

SCHOOL BOARD LEADERSHIP

THE RIGHT WAY

**A Comprehensive
Professional Resource
for School Board Members**

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Glossary of Acronyms and Terms



K-12 General Education Terms

504 Plan: A special needs learning plan derived from Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which states, “Any person who (a) has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more of such person’s major life activities, (b) has a record of such an impairment, or (c) is regarded as having such an impairment.”

Academic Bankruptcy: The status of a school district demonstrating low educational achievement.

Academic Performance: The measurement of student achievement across various academic subjects, typically assessed through classroom performance, graduation rates, and standardized test results.

Achievement Gap: The difference in academic performance or graduation rates between groups of students, often influenced by various societal factors.

Adult General Education (AGE): Educational programs designed for adults to improve basic skills or obtain a high school diploma.

Adult High School (AHS): A program that offers high school diplomas or equivalency for adult learners.

Adult Secondary Education (ASE): Programs that offer education to adults seeking to complete their high school education.

Adult Training Programs (ATP): Programs designed to provide training and education for adult learners.

Advanced Learning Programs (ALP): Programs designed to challenge and enhance the learning experiences of advanced students.

Advanced Placement (AP): A program that allows high school students to take college-level courses and exams for potential college credit.

Age Appropriate: Refers to the suitability of content based on a child’s age.

Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC): A federal assistance program that provides financial aid to families with children in need.

Allied Health Program: A program that provides education and training for health professionals.

America’s Job Bank (AJB): A resource for job seekers to find employment opportunities.

America’s Labor Market Information System (ALMIS): A system that provides labor market data and resources for job seekers and employers.

America’s Service Locator (ASL): A resource for job seekers to find workforce services and programs.

American College Testing (ACT): A standardized test used for college admissions in the United States.

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American Federation of Labor – Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO): A federation of unions that advocates for labor rights and workers' interests.

Applied Learning Skills (ALS): Communication, problem-solving, critical thinking, research, personal/social responsibility, and interpersonal skills across all disciplines and courses.

Applied Technology Diploma (ATD): A credential awarded for completing a program in a technical field.

Assistant Secretary of Employment and Training (ASET): A government position overseeing employment and training programs.

Associate in Science (AS): A two-year degree focused on science and mathematics coursework.

Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTEONLINE): An organization dedicated to promoting career and technical education.

At-Risk: A student is considered “at-risk” if the school is concerned about their potential to fail or drop out.

Audiologist: A specialist who studies hearing, administers hearing assessments, and assists individuals with hearing loss.

Augmentative and Alternative Communication Device (AAC): A tool that uses communication methods other than speech to express thoughts, needs, and ideas.

Authorizer: Entities that set rules for starting and maintaining charter schools. Most authorizers are local education agencies, but they can also be universities, state education agencies, independent boards, municipalities, or nonprofit organizations.

Base Support Level (BSL): A measure of the primary funding necessary to support a school district's operations.

Baseline: A student's starting point is determined by data collected through screening tools to measure progress over time.

Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP): A written plan that outlines specific strategies and interventions that will be implemented to promote positive behaviors and reduce problem behaviors

Benchmark: Milestones that allow parents, students, and educators to track a student's progress throughout the academic year.

Best Practices: An everyday phrase that describes solid, reputable, state-of-the-art work in a field. If employees follow best practices, they are knowledgeable about current knowledge, technology, and procedures.

Black, Indigenous, People/Person of Color (BIPOC): A term that acknowledges and represents the diverse racial and ethnic identities of individuals.

Blaine Amendment: Refers to a proposed constitutional amendment in 1875 to prevent public funds from supporting private education, particularly in parochial schools.

Blended Learning: A formal education program that combines online or web-based components with traditional teaching methods.

Block Scheduling: An organizational system for middle or high school schedules with longer class periods than the traditional schedule.

Blue Ribbon School: A designation awarded by the US Department of Education to recognize schools demonstrating exceptional academic excellence or significant progress in closing achievement gaps.

Brick-and-Mortar Education: Refers to education conducted at a physical school rather than in a virtual environment.

