

# Effectiveness of School Boards in Setting Strategic Direction and Its Effect on Students' Achievement in Selected Counties of the North Rift, Kenya

Florence Chesseret, John Mugun Boit, Catherine Kiprop

Department of Educational Management and Policy Studies, School of Education, Moi University, Eldoret, Kenya  
Email: fchesseret@gmail.com

**How to cite this paper:** Chesseret, F., Boit, J. M., & Kiprop, C. (2024). Effectiveness of School Boards in Setting Strategic Direction and Its Effect on Students' Achievement in Selected Counties of the North Rift, Kenya. *Creative Education*, 15, 1677-1691.  
<https://doi.org/10.4236/ce.2024.158101>

**Received:** July 1, 2024

**Accepted:** August 11, 2024

**Published:** August 14, 2024

Copyright © 2024 by author(s) and Scientific Research Publishing Inc.  
This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0).  
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>



Open Access

## Abstract

School boards have a definitive role in school outcomes. The Boards of Management (BOM) in Kenya exist to oversee the provision of quality education in schools but their effectiveness has been questioned due to the persistent country-wide problem of low performance in national examinations. The purpose of this study was to determine the extent of school boards' effectiveness in offering strategic direction and its influence in students' academic achievement in selected secondary schools in Kenya. Convergent parallel mixed methods research design was employed for this study. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire and interview schedule. We used multi-stage sampling technique to draw a sample of 358 teachers and 12 principals from selected public secondary schools in Uasin Gishu, Elgeyo Marakwet and Nandi counties in North Rift of Kenya. Hierarchical regression was used to analyze the data and test the hypothesis while thematic analysis was used to analyze the qualitative data. The study found that BOM effectiveness in setting the strategic direction ( $\beta = 0.325$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), is a predictor of students' academic performance. It also found that school boards are perceived to be effective in setting the strategic direction of schools. The study concludes that the school board role of setting the strategic direction in schools is vital as it influences students' academic performance. The study recommends strengthening BOMs in secondary schools to bolster student success and improve overall educational outcomes. These findings have implications for policy and practice, highlighting the need for targeted interventions aimed at promoting effective BOM governance structures in secondary schools.

## Keywords

Strategic Direction, School Board Effectiveness, Secondary School Education

## 1. Introduction

Board effectiveness has been defined as “the board’s ability to effectively perform its control and service tasks” (Heeskerk, 2021) cited in Loh, Unda, Gong, & Benati (2021). It is seen as the capacity of the board to succeed in creating a desired outcome.

To have an effective board equates posting improved school outputs (World Bank, 2018). Research has highlighted the qualities of an effective school management as; to communicate clearly challenges encountered and offer definitive insight on how to overcome them, channel human and economic resources towards a common goal and build the necessary networks for their execution, and resolve emerging problems that affect their school with local solutions (World Bank, 2018).

Effective school boards are accessible, visible, and publicly accountable in their undertakings and use of finances. They operate within an aligned set of policies and functions in accordance to government regulations to Wing Ng (2013).

School boards should be “in step” with the requirements and goals of the local community so that they can be in a position to interpret local information in the best possible manner and make contextualized and informed decisions that uphold school-based initiatives (Newton & da Costa, 2016).

Strategic effectiveness has been defined as ... “the degree to which school leadership is successful in identifying long-term or overall aims and interests while having the resources and focus to achieve them.” (Baker, Campbell, & Ostroff, 2015). Such boards are not only good at pin pointing specific targets to be achieved, but also the ability to master the requisite resources and the persistence to pursue the goals to their attainment.

The board’s participation in the formulation of strategy ought to be a consistent process rather than a variable event, not instigated by an emergency, but rather school boards should relentlessly examine and monitor the organization’s resource allocation processes so as to assist it adapt to the changes in the environment. They should also facilitate regular conversations with the institution’s stakeholders so as to harmonize any discrepancies, monitor the progress of implementation and so offer a meaningful contribution to organizational effectiveness (Brauer & Schmidt, 2007).

