

Key Questions the Board Should Ask About

Governance and Strategy

1. Where are we headed and are we all in agreement on that vision?
2. Why do we exist and will our strategic plan accomplish our purpose?
3. Have we expressed our values clearly enough, and how well do the people who need to understand and live them?
4. How well do our goals express the results we want to achieve?
5. How well do our objectives clarify the outcomes we expect to see along with way to achieving our goals?
6. How well is our strategy expressed and understood?
7. To what extent does the business plan being implemented by management agree with and align to the strategic plan?
8. How well does our board-level scorecard reflect and measure what we are trying to accomplish?
9. How effective is the board at playing its role in strategy and allowing management to play theirs?
10. How well does the strategic plan align with the goals and objectives of the Province?

Governance and Risk

1. What are the most significant risks faced by the School Board and do we have a strategy in place to mitigate these?
2. What is our risk appetite and tolerance levels in each of these areas?
3. Are we taking the right amount of risk?
4. How well is our risk management plan integrated with our strategic plan?
5. How effective are our controls? And, are we “in control”?
6. How well are risks being managed by the Director of Education?
7. How appropriate is the information received by the board relative to our risks? (Is it the right information, at the right level, in the right format?)
8. How confident are we in the information we receive at the board level?
9. How well are we monitoring and evaluating at risks at the board level?
10. What can we learn from our actual results?

Governance and Resources

1. “Is this budget reasonable?”
2. “Is it plausible that this proposed allocation of resources matches up with and can achieve the strategic plan?”
3. “Would this expenditure of money be consistent with our core beliefs and values?”
4. “Would this expenditure of money be consistent with the outcomes we want to achieve?”
5. Is there resonance between all of the people who touch the financial statements? (CFO, Director of Education, internal auditor, external auditor, Provincial Auditor, other independent professionals, SSBA)
6. What are the most significant risks we face and how are they reflected in financial statements?
7. What are the main assumptions behind statements?
8. What are the main estimates and judgements used, and does the auditor have complete confidence in these?
9. What can be learned from the Cash Flows, other secondary statements, notes?
10. If you had additional fees/scope/time, what would you look at next, and why?

Governance and People

1. How appropriate is our plan for the Director of Education assessment and evaluation system?
2. How appropriate is our succession plan for the Director of Education at all 3 levels: Emergency, Orderly, Beyond the Next Transition?
3. How clear are we on our role in human resources and collective bargaining?
4. How well do we encourage the Director of Education?
5. How appropriate is our plan for the School Board assessment and evaluation system?
6. How effective is our onboarding and orientation program for School Board Members?
7. How committed are we to continuous education including for the Director of Education and School Board Members?
8. To what extent are our board and committee meetings linked to and aligned with our board and committee charters/terms of reference and work plans: before, during and after the meetings?
9. How healthy is our boardroom culture and how might we strengthen it?
10. To what extent am I fulfilling my responsibilities to the work of the board?