



SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER TOOLKIT

Curriculum Adoption



AMERICA FIRST POLICY INSTITUTE

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for serving on your local school board. School board members make up the largest group of elected officials in the country. There are approximately 100,000 school board members across nearly 14,000 school districts who represent more than 51 million children. School board members play a critical role in the improvement, accountability, and transparency of America's schools.

COVID-19 and the politically motivated teachings of racial and social issues in the classroom have made curriculum, education transparency, and the role of school boards top priorities among parents, students, and politicians. Members of school boards must have the tools they need to advocate for our nation's students.

In a [recent poll](#) from Parents Defending Education, 80 percent of people opposed the use of classrooms to promote political activism. When asked, the majority of Americans did not agree with students receiving an education that taught that America is structurally racist, that there is no such thing as biological sex, that white students are inherently privileged, and/or that America was founded on racism. Despite this opposition, "woke" ideals such as Critical Race Theory (CRT), the 1619 Project, and action civics have been brought into thousands of classrooms across the country ([Burke et al., n.d.-a](#)).

CRT argues that racism and white supremacy are the foundations of the American legal system and American society ([Britannica, n.d.-b](#)). CRT has infiltrated a number of curriculum plans, books, advocacy groups, and diversity and inclusion programs. *The New York Times's* 1619 Project is radical political advocacy framed as "journalism," with the goals of reframing American history and challenging national memory ([Adams, 2020](#)). The 1619 Project makes many [historically inaccurate](#) claims. While top historians in the country have disputed the accuracy of the 1619 Project, it has still been turned into a curriculum and **disseminated in more than 4,500 schools across the country** ([Burke et al., 2021](#); [Bynum et al., 2019](#)).

School board members have the critical responsibility of ensuring our Nation's youth are provided the best education possible. Schools and school boards are accountable to taxpayers and their communities ([About School Board and Local Governance](#)). While the current public debate is centered around the teachings of these divisive, woke ideas, more attention should be paid to the low scores that K-12 students are obtaining in core competency areas like reading, math, and civics education.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is known as the "[Nations Report Card](#)." NAEP is a nationally standardized assessment of student achievement. The test is administered biannually to fourth and eighth-grade students nationwide to measure math and reading proficiency. The scores are reported as a percentage of students who scored as advanced, proficient, and basic. [A recent study](#) analyzed the results of eighth-grade

achievement in math and reading from 2003–2017. The study found no gains in the achievement scores of eighth-grade students in reading and math over the 14-year time frame. The analysis also noted that ***in 36 states and the District of Columbia, one-third of the low-income eighth-graders scored below basic in reading. The dismal results for math revealed that more than one-half of low-income eighth-grade students in nine states scored below basic.***

As states seek ways to improve math and reading student outcomes, civics education is also at the forefront of much-needed reforms. A 2019 Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation [survey](#) found that only 36 percent of Americans could pass a United States Citizenship test, 57 percent did not know how many justices serve on the Supreme Court, and only 13 percent of American adults could correctly note the year the United States Constitution was ratified.

The fundamental role of school boards is to work with their communities to improve student achievement in their local public schools. [Multiple studies](#) find that students experienced academic regression last year due to loss of classroom time because of COVID-19 school closures. School board members can be some of the Nation's most important yet often underappreciated elected officials. ***This guide will provide crucial ways for members of our Nation's school boards to productively fulfill their civic duty and ensure our schools adopt quality curriculum.***

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

1. Roles and Responsibilities of District School Board Members	1
2. Understanding How Curriculum is Adopted in Your District	5
3. The Role of the School Board in Adopting Curriculum	7
4. Promoting High-Quality Curriculum Versus Standard Curriculum	9
5. Providing Transparency for Parents in the District	12
6. Guiding Principles for Board Members	13

1. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

As a school board member, you are a public servant beholden to the citizens in your community. These individuals rely on you to use finite resources wisely and adopt goals and priorities to improve the district's education system.

Core Responsibilities as a School Board Member:

- To **approve curriculum** and textbooks based on standards, goals, and policies adopted by the board.
- To **review and evaluate curriculum** as it relates to student assessment results.
- To hire and **hold accountable** the superintendent of the school district.
- To create a **responsible budget** and tax rate to advance the educational success of the students in your district.
- To provide parents and community members **transparency** on what is occurring in their local schools.
- To empower parents and community members to be able to effectively hold the board **accountable** when adopting curricula, budgets, and policies.

*Please note that exact responsibilities vary by state. You will need to consult your district-specific board member policies or more detailed information.

