



*This bulletin, produced by TASB Leadership Team Services, examines research and shares philosophies to inform and promote exceptional governance within school boards across Texas.*

## Continuous Improvement

*by Phil Gore, PhD, Division Director of Leadership Team Services*

As school boards focus on their continuous improvement—learning together and applying that learning as a board team—they set the example and course of action for continuous improvement throughout the school system. This means administrators are improving, operations are increasing efficiency, teaching is becoming more effective, and students are learning more in the classroom.

Self-assessment by the board can be the first step in this process. Highlighted in a recent edition of *Governance Digest*, TASB's new **XG Board Self-Assessment** can guide the board of trustees through an introspective look at board practices related to improved student learning. Participating in the assessment provides an opportunity for each trustee and the board as a whole to examine how they are performing their work. The follow-up discussion by the board about their responses can catalyze renewed commitment to **eXceptional Governance** that drives increased student learning.

Results from board self-assessment can confirm governance team strengths and inform the board of potential areas for improvement. Both the strengths and areas for improvement can help the board set goals for its learning and development. When the board models this type of self-reflection, they establish an environment that encourages and expects introspection, growth, and continuous improvement throughout the system.

Board goals are not district goals. They are not superintendent goals. They are goals for how the board is going to improve its work, and there needs to be a clear and focused strategy for improvement. That begins with self-assessment, and then it continues with an actionable plan to focus the board's work on improving student outcomes.

One priority action to consider is learning together as a board team. It's not enough for individual trustees or the superintendent to

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learn about effective governance through reading books, attending conference sessions, and studying. Governance teams improve when the team learns together and applies that learning to their work. Specific examples of improvement for most governance teams include agendas focused on student outcomes, times on the agenda that help keep meetings on track, regular reviews of student learning data, and workshops that help the boards understand and monitor for improvement in student learning.

For more information and resources about what boards can do to provide governance and oversight that maximize student learning, visit **[xg.tasb.org](http://xg.tasb.org)**.