

Reinventing Your School Board

How to

Govern Coherently

October 29, 2021

North Dakota School Boards Association

Annual Convention

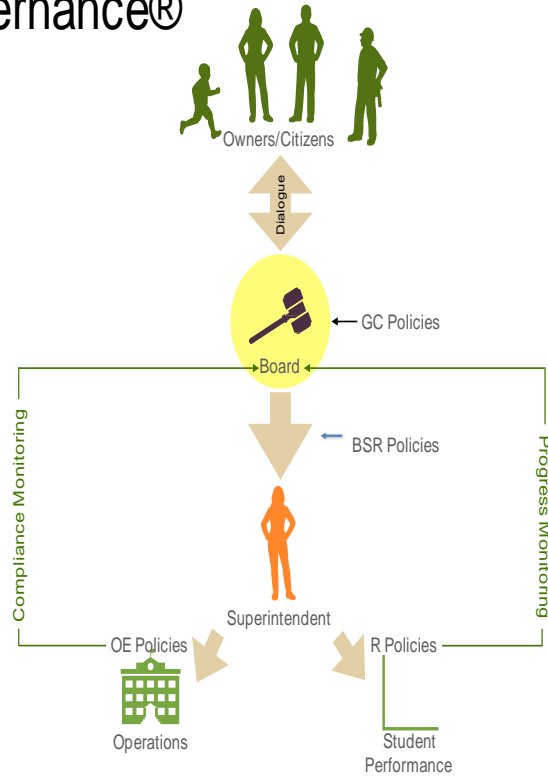
Dr. Randy Quinn. Senior Partner

AGI: Aspen Group International LLC

*Governance Leadership Development
P.O. Box 3788 Gulf Shores, AL. 36547*

*Linda J. Dawson, linda@aspengroup.org, 303.478.0125
Dr. Randy Quinn, randy@aspengroup.org, 303.250.9000
Ginger Hopkins, ginger@aspengroup.org, 864.784.8648*

Coherent Governance®



Key:
GC: Governance Culture
B/SR: Board-Superintendent Relations
OE: Operational Expectations
R: Results



Policy Type: Governance Culture**Governing Commitments**

The Board will govern lawfully with primary emphasis on results for students; encourage full exploration of diverse viewpoints; focus on governance matters rather than administrative issues; observe clear separation of Board and Superintendent roles; make all official decisions by formal vote of the Board; and govern with long-term vision.

1. The Board will function as a single unit. The opinions and personal strengths of individual members will be used to the Board's best advantage, but the Board faithfully will make decisions as a group, by formal vote. No officer, individual, or committee of the Board will be permitted to limit the Board's performance or prevent the Board from fulfilling its commitments.
2. The Board is responsible for its own performance and commits itself to continuous improvement. The Board will assure that its members are provided with training and professional support necessary to govern effectively. As a means to assure continuous improvement, the Board regularly and systematically will monitor all policies in this section and will assess the quality of each meeting by debriefing the meeting following its conclusion.
3. To ensure that the Board's business meetings are conducted with maximum effectiveness and efficiency, members will:
 - a. come to meetings adequately prepared
 - b. speak only when recognized
 - c. not interrupt each other
 - d. not engage in "side" conversations
 - e. not repeat what has already been said
 - f. not "play to the audience" or monopolize the discussion
 - g. support the president's efforts to facilitate an orderly meeting
 - h. communicate openly and actively in discussion and dialog to avoid surprises
 - i. encourage balanced participation of all members
 - j. practice respectful body language
4. The Board will use a consent agenda as a means to expedite the disposition of routine matters and dispose of other items of business it chooses not to discuss. All administrative matters delegated to the Superintendent that are required to be approved by the Board will be acted upon by the Board via the consent agenda.
5. An item may be removed from the consent agenda upon concurrence of a majority of the Board members present and voting.
6. The Board will direct the district through policy. The Board's major focus will be on the results expected to be achieved by students, rather than on the strategic choices made by the Superintendent and staff to achieve those results.

Policy Type: Board/Superintendent Relationship

Authority of the Superintendent

The Board will provide direction to the Superintendent through written policies that define the organizational results to be achieved for students and define operational conditions and actions to be accomplished or avoided.

