

New Trustee Orientation

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Community College
Association of Texas Trustees

Congratulations!

Congratulations on your new role as
a Community College Trustee.

Community colleges are one of
Texas's most powerful engines of
opportunity, and trustee boards are
entrusted with their direction.



Grounding



What is a Community College?

The Texas Community College Landscape & Funding

How Texas Community Colleges Are Governed & Monitored

The Ecosystem that Supports Texas Community College.

Texas
Education
Code §
130.0011

- Texas public junior colleges are community-focused two-year institutions that provide a full range of educational programs, and student supports — from academic degrees and job training to adult education and counseling — and they are expected to strive for excellence in all areas of their work.



Texas Community Colleges By The Numbers

- How Many Students Do Texas Community Colleges Serve?
 - 100,000
 - 450,000
 - 575,000
 - 700,000



Texas Community Colleges By The Numbers

- Officially, How Many Certificates & Degrees Were Awarded to Students in 2025?
 - 65,499
 - 125,215
 - 90,765
 - 101,438



Texas Community Colleges By The Numbers

- What Percentage of All Career and Technical Education Certificates and Degrees are Awarded by Community Colleges?
 - 35%
 - 67%
 - 96%
 - 78%

A Few More Details About Texas Community Colleges....

- 50 Districts with Over 90 Campuses
- Districts Range in Enrollment from 1,400 to 72,000
- Currently, all 50 are Accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges – 89th Legislative Session Provided Choice
- Open-Door Admissions
- Semester Credit Hour (SCH) Tuition and Fees Range from \$62 to \$161 Per SCH for In-District students
- On the Semester System, with Associate Degrees Being Capped at 60 SCH
- Offer Adult Education and Literacy (AEL), Continuing Education, Certificates, Associate Degrees, and limited Bachelor's Degrees



Community College Funding

- The three main funding sources for Texas community colleges form a “three-legged stool.”

Three Major Funding Streams

Local Property Taxes

- Levied by local boards for maintenance, operations, and capital projects

Tuition/Fees

- Revenue collected from student payments and set locally by each college district

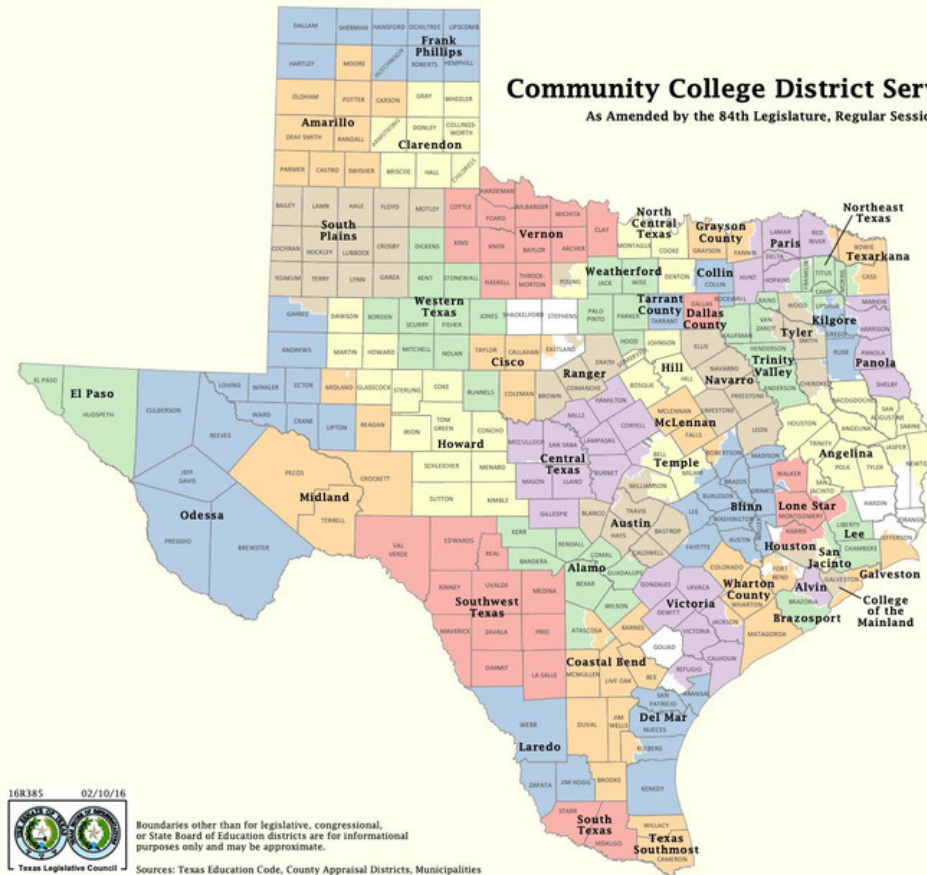
State Appropriations

- Funds allocated by the legislature for instruction, services, and employee benefits

