

## Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

**5.6** *The governing body engages in formation and on-going training and self-evaluation for itself and the leadership team to ensure the faithful execution of their respective responsibilities.*

### **I. What does this benchmark indicate for school performance?**

The members of the governing body are formed in the mission and prepared to assume their roles and responsibilities if they are to be competent stewards of the school's mission and resources (both personnel and material). In fact, it is a priority. This requires members to be continually engaged in formational and educational activities from the moment that they begin to consider joining the board to the day their term of service ends. Therefore, formational and educational activities are presented during the three stages of membership:

- Prospective member (Getting acquainted with the mission and the role and operations of the board)
- Newcomer (Orientation)
- Veteran (Ongoing- this includes items for all board members on their areas of responsibilities)

This requires a well-planned program with materials, resources, and presenters, as well as a group who will oversee the activities for each of the three stages of membership. A Nominating Committee/Governance Committee of the board would be the suggested group to not only oversee the activities, but to plan and execute the blueprint.

The diocese is a resource to assist with this comprehensive and on-going formation and education. It is suggested that a designated person at the diocesan level be responsible for ongoing and systematic training and evaluation of the governing group.

Finally and most importantly, an annual evaluation is necessary to determine if the formation and education is making a difference in the performance of the governing body. Based on the evaluation, the board needs to develop and implement an annual board development plan. It is suggested that in order to plan effectively, time for a planning retreat should be allocated.

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### **II. As a review team member, what evidence do I look for?**

Here are some fundamental guiding questions which will help frame this item:

- What information can be distributed at the Prospective and Newcomer stages? Who determines the topics for these two stages? Who presents the topics?
- How is the veteran or ongoing formation determined? How is it designed and who determines the needs? Who oversees it?
- Is there a designated person at the diocesan level who is responsible for ongoing and systematic training and evaluation? How is the training delivered? How are connections made between the diocesan staff and the governing body?
- How are new members as well as veteran members prepared to direct their discussions, strategies, and decisions around the school's' mission and vision?
- How is the board engaged in an annual review of its performance as a governing body? How is the review used to develop the board's plan for improvement?
- Is a leadership manual for Catholic school boards/governing bodies available from the (arch) diocesan office or the religious community that offers school boards a common frame of reference, vocabulary and best practices to ensure success?
- Has a board Nomination/Board Development Committee been established to design, execute and assess board formation and education? What are the stated responsibilities of the Nomination/Board Development Committee?

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### III. What are the key differences between the levels of the rubric?

#### At level **3-Fully Meets Benchmark**,

the governing body engages in formation and on-going training at all three levels (prospective member, newcomer, and veteran). The governing body and the leadership team demonstrate a strong commitment to this training as part of their commitment to ensure the faithful execution of their respective responsibilities. In addition, both groups are strongly committed to an annual self-assessment that includes a retreat to plan for the governing body's improvement. The Nominating/Governance Committee is a standing board committee responsible for the oversight for all of the above. This committee is dedicated to ensuring that formation, education and self-evaluation occurs on a regular schedule.

#### At level **4-Exceeds Benchmark**,

the governing body is very committed to and engages in continuous formation, education, and self-evaluation at all three levels (prospective member, newcomer, and veteran). The governing body visibly supports and ensures that the leadership team is engaged in continuous formative efforts. Both the governing body and the leadership team have clearly defined accountability measures for the outcomes associated with their responsibilities and the governing body's ongoing work and improvement plan. Outcomes are assessed utilizing both formative (after each meeting) and summative (annual self-evaluation and input from stakeholders) measures to ensure the faithful execution of their respective responsibilities, with clear follow up and plans for improvement. Annual assessments are designed to include all stakeholder groups to secure input that represents the diversity of stakeholders.

An important element of the governing body's assessment is that an annual retreat be held following the assessment process. At this planning retreat, the board and the leadership team discuss the results of the evaluation and design an improvement plan. The Nominating/Governance Committee, a standing board committee, oversees all of the above.

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### **At level 2-Partially Meets Benchmark,**

the governing body and the leadership team intermittently engage in formation and on-going training and self-evaluation. The board and the leadership team have no set plan to provide activities at the three levels (prospective member, newcomer, and veteran).

There is little if any assessment of the governing body's work nor accountability for expected outcomes. Thus, they limit their ability to ensure consistent, informed and faithful execution of their respective responsibilities as stewards of the mission. No Nominating/Governance Committee exists or, if it does exist, its role is limited.

### **At level 1-Does Not Meet Benchmark,**

the governing body and the leadership team do not engage in formation and on-going training. Neither group has a plan in place to do so. Furthermore, the two groups do not support the concept of assessment and accountability. This negatively impacts the governing body's faithful execution of their respective responsibilities as informed stewards of the mission. No Nominating/Governance Committee exists.

## **IV. What are some key suggestions for improvement?**

### **To move from level 1 to level 2,**

- Engage in formation and ongoing training and self-evaluation for the benefit of the board and leadership team to ensure continuous, faithful execution of their respective responsibilities.
- Focus on formation and on-going training in the orientation of new members and ongoing development of veteran members.
- Establish a standing Nominating/Governance Committee of the board.

### **To move from level 2 to level 3,**

- Provide oversight for the formation, education and self-evaluation of the governing body as a responsibility of the Nominating/Governance Committee.

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- Plan focused and ongoing training activities for prospective members, newcomers, and veteran school board members sponsored by the Nomination/Governance Committee.
- Provide formation and ongoing training for prospective members, newcomers, and veterans sponsored by the Nominating/Governance Committee.
- Organize and provide an annual self-assessment process that includes a retreat to engage in ongoing governing body improvement and ensure the faithful execution of their responsibilities.

### **To move from level 3 to 4,**

- Commit to and actively engage in the continuous formation and education of the governing body members at all three levels (prospective member, newcomer, and veteran levels) as well as self-evaluation.
- Visibly support and ensure that the leadership team is engaged in continuous formative efforts
- Establish clearly defined accountability measures for both the governing body and the leadership team based on the outcomes associated with their responsibilities.
- Assess outcomes utilizing both formative (after each meeting) and summative (annual self-evaluation and input from stakeholders) measures to ensure the faithful execution of the governing body and leadership team's respective responsibilities.
- Develop and implement plans that address areas of improvement.
- Include all stakeholder groups in annual assessments to secure input that represents the diversity of stakeholders.
- Conduct an annual retreat where the governing body and leadership team discuss the assessment results and design an improvement plan.
- Charge the Nominating/Governance Committee, a standing committee of the board, with ongoing oversight all of the above.

**V. What are key terms for common understanding? (Refer to Glossary for the terms listed below.)**

Formative Evaluation  
Summative Evaluation  
Formation  
Education

On-going training  
Self-evaluation  
Leadership team

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