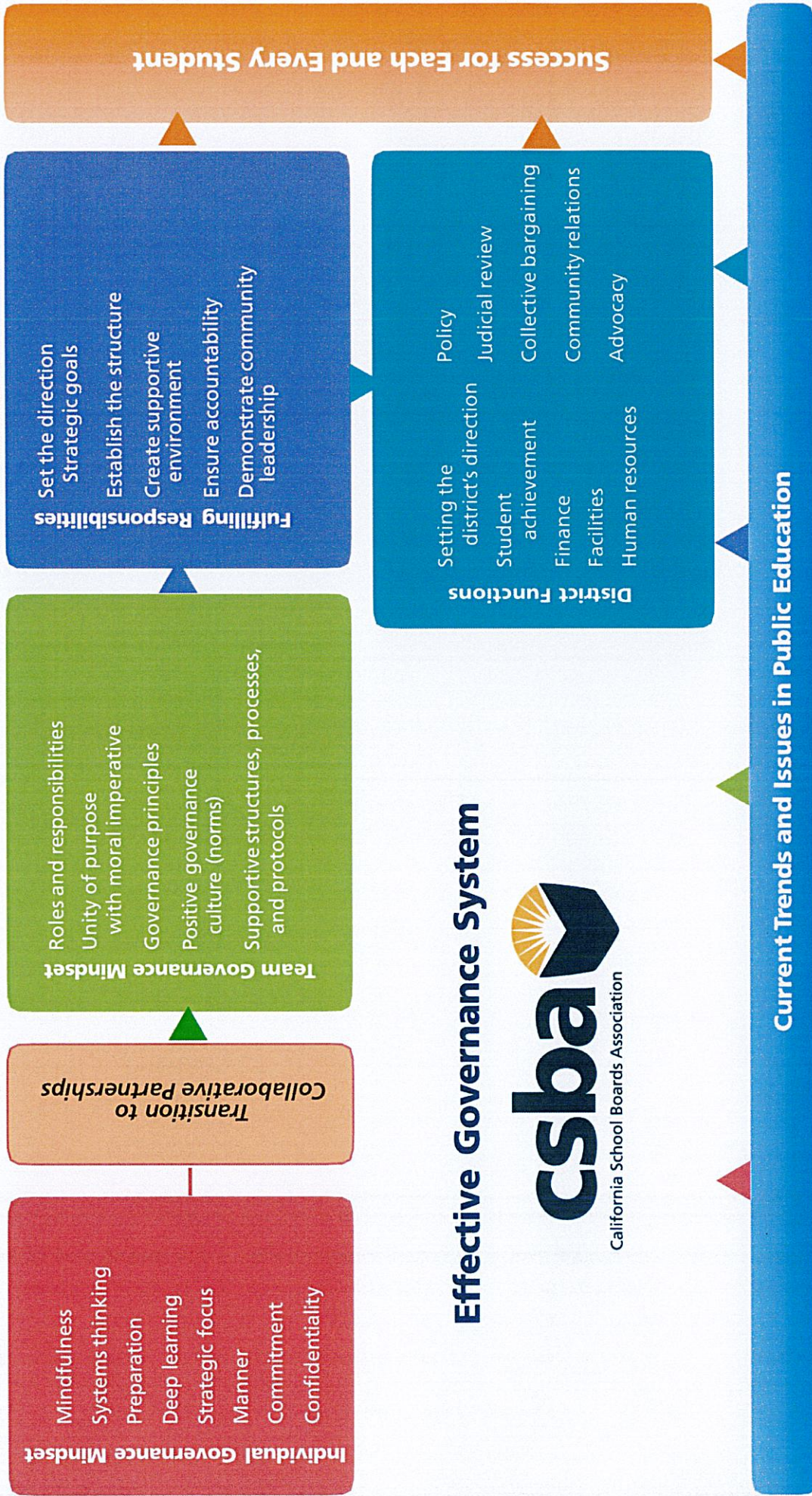




Sample Meeting Guidelines

- We will keep our focus on the best interest of our students.
- We will listen actively to all ideas. / We will listen openly without preparing responses.
- Everyone's opinions count. / We will be open to the ideas of others.
- We will wait to speak until a team member has finished talking. / We will keep our remarks brief and to the point so that all opinions can be expressed.
- Anyone can call a "time out" if s/he feels the need for a break.
- We will communicate openly and honestly with each other.
- We will respect differences. / We will show respect – never dismiss or devalue others.
- We will be supportive rather than judgmental.
- We will give helpful feedback directly and openly.
- All team members will offer their ideas and resources.
- We will build upon the ideas of others and look for common ground. / We will paraphrase for understanding.
- Each member will take responsibility for the work of the team. / We will each be responsible for the success of the meeting – participate equally – address concerns.
- We will respect team meeting times: start on time, return from breaks promptly, avoid unnecessary interruptions.
- We will stay focused on our goals and avoid getting sidetracked.
- When we have a difference of opinion, we will debate the facts of the situation and avoid personalities. / We will address process -- not personalities.
- We will all work to make sure there are no hidden agendas and that all issues and concerns can be dealt with openly by all members.
- We will work toward the future – learning from the past.