Service Areas & Taxing Districts

Community College District Service Areas

As Amended by the 84th Legislature, Regular Session, 2015

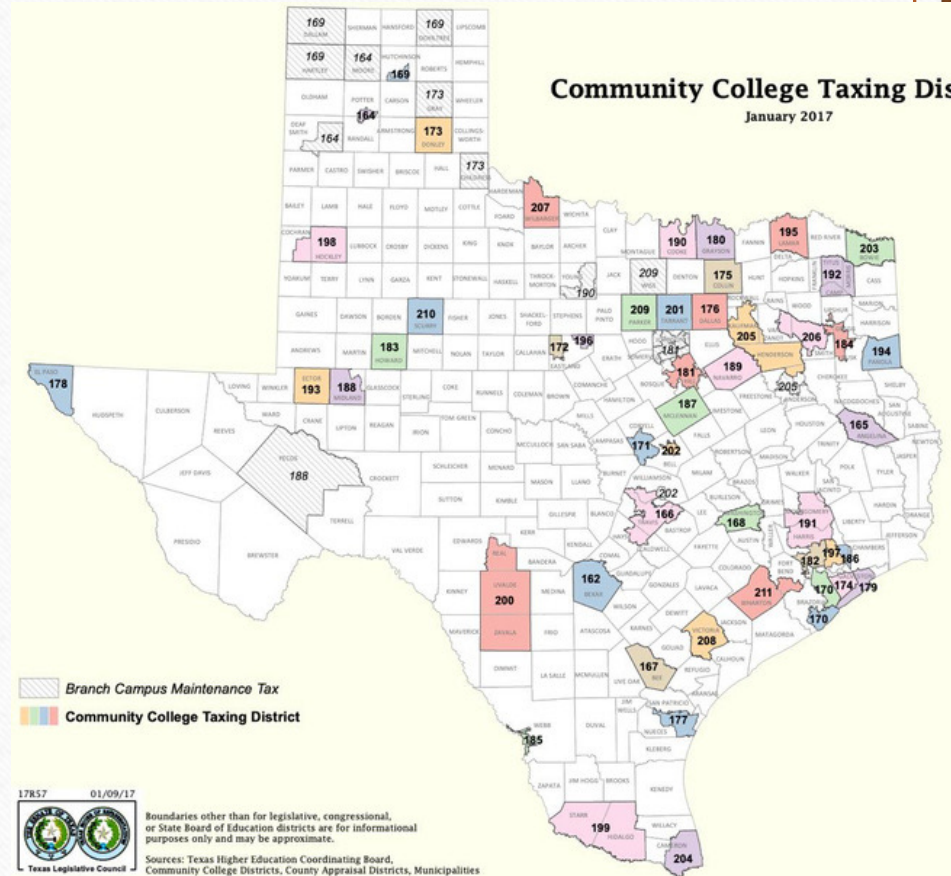


Community College Districts*

- 162 - Alamo Colleges
163 - Alvin Community College
164 - Amarillo College
165 - Angelina College
166 - Austin Community College District
167 - Coastal Bend College
168 - Blinn College
169 - Frank Phillips College
170 - Brazosport College
171 - Central Texas College
172 - Cisco College
173 - Clarendon College
174 - College of the Mainland
175 - Collin College
176 - Dallas County Community College District
177 - Del Mar College
178 - El Paso Community College
179 - Galveston College
180 - Grayson College
181 - Hill College
182 - Houston Community College
183 - Howard College
184 - Kilgore College
185 - Laredo Community College
186 - Lee College
187 - McLennan Community College
188 - Midland College
189 - Navarro College
190 - North Central Texas College
191 - Lone Star College System
192 - Northeast Texas Community College
193 - Odessa College
194 - Panola College
195 - Paris Junior College
196 - Ranger College
197 - San Jacinto College
198 - South Plains College
199 - South Texas College
200 - Southwest Texas Junior College
201 - Tarrant County College
202 - Temple College
203 - Texarkana College
204 - Texas Southmost College
205 - Trinity Valley Community College
206 - Tyler Junior College
207 - Vernon College
208 - Victoria College
209 - Weatherford College
210 - Western Texas College
211 - Wharton County Junior College

Community College Taxing Districts

January 2017



Tuition and Fee Revenues



The Local Board is Responsible for Setting Tuition and Fee Rates



Rates Vary Widely Across the State



Student Residency Impacts Tuition Rates: In-District, Out-of-District, Out-of-State

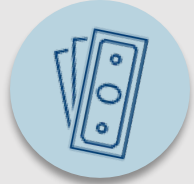
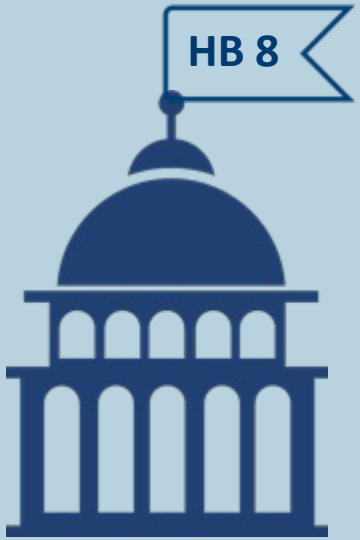


Governor Abbott Directed a Tuition and Fee Freeze for Public Colleges, Including Community Colleges, for FY26, Extended Now for FY27

State Appropriations and HB8

- **During the 2023 Legislative Session, a Significant Piece of Legislation was Signed into Law by Governor Abbott**
- **Key Characteristics:**
 - **Shifted Enrollment-Based to Performance-Based Metrics**
 - **Workforce Development Focus**
 - **Dynamic Model**

Key Components of House Bill 8



Financial Aid for Swift Transfer (FAST)

A new financial aid program that would allow “educationally disadvantaged” students to enroll in dual credit classes at no cost to them.



