

Standards for Effective Governance of Georgia School Systems

Domain I: Governance Structure	
Domain Description: The board of education and superintendent form the governance leadership team of the local school system, and act in a manner that focuses on improving student achievement and organizational effectiveness.	
Standards	Elements
A. The governance leadership team is comprised of the local board of education and the superintendent, and adheres to appropriate roles and responsibilities, as defined in the state constitution, state law, local act and board policy.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The board elects officers using procedures defined in state law, local legislative act and local board policy. 2. The board designates the superintendent as the Executive Officer of the school system and fully delegates the authority to provide educational leadership, manage daily operations, and perform all duties as assigned by law. 3. The superintendent acts as board secretary.
B. The governance leadership team executes its duties as defined in the state constitution, state laws, and state board rules consistent with local board policies, accreditation standards, procedures and ethical standards, which govern its conduct.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The board establishes and follows local board policies, procedures, and ethical standards governing the conduct of the governance leadership team, board and individual board members. 2. The board adopts, commits to, and follows a Code of Ethics, including a Conflict of Interest policy consistent with Domain VIII-Ethics.
C. The board acts as a policy-making body separate from the roles and responsibilities authorized to the superintendent.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The board establishes and follows written policies governing its work in compliance with state constitution, state law, local legislative act(s) and policy. 2. The board fully supports and recognizes that operational issues are the responsibility of the superintendent and school system personnel.
D. The governance leadership team demonstrates a unified approach to governing the school system in order to assure effective fulfillment of roles and responsibilities.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Board participates in annual professional development that meets or exceeds the requirements of Georgia law and the State Board of Education. The superintendent's participation in this training, while voluntary, is strongly encouraged. 2. The governance leadership team differentiates professional development curriculum and delivery for the whole board and individual members based upon the experience and needs of members. 3. New members are provided with induction, orientation, and mentoring in order to support

their effectiveness as members of the governance leadership team.

Domain II: Strategic Planning

Domain Description: The governance leadership team, in collaboration with the community, adopts and enacts a planning process that results in an adopted system strategic plan designed to improve student achievement and organizational effectiveness.

Standards	Elements
A. The governance leadership team provides input to and adopts the system strategic plan.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The governance leadership team, in collaboration with the community, provides input to and the Board adopts a strategic plan that contains the system’s beliefs, vision, mission, and strategic goals, performance objectives, performance measures and targets for improving student achievement and organizational effectiveness. 2. At least annually and as needed, the governance leadership team reviews, assesses the system strategic plan, and the Board readopts. 3. The governance leadership team conducts the strategic planning process consistent with Domain VIII: Ethics.
B. Annually and as needed, utilizing the adopted strategic planning process, the governance leadership team monitors and reports progress on performance measures.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The board implements board action plan for monitoring and reporting performance objectives, performance measures and targets, and effectiveness that is aligned with the school system’s strategic plan. 2. The governance leadership team participates in professional development focused on the development, implementation and assessment of the school system’s strategic plan. 3. The governance leadership team annually and as needed self-assesses performance in fulfilling its duties, responsibilities, and ability to work as a team in support of implementing the strategic plan. 4. The governance leadership team meets annually to appropriately focus upon: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyzing appropriate data to assess progress toward fulfilling the school system’s strategic plan Assessing the strengths and needed improvements of the school system Addressing compelling problem(s) or emerging issue(s) that may prevent the school system from accomplishing its strategic plan Identifying and address emerging opportunities for advancing the school system’s strategic plan Self-assessing the governance leadership team’s educational, governance and leadership performance

DOMAIN III: Board and Community Relations

Domain Description: In order to ensure improved student achievement and organizational effectiveness, the governance leadership team creates and sustains healthy community relations, models professional relationships, creates a culture of mutual respect, and serves as a public school advocate for effective collaboration and engagement of internal and external stakeholders.

