JOHNSON SHOYAMA GRADUATE SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY

SUNWEST SCHOOL DIVISION REVIEW:
BOARD EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW

SUB REPORT ▶▶ JUNE 2014

University of Regina

UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

BACKGROUND TO REPORT, PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES

In January 2014, Dr. Guy Tetrault contacted the Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy to indicate that the JSGS proposal to conduct a comprehensive review of the School Division had been chosen from a number of others. This review of Board Effectiveness for Sun West School Division is one aspect of that larger Review. As commonly practiced, a third party review of Sun West School Division Board's Effectiveness was deemed to wise as such a review would contribute to the Sun West School Division Board's efforts to continuously assess, develop, and manage its future and maturing processes. To this end, we conducted a multi-faceted Board Effectiveness Review for Sun West School Division using interviews, focus groups, observations, document analyses, and an adapted version Turning Point Consulting Ltd basic (survey-based instruments), as part of a board review process. This Review provides data on the Board's perceived effectiveness and supports the Board with findings for ongoing Board learning, self-assessment and development.

The interviews, focus group, observations and surveys were designed to collect data from Board members, Executive Staff and other observers for Board of Sun West School Division, using the board effective practices framework and Turning Point's Board Effectiveness correlates.

BOARD EFFECTIVENESS SURVEY RESULTS

The survey items were designed to provide sufficient confidence that findings both reflected perceptions of Board members and Observers such as might "flag" concerns or differences in perspective to be addressed. This design gave rise to comprehensive set of issues and dimensions. The surveys sought perceptions on:

a. Board's role orientations to vision setting, motivating, analyzing and tasking.

b. Board's relative governance dispositions: administrative, fiduciary/familiar or policy governance.

c. Extent to which Board is effective in the following areas:

- Relationship with and Evaluation of Director

- Credibility with Community in Strategic Relationships

- Financial Planning and Management

- Individual and Collective Efficacy

- Meeting Time Effectiveness

- Policy Making Orientation

- Monitoring Improvement

- Board Learning

- Strategic Planning and Prioritizing

- General Board Effectiveness

- Board Focus

- Board Teamship

Survey data were collected online. Participants were identified by the organization and the consultants were given e-mails for these persons. All prospective participants were notified that the survey would be administered and invited full participation.

BOARD OF EDUCATION EFFECTIVENESS DIAGRAM
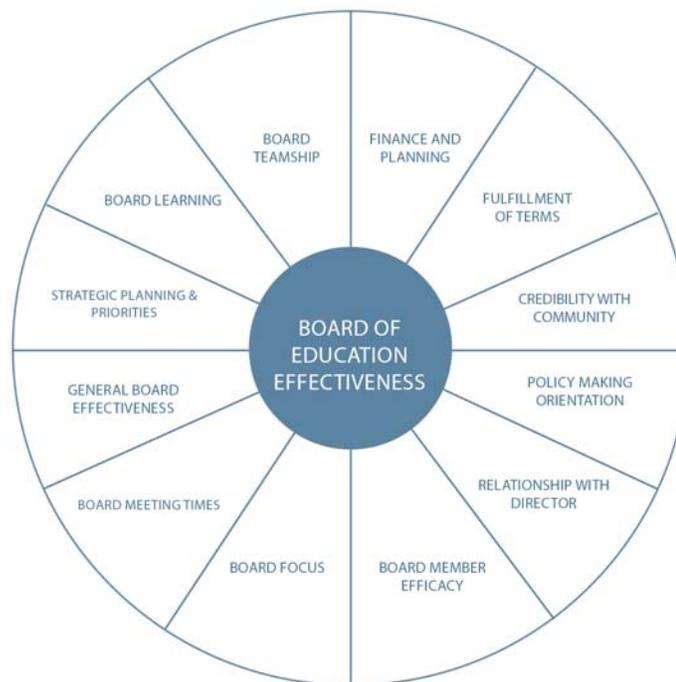
The review was conducted with anonymity – the online survey allowed the consults to see who had submitted responses to the survey BUT there was no possible way to associate respondents with particular responses. All of the responses were aggregated, and presented according to roles (i.e., board member or observer).

Table 1. Survey Returns for Each Respondent Group

Survey	Possible Respondents	Number of Returns	Percent Returns
Board Members	9	9	100%
Observers	10	9	90%
Total Responses	19	18	94.7%

From the information in Table 1, it can be seen that we had Board member response and an exceptional response from Observers to the on-line survey. Given the length and complexity of the survey, these are excellent response percentages. A word about the two groups is important at this stage. The consultants treated all Board members as equal, though their roles, experiences and tenure with the Board were different.

A word about reader interpretation: As Board members read through this Report, it is well to keep in mind the obvious fact that "Observers" will have had a fairly diverse set of perspectives and that they might be expected to have a higher level of "neutral" responses, depending on their first-hand experience with the details of Board behaviour. Some Observers will have had a more distant relationship with respect to some of the items and attributes of board effectiveness. It was important to the integrity of this study to provide a set of perspectives, aside from those of Board members and to include Executive perspectives, without isolating and identifying the Director of Education and other senior staff perspectives from those of others. The internal difference between Board members' perspectives together with the gaps that might exist between Board members and Observers are two elements for consideration.

The reader will note that the findings in each of the section of this review are reported in terms of extend of agreement (agree or strongly agree). While there are some learnings gained from means, standard deviations, relative effectiveness attribute scores and tests for significant differences between groups, it was felt that the purposes of this report would be sufficiently served by this simpler display.

The reader will note that where the neutral responses constituted 15% or more of responses, then this is marked. This may be interpreted as signifying that some respondents were unsure or mixed in perception (i.e., especially likely where the item was multi-faceted) but held a view that was neither in agreement or disagreement. For example, if the table indicates that 67% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with a statement and a plus sign (+) is next to that percentage, then it can be inferred that at least 82% of respondents were either in agreement (to some extent) or neutral. This is a high percentage and would account for most of respondents. If an asterisk (*) is indicated then this means that at least 25% of respondents disagreed (to some extent) with the statement.

So if a table item indicates: a 67*, then this means that 67 percent of respondents agreed (to some extent) and at least 25 percent disagreed (to some extent). We don't know, from this display, what percentage of respondents agreed and percentage of strong agreed but we can see that 2/3 of respondents agreed to some extent. If both asterisk and plus sign are indicated with the percentage – then reader will know that at least 15 percent of respondents were neutral and at least 25 percent were in disagreement (to some extent). These signals to the reader allow one to look

more closely at those items to discuss what differences might account for the differences amongst Board members or Observers. Such discussion can be profitable for clarifying understandings and giving room for insights (from minority perspectives). More details are included in the Appendices.

GENERAL COMMENTS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

In addition to the more quantitative "forced item responses," Board Members were given opportunity to express a number of supplementary queries or comments. Board members were asked four basic questions, through the survey: what should Sun West School Division Board "start doing," "stop doing," "keep doing," and then members were asked if there were any "comments?"

In terms of comments on what the Board might **start doing** to make a positive difference (to increase the overall effectiveness of the Board), members said:

- "Communication with all board members. The board seems to be split-some know things and some don't."

- "We need to start meeting with our neighbouring school divisions to discuss the ways we can enhance each other's programming especially in the technology area."

- "We already have a functioning Audit Committee but I would not consider it to be strong. I think we can learn lots more about its role, both individually and collectively."

- "Yearly renewal of policy. Closer tie of monitoring reports to data and start plan."

- "As a board, we strive very hard to be a cohesive unit. We have said that once the decision is made ... there is UNITY in the board. However, this is not always the case. Decisions that are made that a particular board member was not in agreement with tend to be brought up again and again. An example of this

would be the GPS system installed in our buses. We could definitely strive to allow all board members to have access to the information given to some, and thus become a more unified board."

- "I think that we, as a board, need to do a better job on the communication end. We have the opportunity to attend SCC meetings, visit our schools and be involved in the communities we represent which gives us the opportunities to communicate about Sun West but do we? We need to make sure we are. We also need to build relationships with other trustees and other division employees to be able to share what we are doing effectively. This would also be applicable in the political world, we need to build relationships there as well."

