

The School Board Governance Improvement Act of 2012

- The purpose of this Act is to enhance the effectiveness of public school governance by Alabama school boards.
 - Board members should function collectively, not individually, to govern a local school system that promotes student learning and prepares students for college and careers.
 - Board members have the duty to act in the best interests of the local school system as a whole, without self-interest.
- An individual board member must meet minimum qualifications to serve, comply with a code of conduct, and participate in orientation and ongoing training.
- This Act requires an official affirmation by the board member upon taking office that:
 - The actions and decisions made as a school board member will be based on the needs and interests of the students and the school system.
 - No decision or action will be made to serve or promote the personal, political, or financial interests of the school board member.
 - Each decision or action will be based on the interests of the school system as a whole.
 - The views of all school board members and the local superintendent will be considered before making a decision or taking action on any matter before the board.
 - Formal actions will be taken after recommendation and consultation with the local superintendent and that board members may not individually or jointly attempt to direct or corrupt school operations, or obstruct the local superintendent's duties.
 - The board member will promote public support for the school system and endorse programs to improve the quality of public education for all students.
 - The board member will attend scheduled meetings and participate in training programs and school functions.
- This Act establishes new duties for school board members:
 - Work with the local superintendent to establish a vision for the school system by adopting goals that address student needs, advance student performance, and review data to monitor implementation of policies and programs.
 - Adopt policies and programs to meet the adopted goals and respond to system needs recommended by the local superintendent.
 - Address personnel recommendations submitted by the local school superintendent in a timely manner and take personnel actions based on student needs and system finances without regard to personal preferences or political interests.
 - Approve operating budgets aligned with the adopted goals as recommended by the local superintendent.
 - Advocate for the needs, resources, and interests of students and allow the local superintendent to address constituent issues.

- The State Superintendent will develop continuing education and training programs for school board members to provide each school board member with an understanding of the role of the school board member in assuring the effective provision of educational services.
- The State Board of Education will adopt a model code of conduct for local school board members by December 31, 2012. Each school board will adopt a code of conduct for the local school board that includes the adopted model code of conduct before April 1, 2013.
- The State Superintendent will develop and issue regulations to implement this Act including regulations needed to impose sanctions against a school board member for failure to meet training and attendance requirements, neglect of duty, or willful misconduct:
 - Formal censure or reprimand by the local board.
 - After investigation of serious and substantial allegations of misconduct by a local school board member or members, the State Superintendent may recommend the State Board of Education approve sanctions including:
 - Formal censure or reprimand by the State Board of Education.
 - Disqualification from future school board service by the school board member.
- The Act amends current laws for city and county school board members to require a school board member to vacate office when the school board member moves from the school district the school board member represents.
- Eligibility for election or appointment to a school board now requires:
 - The person is of good moral character.
 - Has a high school diploma or equivalent.
 - Is not employed by the same school board.
 - Is not serving on the board of a private school or college.
 - Is not a registered sex offender.
 - Is not a convicted felon.