

**// LEAP Alliance //**

**Lutheran Education Advancement Plan**

**Advancing Lutheran Education for Future Generations Across the Great Lakes Bay Region**

# **Boards of Education**

**(or Equivalent Governing Entities)**

# **Self-Assessment Instrument**

**July, 2018**

**drawn from the document entitled  
Best Practices of Boards of Education  
(or Equivalent Governing Entities)  
of Lutheran Schools**

An electronic copy of this document is available at the LEAP website ([LEAP-alliance.com](http://LEAP-alliance.com)).  
Select "Resources," and then download "LEAP Boards of Education Self-Assessment Instrument" (pdf).

An electronic copy of the companion "Best Practices document" is also available at the LEAP website ([LEAP-alliance.com](http://LEAP-alliance.com)).  
Select "Resources," and then download "LEAP Best Practices of Boards of Education of Lutheran Schools" (pdf).

### **Identification of, and Promotion of “Education Board Best Practices”**

In early 2013, one of many *LEAP* task forces was given the charge to address the subject of “effectiveness training for education boards.” That charge led to development of the document entitled “Best Practices of Boards of Education (or Equivalent Governing Entities) of Lutheran Schools,” offering a list of “best practices” for church/school education boards, their leaders, and members.

### **Development and use of a Related “Boards of Education Assessment Instrument”**

Following the development and distribution of the first edition of the Best Practices document in 2014, education leaders at Zion Lutheran Church/School in Bay City prepared a directly related assessment instrument to be used by their “Day School Committee.” Our *LEAP Effectiveness Training for Education Boards Task Force* has followed their lead by annually preparing an instrument to measure to what extent the best practices which we’ve endorsed aptly describe any particular education board’s policies and practices. Making such assessments, a board or equivalent governing entity might then choose to follow up by establishing improvement goals.

### **God bless your potential use of the assessment instrument which follows. And God bless your ongoing commitment to the great cause of providing and promoting high quality Christian education programs with distinctive Christ-first focus!**

from the members of the *LEAP Effectiveness Training for Education Boards Task Force* . . .

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### **We would be pleased to work with you.**

Upon your request, the members of our task force would be willing and pleased to work with your education board regarding best practices or regarding your assessment measurement efforts, your growth, and/or your improvement planning. We invite you to call upon any one of us to arrange for consultation activity.

### **A typical “Self-Assessment and Reflection Process” which we encourage has been employed in the past by a number of Great Lakes Bay Region LCMS education boards. That process looks like this:**

1. An education board chair or other school leader contacts one of our *LEAP Effectiveness Training for Education Boards Task Force* members to tentatively schedule a board self-assessment process, to raise questions, and/or to begin to coordinate the details of a board self-assessment process.
2. Survey materials are received from us and then disseminated by a board chair or other designated education board representative to board

members (and often also to a school administrator). An on-line survey version (Google Forms) of this self-assessment instrument is also available. If you are interested in using the on-line version, or both the written and the on-line versions of this survey, please let us know and we will customize the on-line survey for your board assessment effort.

3. By a stated deadline date each board member and often also the school administrator(s) make(s) and submit(s) the called for responses related to each of the “best practices” referenced in the self-assessment instrument. (No names of any individual respondents are placed on any completed survey forms, and care is taken to preserve anonymity.)
4. The response data is directed to the chair of the “LEAP Effectiveness Training for Education Boards Task Force” or to his designated fellow task force member. Data is tabulated. All comments are recorded.
5. The summary data, with response comments is duplicated, copies are returned to the board chair or school administrator, and these are distributed to each board member for review and study several weeks in advance of a scheduled “assessment results discussion time.”
6. During a scheduled approximate one-hour “discussion time” within an education board meeting, representatives of the LEAP Task Force lead a discussion with the education board members which is directly related to the responses and comments that have been “fed back” to the board members and task force members.

**The education board self-assessment process begins with completion of the survey which continues on the following pages. Here are the steps to be taken by each self-assessment participant:**

**Immediately below each of the “boards of education best practices” which follow are four survey response choices. Following each of the “best practices,” please select one, and only one of the four responses provided.**

Select “**accurate**” if, in your judgement, the “best practice” words are **accurate** in describing practices consistently occurring with respect to **your education board**. Feel free to add comments where these are invited.

Select “**mostly accurate**” if, in your judgement, the “best practice” words are **mostly accurate** in describing practices occurring with respect to **your education board**. Be encouraged to add comments where these are invited.