- "Do a better job of making effective principles."

- "Keep up the good work. Stay in touch with the communities."

When asked what the Board might **stop doing**, and to identify hindrances or issues

that people avoid addressing, the Board members indicated the following:

- "Discussing things outside of a meeting. The Director meeting with two or three board members instead of things being said at a board meeting."

- "The area of micromanaging the operations of a school where a board member represents is very detrimental to the entire board and the school division. In one particular subdivision micromanaging has caused many hard feelings and misunderstandings."

- "The only thing that comes to mind is that we sometimes have so much in our agendas that we hurry through monitoring reports from our senior administrators. I feel that they go to a great deal of work to provide us with great information, and we should spend all the time we need to receive the report and ask questions"

- "We need to stop having discussions outside of the board room. I believe that there are discussions going on that everyone should be involved in and not just a select few."

- "One thing that concerns me is the use of cell phones. It is expected that all phones will be on mute during meetings, and that is usually the case.

However, sometimes a board member will get a call during a meeting and leave the room to answer it. Other Board Members will text at times during a meeting. After attending the Board Member Training Sessions, I have learned that this may not be the best way to handle things. At one of the sessions we discussed this practice, and it was suggested that maybe Board members should not leave to answer calls, but wait until a break in the meeting. I think we need to discuss this in an open and constructive way."

- "I think there are some board members who forget what their role is and over step their bounds at times. I also think that not all Board members have a positive and encouraging relationship with the director and don't understand the ramifications of the things they say from time to time."

- "Sometimes I question the necessity of travel all over the world to learn new things."

What should the Board be sure to **KEEP doing**? This question garnered the following response:

- "I think we should keep having retreats with the staff then we are all understanding the goals of our school division together."

- "Continue to value the importance of the board member professional development. The business of educating students is constantly changing and board members need to keep abreast of the new trends to better understand what is taking place in the classroom and thereby being able to make decisions at the board table in the best interest of the students."

- "Our Board has strong inter-personal relationships that shine through when we have discussions where we may not agree with each other, but we can still finish the day on good terms. We put great effort into developing our relationships, including those we work closely with (like director and superintendents)."

- "Engaging in conversations with each all team members."

- "Our informal discussions at the board table have proven to be a very valuable tool for reflection and planning. It is through these discussions that we develop relationships with each other and with our management

staff. It is also through these discussions that many great ideas are born. I find that these discussions motivate me to be a better board member."

- "Since our Board is one that, for the most part, gets along with each other, I think we need to continue to foster those good relationships . . . over the years we have had different Board members come and go. At all times we have been able to have a good relationship with each other which, I think, helps us to do the work that we have been elected to do."

- "I think our regular meetings with our stakeholders has been very effective."

- "The board is on the right track."

The invitation to provide any **further comments** resulted in the following:

- "There is a lack of communication from the Director to the whole board."

- "The board members of the Sun West School division come to the table from many different walks of life and thereby bring a wide array of ideas and philosophies. This I believe has proven to be the reason why we are able to the lead in the Province on many different innovative educational initiatives. We care about each other and are friends outside of the board room."

- "I am very happy to be a member of the Sun West team!"

- "I have noticed that there are some issues amongst board members. I have found that a few have access to more information than others and even though this has been brought up at the board table, it continues to go on. I think we need to address this issue without pointing fingers and come up with a plan on how we can get past this. It seems like a small issue, however, I have seen how some other boards have fallen apart because of this and I do not want our board to lose its cohesiveness, but rather to build further on it. We have a great board, but we could be even better."

- "In doing these surveys I tend to over-think a lot of questions. I read some questions a number of times and each time come up with a different answer. Then I have to stop and think some more. I worry about my answers because for some questions I could either Agree or Disagree. So - in doing the surveys I have just gone with my gut on some questions. That

is why I enjoyed a personal interview much more that a survey. However, I know that it would be impossible to get the system review done if all trustees had to be interviewed so all the questions that are on the surveys could get answered."

- "All in all I think we, as a board, and the business of Sun West is very good. There are a few areas we need to improve and I look forward to this outside look into our effectiveness. I think all stakeholders are ready to hear the good and the bad and are ready to work to making things better for the future. There are a few things like individual personalities, individual abilities and understanding of people roles and positions that are in all organizations that are a struggle at times in ours as well. Any additional insight into these areas and how to work through them would be great."

GENERAL COMMENTS FROM OBSERVER GROUP

Likewise, Observers expressed a number of supplementary comments that bear repeating in this document. As with Board member survey, observers were asked the same four basic questions, through the survey: what should Sun West School Division Board "start doing," "stop doing," "keep doing," and then Observers were asked if there were any "comments?"

In terms of comments on what the Board might **start doing** to make a positive difference (to increase the overall effectiveness of the Board), Observers said:

- "Prioritize initiatives, work to balance the initiatives undertaken with ministry requirements, teacher workload and continue to develop strong relationships with staff and all stakeholders."

- "Identify the sheer volume of projects currently underway so there is a good perspective of how many things are needing time to develop with a positive result."

- "Not sure that now is the time to start something different? One area we could improve is the interaction between SCC's and the Board."

- "The Board works well together."

- "I think they do a great job of moving the education of Sun West students forward."

When asked what the Board might **stop doing**, and to identify hindrances or issues that people avoid addressing, the Observers indicated the following:

- "Maybe taking on too much at one time?   We have great ideas and the Board is supportive but our division cannot do everything."

- "Ensure that when Board members attend community meetings that they seek consultation and detailed information prior to offering suggestions or making recommendations."

- "This is a Board that is operating for the right reasons. They get along well and are always focused on what is good for kids."

- "The Board discusses matters fully and should continue doing so."

- "Nothing - they are a great group that get along well and listen to the concerns of everyone. I love working with them."

What should the Board be sure to **KEEP doing**? This question garnered the following response:

- "Supporting student leadership initiatives; encouraging innovation."

- "Supporting 21st century learning; valuing the support of learning coaches, consultants, etc.; providing professional development opportunities for all staff."

- "Keep building relationships with all levels of staff."

- "Continue working positively together and continue strengthening relationships with all stakeholders."

- "The Board continually places "what is best for students" at the top of the list and should continue doing so."

- "Yes - they are spending money to invest and grow student learning. They are very supportive of Guy and all other staff decisions. They are respectful and their most important concern is "What is best for Kids!" They let people do their jobs and stand behind that."

The invitation to provide any **further comments** resulted in the following:

- "The board is very positive and supportive. Sun west is fortunate to have such progressive board members."

- "Appears to be a strong positive relationship between Board members and staff"

- "Strong Board because of the positive relationships they have established with each other and with senior staff."

- "Sun West School Division is fortunate to have a Board that works so well together."

- "They are a great group and I love the opportunities I have to work with them."

Board members may choose to discuss these comments from Board colleagues

and Observers in a manner that creates agenda items for further investigation,

provides grounds for celebration or "tinkering" with Board processes or relationships.

PERSPECTIVES ON SPECTRUM OF GOVERNANCE APPROACHES

In order to provide a means for surveying the perceived type of governance employed by Sun West School Division Board, an instrument was developed to typify three basic governance stances or approaches: administrative governance, familial and fiduciary governance, and policy governance. Tailoring extant models, orientations or approaches to customized governance might be expected amongst all boards and especially maturing boards. Of course, boards are not obliged to process their decisions, exercise power nor action in a rational manner aligned to any one simplified set of orientations or practices (beyond stipulations of constraints imposed by State and/or denominational requirements). However, to get a sense of the varied approaches, numerous items were developed to characterize each of the three basic approaches, based on extant literature and conventional governance intelligence. The Board's own policy handbook stipulates its approach to governance; these categories and items were intended to determine the approximations of Board's stated governance intentions with Board experience.

Again, we emphasize that no board ought to be expected to exhibit pure forms of these proto-typical approaches. In the case of the three proto-types, we worked with six descriptors for each; with the sense that if Board perceptions were resonate on all six descriptors that this might be indicative of its governance approach disposition.

