



The School Board's Role in Student Achievement

Phil Gore, PhD
AASB Fall Conference
October 7, 2019

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Have a Plan



**What does it take
to build a house?**



What does it take to build a house?

- Blueprints
- Construction Plan
- Adequate materials
- Check work daily
- Communicate with sub-contractors
- Learning curve

A group of people are gathered around a table, looking at and pointing to architectural blueprints. The scene is a professional meeting or collaborative work session. The blueprints are spread out on the table, and several hands are visible, pointing to specific areas on the drawings. There are various office supplies on the table, including a pen holder with pens, a stapler, and a white mug. The lighting is soft and focused on the work area.

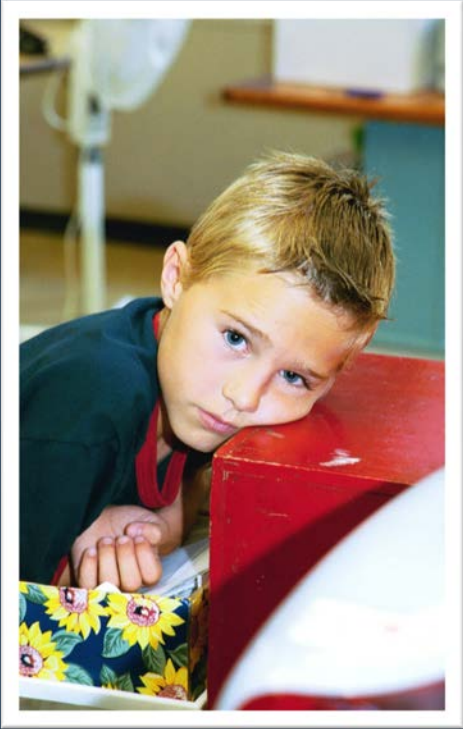
Work the Plan

School boards matter.



FOCUS







Beliefs Make a Difference

Ted Beard











FASTER

Focus

Align

Stretch

Track

Evaluate

Revise



Research on Governance

What boards do that can affect student achievement

FASTER Governance

How your board can positively affect student achievement

IMPROVING SCHOOL BOARD EFFECTIVENESS

A BALANCED GOVERNANCE APPROACH

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Research- informed

Three Governance Studies

1. School boards can harm student learning. (Tom Alsbury)
2. School board beliefs and actions can affect student learning in positive ways. (Iowa Lighthouse)
3. *Specific* actions of school boards correlate with improving student achievement. (Ivan Lorentzen & Bill McCaw)

Tom Alsbury



School boards can harm student learning.

Effects of harmful board behavior



Harry Heiligenthal: Lighthouse Research



School board beliefs and actions can affect student learning in positive ways.

Lighthouse Research Project

- Believe all students can learn
- Set clear expectations
- Create conditions for success
- Hold the district accountable
- Build collective will
- Learn together as a team



Ivan Lorentzen and Bill McCaw



Specific actions of school boards
correlate with student learning.

The Science Of Student Achievement

Adhering to Board Standards Impacts Districtwide Student Success

by Ivan J. Lorentzen and William P. McCaw

Editor's note: As a follow-up to the TASB XG Summit held in January, this is the second of a four-part series of articles on school board performance and its impact on student success, written by education management expert and psychology professor Ivan J. Lorentzen and educational leadership professor William P. McCaw.

Improving student achievement became the mission for public education more than a decade ago, putting educators, including school boards, on notice. Decades of research provided teachers and administrators with a vast amount of information to consult. School boards, on the other hand, had little to turn to. Already saddled with traditional duties such as budget, policy, and contract negotiations, school boards across America were challenged to find ways of participating in districtwide efforts to raise achievement scores for all students.

