Strategic Planning for School Board Members

Navigating Future Success for Student Outcomes

One-hour interactive virtual training

NMPED CATEGORY E

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Start with your district

Opening poll + chat waterfall

POLL

How would you describe your district's current strategic plan?

A Current, measurable, routinely monitored

B Current, not consistently monitored

C In development or being revised

D Outdated or mainly compliance-focused

E I am not sure

CHAT WATERFALL

In three words or fewer...

What should a district strategic plan accomplish?

Type your response.
Do not press Enter until prompted.

Today’s learning journey

From governance role to district action

1 **Clarify**

Governance vs. administration

2 **Apply**

A five-step planning cycle

3 **Prioritize**

Data + stakeholder voice

4 **Strengthen**

SMART, equity-centered goals

5 **Monitor**

Accountability without micromanaging

6 **Commit**

One next step for your district

Strategic planning is governance

The board owns direction and desired outcomes

COMMUNITY — **Aspirations**

↓

BOARD — **Priorities**

↓

DISTRICT — **Action**

↓

STUDENTS — **Outcomes**

Board responsibilities

Set direction • Adopt goals • Align resources • Monitor results

Who owns the decision?

Type B for Board or S for Superintendent and staff

Adopt student-outcome goals — B	Review progress-monitoring data — B
Select a reading intervention — S	Adjust instructional schedules — S
Approve an aligned budget — B	Seek community input on long-term priorities — B + S
Assign implementation teams — S	Recommend strategies and milestones — S

Test: Is the board defining results, or directing employees in how to produce them?

A five-step strategic planning cycle

Strategic planning is a continuous learning process

CHAT WATERFALL **Where does your district most often get stuck?**

Use a balanced evidence set

Pair outcome data with stakeholder experience

OUTCOMES

Achievement • growth • graduation

ENGAGEMENT

Attendance • climate • safety

VOICE

Students • families • staff • community

ACCESS

Opportunity across student groups

CAPACITY

Staffing • programs • finances

CONTEXT

Culture • language • local strengths

1 What does the evidence tell us? 2 Whose experience is missing? 3 What can the district influence?

Breakout challenge: Example Public School

DISTRICT SNAPSHOT

- Reading proficiency: 31–34% for three years
- Chronic absenteeism: 18% → 27%
- Graduation: 76% → 82%
- Families cite transportation + communication barriers
- Teachers report initiative fatigue
- Students report uneven access to support
- Community wants career pathways + visible progress
- Capacity: no more than three priorities

YOUR TASK

- Select ONE priority.
- Cite TWO pieces of evidence.
- Name ONE stakeholder group to engage.
- Draft ONE student-centered outcome.
- Identify ONE risk to monitor.

Roles: facilitator • recorder • equity checker • reporter

Prepare a 60-second board recommendation.

Report out: Make the case

60 seconds per group

LISTEN FOR

1. Is the evidence connected to the priority?
2. Is the outcome strategic, not operational?
3. Whose voice is centered or missing?
4. What might the district need to stop doing?

React: 👍 evidence ♥ equity 💡 clear outcome

Turn a priority into a measurable outcome

Add a baseline, target, deadline, and equity lens

TOO BROAD

Improve student reading.

STRONGER GOAL

By May 2029, increase grades 3–5 reading benchmark attainment from 34% to 55%, while reducing the lowest-performing student-group gap from 18 to no more than 8 percentage points.

S **Specific**

M **Measurable**

A **Achievable**

R **Relevant**

T **Time-bound**

E **Equity-centered**

The board adopts the outcome. The superintendent recommends strategies, milestones, and implementation responsibilities.

Goal-revision challenge

Rewrite the goal

“Increase student attendance.”

ADD

- Student group or grade span
- Baseline
- Target
- Deadline
- Equity or gap measure

Example: By the end of 2028–2029, reduce chronic absenteeism in grades 6–9 from 27% to 15% and reduce the gap for the highest-affected student group to fewer than 5 percentage points.

Monitor without micromanaging

Focus on results, evidence, alignment, risk, and accountability

BOARD SHOULD ASK

- Are we on the expected trajectory?
- Which student groups are benefiting?
- What evidence shows the strategy is working?
- Are resources aligned with the priority?
- What barriers require board-level action?
- What adjustment does the superintendent recommend?

BOARD SHOULD AVOID

- Directing individual employees
- Selecting programs during monitoring
- Relying only on anecdotes
- Changing goals whenever results fluctuate
- Treating activity as proof of impact
- Waiting until the plan ends to review progress

Governance question or operational question?

Vote G or O in the chat

What percentage of students is on track? G	Why did the principal schedule intervention third period? O
Which student groups are not improving? G	Which commercial program should the district buy? O
What adjustment does the superintendent recommend? G	Which teacher should lead the intervention team? O

Rule of thumb: Governance questions examine outcomes, alignment, risk, or accountability.

A practical board monitoring cycle

Build a predictable rhythm for accountability

BEFORE

Receive concise report
Compare actual vs. target
Review groups + risks

→

DURING

Hear superintendent interpretation
Ask governance questions
Document decisions

→

AFTER

Communicate progress
Align goals, budget, policy
Track agreed follow-up

DASHBOARD MINIMUM

- Baseline
- Student-group results
- Superintendent interpretation
- Annual target
- Leading indicators
- Recommended adjustment
- Current result
- Key milestone
- Next review date

A sample strategic planning process

1

SOAR

Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results

2

COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Develop partnerships, build support

3

VISION + MISSION + CORE VALUES

Provide clear direction, align team, guide decisions

4

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

SMART Goals, Action Plans, Measures

5

ADOPT + IMPLEMENT + MONITOR

Stay the course with long-range perspective

Your district action plan

Choose one practice to start, stop, or strengthen

1. **One practice our board should start, stop, or strengthen is…**
2. **The first person or group we need to engage is…**
3. **Evidence that this action is helping will include…**
4. **I will raise this topic by…**

FINAL CHECK + COMMITMENT

Keep the plan alive.

- Begin with student needs and community aspirations.
- Adopt measurable outcomes, then align resources.
- Ask governance questions, not operational questions.
- Monitor routinely, learn, and adjust.

COMMITMENT

In one sentence: What will you do differently as a board member?

Thank You...

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