Select “**somewhat accurate**” if, in your judgement, the “best practice” words are **somewhat accurate** in describing practices occurring with respect to **your education board**. Be encouraged to add comments where these are invited.

Select “**inaccurate**” if, in your judgement, the “best practice” words are **inaccurate** in describing practices occurring with respect to **your education board**. Be encouraged to add comments where these are invited.

**EDUCATION BOARDS SELF ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT**  
**based upon the LEAP Best Practices of Boards of Education of Lutheran Schools**

**Purpose / Philosophy / Mission**

1. The congregation(s) has/have a purpose/philosophy/mission statement for the school. The board promotes the development and maintenance of this statement.

Accurate                       Mostly Accurate                       Somewhat Accurate                       Inaccurate

Comments:

**Board Member Selection**

2. There is a systematic and thorough process for recruiting, vetting, and selecting candidates for potential membership on the board. Prospective candidates are asked about their Lutheran faith, their potential “boardsmanship” strengths and skills, their backgrounds and experiences, and their views regarding the value and importance of Christian education and the school. The vetting process for selecting potential board members should rely upon input from some or all of the following individuals – the pastor, the school administrator(s), the congregation’s nominations committee chair, or the current or a just-retiring board chair. It is recommended that included in the vetting process should be an examination of the candidate’s social media presence.

Accurate                       Mostly Accurate                       Somewhat Accurate                       Inaccurate

Comments:

3. Potential board members are considered for board candidacy with consideration given to balance on the board. The board should determine the criteria of balance. Examples: . . . parents of children in the school / non “school parents” . . . male / female . . . younger / older . . . occupational diversity

Accurate                       Mostly Accurate                       Somewhat Accurate                       Inaccurate

Comments:

4. Board members are faithful participants in worship, regular participants at the Lord’s Supper, and students of God’s Word.

Accurate                       Mostly Accurate                       Somewhat Accurate                       Inaccurate

Comments:

5. When some of the potential candidates for board membership are parents of school-aged children, then among those potential candidates primary consideration for nomination/appointment is given to those candidates whose school-aged children are enrolled in the school, rather than to parents of children who are able and eligible to be enrolled in the school, but are not so enrolled.

Accurate       Mostly Accurate       Somewhat Accurate       Inaccurate

Comments:

6. Schools with significant non-member enrollment should seriously consider Christian non-members as candidates for board membership to give the board a perspective/voice from non-member families.

Accurate       Mostly Accurate       Somewhat Accurate       Inaccurate

**Personal Beliefs, Attitudes, and Understandings of Board Members**

7. Individually, and together in board settings, board members engage in fervent prayer for school children, school families, the school staff, and the mission and ministry of the school.

Accurate       Mostly Accurate       Somewhat Accurate       Inaccurate

Comments:

8. Each member of the board is a committed, faithful steward of time, talents, and financial gifts.

Accurate       Mostly Accurate       Somewhat Accurate       Inaccurate

Comments:

9. Board members frequently attend Church and School events.

Accurate       Mostly Accurate       Somewhat Accurate       Inaccurate

Comments:

10. Board members are enthusiastic advocates for the school. Every board member promotes and speaks well of the school ministry.

Accurate       Mostly Accurate       Somewhat Accurate       Inaccurate

Comments:

11. Every member of the board is expected and enabled to know and articulate the formal mission of the school.

Accurate       Mostly Accurate       Somewhat Accurate       Inaccurate

Comments:

12. Each board member knows that he/she does not represent a group or classroom community of students within the school. Rather, he/she represents the congregation(s) and has the best interests of the school and all of its children in mind.

\_\_\_Accurate      \_\_\_Mostly Accurate      \_\_\_Somewhat Accurate      \_\_\_Inaccurate

Comments:

13. Board members do not bring “personal agendas” to their board roles. They do not use board membership as a way to solve issues related to themselves or to their children or other family members.

\_\_\_Accurate      \_\_\_Mostly Accurate      \_\_\_Somewhat Accurate      \_\_\_Inaccurate

Comments:

14. Board members know and understand the principles of Matthew 18. The board follows these principles as it carries out its responsibilities and particularly when addressing grievances.

\_\_\_Accurate      \_\_\_Mostly Accurate      \_\_\_Somewhat Accurate      \_\_\_Inaccurate

Comments:

15. The board has a policy to deal with issues/grievances. All members are made aware that they may be approached by persons wishing to bring concerns to the board for solutions. The board members know and practice the procedures in place to deal with such situations. Examples: listening courteously to concerns relating to policies or practices, referring these to the board chair, avoiding triangulation, not listening to concerns relating to particular persons but redirecting these to the individuals (Matthew 18), and explaining the “chain of command” in place.

