Goldendale School District  
“Everyone Contributing Every Day”

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in serving on the Board of Directors for Goldendale School District.

Enclosed with the application form, are the following materials for your information:

- Timeline and Process
- Application form
- Detail Map of Areas for District (showing geographical area of #1)
- School Board Selection Criteria
- Goldendale School Board Operating Protocols
- WSSDA Conflict of Interest information
- Policy and Procedure 1620; The Board / Superintendent Relationship
- Public Disclosure Requirement

As a reminder, interested parties must reside in the Director District area 1. To confirm your address within an area, contact Klickitat County or the Goldendale School District Office.

The **deadline to submit your application** is Friday, December 16, by 3:00 pm. Completed applications may be delivered to the district office to the attention of Alexis Ladiges: 604 E Brooks Street, Goldendale or emailed: Alexis.Ladiges@gsd404.org. Please feel free to call if you have any questions about the application process: 509-773-5177.
Goldendale School District Director Area #1 Timeline and Application Process

The Goldendale School District Board of Directors is looking to fill Board Position Director #1, that was made vacant by the resignation of Beth Schroder. State law calls for the remaining school board members to appoint a replacement within 90 days of the board accepting Ms. Schroder’s resignation. The appointed replacement will serve until the next regularly scheduled school board election, November 2023.

Because our school board is set up by district areas, any person interested in applying to the position must live in the District 1 boundary. A map is included in the application packet and is posted to the Goldendale School District website.

The application, timeline, and selection process information are all available on the Goldendale School District homepage and clicking on “About Us > School Board.” Applications will be accepted until Friday, December 16, 2022.

Timeline:

Tuesday, November 29: Applications Open

Friday, December 16: Last Day to Submit Applications

Monday, January 9, 2023: Interviews with School Board

Monday, January 23, 2023: New school board member appointed
Application for Goldendale Board of Directors

Name:
Address:
Phone:
Email:

What is your background and experience as it relates to serving as a school board member?

Why do you wish to be appointed to the Goldendale Board of Directors?

What interests and abilities do you possess which would contribute to successful service as a school board member?

Describe school and community activities in which you are or have been involved:

Explain your experience around policy work related to boards.

Provide an example of a high performing team that you’ve been a part of and how you positively impacted the team:

Signature                   Date
Commitment - Take the time necessary to become/remain well informed, make and support adopted Operating Principles, and follow through on commitments — with passion, in word and action, for all students.

Teamwork - Collaborative team member. Be deliberative in decision making — supporting decisions once made.

Student Focused - Commitment to wellbeing and achievement of all students, including closing achievement gaps. Ensure Goldendale School District’s schools are places where everyone is respected, welcomed, and safe.

Excellent Communication - Respectful two-way communicator, including skills in active listening, speaking in public, and dialoguing — while maintaining an open-mind.

Leadership Experience - Contributions to school, community, and youth-focused activities; one who consistently operates with integrity and is accountable to the community.
Goldendale School Board Operating Protocols
Document in Progress

Communication:

Goal: All children will have the support of the community through ongoing communication and connection.
  - Transparency with community and a high functioning collaborative team

Board/Board Communication
  - We will take time for clarity of content and emotion by asking questions
  - We will ask questions in the meeting and avoid taking it home with us
  - We will forward communication from community members to the Board Chair and Superintendent
    - The board or superintendent will respond and if needed, alert the rest of the board
  - We will express our opinions and positions on issues honestly and openly while being sensitive to others’ opinions.

Board/Superintendent Communication
  - We will communicate with the superintendent in advance of public meetings when we have questions or concerns

Board/Community Communication
  - We will communicate what’s going well and the needs of our district with our community.
  - We will listen with openness to successes and needs expressed by our community, parents, staff, and students
  - We will be accessible to our community
  - We will provide ongoing information to our community regarding boardsmanship

Board acts as a body

  - Individual board members do not have authority. Only the board as a whole has authority. We agree that an individual board member will not take unilateral action. We agree that once a vote is taken and the board has made a decision that we will stand by that decision. The board president will communicate positions of the board on controversial issues.
Board Governs

Successful organizations are the result of strong and effective leadership. In order for members of our team to be active players, they must know their roles.

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Board Meetings

- We will respond verbally when a vote is taken.
- We will engage fully at meetings.
- We will come to meetings prepared having reviewed materials in advance.
- We will ask questions, share our viewpoints and be open to other ideas.
- We will alert the superintendent and/or board chair of concerns and questions prior to bringing them up at a public meeting – No Surprises!

Adopted by the Goldendale School Board on September 26, 2022

Beth Schroeder
Betty Richards
Chris Siebert
Deborah Heart
John Hooter
WHAT MAKES A GREAT SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER?

Who are school directors?
Washington state's public school districts are governed by publicly-elected school boards. These board members—called "school directors"—are citizens just like you! They are parents and grandparents, young people and senior citizens, and diverse community members from all walks of life.

There is great value in diversity on a school board. Each member brings their varying experiences and backgrounds to inform good decision making with a spirit of teamwork.

A statewide survey conducted by WSSDA shows that its members run for school board for two primary reasons: to give back to their community and to help children get a good education.

What does a school board do?
School directors work together to oversee the school district. As a board, their primary responsibilities are:

- Hire, supervise and evaluate the superintendent
- Set the vision, mission and strategic goals for the district
- Review, revise and adopt policies
- Establish and oversee the budget
- Serve as community representatives
- Monitor the district's progress towards its goals

WHERE CAN YOU FIND THE NEXT GREAT SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER?
Look in the mirror: It might be YOU.
AVOIDING CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

A Guide for School Board Members and Superintendents

WSSDA
100 Years of Leadership
AVOIDING CONFLICTS OF INTEREST
A Guide for School Board Members and Superintendents

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Prepared by the Washington State School Directors' Association, Published November 2022
Introduction

Several years ago, the Legislature adopted the Code of Ethics for Municipal Officers (the “Code”), chapter 42.23 RCW. The purpose of the Code is to make uniform laws regulating conflicts of interest. This is an important area of the law for board members and superintendents, so a current and thorough knowledge of the law is important. (The full text of the Code can be found at: https://app.leg.wa.gov/rgw.)

