

3 R's: Roles, Responsibilities and Resources

Presented by: Field Services



New Jersey School Boards Association

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What To Expect When You're Elected



Congratulations on your new role!

- Today's agenda:
 - Things have changed for you
 - Starting right
 - Four main functions of a Board of Education
 - Reorganization
 - Before, during and after
 - Ethics
 - Resources



You're Not In Kansas Anymore...



- Many trustees, both appointed and elected, will often confess that being on the board was **an entirely unexpected experience.**
- No matter how many board meetings they observed from the audience, **nothing could prepare them for the scope and complexity** of board governance.
- Once on the board, they realized that often they had been seeing **only half the story.**

The Governance Core, Davis Campbell and Michael Fullan, 2019



Campaigning vs. Serving

- *“...it is difficult, perhaps impossible, to carry out the systemic governance responsibilities of the trustee if he or she is driven by only one interest or belief and does not make the transition to the full board strategic agenda.”**



*The Governance Core, Davis Campbell and Michael Fullan, 2019

- Despite your campaign promises, you cannot do anything on your own.
- Campaigning is usually an individual activity. BOE is a team sport.
- You may have been running against some of the people who are now at the table with you.



NJ School Board Members Are Officials Of The State Of New Jersey



**Their power is derived from
the Legislature, not the community.**



The Role Of The Board Member

As individuals, board members cannot:

- **make decisions** for the board
- **take actions** for the board, or
- **speak** for the board unless the board has authorized them to do so.
(check your Policy Manual!)



The Role Of The Board Member

Board members have no legal status other than that of any citizen **except** when sitting with other board members in a **legally constituted meeting.**

See: Sen. Byron M. Baer Open Public Meetings Act *N.J.S.A. 10-4-6*



Remember...

- You can't boil the ocean. Take some time. Listen. Ask questions. Learn.
- You don't run the schools – the Chief School Administrator does.
- With time comes experience and confidence.
 - Takes at least a year to know what the different cycles of governance look like – maybe more.
- Boards can operate a bit differently under the same rules.
 - Some approaches are subject to cultural differences, legacy practices and even different legal interpretations.
- NJSBA Webinar on School Ethics Act 07.22.20



The Three Realities of Governance

1

You are **elected as an individual**, but you must **govern as a member of a team**. You didn't get to pick the team; you may not even like everyone on the team, but it's your team.

You do not have authority as an individual trustee to fix the problems you promised to fix in your campaign. **Only the board has authority to take action.**

2

3

Your success as a trustee is completely dependent on the success of your board. The public, appropriately, tends to **judge the success of the board by the board's accomplishments, not by what individuals do.**

The Governance Core, Davis Campbell and Michael Fullan, 2019



A Trustee's First 100 Days

- Suspend all preconceived notions about the district, the staff, and the board.
- Get up to speed in a reasonable amount of time.
- Be mindful of confidentiality, the special nature of trusteeship, and relationships with organizations.
- Avoid conflicting interests.
- Accept the realities of governance.
- Understand that time is your best friend.



The Governance Core, Davis Campbell and Michael Fullan, 2019



The Four Functions of a Board of a Education

1. Provide guidance through policy. **(Policy)**
2. Provide for a program of quality instruction to advance student achievement. **(Planning)**
3. Provide for the effective management of the district by employing and evaluating the chief school administrator (CSA). **(Appraisal)**
4. Provide for two-way communication between the community and board. **(Communication)**