Through setting the strategic direction, the school management is to be able to confront the persistent changes in the school’s environment that present both problems and prospects. The result is increased competition which requires that institutions effectively situate themselves to create a viable competitive gain. Through strategic planning, institutions need to not only set high ambitions for themselves but also attend strongly to their implementation. Through the process of strategic planning, all the matters about the school can be deliberately

dealt with (Schlebusch & Mokhatle, 2016).

Strategic planning confers numerous benefits to the practicing institution including; the achievement of clarity of future direction, the ability to develop priorities, the ability to deal effectively with rapidly changing circumstances, expertise in developing and working as teams, the ability to solve major organizational problems, and to improve organization performance (Bryson, 2011).

Academic performance has been conceptualized as an amorphous and broad term that includes a wide range of scholarly outcomes from attaining a degree to development morally (York, Gibson, & Rankin, 2019). According to Narad & Abdulah (2016), it is the knowledge acquired and evaluated by a teacher and/or goals, set by the teachers and learners for realization within a specified period and measured in terms of continuous assessment or examination results. Lamas (2015) echoes them on the view that academic performance is a collaborative outcome that results from student learning and the teachers' teaching, which is the total of what has been learned through the educative process.

Academic performance has to do with the degree of knowledge acquisition in a field or subject against the norm measured by grades (Torrez & Rodriguez (2006), as cited in Lamas (2015). When a student is motivated to attain a personal target, an interest in the subject area develops and learning takes on a personal significance to the learner. The learner then interacts with the taught content and relates the concepts with the knowledge and experiences acquired previously. This mode of study is thought to achieve the best academic performance (ibid).

Of all the various categories of academic achievement, academic performance is top in the enormity of significance accorded it, trailed by knowledge and skill acquisition (York et al., 2019; Singh, Malik, & Singh, 2016). They define academic performance as capturing a student's capacity to meet performance standards and grades are used to gauge whether learning objectives and acquisition of skills and competencies were met. It is meant to represent academic ability.

Grades directly convey a person's performance and are the most common measure of academic performance (Lamas, 2015). Student's academic performance is a matter of significant disquiet to learners, teachers, and the authorities in several nations' world over due to the economic and social developments associated with it (Ali, Jusof, Ali, Mokhtar, & Salamat, 2009).

### 1.1. Statement of the Problem

In Kenya, Boards of Management (BOMs) are responsible for overseeing the management schools and ensuring quality education output, as mandated by the Basic Education Act No. 13 of 2014. Despite having frameworks and policies in place to direct how the boards should function and the allocation of significant amount of resources, concerns persist about the low academic performance in secondary schools, as seen in the consistently low scores in national examinations. Given the important role BOM's play in schools, this study hopes to fill this gap by assessing the extent of BOM effectiveness in setting the school strate-

gic direction and students' academic performance in selected counties in the North Rift of Kenya.

### 1.2. Research Objective

To determine the extent of BOM effectiveness in setting the strategic direction and its influence on student performance in selected counties of North Rift region of Kenya.

### 1.3. Research Hypothesis

The following hypothesis was tested while controlling for class size, school type, and school climate covariates.

H<sub>01</sub> There is statistically no significant effect of BOM effectiveness in setting the strategic direction on students' academic performance in selected counties of the North Rift of Kenya.

## 2. Literature Review

This research focused on the relationship between effective strategy setting by school boards and academic performance. The findings from various studies highlight the different dimensions of this study. A meta-analysis study done to assess whether successful strategic planning has positive effects on organizational performance found that the effect of strategic planning on organizational performance is greatest when strategic planning is associated with effectiveness and that organizational performance should form part of strategic planning (George, Walker, & Monster, 2019). The importance of effective boards was also established in the study by Brauer & Schmidt (2007) whose study indicated that school boards whose rating was high in strategic effectiveness had a positive impact on school performance.

Effectiveness in strategic thinking on academic achievement in independent schools has been studied Baker et al. (2015); Brauer & Schmidt (2007); Kamara (2022); Kavanagh (2022). The place of strategic thinking is more crucial in independent or private schools because they have no recourse for public funding to maintain their schools but rely on student fees. The number of students enrolled make the school viable or not, hence strategic thinking is more about survival in private schools and the place of strategic board effectiveness is more critical.