This publication reviews basic conflict of interest issues, with particular emphasis on how to structure district policies and board practices to comply with state law and public expectations when one or more school board members (or the superintendent, beyond their contract) have an ongoing personal financial interest in the district’s operations.

Situations arise that require school board members and superintendents to heighten their sensitivity to conflict of interest issues, regardless of the size of their district. State law evolved from simply forbidding most opportunities for financial conflicts of interest, especially those related to employment, in all but the smallest school districts. Now a less restricted approach exists in all districts. For example, the spouse* of a current district employee may be appointed superintendent or elected to the school board without the employee having to forfeit their position. Now, the spouse of a director or superintendent may be a substitute teacher, and a director may have a business contract with the district. Case law has further clarified that the purpose of law is to regulate an officer’s financial interests in contracts, not non-financial interests.

These ongoing personal and financial relationships require the superintendent, each board member, and most importantly, the affected board member to remain vigilant in conducting the district’s business fairly and with complete transparency. Every district must ensure that its policies and practices are in full compliance with current legal requirements. All districts should make the effort to keep their conflict of interest policies current, since these efforts are always easier before the conflict and community concern arise.

A secondary goal is to raise the awareness of school board members and superintendents so that if there is any indication that a conflict exists, they will ask themselves the appropriate questions. For example, will they personally benefit because of their official action? Would a reasonable person conclude that their personal interest impairs their independent and impartial judgment in the exercise of their official duties? If answered in the affirmative, the school director should then take appropriate action to avoid violating the law.

*RCW 42.23.900 provides that the term “spouse” applies equally to state registered domestic partnerships or individuals in state registered domestic partnerships as well as marital relationships and married persons.
Primary Conflict of Interest Legal Principle

Under state law setting out the Code of Ethics, school board members and superintendents are subject to restrictions because they are municipal officers. The Code prohibits municipal officers, such as school board members and superintendents, from making contracts that give the officer a beneficial interest in the contract:

No municipal officer shall be beneficially interested, directly or indirectly, in any contract which may be made by, through or under the supervision of such officer, in whole or in part, or which may be made for the benefit of his or her office, or accept, directly or indirectly, any compensation, gratuity or reward in connection with such contract from any other person beneficially interested therein. (RCW 42.23.030)

General Exemptions

The same Code includes twelve exceptions to the prohibition quoted above. Several of them are not applicable to school districts. Several others are relatively mundane:

- The school board can select a bank or other public depository, despite a connection between a district officer and the bank;
- The school district can publish its legal notices in a newspaper regardless of a connection between a district officer and the newspaper, if it is chosen by public bid or charges the school district the rate charged to the general public or set by law;
- School directors may be designated the clerk or purchasing agent for the district; and
- Second class school districts (with enrollment under 2,000) may hire district officers or their dependents for unskilled day labor at wages not exceeding $1,000 in a calendar month.

However, the Code contains exemptions for business and employment that require attention from school directors and administrators when it comes to adopting and implementing appropriate policies. Those exemptions are discussed in detail in the next two sections.

Business Exemption

The business exemption allows school districts to contract for goods and services with school district officers if the value of the contract does not exceed $1,500 in a calendar month. The $1,500 limit only applies to the school district officer or the officer’s company. If the total contract is worth more than $1,500 per month, but the school district officer’s portion is under the limit, the contract is still valid under the exception. For instance, a school director could be a subcontractor on a large contract if the value of the subcontract to the school director or their company does not exceed the $1,500 per month limit.

The business exemption does not apply to a sale or lease if the district is the one selling or leasing the property or materials. For instance, a school director or superintendent may not lease a facility from the district, even if the monthly lease amount is less than $1,500. The business exemption also does not apply to contracts for legal services. In other words, school directors and superintendents are prohibited from having beneficial interests in contracts for legal services related to their office if they were involved in creating the contract or they receive compensation from another person with a beneficial interest in such a contract. However, school directors and superintendents are not prohibited from receiving reimbursement for expenditures related to legal services contracts.

The school district is required to maintain a list of all contracts awarded to a district officer under this business exception, and the list must be available for public inspection and copying.
Employment Exemption

There are five exemptions to the general prohibition against school district officers being beneficially interested in a contract made under their authority related to employment:

- Board members and their spouses in second-class school districts may work as school bus drivers if the terms of such contract are commensurate with the school district’s operating pay plan or collective bargaining agreement.

- In second class school districts with fewer than 300 students, a board member may be hired as a substitute teacher or substitute educational aide if the terms of the contract are commensurate with the pay plan or collective bargaining agreement operating in the school district, and the school board has found, consistent with board policy, that the school district has a shortage of substitute teachers.

- In all sizes of school districts, the spouse of a school director or the superintendent may be hired as a substitute teacher if the terms of the contract are commensurate with the pay plan or collective bargaining agreement applicable to all district employees, and the board of directors has found, consistent with board policy, that the school district has a shortage of substitute teachers.

- Regardless of the school district’s size, if it already employs a person and their spouse becomes a superintendent or board member, the employee can continue to hold their job so long as the terms of the contract are commensurate with the school district’s operating pay plan or collective bargaining agreement.