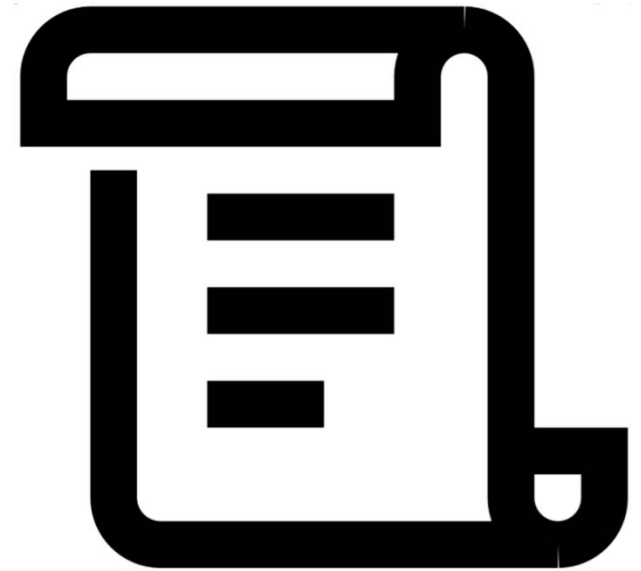
The BOE Is A Policy-Making Body

- To ensure the schools are well run, the board makes **Policies** - broad statements of the goals of the Board and the direction it wishes to take
- Defines, guides, and aligns administrative responsibilities
- Establishes oversight and evaluation procedures
- Authority rests with the **body**, not the individual. *N.J.S.A. 18A: 12-24.1 (d)*



Policies Are Supported By Regulations

- “Regs” are designed by Administration to support & implement the BOE’s policies.
- Typically don’t require BOE approval.
- Provide direction of administrative decisions and district procedures.



Board Bylaws

- Bylaws are policies that guide the Board in its own **conduct and operations**.
- Bylaws are the **board's internal rules**.
 - Identify laws that grant and limit Board authority.
 - Prevent arbitrary and capricious actions.
 - Impacted by Open Public Meetings Act, School Ethics Act, and case law.



Planning: The School Budget

The school **Budget** = District's financial plan
reflects all program needs

The Board is responsible for:

- ✓ discussing needs
- ✓ setting budget parameters
- ✓ setting & keeping to a calendar
- ✓ holding a public hearing
- ✓ approving the budget



Planning: Curriculum & Instruction

The BOE is required to approve courses of study, including all textbooks & materials.



Boards must be able to demonstrate that the approved curriculum will help their students achieve the NJ Student Learning Standards.



Appraisal: Evaluating your Superintendent

The Annual Evaluation

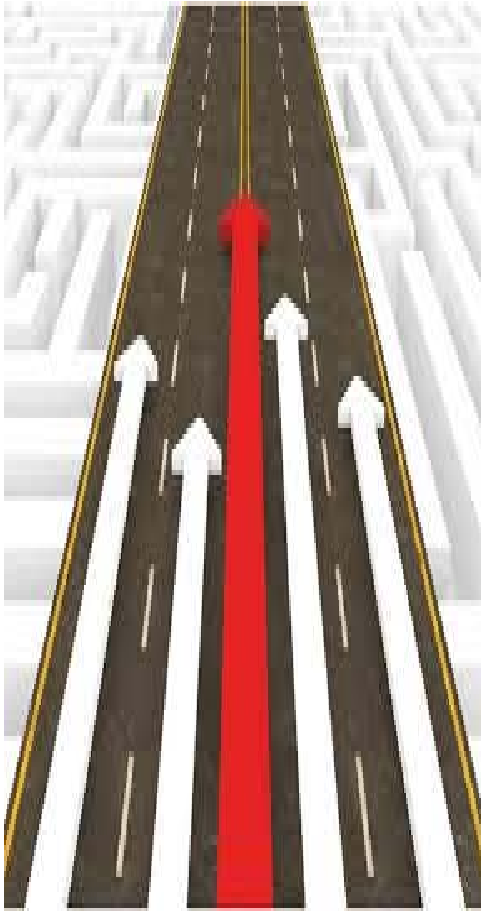
A Tool for Communication



- Clarifies leadership roles
- Creates a common understanding
- Develops a positive working relationship



Appraisal: Evaluating Your Superintendent



Provides for Accountability

- Drives school improvement & student achievement
- Recognizes accomplishments
- Highlights focus areas
- Sets annual priorities



Communication: Board Members' Dual Role

Representatives of the Local Community



Schools' Ambassadors to the Community



Where To Begin

- **Prior to your board's re-organization meeting – “Re-org”**
 - Start process for background check; contact Business Administrator (BA)/Board Secretary(BS)
 - Cannot be seated without a completed background check
 - Oh, and what's a board secretary?
 - Watch/attend BOE meetings to understand the structure of meetings and the nature of discussions.
 - Start doing a deep dive on your district website.
 - Agendas, minutes, and bylaws.
 - Ask about your Board's onboarding process.
 - Does your board have a New Board Member manual? Packet? Mentorship?
 - Meet with Board President, BA/BS, Superintendent if they are amenable.
 - What NOT to do: try to meet with principals, staff, PTO, mayor and council, law enforcement.



