Student Outcomes Focused Governance
A Continuous Improvement Framework

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Overview
Student outcomes don't change until adult behaviors change. Or said differently when placed in the context of governing, patterns of behavior that are exhibited in the boardroom can reasonably be expected to be found paralleled in the classroom. This concept, which offers a summation of the current literature on board behaviors and their relationship to improving student outcomes, is as simple as it can be confounding. The intention of the Council of the Great City Schools' (CGCS) Student Outcomes Focused Governance framework is to translate existing research and the collective experience of dozens of CGCS board members and superintendents into a set of tools that boards can use to identify what's working and what's not working, as well as to track progress along their journey toward improving student outcomes.

The framework is built around six research-informed competencies that describe school board behaviors and the degree to which they create the conditions for improvements in student outcomes: Vision & Goals, Values & Guardrails, Monitoring & Accountability, Communication & Collaboration, Unity & Trust, and Continuous Improvement.

How To Use
This document is best used by the full board and superintendent with guidance from a facilitator specifically trained in its application. After receiving an orientation to the framework, each individual board member and the superintendent should fill out the Board Quarterly Self Evaluation. Using the self evaluation instrument will reveal a score between 0 and 100, where a 0 indicates that the Board is not at all focused (yet) on its goals for student outcomes and a 100 which indicates that the Board has mastered the behavior of focusing on its goals for student outcomes. Then the facilitator should lead the board through a process of collectively completing the self evaluation for the first time. This will create the Board's starting point data which, in addition to providing a measurable score, provides the board with clarity about its strengths and weaknesses relative to being focused on improving student outcomes.

Once a baseline has been set, the board should schedule time during a public meeting every three months to complete the self-evaluation again as a means of monitoring the board's progress over time. Ideally each quarter the board's focus on improving student outcomes meaningfully increases -- a process tracked for the first two years using the Board Continuous Improvement Evaluation.

VISION & GOALS: The Board will, in collaboration with the Superintendent, adopt goals that are student outcomes focused.			
Not Student Outcomes Focused (0)	**Approaching Student Outcomes Focus (10)**	**Meeting Student Outcomes Focus (25)**	**Mastering Student Outcomes Focus (35)**
The Board is Not Student Outcomes Focused if any of the following are true:	*No items from the Not Student Outcomes Focused column, and:*	*All items from the Approaching Student Outcomes Focus column, and:*	*All items from the Meeting Student Outcomes Focus column, and:*
The Board has not adopted **goals**.	The Board has adopted, in collaboration with the Superintendent, goals.	The Board's goals all pertain to desired **student outcomes**.	The Board used a process that included students, parents, staff, and community members in a way that leads them to express ownership of the adopted goals.
The Board has not consistently demonstrated the ability to distinguish between **inputs**, **outputs**, and **outcomes**.	The Board has adopted only **SMART** goals that include a specific **measure, population**, **starting point**, an **ending point**, a **starting date,** and an **ending date**.	In addition to the goal ending points, the Board has adopted **annual targets**, goal ending points for each year leading up to the ending dates. The Superintendent has provided interim goal ending points for each year leading up to the ending date.	All of the interim goals are predictive of their respective goals, and are influenceable by the Superintendent (and the Superintendent's team). Predictive suggests that there is some evidence of a correlation between the interim goal and the goal. Influenceable suggests that the Superintendent -- and through them, the staff -- has authority over roughly 80% of the inputs the interim goal is measuring.
The Board has not hosted opportunities to listen to the vision of the community during the previous thirty-six month period.	The Board has adopted no fewer than one and no more than five goals. Fewer goals allow for greater focus; more allow for less.	All interim goals pertain to **student outputs** or student outcomes, not inputs or adult outputs.	
	The Superintendent has adopted, in collaboration with the Board, one to three **interim goals** to progress monitor each goal, and each interim goal is SMART.	The Board included students, parents, staff, and community members in the goal development process.	
	The status of each interim goal is able to be updated multiple times during each school year.	All Board goals last from three to five years; all interim goals last from one to three years.	The Board relied on a root cause analysis, comprehensive student needs assessment, and/or similar research-based tool to inform identification of and prioritization of potential goals.
	The Board publicly posted the goals for public comment prior to adoption.	The goals and interim goals will challenge the organization and will require change in adult behaviors.	

VALUES & GUARDRAILS: The Board will, in collaboration with the Superintendent, adopt guardrails.			
Not Student Outcomes Focused (0)	**Approaching Student Outcomes Focus (5)**	**Meeting Student Outcomes Focus (10)**	**Mastering Student Outcomes Focus (15)**
The Board is Not Student Outcomes Focused if any of the following are true: The Board has not adopted goals. The Board has not hosted opportunities to listen to the **values** of the community during the previous thirty-six month period.	*No items from the Not Student Outcomes Focused column, and:* The Board has adopted, in collaboration with the Superintendent, **guardrails** based on the community's values and that do not hinder pursuit of the goals. Each guardrail describes a single operational action or class of actions the Superintendent may not use or allow in pursuit of the goals. The Board has adopted no fewer than one and no more than five guardrails. Fewer guardrails allow for more focus; more allow for less. The Superintendent has adopted, in collaboration with the Board, one to three **interim guardrails** for each guardrail, and each interim guardrail is SMART. The status of each interim guardrail is able to be updated multiple times during each school year. The Board publicly posted the guardrails for public comment prior to adoption.	*All items from the Approaching Student Outcomes Focus column, and:* The Superintendent has provided interim guardrail ending points for each year leading up to the ending date. All interim guardrails pertain to **outputs** or outcomes, not inputs. The Board included students, parents, staff, and community members in the guardrail development process. The Board has considered adoption of one or more **theories of action** to drive the school system's overall strategic direction. If there is a permanent Superintendent, that person was included in the theory consideration process. All Board guardrails last from three to five years; all interim guardrails last from one to three years. The guardrails, interim guardrails, and theories of action will challenge the organization and require change in adult behaviors.	*All items from the Meeting Student Outcomes Focus column, and:* The Board used a process that included students, parents, staff, and community members in a way that leads them to express ownership of the adopted guardrails and, if applicable, theories of action. All of the interim guardrails are predictive of their respective guardrails, and are influenceable by the Superintendent (and the Superintendent's team). Predictive suggests that there is some evidence of a correlation between the interim guardrail and the guardrail. Influenceable suggests that the Superintendent -- and through them, the staff -- has authority over roughly 80% of whatever the interim guardrail is measuring. In addition to the guardrails on the Superintendent's authority, the Board has adopted one to five guardrails on its own behavior and evaluates itself against them at least quarterly.