- As an exception to the previous exemption, in second-class districts with less than 200 students at the start of the school year, the spouse of a board member or the superintendent is not required to be under contract as a certificated or classified employee before the date on which the board member or superintendent assumes office.

Disclosure

If a school board member has a permissible interest in a contract under one of the twelve exceptions, the board member must not vote on the authorization, approval, or ratification of the contract. The school board member’s interest in the contract must be disclosed to the school board and noted in the board’s meeting minutes before the contract is made.

Remote Interest

A school district officer does not have conflict of interest if only a “remote interest” exists in a contract. A remote interest exists if the school district officer has one of the following relationships with a party that the school district contracts with:

- A no-salaried officer of a nonprofit corporation;

- An employee or agent of a company doing business with the school district if their compensation consists entirely of fixed wages or salary;

- A landlord or tenant of someone doing business with the district; or

- A stockholder with less than one percent of the shares of a corporation or cooperative doing business with the school district.

If a school board member or superintendent has a remote interest, they must disclose the remote interest for recording in the board’s meeting minutes prior to the contract’s formation, and board members must not vote on any business item related to their remote interest. It is recommended that the superintendent not represent the school district in business matters where they have a remote interest with the other party.

The remote interest statute does not apply to a scenario wherein a school board member or superintendent with a remote interest nevertheless influences or attempts to influence another school district officer into approving a contract between the school district and a party with which the board member or superintendent has a remote interest. In such a scenario, the analysis of conflict of interest is based on the general prohibition and exemptions outlined above.
**Penalties**

Violation of the Code carries significant penalties. First, any contract made in violation of the Code is void. Meaning that neither the district nor the other contracting party are required to perform the duties listed in the contract, including making payments.

Second, any school board member or superintendent violating the Code is liable to the school district for a penalty in the amount of $500, in addition to such other civil or criminal liability or penalty as may otherwise be imposed on the officer by law.

Third, a school board member’s violation of the Code may be grounds for forfeiture of office. This provision is regulated by the courts. However, since case law interpreting this provision is scarce, it is unclear what standard the courts would use to determine whether a violation is serious enough to warrant forfeiture of office.

**Policy Considerations**

**POLICY REQUIREMENT**

State law requires that second-class school districts have a policy ensuring fairness and the appearance of fairness in the kinds of employment contracts described in the employment exemption section above. (RCW 28A.330.240) Despite not being subject to this statutory requirement, it is highly recommended that first-class districts have similar policies. When RCW 28A.330.240 was adopted, only second-class districts could issue the various kinds of employment contracts described above.

**POLICY ISSUES**

It is important for school board members and superintendents to stay current with statutory changes to the Code and to keep policies in this area up to date. It can be extremely damaging to public confidence if the board or superintendent is perceived as personally benefiting from office, especially if the action involves a violation of law. It will not look unwitting to those who examine it with hindsight.

Perhaps the most important element of a sufficient conflict of interest policy is the provision that establishes how the board will deal with employment contracts between the school district and the spouse or a financially dependent family member of a school board member or the superintendent. WSSDA provides two model policies addressing conflicts of interest: one for districts with 2,000 or more students and one for districts with fewer than 2,000 students. The provisions establishing how the board will deal with conflict of interest employment contracts differs between the two model policies. For districts with 2,000 or more students, the model policy uses this paragraph:

> Whenever a director or his or her spouse is employed by the district, the director will refrain from participating in or attempting to influence any board action affecting the employment status of the director or his or her spouse. Actions affecting employment status include, but are not limited to, hiring, establishing compensation and fringe benefits, setting working conditions, conducting performance evaluations, and considering or imposing discipline and termination. (See Model Policy 1610)

For districts with fewer than 2,000 students, the model policy uses this paragraph:

> Whenever a director, or his or her spouse, or his or her dependent is employed by the district, the director will refrain from participating in or attempting to influence any board action affecting the employment status of the director, his or her spouse, or his or her dependent. Actions affecting employment status include, but are not limited to, hiring, establishing compensation and fringe benefits, setting working conditions, conducting performance evaluations, and considering or imposing discipline and termination. (See Model Policy 1611)

Remember that the law itself prohibits school district officers with these kinds of interests from authorizing, approving, or ratifying the contract that would benefit them.
Other Statutory Ethical Obligations

Beyond the proscriptions on contractual relationships discussed above, the Legislature also prohibited municipal officers, including school directors and superintendents, from taking other actions. These prohibited acts include:

- No school board member or superintendent can use their office to secure special privileges for themselves or others;
- No school board member or superintendent may, directly or indirectly, give or agree to receive any compensation, gift, reward, or gratuity for a matter connected with or related to the officer’s position, except from the district;
- No school board member or superintendent may accept employment or engage in business or professional activities that might lead to the disclosure of confidential information acquired through their position with the district; and
- No school board member or superintendent may disclose confidential information gained through their office or use such information for their personal gain or benefit.

Because the Legislature included these prohibitions in the Code, they are subject to the same penalties that contractual conflicts of interest are subject to: a $500 fine and possible forfeiture of office, plus any other civil or criminal penalties otherwise imposed by law.

Prohibition Against Corrupt Practices

Related to the actions prohibited by the Code is the prohibition of certain practices of school officials in RCW 28A.635.050. Under that section, it is unlawful for a school board member, superintendent, or principal to request or receive, directly or indirectly, anything of value for or on account of their influence with respect to any act or proceeding of the state board of education, the office of the superintendent of public instruction, any office of educational service district superintendent, or any school district when such act or proceeding shall benefit those offering or giving the thing of value. Any willful violation of RCW 28A.635.050 is a misdemeanor.