What is My Responsibility to Parents and Community Members?

School board members are champions for the community.

- Work to ensure the needs and desires of the public are brought to life by carrying out core responsibilities.
- Know what to look for and understand what parents in the community want for their children.
- Engage one-on-one with parents and community members.
- Review curriculum plans, training guides, and policies and advocate for quality and nonpolitical content.

What Should I Look Out for in District Curricula, Training Guides, Policies, Websites?

Today's pressing debates about political activism and race-centric and equity-centric policies and activities in schools have resulted in informative data regarding what parents do and do not want their students to be subjected to in the public school system.

Survey Data on Political Activism and Race Centric Policies:

- [Data from a recent survey](#) indicates that 80 percent of Americans oppose the use of classrooms to promote political activism to students.
 - Seventy percent said it is not important or not at all important to “teach students that their race is the most important thing about them,” compared to the 25 percent who think it is somewhat or very important.
 - Sixty-nine percent opposed schools teaching that America was founded on racism and is structurally racist.
- [Another survey](#) found that 75 percent of parents with K-12 students did not believe schools should teach that “the founding ideals of liberty and equality were false when they were written, and America’s history must be reframed” ([Burke et al., 2021](#)).
- Just 20 percent believe we should recognize that America was founded on racism and start over with something new ([Rasmussen, 2021](#)).
- Freedom, equality, and self-governance are seen as accurately describing America’s founding ideals by at least 70 percent of every demographic group measured ([Rasmussen, 2021](#)).

Today’s “hot” politically motivated content:

- **The 1619 Project:** The 1619 Project—named after the year the first slave ship arrived in America from Africa—promotes the concept of “reimagining” or “reframing” American history through a political lens. It has become a popular topic since the release of the initiative from *The New York Times Magazine* in August of 2019. The stated goal of this project is “to reframe American history by considering what it would mean to regard 1619 as our Nation’s birth year” ([The 1619 Project](#)). The 1619 Project claims that one of the primary reasons the colonists declared their independence from Great Britain was to protect slavery. The 1619 Project purports that slavery was a primary driver of economic growth and infused brutality into American capitalism today. These claims are backed by very few sources and have been [widely disputed](#). We are not proud of parts of American history, like slavery, but that does not mean we should reinvent our history to fit a narrative.
- **Critical Race Theory (CRT):** The intellectual origins of CRT go back to the critical legal studies movement of the 1960s and 1970s that was a byproduct of Marxist critical theory. A common definition of CRT is as follows: “**critical race theorists hold that the law and legal institutions in the United States are inherently racist insofar as they function to create and maintain social, economic, and political inequalities between whites and non-whites, especially African Americans**” ([Britannica, n.d.](#)). CRT explicitly rejects the ideals of meritocracy and a color-blind society. School districts across the country have adopted the following CRT definition: “The Critical Race Theory movement considers many of the same issues that conventional civil rights and ethnic studies take up but places them in a broader perspective that includes economics, history, and even

feelings and the unconscious. Unlike traditional civil rights, which embraces incrementalism and step-by-step progress, critical race theory questions the very foundations of the liberal order, including equality theory, legal reasoning, Enlightenment rationalism and principles of constitutional law” ([Delgado, Stefancic, 2001](#)).

- **Action Civics:** The goal of action civics is described in *Education Week* as “not only to teach students how their government works but to harness that knowledge to launch them into collective action on issues they care about.” ([Gewertz, 2019](#).) This form of teaching is highly controversial, as some view this as **legitimizing political protests for class credit**.
- **Equity vs. Equality Focused Education:** The divide between equity and equality has been a topic of political debate in the American education system harkening back to the time of *Brown v. Board of Education*. Curriculum that is equity-based focuses on ensuring everyone has the same outcomes, while equality focuses on ensuring everyone has equal opportunities. Equity demands that one’s treatment of another person must consider race, gender, ethnicity, etc. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. Policies that support equity versus equality can threaten the Civil Rights Act because they promote treating subsets of the population (often people of color) differently.

It is important to note that, while the 1619 Project, CRT, action civics, and equity in education are frequently discussed, **there are many other theories, policies, and curricula programs that are equally as bad and incorporate the same values**. Some examples of these are the Learning for Justice Curriculum of the Southern Poverty Law Center, the “We Stories” program of the Educational Equity Consultants, Black Lives Matter curricula, the Teaching for Change curriculum, and the Zinn Education Project. This list is not exhaustive, so it is critical to use the below methods to identify CRT and racially divisive curriculum.

