Dear Reviewer,

Thank you for taking the time to review the attached policy documents:

Board Policy Development Toolkit

Resources to strengthen policy literacy, evaluation, and governance practices

Contents

1. Policy Framework 101 (Quick Reference Guide)
2. Policy Framework
3. Individual Board Member Reflection
4. Board Policy Process Evaluation
5. Policy Principles Quick Reference Guide

Throughout the toolkit, the items above will be referred to by their assigned name and document number for consistency. Some documents can be used as standalone tools, but all items can be used as part of a more comprehensive process.

This toolkit has been designed to support and enhance the governance of school boards, helping board members assess and improve their policy literacy, engage with community stakeholders, and create robust and equitable policies for their local educational agencies (LEAs). These assets were created under the direction of the CSBA Board of Directors, Strategic Priority 1, Goal 3.

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 framework provides board members, regardless of experience, with guidance on policy development, review, and implementation. It emphasizes the importance of creating a shared governance culture, engaging community input, and maintaining legal compliance. By using this framework and adopting recommended practices, boards can create policies that foster high-quality teaching and learning environments while protecting the LEA from legal and financial risks.

Individual Board Member Policy Reflection This reflection tool is designed to help individual board members assess their own policy literacy and practices. It encourages trustees to identify areas for growth and provides structured prompts to guide their engagement with policy development. This reflection process is intended to help board members, whether novice or experienced, consider areas where they can improve their policy literacy and resources to support their learning.

Board Policy Process Evaluation This comprehensive tool is for evaluating existing board policy practices. It encourages reflection and discussion around key governance pillars such as local priorities, compliance, instructional impact, and equity. The document outlines a scoring rubric for board members to assess their practices on a spectrum from "Not Present" to "Outstanding," supporting continuous improvement through periodic evaluations from the board as a whole.

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. It is based on the policy principles and includes sample questions for governance teams to consider.

REVIEW INSTRUCTIONS

CSBA requests that reviewers assess these documents with the following focus areas in mind:

1. *Engagement of new and experienced board members:* Please evaluate how well these documents address the needs of both new and experienced board members. Consider whether the tools provided will help newer members familiarize themselves with board governance and if they offer sufficient depth to keep more experienced members engaged and improving.
2. *Alignment with CSBA resources (if known):* As these documents draw upon CSBA's framework and best practices, reviewers are encouraged to assess where additional CSBA resources (e.g., policy manuals, legal updates, governance workshops) could be integrated. Please highlight any areas where the documents could better align with existing CSBA tools to ensure cohesive policy practices across California school boards.
3. *Opportunities for improvement:* Consider whether these documents adequately cover the spectrum of board governance responsibilities, such as policy literacy, compliance, community engagement, and monitoring outcomes. Where do you see opportunities to expand or improve the content to better serve the needs of the LEA and its diverse community?
4. *Best practices in policy development:* Please provide feedback on how these documents facilitate the integration of best practices in policy development. Are there additional steps that could be included in the evaluation, reflection, or framework processes that would further enhance the board's ability to govern effectively?
5. *Thoughts on presentation and format:* Please provide feedback on how you believe these materials would best be used by board members (e.g., self-study, board workshops, online, conference workshops, etc.).

Your feedback will be invaluable in ensuring these documents are comprehensive, practical, and aligned with CSBA standards, enabling school boards to foster high-quality governance and improve student outcomes.

Thank you for your thoughtful review.

Sincerely,

Mary Briggs
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