Shared Services

Encourages public junior colleges to participate in institutional collaborations that help students afford college, complete credentials, and transfer.



Performance Tier

The funding level that constitutes the majority of state funding and is comprised of measurable outcomes.



Base Tier

The funding level that ensures each public junior college has access to a defined level of funding for instruction and operations.



Community College Standing Advisory Committee (SAC)

A group of community college leaders that provide advice and counsel to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

HB 8 Fundable Outcomes

Outcomes

- **Credentials of Value**
- **Student Transfers**
- **Dual Credit Success**



**Performance
Tier Funding**

Local Governance

- Fifty Independent Districts Governed By Elected Boards of Trustees
 - 5 to 14 members
 - 6-year rotating terms
 - Some boards are elected at-large and represent the entire college district, while others represent single-member districts
 - Follow the open-meetings law, and new trustees are required to attend training within 90 days of starting their term
 - Considerable local discretion

State Oversight
& Coordination
Texas Higher
Education
Coordination
Board

**Texas Higher
Education**
COORDINATING BOARD

• **THECB Establishes the Guardrails:**

- Statewide rules and guidelines
- Program approval standards
- Data reporting requirements
- Funding formulas and accountability measures

• **Community Colleges Comply:**

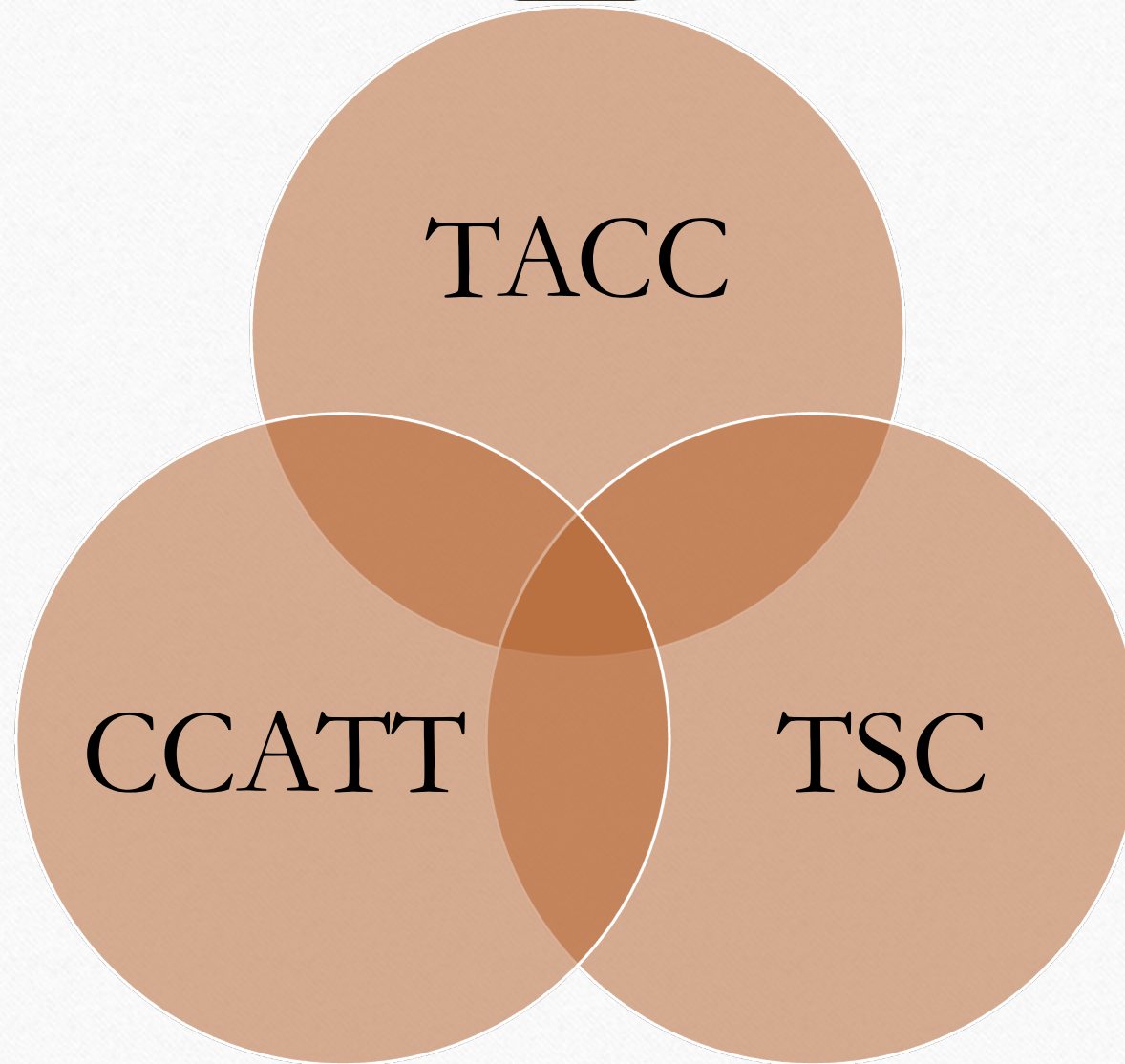
- Receive state funding
- Offer approved programs and credentials
- Remain in good standing with the state



