ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES & RELATIONSHIPS FOR SCHOOL BOARDS & SUPERINTENDENTS

A HYA WORKSHOP

HYA | HAZARD YOUNG ATTEA ASSOCIATES

Managing the Volume of Information

Overcoming Tyranny Of Time

Being Constantly "On Call

Assuming Responsibility
for All Children

Focus on Education
& the Future

Responding to Mandates

Balancing Individual Demands
Against Greater Good

Facing Education Realities
in Your Environment

Why Is It So Hard?

Accepting Slow Pace
of Change

Understanding
Business Paradigm

Setting Goals

Applying Systems Thinking

Accessing Good Data

Meeting Stakeholder Needs

Building Successful Partnerships

Defining Mission, Values, Vision

Supporting Internal Accountability

Adapted from Clay and Soldwedel, School Board Fieldbook, Solution Tree, 2009

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RESEARCH ON EFFECTIVE SCHOOL BOARDS

Effective School Boards have a positive effect of Student Learning!

Here is a highlight of a few of the many studies that detail the characteristics of effective school boards and effective board/superintendent relationships.

EFFECTIVE SCHOOL BOARDS:
A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Academic Development Institute 2013:

Effective School Boards:

- Develop shared and strategic goals with companion implementation plans to drive focused, bold change efforts and ensure that the budget process and priorities align with the strategic plan.
- Establish policies that facilitate board professionalism (e.g., structured strategic planning, board evaluations, and board member self-evaluations).

EFFECTIVE SCHOOL BOARDS:
A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Copich 2013 University of Nebraska at Omaha – Board's Role in Student Learning:

- The board's tool to improve district function and student learning is through effective policy making

- Leadership and trust are important and matter when it comes to improving teaching and learning.

- The board should set the precedent for improvement by supporting the success of the superintendent.

EFFECTIVE SCHOOL BOARDS:
A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Copich 2013 University of Nebraska at Omaha – Board's Role in Student Learning: Continued

- Boards set mutual and ongoing expectations for the Superintendent and evaluate him/her both formally and informally based on district goals and interpersonal skills.

- Boards and Superintendents implement self-evaluations and use these as a basis for ongoing discussion aimed at progress.

EFFECTIVE SCHOOL BOARDS:
A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Lighthouse Project (Iowa, 2002) and Lighthouse II (2007)

- Compared districts with low student achievement versus high student achievement

- Identified seven conditions for school renewal that were central to student achievement

7 CRITICAL CONDITIONS FOR SCHOOL RENEWAL

1. Shared leadership – focus on student learning through shared clear vision, high expectations, and dynamic leadership at all levels
2. Continuous improvement – focus on improvement with high levels of involved, shared decision-making
3. Ability to create and sustain initiatives – understanding of how to start and sustain a district or school improvement effort
4. Supportive workplace for staff – "opportunity to do what I do best every day"
5. Staff development – focuses on teaching and learning
6. Support for schools through data and information –use data to make improvements
7. Community involvement – strong connections between school, parents, and community

NEW ENGLAND SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL (NESDEC) & EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH SERVICE (ERS), 2000

Based solely on interviews of high-achieving and low-achieving districts

Six characteristics of well-governed districts:

1. Stability (board members served 6-8 years and generally did not seek higher office)
2. Short regular meetings with annual or biennial goal-setting retreats
3. Effective management where complaints were referred to administration; lack of subcommittees
4. Communicative board chair/president who acted as go-between board and superintendent
5. Focus on student achievement in policy, budget, facilities: support for superintendent as instructional leader
6. Ability to work collaboratively; high degree of trust

# PANASONIC FOUNDATION REPORT (2009)

Based on extensive work over many years with larger urban districts

Four Sacred Duties of Board Members

1. Establish and promote ownership of district's vision and values
2. Articulate expected results and monitor progress
3. Create conditions for achievement through five areas of Board authority
   a. Deciding on and promulgating policies
   b. Governing use of fiscal resources
   c. Engaging the community in its schools
   d. Sustaining effective board-executive relationships
   e. Negotiating and approving union contracts
4. Ensure a community-wide climate of commitment, respect, and trust

THE RESEARCH ALL FOCUSES ON THE SAME THEME ....

