

Policy News

Topics

July Policy Update focuses on effective governance

Multiple strategies proposed to address teacher shortage

Upcoming issues: Bills to watch

New resources from CSBA:

- » Board role in student achievement
- » Addressing the opportunity gap

Registration for CSBA Annual Education Conference discounted until Aug. 1

July Policy Update focuses on effective governance

Governing boards are elected by their communities to provide leadership and citizen oversight of school districts and county offices of education. Working collaboratively with the superintendent as a governance team, they set direction for the district/COE, establish policies and other structures to promote success in achieving that direction, and ensure accountability to the public for the quality of education provided to each student.

CSBA's mission, as adopted in December 2015, supports local boards in their role:

CSBA strengthens and promotes school board governance. We define and drive the public education policy agenda through advocacy, training, and member services. Strong local boards of education are essential to ensure a high-quality education for every student in every community.

Toward this end, CSBA has been reviewing and updating sample policies and board bylaws related to effective governance. Following the issuance of BB 9240 - Board Training in December 2016 and BB 9012 - Board Member Electronic Communications in May 2017, the July 2017 Policy Update includes a strong focus on governance-related issues as described below.

Board candidates

In order to expedite the transition of newly elected board members, many districts/COEs make basic information available to candidates running for the board and to anyone who expresses an interest in running for office. Such information may include descriptions of school programs and district/COE operations. It may also include materials available from CSBA which address board roles and responsibilities, how to work effectively as a governance team and requirements for becoming a board member. CSBA is currently updating its brochure on the role of boards and producing a video that may be used with community organizations and other public venues.

It is recommended that the board and/or superintendent identify information that would be useful to potential board members and ensure that such materials are offered equally to all candidates and to others upon request. Optional policy language providing for the distribution of such information has been moved from BB 9230 - Orientation to BB 9220 - Governing Board Elections in order to consolidate it with legal requirements for board candidates.

Orientation

BB 9230 - Orientation addresses the importance of providing orientation meetings, training and information to help newly elected or appointed individuals become effective and fully participating members of the board as soon as possible. Topics to be addressed should be thoughtfully selected by the board president and/or superintendent and



3251 Beacon Boulevard,
West Sacramento, CA 95691
www.csba.org

should include general information about education and governance as well as information specific to the district/COE.

Examples of topics immediately essential to effective governance include the Brown Act, conflict of interest laws, the limits of individual board member authority, the board meeting agenda process, and other board protocols and governance standards. Information more specifically related to the district/COE should include, but not be limited to, student demographic and achievement data, the Local Control and Accountability Plan and other comprehensive plans, the budget, policy manual, board minutes of recent meetings and other documents that describe programs and operations. The goal is to provide comprehensive information that will enable the new board member to expeditiously and competently fulfill his or her responsibilities, without being overwhelmed.

In addition to orientation(s) provided by the district/COE, new board members are encouraged to participate in CSBA trainings specifically designed to meet their needs. A one-day Orientation for New Trustees, held in conjunction with the CSBA Annual Education Conference and Trade Show, presents key responsibilities of school boards and prepares new board members for the first 100 days of service. CSBA's Institute for New and First-Term Board Members provides two days of training in four major areas of board authority: effective governance, student learning, finance and human resources.

Board president

Any school board with five or more members is required to have a president, but the specific duties of the president are largely left to the discretion of the board. In general, the president presides over board meetings, serves as a spokesperson on behalf of the board and district/COE, signs board resolutions and legal instruments, and fulfills other leadership roles to promote organizational effectiveness. The president plays a critical role in keeping the board focused on its vision and goals and ensuring that meetings are conducted in an efficient, transparent and inclusive manner.

Suggested responsibilities of the board president have been clarified in BB 9121 - President. Furthermore, the sample bylaw encourages the board president to participate in professional development opportunities in order to become an informed and effective leader. CSBA offers a Board President's Workshop for current and aspiring board presidents, which provides tips, tactics and techniques based on research and experience. Board presidents will also find relevant leadership training through CSBA's Masters in Governance program, Brown Act Workshop and Annual Education Conference and Trade Show.

Vision setting

To serve students and the community well, a district/COE needs to have a clear vision of what it wants its schools to achieve and the ability to convert that vision into action. One of the primary responsibilities of the board is to establish a vision that describes the board's direction, focus, commitment and beliefs. This vision should focus on student learning and well-being and reflect the knowledge and skills that students will need to be successful in the future.

Furthermore, this vision should drive virtually all district/COE activities and operations — from adopting curricula to setting budget priorities to evaluating the superintendent. The entire educational and administrative program should be designed to support achievement of the vision. Evaluations of program effectiveness should be based on the progress made toward the vision.