MONITORING & ACCOUNTABILITY: The Board will devote significant time monthly to monitoring progress toward the goals.			
Not Student Outcomes Focused (0)	**Approaching Student Outcomes Focus (10)**	**Meeting Student Outcomes Focus (20)**	**Mastering Student Outcomes Focus (30)**
The Board is Not Student Outcomes Focused if any of the following are true:	*No items from the Not Student Outcomes Focused column, and:*	*All items from the Approaching Student Outcomes Focus column, and:*	*All items from the Meeting Student Outcomes Focus column, and:*
The Board has not adopted goals.	The Board invests no less than 10% of its total Board-authorized public meeting minutes **monitoring** its goals.	The Board invests no less than 25% of its total Board-authorized public meeting minutes monitoring its goals.	The Board invests no less than 50% of its total Board-authorized public meeting minutes each month into effectively monitoring its goals.
The Board does not schedule each goal to be monitored at least four times per year.			
The Board does not schedule each guardrail to be monitored at least once per year.	The Superintendent led the interim goals/guardrails and monitoring calendar development processes while working collaboratively with the Board.	No more than two goals are monitored per month.	Only **Board work** was discussed and/or acted on during Board-authorized public meetings.
The Board has not adopted a **monitoring calendar**.	The Board has a Board-adopted monitoring calendar.	Every goal is monitored at least four times per year.	The Board modifies its goals, guardrails, and monitoring calendar no more than once during the span of the Board's adopted goals (unless they are met sooner). A longer period allows for more focus; shorter allows for less.
The Board does not track its use of time in **Board-authorized public meetings**.	The Board's monitoring calendar spans the length of the Board's goals. A longer span allows for more focus; shorter allows for less.	Every guardrail is monitored at least once per year.	
The Board has not consistently demonstrated the ability to distinguish between **customer** service/issues and **owner** service/issues.	The Board has received **monitoring reports** in accordance with its monitoring calendar.	The Board has been provided copies of -- but, unless required by law, did not vote to approve / disapprove -- the Superintendent's plan(s) for implementing the Board's goals and worked to ensure that the plan included both an implementation timeline and **implementation instruments**.	The school system has achieved at least half of its interim goals during the previous twelve month period.
The school system has not achieved any of its interim goals during the previous twelve month period.	The Superintendent is evaluated only on performance regarding the Board's goals, guardrails, and interim goals/guardrails. The Board considers Superintendent performance to be indistinguishable from school system performance.	The most recent annual Superintendent evaluation took place no more than twelve months ago.	If the Board approves an annual budget, it does so only after determining that the Board's goals are the first priority for resource allocation.
			The majority of the Board's monitoring sessions during the period were rated Effective or Highly Effective.

COMMUNICATION & COLLABORATION: The Board will lead transparently and include stakeholders in the pursuit of the goals.			
Not Student Outcomes Focused (0)	**Approaching Student Outcomes Focus (1)**	**Meeting Student Outcomes Focus (5)**	**Mastering Student Outcomes Focus (10)**
The Board is Not Student Outcomes Focused if any of the following are true:	*No items from the Not Student Outcomes Focused column, and:*	*All items from the Approaching Student Outcomes Focus column, and:*	*All items from the Meeting Student Outcomes Focus column, and:*
The Board has not adopted goals. The Board did not receive the final version of materials to be voted on at least three calendar days before the Board-authorized public meeting during which the materials would be considered. There were more than six Board-authorized public meetings in a single month during the previous twelve month period (Board committees are counted in this total). Any meeting of the Board lasted more than eight hours during the previous twelve month period. The Board does not use a consent agenda. The Board has not hosted opportunities to listen to the vision and values of the community during the previous thirty-six month period.	All **consent-eligible items** were placed on the consent agenda and all but a few were voted on using a consent agenda. The Board tracks its use of time in Board-authorized public meetings, categorizing every minute used as one of the following: - **Goal Setting:** reviewing, discussing, and/or selecting goals - **Goal Monitoring:** reviewing, discussing, and/or approving/not approving goal monitoring reports - **Guardrail Setting:** reviewing, discussing, and/or selecting guardrails - **Guardrail Monitoring:** reviewing, discussing, and/or approving/not approving guardrail monitoring reports - **Leadership Evaluation:** Board self eval, Board time use eval, and Superintendent eval - **Voting:** debating and voting on any item (these activities are never a form of goal/guardrail monitoring) - **Community Engagement:** two-way communication between the Board and community members - **Other**	There are no more than four Board-authorized public meetings per month and none lasts more than three hours. The Board schedules no more than five topics for discussion during any one Board-authorized public meeting. The Board limits its adoption of Board policies regarding school system operations to matters that are 1) required by law or 2) an appropriate exercise of the Board's oversight authority as defined by the Board's adopted goals and/or guardrails. Existing policies that do not meet one of these criteria have been removed from the Board's policy manual (though the Superintendent may retain them as administrative policy/regulation). The Board made no edits to the Board's regularly scheduled meeting agenda during the meeting and during the three business days before the meeting unless a state of emergency was declared.	There are no more than two Board-authorized public meetings per month and none lasts more than two hours. The Board schedules no more than three topics for discussion during any Board-authorized public meeting. The Board has adopted few enough policies that the full Board as a whole is able to review every policy at least once during every length of time equal to a Board Member's term of office. The Board received the final version of materials to be voted on at least seven calendar days before the Board-authorized public meeting during which the materials would be considered. The Board used a process that included students, parents, staff, and community members in a way that led them to express ownership of the adopted goals and guardrails.