Administrative governance may be characterized by the following elements:

1. Most of the policies that the board deals with relate to how specific situations, operations or functions ought to be handled;

2. Board members like to see detailed reports of monthly expenditures;

3. Board policies are extensive and specific to many past and anticipated issues;

4. Board is actively involved in the day-to-day operations of the Division

5. Board tends to be quite "hand-on" when it comes to Division management; and

6. Board sees its main work as reacting and ratifying.

    The essence of this proto-typical approach was the involvement of the Board in operational (managerial and administrative) aspects of Sun West School Division functions and decision-making.

Familial and fiduciary governance was characterized by the following elements:

1. Board decisions are significantly and predictably shaped through the influence of long-standing Board member(s);

2. Board expects significant operation-level decisions to be brought to them for consideration;

3. Board decisions are primarily shaped through influence of the Director of Education;

4. Board encourages major work challenges and issues, faced by the Director of Education and staff, to be brought to them for advice and decisions, where warranted;

5. One or two of the board members usually sets the tone for the board discussions and exercises much more influence on decisions than do the rest; and

6. Board operates primarily as guardian for "owner" interests.

    The essence of this proto-typical approach was the affinity of Sun West School Division Board with particular persons (i.e., Director of Education, longstanding Board members) or stakeholders/constituents.

Policy governance may be characterized by the following elements:

1. Board's policies and mandate to the Director of Education constitute their primary tools for effective governance;

2. Board policies are minimal in volume and complexity;

3. Board develops policies that focus on the "Ends" or results they want to achieve;

4. Board basically works through Director of Education to get things done;

5. Board is highly aligned to the so-called "Carver" or "policy-governance" approach to board roles and responsibilities; and

6. Board generally delegates the methods and/or means for achieving results to Director of Education and Staff.

The essence of this proto-type approach was the approximation of Sun West

School Division Board efforts to Ends-focused governance practices expressed through

directing policy and delegation.

Obviously some of these elements are overlapping. It is also quite likely that

consensus on labels and descriptors would be hard to achieve. However, these are the

qualities this Report has associated with this spectrum of governance alternatives. Our

approach was to consider the aggregate elements under each approach to be evidence

of tendencies or dispositions towards or away from these characterizing features. In

other words, we sought to determine the extent to which the Board members and

Observers agreed or disagreed that the behaviour or practices they had observed in

Board interactions approximated with these elements and when put together

demonstrated a pattern or tendency that favoured one approach over another.

Table 2. Administrative Governance (Extent of Agreement by Percentage)

Item for Approach	Board Members	Observers
1. Most of the policies we deal with relate to how functions should be handled in Sun West School Division operations.	66.7*(3.6, 1.2)	66.7+(3.8, 1.0)
2. Based on my reflections of our behaviours, this Board has seen its main work as reacting and ratifying.	33.3*(2.3, 1.6)	22.2*(2.6, 1.1)
3. Our Board policies are extensive and specific to many anticipated issues.	77.8(3.9, 1.2)	55.6+(3.4, 1.0)
4. Our Board has tended to be quite "hand-on" when it comes to Sun West School Division management.	77.8(2.9, 1.6)	55.6+(3.6, 1.1)
5. As a Board member, I like to see detailed reports of our monthly expenditures presented to the Board.	22.2+*(2.7, 1.2)	33.3+*(3.0, 0.9)
Total Mean and Standard Deviation	(3.1, 1.1)	(3.3, 0.7)

Note: Board Member and Observer questions were worded slightly differently on their surveys.
The first number is the % of respondents who indicated a positive response. The mean and standard deviation appear in brackets.
+=15% or more said "neutral"
*=25% or more said "disagree to some extent"

For Table 2, both Board members and Observers of the board indicate that the

main work of the board is not seen as simply reacting and ratifying. In addition, seeing

detailed reports of monthly expenditures was *not* important to board members or

observers of the Board. Board members held varying levels of agreement (fairly high

standard deviation). There are, however, some differences of opinion between Board

members and Observers of the board it terms of hands-on management. In addition,

Observers were less likely to agree that Board policies are extensive and specific to

many anticipated issues.

Table 3. Familial/Fiduciary Governance (Extent of Agreement by Percentage)

Item for Approach	Board Members	Observers
6. The decisions of our Board have been significantly and predictably shaped through the influence of long-standing Board member(s).	22.2+*(2.4, 1.4)	22.2+*(2.4, 1.0)
7. The decisions of our Board have been primarily shaped through the influence of our Director.	44.4*(2.7, 1.6)	66.7+(3.7, 0.5)
8. One or two of our Board members exercised much more influence in our discussions than do the rest.	11.1+*(2.3, 1.2)	25.0*(2.5, 1.1)
9. We have encouraged the Sun West School Division staff, especially Director, to bring their major Division challenges and issues to the Board for advice.	44.4+*(3.2, 1.4)	55.6+(3.3, 1.0)
10. Our Board expects that significant Sun West School Division decisions be brought to us for consideration.	88.9(4.0, 0.9)	88.9(4.0, 0.5)
Total Mean and Standard Deviation	(2.9, 1.1)	(3.2, 0.6)

Note: Board Member and Observer questions were worded slightly differently on their surveys.
The first number is the % of respondents who indicated a positive response. The mean and standard deviation appear in brackets.
+=15% or more said "neutral"
*=25% or more said "disagree to some extent"

For Table 3, it appears that, generally speaking, decision-making is done in an

inclusive manner. In addition, long-standing Board members do not overly influence the

decision-making process and neither does the Director of Education. Only around half of

the board members and observers of the board indicated that the board has

encouraged the Sun West Division staff, including the Director, to bring major division

challenges and issues to the board for advice. That being said, both Board members and

Observers indicated that significant Sun West decisions are expected to be brought

forward to the Board for consideration.

Table 4. Policy Governance (Extent of Agreement by Percentage)

Item for Approach	Board Members	Observers
11. The Board's instructions to the Director are the primary tool for its effective governance.	100(4.2, 0.4)	33.3+(3.2, 1.0)
12. Our Board has developed policies that focus on the "Ends" they want to achieve (e.g., the results they want to see).	88.9(4.2, 1.0)	77.8(3.8, 0.8)
13. Our Boards' pattern has been to work through the Director to get things done.	88.9(4.2, 0.7)	66.7+(3.8, 1.0)
14. Our Board is highly aligned to a board policy approach to governance.	66.7+(3.9, 1.1)	66.7+(3.8, 1.0)
15. Our Board has delegated the methods for achieving results to our Director (and his executive staff).	88.9(4.3, 0.7)	88.9(4.2, 0.7)
Total Mean and Standard Deviation	(4.2, 0.5)	(3.8, 0.7)

Note: Board Member and Observer questions were worded slightly differently on their surveys.
The first number is the % of respondents who indicated a positive response. The mean and standard deviation appear in brackets.
+=15% or more said "neutral"
*=25% or more said "disagree to some extent"

For Table 4, there is a high level of agreement that the Board has delegated the

methods for achieving results to our Director (and his executive staff). Interestingly,

roughly two thirds of both Board members and Observers agreed that the Board is highly aligned to a board policy approach to governance, however, a number of respondents indicated a neutral response. There are also some notable differences in opinion between the Board and Observers in terms of item 11. In particular, Observers were much less likely to agree that the Board's instructions to the Director are the primary tool for its effective governance. In addition, Observers were less likely to agree that the Boards' pattern has been to work through the Director to get things done. Generally speaking, observers of the board were less likely to agree than Board members themselves.

GENERAL SENSE OF BOARD IMPROVEMENT

There were two items that sought to get a sense of the Board's effectiveness over time.

Table 5. General Sense of Board Improvement (Extent of Agreement by Percentage)

Item for Approach	Board Members	Observers
124. In my view, the way we currently operate as a Board is superior to the way it was.	88.9(4.4, 0.7)	77.8+(4.1, 0.8)
125. There are obvious ways that our Board has matured in its governance practices over the last several years.	88.9(4.4, 0.7)	88.9(4.3, 0.7)

Note: Board Member and Observer questions were worded slightly differently on their surveys.
The first number is the % of respondents who indicated a positive response. The mean and standard deviation appear in brackets.
+=15% or more said "neutral"
*=25% or more said "disagree to some extent"

From Table 5, there is a general sense among Board members and Observers that the board has improved and matured over the last several years. That being said, there appears to be some difference in opinion regarding the improvement with Observers *less* likely to agree that the way the Board currently operates is superior to the way it was.

