

Balanced Governance: Formative Evaluation Review

Jefferson County Board of Education
Work Session
April 15–16, 2016

Elected Boards Under Attack



“The local school board, especially the elected kind, is an anachronism and an outrage....”

“We can no longer pretend it’s working well.....”

“We need to.....put this dysfunctional arrangement out of its misery....”

Chester E. Finn Jr., President,
Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2014

How to Improve School Boards?

Headline

“First, Kill All the School Boards

A modest proposal to fix the schools”

–Headline: Special “State of the Union” Issue

The national Atlantic Monthly magazine, 2008





“I can state unequivocally, that neither state nor federal policy makers can redesign school districts. Only those leading districts can.”

“Board members.... are close enough to communities and schools to see what needs to be done....”

Former Secretary of Education, Rod Paige

A Second Chance?

“The fact that board members can influence achievement, even loosely, merits much more attention—surely by scholars but also by voters, parents, taxpayers, and other policy-makers.”

*Chester Finn–Fordham Institute Report: Shober & Hartney, 2014–Does School Board Leadership Matter?



Are Elected School Boards Still Viable Today?



ILLUSTRATION / MICHAEL WITTE

School Boards At Risk

“Everyone knows that elected school boards don’t work.....the top performing countries don’t use local governance”

–SPU Keynote: Dr. Thomas Maridada, **Children’s Defense Fund**– Director of Education Policy, Practice and Strategic Initiatives, 2014



Local Autonomy is Critical

“..systems that grant more autonomy to schools to define and elaborate their curriculum and assessments perform better than systems that don’t..”

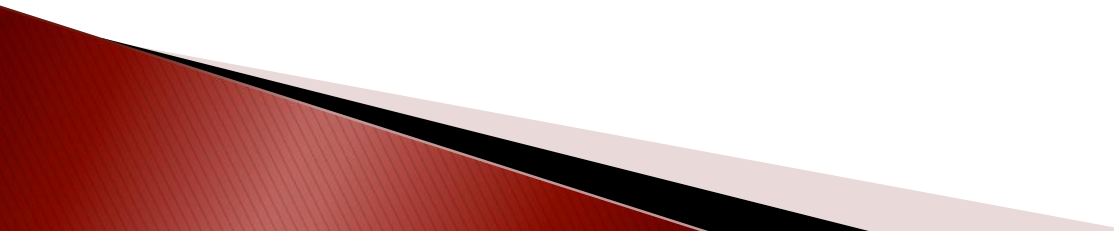
“there is a positive correlation in school autonomy for resource allocation and improved student performance”

Strong Performers and Successful Reformers in Education – PISA Report 2012



“As we have said before, local school boards are the *crucible of democracy*. Local school elections in America provide the closest example of democracy for the American people.”

Laurence Iannaccone/Frank Lutz, 2008
Professors Emeritus,
Univ. of California/Texas A & M
Democratic board theorists, 1959



GERM THREAT

• GERM

• Global Educational Reform Movement

• standardization

• emphasis on literacy and numeracy

• teaching prescribed curriculum

• control

• test-based accountability

(Sahlberg, 2011; pp. 99-106, Kuusilehto & Lahtero, 2011; Risku, 2013)

Effects of Balanced Governance

Does the Choice of School Board Governance
Model Matter to Student Performance?

What the Research Says? (Alsbury, 2008)

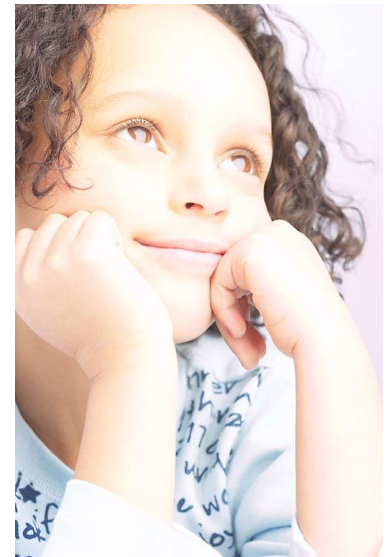
Frequent Politically-Contentious Board turnover