Role of the Board / Superintendent / District Staff

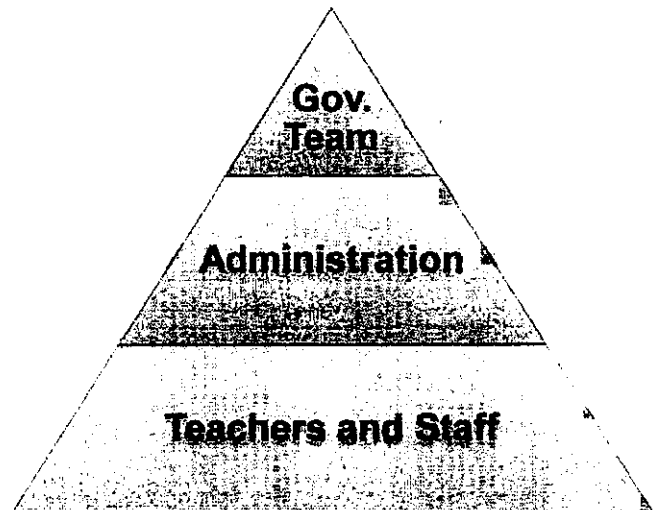
The school board works collaboratively with the superintendent and school district staff to see that the best possible education is provided to district students. Three distinct roles are required within the district to make this happen: *

The Board: strategic role

Transformational change: sets the direction: a strategic charge or target for change, and holds the system accountable for results

Administration: tactical role

Planning, alignment, *logistics, resources etc.* – *bridge between transformational and transitional change* role: creates and launches plans to meet the strategic charge



Teachers and Other Staff: operational role

Do the actual work

Transitional change: Carry out the plans to achieve the intended results

All three of these roles have to be aligned and integrated. None of the roles can be successful without the others. The Superintendent is the link between the roles: supports the Board's governance responsibilities, and as the District's Chief Administrative Officer, works with administration to see that plans are developed in alignment with the vision, and oversees district staff to see that district work is carried out in ways that will achieve the ultimate intended results.

* Adapted from: Mark Van Clay and Perry Soldwedel, *School Board Fieldbook – Leading With Vision*, (@Solution Tree Press, 2009) 13

The Board and Superintendent Working Together

THE BOARD = REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNANCE

School board TRUSTEES are the representatives of the people, elected to ensure the district schools educate the children in consideration of the interests of the local community. The school board works with the superintendent in order to GOVERN effectively:

1. Agree on a framework within which the board and superintendent can work productively together as a governance team.
2. Assume collective responsibility with the superintendent for building unity and creating a positive organizational culture in order to govern effectively.

As elected officials responsible for the education of the youth of the community, the board also performs a LEADERSHIP role on issues that affect public education, the district and students.

Strategic
Leadership



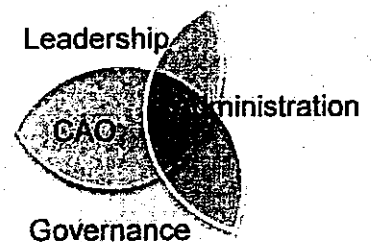
THE SUPERINTENDENT = CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

SUPPORTS

The board's ability to GOVERN effectively:

The superintendent works with the school board to see that the district is governed effectively:

1. Agree on a framework within which the board and superintendent can work productively together as a governance team.
2. Assume collective responsibility with the board for building unity and creating a positive organizational culture in order to govern effectively



CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER:

The superintendent sees that board direction is carried out and manages the day-to-day operations of the district.

As the educational leader for the district, the superintendent performs a LEADERSHIP role on issues that affect the district and the education of the children in the schools.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins or other markings visible.

GOVERNANCE WORKING STYLES QUESTIONNAIRE*

The purpose of this exercise is to get an idea of your dominate governance working style. In answering, place yourself in a governance team situation. Rank order the responses below 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 with a **1 indicating the response that best describes you and 5 for the response that least describes you using all five numbers.** You may find that you like all five answers, but you must rank each of the answers. There are no right or wrong answers.

1. When performing a task with my governance team, it is most important to me to:
 - A. _____ Take time to do things right.
 - B. _____ Work quickly and efficiently.
 - C. _____ Do things in harmony with others.
 - D. _____ Envision how the task fits into the big picture.
 - E. _____ Find out what has been tried in the past.
2. The most enjoyable part of working with my governance team for me is:
 - A. _____ Finding the information that we need.
 - B. _____ When the decision gets made.
 - C. _____ Working with the people.
 - D. _____ Serving as a catalyst for change.
 - E. _____ Reflecting on past experiences that could be re-considered.
3. When there are several decision options on my governance team, I usually:
 - A. _____ Look at the data and real numbers.
 - B. _____ Pick the best option quickly.
 - C. _____ Listen to my colleague's discussion points.
 - D. _____ Attempt to inspire others on the team to believe in my decision.
 - E. _____ Explain to my teammates why options have failed in the past.
4. When working on a Standing Committee that has a long-term task, it is important to me to:
 - A. _____ Present a logical process for completing the task.
 - B. _____ Create a list and check-off tasks as they are completed.
 - C. _____ Follow a process that respects the children and families we serve.
 - D. _____ Work to integrate and synthesize disparate ideas of team members.
 - E. _____ Encourage dialogue that shapes strategies.
5. I am willing to take a risky action with my governance team if:
 - A. _____ We solve a complex problem.
 - B. _____ We make a decision and move forward.
 - C. _____ Our expressions and emotions are honored in the action.
 - D. _____ The action supports our vision for the future.
 - E. _____ The action acknowledges past actions in the district.

