What eXceptional Governance Is

Ivan J. Lorentzen, Ed.D.
William P. McCaw, Ed.D.
What eXceptional Governance Is

Ivan J. Lorentzen, Ed.D.
- School Board Member – 18 years
- Professor Emeritus – Psychology – 45 years
  Flathead Valley Community College, Kalispell, MT

William P. McCaw, Ed.D.
- Teacher and School Administrator– 20 years
- Professor of Educational Leadership – 20 years
- University of Montana, Missoula, MT

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Where we are going this morning . . . 

-What we *know* is going on

-What we *think* may be going on

-What we are thinking about *next*
What we know is going on from others
Boards are Part of the Problem

Low-Achieving Districts and Low-Performing Boards

Lee & Eadens (2014)
William Bennett in 1987 (U.S. Secretary of Education under President Ronald Reagan) used the term “blob” to refer to the bloated educational bureaucracy of public education including the school boards, and called for efforts to “shrink the blob”
Boards are Part of the Problem

“Boards are the least disciplined, least rational and most disordered element in any school system. The board is, in fact, the weakest link in the educational system. It seems obvious that administrators and teachers know their jobs immeasurably better than boards know theirs.”

Carver (2000)
Boards are Part of the Problem

“There are no practical limits on school board powers. . . .

. . . Board members not only have the power to disrupt schools, but can also gain personally from doing so.”

Hill (2003)
If boards are part of the problem, boards are also part of the solution.
Boards are Part of the Solution

This “solution” idea stimulated research efforts to better understand the influence of school boards and its role in student achievement:

- McREL – 1966 to present
- McCarty & Ramsey – 1971
- Cistone – 1975
- NSBA – 1982 to present
- Lutz & Iannaccone – 1986
- Danzberger – 1990’s
- Chait – 1993
- Goodman & Zimmerman – 1997
- Delagardelle (i.e. Lighthouse) – 1998-2010
- Elmore – 2000
- Kirst – 2000 to present
- Hess & Meeks – 2000-2010
- Houston – 2001

- Mountford – 2001 to present
- Land – 2002
- Lashway - 2002
- Leithwood – 2004
- Broholm & Wysockey-Johnson – 2004
- Carver - 2006
- Alsbury – 2008 to present
- Walser – 2009
- WSSDA - 2009
- Maeroff - 2010
- Lee & Eadens - 2014
- Puig – 2014
- Alsbury & Gore - 2015

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Chronology of Applicable Research Informing Effective Boardsmanship

- **1970**
  - Marzano, Waters, & McNulty (2003-present)

- **1980**
  - Delagardelle & Heiligenthal (1998-2008)
    - *The Lighthouse Inquiries*

- **1990**
  - The Lighthouse Inquires
    - Alsbury (ed.)

- **2000**
    - Lorentzen & McCaw

- **2010**
  - Improving School Board Effectiveness (2015)
    - Alsbury & Gore (eds.)

- **2020**
  - Marzano, Waters, & McNulty (2003-present)

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Boards are Part of the Solution:
From Generalities to Specifics

General
- Observational descriptions
- Qualitative analysis

Specific
- Descriptive statistics
- Inferential statistics
  Relationships via Correlations
  Differences via Effect Size

Qualitative

Quantitative
Boards are Part of the Solution

McREL – 1966 to present
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Puig – 2014
Alsbury & Gore - 2015
Boards Behave Differently
The Lighthouse Studies

“The Lighthouse studies show that boards in high-achieving districts are very different from boards in low-achieving districts.”

