STATEMENT OF POLICY: The primary responsibility of a voluntary governance board (BOD) is to establish an organization’s mission, purpose, values and direction. An effective board ensures accountability to its members, sponsors, donors, and broader public through strategic planning, ongoing evaluation of programs and services, and wise utilization and expansion of organizational resources. Recognizing the unique contributions and talents of each of its members, an effective board reaches consensus on what constitutes success, encourages shared sense of responsibility, and fosters a culture of trust, mutual respect, cooperation and open communication.

PURPOSE: In most associations, members of the BOD experience a transition in acquiring expected behaviors, this is particularly true for the American Pediatric Surgical Nurses Association, Inc. (APSNA) because of its completely volunteer and self-guided nature and 2 year terms with new members rotating on to the BOD every year. Therefore, board self-assessment (BSA) is essential to effective board functioning and allows for targeted management in the form of new board orientation, board member instruction and mentoring by:

- Refreshing and clarifying the board’s understanding of its roles and responsibilities
- Identifying important areas of board operation that need attention/improvement
- Assessing progress toward existing plans, goals, and objectives
- Shaping future structure and as a result, operations of the board
- Defining the criteria for an effective and successful board
- Building trust, respect, and communication among board members, the executive director and staff
- Enabling individual board members to work effectively as part of a team

APSNA acknowledges its intention to establish and follow best practices in BOD governance in order to fulfill its fiduciary obligation to the membership.

The purpose of a BSA is to lay the foundation for setting board development priorities and motivating board members — individually and collectively — to strengthen the full board’s governance performance and practices. The results of the self-assessment can help identify issues needing clarification; gaps in skills board members believe they need (both those that they actually need and those individually need) for the board to be successful, and topics for future board education.
**Definition:** A BSA is not a performance evaluation of the organization, rather and a formal process for the board to measure its own effectiveness individually and collectively.

**Timeline:**
- The President will be responsible for conducting the BSA in November. The organization will plan to conduct a self-assessment every two to four years. It is not necessary to conduct one every year — time will be needed to implement changes and learn new ways to function as a board.
- Follow up: Once the BOD identifies areas for possible change, they will develop a plan to address those issues over the coming year. The president elect or immediate past president will oversee an action plan that outlines the findings and assigns responsibility for every item that the board feels needs to be addressed. Responsibilities can be assigned to directors, board committees, management, or other appropriate parties. The board should review the action plan at each meeting to ensure that the board continues to monitor its progress throughout the year.