*Inspired by CSBA Working Styles Questionnaire and Campbell, D. et. al (2021). *The Taking Action Guide for the Governance Core*.

GOVERNANCE WORKING STYLES SCORING GRID

Transfer the numbers from your governance working styles questionnaire to the scoring grid by entering the number rank for each letter going across the page. Next add up columns and record the answer in the space provided for Totals. **The lowest score is your dominate style.** In the case of a tied score, pick the working style that is more like you.

	A	B	C	D	E
Question 1.					
Question 2.					
Question 3.					
Question 4.					
Question 5.					
TOTALS					
	Data Driven	Bottom Line	Relationship	Visionary	Historian

WHAT EACH GOVERNANCE WORKING STYLES BRINGS TO THE TEAM

	GOVERNANCE WORKING STYLE	DESCRIPTION	BEHAVIORS
A	Data Driven	Data driven people like hard data and real numbers. Strengths are in analyzing data, logical processing, and solving complex problems.	Preferred Question: What? Known for: I think. Primary focus: Evidence based. Wants to take time to do things right.
B	Bottom Line	Bottom line people want to see tasks completed, lists checked, and projects tackled. They are action oriented, wanting to make a decision and move forward.	Preferred Question: How? Known for: I will. Primary focus: Works quickly and efficiently.
C	Relationship	Relationship people define an issue according to its impact on children and families. They care about the process. They are supportive, expressive, and emotionally oriented.	Preferred Question: How? Known for: I feel. Primary focus: Processes need to be done harmoniously.
D	Visionary	Visionaries are “big picture,” idea oriented in their approach. They serve as a catalyst for change, inventing solutions to problems, and integrating and synthesizing disparate ideas. They often create the vision and inspire others to believe in it.	Preferred Question: What if? Known for: I want. Primary focus: Everything weighed within the context of the “big picture.”
E	Historian	Historians’ views are formed by past experiences in the district. Their dialogue is often shaped by strategies and efforts that did or did not work in the past.	Preferred Question: When? Known for: I remember. Primary focus: Reflection on past practices.

Your Governance Working Style with Other Team Members

YOUR STYLE	A. Data Driven	B. Bottom Line	C. Relationship	D. Visionary	E. Historian
OTHER'S STYLE					
A. Data Driven	Do not join one another in demanding so much data that it delays the decision-making process and frustrates team members.	Take a deep breath, relax, and slow down while explaining that you have considered all data and options before moving ahead.	Provide information and data on the emotional impact of a decision on the students and their families.	Translate your vision into specific tasks or goals while explaining evidence for developing details or a plan of action.	Admit the value of current data and evidence before reminding others of past experiences.
B. Bottom Line	Organize your communications that begin with conclusions followed by supporting data and analysis	Do not join one another to push for a quick decision-making before other team members are ready.	Express your interest in getting results in supportive and expressive ways that support relationships in the district.	Acknowledge the objectives, action steps, and timelines as they apply to the vision of the decision before the team.	Appreciate an action orientation and deadlines before pointing out similar past unsuccessful efforts.
C. Relationship	Start your communications with the impact on children and families before reporting the data.	Spend time up front gaining trust and confidence and mention specific deadlines even when it seems obvious.	Do not join one another to push so hard for team harmony that team decision-making is stalled.	Express how important the team concept is to making the vision become a reality while listening to ideas for building teamwork.	Mention harmony and relationships in past efforts to solve the problem under discussion.
D. Visionary	Communicate the “big picture” and inspiring vision before mentioning the data analysis.	Be patient and try to use a visual (screen or chart) to harness creative ideas. Introduce timelines and due dates to keep the process moving.	Mention your appreciation for the vision and creativity expressed in the decision being made on behalf of children.	Do not become disappointed if other team members are not as inspired to adopt changes according to your common vision.	Start with the current vision of the team before relating it to past visions.
E. Historian	Communicate the past practices that are similar to the proposal on the table before explaining the data.	Appreciate memories of past experiences before encouraging moving forward with current decisions.	Acknowledge past unsuccessful efforts while supporting the current proposal's impact on relationships.	Accept past events that have worked and not worked while emphasizing the vision for the future.	Do not dwell so much in the past that present challenges expressed by other team members, especially younger ones, are not acknowledged.

