



School Boards & Superintendents

# ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES



**ALABAMA**  
ASSOCIATION OF  
SCHOOL BOARDS

*A joint publication of*  
Alabama Association of  
School Boards  
– and –  
School Superintendents  
of Alabama



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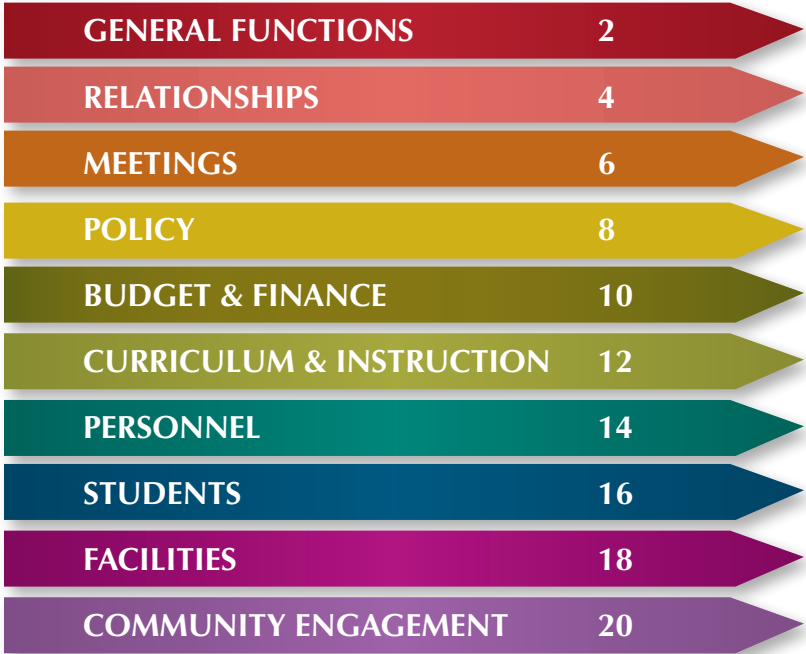
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In 2016 and 2017, a task force of current and former Alabama school board members, superintendents and board attorneys convened to explore ways to help board-superintendent teams work together effectively. As a result, the Alabama Association of School Boards and School Superintendents of Alabama are pleased provide this updated statement of the roles and responsibilities of school boards and superintendents. We believe that, operating within the parameters defined here, these teams can effectively promote equitable learning opportunities for all public school students. We further believe an enhanced understanding of the unique, interrelated functions of school boards and superintendents will lead to greater student achievement, increased accountability and better understanding of, and support for, public education.

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# GENERAL FUNCTIONS

## The Board

**Governs the system and establishes a vision and expectations for the system**

- 1 Works with the superintendent to establish a vision and goals.
- 2 Focuses on raising student achievement.
- 3 Works with the superintendent to set high expectations for student and employee performance.

## The Superintendent

**Serves as system's chief administrator and educational leader and advises the board**

- 1 Works with the board to establish a vision and goals.
- 2 Focuses on raising student achievement.
- 3 Serves as the system's chief executive officer, implementing board policies and overseeing daily operations.

4 Holds the superintendent accountable for system performance.

5 Hires the superintendent and regularly evaluates him or her.

6 Approves policies to establish expected outcomes for the system and its operations.

7 Ensures the system creates and implements a strategic plan.

8 Complies with the School Board Governance Improvement Act.

9 Participates in training to improve the performance of the board and its individual members.

4 Provides educational leadership for the staff.

5 Holds employees accountable for system performance.

6 Identifies and reports to the board on the system's needs and recommends actions.

7 Initiates development and implementation of the strategic plan.

8 Monitors and appraises the board of state and national educational developments.

9 Participates in professional development activities, including annual whole board training.



## The Board

**Governs through  
policy and oversight**

- 1 Recognizes the members have no individual authority.
- 2 Respects the authority of the superintendent for day-to-day administration of the system.
- 3 Follows the chain of command by referring complaints and issues to the superintendent.

