

Forthcoming Book Information
**Relevancy and Revelation:
The Future of School Board Governance**
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Foreword

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The History of School Board Governance Theory

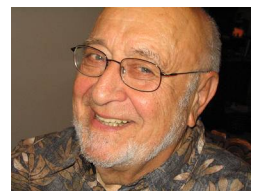
Michael W. Kirst: *The evolving role of school boards: Retrospect and prospect*

This chapter analyzes the historical roots of the local school board and its evolution in the 19th and 20th centuries. It stresses how deeply embedded the school board is in American culture and how distinctive it is in the world. It points out how little we know about an institution that includes 95,000 officials in 15,000 local education agencies. It then focuses on the changing board role through history and ends with an overview of proposals to change the role. These range from incremental reform to abolishing the boards. Reform proposals include mergers into childrens' boards or advisory roles under mayoral control. The author doubts any substantial change will be made in board roles in the vast majority of districts in the near future.



Frank W. Lutz & Laurence Iannaccone: *The dissatisfaction theory of the american democracy*

This chapter provides a summary of the Dissatisfaction Theory and explains why the addition of the words American Democracy is important in understanding the theory. It speaks to researchers and practitioners alike, explaining the theory, why it is not competitive but parallel to other major theories and how it also describes a lot of partisan political events. The author makes an effort to suggest what this means to the school superintendent and board member and suggests how research might be done and theory built, delineating the difference between empirical research and theory and phenomenological insight. The chapter discusses the differences between political research and policy study and why research is needed as well as policy studies. Finally, it suggests ideas important for research to pursue and for practitioners to understand about school administration and its politics.



A Historical Overview of School Board Research

Peter J. Cistone: *School board research: A retrospective*

The author provides a retrospective of school board research themes from the time of the 1975 school board symposium. The author includes major theoretical advances in school board research and concludes that there are few empirical works that extend governance models past those originally prior to the 1970s. The author concludes that further work is needed to better define variables in governance models but maintains the efficacy of elected school boards as one of the few remaining accessible democratic institutions in local communities.



Lars G. Björk

Dr. Bjork will discuss the history of changing board/superintendent roles as affected by politics, changing social context, and the

School Board/Superintendent and Authority Relations



Meredith L. Mountford: *Historical and current tensions among board/superintendent teams: Symptoms or cause?*

The relationship between school boards and superintendents in American Public Schools has been fraught with controversy. This is not altogether surprising considering their history together includes multiple transfers of power and control between the two groups throughout the last two centuries. However, since the conception of school governing boards and school administrators in the mid-seventeenth century and continuing today, school boards and superintendent relationships have been notoriously characterized as tense and conflict laden and rarely characterized as effective.

This chapter reviews the historical development of the conflict between school boards and superintendents and their evolving roles over the last three centuries. Nine historical and current reasons for tension between board members and superintendents commonly cited in the literature are reviewed. Next, findings from a study which suggested four underlying psychological and social (psycho/social) factors (power, motivation, voice, and change) cut across the nine sources and were the actual root sources of the tension occurring among boards and superintendents and that nine cited sources were simply symptoms of the four psycho/social factors. Ultimately, the purpose of this paper is to elucidate the root causes for tension between board members and superintendents so that educational leadership programs and board development training programs can provide foundational training on the psycho/social roots of tension in hopes of alleviating some of these tensions after almost two years of existence.



Thomas E. Glass: *Elected versus appointed boards*

Chronic failure best describes urban school districts attended by over 10 million school children. Mayors, governors and legislatures have seized control of some "failing" districts. More than several elected boards have been replaced by appointed boards consisting of members possessing established track records in organizational and civic leadership. Constant intra-board conflict and superintendent turnover destabilizes districts already suffering from chronic underachievement and system instability. Are contentious, politicized, elected large urban boards creating environments for student failure? When failing should they be dissolved, and appointed by mayors, governors or legislative bodies? If impartially appointed can they get troubled large urban districts on track? Or, will urban districts continue to rely on the politicized

electoral process in finding board members that can improve board governance and district academic and managerial performance?



