



November 2005

Dear School Board Member:

At the recent PSBA annual conference, the association unveiled its Standards for Effective School Governance and a revised Code of Conduct for Members of Pennsylvania School Boards. These statements are designed to give Pennsylvania's 4,509 school board directors specific guidance on providing the essential leadership required for highly effective schools. A complete copy of the standards and revised code of conduct is enclosed.

As you well know, school directors bear much of the responsibility for producing citizens with the intellectual, social and ethical skills necessary to contribute successfully to the advancement of a free society. When school board members commit to the highest ideals of excellence in school governance, they substantially improve the operations of their school district and elevate the role public education plays in developing future citizens. How well schools are governed in demanding times is directly related to student achievement and school performance.

The effort to develop these standards for effective school leadership and the revision of PSBA's code of conduct is intended to provide school board members with specific guidance on performance expectations for highly effective public schools. The adopted standards reflect the best practices in school governance as identified in an extensive body of research as well as through input from the association's membership.

These standards and code of conduct were developed to provide direction for school directors regarding how school boards should function in an era of unprecedented change and growing expectations for public schools. Even more importantly, we wanted to provide school boards with the tools they need to implement them. **The association has incorporated the standards and code of conduct into the draft policies we prepare for school boards as a means of officially adopting these statements. We also suggest that each school board act annually, at its organization meeting in December or during School Director Recognition Month in January, to reaffirm the standards and code of conduct.** These are voluntary actions; there is no law requiring you to do so. However, by publicly committing to adhere to these standards and code of conduct, you will be sending an important message about your board's commitment to effective governance.

For more information on the Standards for Effective School Governance and the revised Code of Conduct for Members of Pennsylvania School Boards, please visit the PSBA Web site at www.psba.org. If you have questions regarding the standards or the code, please contact Curt Rose, assistant executive director for school board and management services, by telephone at (717) 506-2450, ext. 3359, or by e-mail at curt.rose@psba.org.

The standards and code of conduct will influence the efforts of Pennsylvania school boards and PSBA. This is one of the most significant initiatives undertaken by the association in many years, and we believe it can shape the larger public dialogue about school governance across the commonwealth and nationally. Your support is critical to the success of this effort. We welcome your comments as well as your suggestions about other activities the association can take to strengthen school governance.

Sincerely,

Thomas J. Gentzel
Executive Director

c: Chief School Administrator
Secretary, Board of School Directors