Effective Boards do not blur their role with that of the Superintendent and Administration. Rather effective Boards, set the direction for the district (through Strategic Planning and Policy) and consistently monitor the progress and performance of the Superintendent and the District on increased student achievement.
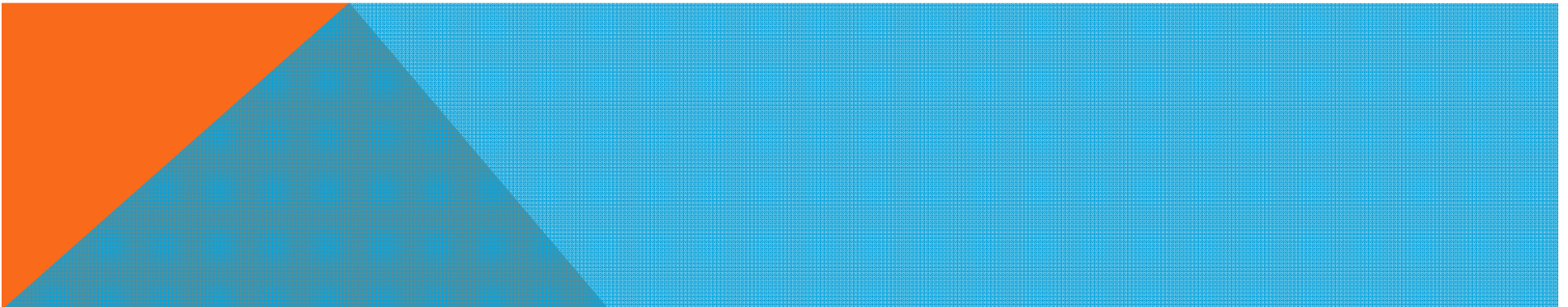
GOVERNANCE MODEL

❖ **The organizational model at right illustrates how effective organizations are governed.**