UNITY & TRUST: The Board will lead with one voice in its pursuit of the goals.			
Not Student Outcomes Focused (0)	**Approaching Student Outcomes Focus (1)**	**Meeting Student Outcomes Focus (3)**	**Mastering Student Outcomes Focus (5)**
The Board is Not Student Outcomes Focused if any of the following are true:	*No items from the Not Student Outcomes Focused column, and:*	*All items from the Approaching Student Outcomes Focus column, and:*	*All items from the Meeting Student Outcomes Focus column, and:*
The Board has not adopted goals. The Board has not adopted policies that establish Board operating procedures. Any Board Member voted on an item on which they had a conflict of interest, as defined by law, during the previous three month period. Board Members serve on committees formed by the Superintendent or staff without approval of the Superintendent and a majority of the Board.	Attendance at all regularly scheduled Board meetings was over 80% during the previous three month period. The Board has adopted a policy or procedure requiring that information provided by the Superintendent to one Board Member is provided to all Board Members. The Board reviews all policies governing Board operating procedures at least once during every length of time equal to a Board Member's term of office. The Board has adopted an Ethics & Conflicts of Interest Statement and all Board Members have signed the statement during their current term of office. All Board Members agree that if the Board has committees, their role is only to advise the Board, not to advise the staff.	The Board has included language in its Ethics & Conflicts of Interest Statement requiring that Board Members do not give operational advice or instructions to staff members. The Board has included language in its Ethics & Conflicts of Interest Statement requiring that Board Members are responsible for the outcomes of all students, not just students in their region of the school system. The Board has included language in its Ethics & Conflicts of Interest Statement requiring that Board Members fully recuse themselves from matters involving individuals or organizations who made campaign contributions to them or who appointed them. The Board unanimously agreed during the most recent self-evaluation that all Board Members have honored the three aforementioned ethical boundaries during the previous evaluation period.	The Board unanimously agreed during the most recent self-evaluation that all Board Members adhered to all policies governing Board operating procedures during the previous evaluation period. All Board Members and the Superintendent agreed during the most recent self-evaluation that none of the Board Members have given operational advice or instructions to staff members. All Board Members have memorized all of the Board's goals and the current status of each. The Board conducted a quarterly self-evaluation during the previous three-month period -- or annually if the most recent score was 80 or higher -- and unanimously voted to adopt the results.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT: The Board will invest time and resources toward improving its focus on the goals.			
Not Student Outcomes Focused (0)	**Approaching Student Outcomes Focus (1)**	**Meeting Student Outcomes Focus (3)**	**Mastering Student Outcomes Focus (5)**
The Board is Not Student Outcomes Focused if any of the following are true: The Board has not adopted goals. The Board has not conducted a self-evaluation during the previous twelve month period. The Board has conducted a self-evaluation during the previous twelve month period but did not vote to adopt the results. The Board has not participated in a **governance team** training or retreat where all members of the governance team were present, during the previous twelve month period.	*No items from the Not Student Outcomes Focused column, and:* The Board tracks its use of time and reports monthly the percentage of Board-authorized public meeting time invested in monitoring the Board's goals and interim goals. The Board tracks the estimated annual cost of staff time invested in governance during its annual self-evaluation. This includes the time of any staff members invested in preparing for, attending, and debriefing after meetings. This includes all Board-authorized public meetings as well as all closed sessions and all hearings. The Board has provided time during regularly scheduled Board-authorized public meetings to recognize the accomplishments of its students and staff regarding progress toward goals and interim goals. The most recent Board self-evaluation took place no more than 12 months ago using this instrument or a research-aligned instrument.	*All items from the Approaching Student Outcomes Focus column, and:* The most recent Board annual self-evaluation took place no more than 45 days before the most recent Superintendent evaluation. The Board has hosted and the Board Members have led or co-led at least one training session on Student Outcomes Focused Governance during the previous twelve month period. The Board has continuously updated the status and targets of all goals, guardrails, and interim goals/guardrails, and publicly displays them in the room in which the Board most frequently holds regularly scheduled Board meetings. The Board conducted the most recent self-evaluation and voted to adopt the results.	*All items from the Meeting Student Outcomes Focus column, and:* The Board included students as presenters in at least one of the Student Outcomes Focused Governance training sessions during the previous twelve months. Prior to being selected, all newly selected Board Members received training on Student Outcomes Focused Governance from fellow Board Members on their Board or from a certified Student Outcomes Focused Governance Coach. The Board conducted the most recent quarterly self-evaluation -- or annually if the most recent score was 80 or higher -- and unanimously voted to adopt the results.

DEFINITIONS

Adult Outcomes: A measure of school system results that are not student results; outcomes that are not student outcomes. [see Outcomes, Student Outcomes definitions]

Adult Outputs: The adult experiences resulting from a particular set of inputs that are usually knowable in the midst of a cycle and that are a measure of the adults' role in the implementation of the program or strategy. Outputs that are not student outputs. [see Outputs, Student Outputs definitions]

Annual Targets: Goal/interim goal ending points for each year leading up to the ending dates.

Board-Authorized Public Meeting: Any non-privileged meeting authorized by the Board or Board Chair including, but not limited to, Board workshops, Board hearings, and Board committees. Legally mandated hearings are exempted from this definition. Trainings led by a certified Student Outcomes Focused Governance Coach may be exempted from this definition. [see Board Work definition]

Board Self Evaluation: The process that the board undertake to track its progress toward becoming more focused on its goals for student outcomes using the SOFG instrument or a similar research-informed instrument. Boards that have currently scored lower than 80 on the SOFG instrument should self-evaluate quarterly; otherwise they should evaluate annually.

Board Work: Items that are discussed and/or acted on during Board-authorized public meetings because either state or federal law/rule requires the Board to do so or because the items directly pertain to the Board's adopted goals or guardrails. Items that are not legally required and that the Board has not designated as Board work through the Board's goals or guardrails are, by default, Superintendent work. [see Board-authorized Public Meeting, Superintendent Work definitions]

Community Engagement: Time invested by the Board in two-way communication between the Board and community members.