Frequent Superintendent turnover



Student achievement decline

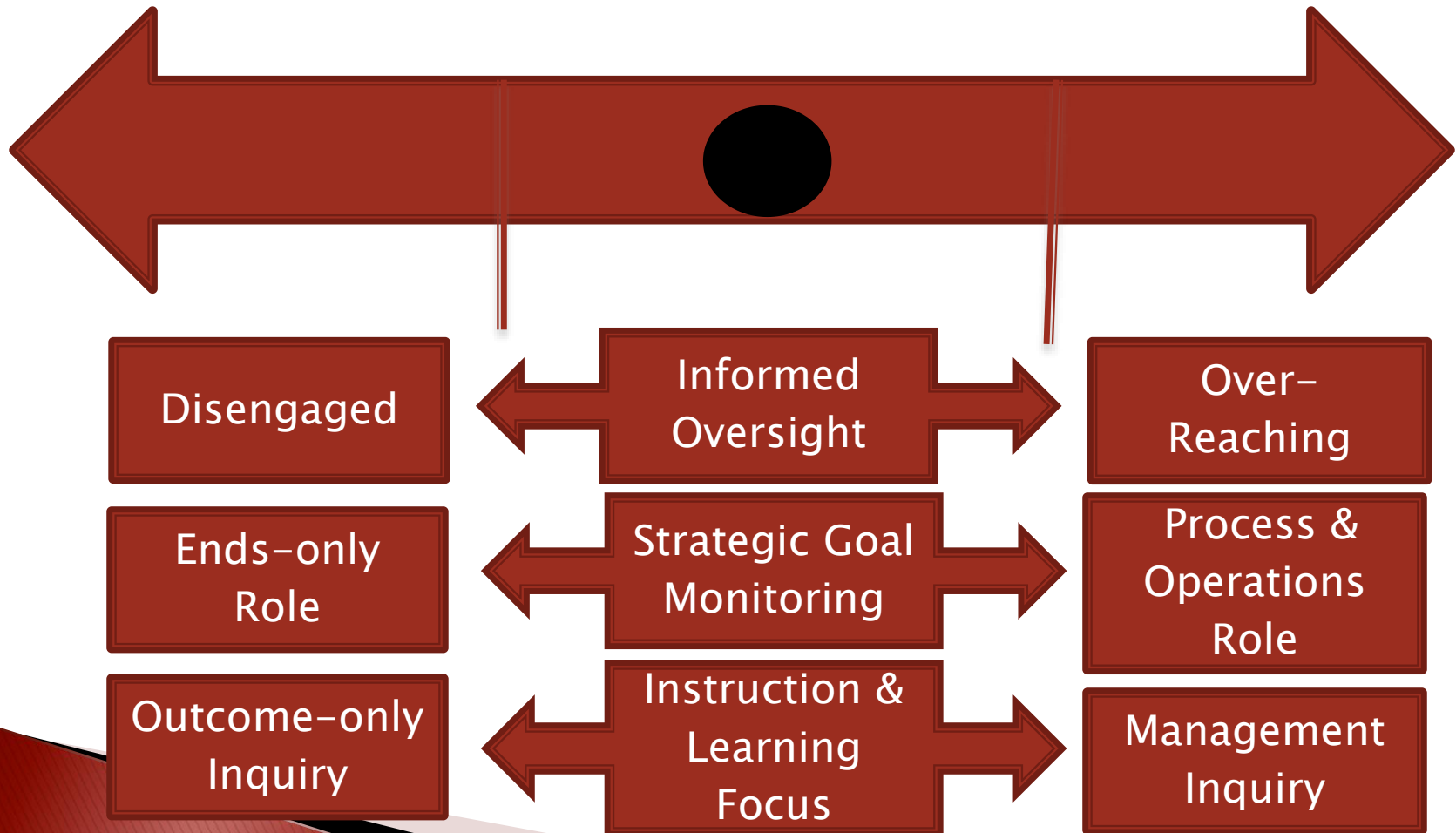


How Political Turnover & Conflict Can Hurt Schools

- ▶ Board and superintendent tenure is declining (Glass, 2009)
 - Loss of organizational memory
 - Loss of board training by experienced members
- ▶ Indirect but significant influence (Glass, 2007)
 - Decline of staff morale/security
 - Discontinuity of goals/purpose
 - Declining community confidence in schools
 - Personnel instability & Lack of confidence

Balanced Governance™ Model

Governance Continuum



Governance Models–Public Response

▶ Disengaged Board = Uninformed Defense

“You don’t understand how hard our teachers work”

“ We use research based best practices to ensure all kids can learn”

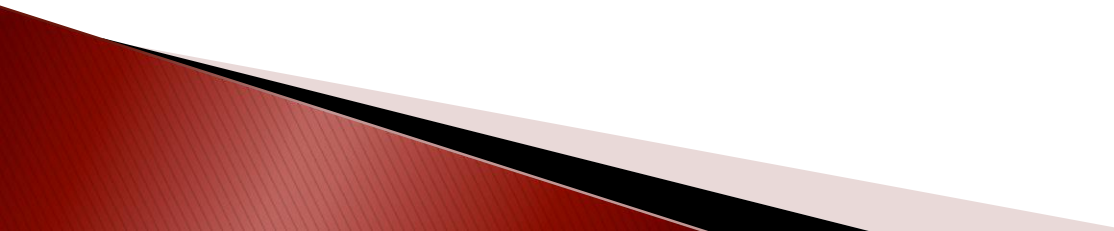
“We need to improve/replace teachers or leaders”

“It is not the school’s fault....it’s broken families”

Public Response

► Over-Reaching Board

“If our teachers and administrators don’t meet the goals, they will eventually not work here anymore. Boards members must monitor what is happening in schools because school employees will naturally spin things for their own benefit. I have no problem criticizing failures in board meetings to show that I am doing my job of ensuring accountability.”



Public Response

- ▶ Balanced Governance = Informed Oversight

“We measure individual student growth and for any student with slower than expected math improvement, schools use a proven program [name it] adapted to meet individual student needs and local community goals. We monitor the student progress quarterly and show 150% growth for most students. Alternative programs [name them] are being used for the 10% of students not showing growth. For example....”

Curriculum Oversight

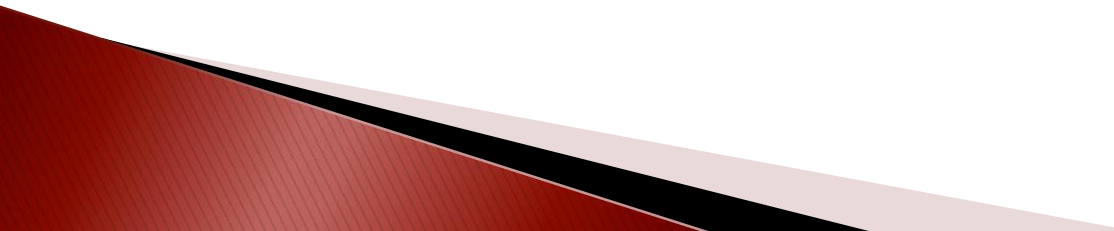
- ▶ Disengaged Board = Uninformed Compliance

“Math scores will increase by 20% by Spring 2014 on the State achievement exam”

Curriculum Oversight

- ▶ Over-Reaching Board

“Math scores will increase by 20% by Spring 2014 on the State achievement exam. Board members will spend time in schools to ensure the adopted program is being implemented properly. Those not meeting the goal will have reduced pay and be on a plan of improvement.”



Curriculum Oversight

- ▶ **Balanced Governance= Informed Oversight**

“Cohort–tracked math test scores on multiple measures (classroom work, class content tests, state exam) showing student growth (by student on class measures & by District on Standardized exams) and disaggregated by SES & ethnicity will be presented quarterly to target effect of focused reform programs”

Balanced Governance: Policy Format

Spring Report p.8



Break Time

Policy Revision Activity

STUDENT CONDUCT

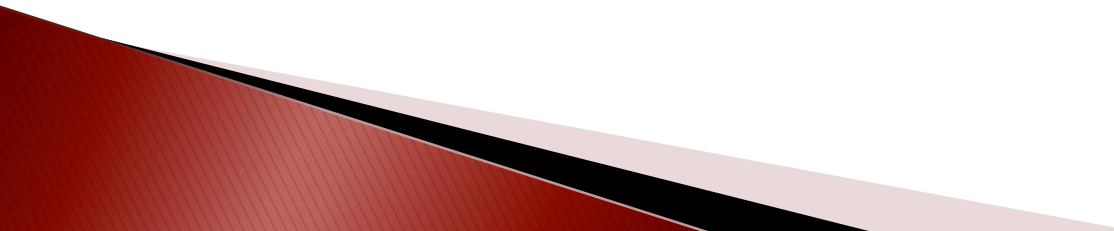
The County School District recognizes that effective character education is fundamental to positive student conduct. The District believes that the values and beliefs within a community are essential to prepare students for the challenges of today's world. Respect, integrity, responsibility, empathy, courage, manners, and justice are all fundamental character traits that students should be encouraged to demonstrate daily while at school and in their lives.