If student achievement scores are the ultimate measure of success for public schools, districts would need to identify the relevant factors under their control and align them in ways that benefit students. The challenge for researchers was to determine what those factors were. The challenge for school boards, administrators, and teachers would be to enact the measures found to be pertinent. Critics claimed that boards were relics of the past, were counter-



Failure to Govern

Bad Board Behavior Equals Poor Student Performance

by Ivan J. Lorentzen and William P. McCaw

Editor's note: As a follow-up to the TASB XG Summit held in January, this is the third of a four-part series of articles on school board performance and its impact on student success, written by education management expert and psychology professor Ivan J. Lorentzen and educational leadership professor William P. McCaw.

Since public education in America is under state and local control, school boards take pride in exercising their independence. This allows boards to tailor schools to reflect local communities. This also produces significant disparity among school districts. However, many aspects of schools are remarkably similar. Third grade is pretty much the same everywhere. So is teacher and administrative training and certification.

But school board membership is different. Since board members come from all walks of life, it is not surprising that their opinions vary widely regarding how a school should function, how a board should behave, and what issues should be addressed. Today, a growing research effort is producing reliable data about the kind of boardmanship related to higher student achievement across the district. Boards that govern districts with higher achievement scores are best described by the essential elements detailed in the Board Self-Assessment Survey (BSAS) (see April 2017 *Texas Lone Star*, page 8, for specifics). Boards and the districts they govern that have yet to address low student achievement continue to be derailed by errors in governance. Recent research has begun to identify specific behaviors that serve to distract school boards from their primary mission of improving student achievement.



