



# ISBL Strategy Framework

## 2023–26



## Why we matter

Our core purpose is to support continuous professional development, promote career aspiration and inspire new entrants to the school business profession.

We aim to support every school business professional to be more effective tomorrow than they are today.



- We provide **practitioners** with status and recognition via accredited training and development programmes
- We provide **employers** with a clear reference point to assess capability and competency
- We provide wider **stakeholders** with confidence in the school business professional workforce

All of this is underpinned by nationally recognised and sector-endorsed professional standards.

## Introduction

The business leadership profession is operating in a highly politicised environment, a mixed economy of providers and significant ongoing change as our system continues to evolve in response to central government policy. At the time of writing (October 2023), the Conservative Party continues to pursue its ambition for a fully trust-led system. With this backdrop, ISBL's strategy has been developed to ensure agility and inclusivity as it seeks to support the many versions of school business leadership practice. From informal gatherings some 30 years ago, our profession has evolved and our organisation has matured to the extent it now boasts professional institute status. And whilst ISBL is the custodian of this status, it is the school business leadership community that has earned it.

Professional bodies are important in any sector for a number of reasons: members enjoy the associated status, they improve their chances of career progression, they tie into a network of fellow professionals, they have access to information on education sector developments, and their understanding of the key issues facing our state-funded education system at any given time is kept fresh.

But in truth, much more of the value that professional bodies offer goes unnoticed; representations to officials and ministers, lobbying, technical analysis of policy and significant consultation work are all examples of less visible work. Professional bodies in any sector have a crucial role to play in making sure their members can seize opportunities but also squarely confront challenges.

The impact that school business professionals (SBPs) have on our education system is undisputed. Highly competent SBPs help ensure resource optimisation within their organisations so that the quality of children's education and future life chances is enhanced. With this new high profile and recognition comes greater opportunity, but this also means greater scrutiny and direct accountability.

As a professional body, our core beliefs are founded on the premise of collaboration and shared learning. By working together, we can ensure all SBPs – regardless of their starting point – are given the very best chance to progress and thrive. To meet these demands, we must ensure improving capability is the 'golden thread' and harness the power of our collective expertise – school resource management advisers (SRMAs), fellows, regions, and special interest groups.

We have recruited a number of new trustees and recently added to the executive team with specialists in the areas of events and professional development. I sense a strong appetite and commitment to continuous improvement and a desire to embrace a new narrative for an ambitious future. This document sets out how the communities we serve are at the heart of our plans. It outlines our strategic objectives and key aims, which are rooted in a new, unifying vision.

### Stephen Morales

ISBL CEO





## Our Mission

We unleash professional potential, nurture ambition, and empower colleagues to have the greatest possible impact on their school or trust.

Together, we (the school business professional community) strive to make a difference to the children and schools we serve by ensuring vital resources are available at the right time, in the right place, with the right people, and used in the right way.

ISBL is committed to the continuous improvement and professional development of all those involved in school business leadership. We act to ensure the suitability, sufficiency and sustainability of the school business profession, and we advocate for its enhanced status.

## Our Vision

To see school business professionals having the greatest possible positive impact on our education system.

## Our Values

### Integrity

We operate according to a code of practice demanding the highest ethical standards, and we set expectations of ourselves and our members commensurate with those expected of other highly respected professions.

### Inclusivity

We strive to provide services and development opportunities for all education professionals involved in school business activity.

### Impartiality

We have no political leaning or bias.

### Insight

We speak from a position of authority, which is based on a well-founded understanding of resource management in education.

We are an equal-opportunity employer with a deep commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) as set out in our contribution to the sector bodies' Statement of action and commitments on equality, diversity and inclusion in education. We live and breathe our values through our actions and involvement in a range of national initiatives. EDI is an important feature in our recently revised professional standards. We are standing members of the Ethical Leadership Commission.



## Context

The education leadership community is made up of many diverse and indeed often unique roles. For many years, education leadership was viewed only through the prism of pedagogy. Education policy reforms over the last three decades have seen the emergence of a new group of leaders, not with an instructional background but with experience in finance, operations and compliance. The Academies Act in 2010 further accelerated the prominence of this cadre of leaders, including the creation of new senior executive roles.

However, whilst some school business leaders have enjoyed new-found status and influence, for many, particularly those operating outside the academy programme, recognition and inclusion as a senior leader is an ongoing concern. ISBL will continue to campaign hard for SBPs to have a role on the senior leadership team at either a local or a trust level.

This is part of our ongoing commitment to promoting joined-up leadership across our education system, where pedagogy, business and governance work seamlessly together.

## Our Aims

Our core aim is to develop the capability of the school business leader community. Our proposition is designed with the following main aims, always with a golden thread of improvement but with support and care at the heart of our service:

- Setting clear professional expectations through nationally recognised standards
- Accessible continuing professional development (CPD) – proportionate entry requirements, competitively priced and/or government-funded
- Programmes designed to meet the needs of a range of abilities and specialist areas
- Guiding colleagues through a professional development journey using career pathways
- Encouraging the most experienced and well-qualified practitioners to share knowledge with colleagues
- Hosting events to bring colleagues together and learn from experts
- Helping colleagues understand the policy landscape and the impact it may have on their role and setting

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