\_\_\_Accurate      \_\_\_Mostly Accurate      \_\_\_Somewhat Accurate      \_\_\_Inaccurate

Comments:

#### **Practices and Procedures of the Board and Board Members**

16. At least annually, the board conducts and/or participates in training sessions to orient new members and to strengthen and enrich all members.

\_\_\_Accurate      \_\_\_Mostly Accurate      \_\_\_Somewhat Accurate      \_\_\_Inaccurate

Comments:

17. The board uses an ethical and effective process for selecting its board leaders.

\_\_\_Accurate      \_\_\_Mostly Accurate      \_\_\_Somewhat Accurate      \_\_\_Inaccurate

Comments:

18. Governing documents for the board clearly and consistently identify the purposes of the board, lines of authority, lines of accountability, responsibilities, and limitations.

Accurate       Mostly Accurate       Somewhat Accurate       Inaccurate

Comments:

19. The roles of each board office (secretary, pastoral advisor, chair, etc.) are delineated for all members.

Accurate       Mostly Accurate       Somewhat Accurate       Inaccurate

Comments:

20. All board members have been supplied with thorough, well developed board policy manuals separate from general board procedural manuals. The policy manuals have been updated as policies have been revised or eliminated or as new policies have been adopted, so that the policy manuals are kept current. Every policy is dated.

Accurate       Mostly Accurate       Somewhat Accurate       Inaccurate

Comments:

21. The board consciously avoids complacency when things are going well, and takes time to focus on improvement. Two to three policy items are reviewed at every board meeting to keep the policy manual current, and to keep the board members up to date on policies.

Accurate       Mostly Accurate       Somewhat Accurate       Inaccurate

Comments:

22. The board chair develops meeting agendas or works with the school administrator(s) to do so. The agendas are written documents or electronic copies of them. They are distributed in advance of the meeting by an established regular deadline. All board members are permitted to suggest agenda items by a preparation deadline.

- Meeting agendas are made available to board members at least three days in advance of scheduled board meetings.
- Late agenda items may be added at the meeting with formal consent of the members present. It is recommended that most decisions on late items be deferred to the next meeting, allowing time for consideration and preparation.
- "Timed agendas" are recommended to keep the board(s) on task.

Accurate       Mostly Accurate       Somewhat Accurate       Inaccurate

Comments:

23. The board chair conducts the meeting, focuses the board on issues rather than people, is strongly supportive of the administrator(s) in the context of the board meeting, holds members accountable, and may act for the board in emergency situations.

Accurate       Mostly Accurate       Somewhat Accurate       Inaccurate

Comments:

24. The board chair enforces time allocations for topics of discussion, adjusts those allocations when appropriate and agreed upon by members present, ensures orderliness, handles votes according to *Robert's Rules of Order*, breaks tie votes of members present, appoints committees, monitors the emotional meeting climate, controls outbursts, and calls recesses when appropriate.

\_\_\_Accurate                      \_\_\_Mostly Accurate                      \_\_\_Somewhat Accurate                      \_\_\_Inaccurate

Comments:

25. The role of the board secretary is to maintain accurate and complete records of board decisions and policies. This includes: taking minutes by recording exact wording of motions, repeating the wording of motions before votes are taken, recording results of motions as passed or not passed, distributing minutes in a timely fashion (within one week of meetings), filing minutes after they have been approved (keeping minutes as hard copies and also saving them electronically at the church/school for future reference), circulating approved minutes to all designated persons, and ensuring that decisions that affect policies are entered into policy manuals.

\_\_\_Accurate                      \_\_\_Mostly Accurate                      \_\_\_Somewhat Accurate                      \_\_\_Inaccurate

Comments:

26. The school administrator(s) work(s) to keep the board mission-focused, consider(s) what policies need to be updated, prepare(s) written reports and present(s) them to the board, consult(s) with the board chair regarding agenda preparation, generally provide(s) for board orientation and training, bring(s) policy recommendations to the board together with background information, and communicate(s) board policies to staff and church/school constituencies.

\_\_\_Accurate                      \_\_\_Mostly Accurate                      \_\_\_Somewhat Accurate                      \_\_\_Inaccurate

Comments:

27. Effective boards meet regularly – at least nine times per year. There are procedures in place for calling special meetings when urgent issues arise or when it becomes necessary to involve the full board in between regular meetings.