Bring Your Own Device (BYOD): A policy that allows students to bring personal electronic devices to school for educational purposes.

Budget Expenditures: Typical expenses incurred by school districts, including salaries, employee benefits, supplies, utilities, maintenance, and miscellaneous expenditures.

Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training (BAT): A division of the U.S. Department of Labor that oversees apprenticeship programs.

Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS): A government agency that provides data on employment, wages, and economic conditions.

Business Relations Group (BRG): A group that aims to facilitate collaboration between businesses and educational institutions.

Career and Technical Education (CTE): Educational programs that prepare students for specific careers through hands-on learning.

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS): A federal agency overseeing healthcare programs.

Certificate of Initial Mastery (CIM): Academic achievement in mathematics and English language arts, the ability to apply academic learning, and possessing essential work habits.

Charter Schools: Publicly funded schools that operate independently, often with a specific educational focus or approach.

Child Find Program: A program mandated by IDEA that continuously seeks out and evaluates children who may have disabilities.

Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP): A program that provides health coverage to eligible children in low-income families.

Classical Education: An educational philosophy rooted in the liberal arts, ancient histories, and classic literature.

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College and Career Ready: Describes students or educational programs that equip students with the necessary knowledge and skills for success in college or careers.

Common Core State Standards (CCSS): A national set of educational standards for K-12 students in subjects like math and English language arts not fully vetted before being adopted by states that took the Race to the Top Federal grant dollars under the Obama administration

Common Tasks: It connects to a standard, GLE, or GSE endorsed by the district or the state.

Consolidated Resource Plan (CRP): The Consolidated Resource Plan (CRP) provides the opportunity to move towards a fuller integration in using resources and your other state and local funds.

Consolidated School District: A school district formed by combining two or more existing districts.

Core Curriculum: Colleges use standardized curricula to impart specific skills or knowledge to all students.

Cost of Living Allowance (COLA): An adjustment made to salaries to account for changes in the cost of living.

Critical Race Theory (CRT): An ideology based on the framework for examining race and racism's impact on culture and institutions in the US, arguing that systemic racism is embedded in legal and social structures.

Curriculum alignment: The process of ensuring that the curriculum, content standards, instructional and assessment methods, educational materials, learning outcomes, and other elements are all coherent, unified, and consistent.

Curriculum-Based Measurement (CBM): Curriculum-based measurements are short, regular assessments to monitor student performance.

Curriculum: A formal plan for an educational course that defines how students will learn what they should learn.

Differentiated Instruction (DI): A method of teaching that focuses on creating varied experiences that meet students' different learning levels and needs in a class.

District Corrective Action: The NCLB classification for a district that has been "In Need of Improvement" for three or more years.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI): Initiatives tied to CRT practices aimed at promoting diverse, equitable, and inclusive environments in schools and workplaces.

Dual Enrollment: A program allowing high school students to earn college credit while working toward their high school diploma.

Dual-language Program: Students receive a significant amount of weekly instruction in a partner language (a language other than English).

Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment (EPSDT): A program that provides comprehensive health services for children enrolled in Medicaid.

Early College Program: See Dual Enrollment.

Early Intervention Program (EIP): Services designed to address developmental delays in young children.

EdTech: “EdTech” is short for education technology.

Education Savings Account: Parents who enroll in an education savings account program can receive public education funds for various approved education costs.

Education Savings Accounts (ESA): Programs that allow parents to use public funds for educational expenses, such as private school tuition or tutoring.

Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA): A federal law aimed at improving education opportunities for disadvantaged students.

Emotional Disturbance (ED): An emotional condition used to describe a diagnosable mental, behavioral, or emotional disorder that lasts for a significant duration and affects educational performance.

Emotional/Behavior Disorder (EBD): A classification for students whose emotional or behavioral functioning negatively impacts their educational performance.

End of Grade Assessment (EOG): Tests administered to evaluate student performance at the end of a grade level.

End-of-Course (EOC): Assessments are given to students at the end of a course to measure their understanding of the material.

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL): Programs designed to teach English to non-native speakers.