District staff at all levels are role models for students and as such should conduct themselves in accordance with these character traits.



Policy Analysis

Review Spring Report– pp. 9–10

1. How did your answers fit with what is listed here?
 2. How is the new policy different from the old one?
 3. Do you see any areas in your district where this policy revision might be helpful?
- 

Balanced Governance: Board Assessment

Meeting Length
p. 11

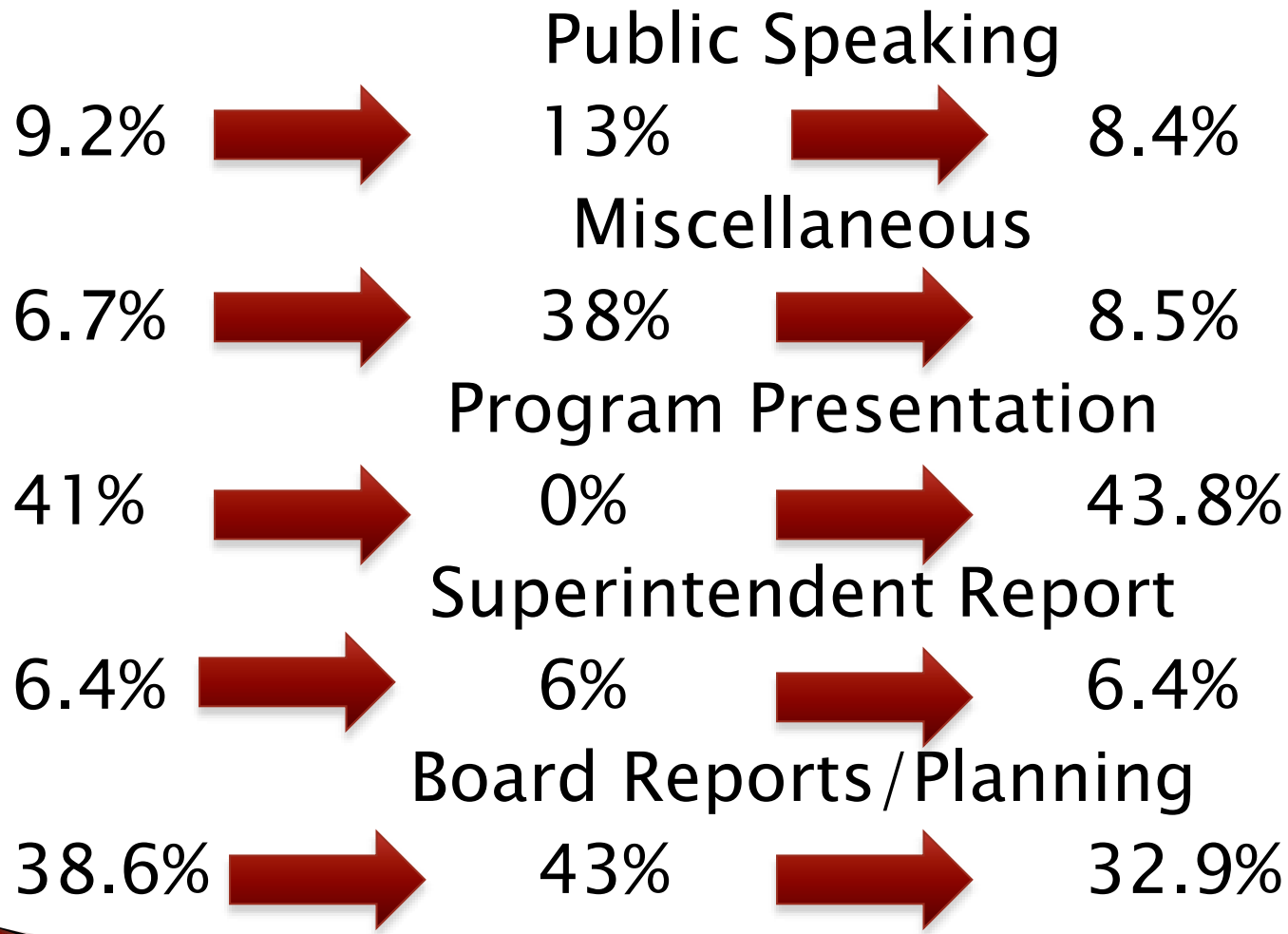
Balanced Governance: Board Assessment

Topics per Meeting
p. 12

Balanced Governance: Board Assessment

Item Typology
p. 14

Trends

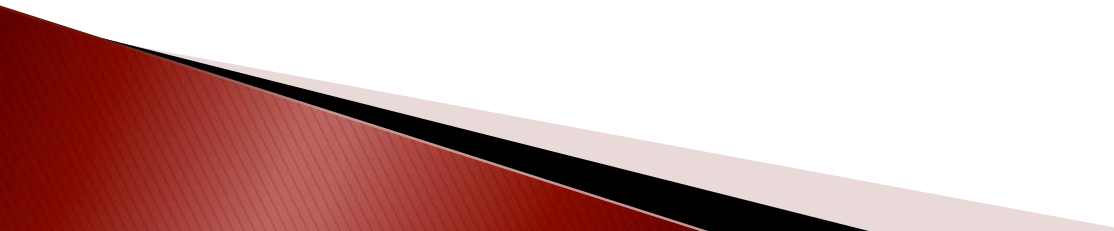


Discussion Point: Public Speakers

- ▶ Is there any concern over the Public Speaking portion of the Board Meeting?

