

4. CSBA's Policy Process Evaluation Tool

The Board Policy Process Evaluation Tool is designed to be used by governance teams to thoroughly weigh and score a local educational agency's (LEA) policy development and implementation practices based on a set of accepted standards, principles, and/or priorities.

This document is meant to help each individual board member and the governance team as a whole understand the practices that create a strong policy culture. It provides a jumping off point for internal board discussions about local policy practices.

WHEN SHOULD THIS EVALUATION BE USED?

Ideally, boards should evaluate their policy practices annually to determine how they can improve and where there are already strengths that can be built upon. The goal is to help the board create a culture that supports effective policy development. This can take some time, and periodic reflections are key.

While an annual evaluation might not be feasible, this tool can also help the board improve LEA governance by examining its policy practices at key moments. For example, boards may use it at their annual organizational meeting to set the tone for the policy practices for new and continuing board members, following a training such as CSBA's Good Beginnings workshop, or when the board has hired a new superintendent. They might choose to do it in cadence with their Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) reporting requirements or another planning meeting. If the board is embarking on a full revamping of the LEA's policy manual through a CSBA-facilitated Policy Development Workshop, it is recommended that the board do this evaluation before adoption of the newly drafted policy manual, to understand how the manual will stay compliant and relevant moving forward.

HOW TO USE THIS POLICY EVALUATION

This policy evaluation tool should be used by governance teams (board and superintendent) that wish to ensure that their LEA values, mission, and policy goals are aligned with their policy practices.

Prior to a group discussion, individual board members should complete the evaluation separately. The governance team should then convene to discuss their individual results to identify where there is agreement on the LEA's current policy practices. This is important for refining norms and surfacing potential areas of disconnect, so the board can set common goals around the LEA's policy practices. Additionally, the conversation should include alignment of norms and practices related to the superintendent and LEA staff role. Each LEA must determine how to best adapt these practices to their local context and community, although some recommendations are included in the Policy Framework and other documents that accompany this tool. *Note:* While the tool may be used for self-study to help each board member reflect on local practices, when possible, the responses by the governance team can be used to improve and align policy development processes as a whole.

Scoring

The enclosed rubric is designed to address each dimension of the policy principles outlined within CSBA's Policy Framework. Each dimension of the policy principles is presented on a spectrum, with activities in each column ranging from **Not Present (0)**, **Beginning (1)**, **Developing (2)**, **Accomplished (3)**, to **Exemplary (4)**. It is not expected that LEAs will receive all 0s or all 4s across the principles. Instead,

for most LEAs policy practices will be represented at different points along the spectrum. Honestly reflecting and establishing where the board's current practices are is a good starting place in determining where future improvement should be made. The responses associated with Accomplished and Exemplary may be useful as aspirational goals for further governance development.

	Not Present (0)	Beginning (1)	Developing (2)	Accomplished (3)	Exemplary (4)
<p>How are our local priorities reflected in our policy creation and monitoring?</p> <p>POLICY PRINCIPLE: <i>Local priorities</i></p>	<p>Board policies are not aligned with local priorities and values.</p> <p>There are no processes to engage in building community consensus around local priorities.</p>	<p>A few board policies align with local priorities, but they are not articulated.</p> <p>Local priorities are mentioned informally but are not clearly documented in board policies.</p> <p>There is limited or no engagement with the community to define or agree on these priorities.</p> <p>Monitoring of alignment is not in place.</p>	<p>The board includes some policies that align with some values in various LEA documents, but articulation is inconsistent.</p> <p>The board has begun identifying and documenting some local priorities.</p> <p>There are ad hoc efforts to engage stakeholders in discussing priorities, but no formal or consistent process.</p> <p>Monitoring efforts are minimal or not yet systematic.</p>	<p>The majority of board policies align with local priorities, and there is a clear attempt to articulate them.</p> <p>Local priorities are clearly stated in some policy documents. The board uses a defined process to consult stakeholders, though it may lack consistency or depth.</p> <p>There are emerging efforts to monitor alignment between LEA practices and local priorities.</p>	<p>Most board policies are intentionally aligned with local priorities, and they are clearly and consistently articulated.</p> <p>The board has clearly articulated local priorities in LEA policy documents.</p> <p>A robust, well-documented process for community engagement and consensus building is in place.</p> <p>The board consistently monitors and evaluates the alignment between LEA practices and local priorities, using data and stakeholder feedback to inform ongoing policy development.</p>
<p>Are we compliant with state and federal law?</p> <p>POLICY PRINCIPLE: <i>Compliance</i></p>	<p>Many board policies do not comply with state requirements, including mandated policies and regulations.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>The board has no process for verifying the compliance status of their board policies with state and federal law.</p>	<p>Board policies do not consistently comply with key federal and state requirements, and/or many policies are outdated.</p>	<p>The board has most of the mandated policies and regulations. Most are regularly updated as new requirements are enacted.</p>	<p>The board has all mandated policies and regulations recommended by CSBA and has a process for regularly checking to ensure policies are current.</p>	<p>The board has all required policies and regularly convenes a policy subcommittee that reviews all mandatory policies and regulations and ensures that other policies and regulations align with state and federal law and recent court decisions.</p>

