



Diligent Community

# A checklist for school board self-evaluations



Thousands of people across the U.S. — appointed or elected to local school boards in the nation's public education system — have one thing in common. They believe in the value of vibrant and high-achieving school districts despite the huge challenges many boards face every day.

While most school board leaders and members are well-intentioned as they strive to foster a positive culture, set policies and promote learning at all levels, they must stop and examine how they are doing.

Are we making strides toward achieving our strategic plan and goals? Do we understand the community we serve? Is the board nimble enough to course correct when faced with serious issues in the community, or with educators, parents and students? And perhaps most important, as a board member, do you have a clear understanding of your governance role and do you strive to exercise best practices?

These questions are answered only through regular, comprehensive and honest self-evaluations. Looking at your board's performance systematically is a best practice in today's modern educational landscape. Board self-evaluations, essential to governing effectively, provide a way for

members to reflect on their performance, strengths and opportunities for improvement. Self-evaluations hold boards accountable for their actions while furthering public transparency.

The importance and value of yearly school board self-evaluations to ensure optimal governance and performance is clear. But how do we make self-evaluations thorough, yet not arduous? That's where Diligent Community can simplify the process.

Our robust board management platform makes the self-evaluation process manageable with software that supports the tasks, timelines and inputs throughout the process. It enables board members to delve into the areas of teamwork, strategic planning, stakeholder engagement, community trust and confidence and more with the assurance that every detail, discovery and action is tracked and saved.



# How effective is your school board?

As you engage in self-evaluations, these characteristics of an effective school board from the [Center for Public Education](#) will help you identify core areas to evaluate. Effective school boards:

- Are committed to a vision of high expectations for student achievement and quality instruction, and define clear goals toward that vision.
- Have strong shared beliefs and values about what is possible for students and their ability to learn, and of the system and its ability to teach all children.
- Are accountability-driven, focusing on policies that improve student outcomes, rather than on operational topics.
- Have a collaborative relationship with staff and the community and a strong communications structure to inform and engage internal and external stakeholders.
- Are data savvy — embracing and monitoring data and using it to foster continuous improvement.
- Align and sustain resources to meet district goals.
- Lead as a united team with the superintendent — with collaboration and mutual trust.
- Participate in team development and training, occasionally with superintendents, to build shared knowledge, values and commitments.



## A path for self-evaluations

We understand how important it is to have a roadmap when engaging in self-evaluations. As school board members, your two functions are oversight of management and governance. Understanding your governance role and staying in that role to support the administration, so that together you have the best outcomes available for students, is critical. Self-evaluation helps you ensure you are achieving this.

Our checklist will help you ask the right questions and find the best resources within Diligent Community as you undertake self-evaluations on your path to ongoing improvements and enhanced student learning.



## Context and mission

As you begin your self-evaluation, consider asking these questions about your board's vision and mission.

Does your mission coordinate with your vision?

Is your vision sustainable in the ever-evolving educational climate? Or does it reflect antiquated thinking out of sync with the environment we live in today?

Does your vision take into consideration school administrators, educators, parents, and the community at-large — focused on student achievement?

Are your vision and mission effectively communicated to all constituents?

Strategic planning with clear goals, a must-have for every school board, is of little value without follow-through.

Have you taken the time to do an in-depth review of critical issues to develop goals?

Are you monitoring progress against measurable goals? How often? What processes are in place to course correct?

As unforeseen situations arise, such as cyberthreats, student wellbeing or any other major disruption, do you have plans in place and are board members familiar with them?

Public school boards are tasked with setting policies and ensuring educational institutions are compliant with federal, state and local laws.

What measures do you have in place to ensure your board policies are relevant and meet all compliance requirements to maintain accreditation?

How is oversight of policy adoption and management being handled?

**Diligent Community offers built-in tools to help you address these critical issues during self-assessments.**

- **Policy and governance:** Adopt research-based policies that support continuous improvement of student achievement.
- **Goal tracking:** Streamline goal management and monitor progress efficiently. Boards can establish strategic goals and track progress to help assess whether they are meeting their defined targets. Setting and monitoring progress towards goals can help provide a structured framework for self-assessment.



# Board functioning

When the lives and future of children and young adults are involved, boards must perform at the highest levels from meeting management to communication, teamwork and professional development.

Are your meetings organized and time-efficient? Are they held at reasonably convenient times for optimal participation?

Do you have well-thought-out agendas and leaders who can stay on track?

Record keeping is vital to public school boards. What systems do you have in place to record minutes, votes and actions?

