

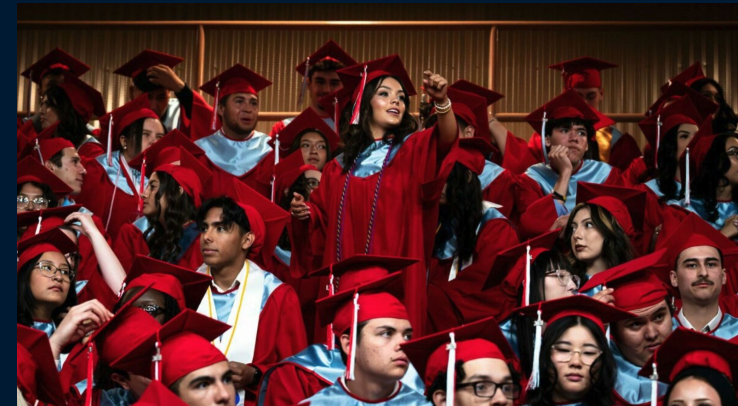
Leading as a United 'Team of Six'

Building Trust and Collective Impact
for Veteran School Board Members



New Mexico School Boards Association
Cooperative Education Services

June 4, 2026



Welcome and Thank You for Serving on the Board

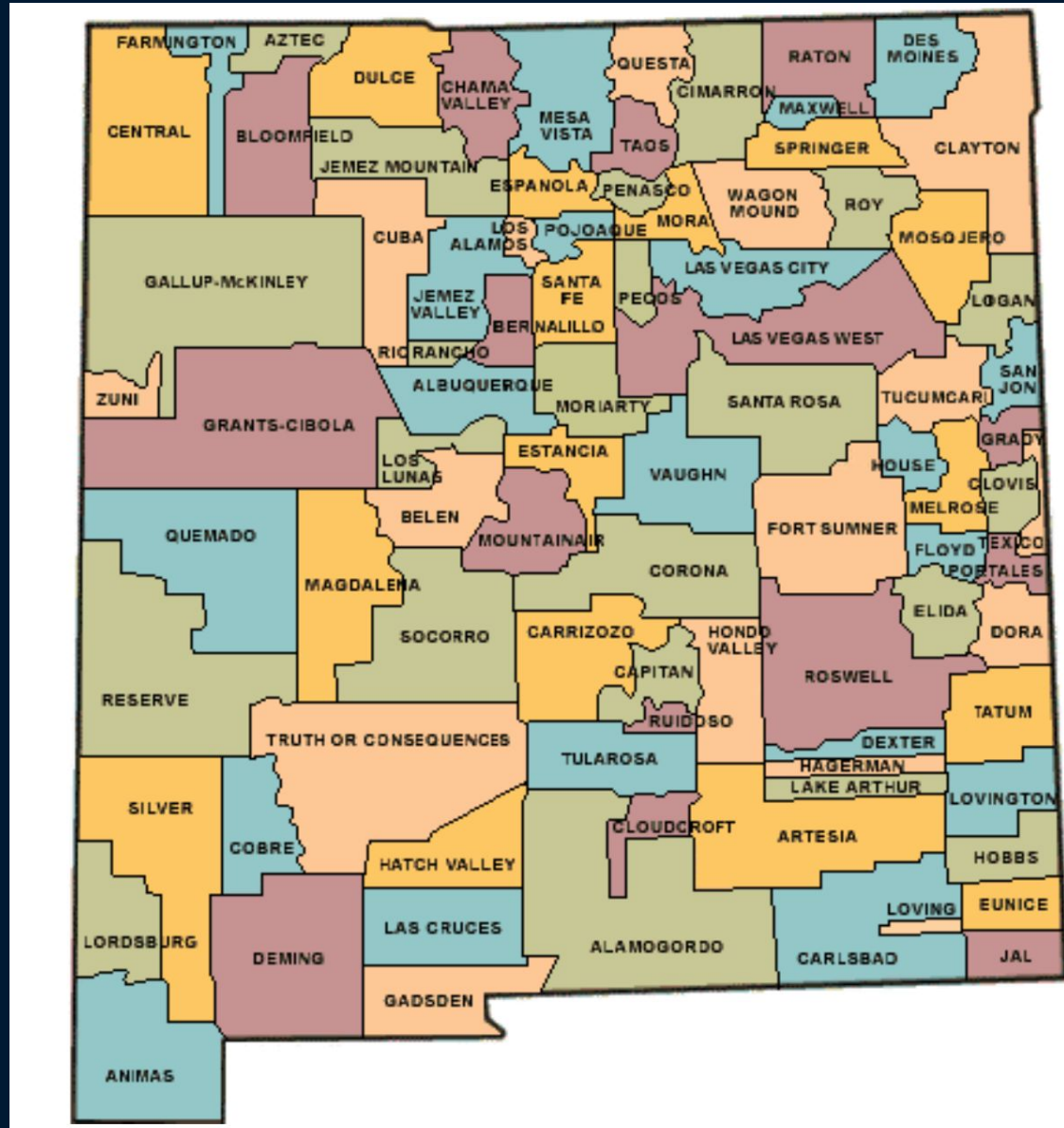


Table share

1. Name and school district
2. Years serving on the School Board and in the education system
3. Ideas about "Team of Six"