The crucial importance of having a strategic plan in place is emphasized (Miskell, 2020). This was further underscored by school principals who took part in the qualitative study in rural New York. They attested that the strategic plan was a vital resource worth all the expenses that go into their formulation (Miskell, 2020). On the tool of strategic plans, a study by Carvalho, Ilidia, Verdasca, & Alves (2022) aimed at identifying dimensions of quality in the strategic action plans and to measure their use in the Portuguese setting found that the strategic action plans did not contain the any quality indicators, but were more

of a descriptive list of actions than an instrument in support of the strategic action in a given school. Boards in the actual process of developing strategies have been studied by [Watson & Ireland \(2021\)](#).

While the foregoing studies have been based in the developed world, there are similar studies on the effect of setting strategic direction plays in school improvement in Sub Sahara Africa. These include: [Nkumbwa \(2019\)](#), [Kwaslema & Onyango \(2021\)](#), [Mwangi \(2017\)](#), [Gode \(2009\)](#), [Kobia \(2017\)](#) and [Njunu, Kiprop & Nyambura \(2016\)](#). This study is based in a similar context and hopes to add to these studies by taking a step further into the specific context of the selected counties of North Rift region of Kenya to find out how effective school boards are in setting the strategic direction and its influence on academic performance using convergent parallel mixed methods research design. As has been said that preparation and implementation of strategic plans and programmes in the education sector changes depending on the context ([Chang, 2008](#)).

### 3. Research Methodology

This study was conducted in three counties found on the North region of Rift Valley in Kenya. These are Elgeyo Marakwet, and Uasin Gishu and Nandi counties. The study targeted teachers of public secondary schools as well as school principals. Of all the school stakeholders, they were deemed to have a good understanding of the functioning of the school board in their schools. They are also directly impacted by boards' decisions. The study employed convergent parallel mixed methods research design. Data was collected by use of self-administered questionnaires and an interview schedule.

The study utilized multi-stage sampling as follows: Firstly, convenience sampling was used to select the counties of Elgeyo Marakwet, Uasin Gishu and Nandi found on the North Rift part of Kenya. Next, proportionate stratified sampling was employed to determine the number of respondents for each county and sub county relative to its size as shown in [Table 1](#) below. Simple random sampling was finally utilized to select respondents across schools in each of the sub-counties. The table by [Krejcie & Morgan \(1970\)](#) was used to determine the recommended sample size of the study. Out of the target population of 6678 teachers, the recommended sample size is 364 respondents. Of the 364 questionnaires administered, 358 were returned, indicating a response rate of 98%. 12 principals from purposively selected schools took part in the interviews.

**Table 1.** Target population and sample size.

County	Sub County	Target Population	Sample size
Elgeyo Marakwet	Marakwet East	221	12
	Marakwet West	514	28
	Keiyo North	632	34
	Keiyo South	622	34
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1989</b>	<b>108</b>

## Continued

	Moiben	299	16
	Ainabkoi	323	18
Uasin Gishu	Soy	392	21
	Turbo	373	20
	Wareng	495	28
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1882</b>	<b>103</b>
	Nandi North	561	31
	Nandi South	517	28
Nandi	Chesumei	560	31
	Tindiret	400	22
	Nandi East	326	18
	Nandi Central	443	24
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2807</b>	<b>154</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>6678</b>	<b>364</b>

## 4. Results and Findings

### 4.1. Descriptive Statistics of Respondent's Demographic Characteristics

The following is a breakdown of the demographic information of the respondents. It sheds light on their nature and caliber from which an interpretation can be made (Table 2).

**Table 2.** Demographic composition of respondents (N = 358).

Demographic Factor		N	% of N
Teacher's Age Range	21 - 30	135	37.7
	31 - 40	131	36.6
	41 - 50	63	17.6
	above 51	29	8.1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>358</b>	<b>100</b>
Teacher's Gender	Male	184	51.4
	Female	174	48.6
	<b>Total</b>	<b>358</b>	<b>100</b>
School Type	National	59	16.5
	Extra County	107	29.9
	County	65	18.2
	Sub-county	127	35.5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>358</b>	<b>100</b>

## Continued

	Below 60	281	78.5
Average class size	61 - 80	57	15.9
	over 81	20	5.6
	<b>Total</b>	<b>358</b>	<b>100</b>
School Climate	very high	64	17.9
	moderately high	115	32.0
	Neutral	147	41.1
	Low	31	8.7
	very low	1	0.3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>358</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Research data, 2023.