COMPETING ROLES ANALYSES

Another means to determining orientation of boards is to consider Quinn's competing roles typology. Simply expressed, Board members and Observers were asked to express the extent of their agreement on the practices of their respective boards against the Quinn descriptors. According to Quinn (1996), **vision setting** boards attend to the future, remain up-to-date with emerging trends, focus on purpose and direction, and communicate a sense of where the division will be over the long term. **Motivating** boards attend to commitment, emphasize the organization's values, challenge people with new goals and aspirations, and create a sense of excitement. **Analyzing** boards attend to the efficiency of operations, evaluate proposed projects, and integrate conflicting perspectives and needs. Finally, Quinn's competing roles model suggests that the boards with **tasking** orientation attend to performance, focus on results, solve problems, and influence lower-level decisions.

As indicated in **Figure 1**, the analyzing and tasking roles are transactional and the vision setting and motivating roles are transformational.
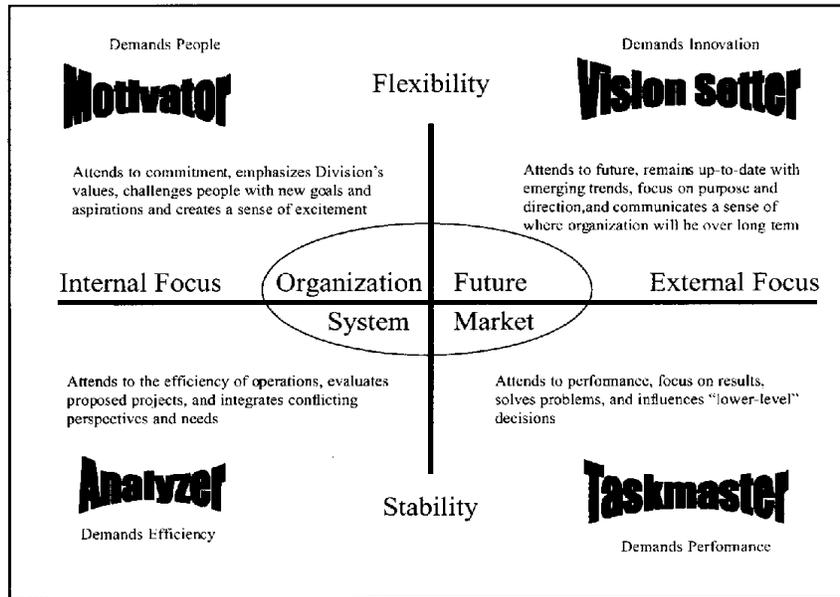
Figure 1. Quinn's (1996, p. 149) Four Competing Roles Model

As indicated on Table 6, Board members perceive that they are most focused on vision setting, motivating, and tasking (least oriented to analyzing). Observers see Board as most focused on motivating and least on tasking. The single items for each of these completing roles were as follows:

44. From my perspective the Sun West School Division Board has tended to focus its energies on the future, keeping up-to-date with emerging trends and seeing around the corner. We have focused on purpose and direction, and we have communicated a sense of where the School Division will be over the long term. **Vision Oriented**

45. The Board has focused its energies on gaining commitment from the staff, partners and government through their emphasis on the success of all students and by challenging people with new goals. We have helped create a sense of excitement and "buy-in," regarding the importance of the Sun West School Division Mission. **Motivation Oriented**

46. The Board has tended to focus on the efficiency of the School Division operations. We have carefully evaluated proposed projects, and integrate conflicting perspectives and needs with priorities and resources. We have been

engaged in thorough analysis of reports and require strong rationale for new initiatives. **Analysis Oriented**

47. The Board has focused its energies on the performance of Director and the executive staff. We work with our executive to anticipate and solve Division-level issues. We have relentlessly insisted on monitoring for results. We have provide a positive influence on decisions made throughout the various facets of Sun West School Division's operations. **Task Monitoring Oriented**

Table 6. Governance Approach According to Board Members and Observers (Extent of Agreement by Percentage)

Approach	44. Vision Setting	45. Motivating	46. Analyzing	47. Tasking
Board Members	100(4.7, 0.5)	100(4.6, 0.5)	77.8+(4.1, 0.8)	100(4.2, 0.4)
Observers	88.9(4.3, 0.7)	100(4.6, 0.5)	88.9(4.0, 0.9)	55.6+(3.7, 1.0)

Note: Board Member and Observer questions were worded slightly differently on their surveys.
The first number is the % of respondents who indicated a positive response. The mean and standard deviation appear in brackets.
+=15% or more said "neutral"
*=25% or more said "disagree to some extent"

In terms of governance approaches, 'analyzing' is comparatively lower than the other four approaches, particularly for Board members. Interestingly, there are differences of opinion between board members and observers in terms of the tasking approach. There is also the widest range of opinion for Observers for this item (greatest standard deviation). Board and Observers agreed that motivating is a key disposition of the Board but observers see tasking as the least obvious orientation for the Board (though observers differed most on this observation).

The Sun West Board Policy Handbook (especially policy #2) provides specific terms of reference for activity and performance of the Sun West Board. Consultants used these terms of reference to generate a number of benchmark items measure the degree to which the Board and Observers believe the Board meets its own reference points.

Table 7. Benchmarks of Board Performance Against Terms of Reference

Survey Items	Board Members	Observers
16. As a Board we have consistently performed in accordance with all statutory requirements, Provincial education standards and policies.	100(4.7, 0.5)	75.0+(4.3, 0.9)
17. Our legislated functions have been performed in an exemplary and timely fashion.	100(4.7, 0.5)	88.9(4.3, 0.7)
18. This Board has always made decisions consistent with Sun West mission, vision values, guiding principles and we do so in the interests of the entire Division.	100(4.8, 0.4)	88.9(4.3, 0.7)
19. This Board has established highly effective processes for information exchange with our communities (sharing out and receiving input).	55.6+(3.4, 1.3)	55.6+(3.6, 0.9)
20. As a Board we determine the key results areas and ensure annual reporting on these.	77.8+(4.0, 0.7)	88.9(4.1, 0.6)
21. Our current Board culture reflects our guiding principles and code of conduct.	88.9(4.2, 0.7)	88.9(4.2, 0.7)

22. As a Board we have effectively ensured two-way communications: Between the Board and School Community Councils; between the Board and students; and between the Board and our employees.	44.4+(3.4, 1.1)	100(4.2, 0.4)
23. We have effective mechanisms for community input and for communication of Board policies and decisions to our constituents.	66.7(3.4, 0.9)	66.7+(3.9, 0.8)
24. The Board and its individual members have modeled integrity and we have operated in an open, transparent fashion.	88.9(4.2, 0.7)	88.9(4.1, 0.9)
25. Each year we have approved and monitored the Continuous Improvement Plan and Division priorities.	100(4.7, 0.5)	100(4.3, 0.5)
26. We have a set of specific accountability reports that are presented to the Board, through which we monitor the progress of key strategic result areas.	77.8+(4.2, 0.8)	77.8+(4.0, 0.7)
27. We have annually evaluated the effectiveness of the Division in terms of the achievement of key results.	77.8(3.9, 0.9)	77.8+(4.0, 0.7)
28. Our allocation of resources reflects our focused effort to ensure student achievement.	100(4.4, 0.5)	77.8+(4.2, 0.8)
29. Before creating any new policy we have identified the specific purposes to be achieved and the means by which to evaluate the impact of change and achievement of desired results.	88.9(4.4, 1.0)	88.9(4.2, 0.7)
30. The policies we have developed facilitate smooth and effective provision of quality educational services for the Division.	88.9(4.1, 0.6)	100(4.4, 0.5)