1. The Board will develop **Results** policies instructing the Superintendent to achieve defined results for the students served by the district.
2. The Board will develop **Operational Expectations** policies which express the Board's values about operational conditions and actions. Certain of these values will be expressed positively to assure that the stated actions occur, and the identified conditions exist and will be stated as directives. Certain other values represent actions and conditions that are to be avoided and will be stated prohibitively.
3. As long as the Superintendent uses any reasonable interpretation of the Board's **Results** and **Operational Expectations** policies, the Superintendent is authorized to establish any additional district policies or regulations, make any decisions, establish any practices and develop any activities the Superintendent deems appropriate to achieve the Board's **Results** policies. The Superintendent is not expected to seek Board approval or authority for any such decisions falling within the Superintendent's area of delegated authority.
4. The Board may change its **Results** and **Operational Expectations** policies, and in so doing shift the boundary between Board and Superintendent areas of responsibility. The Board will respect and support any reasonable interpretation of its policies by the Superintendent, even though Superintendent decisions may not be the decisions the Board or its members may have made.

Adopted:

Monitoring Method: *Board self-assessment*

Monitoring Frequency: *Annually*

B/SR-5

Policy Type: Board/Superintendent Relationship

Superintendent Accountability

The Board considers Superintendent performance to be identical to district performance. District accomplishment of the Board's **Results** policies, and district operation according to the values expressed in the Board's **Operational Expectations** policies, will be considered successful Superintendent performance. These two components define the Superintendent's job responsibilities and are the basis for the Superintendent's performance evaluation.

1. The Board will determine organizational performance based upon a defined systematic monitoring process as outlined in its Annual Work Plan.
2. The Board will acquire monitoring data on **Results** and **Operational Expectations** policies by one or more of three methods:
 - a. By **Internal Report**, in which the Superintendent submits information that certifies and documents to the Board compliance or reasonable progress;
 - b. By **External Review**, in which an external third party selected by the Board assesses compliance or reasonable progress with applicable Board policies;
 - c. By **Board Inspection**, in which the whole Board, or a committee duly charged by the Board, formally assesses compliance or reasonable progress based upon specific policy criteria.
3. The consistent performance standard for **Operational Expectations** policies shall be whether the Superintendent has:
 - a. reasonably interpreted the policy;
 - b. complied with the provisions of the Board policy.
4. The consistent performance standard for **Results** policies shall be whether the Superintendent has:
 - a. reasonably interpreted the policy;
 - b. made reasonable progress toward achieving the outcomes defined by the Board's **Results** policies.
5. The Board will make the final determination as to whether the Superintendent's interpretation is reasonable, whether the Superintendent has complied and whether reasonable progress has been made. In doing so, the Board will apply the "reasonable person" standard.
5. All policies that instruct the Superintendent will be monitored according to a schedule and by a method determined by the Board and included in the Board's annual work plan. The Board may monitor any policy out of this defined sequence or method if it is determined by a majority of the Board that conditions warrant monitoring at times other than those specified by the annual schedule.
- 6.
7. Each _____, the Board will conduct a formal summative evaluation of the Superintendent. The summative evaluation will be based upon data collected and decisions made by the Board during

B/SR-5

the year related to the monitoring of **Results** and **Operational Expectations** policies. The Board will prepare a written evaluation document consisting of:

- a. A summary of the data derived during the year from monitoring the Board's **Results** and **Operational Expectations** policies;
- b. Conclusions based upon the Board's prior action during the year relative to the Superintendent's reasonable interpretation of each **Results** policy and whether reasonable progress has been made toward its achievement;
- c. Conclusions based upon the Board's prior action during the year relative to whether the Superintendent has reasonably interpreted and operated according to the provisions of the **Operational Expectations** policies.

Adopted:

Monitoring Method: *Board self-assessment*
Monitoring Frequency: *Annually*

_____ Board of Education

AGI Aspen Group International LLC ©

Policy Type: Operational Expectations

OE-6

Financial Administration

The Superintendent shall not cause or allow any financial activity or condition that materially deviates from the budget adopted by the Board, that cause or allow any fiscal condition that is inconsistent with achieving the Board's **Results** priorities or meeting any **Operational Expectations** goals; or that jeopardizes the financial health of the district.

The Superintendent will:

1. Assure that payroll and legitimate debts of the district are promptly paid when due.
2. Assure that all non-bid purchases are based upon comparative prices of items of similar value, including consideration of both cost and long-term quality.
3. Assure that all transactions in excess of _____, including the purchase of supplies, materials and equipment, and any contracted services except professional services, are based on a competitive bid process.
4. Coordinate and cooperate with the Board's appointed financial auditor for an annual audit of all district funds and accounts.
5. Make all reasonable efforts to collect any funds due the district from any source.
6. Keep complete and accurate financial records by funds and accounts in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles.
7. Publish a financial condition statement annually.