FASTER Governance for Improved Student Achievement

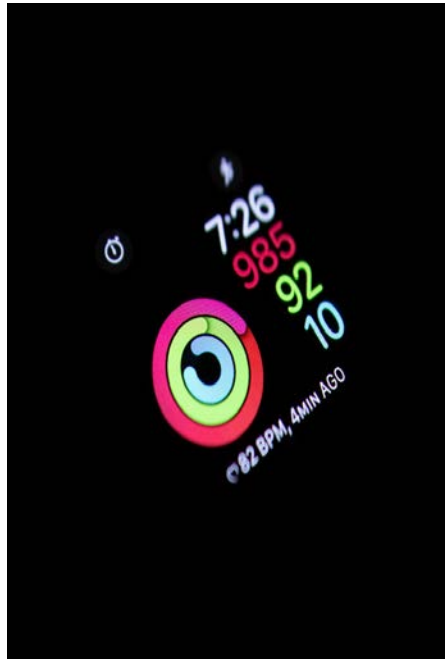


Research on Governance

What boards do that can affect student achievement

FASTER Governance

How your board can positively affect student achievement



Focus
Align
Stretch
Track

FOCUS

- Specific Areas of Improvement
- Data Collection
- Data-Informed Decisions

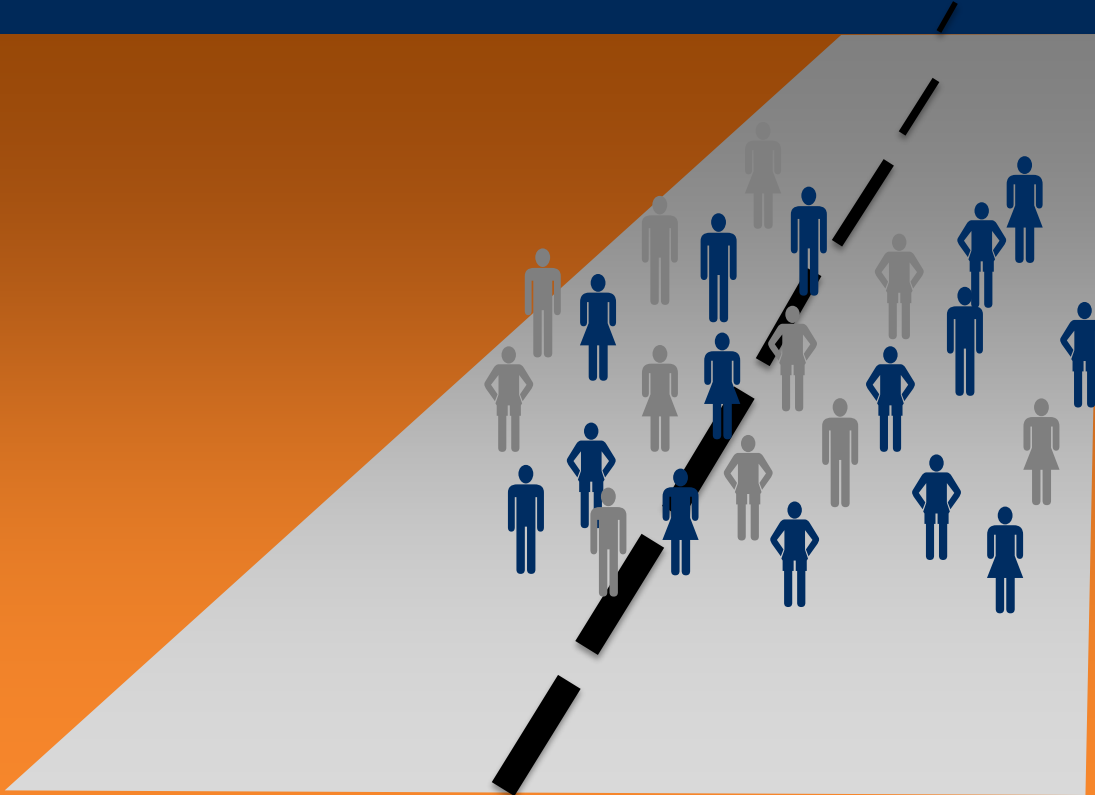


What is your vision for
students after they leave your
district





What do you imagine
for their futures?



What do THEY imagine for their futures?



**It is critical that the school board adopt
and pursue a clear, compelling,
collaboratively developed vision for
student success.**

PLANNING

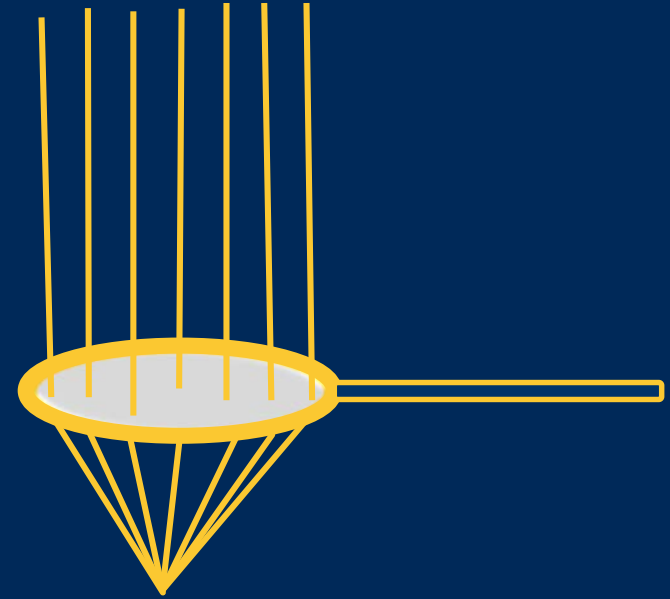
If you're going to go somewhere you've never been, you're going to need to do some things you've never done.





To help your
students go far,
act **FASTER!**

Focus the board's
work on student
achievement



Student
Achievement

Align

- District Goals
- School Goals
- Board Meeting Agendas
- Board Self-Assessment
- Superintendent Evaluation
- District Budget
- Progress Monitoring



How might your work need to change?

- Monitoring calendars
- Interim assessments
- Data dashboards
- Agendas tied to goals
- Allocation of time and resources
- Budgeting processes
- Other?



Stretch

- The Highest Expectations
- Challenging Goals
- Creative Problem-Solving



How might the act of
setting specific goals
impact student
achievement





“ That’s one
small step for
man; one giant
leap for mankind.”