TACC, CCATT, TSC

**A Coordinated Ecosystem-Distinct Roles,
Shared Impact**

**Texas Association
Community Colleges**



**Texas
Association
of
Community
Colleges**

TACC

Serves Texas public community college districts as a nongovernmental statewide association.

Advocates for effective policies that strengthen community colleges and student success.

Unified Voice by building strong relationships with legislators, policymakers, and partners.

**Community
College
Association
of Texas
Trustees**

CCATT

Serves community college trustees as the statewide governance association

Strengthens trustee leadership through training, development, and best practices

Builds effective governance that advances student success and institutional stewardship

Texas Success Center

TSC

Supports Texas community colleges in implementing and scaling reforms that improve student learning and success

Builds institutional capacity to design, evaluate, and sustain student success strategies

Informs public policy through research, data, and evidence from practice

An Introduction to Board Governance

Your Role as a Community College Trustee

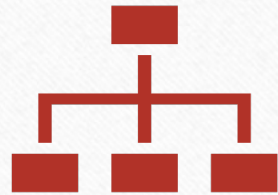
The Board's Core Role



-
- The Board Governs—It Does Not Manage
 - To Govern Means to:
 - Act on behalf of the public
 - Set direction and priorities
 - Ensure accountability
 - Delegate operations to the CEO

Governance vs. Management

Two Distinct Roles



Governance

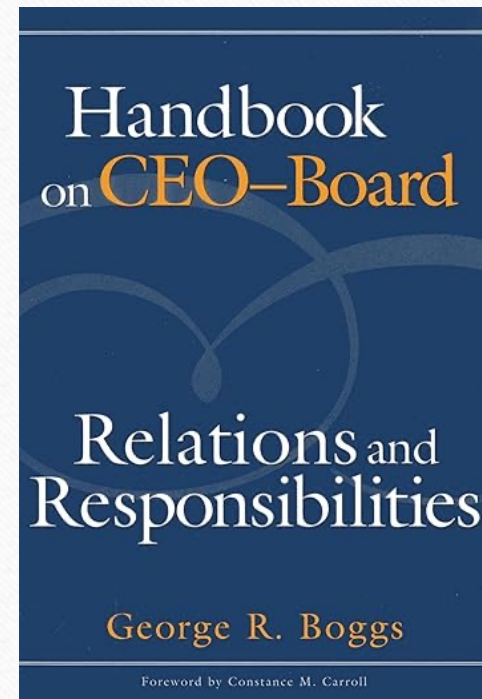
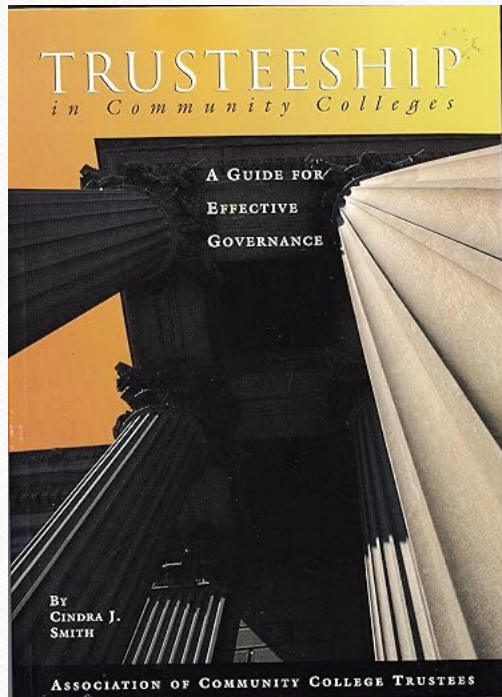
Mission, vision, values
Policy and direction
CEO oversight
Long-term focus



Management

Daily operations
Program implementation
Internal processes

Two Excellent Resources



Association of Community College Trustees

Nine Board Roles & Responsibilities

- Act as a Unit
- Represent the Common Good
- Set Policy Direction
- Employ, Support and Evaluate the CEO
- Define Policy Standards for Operations
- Monitor Institutional Performance
- Create a Positive Institutional Climate
- Support and Advocate for the Interests of the Institution
- Lead as a Thoughtful, Educated Team

Act As A Unit

Authority Resides with the Board as a Whole

Boards Act Collectively

Individual Trustees Have Influence, Not Authority

Decisions are Supported Once Made

Represent The Common Good

- Trustees Serve the Institution
- Govern for Students and Communities
- Avoid Personal and Special Interests
- Keep the Mission Central