The Superintendent may not:

8. Expend more funds than have been received in the fiscal year unless revenues are made available through other legal means, including the use of fund balances, the authorized transfer of funds from reserve funds or from tax anticipation notes.
9. Indebt the organization.
10. Permanently transfer money from one dedicated fund to another.
11. Allow any required reports to be overdue or inaccurately filed.
12. Receive, process or disburse funds under controls that are insufficient under Generally Accepted Accounting Procedures.

Policy Type: Results

R-1

Mission

Each student will acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to achieve their personal goals, thrive in a diverse global society, and lead a healthy, self-fulfilling life.

Policy Type: Results

R-2

Academic Achievement

Each student will be literate and numerate, able to achieve their personalized goals.

Accordingly, each student will:

- 2.1 Achieve at individually and appropriately challenging levels and acquire academic competencies in the following disciplines:
 - 2.1.1 Language Arts (reading, writing, speaking, listening)
 - 2.1.2 Mathematics
 - 2.1.3 Sciences
 - 2.1.4 Social Studies (history, civics, economics, financial literacy, social justice)

- 2.2 Acquire the academic competencies needed to achieve their personal goals in:
 - 2.2.1 Career and Technical Education
 - 2.2.2 World Languages
 - 2.2.3 Creative and Performing Arts
 - 2.2.4 Health and Physical Education

- 2.3 Be technologically fluent and discerning consumers of knowledge and information; able to create, navigate, and use tools critically, ethically, and safely.

Policy Type: Results

R-3

Well-being

Each student will develop knowledge and skills to lead healthy, self-fulfilling, self-directed lives.

Accordingly, each student will:

- 3.1 Achieve personal goals in the following areas:
 - 3.1.1 **Cognitive development**, including critical, analytical, and creative thinking;
 - 3.1.2 **Social well-being**, including the ability to establish and maintain positive relationships with others;
 - 3.1.3 **Emotional well-being**, including recognizing, processing, and expressing their own thoughts, feelings, and behaviors to navigate life's challenges and maintain positive self-worth;
 - 3.1.4 **Moral and ethical character development**, including respect, empathy and compassion for others, and accountability for their own actions;
 - 3.1.5 **Physical development and wellness**, including making healthy and informed lifestyle choices.
- 3.2 Acquire the skills necessary to self-assess, self-advocate, and design solutions to accomplish personal goals.

Policy Type: Results

R-4

Members of a Diverse Global Community

Each student contributes to an effective and diverse community.

Accordingly, each student will:

- 4.1 Be a critical and creative thinker who seeks to understand diverse perspectives, solve problems, and communicate effectively.
- 4.2 Recognize and practice the duties, responsibilities, and rights of being a community member in a diverse, democratic society.

- 4.3 Act responsibly and ethically to build trust and establish positive relationships with others.
- 4.4 Be a constructive participant in their community (school, local community, country, and world).
- 4.5 Demonstrate the ability to work interdependently and collaboratively to promote learning, increase productivity, and achieve common goals.

Annual Work Plan

MONTH	GC	BSR	OE	RESULTS	ENGAGEMENT	BOARD DEVELOPMENT	OTHER BUSINESS
JAN							
FEB							
MAR							
APR							
MAY							
JUNE							
JULY							
AUG							
SEPT							
OCT							
NOV							
DEC							

RI – reasonable interpretation **B** – baseline **T** - target
M – monitoring **RM** – re-monitoring **I**- internal monitoring **E** – external monitoring **DI** – direct inspection

DURANGO 9R BOARD OF EDUCATION

Regular Board Meeting

Date: _____ **Time; 5:30 p.m.**

R-1 Results Policy: Academic Performance

Students will make reasonable progress toward one year's academic gain each year, with low achieving students progressing more quickly, in the following disciplines:

Reading - Writing - Math - Science

1. Convene – 5:30 p.m.

A. Call to Order and Roll Call

B. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance will be led by *(student name)* from *(name of school)*

C. Mission Statement

The Mission Statement will be read by *(student name)* from *(name of school)*

Each student develops the skills and attributes for lifelong learning and has the ability to compete and contribute to the global community.

2. Adopt agenda – 5:35 p.m.

GC-2

3. Showcasing Schools – 5:40 p.m.

R-1

*Students will make reasonable progress toward one year's academic gain each year, with low achieving students progressing more quickly, in the following disciplines:
Reading, Writing, Math, and Science.*

A. *(Name of school or program):* Principal's report presented by *(name of principal)*

4. Focus on Results – 5:55 p.m.

BSR-5

The Board's major policy focus will be on the results expected to be achieved by students, rather than on the tactical choices made by the superintendent and staff to achieve those results.