Conclusion

It is important that school board members and superintendents in all sizes of districts know and understand the provisions of state law regarding conflicts of interest and the code of ethics for municipal officers. In exchange for giving school boards flexibility to hire the spouses of district officers and do business with board members, the Legislature increased the responsibility of school boards to manage all of the district’s financial relationships fairly and with the appearance of fairness. School board members with "legal conflicts" need to be the most sensitive, but all school district officers should be attuned to the legal, ethical, and community relations nuances these issues raise.
Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Can my spouse be a substitute teacher in the district where I am a board member?

A. Regardless of school district size, the spouse of a school director may be hired as a substitute teacher if the terms of the contract are commensurate with the pay plan or collective bargaining agreement applicable to all district employees, and the board has found, consistent with board policy, that there is a shortage of substitute teachers in the district. In addition, a board member may not vote in the authorization, approval, or ratification of a contract in which the board member is beneficially interested. The interest of the board member must be disclosed to the board of directors and noted in the official minutes of the board before the formation of the contract. (RCW 42.23.030)

Q. Can my child work for the school district where I am a board member?

A. A school director’s child may work for the school district where they sit on the board if the board member does not directly or indirectly benefit financially from the child’s employee contract. For example, a board member could receive a pecuniary benefit from their child working in the district if that child lived in the same household as the board member. (RCW 42.23.030)

Q. Can a board member’s son-in-law/daughter-in-law apply for and be offered a position in the district?

A. Similar to the previous question, a school director’s son-in-law or daughter-in-law may work for the board member’s school district if the board member does not directly or indirectly benefit financially from the contract. For example, a board member could receive a pecuniary benefit from a son-in-law working in the district if he lived in the same household as the board member. In addition, a school director may not vote in the authorization, approval, or ratification of a contract in which they are beneficially interested. The interest of the board member must be disclosed to the board of directors and noted in the official minutes of the board before the formation of the contract. (RCW 42.23.030)

A board member is also prohibited from using their position to influence the hiring of their son-in-law or daughter-in-law. (RCW 42.23.070)

Q. My spouse currently works for the school district. Can I run for a position on the board?

A. Yes, regardless of the size of the district, if a person is already under contract as a certificated or classified employee with the school district before the date the board member takes office and the terms of the employee contract are commensurate with the pay plan or collective bargaining agreement operating in the district. In addition, a board member may not vote in the authorization, approval, or ratification of a contract in which they are beneficially interested. The interest of the board member must be disclosed to the board of directors and noted in the official minutes of the board before the formation of the contract. (RCW 42.23.030)

Q. Can my spouse be hired as a full-time permanent teacher while I am serving on the board?

A. If the board member serves in a second-class district with less than 200 full-time students at the start of the school year, the board member’s spouse may be hired as an employee after the board member assumes office. In that instance, the board member would still be subject to the same disclosure and recusal requirements outlined above, in school districts larger than 200 full-time students, this exception does not apply. (RCW 42.23.030)

Q. I am a board member. Can I serve as a substitute teacher?

A. Yes, if you are in a school district of 300 or less full-time students, the board declares a substitute shortage consistent with written board policy, and the contract issued is commensurate with the school district’s operating pay plan or collective bargaining agreement. (RCW 42.23.030) It is worth emphasizing that, in those instances when the school district employs the spouse of a board member or when a board member is fulfilling a district contract, it is imperative that the board member not vote on the authorization, approval, or ratification of the contract and that the interest is disclosed to the board and noted in the official minutes.
Q. Can the school district contract with a business owned by one of its school board members?

A. Yes, all size school districts may contract for goods and services with district board members, if the value of the member's contract does not exceed $1,500 in a calendar month. The school district is required to maintain a list of all contracts it awards to board members under the business exception of the Code. The list must be available for public inspection and copying. In addition, a school board member may not vote in the authorization, approval, or ratification of a contract in which he or she is beneficially interested. The school board member's interest must be disclosed and included in the official board meeting minutes before the contract's formation. (RCW 42.23.030)

Q. Is it okay for a board member to be president of a union at the same time he or she is on the board?

A. Legally, a board member who works in another district may serve as president of the union where they are a member. From a practical standpoint, holding both positions may present challenges for the individual board member and the board.

Q. Can a school board member volunteer in the classroom?

A. School board members may volunteer in the classroom according to the same process as other members of the community, however, school board members must not use their position to secure special privileges or exemptions for themselves or others. Although volunteering is legally permissible, it is advisable for board members to proceed cautiously because their status as a school director may make it uncomfortable for others in the school or classroom setting. (RCW 42.23.070)

Q. Can a school bus driver run for the board?

A. Maybe. There is a specific exemption allowing a school bus driver in a second-class district to serve as a school director. In a first class district, if the board member earns less than $1,500 in a calendar month, the law allows that individual to contract with the district. (RCW 42.23.030)

Q. Can the school district employ a board member as a coach?

A. The school district may employ a board member if the value of the contract does not exceed $1,500 in any calendar month. This value includes any additional payments that may be received from district supporters such as booster clubs. Although legally permissible, the district and board member must carefully consider the practical ramifications of such a relationship and the challenging perceptions that must be confronted. (RCW 42.23.030)

Q. I am both a board member and the owner of a construction company. Can my company bid on the district's upcoming construction project?

A. Generally, no. In most cases, a board member's construction company would not be permitted to bid on a construction project because the approval of such a contract would substantially benefit their company. In this instance, the board member would need to resign or forfeit the opportunity for their company to bid on the contract. The caveat to the general answer is where a board member's construction company is hired as a subcontractor and the company is paid $1,500 a month or less under the contract. (RCW 42.23.030)

Q. I am a board member. May I obtain a supplemental contract with the district?

A. Yes, but the contract may not exceed $1,500 in any calendar month. Additional funding received from affiliated district organizations, such as a PTA, PTO, or a booster club, must be included in determining the $1,500 limit. (RCW 42.23.030)
The Washington State School Directors' Association provides its members research-based leadership development resources, policy and legal guidance, and legislative advocacy. WSSDA builds leaders by empowering its members with tools, knowledge, and skills to govern with excellence and advocate for public education.