Lisa Bartusek – IASB Associate Director for Board leadership (2009)
Sense of Urgency
Moving and Stuck Districts
“Lighthouse Studies”
(Iowa Association of School Boards, 2000)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Governance Behaviors</th>
<th>Moving Districts</th>
<th>Stuck Districts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student focus</td>
<td>Preparation for a changing world</td>
<td>Change forced by outside initiatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared vision</td>
<td>Ongoing search for improved educational strategies</td>
<td>Satisfied with and unable to alter the status quo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student expectations</td>
<td>All students need greater challenges with high expectations</td>
<td>Parents and low SES stated as reasons for low SA metrics</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Moving and Stuck Districts
(Iowa Association of School Boards, 2000)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Governance Behaviors</th>
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<th>Stuck Districts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shared decision making</td>
<td>District knows how and to whom to provide support for change</td>
<td>Unsure of how to generate support for change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New ideas</td>
<td>On-going and thoughtful search for new ideas throughout district</td>
<td>Rare for new ideas to permeate the status-quo</td>
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<tr>
<td>Resources for innovation (students and staff)</td>
<td>Innovation encouraged with support processes developed</td>
<td>Discipline and classroom management emphasized</td>
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# Boards are Part of the Solution:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Board Name</th>
<th>Years</th>
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<tr>
<td>McREL</td>
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<td>1993</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goodman &amp; Zimmerman</td>
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<td>Houston</td>
<td>2001</td>
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<td>Mountford</td>
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<td>2002</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leithwood</td>
<td>2004</td>
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<tr>
<td>Broholm &amp; Wysockey-Johnson</td>
<td>2004</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carver</td>
<td>2006</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alsbury</td>
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<tr>
<td>Walser</td>
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<td>WSSDA</td>
<td>2009</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maeroff</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lee &amp; Eadens</td>
<td>2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>Puig</td>
<td>2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alsbury &amp; Gore</td>
<td>2015</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Boards . . .
govern from the balcony/mezzanine
-If the board were a football team and the community was watching us as players on the field with everybody running in opposite directions, paying no attention to our quarterback and getting nowhere near the goal, they would all go home. We’re going to lose them. When this is what they see, and when we go to them asking for more money - nobody should be surprised when they say NO.

(Broholm & Wysockey-Johnson – 2004)
No Micro-management
## Boards are Part of the Solution:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>McREL – 1966 to present</th>
<th>Mountford – 2001 to present</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cistone – 1975</td>
<td>Lashway - 2002</td>
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<td><strong>Danzberger – 1990’s</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Alsbury &amp; Gore - 2015</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Distal Factors
- the community
- the school board
- district leadership

Proximal Factors
- the principal/school
- the teacher
- the student
What we **know** is going on

From our research
The Montana Study (Lorentzen, 2013)

to determine whether actions by this group (the school board)...

...had any effect on the achievement of this group (students).
Structural Scheme

Board Self-Assessment Survey©

• Standards (5)
  • Benchmarks (22)
  • Key Indicators (69)
### Causality Relationships (via correlations)

<table>
<thead>
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<th>J</th>
<th>K</th>
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<td>E</td>
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<td>0.31</td>
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### Group Differences (via effect size)

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<td>E</td>
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<td>0.48</td>
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Transferability

Lessons learned from a single or limited number of similar events ...

... can be transferred to similar events in the future
Boards are Part of the Solution: From Generalities to Specifics

General
- Observational descriptions
- Qualitative analysis

Specific
- Descriptive statistics
- Inferential statistics
  Relationships via Correlations
  Differences via Effect Size

Qualitative
- Quantitative
### Sources of Quantitative Data on Boardsmanship

<table>
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<th>Montana</th>
<th>Washington</th>
<th>Texas</th>
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<td>Relationships</td>
<td>AY 11-12</td>
<td>AY 11-12</td>
<td>AY 17-18</td>
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<td>Differences (high/low SA)</td>
<td>AY 11-12</td>
<td>AY 11-12</td>
<td>AY 17-18</td>
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<td>Differences (Gap Analysis)</td>
<td>AY 11-12</td>
<td>AY 11-12</td>
<td>AY 17-18</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Boards Behave Differently

• Lighthouse
• WSSDA
• Smoley
• Alsbury
• Lorentzen
• McCaw
• Gore
• Mountford
• Lee/Eadens
• Puig
• Maurer
• Holman
• ETC.
Texas XG School Board Self-Assessment Survey
(Lighthouse; McREL; NSBA Key Works, WSSDA, 2009)

The Five Board Standards

Standard 1: Responsible school district governance

Standard 2: High expectations for student learning

Standard 3: Create conditions district-wide for student and staff success

Standard 4: Holding the district accountable for student learning

Standard 5: Community engagement
### Board Standards and Conceptual Similarities from Six Studies

<table>
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<tr>
<th>MT</th>
<th>WA</th>
<th>TX</th>
<th>L/E</th>
<th>M/S</th>
<th>Puig</th>
<th>Overall Rank</th>
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<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>4 - Accountability</td>
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<td>2 - Expectations</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>3 - Conditions</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>5 - Community</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Board Standards
1. Governance
2. Expectations
3. Conditions
4. Accountability
5. Community
CONTEXT

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NOT INTUITIVE
Effective Board Behavior is NOT Intuitive

Which standard contains the key indicator (board behavior) with the largest difference between high performing and low performing districts in Texas (10th grade)?