❖ **The Board's focus is the green; the Superintendent and Administration's focus the Blue**
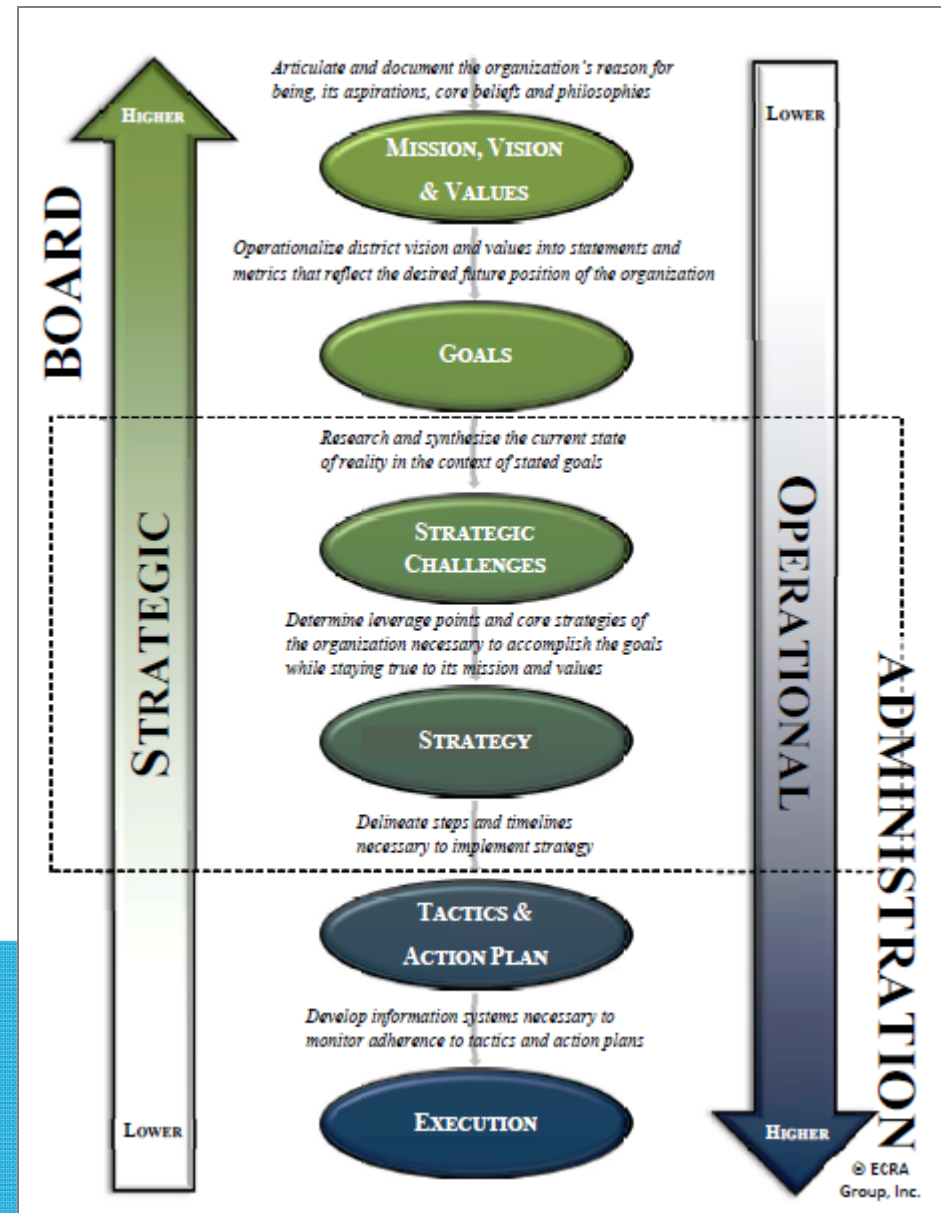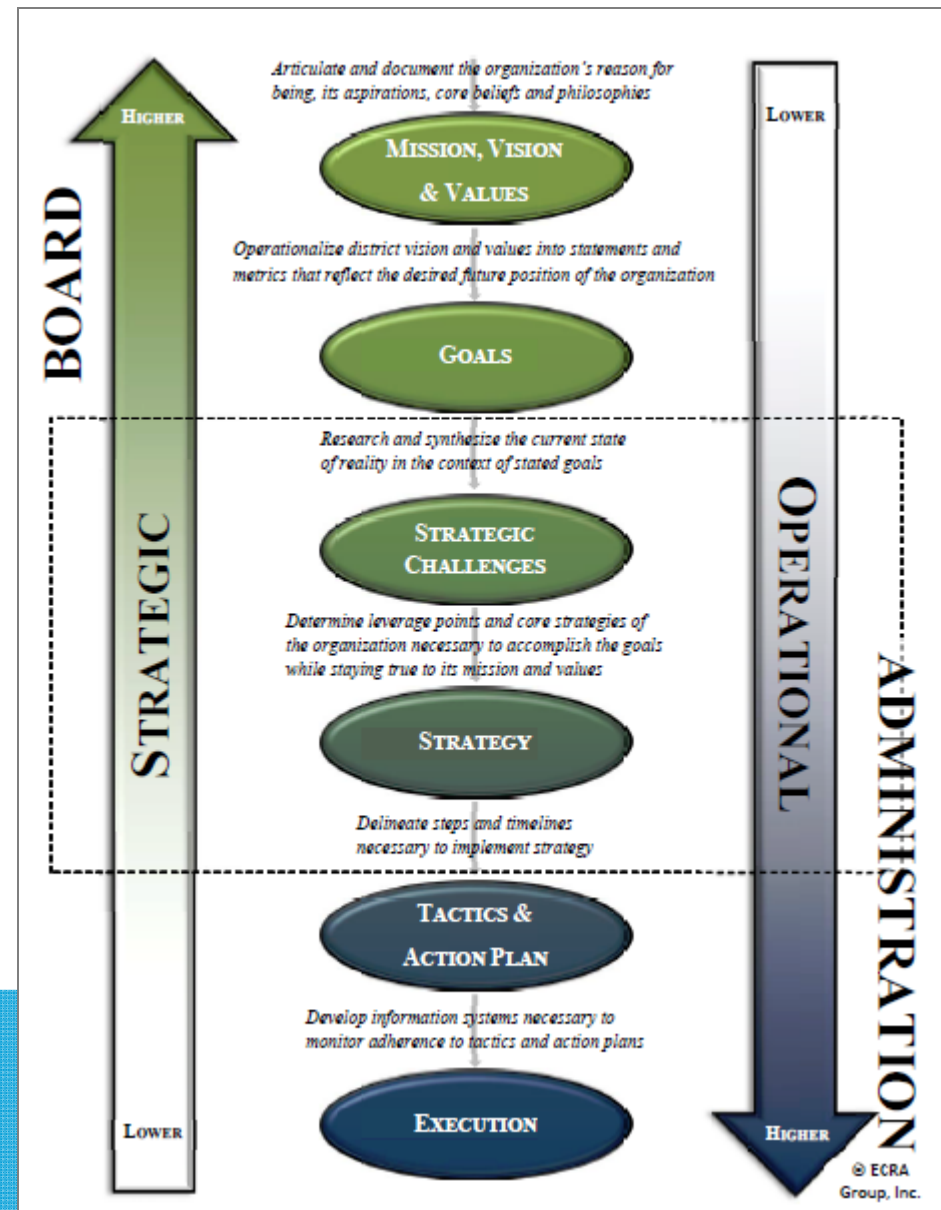
DEFINITIONS

