



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

Board Self-Assessment

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

Board self-assessment provides a foundation for growth and improvement. An individual trustee's performance is evaluated periodically by the voters at the ballot box, but rarely is the entire board's performance evaluated, unless the board is intentional in making that happen.

While the law requires that a school board evaluate a superintendent's performance, a board may not have much moral ground for doing so unless they have first taken a look at their own performance. Numerous board self-assessment tools are available for this. A recent Google search for "School Board Self-Assessment" yielded 4,360,000 responses. The instrument and process your board uses is not as important as making a habit of reflecting on and discussing your performance.

You might consider your interpersonal skills and practices in board meetings. Do you ensure that all trustees' voices and opinions are heard? Do you conduct your meeting in an orderly manner that promotes goodwill among the team and community?

Are agendas clear and focused on what matters most for student performance? Do you demonstrate respect for each other, your superintendent, staff, students, and community members? Does everyone on your board fully understand the process for adding items to the agenda? Are meetings efficient and adjourning in a timely manner?

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Some school boards assign a different trustee each month to lead a five-minute discussion at the end of meetings around these types of questions. Others do that quarterly or include it in the annual assessment of the board's performance.

The next level of board self-assessment, beyond processes your board

uses, could be the impact of your board's performance on the district and on student outcomes. This level zeroes in on the priorities of the board—how you spend your time and to what extent your discussion and decisions deliver the results you desire. To do this, you will need a different type of board self-assessment that helps you reflect on your work and how that relates to outcomes.

Recently passed SB1566 encourages all boards and requires some of them to use a research-based self-assessment. TASB recently partnered with one of our sister state school boards associations to bring you the board self-assessment that Ivan Lorentzen and Bill McCaw used in their study of specific actions of school boards that relate to student outcomes. We are making this available to all Texas school boards at no charge. This statistically validated board self-assessment tool may be the only one of its kind. For more information and to access your direct link to the assessment, contact Phil Gore at phil.gore@tasb.org.