

# PREPARING TO SERVE

*Serving Public Education*



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By Marcia R. Herring  
Director of Board Leadership  
Nebraska Association of School Boards



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# Preparing to Serve

## NASB MISSION STATEMENT

“Through Leadership, Innovation, Vision and Engagement, the Nebraska Association of School Boards provides programs, services, and advocacy to strengthen public education for all Nebraskans.”

As a school board member, you are of great value to the students, your peers, your board, your community, and as an elected official, you are a community leader. As a leader, you are charged with gathering input from your community on issues related to your students' learning environment, academics and achievement.

It is critical that Nebraska communities remain viable, and that starts with you. Great leaders at the local level have the power to hold everyone accountable. While making the best decisions for education, you are building a strong school and a strong community. Nebraska Association of School Boards (NASB) provides the programs and support to engage your community's stakeholders as the school board works to establish a district vision and goals. This input from the entire community, including those with no direct tie to the school, has allowed boards to expand their thinking. This expanded view reflects the community's values for students, while also bridging the gap to bring multifaceted community support for needed growth and improvement. As a board member, you are responsible for modeling informed decision-making to ensure students receive a quality education. By engaging community stakeholders in purposeful discussion the board fosters a positive working relationship with stakeholders while cultivating a progressive school-community climate.

While at its core NASB is a resource for board training and an advocate on behalf of public education, the value of your district's membership in NASB is far reaching. As a board member, you have access to staff with experience in school law, policy, governance leadership, insurance, advocacy, communications, superintendent evaluation, board self-assessment, community engagement, strategic planning, superintendent searches, negotiations data, etc. It is safe to say that most districts would have a difficult time

accessing or retaining such extensive expertise on their own. It is also difficult to calculate the impact of NASB's assistance to its members in terms of improved efficiency and avoidance of the hardship that results in uninformed decision-making.

As critical as the support services are to our members, it is only part of the story. NASB works collaboratively with many educational and governmental partners representing the interests of school boards and the development of policy. We continually aspire to grow and improve our programs and services to ensure cost-savings to our members and to support your goal to provide a quality education for all students.

We value you as a school board member, an advocate for public education, and a leader in your community and Nebraska as a whole. Thank you for serving your community as a school board member in Nebraska. People like you who dedicate your time and leadership make a difference in the life of a child. We hope you value your relationship with NASB, and I look forward to working with you to continually to improve public education for all students in Nebraska.

For information about NASB and board service, visit our website at [www.NASBOnline.org](http://www.NASBOnline.org) and feel free to contact us at 1-800-422-4572. We are here for you, so when you need assistance, think of NASB first!

Sincerely,  
John Spatz  
NASB Executive Director



# Introduction

Congratulations! The decision to file to serve on your local school board is an important step toward one of the most meaningful volunteer roles you will ever fulfill. Your election by your community is an affirmation of their confidence in you. They entrust you with the education of those they hold most dear — their children.

The time you serve on the school board will most likely challenge you, possibly frustrate you, and yet you will realize rewards far beyond anything you might have imagined. It will also be a time for personal growth as you are called upon to learn or expand your knowledge and skills. Very few school board members come to the board table fully prepared for the responsibility of comprehensive planning, understanding federal and state statutes and mandates, communications, planning, curriculum design, evaluation systems, political lobbying, labor relations, and other responsibilities. The list goes on and, at times, may seem overwhelming.

As a member of a public board governing education, the board plays an important role in the success of the school district, educational service unit and/or learning community. A board member must understand the board's responsibilities, model effective principles of board governance,

and nurture a collaborative relationship with the administrator leading education. An effective and successful board-administrator leadership team is defined as a connected group of individuals working collaboratively with clear purpose, a mutual understanding of roles, and a shared goal of improving educational opportunities for all students.

This guide is designed to provide basic information for individuals interested in serving on a school board, educational service unit board, or learning community council. The rewards of board service can be an enormously fulfilling experience; however, achievement of success can only be derived when boards plan for success, work collaboratively as a leadership team, and unite during times of challenge. Always be mindful that you are a collective team and one board member does not have authority without his/her fellow board members.