## The Superintendent

**Works collaboratively  
with the board**

- 1 Oversees the overall operation of the system and manages all personnel.
- 2 Respects the decisions and opinions of the board and its members.

4 Respects the superintendent's professional judgment.

5 Respects the superintendent's decisions that conform to professional standards and board policy.

6 Conducts self-evaluation regularly and sets improvement goals as needed.

7 Gives the superintendent the benefit of the board's counsel in matters related to members' expertise, familiarity with the system and community interests.

3 Provides the board with sufficient and timely information and data to make sound decisions.

5 Advises the board on policy development and revision.

4 Provides the board with requested materials in a timely manner.



# MEETINGS

## The Board

**Meets regularly to conduct business in public**

- 1 Meets in accordance with state laws to transact system business.
- 2 Ensures actions comply with state ethics, nepotism and other laws.
- 3 Acts only during official, properly noticed public meetings and only with the recommendation of the superintendent.

## The Superintendent

**Serves as the secretary to the board and makes recommendations for board consideration**

- 1 Serves as the system CEO, secretary to the board and a member of the governance team.
- 2 Assures compliance with state law regarding meeting notices and maintenance of meeting records.



4 Holds all meetings with the superintendent or his/her designee present unless the superintendent is the subject of the meeting.

5 Studies the agenda packet prior to meetings and asks the superintendent questions as needed.

6 Establishes board operating procedures.

7 Ensures the superintendent develops the meeting agenda in consultation with the board president.

8 Has clear protocols for placing items on the meeting agenda.

3 Identifies topics the board must address at meetings and consults with the board president on development of the agenda.

5 Notifies staff of board actions relevant to them.

6 Assures the board meets for legally required sessions.

4 Provides the agenda packet to board members in advance of meetings to allow members sufficient time to review and ask questions.



## The Board

**Establishes expected outcomes through policy**

- 1 Adopts policies for the governance and management of the system.
- 2 Focuses policies on desired outcomes rather than administrative procedures.
- 3 Reviews and revises policies on a regular basis.

## The Superintendent

**Ensures policies are current and are properly implemented**

- 1 Advises the board regarding policy development and revision.
- 2 Drafts proposed policies and provides the board with sufficient data and information to debate the recommendation.
- 3 Makes recommendations that are consistent with board policy.



4 Ensures the policy manual is up to date and accessible to employees and the community.

5 Ensures personnel are informed about and comply with policy.

6 Develops procedures needed to implement board policies.



## The Board

**Monitors system budget and finances and advocates for resources**

- 1 Works with the superintendent and chief school financial officer to ensure the budget is aligned with system goals.
- 2 Holds budget hearings as required.
- 3 Approves and adopts the budget in a timely manner.

## The Superintendent

**Monitors budget and finances and advocates for resources**

- 1 Works with the board and CSFO to ensure the budget is aligned with system goals.
- 2 Ensures the board holds budget hearings as required.
- 3 Recommends adoption of the budget in a timely manner.

4 Monitors the system's financial health.

5 Evaluates the CSFO's performance regularly with the superintendent.

6 Holds CSFO accountable for communicating financial information to the board and stakeholders in a clear, accurate, timely manner.

7 Receives audit reports and expects the superintendent and CSFO to provide a plan for addressing findings.

8 Actively supports efforts seeking needed funding for the system.

4 Monitors the system's financial health.

5 Supervises the work of the CSFO.

6 Ensures the CSFO provides the board and staff with clear, accurate, timely information.

7 Evaluates the CSFO's performance regularly with the board.

8 Develops, with the CSFO, plans to remedy any audit findings.

9 Advocates for needed financial support.



## The Board

**Establishes expectations and monitors outcomes**

- 1 Believes all students can learn.
- 2 Establishes, with the superintendent, goals for improving academic achievement.

