



Independent Mindedness

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Welcome to **LeadingAge Kansas'** eleventh issue of Guiding Governance. Each quarter this publication focuses on a specific governance topic to help you, your leadership team and your board in planning, strategic thinking, and execution as you seek to sustain and amplify your mission. Our current issue will continue to highlight a principle from BoardSource's [The Source – Twelve Principles of Governance that Power Exceptional Boards](#).

Remember, exceptional governance does not happen by accident. If we want staff and volunteer leadership partnerships that add value to our organizations, we must intentionally focus on our governance practices - constantly refining and evolving.

Please [let us know](#) how you use this publication, if it proves helpful, what other topics you would like to see us focus on and how we can best serve you and your board. We would love to discuss being part of your next Board or Leadership Team retreat, so contact debra@leadingagekansas.org to learn more.

Independent-Mindedness

“Exceptional boards are independent-minded. When making decisions, board members put the interests of the organization above all else.”

– BoardSource, [The Source: Twelve Principles of Governance that Power Exceptional Boards](#) (for purchase)

In the fiduciary role, boards are executing their duty of care, duty of loyalty and duty of obedience to charitable purpose. Independent-mindedness is important for all not-for-profit boards, but in the older adult services sector that requires constant diligence. Board members must be mission loyal, not institutionally loyal. The tension is sometimes palpable as our member boards balance strategies affecting today's residents and clients while preparing for the next generation of customers.

Governance requires setting aside an individual agenda and welcome differing viewpoints and perspectives. Rigorous adherence to conflict of interest policies are fundamental and should start at recruitment. Decisions are influenced by mission and strategy, not loyalty to the current state or

another stakeholder. Exceptional boards embrace open debate and leverage their members' wisdom to advance the mission.

Starting the Conversation

[Is it Time to Dust Off Your Conflict of Interest Policy?](#) By Erin Berry for BoardSource

[Conflicts of Interest](#) from National Council of Nonprofits

[Why You Think You're Right Even if You're Wrong](#) (Ted Talk) by Julia Galef

[Three Rules for Constructive Debate](#) by Randall Peterson for Financial Times

[Conflict of Interest Policy](#) from BoardEffect

[Beware Conflicts of Interest](#) (Ted Talk) by Dan Ariely

[Conflicts of Interest: 5 Things You Should Know](#) from BoardSource

[For Argument's Sake](#) (Ted Talk) by Daniel H. Cohen

[Coming to Terms with a Conflict](#) from BoardSource

[A Good Question Can Be a Game Changer](#) by Anne Wallestad for BoardSource

Tools & Templates

[Sample Conflict of Interest Policy](#) from form1023

[Sample Conflict of Interest Policy](#) from BoardEffect

[Managing Conflicts of Interest](#) (for purchase) from BoardSource

[7 Ways Amazing Leaders Encourage Healthy Debate](#) by Kevin Daum for Inc.

[How to Disagree Productively and Find Common Ground](#) (Ted Talk) by Julia Dhar

[How to Ask Better Questions](#) by Judith Ross for Harvard Business Review

[5 Steps to Asking Good Questions](#) (infographic) from Wabisabi Learning

[Catalytic Questions](#) to Get the Conversation Going from BoardSource

[10 Ways to Have a Better Conversation](#) (Ted Talk) by Celeste Headlee

Did you know that LeadingAge Kansas provides consultation services to improve your board's effectiveness? Contact [Debra Zehr](#) at 1.800.264.5242 to learn more about how we can help you and your board.

Special thanks to LeadingAge Virginia for allowing us to use their "Guiding Governance" newsletter