



Georgia School Boards Association
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GSBA Overview

Created in 1951, the Georgia School Boards Association (GSBA) is a voluntary, nonprofit, statewide educational association that serves and represents the 180 locally elected boards of education in Georgia.

Membership

GSBA's membership includes Georgia's 180 local boards of education. The association represents "the collective resolve" of its member boards and provides information and services to the 180 school boards serving 1.6 million school children in Georgia.

Governance

Local school boards govern GSBA through the association's Board of Directors, an annual Delegate Assembly (which serves as GSBA by approving the legislative positions and electing officers), and a grassroots process whereby local school boards assist in communicating important legislative information to legislative leaders and local policy-makers. The GSBA Board of Directors includes the president, vice president, president elect, past president, treasurer and a representative from each of GSBA's 14 Districts around the state.

GSBA Programs and Services

Advocacy

GSBA's official positions on legislative and regulatory matters are adopted annually by the association's Delegate Assembly, which occurs in June. Although GSBA's specific stance on education issues may change over time, the association remains dedicated to the preservation of local control of public education. The association is dedicated to keeping a presence in all legislative matters that involve the education of children at all levels in the process throughout the year. To be most effective, GSBA believes that our members must be well informed of the issues. To keep our members and others interested in public education informed of legislative issues affecting public education, GSBA has developed Capitol Watch Online. From this site, you can read daily reports of action under Georgia's "Gold Dome" while the Georgia General Assembly is in session and find out about certain bills and pieces of legislation. The association also provides numerous opportunities for engagement in the process through advocacy workshops, statewide forums on legislative issues, participation in the National School Boards Association Federal Relations Network (FRN) and more.

eBOARDsolutions (EBS)

EBS was created as a subsidiary of GSBA when demand for its governance and membership management products began to expand into other markets and states. Initially developed by and for GSBA, the products are now used by over 200 local boards of education, state boards of education, state agencies and other associations. The signature product of EBS is eBOARD. eBOARD is a web-based governance portal that provides a single source for access to pertinent data for effective decision-making. Stakeholders can easily find information about meetings, policies and strategic plan





initiatives through advanced search capabilities. They can save time and money by streamlining workflow and eliminating paper dependency. eBOARD also enhances communications with all stakeholders and provides greater transparency. Current modules available through eBOARD are: Meetings, Policy, Strategic Plan, Law, Communications and Documents. In 2010, a board/superintendent evaluation module will be available.

Professional Development

GSBA is known nationally for the caliber of its training programs. In addition to two major annual conferences, GSBA conducts regional workshops on topics ranging from online courses, board candidate and board chair training to school finance and budgeting. Prior to each conference, board members and others can participate in pre-conference workshops that include the GSBA New Board Member Orientation, the School Law Seminar, the Student Achievement Workshop, the Communications Workshop and the Policy Workshop. Although most board members receive their mandated training through these workshops, many boards receive the annual training through customized whole board retreats provided by GSBA. The association is now also offering a series of webinars to allow school board members to meet their mandated training requirements.

Risk Management Services

State-of-the-art risk management practices help school districts lower their costs, reduce anxiety and prevent injuries. Membership in the GSBA Workers' Compensation Fund and Risk Management Fund provides school boards with a proven means of preserving lives, protecting facilities, minimizing disruptions and recovering fully from unexpected events. Group self-insurance membership has gained wide recognition and acceptance among school boards in Georgia and nationally. School systems that participate gain the immediate saving of longer term cost reduction through more efficient transfer of risk. In addition, the improved risk management programs developed through a cooperative effort of the GSBA Funds helps school boards reach their goals of higher student achievement.

Strategic Planning

GSBA, in partnership with the Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement (GLISI), offers a comprehensive strategic planning process. The multi-step process begins with a community engagement component that seeks input from all stakeholder groups. GSBA then leads a diverse planning team through the development of a mission, vision, beliefs and strategic goal areas. Action teams then are assisted with coming up with the steps necessary to implement the plan. The entire process takes about 4-6 months. Local school plans for improvement are brought into the process as well so that the district has a systemic improvement plan in place to move the entire district forward. The EBS Strategic Plan Module can assist boards in managing and communicating the plan.

Additional services provided by GSBA are:

- **Policy Services** – GSBA provides districts with different levels of service to meet policy needs. These services include complete manual revisions and a policy update service.
- **Public Engagement** – GSBA can assist with planning, coordinating and facilitating a variety of community engagement activities including community conversations, focus groups and online surveys. Our community conversation process includes recruiting a wide and diverse cross section of the school district's community that represents all stakeholder groups. A meeting or series of meetings are held to lead small group discussions on topical issues.
- **Standards for Local Boards of Education/Board of Distinction Program** – GSBA began the Standards program in 1996 to assist boards with achieving minimum benchmarks in governance. The Board of Distinction level was added later as a higher standard of achievement. In 2001, the program was revised to include a continual improvement process that combines the standards program with a superintendent evaluation and board self-assessment.
- **Superintendent Search Services** – GSBA conducts the majority of superintendent searches in the state. The association's process is inclusive and thorough in assisting the board in selecting the right superintendent for their district.
- **Website** – GSBA's website offers daily newsclips from around the state, an active newsroom that includes information about public education in Georgia, details about the association's programs and services, online registration for all events and an online boardsmanship manual – eBoardsmanship.