A. Presentation of Achievement Data

R-2

*Students will make reasonable progress toward one year's academic gain each year, with low achieving students progressing more quickly in the following disciplines:
Reading, Writing, Math, and Science.*

5. Focus on Operations – 6:45 p.m.

BSR-5

The Board will acquire monitoring data on Results and Operational Expectations policies by one or more of three methods:

a. By Internal Report, in which the Superintendent submits information that certifies and documents to the Board compliance or reasonable progress

A. Internal monitoring report on OE-6, Financial Administration

6. Public Comment – 7:00 p.m.

GC-3.3

Initiate and maintain constructive two-way dialogue with students, staff, parents and the citizens as a means to engage all stakeholders in the work of the Board and the District.

- 7. Monitoring Board Performance – 7:30 p.m. GC-3.6**
A. Annual Work Plan **GC-6**
The Board will follow an annual work plan that includes continual monitoring and review of all policies, dialog sessions with community and staff groups, and activities to improve Board performance.
- 8. Superintendent’s Consent Agenda – 7:40 p.m. GC-2.4**
All administrative matters delegated to the Superintendent that are required to be approved by the Board will be acted upon by the Board via the consent agenda.
A. Personnel Employment
B. Financial Statement
- 9. Board Consent Agenda – 7:45 p.m. GC-2.4**
The Board will use a consent agenda as a means to expedite the disposition of routine matters and dispose of other items of business it chooses not to discuss.
A. Approval of Minutes – September 7, 2021 and September 23, 2021
- Recess (5 minutes)**
- 10. Board Debrief of Meeting – 7:55 p.m. GC-2.2**
The Board will assess the quality of each meeting by debriefing the meeting following its conclusion.
- 11. Adjourn – 8:00 p.m.**

(Date)

Dear _____:

The Board met in closed session to conduct your annual performance evaluation. As you are aware, our evaluation is based on two components: a summary of the year's monitoring of student achievement progress on our Results policies and district compliance with our Operational Expectations policies. By Board policy, these are the two components used by the Board to judge the performance of both the district and the superintendent.

Overall, there is much to commend concerning your personal performance and your leadership of the district. We respect the job you have done as the Superintendent of this complex organization. You model the dedication we expect of all employees with your work ethic, call for instructional leadership and academic rigor and pursuit of good working relationships with all of us who work to support students.

Based on the Board's monitoring of its Operational Expectations policies, it seems clear that operationally, the district is performing well in all areas addressed by the policies. In terms of Results, we continue to be concerned with student achievement and the continued failure to make reasonable progress.

We will summarize below some of the specific performance areas that the Board believes are working especially well, as well as a few areas that deserve attention during the coming year.

Below is a summary of the Board's conclusions resulting from our monitoring of OE and R policies during the past year:

A. Operational Expectations Policies

OE-1, Global Operational Expectation: The Board believes that OE-1 should be monitored, as are all other OE policies. We believe we all are in agreement that there is little reason to develop elaborate indicators and monitoring systems for such a broad policy. However, it seems reasonable to use the outcomes of monitoring all other OE policies to document OE-1 compliance. Essentially, the Board has done most of what is required to effectively monitor OE-1, except that the final step—judging compliance—has not been taken. Formal monitoring of OE-1 should be added to the Board's Annual Work Plan for next year.

OE-3, Treatment of Constituents: The Board believes you are due commendation for building strong relations with various elements of the community. Your openness and honesty with parents and community are appreciated, and the Board believes this valued relationship building with various constituencies will serve us, you and the district well. We note, in particular, your effectiveness in broadening constituent work to include our recent legislative and advocacy linkage.

OE-4, Personnel Administration: As noted in the OE-4 report feedback, the Board is concerned about retention (the revolving door at the neediest schools) and attrition rates for staff. In addition, we expect that in the next monitoring report classified staff will be included.

In the future, the Board will expect that employment decisions referenced in OE-4.4 will consistently follow established district hiring practices that avoid appointments without application and interview protocols. The Board will add language to its OE-4.4 to assure clear understanding of its value about hiring practices.

Although the Board failed to discuss this issue during the monitoring of this policy, we have for some time been concerned about the district's performance related to OE-4.10, employee evaluation. With regard to district administrator and principal evaluations specifically, the Board believes that high priority should be assigned to developing and presenting to the Board, for its information, a plan that addresses all pertinent elements of effective evaluation. This plan should assess not only individual performance as district or

site instructional leaders that can lead to increased student achievement, but also their effectiveness in assuring meaningful employee evaluation in their respective departments and schools.

There seems to be ambiguity and articulated concerns about lines of reporting as well as a clear understanding of evaluation responsibilities. This should be clarified to facilitate our many changes in personnel responsibilities and accountability.

