

**IV.C.4. The governing board is an independent, policy-making body that reflects the public interest in the institution’s educational quality. It advocates for and defends the institution and protects it from undue influence or political pressure. (ER 7)**

**Evidence of Meeting the Standard**

Members of the Board of Trustees are elected by the electorate in five designated trustee areas, as outlined in BP 2100, Board Elections (IV.C.4.01). They are an independent group of elected officials who represent the public’s interest to ensure educational quality at all three colleges of the District. A student board member is selected each year by the students from each of the three colleges, as detailed in BP 2105 Election of Student Member (IV.C.4.02). The board has the responsibility to advocate for and defend the District and the three colleges, while protecting the institutions from undue influence or political pressure. Current board members serve 4-year terms and elections are staggered to ensure continuity.

Several board policies and administrative procedures clearly state board organization, duties, and authority. BP 2200 Board Duties and Responsibilities, BP 2201 Board Participation in District and Community Activities, BP 2205 Delineation of System and Board Function, and BP 2430 Delegation of Authority to Chancellor provide the board with guidelines of their roles, responsibilities, and limits to their role in District operations (IV.C.4.03, IV.C.4.04, IV.C.4.05, IV.C.4.06).

BP 2710 Conflict of Interest, BP 2715 Board Code of Ethics/Standards of Practice, BP 2716 Political Activity, and BP 2717 Personal Use of Public/District Resources further clarify the roles of board members in their handling of District and personal business as related to the District’s educational quality ((IV.C.4.07, IV.C.4.08, IV.C.4.09, IV.C.4.10).

BP 2745 Evaluation and AP 2745 Board Evaluation provide opportunities for individual trustees to assess board performance through an annual evaluation to identify its strengths and areas in which it may improve its functioning (IV.C.4.11 and IV.C.4.12). Results, progress, and corrective actions in meeting established board performance goals are reviewed and discussed during the Board of Trustees Annual Strategic Planning Session (IV.C.4.13).

Public interest in the quality of education and District operations is provided through public comment at board meetings and through the board’s adherence to open meeting laws and principles. Minutes of meetings and live-stream recordings provide examples of public input and comments. Public comments at board meetings provide a diversity of public opinion to the board. The board uses [BoardDocs](#), a web-based governance recordkeeping software, to archive meeting records and [YouTube](#) to share board meeting recordings. The role of the board as an independent, policy-making body established in BP 2200 is affirmed in board review, development, and approval of new and revised policies.

**Analysis and Evaluation**

The manner in which the board is elected should ensure that the board is representative of the public throughout the District. The five election areas are unique and collectively cover the entirety of our county. This structure should provide balance so that the board is not

predominantly weighted towards any one geographical area and so that the diverse constituencies within the District are fairly represented. This geographically distributed approach has likewise effectively supported BP 2200 Board Duties and Responsibilities, which calls for the board to advocate for and defend the institution from undue influence and pressure by not concentrating representation from any one segment of the service area. Board members actively participate as advocates for the District and colleges in the community through professional, service, and community organizations.

However, trustees consistently take positions and advocate for specific groups or a college without representing District wide needs. During the last negotiation period with the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), trustees publicly supported AFT positions and voiced concerns regarding the District's position on various points and criticized the District negotiations team and chief negotiator during board meetings. Several trustees actively support AFT and other specific constituent positions or needs and use their comments during board meetings to pressure other trustees and influence operational decisions and actions. The trustees also bypassed operational and governance review of a college proposal to meet the specific interest of one college. These are examples of trustee practices that result in undue political pressure in and attempt to influence operational decisions that will benefit a specific constituent group or college without consideration of the broad direction and impact needed for the District as a whole. This is documented in the minutes of their meetings and live-streamed recordings.

#### **Evidence**

- IV.C.4.01 [BP 2100 Board Elections](#)
- IV.C.4.02 [BP 2105 Election of Student Member](#)
- IV.C.4.03 [BP 2200 Board Duties and Responsibilities](#)
- IV.C.4.04 [BP 2201 Board Participation in District and Community Activities](#)
- IV.C.4.05 [BP 2205 Delineation of System and Board Function](#)
- IV.C.4.06 [BP 2430 Delegation of Authority to Chancellor](#)
- IV.C.4.07 [BP 2710 Conflict of Interest](#)
- IV.C.4.08 [BP 2715 Board Code of Ethics/Standards of Practice](#)
- IV.C.4.09 [BP 2716 Political Activity](#)
- IV.C.4.10 [BP 2717 Personal Use of Public/District Resources](#)
- IV.C.4.11 [BP 2745 Evaluation](#)
- IV.C.4.12 [AP 2745 Board Evaluation](#)
- IV.C.4.13 [Board of Trustees Annual Strategic Planning Session July 10, 2021](#) [Are these referring to the minutes?]

#### **POSSIBLE SOURCES OF EVIDENCE:**

Board policy or bylaws that address the elements contained in this Standard;

Standard IV.C: Review Criteria and Possible Sources of Evidence 84  
And/or other documents that demonstrate the institution is aligned with this Standard.

**REVIEW CRITERIA:**

- The governing board is appropriately representative of the public interest and lacks conflict of interest.
- The composition of the governing board reflects public interest in the institution.

**Notes for discussion—Academic Senate:**

Based on the narrative above, does this meet the standard?

What suggestions, if any, do you have for how to improve this standard?