As a school board member, you have a key role in the curriculum approval process. It is important that you carefully review the curriculum, training, and policy guides that the district posts. In alignment with what the **majority of Americans want, content should be high-quality and not political, race-centric, or equity-focused**. Identifying race-centric, equity-focused, or political content can be challenging. It will not always include the above terms, so it is important to review each document closely.

The [Texas Public Policy Foundation](#) has developed a very helpful list of keywords to look for and an explanation of why these are “buzzwords” for politically motivated content. Their list is below:

Equity: This has replaced “equality” for individuals on the Left. Instead of ensuring that every American has an equal opportunity to succeed, equity demands equality of outcomes.

Implicit/unconscious/internalized bias: This is the relentless search to find racism in every aspect of American life. If it is not immediately evident, look harder.

Social Justice/Restorative Justice: This is the belief that society must be torn down and remade in order fully to root out racism.

Systemic racism: According to CRT, racism is the original sin of America, and it persists everywhere to this day. Every institution is designed, they say, “to maintain the dominance of white people in society.”

Microaggressions: These are “subtle insults (verbal, nonverbal and/or visual) directed toward people of color, often automatically or unconsciously.”

Antiracism: This is CRT’s fictitious name, and the practical outworking of its central ideas.

White privilege: According to this doctrine, white people derive immense benefits from their race. According to one theorist (and Wisconsin politician), “America needs to be honest about how race has driven every decision from education to homeownership, and everything in between.”

White fragility: This makes CRT non-falsifiable. Any objection to any tenet of critical race theory is said to be white fragility.

Identity: Everything is about what you are, not who you are.

Ally/Allyship: According to Harvard University, an ally is “Someone who makes the commitment and effort to recognize their privilege (based on gender, class, race, sexual identity, etc.) and work in solidarity with oppressed groups in the struggle for justice.” Critical race theorists demand nothing less of the rest of us.

Social Construct: The idea that race is made-up; it is a fiction used by oppressors to control the oppressed. Oh, and also race is real and immutable. It is the one thing you cannot change about yourself, and it is all that matters (see identity).

Another helpful resource to identify “buzzwords” for divisive concepts can be found [here](#).

2. UNDERSTANDING HOW CURRICULA IS ADOPTED IN YOUR DISTRICT

What is Curriculum?

Curriculum is broadly defined as *the courses offered by a school* ([Merriam-Webster, n.d.](#)). However, in Pre-K and K-12 classrooms, the term curriculum is commonly used to refer to all the academic lessons and content those lessons contain. In this sense, a school's curriculum includes components that all interrelate to the expected learning outcomes of students. A school's curriculum includes supplemental materials like videos, textbooks, book lists, in-class projects, class speakers, and ALL content taught in the classroom. It is important to recognize that the curriculum is much more than a textbook.

What is The Role of District School Boards in Adopting Curricula?

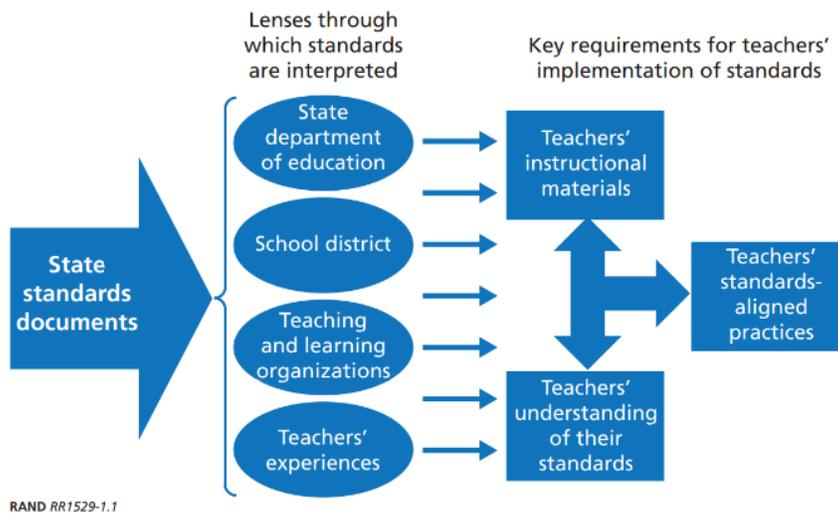
State academic standards are the starting point in the curriculum-setting process. They establish the goals and aspirations of what is expected for students to master in the classroom. Standards influence testing materials used, teacher preparation courses, and professional development training for teachers.

