

Texas Public School Governance: The Role of the Board of Trustees Leadership Katy January 17, 2019

Bill Rutherford, Ed.D.
Senior Consultant

Texas Association of School Boards



Is there a national standard? NO!

- Some are appointed
- Some mayors even serve as school CEO
- Some receive pay
- Some face collective bargaining pressures
- Some have no training requirements



What makes the school board unique among governing boards and similar entities?

- A lay board – essentially volunteers
- No standard for job-related qualifications
- Steep learning curve and averages 3 years
- Elected and the CEO has no influence
- Has only one employee



Legal Authority in Texas

- “An independent school district is governed by a **board of trustees** who, as a body corporate, shall:
 - (1) oversee the management of the district; and
 - (2) ensure that the superintendent implements and monitors plans, ... (TEC 11.051.a)



Who does the board hold in trust?

- 5.2 million students
 - 14% African American
 - 47% Hispanic
 - 35% White
 - 4% Other
 - 58% Economically disadvantaged
- 1034 school districts
- 374 charter schools
- 8,195 campuses
- 633,347 employees



Qualifications for Office

- Qualified voter
- Resident of state for 1 year and district for 6 months prior to the election
- Resident – lawful domicile
- No power of recall



District Types

- 3, 7, 9, 17, 21 member board
- Single member
- At-large
- Position
- Variation



Term

- May or November election, even or odd numbered year – board decision
- 3 or 4 year terms – board decision
- No term limitations – state law



Structure of Governance in Texas

Legislature

SBOE/Commissioner

Local Board

Superintendent



The School Board's Authority

- “The trustees **as a body corporate** have the exclusive power and duty to govern and oversee the management of the public schools of the district.” *TEC 11.151(b)*
- “Because the Board is a body corporate, members can perform **no valid act except as a body at meetings** properly convened and conducted.” *Policy BBE(LEGAL)*
- ***Must comply with the Open Meetings Act***

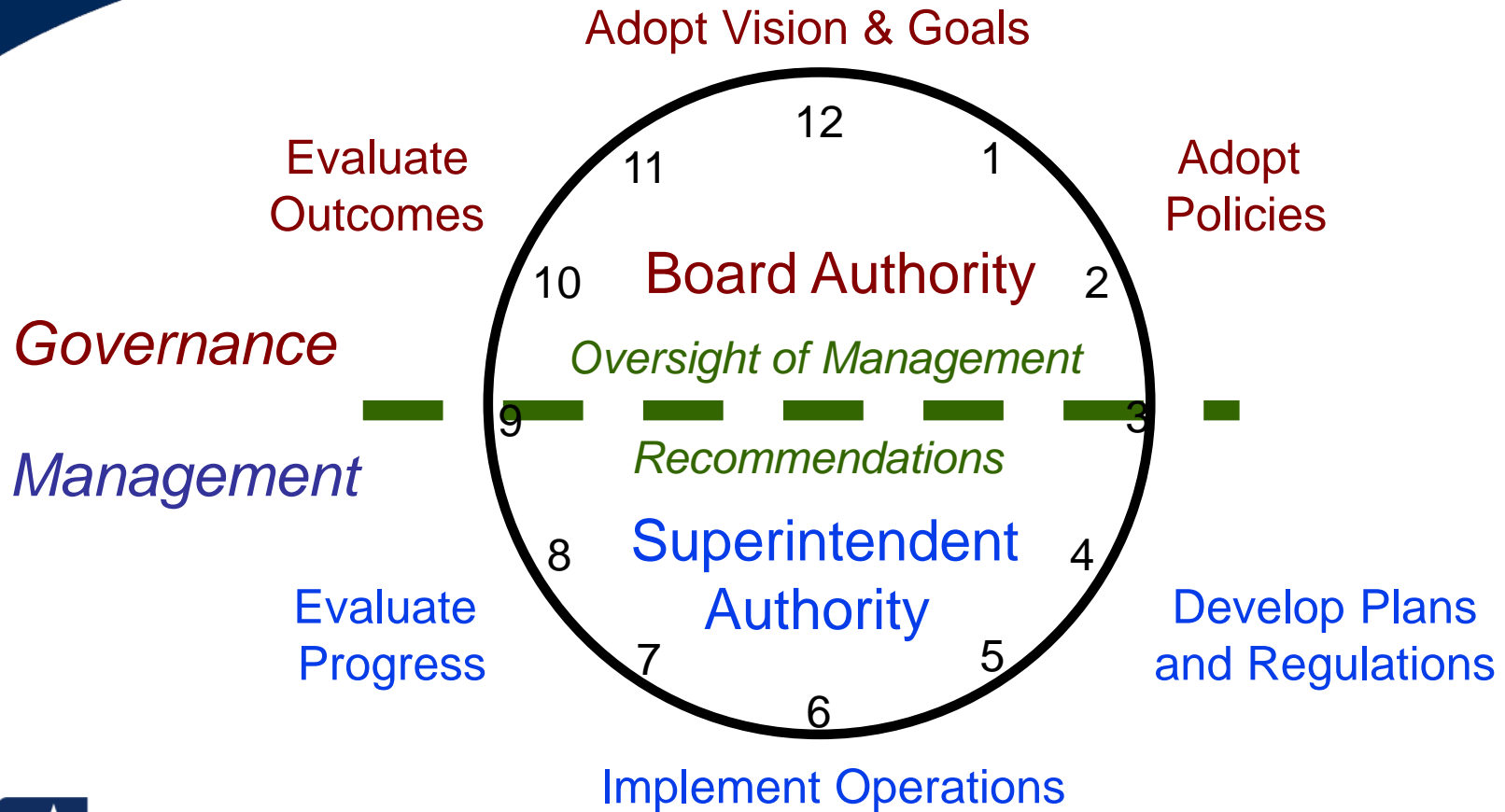


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The Governance Clock



Basic Roles of the Board

- Adopt goals and evaluate outcomes
- Adopt and evaluate policies
- Hire and elevate the superintendent and delegate **all** administrative duties
- Approve the district's budget and set the tax rate
- Advocate on behalf of the district
- Communicate with the community



Yes, the board does...

- Average more than 25 hours a month in
 - attending meetings and sundry district functions
 - preparation for meetings
 - answering calls and complaints from constituents
 - attending additional training sessions
 - doing homework and even more homework
- Comply with a statutory annual requirement for continuing education hours



No, the board does not...

- Receive a paycheck, even for hazardous duty
- Receive a financial allowance for:
 - gas, car, clothing, babysitting, housing, entertainment, pool cleaning, landscaping, etc.
- Receive secret service (or similar) protection
- Receive special privileges for their children in:
 - teacher selection, quarterback selection, commencement speaker selection, etc.
- Receive special editorial protection from the media



And if you paid attention, answer this...

How many school board members does it take to change a light bulb?



Questions?



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