Where To Begin (cont'd)

- Read and understand your re-org Meeting Packet
 - What's a packet? Paper or digital?
- These days, be ready for a remote meeting
 - How's your tech at home?
 - Connectivity? Camera? Microphone? Lighting?
 - Place to join the meeting at home – free from usual home activity.
 - Executive session **must** be done out of sight/hearing of non-board members, including spouse, family and friends!
- NJSBA.com resources
 - Code of Conduct for Remote Meetings
 - Re-org FAQ - very big, but good information



Questions Done Right

- You should be asking questions - probably a bunch.
- But you're not now the manager of the district! Ask the RIGHT questions!
 - Ask questions relevant to your role – high level and strategic is where the board does its work.
 - Ask them in an optimal manner
 - Right time and setting – no “gotchas”
 - Right tone – inquisitive rather than accusatory



Reorganization Meeting

- Held after the School Board & (School Budget?) election
 - Board must re-organize in the first 7 days of the new year
- Business Administrator/BS runs beginning of meeting until new President is elected
- Board Members take Oath of Office and a quorum is declared
 - **BA can't refuse to issue the Oath Of Office but you need to have your background check completed**
- Nominations for President & election of same
 - A second is not required for a nomination
 - **If the board can't agree on a president**, the Executive County Superintendent can appoint one
- President takes the gavel and officiates the meeting
- Nominations for Vice President & election of same



Reorganization Meeting (cont'd)

- Appointments
 - board secretary
 - What is the board secretary, really?
 - Difference between BA and Board Secretary.
 - board attorney
 - insurance consultants
 - district auditor
 - others, such as purchasing agent, Harassment, Intimidation & Bullying, public agency compliance officer, etc.
 - liaisons
 - County School Boards Association
 - NJSBA Delegate/Alternate
 - Educational Services Commission
 - PTA/PTO/HSA
 - Boro/Town/City council



Reorganization Meeting (cont'd)

- Naming of legal depositories
- Approving signatories for accounts
- Naming of official newspaper for placement of legal advertisements
- Adopt
 - board meeting schedule
 - special meetings may be added later
 - all board policies, regulations and by-laws
 - textbooks
 - Robert's Rules
 - committees (appointment of committee members by president)
- Often boards read the Code of Ethics.
- Sometimes, following reorganization, you may proceed to a regular meeting agenda also.



School Ethics Act (effective April 1992)

It is essential that the conduct of members of local boards of education and local administrators hold the **respect** and **confidence** of the people.

These board members and administrators must **avoid conduct** which is in **violation of their public trust** or which creates a **justifiable impression** among the public that such trust is being violated.



School Ethics Commission Jurisdiction

Advisory Opinions

- A school official may request an **advisory opinion** to determine if any **proposed activity or conduct** by a **school official** would constitute a violation of the Act.

Ethics Complaints

- Acts upon **complaints filed by anyone** alleging a **violation of the School Ethics Act or Code of Ethics** took place.



Volunteerism

Acceptable

- One-time, infrequent, non-executive in-district volunteer activities, e.g. Dr. Seuss Day or chaperoning a trip.
- Volunteer activities in outside organizations that are self-governing, wholly independent of board member's role and board of education oversight -e.g. education foundations, PTAs, student activity booster clubs, local recreation organizations
- **(Do have to recuse on voting)**

Probable Violations

- Supervision, management and direction of school personnel and funds
- Regular contact with students, parents and staff
- Active day-to-day presence
- Enmeshed in the building
- E.g. volunteer coaches, volunteer club advisors, volunteer playground aides

Recent Advisory Opinions: A32-14, A10-15, A17-15 do not ban in-district volunteering but do place restrictions on contact with students, staff, and parents that is inconsistent with the role of a Board member.



