

SESSION TITLE: WORKING WITH NEW BOARDS

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Participant Handout
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Orient – “to set right by adjusting to facts and principles, to acquaint with the existing situation or environment” –Webster

Session Overview

- Provide a framework for orienting/preparing new and experienced trustees/boards for the realities, challenges and opportunities of educational governance
- Review, for discussion by participants, some current mindsets of educational governance in BC
- Identify, for discussion by participants, some major current issues of educational governance in BC
- Review, for discussion by participants, a sampling of educational, political and financial trends influencing educational governance
- Suggest, for use by participants who so wish, templates and topics for trustee orientation and ongoing in-service
- Suggest, for discussion by participants, some “best practices” for senior administrator – trustee/board relationships

What is Governance?

- The authoritative allocation of values
- Choosing among alternatives
- Managing expectations and conflict (value conflict, factual conflict and strategic conflict)
- Ensuring fair representation and democracy in policy making
- Establishing “culture” and “climate”
- Providing acceptable quality of service
- Taking responsibility for results

Current Mindsets Influencing Education Policy Making/Governance

- The need for public education to be responsive, effective and efficient
- The need for public education to document value received for money invested in public education
- The need for governance structures/practices that ensure that the requirements of learners comes first
- The need to address the affordability issue – the cost of public education is challenging the public’s willingness and ability to pay
- The popularity and widespread appeal of market-based reforms as instruments of educational change

Major Issues of Education Policy Making/Governance

- The widening mandate and the management of expectations
- The private good versus the public good (Is public education a cost or an investment?)
- Lay control vs. professional control
- Centralization vs. decentralization
- The purposes of school reform
- The limited grasp of the production function in education
- Inequalities
- Future funding prospects
- Lack of new ideas

A Sampling of Some Current Trends Influencing Education Policy Making/Governance

- Deficit/debt reduction will be attractive goals for government
- The political base for public education will continue to shrink
- Addressing inequalities between the rich and poor, advantaged and disadvantaged, and the privileged and disenfranchised will have implications for school system mandates and costs
- The increasing awareness that a child's success at school will be determined by their development during the first five years
- The prospects of no new money for public education, the increased politicization of education caused by scarce funds
- The proliferation of alternate, non-traditional (and sometimes controversial) sources of revenue
- Changing conceptions of teaching, learning, and what is worth learning
- Curriculum more linked to standards (not simply content coverage)
- The continuing proliferation of new linkages between learners and subject matter. Access to new linkages will challenge the monopoly of schools and introduce greater competition.

Significant Documents to Review with Boards

- School District Manual of Policies and Administrative Procedures
- The *School Act*, School Act Related Regulations and Orders-in-Council, and School Act Ministerial Orders
- Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education Plan
- Funding Allocation System
- The Operating Budget
- The School District Strategic Directions Framework
- The School District Accountability Contract (Performance Plan)

School District Manual of Policies and Administrative Procedures

- Governance and Foundations
- Instructional Programs and Services
- Student Conduct and Welfare
- Parent and Community Relations
- Human Resources
- Organization and Management
- Financial Management
- Equipment and Facilities
- Board Bylaws

Relevant New/Revised Sections of the *School Act*

- Accountability: accountability contracts, special advisors, accountability cycle
- Parent Involvement: school planning councils, parent advisory councils, district parent advisory councils
- Financial Activities: allocation of funds, preparing operating budget, accounting practices
- Board Powers: partnerships, revenue generation, disposal of assets, closing schools
- Enrolment in Educational Programs: choice, available space, application procedures, neighbourhood schools
- Eligibility Requirements for Base Per Pupil Funding

Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education Plan

- Required Areas of Study, Recommended Time Allotments and Graduation Requirements
- Performance Standards
- Student Placement
- A Common Core of Learning
- Principles of Instruction
- Student Assessment
- Reporting Student Achievement
- Provincial Curriculum: Integrated Resource Packages (IRP)
- Students with Special Needs (Individual Education Plans, Adaptation and Modification)
- Challenge, Equivalency, Independent/Directed Studies and Partial Credit
- Information and Communication Technologies
- Languages Policy (Heritage Languages, French Immersion, and ESL)
- Career Education

Funding Allocation System

- Student Base Allocation
- Supplements – unique student needs: special education, ESL, aboriginal education [targeted], adult education
- Supplement – enrolment decline: when enrolment decline > one percent
- Supplement – salary differentials: where average teacher salary > provincial average salary
- Supplement – transportation and housing
- Supplement – unique geographical factors: low enrolment, distance from regional centre and Vancouver, sparsity, climate, small communities, small isolated schools
- Supplement – Buffer Grant

The Operating Budget

- Budget Principles and Preparation Instructions
- General Features
- Revenue Sources: provincial operating grant, other sources, prior year's surplus/deficit
- Expenditures by Function
- Expenditures by Program
- Expenditures by Object
- Enrolment and Staffing Levels
- Unmet Needs
- Impact Statements
- "Risk Factors"
- Contingency/Reserve

School District Strategic Directions Framework

- School District Characteristics
- Environmental Scan (context)
- Mission Statement
- Mandate
- Core Values/Beliefs
- Goals, Objectives, Strategies, Indicators
- Annual Priorities: curriculum and instruction, human resources, facilities and planning, financial activities, corporate services

The School District Accountability Contract (Performance Plan)

- Review student achievement using provincial and local performance data
- Identify areas for improvement
- Set specific targets for improvement
- Describe strategies to address the targets
- Establish measures to track progress in meeting performance targets

Current Provincial Priorities in Curriculum and Instruction

- Reading; early identification/intervention, teaching reading, and reading in the content areas
- Mathematics: early numeracy, grade 7/8 transitions, and participation levels at senior levels
- Social Responsibility
- Addressing Diversity: special education programs/services and ESL
- Safe and Caring Schools: codes of conduct, violence prevention
- Improving Success Rates of Aboriginal Students: removing obstacles to success, reading and numeracy, school completion, attendance
- Applications of Information Technology
- Assessing and Reporting Student Progress: performance standards, criterion-referenced assessment
- Graduation Requirements
- New Linkages of Learners and Programs: active learning, new service delivery models, choice in accessing learning opportunities, challenge/equivalency/external programs

Current Provincial Reform Priorities

- Effective new ways of linking learners with programs
- Performance standards
- Criterion-referenced assessment
- Innovative, cost effective and diverse ways of delivering educational programs and supports
- Expanded use of information technology
- New ways of organizing schools
- New management techniques and technologies
- New and entrepreneurial sources of funding
- New approaches to governance
- Partnerships

Role of Board and Senior Administration in Leading Change – Some Suggestions

- Define and explain change (the “what” and the “why”)
- Build and foster a “spirit of inquiry-mindedness”
- Build shared vision, goals and motivation/momentum – create a sense of urgency and energy
- Communicate the vision and goals broadly and frequently
- Build shared responsibilities for “quality” and shared ownership of issues, challenges and successes
- Build system, school and individual capacity – empower people to act on the vision
- Provide pressure and support
- Produce short term results – “quick wins” – to build/maintain capacity and momentum
- Broaden the base of leadership
- Monitor, provide feedback, celebrate successes
- Anchor new behaviours/practices in the school district and school culture

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