**"The heart of a volunteer is not measured in size, but by the depth of the commitment to make a difference in the lives of others."**

**~DeeAnn Hollis**

Since 1918, NASB has been committed to serving school boards across the state. Our mission to enhance public education for the students of Nebraska is assembled upon the beliefs that:

- Every public school board will govern effectively and with integrity.
- Every public school board member will understand the importance and emphasize increased student learning.
- Every public school board will practice good stewardship of resources.

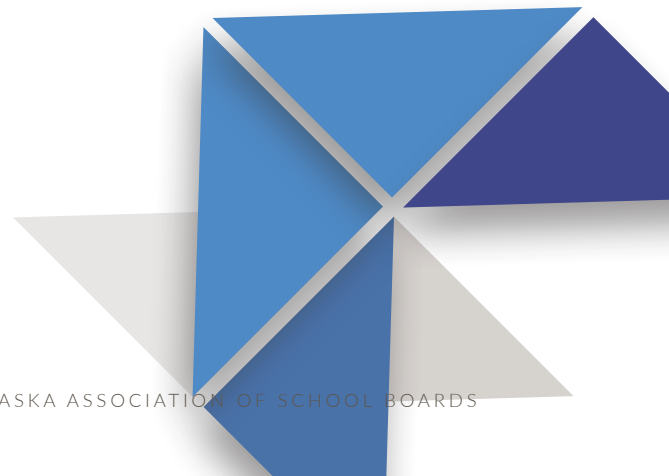
## Benefits of NASB Membership

NASB delivers a broad array of services, including high-quality training, workshops and conferences; publications; board leadership services; online leadership tools; cost-saving programs; superintendent search services; legal and policy services; and strong advocacy for public schools. School boards may access any or all of these services as the need arises and/or when the opportunity presents itself to assess the cost-savings programs provided through your membership.

# About the Association

The Nebraska Association of School Boards is a not-for-profit organization which has served local boards of education since 1918. While celebrating 100 years of investment, NASB continues to provide assistance and information for the boards and districts it represents throughout Nebraska. Governed by school board members throughout the state, NASB is committed to the following goals on behalf of its member boards:

- Enhancing the ability and authority of local boards of education to represent the citizens of their school district;
- Working for increased public awareness and financial support of the public schools;
- Providing development, training, and consulting opportunities for school board members to assist them in meeting their responsibilities for policy making, and efficient management of the school district;
- Representing the interests of public education and, in particular, the viewpoints of local boards of education, to those who impact public education; and
- Providing member boards with the specialized information needed to operate the public schools in the most efficient way possible.





# NASB Programs and Services

To fulfill the Association's goals, NASB offers a broad range of services to its members including:

- Legislative presence at the state level to represent the concerns of local policy makers;
- Cost-saving programs designed to give schools the services they need at the most competitive price possible; such as,

- + ALICAP–(All Lines Interlocal Cooperative Aggregate Pool)
- + Community Engagement
- + Educational Search Service (superintendent search)
- + Lease Purchase
- + Natural Gas Purchasing
- + Online Board Self-Assessment
- + Online Superintendent Evaluation
- + Policy Service
- + SPARQ Meetings, Negotiations Software, and eFunds
- + Strategic Planning
- + Unemployment Insurance Program

The board may also access:

- Opportunities to network, share expertise, access and learn about best practice and solutions to common problems through annual workshops and conferences
- A facilitator to lead a local board retreat (Note: The agenda is defined based upon the needs or request of the board/superintendent.)
- Community engagement services to foster a positive working relationship with internal and external stakeholders
- Leadership services to design and implement a District Strategic Plan
- Access online leadership tools
- Current and timely information and communications through print publications, e-mail, and the NASB website
- Innovative electronic meeting management tools
- Policy support services
- Search services to assist boards in hiring a superintendent or ESU administrator



## Board and Superintendent – The Community Leadership Team

The relationship between the superintendent and the school board is based upon the understanding of the leadership of the superintendent and the governance role of the board. Developing a mutual respect and understanding of the roles and responsibilities the board and superintendent fulfill will provide a foundation to promote a district culture focused on effective governance.

