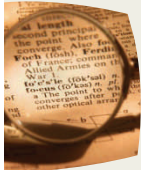




► PRESERVING THE HERITAGE



► APPRAISING THE PRESENT



► PLANNING THE FUTURE

○ SERIES 3 | ○ ISSUE 4 | ○ MARCH 2008



Trustee focus

ADDRESSING KEY ISSUES FOR CHRISTIAN SCHOOL TRUSTEES AND PLANTING THE SEEDS FOR A SECURE FUTURE.

I began this series affirming my belief that Policy Governance® is the best available model for board governance. Next, I focused on *monitoring* as one of the distinguishing features of the model. In this third and final installment, I want to help you understand what John Carver calls “*policies of a finer crafted sort.*”

Policy Governance®: Is it Right for Your Board? *Part 3*

By John Schimmer, Ed.D.



Hopefully by now you have purchased a copy of John Carver’s book, *Boards that Make a Difference (Third Edition)*

and have started on your journey to see if Policy Governance® will work for your board.

In this last part of the series I want to summarize some of the other “genius” attributes of the model so you will understand why it is, in my opinion, the best way to make board governance work.

Brevity and Preciseness of Policies. You will no longer need that 150 page board policy manual that incorrectly mixes governance policies with administrative policies and board-directed procedures. Policy Govern-

ance® uses four policy domains (John Carver, *Boards that Make a Difference (Third Edition)*, 2006):

- **Ends Policies.** These policies describe what the board wants the CEO and staff to achieve—how our school will affect the community, society, and the world.

Every *Ends* statement has three essential parts: **what good** (our purpose for existing), **for whom** (the people we will serve), and **at what cost** (the resources needed to achieve our goal).

- **Governance Policies.** Here the board states how it will do its own work—the process of governing the school. This includes how trustees serve collectively—the **one voice** of the board.



- **Board-Head of School Linkage Policies.** In this section the board clearly states how it will relate to the head of school—what it will/will not do.
- **Executive Limitations.** Here the board states what the CEO may not do (discussed below).

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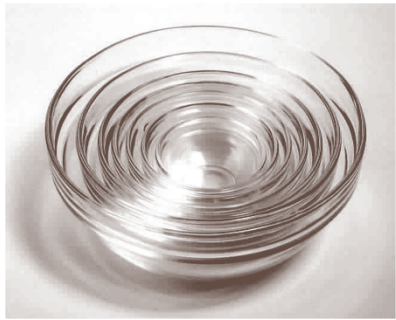


Writing Policies from the Outside In

For years Christian school boards have borrowed/adapted policies from other schools, and most are directives from the board to the CEO. Carver's format for policy development is a radical departure from this tradition. He likens policies to a set of nesting bowls—several bowls which fit inside of the larger bowls.

The construct here is that the outer (largest) bowl is the broadest (global) value statement on each issue, and the inner bowls become more specific (not more directive) so the CEO will thoroughly understand what matters most to the board.

The board disciplines/limits itself to only what it **must say**, not everything it could say. The CEO is then given latitude to use any reasonable interpretation (developing the *means*) to achieve what the board wants achieved and avoid what must be avoided (John Carver, *Reinventing Your Board, Revised Edition*, 2006).



Executive Limitations

This is the key to empowering your CEO. Rather than writing zillions of words directing the CEO on a multitude of topics (administrative means), the board simply states what the CEO may not do, consequently removing the mystery about who has what authority. The CEO now knows when to come to the board for approval.

There are few things more clear and more positive than a negative statement. (e.g., Gen. 1—God instructing Adam and Eve, Ex. 20, Psalm 1:1, Heb. 10:25) The CEO is now authorized to use all available resources when making decisions and leading the school forward.

Prerequisites for Success in the Model

1. *Stability in Board and CEO leadership.* Frequent turnover of trustees and/or the CEO will impede your progress in mastering the model. Monitoring will be tedious and repetitive.
2. *The effective use of a Board Governance Committee* (see *Trustee Focus*, Sept. 2007) is key to the board deepening its understanding of and continuation of its governance commitments.
3. *Careful screening of potential board members.* Any governance model can be seriously sabotaged by inviting the wrong people to serve on the board. Careful steps must be taken to ensure compatibility with the philosophy of, and commitment to, the model.
4. Remember, *monitoring*, which include administrative monitoring reports, is absolutely essential to success in the model.

Words of Caution

1. *Do your homework.* Someone recommending the model is not sufficient reason to adopt it. You must read (devour) *Boards That Make A Difference*, and hopefully *Reinventing Your Board*.
2. *Do not attempt to modify the model.* Policy Governance® cannot be used successfully when you have rejected, selected, and/or changed portions of the model. Do not refer to yourself as a Policy Governance® board unless you have accepted the model in its entirety. Simply using "Carverisms" does not make you a Policy Governance® board.
3. *Do not try to make your old policies fit the new model.* Policy Governance® requires a new way of writing board policies.
4. *When adopting Policy Governance®, use only a Carver trained consultant* who is properly schooled in teaching the model's theory, guiding you in writing your new policies, and assisting you in implementing the model.

Disclaimer

Policy Governance® cannot be adequately explained or understood in three short articles. If I have succeeded in capturing your interest, the next step is to read *Boards that Make a Difference* and *Reinventing Your Board*, by John Carver and Miriam Mayhew Carver.- J.S.

For a bibliography of John & Miriam Carver's books and resources, [click here](#).

References:

- John Carver, *Boards that Make a Difference (Third Edition)*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006.
- John Carver and Miriam Mayhew Carver, *Reinventing Your Board, Revised Edition*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006.

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Dr. Schimmer has been trained by John Carver to be a consultant/trainer for Policy Governance®. He served 26 years as the South-Central Regional Director and 48 years in the field of education, both private and public. Through his service he has influenced more than 300 Christian school boards.

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