**Standard 1:** Responsible school district governance

**Standard 2:** High expectations for student learning

**Standard 3:** Create conditions district-wide for student and staff success

**Standard 4:** Holding the district accountable for student learning

**Standard 5:** Community engagement
Effective Board Behavior is NOT Intuitive

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**Standard 4:** Holding the district accountable for student learning

**Standard 5:** Community engagement
Necessary Questions to Ask

Standard #5: Community Engagement

a. How to inform?
b. How to consult?
c. How to involve?
d. How to collaborate?
Effective Board Behavior is NOT Intuitive

Which standard contains the board behavior with the largest difference between the mean achievement of all 10th grade students compared to the mean achievement of 10th grade students on free and reduced lunch (poverty) in Texas?

Standard 1: Responsible school district governance

Standard 2: High expectations for student learning

Standard 3: Create conditions district-wide for student and staff success

Standard 4: Holding the district accountable for student learning

Standard 5: Community engagement
Effective Board Behavior is NOT Intuitive

Which standard contains the board behavior with the largest difference between the mean achievement of all 10th grade students compared to the mean achievement of 10th grade students on free and reduced lunch (poverty) in Texas?

**Standard 1:** Responsible school district governance

**Standard 2:** High expectations for student learning

**Standard 3:** Create conditions district-wide for student and staff success

**Standard 4:** Holding the district accountable for student learning

**Standard 5:** Community engagement
Necessary Questions to Ask

Standard #3: Conditions for Success

a. What are they?
b. How to express?
c. How to turn them into a reality?
Effective Board Behavior is NOT Intuitive

Standard 3: Create conditions district-wide for student staff success

Rank the three board behaviors associated with Standard 3 in order of importance when considering the difference between the mean achievement of all 10th grade students compared to the mean achievement of 10th grade students on free and reduced lunch (poverty) in Texas?

I Have policies that establish a course of study for students and graduation requirements that align with high expectations for student achievement.

II Communicate an expectation that all classrooms will implement effective instructional practices.

III Have policies that ensures students receive the curriculum, support and supplemental materials necessary for high achievement.
Effective Board Behavior is NOT Intuitive

Standard 3: Create conditions district-wide for student staff success

Rank the three board behaviors associated with Standard 3 in order of importance when considering the difference between the mean achievement of all 10th grade students compared to the mean achievement of 10th grade students on free and reduced lunch (poverty) in Texas?

III Have policies that ensures students receive the curriculum, support and supplemental materials necessary for high achievement. \((d = 1.12)\)

I Have policies that establish a course of study for students and graduation requirements that align with high expectations for student achievement. \((d = .84)\)

II Communicate an expectation that all classrooms will implement effective instructional practices. \((d = .59)\)
What we are thinking about next
The District Health Index

UNHEALTHY

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Low

High

HEALTHY

STUCK

Which best describes your district?
The Board’s Health Index

Which best describes your Board?

Healthy

Boardsmanship

Unhealthy

Stuck

Low

High

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The Organizational Structure of Your School District

What does it look like?
Formal Organizational Structure Examples
Formal Organizational Structure Examples
Organizational Structures

**Pyramidal Structure:**
- designed for direct action, demands accountability, decisive, is part of the action
- vertical design creates boundaries that cripples innovation, creativity, and responding to threats

**Flattened Structure**
- designed for reflection, diverse viewpoints, hospitable, trustworthy, distant from the action, overview, consensual, and collaborative

Broholm & Wysockey-Johnson (2004)
PARADIGM
Schools Function Best With Separate but Overlapping Formal Roles

- Community Engagement
- Board Governance
- Superintendent
- Principal School Leadership
- Teacher Instruction
- Student Achievement
- Parent Involvement

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Roles and Responsibilities

Community

School Board

Superintendent

Principal

Teacher

Student

Parent

Engagement

Governance

District Leadership

School Leadership

Instruction

Achievement

Involvement
Schools Function Best With Separate but Overlapping Formal Roles
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Schools Function Best With Separate but Overlapping Formal Roles

- Community Engagement
- Board Governance
- Superintendent
  - District Leadership
- Principal
  - School Leadership
- Teacher Instruction
- Student Achievement
- Parent Involvement

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A bad system will beat a good person every time.

