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|  | **MASB Board of Education Governance Standards** |

SAMPLE LETTER TO THE EDITOR 1 FOR LOCAL DISTRICTS and ISDs

**It Takes Courage to Lead**

We find ourselves in one of the most volatile political environments of our lifetimes. Our elections and political arenas are filled with intensified rhetoric, name-calling, stark contrasts in ideas, refusal to compromise and most importantly, disrespect.

Isn’t it time we returned civility to elected public office? I believe it starts at the local level. That’s why we at (DISTRICT NAME) have adopted the Board of Education Governance Standards, developed *by* board members *for* board members through the Michigan Association of School Boards.

Not only do these Standards provide a shared, research-based framework for effective school board governance, they also raise the bar for board service. We have to do better for our kids. We must be disciplined in *our own* governance behaviors. We must respect our board colleagues enough to expect them to be disciplined in *their* governance behaviors. And we must have the courage to speak up when the performance of individuals or the board as a whole is not in alignment with the Standards.

This is the challenge we must overcome if we are to do what’s needed for the success of our children. Boards of education that adopt and live by these Standards are much more likely to positively impact student achievement. I implore my fellow board members from across the state to adopt these Standards, live by them and help them guide your decisionmaking at the board table.

Change only happens when we decide to stand up and make it happen. It starts with us. Isn’t it time we find the courage to lead and start returning civility back to public office?

More information can be found at miboardstandards.com.

*(PRESIDENT NAME)  
(SCHOOL DISTRICT)*

SAMPLE LETTER TO THE EDITOR 2 FOR LOCAL DISTRICTS and ISDs

**Everyone Needs to Improve**

It’s no coincidence that districts with high student achievement have boards of education that adhere to consistent standards and principles of governance, but even high-functioning boards of education have room for improvement.

Our community has high expectations for our school district. Teachers, administrators, superintendents and many others are held to high standards and measurements. Why are board members the exception? As board members, we always need to be striving to do better. We owe it to our communities and we owe it to our kids. Continuing the status quo is irresponsible, and it won’t lead to improved student achievement in Michigan.

So how do we improve? How do we grow and do better at the board table? To help enhance our effectiveness, we at (DISTRICT NAME) recently adopted the Board of Education Governance Standards developed *by* board members *for* board members through the Michigan Association of School Boards. The Standards provide a shared, research-based framework for effective school board governance. Not only do they define the principles that should affect board decisionmaking, they also identify the specific behaviors of school boards and school board members that contribute to positive outcomes for students. And they do so in simple terms so as to be easily understood by board members and the entire school district community.

We will hold ourselves accountable to these Standards at the board table, but we also ask that you hold us to them as well. It’s crucial that we all have a mutual understanding of the roles and responsibilities of board members, and the Standards to which we adhere.

We strongly encourage all boards of education to follow suit and adopt these Governance Standards. If we don’t stand up and start holding ourselves accountable, who will?

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*(PRESIDENT NAME)  
(SCHOOL DISTRICT)*