Firstly, the results show that more than 74% (n = 135 and n = 131) of the respondents were below 40 years of age 17% (n = 63) were between 41 and 50 years and the least category – those over fifty-one were 8.1% (n = 29). Teacher's gender shows that males are past the half mark at 51.4% (n = 184) while female teachers 48.6%. On school type the majority were from sub-county schools at 35.5% (n = 127), followed by extra county schools at 29.9% (n = 107), county schools at 18.2% (n = 65), and national at 16.5% (n = 59). On class size, the majority of learners 78.5% (n = 281) are from the least category of class size those of less than 60 learners followed by the category of between 61 and 80 at 15.9% (n = 57) and the over 80 category at 5.6% (n = 20). As for school climate, the majority at 41.1% (n = 147), followed by moderately high at 32% (n = 115), then very high at 17.9% (n = 64), low at 8.7% (n = 31) and very low at 0.3% (n = 1).

#### 4.2. Descriptive Statistics for BOM Effectiveness in Setting Strategic Direction

Setting Strategic Direction is the independent variables of this study. The data was obtained from a 5-point Likert scale. The results shed light on the respondents' perceptions are shown in **Table 3** in terms of means and standard deviation.

Note: M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation.

**Table 3.** Descriptive statistics for BOM effectiveness in setting strategic direction.

BOM Effectiveness in Setting Strategic Direction	N	M	SD
The BOM usually takes time to plan and budget for school activities	358	4.305	0.878
The BOM involves stakeholders in setting performance targets	358	4.103	1.025
The school vision and mission are well documented/written down	358	3.997	1.068

**Continued**

The school vision and mission are regularly communicated to and are known by students	358	3.874	1.147
The BOM in my school's emphasis is mainly on academics	358	4.162	0.988
The BOM is effective in setting the schools' strategic direction and this has positively influenced the performance	358	4.165	1.003
<b>Grand Mean</b>		<b>4.101</b>	<b>1.018</b>

Source: Research data (2023).

Firstly, the BOM's commitment to planning and budgeting for school activities got the highest mean value of 4.305 (SD = 0.878) and indicates a high level of agreement among respondents. This suggests that the BOM is perceived as actively engaged in strategic planning.

The principals supported the teachers' responses by stating that the BOM usually plans for the activities of the year. One principal PS 8 remarked that:

*“The Board usually plans for infrastructure projects under RMI at the beginning of the year based on the availability of funds. They also plan for academics based on teachers' needs and set targets which they will follow up in every meeting to check the progress.”*

Furthermore, stakeholders are seen to be actively involved in setting performance targets, as indicated by the mean value of 4.103 (SD = 1.025) suggests a general agreement but with a slightly wider range of opinions. This is supported by the majority of participants who consented that the BOM involves stakeholders in setting the performance targets pointing out that they involve teachers, the learners and parents. One principal, PS 12 remarked;

*“The process of setting the mean score in school is such that the teachers usually come up with the mean score together with form fours. The BOM approve it then parents and the sponsor is informed during the mean launching ceremony”.*

The results support the findings by [Luhangala & Anyieni \(2019\)](#) that stakeholders should be consulted in the formulations, implementation and execution of the schools' strategy. Findings by [Gilchrist & Knight \(2015\)](#) also established that boards should work well with the school leadership and others in deciding the overarching strategic direction of the school and offer support to realize its objective.

However, some studies established the lack of involvement of any or some stakeholders of the school, particularly the School Governing Body in the development and implementation of strategic plans by principal ([Schlebusch & Mokhatle, 2016](#); [Adonis, 2017](#); [Mwangi, 2017](#)). A study by [Dean et al. \(2007\)](#) also found that governors in the study rarely got involved in influencing the strategic direction of the school felt happier to offer support to the head teacher rather than challenge them. They therefore depend on the principal to set the strategic direction of the school.

