



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

The Importance of Board Stability

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Introducing the Philosophy

Research over the past 20 years clearly links the beliefs and actions of school boards with student outcomes.

Tom Alsbury, a university professor and former school administrator, found that politically motivated turnover on school boards corresponds with decreased student achievement. Mary Delagardelle, a former school board member and principal, picked up on Tom's research and asked, "If school boards have the potential to harm student performance, couldn't they also do good?" That question birthed what became known as the Iowa Lighthouse Research Project, which reveals that the beliefs, actions, and relationships of school board members influence student learning in the classroom.

Making the Connection

A very strong link connecting school boards to student performance is school board stability. Transition of members will happen. How can boards maintain balance when changes occur? It helps to strengthen the onboarding process,

encourage community involvement, and find ways to focus before the boat starts rocking.

Overcoming the Learning Curve

It takes time for new trustees to learn their role and contribute positively to the governance team. How important is it to define an effective onboarding approach for new trustees? Low-achieving school districts tend to be more carefree in their approach to transitioning new board members. High-achieving school districts tend to have intentional practices for preparing citizens to serve as school trustees. Thorough and comprehensive onboarding processes are crucial for bringing new trustees on board and maintaining board stability during the transition.

Educating the Community

A citizen's academy for learning about the school district and governance priorities seems to be helpful for improving continuity in the school district. Voter education about the role of a school board can help stabilize the community's understanding and expectations of school board

members. Keeping the community informed and creating positive relationships with the community can contribute to board stability.

Staying the Course

A consistent course of action over time is the key to improvement. Whenever there is a change of course, it can take a while for a school district to recover and start anew. While turnover of school board members is inevitable, anything the board and district can do to keep things on a steady path will likely improve the long-term success of its students. School boards working with trained facilitators to help clarify and focus their work can help keep the governance team on a path to improved student performance.

Interested in resources to help your board maintain or increase stability? Visit [LTS.tasb.org](https://lts.tasb.org) for a list of online resources, training, and information on personalized consulting for your governance team.