Board Business or Staff Business?

An Agenda That Works

Greetings. Please read the American School Board Journal "Adviser" (handout)

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Agenda

- What's wrong with board meetings?
- Governance – the work of boards
- What is board business? Staff business?
- What does a 'board' agenda look like?
- A strategy for the board to use in creating an agenda to do board work

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Some Problems With Meeting Agendas

- [Not enough] Time
- [Misplaced] Priorities
- [Lack of] Relevance
- [Focus of] Staff
- [Interests of the] Public
- [Self-defeating] Board Members

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Time

- Not enough board time
  - 1 mtg/month @ 3 hours/meeting = 36 hrs/yr
  - 3 mtgs a month @ 4 hours/mtg = 144 hrs/yr
- Compare with staff time
  - 40 hours/week x 50 weeks = 2,000 hrs

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Priorities

- Whose priorities?
  Staff or Board
- Misplaced board priorities
  Doing things right vs. Doing the right things
- Unfocussed agenda
  Do agendas reflect board priorities?

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Relevance

- Urgent crowds out Important
  "By the time we got to important items on the agenda, we were too tired to do the work that was needed." - Board member
- Trivial Pursuits
  Dominated by routines and procedure and personal agenda items

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Staff

- Whoever prepares agenda…
  …directs the directors
- Staff work – staff reports
  Board's primary conversation is with staff
- Board work – reacting to staff
  Who's setting priorities?
- Public input – focus on plans, programs, resources, activities
  Staff Work

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The Public

Expectations about boards:

- Politics and Politicians
- Meetings are for airing problems, and board members are problem solvers, but
  - problems take time
  - take staff time
- Every organization issue is a board issue
- Every board issue is worked at board meetings

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Board Members

- Input to the agenda
  - Abdication to CEO
  - Personal 'agenda' items
- Ill-disciplined
  - Not easy to 'think as one'
  - Over-reliance on consensus
  - Under-reliance on Robert's Rules

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Agendas We've Seen

- Call to Order/Flag Salute
- Approval of Minutes
- Consent Agenda – Hiring, Resignations, Voucher Approval
- Special People – Recognition
- Reports
  - 1.
  - 2.
- Old Business
  - 3.
  - 4.
- New Business
  - 4.
  - 5.

Most Meeting Time

- Announcements – Board End-of-year Reception
- Adjourn

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Agendas We've Seen

- Call to Order/Flag Salute
- Approval of Minutes
- Consent Agenda – Hiring, Resignations, Voucher Approval
- Special People – Recognition
- Reports
  - 1. DECA Business Club
  - 2. Host School Report
  - 3. Affirmative Action Report
- New Business
  - 1. Course Approval
- Announcements
- Adjourn

Board Initiative Staff Initiative Legal Mandate

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Agendas We've Seen

- Call to Order/Flag Salute
- Approval of Minutes
- Consent Agenda – Hiring, Resignations, Voucher Approval
- Special People – Recognition
- Reports
  - 1. CEO's Conference
  - 2. New Principal Evaluation Form
  - 3. Budget Status
- New Business
  - 4. Facilities Use Agreement
  - 5. Food Services Contract
  - 6. Textbook Adoptions
  - 7. Salary Schedules
- Announcements
- Adjourn

Board Initiative Staff Initiative Legal Mandate

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The Appearance of Governance

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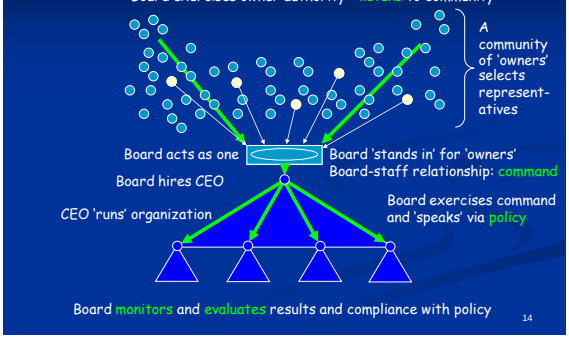
What Governance Is



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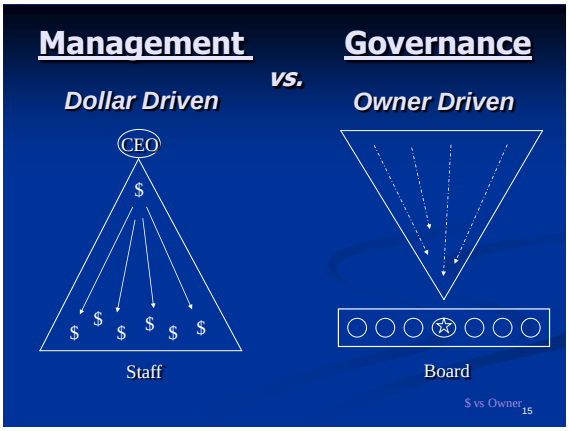
Management vs. Governance



