

# A Pathway to Effective Board Policy Governance

## Module 5

Participate in this seminar to strengthen the capacity of the board of education to use policy as an instrument for good governance. Module 5 workshop and resource materials include these important topics:

- Examine your philosophy and approach for effective practices in governing;
- Advance a shared understanding of policy governance;
- Identify principles and approaches for effective practice; and,
- Examine key components and strategies for implementing strategic policy governance.

STEWARDSHIP

RELATIONSHIP

LEADERSHIP



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# Introduction

The Saskatchewan School Boards Association (SSBA) has developed a policy governance framework to assist boards in moving from traditional policy models to a board policy model where the board governs strategically.

Traditionally boards of education have governed with a high degree of hands-on involvement in the day-to-day management of their school divisions.

Today, boards of education are beginning to leap from this managerial focus to a policy or strategic governance focus.

A board's pathway to development of this model is through the installation of an underlying process of on-going strategic thinking and strategy development. It is through the strategic planning process that the required policies specific to the governance and management of a particular school division are determined.

In a policy governance model, the board directs its efforts to turning its values and vision into reality. It engages the community to ensure the board's work reflects the community's values. An effective strategic policy governance board:

- Develops and articulates vision and goals;
- Aligns resources to attain the goals;
- Adopts policies to support achievement of the goals;
- Establishes an accountability framework that measures progress toward goal achievement; and
- Builds an effective leadership team.

## *Characteristics of Effective School Boards*



School boards that govern well attend to three areas of responsibility: leadership, stewardship and responsibility.

- **Leadership** – Setting a progressive direction for the school system.
- **Stewardship** – Overseeing the successful operation of the school system.
- **Relationship** – Empowering staff and creating connections with all those who have a stake in effective public education for children and youth in Saskatchewan.

The framework for strategic policy governance advanced by the SSBA provides for the development of “Principles and Strategic Priorities” to enable the board to govern strategically. This approach strengthens the capacity of the board to nimbly and strategically respond to changing demographics and circumstances.

Strategic policies define the board’s “Governance Approach” to clarify roles, the operational style and practices to attain the goals of the board and the school division.

Strategic polices define the “Limitations on Operations” to clarify the expectations of staff and the delegation of authority.

Two important additional components for effective policy leadership are monitoring and performance review. Boards are encouraged to learn how to better monitor progress in goal attainment and to develop on-going practices in engaging their community. The “Board-Director Review” process is established so boards can more effectively assess their current governance practices, the performance of the director and identify directions for continuous improvement.

This strategic policy governance framework is designed to fit the Saskatchewan reality and strengthen board of education capacity to implement policy and manage affairs effectively.

Research supporting this corporate policy “results-based” approach to governance is outlined in Research Report #99-01 *Strengthening School Governance* available on the SSBA website at [www.saskschoolboards.ca](http://www.saskschoolboards.ca).



**The School Boards Association  
Framework for  
Strategic Policy Governance  
Defines:**

1. Principles and Strategic Priorities  
- the results the Board wants to achieve.
2. Governance Approach - how the Board  
itself will operate.
3. Limitations on Operations - the authority  
and role of staff.

# Policy

Policy reflects agreement in the learning community to work in a certain way.

Policy is the framework within which staff perform their duties and achieve the goals established by the board.

A board of education's job is to govern those aspects of the education system that, under legislation, fall under its jurisdiction. To achieve this mandate requires policy leadership. Policy leadership means that board decisions are formulated as policies, principles or guidelines for staff to follow. The board of education establishes the school division's goals, sets its direction and plans its strategies. The board asks the director of education and other staff to ensure that the decision is implemented, and monitors progress to ensure that the desired results are being achieved.

Policy leadership involves more than writing policies, it also involves holding hired staff responsible for implementing policy and regular monitoring to be sure that the objectives of the policy are being achieved.

With policy leadership, the board's role might be compared to that of a bandmaster or orchestra conductor. The bandmaster and conductor lead the musicians, they ensure that everyone is playing from the same music score and that everyone is in tune, but they don't play individual musical instruments. Similarly, the board leads the school division and makes sure that staff members' actions are consistent with the board's decisions. But the board doesn't become involved in routine operations such as evaluating teachers' work, ordering supplies and checking schools for cleanliness.

