

Leadership & Governance

Implications and Connections

The Association of Alberta Public
Charter Schools

Charter School Board Workshop

Purpose of workshop:

1. To develop a clearer understanding of the role of the Board.
2. To understand the relationship between leadership and governance.
3. To develop board cohesiveness.

Role of a charter school board

- Who are we? As individuals. As a board.
[Leaders who serve. We speak with “one voice” not as individuals]
- Who/what are the bodies that give us context?
[Relationships with the people/groups we serve – students, staff, parents, AB Ed etc.]
- What do we do?
[Govern]
- What should we be doing as a board?
[Insure we are “effective” as leaders e.g. D.C.O.M]
- What tools do we currently have in place? What might we need?
[School Act, Policy handbook, Charter agreement, Bylaws]

Role of a charter school board (2)

Overview:

- “Governance is the act of governing”. The word “governance” comes from the Greek word “to steer”. Governance means to decide.
- School boards that govern well attend to the following components of effective practice:
 - * **Leadership** – setting a progressive direction for the school system
 - * **Stewardship** – Overseeing the successful operation of the school system
 - * **Relationship** – Empowering staff & creating connections with all those who have stake in effective public education for children and youth in the province.

Consultant Hildy Gottlieb says that Boards tend to spend more time involved with stewardship and relationships than with leadership.

Reflection:

1. **How do you define board leadership? How do you know when it is strong?**
2. **What are the key components to board stewardship? How do you measure success?**
3. **What are the key components to board relationships? How can you tell when relationships are solid?**

How does good leadership relate to good governance?

- Leadership vs. management – What is the difference?
- Trust vs. mistrust – How do good leaders develop trust?
- IQ vs. EQ – How important is emotional/social intelligence to a leader?
- Effective organizations vs. ineffective organizations – What are the differences?
- Board governance models – What are they?

D.C.O.M – The Four Habits of Highly Effective Organizations

Effective boards can answer “yes” to these D.C.O.M. questions.

Direction: Does everyone in the organization clearly understand what is most important?

Competence: Do(es) the organization (and its individuals) have the capability to achieve the organization’s vision?

Opportunity: Are there adequate resources and are obstacles to performance removed?

Motivation: Do people want to do the right things and are the consequences of action aligned with the organization’s direction?

What happens if any of the D.C.O.M. components are missing?

- If you have competence, opportunity and motivation but lack direction, you get chaos.
- If you have direction, opportunity and motivation, but lack competence, you will eventually “bankrupt” the organization because well-directed, highly motivated people with resources will drive the organization into the ground.
- If opportunity is weak, even the best performers get frustrated because they lack the time, tools and authority to remove barriers in order to perform optimally.
- If motivation is low, performers become lethargic. There is no extra effort because the consequences for going that extra step are ambiguous, meaningless or even unpleasant.

(Hilgren & Jacobs, GLC, Pittsburgh)

Effectiveness

Role of Charter School Board in enhancing “effectiveness”:

1. How does a Board support the provision of “direction” for its school?
2. Without becoming overly involved in “management” what part does a Board play in insuring that “competence” is present, both for the staff as well as for itself?
3. How does a Board insure that opportunities to succeed are present so that “obstacles” are removed from the way a school and its administration carry out their assignments?
4. What part does a Board play in “motivating” itself and others to do their best?

Governance?

“Governance is what a government does. It’s the act of governing. Governance relates to consistent management, cohesive policies, procedures and decision-rights for a given area of responsibility”.

- What does the School Act say about Charter Schools? (Sections 31-38)
- What is the difference between policy and procedure?
- Why are effective boards most concerned with policy while leaving administration to handle procedures?
- Why is there a move towards separating “policies” and “procedures” in board documents? Eg. Having both a Policy Manual and a separate Administrative Procedures Handbook.
- Why are so few policies required in Alberta’s public schools?
- How are policies and procedures stated in your charter school? Are responsibilities clearly delineated?
- Are the policies and procedures in your charter school related to D.C.O.M.? That is, do they enhance or inhibit the “effectiveness” of your administration and the board?
- What are the main tasks of boards?
- What models of governance exist?

Reflection: What charter school policy manuals might be seen as good models?

Tasks of Boards

Besides “Leadership, Stewardship and Relationship”, another way to describe the main tasks of boards is as follows:

1. Fiduciary leadership – relates to the “what” (e.g. finance)
2. Strategic leadership – relates to the “how” (e.g. plans)
3. Generative leadership – relates to the “why” (e.g. vision)

* Fiduciary and Strategic leadership relate to “means” while Generative leadership relates to “ends”.

A common difficulty with boards is the overconcentration on the “means” rather than the “ends”.