Information Briefing

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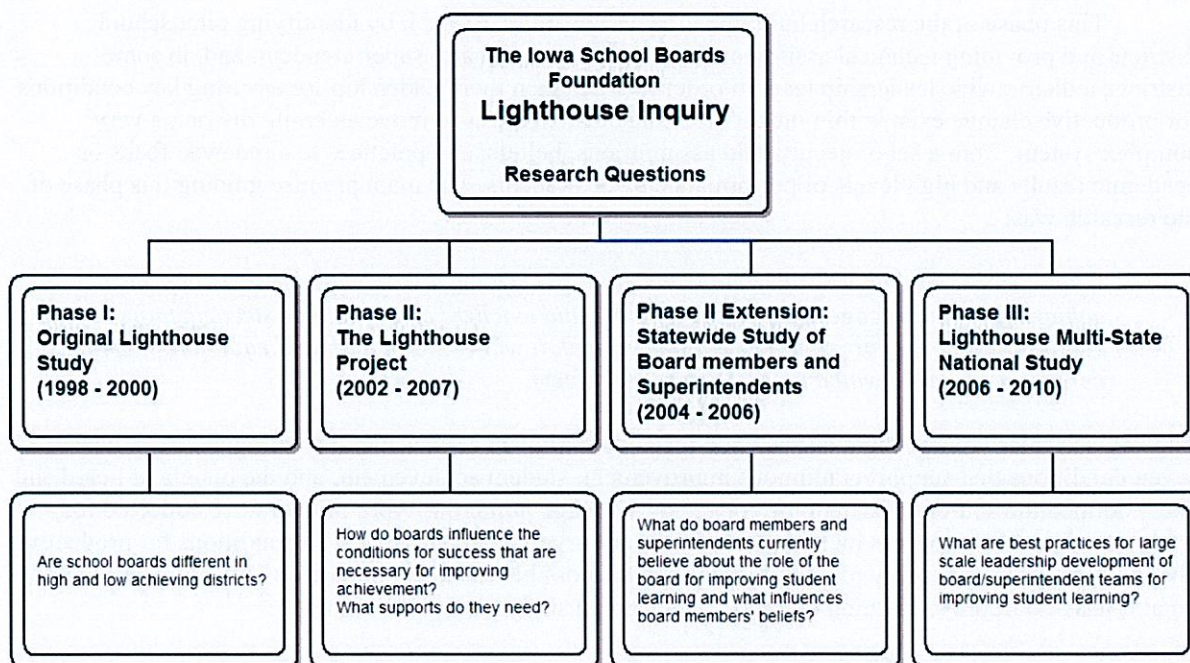
Lighthouse Phase II – Brief Summary

Source: This article is an excerpt from: Delagardelle, M. (2008). "The Lighthouse Inquiry: Examining the Role of School Board Leadership in the Improvement of Student Achievement." In T. Alsbury (Ed.), *The Future of School Board Governance: Relevancy and Revelation*. Blue Ridge, PA: Rowman & Littlefield.

Introduction

The Lighthouse Study demonstrated that school boards in high-achieving districts are different in their actions and beliefs from school boards in low-achieving districts. The continuing research also provides emerging evidence about what school boards need to know and be able to do to function in a manner that has a positive impact on a school district's efforts to improve student achievement. This line of research has evolved in a systematic approach through various phases of study with each phase focusing on slightly different research questions. The phases and research questions guiding each phase are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Lighthouse Research Phases and Questions

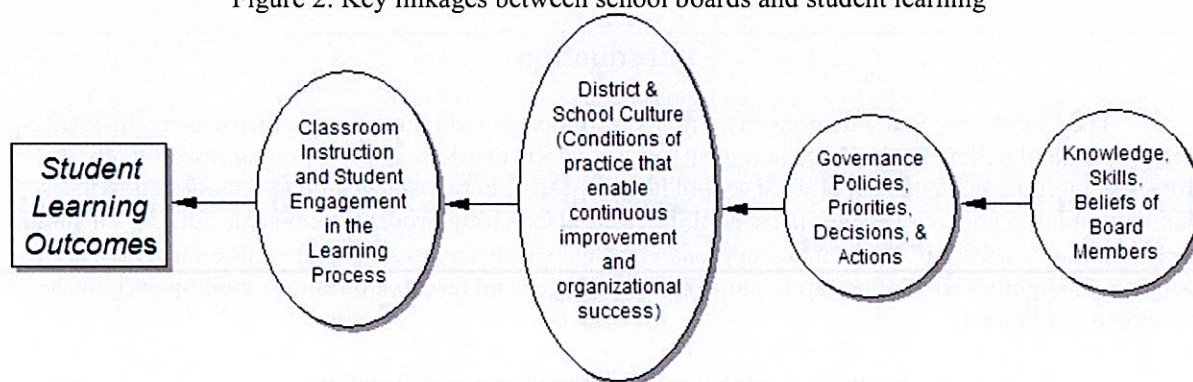


The Iowa School Boards Foundation is the research affiliate of the
Iowa Association of School Boards

Phase II of the Lighthouse Inquiry: A Closer Examination of the Role of School Board Leadership for the Improvement of Student Achievement