Discussion Point: Report Content

Review item #2 in the Governance Improvements Handout

1. How is the Board doing with respect to Superintendent reporting?
 2. What can be done to improve this area?
- 

Balanced Governance: Board Assessment

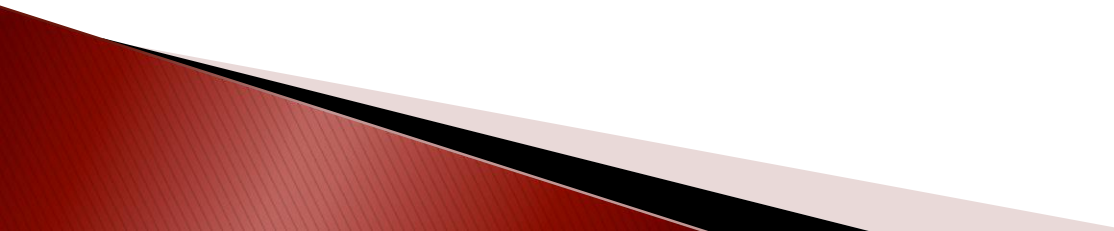
Board Member Discussion Focus
p. 15

Trends

Consent Agenda		
31%	→	4% → 2%
Board Requests		
N/A	→	37% → 30%
Board Reports		
25%	→	34% → 58%
Planning Agenda		
44%	→	25% → 10%

Discussion Point: Consent Agenda

Review item #8 in the Governance Improvements Handout

1. How is the Board doing with respect to managing the Consent Agenda?
 2. What can be done to improve this area?
- 

Discussion Point: Board Requests

Review item #6 & #7 in the Governance Improvements Handout

1. How is the Board doing with respect to managing Board Requests?
2. What can be done to improve this area?

Balanced Governance: Board Assessment

Recognitions
p. 17

Discussion Point: Board Report

Review item #4 in the Governance Improvements Handout

1. How is the Board doing with respect to reporting?
2. What can be done to improve this area?

Balanced Governance: Board Assessment

Instructional Focus
p. 20

Trends

Direct Instruction

Supports Instruction

9%



91%

12%



88%

55%



45%

Balanced Governance: Board Assessment

Goal Progress
p. 23

Trends

Goal Monitoring

10%

2%

84.5%

Fall



Winter



Spring



Management Inquiry

90%

98%

15.5%

Discussion Point: Board Report

Review item #1 & #3 in the Governance Improvements Handout

1. How is the Board doing with respect to a Goal Progress Focus?
2. What can be done to improve this area?

Balancing Bridging and Bonding

The Trustee/Delegate Dance
The Wake County Story

Wake County History

- ▶ Review your Scenario fact sheet
- ▶ Any additional contextual questions?

You Make the Call.....

What caused this problem?

What can fix the problem?

Bridging & Bonding Roles

Bonding Role =
Looking Inward

Board Addresses
Collective Interests



Bridging Role =
Looking Outward

Board Addresses
Special Interests



Discussion

- ▶ Have you ever experience this type of conflict?
- ▶ How could you use Balanced Bridging and bonding to help address the problem?

Balanced Governance: Board Assessment

Bridging & Bonding
p. 26

Trends

Bridging

Bonding

100%



0%

100%



0%

50%



50%

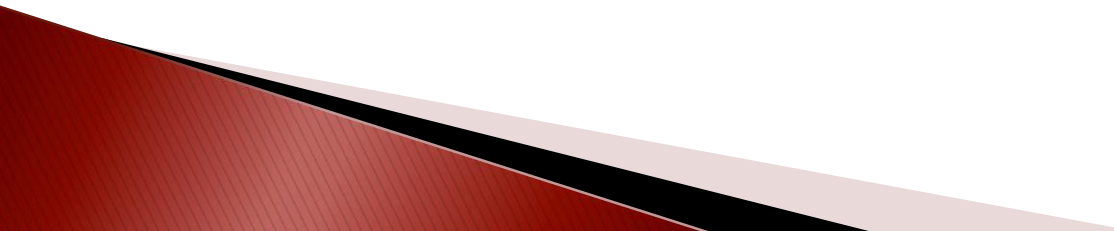
Fall

Winter

Spring

Discussion Point: Board Report

Review item #5 in the Governance Improvements Handout

1. How is the Board doing with respect to a External Committee Service Focus?
 2. What can be done to improve this area?
- 

Eight Characteristics of Highly Effective Boards

What is missing?

Balanced Governance Board Standards

Vision-Directed Planning

- ▶ Boards engage **communities** and **staff** in the development of a **shared** vision focused on student **learning**.
- ▶ The vision is the foundation of the mission and goals that **directs** board policy-making, planning, resource allocation and activities.



Vision-Directed Planning

- ▶ How is the board trending on this standard?
[pp.29–32]
- ▶ How could your board improve in this area?

Community Engagement

- ▶ **All** members of the community are stakeholders in the success of their schools.
- ▶ Community engagement is a **reciprocal advocacy** process that creates and sustains meaningful conversations, systems connections, and feedback loops with all groups in the community.
- ▶ Successful community engagement results in **collaborative partnerships** and new types and levels of community participation in schools.



Community Engagement

- ▶ How is the board trending on this standard?
[pp. 33–35]
- ▶ How could your board improve in this area?

Effective Leadership

- ▶ Board leadership is **proactive**, integrated, and distributed.
- ▶ Boards establish **focus**, direction, and expectations that foster student learning.
- ▶ Across education systems, boards develop and implement **collaborative leadership models** and practices that are guided by shared student learning goals.
- ▶ Within organizations, boards align authority and responsibility so that **decisions** can be made at levels close to implementation.



Effective Leadership

- ▶ How is the board trending on this standard?
[pp. 36–40]
- ▶ How could your board improve in this area?

Using Data for Continuous Improvement

- ▶ Boards have **high expectations** for all students and hold **themselves** and the **District accountable** for reaching those **goals**.
- ▶ **Continuous** improvement is the antithesis of complacency. Boards use data and information, from **multiple sources** and in **various formats**, to identify areas for improvement, set priorities, and **monitor improvement** efforts.



Using Data for Continuous Improvement

- ▶ How is the board trending on this standard?
[pp. 41–44]
- ▶ How could your board improve in this area?

Cultural Responsiveness

- ▶ The cultural **diversity** of a community has many facets – social, economic, political, religious, geographical, generational, linguistic, ethnic, racial, and gender. Boards develop an understanding of this diversity and hold perspectives that **reflect** the cultures in their community.
- ▶ Effective community **engagement** and **expectancy** strategies build on the strengths of a community's cultural diversity.



Cultural Responsiveness

- ▶ How is the board trending on this standard?
[pp. 45–48]
- ▶ How could your board improve in this area?

Learning Organization

- ▶ A learning organization is a **self-renewing** professional community that supports reflection, discovery, learning, improvement, and success by staff at all levels.
- ▶ Boards encourage **professional development** that empowers staff and nurtures leadership capabilities across the organization.



