

Policy Governance Principles

1. The Policy Governance model takes as its starting point that a governing board is accountable for the organization it governs and that it exists on the behalf of a larger group of persons who own the organization. Owners are the State and by extension Taxpayers in the case of public schools.
2. The boards job is to see to it, on behalf of owners, that the organization produces what it should (described in ends policies) while avoiding situations and conduct that should not occur (described in executive limitations policies).
3. The model provides a framework for effectively codifying the boards values; it does not dictate what the content or breadth of those values will be. Legal and regulatory requirements must not be ignored.
4. Charter School boards traditionally operate in a manner based on habit, attention to the present rather than the future, and “Approval Syndrome”. Once Policy Governance is implemented it means that decisions and activities inconsistent with the model are no longer practiced.
5. Without a doubt, the board is accountable for everything that goes on in the organization. But the board cannot do, or even supervise, everything that goes on. Accountability is discharged by seeing to it that something is accomplished through (1) describing the “it” that is to be accomplished, (2) unambiguously assigning the “it” to someone, and (3) checking to be sure the “it” was accomplished.
6. Boards are ultimately responsible for both **ends and means**. They have not only the right but the obligation to govern both. Policy Governance boards involve themselves in staff means only as far as needed to safely let them go.
7. Boards may always change its policies, or take up issues of smaller magnitude, but in the absence of a board decision to do so, any issues already delegated should not be discussed by the board until the monitoring phase. Governing policies should be in a constantly updated succinct form.
8. Board Committees exist only to assist in the boards own jobs and not to be involved in the jobs of staff.

9. Likely the board will disagree over important issues, so speaking with one voice will not be achieved by unanimity. It is a requirement that all board members support the legitimacy of a board decision, even if they voted against it.
10. The expression of dissent is encouraged in board discussion. Deliberate with many voices but govern with one.
11. It is not the job of the board to help staff. Staff who want advice can ask it from anyone, including board members, it is staff who makes the decision based upon advice they solicit. The staff is then accountable for their decision.
12. Board rules for itself must be clear, or sufficient group discipline will never be maintained.
13. Monitoring program activity is **not** monitoring results. Attempting to evaluate without criteria, while common, is ineffective.
14. Ongoing monitoring of board expectations is the same as CEO performance evaluation. CEO performance is continually being monitored under Policy Governance.
15. Board must insist upon systematic, accurate and believable monitoring data that addresses the expectations it has established.
16. Any action by staff should be considered board approved if it does not violate the policies. Boards must take care of their worries about staff activities by defining those worries and explicitly proscribing them.