The commitment to participate in purposeful learning opportunities cultivates growth of knowledge and focus on improving student learning and achievement.



## NASB Governance

NASB is governed by a 24-member Board of Directors. Local school board members are elected to the NASB Board of Directors on a regional basis and serve three-year terms. The Board meets five times a year, with subcommittees meeting throughout the year.

The Association's bylaws and annual legislative agenda are developed through a representative process which begins with the initiation of proposals by member boards. Proposals are submitted to the NASB Legislation Committee, which is composed of 19 members elected by size-specific districts, plus six members appointed from the NASB Board of Directors. The Legislation Committee reviews local district proposals for bylaw changes and legislative resolutions and makes a recommendation to the NASB Delegate Assembly. Through the Delegate Assembly, each member district is able to exercise its vote to establish the Association's direction for the year.



## National School Boards Association (NSBA)

The Nebraska Association of School Boards is a member of the National School Boards Association. Founded in 1940, the NSBA is a not-for-profit federation of state associations of school boards from across the United States. NSBA is a nationwide advocacy organization for public school governance and provides vital information and services to its members. To learn more about NSBA, please visit their website at [www.NSBA.org](http://www.NSBA.org).





## Board Governance

The basic function of a school board is to provide local citizen control over education at a point as close to the parent and child as possible. This means that the school board represents the citizens of the school district – not just some of the citizens, but all. Because different patrons have varying ideas about the school district, the responsibility of serving the board can present a challenge.

The encompassing responsibility for education rests with the State of Nebraska. The state delegates and holds accountable the local board of education. School boards are granted latitude in governing the school district; however, districts are subject to state and federal rules and regulations.

The most important responsibilities of a school board are to:

- Employ a superintendent
- Hold him/her responsible for managing the school district in accordance with state law and the adopted school board policies
- Identify and adopt educational goals for the school district
- Engage the community in the discussion and support of student learning

The board is required to meet in public because a school board is a governmental body. The board can only take action by majority vote at a public meeting. An individual board member has no authority. Each board member has the right to cast a vote for an action item at a called and advertised meeting of the Board of Education. A board member who attempts to speak for the board, direct members of the staff, or make individual decisions is a board member acting outside of their authority.

The purpose of a school board meeting is to transact the legal business of the school district through discussion and voting among the members. The board must also provide time at meetings for the public to be heard. Public comment is one way for the board to assess the values of the public they represent; however, those who speak at a school board meeting do not necessarily represent the entire community, or even the majority. Effective community relations are an important responsibility of the board, superintendent, and staff.



## The Superintendent

The school board hires a properly certificated and qualified individual to serve as superintendent of the district. Through written policies, the school board directs and empowers the superintendent to function as the educational leader managing all aspects of the district operations. By law, the board must evaluate the superintendent's work in relation to the defined district goals, job description, employment contract, and board expectations as defined in a performance-based evaluation tool.



## The Board Member – A Community Leader

The vast majority of individuals elected to serve the Board of Education possess some sense of the importance and significant responsibilities they inherit to ensure the district provides quality instruction and learning opportunities to meet the needs of all students in a safe and effective learning environment. There is no greater honor for a person of high purpose than to be elected by the community to serve on the Board of Education to represent the public and all students. However, it is an honor that must be earned through constant effort and a strong commitment to serving public education.

School board members in Nebraska serve without pay and are prohibited by law from having a significant financial interest in any business transacted by the school district. The term of office for most school board members is four years.