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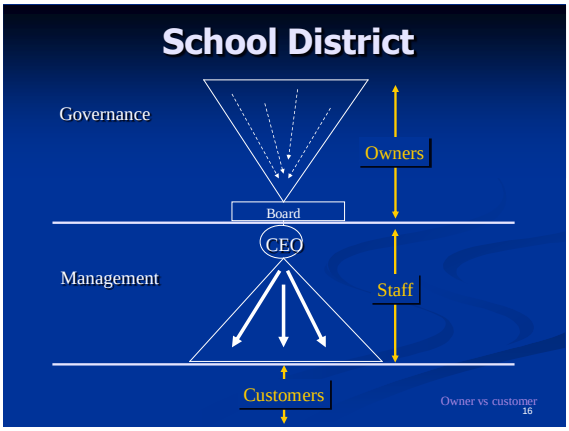
School District



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Your Turn

From your perspective...

What is "board business"? and what is "staff business"?

Let's Talk

Board Business

- Set direction for the organization
- Monitor organization performance
- Concerned with WHAT…
  …is to be accomplished:
  - Academic achievement
  - Character
  - Citizenship

} END RESULTS

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Staff Business

- Achieve results
- Follow policy
- Concerned with HOW…to get the organization where it must go:
  - Curriculum/Instruction
  - Schedules
  - Bus routes
  - Facility constr/maint

} MEANS

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Board Business

- Identify desired results for students
- Set policy that guides staff work
- Monitor for results
- Monitor for compliance with policy
- Connect with the community
- Board development

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Staff Business

- Means – Anything that isn't an End
- Means – 'freedom within limitations'
- Do Ends justify Means?
  - YES…Success = Desired Results
  - NO…Prohibit Unacceptable Means
  - Any reasonable interpretation of policy

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Ends/Means Distinction

- Ends identify results for beneficiaries
  [What good…for Whom…at What Cost or Priority]
  - "All Students will achieve level 3 on the state test"
  - "All Students will demonstrate successful job skills"
  - BOARDS prioritize (obsess on) ENDS
- Means are everything else
  - "organization budget will maintain 5% reserve"
  - "Instruction will not deviate from adopted curriculum"
  - "Transportation costs will not exceed state-funded amounts by more than 15%"
  - BOARDS only set boundaries on STAFF MEANS

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Meeting Focus

- Who prepares the agenda?
- Staff? If the staff does it…
  - You can expect the agenda to address Staff business
- Board? If the board does it…
  - You should be able to expect the agenda to address Board business

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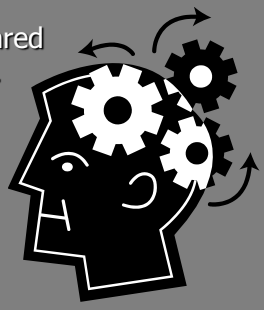
Your Turn

If the board prepared **its own** agenda…

What would that agenda look like?



Let's Talk

The Board's Own Agenda

Q: How can the board prepare its agenda?

- Part-time board, full-time staff
- State-mandated agenda items
- Everything on our agenda is important

A: Limit the board's scope

- Expand the board's vision (>1 yr)
- Follow an annual agenda

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Annual Agenda

- An Agenda a Board can plan
- Plan Monitoring…
  - …of both Ends and Means
  - …against written criteria
- Plan Linkage with the community
- Plan Policy Review
  - Policies that guide staff
  - Policies that guide board

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Annual Agenda

	Board	Bd/Supt Rel	Ends	Limits
July	1,2,3,4			2
August	8			1,3,4,7,8
September	11			9,10
October			2	18
November	13			13,14
December		1,2,3,4		11,12
January		5		
February				17
March	5,6,7		3	
April	12			5,16
May	9,10		1	15
June		5		6

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Annual Agenda

	Linkage	Board Development	Other
July			CEO Contract
August	w/ Citizen Assn	Board Retreat	
September			Staff Day
October	Ends		
November		State Conference	
December			
January	Citizenship		
February	w/ Students		
March	w/ City Council		
April		National Conference	
May	w/ Businesses		Awards Dinner
June			Graduation

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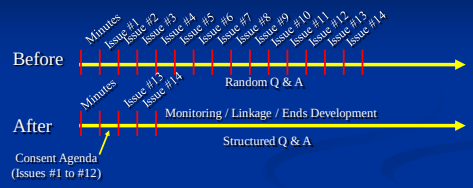
Each Meeting Agenda