## The Superintendent

**Recommends programs and curriculum and oversees the staff's work**

- 1 Creates a culture of high expectations for students and staff.
- 2 Advises the board on all students' educational needs.
- 3 Evaluates the effectiveness of the instructional program.

3 Adopts standards and instructional programs upon the superintendent's recommendation.

4 Reviews achievement data regularly, including test scores, equitable access to accelerated courses, school climate and staffing.

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4 Leads efforts to continuously work to improve teaching and learning.

5 Keeps the board apprised about the staff's work to raise achievement and implement board-approved programs.



## The Board

**Establishes expectations for staff and acts on personnel recommendations**

**1** Holds the superintendent accountable for recruiting, hiring, evaluating and retaining a well-qualified, effective work force.

**2** Acts on the superintendent's personnel recommendations in a timely manner and without regard to personal or political issues.

## The Superintendent

**Recommends employment and disciplinary actions and holds employees accountable**

**1** Recommends the employment, retention, promotion and termination of staff.

**2** Ensures all staff are effectively supervised and evaluated.



3 Approves job descriptions for staff.

5 Encourages and provides resources for effective professional development for staff.

4 Serves in an unbiased manner for termination and suspension hearings.

6 Promotes a strong working relationship with the staff.

3 Recommends job descriptions for all staff.

6 Fosters a strong working relationship with staff and maintains the lines of communication.

4 Establishes procedures for recruitment and professional development of staff.

7 Delegates authority as appropriate.

5 Serves as the board's liaison to the staff.



## The Board

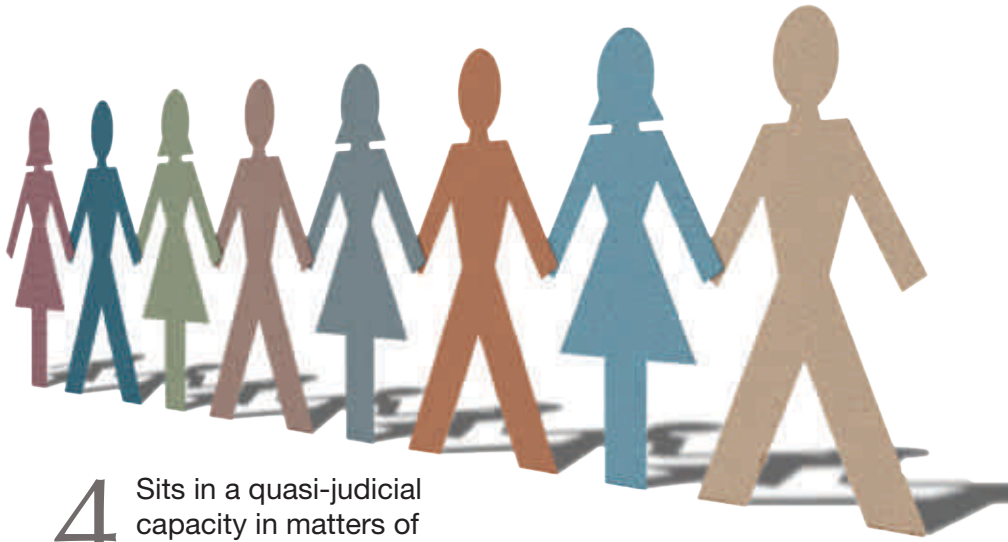
**Establishes policies for care and control of students**

- 1 Promotes a healthy climate for student growth and learning.
- 2 Evaluates school programs to meet the diverse needs of the student population.
- 3 Adopts policies regarding student support services, including enrollment, attendance, guidance, testing, safety and discipline.

## The Superintendent

**Recommends and implements policies for student services**

- 1 Promotes a healthy climate for student growth and learning.
- 2 Evaluates school programs and recommends needed changes to meet the diverse needs of the student population.