English Language Arts (ELA): The subject area focuses on reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills.

English Language Learner (ELL): A term used to describe students who are learning English as an additional language.

Equity: Equity ignores a merit-based system and fairness in education by shifting resources to some students within an identified category based on race to give them access to the resources and opportunities they need to succeed.

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA): A federal law that replaced No Child Left Behind, emphasizing equal opportunity and flexibility for states in education.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA): A federal law regulating the management of student records and disclosure of information from those records.

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Fiscal Year (FY): One year used for financial reporting and budgeting.

Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL): A program that provides free or discounted meals to eligible students from low-income families.

Full-Time Equivalent (FTE): A measure used to represent the workload of an employed person in a way that makes workloads comparable across various contexts.

Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA): A problem-solving process for addressing inappropriate behavior that impedes a child's learning or the learning of others.

Gamification: An instructional approach that brings elements of playing a game into a classroom.

Gifted Program: A gifted program is designed to bring unique support to academically exceptional students whose needs are unmet in a traditional learning environment.

Grade Level Expectations (GLEs): A blueprint for developing and implementing a state-level assessment that identifies the content knowledge and skills expected of all students.

Health and Human Services (HHS): A federal department responsible for protecting the health of all Americans and providing essential human services.

Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS): The cognitive domain in Bloom's taxonomy categorizes learning into six major divisions.

Highly Qualified Teachers: The federal definition of a highly qualified teacher meets all the following criteria: the teacher must be fully certified and/or licensed by the state, hold at least a bachelor's degree from a four-year institution, and demonstrate competence in each core academic subject area.

Inclusion: Term used to describe services that place students with disabilities in general education classrooms with appropriate support services.

Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE): By law, a school district must conduct assessments of students who may be eligible for special education.

Individualized Education Program (IEP): A legal roadmap for what individualized supports and services a child with disabilities will receive.

Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP): A process of providing early intervention services for children ages 0-3 with special needs.

Individualized Transition Plan (ITP): This plan starts in the 9th grade or before age 16 and addresses areas of post-school activities, post-secondary education, employment, community experiences, and daily living skills.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA): A law ensuring students with disabilities receive a free and appropriate public education.

- Institute of Higher Education (IHE):** Institutions that provide post-secondary education and training.
- Instructional Improvement System (IIS):** Designed to help educators improve instructional practices and student outcomes.
- Intensive English Language (IEL):** Programs designed to provide focused English language instruction to non-native speakers.
- International Baccalaureate (IB):** An internationally recognized educational program that offers a rigorous curriculum for students aged 3-19.
- Intervention:** An instructional strategy or method of instruction used to increase student skills.
- Learning Disability:** A disorder in one or more basic psychological processes involved in understanding or using language.
- Learning Management System (LMS):** Software that helps educators create, deliver, and manage educational courses and training programs.
- Least Restrictive Environment (LRE):** A requirement that students with disabilities be educated with their non-disabled peers to the maximum extent possible.
- Limited English Proficient (LEP):** A term used to describe individuals who are not fluent in English.
- Local Education Agency (LEA):** A term that can refer to any school program conducted by a public school or agency.
- Mainstreaming:** The term describes integrating children with special needs into regular classrooms for part of the school day.
- Maintenance and Operations (M&O):** Refers to the expenditures necessary to maintain and operate educational facilities.
- Major Life Activities:** Include caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working.
- Manifestation Determination/Hearing:** Within 10 school days of any decision to change the placement of a child with a disability because of a violation of school code.
- Medical Report/Information:** This form may document relevant medical findings, health problems, medication, and other medical information to determine eligibility.
- Memorandum of Agreement (MOA):** A document outlining the terms and details of an agreement between parties.
- Memorandum of Understanding (MOU):** A formal agreement between two or more parties outlining their intentions and responsibilities.

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Modifications: Changes were made to curriculum expectations to meet the student's needs.

Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS): A framework for providing varying levels of support to students based on their needs.

Multidisciplinary Evaluation and Eligibility Group Summary (MEEGS): The multidisciplinary evaluation must include relevant and functional information from the home and school.