Conflicts of Interest- *N.J.S.A.18A: 12-24*

- **Recuse yourself** if there is a benefit to you as a school official or a member of your **immediate family** (or others) due to a:
 - Business interest
 - Use of the position to secure unwarranted privileges
 - Financial involvement
 - Gift, favor, etc. that was offered with the intent to influence
 - Personal involvement that creates a benefit
 - Service or employment that may prejudice independent judgment



Conflicts Of Interest

- **Family members working in District or in other Districts *may* cause conflicts of interest in personnel matters and/or negotiations.**



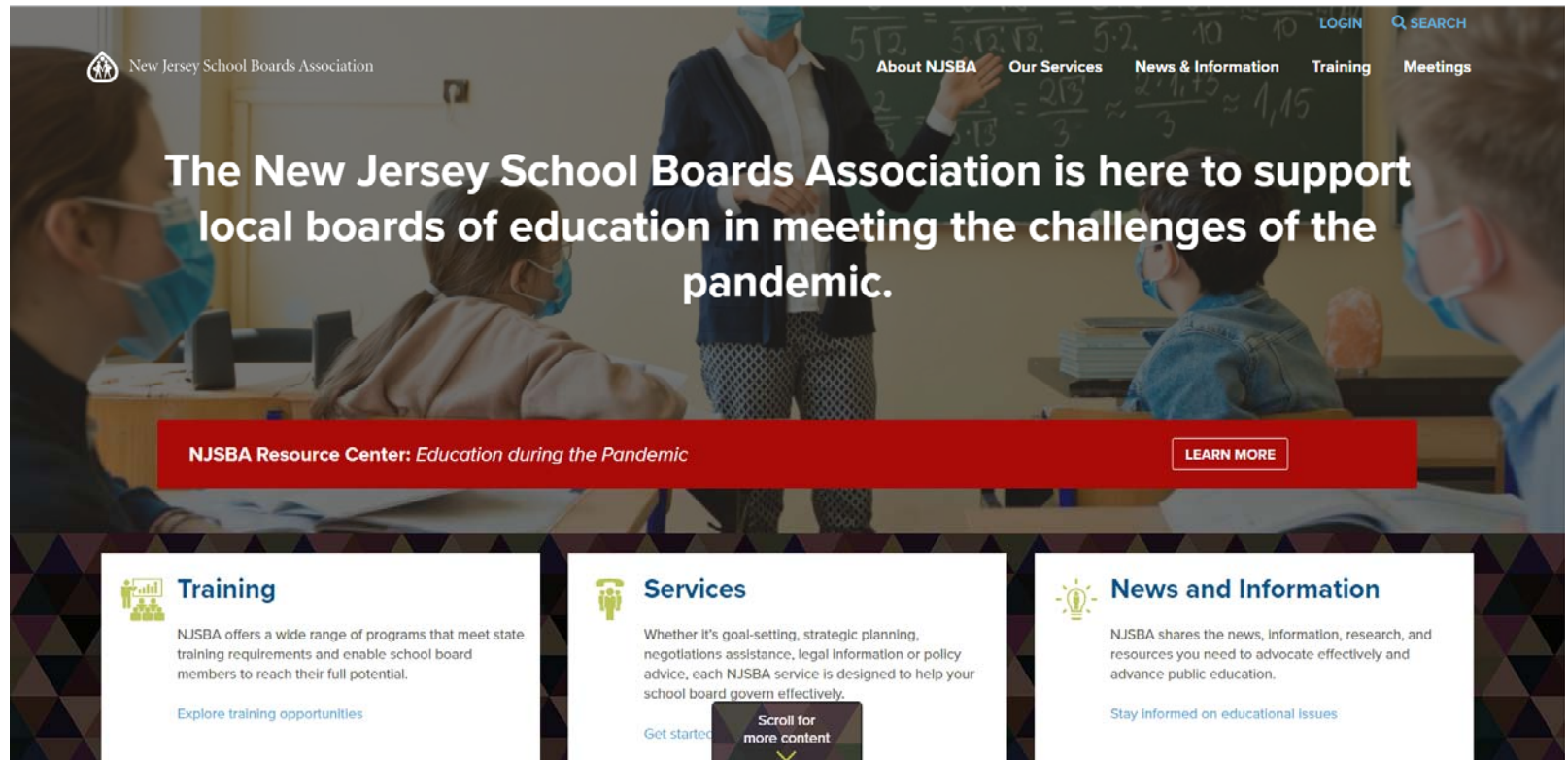
NJSBA Support

Team NJSBA!