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wssda.org
WASHINGTON SCHOOL BOARD STANDARDS

"We intend the Washington School Board Standards to serve as a guide to help boards understand and apply common principles of good governance and to assess the strengths and weaknesses of their own board governance to continuously improve their performance."

— Martha Rice
WSSDA Past President
and Director, Yakima School District
Formed in 1922, WSSDA has grown to include 1,477 locally elected school board directors from across Washington. As a state agency, per chapter 28A.345 RCW, WSSDA supports its members with research-based leadership development resources, policy and legal guidance, and legislative advocacy. This work is of critical importance because school board directors build the future of public education by setting the policy, governance, and budgetary priorities for all of Washington’s 295 school districts, serving approximately 1.1 million students.
Special Thanks
The following individuals served on the WSSDA Board Standards Task Force and provided leadership and guidance in the development of these standards.

Joan Skelton
School Director, Evergreen
WSSDA Task Force Chair

Dr. Steven Chestnut
Superintendent, Moses Lake

Dr. Rob Coffey
School Director, Mount Vernon

Gordy Edgar
School Director, Waterville

Patty Henderson
School Director, South Kitsap

Dr. Bill Kelm
Superintendent, Educational Service District 113

Cindy McMullen
WSSDA Past President
School Director, Central Valley

Rocky Simmons
School Director, Sunnyside

Ted Thomas
WSSDA Past President
School Director, Longview

Jan Widseth
School Director, Issaquah

Patty Wood
School Director, Kelso

Additional thanks to WSSDA staff and Dr. Debora Boeck for her assistance in researching and writing the standards.

Introduction
The Washington School Board Standards are intended for use by local school boards and individual directors as a common framework for school board governance. Two sets of standards were developed to encourage school boards and individual school directors to subscribe to the highest levels of professional and personal conduct and performance.

The standards identify the elements of good governance and effective board leadership as drawn from best practices and current research. They provide shared understanding of what constitutes good governance. They also validate and affirm the importance of the school board's role in ensuring student success.

School Board Standards
The standards encourage boards to focus on student achievement as their primary responsibility. For many school boards and individual directors, these standards will reinforce current practices. For others, they will provide a challenge and goals to be achieved. While use of the standards is voluntary, it is the hope that every school board will use them as a target for high performance.

The public also has an interest in the governance of its local schools, and the standards provide an opportunity for clarity of board roles and responsibilities and of the expected skills, knowledge and behaviors of school directors. These standards should serve to increase the public's confidence in local school boards.

Five core principles
The School Board Standards comprise five core principles:

1. Responsible school district governance
2. Communication of and commitment to high expectations for student learning
3. Creating conditions district-wide for student and staff success
4. Holding the district accountable for student learning
5. Engagement of the community in education
Benchmarks, indicators and references
Each standard has a set of benchmarks and key indicators to further define and help translate the standard into practice. The benchmarks identify the knowledge and skills that high-performing boards demonstrate in meeting each standard. The indicators outline questions about what each standard looks like when applied at the local board level. A review of the professional literature provided references, which are identified for each of the standards and related benchmarks described below.

Individual School Director Standards
The second set of standards, for individual school directors, describes healthy conduct of directors relevant to their relationships with one another, the community, staff, and students. These standards address professional behaviors needed to fulfill the obligations of being effective and responsible school directors.

Development of standards
The Washington School Board Standards were developed by the WSSDA Board Standards Task Force, which was established by the WSSDA Board of Directors in August 2008. The project began with face-to-face discussions among Task Force members and with internal and external stakeholders. The Task Force then drafted the standards over a period of nine months, soliciting input from all school directors, superintendents, WSSDA training consultants, and other education groups and revising them to incorporate input. The final Washington School Board Standards were adopted by the WSSDA Board of Directors on June 27, 2009 and by WSSDA members at the Delegate Assembly on November 20, 2009.

Putting the standards into practice
Although school boards have adopted varying governance structures and each district and community is unique, WSSDA encourages all school boards to put the standards into practice in a way that is appropriate for their district. Not every benchmark and indicator under each standard will be directly applicable to all districts. Boards are encouraged to review and discuss the standards, and consider passing a resolution to adopt them in a format that is useful. Once adopted, the standards can be shared with staff and community to bring additional clarity of board roles and responsibilities.

The Individual School Director Standards can be used as a foundation for board protocols to which all board members agree, as a method of commitment by each school director, or as a self-directed learning plan.

The Washington School Board Standards form the basis of the Boards of Distinction program. They also informed the development of an online board self-assessment instrument and are used to develop curriculum for board workshops and training.
Washington School Board Standards, Benchmarks of Success and Indicators for Evaluation, with References

School boards provide leadership focused on promoting student achievement through planning, policy setting, advocacy and monitoring of performance so each and every student succeeds. To fulfill these roles, school boards implement the following standards.