	Not Present (0)	Beginning (1)	Developing (2)	Accomplished (3)	Exemplary (4)
<p>Do we have a process for considering the barriers to implementation?</p> <p>POLICY PRINCIPLE: <i>Implementation</i></p>	There is no implementation discussion by the board or plan for implementation.	There is minimal implementation discussion, but the board makes little to no planning for continual monitoring.	<p>When considering policies, the board discusses implementation barriers and asks the superintendent to develop a plan of action to remedy them.</p> <p>The board considers what supports staff will need for implementation and how to monitor implementation.</p>	<p>The board holds substantive discussions about implementation (when needed) before considering adoption, identifies potential barriers to implementation, and ensures there is a plan to implement the policy.</p> <p>The board actively seeks input into the support needed for implementation and monitoring.</p>	<p>The board ensures the LEA holds collaborative conversations with stakeholders who will implement policy and those who the policy will impact to best understand how to implement it.</p> <p>When appropriate, there is a monitoring plan in place to facilitate accountability for successful implementation.</p>
<p>What is the process for considering the intended impacts of policies on instruction?*</p> <p>POLICY PRINCIPLE: <i>Instructional impact</i></p> <p><i>*If applicable. Not all policies have implications for instruction.</i></p>	The board does not discuss the potential instructional impact of policies.	There is minimal discussion on the instructional impact of policies.	The board occasionally discusses the potential impacts on instruction and how they align with the board's goals and priorities. Some attention is paid to addressing and preventing gaps in outcomes between student groups.	<p>The board regularly considers proposed policies' instructional impacts and how they align with the board's goals and priorities for student learning, including addressing and preventing gaps in outcomes between student groups.</p> <p>The board has some idea about the evaluation that will monitor success in implementation.</p>	<p>The board ensures the LEA has multiple collaborative conversations with teachers and staff responsible for implementing instructional changes. It ensures that all stakeholders understand the intended impacts of the instructional policies.</p> <p>There is a monitoring and evaluation process that is aligned with the LEA's overall instructional goals and other interim and summative assessments of student learning to ensure policies work as intended. Student group differences and intended instructional impacts are discussed before adoption, monitored after adoption, and addressed when identified.</p>

	Not Present (0)	Beginning (1)	Developing (2)	Accomplished (3)	Exemplary (4)
<p>How do we consider the resources needed to implement policies?</p> <p>POLICY PRINCIPLE: <i>Resources</i></p>	<p>There is no discussion about the resources necessary to implement policies successfully.</p>	<p>There is minimal discussion on the resources necessary to implement policies successfully.</p>	<p>The board has occasionally discusses the resources necessary to implement policies successfully and how those resources might shift over time.</p>	<p>The board has multiple conversations with LEA staff about the resources necessary to implement policies successfully. It occasionally does basic cost-benefit analyses to understand the inputs versus expected outputs.</p> <p>The board sets periodic reviews to understand if invested resources are well used.</p>	<p>The board regularly requests and reviews data from LEA staff and stakeholders and reviews past policies to identify potential resources to implement with fidelity. It evaluates policies for alignment with LEA-wide goals and priorities.</p> <p>The board has a monitoring and evaluation process that is regularly reviewed to evaluate return on investments.</p>
<p>How do we engage with the community about potential policy developments?</p> <p>POLICY PRINCIPLE: <i>Community engagement</i></p>	<p>There is no engagement of community members about potential policies outside of the board.</p>	<p>Community members are minimally engaged in key board policy decisions. Feedback is one-directional and concentrated on mandatory processes (LCAP, etc.).</p>	<p>The board invites feedback from community members outside of mandatory processes. Engagement is limited to one-directional feedback and largely takes place in board meetings.</p>	<p>The board regularly engages with community members in formal and informal events. Engagement includes conversations outside of board meetings (e.g., other LEA committees, town halls, etc.) and ensures diverse voices are part of the process.</p>	<p>The board consistently engages with community members, including subcommittees and other bodies, in decision-making for the LEA.</p> <p>A diverse range of community members participate because the LEA has worked to remove barriers to participation (child care, translation, meeting time, and location).</p>

