

# THE ABMP SCHOOL CONNECTION

Volume 6 Number 1

## Strategic Planning achieving your school's mission & vision

Strategic planning is invigorating and fun. People enjoy thinking about their school and taking a fresh look at realities and challenges. This renewed energy spurs the achievement of long-held goals and may lead to novel solutions. With measurable milestones and goals in place, schools are better able to define and influence their futures. A formal process for strategic planning that includes primary stakeholders (students, staff, graduates, and potential employers of the school's graduates) and allows innovative thinking can help schools strengthen the activities they undertake to achieve their mission and vision.

Strategic planning for schools builds on the business world's process to focus on the management of risk, industry expansion, and competitive advantage. While useful, this model can also hold pitfalls for schools. Schools participating in strategic planning are advised to place the core functions of schooling (curriculum, building teacher capacity, and learning), at the forefront of the planning process, so that the focus remains on an enhanced learning environment, rather than the market share of students.

Strategic plans must have clearly defined action steps. Plans should be concise (between 12 and 35 pages), so that goals and activities don't get lost in fine print or in lofty language describing strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

### Situation Analysis, Milestones, and Goals

The first step in a strategic planning process is often an analysis of the current situation. Ask planning participants to brainstorm, thinking about where the school is now and where it wants to be in the future. Next, identify trends impacting the school (for example, a shift from older students seeking a second career to younger students looking for a first career). Evaluate situational factors that demand the most attention and should

be placed high on the priority list. Determine the school's strengths and weaknesses and look for opportunities to fortify curriculum, infrastructure, and teacher capacity. Also look for threats to the school—such as low enrollment, or a continuing education program that doesn't yield projected revenue—that might threaten school goals.

Use the situation analysis to define milestones and goals. Milestones show that the tasks necessary to achieve a goal are on track. Goal statements should be measurable, time-bound, include evaluation criteria, and identify individuals responsible for each goal's completion. Define goals based on where you want to be in one, two, and three years, prioritizing goals for each year.

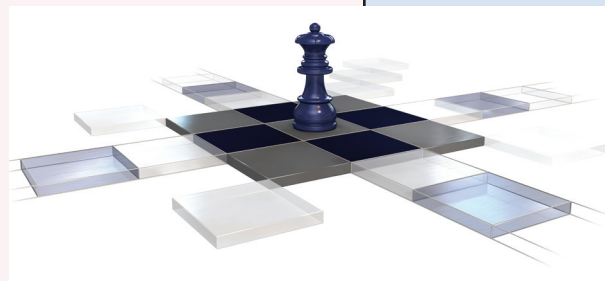
### Action Plan and Evaluation

The action plan is comprised of the tasks and activities you will undertake to achieve milestones and goals.

Many schools assign goals to committees that work on achieving the goal.

Strategic plans are usually written with the purpose of defining key goals and activities for a three to five year period of time. Consultants recommend that progress be evaluated at least quarterly. An annual in-depth review assesses each goal and determines its relevance. The goals the group achieves become stories that encourage future participation, planning, and motivation. Finally, strategic plans should be flexible enough to allow change should trends in the market require substantial adjustment.

Download a Strategic Planning Worksheet from [www.abmp.com](http://www.abmp.com) in the School Alliance Section. ●



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# FSMTB Delivers MBLEx to Massage C

The Federation of State Massage Therapy Boards (FSMTB) premiered the new Massage and Bodywork Licensing Examination (MBLEx) in October 2007. The MBLEx is an entry-level exam created specifically to assess the competence of massage school graduates seeking licensure.

The MBLEx was developed by FSMTB to provide a reliable, entry-level evaluation for massage licensure. The FSMTB was established in 2005 to enhance the communication between different state massage boards; provide education, services, and guidance to state boards; and support the establishment of compatible requirements for the regulation of massage therapists. The MBLEx is a first step in working toward reciprocity and portability of licensure between states. At the time of publication, the MBLEx is accepted in the 15 states shown in the sidebar.

The development of the MBLEx included stakeholders from the regulatory community. In addition, 15 psychometricians and testing specialists have scientifically scrutinized the methods used to create the MBLEx, which was recognized in March by the Association of Test Publishers at its annual meeting. The exam content is based on input from more than 7,600 massage and bodywork practitioners gathered through the FSMTB's landmark job task analysis survey conducted in 2007. The test boasts a streamlined application process and speedy turnaround (currently one week) on applications.

For schools, the MBLEx provides a smooth registration process. Now, schools only need to send transcripts to the state; transcripts are not required to take the test. This means that students can sit for the test at any point in their training, though students in the early stages of their training will not have the knowledge level necessary to pass. The ultimate goal, however, is to allow students to receive their massage credentials quickly after graduation to ensure rapid job placement. This can be integral to schools needing to meet placement benchmarks in a timely manner.