When boards formulate their decisions as guidelines for staff to follow and results to be achieved, it is more likely that:

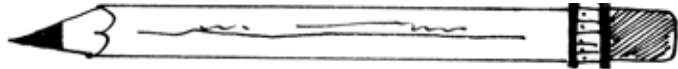
- Board decisions will be based on principles and that these principles will be explicit and deliberated;
- Staff will act according to the principles established by the board, but still be able to use their own expertise; and,
- The board will have more time to focus on what is important.

The SSBA approach to strategic policy leadership provides a framework for effective governance of the school system. Boards should avoid developing dozens of highly specific policies for individual situations without alignment around a philosophical approach to effective governing. Policies have leadership value only if they are applied and successful.



<p><b>What are the perceived <u>advantages</u> of your current policy framework?</b></p>	<p><b>What are the perceived <u>disadvantages</u> of your current policy framework?</b></p>

**Notes**





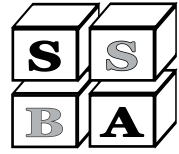


<b>Policy governance is:</b>	<b>Policy governance is not:</b>

**Strengthening Board Policy Governance**

<b>What Do We Want to Do More Of:</b>	<b>What Do We Want to Do Less Of:</b>

**Principles for Effective Policy Governance:**



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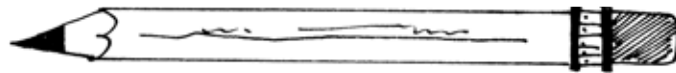
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## Developing Common Ground on the Approach to Governing

- In order to govern effectively, a board must be clear about what needs to be governed. What does the board of education govern?
- How would the board most effectively govern each duty?

<b>Traditional Managerial Approach:</b>	<b>Strategic Policy Approach:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff bring each significant decision to the board for a decision;</li> <li>• Frequent confidential discussions require many ‘closed’ meetings;</li> <li>• Board meetings focus on individual pieces of inputs and outputs;</li> <li>• Staff are encouraged to bring their work to board meetings;</li> <li>• Staff decisions are open to review and reversal at any time; and,</li> <li>• Board work is focused on administrative decisions for day-to-day operation of the school system.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff are authorized to make decisions within a policy framework.</li> <li>• Key principles and policy directions are debated and determined publicly.</li> <li>• Board meetings focus on setting strategic priorities and reviewing results.</li> <li>• The board chair works with staff to identify key board work to address at meetings.</li> <li>• When the board is unhappy with results, policies are revised to change direction.</li> <li>• Board work is focused on planning and achieving the desired future for education in the school system.</li> </ul>

**Notes**



## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q:** When does good governance prevail?

**A:** Good governance prevails for a board when it has:

- Clarity of vision and goals;
- Transparency and openness;
- Real accountability to measure goal attainment;
- Effective stewardship;
- Sound board-staff relations; and,
- Policies that support goal attainment.

**Q:** How is good governance fostered?

**A:** Good governance is fostered by:

- Effective leadership;
- Clear roles;
- Staff and board members who perform to fullest ability;
- Strong values;
- Trust;
- Respect;
- Caring;
- Openness; and,
- Foresight.

**Q:** What is policy governance?

**A:** Policy governance is a way to govern that focuses the board on the school division's vision for students and their achievements. Through the development of its vision and mission, the board establishes commitment statements that focus its attention on the educational goals of the division.

Policy governance gives the director of education authority to take responsibility for management decisions within the limitations of written policy.