**Standard 1. Provide responsible school district governance by:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benchmarks of Success</th>
<th>Indicators for Evaluation</th>
<th>References</th>
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</table>
| a. Conducting board and district business in a fair, respectful and responsible manner. | 1. Does the board base its decisions on what is best for students?  
2. Does the board conduct its meetings in a businesslike manner?  
3. Do board meeting agendas and minutes provide meaningful details regarding the business of the board in a way that the public can understand the issues addressed and the decisions made?  
4. Does the board ensure that time spent on each agenda item is appropriate in terms of the item’s importance and impact on student learning?  
5. Does the board use methods to study and gain a deeper understanding of issues (e.g., study sessions, work groups, board training or public forums)?  
**Standard 1. (continued)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>b. Ensuring the board is accountable and open to the public including seeking divergent perspectives in its decision making process.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Does the board understand and comply with the Open Public Meetings Act?</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Does the board encourage the public to attend board meetings and provide input on topics before the board, including hosting informal opportunities for the public to discuss issues and district performance?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Does the board make available to the public, with sufficient notice and time for input, information which supports board discussions and decisions?</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Does the board follow a defined process for gathering input from the community, staff and other stakeholders prior to making critical decisions?</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Does the board carry out annual evaluations of its own performance and set goals for improvement?</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Does the board solicit input from the public regarding its own performance?</td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Team leadership for student achievement.</strong> Alexandria, VA: National School Boards Association.</td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The evaluation process: <strong>Board self-assessment and superintendent evaluation.</strong> Olympia, WA: WSSDA.</td>
</tr>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>c. Respecting and advocating mutual understanding of the roles and responsibilities of board members and the superintendent.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Does the board recognize the superintendent as an integral part of the governance team and model collaboration and commitment to a shared purpose?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Does the board delegate through written policy authority for the superintendent to manage district operations and implement policy?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Does the board provide the superintendent with a clear statement of its expectations for his/her performance which is used in the superintendent’s evaluation?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Does the board honor the roles and responsibilities of the superintendent and staff?</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Does the board thoughtfully consider recommendations of the superintendent and staff prior to making decisions?</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Does the board establish and commit to written protocols for respectful internal and external interactions?</td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thinking differently: Recommendations for 21st century school board/superintendent leadership, governance, and teamwork for high student achievement.</strong> Arlington, VA: Educational Research Service.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Standard 1. (continued)</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>d. Adopting policies</strong></td>
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<td>based on well-re-</td>
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<td>searched practices</td>
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<td>that emphasize a</td>
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<tr>
<td>belief that all students</td>
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<tr>
<td>can achieve at high</td>
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<tr>
<td>levels and that support</td>
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<tr>
<td>continuous improvement</td>
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<tr>
<td>of student achievement.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>1.</strong> Does the board govern using written policies that align with current laws and best practice research?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2.</strong> Does the board focus its policy decisions on what is necessary to further the achievement for all students at the highest levels?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3.</strong> Does the board conduct periodic reviews to identify and adopt policies needed or to revise and update existing ones?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4.</strong> Does the board communicate and collaborate with colleagues across the state and nation regarding current and emerging issues, trends and viable policy solutions?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>National School Boards</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Association (2005).</strong> Targeting student learning: The school board’s role as policymaker. Alexandria, VA: NSBA.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **e. Promoting healthy relationships by communicating supportively, inspiring, motivating and empowering others, and exercising influence in a positive manner.** |
| **1.** Does the board provide an opportunity for staff and students to make presentations to the board? |
| **2.** Does the board foster an environment of empowerment to promote a culture of continuous improvement and flexibility throughout the organization? |
| **3.** Does the board use its credibility and influence to mobilize resources and accomplish productive work? |
| **4.** Does the board promote school board service as a meaningful way to make long-term contributions to the community? |
| **5.** Does the board treat all individuals, including fellow board members, staff, students and community, with respect? |
## Standard 1. (continued)

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<tr>
<td>f. Working as an effective and collaborative team.</td>
<td>1. Does the board work with the superintendent to achieve mutual trust and commitment to each other through teamwork and clear communication?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Does the board build its influence by learning from others and striving to continuously improve its expertise, knowledge-base, skills, reputation, credibility, character and effort?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Does the board as a team pursue professional development activities to improve their knowledge and governance skills?</td>
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<td>4. Does the board demonstrate collaborative problem-solving and decision-making?</td>
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<td>5. Do the board and superintendent share responsibility for the orientation of new board members and work together to form a new inclusive team?</td>
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"The Standards provide a foundation for the critical discussions and ensuing decisions that must be made to ensure student success."

—Joan Skelton
Former Chair, WSSDA
Board Standards
Task Force, and Former Director, Evergreen School District
Standard 2.

Set and communicate high expectations for student learning with clear goals and plans for meeting those expectations by:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benchmarks of Success</th>
<th>Indicators for Evaluation</th>
<th>References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| a. Articulating the conviction that all students can learn and the belief that student learning can improve regardless of existing circumstances or resources. | 1. Does the board truly believe that all students can achieve?  
2. Does the board articulate high expectations for all students?  
3. Does the board engage the community in developing and sustaining the belief that all students can achieve and that improvement in student learning can be made regardless of existing circumstances or resources?  
Iowa Association of School Boards (2000). The lighthouse study. Des Moines, IA: IASB. |
| b. Leading the development, articulation and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by schools and community. | 1. Does the board include stakeholders and the community in the development and revisions of the district's vision?  
2. Does the board use the vision to drive planning, decision-making and evaluation of district operations and progress?  
### Standard 2. (continued)

**c. Adopting a collaboratively developed district plan focused on learning and achievement outcomes for all students.**

| 1. | Does the board, in collaboration with staff and the community, formulate and maintain a current plan with goals and outcomes? |
| 2. | Does the board incorporate educational research, local issues, educational legislative initiatives, and national and global trends in the district planning process? |
| 3. | Does the board ensure that stakeholders, staff, and constituents have easy access to and understand the vision/goals/mission articulated in the district plan? |
| 4. | Does the board base its ongoing policy development, decision-making and budgeting on the district plan? |
| 5. | Does the board continually monitor implementation of the district plan and progress toward the plan’s goals and outcomes? |