The testing fee for the MBLEx is \$195 per individual; the candidate has a 90-day window (following receipt of approval to test) in which to sit for the exam. For convenience, each student receives his or her test score at the site and verification of the test score can be sent automatically to the state board.

## Application Process

Students who want to sit for the MBLEx before graduation can apply directly through the FSMTB. If students prefer to wait until after their graduation date, they can apply through the state licensing board or agency. Direct application to the FSMTB is straightforward and easy. Students can log on to the FSMTB website and download the candidate handbook,



## Information available at [www.fsmtb.org](http://www.fsmtb.org)

- Candidate Handbook
- MBLEx Application
- MBLEx Retake Application
- MBLEx Content Outline
- MBLEx Bibliography
- Special Accommodations Handbook
- ADA Accommodations Form
- Other information about MBLEx and the FSMTB



MBLEx application, and MBLEx content outline, or schools can download and make copies of these documents available to students. The student completes the simple application form and submits it to the FSMTB and the \$195 fee. A Notice to Schedule form arrives via e-mail or regular mail and gives directions on how to register for the test. Once the student has registered, a confirmation arrives noting the testing date, time, and location. Students should arrive at the test location 30 minutes before their scheduled test time and bring two pieces of current identification. (The primary identification can be a driver's license, passport, military or state ID, or alien registration card [green card or permanent resident visa], or other government-issued ID. The secondary ID can be a US social security card, school, employee, or hospital ID or work badge, bank ATM card, credit card, or any document from the primary list.) Candidates have two and a half hours to complete 125 multiple-choice questions on a computer. To familiarize themselves with the computer-based testing experience, students can log on to [www.pearsonvue.com/fsmtb](http://www.pearsonvue.com/fsmtb) and practice with the testing tutorial.

If your state does not currently accept the MBLEx for licensing, contact your state board of massage and ask them to consider adopting the MBLEx. Schools may want to download the exam content outline from FSMTB's website and compare it to their current curriculum.

For more information about the FSMTB, including its mission statement, or MBLEx, visit [www.fsmtb.org](http://www.fsmtb.org). ●

## MBLEx Adoption by States

Arkansas	South Carolina
Georgia	South Dakota
Iowa	Tennessee
Louisiana	Texas
Maine	Utah
Mississippi	Washington
New Mexico	West Virginia
Oregon	



## Federation of State Massage Therapy Boards

7111 W. 151 Street, Suite 356

Overland Park, KS 66223

Toll-free: 888-70-FSMTB (888-703-7683)

MBLEx questions: 866-962-3926

[dpersinger@fsmtb.org](mailto:dpersinger@fsmtb.org)





## Want ABMP's Resources but Don't Need Insurance?

Many schools have expressed interest in ABMP's new student membership tools and the benefits of belonging to ABMP as school members, but don't require insurance for their students. Among the ways ABMP is meeting these needs, student membership *without* insurance is now available.

Students receive all the same helpful member benefits—*Knead to Know* student newsletter, *Massage & Bodywork* magazine, *Massage Year Planner*, online resources and tools, and the *Student Success Guide*—for the reduced cost of \$45, for one year or until graduation, whichever comes first. (Student membership with insurance for the same period is \$65.)

## Upcoming Webinars for Schools

- April 17, 2008: Emotional Intelligence: Strategies to Build it in Your Students
- May 15, 2008: Assessing and Developing Your Campus Culture
- June 19, 2008: Implementing the Student Success Curriculum at Your Campus

**Webinars run at 11 a.m. (PDT), Noon (MDT), 1 p.m. (CDT), and 2 p.m. (EDT).**

For more information about student and school membership options, customized webinars (available to schools that sign up all students as members), resources available to student members, or implementing the Student Success Curriculum, visit [www.abmp.com](http://www.abmp.com) or contact your ABMP school representative:

<b>Melanie Gourley</b> melanie@abmp.com 800-458-2267, ext. 626	California, Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia.	<b>Jennifer Argenbright</b> jennifer@abmp.com 800-458-2267, ext. 636	Alaska, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Indiana, Michigan, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Virgin Islands, and Washington.
<b>Kathy Laskye</b> kathy@abmp.com 800-458-2267, ext. 649	Alabama, Arizona, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, and Wisconsin.	<b>Taffie Lewis</b> taffie@abmp.com 800-458-2267, ext. 629	Arkansas, Colorado, Connecticut, Idaho, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Montana, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, Texas, Vermont, and Wyoming.

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evergreen, colorado 80439



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