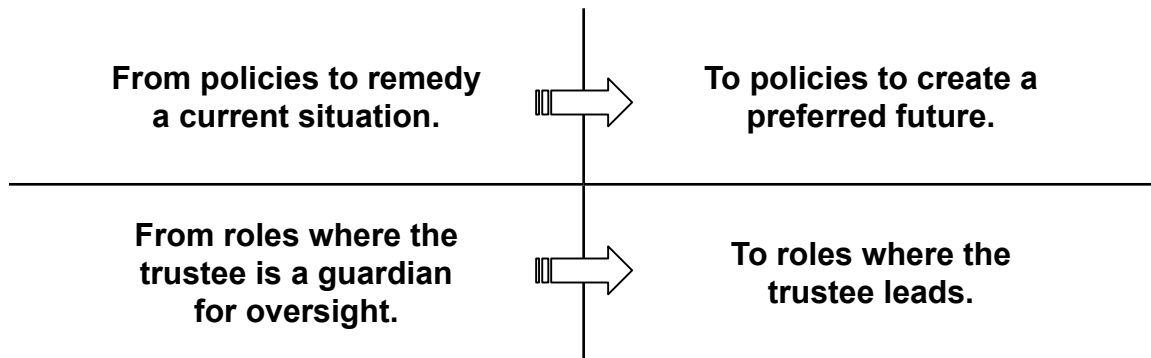
Policy governance engages community members including parents and teachers in defining system direction and goals.

**Q:** Why is there a shift towards policy governance?

**A:** There is a deliberate movement toward a paradigm shift in school board governance. This shift is toward a policy governance model. The reasons for the shift are many including:

- Amalgamation of school divisions;
- A growing emphasis on student achievement;
- An expectation that boards define priorities as ends;
- The formation of strategic alliances with other agencies;
- Changing demographics; and,
- Changing expectations for the role of the school.

The rationale for development of policy in response to these new circumstances is shifting:



**Q:** Our board already governs by policy, why do we need a different model?

**A:** Most school boards have manuals with numerous pages of policies. Most, if not all of these policies contain important information about how specific situations will be handled. Many of these policies deal with operational areas that can and should be handled by the director of education and staff.

In the policy governance model there is a clearer distinction between Board Governance Policies and Administrative Operational Procedures. This distinction is made at the outset of developing the model through a strategic planning process in which areas of board and staff responsibility are determined by the board. Some areas will be shared between board and director; others will clearly belong to the board while others will be delegated to the director and staff.

**Q:** What are the contents of the board governance policies?

**A:** The board governance policies can be outlined in three major categories:

- **Foundations and Direction**

These governance policies state the board's mandate, vision, mission and guiding principles of governing. Statements of board and system goals are stated in this section.

- **Governance and Management**

These policies outline the role of the board, role of the chair and committees. They detail the board's approach to governance, delegation of authority, monitoring requirements, functioning of meetings and a code of conduct for board members.

- **Limitations on Operations**

In these policies the board places limitations on the executive authority of the director of education in terms of general constraints, relationships within the school division, programs and services, assets, finances, and communications with the board.

**Q:** If our board decides to adopt a policy governance model, can we use our current policy manual?

**A:** Your current policy manual will not be compatible with implementing the new model. The Board Governance Policies are developed in response to the strategic plan developed by the board. The majority of these policies will remain in place for a number of years; others such as board and system goals and aspects of delegation and committee formation may well change from year to year as the board updates its strategic plan while constructing its annual action or management plan. To update and manage policies will be much easier given the use of electronic technology. It is advised that boards concentrate on developing these policies first. The majority of the Administrative Operational Procedures can be converted by the director of education and staff over an extended period of time. Some of these procedures, however, will require immediate attention because of legal or contractual requirements and in circumstances of policies not being compatible or in cases of amalgamation of boards.

**Q:** How long will take for a board to convert to governing under this model?

**A:** This process should begin with an assessment by the board of its current state of governance within the division. This assessment is called a Governance Health Check, which is designed to consider possible needs in terms of governance development. The assessment can be completed in a three to four hour session with the board. Following this assessment if the board decides to establish the policy governance model it requires a four-day blitz. During the first day the board will engage in a visioning session to develop vision, mission, commitments and goals. This should include representatives of the staff and community(ies). Then approximately three days will be required with the board to develop the strategic plan and management plan including appropriate delegation and consideration of committee structures.

Following implementation of the model, the board should review its approach to agendas, monitoring and performance review.

At the end of the first year prior to entering the board's new planning cycle, the board should engage in a one day 'Governance Health Check' session to fine tune its policies, planning and operations.

