



Bentonville Schools

The Basics of Board Governance: Roles and Responsibilities

Eric White, Bentonville Schools Board President | Dec 11, 2019

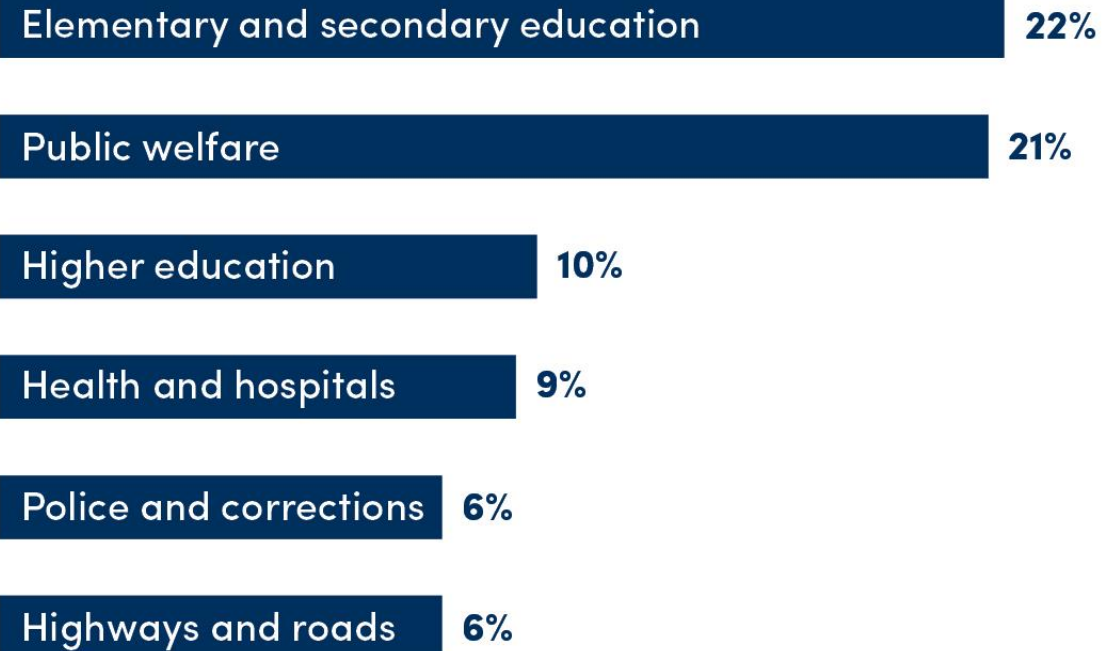
WHAT IS A SCHOOL BOARD?

- 1 Publically elected group to oversee tax payer monies
- 2 Hire and supervise superintendent
- 3 Serve as a community liaison

STATE & LOCAL GENERAL SPENDING

NOTE: Excludes spending on government run liquor stores, utilities, and insurance trusts. Medicaid spending is divided between the public welfare and health and hospitals functional category, with the majority allocated to the former.

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Survey of State and Local Government Finance, 2015.



HOW DO SCHOOL BOARDS WORK?

- ① Only as a legal entity with a quorum & in legal session
- ② Ensure the district has a plan to deliver educational objectives
 - Ⓐ Student Achievement (Graduation Rates)
 - Ⓑ Student Achievement (Improve Metrics)
 - Ⓒ Student Achievement (specific for demographics, student segments)
- ③ Monitor Progress
- ④ Change Course when Necessary
- ⑤ Hire & Evaluate superintendent

FOCUS ON RESULTS RATHER THAN PROCESS

① Plans should be presented to the board & progress monitored

② Important Plans:

- Ⓐ Student Achievement (graduation rates, test scores, inclusion plans, etc...)
- Ⓑ Finances
- Ⓒ Facilities
- Ⓒ Staffing & PD

focus on
 process
 result

TAKE IT FROM ME...

board members don't think the same

- 1 Only as a legal entity with a quorum & in legal session
- 2 Ensure the district has a plan to deliver educational objectives
- 3 Guard against pressure from "Special Interest Groups / Individuals"

TAKE IT FROM ME...