Vision setting is necessarily tied to the development and annual update of the LCAP, as that process requires districts/COEs to engage in a comprehensive effort to identify annual goals and specific actions linked to state-identified priorities and any locally established priorities. For this reason, districts/COEs will likely find it necessary to review their vision and goals more frequently in order to ensure alignment of key planning documents.



3251 Beacon Boulevard,
West Sacramento, CA 95691
www.csba.org



BP 0000 - Vision was updated in July to reflect the role of the LCAP as a tool for setting direction and to outline key components of the vision-setting process. Actual vision statements will necessarily be unique to the needs and circumstances of each district/COE. In addition, the vision should be supported by a board-adopted set of core beliefs, values and tenets, as described in the updated BP 0100 - Philosophy.

Superintendent evaluation

The board works closely with the superintendent in the governance of the district and should do its best to develop a strong team, including communicating with the superintendent on a regular basis. Thus, evaluation is really an ongoing process. However, at least once a year the board's perspectives should be combined into a formal evaluation.

Superintendent evaluation is the vehicle the board uses to clarify expectations for the superintendent, review his or her performance, identify progress toward previously established goals, provide new benchmarks for the district for the coming year and make decisions about contract renewal, salary and benefits.

There is no one method to evaluate a superintendent, and the process should be one that supports effective leadership, continuous improvement in district/COE performance, and professional development and growth for the superintendent. At the front end of the process, the board needs to decide, with the superintendent's input, what to evaluate, how to determine progress and the form of the evaluation instrument.

BP 2140 - Evaluation of the Superintendent has been updated to clarify the purposes for evaluation and clarify that compensation should generally not be discussed in closed session even though the evaluation may be. The sample policy also reflects the appellate court's decision in *Versaci v. Superior Court* which held that personal performance goals for the superintendent are not subject to disclosure under the California Public Records Act unless those goals are incorporated into the superintendent's contract.

Board self-evaluation

Just as staff evaluations provide a means for continuous improvement of staff performance, board self-evaluation provides an opportunity for ongoing advancement and growth for district/COE leadership. Conducting regular self-evaluation demonstrates a commitment to quality and a willingness to accept accountability for board and district/COE performance. Board members reflect on their individual and collective performance, engage in open communication, build teamwork, identify strengths and areas of concern, and develop governance goals and training needs for the upcoming year.

Boards need to make decisions regarding the self-evaluation process, including the frequency of evaluation, the criteria and performance objectives to be assessed, the method and instrument to be used, whether discussions will be facilitated by a consultant, and whether input will be sought from the superintendent or others. BB 9400 - Board Self-Evaluation describes key components of the process and may be revised to reflect district/COE practice.

An online self-evaluation tool is available from CSBA and may be requested at <http://bse.csba.org>. Boards may also use a CSBA representative to facilitate board self-evaluation workshops, which includes access to CSBA's self-evaluation tool.

Additional CSBA resources

See CSBA's website at www.csba.org for further information regarding effective governance. CSBA governance briefs address a variety of topics related to effective governance, student achievement, the conditions of children, and funding and finance. The *Defining Governance* series of five governance briefs synthesizes related research and literature and proposes an updated framework for K-12 school governance.



3251 Beacon Boulevard,
West Sacramento, CA 95691
www.csba.org



CSBA's Governance Consulting Services provide training within the district/COE to strengthen existing practices, transition the governance team when a new board member is elected or a new superintendent is hired, or assist an at-risk district/COE. Top services include a governance retreat, vision and goal setting, board self-evaluation, superintendent evaluation, public engagement and community forums, and training on the board's role in program improvement.

CSBA's Masters in Governance program equips board members and superintendents with the knowledge and skills to build and support an effective governance structure, with five self-paced courses covering:

1. Foundations of Effective Governance/Setting Direction
2. Policy and Judicial Review/Student Learning and Achievement
3. School Finance
4. Human Resources/Collective Bargaining
5. Community Relations and Advocacy/Governance Integration

Multiple strategies proposed to address teacher shortage

Three-quarters of districts are experiencing a shortage of qualified teachers, according to the results of a 2016 survey completed by 211 districts represented in CSBA's Delegate Assembly. Over 80 percent reported that the shortages have worsened since the 2013-14 school year. Teacher shortages are especially critical in districts serving the largest concentrations of low-income students, English learners and students of color. Shortages are also worse at the middle and high school level, particularly in math, science and special education.

The primary reason cited for the teacher shortage is the shrinking supply of newly credentialed teachers. Other frequently cited explanations include teacher retirement, teacher turnover, reductions in class size and the high cost of living.