Following Phase I of the Lighthouse Inquiry, which demonstrated that school boards in high-achieving districts were significantly different in their beliefs and actions from school boards in low-achieving districts, Phase II of the inquiry set out to understand more about the actions of local boards of education that positively impact school cultures and student outcomes and to understand how they learn to perform in those ways. The linkages between school boards and teaching and learning in classrooms are often misunderstood. School boards do not directly cause student learning. However, it would appear from findings of the Lighthouse Research and others, the beliefs, decisions, and actions of school boards directly impact the conditions within schools that enable district efforts to improve achievement to either succeed or fail. These linkages are illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Key linkages between school boards and student learning



This phase of the research built upon the earlier study, Phase I, by identifying pilot school districts and providing technical assistance and support to the board, superintendent, and, in some districts, a districtwide leadership team in order to strengthen their leadership for ensuring key conditions for productive change exist within the district. The challenge was to move an entire district, a very complex system, from a set of deeply held assumptions, beliefs, and practices to a renewed focus on academic results and high levels of performance by all students. The main premise guiding this phase of the research was:

When local school board/superintendent teams generate a districtwide focus on improved achievement and engage local administrators and teachers in creating or strengthening key conditions that support continuous improvement, it will result in high and equitable student achievement and elevated beliefs across the system.

The key variables (generating a districtwide focus on improved achievement, creating or strengthening seven conditions that support continuous improvement, student achievement, and the beliefs of board and staff) defined the sources of data to be collected. Although numerous types of data were collected for study, the three main sources included a districtwide survey related to the seven conditions for productive change, a districtwide survey of beliefs about what is possible to expect in terms of student learning and what it takes to improve learning outcomes, and annual student achievement data.

Results

Extensive analysis of data at the end of year three and again at the end of year five revealed considerable evidence of impact as illustrated by the following examples:

- Significant positive change in the perceived presence of six of the seven conditions being monitored.
- Significant positive change in 75% of the beliefs being monitored.
- Significant positive change in the perceived presence of specific indicators of each condition being monitored.
- Significant positive change in achievement.
- Significant increase in the ability of the staff and the board to consistently describe the district's school improvement goals.
- Significant increase in the amount of time spent in regular board meetings on policy and student achievement issues.
- Significant increase in the time board members dedicated to work sessions to focus exclusively on student achievement issues.
- Significant increase in the time board members spent talking to each other during board meetings and work sessions as opposed to interacting mainly with the staff member presenting information.
- Strong agreement across all role groups that local school boards can positively impact student achievement.

Voices of the Participants

With the project emphasis on establishing a districtwide focus on improving student learning and shared goals for the improvement of achievement, it was important to gather information about the collective understanding of what the district was trying to improve. Therefore, one of the survey questions asked the participants in the pilot sites to describe the current goal for improvement in their school district. The following quotes from staff and board members' responses to the survey item in one pilot district illustrate the kind of change that was observed across districts.

In the first year of the project, survey responses to the question, "What are the improvement goals for this district?" included:

- *To enable all students to be successful learners both now and in the future.*
- *To better educate the student for their lifetime.*
- *Helping students to do better.*
- *To improve tests scores.*
- *To seek new challenges to continue the tradition of academic excellence and personal satisfaction.*
- *To prepare students for college, work, life.*
- *To allow our students to be the best that they can be.*
- *So all students can experience success.*

One year later, responses to the same question "What are the improvement goals for this district?" from participants in the same school district included:

- *Improve reading comprehension districtwide is the current initiative.*
- *Improve reading comprehension through the use of new instructional strategies*
- *To improve the reading comprehension at all grade levels.*
- *Improve reading and reading comprehension of every student.*
- *All students will improve in reading comprehension.*
- *Improve reading comprehension.*
- *To improve comprehension scores in reading in all content areas.*
- *Improve reading comprehension.*

- *Reading comprehension (K-12) is the main improvement goal for our district.*

With approximately 80 staff and board members participating in the survey from this district of approximately 1000 students, over 97% of the responses mentioned the districtwide focus on improvement of reading or reading comprehension as their current focus for improvement. This shift, from a very mission driven district to districtwide clarity about the “most important thing to improve this year” as they carry out the mission, appeared to be critical for generating collective action and ultimately improving outcomes for students. The board played a key role in establishing the focus for improvement, clarifying expectations in relation to the improvement focus, protecting the districts’ improvement efforts from fragmentation, and aligning decisions and resources consistent with the needs in the focus area.

