POLICY TOOLKIT

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 for a strong policy culture. It is designed to be used as a jumping off point for internal board discussions about local policy practices.

COMPANION TOOLS

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 LEA's 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 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 to adopt policies and regulations on specified topics, and the CSBA policy or regulation that addresses each mandate.

Policy Document Workshops — 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 polices that need to be updated or added to the manual.

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 ensure the board has a culture that supports effective policy development. This can take some time, and periodic reflections are key.

This tool can help the board evaluate its policy practices at key moments to improve LEA governance. 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 Funding Formula (LCFF)/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 Policy Development Workshop facilitated by CSBA, it is recommended that the board do this evaluation before starting the workshop and before adoption of the newly drafted policy manual, to understand how the policy manual will stay compliant and relevant for the LEA moving forward.

HOW TO USE THIS POLICY EVALUATION

LEAs should use this evaluation tool before adopting new policies and in reviewing priority policies that have been identified by the board's values, LCAP or community request.

This policy evaluation tool should be used by boards that wish to ensure that their LEA values, mission, and policy goals are aligned with their policy practices.

Individual board members should complete the evaluation separately. 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. In this case, the governance team would convene to discuss their individual results in order to find out where there is agreement on the LEA's current policy practices. This is important in refining norms and surfacing potential areas of disconnect, so the board can set common goals around the LEA's policy practices. 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.

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)**, **Exemplary (4)**, to **Outstanding (5)**. It is not expected that all LEA's will have 0s or 5s, but rather that an LEA's policy practices likely fall along the spectrum. Honestly reflecting and establishing where the board's current practices are is a good starting place in determining where future progress should be made. The responses associated as Exemplary and Outstanding may be useful as aspirational goals for further governance development.

	Not Present (0)	Beginning (1)	Developing (2)	Accomplished (3)	Exemplary (4)	Outstanding (5)
How are our local priorities reflected in our policy creation and monitoring? *Policy Principle: Local Priorities*	Board policies are not aligned with local priorities and values. There are no processes to engage in building community consensus around local priorities.	A few board policies align with local priorities, but they are not articulated. Local priorities are mentioned informally but are not clearly documented in board policies. There is limited or no engagement with the community to define or agree on these priorities. Monitoring of alignment is not in place.	The board includes some polices that align with some values in various LEA documents, but articulation is inconsistent. The board has begun identifying and documenting some local priorities. There are ad hoc efforts to engage stakeholders in discussing priorities, but no formal or consistent process. Monitoring efforts are minimal or not yet systematic.	The majority of board policies align with local priorities, and there is a clear attempt to articulate them. 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. There are emerging efforts to monitor alignment between LEA practices and local priorities.	Most board policies are intentionally aligned with local priorities, and there is a clear attempt to articulate them. Local priorities are explicitly articulated in key policies. The board engages in a structured and inclusive process to build community consensus. There is a defined process for monitoring policy implementation and alignment with stated priorities, though it may not yet be fully optimized.	Most board policies are intentionally aligned with local priorities, and they are clearly and consistently articulated. The board has clearly articulated local priorities in LEA policy documents. A robust, well-documented process for community engagement and consensus building is in place. The board consistently monitors and evaluates the alignment between LEA practices and local priorities, using data and stakeholder feedback to inform ongoing policy development.
Are we compliant with state and federal law? *Policy Principle: Compliance*	Many board policies do not comply with state requirements, including mandated policies and regulations.	Board policies do not consistently comply with key federal and state requirements, and/or many policies are outdated.	The board has most of the mandated policies and regulations. Most are regularly updated as new requirements are enacted.	The board has all mandated policies and regulations recommended by CSBA and has a process for regularly checking to ensure policies are current.	The board has all required policies and occasionally engages in a policy subcommittee to continuously review mandated policies to ensure they are current.	The board 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.