Consent-Eligible Items: Matters on the Board agenda that include, but that are not limited to, personnel actions, contract renewals, previous meeting minutes, policy updates, construction amendments, non-monitoring administrative reports, committee reports, enrollment updates, and regular financial reports where financial activities remained within budgetary parameters. [see Board-authorized Public Meeting, Board Work definitions]

Customers: The organization's recipients of services and/or transactional beneficiaries -- such as students and staff -- for whom the staff is better positioned to address and/or resolve issues in a timely and effective manner. In a school system, customers and owners can be the same people, and therefore care must be taken to distinguish customer issues from owner issues. [see Owner definition]

Ending Date: The month/year by when the goal will reach the ending point. In goal setting, the ending date can be no less than one and no more than five years away. The ending date is often represented by the 'Z' in sample goals: "the measure will move from W% on X to Y% by Z." [see Ending Point, Goal Setting, SMART definitions]

Ending Point: The goal's desired number/percentage at the time of the ending date. The ending point is often represented by the 'Y' in sample goals: "the measure will move from W% on X to Y% by Z." [see Ending Date, Goal Setting, SMART definitions]

Goals: Policy statements that are SMART, that are student outcomes focused, and that describe the Board's top priorities during the timeline for which they are adopted. The first priority for resource allocation in the school system should be toward achieving the Board's goals. Once those allocations are complete, remaining resources may be allocated in a manner that addresses the additional needs and obligations of the school system. Goals generally are set for a three to five year period.Goals generally take the form of "student outcome will increase from X to Y by Z." [see Goal Examples section; see SMART, Student Outcome definitions]

Goal Monitoring: Time invested by the Board in reviewing, discussing and/or accepting/not accepting goal monitoring reports. No fewer than 50% of the minutes spent in Board-authorized public meetings should be invested in goal monitoring or goal setting. Debating and voting on Board items is never a form of goal monitoring. [see Board-authorized Public Meeting, Goal, Goal Setting, Interim Goal, Monitoring definitions]

Goal Setting: Time invested by the Board in reviewing, discussing, and/or selecting goals. No fewer than 50% of the minutes spent in Board-authorized public meetings should be invested in goal monitoring or goal setting. [see Board-authorized Public Meeting, Goal, Goal Monitoring, Interim Goal, Monitoring definitions]

Governance Team: All Board Members and the Superintendent. The Superintendent is not a member of the Board, but is a member of the governing team.

Guardrail: An operational action or class of actions, usually strategic not tactical, the Superintendent may not use or allow in pursuit of the school system's student outcome goals. Guardrails are based on the community's values and should not undermine the school system's ability to meet the goals — though guardrails will often require the Superintendent to accomplish the goals in a different way. [see Examples section; see Guardrail Monitoring, Guardrail Setting, Interim Guardrail, Theory of Action definitions]

Guardrail Monitoring: Time invested by the Board in reviewing, discussing and/or accepting/not accepting guardrail monitoring reports. [see Guardrail, Interim Guardrail, Monitoring definitions]

Guardrail Setting: Time invested by the Board in reviewing, discussing, and/or selecting guardrails. [see Guardrail, Interim Guardrail, Theory of Action definitions]

Implementation Instruments: Measures that describe the quality of effort that goes into execution of inputs or outputs. This document is an example of an implementation instrument for the governing team's outputs.

Inputs: Resources and activities invested in a particular program or strategy that are usually knowable at the beginning of a cycle and that are a measure of effort applied. [see Outcomes, Outputs definitions]

Interim Goals: A leading measure of progress that can be expressed as a number or a percentage and that, when improving, increases the likelihood that the goal will be achieved. While goals are outcomes, interim goals are generally outputs. Each goal will have between one and three

interim goals. Interim goals are SMART. [see Goal Examples section]

Interim Guardrail: A measure of progress toward a defined guardrail that can be expressed as a number or percentage. [see Guardrail Examples section]

Leadership Evaluation: The Board conducting routine self-evaluations and Superintendent evaluations. It is recommended to include months during which leadership evaluation will take place on the monitoring calendar.

Measure: The instrument, assessment, or other means used to quantify something. In the context of goals, this is often an evaluation of student performance such a school system or state exam. [see Goal Setting, SMART definition]

Monitoring: A Board process that includes the Board receiving monitoring reports on the timeline indicated by the monitoring calendar, discussing them, and choosing to accept or not accept them. The intention of monitoring is to determine whether reality matches the Board's goals / guardrails.

Monitoring Calendar: A Board-adopted multi-year schedule that describes months during which goals, interim goals, guardrails, and interim guardrails are reported to the Board.

Monitoring Report: A report that provides evidence of progress to the Board regarding their adopted goals and guardrails. Each monitoring report must contain 1) the goal/guardrail being monitored, 2) the interim goals/guardrails showing the previous three reporting periods, the current reporting period, and the annual and ending point numbers/percentages, 3) the Superintendent's evaluation of performance ("red/yellow/green" or "on track/partially off/off track" or "compliant/partially compliant/non-compliant" or whatever other status labels the school system uses for progress monitoring), and 4) supporting documentation that shows the evidence and describes any needed next steps.

Outcomes: The impact of the program or strategy that is usually knowable at the end of a cycle and that is a measure of the effect on the intended beneficiary. [see Adult Outcomes, Inputs, Outputs, Student Outcomes definitions]

Outputs: The result of a particular set of inputs that is usually knowable in the midst of a cycle and that is a measure of the implementation of the program or strategy. [see Inputs, Outcomes definitions]

Owners: The organization's moral and legal authority -- such as residents and taxpayers -- for whom the board is better positioned to address and/or resolve issues in a timely and effective manner. In a school system, owners and customers can be the same people, and therefore care must be taken to distinguish customer issues from owner issues. [see Customers definition]

Population: The group of students who will be impacted and/or who are being measured. [see Goal Setting, SMART definition]

SMART: An acronym for "specific, measurable, attainable, results-focused, time-bound." Goals and interim goals partially accomplish SMART-ness by having a specific measure, population, starting points, ending points, starting dates, and ending dates. [see Ending Date, Ending Point, Measure, Population, Starting Date, Starting Point definitions]

Starting Date: The month/year that the goal is set. The starting date is often represented by the 'X' in sample goals: "the measure will move from W% on X to Y% by Z." [see Goal Setting, SMART, Starting Point definitions]

Starting Point: The goal's current number/percentage at the time of adoption. The starting point is often represented by the 'W' in sample goals: "the measure will move from W% on X to Y% by Z." [see Goal Setting, SMART, Starting Date definitions]

Student Outcomes: A measure of school system results that are student results rather than adult results; outcomes that are a measure of what students know or are able to do. Student outcomes are distinct from adult outcomes. [see Adult Outcomes, Goals, Outcomes definitions]

Student Outputs: The student experiences resulting from a particular set of inputs that are usually knowable in the midst of a cycle and that are a measure of the students' role in the implementation of the program or strategy. Student outputs are distinct from adult outputs. [see Adult Outputs, Outputs definition]

Superintendent Evaluation: The annual process that the board undertakes to determine whether the superintendent has met the annual targets they have set toward achieving the board's goals and guardrails. [see Goals, Guardrails definitions]

Superintendent Work: Items that are not legally required and that the Board has not designated as Board work through the Board's goals or guardrails. [see Board Work definition]

Theory of Action: A set of high level strategies to which all school system inputs and outputs must be aligned. Unlike other guardrails, theories of action do not have interim guardrails. [see Examples section; see Guardrail definition]

Values: The shared understanding of what the community considers important but that is not the vision. Where the vision describes what the community wants to see happen, values describe what the community does not want to see happen. Values describe protections the community wants to see put into place. It is not appropriate for the Board to allow the community's values to be violated, even if doing so would support the accomplishment of the vision. The values are most often expressed as a guardrail or a theory of action. Guardrails generally are set for a three to five year period; theories of action generally are set for a five to ten year period.