Faced with such shortages, districts have resorted to a variety of strategies to fill their classrooms, such as hiring teachers with substandard credentials, hiring substitutes and assigning teachers to teach out of their credential field. In some instances, positions are left vacant, courses are cancelled or class sizes are increased.

Almost all districts reported adopting one or more teacher preparation strategies for recruiting and retaining teachers. The majority of the districts work with postsecondary teacher preparation programs to coordinate student teaching or residency programs and to communicate hiring need. The majority also develop differentiated roles and assignments for teacher leadership opportunities ("grow your own" programs).

The complete results of the 2016 survey are discussed in *California Teacher Shortages: A Persistent Problem*, a brief jointly issued by the Learning Policy Institute and CSBA. Additional findings and recommendations are discussed in the Learning Policy Institute's follow-up report *Addressing California's Growing Teacher Shortage: 2017 Update*. The two reports are available at <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org>.

Statewide, policymakers are examining ways to encourage more individuals to enter the teaching profession and to increase the supply of fully credentialed teachers.

Last year, Governor Brown signed Senate Bill 1413 (Leno) to facilitate the acquisition, construction, rehabilitation and preservation of affordable rental housing for teachers and other employees. It authorizes districts to establish programs that leverage federal, state and local fiscal resources available to housing developers, promote public-private partnerships and foster innovative financing opportunities.

State regulations approved in 2016 added a new type of teaching permit to address vacancies



3251 Beacon Boulevard,
West Sacramento, CA 95691
www.csba.org

that occur when a teacher is on sick leave, differential sick leave, industrial accident or illness leave, pregnancy disability leave, or family care and medical leave. If a district makes reasonable efforts to hire a substitute with a full teaching credential and no such candidate is available, it may request that the Commission on Teacher Credentialing issue a Teaching Permit for Statutory Leave to a qualified individual who will be serving as the interim teacher of record. The district is responsible for providing preservice preparation in specified content areas. District requirements related to this permit have been added to CSBA's sample AR 4112.2 - Certification. The required qualifications are similar, but not identical, to those required for the Provisional Internship Permit and the Short-Term Staff Permit. However, the Teaching Permit for Statutory Leave is renewable annually provided that the teacher receives continued mentoring and support.

This year, a number of bills have been proposed to address teacher preparation and incentives to enter the teaching profession. As of this writing, bills that are continuing to make their way through the Legislature include the following:

- » AB 45 (Thurmond) would require the California Housing Finance Agency to administer a program to provide financing assistance to a qualified school district and a qualified developer for the creation of affordable rental housing for school employees, including teachers.
- » AB 169 (O'Donnell) would establish a grant program for postsecondary students enrolled in teacher credentialing programs who make a commitment to teach in high-need subjects such as special education, bilingual education, math and science for at least four years after receiving a preliminary teaching credential.
- » AB 226 (Cervantes) would expedite the credential application process for an applicant who holds a valid credential from another state or territory and is married to, or in a domestic partnership or other legal union with, an active duty member of the Armed Forces of the United States who is assigned to a duty station in California.
- » AB 410 (Cervantes) would prohibit a district, COE or charter school from charging a fee to a teacher with a preliminary multiple subject, single subject or education specialist credential for participation in a beginning teacher induction program.
- » AB 1157 (Mullin) would authorize a board to elect not to appoint a school district advisory committee in the sale, lease or rental of excess real property to be used for teacher or school district employee housing.
- » AB 1217 (Bocanegra) would provide grants to districts/COEs to establish, maintain or expand teacher residency programs, defined as school-based teacher preparation programs in which a prospective teacher would teach alongside an experienced mentor teacher while receiving instruction in a teacher credentialing program in a qualified postsecondary institution.
- » SB 436 (Allen) would establish the California STEM Professional Teaching Pathway, to be administered by the California Center on Teaching Careers, for the purpose of recruiting, training, supporting and retaining qualified science, technology, engineering, and mathematics professionals, including military veterans, as mathematics and science teachers in California.
- » SB 765 (Wiener) would allow the use of surplus district property for teacher housing, as an exemption to the requirement to first offer such property to charter schools.

CSBA will analyze any bills that are ultimately signed by the Governor and update BP 4111/4211/4311 - Recruitment and Selection and other sample policies as appropriate.