The Board's Work:

- ❖ <u>**Mission, Vision & Values**</u> articulate and document the organization's reason for being, its aspirations, core beliefs and philosophies

- ❖ <u>Goals</u> operationalize the district's vision and values into statements and metrics that reflect the desired future position of the organization.
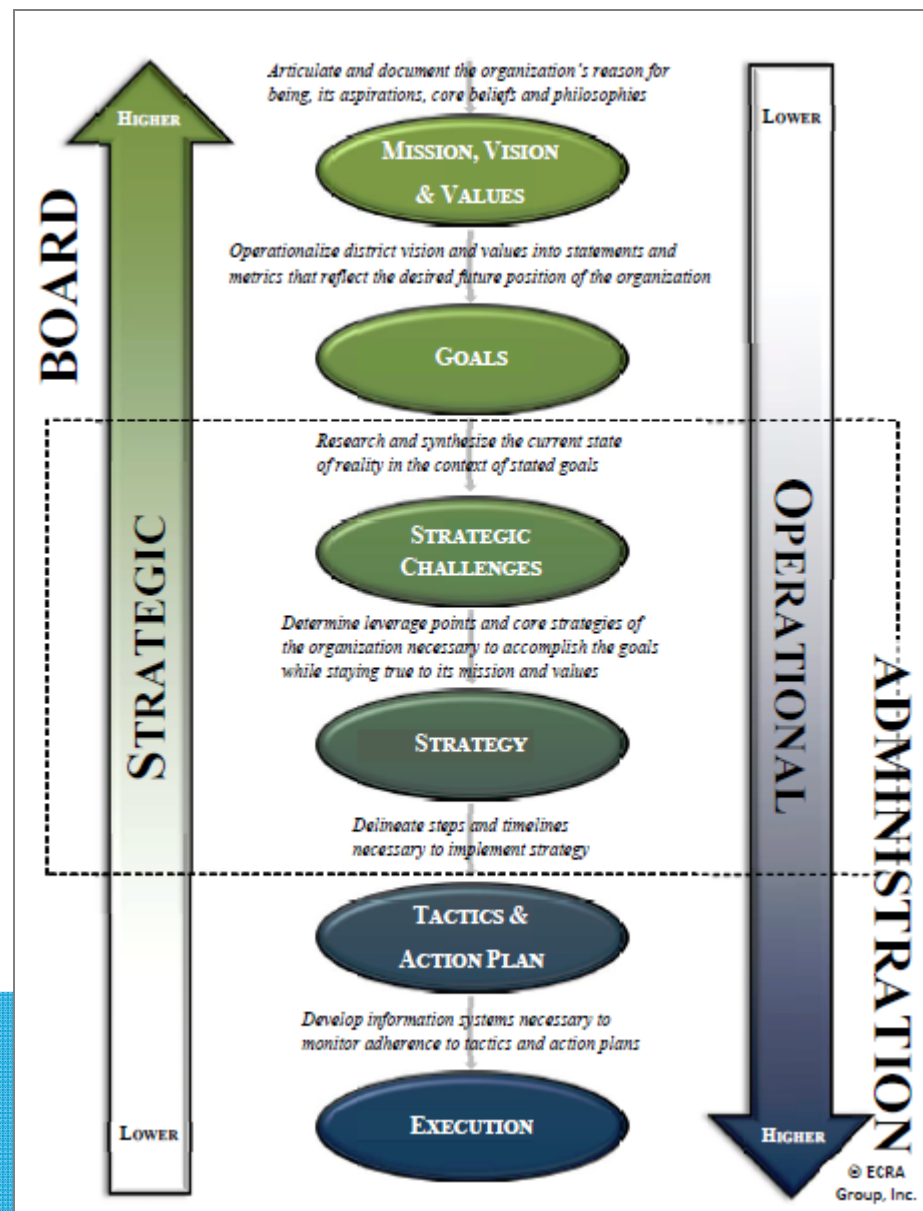
DEFINITIONS *(CONTINUED)*

