

# "GOVERNANCE ROLES FOR BOCES BOARD MEMBERS"

# Presentation by the Colorado BOCES Association

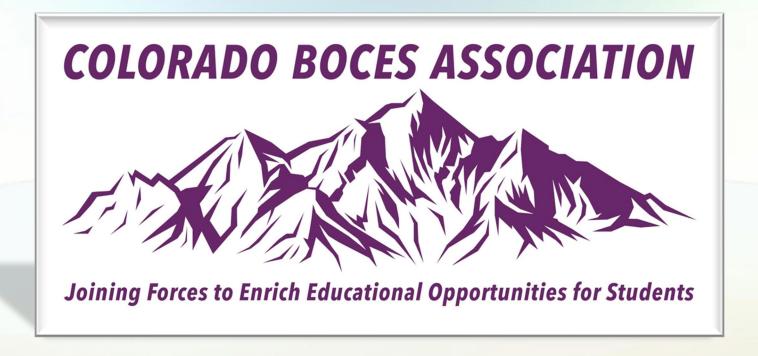
## 85th Annual CASB Convention The Broadmoor Hotel Colorado Springs, Colorado December 11, 2025

### **OUTCOMES FOR THE SESSION:**

- Get to know who is in the room
- Review what a BOCES is
- Talk about traits of an effective BOCES Board Member
- Discuss Real BOCES Issues
- Do Q and A's as we go

### **Session Topics**

- Statutory Role of a BOCES Governing Board
- Creation of a BOCES and Appointment of BOCES Board Members
- BOCES Board Meetings Number of Meetings; Methods for Conducting Meetings; Officers, etc.
- Selection, Employment and Evaluation of the Chief Executive Officer
- Duties and Powers of a Board of Cooperative Educational Services
- Corporate Status of Boards of Cooperative Educational Services
- Financing, Budgeting and Accounting
- Personnel Employment of Staff
- Discuss Some Real BOCES Scenarios and Share Solutions



# **BOCES Pre-Assessment**

BOCES receives 100% of its funding from State and Federal funds?

**BOCES** are unique to Colorado?

BOCES can have accreditation contracts with the state to operate schools?

A school district can belong to more than one BOCES?

# 5. What year was the BOCES law written?

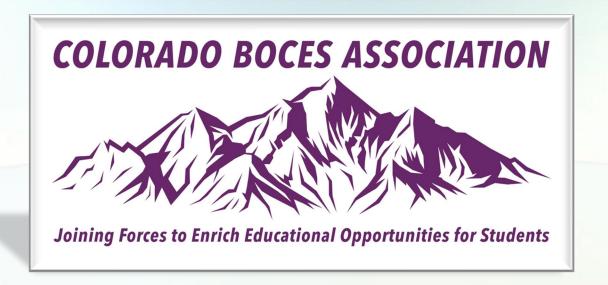
# 6. What year did the state's first special education law pass?

7. What is the smallest number of districts that currently form a BOCES?

# 8. Currently, how many BOCES operate in Colorado?

## **BONUS Question –**

9. What does the letter "C" in BOCES stand for?



# What is a BOCES?

### **Board Of Cooperative Educational Services**

- An intermediate/regional service agency created by State Legislation (CRS 22-5-101) in 1965 to provide services to member districts.
- There are 21 BOCES in the state of Colorado, serving 174 school districts
  - Adams County
  - Centennial BOCES
  - Colorado River BOCES
  - East Central BOCES
  - **Education reEnvisioned BOCES**
  - Expeditionary BOCES
  - Front Range BOCES
  - Grand Valley BOCES
  - Mountain BOCES
  - Blue Sky BOCES
  - Northeast BOCES

- Northwest BOCES
- Pikes Peak BOCES
- Rio Blanco BOCES
- > San Juan BOCES
- San Luis Valley BOCES
- > Santa Fe Trail BOCES
- South Central BOCES
- > Southeastern BOCES
- > Uncompaghre BOCES
- Ute Pass BOCES

