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A Case Study of Effective School Board Governance

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A CASE STUDY OF EFFECTIVE SCHOOL BOARD GOVERNANCE

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in
Leadership and Education in
the Adrian Dominican School of Education of

Barry University

by

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* * * * *

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Area of Specialization: Human Resource Development

A CASE STUDY OF EFFECTIVE SCHOOL BOARD GOVERNANCE

DISSERTATION

by

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2006

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ABSTRACT

A CASE STUDY OF EFFECTIVE SCHOOL BOARD GOVERNANCE

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Barry University, 2006

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Purpose. The purpose of this qualitative case study is to understand and describe how school board members, through their perception, administer a governance process to identify, develop, and sustain the conditions necessary to raise students' academic performance. The participants in this study are the elected school board members of the Florida School District that scored the highest on Florida's Comprehensive Assessment Tests (FCAT) and set new state academic performance records for the 2004-2005 school year. In exploring the school board members' perceptions, the following research questions guided my study:

1. How do school board members perceive their governance process raises students' academic performance?
2. What governance conditions are necessary to raise students' academic performance?

Method. A single qualitative case study was used to understand and describe the school board members' perceptions of the phenomenon of school board governance and students' performance. The five elected school board

members were purposefully selected for their ability to provide rich information to the study of this phenomenon. The data was collected through in-depth interviews, field notes, and an observation of one of their school board meetings. The data was analyzed and synthesized to find the four themes that contributed to this body of knowledge.

Major Findings. The school board members perceived their governance process raised students' performance. The four emerging and recurrent themes that emerged from the analysis and synthesis of the data were: leadership, community relations, performance outcomes, and governance. Collectively, the findings addressed my research questions.

Dedication

To my wife Sally, and daughter, Andrea for their sacrifice, support, and love. And to my son, Ben, whose brief zest for life provided my inspiration to accomplish.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES	x
LIST OF FIGURES	xi
Chapters	
I. INTRODUCTION	
A Human Resource Development Perspective	1
Background of the Problem	2
Statement of the Problem	4
Purpose of the Study	4
Research Questions	5
Conceptual Framework for the Study	5
Significance of the Study	7
Boundary of the Study	9
Definition of Terms	10
Summary	11
II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE	
Introduction	12
School Board Governance	12
Leadership and Learning Theories	15
Proximal Concept	15
Distributed Leadership Perspective	16
Transformational Theory	17
Shared Leadership Theory	17
School Board Governance and Student Performance	18
Summary	22
III. METHODOLOGY	
Introduction	24
Restatement of Purpose and Research Questions	24
Research Design and Rationale	25
Participant Selection	27
Sampling	27
Data Collection	29

	Page
Interviews	29
Document Review	31
Observation	32
Data Analysis	32
Validity and Reliability	34
Researcher's Role	35
Summary	35
IV. FINDINGS	
Introduction	37
Description of the Context	37
Sample Selection	37
Organizational Structure	38
Geographical Setting	39
Table of Organization	40
Description of the Participants	41
Data Analysis Methods	42
Field Notes	45
Document Review	45
The Findings	46
Theme 1: Leadership	47
Theme 2: Community Relations	51
Theme 3: Performance Outcomes	55
Theme 4: Governance	58
Summary	61
V. DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS	
Introduction	63
Summary	63
Discussion	65
Theme 1: Leadership	68
Theme 2: Community Relations	71
Theme 3: Performance Outcomes	72
Theme 4: Governance	73
Studies Related to the Studies	74
Limitations	77
Implications for Human Resource Development Practice	78
Recommendations for Future Research	80
Conclusion	81
LIST OF REFERENCES	84

	Page
APPENDIX A – INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD AUTHORIZATION	93
APPENDIX B – COVER LETTER	94
APPENDIX C – INFORMED CONSENT	95
APPENDIX D – INTERVIEW GUIDE AND QUESTIONS	96
APPENDIX E – CONSOLIDATED CATEGORIES/SUB-THEMES/ THEMES MATRIX	97
APPENDIX F – OBSERVATION FIELD NOTES CODING FORM	98

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 1. Results of the Open Coding Process Matrix -	44
Table 2. Results of the Open Coding Leadership Matrix - Leadership	47
Table 3. Results of the Open Coding Matrix - Community Relations	52
Table 4. Results of the Open Coding Matrix - Performance Outcomes	55
Table 5. Results of the Open Coding Matrix - Governance	59

LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 1. Conceptual Framework	7
Figure 2. Organizational Chart	40

A CASE STUDY OF EFFECTIVE SCHOOL BOARD GOVERNANCE

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Chapter One presents a human resource development perspective, the background and statement of the problem, purpose of the study, and the conceptual framework that illustrates the relationship between the school boards' governance process and students' performance outcomes. Chapter one concludes with the significance and boundary of the study, definition of terms, and the summary.

A Human Resource Development Perspective

Ruona (1999) and Swanson & Arnold (1996) write that the purpose of human resource development is to improve an organization's performance. The literature supports this and defines a school district as an organizational system whose primary purpose is to improve its educational performance outcomes (Lashway, 2002). Dawson & Quinn (2004) contend that a school board, like any board of directors, serves as the elected or appointed leadership accountable to their stakeholders for the organizations' performance. Essentially, school board governance is viewed as an organizational strategy to administer and oversee a performance-based system to improve students' academic performance (Kirst & Bulkeley, 2000). Therefore, school boards are responsible to provide the education the community expects through their leadership and resources (Goodman &

Zimmerman, 2002; Land, 2002; Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 1999). Lastly, since researchers agree that after a decade of performance-based reform the ultimate measure of educational performance outcomes is students' achievement (Lashway, 2002) and that the literature almost exclusively defines student achievement in terms of students' scores on standardized competency tests (Goodman & Zimmerman, 2000; Lashway, 2002; National School Boards Association [NSBA], 2002) the terms student performance and student achievement are used interchangeably throughout this study.