Findings also show that there was a moderately consistent agreement on the

documentation and communication of the school's vision and mission ( $M = 3.997$ ,  $SD = 1.068$ ). Similarly, the regular communication of the vision and mission to students, with a mean value of 3.874 and a standard deviation of 1.147, got a varied range of opinions on the effectiveness of communication.

The BOM's emphasis on academics is strongly acknowledged ( $M = 4.162$ ,  $SD = 0.988$ ) suggests that the respondents perceive the BOM as prioritizing academic matters consistently. Responses from the principals were varied, some consented that the emphasis of the BOM is academics while others disagreed. One deputy principal PS 11 noted that;

*“Our BOM is more inclined towards infrastructure, they are more effective in matters infrastructure not on academic matters”.*

The finding particularly from the teachers support Gilchrist & Knight (2015) who established that one of the qualities of an effective board is a sincere concern for the performance of the school reflected by the focus of its governance activities to school improvement and learners' performance.

Lastly, the BOM's effectiveness in setting the school's strategic direction and positively influencing performance is strongly endorsed ( $M = 4.165$ ,  $SD = 1.003$ ), indicates a generally high level of agreement, yet with some variability in responses.

The overall grand mean of 4.101 suggests a predominantly positive perception among respondents regarding the BOM's effectiveness in setting strategic direction. While there is some variability in opinions, especially in aspects related to communication and documentation, the majority of items demonstrate a high level of agreement, portraying an overall favorable view of the BOM's role in guiding the school's strategic direction in the selected counties.

When asked how effective BOMs were in setting the strategic direction of the school, the majority of the principals happily agreed that BOMs are effective. However, one of the principals had a somewhat differing opinion, and remarked that;

*“I would say that our BOM is average because of unavailability. The so-called elite BOM members are not readily available, yet the available ones are not resourceful. BOM members should be elite but also available to impact the school. They should not be from far.”* (PS 5)

The findings from the objective that sought to establish whether the BOM is effective in setting strategic direction indicate that the teachers generally perceive the BOM to be effective in this role. The constructs BOM taking time to plan and budget, BOM emphasize mainly academics, BOM involving stakeholders in setting performance targets and BOM is effective in setting the strategic direction of the school all scored highly in terms of the mean values.

The results of this objective concur with other findings that schools were effective in developing strategic plans and that implementation of strategic plans enhanced the improvement of students' academic performance (Kwaslema & Onyango, 2021) and that an effective board has strong strategic planning abilities (Gilchrist & Knight, 2015). The study results also support prior studies that

established a positive effect of strategic planning on student achievement (Miskell, 2020; Kwaslema & Onyango, 2021; Gode, 2009; Mwangi, 2017; Kobia, 2017; Kisaika, 2021) and that effective boards are effective in setting the strategic direction of the school which is inevitably related to positively enhancing school performance (Baker et al., 2015).

### 4.3. Descriptive Statistics for Student Academic Performance

Student Academic Performance is the dependent variable in this study. The data was obtained from a 5-point Likert scale. The results provide valuable insights into the perceived impact of various school factors on student academic performance and are presented on **Table 4** in terms of means and standard deviation.

Note: M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation.

**Table 4.** Descriptive statistics for student academic performance.

Student's Academic Performance	N	M	SD
When teachers and learners are involved in setting academic targets by the BOM, it affects the academic performance	358	4.335	0.904
When he BOM monitoring teaching and learning, students' academic performance improves	358	4.316	0.787
If the school environment is quiet, safe and orderly, the academic performance goes up	358	4.648	0.612
A school leadership that is supportive of teachers' efforts enhances students' academic performance	358	4.662	0.626
Exposing teachers to regular trainings/workshops/seminars has an effect on learner's academic performance	358	4.643	0.691
Motivating highly performing teacher and learners influences academic performance	358	4.682	0.698
<b>Grand Mean</b>		<b>4.548</b>	<b>0.720</b>

Source: Research data (2023).