Set Policy Direction

Establish	Establish Clear Policies
Set	Set Expectations and Boundaries
Delegate	Delegate Authority to the CEO





Define Policy Standards For Operations

- Establish Policies That Set Standards For Quality, Ethics, and Prudence in College Operations
 - Educational Programs & Services
 - Personnel & Human Resources
 - Fiscal Health & Stability

**TASB Policy
Services: A
Governance
Anchor For
Texas
Community
Colleges**

*The Texas Association of School
Boards (TASB) Serves as the Primary Policy and
Governance Support Organization for Texas
Community College Boards, Providing Locally
Adopted and Legally Aligned Board Policies.*



TASB Policy Services

Turning Principle Into Practice

- TASB Policy Services Help Boards Translate:
 - State law and legislative requirements
 - Best practices in governance
 - Board values and priorities into clear expectations for both the Board and CEO roles.





The Board's Most Important Responsibility Employ, Support & Evaluate the CEO

- Hire the CEO-College President/Chancellor
- Set Clear Expectations
- Support Publicly
- Evaluate Consistently



Monitor Institutional Performance

- Oversight Focused on Outcomes
- Monitor Progress Toward Goals
- Use Data, Not Anecdotes
- Ask Strategic Questions



Create A Positive Institutional Climate

- Tone at the Top Matters!
- Board Behavior Sets Expectations
- Respectful Discourse
- Ethical Leadership

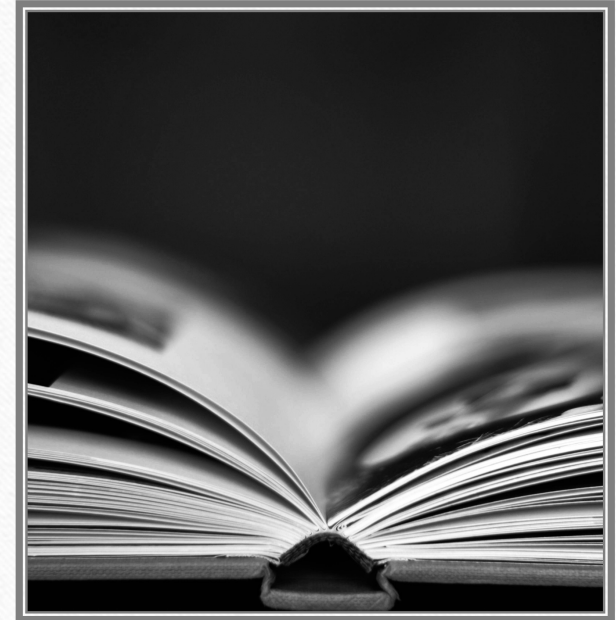


Support & Advocate For The Institution

- Be an Ambassador
- Build Public Trust & Partnerships
- Advocate for the College's Mission
- Seek Support from Policymakers

Lead As A Thoughtful, Educated Team

- Governance Requires Continuous Learning
- Commitment to Teamwork
- Listen, Ask Good Questions, Analyze Options
- Future Orientation



What The Board Does Not Do...

Clear Boundaries Protect Everyone

- **Boards Do Not:**
 - Manage employees
 - Resolve complaints
 - Direct staff
 - Make operational decisions
 - Represent personal agendas



SB 37: Redefining Board-CEO Governance Authority with Accountability



Traditional Model:

- Board: policy, strategy, CEO evaluation
- President: operations, academics, staffing
- Faculty: academic expertise

SB 37:

- Board: authority extends deeper into academics and leadership
- President: role remains central-but more scrutinized
- Faculty: role codified as advisory

Shepherding the Institution

The Trustee Posture



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- Leading From Behind
 - Best view
 - Greatest influence
 - Ability to adjust direction when needed

Board Responsibility in One Sentence

- *Boards Govern Collectively, Set Policy Direction, Support and Evaluate the CEO, and Steward the Institution in Service of the Public Good.*





It All Boils Down To Changing Student Lives!

- Role Clarity Enables Strong Leadership
- Strong Leadership Improves Student Success
- Good Governance Changes Lives



The Board – CEO Partnership

A Foundation for Effective Community College Governance

Governance Works Best When The Relationship Is Strong

- A Strong Partnership:
 - Enables strategic leadership
 - Builds institutional trust
 - Creates stability
- Weak Partnerships Result in:
 - Confusion and micromanagement
 - Distrust and mixed signals
 - Organizational drift

Different Roles, Shared Commitment

- *Governance is Not About Power; It's About Purpose.*
- The Board and CEO:
 - Serve the same mission
 - Are accountable to the public
 - Lead together, but from different roles



Joint Respect for Lines of Authority

- **One Board. One CEO. One Voice.**
 - The Board acts only as a collective body
 - Individual trustees:
 - Have influence, not authority, authority only exists when the Board acts together
 - Do not direct staff
 - The CEO:
 - Is the Board's sole employee
 - Has authority over all college staff