Vision: The shared understanding of what the community ultimately desires to accomplish for all students. Where values describe what the community does not want to see, vision describes what the community does want to see happen. Vision describes the direction the community wants to see the school system go. A vision is most often expressed as an aspirational policy statement that describes what the Board understands the community's desire for the future to be. Vision statements generally are set for a five to ten year period.

Voting: Time invested by the Board in debating and voting on any item. Unless indicated elsewhere in this document, these activities are never a form of goal monitoring or guardrail monitoring.

GOAL EXAMPLES

Sample Goals:
- *Many of these examples are drawn from current or proposed goals from CGCS member school systems (or adaptations of their policy that meet the goal definition).*
- The percentage of kindergarten students who will enter kindergarten school-ready on a multidimensional assessment will increase from W% on X date to Y% by Z date
- The percentage of graduates who are persisting in the second year of their post-secondary program will increase from W% on X to Y% by Z
- The percentage of free and reduced lunch-eligible students in kindergarten through 2nd grade who are reading/writing on or above grade level on the school system's summative assessment will increase from W% on X to Y% by Z
- The percentage of students at underperforming schools who meet or exceed the state standard will increase from W% on X to Y% by Z
- The percentage of males of color who graduate with an associate's degree will increase from W% on X to Y% by Z

Sample Interim Goals:
- *Many of these examples are drawn from CGCS' "Academic KPIs" work.*
- The percentage of students successfully passing abc semester long course by the end of ninth grade will increase from W% on X to Y% by Z
- The percentage of students showing growth from one formative assessment to the next will increase from W% on X to Y% by Z
- The percentage of students earning at least three IB, AP, or college credits each semester will increase from W% on X to Y% by Z

GUARDRAIL EXAMPLES

Sample Guardrails:
- *Many of these examples are drawn from current or proposed guardrails from CGCS member school systems (or adaptations of their policy that meet the guardrail definition).*
- The Superintendent will not allow underperforming campuses to have principals or teachers who rank in the bottom two quartiles of principal or teacher school system-wide performance
- The Superintendent will not propose major decisions to the Board without first having engaged students, parents, community, and staff
- The Superintendent will not only use student proficiency data to identify, retain, and place highly effective staff
- The Superintendent will not allow the inequitable treatment of students

Sample Interim Guardrails:
- *Many of these examples are drawn from CGCS' "Managing for Results" work.*
- The percentage of People Incidents per 1,000 Students at underperforming schools will decline from W% on X to Y% by Z
- The Employee Separation Rate for principals and teachers in the top quartile of school system-wide performance will decline from W% on X to Y% by Z

THEORY OF ACTION EXAMPLES

Sample Theories of Action:
- *Some of these examples are drawn from current or proposed Theories of Action from CGCS member school systems (or adaptations of their policy that meet the Theories of Action definition).*

- **Managed Instruction:**
  - If instructional materials and methods are directed by the central office to ensure that students experience consistency and quality of instructional delivery across a system of campuses;
  - Then central office will be responsible for accomplishing the Board's goals while operating within the Board's other guardrails.

- **Earned Autonomy:**
  - If the central office directly operates some schools and grants varying levels of autonomy to other schools; and
  - If the central office clearly defines operational thresholds that deserve higher levels of autonomy, and the specific autonomies earned, consistent with Board goals and guardrails;
  - Then responsibility for accomplishing the Board's goals while operating within the Board's guardrails will vary between central office and school leaders based on school-level operational capacity and student outcomes.

- **Performance Empowerment:**
  - If the central office devolves autonomy to schools; and
  - If the central office empowers parents to make choices among schools operated by differing partners; and
  - If the central office creates performance contracts with schools, annually evaluates performance of and demand for schools, and makes strategic decisions regarding growing access to high performing schools and addressing low performers;
  - Then school performance contracts will require the school to accomplish the Board's goals while operating within the Board's other guardrails.

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A Framework for School Governance, Rick Maloney: https://www.amazon.com/dp/0999419307/

The 4 Disciplines of Execution, Chris McChesney, Sean Covey, & Jim Huling: https://www.amazon.com/dp/B005FLODJ8/

The Future of School Board Governance, Thomas L. Alsbury: https://www.amazon.com/dp/1578867959/

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PROGRESS MONITORING STUDENT OUTCOMES

What Is Progress Monitoring?
Progress monitoring is a conversation between the school board and superintendent that provides boards the opportunity to evaluate the alignment between the community's vision (goals towards student outcomes) and the school district's reality (current student performance/growth). While student outcome goals and current student performance may not match perfectly, it only becomes problematic when there is no evidence of student growth and progress. And even if students aren't yet growing and making progress, that's only catastrophic if the superintendent doesn't have sufficiently aggressive strategies in place for increasing growth and helping students make progress. These are the fundamental concerns of monitoring: 1) does reality match the vision, 2) is there growth toward the vision, and 3) is there a strategy and plan sufficient to cause growth toward the vision?

- If the answer to all three is yes, then the board can accept the monitoring report confident that the superintendent is performing.
- If the answer to only one or two of these questions is yes, the board may opt to table the matter (see *Keep the Conversation Going* below).
- If the answer to all three is no, the board may opt to reject the report and reflect on how to respond to the superintendent's non-performance.

UNDERSTANDING PROGRESS MONITORING

How Is Monitoring Beneficial?
In addition to clarifying student and superintendent performance, monitoring -- when done well -- confers several other organizational benefits:

- **Lead by Example**: What happens in the boardroom is more likely to be echoed in the classroom. Board behavior sets the culture for an institution. If board members want a culture where teachers are open and reflective in their craft, they set the stage for that by demonstrating what it looks like for the board and superintendent to be open and reflective -- grounded in student outcomes data -- in their craft as well.