**Table 4** presents descriptive statistics providing valuable insights into the perceived impact of various factors on student academic performance. Firstly, the involvement of teachers and learners in setting academic targets by the Board of Management (BOM), scored a mean of 4.335 (SD = 0.904) and indicates a relatively high level of agreement among the participants. This result aligns with the findings from the interviews where the majority of the participants expressed positive perceptions regarding the impact of teacher and learner involvement in setting academic targets by the BOM. For instance, one reported that;

*“I strongly believe that when the BOM facilitates teachers and learners to be involved in setting academic targets, it has a significant effect of fostering a sense of self-drive among learners. In our school, we've observed that this collaborative approach empowers students to take ownership of their academic goals”.*

(PS5)

Similarly, the BOM's role in monitoring teaching and learning shows a positive correlation with students' academic performance. ( $M = 4.316$ ,  $SD = 0.787$ ) which underscores a consensus among participants regarding the constructive role of BOM monitoring.

The findings from the association between the school environment and academic performance scored a high mean score of 4.648 and a low standard deviation of 0.612 signifying a strong agreement and a relatively consistent viewpoint among respondents. Similarly, the acknowledgment of a quiet, safe, and orderly school environment positively influencing academic performance resonates with the qualitative suggestion to enhance discipline among learners.

*“When students feel secure and the school environment is conducive to learning, it has a direct and positive influence on their academic focus and outcomes.”* (Principal, PS3)

Supportive school leadership is also identified as a crucial factor influencing academic performance ( $M = 4.662$ ,  $SD = 0.626$ ) while exposure of teachers to regular training, workshops, and seminars is perceived as beneficial for learners' academic performance ( $M = 4.643$ ,  $SD = 0.691$ ) indicate a strong consensus on the positive impact of professional development opportunities on academic outcomes. Motivating highly performing teachers and learners influences academic performance as indicated by the mean score of 4.682 and a standard deviation of 0.698 underscore a strong consensus on the positive influence of motivation.

Overall, the above findings show that teachers highly agreed with the indicators of student academic performance; a quiet, safe, and orderly school environment enhances academic performance, school leadership that is supportive of teachers' efforts enhances students' academic performance, exposing teachers to regular trainings/workshops/seminars has an effect on learner's academic performance and motivating highly performing teachers and learners influences academic performance. Hence, collectively, a positive perception among respondents regarding the factors influencing student academic performance is revealed. The high grand mean of 4.548 indicates an overall agreement on the significant role these factors play in fostering a conducive environment for enhanced academic outcomes.

#### 4.4. Hypothesis Testing

Having conducted a preliminary analysis to ascertain that the study did not violate any of the assumptions of normality, linearity, multicollinearity, and homoscedasticity, the hypothesis was tested. The results are as indicated below:

##### **H<sub>01</sub> the Effect of BOM Effectiveness in Setting the Strategic Direction on Student's Academic Performance**

Hierarchical regression was utilized to determine the capacity of the predictor variable setting strategic direction (SSD) to predict student academic performance. Step 1 included controlling for class size, school climate, and school type.

These control variables are school demographic factors that can potentially influence the role of the BOM in enhancing student academic performance. Class size is the number of learners in a class and was categorized into three; below 60, between 61 - 80, and over 80. School climate is operationalized as the expectation to succeed and this was categorized into five types of schools: very high, moderately high, neutral, low, and very low. In school type, schools were categorized as national schools, extra county schools, county schools, and sub-county schools.

Hence, they were entered as step 1 so that their effects can be measured and explained. In this case, they explained 3% of the variance in student academic performance. Step 2 included adding setting strategic direction (SSD) and the total variance explained by the model as a whole was 11%  $F(4,353) = 10.7$ ,  $p < 0.001$ . The predictor SSD further explained an additional 11% of the variance in student academic performance  $R^2 \text{ change} = 0.11$ ,  $F \text{ change } 1,353 = 41.77$ ,  $p < 0.001$ . Therefore, based on the findings, the hypothesis is rejected. There is therefore a positive statistically significant relationship between school board effectiveness in setting strategic direction and students' academic performance.