Learning Organizations

- ▶ How is the board trending on this standard?
[pp. 49–51]
- ▶ How could your board improve in this area?

Systems Thinking

- ▶ Systems thinking allows boards to break out of the box of single district thinking and act on an **integrated** view of education within and across systems and levels (e.g. K–12, ESD, community college, and university).
- ▶ Boards that practice systems thinking open the door for collaborative local, state, and national **partnerships**, coordinated programs, and shared resource models to improve student learning.



Systems Thinking

- ▶ How is the board trending on this standard?
[pp. 52–54]
- ▶ How could your board improve in this area?

Innovation & Creativity

- ▶ Innovation and creativity are **assets** to the process of development and change, leading to new types of thinking and better ways of meeting student needs.
- ▶ Innovation and creativity are not predictable, but can flourish when boards align vision throughout the organization, engage in collaborative partnerships, and encourage **dialogue**, new ideas, and differing **perspectives**.



Innovation & Creativity

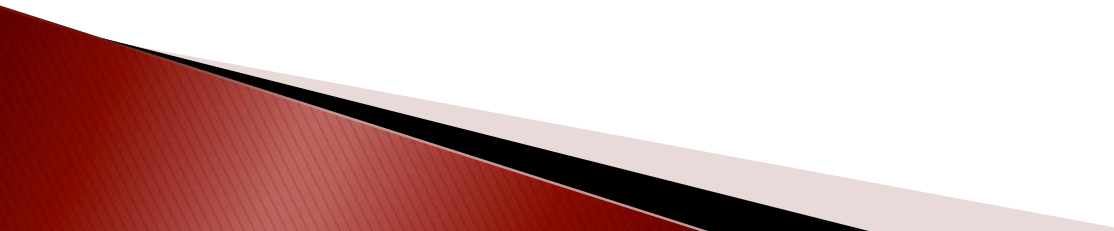
- ▶ How is the board trending on this standard?
[pp. 55–57]
- ▶ How could your board improve in this area?

Board Member Conduct, Ethics, and Superintendent Relationship

- ▶ The relationship between the board and the superintendent is a delicate one and it is essential that they have a clear, mutual understanding of their **respective roles** and responsibilities.
- ▶ **Team building** is an essential part of this relationship and a **clear district goal** will help maintain a respectful relationship.

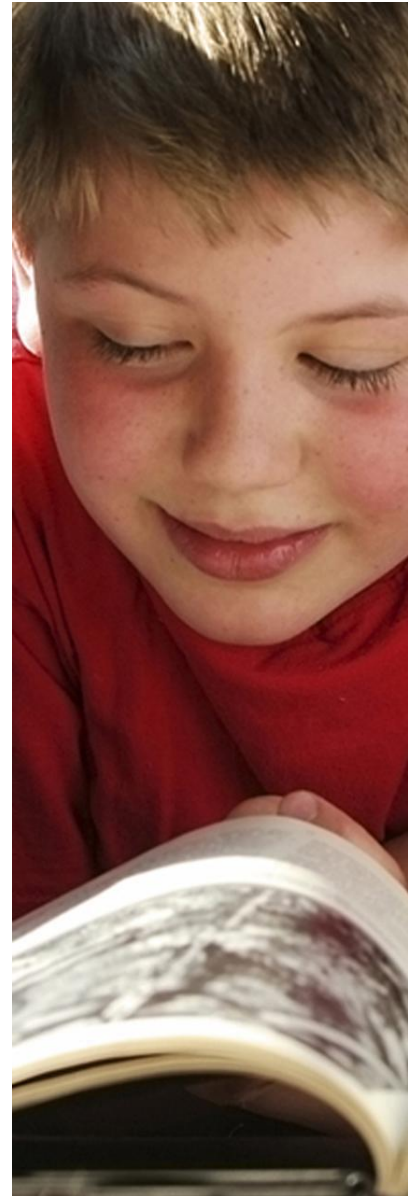


Board Member Conduct, Ethics, and Superintendent Relationship

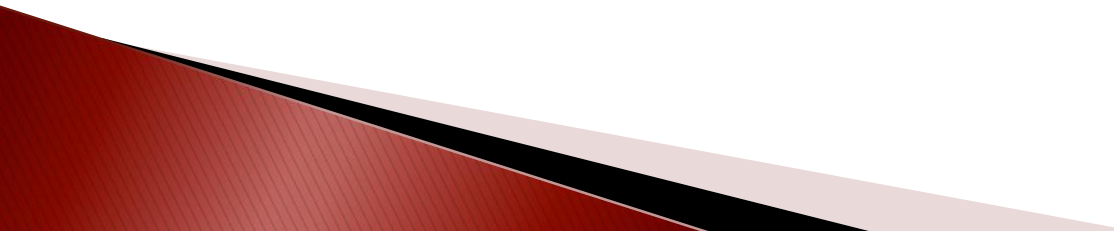
- ▶ How is the board trending on this standard?
[pp. 58–63]
 - ▶ How could your board improve in this area?
- 

Budgeting & Financial Accountability

- ▶ One of the important activities in **translating the educational goals** of schools into reality is the adoption of a budget and making sure that the school district is fiscally sound.
- ▶ Boards utilize fiscal resources based on **student needs** and district policy and goals.



Budgeting & Financial Accountability

- ▶ How is the board trending on this standard?
[pp. 64–65]
 - ▶ How could your board improve in this area?
- 

Balanced Governance Board Standards

Trends [p. 66]

Individual Board Member Characteristics

Spring Report [pp. 67–68]

Individual Attributes

- ▶ Some individual attributes, beliefs, and behaviors are
 - Linked to longer board member tenure
 - Linked to improved district success



Stabilizing



Stable: Low
Conflict

Focused: Student
Performance

Role Boundaries

- ▶ Understands the difference between the role of *informed oversight* and *over-reach*.

Role Boundaries

- ▶ How is the board trending on this standard?
- ▶ How could your board improve in this area?

Role Orientation

- ▶ Understands how and when to enact an **open dialogue** versus an **open debate** orientation.
 - An *open dialogue* orientation focuses on general interests and welcomes various viewpoints, but expects unanimous support of final board decisions.
 - An *open debate* orientation focuses on activism and special interests, values individual viewpoints over collective consensus, and doesn't expect support of final board decisions.

