

Board Role Clarity

The board has a role in student achievement. It must set district-wide goals and then monitor achievement toward those goals. But first, the board must have a vision for its own role before it can set about gathering data on student achievement.

Here's a look at how other boards spell out who does what ...

School board members across the country share common responsibilities from guiding fundamental change in policy and goals to monitoring progress to overseeing how resources are used. To ensure roles and responsibilities are clear to everyone, many boards and state associations of school boards have stated publicly what a school board member's role is, and in some cases how their role differs from the superintendent. Here are a few examples in the words of districts that have crafted such language:

Beaverton, Oregon

The seven-member school board is the policy-making body of our school district. It is responsible for providing an educational program for students living within the district. To accomplish its role, the board:

- Determines the long-range direction of the district
- Establishes policies that direct the instructional and support programs
- Communicates with the community
- Employs and evaluates the superintendent
- Negotiates with employee groups to determine salaries and benefits
- Calls elections on bond proposals
- Approves the annual budget

Midland, Texas

The Role of the Local School Board

Our system of local school districts and boards of education epitomizes representative and participatory government — citizens elected from their community make decisions about educational programs based on community needs, values and expectations. Local school boards also allow for community participation in that decision-making process. School boards not only represent the public, but also translate the needs of students into policies, plans and goals.

The Superintendent

The superintendent of schools is appointed by the school board as the chief administrator and executive officer. With the assistance of his staff, the superintendent directs, guides and coordinates the total educational program in accordance with board policies and the rules and regulations of the Texas Education Agency. He attends all board meetings and brings recommendations to the board for action in carrying out the business of the school system.

Iowa Association of School Boards

The school board has four basic roles in student achievement:

- Holding high expectations
- Supporting successful teaching and learning
- Being accountable for student success
- Linking the schools with the community

No matter how these different organizations word it, the spirit is the same. The school board is a governing body elected to set policy, establish district-wide goals for student achievement, hire and direct the superintendent, and give back to their communities who elected them. The superintendent guides and manages educational practice to achieve the educational goals.