**Q:** Is this something that will work only in large school divisions?

**A:** No, the size of the school division has little to do with policy governance. The model will work where the board wants to concentrate on the business of educating students. It will work where the board takes the steps to plan strategically and develop its governance policies in accordance with a leadership plan based on the vision and values that are consistently revisited and reviewed annually.

**Q:** How will the SSBA support boards in implementing strategic policy governance?

**A:** The SSBA is supporting strategic policy governance in the following ways:

Association facilitators have experience and resource materials to facilitate:

- Board retreats to clarify the board's preferred approach to governing;
- A five day workshop blitz to develop board strategic governance policies;
- A board governance health check up and director performance review;
- Development of the board's strategic plan;
- The SSBA provides forums for boards to share ideas and learn more about effective strategies; and,
- Application of information communications technology for effective communications.

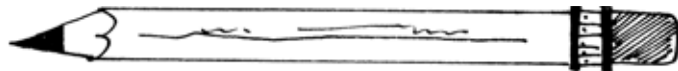


**Q:** What does the shift to policy governance mean for the board and director?

**A:** The shift in approach to strategic policy governance results in a significant role change for board and director of education. The shift:

- Allows the Board to govern proactively;
- Focuses the Board on its own job rather than what it hired the director to do;
- Focuses the Board's attention on goals;
- Frees the director to do his or her job in the most creative way possible;
- Provides clarity of roles and responsibilities;
- Provides clear direction about what end results are to be achieved;
- Increases accountability for results;
- Aligns resources of the organization;
- Makes values stated in policy the single driver for the organization;
- Allows the Board to spend its time with the owners, electors;
- Improves relationship with community, parents and staff;
- Increases probability that the division's values will match the community's values; and,
- Provides a structure for governance that makes it more likely the division will succeed.

**Notes**



# Board Policy Governance and School<sup>PLUS</sup>

School<sup>PLUS</sup>, a Saskatchewan government policy initiative to improve children and young people's well-being and success in learning and in life:

- Changes the definition of schooling and expands the role of school boards;
- Provides boards of education with the challenge to review and adjust current policy and practices to enable integration and alignment of the School<sup>PLUS</sup> vision and principles;
- Prompts boards of education to extend their work to include the learning community and community at large to better assure that the boards' work reflect their respective community's values;
- Presents an opportunity for boards of education to move from operational governance to strategic policy governance; and,
- Offers a chance to make a bigger difference in the lives of children and in the community.

The School<sup>PLUS</sup> vision is one where schools serve as centres of learning, service delivery and community where the needs of all Saskatchewan children and youth are met by working closely with their families, community and other human service providers.

School<sup>PLUS</sup> implementation entails major change because of philosophical and operational change. Boards of education need to redefine themselves in light of School<sup>PLUS</sup> the implementation of which means:

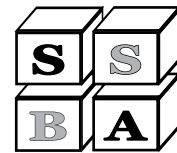
- A new way of thinking about education and results;
- A new preferred future;
- A new governance model;
- A new emphasis on student achievement and life success;
- New expectations for board, staff and community;
- A new role for the board of education and Director of Education;
- A new way of leading with adaptive leadership and doing business; and,
- Authentic partnerships and strategic alliances.

A strategic policy governance board:

- Aligns current school division policy and practice with The Effective Practices Framework Toward School<sup>PLUS</sup>;
- Develops and articulates vision and goals in light of School<sup>PLUS</sup>;
- Adopts policies to support achievement of the newly-aligned goals;
- Integrates School<sup>PLUS</sup> with existing strategic planning programs
- Builds a culture of adaptive leadership and establishes a community team;
- Aligns resources to attain the goals;
- Establishes an accountability framework that measures progress; and,
- Uses the measurements to formulate new data-informed improvement policies and practice.

### **Building Board Knowledge**

- 1. How will our board operate in advancing School<sup>PLUS</sup> and pursuing the direction of this vision?*



# Sample of Board Meeting Agenda

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA
3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES OF LAST MEETING
4. DELEGATIONS AND SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS  

Ownership linkage – board invites public and staff input.

Public requests presentation to Board.
5. CONSENT ITEMS  

The Chairperson will ask for a motion to receive the items which are starred\* and to approve all recommendations contained therein. Prior to approving the motion any trustee may request that a star(s) be removed.

