Student Outcomes Focused States

A Continuous Improvement Framework Nevada State Board of Education

INTRODUCTION

Overview

Student outcomes don't change until leader behaviors change. Or said differently when placed in the context of governing statewide education systems, patterns of behavior that are exhibited in the state boardroom can reasonably be expected to be found paralleled in the local 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 Student Outcomes Focused States framework is to translate existing research and the collective experience of dozens of board members and Superintendents into a set of tools that boards can use to identify their strengths and weaknesses as well as to track progress along their journey toward improving student outcomes.

The framework is built around six research-informed competencies that describe 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 State Board and State Superintendent with guidance from a facilitator specifically trained in its application. After receiving an orientation to the framework, each individual State Board Member and the State Superintendent should complete the 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 State Board and the State Superintendent should schedule time once per quarter to complete the self-evaluation again as a means of monitoring progress over time. Ideally each quarter the State Board's focus on improving student outcomes meaningfully increases.

Board Self Evaluation

VISION & GOALS: The State Board will, in collaboration with the State 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 not consistently demonstrated the ability to distinguish between inputs, outputs, and outcomes. The Board has not hosted opportunities to listen to the vision of community stakeholders during the previous sixty month period.	The Board has adopted, in collaboration with the Superintendent, goals. 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. The Board has adopted no fewer than one and no more than five goals. Fewer goals allow for greater focus; more allow for less. 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.	In addition to the goal/interim goal ending points and the ending dates, the Board has adopted goal/interim goal ending points for each year leading up to the ending dates. All interim goals pertain to student outputs or student outcomes. The Board included students, staff, and community stakeholders in the goal and interim goal	The Board used a process that included students, staff, and community stakeholders in a way that leads them to express ownership of the adopted goals and interim goals. 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 institution's staff has authority over roughly 80% of the inputs the interim goal is measuring.
		The goals and interim goals will challenge the organization and will require change in staff behaviors.	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.

VALUES & GUARDRAILS: The State Board will, in collaboration with the State Superintendent, adopt guardrails in alignment with the goals.

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 community stakeholders during the previous sixty month period.	No items from the Not Student Outcomes Focused column, and: The Board has adopted, in collaboration with the Superintendent, guardrails based on community stakeholders' values and that are in alignment with 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 Board's guardrails are in alignment with not in conflict with the Board's goals. In addition to having ending points and ending dates for the interim guardrails, the Board has adopted interim guardrail ending points for each year leading up to the ending date. The Board included students, staff, and community stakeholders in the guardrail and interim guardrail development process. All Board guardrails last from three to five years; all interim guardrails last from one to three years. The guardrails and interim guardrails will challenge the organization and require change in	All items from the Meeting Student Outcomes Focus column, and: The Board used a process that included students, staff, and community stakeholders in a way that leads them to express ownership of the adopted guardrail and interim guardrails. 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 institution's 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.

Not Student	Approaching Student	Meeting Student	Mastering Student
Outcomes Focused (0)	Outcomes Focus (10)	Outcomes Focus (20)	Outcomes Focus (30)
The Board is Not Student Outcomes Focused if any of the following are true: The Board has not adopted goals, interim goals, guardrails, or interim guardrails. The Board does not schedule each goal to be monitored at least once times per year. The Board does not schedule each guardrail to be monitored at least once every two years. The Board has not adopted a monitoring calendar. The Board does not track its use of time in open meetings. The institution has not achieved any of its annual ending points or ending date ending points for any of its interim goals during the previous twelve month period.	No items from the Not Student Outcomes Focused column, and: The Board invests no less than 10% of its total open meeting minutes monitoring its goals and interim goals. The Superintendent led the interim goals/guardrails and monitoring calendar development processes while working collaboratively with the Board. The Board has a Board-adopted monitoring calendar. The Board's monitoring calendar	All items from the Approaching Student Outcomes Focus column, and: The Board invests no less than 25% of its total open meeting minutes monitoring its goals and interim goals. Every goal is monitored multiple times per year. Every guardrail is monitored at least once per year. The Board has been provided copies of but 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. If the Board evaluates the Superintendent, the most recent annual Superintendent evaluation took place no more than twelve months ago.	All items from the Meeting Student Outcomes Focus column, and: The Board invests no less than 50% of its total open meeting minutes monitoring its goals and interim goals. Only Board work was discussed and/or acted on during open meetings. The Board modifies its goals, guardrails, interim 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 institution has achieved the annual ending point or the ending date ending point for at least half of its interim goals during the previous twelve month period. 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.