- More time on key issues
- More time discussing owner's opinions
- Improved focus on Supt monitoring

GP 8 31

Agenda Prepared by Board

- Call to Order/Flag Salute
  - Approval of Minutes
  - Announcements/Comments
  - Consent Agenda
- Assurance of Organizational Performance
  - 1. CEO Update
  - 2. Ends Monitoring – Citizenship/Character
  - 3. Board Response to Monitoring – Student Conduct/Discipline
  - 4. Board Self-Monitoring – Board Job Description
- ownership Linkage
  - 5. Joint Meeting with City Council – Citizenship/Character
- Policy Review
  - 6. Governing Style
- Announcements
- Adjourn

Board Initiative Staff Initiative Legal Mandate

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Your Turn

If we want board meetings to focus on "board business"…

How do we do that?

Let's Talk

Wanted

- Strategy for doing board business…
- …by choosing systematically NOT to do staff business

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Strategy for Board Meetings

That do the Board's Business

- Obligations
  1. Represent the Community (Owners)
  2. Account to the Owners
  3. Policy – for #1 and #2

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Strategy for Board Meetings
That do the Board's Business

- Community of Owners – The real boss
  - Board 'stands in' for owners
    Listens to the owners
- Accountability – Monitoring
  - "Organization does things the boss checks"
    Monitor data as called for in policy
  - "Don't ask how things are going until you've said how things ought to be"
    Evaluate data against criteria for success

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Strategy for Board Meetings
That do the Board's Business

- Policy – Board's Means – Gives direction
  - Directs the CEO thru policy
  - Directs staff thru the CEO
  - Expectations for Results
  - Expectations for Policy Compliance
  - Board gives as much guidance as needed – and not one word more

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Board-Controlled vs Staff-Controlled

- Agenda Items Prepared by the Staff
  - Approval to repair a roof
  - Accept bids on a school remodel
  - Budget review and approval
- Agenda Items Prepared by the Board
  - How are students performing?
  - What do 'owners' think of their schools?
  - Do programs need to change due to new information/trends? (e.g.: The World is Flat)

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Board's Purpose

- The Board stands in for 'owners'
  - It's primary connection is with 'owners' (not staff)

- In meetings…
  Board connects with 'owners' to learn their values and priorities

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Governing Style

- The Board speaks with one voice
- The Board directs only through policy

- In meetings…
  Board acts by voting on policies – Board majority 'speaks' via policy

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Board Self-Assessment

- The Board evaluates whether it complies with its own governance process policies

- In meetings…
  Board assesses its own performance at the end of each meeting

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Board Job Description

- The job of the Board is to ensure the organization achieves what it should and avoids doing what is not acceptable

- In meetings…
  Board does its job by connecting with its ownership, setting policy, and monitoring to ensure performance

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Monitoring Performance

- The Board monitors organization performance: achievement of desired results, and compliance with policy limitations

- In meetings…
  Board monitors organization performance and compares data against policy criteria

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The Chair's Role

- Chair is responsible for ensuring the Board follows its own policies

- In meetings…
  Chair ensures the Board follows its agenda

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Agenda Planning

- Contents of Board's annual agenda:
  - Linkages – Listen to the owners
  - Monitoring – Judge organization performance
  - Policy Review – Entire set reviewed each year

- In meetings…
  Parts of meetings – planned linkages, scheduled monitoring, and policy review

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Annual Board Agenda

- Linkage/Monitoring/Policy PLUS
  - Board development

- In meetings…
  Board schedules opportunities to inform its members and to improve its capacity to govern

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Monitoring Documents

- Report of ends achievement…
- Report of means compliance…
  …based on criteria written in policy

- In meetings…
  Board judges achievement/ compliance and prepares written responses that build an annual evaluation of the organization

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Board Member Conduct

- Guided by its own policies for board conduct
- In meetings…
  Chair is responsible for compliance, and is assessed at the end of each meeting

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Supt Evaluation

- The Board monitors organization (Supt) performance data against written policy criteria
- The only measurement of success:
  - Did the organization achieve desired Ends?
  - Did the organization comply with Executive Limitations?
- In meetings…
  Valuable board-CEO performance discussion is extensive and lasts all year long

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Board Meetings: Board Business

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

Q: "What's going on?"

New:
- Link with 'owners'
- Monitor performance
- Revise policies
- Agenda prep by board in annual plan and written in policy

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

Strategic 51

Effective Meetings

- Time – More time for board business
- Priorities – On board's work
- Relevance – What boards can do
- Staff – Focus on responding
- Public – Is represented & consulted
- Board Members – Do what they are capable of doing

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In Summary

- By taking control of the board agenda, you spend the board's meeting time on board business, and…
- …you produce an agenda that WORKS

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Questions?

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