Consent items are reports on items which the board has delegated its authority to the Director or general items of information or correspondence being received by the Board and requiring no action.
6. DISCUSSION/DECISION – BOARD DIRECTION
  - A. PRINCIPLES AND POLICY MAKING ITEMS  

These are items of policy formation or revision and items that the Board is developing principles and guidelines on for the direction of the CEO.
  - B. BOARD OF EDUCATION STRATEGIC DIRECTION ITEMS  

These are items flowing from the boards strategic plan.
  - C. MONITORING AND REPORTING ITEMS  

These are monitoring reports as required by the Board’s Governance Policies and the Board’s strategic plan.
7. INFORMATION ITEMS
8. CORRESPONDENCE
9. IDENTIFICATION OF EMERGENT ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA
10. ROUND TABLE AND ADJOURNMENT

# Decision Matrix

## Clarifying Roles and Responsibilities

The following table outlines some of the key tasks in the operation of a school division. Through policy, boards of education should clarify expectations and responsibility for all major tasks. It is necessary for the CEO to understand the responsibilities that have been delegated.

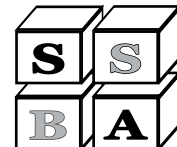
For example, ‘approving board policy’ should be a responsibility of the board as indicted by the dot in the first column.

Where do you think your board would put the limits of responsibility?

Tasks	Responsibility			
	Board	Director	Director Reports	Shared Task
<b>Policy</b>				
Approve board policy				
Develop administrative operational procedures				
<b>Personnel</b>				
Employment contracts with CEO				
Employment of School-Based Administrators				
Evaluation of CEO				
Evaluation of Staff				
Negotiation of Staff Collective Agreements				
<b>Budget</b>				
Principles and/or Guidelines				
Budget Revision of up to \$100,000				

### Building Board Knowledge

1. *What authority does your board delegate to the director of senior administration?*



# Monitoring Progress

Monitoring is the key activity for giving a board of education and its director the information they need to hold themselves accountable to their strategic governance policies and to demonstrate to its ownership that it is fulfilling its role in a responsible manner.

The monitoring report is designed to demonstrate:

- The degree of compliance to board policy; or,
- The extent of progress toward attainment of the goals stated in the board's strategic plan.

The elements of the report are that it provides:

- Pertinent information in a form that helps the board judge pre-determined criteria, which demonstrate compliance to policy or goal attainment and provide summary data that supports the overall conclusion of the report.

There are three methods of monitoring under the strategic policy governance model: internal reports, external reports and direct inspection.

## Internal Reports

The director of education provides periodic reports to the board monitoring Foundations and Direction Policies and Limitations on operations Policies. These reports are based on specific criteria determined by the board and director. The director usually suggests the criteria for board adoption.

## External Reports

The board, through the director, engages auditors, site inspectors, or other external assessors to answer specific questions.

## Direct Inspection

Board members and the director examine implementation or maintenance of a policy through direct inspection or site visits determining criteria compliance.

It is important to determine the type of information expected in a monitoring report.

Inputs	Outputs	Efficiencies	Outcomes
The resources applied to the activities and programs. This may be expressed in dollars, staff assignment, facility, transportation etc. Compliance needs to be reported.	Activities completed or begun.	Inputs per unit of output.	Improved quality.
	Products produced.	Ratios.	Changed attitude.
	Persons served.	Comparative dollars.	Changed behaviour.

# Six Steps Toward Strategic Policy Governance

## **Step 1: Governance Health Check**

The “Governance Health Check” is an assessment of the board’s current governance style. Through conversation, the board establishes common ground on its approach to governing. Criteria for effective governance are established that are used again at the end of the year. Needs in terms of strategic governance development are outlined.

## **Step 2: Visioning and Strategic Planning**

The visioning and strategic planning session defines the future directions for the school division. This work offers the ideal opportunity for the board to engage its public, staff and students into its new form of governance. The board’s vision, mission and guiding principles are established in this session as well as board goals. The purpose of strategic planning is to ensure that the board’s activities are focused, and its resources are managed in a consistent, strategic fashion.