Multiple Disabilities: An IEP term defines a combination of disabilities that cause severe educational needs that require multiple special education programs.

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP): A long-term assessment of student performance in various subjects across the United States.

National School Board Association (NSBA): An organization that represents school boards and advocates for public education.

National School Lunch Program (NSLP): A federally assisted meal program that provides children nutritionally balanced, low-cost, or free lunches.

No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB): Federal legislation aimed to improve disadvantaged students' educational outcomes.

Notification of Meeting (NOM): Notification of Meeting is used by the LEA to take steps to ensure that parent(s) are allowed to participate in the special education process.

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD): An anxiety disorder that presents itself as recurrent obsessions or compulsions.

Office for Civil Rights (OCR): Ensures equal access to education and promotes educational excellence throughout the nation.

Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP): This division of the U.S. Department of Education is entirely focused on special education.

Online Learning Exchange (OLE): A platform for sharing resources and information about online education.

Open Educational Resources (OER): Teaching, learning, and research resources that are freely available for use.

Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD): A child who defies authority by disobeying, talking back, arguing, or being hostile.

Orthopedic Impairment: Term used to define impairments caused by congenital anomaly, impairments by diseases, and impairments by other causes.

Other Health Impaired (OHI): A term described as limited strength, vitality, and alertness resulting in limited educational ability.

Parent Consent: Special education term used by IDEA that states you have been fully informed in your native language.

Parents Rights in Special Education: Notice of Procedural Safeguards.

Performance Evaluation Instrument (PEI): Tools used to assess and evaluate employee performance.

Personal Protective Equipment Grant (PPE): Funding provided to help schools purchase necessary protective equipment.

Physical Therapy (PT): Physical therapy is instructional support and treatment of physical disabilities.

Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS): A framework for improving student behavior and promoting a positive school culture.

Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT): A standardized test that provides practice for the SAT and qualifies students for scholarships.

Race to the Top (RTTT): A federal program providing funding to encourage state education reform by implementing CCSS and integrated longitudinal databases with the Federal Department of Education under the Obama administration.

Reevaluation: In special education, a reevaluation is an assessment that occurs at least every three years.

Referral: A referral concerning special education is the official request to begin a formal process.

Related Services: Services that a school is required to provide under IDEA.

Resource Room: A room separate from the regular classroom where students with disabilities can receive specialized assistance.

Resource Specialist Program (RSP): This term describes a program that provides instruction, materials, and support services to students with identified disabilities.

Resource Specialists Provide instructional planning, support, and direct services to students whose needs have been identified in an IEP.

Response to Intervention (RTI): An educational approach providing early, systematic assistance to struggling students.

Revenue Control Limit (RCL): A limit on the revenue a school district can generate.

Review of Existing Data (RED): When a student is requested to be evaluated initially, the LEA staff must conduct a Review of Existing Data.

Scaffolding: In education, scaffolding is an instructional technique that helps students progressively build on knowledge.

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Scholarship Granting Organization (SGO): Non-profit organizations that manage contributions from donors or grants for educational scholarships.

Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT): A standardized test widely used for college admissions in the United States.

School Psychologist: Assist in identifying students' intellectual, social, and emotional needs.

School-based System (SBS): Refers to programs or initiatives implemented at the school level.

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM): An educational approach emphasizing these four disciplines.

Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM): An educational approach integrating arts into the STEM fields.

Secretary of Education: The Federal Secretary of Education leads the Department of Education and advises the President.

Self-Advocacy: A skill set that allows students to take charge of their education.

Self-Directed Learning: An educational style in which students can choose their activities and experiences.

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL): A trend in K-12 education that emphasizes the development of emotional and interpersonal skills. This focus on SEL can sometimes be polarizing, leading to debates about what is appropriate for students' age and what should be the responsibility of parents versus the school district.

Socratic Method: The Socratic method is a teaching method in which a teacher asks questions to help students reason more clearly.

Special Education (SpEd): Instruction specifically designed to meet the unique needs of a student with a disability.

Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST): A tax used to fund specific school projects or improvements.

Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) is an instruction that has been adapted in content or delivery method to address specific learning needs.

Speech and Language Impairments: Communication disorders such as stuttering, delayed speaking, impaired articulation, language impairment, or voice impairment.

Speech and Language Specialists: Assesses students for possible delayed speech and language skills and provides direct services.

Standardized Testing: Used to ask students in the same grade level across a state or country to answer the same questions under the same time limit and conditions.

State Educational Agency (SEA): A state educational agency in charge of supervising public schools in a state.

STEM Education: STEM education focuses on innovation and active learning through science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

Student Assistance Team/Student Support Team: This team of professionals and parents meet to discuss any problems students have in their general education classroom.

Substance Use Disorder (SUD): A condition characterized by an individual's inability to control their use of substances, leading to significant impairment.

Synchronous Learning: In synchronous learning, a student goes through learning material with the teacher in real-time.

Tax Credit Scholarships (TCS): Scholarships funded by donations that provide tax credits to donors and allow families to attend private schools.

Teacher Certification: The state requires most or all teachers in public schools to be certified or licensed to teach.

Teaching and Learning Division (T&L): A division within an education agency focused on enhancing teaching and learning practices.

Title I: A federal program that provides extra funding to schools with high percentages of low-income children.

Title II: A federal law aimed at supporting the development of teachers and school leaders.

Title IX: A civil rights law that protects students from discrimination based on sex, especially in school athletics and sports.

Transition Meeting: In special education, a transition meeting is a meeting of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) or ARD team.

Transition Plan: A plan specific to an Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

Transportation Revenue Control Limit (TRCL): A limit on the revenue generated for school transportation.

Transportation Support Level (TSL): Funding provided to support transportation services in educational settings.

Triennial Review: A triennial review is an Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting every three years.

United States Education Department (USED): The federal agency responsible for national education policy and funding.

Universal Screening Tool: An assessment used to identify or predict students who may be at risk for not meeting benchmarks.

University Model Education: A model that blends aspects of homeschooling, public schooling, and private schooling.

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Unschooling: A type of homeschooling that focuses on nurturing a child’s innate curiosity and interests.

Voucher: Families eligible for vouchers can use all or some of the public funding available for their child’s education to attend a private school.

Waldorf: Waldorf education is one philosophy and method of education.

Weighted Grades: A weighted grade is the average of a group of grades, each making up a different percentage of the final grade.

Welfare Information Network (WIN): A network providing information and resources related to welfare programs.

Welfare Transition Program (WTP): Programs aimed at helping individuals transition from welfare to work.

Whole Child Education: Whole child education is a trend in education that takes on the role of caregiver beyond academics to provide emotional and health care, creating a community approach to raising the child.

Women’s Bureau (WB): US Department of Labor: An agency that promotes the interests of working women and advocates for their rights.

Work And Gain Economic Self-sufficiency (WAGES): A program aimed at helping individuals achieve economic independence.

Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC): A tax credit for employers hiring individuals from certain target groups.

WorkForce Development (WFD): Initiatives and programs to improve workforce skills and job readiness.

Workforce Development Board (WDB): A group that oversees workforce development programs and initiatives.

Workforce Development Education Fund (WDEF) supports education and training programs to enhance workforce skills.

Workforce Development Implementation Team (WDIT): A team executing workforce development initiatives.

Workforce Development Information Systems (WDIS): Systems that manage and analyze data related to workforce development.

Workforce Education (WE): Education programs focused on preparing individuals for careers and employment.

Workforce Education and Outcome Information Services (WHOIS): Services that provide information on workforce education outcomes.

Workforce Investment Act (WIA): Legislation designed to improve the workforce development system in the United States.

Workforce Investment Board (WIB): A board that oversees local workforce development initiatives and funding.

Wraparound Services: In education, wraparound services refer to when a school seeks to support students that “wrap around” into all areas of life.

Year-round School: Like it sounds, year-round schooling without summer break.

Zone (Attendance Zone): In many areas where a family lives, it determines what public school they are automatically assigned or zoned to.