Experienced board members from across the state were asked to identify the most difficult lesson or fact they had to learn about board service. This is what they shared:

- The great amount of time it takes to be an effective board member
- The mismatch between initial assumptions and the actual roles, responsibilities, and relationships of the board and administration in operating the school district
- Recognizing the difference between setting policy (the board's job) and administering (the superintendent's job)
- Change comes slowly
- The abrupt change from "citizen" status to "board member"
- Learning to publicly acknowledge that you have no power and authority as an individual board member; that only the board as a whole can set policies and decisions for the school district
- That you must represent all the students; decisions must be made in the interest of the school district and not made solely for special groups or interests
- Learning how to respond to the complaints and concerns of patrons and parents
- Effective boardsmanship means being able to hold the minority viewpoint when voting on a given issue; then openly supporting the majority vote in your community
- A board member must think deeply and sometimes accept a reality that is contrary to his/her own beliefs
- As a board member you cannot solve everyone's problems by yourself!

# NASB Board Leadership Standards



The NASB Board Leadership Standards provide a framework to describe excellence in school governance focused on student achievement as the board's primary responsibility. Based on research and best practice, the standards can be used to guide board learning and board self-assessment.

## I. MISSION, VISION, AND GOALS

The board annually reviews the district's vision and mission statements and adopts board and district goals to support the mission.

Questions to consider:

- The board adopts a mission and vision statement that is developed with the support of stakeholders?
- Student achievement is a top priority of the school board, staff, and community?
- How are the mission and vision statements communicated to the community?
- Is there a long-term or strategic plan in place to support the mission and vision?
- The board regularly refers to the mission and vision when setting district policy?
- The mission and vision is used as a guide when making resource, budget, and other operating decisions?
- The board periodically reviews the mission and vision statement with stakeholders to ensure it aligns to and reflects community beliefs and values?

## II. POLICY GOVERNANCE

The board continuously reviews, revises, and develops policies and procedures to ensure accountability focused on growth and student achievement.

What the board can do:

- Adopt policies that support the mission and vision, provide structure, and hold everyone accountable.
- Establish a policy committee that includes all district stakeholders.
- Review policies on a regular basis to ensure the policy manual is up-to-date.
- Update policies annually to ensure legal compliance.



### III. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The board establishes effective communications with stakeholders through actively engaging parents, students, staff, and community members with the intent to promote the district's image, build positive working relationships, and sustain long-term partnerships that serve and support education.

Questions to consider:

- The board has adopted a District Strategic Plan? What process has been identified for gathering input from stakeholders — parents, students, staff, community advocates, businesses, government agencies, and higher education (this process helps to define the core beliefs of the school district and is often referred to as Strategic Planning)?
- The district communicates the vision frequently and consistently to the entire community through a system of planned communication?
- The board regularly refers to the vision when making decisions about policy and district operations?



### IV. ACCOUNTABILITY AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

The board continuously monitors the progress of district goals utilizing data to support growth and promote shared accountability for maximizing student achievement.

What the board can do:

- Ensure the district has adopted high instructional standards.
- Engage in the review of data to evaluate the instructional program.
- Adopt a curriculum review cycle and ensure the curriculum is aligned to the state standards.

Questions to consider:

- What do we want students to know?
- Are all students progressing academically?



## V. ADVOCACY

The board advocates for children, public education, learning, and equity to support improved student achievement for all students.

Questions to consider:

- What is my role and how do I advocate for the best interest of the school district?
- Where do I find information regarding Legislative Bills that may impact public schools?



## VI. DISTRICT RESOURCES

The board aligns and manages district resources in a responsible manner to meet goals and to promote growth of student achievement.

What the board can do:

- Adopt a budget that supports the vision.
- Use data to link instructional needs to instructional resources.
- Provide transparency through district financial reports.

Questions to consider:

- Which comes first, our priorities or the budget?
- Is the budget easy to understand?
- What is our budget cycle and calendar?
- Who is involved in developing the budget?
- How does the budget address student achievement?

## VII. BOARD OPERATIONS

The board ensures meetings are effective, efficient, and orderly, focused on policy, proper board governance, and conduct.

What the board can do:

- Utilize the NASB Annual Board Calendar.
- Follow the Board Code of Conduct and abide by adopted protocol and procedures to ensure orderly board meetings.

“ An effective board member is committed to the education of all students. ”

## VIII. BOARD – SUPERINTENDENT RELATIONS

The board and superintendent establish and sustain a professional and collaborative working relationship to support and advocate for growth and student achievement.