## **Step 3: Governance Planning Session**

This session establishes a working draft of the Governance, and Management policies that define ‘how the board will do business’. Decisions are made as to the function and use of committees, the limits of delegation to the director of education, and the functions and role of the board. These discussions provide opportunities to establish common ground on issues as well as develop appropriate monitoring policies and procedures in order to assess goal attainment, and board and director performance.

## **Step 4: Limitations and Operations**

These policies define the limitation that the board places on the director in managing the day-to-day operations of the school division. Expectations are clarified during this session.

## **Step 5: Align Meetings, Procedures and Board Work**

This step engages the board and senior administration in using the strategic policy governance framework that has been established. This alignment phase involves many meetings over several months.

## **Step 6: Annual Review of Policy Framework and Board Planning**

At the end of the first year prior to entering the board’s new planning cycle, the board engages in a one day session to refine policies, and trouble-shot difficult issues. The governance health check is used again to review progress and identify needs. This session offers an opportunity for the director performance review.

# Board Health Check and Director Performance Review

An effective Board-Director relationship is the foundation for a successful and productive school system.

The SSBA has developed a framework and resources to support boards in the review process. An important first step for the board is to describe what constitutes “good” in the relationship and performance for the Board of Education and the Director of Education.

## Part One: Establish Criteria for The Governance Health Check

Part One invites the board to define criteria for the governance health check. The board should annually assess the board’s governance approach to identify areas of strength, gaps in practice and to inform planning.

The following table outlines a sample of some suggested criteria for the board’s governance health check. What would your board add or change?

Part One: Governance Health Check - ‘How is the Board Doing?’	Poor ----- Strong			
	①	②	③	④
1. Effective use of policy to govern the school system.	①	②	③	④
2. Effective use of mission, vision and values.	①	②	③	④
3. Effective planning to establish board and system priorities.	①	②	③	④
4. Effective board meetings.	①	②	③	④
5. Effective board chair.	①	②	③	④
6. Effective strengthening of student achievement.	①	②	③	④
7. Effective use of information to inform decisions.	①	②	③	④
8. Effective and productive relationship with the director.	①	②	③	④
9. Effective public engagement.	①	②	③	④
10. Effective advocacy for learning.	①	②	③	④



**Part Two: Establish Criteria for the Director Performance Review**

Part Two invites the board to define the criteria for the Director performance review. The board should clarify priorities, expectations and guidelines for monitoring reports.

Role Expectation	Director Evaluation Evidence	Quality Indicators

Assigned System Goals	Level 1 – Unacceptable Performance	Level 2 – Satisfactory Performance	Level 3 – Excellent Performance



# Vision Development Strategies

Board strategic governance policies are categorized or codified into three major types:

1. Foundations and Direction
  - 1.1 Mandate
  - 1.2 Vision
  - 1.3 Mission
  - 1.4 Guiding Principles
  - 1.5 Board Goals
  - 1.6 System Goals
  
2. Governance and Management
  - 2.1 Role of the Board
  - 2.2 Approach to Governance
  - 2.3 Code of Conduct
  - 2.4 Role of Chair
  - 2.5 Role of Committee and Representative
  - 2.6 Meetings
  - 2.7 Delegation of Authority and Responsibility
  - 2.8 Monitoring Performance
  
3. Limitations on Operations
  - 1.7 General Constraints
  - 1.8 Relationships
  - 1.9 Programs and Services
  - 1.10 Finances
  - 1.11 Assets
  - 1.12. Communication with the Board

This form of a policy register is easy to adapt to local board use, can be developed and maintained electronically, and parallels board governance policies on the CSBA website.

SAMPLE POLICY

Policy Type: Foundations and Directions

Policy Title: 1.2 Vision

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To build a learning community in which all members achieve success.

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MONITORING

METHODS:

FREQUENCY:

MONTH:

SAMPLE POLICY

POLICY TYPE: Governance and Management

POLICY TITLE: 2.4 Role of Chair

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The chair shall assure the integrity of the board's process, represent the board to outside parties, and speak for the board.