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 or interim goals. The Board did not receive the final version of materials to be voted on at least three calendar days before the open meeting during which the materials would be considered.	open meetings, categorizing every	There are no more than four open meetings per month and none lasts more than three hours.	There are no more than two open meetings per month and none lasts more than two hours. The Board schedules no more than three topics for discussion during any open meeting.
There were more than six open meetings in a single month during the previous twelve month period (Board committees are counted in this total).	 Goal Setting: reviewing, discussing, and/or selecting goals Goal Monitoring: reviewing, discussing, and/or approving/not approving goal monitoring reports Guardrail Setting: reviewing, 	oversight authority as defined by	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.
Any meeting of the Board lasted more than eight hours during the previous twelve month period. The Board does not use a consent	 Guardrail Monitoring: reviewing, discussing, and/or approving/not approving guardrail monitoring reports 	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	The Board received the final version of materials to be voted on at least seven calendar days before the open meeting during which the materials would be considered.
agenda. The Board has not hosted opportunities to listen to the vision and values of community stakeholders during the previous sixty month period.	- Leadership Evaluation: Board self eval, Board time use eval, and Superintendent eval - Voting: debating and voting on any item (these activities are not a form of goal/guardrail monitoring) - Community Engagement: twoway communication between the Board and community stakeholders	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.	The Board used a process that included students, staff, and community stakeholders in a way that led them to express ownership of the adopted goals, guardrails, and interim goals/guardrails.
	- Other		

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 or interim 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.	No items from the Not Student Outcomes Focused column, and: 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 a subset for whom they have an affinity. The Board unanimously agreed during the most recent quarterly self-evaluation that all Board Members have honored the two aforementioned ethical boundaries during the previous three month period.	All items from the Meeting Student Outcomes Focus column, and: The Board unanimously agreed during the most recent quarterly self-evaluation that all Board Members adhered to all policies governing Board operating procedures during the previous three month period. All Board Members and the Superintendent agreed during the most recent quarterly 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 and unanimously voted to adopt the results.

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 or interim goals. The Board has not conducted a self-evaluation during the previous twelve month period. The Board has not participated in a governance team training or retreat where all members of the governance team were present, during the previous thirty-six month period.	No items from the Not Student Outcomes Focused column, and: The Board tracks its use of time and reports quarterly the percentage of open meeting time invested in monitoring the Board's goals and interim goals. The Board tracks the average 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 open meetings as well as all closed meetings. The Board has provided time during open meetings to recognize the accomplishments of students and staff regarding progress toward goals and interim goals. The most recent Board self-evaluation took place no more than twelve months ago using this instrument or a research-aligned instrument.	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 thirty-six month period. The Board has continuously updated the status and targets of all goals, guardrails, and interim goals/guardrails, and publicly	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 State training sessions during the previous thirty-six months. Prior to being selected, all newly selected Board Members received training on Student Outcomes Focused State from fellow Board Members on their Board or from a certified Student Outcomes Focused State Coach. The Board conducted the most recent quarterly self-evaluation and unanimously voted to adopt the results.

GOAL EXAMPLES

Goals:

- The percentage of graduates who qualify for admission to graduate and professional schools for entry into their selected careers will increase from 21% on August 1, 2019 to 65% by August 1, 2024
- The percentage of students who graduate having demonstrated the ability to think critically and collaborate effectively as measured by a rubric-scored portfolio will increase from W% on X to Y% by Z
- The percentage of students who have received an evaluation of satisfactory or higher during a three month internship/apprenticeship in their desired field will increase from W% on X to Y% by Z
- The percentage of students on track to graduate at the end of each academic year will increase from W% on X to Y% by Z

Interim Goals:

- The percentage of students successfully passing all courses at the end of each period will increase from W% on X to Y% by Z
- The percentage of students showing growth on [insert formative assessment] will increase from W% on X to Y% by Z
- The percentage of students earning at least three credits each semester will increase from W% on X to Y% by Z

GUARDRAIL EXAMPLES

Guardrails:

- The Superintendent will not allow faculty with below average student feedback ratings to attain tenure
- The Superintendent will not propose major decisions to the Board without first having engaged students and staff
- The Superintendent will not maintain programs or departments that fall below minimum performance thresholds for more than two years
- The Superintendent will not allow the inequitable treatment of students
- The Superintendent will not allow financial conditions that jeopardize the institution's solvency or ability to accomplish the Goals
- The Superintendent will not allow enrollment to decline

Interim Guardrails:

- The percentage of People Incidents per 1,000 Students will decline from W% on X to Y% by Z
- The Employee Separation Rate for faculty and staff in the top quartile of college-wide performance will decline from W% on X to Y% by Z

Board Work: Items that are discussed and/or acted on during open 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 Open Meeting definition]

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

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 Open Meeting, Board Work definitions]

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 institution 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 institution. 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 open meetings should be invested in goal monitoring or goal setting. Debating and voting on Board items is never a form of goal monitoring. [see Open 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 open meetings should be invested in goal monitoring or goal setting. [see Open 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 institution's goals. Guardrails are based on community stakeholder's values and are aligned with the goals. [see Examples section; see Guardrail Monitoring, Guardrail Setting, Interim Guardrail 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 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 measure of progress toward a defined goal that can be expressed as a number or percentage. [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. [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 institution uses for progress monitoring), and 4) supporting documentation that shows the evidence and describes any needed next steps.

Open Meetings: Any non-privileged meeting authorized by the Board or Board Chair for the purpose of debating, deciding, voting, or acting on board business including, but not limited to, Board workshops, Board hearings, and Board committees. Board professional development is excluded from this definition. [see Board Work definition]

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 Staff 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]

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]

Staff Outcomes: A measure of institution results that are not student results; outcomes that are not student outcomes. [see Outcomes, Student Outcomes definitions]

Staff Outputs: The staff 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 staffs' role in the implementation of the program or strategy. Outputs that are not student outputs. [see Outputs, Student Outputs 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 institution results that are student results rather than staff results; outcomes that are a measure of what students know or are able to do. Student outcomes are distinct from staff outcomes. [see Staff 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 staff outputs. [see Staff Outputs, Outputs definition]

Values: The shared understanding of what community stakeholders consider important but that is not the vision. Where the vision describes what community stakeholders want to see happen, values describe what community stakeholders do not want to see happen. Values describe protections community stakeholders want 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. Guardrails generally are set for a three to five year period.

Vision: The shared understanding of what community stakeholders ultimately desire to accomplish for all students. Where values describe what community stakeholders do not want to see, vision describes what the community does want to see happen. Vision describes the direction community stakeholders want to see the institution go. A vision is most often expressed as a goal that the Board understands community stakeholders' desire for the future to be. Goals generally are set for a three to five 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.

RESOURCES

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

Boards That Make A Difference, John Carver: https://www.amazon.com/dp/B008L01JWO/

Good To Great, Jim Collins: https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0058DRUV6/

The Fifth Discipline, Peter M. Senge: https://www.amazon.com/dp/B000SEIFKK/

Influencer, Joseph Grenny, Kerry Patterson, et al: https://www.amazon.com/dp/B00BPO7710/

The Three Laws of Performance, Steve Zaffron and Dave Logan: https://www.amazon.com/dp/B005QPDNTY/

Leadership and Self-Deception, The Arbinger Institute: https://www.amazon.com/dp/1523097809/

Crucial Conversations, Kerry Patterson, Joseph Grenny, Ron McMillan, & Al Switzler:

https://www.amazon.com/dp/B005K0AYH4/

Leading Change, John P. Kotter: https://www.amazon.com/dp/B00A07FPEO/

Immunity To Change, Robert Kegan & Lisa Lahey: https://www.amazon.com/dp/B004OEILH2/

Who Killed Change, Pat Zigarmi & Ken Blanchard: https://www.amazon.com/dp/B002AR2Q1W/

Policy Governance Consistency Framework, International Policy Governance Association:

https://www.policygovernanceassociation.org/assets/documents/principles-and-model-consistency-framework-2014.pdf

Student Outcomes Focused Governance, CGCS & Airick Journey Crabill: http://tinyurl.com/SOFGmanual