Questions to consider:


- When do we evaluate the superintendent?
- What does an effective evaluation process include?

## IX. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The board and superintendent participate in continuous and appropriate training and professional development to build shared knowledge and values.

Questions to consider:

- Where do I find a list of workshops and conferences for school board members?
- How do I register for workshops and conferences?
- Will the district cover the cost of the registration fees for workshops and conferences?



Knowledge and experience are not enough. Board members must be willing to learn and be open to new knowledge. In addition, an effective board member is committed to the education of all students in the district. It is important that board members possess courage and a conviction of the importance of public education. They must be committed to fulfilling their responsibilities in areas of board work.

The public school is a complex organization. Local school boards must answer to many more voices than the Nebraska State Board of Education and/or the Legislature. The courts play an active role in clarifying the laws and determining how they are to be implemented. The court decisions set the parameters for the local board's decisions in policy, personnel, student rights and responsibilities, and a multitude of other areas related to education.

Most school boards adopt and annually review the **Board Member Code of Conduct**. The Board Member Code of Conduct represents best practice for all board members.

Note: The code listed below represents an abbreviated version.

## Board Member Code of Conduct

As a member of the board, I shall promote the best interests of the district, and adhere to the following Code of Conduct:

### EQUITY IN ATTITUDE

- I will be fair, just, and impartial in all my decisions and actions.
- I will accord others the respect I wish for myself.
- I will encourage expressions of different opinions and listen with an open mind to others' ideas.

### TRUSTWORTHINESS IN STEWARDSHIP

- I will be trustworthy to the public by representing district policies, programs, priorities, and progress accurately.
- I will be responsive to the community by seeking its involvement in district affairs and by communicating its priorities and concerns.
- I will work to ensure prudent and accountable use of district resources.
- I will make no personal promise or take private action that may compromise the performance of my responsibilities.

## HONOR IN CONDUCT

- I will tell the truth.
- I will share my views while working for consensus.
- I will respect the majority decision as the decision of the board.
- I will base my decisions on fact rather than supposition, opinion, or public favor.

## INTEGRITY OF CHARACTER

- I will refuse to surrender judgment to any individual or group at the expense of the district as a whole.
- I will consistently uphold all applicable laws, rules, policies, and governance procedures.
- I will keep confidential any information that is privileged by law or that will needlessly harm the district if disclosed.

## COMMITMENT TO SERVICE

- I will focus my attention on fulfilling the board's responsibilities of goal setting, policymaking, and evaluation.
- I will diligently prepare for and attend board meetings.
- I will avoid personal involvement in activities the board has delegated to the superintendent.
- I will seek continuing education that will enhance my ability to fulfill my duties effectively.

## STUDENT-CENTERED FOCUS

- I will be continuously guided by what is best for all students of the district.



The board and school district are held accountable to the public. School boards not only must meet the demands of law, they must be responsive to the needs and desires of the community. The community expects to have a role in deciding how the school district will be governed. The district's identified

needs must then be balanced to ensure a quality education for all students in a safe learning environment.

The boundaries for transparent and effective decision-making are supported by the Nebraska Open Meetings Law to ensure the meetings of the board are conducted properly in public.



“The boundaries for transparent and effective decision-making are supported by the Nebraska Open Meetings Law to ensure meetings of the board are conducted properly in public.”

Transparency in government is important because it allows citizens to participate and have confidence in government decisions. Public bodies that make decisions behind closed doors and by secret votes breed the suspicion that private interests – not the public interest – are being served. Effective board governance is measured by not only the board’s compliance with the Nebraska Open Meetings Law, but also how the body operates within their

proper governance role while empowering the superintendent as educational leader to ensure policy is followed and the district provides a quality education that supports student success.