Accordingly the chair shall:

- Assure board behaviour is consistent with board policies, and obligations imposed upon the board from outside the organization.
- Assure that the board discusses only those issues that clearly belong to the board to decide, not the director.
- Ensure board meeting deliberation is fair, open, thorough, efficient, limited to time, and to the point.
- Make interpretive decisions that fall within topics covered by board policies on Governance and Management.
- Chair board meetings with all commonly accepted powers.
- Conduct board meeting debriefing and quarterly self-assessments to ensure processes improve.
- Represent the board to outside parties by stating positions consistent with its policies, resolutions and by laws.
- Conduct an exit interview of the Director of Education.

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MONITORING

METHODS: Internal – Board Discussion and Self-Reflection

FREQUENCY: Yearly

MONTH: November Organizational Meeting

SAMPLE POLICY

POLICY TYPE: Limitations on Operations

POLICY TITLE: 3.1 General Constraints

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The director of education shall not cause in the school division any practice, activity, decision or circumstance which is either imprudent or unethical:

Accordingly:

- The director of education shall not treat or tolerate the treatment of students, parents, staff and community members in contravention of the board's Guiding Principles policy.
- The director of education shall not fail to offer programs which support and enhance the education of students
- The director may not cause or allow the development of fiscal jeopardy, or material deviation of actual expenditures from board priorities as established in the annual budget.
- The director of education may not allow assets to be unprotected, inadequately maintained or unnecessarily risked.
- The director of education may not permit the board of education to be uninformed regarding materials pertinent to the board.
- The director of education may not deviate from the responsibilities defined in the policy governance matrix.

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MONITORING

METHODS: Performance Review with Board Health Check

FREQUENCY: Annually

MONTH: February

## Implementing Strategic Policy Governance

In Strategic Policy Governance the Board Needs to Know:		To Establish Strategic Policy Governance the Director Needs to:	
1.	The board’s approach to governing the school system: What authority will the board delegate and what types of decisions will the board determine at meetings?	1.	Assist the board to examine and implement a sound approach to governing. Work to build common ground on delegation of authority and governance processes.
2.	The vision and desired ends of the organization: What business are we in? What will it look like when it is right? How will we know when the school system is successful?	2.	Focus the work of the board and the school system. Describe the preferred future in measurable terms as outcomes.
3.	The plan to achieve results. What specific strategies and actions need to be followed in regard to each strategic direction in order to achieve the key results identified by the Board? Who will do what, by when, and with what budget? Where is it most critical for the organization to focus its resources (effort, money, people, measures, accountability, passions) in order to achieve organizational success?	3.	Construct a strategic plan and implementation document to identify the strategies and actions to be taken, who has been assigned responsibility, the funding provided and the due date for each and assign responsibility to staff and include in performance evaluation criteria.
4.	Progress is being made: What progress is being made on the priorities and assigned strategies to achieve key results?	4.	Focus on providing evidence or measures of success that prove the results are being achieved to move the organization closer to the desired vision. Scheduled monitoring reports are provided to the Board. The primary focus of such reports is on accomplishment of key results. Activity is secondary. These reports also provide financial updates.

# Appendix A

## **POLICY GOVERNANCE IN A NUTSHELL**

Adapted from the writings of John Carver

Governance is a generic task, similar across vastly different organizations being governed. A board of education has a task more similar to the board of a giant industrial corporation than either acknowledges.

All fields of endeavour encounter their peculiar dilemmas and challenges. It is common in natural development of any pursuit for experience to yield helpful tips and shortcuts. To the extent a field continues to advance, frameworks or paradigms of thought develop in which the principles and concepts provide more effective guidance than tips ever can.

Policy Governance provides a framework for the board-staff relationship, planning, evaluation, and all other aspects of the board job. Unlike virtually every other approach to the board challenge, Policy Governance is a conceptually coherent model, intended as a complete replacement of the deeply flawed traditional wisdom about boards.

Watching a city council, school board, social service board, or trade association board reveals varying degrees of ritual, rework, trivia, and failure to act as a group. Our missions and our own integrity demand that boards govern rather than either rubber stamp or meddle. Our busy lives demand that time, energy and wisdom be well used and that boards and management should both be optimally empowered in their work.