4 Sits in a quasi-judicial capacity in matters of student discipline.

3 Recommends and implements policies for the provision of student support services.

4 Recommends appropriate policies and rules to maintain student safety, health and discipline.



## The Board

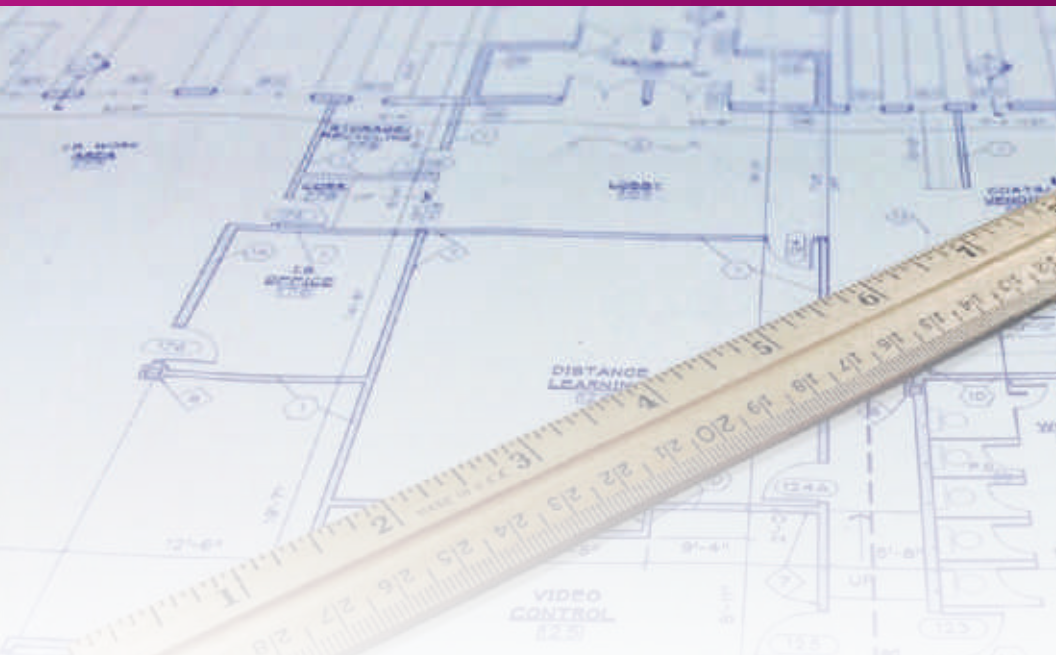
### Adopts policies for facilities

- 1 Adopts policies for the use, operation, maintenance and rental of system buildings, grounds and equipment.
- 2 Approves the hiring of architects or other consultants as necessary.
- 3 Acts on proposed construction, closing, consolidation or rezoning.

## The Superintendent

### Recommends and implements policies and procedures for facilities

- 1 Recommends and implements policies for the use, operation, maintenance and rental of system buildings, grounds and equipment.
- 2 Provides for the proper upkeep of facilities and equipment.



- 3 Sets priorities for long-term and preventative maintenance of facilities and equipment.
- 4 Works with architects, staff and consultants.
- 5 Recommends actions related to construction, closing, consolidation and rezoning.



## The Board

**Builds positive relationships with stakeholders**

- 1 Acts as a liaison between the system and community.
- 2 Solicits stakeholder input on issues facing the system.
- 3 Monitors stakeholder attitudes, values and interests related to the system.

## The Superintendent

**Builds positive relationships with stakeholders and directs communication**

- 1 Informs stakeholders about the system's successes and challenges.
- 2 Expects staff to engage parents.
- 3 Engages in dialog with stakeholders at all levels about issues facing the system.

4 Actively participates in school functions and programs that build community relationships.

5 Speaks with one voice about issues on which the board has taken a position.

6 Designates the board president as spokesperson for the board.

7 Channels complaints through the system's grievance process, notifying the superintendent as warranted, without becoming personally involved.

4 Works effectively with news outlets and social media.

5 Ensures issues referred through the grievance process are addressed by staff in a timely and appropriate way.

6 Builds bridges between the system and key organizations and leaders.