- **Field Services**
- **Legal, Policy, and Labor Relations**
- **Training & Professional Development**
- **County Activities & Member Engagement**
- **Governmental Relations**
- **Communications**



Online Resources: NJSBA.org



New Jersey School Boards Association

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About NJSBA Our Services News & Information Training Meetings

The New Jersey School Boards Association is here to support local boards of education in meeting the challenges of the pandemic.

NJSBA Resource Center: Education during the Pandemic [LEARN MORE](#)

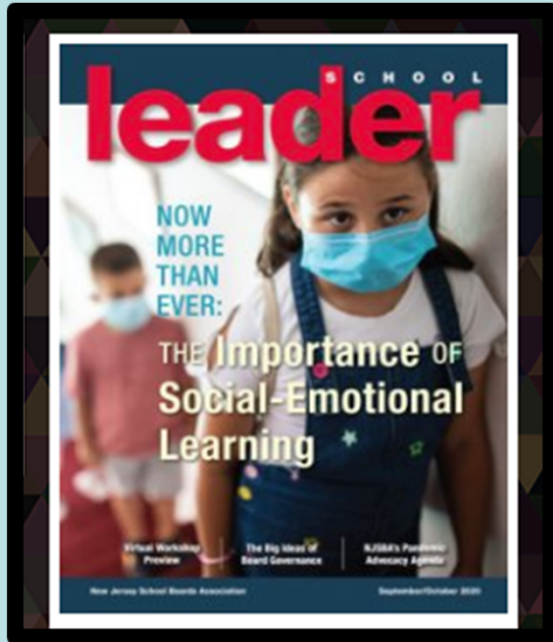
Training
NJSBA offers a wide range of programs that meet state training requirements and enable school board members to reach their full potential.
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Services
Whether it's goal-setting, strategic planning, negotiations assistance, legal information or policy advice, each NJSBA service is designed to help your school board govern effectively.
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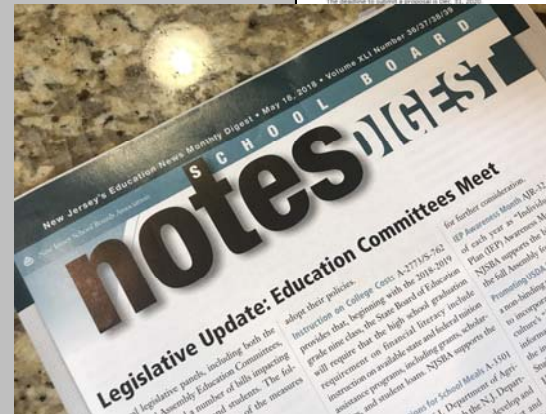
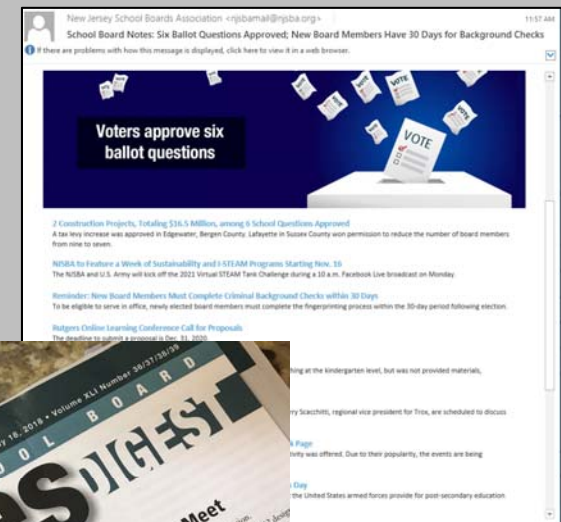


