

Who's in Charge?

University Place School District

University Place, Washington

April 16, 2005

NSBA - San Diego

The Bus Driver...or the Bus?

- William Raspberry column about a large district hiring a new Superintendent
- The revolving door
- ~Replacing the bus driver on an aging, worn out school bus
- Raspberry's preferred solution: **Fix the bus!**



Survey

A short survey

Please take a few moments to jot down short answers to these questions:

1. What does your superintendent expect from the board in order to do his/her job?
2. What does your board expect from its superintendent in order to do its job?
3. For your board superintendent team, what disagreements have you observed about 'Who controls what?'

Now share your answers with a neighbor

Haze

Boards Lead
Who's in Charge?
Superintendents Lead

Policy Governance

Empower Your Board to Govern
Clean Away the Haze ...
Free Your Superintendent to Manage
...in Order to Achieve **What's Best for Kids**

Objectives

Today's Objectives

- What is Policy Governance?
- Why Policy Governance?
- Implementing PG in our district
 - Clarify roles
 - Set goals
 - For results

Boards Want 6

Good Board Members Want...

- To be a voice for their constituents
- To contribute their talents and energy
- To take part in the enterprise
- To make a difference for kids

Don't Want 7

Good Board Members Don't Want...

- To be a 'rubber stamp'...to be irrelevant
- To micromanage or get in the way
- To only give the appearance of accountability
- To waste their time



Want to Lead 8

Board Members Want to Lead

Key question:

How/Who do we lead?

Follow-up:

If our job is to lead, then what is the job of the superintendent?

...in other words...

What am I...a potted plant? - Superintendent

Sup Concerns 9

Superintendent Concerns

"Boards are less likely to take responsibility for their own jobs and more likely to judge you based on criteria they've never communicated."

Board members who...

- **'Make things happen'** without relying on my knowledge/experience
- **'Watch things happen'** then resent me
- **'Wonder what happened'** then 2nd guess me

Sup Want 10

Good Superintendents Want

- A clear idea of the board's expectations
- A free hand to do their job
- One boss...the board as a whole
- Fair, objective evaluation
 - Based on district performance
 - Not driven by personality

Superintendent Want 11

Good Superintendents Don't Want

- The board running the schools
 - Even 'friendly' meddling is unhelpful
- Monday-morning quarterbacking
 - "Here's how I'd have made that decision..."
- To have to do the board's job for them
 - They have enough on their plate

Want to Lead 12

Superintendents Want to Lead

According to approximately 9 out of 10 superintendents and principals, "giving administrators far more autonomy to run the schools while holding them accountable for getting results" would be an effective way to improve leadership in the public schools.

- Public Agenda (2003 Survey)

Intersection 13

Why Policy Governance?



Intersecting area
a source of
friction about
who's leading...
who's in charge

Leadership

PG attempts to
address the
overlap as part of
a larger concept
of leadership

14

Principles of Policy Governance

1. Board Represents 'Owners'
2. Board speaks w/one voice, or not at all
 - "It is the duty of the board as a body to protect its staff from the board as individuals"
3. Instruct via Written Policy: Values
4. Instruct no staff except the Superintendent
5. Ends differentiated from Means (What result, for whom, at what cost)

Principles 15

Principles of Policy Governance

6. Define Ends positively (achieve)
7. Define Means 'negatively' (avoid)
8. Progressively Set Expectations
 - Broad/general to narrow/specific
9. May change specificity at any time
10. Evaluate only against criteria written into policy

Bo Job 16

The Board's Job Under PG

- Ensure the district 'works' by providing:
 - **Linkage** between the organization's 'owners' and 'operators'
 - **Written policies**, communicating values (and instructions) to the superintendent
 - **Assurance**, on behalf of 'owners', that the organization achieves what it should and avoids that which is unacceptable

Bo Job 17

What the Board's Job is Not

- Digestion of detailed staff reports
- Giving 'assistance' to the staff
- 'After-the-fact' approval of staff efforts

Not Bubble 18

What the Job is Not



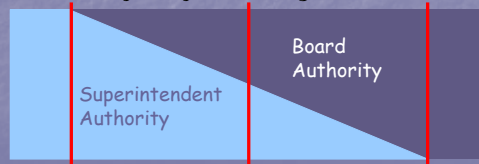
The board's job is not that of a 'bobble-head doll', nodding happily about work that others conceive and plan, then bring to the meeting for approval only after it is wrapped up and tied with a fancy ribbon.



