



Why board development matters:

A guide for government and school boards

What is board development?

Board development is **the process of preparing board members to perform their roles effectively**, through formal training and learning opportunities. In many states and municipalities, it's also required.

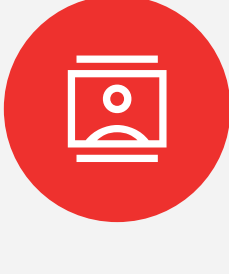
“Prioritize training and development for board members. You cannot expect them to just know what their role is.”

Chandu Vemuri
Executive Assistant for Board and Superintendent Leadership, Sun Prairie Area Schools, Wisconsin¹

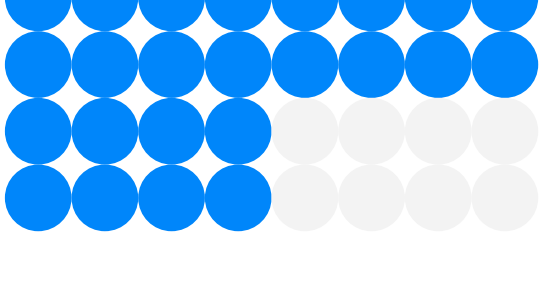
Introducing the concept of everboarding

Everboarding:

Is an approach that recognizes there is always something new to learn. Board development should extend throughout service, starting with a robust onboarding process and continuing into specialized training about board service as well as nuances of your organization, its mission and related topics.²



The value of board development for public boards



75% of public boards conduct board training "as needed"¹



25% schedule it annually at board retreats.¹

“Board development is essential. If the board expects the organization to have a continuous improvement mindset, so must the board.”

Steve Schroeder
Board Member, Sun Prairie Area School District, Wisconsin

So, where is the disconnect?

Top 4 challenges faced in board development¹

01 Board member availability

03 Resistance to change

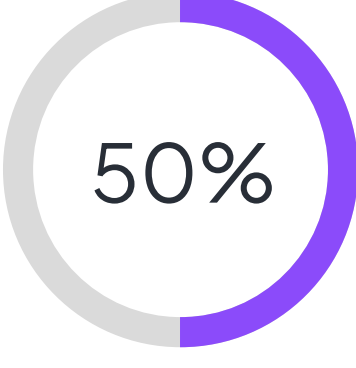
02 Limited time

04 Access to quality training content

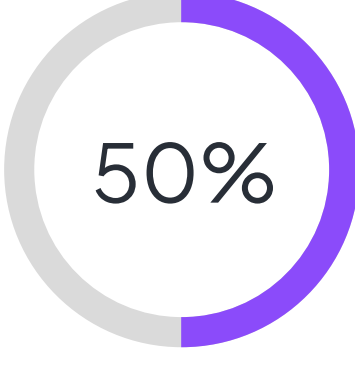
Where publicly facing boards find development and training materials¹



from membership in association/training providers



create in-house



use third-party options

Tip: A time- and budget-saving strategy is to store training resources on your board management software so future board members can benefit with no additional cost.

Make time for board development



Flexibility is key to board development. Look for training that board members can complete on their own time, on their own devices. And arrange group training at times that work for busy board members.

“Find a time when they all can attend to hear the same message and have a trainer deliver the message that you want them to hear.”

Greg Doverspike
Superintendent, Mosinee School District, Wisconsin

The right training for public boards

“Public-facing boards should have a clear mandate, with well-prepared members knowledgeable about the topics they will be dealing with. Processes should be outlined, ensuring members are well informed and that there is transparency and public inclusion.”

Gwen Dombroski
Manager of Legislative Services/Clerk, County of Renfrew, Ontario

Requirements vary from state to state, but public board training should include these elements:³

- Applicable laws and regulations
- Community relations
- Effective governance
- Employment and evaluation of chief administrator
- Strategic planning and goal setting

Using technology to support training and development

“Technology creates a central source of truth. It becomes a great resource of the record. You're giving board members tools that help them have access to information that is important, that's going to result in better decision making and better governance. And leveraging those tools also helps you satisfy the laws.”

Ellen Glasgow
Managing Director for Mission Driven Organisations, Diligent

See how Diligent Community can transform your school board and help deliver training and development for mission success.

Request a demo ▶

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References

- [1] Diligent survey of public leaders, February 2025
[2] <https://www.diligent.com/resources/blog/leveraging-technology-development-engage-board-members>
[3] <https://www.diligent.com/resources/blog/best-practices-school-board-member-training>