The findings concur with that found by other studies that setting the strategic direction relates positively to performance (Miskell, 2020; Kisaika, 2021; Njunu, Kiprop, & Nyambura, 2016). The importance of the practice of setting the school's strategic direction is such that schools that practice it are different from those that do not as studies have indicated (George et al., 2019; Miskell, 2020; Nkumbwa, 2019; Kwaslema & Onyango, 2021; Gode, 2009; Kobia, 2017; Mwangi, 2017; Njunu et al., 2016). Therefore, schools need to embrace strategic thinking to cope with changes in the environment and in order to survive.

## 5. Conclusion of the Study

The study concludes that school board effectiveness in setting strategic direction has a positive statistically significant influence on students' performance in selected counties in the North Rift of Kenya. It also concludes that strategic leadership development and collaborative governance approaches between the school board and other stakeholders are crucial to maximize educational outcomes and hence ultimately impact students' academic performance.

## 6. Recommendations of the Study

1) The study findings established that BOM effectiveness in setting the strategic direction has a positive statistically significant influence on students' performance in selected secondary schools in Kenya. Therefore, the County Education Boards should ensure to incorporate training of the BOM on how to set the strategic direction of the school as part of the BOM induction training so that they can be more effective in this role and also influence students' academic performance.

2) The school board should proactively engage the other stakeholders: the

class representatives, the parents, learners, the sponsor and the sub county administration to contribute in setting academic targets, monitoring progress, and implementing interventions that support academic improvement. This would foster a culture of collaborative decision making and mutual respect among all the parties.

3) BOM's should foster a practice of strategic planning that emphasizes on students' success and academic excellence. This requires setting clear objectives and actionable strategies that align with the school's vision and mission, along with effective communication and continuous monitoring and evaluation to ensure continuous progress towards the set academic goals.

4) Furthermore, the school board should support the school leadership implement strategy by ensuring optimal resource allocation and management, including finances, infrastructure, and human capital. This involves identifying and addressing resource gaps, sourcing additional resources where necessary, and ensuring efficient utilization of existing resources to maximize their impact on student academic performance.

### Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

### References

- Adonis, T.-A. (2017). *Investigating the Development of the Learning Environment at a Disadvantaged Primary School in the Western Cape through a Participatory Action Research Process*. PhD Thesis, University of Western Cape.
- Ali, N., Jusof, K., Ali, S., Mokhtar, N., & Salamat, A. S. A. (2009). The Factors Influencing Students' Performance at Universiti Teknologi Mara Kedah, Malaysia. *Management Science and Engineering*, 3, 81-90.
- Baker, T., Campbell, S., & Ostroff, D. (2015). Independent School Leadership: Heads, Boards, and Strategic Thinking. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 91, 574-587. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0161956x.2016.1227165>
- Brauer, M., & Schmidt, S. L. (2007). Defining the Strategic Role of Boards and Measuring Boards' Effectiveness in Strategy Implementation. *Corporate Governance: The International Journal of Business in Society*, 8, 649-660. <https://doi.org/10.1108/14720700810913304>
- Bryson, J. M. (2011). *Strategic Planning for Public and Non-Profit Organizations: A Guide to Strengthening and Sustaining Organizations' Achievement*. Jossey-Bass.
- Carvalho, M., Ilidia Cabral, I., Verdasca, J., & Alves, J. M. (2022). Strategic Action Plans for School Improvement: An Exploratory Study about Quality Indicators for School Improvement Plan Evaluation. *Journal of Social Studies Education Research*, 13, 143-163.
- Chang, G. C. (2008). Strategic Planning in Education: Some Concepts and Methods. Directions in Educational Planning. In *Symposium to Honour the Work of Françoise Caillods*. UNESCO and International Institute for Educational Planning. <https://dr-ama.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/strategic-education.pdf>
- Dean, C., Dyson, A., Gallanaugh, F., Howes, A., & Raffo, C. (2007). *Governing Bodies and*

*Disadvantage*. Joseph Roundtree.