Role Orientation

- ▶ How is the board trending on this standard?
- ▶ How could your board improve in this area?

Advocacy Focus

- ▶ Understands the difference between being *position-driven* and *interest-driven*.
 - A *position* is often polarizing and identifies “friends” versus “enemies”.
 - An *interest* is discovered through conversation to get to shared solutions that can be applied to many students and achieved through various means.

Advocacy Focus

- ▶ How is the board trending on this standard?
- ▶ How could your board improve in this area?

Student Concern Focus

- ▶ Understands the difference between a **broad** and a **targeted** focus on student concerns.
 - A **broad** focus on student concerns includes a stated responsibility to insure all students are afforded opportunities to succeed.
 - A **targeted** focus emphasizes providing opportunities for single groups of students.

Student Concern Focus

- ▶ How is the board trending on this standard?
- ▶ How could your board improve in this area?

Solution Focus

- ▶ Understands the difference between *standardized* and *contextualized* solutions.
 - The understanding that the local school district, and each school has **unique and shifting needs**; often requiring **innovative solutions**.

Solution Focus

- ▶ How is the board trending on this standard?
- ▶ How could your board improve in this area?

Exercise of Influence

- ▶ Understands the difference between *individual* and *collective authority*.
 - Understands *appropriate visibility*.

Exercise of Influence

- ▶ How is the board trending on this standard?
- ▶ How could your board improve in this area?

School Board Conflict

Mountford (2008) Studies

Use of Voice

- ▶ Understands the difference between the use of voice to *tell and sell* their position versus seeking to *hear and understand* interests, and come to resolution and reconciliation.

Use of Voice















- ▶ How is the board trending on this standard?
- ▶ How could your board improve in this area?

Trends

Fall

Winter

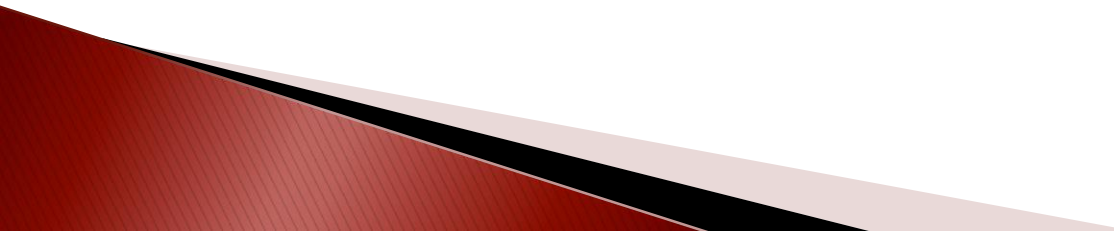
Spring

19%		Board Member G	21%		10%
7%		Board Member F	4.5%		26%
21%		Board Member E	22.5%		29%
30%		Board Member D	22.5%		15%
12%		Board Member C	6.5%		9%
7%		Board Member B	23%		4%
4%		Board Member A	0%		7%

Use of Power

- ▶ Understands the difference between *power over* and *power with*.
 - *Power Over* is using your position to get your own way through threat or reward.
 - *Power With* is using your position to ensure all voices are heard and collaborative solutions are guaranteed.

Which of the following definitions is closest to your own definition of power?

1. Power is the ability to get others to do what you want or need them to do.
 2. Power is the ability to control others
 3. Power is the ability to assist in facilitating change with those most affected by the outcome of the change
 4. Power is freedom and respect
 5. Power is the authority, the right, and the approval to make decisions for others
- 

Use of Power

Power Over...

-conceptualized as control, command, domination, authority, influence.

Power with....

-conceptualized as benefitting the whole group or increasing collaborative power.

(Mary Parker Follet, 1927; Brunner, 2002; Mountford, 2008)

Most people fall somewhere on a continuum between **power over** and **power with**



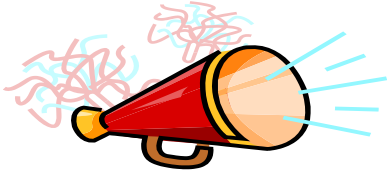
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5. Power is the authority, the right, and the approval to make decisions for others

Red = Power Over



“Power Over” Examples



Power is authority or control of others. (Board Member 16M)

Board
Member



Board
Colleague

I think, at times, I see him say to our superintendent ‘No, no. You don’t understand.’ Not so much in words, O.K...more like ‘I’m the board member; you work for me. I want this; you get it for me. I want it now; you get it for me. If I want you to do this, you do this.’ (Board Colleague Discussing Board Member 16M)



Superintendent

I think he probably believes in defining it [power] you know as the paramilitary stuff of the police. I know in my discussions with him about past administrators is that he appreciates the administrators that exercised their positional authority and power, so he would describe it in a more traditional sense. I don’t think he’s necessarily a power member power person, but he thinks the principals and I ought to kick [teachers] in line, you know that type of paramilitary policeman.

(Superintendent discussing Board Member 16M)

“Power With” Examples



Power

Power is coming together to make decisions for the common good. Power is working together to help others. (Board Member 12F)



Board

Colleague

I think she would define power as a consensus of the group
(Board Colleague Discussing Board Member 4F)



Superintendent

I think that she might define power as compromise or mediation or talking or discussing to get to a solution where one person doesn't overwhelm another one, but rather that people work together to come to a consensus about an issue
(Superintendent discussing Board Member 12F)

Mixed Power

- ▶ Power conceptualized using some combination of both definitions of “power over” and “power with”

Power is working with others to get them to do what you want them to do. (Board Member 28M)



Power to me is providing the resources necessary for principals and teachers to meet the district objectives I have set. (Superintendent)

Use of Power

- ▶ How is the board trending on this standard?
- ▶ How could your board improve in this area?

Decision-making Style

- ▶ Understands the difference between *collaborative* and *individual* decision-making.

Decision-making Style

- ▶ How is the board trending on this standard?
- ▶ How could your board improve in this area?

Motivation for Service

- ▶ Understands the difference between *altruistic* and *personal* motivation for service.

Motivation for Service

- ▶ Understands the difference between *altruistic* and *personal* motivation for service.