**d. Ensuring non-negotiable goals for student achievement are established and aligned to the district’s plan.**

| 1. | Do the board and superintendent agree on non-negotiable student achievement goals and review them regularly? |
| 2. | Does the board demonstrate responsibility for student learning by using the district plan and its non-negotiable goals to drive board decisions and actions? |
| 3. | Does the board continually monitor district progress toward non-negotiable goals to ensure they remain the driving force behind every action? |

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Iowa Association of School Boards (2007). *Leadership for student learning: The school board’s role in creating school districts where all students succeed.*
Standard 3.
Create conditions district-wide for student and staff success by:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benchmarks of Success</th>
<th>Indicators for Evaluation</th>
<th>References</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Does the budget adequately address concern for safety and security issues?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. Does the board ensure that facilities meet the learning needs of students and comply with current health, safety, security and accessibility standards?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. Does the board have policies in place to hire, evaluate and retain qualified staff to meet the needs of students?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. Does board policy support and promote continuous staff development and mentoring?</td>
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<td>4. Does the board celebrate and publicize staff successes?</td>
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</table>
### Standard 3. (continued)

| c. Providing for learning essentials, including rigorous curriculum, technology and high quality facilities. | 1. Does the board ensure that a course of study and graduation requirements are established that align with the community's high expectations for the achievement of students?  
2. Do the board policies and budget provide the necessary curriculum materials, supplemental tools, resources and staff development to maximize student learning?  
3. Does the board have a curriculum adoption cycle and a process for selecting curriculum that includes involvement of the community and parents in curriculum selection?  
4. Does board policy require rigorous evaluation of curriculum and supplemental materials on a regular basis to ensure that curriculum materials clearly align with state and district standards and are positively impacting student achievement?  
5. Does the board have policy in place for the support, evaluation and updating of technology?  
|---|---|---|
| d. Ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for an efficient and effective learning environment. | 1. Does the board ensure an organizational structure is in place that supports the district as a learning organization?  
2. Does the board communicate an expectation that effective instructional resources and strategies are used consistently in all classrooms across the district?  
3. Does the board establish a framework for the district’s negotiated agreements to support a high level of student achievement?  
### Standard 3. (continued)

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<td>4.</td>
<td>Does the board regularly monitor the budget and fiscal status of the district?</td>
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### Standard 4.

Hold school district accountable for meeting student learning expectations by:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benchmarks of Success</th>
<th>Indicators for Evaluation</th>
<th>References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| a. Committing to continuous improvement in student achievement at each school and throughout the district. | 1. Does regular communication from the board to the staff and community reinforce its commitment to high levels of achievement for all students?  
2. Does the board establish and follow a schedule for the timely review of the district plan?  
3. Does the board ensure a high degree of coherence between the district's plan and individual school improvement plans?  
4. Does the board annually review district and school improvement plans?  
| b. Evaluating the superintendent on clear and focused expectations.                    | 1. Does the board establish a policy and a process for routine evaluation of the superintendent?  
2. Does the board have written performance expectations for the superintendent and communicate those to the community?  
3. Does the board solicit appropriate data for the superintendent's evaluation?  
### Standard 4. (continued)

| c. Measuring student academic progress and needs based on valid and reliable assessments. | 1. Does the board expect and model the effective use of data in monitoring student achievement and district performance?  
2. Does the board review and understand the criteria, assessment tools and methods to measure student achievement and district performance?  
3. Does the board regularly review data, including disaggregated student achievement data, to measure progress toward district goals?  
4. Does the board regularly evaluate and adjust resources and strategies for closing achievement gaps to maximize their effectiveness?  

### Standard 5.

Engage local community and represent the values and expectations they hold for their schools by:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benchmarks of Success</th>
<th>Indicators for Evaluation</th>
<th>References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| a. Collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources. | 1. Does the board provide leadership on educational issues important to the community and advocate on behalf of students and the district?  
2. Does the board exhibit cultural, racial and ethnic understanding and sensitivity?  
3. Does the board establish partnerships to promote and expand educational opportunities for all students?  
4. Does the board foster partnerships with community organizations in the use of facilities and sharing of services?  
5. Does the board maintain legislative awareness and communicate with local, state and federal governments in its advocacy role?  
### Standard 5. (continued)

#### b. Ensuring school board and district transparency through a process that is open and accountable.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Does the board ensure that the public is well informed of the board’s roles and responsibilities?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Does the board make itself directly accessible to the public?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Does the board maintain visibility, participating actively in school and community affairs?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Does the board ensure that district and school staff operate with a customer focus?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Does the board ensure the district conducts business in a transparent and accountable manner?</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Does the board ensure its policies are easily accessible to staff and community?</td>
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#### c. Ensuring district information and decisions are communicated community-wide.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Does the board ensure that a proactive communications system is in place to disseminate information and address issues in the schools and community?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Does the board identify and use key communicator groups to provide input and disseminate district information and decisions?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Does the board communicate district performance to the public in clear and understandable ways?</td>
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#### d. Soliciting input from staff and a wide spectrum of the community so that a diverse range of interests and perspectives on issues is considered.

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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Does the board seek input from parents, students, community groups, service organizations and local governing bodies on important matters?</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Does the board seek meaningful input from staff on changes needed to strengthen instructional programs?</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Does the board carefully consider community and staff input in its decision-making?</td>
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Individual School Director Standards

Standard 1. Values and Ethical Behavior
To be effective, an individual school director:
   a. Places students' needs first.
   b. Demonstrates commitment to equity and high standards of achievement for each student.
   c. Commits to treating each individual with dignity and respect.
   d. Models high ethical standards.
   e. Advocates for public education.

