



ONTARIO EDUCATION SERVICES CORPORATION

**Professional Development Program
for School Board Trustees**

Modules

**2 Effective Governance
for Student Achievement
and Well-Being: Boards
Matters!**



“The greatest and most inspiring mountain climbing achievements in history are not so much stories of individual achievement, but are stories of the extraordinary power of a unified, talented, prepared team that stays loyally committed to one another and to their shared vision to the end.”

STEVEN COVEY



In this module, trustees will explore:

- The multiple facets of their role as leaders for student achievement
- The relationship between ethical leadership at the board table and student achievement
- The critical role of School boards as direct links to their community in ensuring a concerted focus on students.



Module 2 Effective Governance for Student
Achievement and Well-Being:
Boards Matter!

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School boards make a huge and a direct contribution to the improvement of learning for all students through their leadership in building public understanding and commitment of their communities to valuing and sustaining high levels of student achievement.

Good Governance for School Boards:
Trustee Professional Development Program



**Education
that Connects**
Global Achievement
with Local Accountability



Ontario Education
Services Corporation
La corporation des
services en éducation
de l'Ontario

Association des conseils scolaires des écoles publiques de l'Ontario (ACÉPO)
Association franco-ontarienne des conseils scolaires catholiques (AFOCSC)
Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association (OCSTA)
Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA)
Council of Ontario Directors of Education (CODE)



The research is compelling: school boards make a difference! When boards move to the higher levels of authentic governance that is truly student centred and make teaching and learning their first priority, changes occur. And this is not entirely dependent on more funding. The research team of Waters and Marzano conducted an analysis of 27 different studies.



- Research has confirmed the strong relationship between school board leadership and student achievement.
- School boards which demonstrate ongoing improvement in student achievement were tightly aligned from the board table to the district leadership team to schools.
- In short, everyone “walked” the student learning road. A number of further studies found the same themes.
- School board governance operates in the broadest context, providing the structure for success, connecting with communities and advocating for all students in the board. Only a locally elected school board can do this.



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There are clear actions that boards can take which have direct impact. Five governance responsibilities/practices emerged as central to student achievement.

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1. Setting the vision.

In this role, boards work with the entire community and staff to establish the vision for student learning and to articulate the beliefs that are the foundation for goals and direction. School board governance reflects the vision in all its decisions including the conditions that affect teaching and learning.



2. Establishing goals.

As elected officials, boards are in the best position to work with local community to position student achievement as the core belief and to lead in defining what this means to their community. From here, boards set strategic goals. This lays the foundation and indeed drives every aspect of program and operations in the board.



3. Developing policy.

Boards have the task of establishing the structure to support student achievement and they do this through their policies. The decisions boards make around policy have an impact on students, schools and all staff. They in fact create the culture of learning. School boards can be described as the architects. Good design is essential.



4. Allocating resources.

School boards are the stewards who shepherd resources. It is the job of boards as stewards to:

- provide clear direction about priorities
- insist that the allocation of resources is aligned with the goals and the strategic plan of the board
- distribute dollars in ways that ensure that the lowest performing schools get the support they need and that all staff have the training they need to deliver high quality
- tough questions during budget deliberations
- monitor budgets to ensure that the right services are being provided to students at appropriate costs and for measurable benefits.



5. Assuring accountability.

- As the link between schools and communities, boards need to use data to monitor progress and to keep the public informed. Student achievement will only improve with the concerted efforts of both the board and the community.
- The broader community expects school boards to be current with regard to trends in education nationally and internationally.
- They expect boards to set direction based on 21st century skills and competencies for new millennium learners.



- Boards should find opportunities for discussion on emerging thinking and how new directions might impact the decisions made at Board table.
- Successful boards demonstrate their accountability further by acknowledging poor performance and then addressing issues.



Today's school boards work with diverse communities which expect that students achieve higher standards. They are frequently confronted with an ever-changing agenda. The future will demand talented and ethical board leaders who will need to be supported and focussed in their efforts.



“We need a metamorphosis of education - from the cocoon a butterfly should emerge. Improvement does not give us a butterfly only a faster caterpillar.”

B.H. Benathy *Systemic Change: Touchstones for the Future School*