Altruistic:

Desire to help all students

Desire to serve

Personal:

To fix a single problem

Ego or prestige

Personal or political need for involvement

<u>Motivation for Membership</u>	Reported by Board Members		
To fix a single problem	24%		
Desire to help all students	32%		
Desire to serve	40%		
Personal or political need for involvement	4%		
Ego or Prestige	0%		

<u>Motivation for Membership</u>	Reported by Board Members	Reported by Board Member Colleagues	
To fix a single problem	24%	33%	
Desire to help all students	32%	28.5%	
Desire to serve	40%	10%	
Personal or political need for involvement	4%	18.5%	
Ego or Prestige	0%	10%	

<u>Motivation for Membership</u>	Reported by Board Members	Reported by Board Member Colleagues	Reported by The Superintendent
To fix a single problem	24%	33%	35%
Desire to help all students	32%	28.5%	20%
Desire to serve	40%	10%	10%
Personal or political need for involvement	4%	18.5%	24%
Ego or Prestige	0%	10%	11%

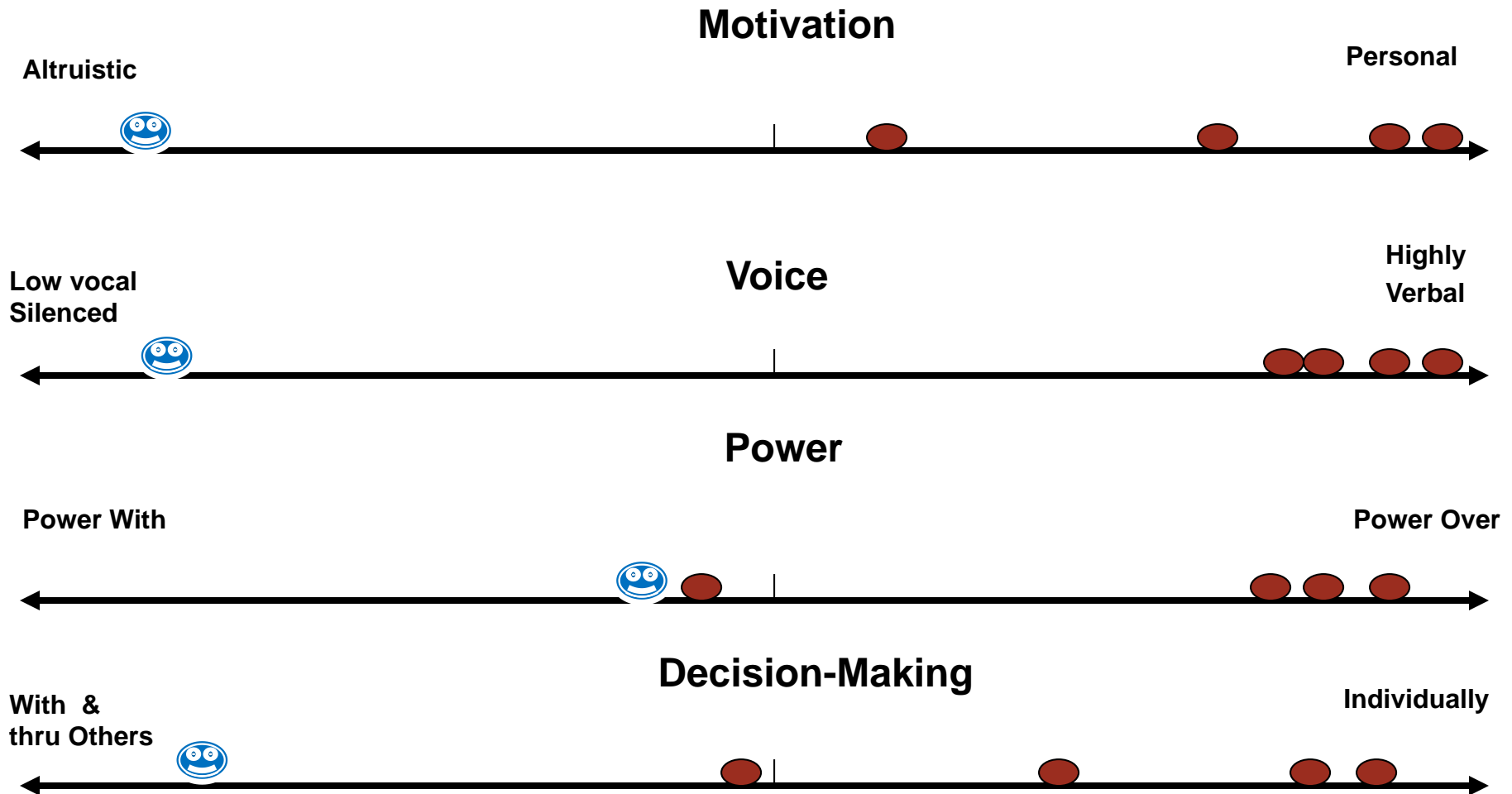
Motivation for Service

- ▶ How is the board trending on this standard?
- ▶ How could your board improve in this area?