31. We have provided the Director of Education with clear corporate direction.	100(4.3, 0.5)	100(4.3, 0.5)
32. All Board members have respected the authority of the Director to carry out executive action and have supported the Director's discretionary actions.	88.9(4.1, 0.9)	88.9(4.3, 0.5)
33. As a Board, we have interacted with the Director in an open, honest, respectful and professional manner.	88.9(4.7, 0.7)	100(4.3, 0.5)
34. This Board has strategically and regularly conveyed key messages to MLAs, MP, municipal partners and to the media.	55.6+(3.6, 1.1)	66.7+(3.8, 1.0)
35. As a Board we have annually reviewed our plan to engage all trustees in Board development training, in order to strengthen our governance processes.	66.7+(4.0, 0.9)	88.9(4.1, 0.6)
36. Trustees' interactions demonstrate our mutual respect, understanding and integrity.	88.9(4.1, 0.6)	100(4.4, 0.5)
37. We have effectively monitored revenues and expenditures on a quarterly basis.	88.9(4.6, 0.7)	66.7+(4.0, 0.9)
38. We have set the mandates for employee group negotiations and for memoranda of agreement with bargaining units.	77.8+(4.1, 0.8)	62.5+(4.0, 0.9)
39. Our Division budget assumptions have been clearly understood by all Board members.	66.7+(3.6, 0.7)	66.7+(4.0, 0.9)
40. I believe our approved budgets have clearly reflected our Board's priorities.	100(4.4, 0.5)	100(4.4, 0.5)
41. Our capital and facility plans have provided for suitable student, program, and 21st Century School accommodations.	88.9(4.1, 0.9)	77.8+(4.1, 0.8)

42. I am convinced that Sun West School Division resources have been used as efficiently and effectively as possible.	100(4.4, 0.5)	66.7+(4.0, 1.1)
43. Variance analyses and year-end projections have been received on a quarterly basis.	88.9(4.0, 0.9)	33.3+(3.6, 0.9)
Total Mean and Standard Deviation	(4.2, 0.4)	(4.1, 0.6)

Note: Board Member and Observer questions were worded slightly differently on their surveys.
The first number is the % of respondents who indicated a positive response. The mean and standard deviation appear in brackets.
+=15% or more said "neutral"
*=25% or more said "disagree to some extent"

For Table 7, communication emerges as an interesting theme: it may be possible to increase the flow of information to and from communities served by the Sun West Division. It may also be possible to increase communication to MLAs, MP, municipal partners and to the media. Interestingly, there were considerable differences between the Board and observers for the following communication-related item (22): As a Board we have effectively ensured two-way communications: Between the Board and School Community Councils; between the Board and students; and between the Board and our employees. In particular, Board members were much less likely to agree that two-way communication is currently adequate. Overall, both Board members and Observers tended to positively rate the benchmarks of Board performance against the terms of reference.

BOARD MEMBER AND OBSERVER PERCEPTIONS OF BOARD EFFECTIVENESS

In **Table 8-19**, we present results and findings from Board member and Observers perceptions of the effectiveness of Sun West School Board according to 12 qualities or indicators of Board effectiveness.

CREDIBILITY WITH COMMUNITY IN STRATEGIC RELATIONS

Despite the fact that in earlier items, under terms of reference, where Board members felt there needed to be better communications, these responses indicate that higher levels of engagement and credibility with stakeholders than suggested.

Table 8. Perceptions of Board Effectiveness: Credibility with Community in Strategic Relations (Extent of Agreement by Percentage)

Survey Items	Board Members	Observers
49. The Sun West School Division staff has reported, through the Director of Education, to the Board on the concerns of constituents in a timely, accurate and helpful fashion.	77.8+(3.9, 0.6)	88.9(4.2, 0.7)
50. As a Board, we have been active in our encouragement of partnerships and meaningful engagement with persons, groups or agencies who have missions and values consistent with to those held by Sun West School Division.	88.9(4.3, 0.7)	100(4.6, 0.5)
51. Sun West School Division has formal structures and procedures for engaging in aspects of Division work that have high relevance to particular stakeholders.	88.9(3.8, 0.7)	88.9(4.2, 0.7)
52. Through meetings and minutes, stakeholders within the Sun West School Division have access to sufficient details to discern what their Board of Education is doing and deciding.	88.9(4.3, 0.7)	77.8+(4.1, 0.8)

53. Sun West School Division has high credibility and is seen as an excellent School Division by key stakeholders (including Provincial ministries, the general public, and amongst other boards of education in the Province).	100(4.2, 0.4)	77.8+(4.3, 0.9)
54. Sun West School Division, through its Board and Executive leadership team, has found a good balance between organizational stability/constancy and innovation/change.	88.9(4.0, 0.9)	100(4.3, 0.5)
Total Mean and Standard Deviation	(4.1, 0.5)	(4.3, 0.5)

Note: Board Member and Observer questions were worded slightly differently on their surveys.
The first number is the % of respondents who indicated a positive response. The mean and standard deviation appear in brackets.
+=15% or more said "neutral"
*=25% or more said "disagree to some extent"

From Table 8, generally speaking, both Board members and observers Agreed with the items pertaining to credibility with community in strategic relations. That being said, Board members were less likely to agree that a) the Sun West School Division staff has reported, through the Director of Education, to the Board on the concerns of constituents in a timely, accurate and helpful fashion, and b) as a Board, we have been active in our encouragement of partnerships and meaningful engagement with persons, groups or agencies who have missions and values consistent with to those held by Sun West School Division. The Board was also less likely to agree that the Sun West School Division, through its Board and Executive leadership team, has found a good balance between organizational stability/constancy and innovation/change. In comparison, Observers were less likely to agree that a) through meetings and minutes, stakeholders within the Sun West School Division have access to sufficient details to discern what

their Board of Education is doing and deciding, and b) that the Sun West School Division

has high credibility and is seen as an excellent School Division by key stakeholders

(including Provincial ministries, the general public, and amongst other boards of

education in the Province).

FINANCIAL PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

Table 9 Perceptions of Board Effectiveness: Financial Planning and Management (Extent of Agreement by Percentage)

Survey Items	Board Members	Observers
55. Sun West School Division is financially sound (viable and stable).	100(4.6, 0.5)	100(4.6, 0.5)
56. Sun West School Division resources have been used efficiently (good value for money spent) and equitably (fairly).	88.9(4.4, 0.7)	88.9(4.2, 1.0)
57. Our Board has judiciously reviewed revenue projections alongside forecasts for future budgetary needs.	100(4.3, 0.5)	66.7+(4.1, 0.9)
58. We have provided diligent, Board-level oversight of the financial planning and practices of Sun West School Division.	100(4.3, 0.5)	75.0+(4.0, 0.8)
59. The Board of Education has routinely requested and/or received analyses of ongoing costs for current and proposed projects.	88.9(4.0, 0.9)	100(4.3, 0.5)
60. The Sun West School Division Board has exemplified excellent practice with respect to financial due diligence.	77.8+(4.1, 0.8)	77.8+(4.2, 0.8)
Total Mean and Standard Deviation	(4.3, 0.5)	(4.3, 0.7)

Note: Board Member and Observer questions were worded slightly differently on their surveys.
The first number is the % of respondents who indicated a positive response. The mean and standard deviation appear in brackets.
+=15% or more said "neutral"
*=25% or more said "disagree to some extent"

In Table 9, it can been seen that Observers were less likely to agree that: the Board has judiciously reviewed revenue projections alongside forecasts for future budgetary needs and that the Board has provided diligent, Board-level oversight of the financial planning and practices of Sun West School Division. In comparison, Board members were less likely to agree that the Board of Education has routinely requested and/or received analyses of ongoing costs for current and proposed projects. Interestingly, a notable percentage of Board members and Observers indicated a neutral response when asked if the Sun West School Division Board has exemplified excellent practice with respect to financial due diligence. The Board might reflect on ways and means to further exemplify (show to others) their ongoing financial due diligence, if possible.