Trust Is The Currency Of The Partnership

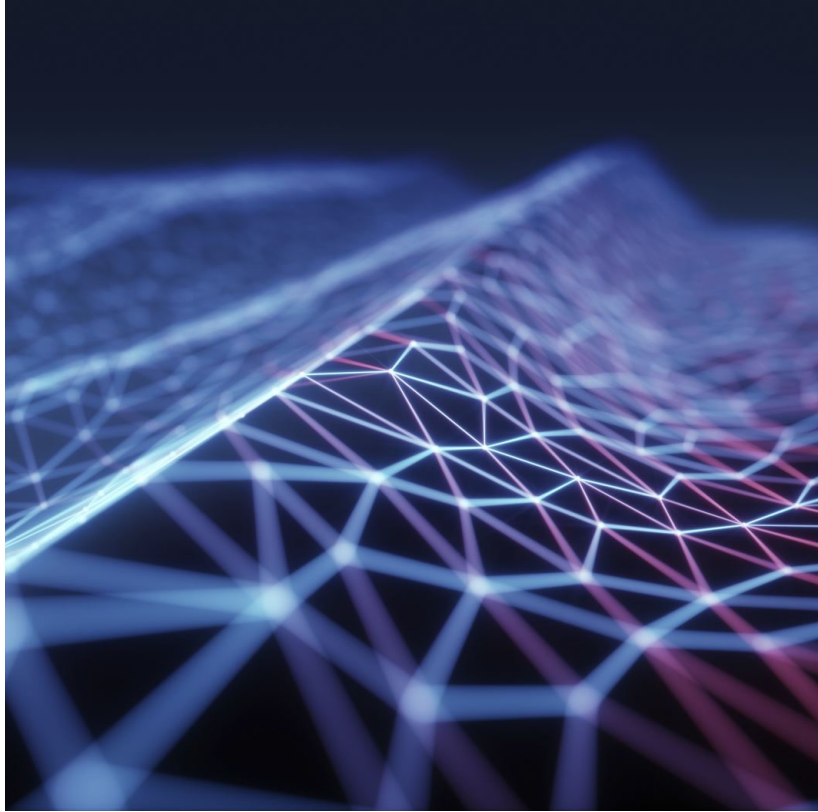
It's Built Through Behavior

- **Trust Grows When:**

- Roles are respected
- Communication is honest and timely
- Expectations are clear
- Disagreements are handled professionally

- **Trust Erodes When:**

- Trustees micromanage
- Information is withheld
- Decisions happen outside the board process



Communication: The Lifeline of Governance

- Clear, Consistent, and Professional
- Effective Communication Includes:
 - Regular, structured updates
 - Clear distinction between information and action items
 - Mutual preparation for meetings
 - No surprises

Supporting the CEO Is A Governance Responsibility

- *Support Does Not Mean Blind Agreement on the Part of Either the Board or the CEO*
- Supporting the CEO includes:
 - Clear Expectations
 - Public Unity After Board Decisions
 - Constructive Feedback in Appropriate Settings
 - Acting as Ambassadors for the Institution

Evaluating The CEO

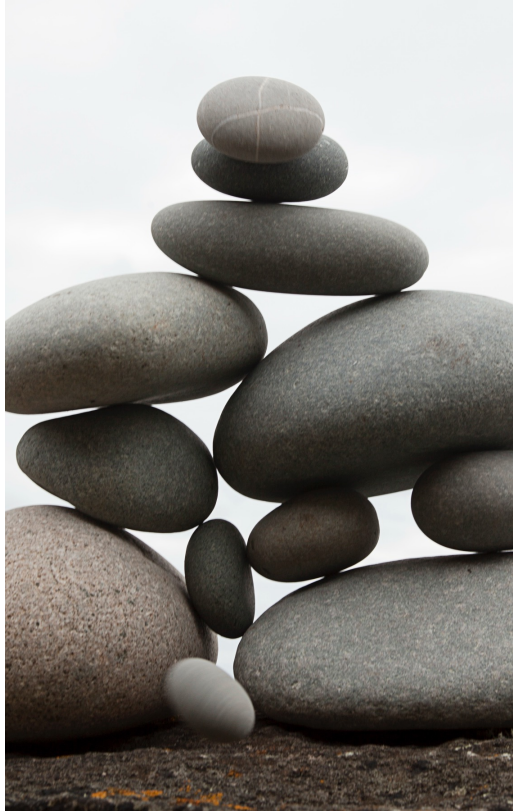


Evaluation Is About Alignment and Improvement



Effective CEO Evaluation:

- Is regular and systematic
- Is based on agreed-upon goals
- Is conducted by the full board
- Strengthens accountability and trust



Common Pitfalls in the Board-CEO Relationship

- What Undermines Governance:
 - Blurred roles
 - Individual trustees acting independently
 - Micromanagement
 - Public criticism of the CEO
 - Lack of follow-through

When The Partnership Is Working Well

- *When governance is healthy, the campus feels it—even if no one can point to why.*
- What Success Looks Like
 - Clear roles and boundaries
 - Strategic focus
 - Institutional stability
 - Confidence from faculty, staff, and community



Texas Governance Case Scenario

When Good Intentions Blur the Line



Trustee Reflection

- Pause and Reflect
 - Do I understand where governance ends, and management begins?
 - How do my actions build or weaken trust?
 - Am I acting in the best interest of the whole institution?



