

School Board Leadership Research

Excerpts from: The Future of School Board Governance: Relevancy and Revelation

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Frank Lutz & Laurence Iannacone (Lutz and Iannacone, Summary p. 13)

"...don't make too many detailed rules. Rather, establish broad policy to cover the generalized case and allow qualified and knowledgeable administrators on the scene some situational latitude.

Thomas Alsbury (Alsbury, p. 22)

Studies that show school boards have a positive effect on school renewal with the goal of improved student achievement:

- Cotter, M.E. (2001) "*Strategic leadership for student achievement: An exploratory analysis of school board-superintendent governance and development practices*". Dissertation Abstracts International, 62(06), 1993. (UMI No. 3017528)
- Parelius, R.J. (1982). "*The school board as an agency of legitimation and change*". Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New York, NY. (ERIC Document reproduction service No ED 217556)
- Russell, M (1997). "*A study of the relationship between school board leadership behavior and advancement of instructional quality*". Dissertation Abstracts International, 57 (08), 3349. (UMI No. 9700667)
- Scott, H.J. (1991, April). "*Leadership imperatives for school board members in the reform and renewal of public schools*". Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National School Boards Association, San Francisco, CA (ERIC Document reproduction service No. ED 336857)
- Underwood, K.E., Fortune, J.C. & Cleary, F.J. (1985). "*Heads up: Here's how school boards are energizing public education*". American School Board Journal, 172(1), 25-28.

Deborah Land (Cistone, p.4)

[School board literature is] "...rife with conclusions and recommendations based on personal experience...and a heavy reliance on anecdotal evidence...failure of studies of educational governance to treat the school board as a discrete unit of analysis."

William Boyd (Cistone, p.10)

"... 'rank' authority of a board [sometimes defers] to the 'technical' authority of a superintendent. Conversely, if school boards were to maximize their main resource, formal authority, boards would emerge as the dominant partner in the relationship."

Laurence Iannacone (Cistone, p.12)

"We need to distinguish two different public interests in education and develop appropriate mechanisms for each. One is the universal and impersonal interest of the general society; the other is the particular, personal interests of pupils and parents."

"Representation needs to be understood as a basis for combining professional and lay interests"

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Michael Usdan (Cistone, p. 13)

“[The school board will survive] although its basic responsibilities and capabilities must be assessed more realistically.”

“...school boards must broaden and deepen their base of lay support through the creation of new linkages and mechanisms that facilitate citizen participation in school affairs.”

Theodore Kowalski (Kowalski, p. 3)

“Current reform is... a form of directed autonomy...state government (a) sets broad goals (b) provides leeway to local officials (so they can determine how to meet the benchmarks (c) holds local officials accountable for outcomes.”

Meredith Mountford (Mountford, p. 8)

Sources of tensions in the board-superintendent relationship:

1. Confusion over roles and responsibilities
2. Power struggles
3. Questionable motives for board service
4. Equality of representation
5. Philosophical orientation
6. Beliefs and attitudes
7. Increased state and federal accountability
8. Resistance to service
9. Public apathy

Thomas Glass (Glass, p. 15)

“...data showing board members spending twenty to thirty hours a week on “board business”...Such a time commitment suggests board members are routinely heavily involved in management.”

“If board and board member performance were evaluated and made public many board members might be a bit more restrained in some of their actions.”

George Petersen & Lance Fusarelli (Petersen & Fusarelli, pp 4-24)

“...a poor relationship between the superintendent and the board of education poses a threat to the district’s ability to meet its boards and to engage in systemic reform.” (Petersen & Fusarelli, p. 4)

“While school boards have power, they are usually unpaid, part-time, untrained and, except for information presented to them by the superintendent or perhaps what they pick up informally, board members know little of the underlying issues for scores of complex decisions requiring their approval at each board meeting.” (Petersen & Fusarelli, p. 6)

Bjork & Lindle: “...nearly one in five superintendents identified their boards as factional, while slightly more than one in ten have inert boards...” (Petersen & Fusarelli, p. 7)

“School boards behave like typical schizophrenics. On the one hand, they give power away to the experts...on the other hand, they espouse an ideology of lay control.” (Petersen & Fusarelli, p. 7)

“For their part, school boards must be cognizant of...interest group activism and recognize that individuals who engage in such activities seldom represent the majority of opinion on school issues.” (Petersen & Fusarelli, p. 15)

“...there is no concrete evidence that state departments of education or mayors do a better job running local school districts than existing school boards.” (Petersen & Fusarelli, p. 24)