School districts evaluate, develop, and adopt the curricula and textbooks to keep their educational materials and instruction updated. Every state has control over what is taught in its schools and the requirements that a student must meet. Each state, or a political subdivision of the state, is also responsible for the funding of schools. States regulate curricula at public schools, and they often use high school graduation requirements to regulate school curricula by requiring a certain number of courses in specific subjects.

In some states, local school boards have the final approval or denial of a selected curriculum used within their schools. According to [Boser, Chingos & Straus, 2015](#), 19 states have a state-level adoption process for instructional materials: *California, Nevada, Utah, Idaho, Oregon, New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Mississippi, Georgia, Alabama, Florida, Tennessee, Kentucky, West Virginia, Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina*. The state-level adoption process means that the State Board of Education creates a pre-approved list of recommended books and materials for implementation, but the local school board has the final approval and can choose materials not on the list. The remaining states: *Arizona, Colorado, Wyoming, Washington, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Minnesota, Iowa, Michigan, Arkansas, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York, Vermont, Maine, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Alaska, Hawaii, and the District of Columbia* allow districts to select their materials with no input from the state board of education, giving the local districts more flexibility to determine what works best for them.

Figure 1: Relationship of state standards and what teachers use in the classroom

Factors Influencing Teachers' Implementation of State Standards



What is The Role of Textbooks in Curriculum?

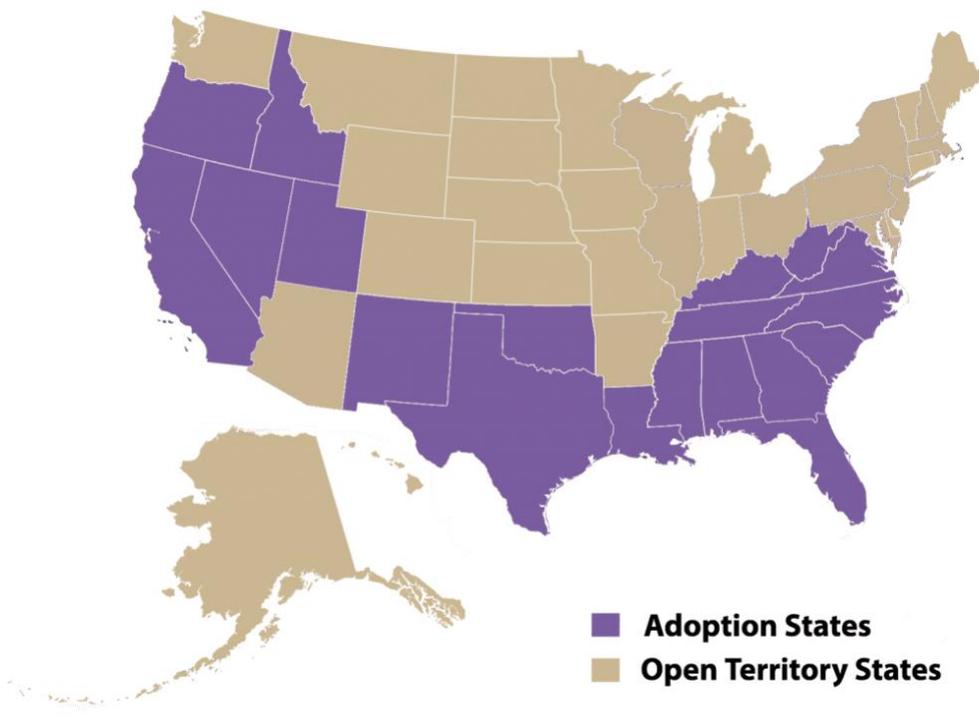
Once the standards are set in a state, districts typically select and purchase their textbook resources directly from textbook publishers ([Navigating the New Curriculum Landscape: Background: Curriculum, Open Educational Resources, and Quality, n.d.](#)). According to EdWeek Market Brief, 44 percent of school districts across the country make sole source (only from one vendor) purchases and often hire the same providers year after year without issuing a request for proposals, resulting in a lack of competition in the market. In 2019, the U.S. book publishing industry generated \$8.38 billion in revenue in textbook publishing ([Watson, 2021](#)). It is important to remember that while textbooks alone are not curricula, they are a key part of a larger curriculum and should be carefully selected as they are foundational to learning curricula.

Textbooks can also be costly. While considering ways to save your district money, a **competitive bidding process for textbook procurement** is a simple and great start.

3. THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL BOARD IN ADOPTING CURRICULA

As a District School Board Member, What is my Role in Adopting Curricula?

Different states have different curriculum adoption processes. As discussed above (section 2) and shown in the below image, 19 states have a state-level adoption process for instructional materials. Of those 19 states, some compile a list of materials that school districts are encouraged but not required to select their curriculum from. Other states provide a list of materials as options, but leave it up to the districts to make their selections. The remaining states are the “open” states. This means they allow districts to select their materials with no input from the state board of education, which gives the local districts more flexibility to determine what works best. All that to say, ***school boards play a role in adopting curriculum***—it just varies state by state precisely what role the school district plays.



<https://victorvord.com/bla/shiftinga-tex 1>

**Please note that state policies frequently change so consult your state board of education for the most updated guidance

How do I Get Involved in Curriculum Selection Before Final Approval?

The research is clear that an evidence-based curriculum positively impacts student outcomes.

As a school board member reviewing curriculum, you should.

- Make sure you have access to the state standards as you begin the curriculum review process.
- Choose a lesson or a section of the instructional materials on the topic (literacy, history, math).
- Make a list of the concepts from the standards that align with that lesson.
- Determine whether the materials focus on the concept or if they are only a superficial match.

The more concepts you analyze using this process, the more confidence you will have in the quality of the materials and their alignment with the standards for the state. School board members should also review the teacher materials for ***evidence of consistency between the goals and assessments***. School board members can share findings with other board members and their superintendent upon a thorough review before a board vote. All information gathered can be added to the agenda item as “backup material” to document the information within the minutes of the board meetings.

4. PROMOTING HIGH-QUALITY CURRICULUM VERSUS STANDARD CURRICULUM

What Does High-Quality Curriculum Mean?

As a board member, you will likely be presented with an agenda item requesting approval of a selected curriculum. ***It is important to request to see the curriculum well before you vote to approve it for the district.*** A thorough review process should take several weeks, and as a board member, you have the right to ask to [table](#) an agenda item allowing for more time. “Tabling” a motion delays a vote on that motion.

There are many components to examine while reviewing the curriculum. Research confirms that implementing a “high quality” curriculum leads to notable positive learning outcomes for students. A high-quality curriculum; is aligned to rigorous state standards; is built on high expectations aligned with robust scholarly standards; is academically rigorous; designed to meet the needs of all learners; and provides more ***coherence and connection in the sequencing of learning*** between grade levels ([Steiner, 2017](#)). High-quality curriculum materials are created to engage students in a ***deeper level of learning*** and create a ***focused direction*** ([National Institute for Excellence in Education](#)). Curriculum considerations should include multiple research studies with evidence of positive student outcomes over a period of time. Effects on student learning over several years are one of the best determinants of a curriculum’s quality. Curricula like the 1619 Project and CRT have none of the important determinants of research-based effects on student outcomes.

In a recent survey, only 40 percent of teachers reported using a curriculum that is “high-quality and well-aligned to learning standards” ([Voices from the Classroom, 2020](#)). When a district does not have a high-quality curriculum, teachers must fill in the educational gaps and develop their own resources and activities to help meet the state standards. [A 2017 RAND Corporation](#) survey of 1,100 math and English and language arts teachers found that almost all rely on materials that they have developed or selected themselves rather than the curriculum supplied by their school district ([Opfer et al., 2017](#)). The researchers found that 96 percent of teachers surveyed used Google to find lessons and materials, and 75 percent used Pinterest.

Although many teachers utilize the district curriculum as adopted, many teachers lack the administrative support to implement the programs successfully. When teachers without support attempt to build their curriculum from Google and Pinterest, it is difficult to ensure transparency and accountability in the curriculum. School board members can spend time in schools and classrooms to ensure educators are appropriately teaching the adopted curriculum and receiving the needed support for professional development. Outside resources and creative teaching techniques can be effective, but it is important to ensure the curriculum’s quality and efficacy meets the needs of all their students.

What are the Benefits of a High-Quality Curriculum?

Standards, curricula, and instructional materials all play a vital role in what is taught in the classrooms across the Nation. A 2017 [report from Johns Hopkins University](#) provided research on the effect of curriculum regarding student outcomes. The authors concluded that a

teacher's or a district's choice of curriculum significantly affects student learning. A high-quality curriculum is built on high expectations, aligned with robust scholarly standards, is academically rigorous, and designed to meet the needs of all learners. The report concluded that a positive impact on student achievement using a high-quality curriculum increased as much as 10 percentile points in reading and 23 percentile points in math ([Steiner, 2017](#)). Furthermore, the authors shared that with such strong evidence, policy decisions should be of "deep concern" for policymakers and require "urgent attention" ([Steiner, 2017](#)).