RELATIONSHIP WITH AND EVALUATION OF DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

Table 10 Perceptions of Board Effectiveness: Relationship With and Evaluation of Director of Education (Extent of Agreement by Percentage)

Survey Items	Board Members	Observers
61. The Sun West School Division Board has done a good job of providing ongoing encouragement to our Director and his staff.	77.8+(4.2, 0.8)	100(4.4, 0.5)
62. In consultation with the Director, we have clarified areas of executive and board role responsibilities and how these role definitions will be maintained.	100(4.1, 0.3)	77.8(4.0, 1.0)
63. The work of Sun West School Division has been well led by the Director and his staff.	100(4.4, 0.5)	100(4.6, 0.5)

64. There is a productive working relationship between the Sun West School Division Board and the Director (good communications, mutual trust and respect).	88.9(4.4, 0.7)	100(4.4, 0.5)
65. Our approach to formally appraise the performance of our Director of Education has worked well.	77.8(4.0, 1.2)	100(4.3, 0.5)
66. I would say this Board, and each of its members, enjoys positive relationships with the Director and the School Division staff members.	77.8(3.9, 0.9)	88.9(4.2, 0.7)
Total Mean and Standard Deviation	(4.2, 0.6)	(4.3, 0.5)

Note: Board Member and Observer questions were worded slightly differently on their surveys.
The first number is the % of respondents who indicated a positive response. The mean and standard deviation appear in brackets.
+=15% or more said "neutral"
*=25% or more said "disagree to some extent"

Overall, as can be seen in Table 10, both Board members and Observers tended

to respond positively with respect to relationships with Director and regarding his

evaluation. That being said, some Board members indicated that they were neutral on

whether the Board had provided the Director of Education with encouragement. Board

member responses to (65): Our approach to formally appraise the performance of our

Director of Education has worked well, and (66): I would say this Board, and each of its

members, enjoys positive relationships with the Director and the School Division staff

members were also comparatively low, with higher standard deviations.

Observers, on the other hand, were less likely to agree that in consultation with

the Director, the Board has clarified areas of executive and board role responsibilities

and how these role definitions will be maintained (62).

INDIVIDUAL TRUSTEE AND COLLECTIVE BOARD EFFICACY

From **Table 11**, we see that both Board members and Observers have rated highly individual trustee and collective board efficacy. Although the level of agreement is still high, Observers were less likely to agree that a) the Board's approach to governance and policy work has made a positive difference in Sun West School Division's efforts to accomplish its institutional Ends and focus on its priorities, and b) the work of the Board has definitely served to influence and support the effective administration and fulfillment of Sun West School Division mandate.

Table 11 Perceptions of Board Effectiveness: Individual Trustee and Collective Board Efficacy (Extent of Agreement by Percentage)

Survey Items	Board Members	Observers
67. As a Board member, I am certain that our work makes a positive difference in the lives of our students and their families.	100(4.6, 0.5)	100(4.6, 0.5)
68. As Board members we have control over most of what it takes to succeed as an excellent governing board.	100(4.2, 0.4)	100(4.3, 0.5)
69. The Board's approach to governance and policy work has made a positive difference in Sun West School Division's efforts to accomplish its institutional Ends and focus on its priorities.	100(4.3, 0.5)	88.9(4.1, 0.6)
70. As a Board, there is much we have done to ensure that our students and employees are provided with the highest quality of service we can afford.	100(4.7, 0.5)	100(4.6, 0.5)
71. As a Board member, I sincerely feel that we have made significant contributions to well-being of our students and our employees.	100(4.4, 0.5)	100(4.4, 0.5)

Survey Items	Board Members	Observers
72. The work of the Board has definitely served to influence and support the effective administration and fulfillment of Sun West School Division mandate.	100(4.3, 0.5)	88.9(4.3, 0.7)
Total Mean and Standard Deviation	(4.4, 0.3)	(4.4, 0.5)

Note: Board Member and Observer questions were worded slightly differently on their surveys.
The first number is the % of respondents who indicated a positive response. The mean and standard deviation appear in brackets.
+=15% or more said "neutral"
*=25% or more said "disagree to some extent"

BOARD MEETING TIME EFFECTIVENESS

The percentages of agreement on this aspect of effectiveness are sufficiently high to encourage sustaining current practice, with the exception of approach to minutes.

Table 12 Perceptions of Board Effectiveness: Board Meeting Time Effectiveness (Extent of Agreement by Percentage)

Survey Items	Board Members	Observers
73. This Board has been just as attentive to how we have reached conclusions as we have been about what has actually been decided (i.e., we are both process and content conscious).	88.9(4.1, 0.6)	77.8+(4.1, 0.8)
74. Our Board has dealt fairly and in an open-minded fashion with all of the issues brought to us.	100(4.2, 0.4)	88.9(4.3, 0.7)
75. The Board has an "annual continuous agenda" or a "yearly agenda" that predictably guides the subject matter of most of our meetings.	100(4.4, 0.5)	88.9(4.2, 0.7)
76. The Board has spent appropriate time and attention on discussion, learning, listening, deciding, and monitoring.	88.9(4.2, 0.7)	88.9(4.3, 0.7)

77. If an outsider were to examine our Board minutes, our Board's priorities would be accurately reflected in the business we conduct, the time we've taken on various agenda items and the decisions we have made.	66.7+(3.7, 0.5)	100(4.4, 0.5)
78. Our Board meetings have been well-managed and led by the Chair.	100(4.4, 0.5)	88.9(4.4, 0.7)
Total Mean and Standard Deviation	(4.2, 0.4)	(4.3, 0.6)

Note: Board Member and Observer questions were worded slightly differently on their surveys.
The first number is the % of respondents who indicated a positive response. The mean and standard deviation appear in brackets.
+=15% or more said "neutral"
*=25% or more said "disagree to some extent"

Overall, these were quite positive results. While still generally positive,

Observers of the board were less likely to agree that a) the Board has been just as

attentive to how we have reached conclusions as we have been about what has actually

been decided (i.e., we are both process and content conscious), b) the Board has dealt

fairly and in an open-minded fashion with all of the issues brought to us, c) the Board

has an "annual continuous agenda" or a "yearly agenda" that predictably guides the

subject matter of most of our meetings, and d) that the Board meetings have been well-

managed and led by the Chair. Board members, in comparison, were less likely to agree

that if an outsider were to examine our Board minutes, our Board's priorities would be

accurately reflected in the business we conduct, the time we've taken on various

agenda items and the decisions we have made. As a general observation, Observers

tended to rate items lower than Board members.

BOARD POLICY MAKING ORIENTATION

Table 13 Perceptions of Board Effectiveness: Board Policy Making Orientation (Extent of Agreement by Percentage)

Survey Items	Board Members	Observers
79. As a Board, we have tended to be less concerned with solving particular problems and more concerned about making sure the right problems are being solved.	66.7(3.6, 1.0)	33.3+(3.2, 1.0)
80. Our Board's primary focus has been on policy issues, strategic directions and performance monitoring rather than directing specific operations.	88.9(4.2, 0.7)	66.7(3.8, 1.2)
81. Our Board has used sound decision-making processes (focused on board responsibilities, policy, factual information etc.).	100(4.1, 0.3)	88.9(4.2, 0.7)
82. The challenges and strategies associated with efficient operations and providing high quality services for our students and employees have clearly been reflected in Board's enabling policy work.	77.8(3.9, 0.9)	88.9(4.2, 0.7)
83. We have governed Sun West School Division by systematically monitoring our policies, priorities, and the Director of Education's performance.	100(4.3, 0.5)	77.8+(4.1, 0.8)
84. I believe that our Board's policies and our mandate to the Director have constituted the primary tools used for our effective governance.	100(4.5, 0.5)	88.9(4.2, 0.7)
Total Mean and Standard Deviation	(4.1, 0.5)	(4.0, 0.6)

Note: Board Member and Observer questions were worded slightly differently on their surveys.
The first number is the % of respondents who indicated a positive response. The mean and standard deviation appear in brackets.
+=15% or more said "neutral"
*=25% or more said "disagree to some extent"

As can be seen in Table 13, the level of agreement for the following item is

comparatively low, especially for Observers of the Board (79): As a Board, we have

tended to be less concerned with solving particular problems and more concerned

about making sure the right problems are being solved. Observers of the board were

less likely to agree with most items compared to the Board, and especially, item 79 (high

neutrality). The extent to which the Board's policy making helps meet challenges and

engages strategies is less strongly held by members than are most other items.