Today's Agenda

1. Full engagement and participation
2. Recognize the unique strengths of each board member, student, teacher, and school district leader
3. Ask hard and important questions

The 'Team of Six' Model



Gear 1. Strategic Focus

Aligning the board's Vision and Values with the superintendent's operational expertise.

Gear 2. One Governing Unit

The 5 Elected Members + 1 Superintendent function as a singular entity in leadership.

*7 Board Members in Albuquerque

Gear 3. Collective Trust

Trust impacts every interaction, relationship, and school board decision

Why Does This Matter?

K-12 school board governance research: the most effective boards that have an impact on student achievement are:

- Highly functional, data-driven with shared goals
- Hold cohesive working relationships with administration
- Keep true to the mission

In contrast, dysfunctional leadership can have the opposite effect and often waste money on “adult issues” instead of students as a priority

Source: The School Board Lighthouse Studies & Modern K-12 Governance Frameworks (Lone Star Governance)

Before you can build collective trust, you must establish credibility.

Character (Who you are):

1. **Integrity:** Being honest, walking your talk, and having the courage to act according to your values.
2. **Intent:** Your motives and agendas. Trust grows when it is clear that you genuinely care about students, staff and families (win-win).

Competence (What you can do):

3. **Capabilities:** Your talents, skills, knowledge, and capacity to perform tasks effectively.
4. **Results:** Your track record. People judge your credibility based on relationships and what you have successfully delivered in the past.

Table Conversation: Identify one change to move your board toward collective trust.

Leading as the Team of Six:

Strategic Governance for Student Success

The “Team of Six” Model



A unified leadership body consisting of the school board and the superintendent.

Strategic Levers for Collective Impact

High-Support, High-Accountability

Supporting the superintendent's leadership without crossing the line into micromanagement.



Equity-Centered Leadership

Using the Martinez/Yazzie ruling to evaluate impact on closing achievement gaps.



Shift from “Oversight” to “Visionary”

Moving beyond basic responsibilities to governance that demonstrably improves student outcomes.



The Theory of Action

Directly linking board-superintendent alignment to specific student achievement markers.



Communication Guardrail Protocols

Maintaining a unified front during fiscal uncertainty or community pressure.



Review the Team's Statutory Authority

BOARD (The "What" & "Why")

Policy Development: Sets the formal rules and overall direction under § 22-5-4.

Strategic Budgeting: Reviews and approves annual resource allocation and monthly adjustments.

Hiring and Evaluation: Employs and evaluates one person: the CEO.

SUPERINTENDENT (The "How")

Administrative Execution: Implements board policies under § 22-5-14.

Operational Budgeting: Prepares the budget and manages expenditures.

Personnel Management: Recruits, employs, inducts, develops, and retains all district staff.

| Boundaries: Who Holds the Line?

Consider the three real-world scenarios below. Determine if the action falls under **Board Policy (§ 22-5-4)** or **Superintendent Operation (§ 22-5-14)**.

Scenario A

A group of parents demands the removal of a specific bilingual program reading textbook used at your middle school.

Board Policy

Supt. Ops

Scenario B

The district needs to restructure its central office personnel to better meet Martinez/Yazzie equity targets.

Board Policy

Supt. Ops

Scenario C

Changing the district's minimum reserve fund from 5% to 8% due to patterns of state and federal fiscal volatility.

Board Policy

Supt. Ops

Debate Focus: How does keeping a clean statutory boundary support the "Team of Six" model?

Balancing Performance, Accountability, and Support

How often have you seen “High Support” and “Low Accountability”?



Low Support / High Accountability

Micromanagement:
High pressure, low trust.
Leads to high turnover
and operational friction.



High Support / Low Accountability

Complacency: Good
relationships but lack of
focus on student
outcome data.



The Gold Standard

High Support / High
Accountability:
Trust-based leadership
focused on visionary
goals.