Research conducted by the National School Board Association’s Center for Public Education defines a high-achieving school board as one that exhibits the following characteristics:

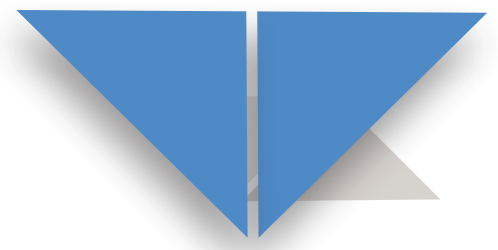
- Defines goals with high expectations for student learning: effective school boards make a commitment to a vision of high expectations for student learning and quality instruction. The board and administration define goals to meet the vision, affirm the goals that drive decision-making, and ensure goals are met.
- Believes all students can learn: effective school boards have strong-shared beliefs and values about what is possible for students, their ability to learn, and the system’s ability to teach all students. In high-achieving districts poverty, lack of parental involvement, and other factors are described as challenges to overcome, not excuses. Board members expect to see improvements in student learning as a result of initiatives.
- Focused on achievement: effective school boards are accountability driven. The board spends less time on operational issues and more time focused on policies to improve student learning.
- Collaborative and engaged communications: effective school boards have a collaborative relationship with staff and the community. A strong communications structure is in place to inform and engage key groups – internal and external – in setting and achieving the district’s goals.

- Drives decision-making based upon data: effective school boards embrace and monitor data, even when the information is less than favorable, and the board is utilizing the data to support continuous improvement. In high-achieving districts, board members identify specific student needs and justify decisions based upon the data.
- Align goals and resources: effective school boards align and sustain resources, such as professional development, to meet district goals. This must occur even during the most severe budget challenges.
- Model positive team leadership: effective school boards lead as a united team with the superintendent, each from their respective roles, with strong collaboration and mutual trust. Boards in successful school districts define an initial vision for the district and seek a superintendent who matches the vision.
- Commit to team training: boards that are effective take part in team development and training, including the superintendent, to build shared knowledge, values, and commitments for the district's improvement efforts. Training is formal, deliberate, and often on specific topics.

## Characteristics of an Effective Leadership Team

High-achieving leadership teams are characterized by several critical components involving the individual board member, the board of education, and the superintendent.

“An effective Board-Superintendent Leadership Team is fundamental to the success of the school district.”



## I. The individual board member must:

- Understand student learning for all students is the primary focus of the board
- Value, support, and advocate on behalf of public education and the school district
- Recognize and respect the perspectives of fellow board members, administrators, staff, students, and patrons
- Perform board responsibilities in a manner that is dignified and respectful
- Maintain the confidentiality of all matters discussed in closed session
- Participate in professional development and commit the time necessary to be an informed and effective board member
- Understand the distinct role of the board and delegate authority to the superintendent and staff
- Understand that authority rests with the board as a whole and not with an individual board member

## II. The board of education must:

- Conduct board business in unity and with purpose as a board
- Maintain the primary focus on student learning for all students
- Define and adopt the vision and goals that provide clarity and purpose to the work of the board and district that enable the board to effectively monitor district performance
- Govern through board-adopted policies and procedures to guide administration and staff
- Conduct periodic board self-assessment to ensure effective board governance
- Respect the values of the community and engage stakeholders in support of education

### III. The board of education must ensure effective governance by:

- Hiring and evaluating the superintendent to ensure the vision and goals for student learning are attained
- Developing and maintaining a positive relationship with the superintendent through mutual respect and a clear understanding of the roles, responsibilities, and expectations identified in the contract, job description, goals, and evaluation tool
- Regularly developing, reviewing, and adopting the necessary policies to govern the district
- Adopting a fiscally responsible budget based on the district's vision and goals
- Continuously monitoring the financial statements and ensuring administrative accountability and compliance with policies and state and federal regulations
- Engaging stakeholders in an ongoing review and update of the district's vision in support of student learning
- Monitoring progress by utilizing data to ensure accountability for student learning
- Nurturing a positive culture by utilizing policy to guide board operations, providing a comprehensive orientation for new board members, participating in continuing education for all members, and assuming full responsibility for the board's behavior and performance through periodic self-assessment.