Standards	Elements
A. The governance leadership team develops a process for creating a culture where input is sought, heard, and valued.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The governance leadership team aligns its actions and decisions, which impact board and community culture, to the school system's strategic plan.2. The interactions of the governance leadership team with the community create a culture in which ideas are sought, heard, and valued, and are based on collaborative review of research and data.
B. The board develops policies to ensure effective communication and engagement of all stakeholders' which support the strategic plan, desired culture and continuous improvement of the school system.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The governance leadership team develops and supports implementation of a communications plan aligned with the school system's strategic plan.2. The governance leadership team formally and informally communicates to stakeholders, its strategic plan, desired culture and improvement needs, and student performance expectations progress, targets, and results.3. The governance leadership team and individual member's communication demonstrate transparency of intentions, actions, decisions, successes, progress statuses, benchmarks and barriers to achievement of goals and performance targets.4. The governance leadership team will implement a communication plan consistent with Domain VIII – Ethics.
C. The governance leadership team ensures processes that develop, communicate and maintain procedures for communications by stakeholders which result in resolution of issues and concerns supporting the strategic plan, desired culture and continuous improvement of the school system.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The governance leadership team follows an approved communication plan that supports clear two-way communication with stakeholders (i.e. Chain of Command process).2. The management of all communications of the governance leadership team promotes shared accountability and collaborative action in support of the strategic plan, desired culture and continuous improvement of the school system.3. The board establishes a process for monitoring and reporting the school system's performance in analyzing, addressing, and resolving issues or concerns raised by stakeholders.

Domain IV: Policy Development	
Domain Description: The board adopts, revises, and follows written policies in accordance with laws and state board rules that include but are not limited to those that support improved student achievement, fiduciary responsibility, community and stakeholder engagement, organizational effectiveness, and continuous improvement.	
Standards	Elements
A. The board of education adopts, revises, and follows written policies that are clear, up-to-date, and in compliance with the school system’s strategic plan, state constitution, state and federal laws and state board rules.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The governance leadership team promotes policy development that is aligned with the system strategic plan and supports improved student achievement and organizational effectiveness. 2. The board, through a local board policy, adopts, revises, and follows effective procedures for: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Policy development, adoption, revisions, and repeal b. Emergency adoption of policies c. Policy dissemination 3. The board solicits and receives recommendations from the superintendent on any proposed policies. 4. The board provides opportunities for public review on proposed policies before final board action is taken. 5. The board approves procedures for policies to be systematically reviewed. 6. The board holds the superintendent accountable for the consistent implementation of adopted policies. 7. The governance leadership team develops policies consistent with Domain VIII – Ethics.

Domain V: Board Meetings	
Domain Description: In order to conduct official business for the purpose of improving student achievement and organizational effectiveness, the governance leadership team plans and conducts board meetings in accordance with Open Meetings Law and local board policy.	
Standards	Elements
A. The board announces and holds meetings in accordance with local board policy and the Open Meetings Law (O.C.G.A. §50-14-1).	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The board adopts a policy defining the process for developing board meeting agendas, to include, but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> how the agenda is prepared and by whom a process to remove or place items on the agenda a process to allow requests for additional information on agenda items procedures through which the public can provide information, ideas, or input on agenda items. 2. Board of education meeting agendas consistently include components that demonstrate alignment with the system’s strategic plan. 3. The superintendent posts board meeting agendas for public review. 4. The board of education uses a “consent agenda” procedure when appropriate. 5. The board of education conducts meetings in accordance with the meeting agenda, once approved, and departs from the agenda only under circumstances allowed under the Open Meetings Law (O.C.G.A. §50-14-1) and by a majority (simple majority, super majority, or unanimous vote) previously specified in local board policy. 6. The Board is trained in, and conducts meetings in a manner consistent with, parliamentary procedure. 7. The superintendent ensures accurate records are recorded and maintained as prescribed by the Open Records Act (O.C.G.A. §50-18-70). 8. The board of education plans and conducts business meetings in open and closed sessions in a manner consistent with the Open Meetings Law (O.C.G.A. §50-14-1). 9. The governance leadership team conducts meetings consistent with Domain VIII – Ethics.