\_\_\_Accurate                      \_\_\_Mostly Accurate                      \_\_\_Somewhat Accurate                      \_\_\_Inaccurate

Comments:

28. A committee structure is recommended whereby smaller groups of members meet prior to regular board meetings, research information for full board review or approval, and provide supporting data for recommendations of new, modified procedures or policies.

\_\_\_Accurate                      \_\_\_Mostly Accurate                      \_\_\_Somewhat Accurate                      \_\_\_Inaccurate

Comments:

29. The board abides by clearly defined policies restricting either some or all forms of open attendance at meetings and executive sessions. The board chair makes certain that these policies are adhered to.

\_\_\_Accurate            \_\_\_Mostly Accurate            \_\_\_Somewhat Accurate            \_\_\_Inaccurate

Comments:

30. All board members respect the confidentiality of board matters. They use caution and restraint outside of board meetings, knowing that they act as board members only when the board is in session or when they have specifically been assigned to carry out particular board tasks. They do not otherwise speak outside of board meetings concerning board actions or board meeting conversations.

\_\_\_Accurate            \_\_\_Mostly Accurate            \_\_\_Somewhat Accurate            \_\_\_Inaccurate

Comments:

31. Individual members of the board abstain from participating in discussion and voting on matters when there is, or may be a personal conflict of interest.

\_\_\_Accurate            \_\_\_Mostly Accurate            \_\_\_Somewhat Accurate            \_\_\_Inaccurate

Comments:

32. Though they may sometimes hold minority views, all board members publicly support decisions of the board.

\_\_\_Accurate            \_\_\_Mostly Accurate            \_\_\_Somewhat Accurate            \_\_\_Inaccurate

Comments:

33. All board members are expected to be present at every meeting. Normally, absent members will have excused themselves in advance of a meeting. A policy is in place for removal of board members with excessive absences.

\_\_\_Accurate            \_\_\_Mostly Accurate            \_\_\_Somewhat Accurate            \_\_\_Inaccurate

Comments:

34. The board annually reviews the administrator's(s') job description(s), involving the administrator(s) in the process. Additions, deletions, and other improvements to the job description(s) are considered for adoption by the board.

\_\_\_Accurate            \_\_\_Mostly Accurate            \_\_\_Somewhat Accurate            \_\_\_Inaccurate

Comments:

35. The board and/or other parish leadership gives strong consideration to, and determines whether the early childhood director is properly credentialed and is to be titled as the early childhood "administrator" – a parallel position to that of the school principal.

\_\_\_Accurate            \_\_\_Mostly Accurate            \_\_\_Somewhat Accurate            \_\_\_Inaccurate

Comments:

36. The board ensures that the administrator(s) is/are evaluated annually, using criteria based upon the job description(s) of the administrator(s), and using a process that works well and is helpful to the administrator(s) and to the school. The board holds the administrator(s) accountable to the job description(s), calling upon him/her/them to set goals and to report monthly on his/her/their goal accomplishment progress.

Accurate                       Mostly Accurate                       Somewhat Accurate                       Inaccurate

Comments:

**Concern for the School Administrator(s) and Staff**

37. Seeking the guidance of our Lord and working together with others as established policies dictate, the board gives high priority attention to staffing the school with God-fearing, well-qualified people.

Accurate                       Mostly Accurate                       Somewhat Accurate                       Inaccurate

Comments:

38. The board annually adopts and communicates board goals, involving the administrator(s) in the process.

Accurate                       Mostly Accurate                       Somewhat Accurate                       Inaccurate

Comments:

39. The board has a policy for non-Synodically trained faculty to obtain a colloquy within a reasonable length of time.

Accurate                       Mostly Accurate                       Somewhat Accurate                       Inaccurate

Comments:

40. The board encourages professional development for all professional and support staff by setting policy and providing resources.

Accurate                       Mostly Accurate                       Somewhat Accurate                       Inaccurate

Comments:

41. The board has policies and carries out practices to care for and recognize professional and support staff, showing appreciation and giving honor to them. Examples: celebrating service anniversaries, noting ministries well served, and recognizing educational accomplishments.

Accurate                       Mostly Accurate                       Somewhat Accurate                       Inaccurate

Comments:

42. By fulfilling the board role(s), the board enables the faculty and staff to more fully engage in serving students and parents.