Standard 2. Leadership
To be effective, an individual school director:
   a. Contributes to thoughtful governance discussions and decisions by being well informed, open-minded and deliberative.
   b. Understands that authority rests with the board as a whole and not with individual directors.
   c. Is able to articulate and model appropriate school director roles and responsibilities.
   d. Actively participates in school director duties and responsibilities.
   e. Demonstrates group membership and leadership skills, working within the board structure.
   f. Respects the board's role in policy making and supports all adopted board policies.

Standard 3. Communication
To be effective, an individual school director:
   a. Builds and maintains positive connections with the community and staff.
   b. Communicates accurately and honestly, with awareness of the impact of his/her words and actions.
   c. Listens carefully and with an open mind.
   d. Maintains civility and treats all people with respect.
   e. Maintains confidentiality of appropriate matters.
   f. Refers and guides people with concerns to appropriate staff.
   g. Welcomes parent, student and community input.

Standard 4. Professional Development
To be effective, an individual school director:
   a. Commits the time and energy necessary to be informed and competent.
   b. Keeps abreast of current issues, research, applicable laws, regulations, and policies that affect public education.
   c. Participates in professional development, individually and with the board/superintendent team.

Standard 5. Accountability
To be effective, an individual school director:
   a. Is accountable to the community.
   b. Takes personal responsibility for his/her own words and actions.
   c. Respects and abides by board decisions.
   d. Meets expectations for transparency, including disclosing potential conflicts of interest and refraining from discussing or voting on those issues.
   e. Complies with board policies/procedures and the law.
Online Board Self-Assessment

WSSDA’s Online Board Self-Assessment is a user-friendly tool that helps school boards assess and strengthen their performance in governing for improved student learning.

The online tool offers a straightforward way for each board member to assess his or her board’s performance based on the governance standards and best-practices outlined in the Washington School Board Standards.

Research-based and scientifically validated, the assessment tool is available at no charge to school districts throughout the state. Learn more at wssda.org/bsa.

Boards of Distinction Program

The Boards of Distinction recognition program is based on the Washington School Board Standards. WSSDA members adopted the standards because they identify best practices for teams and individuals as drawn from current research. These best practices support increased student achievement.

Participants in the Boards of Distinction program have cited a variety of benefits that accrue just from going through the application process. Board members have said it’s good for performing a self-examination of board/district work, evaluating key district initiatives, informing newer board members and sharing solutions with other districts. Learn more at wssda.org/bod.

WSSDA OnBoard

The Leadership Development branch is in the midst of a multi-year curriculum development project titled WSSDA OnBoard. In 2017, WSSDA established a framework for a curriculum that aligns with the Washington School Board Standards and WSSDA’s Online Board Self-Assessment. This first-in-the-nation undertaking will give boards a bridge between their assessment results and the standards.

As board members reviewed the [Washington School Board] standards and requirements for the Boards of Distinction application, it was a good time for reflection and to review where we’ve been and how far we’ve come to provide the best education we can for our students.

—Debbie LeBeau
Superintendent, Clover Park School District

For more information about how WSSDA supports school boards, please contact Colleen Miller at 360-252-3006 or c.miller@wssda.org.
MISSION: WSSDA builds leaders by empowering its members with tools, knowledge and skills to govern with excellence and advocate for public education.
The Board Superintendent Relationship

The successful operation of schools requires a close, effective working relationship between the board and the superintendent. The relationship must be one of trust, goodwill and candor. As the legally designated governing body, the board retains final authority within the district. The board exercises powers expressly required and implied by law. The superintendent is the board's professional advisor, to whom the board delegates executive responsibility, including such powers required to manage the district in a manner consistent with board policy and state and federal law.

The superintendent, as an executive officer of the board (secretary), is responsible for the administration of the schools under applicable laws and policies of the district. The board delineates the duties of the superintendent and uses them as the basis for evaluating the superintendent’s performance. Unless specifically limited, the superintendent may delegate to other staff the exercise of any powers and the discharge of any duties imposed by district policy or a vote of the board. The delegation of power or duty does not relieve the superintendent of responsibility for the actions taken under such a delegation.

In order to perform their responsibilities, board members must be familiar with the operations within the schools. The superintendent will establish communication procedures which can enhance the board member’s understanding of student programs and school operations.

END OF POLICY

Legal References:
- RCW 28A.320.010 Corporate powers
- RCW 28A.330.050 Duties of superintendent as secretary of the board
- RCW 28A.330.100 Additional powers of the board (First Class Districts Only)
- RCW 28A.400.010 Employment of superintendent — Superintendent's qualifications, general powers, term, contract renewal
- RCW 28A.400.030 Superintendent's duties

Management Resources:
- 2013 - February Issue
The following communications procedures are established:

A. **Staff Communications to the Board**
   All communications or reports to the board or individual board members from principals, supervisors, teachers, or other staff members shall be submitted through the superintendent. This shall not deny any staff member’s right to appeal to the board regarding administrative decisions, provided that the superintendent shall have been notified of the forthcoming appeal and that it is processed according to the applicable procedures on complaints and grievances.

B. **Board Communications to Staff**
   All official communications, policies, and directives of staff interest and concern will be communicated to staff members through the superintendent. The superintendent will employ all such media as are appropriate to keep staff fully informed of the board’s priorities, concerns and actions.

C. **Visits to Schools**
   Individual board members interested in visiting schools or classrooms will make arrangements for visitations through the principals of the various schools. Such visits shall be regarded as expressions of interest in school affairs and not as "inspections" or visits for supervisory or administrative purposes. Official visits by board members will be carried on only under board authorization and with the full knowledge of staff, including the superintendent, principals and other supervisors.

D. **Social Interaction**
   Staff and board members share a keen interest in the schools and in education. When they meet at social affairs and other functions, informal discussion on such matters as educational trends, issues, and innovations and general district problems can be anticipated. Discussions of personalities or staff grievances are not appropriate.