



## Rubric: Becoming an Impactful School Board Member

This rubric was created after a year of working with our school board fellows and mentors to understand the current state of our nation's school boards and what is needed in order to develop school board members who will lead with the knowledge, skills and mindset necessary to finally close our nation's opportunity gap. We expect this rubric to change and improve over time as we learn alongside you. We plan to supplement it with specific examples, policies and templates as they are created. If you have suggestions or comments on this rubric, please email [ethan@schoolboardpartners.org](mailto:ethan@schoolboardpartners.org). Thank you to the SBP fellows and mentors who have already provided feedback.

In many cases you will not fit perfectly into a level. Each of these areas are complex and nuanced, and this rubric is meant to be illustrative, not comprehensive.

This rubric should be used in conjunction with our [Rubric for Becoming an Equity-Minded School Board Member](#)

	Level 1 - Rookie	Level 2 - Developing	Level 3 - Impactful
<b>DEVELOPING A THEORY OF CHANGE &amp; PLAN</b>			
<b>Theory of Change &amp; Plan</b>	I can't name my top three priorities for my term in office. (i.e., specific policies or practices that I want to change)	I have several ideas and issues that I work on with little prioritization of importance and oftentimes get distracted by the urgent business of the district; and, as a result, I am not able to focus on the things I know are important. I'm worried my term will finish without addressing what I believe to be the most important issue areas.	I have a Theory of Change for how our district will significantly increase student life outcomes for ALL students, especially those historically underserved, by building a system of great schools. Based on that Theory of Change, I have three clear priorities for my term in office that will improve student life outcomes and are informed by the priorities of the community. Ideally, I have led or co-led my board to develop a collective theory of change. I have completed a plan and power-mapping exercise for each priority. I review my priorities monthly with an accountability buddy to ensure I'm spending my time on what matters most. I say no to things that will take my focus and capacity away from my top priorities.
<b>PERSONAL LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT</b>			
<b>Board relationships</b>	I interact with my colleagues as necessary during scheduled meetings. I am not intentional about building relationships with my colleagues. I don't seek to understand their backgrounds or experiences they bring to the table. I believe that what's good for my community will be good	I meet with school board members that I agree with consistently and meet with my other colleagues occasionally. Our conversations aren't necessarily solution-focused or driven by data or district priorities.	If allowed by law, I proactively schedule quarterly 1:1s with every school board member, even those I don't agree with. Our meetings are focused on problem-solving and informed by data and district priorities. I can tell you what matters to each of my colleagues, and what their priorities are. I have conducted school visits alongside them, including schools in their zones. I have co-organized team bonding experiences for our board. I've worked collaboratively with a

	for the whole district. I understand the parameters of meeting laws and how to work within them.		colleague I don't agree with to move a policy or practice forward.
<b>Reflection and self-care</b>	I do not have any habits around feedback, reflection or self-care.	I have, on occasion, found time to reflect and or practice self-care, but it is not consistent or intentional.	I have committed to at least one habit for reflection and one habit for self-care that I stick to regularly. I have an accountability buddy or mentor. I often ask for and am open to feedback from peers and members of my community.
<b>Learning and exposure; growth mindset</b>	I haven't researched, visited or learned about districts or schools outside my own district.	I have a few contacts around the country and have learned about some isolated policies and strategies used elsewhere. I haven't completed a comprehensive review of leading districts to understand what has worked to significantly improve outcomes for all kids, and to understand the steps between where our district is and where we need to be. I have a solid understanding of what a high quality system of schools looks like.	I can describe the strategies and strengths and weaknesses of what other districts have attempted on their path to creating a system of high quality schools. I have visited successful schools and systems around the country and met with/talked with school board members from those districts. I am constantly trying to learn and don't assume that the way we're doing something is the only/best way to do it. I am involved with local and/or national organizations aligned with my values that expose me to new ideas, best practices, and provide opportunities for me to network with other elected school board members.
<b>BOARD GOVERNANCE</b>			
<b>Board governance</b>	I've read all of our existing Board policies and the state statute that gives us authority as a school board. I understand the distinction	Our board has a policy governance framework. (i.e. Carver's Governance Framework.) I have made a few small suggestions about how we could improve the way we govern.	Our board has taken a self-assessment and agreed that we want to improve the way we govern. I have led or co-led improvements to the way our board governs. This could include: reviewing and revising our policies; reviewing