Community College
Association of Texas Trustees



Data-Informed Governance

Friday, January 30, 2026



Measuring What Matters

A Strategic Use of Data for Governance

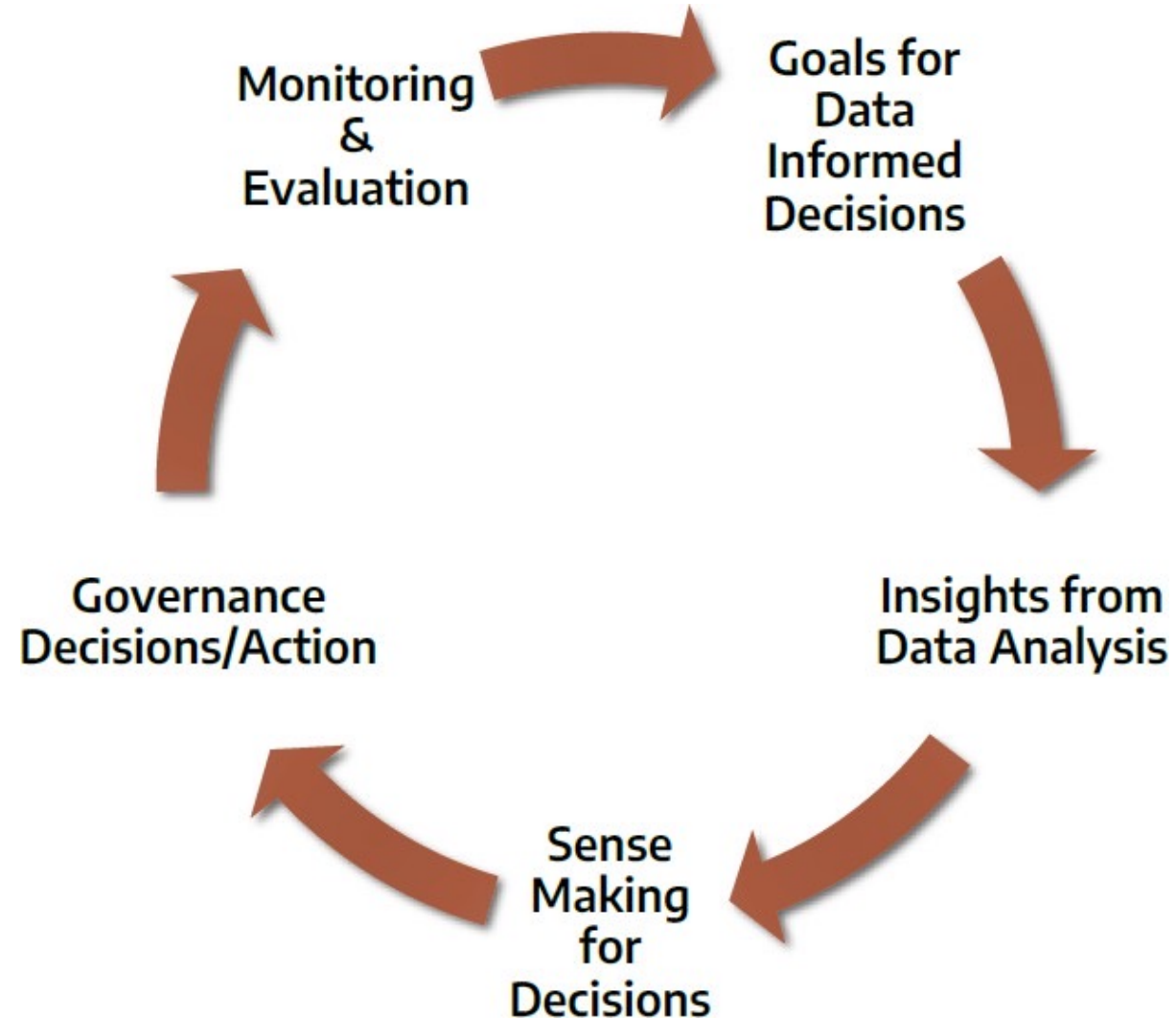
Why Data Matters in Governance



- From Oversight to Insight
 - Stewardship of public resources and public **accountability**
 - Mission impact-**accountability** for student outcomes
 - Strategic decision-making-ability to monitor leadership effectiveness & **accountability**

DIG is Dynamic Process In Trustee Decision-Making

DIG is a dynamic and iterative cycle.



Examples of Data Informed Governance

Program
Development

Student
Support

Resource
Allocation &
Reallocation

What Does It Mean to Measure What Matters?