- **Clarify Strategies**: When the board receives monitoring reports from the superintendent, the report should include how the superintendent will respond to the data. If the data says things are slightly off track, the superintendent's strategy should reflect that. If the data says that performance is completely off track, the superintendent's strategy should reflect the urgency that the current reality demands.

- **Communicate Expectations**: By investing at least 50% of the board's time each month into monitoring progress toward the vision, the board makes clear what the priorities of the entire organization are expected to be. This is a powerful tool for creating organizational alignment.

- **Formative Evaluation**: With each monitoring report the board is conducting a micro assessment of superintendent performance which creates an opportunity for the superintendent to make adjustments. As a continuous improvement strategy, providing this regularly recurring feedback loop is a superior approach to the outdated concept of merely conducting annual performance evaluations.

Tips For Effective Monitoring

- **Do Your Homework**: Board members should arrive at board meetings having already read the monitoring report and having already come up with at least three or four questions each regarding the "who", "what", "why", and "how" of the monitoring report (see *During Monitoring* below).

- **Understanding Reality**: The desired result of monitoring is to understand the current reality for your students as compared to the vision you've adopted for them (goals). Whether you enjoy the current reality isn't the point of monitoring; whether or not you fully know the current reality is.

- **Keep the Conversation Going**: If the superintendent presents a monitoring report that is missing the prerequisites (see *Before Monitoring* below) or that fails to clarify for board members the extent to which reality matches the goals, consider tabling the conversation and giving the superintendent a chance to fix it and re-offer it at a subsequent meeting, instead of choosing not to accept it and ending the discussion.

- **No Gotcha Governance**: Adopt a monitoring calendar that describes which goals will be monitored during which months. The ideal monitoring calendar will span the full term of the goals -- if they are five year goals, the calendar should cover five years.

- **Don't Offer Advice**: Monitoring is never an opportunity for board members to provide advice to the superintendent regarding what should/shouldn't be done about student outcomes. It's also not about liking/not liking the superintendent's strategies.

PRACTICING PROGRESS MONITORING

DURING GOAL MONITORING

Monitoring is about understanding the extent to which reality matches the Board's adopted goals / interim goals. Monitoring is never about offering advice or recommendations; most of monitoring is about understanding where we are and how we got here. The Board's attention is focused on what's true for students, not on what adults are/aren't doing. Here are observations to look for / questions to ask that support effective progress monitoring. Notice that none of these questions offer advice concerning which inputs/outputs the Superintendent should select; these are SMART monitoring questions, not managing questions. (see *Effective Question Asking*)

Current Performance Questions			Future Performance Questions
What do we know about the students mentioned in the report?	What do we know about the data mentioned in the report?	What do we know about the root cause of the student data in the report?	What adult behaviors need to change in response to the student data?
● Who is struggling the most? ● Who is growing the most? ● Who is not moving? ● Which students are not included	● What is currently happening? ● What else do we need to know about this? ● How and what did we learn?	● Why is it working in this area? ● Why is it not working in this area? ● How did we learn about this issue?	● How can we replicate what is happening in ___? ● Given what we know about __, what are you going to do to

in this data?	● What are the strengths? ● What are the limitations? ● Where do gaps exist between student groups? ● What's working? Not working? ● What do you see as accounting for <anomalous data in report>?	● Why such significant growth? ● Why was there no growth? ● What do we need to know about? ● Why do gaps between student groups exist? ● Why is <data point a> so much <higher or lower> than <data point b>?	speed up the progress? ● What evidence suggests that your new strategy is going to work? ● How are we going to address __ (issue not resolved)? ● How might changes show up in the future (budget, etc.)? ● How can the board help?

Ineffective Questions
● Any statements or questions that are really just board member opinions or recommendations about what the superintendent should do ● Any statements or questions that don't reference the data mentioned in the monitoring report. ● Any statements or questions that aren't actually questions but that are just statements or opinions ● Any statements or questions about what will happen next that aren't grounded in previously asked questions about where students currently are and how students got there

AFTER GOAL MONITORING

To Accept the Monitoring Report or Not?

Once the board has completed the monitoring conversation, it must choose whether to accept or not accept the report based on three questions: 1) does reality match the vision, 2) is there growth toward the vision, and 3) is there a strategy and plan sufficient to cause growth toward the vision?

- If the answer to all three is yes, then the board can accept the monitoring report confident that data is accurate & the superintendent is performing.
- If the answer to only one or two of these questions is yes, the board may opt to table the matter (see *Keep the Conversation Going* above).
- If the answer to all three is no, the board should consider voting to not accept the report. Note: This vote informs the superintendent that they have failed to meet the expectations of monitoring.

To Change Goals or Not?

Once the board has completed the monitoring conversation, it's also appropriate -- though not required -- to ask whether or not the goal is still an appropriate representation of the community's vision for what students should know and be able to do. This inquiry should not be taken lightly; goal monitoring is most effective when the goals only change after their term has expired or they are accomplished. Frequently changing goals makes it almost impossible to adequately assess superintendent performance and to avoid wasting school system resources. If the board believes that the goal is no longer appropriate, it should create a plan to start the board-led community listening process over again and then begin the community listening process from scratch. Because goals represent the vision of the community, no new goals should be adopted without first going through this process.

Evaluating the Quality of Goal Monitoring

While the board is in the process of conducting the monitoring conversation:

1) Use the "Evaluation Rubric" to evaluate every individual question on its SMARTness: Strategy, Measure, Ask-oriented, Results, Time-bound.
2) Use the "Tally Sheet" below to track whether each individual question is focused or not ("Yes" or "No"). This will provide data that describes the percentage of all of the questions that are focused ("% Focused") on each of the SMART characteristics.
3) Average the individual ratings for the SMART characteristics together to get the overall rating of monitoring quality. Some behaviors -- ineffective monitoring practices, not being prepared in advance, or not participating -- will give automatic zeroes or cap the rating at no more than 79.
4) Total Monitoring Scores of 90 and above indicate highly effective monitoring, 80-89 indicate effective, 70-79 indicate approaching effective, and 69 or less indicate ineffectiveness. (see *Effective Goal Monitoring spreadsheet*; it automatically performs these steps)

Monitoring Conversation Evaluation Rubric		
	Ineffective Monitoring	**Effective Monitoring**
Strategy-Focused	Any conversation is focused on or offering advice about technical or tactical issues. (*see Technical/Tactical/Strategic*)	Is the question about strategic issues rather than technical or tactical issues?
Measure-Focused	Any comments are focused on data not in the report.	Does the question reference specific metrics/data that has been provided at the request of the board?
Ask-Oriented	Any conversation is focused on accusatory yes/no questions or statements.	Is the question open ended.
Results-Focused	Any comments are focused on blaming or shaming.	Is the question focused on understanding data rather than sharing opinions.
Time-Bound	Any conversation is offering advice about future action.	Is the question focused on current performance (past actions) rather than future performance (future actions).