BOARD LEARNING

Table 14 Perceptions of Board Effectiveness: Board Learning (Extent of Agreement by Percentage)

Survey Items	Board Members	Observers
86. We have invested in the ongoing development of our Board members by various means (e.g., conferences, seminars, workshops, or training sessions).	100(4.8, 0.4)	100(4.7, 0.5)
87. Periodically we have set aside Board meeting times to gain deeper insight into important issues facing this and similar school divisions.	88.9(3.9, 0.8)	66.7+(4.2, 1.0)
88. From time to time, our Board has sought outside assistance or advice to help us to fine-tune our effectiveness as a Board.	100(4.3, 0.5)	77.8+(4.3, 0.9)
89. There are Board discussion times when we have reflected on what we might have done differently, as we've looked back at previous decisions.	44.4+*(3.2, 1.1)	33.3+(3.4, 0.7)

90. This Board has routinely taken time to review the mission, values, processes, roles, relationships and features of Board effectiveness.	77.8(3.8, 0.8)	75.0(4.0, 1.1)
91. This Board has taken the time and effort to regularly encourage and learn from the Director of Education and other Division staff.	88.9(4.1, 0.6)	100(4.6, 0.5)
Total Mean and Standard Deviation	(4.0, 0.5)	(4.2, 0.7)

Note: Board Member and Observer questions were worded slightly differently on their surveys.
The first number is the % of respondents who indicated a positive response. The mean and standard deviation appear in brackets.
+=15% or more said "neutral"
*=25% or more said "disagree to some extent"

As can been seen in Table 14, according to both Board members and Observers, it may be possible to increase reflective practices as related to previous decision-making (89). It may also be possible to increase the amount of time devoted to reviewing the mission, values, processes, roles, relationships and features of board effectiveness (90). Overall, Observers were less likely than Board members to agree with items, with the exception of item 91, where Board members were less likely than Observers to agree that the Board has taken the time and effort to regularly encourage and learn from the Director of Education and other Division staff.

BOARD MONITORING

Table 15 Perceptions of Board Effectiveness: Monitoring Improvement (Extent of Agreement by Percentage)

Survey Items	Board Members	Observers
92. We have regularly been presented with evidence of achievement/progress, together with opportunities and initiatives to enhance Sun West School Division's quality and scope of services.	100(4.3, 0.5)	100(4.4, 0.5)
93. As a Board, we have periodically been presented with data on employee well-being, retention, recruitment, engagement and satisfaction levels.	44.4+*(3.2, 1.1)	66.7+(4.0, 0.7)
94. We have periodically been presented with both anecdotal stories AND scorecard data related to the services provided by our schools and the state-of-learning in the Division.	88.9(4.1, 0.6)	77.8+(4.2, 0.8)
95. We have specific dashboard measures and processes for monitoring Sun West School Division's progress towards achievement of our priorities and key sets of desired outcomes.	88.9(3.9, 0.8)	77.8(3.8, 0.8)
96. Our Board has monitored particular priorities associated with our Division strategic directions and the quality of services provided to our constituents.	88.9(3.8, 0.8)	100(4.2, 0.4)
97. Our Board has established ongoing monitoring procedures that ensure policies are implemented and that the desired results are achieved.	88.9(4.0, 0.9)	77.8+(4.1, 0.8)
Total Mean and Standard Deviation	(3.9, 0.6)	(4.1, 0.6)

Note: Board Member and Observer questions were worded slightly differently on their surveys.
The first number is the % of respondents who indicated a positive response. The mean and standard deviation appear in brackets.
+=15% or more said "neutral"
*=25% or more said "disagree to some extent"

As can be seen in Table 15, both Board members and Observers agreed that they have regularly been presented with evidence of achievement/progress, together with opportunities and initiatives to enhance Sun West School Division's quality and scope of services. In contrast there were low levels of agreement, particularly for Board members, with the following statement (93): As a Board, we have periodically been presented with data on employee well-being, retention, recruitment, engagement and satisfaction levels. There may be an opportunity to increase the availability of this information in the Sun West division.

STRATEGIC PLANNING AND PRIORITIZING

Table 16 Perceptions of Board Effectiveness: Strategic Planning and Prioritizing (Extent of Agreement by Percentage)

Survey Items	Board Members	Observers
98. Succession plans for senior administration, Division and School-based staff are in place at Sun West School Division.	22.2*(2.6, 0.9)	22.2+*(2.8, 1.1)
99. Our Board has focused its energies on the future, kept up-to-date with emerging trends, and communicated a sense of where Sun West School Division will be over the intermediate and long term.	100(4.1, 0.3)	100(4.3, 0.5)
100. Our Board has focused much of its attention on a strong enabling infrastructure for accountability and to support our vision of learning success for all of our students.	100(4.3, 0.5)	77.8+(4.1, 0.8)

	Board Members	Observers
101. Our Board has effectively ensured that Sun West School Division focuses on fulfilling its mission through monitoring the incremental achievement of our strategic plan.	88.9(4.1, 0.6)	77.8+(4.0, 0.7)
102. Our Board has established a pattern of determining and achieving strategic priorities.	88.9(3.9, 0.8)	100(4.2, 0.4)
103. Sun West School Division has a Board approved strategic plan, with appropriate priorities and aligned supports to achieve 21st Century outcomes.	100(4.8, 0.4)	100(4.4, 0.5)
Total Mean and Standard Deviation	(4.0, 0.4)	(4.0, 0.5)

Note: Board Member and Observer questions were worded slightly differently on their surveys.
The first number is the % of respondents who indicated a positive response. The mean and standard deviation appear in brackets.
+=15% or more said "neutral"
*=25% or more said "disagree to some extent"

In Table 16, based on responses from the both the Board and Observers, succession plans do not appear to be in place for senior administration, Division and School-based staff in Sun West (98). A significant percentage of respondents indicated disagreement with this item. Generally speaking, however, there is a generally positive response to the Board's Strategic Planning and Prioritizing**.**

BOARD FOCUS

Table 17 Perceptions of Board Effectiveness: Board Focus (Extent of Agreement by Percentage)

Survey Items	Board Members	Observers
104. Our Board has worked diligently to ensure the alignment of our overall financial operation to support goal achievement.	100(4.4, 0.5)	88.9(4.2, 0.7)

105. As a Board, we have had to make some tough decisions, knowing these are required to keep us on track.	88.9(4.1, 0.9)	55.6+(3.7, 1.0)
106. Our Division values and guiding principles have regularly and explicitly been brought into discussions at our Board meetings.	77.8(3.6, 0.9)	77.8(3.7, 0.7)
107. Each of Board member has demonstrated a strong commitment to the Sun West School Division values and to the Board/Board members' responsibilities as set forth in our Board Policy Manual.	88.9(3.9, 0.8)	66.7+(3.8, 0.7)
108. All Board members have a very clear understanding of the specific goals and current priorities of Sun West School Division.	44.4+(3.4, 0.9)	55.6+(3.7, 1.0)
109. If people knew full well the details, complexities and issues associated with the most difficult of our Board decisions, I am convinced that they would affirm each of our Board's decisions.	100(4.4, 0.5)	88.9(4.1, 0.6)
Total Mean and Standard Deviation	(4.0, 0.4)	(3.9, 0.7)

Note: Board Member and Observer questions were worded slightly differently on their surveys.
The first number is the % of respondents who indicated a positive response. The mean and standard deviation appear in brackets.
+=15% or more said "neutral"
*=25% or more said "disagree to some extent"

Generally speaking, Observers were less likely than Board members to agree

with items related to Board focus. As can be seen in Table 17, Board Observers were

less likely to agree that: the Board had worked diligently to ensure the alignment of our

overall financial operation to support goal achievement; the board has had to make

some tough decisions, knowing these are required to keep on track; each of the Board

members had demonstrated a strong commitment to the Sun West School Division

values and to the Board/Board members' responsibilities as set forth in their Board Policy Manual. Interestingly, only about half of respondents (Board and Observers) agreed that all Board members have a very clear understanding of the specific goals and current priorities of Sun West School Division.