W. Edwards Deming
Schools Function Best With Separate but Overlapping Formal Roles

- Community Engagement
- Board Governance
- Superintendent
  - District Leadership
- Principal
  - School Leadership
- Teacher
  - Instruction
- Student
  - Achievement
- Parent
  - Involvement

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Community Engagement

Community Engagement
Board Governance
Superintendent District Leadership
Effective Boardsmanship

Community Engagement

Board Governance

Board and Community Collaboration

Board and Superintendent Collaboration

Only the Board

Superintendent District Leadership

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Legal Mandates for District Governance & General Operations
1. Hire the superintendent and clerk
2. Supervise/evaluate the superintendent
3. Set district policy
4. Approve the budget
5. Approve the curriculum
6. Seek public approval for bonds and levy’s
7. Ensure safety and security of students and staff

Only the Board:

District Governance for High Student Achievement
1. Hold the district accountable
2. Responsibly govern and district
3. Set expectations for student learning
4. Engage the community
5. Create the conditions for student and staff success
The Learning District:
A Systems Approach to High Student Achievement

Instructional Leadership

Stable Culture of High Student Achievement

Effective

Ineffective

LOW

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

HIGH

Boardsmanship

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• Context
• Deeds and Misdeeds
• Achievement Gap
• “Our” Kids doing OK
• Lag Time

What we are **eXploring**
Deeds and Misdeeds of School Boards and their Members

Individual Deeds
- a collaborative attitude, open dialogue (1)
- good relationships with community and superintendent (2)
- focus on the "critical Cs" (27)
- involved in community engagement (28)
- board governance committee (29)
- focuses on the five "board standards" (30)
- utilizing the BSAS for annual self-assessment (31)
- monthly board professional development (32)
- current district plan utilized monthly (33)
- mission/vision/strategic plan (34)
- hire, retain, evaluate effective superintendent (36)
- board meeting agendas tied to policy/district plan (37)
- annual board calendar (38)
- monthly community engagement dialogue (39)
- monthly student achievement reports (40)
- becoming a "learning district" (41)
- a collaborative attitude, open dialogue (1)
- good relationships with community and superintendent (2)
- focus on the "critical Cs" (27)
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- monthly student achievement reports (40)
- becoming a "learning district" (41)

Individual Misdeeds
- micromanagement (15)
- advancing personal, not the district's, agendas (16)
- contrary attitude (17)
- comes to meetings unprepared (18)
- one person dominates conversations (19)
- intimidates others with different opinions (20)
- "I am here to fix things" (21)
- single issue focus (22)
- focus on "administrivia" and urgent issues (23)
- lack of board professional development (24)
- role confusion/reactive stance (26)
- contributing to internal board disagreement/disarray (26)

Board Deeds
- involvement in community engagement (28)
- boards using the BSAS for annual self-assessment (31)
- board professional development (32)
- district utilized monthly (33)
- mission/vision/strategic plan (34)
- hiring, retaining, evaluating an effective superintendent (36)
- board meeting agendas tied to policy/district plan (37)
- annual board calendar (38)
- monthly community engagement dialogue (39)
- monthly student achievement reports (40)
- becoming a "learning district" (41)

Board Misdeeds
- micromanagement (42)
- disarray between board members tolerated (43)
- focus on the "Killer B's" (44)
- meetings less orderly (45)
- meetings focus on urgent, not important, issues (46)
- poor relationship with superintendent (47)
- ignoring the community unless need something (48)
- routinely defer to administration (49)
- making unrealistic demands of administration (50)
- no time spent on student achievement, community engagement, professional board development, or issues of governance (51)
- rejecting superintendent recommendations (52)
### Achievement of All Students

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### Achievement of Students on Free and Reduced Lunch

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Board actions matter because school boards, when addressing factors within their control, can create environments where social injustices are overcome and every student achieves at high levels.
Lag Time – Decision to Impact to Student Achievement

School Board Actions

Impacting Students

Tomorrow?
1 Month?
6 Months?
This Year?
Five Years?
1. Everything you do will always leave a mark.
2. You can always correct the mistakes you make.
3. What is important is what is inside of you.
4. In life, you will undergo painful sharpening which will only make you better.
5. To be the best pencil, you must allow yourself to be held and guided by the hand that holds you.
Thank You

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