- A Student Success Best Practice
 - Focus on **outcomes**, not just **activities**
 - Use a small, meaningful set of measures
 - Align data with mission and priorities



Outcomes vs. Activities

- **Understanding the Difference**
 - Activities:
 - Programs Offered
 - Services Delivered
 - Initiatives Launched
 - Outcomes:
 - Student progression
 - Credential completion
 - Transfer and employment success



Lagging vs. Leading Indicators

- Definitions
 - Lagging Indicators
 - Illustrate what has already happened
 - Leading Indicators
 - Signal future student success

Lagging & Leading Indicators

- Which of the following data elements would be considered a **leading** indicator of student success?
 - a. Graduation rate
 - b. Transfer rate
 - c. Gateway (Math & English) course completion
 - d. Licensure pass rate



Lagging vs. Leading Indicators

Other Examples

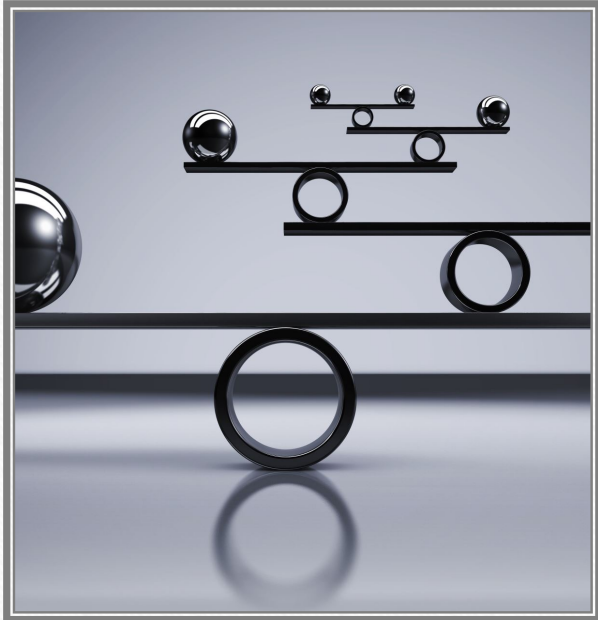
- Lagging

- Completion & graduation rates
- Transfer rates to 4-yr IHE's
- Job placement and earnings
- Credential attainment
- Licensure pass rates

- Leading

- Credit momentum (e.g., first-year credits earned)
- Gateway course success (e.g., math/English pass rates)
- Persistence from term to term
- FAFSA completion & early advising engagement
- Enrollment intensity (full-time vs. part-time)

Why Boards Need Both



- A Balance Between Data Elements Better Supports Student Success
 - Focusing on only one type of data limits understanding
 - Together, lagging and leading indicators create a fuller picture of student success
 - This balance keeps you, as Board members, strategic and forward-looking.

Best Practices for Board Data Use

1

Center Meeting
Agendas Around
Student Data

2

Keep the Data
Simple, Strategic,
and Consistent

3

Use Trend Data,
Not Snapshots

4

Disaggregate
Data

5

Ask Strategic
Questions

Data & Strategic Alignment

- Centering Meeting Agendas on Student Data
 - Allows for connecting measures to student success priorities
 - Data should reflect what the college says matters most for students
 - Alignment prevents competing priorities
 - Helps boards to stay mission-focused
 - Creates and fosters a culture of inquiry

KPI's Key Performance Indicators

KPI's are the Board's Student Success Scorecard

KPI's are a **prioritized small set** of agreed-upon measures, tied to strategic goals, rather than dozens of random measures

KPI's help Boards avoid data overload and provide a shared understanding of success

Establishing KPI's means boards will be able to review the same measures regularly



Seeing the Full Student Story

- Using trend data, not snapshots avoids over-reacting or focusing on short-term fluctuations
- One-year changes can be misleading
- Trends reveal whether progress is real and sustained or on the flipside if progress has stalled



Disaggregation of Student Data

- Why Averages Mislead
- Broken Down by Age, Income, Single-Parent Status, FTIC
- What Trustees Should Expect to See

Asking The Right Questions

- **Trustee-Level Strategic Data Questions**
 - Where are students gaining momentum?
Where are they getting stuck?
 - How does our college's data compare to state or national averages and trends?
 - Are current strategies improving outcomes?
 - How will this data impact our current funding?
 - What additional questions do these data points raise?

Asking The Right Questions



- Which question best reflects a **Board-level focus on student success?**
 - a. Why isn't this department meeting its target?
 - b. What system tracks this data?
 - c. What trends should we monitor to improve student outcomes?
 - d. How many staff meetings were held?



Sources of Student Data

- #1 Your President and College Staff
- Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
- Texas Workforce Commission
- Texas Education Agency
- TACC, TSC and CCATT
- IPEDS (Federal Database)
- US Department of Education

Quantitative and Qualitative Data

- Quantitative Data
 - Numerical, measurable, objective, focuses on quantities
 - Used to measure how many students received a C or above
- Qualitative Data
 - Descriptive, interpretive, subjective, focuses on qualities
 - Used to understand why students received a D or F

Common Qualitative Data Collection Methods

- *Interviews*
- *Focus Groups*
- *Observation*
- *Open-Ended Surveys/Questionnaires*



The Best of Both Worlds



- Consider Using Both
 - Often, using both (mixed methods) provides the most comprehensive understanding, combining objective numbers with rich context.

Key Takeaways



TRUSTEES DO NOT NEED
TO BE DATA EXPERTS



YOUR ROLE IS TO
STEWARD STUDENT
SUCCESS



DATA IS A MEANS, NOT
AN END



Thank You!