### **Board Of Cooperative Educational Services**

- Two or more school districts <u>or</u> one or more school districts and a higher education institution may form a BOCES
- Administrative Units (AU) were created in 1973 under the Exceptional Children's Educational Act (ECEA)
- BOCES can be an AU not all BOCES are AU's

# Administrative Unit Definition (ECEA Rules 2.02)

- School District
- BOCES
- State Charter School Institute
- Duties of an Administrative Unit
  - ✓ Provide SPED services
  - **✓** Responsible for administering rules
  - √ Approved by CDE

# **AU Qualifications (ECEA Rules 3.01)**

- Sufficient size & geographic makeup
- Fulfill ECEA obligations and rules
- Effective & Efficient

#### **BOCES Governance**

- Governed by a Board of Directors which determines all BOCES policies and has the same duties as a local school district board of education.
- Each member district appoints one or more members of its board to the BOCES Board of Directors.

## **BOCES Board Responsibilities:**

- Establish BOCES policies and goals
- Approve the BOCES budget and oversee financial management of the BOCES
- Employ an Executive Director, delegate administrative authority to him/her and evaluate his/her performance
- Approve personnel actions for the BOCES staff
- Represent individual districts in BOCES collaboration
- Approve all contracts with organizations outside the BOCES

# Superintendents' Advisory Council (SAC)

- Superintendents' Advisory Council (SAC) provides input on BOCES programs and services
- Identifies needs based on local district circumstances
- Collaborate to advise the Executive Director and the Board regarding BOCES services and initiatives
- Previews items for the BOCES Board and makes recommendations

#### **BOCES Services**

- Authorization for services in state statute (CRS 22-5-118)
- Determination of services by member districts

## **Examples of Services Provided by BOCES**

| Exceptional Student Services       | AU + | Special Purpose<br>Collaborative | = Full Service BOCES |
|------------------------------------|------|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| Professional Development           |      | Special Purpose<br>Collaborative |                      |
| Specialized Instructional Programs |      | Special Purpose<br>Collaborative |                      |
| Instructional Support Services     |      |                                  |                      |
| <b>Technology Support Services</b> |      |                                  |                      |
| Business Support Services          |      | Special Purpose Collaborative    |                      |

### **BOCES Funding**

- Program Assessments
- Cost of Services Share
- \$3.3 million Annual Funding (HB 12-1345) as amended (allocated to the 21 BOCES)
- Categorical State and Federal Funding (Designated Programs)
- Grants
- Contract Fees
- District Membership Fee / Assessments

#### **Effective Board Member**

- stanch advocate of a high quality education
- uphold and enforce all laws, rules, and regulations pertaining to public school districts and BOCES
- strive to help create schools which meet the individual educational needs of all children regardless of their ability, race, creed, gender, physical condition or social standing
- work to help community understand the importance of proper support for public education
- arrive at conclusions only after discussing all aspects of the issues
- respect the opinions of fellow board members

#### **Effective Board Member**

- recognize that authority rests only with the whole board assembled in a meeting
- confine my board action to policy-making, superintendent/BOCES Executive
   Director appraisal and employment, and assisting administration with long-range planning
- recognize that a board member's responsibility is not to "run the schools" but to see that schools are well-run through effective policies
- maintain and insist upon high standards of conduct
- support board actions and policies
- demonstrate honesty, sincerity and critical thinking skills
- refer complaints through the proper "chain of command"
- maintain a sense of humor

#### **Great Governance Teams**

- Lead with a clear, motivating, focused purpose
- Focus precious time and energy on the "wildly important"
- Share and constantly express bedrock/core values
- Communicate/relate constantly and well
- Regularly sharpen the work of team effectiveness

#### **Great Governance Teams**

- Guide the system through the lead executive
- Engage strategic shareholders/constituents regularly
- Measure what matters
- Celebrate those making excellence happen
- Strategically model and develop fellow board members

1. Willingness to commit time to the position.

There should be a willingness to read educational materials (at least board meeting materials) and attend meetings, workshops, and retreats. It is not a 4 hour a month position.