	Automatic 0%		
Preparation & Participation	**Read**: The monitoring conversation is automatically scored 0% if any Board members have not completely read any of the monitoring report prior to the monitoring conversation.	**Participate**: The monitoring conversation is automatically scored 0% if there is non-participation by any board member present during the monitoring conversation.	**Share**: The monitoring conversation is automatically scored 0% if any board members failed to share questions with the Superintendent at least three working days prior to the monitoring conversation.

BOARD QUARTERLY SELF-EVALUATION						
Current Date	/	/		**Votes For/Against**		/
	January -March	April -June	July -September	October -December	January -March	Total Possible
Vision & Goals						**35**
Values & Guardrails						**15**
Monitoring & Accountability						**30**
Communication & Collaboration						**10**
Unity & Trust						**5**
Continuous Improvement						**5**
Total						**100**

Directions

1. You will enter five sets of evaluation results: three previous quarters, most recently completed quarter, and the next quarter estimate.
2. **Enter** the self-evaluation results for the previous three completed quarterly self-evaluations. (For example, if it is currently January then enter the self-evaluation results for Jan-Mar, Apr-Jun, and Jul-Sep.)
3. **Conduct** the quarterly self-evaluation for the most recently completed quarter and vote to adopt the results. (Continuing the example, conduct the quarterly self-evaluation for Oct-Dec.)
4. **Compare** the quarterly self-evaluation results with the estimated self-evaluation results from the previously completed self-evaluation (Continuing the example, compare the self-evaluation results for Oct-Dec with the estimated Oct-Dec self-evaluation results that were entered during the Jul-Sep self-evaluation.)
5. **Enter** the self-evaluation results. (Continuing the example, enter the self-evaluation results for Oct-Dec.)
6. **Estimate** the self-evaluation results the Board can achieve during the next quarter. (Continuing the example, estimate the self-evaluation results for Jan-Mar.)
7. **Enter** the estimated self-evaluation results for the next quarter. (Continuing the example, enter the estimated self-evaluation results for Jan-Mar.)
8. **Update** the Board Continuous Improvement Evaluation to ensure meaningful progress toward focusing on improving student outcomes.

BOARD MONTHLY TIME USE EVALUATION

Framework	Activity	Mins Used	% of Total Mins Used	Description
Vision & Goals	Goal Setting			Reviewing, discussing, and/or selecting goals
	Goal Monitoring			Reviewing, discussing, and/or approving/not approving goal monitoring reports in accordance with the monitoring calendar
Values & Guardrails	Guardrail Setting			Reviewing, discussing, and/or selecting guardrails
	Guardrail Monitoring			Reviewing, discussing, and/or approving/not approving guardrail monitoring reports in accordance with the monitoring calendar
Monitoring & Accountability	Superintendent Evaluation			Annual evaluation of Superintendent/school system performance
	Voting			The Board debating and/or voting on any item (voting on goal/guardrail adoption and/or scheduled monitoring reports & evals are counted elsewhere, not here; all other incidents of debating/voting are never a form of goals/guardrails "monitoring")
Communication & Collaboration	Community Engagement			Two-way communication opportunity where Board Members listen for and discuss the vision/values of their staff and community members
	Student / Family Engagement			Two-way communication opportunity where Board Members listen for and discuss the vision/values of their students and family members
Continuous Improvement	Board Self Evaluation			Quarterly and/or annual Board self-evaluation using the Student Outcomes Focused Governance instrument
	Board Time Use Evaluation			Meeting evaluation using this time use instrument
	Board Training			Training for the Board on Student Outcomes Focused Governance and related topics
	Board-led Community Training			Board-hosted and Board Member-led or co-led training on Student Outcomes Focused Governance and related topics
Other	Closed Session		NA	Time spent in non-public meetings, consistent with open meetings laws; this time is not calculated
	Other			Any time spent on an activity that is not one of the above
Total Student Outcomes-focused Mins				Goal Setting & Goal Monitoring combined
Total Public Meeting Minutes				All minutes in Board-authorized public meetings combined

BOARD CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT EVALUATION

Quarter 0
The first time a Board uses the Board Quarterly Self-Evaluation; the Board's 'starting point' for their two year continuous improvement process.

Last Quarter Total	Current Quarter Total	Growth From Last to Current Quarter

Quarter 1 Board's 2nd Quarterly Self-Evaluation			Quarter 2 Board's 3rd Quarterly Self-Evaluation			Quarter 3 Board's 4th Quarterly Self-Evaluation			Quarter 4 Board's 5th Quarterly Self-Evaluation		
Last Quarter Total	Current Quarter Total	Growth From Last to Current Quarter	Last Quarter Total	Current Quarter Total	Growth From Last to Current Quarter	Last Quarter Total	Current Quarter Total	Growth From Last to Current Quarter	Last Quarter Total	Current Quarter Total	Growth From Last to Current Quarter
	Total at least 30?	Growth at least 25?		Total at least 45?	Growth at least 15?		Total at least 60?	Growth at least 15?		Total at least 70?	Growth at least 15?
If either question is 'yes', the Board met its quarterly continuous improvement goal	Met ☐	Did Not Meet ☐	If either question is 'yes', the Board met its quarterly continuous improvement goal	Met ☐	Did Not Meet ☐	If either question is 'yes', the Board met its quarterly continuous improvement goal	Met ☐	Did Not Meet ☐	If either question is 'yes', the Board met its quarterly continuous improvement goal	Met ☐	Did Not Meet ☐

