

## School Board Performance Review

### Essential Pre-reading

- 1 So what do we know about effective school boards? CPE's research shows that effective school boards are characterised by:
- an ability to set goals reflecting high expectations for students and monitoring progress toward goals; an understanding of student data and how it can be used
  - a relentless focus on student achievement and spending less time on operational issues
  - a comprehensive understanding of the needs of the school, and strong relationships with the principal, school executive, and other stakeholders
  - everyone is committed to success

(National School Boards Association USA eBulletin, Sept 2013)

.....

- 2 A recent global survey (2012) showed that boards are spending a greater proportion of their time on strategy; but boards appear to struggle to understand and make time to manage business risks. Directors also need to spend more time on their role

(*Improving board governance*. McKinsey & Company, Aug 2013)

.....

- 3 Five habits of high impact school boards:
- understand and focus on governing
  - build capacity to govern
  - lead innovation and change
  - give attention to board & principal partnership
  - implement a relationship strategy

(*Five habits of high impact school boards*. Doug Eadie, 2005)

.....

- 4 Successful boards need to:
- remain strategic
  - align programs with the mission
  - remain innovative
  - preserve the spirits by sharing successes
  - ensure leadership succession

(BoardSource, 2010)



Donald M Walkley

Executive Director, Australian Institute for School Governance

0466 888 674 [contact@instituteforschoolgovernance.com.au](mailto:contact@instituteforschoolgovernance.com.au) PO Box 262 Brunswick Vic 3056 Australia

[www.instituteforschoolgovernance.com.au](http://www.instituteforschoolgovernance.com.au)

5 A framework for best practice governance per literature from Australia, New Zealand, UK and USA includes:

- # Board is clear that it represents the owners of the organisation. Its role is to advance the performance of the organisation in the interests of owners of organisation
- # Ideal board size being less than 10; desired board member competencies include - strategic, independence of thought, leadership, knowledge of sector, analytical, ability to ask questions
- # Membership comprises people who have appropriate skills rather than those who are simply representatives
- # Board's role is to govern, not manage the organisation
- # Board's role is to create the future, not mind the shop - it sets the strategic direction for the organisation, subsequently, the CEO is delegated the task of preparing and implementing the strategic plan
- # Board sets rules for the organisation operations and its own processes in the form of governance policies, and subsequently establishes a policy review schedule
- # Board meetings are as long as needed for effective and productive deliberations on important topics and to fulfil the governance role; the Chair's role is to assist as servant leader
- # Board directs organisational performance through the CEO instructing only that person. CEO is accountable to the board as a whole
- # Board's role is financial governance rather than financial management
- # Board sets the framework for the management of organisational risk, including the level of risk allowable in certain activities or projects
- # Board explicitly sets standards for its own performance and aims to be as good at its own job as it expects the CEO to be at his/hers. It establishes a governance capability and development plan
- # Board selects and directs CEO
- # Board provides all new members with a thorough induction program
- # Board members understand their fiduciary duties (including the duty of loyalty and the duty of care) and that they share equal responsibility and accountability for the decisions and actions of the board

*(Journal of Good Governance. Boardworks International, 1999)*

6 Guiding Standards for Governing by Australian School Boards  
*Australian Institute for School Governance (2014)*