High-Support vs. Micromanagement

Veteran school board success requires knowing the boundaries

Example: Gold Standard

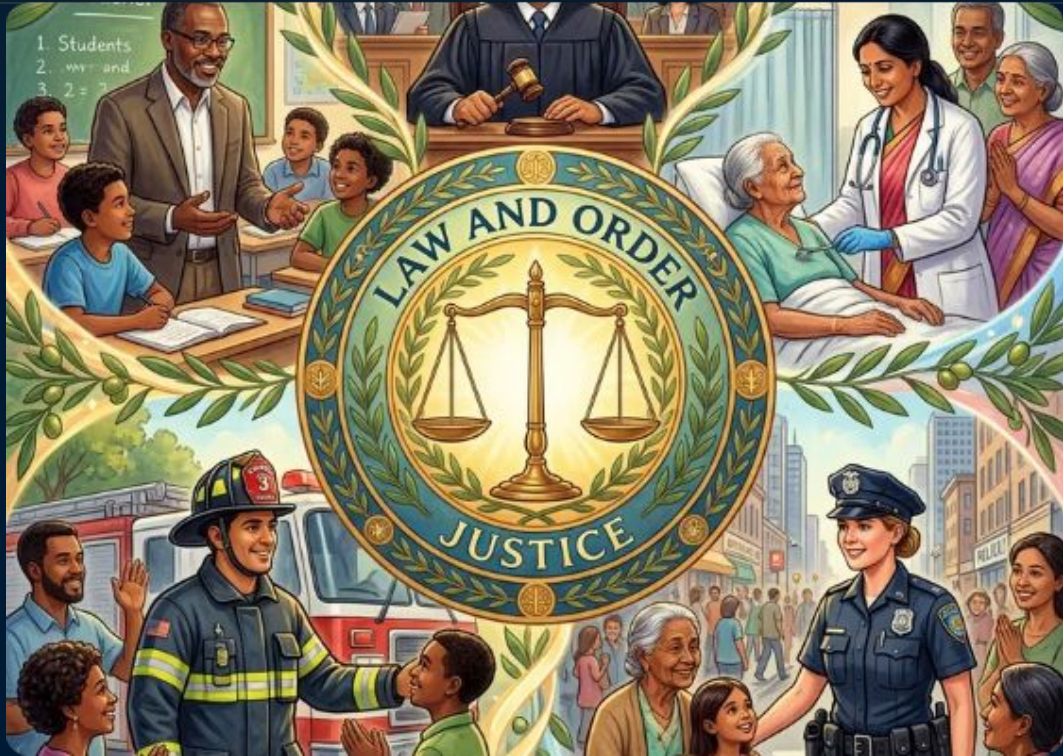
- Co-developing clear data monitoring calendars with the Superintendent and District Leadership Team
- Directing all operational complaints to the Superintendent's formal routing system per Board Policy

Example: Micromanagement Pitfall

- Requesting custom operational data directly from individual campus-level Principals without the Superintendent's knowledge
- Demanding a brief about teacher scheduling and planning periods

Prompt: Identify one change to move your board from potential Pitfalls to High Support

The Martinez/Yazzie Pillars



Pillar 1: Sufficient Educational Opportunities (NM Constitution)

Pillar 2: Equitable Funding Alignment for Identified Groups

Pillar 3: Culturally and Linguistically Responsive

Operationalizing Martinez/Yazzie Allocations

Evaluate your board's resource alignment using this matrix:

1. Non-Compliance

Resources distributed entirely using standard per-pupil historic formulas without adjusting for localized subgroup gaps.

2. Basic Compliance

Meeting basic regulatory mandates for Equity Councils but keeping strategic resource decisions separated from council input.

3. Proactive Alignment

Using demographic and academic subgroup profiles to change how specialized teaching assets are deployed to low-performing campuses.

4. Visionary Equity Governance

The Target Zone: Full budget alignment where funding choices meet strategic, data-proven intervention to close achievement gaps between subgroups..

Prompt: Identify one change to move your board from Quadrant 2 into Quadrant 4.

The School Board Equity Cycle

■ Assessment ● Advisement ● Alignment ● Funding

Leadership Team evaluates and reports achievement gaps using trend data	Recommendations provided to Superintendent and Board	Board integrates advisement into the Strategic Plan	Budget is aligned to execute the Equity Action Plan
--	---	---	---

Navigating Volatility with Unity



The Protocol for Unity: True governance requires that the board acts as a singular entity, particularly during times of fiscal uncertainty or intense community pressure.

Individual vs. Collective: You may speak as an individual, but you do not speak for the Board outside of official action.

The Post-Vote Mandate: While vigorous disagreement during deliberation builds credibility and considers diverse perspectives, the board must speak with one unified voice after a decision is made.

Transparency as Armor: Utilizing the Open Meetings Act (OMA) and Inspection of Public Records Act (IPRA) strictly as tools for public trust and informed, data-driven decision making.

Governance Theory of Action

Move from "Equal" distribution to "Equitable" investment based on student needs



IF...

The Board provides high-support and clear policy guardrails to the Superintendent...



AND...