Lance D. Fusarelli & George J. Petersen: *Systemic leadership amidst turbulence: Superintendent-school board relations under pressure*

Local boards of education are evidence of the fundamental relationship between schools and local communities. During the past several decades, the press for reform has changed the landscape of district politics and decision-making at the local level. Heightened public scrutiny has sparked a myriad of questions about the quality and the effectiveness of school district governance; more specifically the functions of school boards, their relationship with the district superintendent, their role in policymaking, as well as

issues of power, effectiveness and compatibility with modern reforms. This chapter concentrates on four trends we believe are reshaping this relationship: (1) demographic changes; (2) external threats and stress; (3) the politics of personalism and; (4) changes in superintendents themselves. We use these four trends as conceptual lenses to explore their potential strength in influencing, in any substantive way, relations between superintendents and boards of education and the leadership of schools. The chapter concludes with a discussion about re-imagining board-superintendent relationships and school governance.



School Board Democratic Effectiveness



Frederick M. Hess: *Money, interest groups, and school board elections*

This chapter will briefly sketch some of the thinking on how/why board elections operate and then use data to shed light on how expensive elections are, how contested they are, and on which groups appear to be most influential. The conclusion will explain that board elections are generally relatively amateurish affairs, outside of the biggest of districts, and that there are two distinct sets of dynamics - that in the big 100-200 urban districts and that in the vast majority of districts - and that reform proposals would be well-advised to distinguish appropriately.

Carol Merz Frankel: *Local school foundations: Equity and the future of school funding*

Based on the line of research that indicates that the local citizens of a school district have the political power to control their schools, this chapter examines the phenomenon of foundations established by school districts to raise funds from citizens to support schools. Begun about the time that court decisions required states to equalized funding among district of differing wealth, these foundations seem to be a method for avoiding the equity requirements. On further examination it appears that the equity requirements reduced the total amount of money available to schools in a state. Foundations are considered in this chapter to be an indication of local political will. Through an examination of sample foundations in affluent districts, the chapter considers the implications of possible solutions to funding schools in an equitable fashion and attempts to assess the overall desirability of the foundation phenomenon within the context of state-wide funding.



Barbara DeHart & DeLacy Derin Ganley: *A descriptive case study of discord & dissent: The story of a school board's act of non-compliance with state and federal law*

This descriptive case study highlights the problems created when a three-two majority alliance was formed on the five-member board of trustees of the Northville School District, a medium-sized (10,250 students), suburban/urban, elementary (K-8) school district in California. The problem started when the three member Board Majority did not follow a legal mandate to revise the District's Uniform Complaint Procedure Policy (UCPP). The mandated revision would have assured compliance to new state and federal laws that granted "protected class status" to transgender and transsexual students.

In California, a Uniform Complaint Procedure Policy (UCPP) delineates specific procedures for persons of "protected classes" to file a discrimination complaint against a public K-12 school district. The UCPP is called a "uniform policy" because all public K-12 districts are subject to the same laws and, accordingly, every district's UCPP is supposed to be identical to one another in terms of language and interpretation. As required by law, Northville's UCPP already extended protected class status to students who experienced unlawful discrimination because of their ethnic group identification, religion, age, sexual orientation, race, ancestry, national origin, gender, color, or disability (physical or mental). The mandated changes not approved by the Board Majority would, as dictated by law, extend protected class status to transgender and transsexual students.

The rhetorical focus of the dissenting Board Majority indicated that they were uncomfortable protecting the rights of other-than-heterosexual persons. Questions asked included *Where will little boys dressed as little girls go to the bathroom? What will prevent "these children" from becoming "Peeping Toms?"* (Minutes, Special Meeting, February 26, 2004, 7.1 p. 3+; Board Minutes, February 5, 2004, 7.1 p. 9+). One board member publicly referred to transgender people as "trash" (Board Minutes, February 5, 2004, p.88). Another Board Majority member (who was, coincidentally, a chaplain) fretted about the "sexual" and "homosexual agenda" and wondered how she would "answer to a higher power" if she voted in favor of revising the policy (Board Minutes, February 4, 2004). Along with threatening the civil rights of transgender/sexual students, not being in compliance with state and federal laws endangered the District's financial viability. The California Department of Education threatened to withhold over \$51 million in school funding. Once the financial stakes of the Board's objection became known, the community objected with furor. Attendance at school board meetings ballooned to over a thousand. The media swarmed. Police in bulletproof vests were called in to maintain the order.