Board 'or' 19

Board 'or' Superintendent

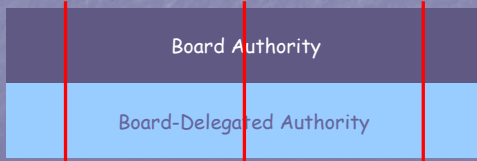
- 'Either-or' leadership roles
- Power regarded as 'zero-sum'
- Continuum between roles
- Boundary subject to negotiation



Board 'and' 20

Board 'and' Superintendent

- 'Both-and' leadership roles
- Power is complementary/simultaneous
- Clarity between coexisting roles
- Explicitly defined boundary



Empowering 21

Empowering the Board

- Primary Linkage with Owners
- Primary Focus on Ends to be Achieved
 - Outcomes- For Whom- At What Cost
- Clarify What is Unacceptable
 - Nested Sets of Expectations – Values
- Meetings are for Board Business
 - Not for Staff Business (e.g. Show & Tell)
 - Decisions about the Future – Not the Past
- Initial Authority – Not Final Authority

Freeing Up 22

Freeing Up the Superintendent

- Clarification of Roles
- Delegation of Authority
 - Freedom of action- within Parameters
 - "Any Reasonable Interpretation"
- Evaluation Based only on Written Policy:
 - Prescribe Ends, Limit Means
- Board Self-Discipline
 - No Guessing or Second Guessing

Implementing 23

Implementing Policy Governance

- How we got here
 - What we've done
 - What we've not done
- Lessons learned
- Alternatives
- Results

Preceding 24

Conditions Preceding PG

- Leadership roles: 'Who's in charge?'
- Board concerns
- Superintendent concerns
- Superintendent evaluation



Initial Interests

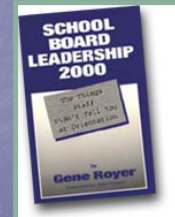
Initial Behaviors

Initial Outcomes

25

Initial Interest in the Model

- Spring 2001 - NSBA Bookstore
 - School Board Leadership 2000
- Reading
 - Passed book around
 - Shared reactions
 - Discussed possibilities
- Incubation period



Deciding

26

Deciding to Use PG

- Board must understand the model
 - Committee work; Reading; Study
- Staff must understand the model
 - Year-long board discussion w/staff
- Deliberations & Decision
 - Public commitment; Resolution
- Orientation & Training
 - Workshop (AASA/Aspen Group)

Preparing 27

Preparing to Adopt PG

- 3 Products:
 - Policy, Linkage, Assuring Performance
- Reading: Articles – Books – Pamphlets
- Policy Development (work-study)
 - Means (GP, B/SR, EL) – using templates
 - Annual Agenda – w/ Linkage Meetings
 - Ends (E) – from scratch
- Consultant vs. Self-help



Flipping Switch

28

'Flipping the Switch'

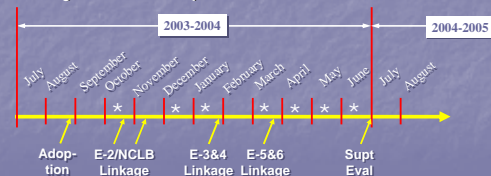


- Formal ceremony – public commitment
- Public/staff informed
 - Change expectations - 'board business'
 - Educate: Roles, Procedure
- Meetings change radically
 - Full year's agenda - linkage meetings
 - Agenda item: "Is this board business?"
 - Consent agenda for superintendent business

1st Year 29

1st Year of PG Implementation

- Linkage – with 'owners'
- Monitoring – to assure performance*
- Policy – review policies



Lessons 30

Lessons Learned

- Discipline
- Evaluation
- Monitoring
- Linkage
- Meetings
- Strategic Plan
- Budget
- Existing Policy

Board (Self-)Discipline

"Boards are the least disciplined, least rational, and most disordered element in any school system."

Gene Royer - School Board Leadership 2000

- Decide group expectations about:
 - Attendance – Individual authority
 - Meeting Preparation – Conflict of interest
- Everyone enforces
 - Not just Board Chair
 - **Individual responsibility**



Monitoring

- Delegation w/o monitoring is abdication
- Write performance criteria into policy
- Set method/frequency of monitoring
 - Internal/External Reports; Direct Inspection
- Board makes judgments about data
 - Were prescribed Ends achieved? **Criteria?**
 - Were Means within limitations? **Criteria?**
 - Do we need to refine policy/criteria?