DOMAIN VI: Personnel	
Domain Description: The Board of Education employs, sets performance expectations for, and evaluates the work of the superintendent; sets personnel policies and approves or denies personnel actions recommended by the superintendent in order for him/her to manage the system workforce to improve student achievement and organizational effectiveness.	
Standards	Elements
A. The board of education employs a superintendent who acts as the Executive Officer of the school system.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The board's search and hiring processes result in selecting a superintendent with the verified knowledge, expertise, skills and prior performance history that predict successful performance in execution of Superintendent duties and responsibilities in alignment with the school system strategic plan. 2. The board sets performance expectations for the superintendent through the adoption of a strategic plan, the adoption of a current job description, the adoption of professional development and evaluation plan, and adherence to state law. 3. The board of education invests in the Superintendent professional development to ensure alignment to the school system strategic plan, and current job description. 4. The board of education engages in planning for leadership continuity to support sustainability of improvement. 5. Board decisions regarding termination of Superintendent/ employment are compliant with superintendent contract and state laws. 6. The governance leadership team develops policies consistent with Domain VIII – Ethics.
B. The board of education evaluates the professional performance of the superintendent.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The board annually evaluates the superintendent's job performance as outlined in the evaluation plan. 2. The evaluation instrument and process are developed by the board in collaboration with the superintendent; based on clear, written measurable performance targets and indicators; and aligned with the school system's strategic goals. 3. The board receives training in the superintendent's evaluation process and current evaluation instrument, and objectively follows that process for evaluation. 4. The superintendent's evaluation will be reflected in meeting agenda minutes, noting participating members; however, the results of the evaluation of the superintendent will remain confidential.

<p>C. The board adopts personnel policy that is implemented by the superintendent.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The board adopts personnel policies that are aligned with the school system’s strategic plan and organizational effectiveness and consistent with applicable statutes.2. The board and individual board members do not engage in the implementation of personnel policy, including the employment, assignment, or dismissal of personnel, except to accept or reject the recommendations of the superintendent.3. The board holds the superintendent accountable for assuring that all personnel in the school system are evaluated in accordance with the school system’s mission, strategic plan, school system personnel policies, and applicable statutes.4. The board follows state laws in matters of school system employee discipline.5. The board makes personnel decisions consistent with Domain VIII – Ethics.
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DOMAIN VII: Financial Governance	
Domain Description: The board provides guidance to the superintendent and sets sound fiscal policy so that the school system is an effective steward of all resources to support student achievement and organizational effectiveness.	
Standards	Elements
A. The board of education upon recommendation of the superintendent adopts a budget that adheres to State law provisions and consistent with its strategic plan.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The board provides guidance to the superintendent, who develops and manages the budget in accordance with the school system’s strategic plan, and adopts fiscal policies that assure improved student achievement and organizational effectiveness. 2. The board conducts budgeting discussions with the superintendent and establishes specific budget parameters where deemed necessary or appropriate. 3. The governance leadership team seeks community and stakeholder input, review, and feedback on the budget. 4. The board approves, after careful consideration of sound business and fiscal practices, the school system’s budget reflecting the strategic plan.
B. The board of education adopts policy for sound fiscal management and monitors the implementation of the budget in accordance with state laws and regulations.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The board develops policies to ensure sound fiscal management, including but not limited to: balanced budget requirements, spending level authorizations and permissions, deficit spending restrictions, establishment of special funds, and reserve maintenance requirements. 2. The board holds the superintendent accountable for the implementation of the budget in a manner consistent with the strategic plan. 3. The board establishes, through policy, the level of spending beyond the budget for which the superintendent must seek board approval. 4. The board monitors the school system’s audits, monthly financial reports, and additional financial reports needed to make informed decisions and to ensure execution of the budget in a manner consistent with the strategic plan and strategic goals of the school system. 5. The board reviews and addresses annually audited financial records and audit findings, with a goal of proactively preventing audit exceptions. 6. The board addresses fiscal matters in a manner consistent with law, sound business practice, and ethical principles regarding conflicts of interest in Domain VIII - Ethics. 7. The board operates in a manner such that the board’s financial decisions and actions do not provide unfair financial or other opportunistic advantages to any member of the governance leadership team, their family members, associates, or individual constituents.

DOMAIN VIII: Ethics	
Domain Description: The governance leadership team conducts themselves, collectively and individually, in an ethical and professional manner.	
Standards	Elements
A. The board of education adheres to, adopts and practices a Code of Ethics, avoids conflicts of interest, and annually reviews ethical standards to ensure and enhance governance structure and organizational effectiveness.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The board adopts and adheres to an ethics policy that includes, as a minimum, an ethical code of behavior based on the Georgia State Model Code of Ethics as shown in Appendix A. 2. The superintendent adheres to the Georgia Professional Standards Commission Code of Ethics for Educators. 3. The board adopts and adheres to a Conflict of Interest policy that includes state law requirements, as outlined in the Georgia State Conflict of Interest Provisions as shown in Appendix B.