Quarter 5 Board's 6th Quarterly Self-Evaluation			Quarter 6 Board's 7th Quarterly Self-Evaluation			Quarter 7 Board's 8th Quarterly Self-Evaluation			Quarter 8 Board's 9th Quarterly Self-Evaluation		
Last Quarter Total	Current Quarter Total	Growth From Last to Current Quarter	Last Quarter Total	Current Quarter Total	Growth From Last to Current Quarter	Last Quarter Total	Current Quarter Total	Growth From Last to Current Quarter	Last Quarter Total	Current Quarter Total	Growth From Last to Current Quarter
	Total at least 75?	Growth at least 5?		Total at least 80?	Growth at least 5?		Total at least 85?	Growth at least 5?		Total at least 90?	Growth at least 5?
If either question is 'yes', the Board met its quarterly continuous improvement goal	Met ☐	Did Not Meet ☐	If either question is 'yes', the Board met its quarterly continuous improvement goal	Met ☐	Did Not Meet ☐	If either question is 'yes', the Board met its quarterly continuous improvement goal	Met ☐	Did Not Meet ☐	If either question is 'yes', the Board met its quarterly continuous improvement goal	Met ☐	Did Not Meet ☐

SUPERINTENDENT ANNUAL EVALUATION

A Goal or Guardrail's performance is **Met Standard** if:
- The Actual Ending Point >= Desired Ending Point
  OR
- At least two thirds of the Interim Goals'/Guardrails' Actual Ending Points >= their respective Desired Ending Points

Otherwise the Board must consider growth and performance and vote to determine whether or not a Goal or Guardrail's performance **Met Standard** or **Did Not Meet Standard**.

Overall School System/Superintendent performance is **Met Standard** if:
- At least two thirds of the Goals are **Met Standard**

  AND

- At least half of the Guardrails are **Met Standard**

Otherwise the Board must consider growth and performance, and vote to determine whether or not overall school system/Superintendent performance **Met Standard** or **Did Not Meet Standard**.

Goal 1: Percentage of students meeting passing standard on the state assessment in reading will increase from 60% in July 2017 to 68% by July 2022				
Baseline Ending Point:		Desired SY17/18 Ending Point:		Actual SY17/18 Ending Point:
Interim Goal 1.1:			**Management Comments**	
Baseline Ending Point:	Desired SY17/18 Ending Point:	Actual SY17/18 Ending Point:		
Interim Goal 1.2:				
Baseline Ending Point:	Desired SY17/18 Ending Point:	Actual SY17/18 Ending Point:		
Interim Goal 1.3:				
Baseline Ending Point:	Desired SY17/18 Ending Point:	Actual SY17/18 Ending Point:		
SY17/18 Evaluation				
Met Standard: ☐		Did Not Meet Standard: ☐		

Goal 2: Percentage of schools meeting passing standard on the state assessment in math will increase from 60% in July 2017 to 68% by July 2022		
Baseline Ending Point:	Desired SY17/18 Ending Point:	Actual SY17/18 Ending Point:

Interim Goal 2.1:			Management Comments
Baseline Ending Point:	Desired SY17/18 Ending Point:	Actual SY17/18 Ending Point:	
Interim Goal 2.2:			
Baseline Ending Point:	Desired SY17/18 Ending Point:	Actual SY17/18 Ending Point:	
Interim Goal 2.3:			
Baseline Ending Point:	Desired SY17/18 Ending Point:	Actual SY17/18 Ending Point:	
SY17/18 Evaluation			
Met Standard: ☐		Did Not Meet Standard: ☐	

Goal 3: Percentage of students who are more than a grade level behind and who show at least 1.5yrs academic growth during a single school year in reading will increase from 60% in July 2017 to 68% by July 2022		
Baseline Ending Point:	Desired SY17/18 Ending Point:	Actual SY17/18 Ending Point:

Interim Goal 3.1:			Management Comments
Baseline Ending Point:	Desired SY17/18 Ending Point:	Actual SY17/18 Ending Point:	
Interim Goal 3.2:			
Baseline Ending Point:	Desired SY17/18 Ending Point:	Actual SY17/18 Ending Point:	
Interim Goal 3.3:			
Baseline Ending Point:	Desired SY17/18 Ending Point:	Actual SY17/18 Ending Point:	
SY17/18 Evaluation			
Met Standard: ☐		Did Not Meet Standard: ☐	

Guardrail 1: Superintendent will not allow the most underperforming campuses to have principals or teachers who rank in the bottom two quartiles of principal or teacher school system-wide performance			
Interim Guardrail 1.1:			**Management Comments**
Baseline Ending Point:	Desired SY17/18 Ending Point:	Actual SY17/18 Ending Point:	
Interim Guardrail 1.2:			
Baseline Ending Point:	Desired SY17/18 Ending Point:	Actual SY17/18 Ending Point:	
Interim Guardrail 1.3:			
Baseline Ending Point:	Desired SY17/18 Ending Point:	Actual SY17/18 Ending Point:	
SY17/18 Evaluation			
Met Standard: ☐		Did Not Meet Standard: ☐	

Guardrail 2: Superintendent will not operate schools without a system that uses student growth to identify, retain, and inspire placement of highly effective educators			
Interim Guardrail 2.1:			**Management Comments**
Baseline Ending Point:	Desired SY17/18 Ending Point:	Actual SY17/18 Ending Point:	
Interim Guardrail 2.2:			
Baseline Ending Point:	Desired SY17/18 Ending Point:	Actual SY17/18 Ending Point:	
Interim Guardrail 2.3:			
Baseline Ending Point:	Desired SY17/18 Ending Point:	Actual SY17/18 Ending Point:	
SY17/18 Evaluation			
Met Standard: ☐		Did Not Meet Standard: ☐	

Guardrail 3: Superintendent will not propose major decisions without engaging impacted stakeholders			
Interim Guardrail 3.1:			**Management Comments**
Baseline Ending Point:	Desired SY17/18 Ending Point:	Actual SY17/18 Ending Point:	
Interim Guardrail 3.2:			
Baseline Ending Point:	Desired SY17/18 Ending Point:	Actual SY17/18 Ending Point:	
Interim Guardrail 3.3:			
Baseline Ending Point:	Desired SY17/18 Ending Point:	Actual SY17/18 Ending Point:	
SY17/18 Evaluation			
Met Standard: ☐		Did Not Meet Standard: ☐	

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