It has long been said that boards should stick to making policy and leave administration to managers. It has also long been said that boards should be (a) more involved and (b) more arm's-length. The truth is that boards should be more involved in some things and less involved in others. Only a creditable model can reliably and powerfully help a board and its CEO know which is which.



Let's begin with the purpose of any governing board's job:

The purpose of [1] the board job is, [2] on behalf of some ownership, [3] to see to it that the organization[4] achieves what it should and [5] avoids what is unacceptable.

1. **The Board Job** – It is the board's responsibility to govern; the board has a commensurate authority to govern. Individual board members do not. That is, whatever authority is legitimately wielded by a board is wielded by the board as a group. Hence, a CEO is bound by what the board says, but never by what any board member says. A board should pledge to its CEO that it will never hold him or her accountable for keeping board members happy as individuals and will never hold him or her accountable for any criteria except those expressed officially by the full board. In other words, the board as a body is obligated to protect its staff from the board as individuals.

The “one voice” aspect of governance is regularly lost by having a host of board committees running about involving themselves in issues ostensibly delegated to staff. Staff members end up taking direction from segments of the board. Common committee roles do grave damage to the integrity of CEO delegation.

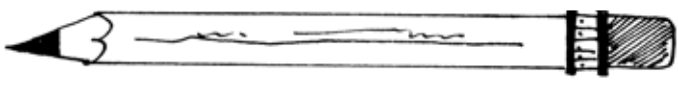
The suggestion here, also, is that the board has a specific job to do, a specific set of “values added” that justify its position. This differs from having a job that is essentially looking over everyone else's shoulders, reacting, and largely being steered around by whatever staff have been doing (the show-and-tell board meeting of staff reports) or are thinking about doing (reviewing and approving detailed plans). That a board has its own job to do means, if the board is responsible for getting its own job done, that board agendas should be the board's agendas, not the CEO's agenda for the board. Yet most board agendas are products of those who work for the board - a practice that would rarely occur anywhere else in an organization.

2. **On Behalf of Some Ownership** – Boards rarely “own” an organization themselves. They ordinarily are a microcosm of a larger ownership. The board speaks on their behalf, a task that requires (a) knowing who the owners are and what their desires are, (b) being able to distinguish owners from customers (clients, students, patients) and other stakeholder groups. Finding ways to link with owners even more than with management is a major challenge to any board.

3. **To See To It** – Seeing to it implies a commitment to assure, not simply to hope that things come out right. Seeing to it that things come out right requires three steps: First, the board must describe “right” - that is, the criteria that would signify success. Second, the board must hold someone accountable for reaching these criteria – the CEO. Third, the board must systematically and rigorously check to see if criteria are being met, that is, the board must monitor performance regularly.

Traditional board operation fails in all three areas, especially in the first and third. Outcome expectations (what difference is to be made in recipients’ lives) are rarely or incompletely stated. Acceptability of practices and methods is rarely clarified. Hence, when a board tries to monitor, it has no criteria against which to do so. The result is not monitoring, but foraging about.

4. **Achieves What It Should** – What should any organization achieve? This is the most important aspect of instructing the CEO. The only achievement that justifies organizational existence is that which causes sufficient benefits for the right recipients to be worth the cost. What good is this organizations to accomplish, for whom, at what cost or relative worth?
5. **Avoids What is Unacceptable** – Putting the board’s emphasis on ends is a powerful tactic for board leadership, but the board cannot forget that it is also accountable for the means as well. “Means” include not only practices and methods, but situations and conduct as well - in other words, all aspects of the organization that are not ends. It is a dilemma: on the one hand, boards are accountable for staff practices and situations, yet dealing with them directly trivializes the board job. Policy Governance offers a safer way for boards to deal with this dilemma: The board can simply state the means that are unacceptable, then get out of the way except to demand data (monitor) that the boundaries thus set are being observed.

<p><b>Notes</b></p>	
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**My Personal Plan of Action**

In order to strengthen the governance of our board of education, I make a commitment to:

State the Area You Want to Improve	I Commit Myself to the Following	When Will I Do This?	How Will I Know I Have Been Successful





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