



2026 ASBA BOARD OF EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP

Recognizing school boards whose work, dedication, and ethical service have made a positive impact on the students in their district

Applications due October 19.



2026 (SY 26-27)

ASBA School Board of Excellence in Leadership Award

This award seeks to recognize school boards whose work, dedication, and ethical service have had a positive impact on students in their districts. Districts will be chosen based on evidence from each of the following eight (8) criteria:

1. Focuses on and demonstrates support for educational performance and student achievement
2. Supports educational improvement projects and school transformation initiatives
3. Functions as a policy-making body with adherence to adopted policies
4. Demonstrates commitment to a code of ethics
5. Maintains harmonious and supportive relationships among members of the board and with the superintendent
6. Supports and participates in public relations efforts, including community awareness
7. Participates in ASBA workshops and performance improvement programs
8. Provides oversight for district finances and budget that support continuous improvement by making decisions and taking actions that are consistent with the district's strategic plan (vision, mission, and goals) and policies

Two awards may be bestowed each year:

- 1 school district with student enrollment below 1,500
- 1 school district with student enrollment above 1,500

Each award will be based upon a board's performance over the school year immediately prior to the year in which the award is granted. The criteria are weighted to place greater emphasis on student performance, achievement, and growth.

Procedures

Any current public school district superintendent or board member may nominate his/her school board by collecting and submitting data supporting the criteria.

Materials submitted shall adhere to the following guidelines:

1. All entries must be submitted **electronically** using the following link:
<https://bit.ly/asbaboe26>
2. Total number of pages shall not exceed 60, 8.5 x 11-inch pages.
3. No audiovisual materials, such as videotapes or slides, will be accepted.



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Calendar for Submissions/Selection

- October 19 – Deadline for district submissions to ASBA
- November 13 – ASBA Awards Committee selects winning boards
- December 9 – 11, 2026 ASBA Annual Conference – ASBA School Board of Excellence Award winner(s) named and recognized December 11, 2026.

Once the submission deadline has passed, the ASBA Board Development Director will arrange for a “blind” assessment of district submissions by an Awards Committee of six (6) ASBA board members who will make the final determination of winners.

- No member of the committee may be from a school whose board is being considered.
- No board may repeat as an ASBA School Board of Excellence Award winner more than once every 5 years.
- Named members of the winning boards will be those serving at the time the nomination was submitted for consideration.

Criteria for Selection

The following criteria serve as the basis for selection of the ASBA School Board of Excellence Award. Each criterion is followed by examples of documentation and materials that boards may submit as evidence of their role in supporting that criterion. This is a suggested list only and, therefore, may be expanded or items substituted to include other documentation and materials as deemed relevant and appropriate. The number in parentheses following each criterion indicates the maximum possible points for that criterion. The criteria are weighted to place greater emphasis on student performance, achievement, and growth.

1. **Focuses on and demonstrates support for educational performance (40)**

- A copy of your district's most current state accountability ratings and a copy of your district's most current Arkansas Academic Performance Reports, along with any other descriptive data that profiles student performance, including gains in student performance. Is your work in the boardroom transferring to achievement in the classroom?
- Evidence of board support for programs that contribute to high performance at district and campus levels. What data is used to support or not support programs?
- Examples of recognition received for educational performance
- Trends in student performance and evidence of support for efforts directed at correcting deficiencies in student performance



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2. Support for educational improvement projects and school transformation initiatives (40)

- Evidence of the strategic planning process and its outcome
- Approval of long-range plans for curriculum design and revisions, and other phases of the academic program
- Support for innovative programs initiated by the district
- Evidence of student engagement and exemplary student performance
- Individual board member support for the school district and dedication to duty
- Support for bond elections, facility planning, and other district improvement plans
- Support of potentially controversial actions when those actions are clearly to the benefit of the district and its children

3. Functions as a policy-making body with adherence to adopted policies (30)

- Policies established or revised by the board in the last two years
- Evaluation time and support allowed for new board policies prior to making judgments and alterations
- Active school board support for the superintendent and other school personnel in carrying out policies
- Input from professional staff and/or patrons into the policy-making process
- Formal procedures for initiating, adopting, or changing board policies
- Frequency of policy review, including the last date of review and revision
- Procedure for updating and maintaining the policy book
- Board decisions based on policy statements that have been implemented when such action was opposed by others
- Availability of board policies to district personnel and the community

4. Commitment to a code of ethics (20)

- Copy of the board's code of ethics
- Evidence of ethical practices adhered to in dealing with the professional staff, both collectively and individually
- Evidence of ethical considerations in dealing with professional contracts, grievances, and dismissal procedures
- Examples of placing dedication to the school system above special favors and policy exceptions
- Demonstrations of commitment on the part of each board member to the code of ethics adopted by the board of directors of the ASBA (<https://5il.co/uhcg>), or a code of ethics developed and adopted by the board itself



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5. **Maintenance of harmonious and supportive relationships among board members and with the superintendent (20)**
 - Statements from individual board members and news media personnel testifying to the harmonious working relationship among board members and between and with the superintendent
 - Indications of unified action by the board, including evidence of effective resolution of differences
6. **Public relations efforts, including community awareness (20)**
 - Copies of newsletters or news clippings illustrating the school district's efforts to convey information on procedure and policy to the community
 - Samples of publications aimed at informing the community about the board and the district, as well as actions affecting local public schools
 - Evidence of efforts to obtain community input and engagement in decision-making
7. **Participation in ASBA workshops and performance improvement programs (20)**
 - Association membership and participation in ASBA
 - Encouragement of professional staff to participate in activities designed to improve performance
 - Specific workshops, conventions, or other ASBA training programs board members have attended in recent years, including evidence of completion of required board member training
 - Support of professional development opportunities for the superintendent.
8. **Provides oversight for district finances and budget that support continuous improvement (10)**
 - Making decisions and taking actions that are consistent with the district's strategic plan (vision, mission, & goals) and policies
 - Statement showing total taxable base of district; district millage rate; average expenditure per child in the district; adequacy of facilities, educational programs, and employee salaries and benefits; and efforts being made to finance schools
 - Evidence of efficient business management practices
 - Trends indicating financial support for educational programs

QUESTIONS?

If you have questions regarding the ASBA School Board of Excellence in Leadership Award or the application process, please contact Tammie Reitenger, ASBA Deputy Executive Director / Board Development Director, at 501-492-4822 or via email at treitenger@arsba.org.



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ARKANSAS SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

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Individual District Scoring Sheet

District: _____

Please score each category based on the 8 criteria. Possible points are in parentheses.

	Points Possible	Points Awarded
1. The board's support for educational performance	40	
2. Support for educational improvement projects	40	
3. Functions as a policy-making body with adherence to adopted policies	30	
4. Commitment to a code of ethics	20	
5. Maintenance of harmonious and supportive relationships among members of the board and the superintendent	20	
6. Public relations efforts, including community awareness	20	
7. Participation in workshops and other performance improvement programs	20	
8. Provide oversight for district finances and budget that support continuous improvement	10	

Total Score _____