

NCSBA MASTER BOARD PROGRAM

The Master Board Program offers skills training for school board governance teams. Courses emphasize board development and growth in key leadership areas such as team and trust building, conflict resolution, goal setting, communication, managing change, ethics, problem solving, decision making, and evaluation. The program, which was developed by the North Carolina School Boards Association and the School of Government at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, allows the school district's leadership team to train together and address the issues that pertain to their individual school system. Veteran school board members and experienced public school administrators serve as trainers for the program. These individuals have critiqued the courses and received training in the content. The sequence of courses will be developed in consultation with each board.

Master Board courses, or modules, are four (4) hours each. Boards may choose to schedule a training to coincide with retreats or as a convenient dinner meeting. No matter your board's preference for training location and date, trainers will make every effort to be available to work with your schedule. Master Board status is awarded after a board completes five courses. Such boards are recognized at the association's annual conference.

MASTER BOARD COURSES

Understanding School Boards in a Democracy

The most fundamental and crucial version of politics is the negotiation of public values by elected leaders on behalf of who or what they represent. That's called politics and it's crucial to democracy. This course explores the purpose of the board of education as well as the skills that are needed for boards to solve public problems.

Building Our Team

Building Our Team will enlighten your board on how to translate current team strengths into a more dynamic board. Participants will identify their style as team players, and the full board will analyze its total team profile as they identify better ways of communicating, determine factors that influence their trust in others, and develop a plan to increase trust. Skills acquired through this module are foundational to subsequent courses.

Clarifying Board Operations

Today's leadership style and method may not always work with tomorrow's leadership team. Job requirements, job descriptions, expectations, and communication processes may change – sometimes unexpectedly – depending on the individual personalities on the team. Clarifying Board Operations will help to ensure a successful transition. This course will focus on your governance team discussing critical operational policies and how they will work together for continuous improvement of the district and the team.

Working Through Conflict

Board members will develop strategies to work with conflict by examining their own conflict-handling style and recognizing the style of others. In this course, boards will work on skills and strategies for conflict situations, recognize effective and less effective results of conflict and have the opportunity to develop board guidelines for conflict situations.

Affirming Board & Superintendent Responsibilities

This course seeks to clarify board/superintendent roles and responsibilities in terms of behaviors, governance vs. management, and the key works of boards as identified by the National School Boards Association. Participants

will identify ways to prevent, intervene, and/or redirect problem situations between the board and superintendent.

Solving Problems and Making Decisions

Identify and practice steps in collaborative problem solving during this course. Building on skills developed in previous master board courses, your board will analyze the various methods of decision making, practice consensus building, and understand the reasons for poor decisions.

Connecting with the Community

How should your board structure community involvement? How should the board facilitate information flow and connect with external and internal communities? Connecting with the Community will allow you to focus on these items. Your board will receive guidance on how to approach public participation in board meetings and understand the importance of policies that support communication and the importance of public engagement today.

Planning Productive Board Meetings

Is there anything you would want to change about your board meetings? Take this course and examine issues surrounding the development and content of the board meeting agenda. You also will have the opportunity to critique board meeting situations that relate to lessons about effective meetings.

Planning the Evaluation of the Superintendent

Gain a better understanding of why you need to effectively evaluate the superintendent. Your board will focus on prerequisite understandings and guiding principles about evaluating your superintendent for the evaluation process, as well as work on steps in developing your evaluation plan. This course incorporates the superintendent evaluation instrument developed by the NC State Board of Education.

Conducting a Board Self Evaluation

Conducting a Board Self Evaluation allows participants to review their individual performance as a member of the board, as well as the board as a whole. By the end of the course, board members will understand personal and board strengths, and develop improvement goals individually and for the operation of the board.

Analyzing Ethical Challenges

Do your board members wonder if it is okay to accept gifts during school board appreciation month? Can they talk to the coach about their daughter's playing time now that they are on the board? Should they intervene on behalf of a friend to ensure that they get an interview for a position in the district? This course uses humorous scenarios and video clips to guide discussion through various ethical situations.

Advocating Effectively for Student Achievement

Through this session, the governance team will hone in on its advocacy skills. The course offers an overview of the legislative process, an understanding of how to connect with legislators, and how to advocate effectively with local and state legislators.

The cost per board course is \$1,500 plus the trainer's expenses to include travel, hotel and meals. If you are interested in starting Master Board in your system or would like to have your board train under one of the following topics, contact Ramona Powers, director of board development, at (919) 841-4040.