How Do I Know if Curriculum is High-Quality?

Again, curricula that provides **evidence of positive impact** on student outcomes over a period of time is considered the gold standard of a high-quality curriculum. There are many ways school board members can review textbooks, supplemental materials, homework, in-class activities, and digital content to determine when and where the curriculum is politically motivated rather than focused on improving student outcomes.

It is much more likely that you will discover this content in the in-class activities and digital content versus the textbook. Thus, it is crucial that you request transparency on ALL materials presented within the district. It is also likely that these materials will not outright say "Critical Race Theory" or "the 1619 Project," so it is important to scan the materials for keywords or phrases (like those mentioned above) that imply these teachings are inherent in the curriculum and result in revisionist history, bigotry, collective guilt, neo-segregationism, racial discrimination, race scapegoating in the classroom, and other race-centric policies. As previously discussed, textbooks should follow the adopted state standards and be aligned with the district-adopted curricula. There are no federal standards that states are required to follow, so be cautious of any explanations for chosen materials because the "federal government" or "United States Department of Education" requires it.

It is important to remember that while politically motivated content is a flag for a low-quality curriculum, is not the only indicator of a low-quality or failed curriculum. For example, Common Core State Standards (CCSS) is a [failed curriculum](#) that does not directly include politically motivated content. CCSS harmed student achievement in science and social studies. Underprivileged students were negatively affected by the implementation of CCSS studies ([Arold and Shakeel, 2021](#)). It is critical always to seek data and evidence of effective curricula illustrating positive outcomes. Parents and educators have strongly opposed Common Core Math as the original standards were deemed not developmentally appropriate for the younger age groups. School board members should review standards and make sure that curriculum choices are age-appropriate and do not create unrealistic expectations for children's natural pace of learning.

It is difficult to find accurate data or reviews on curriculum and instruction materials, which is problematic considering the substantial difference a high-quality curriculum can make on learning outcomes and the billions of dollars spent each year on textbooks. The Institute of Education Sciences' What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) does publish reviews of existing research on different education programs, products, and policies. According to the WWC reviews of curriculum, many curriculum plans had no research or evidence supporting effectiveness in the classroom. For example, of the 155 math curriculums made available, 108 had no associated studies as to their efficacy ([Institute of Education Sciences, Results: Math, n.d.](#)). School districts across the Nation are selecting curriculum that has no evidence of improved outcomes for students. As a school board member, you can use your voice and

your vote to advocate for increased data on the impacts of curriculum to help make more informed decisions in the future.

5. PROVIDING TRANSPARENCY FOR PARENTS IN THE DISTRICT

How Can I Help Parents Succeed?

- Advocate that information is posted publicly in **a timely and organized** manner to the school district website.
 - Remember: posting information is only useful if parents can find it. Updates should be easily accessible and found in less than three “clicks” on the website.
- Ensure district policies encourage teachers to email weekly curriculum plans/updates to parents. This includes all videos, guest speakers, books, and documents they plan to use.
- Speak up if you see politically motivated or ineffective content and follow the [Roberts Rules of Order](#) to bring the item forward as a new agenda item, ensuring the issue is brought to the attention of the board.
- Invite your constituents to the meeting personally rather than only posting when district meetings will be held.
- Utilize online surveys to collect input from citizens regarding important issues.
- Send regular emails to parents with school board updates, as parents might not know how to access the website for information.
- Remember that parents are a child’s first teacher, and they know best how to help their children. Utilize them and form a partnership to ensure you are equally committing to their child’s education.
- Televisе or livestream your school board meetings and post the video footage on your website so that all parents have a chance to watch the meeting.
- Develop a social media page on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or all three and post regular updates about board meetings, decisions, and updates. These can also be a great resource to post surveys and gather public input on issues.

What Are State Freedom of Information or Sunshine Laws?

Through [state freedom of information or sunshine laws](#), parents and citizens can request to see public records formally. All trainings, programs, official communications (emails and call logs), and curricula-related materials can be requested. Whether you are proactively transparent or not, citizens have the legal right to request public records regarding your official business as a school board member.

By clicking the link above, choose the state you are a board member in, and select “Sample FOIA request.” It will give you an outline, like below, that you can utilize to see how citizens formally request information from the school district.

6. GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR BOARD MEMBERS

Being Action Oriented

Being proactive is necessary to advocate for policies that align with your values and against policies that do not. It is not easy being a school board member. It requires research and **action** to make a real difference. Even after you have done the necessary research to make informed decisions, others have not. It is also the case that ***sometimes your one vote will not be enough to change the course of the school board.*** School boards often have factions, and it is important to understand that going into meetings. Making a change will often require work beyond just ensuring that YOU are a good and informed school board member. It is important to ***inform and educate other board members*** on data and research you collected before meetings and votes. Sharing data and evidence of good policies with fellow board members and ***building support among the community*** is a critical step to ensure policy change happens. When preparing for board meetings, always consider whether the actions you would like to see the board make have enough votes. If you are fearful they do not, schedule a time to discuss your position and the data that supports your position individually with other board members. You can also meet with the public and share on your social media accounts your research and evidence to support a position in order to gain momentum and support from community members. Making a change requires gaining the support needed to vote for that change. As a school board member, being action-oriented and proactively assessing support for issues will help you make important and sustained change.

Effective Communication

Effective communication is intentional and takes well-planned strategies. Most school boards develop a communication plan. Influential board members should be communicating with the public in the following ways:

- Involvement in the schools.
- Availability to connect with constituents.
- Interacting with students, staff, and administration in the district.
- Advocating for what is best for the community at school board meetings.

Open communication builds a strong foundation of trust and enables school board members to engage positively with the public and advocate for their values. ***Maintaining constructive strategies of communication is essential.*** Board members can solicit community input through the following:

- **Participate in Open Forums**
 - Forums can be educational and informative. One idea is to solicit questions on notecards to avoid long questions that take up time.
- **Keep Regular Board Office Hours**

- Regular open-door meetings build trust. Constructive dialogue can happen during office hours, and sometimes issues can be solved before they even come up.
- **Create Study Groups and Committees**
 - Study groups and committees are usually task-focused and can be a great means of communication between parents and school board members.
- **Develop and Distribute Surveys**
 - Surveys are a great way of obtaining information about any given topic within the community. These are cost-effective and can easily be shared on the webpage and social media pages.
- **Social Media**
 - Social media is helpful for school board members to help clarify any information, proactively update parents, and remain transparent and accountable to the public.

Respecting the community's role in the system is essential to help create the best learning environment possible for students and families.

Accountability to the School Board District Community

Accountability is key to seeing policies through. School board members must be able to back up their decisions and actions with facts and data. The board's actions must be transparent and accountable to the public. A high-achieving school board should focus on prioritizing and improving student achievement. School board members should engage in ongoing, two-way conversations with the community. Effective community engagement is essential to create trust and support among the community, board, superintendent, and staff.

Use Data to Make Informed Decisions

A good school board will use relevant data in decision-making processes. It is important to obtain all data related to student outcomes, school rankings, achievement, and professional development and training needs of teachers. Board members need to utilize this data in decision-making and in explanations to the community.

Prioritizing the Needs of the Students

Many issues affect a board's goals and topics of discussion. ***It is important never to lose sight of the main priority—the students.*** There are no one-size-fits-all solutions, but an effective school board member should make decisions regarding school practices and curriculum with the benefit of the students in mind at all times.

WORKS CITED

- About School Board and Local Governance*. (n.d.). National School Board Association. Retrieved August 19, 2021, from <https://www.nsba.org/About/About-School-Board-and-Local-Governance>
- Adams, B. (2020, July 28). *1619 Project founder claims her project is simply an “origin story,” not history* | *Washington Examiner*. Washington Examiner. <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/1619-project-founder-claims-her-project-is-simply-an-origin-story-not-history>
- Arold, B. W., & Danish Shakeel, M. (2021). Program on Education Policy and Governance Working Papers Series The Unintended Effects of Common Core State Standards on Non-Targeted Subjects The Unintended Effects of the Common Core State Standards on Non-Targeted Subjects *. www.hks.harvard.edu/pepg/
- Boser, U., Chingos, M., & Straus, C. (2015). *The Hidden Value of Curriculum Reform Do States and Districts Receive the Most Bang for Their Curriculum Buck?*
- Burke, L. M., Butcher, J., Kao, E., & Gonzalez, M. (n.d.). *The Culture of American K-12 Education: A National Survey of Parents and School Board Members*. Retrieved June 19, 2021, from <http://report.heritage.org/sr241>
- Bynum, V., McPherson, J., Oake, J., Wilentz, S., & Wood, G. (2019, December). *Re: The 1619 Project, Letter to the Editor*. New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/20/magazine/we-respond-to-the-historians-who-critiqued-the-1619-project.html>
- critical race theory* | *Definition, Principles, & Facts* | *Britannica*. (n.d.-a). Retrieved June 14, 2021, from <https://www.britannica.com/topic/critical-race-theory>
- Curriculum* | *Definition of Curriculum by Merriam-Webster*. (n.d.). Retrieved June 19, 2021, from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/curriculum>
- Desilver, D. (2017, February 15). U.S. academic achievement lags that of many other countries | Pew Research Center. Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/02/15/u-s-students-internationally-math-science/>
- Gewertz, C. (2019, March 20). “Action Civics” Enlists Students in Hands-On Democracy. <https://www.edweek.org/policy-politics/action-civics-enlists-students-in-hands-ondemocracy/2019/03>
- High-Quality Curriculum Implementation The Potential of a High-Quality Curriculum*. (n.d.). Retrieved August 22, 2021, from https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/education/data/2019-survey/Lessons_District_Leaders_Infographic.pdf
- Lewer, B., 2019. *Reimagining American History Education*. Princeton, NJ: The Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation.