Accurate                       Mostly Accurate                       Somewhat Accurate                       Inaccurate

Comments:

43. The board advocates for, and works in alignment with the congregation's salary or compensation review team, and the board recommends competitive salaries for the professional and support staff to the church/school budget process. The board carries out similar due diligence with respect to competitive fringe benefits for the professional and support staff.

Accurate       Mostly Accurate       Somewhat Accurate       Inaccurate

Comments:

#### **Communication Beyond the Board**

44. The board, in its official capacity, communicates with the school professional and support staff only through the school administrator(s).

Accurate       Mostly Accurate       Somewhat Accurate       Inaccurate

Comments:

45. The board, through its chair, carries out the responsibility of regularly reporting to the congregation and responds to input from the congregation in a timely manner. The board also, through its chair, provides the opportunity for individuals to request items to be added to the board agenda, and responds in a timely manner to those individuals.

Accurate       Mostly Accurate       Somewhat Accurate       Inaccurate

Comments:

#### **School Governance**

46. As board policies are established, reviewed, or revised, special attention is given to making certain that such policies are fully consistent with the school's established and articulated mission.

Accurate       Mostly Accurate       Somewhat Accurate       Inaccurate

Comments:

47. The board is responsible for setting policies to direct the board and the school administrator(s). The administrator(s) act(s) as the school's chief operations officer(s). The roles of setting policy and administering the school are distinctly separate. The school administrator(s) operate(s) the school so that it is open tomorrow. The board creates policy that assures that the school will be open in five years.

Accurate       Mostly Accurate       Somewhat Accurate       Inaccurate

Comments:

48. The school administrator(s) implement(s) board policies, establish(es) procedures for school operations, supervise(s) staff, make(s) decisions not limited by policy, make(s) decisions to deal with immediate issues, and together with the professional and support staff, operate(s) the school on a day-to-day basis in accord with established procedures that are consistent with board policy. The board expects the administrator(s) to hold school personnel accountable to the ministry.

\_\_\_Accurate                      \_\_\_Mostly Accurate                      \_\_\_Somewhat Accurate                      \_\_\_Inaccurate

Comments:

49. Governance policies are determined only at official board meetings. Those policies are recorded in the minutes and soon thereafter in the board policy manual.

\_\_\_Accurate                      \_\_\_Mostly Accurate                      \_\_\_Somewhat Accurate                      \_\_\_Inaccurate

Comments:

### **Funding the School**

50. The board takes a lead role in providing stable funding for the school and its mission.

\_\_\_Accurate                      \_\_\_Mostly Accurate                      \_\_\_Somewhat Accurate                      \_\_\_Inaccurate

Comments

51. The board receives regular financial reports and exercises financial oversight of the school.

\_\_\_Accurate                      \_\_\_Mostly Accurate                      \_\_\_Somewhat Accurate                      \_\_\_Inaccurate

Comments:

52. The administrator(s), with input from the staff, recommend(s) an annual budget to the board.

\_\_\_Accurate                      \_\_\_Mostly Accurate                      \_\_\_Somewhat Accurate                      \_\_\_Inaccurate

Comments:

### **Enhancing Christian Education**

53. Together with the administrator(s), the board has developed and published a strategic plan that presents annual goals as well as long term goals (two to three years) that are studied and upgraded at least annually.

\_\_\_Accurate                      \_\_\_Mostly Accurate                      \_\_\_Somewhat Accurate                      \_\_\_Inaccurate

Comments:

54. The board has a process in place to collect data by polling the board's constituencies, asking the following questions of each constituency:

1 – Areas of Strength - What are we doing well?

2- Areas of Improvement - What are we not doing well?

3 – Areas of Need - What are we not doing that we should be doing?

This data will be used to create and update the strategic plan.

\_\_\_Accurate

\_\_\_Mostly Accurate

\_\_\_Somewhat Accurate

\_\_\_Inaccurate

Comments:

55. The role of the board includes supporting the congregation(s) in nurturing life-long Christians.

\_\_\_Accurate

\_\_\_Mostly Accurate

\_\_\_Somewhat Accurate

\_\_\_Inaccurate

Comments:

56. The board is committed to ensuring that the school is recognized in the community for quality Christian education, high standards, effectiveness, and valuable services provided for its students. These qualities are described with metrics that the school's publics can understand and share with others.

\_\_\_Accurate

\_\_\_Mostly Accurate

\_\_\_Somewhat Accurate

\_\_\_Inaccurate

Comments:

\* \* \* \* \*