- ① Board members have authority only while in official session
- ② Notify media
- ③ Limit interaction with employees
- ④ Fixing problems is the superintendent's role
- ⑤ Bring Professional Expertise
- ⑥ Remember what matters

TAKE IT FROM ME...

Don't place unnecessary demands on your CEO

- 1 Stand back
- 2 Don't put superintendent on speed dial
- 3 Remember what matters

TAKE IT FROM ME...

board meetings are private meetings held in public

- 1 Govern from Policy, not Emotion
- 2 Board meetings must be dictated from the AGENDA
- 3 Board meetings are for a “Team” of members to discuss, debate, and conclude
- 4 Comments that start with “for the record”, or “for the audiences sake” are probably not helpful
- 5 If your meetings are more than an hour (maybe 1.5) revisit points above.

Your individual persona and your role on the school board are now conjoined

- 1 New phenomenon
- 2 Your activity can cause reputational damage to the district
- 3 Right & Wrong both have consequences
- 4 Your District has a policy for all employees, your board should strive to exceed that policy



It's all about the kids!



Other politicians matter

- 1 Election cycles
- 2 Millage elections
- 3 Funding
- 4 Infrastructure and Growth

It's all about the kids!

TOP 10 DUTIES OF SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

- 1 Hire Superintendent
- 2 Evaluate Superintendent
- 3 Set Mission & Direction
- 4 Follow All Laws
- 5 Oversee Budget & Finance
- 6 Make & Follow Policies
- 7 Attend Board Meetings
- 8 Visit Schools
- 9 Hearings (Approve Staff Hires)
- 10 Professional Development

HIRE THE SUPER- INTENDENT

①

Superintendent runs the day to day operations and is the CEO.

②

The superintendent is the only person the board can hire and fire.

EVALUATE THE SUPER- INTENDENT

- 1 Annually or at least before extending contract
- 2 Board should set clear expectations
 - a What is expected
 - b What “right” looks like
 - c How they will be evaluated
- 3 Provide frequent feedback

SET MISSION AND DIRECTION OF THE DISTRICT

- ① Work with the Superintendent to set the mission and direction for the school district
- ② Strategic Plans
 - ⓐ Financials
 - ⓑ Facilities
 - ⓒ Growth / Construction
 - ⓓ Others
- ③ Plan drives activity and is used to measure performance

FOLLOW THE LAW

1

You will not know all the laws, so use your resources

- a) School District Attorney
- b) ASBA Attorney
- c) NSBA Attorney

2

Your superintendent will keep you updated on changes to or status of Arkansas school law

OVERSEE FINANCES

- ① The superintendent and staff will develop a balanced budget
- ② Board approves budget & financial reports
- ③ Legislative audit training is required

MAKE, ENFORCE, & FOLLOW POLICY

- ① Policy making is serious
- ② Policies, good & bad, have consequences
- ③ Policies affect people

Follow Policy, Lead by Example

ATTEND BOARD MEETINGS

- ① Legally convened board meetings are the only time you can conduct business
- ② Business can not be conducted unless you have a quorum
- ③ All meetings have announcement requirements
- ④ Special sessions & workshops
- ⑤ Executive session
 - ⓐ for personnel matters only

HEARINGS (APPROVE STAFF HIRES)

- ① Your role to make an employment offer based on superintendent's recommendations
- ② Hearings are Important, you are a fact finder & appeals judge
 - ⓐ Employee appeals
 - ⓑ Student expulsion appeals

PERSONNEL ISSUES AUTHORIZE EXECUTIVE SESSIONS

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 1 Not just for employees, it's for YOU too
- 2 Make time at every meeting for Board PD
- 3 Attend ASBA functions
- 4 NSBA functions are also available
- 5 Find the budget



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