## Serving Public Education

Are you a suitable candidate for the board? The unique qualities of a governing school board are the unique qualities of the individuals who serve. The ability to function as one member of a governing board is not determined by sex, occupation, race, income, or social standing. The effective board candidate is, however, characterized as one with:

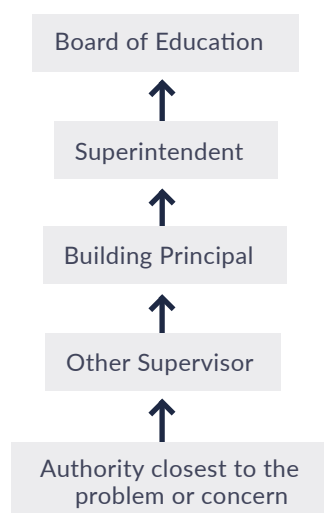
- The ability to work as a member of a team, including an open mind and the ability to engage in give-and-take and to arrive at a group consensus
- The willingness to spend the time required to become informed and to do the homework needed to take part in effective board meetings
- A desire to serve students and the community, and a strong belief in the values of public education and schools

- Respect for the needs and feelings of others
- Recognize the school district is commonly one of the largest employers/ businesses in the community and that the board is responsible to ensure the district is lead by a highly skilled educational leader
- Possess a genuine concern for community involvement

Considering candidacy as a result of a disagreement or ongoing dispute with a district employee may not be the best approach. Community members will often contact a school board member with their concerns, suggestions, and questions. This may be the appropriate choice if a district-wide policy is involved; however, most matters should be referred to the building administrator and/or superintendent as opposed to a board member. The individual board member does not have authority outside of a public meeting.

It is always best to begin with the individual directly related to the issue. If the matter cannot be resolved at the lowest possible level, then one must follow the Chain of Communication thereafter. For example, if the matter is related to a classroom teacher, begin with the teacher and, if the issue is not resolved, the Chain of Communication would progress to the principal and then to the superintendent. If the matter pertains to a coach, begin with the coach, then sequentially seek out the athletic/ activities director, principal, and superintendent. By following the proper Chain of Communication, parents/patrons rarely need to appeal to the board through the formal grievance process.

### Chain of Communication



### Following the Chain of Communication

- Board Member is contacted by a patron of the district.
- Board Member listens with courtesy and sincerity.
- Board Member instructs the patron to follow the Chain of Communication starting with the authority closest to the problem or concern.
- Board Member contacts superintendent to turn the matter over to superintendent and/or the administrators to handle.



# The Board Candidate

What do you need to know as you consider candidacy for the board? It is critically important for candidates to acquire a basic understanding of the school district including, but not limited to:

- Board Member Code of Conduct
- Board protocol and procedures
- Board policies
- District vision and goals for growth and improved student learning
- District organizational chart
- Current budget
- State rules and regulations governing the school district

The board candidate is best equipped when they understand the working relationship between the board and the state, the community and the superintendent, and individual board members and other members of the board.

A board member has only one vote; therefore, the candidate who defines their candidacy by invoking change must do so within the existing laws and district framework. Too many times, the fresh perspective and vision the new board member brings forth fails simply because of the approach and failure to properly present to the full board.

NASB advocates for the individual who is considering a candidacy for the board to prepare for this important endeavor by attending the meetings of the board. To learn more about the district: speak with current board members, set aside time to meet with the superintendent to better understand the district and the dynamics of the educational issues the district is facing, and review the past 6 to 12 months of board meeting minutes.

## Commit to Your Own Learning

The learning curve of boardsmanship can be rather steep! To make the most of your time on the board, commit early on to your own learning and development as a board member. Encourage your fellow board members to help you by asking questions and engaging in discussion. Learning together is a great activity for any board and NASB offers many resources for building your skills and knowledge, ranging from this manual to a New Board Member Workshop to a comprehensive list of other opportunities to support you in your role as a board member. Your commitment to developing your own skills will be a model for the students and staff in your district.