	between governance and management. I have not done anything to change or improve our Board governance.		and revising our board “ends” or goals; planning or leading a board retreat; reviewing and revising our board norms and operating procedures; reviewing and revising our meeting schedules or committee meeting schedules. I have introduced new items to the standing agenda that have increased transparency, community engagement, and/or student voice.
<b>Board leadership</b>	I have not taken a formal leadership role on the Board. (i.e. Officer or Committee Chair)	I serve as a committee lead. I am taking steps to prepare for Board leadership, including leadership training (SBP!) or other professional development.	I am, or have been, the President or Vice President of the Board. I have done some formal assessment of my personal leadership strengths and weaknesses and have a plan for my personal leadership development.
<b>Goals and Guardrails</b>	Our Board does not have goals and guardrails that we have agreed upon to guide the system	Our Board has Goals and Guardrails, but they are not rigorous, kids-first or anti-racist and/or are not actively used to govern the system	Our Board and Superintendent have established Goals (or Ends) and Guardrails (or Executive Limitations) that clearly define rigorous, kids-first anti-racist goals and guardrails for the system, upon which everything else is aligned, including the Superintendent’s evaluation, strategic plan, board meeting agendas, data evaluation and reports, community engagement, and decisions about school closures, replication or design.
<b>SYSTEM OF HIGH QUALITY SCHOOLS</b>			
<b>System of high quality schools</b>	My board does not have a comprehensive and cohesive board vision for creating a system of high quality schools. My district is rated mostly 1st on the	My board has acknowledged that our existing structure is not serving all kids well and that significant innovation is needed in how our District is run in order to significantly improve outcomes for all students. My	My board has a collective Theory of Change and vision for our district to become a system of high quality schools. My district is rated mostly 3s and 4s on the CRPE rubric, for the dimensions that are right for our community. Where our community has alternate/better

	Center for Reinventing Public Education (CRPE) <u>rubric</u> .	board has a collective (or at least majority) board vision for creating a system of high quality schools, but no plan, and have only moved on a few aspects of the CRPE rubric. Based on conversations across the community, we've agreed which aspects of this rubric are right for our community and where we need an alternate/better solution.	ideas for what will increase student outcomes, we have a clear set of policies and actions outlined for how to get there. I have led or helped lead at least one policy annually to move our district towards a system of high quality schools.
<b>ANTI-RACIST POLICY MAKING</b>			
<b>Board equity</b>	Our board is rated mostly 1s on the <a href="#">School Board Partners Anti-racist rubric</a> .	Our board is rated a mix of mostly 1s and 2s on the SBP Anti-racist rubric. Equity is not yet a board priority.	I have led or co-led our board to be mostly rated 3s on the School Board Partners Anti-racist rubric.
<b>Policymaking</b>	I have never written & passed a policy.	I have led or co-led the writing of a policy, but it didn't pass and/or wasn't anti-racist or focused on a policy priority that will lead to a system of high quality schools and improved student life outcomes.	I have led or co-led the writing and passing of at least one policy annually that is anti-racist and that supports a system of high quality schools and improved student life outcomes. The policy was authentically informed by the community. Over time, the policy is being enforced and having the intended impact.
<b>COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS</b>			
<b>Communications and branding</b>	I do not have a communications plan as a School Board member. I understand the laws and ramifications of any written communication as an elected official. (e.g.	I randomly post on social media and send e-newsletters/emails occasionally when I think about it. I have completed basic media training, including how to talk with reporters and journalists.	I have gone through a communications and branding exercise to clarify my priorities and values and what I want my external brand to be. I have a proactive communications plan that: is planned out 6-12 months in advance, which could include a newsletter, social media, in-person communication, and traditional

	anything you write could be a newspaper headline)		media; is provided in multiple languages (if needed); is focused on the priorities I have committed to for my term; helps me build momentum for priorities. Ideally, I have built a team of interns and supporters to help me execute my communications plan.
<b>Community engagement</b>	I do not have a plan for community engagement in my city/district.	I routinely attend events and meetings in the community, but don't have my own community engagement strategy and plan. I attend events and meetings across racial, political or other divides.	I have led or co-led efforts to make our school board meetings more inclusive and accessible. I have led or co-led efforts to ensure 2-way communication, not just communication from the Board. I host office hours or town halls at least twice a year. My constituents have multiple ways to contact me, in multiple languages.

