

Chapter 7: Evaluating Board Effectiveness

Successful boards pay attention to the process of how they operate and hold themselves accountable for good performance. Take time every year to formally evaluate board performance. The purpose of the evaluation is not to find fault with board members or the full board, but to identify strengths and areas for improvement. The board evaluation should be followed with a plan to improve.

There are three assessments that follow, two for you as an individual board member and one to assess the board as a whole. Feel free to photocopy and use these assessments.

Individual Library Board Member Assessment (for individual use and typically not shared with others)

Please check the box for those statements you are in total agreement with.

- 1. I am familiar with the library's mission statement and plan of service.
- 2. I am familiar with laws that apply to libraries.
- 3. I am familiar with the board's bylaws and library policies.
- 4. I attend board meetings regularly.
- 5. I am available to serve on committees as needed.
- 6. I come to meetings having already read the information relevant to that meeting.
- 7. I understand and am comfortable with the board's decision-making process.
- 8. I willingly abide by majority board decisions and support them publicly.
- 9. I treat other board members with respect and listen openly to their opinions.
- 10. I understand and respect the different roles/duties of the library director and board.
- 11. I route my requests of staff through the library director.
- 12. I encourage and support the library director in achieving our organization's goals.
- 13. I visit my library frequently enough to be familiar with services and to identify potential need.
- 14. I am a member of a civic organization.
- 15. I am a library advocate to civic groups and community organizations.
- 16. I keep abreast of legislation and the impact it has on the library community.
- 17. I have established a relationship with my local and state representatives and discuss library issues with them advocating for their support.
- 18. I belong to a state or national library organization.
- 19. I have read state or national library organization journals over the past six months.
- 20. I have attended at least two library events in the last year.

(If each checked box represents 5 points – all boxes checked would equal 100.)

Library Board Assessment

(Done individually and discussed as a board)

Instructions: Rank the following with 5 being “most definitely” and 1 being “no/never”

	5	4	3	2	1
1. The board has a method in place for the recruitment and recommendation of trustees for open positions.					
2. The board has a method in place for new board member orientation and ongoing board member training.					
3. The board stays abreast of the financial status of the library and its funding sources.					
4. The board sets the direction for the library through planning.					
5. The board has adopted a mission statement for the library and uses it to drive planning choices.					
6. The board reviews and adopts the budget.					
7. The board adopts the budget after the annual planning is complete.					
8. The board ensures that the budget covers goals and objectives set during the planning process.					
9. The board evaluates the library director annually based on the success of set goals and/or expectations.					
10. The board feels free to communicate problems to the director in a timely manner.					
11. The board requires regular written updates from the director on progress toward the annual plan and goals.					
12. The board is familiar with state and federal laws governing libraries.					
13. The board has established bylaws to oversee its governance.					
14. The board has established clear policies to govern and guide library operations.					
15. The board continually reviews and updates the library’s policies.					
16. The board pays more attention to the ends than the means – to <i>what</i> will be accomplished versus <i>how</i> it will be done.					
17. The board safeguards the public’s First Amendment and Intellectual Freedom rights by protecting freedom of access, while also being open to the public’s comments.					
18. The board is aware of patron privacy protections under the Iowa Code and ensures that its policies are consistent with the law.					
19. The board is representative of the community it serves.					
20. The board is politically active, advocating for libraries in the public policy arena.					
21. The board effectively represents the library to the community.					
22. The board annually assesses its own performance.					
23. The board receives information needed to make informed decisions in a timely manner.					
24. The board allows time at each meeting for discussion of emerging issues and trends.					
25. The board encourages open discussion and expression of dissenting opinions during board meetings.					

26. The board speaks with one voice after a vote is taken.					
27. The board recognizes and thanks staff and volunteers for their accomplishments.					
28. The board projects a positive internal image.					
29. The board projects a positive external image.					

If the Board has standing committees:

31. The board is effective in using its committee structure to accomplish its work.					
32. The board has established, clear, written guidelines for committees.					

In which of the major categories above does our board show real strengths? In which of the major categories above does our board need improvement?

Self-Assessment and Board Assessment based on material created by Douglas County (CO) libraries in conjunction with Arapahoe Library District, www.DouglasCountyLibraries.org, 2013.

Checklist for Tech Savvy Trustees

(for individual board members)

	Yes	No	Not Yet
I have email at home			
I have a personal Facebook account			
I have a personal Twitter account			
I use a laptop, tablet, or iPad			
I have an have e-book reader and use the library's e-book service			
I use a Smart Phone			
I have attended a library-related webinar this year			
I have attended ISLOC in past years (Iowa Small Libraries Online Conference)			
I know the library's website address			
I know Iowa Library Services' website address			
My library provides wireless Internet access			
My library participates in the E-Rate Program (and I can define E-Rate)			
My library subscribes to EBSCOHost for the community (and I can define EBSCO)			
My library provides Learning Express for the community (and I can define Learning Express)			

“Shifting Sands: A Changing Library Landscape”
 “Toward Tech Savvy Trustees”
 Bonnie McKewon