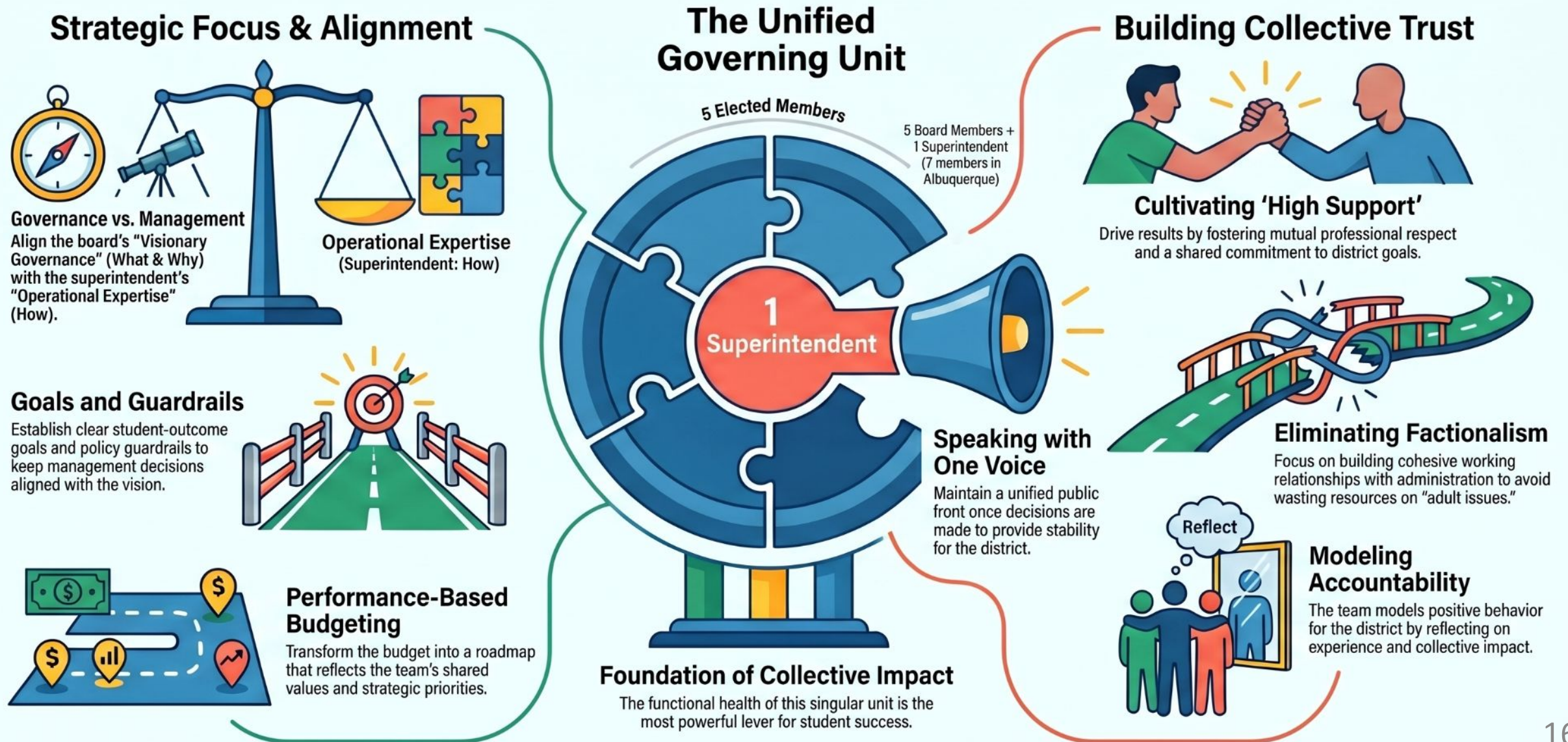
The Superintendent implements evidence-based, instructional systems...



THEN...

Student achievement gaps will narrow and the district constitutional mandate is met.

The 'Team of Six' Model: A Unified Approach to Student Success



The Visionary Mandate

True North



Transform Your Board: Elevate your service by fully embracing your role as the policymaking, outcomes-focused body.



Focus on the WHAT and WHY: Establish the strategic vision and the student outcome goals.



Trust the WHO to handle the HOW: Empower the administration to execute management.



Fulfill the Promise: Govern as a unified team to guarantee the promise of a quality, uniform, and sufficient education for every child in New Mexico.



Please scan the QR code to complete your session feedback and attendance record.

Questions and Thank You

Building the Future of New Mexico Education Together

Dr. Kurt
Steinhaus

[ksteinhaus@ces.
org](mailto:ksteinhaus@ces.org)

mobile:
505-670-0048



*Please scan the QR code to
complete your session feedback
and attendance record.*