### STRATEGIC FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

<b>Financial management</b>	I review the budget when it is presented to the Board, ask minimal questions, and mostly approve what is presented by District leadership.	I have asked for the budget earlier and additional information than what was presented previously. I am engaged in the decision making around priorities, not just approving the budget. I understand our budget, but might not be able to connect our budget to our strategic priorities/goals.	I have graduated from the <u>Edunomics Lab</u> Financial Management course offered by SBP. I have led or co-led a more robust financial management process for our board, that could include: setting financial priorities based on our district's strategic plan and goals for student improvement, asking for new/more detailed/ different reports and information; starting the process sooner; getting authentic community feedback; utilizing resources from Edunomics Lab and ERS. I have directed the Superintendent to conduct ROI analysis on several programs to ensure effective use of resources. We look primarily at financial data through the lens of per pupil unit cost.
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### SUPERINTENDENT MANAGEMENT

<b>Superintendent hiring</b>	<p>My board uses a traditional hiring process, led by a traditional search firm.</p>	<p>My board has a policy that describes our district's search process. My board has pushed the search firm to think more about equity and Superintendents who can lead a system of high quality schools, but we're not fully committed to hiring an anti-racist portfolio-focused candidate.</p>	<p>We have updated our Superintendent hiring policy. Prior to a search, my board conducted a SWOT analysis to determine the needs of our district and focus on finding leaders to meet our needs. My board leads a proactive search process that works to eliminate unconscious bias and elevate a proven track record of increasing the number of high quality schools serving all kids. My board leads a search to find a Superintendent who understands the difference between leading a system of schools vs a traditional school system. The search process engages stakeholders at appropriate levels, my board is clear on the specific needs of our district as it relates to hiring the right superintendent, and our selection process is reflective of our needs and gets at the skills, track record and experiences of the Superintendent that is the right fit for our district. Our expectations and how the Superintendent will be evaluated are clearly communicated during the hiring process.</p>
<b>Superintendent management</b>	<p>My board evaluates our Superintendent once a year. Our board does not have formative evaluation conversations about performance at any other time. Our board does not talk with the Superintendent about the performance of their subordinates or a succession plan. Our</p>	<p>My board has at least one formative conversation a year with our superintendent about their goals and priorities, in addition to our summative evaluation. Our board gets limited feedback from outside partners about the Superintendent's performance. I understand my personal role and responsibility in managing the Superintendent and occasionally focus on this aspect of</p>	<p>Our executive committee actively manages our superintendent as a corporate board would manage a corporate CEO. Our board reviews her or his goals and district performance at least 4 times a year. Our board has regular conversations about the Superintendent's strengths and weaknesses, their desire and need for professional development, their satisfaction in their job, and their succession plan. Our board talks with our Superintendent specifically about</p>

	Superintendent largely controls the board agenda and meeting schedule, and we usually follow her or his recommendations. I do not take personal responsibility for the process of managing our Superintendent.	my role.	supporting the careers of women and POC who don't become Superintendents at the same rate. Our board receives a 360 evaluation on the Superintendent's performance from key community stakeholders. We consider what additional supports might help our Superintendent to grow and improve as a leader, including an Executive Coach. I actively participate in the management of the Superintendent.
<b>Superintendent evaluation</b>	My board uses an evaluation tool traditionally used by the District, once a year. The Superintendent evaluation is not directly tied to student achievement, including measures of equity, nor our district strategic plan goals.	My board has redesigned our superintendent evaluation to better reflect either a focus on equity, student outcomes, or portfolio management, but not all three. My board evaluates our Superintendent once a year.	My board has redeveloped our superintendent evaluation to reflect a focus on antiracism and equity, student outcomes, and effectively managing a system of high quality schools. My board completes formative evaluations 4 times a year in addition to the summative evaluation once a year. The superintendent's salary and bonus is dependent on meeting her or his goals.