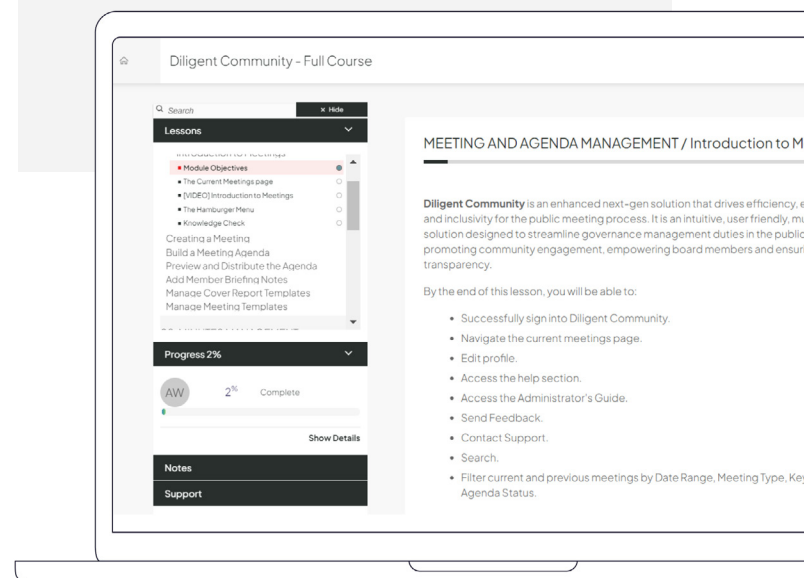
How well does the board work as an effective team? And what measures are deployed when the board doesn't operate as it should because of time constraints, personality issues or other factors?

Is your board meeting training requirements to improve the board's overall effectiveness?

How do you onboard new board members so they can get up to speed quickly and be effective in their role?

## Diligent Community features that can help:

- **Document library:** Keep track of all board documents, meeting minutes and KPIs for easy access to important historical data. The Document Library enhances the self-evaluation process, allowing board members to review prior evaluations, find information to support evaluation and access key policies that board members should adhere to, from cybersecurity best practices to open meeting laws.
- **Training and development:** Training and professional development can benefit decision-making. Diligent Community helps support board member development, from using the software to support good governance through to board members being able to access information to guide best practice in the document library.



## Decision-making & accountability

Public school boards are faced with critical decisions that may impact the lives of educators and students in profound ways — in the short- and long-term. When board members take on these responsibilities, they are expected to exercise sound decision-making skills and accountability in key areas. Self-evaluations give boards an opportunity to question and improve governance and oversight. Your district can have great goals but ongoing improvement in how you perform your governance role will better help make progress towards those goals, in partnership with the administration.

### Data-driven decision-making

Are your decisions and ultimate actions based on verified data?

Do you have sufficient primary and secondary research to back up decisions?

Are you prepared to course correct if/when data is determined to be flawed, inaccurate or old?

### Financial oversight

What measures are in place to ensure all decisions with financial consequences are being managed with consideration of long-term impact?

Does the board regularly review and consider financial reports as part of oversight?

## Accountability

These questions are based on the [Texas State Board of Education's Framework for School Board Development](#) and are similar to what most states maintain.

Is your board holding itself accountable to its adopted vision, goals, commitment and operating procedures?

Are you ensuring equity through the system by regularly identifying inequities, updating policies and appropriately distributing resources?

Does your board annually evaluate your superintendent on the progress toward district goals?

### Diligent Community features that can help:

- **Secure data hosting:** Know that your data is secure with a top-tier cloud provider. Diligent Community is hosted in secure cloud infrastructure where data is stored, encrypted and decrypted transparently using 256-bit AES encryption — one of the strongest block ciphers available — and is FIPS 140-2 compliant.
- **Transparency and accountability:** As you undergo these important self-assessments, you can share summary reports through the Diligent Community public transparency website to show good governance and your commitment to continuous improvement and accountability.

## Board self-evaluations yield positive outcomes

Becoming and maintaining an influential and high-performing board — one that delivers positive results in every school district — is achieved with regular self-evaluations and robust supporting technology. This combination will give school boards the resources, tools and flexibility to address problems while effectively serving the community.

With discipline, a commitment to self-evaluations and Diligent Community, boards will be more prepared to deal with most matters they encounter.

By examining their performance and governance through the lens of transparency, accountability, stakeholder engagement and overall effectiveness, boards will be better positioned to impact favorable outcomes for everyone in their educational system.

## Simplify self-evaluations with Diligent Community

We know that evaluating your own performance can be daunting, but it does become easier when you use a board management software platform with technology that delivers online document repositories, secure communications, customized workflows and much more — all protected by 256-bit encryption.

Diligent Community is your solution to conducting those critically important and valuable self-evaluations. Let us help you govern effectively, implement timely and effective policies, and remain accountable and transparent to the school district and community you serve.

Learn how Diligent Community can help you with your self-evaluations.

Schedule a demo of [Diligent Community](#) today.

Schedule a demo ►





# About Diligent Community

Diligent Community is the next-generation governance solution designed to enhance effectiveness and efficiency for public boards and leadership teams. Tailored to cater to the unique needs of diverse public organizations, Diligent Community empowers streamlined decision-making, ensuring transparent and effective governance. As a trusted offering from Diligent, a leader serving over 14,000 mission-driven organizations globally, Diligent Community is your essential tool for driving impactful governance, fostering better communication and achieving shared success.

For more information or to request a demo:

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