Knowing where to focus energy was not enough to ensure student learning improved. Actions consistent with the priority for improvement also became apparent in the data. Board/superintendent teams developed a renewed commitment to improving teaching in the area of greatest student learning need and ensured the professional development experiences of their staff members maintained this focus. The initial responses to questions asking participants to describe their professional development experiences over the past year included none of the characteristics of quality professional development that have been shown to impact teaching practices in ways that benefit student learning. Descriptions of their previous professional development experiences included references to motivational speakers or content that was not directly related to instruction as in the following quotes:

- *One afternoon of attendance with professional speaker.*
- *Just what has been provided for us at the beginning of the school year. . .*
- *Mr. Fitzgerald is about all that I can remember.*
- *Guest speaker on classroom discipline. Technology updates on grading system.*
- *Behavior management in the classroom, physical activity and nutrition, organizational skills.*
- *Teacher workshops at the beginning of the school year and a regional seminar.*
- *Motivational speakers were provided by the district.*
- *A state convention with inspirational speakers, hands-on workshops.*

By the end of year three, 92% of the survey responses from the same district mentioned one or more of the characteristics of quality professional development with evidence of impact on student learning:

- *The review of student data and the research and development of strategies to meet the needs of students.*
- *I have received further training in instructional reading strategies.*
- *Frequent teacher in-service times to learn about, practice, and discuss research based reading comprehension strategies.*
- *They were all related to the strategies we are to use to improve student reading comprehension.*
- *I meet weekly, sometimes daily, with my study team to improve on my teaching and student learning.*
- *Researched how to improve reading comprehension in my subject area.*
- *Shared and discussed experience in implementing reading strategies.*
- *Learning support strategies for the main comprehension strategies of inductive thinking and concept attainment.*
- *Most of them focused on teaching reading using inductive methods.*

The results and quotes provided here represent only a few of the changes observed during the data analysis but provide a glimpse into the changing conditions within the participant school districts. The next step was to sort-out the behaviors of the board members that may have contributed to the changes being observed within the culture of the school district.

What Did The Board Members Do?

The board/superintendent team assumed leadership responsibilities with a focus on systemic improvement. The board members in the pilot school districts were not passive “rubber stamps” of the superintendent’s recommendations but they were also not acting as if they were the professional educators. At the same time, superintendents did not view their boards as a necessary evil that must be tolerated or merely “managed” in order to keep them from causing harm. Together, the board members and superintendents gained a sense of the leadership role the board could play and made substantial efforts to engage with each other as leadership partners without discounting the diverse perspectives and unique responsibilities each position brings to the team. The board members found a balance of active engagement in extensive dialogue about the district’s focus and direction for improvement and a deep regard for the role of the teachers and administrators charged with moving the district in that direction. Finding and maintaining this balance enhanced the relationship between the board and the superintendent and the confidence they had in each other’s ability to make a difference.

The board and the superintendent built a different type of relationship than is typical in many school districts. Positive, trusting relationships existed between the boards and their superintendents in all pilot districts; which, as in the original Lighthouse Study, appeared to be a necessary but not sufficient condition of the board/superintendent team. Boards and superintendents relied upon the positive trusting relationships to enable them to play strong, interdependent leadership roles, to examine and challenge each others’ views, to study data and confront existing realities, to ask probing questions, and to scrutinize each others’ performance in ways that strengthened and mobilized the entire team.

Roles of the Board

Five main functions or roles of the board surfaced as critical roles for boards to play as they interacted with district staff around their efforts to improve student learning. First, the boards **set clear expectations** for the outcomes of the improvement work. Regardless of the specific area being discussed, the improvement of student performance or the improvement of professional development, the boards worked to clarify expectations in terms of the desired outcomes or results rather than the strategies the district staff would employ to meet the expectations.

With clear expectations for results, another role the board members played was to **hold themselves and the district staff accountable for meeting the expectations**. The board members had to be willing to constantly monitor progress and ensure corrective actions could be taken when the progress was not adequate. However, their approach to monitoring was not one of mandate and hands off. Rather, it was a collective effort of shared (albeit different) responsibilities for watching the progress and ensuring success.

Another key role the board members played was to **ensure the conditions for success were present within the system**. In other words, board members had to be willing to support whatever it would take to meet the expectations that had been set. This type of reciprocal responsibility for the success of the school district created a new dimension of “pressure and support” than had been present in the districts previously.

The board members also found it important to **build the collective “will” of the staff and the community to improve student learning**. In other words, they needed to build a shared sense of urgency and a shared commitment to ensuring all students learn well.

And, finally, the board members found it necessary to **create time to learn together as a board team** and engage in extensive dialogue with each other in order to establish consensus about what was most important to accomplish, to understand what it would take to succeed, and to determine at what “cost” they were willing to pursue it. Board members are not professional educators but they did need to have shared understandings about what was reasonable to expect and what it would take to meet the expectations – and that required learning together as a board team. These five roles - setting clear expectations, holding the system accountable to the expectations, creating conditions for success, building the collective will to succeed, and learning together as a board team – became the defining elements of

the board's role from which seven key areas of performance emerged as the board members engaged in fulfilling these roles.

Seven Areas of Performance Related to the Roles of the Board

As board members played their role, they found it extremely important to take responsibility for increasing public awareness of the current status of student learning, point out critical needs, and build a "case-for-change" to increase the sense of urgency for addressing the learning needs. This was often a difficult shift for board members who were more accustomed to building public confidence by pointing out district strengths than attempting to build public confidence by pointing out areas of need and communicating what the district was going to do to address the needs. In order to perform this leadership function, they first had to challenge their own beliefs about what was possible to expect in terms of their student learning gains then consistently and confidently mobilize the public, including district staff, to expect more.