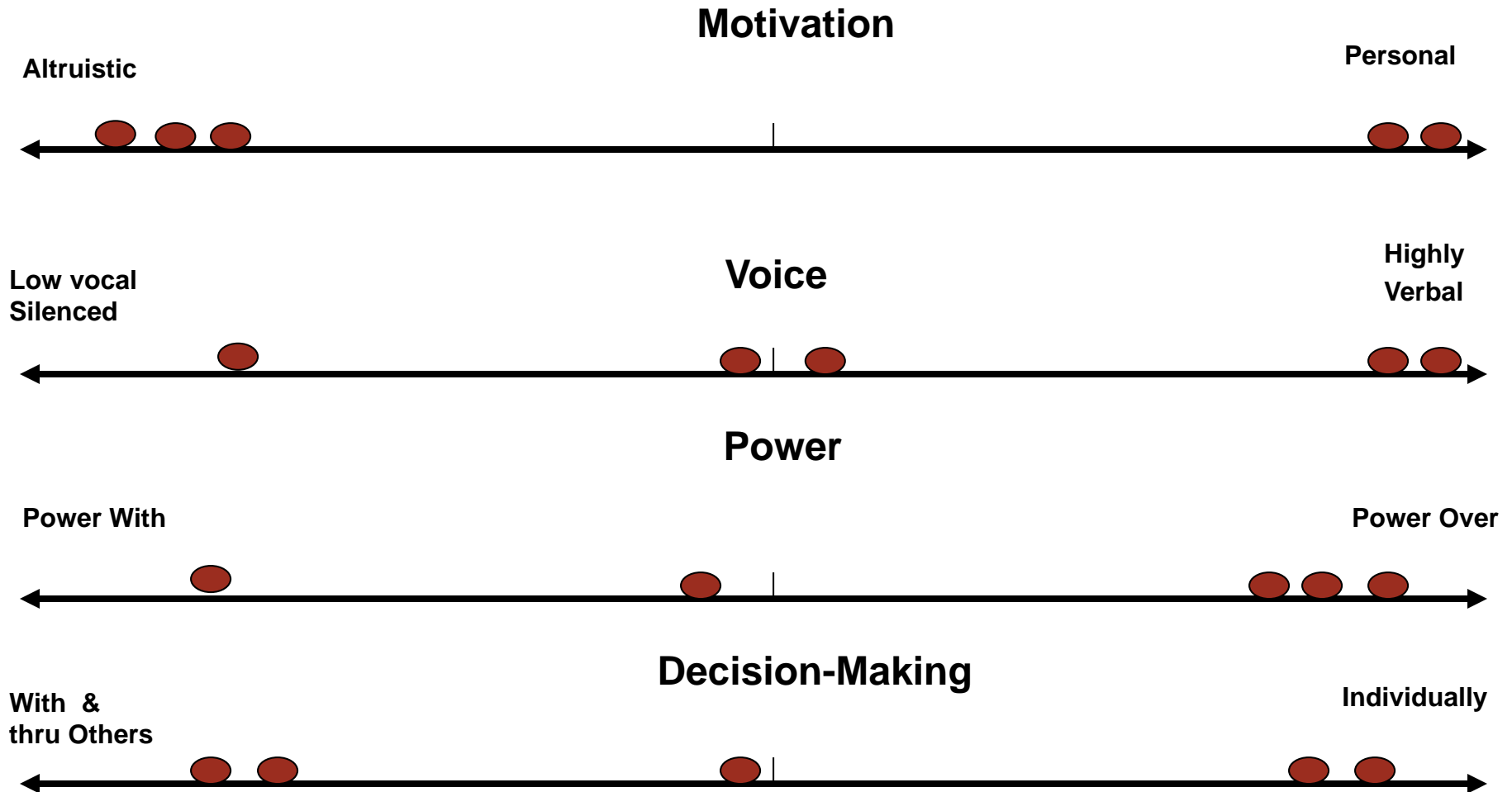
Board Evaluation Profile

Individual
Whole Board

Sample Personal Profile



School Board Profile



Discuss

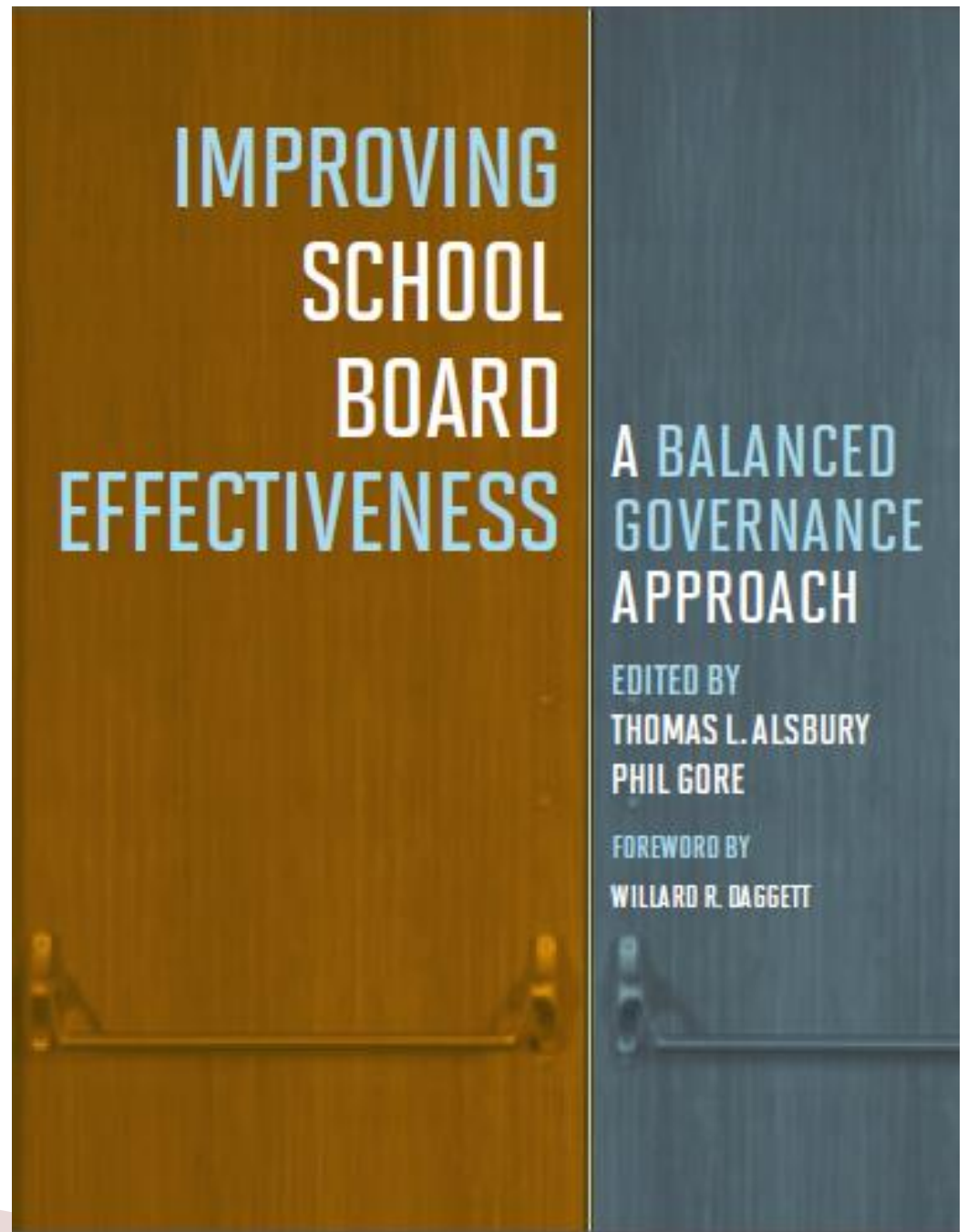
► Table Share

- How well would you predict this board works together?
- What could be done to address the disconnection between board members who are willing to function as a team?

Resource

Harvardeducationpress.org

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