	Not Present (0)	Beginning (1)	Developing (2)	Accomplished (3)	Exemplary (4)	Outstanding (5)
What implementation barriers can we anticipate? *Policy Principle: Implementation*	There is no implementation discussion by the board or plan for implementation.	There is minimal implementation discussion, but no plan has been created for continual monitoring.	The board discussed implementation barriers and asked the superintendent to develop a plan of action to remedy them.	The board discussed implementation at multiple meetings before considering adoption, surfaced potential barriers to implementation, and has a plan to implement the policy.	The board has surveyed stakeholders to surface potential barriers to implementation. It has a policy implementation plan, monitoring, and future checks scheduled for board discussion.	There have been collaborative conversations with stakeholders who will implement policy and those who the policy will impact to best understand how to implement it. There is a monitoring plan in place to ensure and monitor successful implementation.
What is the intended impact on instruction? * *If applicable. Not all policies have implications for instruction. *Policy Principle: Instructional Impact*	The board has not discussed the potential instructional impact.	There is minimal discussion on the instructional impact of the policy.	The board has discussed potential impacts on instruction and how it aligns with the board's goals and priorities.	The board has had multiple conversations about the policy's potential instructional impacts and how it aligns with the board's goals and priorities for student learning. The board has some idea of the evaluation that will take place to monitor success in implementation.	The board has facilitated a feedback process from teachers and other instructional staff to understand potential impacts on instruction. A plan is in place to continuously monitor these impacts and evaluate the policy's success alongside other academic interventions overseen by the board.	The board has ensured the LEA has had multiple collaborative conversations with teachers and staff responsible for implementing instructional changes. It ensures that all stakeholders understand the intended impact of the instructional policy. There is a monitoring and evaluation plan that is aligned with the LEA's overall instructional goals and other interim and summative assessments of student learning to ensure the policy is working as intended. Student subgroup differences and intended instructional impacts are discussed before adoption.

	Not Present (0)	Beginning (1)	Developing (2)	Accomplished (3)	Exemplary (4)	Outstanding (5)
What resources do we need to implement this policy? *Policy Principle: Resources*	There is no discussion about the resources necessary to implement the policy successfully.	There is minimal discussion on the resources necessary to implement the policy successfully.	The board has discussed the resources necessary to implement the policy successfully and how those resources might shift over time.	The board has had multiple conversations with LEA staff about the resources necessary to implement the policy successfully. It has done a basic cost-benefit analysis to understand the inputs versus expected outputs. The board has set periodic reviews to understand if invested resources are well used.	The board has collected data from stakeholders to understand what resources are needed to implement policy and done a cost-benefit analysis that includes the LEA's goals and priorities. The board has a monitoring plan to evaluate success and return on investment.	The board has collected data from LEA stakeholders and reviewed past policies to determine potential resources to implement with fidelity. The board has a cost-benefit analysis that is aligned with LEA-wide goals and priorities to ensure that resources are best used. The board has a monitoring and evaluation plan that is regularly reviewed to evaluate return on investment.
How have we engaged with the community about this issue and potential policy development? *Policy Principle: Community Engagement*	There is no engagement of community members outside of the Board.	Community members are minimally engaged in key board decisions. Feedback is one-directional and concentrated on mandatory processes (LCAP, etc.).	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.	The board regularly engages with community members in formal and informal events. Engagement includes conversations outside of board meetings and mandatory processes and ensures diverse voices are part of the process.	The board includes community members in key decisions and regularly solicits feedback from diverse community members. The board ensures community members are consulted in diverse settings and at all times to solicit quality feedback.	The board includes community members in subcommittees and other bodies to engage community members regularly in decision-making for the LEA. Diverse community members participate because barriers to participation have been removed (childcare, translation, meeting time, and location).

	Not Present (0)	Beginning (1)	Developing (2)	Accomplished (3)	Exemplary (4)	Outstanding (5)
How have we considered the impact this will have on different student groups and staff? *Policy Principle: Equity*	Board has no discussion about how decisions may affect different student or staff groups.	Board has minimal discussion about how decisions may have different effects on different student or staff groups.	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. Board has consulted with labor leaders to understand the impact of the decision.	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. 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. The board has consulted with labor leaders and rank and file members to understand how the policy decision impacts different staff.	Board regularly includes students and staff as part of the policy subcommittee and has discussions about equity implications for the policy before it is brought to the board for review and voting. Disaggregated data is part of both policy subcommittee and full board discussions. Diverse community members are solicited to give feedback on the proposed policy.	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. Boards solicit community engagement 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. The board facilitates specific discussions on groups of students that are underperforming and steps the LEA is taking to address gaps in outcomes.
What data will we use to define success? *Policy Principle: Data*	The board uses no data when making decisions.	The board uses minimal data to make decisions, which may not be up to date.	The board uses the California School Dashboard and other statewide data collection when making decisions.	The board uses a combination of statewide and local data collected by the LEA and statewide entities when making decisions.	The board uses all available statewide databases and sets local data metrics that they collect and monitor like community engagement, school climate, and interim student assessment.	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 decisions and when making new decisions.