The **Board** & **Administration's**
Collaborative Work:

❖ **Strategic Challenges** research
and synthesize the current state
of reality in the context of stated
goals

❖ **Strategies** determine leverage
points and core strategies of the
organization necessary to
accomplish the goals while
staying true to its mission and
values.

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DEFINITIONS *(CONTINUED)*

The Administration's Work:

❖ **Tactics and Action Plan** delineate steps and timelines necessary to implement each of the strategies

❖ **Execution** involves developing the information systems necessary to monitor adherence to tactics and action plans
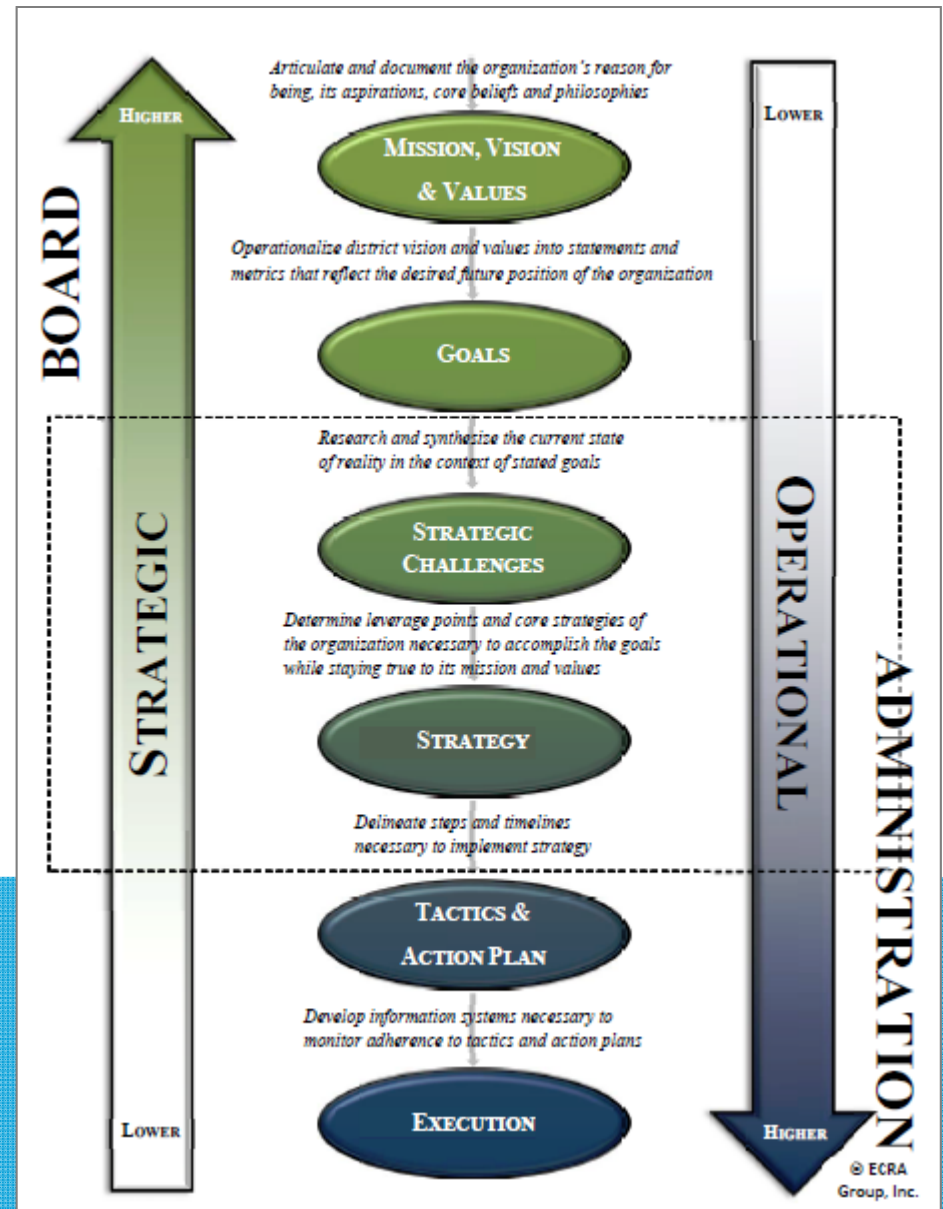
COMPLEMENTARY ROLES

