



## HOW DOES YOUR DISTRICT BOARD MEASURE UP?

Your district board has been entrusted with a vital public responsibility – to effectively manage the many risks that are involved with the operation of your special district.

Dedicated board members have reasons to be concerned about how well they are performing as risk managers.

SDIS shares those concerns and provides programs and consulting services designed to help member districts monitor and improve their risk management capabilities. The Board Practices Assessment (BPA) is a new consulting tool we are offering to show district boards how they rate in six key areas of risk management.

The BPA reveals how a board performs in such areas as communications, customer relations, personnel, operations, etc. Results of the BPA underscore the significant link between a board's performance and their district's risk management experience. Simply put, good board practices lead to sound risk management.



**SDIS**  
SPECIAL DISTRICTS  
INSURANCE SERVICES

**Special District Board Practices Assessment**

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## Special District Board Practices Assessment

*Helping members effectively manage risks involved with the operation of special districts*

## BOARD PRACTICES ASSESSMENT

### Frequently Asked Questions

**Q: What is the purpose of the Board Practices Assessment (BPA)?**

A: The BPA provides a format for a facilitated discussion among board members about their governance practices and how well they “measure up”. By assessing its strengths and weaknesses in key performance areas, the board can discover ways to improve the district’s outcomes.

**Q: What does the BPA cover?**

A: The BPA assesses board practices in six key performance areas that often determine whether the district will successfully achieve its outcomes. The practices involve regulatory, fiscal, customer service, personnel, and general management responsibilities that are necessary components of being a special district board.

**Q: Why does the BPA require a facilitated discussion?**

A: Individual board members often have different perspectives and levels of expertise. A facilitated discussion draws on the insight and knowledge of all members for a consensus-based understanding and analysis of their board’s governance practices.

**Q: SDIS has a Best Practices checklist; why offer another tool?**

A: SDIS uses the checklist to encourage and document compliance with industry-wide best practices. Compliance is assessed on the basis of simple yes/no responses that are often provided by a board representative who may not be as well-informed or insightful as the full board. The BPA is designed to reflect a consensus of the views and expertise of all board members to produce a more comprehensive assessment.

**Q: Our district seems to be functioning pretty well; how would we benefit from using the BPA?**

A: Boards generally believe they are functioning pretty well and in fact, they probably are. But how do they know? What do they use as indicators of “functioning well” and are those the right indicators? Sometimes it takes a serious setback to prompt a board to improve its practices, after the damage has been done. The BPA offers the advantage of foresight by enabling a board to identify weaknesses in its governance practices that can be corrected before they lead to failure.

**Q: After our board completes the BPA, then what?**

A: With a consensus-based assessment, a board is well-positioned to determine the actions needed to fortify strengths and correct weaknesses in its practices. The actions may be relatively easy to

implement, such as adopting a new policy or training for new skills. Or the actions may be more involved – for example, restructuring the organization or improving the budgeting process. In either case, actions implemented will be based on relevant information and thoughtful analysis as a result of completing the BPA.

SDIS is offering the BPA to member districts as an option for earning insurance contribution discounts and including it in their eight hours of free consulting time. District boards that complete the BPA will be awarded a 2% discount credit the following year on their SDIS property/casualty contributions.

### Schedule an Assessment

To schedule the BPA for your board or for more information, contact Consulting Services Administrator George Dunkel at 503-906-7241 (office), 503-369-2050 (cell), or [gdunkel@sdao.com](mailto:gdunkel@sdao.com).