OE-5 and OE-6, Financial Planning and Administration: The financial planning and management of the district's resources is one of our continuing strengths. The overall financial climate in which the district operates is and will continue to be unpredictable, but the Board has confidence that the district has the leadership and systems in place to continue to effectively manage the resources the residents have provided. The Board commends you for clear financial reporting that the Board finds easy to understand.

Consistent with the Board's stated values about long-term financial stability, the Board will expect a provisional plan addressing the pension cost challenge to be developed and presented by (date). Its purpose is to present alternatives to assist the Board. A final plan is to be approved by the board in March in order to provide guidance for the next budget.

OE-8, Communicating With the Board: The Board chose to use the Direct Inspection method to monitor OE-8 rather than relying on the customary Internal Report prepared and submitted by the Superintendent. Overall, we are pleased with the type and quality of information received from you. The Board's specific assessment of your compliance with the provisions of OE-8 are as follows:

8.1: The Board has accepted most monitoring reports as either compliant or as evidence of reasonable progress. We appreciate the improved data, especially cohort data, being presented in Results monitoring reports. However, the Board would benefit from, and will be expecting, stronger written data analyses in the evidence sections accompanied by information about your intended next steps. There is a sense that the Board at times receives an excessive amount of information with a scarcity of analysis of that information.

8.4: The Board recognizes and appreciates the improved flow of information relative to facilities decisions.

8.5: The Board appreciates the information it receives relative to anticipated media coverage.

OE-9, Communicating with the Public: The Board recognizes the significant improvements being made to the district web site. It is visually appealing, easy to navigate and in general very user friendly. Strategies celebrating the district's success are very visible and well done. Overall, we are pleased with the efforts to build public awareness of and support for district efforts. We appreciate your public relations initiatives to keep the public informed--recognizing students, district activities and innovative programs.

OE-11, Learning Environment/Treatment of Students: The Board looks forward to receiving its first monitoring report on this policy, which is a combined policy encompassing the prior policies on Discipline and the Learning Environment. That report is expected to address concerns previously expressed by the Board about the old OE-11 Discipline policy.

OE-12, Facilities: The Board takes great pride in the district's buildings and facilities, their quality maintenance and upkeep. Although we accepted the monitoring report on OE-12 as compliant, we are concerned that effective maintenance of our facilities is not uniform and consistently addressed throughout the district (OE-12.1). The Board will consider an amendment to OE-12.10 to highlight its concern about uniformity.

B. Results Policies

R-2, Academic Achievement: The following language is lifted from the prior year's summary of district performance:

“As we are certain you understand as well, student performance overall has not met our expectations. The failure to make reasonable progress in so many areas of Results is unacceptable to the Board. The specific areas of concern include: English Language Development, ELA, Math and Science. Our students have only one chance to succeed. If we fail as a district to make sure each student achieves, we have sacrificed their only chance for personal success.”

The Board sees little difference in the measured results of our students today compared to prior years. Additionally, we are concerned about the wide variations in achievement between and among schools.

The following statements also are lifted from that same summary:

“A course correction is needed now. We understand that our job is not to determine the strategies and actions that are necessary to change this direction. We believe the responsibility to do that rests with you and the key leaders you have surrounded yourself with. But our concern is acute and the time now is critical.”

This statement too applies to the current state of academic performance in the district. The Board recognizes the realities of delayed evidence following the initiation of new strategies, but this trend of unacceptable student performance has persisted far too long. The Board recognizes and supports the programs, procedures and actions that have been put into place during the past year to address this issue, but it also recognizes the urgency for results to be demonstrated as soon as possible, with priority assigned to ELA, ELD and Math.

C. General Commendations

As reflected in some prior formative conversations, the Board recognizes and appreciates a number of personal leadership qualities and skills you bring to the job, including your:

- Approachability and engagement
- Actions to build a strong team with members of the cabinet
- Demonstrated confidence in members of the cabinet and encouragement for them to be assertive
- Emphasis on increasing the instructional leadership skills of your principals
- High visibility within the district
- Thoughtful views about staffing
- Fresh perspective

D. Looking Ahead

The Board will look for demonstrated attention to the following priorities:

- Assuring a better and deeper understanding of the Board's policies and how they drive district direction
- Assuring uniform accountability, at all sites and levels, throughout the district
- Clear analysis of data in Results reports (no “data dumping” or simple restating of data charts)
- Assuring that any visual presentations support the analysis of data, not simply restating the data
- Less emphasis on performance comparisons with other districts and more emphasis on measuring performance among our own school sites
- A clear, well-designed and coherent plan to enable the district to achieve its academic Results
- Assure clear and consistent focus and messaging by all district administrators on the Board's Results priorities for student achievement