- George, B., Walker, R. M., & Monster, J. (2019). Does Strategic Planning Improve Organizational Performance? A Meta-Analysis. *Public Administration Review*, 79, 810-819. <https://doi.org/10.1111/puar.13104>
- Gilchrist, D., & Knight, P. (2015). *Research into Developing Highly Effective School Boards for Independent Public Schools*. Government of WA, Department of Education and Training.
- Gode, H. (2009). *Influence of Strategic Planning on Performance of Public Secondary Schools in Kisumu East, Kenya*. MBA Project University of Nairobi.
- Kamara, T. (2022). *Effective Board Governance in Independent Schools*. D. Ed. Thesis, Vanderbilt University.
- Kavanagh, D. (2022). *Alignment of Leadership to Constructs of Governance in Independent Schools* (p. 30). Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership for Learning Dissertations. [https://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/educleaddoc\\_etd/30](https://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/educleaddoc_etd/30)
- Kisaika, S. R. (2021). *Strategic Planning Practices and Performance of Secondary Schools in Narok North Sub-County, Kenya*. MBA Thesis, Kenyatta University.
- Kobia, B. K. (2017). *Strategic Planning and Performance of Secondary Schools in Limuru Sub County, Kenya*. MBA Thesis, University of Nairobi.
- Kwaslema, P., & Onyango, D. (2021). Effectiveness of the Strategic Planning and Academic Performance among the Public Secondary Schools in Babati District, Tanzania. *East African Journal of Education and Social Sciences*, 2, 82-86. <https://doi.org/10.46606/eajess2021v02i01.0069>
- Lamas, H. A. (2015). School Performance. *Propósitos y Representaciones*, 3, 351-386. <https://doi.org/10.20511/pyr2015.v3n1.74>
- Loh, C. M., Unda, L., Gong, Z., & Benati, K. (2021). Board Effectiveness and School Performance: A Study of Australian Independent Schools. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 32, 650-673. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09243453.2021.1939734>
- Luhangala, H. M., & Anyieni, A. (2019). Strategy Implementation on Organisation Performance: A Case of Public Secondary Schools Nyamira County, Kenya. *International Academic Journal of Human Resource and Business Administration*, 3, 394-410.
- Miskell, S. P. (2020). *A Study of the Effect of Strategic Planning on Student Achievement in Rural Public Schools in New York State*. PhD Thesis, St. John Fisher University.
- Mwangi, J. K. (2017). *Effectiveness of Strategic Planning Process in the Management of Secondary Schools in Nakuru County, Kenya*. M. Ed Thesis, Kenyatta University.
- Narad, A., & Abdullah, B. (2016). Academic Performance of Senior Secondary School Students: Influence of Parental Encouragement and School Environment. *Rupkatha Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities*, 8, 12-19. <https://doi.org/10.21659/rupkatha.v8n2.02>
- Newton, P., & da Costa, J. (2016). School Autonomy and 21st Century Learning: The Canadian Context. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 30, 1279-1292. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ijem-11-2015-0151>
- Njunu, J. N., Kiprop, C. J., & Nyambura, R. N. (2016). Impact of Strategic Planning in Sustained Focus on Instruction and Learning in Public Secondary Schools in Nakuru County, Kenya. *Scholars Bulletin*, 2, 564-568.
- Nkumbwa, E. (2019). *The Role of Strategic Planning in School Improvement in Selected Public Secondary Schools in Solwezi District, Zambia*. M. Ed Thesis, University of Zambia.

- Schlebusch, G., & Mokhatle, M. (2016). Strategic Planning as a Management Tool for School Principals in Rural Schools in the Motheo District. *International Journal of Educational Sciences*, 13, 342-348. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09751122.2016.11890470>
- Singh, S. P., Malik, S., & Singh, P. (2016). Research Paper Factors Affecting Academic Performance of Students. *Indian Journal of Research*, 5, 176-178.
- Watson, C., & Ireland, A. (2021). Boards in Action: Processes and Practices of “Strategizing” in the Boardroom. *Journal of Management and Governance*, 25, 933-966. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10997-020-09545-7>
- Wing Ng, S. (2013). Including Parents in School Governance: Rhetoric or Reality. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 27, 667-680. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ijem-07-2012-0087>
- World Bank (2018). *World Development Report 2018: Learning to Realize Education’s Promise*. World Bank.
- York, T. T., Gibson, C., & Rankin, S. (2019). Defining and Measuring Academic Success. *Practical Assessment, Research, and Evaluation*, 20, Article No. 5.