3251 Beacon Boulevard,
West Sacramento, CA 95691
www.csba.org

Upcoming issues: Bills to watch

In addition to the bills listed above related to the teaching profession, CSBA is monitoring over 400 legislative proposals introduced this year that may impact K-12 education. These include proposals to add immigration status as a category protected against discrimination, delete the authority of districts/COEs to permit a person to possess a firearm within a school zone, exempt children of military families from local graduation requirements and allow the use of uniform complaint procedures for complaints of noncompliance, prohibit school participation in a corporate incentive program that rewards students with free or discounted foods or beverages, amend requirements related to the reserve fund and many others. There are additional bills that failed to make the deadline this year but may be reconsidered in 2018 during the second term of the legislative session.

Policy implications of these bills are being tracked, and CSBA Policy Services clients will be kept abreast of new laws that impact board policies and administrative regulations. Districts/COEs may also obtain legislative news, plus a link to a list of bills with CSBA's position on each bill, at www.csba.org/LegislativeNews.

New resources from CSBA

Board role in student achievement

In May, CSBA issued *The School Board Role in Creating the Conditions for Student Achievement: A Review of the Research* to shed light on how district and county boards can carry out their essential responsibility of governance to help districts/COEs improve learning outcomes for the students in their communities. Because research has paid limited attention to the role of the district board and virtually no attention to the role of the county board, CSBA's report focuses on how districts influence student outcomes, and then looks at the board role in supporting that impact.

The research review indicates that districts making progress toward improving student outcomes, particularly outcomes for historically underserved student groups, exhibit common characteristics that include, but are not limited to:

- » Setting a vision and goals with a primary focus on student achievement, and aligning resources to realize those goals
- » Establishing and maintaining a balance between system-wide coherence and school site autonomy
- » Using data to inform and support continuous improvement, especially for student achievement
- » Creating a district culture that supports student achievement, including establishing strong community partnerships
- » Investing in human capital by building staff capacity at all levels
- » Maintaining stable and effective leadership while ensuring a shared vision and responsibility for meeting goals that can withstand leadership transitions

Following a detailed discussion of each of these factors, the report considers how the board can increase student achievement through its responsibilities to set direction for the district/COE, establish structure through policy, provide support for implementation efforts, ensure accountability through oversight and monitoring, and act as community leaders. There is evidence that board training can improve student outcomes by helping boards support the conditions for district/COE improvement and work more closely with the superintendent as a team.

To read the full report, go to www.csba.org/SchoolBoardResearch2017.



3251 Beacon Boulevard,
West Sacramento, CA 95691
www.csba.org

Addressing the opportunity gap

Recognizing that the gap in achievement across student populations can be attributed in large part to students' unequal access to opportunities for success, CSBA is engaged in a campaign for adequate funding to close the opportunity gap. In 2015, the CSBA Education Legal Alliance's Adequacy Committee issued *California's Challenge: Adequately Funding Education in the 21st Century*, which began a discussion of the substantial gap in funding between what K-12 education receives and what it needs in order to meet the standards prescribed by the state. Over the past year, CSBA has been further examining concrete, research-supported strategies to ensure that all students have the opportunity to graduate from high school prepared for college and career success.

A comprehensive report issued in May, *Meeting California's Challenge — Access, Opportunity and Achievement: Key Ingredients for Student Success*, describes eight essential ingredients of an adequately funded education system:

- » A rigorous, well-rounded and relevant curriculum
- » Academic support to improve achievement
- » Staff with the skills, competencies and knowledge to support student success
- » Early support and services
- » Education and assistance for families to support and guide learning
- » Physical, mental and environmental health supports
- » 21st Century infrastructure and technology
- » Services for students with specific needs

The report presents key research and evidence of the urgent need for each of these ingredients, summarizes data on gaps in access and achievement for economically disadvantaged students and students of color, and highlights examples of implementation of each ingredient from a range of districts and COEs.

Both reports in this series are available at www.csba.org/GovernanceAndPolicyResources.

Registration for CSBA Annual Education Conference discounted until Aug. 1

CSBA's Annual Education Conference and Trade Show is the premier governance training opportunity in the state, offering informative general sessions, workshops, critical issue sessions, table talks, a trade show and networking opportunities. The 2017 conference will address five major strands:

- » Adequacy, opportunity and equity
- » Student achievement and outcomes
- » School climate and engagement
- » Leadership through governance
- » Funding, finance and facilities

The conference will be held Nov. 30 through Dec. 2 at the San Diego Convention Center. A discounted fee for early registration is available through Aug. 1. To register, go to <http://aec.csba.org>.

Executive assistants are encouraged to sign up for the all-day Executive Assistants Program on Dec. 1. This training is designed to help executive assistants build their skills in supporting the governance team, manage the details of board meetings, identify tools to do their job more effectively and share best practices with their peers.



3251 Beacon Boulevard,
West Sacramento, CA 95691
www.csba.org