# Board Leadership Programs and Services

The NASB Board Leadership Department provides a broad scope of services and programs to support the governance roles and responsibilities of the District Leadership Team. The board and superintendent may consider:

**Board Retreat** The NASB Board Leadership staff advocate for the board and superintendent to participate in an annual board retreat to: grow in your leadership roles and responsibilities, discuss district goals and planning, etc. The design of the local Board Retreat is subject to the board's vision and what the president and/or superintendent believe will be beneficial to the growth of the leadership team. NASB staff serve as facilitators and will modify the agenda and content per the direction provided by the board and/or superintendent.

**Board Leadership Resources** As a member of the Association, the Board Leadership Department provides a variety of resources to support the board-superintendent leadership team. Our leadership resources are available through the workshops, conferences, website, or email.

**Community Engagement** Engaging stakeholders in purposeful discussion can be a powerful component in shaping the future of the school district. This level of involvement is realized through Community Engagement. Fostering a positive working relationship with internal and external stakeholders cultivates a progressive school-community climate. This NASB Board Leadership service is tailored to each school district by carefully selecting the stakeholder groups involved and discussion topics and questions utilized.

**Strategic Planning** The NASB Board Leadership staff facilitate the engagement of stakeholders and collect and assess all relevant data. Analysis of the data is articulated through a District Needs Analysis followed by the creation of the Strategic Plan supported by Objectives, Strategies, Performance Indicators, etc. Once the plan is implemented, our process ensures accountability through the continuous monitoring of progress and success. Strategic Planning is effective planning that includes:

- Commitment by the School District Leadership to a defined long-term plan
- Strategies and objectives aligned with the School District's mission and beliefs
- Collaboration and consensus building among internal and external stakeholders
- Accountability of administration and staff
- Ongoing and consistent monitoring of progress and success

**Superintendent Evaluation** It is the responsibility of the school board to evaluate the performance of the superintendent. Fair application of the Superintendent Evaluation process is best achieved through collaboration and agreement by the board and superintendent about the what, how, and when of the evaluation process. The Association provides the Leadership Encompass 360, the NASB Standard Superintendent Evaluation and an online platform for administering the legally required board responsibility. All board members must participate and provide purposeful feedback regarding the superintendent's educational leadership of the school district.

**Board Self-Assessment** The board that operates effectively will periodically engage in some form of Board Self-Assessment. Conducting a self-assessment is an opportunity for the board to evaluate how well it is functioning as a body. Completing a self-assessment enables the leadership team to determine what needs to be improved to function more effectively going forward. It is important that expectations and standards on how to improve the team's practices and behaviors are clearly articulated during this process. The Association provides sample board self-assessment tools to support this best practice process.

**Learning Workshops** Commit to learning and growing in your role and responsibilities as a board member. To make the most of your time on the board, participate in the learning opportunities provided through NASB. Each year NASB offers an array of opportunities to build your skills and knowledge, including but not limited to: The New Board Member Workshop, President's Retreat, Candidate Forum, Legislative Issues Conference, Area Membership Meetings and State Conference, just to name a few. Your commitment to developing your own skills will be a model for the students and staff in your district.

**Awards of Achievement** Education is both complex and challenging. Through conferences, area workshops, and local board retreats the Association serves our members by providing learning experiences to support growth and board member professional development. When you attend NASB sponsored activities you are awarded points through the Awards of Achievement program. As you accumulate points, your commitment to growing professionally and service to your local school district is acknowledged each year during the awards presentation at Area Membership Meetings.





# Where to Find Help

Whether you are a newly elected board member embarking on this most important endeavor or an experienced board member facing a new challenge, remember that you are not alone. NASB is your network for support, advice, information and educational opportunities. NASB's expert staff can help you or refer you to someone who provides the support you need. As a starting point, you can always visit our website at [www.NASBonline.org](http://www.NASBonline.org), call us at 1-800-422-4572, or contact the Board Leadership Department through Marcia Herring, Director of Board Leadership, at [mherring@NASBonline.org](mailto:mherring@NASBonline.org). We look forward to working with you!



**Nebraska Association of School Boards**

1311 Stockwell Street  
Lincoln, Nebraska 68502  
[www.NASBonline.org](http://www.NASBonline.org)  
1.800.422.4572



