

Seven Great Arguments Against Elected Boards Deciding to Adopt Policy Governance®

Bob Hughes and Rick Maloney
<http://www.policygov.com>

Outline

1. John Carver's Policy Governance® Model
2. Arguments against adopting PG
 - Counter-arguments for each
3. Q&A

What is your perspective?

- *"My board has adopted policy governance®... but I have reservations." or "...and I don't doubt that decision."*
- *"My board is considering adopting policy governance®... and I want to hear arguments against it."*
- *"I don't know what policy governance® is, but I'd like to find out."*

Expectations

- If you have already adopted, or
If you have decided to adopt, or
If you are considering policy governance®
 - Be able to anticipate possible pitfalls
 - Be able to deal with them
- If you are not yet aware of the model
A brief introduction...but not enough for deep understanding

4



Cliff's Notes Version of

THE POLICY GOVERNANCE® MODEL

Policy Governance®

- A theory – of owner-accountable governance
- A philosophy – of board leadership
- A strategy – for organizing the work of the board
- A method – of discerning and defining community values
- A set of competencies to:
 - Establish board self-discipline
 - Distinguish owners from customers
 - Define the boundary between board work and staff work
 - Guide the district/superintendent
 - ✓ What to accomplish – end results
 - ✓ What to avoid – constraints on staff work
 - Account for organizational performance
 - ✓ Board self-evaluation and superintendent evaluation

A Balancing Act

- Board Work & Staff Work
- Ends & Means
- Owners & Customers
- Staff Freedom & Constraints
- Roles & Goals
- Delegation: Trust & Accountability
- Personnel Evaluation & Organizational Accountability
- Broad Guidance & Detailed Directives
- Authority (Reserved & Delegated)



Example Ends Policy

Academic Competence E-2

All UPSD students meet or exceed high academic standards by acquiring the knowledge and skills essential for reading, writing, communication, mathematics, other academic areas.

Standards:

1. The performance of the district as a whole will exceed that of Washington State and (if available) the nation as a whole as measured by standardized test and other data.
2. All UPSD schools will make appropriate yearly progress as defined by the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (the Child Left Behind).
3. The district will eliminate the achievement gap of disparate performance between identified student groups, and will make yearly progress toward eliminating the achievement gap.
4. The district will make continuous progress on all measures and indicators.

Competencies:

1. Reading - All UPSD students read with comprehension, as evidenced by:
 - a. Learning to read by the end of 3rd grade
 - b. Meeting or exceeding district grade-level achievement standards for:
 - (1) 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th grade reading benchmarks
 - (2) 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, and 10th grade WASL
2. Writing - All UPSD students write with skill, as evidenced by meeting or exceeding district grade-level achievement standards for:
 - a. 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th grade writing benchmarks
 - b. 4th, 7th, and 10th grade WASL
3. Communication - All UPSD students communicate effectively and responsibly in a variety of voice and settings, as evidenced by meeting or exceeding district grade-level achievement

Monitoring Report – Ends

Indicator	Target	Metric	Status	Comments
7th gr WASL	85%	85%	Met	7th - 10th grade reading benchmark achievement rates for 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, and 10th grades are all at or above 85%. This can be attributed to a 2.7% increase in the percent of 7th grade reading benchmark scores of 85% and above. 2.7% decrease in the percent of 8th grade reading benchmark scores of 85%.
7th gr WASL	85%	85%	Met	7th - 10th grade writing benchmark achievement rates for 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th grades are all at or above 85%. This can be attributed to a 2.7% increase in the percent of 7th grade writing benchmark scores of 85% and above. 2.7% decrease in the percent of 8th grade writing benchmark scores of 85%.
7th gr WASL	85%	85%	Met	7th - 10th grade communication benchmark achievement rates for 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th grades are all at or above 85%. This can be attributed to a 2.7% increase in the percent of 7th grade communication benchmark scores of 85% and above. 2.7% decrease in the percent of 8th grade communication benchmark scores of 85%.

7th gr WASL

Board Response – Ends

Monitoring Response Document (Ends) B/SR 5-E-1
Policy Monitored: E-2 Date Report Submitted: Oct 26, 2005

The Board on the date shown above received and reviewed the official internal monitoring report of its policy E-2 (Competence Goal 1 – Academic Standards) submitted by the Superintendent. Following its review of the report, the Board concludes:

1. Based upon the information provided, the Board finds that the Superintendent has reasonably interpreted the provisions of the relevant Ends policy, and the district is making reasonable progress toward achieving the desired results called for in the relevant policy. The Board commends the Superintendent for exemplary performance in the following areas:

The district has made commendable progress in most areas of Reading, Writing, and Math at the 4th and 7th grade levels, and in writing at the 10th grade level.

EL's

Principles of Policy Governance®

1. The Board stands in for constituents, those who morally 'own' the district.
2. The Board speaks with one voice, or not at all.
3. The Board directs the Superintendent via policy, expressing in writing the values of the community.
4. The Board instructs no staff except the Superintendent.
5. Policies are written for Ends (what is to be achieved) and Means (all other issues).