A second performance area involved board members increasing their use of data to set expectations, determine and monitor indicators of progress, and apply pressure for accountability. This performance area was the most difficult for boards because they did not want to set the district up to fail and, therefore, were very reluctant to set measurable goals and targets that might expose any lack of success. Closely related to the need to apply pressure for accountability was the corresponding need to demonstrate unwavering commitment to the improvement efforts and ensure board actions and decisions reflected that commitment. This type of dedication required extensive learning, dialogue, and a willingness to "stay-the-course."

The boards also realized that improving student achievement would be directly related to their support for quality professional development focused on the improvement of instruction. For most boards, this required significant changes in the allocation of resources (people, time, and money) and would not have happened without a clear understanding of the characteristics of quality professional development and a belief in the importance of improving the knowledge and skills of educators in order to improve student outcomes.

As board members increased their leadership role, they also had to support and connect with other district-level leaders to ensure a strong continuum of leadership was distributed across the school district. The relationship between the board and the superintendent, discussed previously, was extended to the district leadership team (usually consisting of central office administrators, principals, and teacher leaders from each building) to guide and protect the improvement efforts, monitor progress, and make mid-course corrections to accelerate progress. Whenever there was a breakdown in this leadership continuum or a breakdown in the leaders' capacity to function effectively in their leadership role, the improvement work ceased to move forward.

Policies for guiding the decisions and actions of district staff have not been very effective in areas that most directly impact student learning (curriculum, instruction, professional development, assessment, etc.). Board members in the pilot districts believed that sustaining the processes and structures of the improvement work playing out in their districts would depend upon written policies to provide continued guidance when key leaders or board members were no longer serving the district. However, they quickly realized that policies to guide and sustain the district work to improve achievement required a more deliberative process than the policy development process they used for existing policies. Board members collectively studied background information about the policy area, identified and prioritized expectations, determined measures of progress they would accept as evidence of success, identified support needs, and regularly monitored the implementation of their policy.

Finally, board members connected with the community to increase the community's involvement in and commitment to the school district's focus for improvement. The board members had to value the role of the parents and community in the education of students and be willing to engage the community in a more significant role than the compliance requirements for involvement established by the State Department of Education. Even though the community connection changed less than any other condition

being monitored by the research team, several districts made impressive connections with the community that need to be developed, supported, and studied to determine impact over time.

While each of these seven areas of performance may have transpired differently in each district, there were many commonalities across districts that can guide board development across the state and the nation. More information about the seven key areas of performance and the knowledge, skills, and beliefs that board members identified as necessary for effective performance in these areas is available from the Iowa School Boards Foundation and are the basis of the implementation and scale-up study of the current third phase of the research.

Summary

Do some school boards generate higher achievement through patterns of organizational behavior that can be described and learned by others? Clearly, the initial findings in this line of inquiry would indicate they do. However, this is difficult for many to grasp. When we think about the educational system of a school district and its likely effect on students, we consider the elements of the system in terms of their proximity to the student. In the case of this study, the educational environment created in the classroom and the school is closest to the student and is likely to have the most influence. The conditions for change are more distal from the student and are unlikely to have a significant effect unless they affect the learning environment in the classrooms and schools. The governance processes are more distal yet and are likely to have a significant effect only when they affect the conditions for change and those in turn affect the educational environment (see Figure 2).

Essentially, the board/superintendent team operates “at a distance” from the learner. As they try to support student learning they must operate through the organization since the actual work of educating is done by others. How to create these processes and how to shape them to affect the conditions for productive change and, in turn, the learning environment is just starting to become clear through the continuing Lighthouse Research.

School boards matter. Solving the problems of public education will depend upon the leadership of public schools. Issues affecting the conditions of schools that enable productive change are issues of policy. School boards are critical players in the school change process and must be active leaders on behalf of the students in their schools. Without effective school board leadership, systemic change becomes impossible and improvement of student achievement will remain episodic, with only “pockets of excellence” sprinkled throughout public schools and school districts. How board/superintendent teams understand and carry out their roles can make the difference between dysfunctional leadership teams incapable of leading change and highly effective leadership teams that build districtwide capacity to ensure every student succeeds.

A great deal is already known about what it takes to improve the achievement of all students in classrooms and schools. Numerous studies and books have been written describing the characteristics of more effective learning environments. Numerous examples of schools that beat the odds and produce high levels of learning for all students exist. However, less is known about what it takes to lead an entire district to high levels of learning and sustain a culture focused on excellence and equity. Until recently, school boards have been excluded from the school reform literature and excluded from consideration as a unit of change or a key lever in the change process. This study and those that follow will open the door to understanding the critical leadership role of school governance. This understanding can then help establish the processes for creating conditions for productive change which impact the teaching and learning environment throughout the school district, and, in turn impact the learning of students in schools.