Self-evaluation

Assignment:

Examine previous board meeting agendas and note the items which are:

1. Fiduciary – related to finances, legal, bureaucratic obligations.
2. Strategic – related to planning.
3. Generative – related to making sense of complex issues which have no clear answer

What % of the meetings were dedicated to each area?

How meaningful and/or rewarding were these meetings to individual directors? Senior administrators?

Models of Governance

1. **Policy Board** – A traditional model. A partnership is developed between the board chair (president) and the CEO in order to lead and manage the organization. A series of committees do the work of the board and these are often supported by senior staff.
2. **Policy Governance Board** – John Carver describes this model in Boards that Make a Difference. The model provides a structure and method of proscribing limits on the CEO's responsibilities. Emphasis is placed on the main purpose of the board – policy development. The board works as a whole and speaks with one voice.
3. **Working or Administrative Board** – A working board has some responsibilities for the operations of the organization. In addition to providing policy and general direction, the board members may help in practical ways such as organizing events and drafting documents.
4. **Collective Board** – A collective is a group of like-minded people working towards a specific goal. The individuals within the collective have a responsibility to define and support the basic philosophy of working as a collective.

Reflection: Which model best describes your board? Why? Is it successful?

Common challenges to governance

1. Role confusion – requires not only an awareness of the “models of governance” but also an understanding of the personal and social aspects of “team”.
2. Relationships – “leadership is about relationships”. What legacy do you want your leadership to be remembered for?
3. Trust – “the social glue that binds every organization”

“Leadership is about relationships”

- “If organizations are to survive and thrive today, they must avoid the mechanistic Industrial Age model of treating people like a cog on a wheel and instead create humanistic conditions of trust and adaptability through life leadership, cooperation, connectivity and communication [i.e. relationships]”
 - Dr. Eli Sopow, “Bioleadership”
- “By asking ourselves how we want to be remembered, we plant the seeds for living our lives as if we matter”.
 - Kouzes & Posner, “A Leader’s Legacy”
- * “Reflect on what you want to create in your life and more important, what gift you wish to leave the world when you are no longer here”.
 - Robin Sharma, “Who Will Cry When You Die?”

12 Leadership Legacy Traits

1. Remembered for interpersonal skills, EQ, & team building ability.
2. Not remembered for title but for credibility, influence, compassion, understanding, patience & integrity.
3. Courageous. Willing to take a stand, often with quiet tenacity rather than bravado.
4. Look inward before acting outward. Know themselves. Are authentic & teachable.
5. Know how & when to be quiet. Ask questions & research before acting.
6. Are teachers. Know everyone is growing & provide for that opportunity. Encourage continuous learning & growth for all, including themselves.
7. Are approachable. Create a safe environment.
8. Balance managing by influence with managing by authority.

12 Leadership Legacy Traits (2)

9. Empower others & ensure their success. Plan & train their successors.
10. Don't build followers but rather build more leaders.
11. Visualize tomorrow's possibilities & incorporate small, achievable steps to achieve them.
12. Set examples of excellence, not perfection.

* Walter Lippman

Reflection:

How will your board be remembered for its leadership?

How will individual directors be remembered for their leadership?

Relationships, Trust & Governance

- How do relationships connect to the effectiveness of an organization's governance?
Happiness? D.C.O.M.? Speed? IQ/EQ?
Change?
- How can you measure an organization's trust level?
- How can you increase the level of trust in an organization?

The Speed of Trust

- “There is a good business argument for paying attention to the trust level in your organization”. (Stephen M.R. Covey)
- If trust is high, speed is high and costs are down.
- If trust is low, speed is low and costs are up.
- Examples?

The Speed of Trust 2

Five waves of Trust: Self trust, Relationship trust, Organizational trust, Market trust and Societal trust.

How do you build trust?

13 Behaviors:

1. Talk Straight
2. Demonstrate Respect
3. Create Transparency
4. Right Wrongs
5. Show Loyalty
6. Deliver Results
7. Get Better
8. Confront Realty
9. Clarify Expectations
10. Practice Accountability
11. Listen First
12. Keep Commitments
13. Extend Trust

Emotional Banking

- We need to appreciate that there are emotional bank accounts which hold the trust that has been built up in relationships. We can make both deposits and withdrawals.

DEPOSITS

- Kindness
- Keeping promises
- Honoring expectations
- Loyalty

WITHDRAWALS

- Unkindness
- Breaking promises
- Violating expectations
- Duplicity

Trust: A function of two ingredients

“Trust is a function of 2 things: character and competence. Character includes your integrity, your motive, your intent with people. Competence includes your capabilities, your skills, your results, your track record. Both are vital”.

(Stephen M.R. Covey, The Speed of Trust)

Tree analogy:

Character is largely below the ground – the roots. Competence is above – the trunk , limbs and leaves.