NJSBA Publications



School Leader -
NJSBA's
bi-monthly
glossy magazine

School Board Notes -
newsletter, mail & email



New Jersey School Boards Association

www.njsba.org

County School Board Associations

**21
County
SBA's**

**Local
School
Board
Members
make up
the
County
SBA**

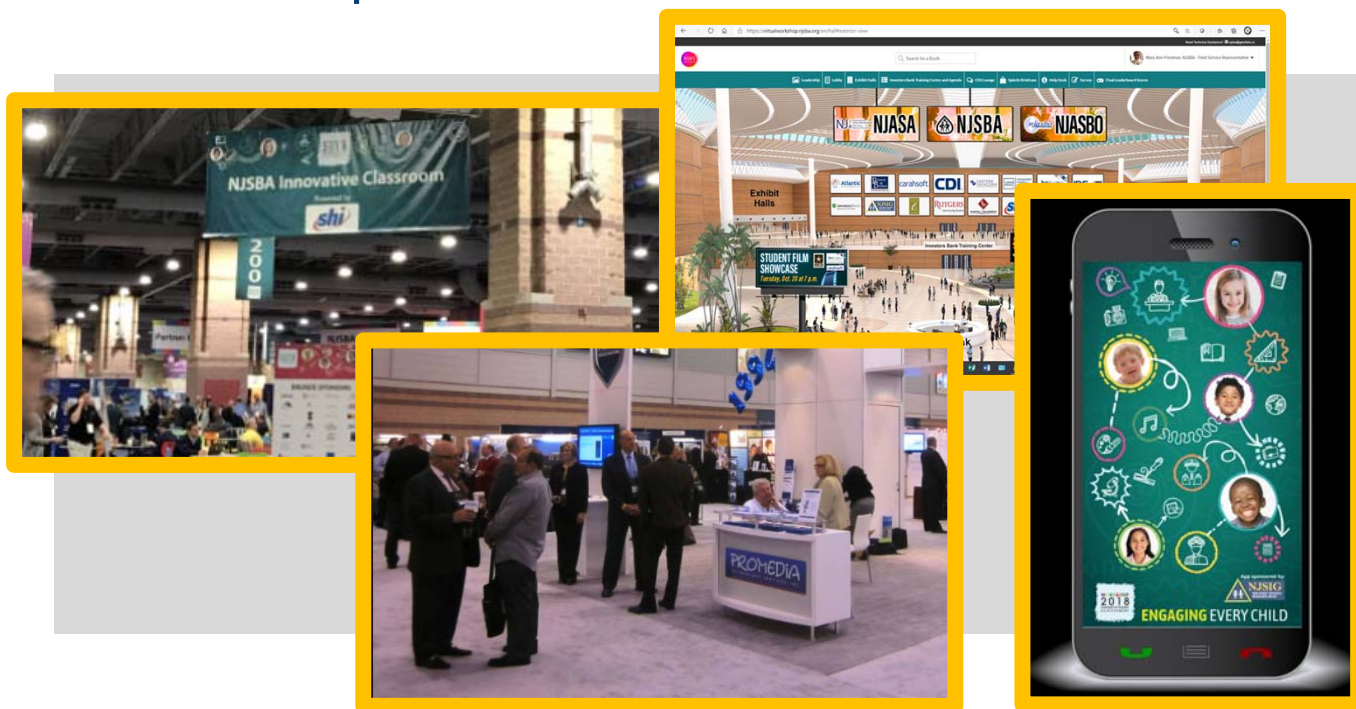
**Dedicated
staff
member/
county**

**Each
County
holds 4-5
meetings
per year**



NJSBA's Annual Workshop

- The largest (more than 8,000 attendees!) professional development event for NJ school leaders.
- Every (non-pandemic year) October in Atlantic City.
- Workshops, presentations, keynote, performances and more!
- A team experience!



10 Important Additional Things For A New Board Member To Remember...

1. Be patient. . . You were elected for a term of office; take advantage of the time to learn. You are only new once.
2. Choose to govern professionally; it will determine your legacy. Most important, develop a governance mindset.
3. Be a systems thinker. Connect the dots.



10 Important Additional Things For A New Board Member To Remember...

(cont'd)

4. Have a strategic focus. Understand and be proud of the awesome responsibility of setting the direction for the district.
5. Commit to deep learning. Always do your homework. You cannot be part of something you don't understand.
6. Be trustworthy; build trust with your board, your district, and your community.
7. Contribute to creating a positive, powerful board culture; understand how your board works.



10 Important Additional Things For A New Board Member To Remember...

(cont'd)

8. Represent the needs of all your community, not a part.
9. Be a leader on your board, in the district, in the community.
10. Always remember you and your board are modeling the ethical and moral standards you expect the children in your district to emulate.

The Governance Core, Davis Campbell and Michael Fullan, 2019



Questions?