BOARD MEMBER

- Defines mission
- Develops common vision
- Establishes long- and short-term goals
- Employs superintendent as CEO
- Defines parameters (policies)

SUPERINTENDENT

- Moves organization toward mission
- Provides leadership to achieve vision
- Achieves short-term goals and moves district on long-term goals
- Hires all other staff for board approval
- Leads and manages within established policies

COMPLEMENTARY ROLES

BOARD MEMBER

- Monitors overall operations

- Evaluates superintendent

- "Makes sure the train runs well"

SUPERINTENDENT

- Monitors operations; informs board of progress, successes, and setbacks

- Oversees evaluation of all other staff

- "Runs the train"

CRITICAL ISSUES
IN THE BOARD-SUPERINTENDENT RELATIONSHIP

- Ongoing communication
(*regular emails, notification of unusual events, coffee or lunch with individual board members, etc.*)
- Board member communications with each other
- Board member visits to schools (*announced versus unannounced*)
- Questions from board members in general (*who sees questions and answers*)
- Board member meetings with principals/staff members

CRITICAL ISSUES
IN THE BOARD-SUPERINTENDENT RELATIONSHIP

BOARD MEETING ISSUES
- Content/follow-up communication to all board members about meeting with board president to set meeting agendas
- When/how board members receive agenda materials
- How questions from board members about agenda items are handled
- How board members can add topics for discussion to board and/or committee meetings
- If/how board members can add items to the board meeting agenda, etc.
- How meetings are handled when board members disagree
- How board members handle complaints from community or staff

BOARD MEETING MONITORING QUESTIONS

1. Did board members believe they received adequate information ahead of time on which to make good decisions?
2. Did board members prepare for the meeting?
3. Was board meeting time adequately balanced between governance and management issues?
4. Did each board member have an adequate opportunity to participate in discussions and decision-making?
5. Did board members treat all staff and visitors courteously, equitably, and consistently?
6. Did the board:
   a. Adhere to the agenda?
   b. Treat each member courteously?
   c. Use effective decision-making strategies?

These questions can be turned into a short form to be completed by members at the conclusion of each board meeting.