	Not Present (0)	Beginning (1)	Developing (2)	Accomplished (3)	Exemplary (4)
<p>How have we considered the impact this will have on different student groups and staff?</p> <p>POLICY PRINCIPLE: <i>Equity</i></p>	<p>Board has no discussions about how decisions may affect different student or staff groups.</p>	<p>Board has minimal discussion about how decisions may have different effects on different student or staff groups.</p>	<p>Board discusses regularly the impact of the decision on UDP (unduplicated student groups) mandated by the state including low-income, English learners, and foster youth.</p> <p>Board has consulted with labor leaders to understand the impact of the decision.</p>	<p>The board regularly discusses UDP students and other student equity issues, including disaggregating student outcomes in programs and policy decisions by race, gender, and language status. The board uses state and internal data to make policy decisions.</p> <p>The board has consulted with labor leaders and rank-and-file members to understand policy decisions after protected classes by race, gender, and language status. The board uses state and internal data to make policy decisions.</p> <p>The board has consulted with labor leaders and rank-and-file members to understand how the policy decision impacts different staff.</p>	<p>The board establishes a process to regularly include students and staff in their policy discussions (for example, the creation of a policy subcommittee). If a policy subcommittee has been established, the board recruits diverse students and staff to serve on the policy subcommittee, which leads discussions about equity implications of the policy, particularly related to student learning outcomes.</p> <p>Boards solicit community engagement, including labor leaders and rank-and-file members, before the policy is brought to the full board, and disaggregated data, both state and local, are part of the policy subcommittees' recommendations to the board.</p> <p>The board facilitates specific discussions on groups of students that are underperforming and steps the LEA is taking to address gaps in outcomes.</p>
<p>What data will we use to define success?</p> <p>POLICY PRINCIPLE: <i>Data</i></p>	<p>The board uses no data when making policy decisions.</p>	<p>The board uses minimal data to make decisions, and data may not be up to date.</p>	<p>The board occasionally uses the California School Dashboard, other statewide data, and/or local collection when making decisions about relevant policies.</p>	<p>The board regularly uses a combination of statewide and local data collected by the LEA when making decisions.</p>	<p>The board engages community members and staff to help set priorities for data collection. Data is collected internally and reviewed regularly to help monitor existing board policy decisions and when making new policies.</p>

COMPANION TOOLS

In addition to Board Policy Process Evaluation, members can access the following documents:

Cover Letter — The cover letter provides a brief overview of the toolkit and suggestions for the review process.

Policy Framework 101 — The 101 document serves as a simplified version of the more comprehensive framework document, quickly orienting members to the tools and how to use them.

Policy Framework — The Policy Framework equips board members with the tools to create effective policies, fostering shared understanding and informed decision-making, while enhancing the local educational agency's (LEA) ability to adopt and maintain strong policy practices.

Individual Board Member Reflection — The individual reflection sheet poses a series of questions to help board members understand their current policy literacy and practices related to policy development.

Policy Principles Quick Reference Guide — The quick reference guide helps board members understand how to engage in high-quality policy review and discussion at the dais.

Additional CSBA Policy Resources

(Available by GAMUT subscription only)

GAMUT Policy — The most comprehensive set of sample school policies in California.

CSBA's Mandated and Conditionally Mandated Policy Language — A chart summarizing state and federal laws that mandate districts and COEs to adopt policies and regulations on specified topics, and the CSBA policy or regulation that addresses each mandate.

Policy Development Workshop — Develop a robust, up-to-date policy manual that addresses key issues and complies with state and federal mandates through a 2-3 day workshop facilitated by a CSBA consultant.

Policy Manual Reviews — A review of a board's policies resulting in a report identifying individual policies that need to be updated or added to the manual.