GENERAL SCHOOL BOARD EFFECTIVENESS

Table 18 Perceptions of Board Effectiveness: General School Board Effectiveness (Extent of Agreement by Percentage)

Survey Items	Board Members	Observers
111. I believe our Board has been highly effective in its governance practices.	88.9(4.2, 0.7)	89.9(4.2, 0.7)
112. The Board and Director's Office have had effective ways and means for regularly communicating with our constituents and employees (i.e., public relations efforts and use of various media and technologies).	77.8(4.0, 1.0)	77.8+(4.0, 0.7)
113. We have NOT been a "rubber stamping" Board.	100(4.8, 0.4)	100(4.4, 0.5)
114. There is plenty of evidence demonstrating that the Sun West School Division Board has been highly effective in their work.	100(4.4, 0.5)	88.9(4.3, 0.7)
115. We have done well to develop the governance, executive management, leadership and infrastructures to support Sun West School Division priorities and goals.	100(4.4, 0.5)	100(4.4, 0.5)
116. Modesty aside, the Board provides excellent leadership in its support of Sun West School Division employees, and various constituencies.	100(4.6, 0.5)	88.9(4.3, 0.7)
Total Mean and Standard Deviation	(4.4, 0.5)	(4.3, 0.6)

Note: Board Member and Observer questions were worded slightly differently on their surveys. The first number is the % of respondents who indicated a positive response. The mean and standard deviation appear in brackets.
+=15% or more said "neutral"
*=25% or more said "disagree to some extent"

As can be inferred from Table 18, there may be room to improve communication, as the level of agreement with the following item is comparatively low (112): The Board and Director's Office have had effective ways and means for regularly communicating with our constituents and employees (i.e., public relations efforts and use of various media and technologies). That being said, overall Board Effectiveness is rated highly.

BOARD TEAMSHIP

Table 19 Perceptions of Board Effectiveness: Board Teamship (Extent of Agreement by Percentage)

Survey Items	Board Members	Observers
117. As Board members, we devote concerted energy to maximize our collective wisdom, influence, and hard work to support Sun West School Division's purposes.	100(4.6, 0.5)	88.9(4.3, 0.7)
118. The Board's capacity to govern effectively has NOT been impaired by conflicts between or amongst Board members.	100(4.4, 0.5)	100(4.4, 0.5)
119. Whether in private or public, our Board members have exhibited mutual respect and we enjoy working together.	100(4.4, 0.5)	88.9(4.4, 0.7)
120. Our Board members evidence due care for each other at and between meetings.	88.9(4.3, 0.7)	100(4.4, 0.5)
121. At meetings, our Board members' behaviour points to genuine efforts to understand each others' perspectives.	100(4.6, 0.5)	88.9(4.2, 0.7)

122. From time to time, our Board members engage in constructive criticism, debate, or respectful dialogue to aid our deliberations.	100(4.4, 0.5)	100(4.3, 0.5)
Total Mean and Standard Deviation	(4.5, 0.5)	(4.4, 0.5)

Note: Board Member and Observer questions were worded slightly differently on their surveys.
The first number is the % of respondents who indicated a positive response. The mean and standard deviation appear in brackets.
+=15% or more said "neutral"
*=25% or more said "disagree to some extent"

In Table 19, it can be seen that both Board members and Observers agree that a

the Board functions as a team. Overall ratings of 'board teamship' are high for both

Board members and Observers of the board and the standard deviation is low.
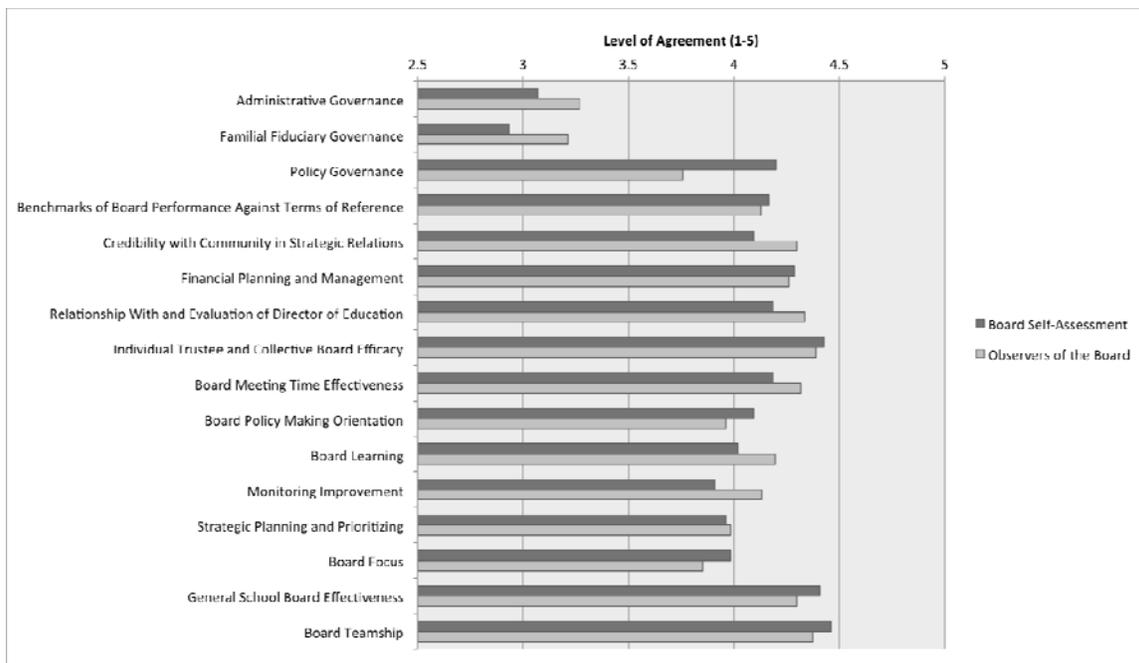

Figure 2. Comparison of Board Self-Assessment and Observers of the Board Total Means

It is clear, from this figure, that the Sun West School Board has a disposition to

policy governance (its new and tailored formulation of this approach). Against 43

benchmarks from the Board's own terms of reference, the Board appears to be

performing well. On all but three of the 12 indicators of effectiveness, the Board is seen

as effective. The three areas that are less positively described are: Monitoring

Improvement; Strategic Planning and Prioritizing; and Board Focus. These three

indicators or qualities of effectiveness are interrelated and associated with the need for

greater analytical attention. The quantitative data resonates with the qualitative

responses of Observers and Board members in this report.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

There are a number of findings that this review has produced for the

consideration of Board:

1. Perhaps the most striking and urgent finding and risk for the Sun West School Division is related to the need for a comprehensive succession (and retention) plan for the senior administration, Division and school-based staff.

2. The Board would benefit from refreshing its approach to receiving and invigilating monitoring reports, dash boards and score cards such that due regard and diligence is give to all areas of accountability and goal attainment. It is recommend that the Board consider ways and means to provide increasingly analytical attention to its business. While this review process did not examine the Audit Committee function and effectiveness, this is another area indicated for Board consideration by Observers and Board comment.

3. The Board might address the perception of unevenness of information held by Board members to determine if there is a need to recalibrate how knowledge is transferred (how information moves to and from Board members) through the organization. Where collateral discussions take place, the Board may wish to give some guidance to itself in terms of its own collective propriety and preferences.

4. This Sun West Board needs to increase its effectiveness of information exchange between itself and its various employee and stakeholder communities. These efforts should include both the receiving of information and feedback, as well as the dissemination of information and seeking advice. Strategic approaches to government relations, partners and media also need further development.

5. While the Board is strong in relationships, teamship, time together, and Board development (learning), there may be room for more post-decision reflection and recalibration. Time for this should be made in the habit of meetings and agenda cycle of the Board.

6. The Board would be well advised to require more periodic reporting on employee well-being, retention, recruitment, engagement and satisfaction levels. These may be benchmarked with the findings from this comprehensive review and other relevant measures and cross-Province comparators.

7. The Board needs to continue to sharpen its focus with specific goals and priorities, clearly understood by Board members and accompanied by dashboard, scorecard reporting.

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