Change, Trust and Governance

Leadership Styles (Daniel Goleman)

- Coercive – the leader demands compliance. (“Do what I tell you”).
- Pacesetter – the leader sets high standards for performance. (“Do as I do, now”).
- Authoritative – the leader mobilizes people toward a vision. (“Come with me”).
- Affiliative – the leader creates harmony and builds emotional bonds. (“People come first”).
- Democratic – the leader forges consensus through participation. (“What do you think?”).
- Coaching – the leader develops people for the future. (“Try this”).

Reflection: Which style(s) support(s) change? Trust? Effective governance? Why?

Measuring Trust/Team*

- Trust Level Survey – Form A (W. Morin)
- Trust Level Survey – Form B (W. Morin)
- Supports for Positive Interpersonal Relationships Surveys (1,2 & 3)
- Team Building Self-Assessment Exercise
- Team Maturity Scale

*Instruments are available upon request to TAAPCS.

- How can information from these instruments be used to address governance issues?
- Continue/stop/start?
- Appreciative Inquiry?
- Action plan format?

10 Mistakes of Charter Boards

1. Individual board members acting as if they have authority to make decisions.
2. Conducting illegal meetings by not properly posting a meeting, taking action in a workshop or executive session, or discussing inappropriate topics in executive session.
3. Approving a budget that is not based on realistic projections.
4. Meeting too often and for too long.
5. Failing to keep corporate records, such as the charter application, contract, bylaws, Articles of Incorporation, meeting minutes, etc., in a safe location where people can use them (including student academic achievement records).
6. Micromanaging or failing to focus on what matters most.
7. Agreeing to capital financing terms that overextend the charter school's budget (usually the result of projecting student enrollment too high).
8. Neglecting the board's responsibility to create and to govern through board policies.
9. Failing to communicate with relevant constituencies (e.g. parents, AB Ed.)
10. Terminating the principal based on the belief "there must be a better principal out there somewhere".

Reflection: How well does your board do in avoiding these mistakes?

Best Practices of Charter Boards

1. A clearly delineated, written governance structure with only one staff person reporting to the board.
2. Ongoing board training based on identified needs plus orientation and mentors for new board members.
3. Once a month, properly posted meetings focused on leading the charter school in alignment with the vision and mission statements.
4. Zero tolerance for email discussions or decision-making.
5. Less than half of the business meetings have an Executive Session.
6. Involved future board members on subcommittees or projects in order to acquaint them with the work of the school and give the current board an idea of how that individual would conduct themselves as a board member.
7. A strategic plan to guide them in meeting long-term and short-term goals.
8. A board subcommittee that develops the school budget, financial policies and procedures and an internal/external audit process.
9. Board packets sent to individual board members a week before the meeting.
10. A board policy manual that is easy to understand and clearly communicates the board's values.

Best Practices of Charter Boards 2

11. A focus on outcomes rather than process.
12. Individual board members that network with key individuals in the community and monitor charter school legislation.
13. A proactive rather than a reactive mindset.
14. A understanding of each other's strengths and weaknesses.
15. A practice of evaluating itself at least annually.
16. A standard board calendar with items that are addressed on a regular basis.
17. Efficient, productive meetings.
18. A practice of using Roberts Rules of Order (or a modification thereof) to conduct meetings.
19. Financial checks and balances that provide for good oversight of public funds.
20. Individual board members always learning about charter school or education issues.

Reflection: How well does your board do in enacting these practices?

Board Self-Evaluation

1. Done annually in conjunction with Superintendent's evaluation?
2. Example of Focus Questions:
 - a. How well have we fulfilled each of our defined roles in relation to our mission, goals and objectives as a Board this past year?
 - b. How do we perceive our interpersonal working relationships?
 - c. How well do we receive input and how well do we communicate?
 - d. How well have we adhered to our annual work plan?
 - e. How would we rate our Board-Superintendent relations?
 - f. How well have we adhered to our governance policies?
 - g. What have we accomplished this past year? How do we know?

* Suzuki Charter School

Reflection: How could the 10 Mistakes of Charter Boards and/or the Best Practices of Charter Boards be used for annual board self-evaluation?

Next steps?

Board Satisfaction Checklist

- | | Not Sat. | Sat. | Very sat. |
|---|----------|------|-----------|
| • 1. Handle the money and file the forms | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| • 2. Keep it legal and safe | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| • 3. Make big decisions for the future | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| • 4. Make sure the organization stays accountable | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| • 5. Get help when you need it | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| • 6. Plan for the arrival & departure of individual members | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| • 7. Get the work done | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| • 8. Support the work of others | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| • 9. Be ambassadors to the community | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| • 10. Pass along a strong legacy | ___ | ___ | ___ |
- Management needs? Policy Needs? Procedure needs?
Areas of responsibility?
 - Who, what, where, when, why and how?