Neil Armstrong
July 20, 1969

Photo Credit: NASA



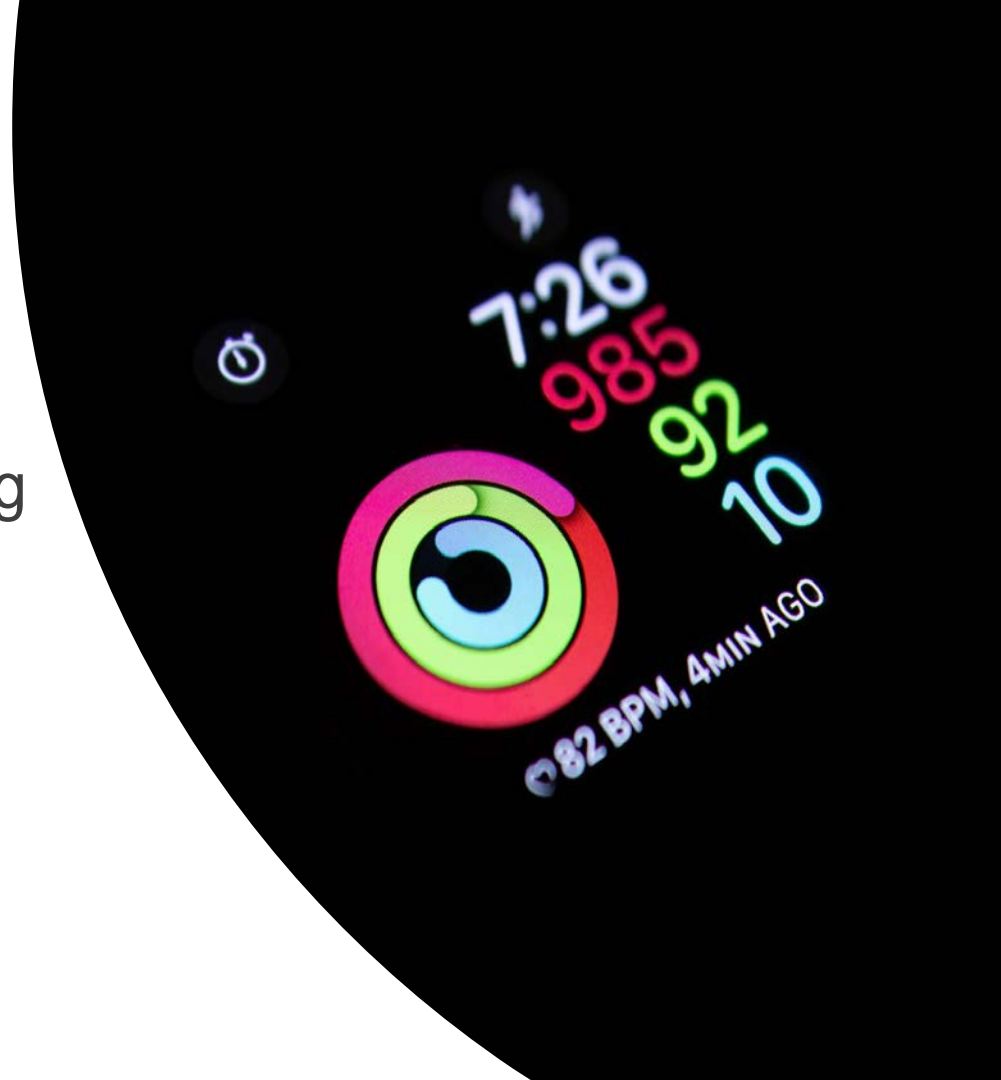
“ “ I believe that this nation should
commit itself to achieving the goal,
before this decade is out, of landing
a man on the moon and returning
him safely to earth. ” ”