Superintendent Evaluation

- 'Behavior/style' checklist vs. accumulation of *judgments* on monitoring reports *throughout the year*
- Reports not good enough
- Evaluate against *written criteria* in policy (Ends and Executive Limitations)
- To what extent does the *organization...*
 - Achieve what is to be achieved?
 - Avoid what is to be avoided?
- "Any reasonable **interpretation**"

Board (Self-)Evaluation

- Regular self-evaluation of meetings (rotating the duty - not the chair)
- Is the board following the model?
- Are meetings dedicated to board work or are we still doing staff work?
- Annual **self-evaluation**

Ends & Linkage

"The most frequent dialogue of boards should be with the public, not with its staff"

John Carver

- Input around preselected topic
- **Focused** not random
- Owners - not just customers
- Validate owner input by deliberating

Board Meetings: Board Business

Old:

- Link with staff
- Receive staff reports
- Approve staff work
- Agenda prep by staff, ad hoc items added by board

Q: "What's going on?"

New:

- Link with 'owners'
- Monitor performance
- Work on board policy
- Agenda prep by board in policy, added by staff (consent agenda)

Q: "What's important?" or "How did we do?"

Strategic Plan

- Traditional strategic plan
 - Primary focus on means: Plans & Programs
 - Less emphasis on Ends
- Strategic planning changes
 - Board retains small (critical) part: Ends – Executive limitation policies
 - Superintendent gets the rest: Strategies that must meet criteria established in policy
 - Board controls through policy/monitoring

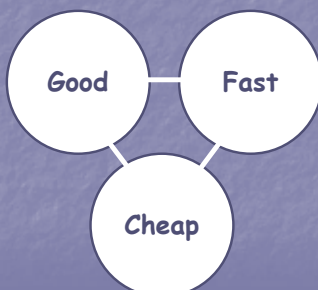
Budget

- Board prioritizes spending in Ends Policies
 - Here 'meddling' on behalf of ownership is ok
- Means criteria in Exec Limitations policies
 - Debt – Fund Balance – Spending Limitations
- Frees up Superintendent to plan budget
 - **Not easy – the public expects meddling**
- Board retains control by monitoring frequently against policy criteria

Existing Policy Manual

- Detailed directives/rules (305 policies)
 - Means are prescribed in great detail
 - Very little expressed in values terms
- Hand-off to Superintendent...
 - Anything not prescribed in Ends
 - Anything not proscribed in Means
- Supt may **modify, delete, add** as needed
 - Board approval via consent agenda

Alternatives



Cost - Time

- Time (incremental vs policy blitz)
- Learning & Preparation - **1 yr +**
 - Means Policies - 2 days +
 - Ends Policies - 1 day +
 - Implementation – 1 yr

Cost - Money

Money

- 2002/3 - \$8,900 (Training)
- 2003/4 - \$6,700 (Linkage)
 - Total for implementation: \$15,600
- 2004/5 - \$7,000 (Policy Review)
 - Total to date - \$22,600

Results 43

Results: 2001-2005

- Test scores have risen steadily
- > State average – all subjects, all grades
- Met AYP at all grade levels
- + Trend – Continuous improvement
 - Early success at primary level
 - Middle level excels – 1st/2nd
 - Concerns- Secondary, Achievement gap
- Clarity at the top -> Focuses attention

Conclusion 44

Conclusion

- The school board needs to be **hands on** about some things, and **hands off** about others.
- The solution to that paradox is to be able to know when to do which.

How/Who 45

Conclusion

How/Who Should the Board Lead?

- The 1st Question should be...**Who?**
Answer: only the Superintendent
- The 2nd Question should be...**How?**
Answer: only through Policy

Conclusion 46

Conclusion

- Who's In Charge?
 - For **board business**: The board is in charge, and must do the work.
 - For **all other business**: The superintendent runs the show & is accountable for same.
- As for Wm Raspberry's analogy,
 - Our board and superintendent have chosen to spend our time **fixing the bus**

Conclusion 47

Questions?

Reference materials may be found at

<http://www.carvergovernance.com/pubs.htm>

Prompt 48