2. Focus on student achievement.

School Board / BOCES Board Members need to look at the big picture of a school district and/or BOCES.

- They are to give overall direction, guidance and support for the district.
- They see no individual students but do everything for the benefit of the whole.
- A Board member and the Board is only a Board with authority when seated.
   Other times they are individual citizens in a community who are elected to come together every so often to conduct the business of the District/BOCES. Do not abuse the role by playing administrator at other times.

- A board has one employee that they deal with, the superintendent/BOCES
   Executive Director. Hire well, give good clear guidance and expectations, and
   let your people do their work. If there seems to be a problem, ask your
   superintendent/BOCES Executive Director to look into it and get back to the
   Board.
- Have a vision and clear goals for your districts/BOCES and communicate these clearly to your superintendent/BOCES Executive Director.
- Put some time and effort into it or let someone who has the time and desire to devote the time to the position have a turn.

• Be a team member with your administration. Take care of them and let them know you care. Good superintendents/BOCES Executive Directors and administrators are difficult to find and get "trained" into your local community. Continuity of your administrative leadership is so very important, and being a superintendent/principal/BOCES Executive Director is not an easy job.

- Board Members need to grow in their position. Take time to learn your district/BOCES. Go to the Regional and State conferences. Think about the future of the students in your school district/BOCES, 20-30 years down the road. Not the way it was when you were in school.
- Board members need to study the issues, make the best, quality decisions they can based on the facts that they are privy to, and then support the Board decisions regardless of their individual point of view. They are not individuals all tugging their own way, they are a Board.

- Good School Board/BOCES Board members set clear goals and expectations for their superintendent. This allows for a quality relationship to develop between the Board and the administration. The superintendent/BOCES Executive Director can then concentrate on communicating the direction of the district/BOCES to the staff and community.
- Often Board members and superintendents/BOCES Executive Directors get off in the rough because the Board does not truly let their administrator know what they want, then they often want it to be the superintendent's/BOCES Executive Director's fault when things do not go as they wanted.

#### **BOCES Scenarios:**

- Your BOCES is dealing with the same budget woes as the rest of the state. How do you work together to effectively assist the BOCES with their budget decisions while continuing to meet the needs of all districts?
- Your BOCES is the AU for your region. You have one district that is in conflict with the other districts on how special education students should be served and what the costs of those services should be. How do you work to resolve the special education issues of the single district while still keeping the needs of the whole region/BOCES in mind?

#### **BOCES Scenarios:**

- Each BOCES can provide services as requested by their member districts in a cooperative manner. You have an Executive Director that is reluctant to expand services and create new opportunities for cooperative programs. How do you as a Board approach this issue with your Executive Director and what solutions might you suggest?
- Be Creative! Come up with your own real life scenario as a group and be prepared to share this scenario with the group and your ideas to resolve it.

#### **BOCES Scenarios:**

Share your thoughts, Issues and solutions with the whole group

FINAL THOUGHTS?

### **QUESTIONS AND ANSWER SESSION**

You ask the question, if we do not know the answer, we will try to help you find it.

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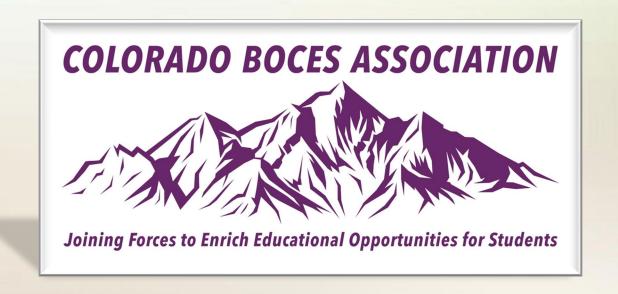
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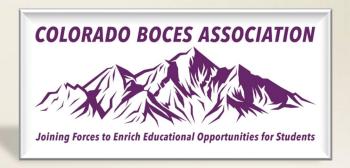
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