President John F. Kennedy
May 25, 1961

Track

- Robust Progress Monitoring
- Team Learning
- Collaborative Approach





FAST

FOCUS

ALIGN

STRETCH

TRACK

Learning Together as a Team

Gloria Casas



1

Set clear expectations

2

Hold the system accountable

3

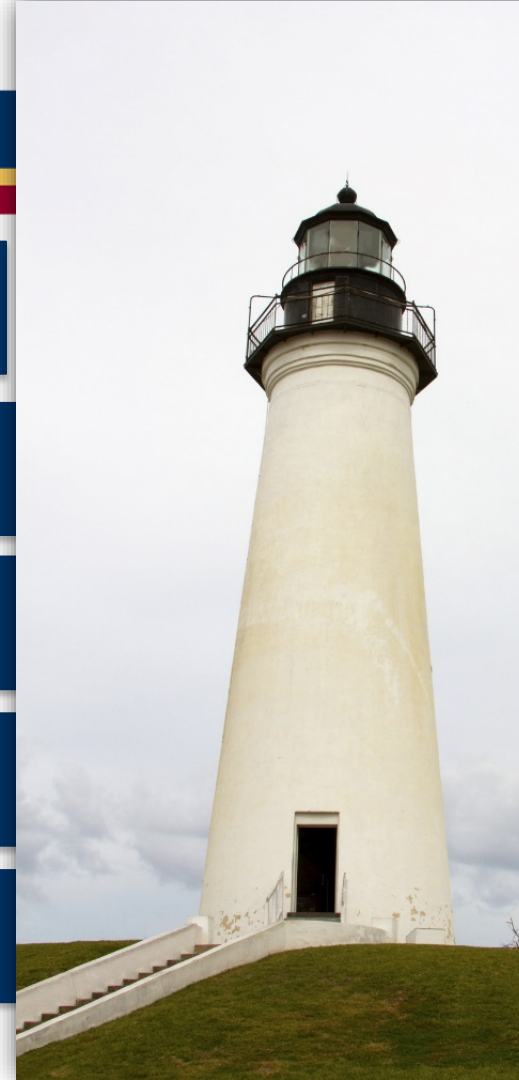
Create conditions for success

4

Create public will to succeed

5

Learn as a team



Board's Role	Key Questions
Set Clear Expectations	What are our greatest hopes for the district in this area?
Create Conditions for Success	What are we willing to support to ensure the expectations can be met?
Hold the System Accountable	What will we accept as evidence of progress toward expected outcomes?
Build Collective Will	What will we need to do to gain community support for this work?
Learn Together as a Team	What information does the board need to ensure the right decisions are made?

Evaluate

- Reflection and Curiosity
- Process and Outcomes
- Data-Informed Adjustments





EVALUATE

- Did we make the progress we desired based on our goals?
- Did we have the right goals?
- What do we need to adjust for next year?
- What do we as a board need to do differently?

Lockhart ISD

“ We had to be very open and honest about student performance, and we had to say that we were not in a good place. ... This involved a lot of hard conversations, a lot of reflection... ”



Mark Estrada, Superintendent



Lockhart ISD

“ Everything we do now, every vote we make as a board, is based on our vision and our goals. If it’s not moving us toward our vision, we won’t consider it as a board. ”

Steve Johnson, Board President



Lockhart ISD

“When we first started the 1.5 concept, we had about 19% of students reaching that 1.5 level. Now, about 60% of our students achieve a year-and-a-half growth within the year.”

Steve Johnson, Board President



R e v i s e

- Continuous Improvement
- Culture of High Expectations
- Data-Informed
- Student-focused



A group of people are gathered around a table, looking at and pointing to architectural plans. The scene is a professional meeting or collaborative work session. The text "Revise the Plan" is overlaid on the image in a dark blue font, centered horizontally and slightly above the middle vertically. The background shows various office supplies like pens, a stapler, and a laptop, all in a soft, slightly blurred focus. The overall color palette is cool, with blues and greys.

Revise the Plan







FASTER

governance

for Improved Student Achievement

Phil Gore, PhD