School Board's Role in District/Systemic Reform



Mary L. Delagardelle: *The lighthouse inquiry: Examining the role of school board leadership in the improvement of student achievement*

The Iowa Lighthouse Research is an evolving study of the leadership role of the school board for improving student achievement. An overview of all three phases of this line of inquiry, as well as a deeper look into the second phase of the research, is provided with information about the questions framing each phase and the findings that emerged. The results provide evidence that school boards in high and low achieving districts are significantly different in their beliefs and actions. In addition, the preliminary results of the second phase of the inquiry identified five key roles of the board, seven areas of performance boards demonstrate as they play those roles, and the knowledge, skills, and beliefs necessary to perform in those ways. Another component of the inquiry shows a relationship between board training, board members' beliefs about their role, and the achievement of students in schools. Overall, this line of inquiry supports a conclusion that the leadership role of the board is an important factor in the improvement of student achievement and one that warrants continued study.

William L. Boyd, Jolly B. Christman, Elizabeth Useem: *Superintendent and school board leadership for district improvement*

Dr. Boyd will take a study of the Philadelphia Schools mayoral takeover and traditional board governance and compare district-level improvement under both systems.



Theodore J. Kowalski: *School reform, civic engagement, and school board leadership*

During much of the 1980s, would-be reformers largely ignored the effects of local governance and the potential influence of school boards on education improvement. Though such issues received greater attention after 1990, the role and responsibilities of school boards in relation to school reform remain vague—arguably a disadvantageous situation in a policy environment where state deregulation and district decentralization are primary change strategies.

This chapter first explores traditional and proposed school board roles in relation to school reform. Based on the conclusion that radical changes in local governance are improbable, the concept of relational communication is described and then proposed as a normative standard that can be applied within the existing parameters of legitimate authority. Specifically, the argument is made that school boards should be held accountable for maintaining ongoing information exchanges with multiple publics, especially in conjunction with visioning, planning, resource procurement, and political support. The nature of this relational communicative role and its corresponding responsibilities are explained. Examples of effective practice are provided and recommendations are made to develop and maintain relational communication.

Relevance: School Board Organizational and Educational Influence



Thomas L. Alsbury: *School board politics and student achievement*

District-level leadership often has been perceived as irrelevant to educational reform. This study compared district political and apolitical board and superintendent turnover to student performance change on the state criterion-referenced test. Results included student test score decline as board turnover increased, particularly in smaller districts and when delineating politically motivated board turnover. Also, student test scores declined in small, rural districts where there was no superintendent change over the course of the eight-year study. Conclusions included support for the Dissatisfaction Theory, which predicts that politically motivated board and superintendent turnover may influence student performance.

Samuel C. Stringfield: *School boards and educational improvement: An urban case study*

The need for educational improvement is more often observable in urban districts than elsewhere in America. While there are many examples of individual or small groups of urban schools' improving, efforts at systemic urban educational reform have had a particularly promising history. Against this background, in 1997 the Maryland legislature authorized a New Board of School Commissioners and charged that group with dramatically improving academic achievements and graduation rates for Baltimore's largely poor, minority student body.

This chapter explores the new board's actions and impacts over its first seven years. Impacts were positive and essentially continuous. Written through the experiences of a member of the new board, this chapter attempts to explain the role of the board in achieving desired impacts, the board's relationships with the mayor(s), governor(s), state superintendent, teachers' unions, and the press.



Revelation: School Board's Viability and Possible Future



Kenneth K. Wong & Francis X. Shen: *Education mayors & big city school boards: New directions, new evidence*

Following the high profile introduction of mayoral governance in Boston (1992) and Chicago (1995), a growing number of cities have followed suit by replacing their traditional elected school board with a mayoral appointed board. In this paper we introduce and evaluate this reform strategy.

Using multiple data sources, we evaluate student achievement, financial management, and human capital in a national sample of large, urban school districts. Complementing earlier qualitative research, our study is the first to conduct cross-district, multiyear empirical

analysis of the effects of mayoral control.

The results of our multivariate, fixed-effects regression models show that mayoral control is associated with roughly a .15 standard deviation in elementary and high school achievement. We also find that mayoral leadership is tied not to increased spending, but to a reallocation of resources toward instruction and instructional support. While these successes in achievement and financial management are encouraging, our analysis of staffing measures finds signs of district bureaucratic inertia that is difficult to overcome. Mayors may be able to implement some, but not all, of their intended central office transformations.

Replacing an old emphasis on patronage, these new education mayors stress accountability, fiscal management, and raising student achievement. We believe the future of education mayors has the potential to transform urban education. We conclude the paper, therefore, with discussions of a possible second wave of mayoral control, focusing on recent developments in Los Angeles, Albuquerque, and Washington, D.C.