Meckler, L., Natanson, H. (2020). New data finds unequal gaps in learning during remote school - The Washington Post. The Washington Post. https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/students-falling-behind/2020/12/06/88d7157a-3665-11eb-8d38-6aea1adb3839_story.html

Navigating the New Curriculum Landscape: Background: Curriculum, Open Educational Resources, and Quality. (n.d.). Retrieved June 19, 2021, from <https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/reports/navigating-new-curriculum-landscape/background-curriculum-open-educational-resources-and-quality/>

NAEP Report Cards - Home. (n.d.). Retrieved August 19, 2021, from <https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/>

Opfer, V. Darleen, Julia H. Kaufman, and Lindsey E. Thompson, Implementation of K–12 State Standards for Mathematics and English Language Arts and Literacy: Findings from the American Teacher Panel. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2017. https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1529-1.html.

POLL: Americans Overwhelmingly Reject “Woke” Race and Gender Policies in K-12 Education - Parents Defending Education. (2021, May 10). Parents Defending Education. <https://defendinged.org/press-releases/poll-americans-overwhelmingly-reject-woke-race-and-gender-policies-in-k-12-education/>

Rasmussen, S. (2021, May 22). *93% Recognize Racism As Big Part of American History; 20% Want to Scrap the Founding Ideals And Start Over.* <https://scottrasmussen.com/93-recognize-racism-a-big-part-of-american-history-20-want-to-scrap-the-founding-ideals-and-start-over/>

Rasmussen, S. (2021, March 21). *Rasmussen: 83% believe America’s founding ideals are worth fighting for - Deseret News.* DeseretNews. <https://www.deseret.com/opinion/2021/3/21/22340298/scott-rasmussen-poll-american-founding-ideals-freedom-equality-self-government>

Results: Math. (n.d.). Retrieved June 19, 2021, from <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/FWW/Results?filters=,Math>

Riccards, P. (2018, October 3). *Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation | National Survey Finds Just 1 in 3 Americans Would Pass Citizenship Test.* <https://woodrow.org/news/national-survey-finds-just-1-in-3-americans-would-pass-citizenship-test/>

Roberts, K. (2021, July 1). *How will you know if critical race theory is taught in your child’s school?* Texas Public Policy Foundation. https://www.texaspolicy.com/how-will-you-know-if-critical-race-theory-is-taught-in-your-childs-school/?_hstc=204790927.8ea65c43cd17d24af3b6826bdd93b039.1629225167128.1629225167128.1629225167128.1&_hssc=204790927.2.1629225167128&_hsfp=424596134

State Freedom of Information Laws – National Freedom of Information Coalition. (n.d.). National Freedom Of Information Coalition. Retrieved August 19, 2021, from <https://www.nfoic.org/state-freedom-of-information-laws/>

Tabled Items. (n.d.). Davis-Stirling. Retrieved August 25, 2021, from <https://www.davis-stirling.com/HOME/Tabled-Items>

Textbook publishing revenue in the U.S. 2010-2019 | Statista. (n.d.). Retrieved June 19, 2021, from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/185042/us-publishing-revenue-from-textbooks-since-2005/>

VOICES FROM THE CLASSROOM. (2020). *Educators for Excellence.* [voices_from_the_classroom_2020.pdf \(e4e.org\)](#)