Overview:
Roles of the Board for Improving Student Achievement
Based on the Iowa Lighthouse Research

1. Set clear expectations

- a. Get clear about the greatest student learning needs – the most important content area to improve first
- b. Believe more is possible and communicate high expectations
- c. Establish a clear and narrow focus for improvement – clarify improvement goals and specific targets
- d. Focus on student learning and teaching (Improving teaching as the key strategy for improving learning)

2. Create conditions for success

- a. Demonstrate commitment to the improvement focus through board actions and decisions
- b. Support quality professional development
- c. Stay the course
- d. Support & connect with districtwide leadership
- e. Develop and nurture the board/superintendent team leadership
- f. Ensure all parts of the system are aligned around the learning needs of students (curriculum, instruction, assessment; goals, actions, resource allocation; etc.).

3. Hold the system accountable to the expectations

- a. Use data extensively
- b. Determine what you will accept as evidence of progress/success
- c. Monitor progress regularly
- d. Apply pressure for accountability

4. Build collective will

- a. Create awareness of the need
- b. Create urgency around the moral purpose of improvement
- c. Instill hope that it's possible to change
- d. Connect with the community

5. Learn together as a board team

- a. Establish board learning time
- b. Learn together
- c. Talk to each other – extensive board conversations
- d. Develop a willingness and readiness to lead and allow others to lead
- e. Build commitment to the improvement focus through shared information and discussion
- f. Engage in deliberative policy development – lead through your policies



PERSONAL BELIEFS

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| ☐ Achievement | ☐ Freedom | ☐ Personal development (living up to my fullest potential) |
| ☐ Accountability | ☐ Friendships | ☐ Physical challenge |
| ☐ Advancement and promotion | ☐ Fun | ☐ Physical fitness |
| ☐ Adventure | ☐ Growth | ☐ Pleasure |
| ☐ Affection (love and caring) | ☐ Having a family | ☐ Power and authority |
| ☐ Arts | ☐ Helping other people | ☐ Privacy |
| ☐ Challenges | ☐ Helping society | ☐ Public Service |
| ☐ Change and variety | ☐ Honesty | ☐ Purity |
| ☐ Close relationships | ☐ Humor | ☐ Quality of what I take part in |
| ☐ Community | ☐ Independence | ☐ Quality relationships |
| ☐ Competence | ☐ Influencing others | ☐ Realism |
| ☐ Competition | ☐ Inner harmony | ☐ Recognition (respect from others, status) |
| ☐ Cooperation | ☐ Initiative | ☐ Religion |
| ☐ Country | ☐ Integrity | ☐ Reputation |
| ☐ Creativity | ☐ Intellectual status | ☐ Responsibility |
| ☐ Decisiveness | ☐ Involvement | ☐ Security |
| ☐ Democracy | ☐ Job tranquility | ☐ Self-respect |
| ☐ Ecological awareness | ☐ Knowledge | ☐ Serenity |
| ☐ Economic security | ☐ Leadership | ☐ Solitude |
| ☐ Effectiveness | ☐ Leisure | ☐ Sophistication |
| ☐ Efficiency | ☐ Location | ☐ Stability |
| ☐ Equality | ☐ Loyalty | ☐ Status |
| ☐ Ethical practice | ☐ Market position | ☐ Supervising others |
| ☐ Excellence | ☐ Meaningful work | ☐ Time freedom |
| ☐ Excitement | ☐ Merit | ☐ Truth |
| ☐ Expertise | ☐ Money | ☐ Wealth |
| ☐ Fame | ☐ Nature | ☐ Wisdom |
| ☐ Fast living | ☐ (being around people who are) Open and honest | |
| ☐ Fast-paced work | ☐ Optimism | |
| ☐ Financial gain | ☐ Order (tranquility, stability, conformity) | |

TOP 30 PROTOCOLS TO CONSIDER

	1.	Orientation of school board candidates
	2.	Welcoming new members to the board
	3.	Communication among governance team members
	4.	Role and responsibilities of the board president / officers
	5.	Using board meetings as strategic leadership tools/ BRS=Board Meeting Management
	6.	Study sessions / conversation meetings
	7.	Placing items on the board meeting agenda (<i>bylaw required</i>)
	8.	Bringing up new ideas or agenda items
	9.	Developing the board meeting agenda
	10.	Agenda questions answered before a meeting
	11.	Board member reports at board meetings
	12.	Staff reports to the board
	13.	Deliberation and decision-making at board meetings
	14.	Explaining “no” votes
	15.	Individual board member requests for information, materials, or action
	16.	Sharing personal expertise / i.e.: Sharing information w other board members for decision-making
	17.	Addressing conflict among board members
	18.	Allowing majority vote to set the direction
	19.	Meeting Guidelines for board and other district meetings
	20.	Public comment section of board meetings
	21.	Handling concerns/complaints from the community (<i>Uniform Complaint Policy required</i>)
	22.	Handling concerns/complaints from staff
	23.	Spokesperson(s) for the Governance Team / Board / District
	24.	Board opinion vs. individual opinion
	25.	Speaking with a common voice -- (developing and using key messages)
	26.	Board member appointment to district committees -- role and authority
	27.	Managing difficult topic/issues in an atmosphere of mutual respect
	28.	Visiting schools
	29.	Role of board members in public
	30.	Self monitoring of governance team effectiveness