Principles of Policy Governance®

6. Ends policies are defined positively (telling the Superintendent what is to be achieved).
7. Staff means are defined negatively (what means are unacceptable, and should therefore be avoided).
8. The Board sets expectations first in broadly expressed values, then through progressively more detailed policies.
9. The Board may change the level of specificity in its policies at any time.
10. The Board evaluates the Superintendent only against criteria written in policy.

To learn more about the model

- School Board Leadership 2000
Gene Royer
<http://generoyer.com>
- Boards that Make a Difference
John Carver, PhD
www.policygovernance.com
- Our website
www.policygov.com

13



Why publicly elected boards have difficulty with Carver's model

7 ARGUMENTS AGAINST POLICY GOVERNANCE®

State Law Mandates Policies

- The State requires boards to take action on specific means issues that violate PG principles
 - Annual budget
 - Personnel decisions
 - Tax rates
 - Closing schools



State Law Mandates Policies

- We can comply with law without giving up control over what we do with our board time
 - District policy = Superintendent responsibility
 - Compliance with letter of the law
 - Consent agenda



Public Expectations

- Consent agenda – secrecy?
- Board deliberates on all matters
- Board solves all problems
- Board has a role in hiring, book challenges, etc.
- Board members take positions individually
- Board members fix constituent complaints
- Board members ask probing questions

Public Expectations

- Consent agenda – open to the public
- Board deliberates on policy – & monitoring
- Board demands problem-solving by staff
- Board role is that of policymaker
- Board members - before vs after decisions
- Board members demand customer treatment
- Board members probe during policymaking

Too Much Power to the CEO

- PG gives too much authority to the superintendent
 - Example of Yakima Teacher’s Union – They objected to delegation to the superintendent
- Policies are too broad
 - Boards cannot predict all potential problems ahead of time
 - Without an executive committee, a budget committee and several other committees, the board members are removed from detailed knowledge of the operation of the organization.

Too Much Power to the CEO

- Policy governance® gives authority to the superintendent – and holds him/her accountable for same
 - Example of Yakima Teacher’s Union – Solution was an open Q&A process...delegation **with** ↑ accountability
- Policies start broad...then narrow as needed
 - Boards cannot predict all potential problems ahead of time
 - Without an executive committee, a budget committee and several other committees, the board members are removed from detailed knowledge of the operation of the organization.

Language Gets in the Way

- Jargon can cause confusion
 - PG was designed for private (not public) board meetings
 - It confuses when discussion is in the open
 - Terms like Ends, Means, EL’s, GP’s confuse observers
- Negative Language of Staff “Means” Policies
 - The negative language in executive limitations is confusing...often full of double negatives
 - (eg., The superintendent shall not fail to...)
 - Why not just say what you want?



Language Gets in the Way

- Jargon can cause confusion
 - PG was designed for private (not public) board meetings – ensure that we communicate to our public
 - When discussion is in the open we must be clear
 - Use common terms like results, activities, prohibitions, protocol
- Negative Language of Staff “Means” Policies
 - When we deliberate in public, use “What I worry about is...” or “What I do not want is...”



Monitoring Won't Work

- How to determine reasonable progress
- Self monitoring in public impossible
- CEO monitoring reports give away strategies and decisions.
- Monitoring reports causes a paper blizzard
- Pre-approval is an abdication of the board's authority
- Board members don't read
- The public needs to be informed

Monitoring Won't Work

- Reasonable progress must be shown by evidence
- Self monitoring – when tried – becomes a routine
- Any public comments can give away strategies and decisions...requires judgment by CEO
- Asking for approval of all staff program decisions creates a paper blizzard
- Board ratification of staff work is a sham
- Board member preparation for meetings is always a problem
- The public is informed by monitoring

Linkage is Hard to Do

- Nobody knows how to conduct a linkage session with the public.



Linkage is Hard to Do

- Community engagement is always a board challenge – there is nothing new there



Board Member Behavior

- Not easy to control individual member behavior
- Motivation to follow the PG principles is purely voluntary and not enforceable.
- You were not selected or recruited by the board
- You answer to the public and can not be thrown off or voted off for non conformity
- Because you are publicly elected, you don't have to answer to the board



Board Member Behavior

- Individual member behavior is better when criteria for success are spelled out in board policy
- Motivation to follow the PG principles is the ticket to board members getting things done.
- Board members can be renegades...face it
- Non-conformity has its own consequences
- You have to answer to voters...and well-written policy illuminates your behavior



7 Arguments

1. State law requires boards to act on means
2. Public expectation – ‘fix things’
3. Too much power to the CEO
4. Language gets in the way
5. Monitoring won’t work
6. Linkage – Hard to do
7. Board behavior – Hard to control

29

Questions?

- Bob Hughes & Rick Maloney
- bhughes@policygov.com
- rmaloney@policygov.com
- <http://www.policygov.com>

30