Background of the Problem

School board governance changed dramatically as a result of the educational reform movement in the early 1980s and 1990s. A 1983 report, "A Nation at Risk" warned about the rising tide of mediocrity in American education (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). This generated the excellence movement. The movement ultimately propelled the change from measuring school quality by resources received to evaluating performance based on students' academic achievement (Guthrie & Springer, 2004).

Further, the publication "Governing Public Schools: New Times New Requirements" unleashed a flood of scrutiny about the effectiveness of school board governance (Danzberger, Kirst, & Usdan, 1992). This occurred while school boards engendered ongoing criticism for their failure to assume a leadership role in educational reform (Glass, 1992). As a result, a centuries-long American tradition of state authority and local discretion gave way to national and

state accountability requirements (Guthrie & Springer, 2004). Traditionally, school boards focused on financial and legal issues and left the responsibility for students' academic performance to their administrators (Carol, Cunningham, Danzberger, Kirst, McCloud, & Usdan, 1986; Resnick, 1999). Today, however, school boards risk being judged ineffective if they do not develop policies and support programs designed to improve students' achievement, oversee and evaluate the implementation and performance of these programs, and demonstrate improved student achievement (Land, 2002; Resnick, 1999).

The literature reveals that effective school board governance of students' performance depends on the board's oversight and leadership skills (Doyle & Smith, 2001; Goodman & Zimmerman, 2000; Land, 2002). Yet, under the No Child Left Behind Act, school districts nation-wide are struggling to meet student performance standards (Florida's School Boards Association, 2005). In light of this, the majority of school board members are still elected even though they do not have a background in education, and lack expertise in the fiscal, legal, and educational issues school board members must address (Smoley; 1999).

The public's perception of local educational governance has left them confused about the role of the school board and in doubt about their ability to raise students' performance (Carol et al. 1986; Goodman & Zimmerman, 2000; Land, 2002). McAdams (2002) notes that after two decades Americans still believe that school boards do not act as reformers and need to improve their governance skills—not be overseers of the status quo. Critics of educational governance advocate their demise if they cannot demonstrate they affect students'

performance (Streshly & Frase, 1993; Whitson, 1998).

Statement of the Problem

Although increasing attention is being given to the school board's impact on students' performance, limited research exists that provides information to school boards on how to perform this role and substantiate that school boards affect students' performance (Goodman, Fulbright, & Zimmerman, 1997). The problem is that the existing literature and research does not describe how school boards administer a governance process to raise students' performance (Goodman et al., 1997; Iowa Association of School Boards, 2000; Land, 2002). The Iowa Association of School Board's researchers consider identifying the links between what school boards do and students' achievement "uncharted territory" (2000, p. 2).

Purpose and Research Questions

Many researchers agree that school boards can only preserve their control by determining how to use the governance process to raise student performance (Carol et al., 1986; Gudvangen, 2002; Land, 2002). In her meta-analysis of school boards, Land (2002) proposes that the school board's greatest challenge is to determine which form(s) of governance, management, and operational procedures meet local conditions and translate them into improved educational outcomes. This is not a simple prescription.

The purpose of this qualitative case study is to understand and describe

how school board members, through their perception, administer a governance process to identify, develop, and sustain the conditions necessary to raise students' academic performance. The study focuses on two areas: (1) school board member's perceptions of how the governance process raises students' performance, and (2) governance conditions necessary to raise students' performance. The following two research questions guide my study:

1. How do school board members perceive their governance process raises students' performance?
2. What governance conditions are necessary to raise students' performance?

There are 67 district school boards in Florida, approximately 15,000 school boards in the United States, and 95,000 school board members who serve on these school boards (Hess, 2002). Since site based schools have become the unit of accountability for meeting student performance standards, this study could provide valuable information to many school board members as well as school based leaders (Gunthrie & Springer, 2004).

Conceptual Framework

No one concept or theory describes the relationship between school board governance and student performance. Therefore, I created the following conceptual framework (Figure 1), based on educational leadership and learning practices and the literature on school board governance and student performance, to serve as a model for this study. The conceptual framework illustrates how I

integrated concepts from Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond's, (1999) distributed leadership practice and the concept of proximity (IASB, 2000; Vygotsky, 1978) into a school board governance process to identify, develop, and sustain the conditions necessary to raise students' performance.

The theory of distributed leadership practice (Spillane et al, 1999) proposes that the way leaders and resources are distributed throughout the organization and the way leaders enact their roles are critical to instructional innovation are critical to instructional innovation. They describe how school leadership practice is constituted in the interaction of multiple formal and informal leaders and is stretched over the social and situational context, and leadership tasks throughout all levels of the organization. Formal leaders include superintendents and principals, while informal leaders include teachers. Resources refer to designed artifacts, including meetings, agendas, policies, teacher evaluations, incentives and supports that influence how the leaders define, approach, and enact tasks at all levels of the organization.

Researchers often make use of the concept of proximity to predict the aspects of the environment that are most likely to make a difference in the development and learning behavior of humans (IASB Lighthouse Study, 2000; Vygotsky, 1978). Essentially, environmental conditions are placed on a continuum ranging from those closest to the learning situation (called proximal conditions) and those that are farther away (called distal conditions). The proximal conditions usually have the greatest effect on one's development (IASB Lighthouse Study, 2000; Vygotsky, 1978). Therefore, since the school board

operates at a distance from the learner and the work of educating is done by others, the distribution of leadership and resources, and their proximity to the learner is critical to raising students' performance (see figure 1).

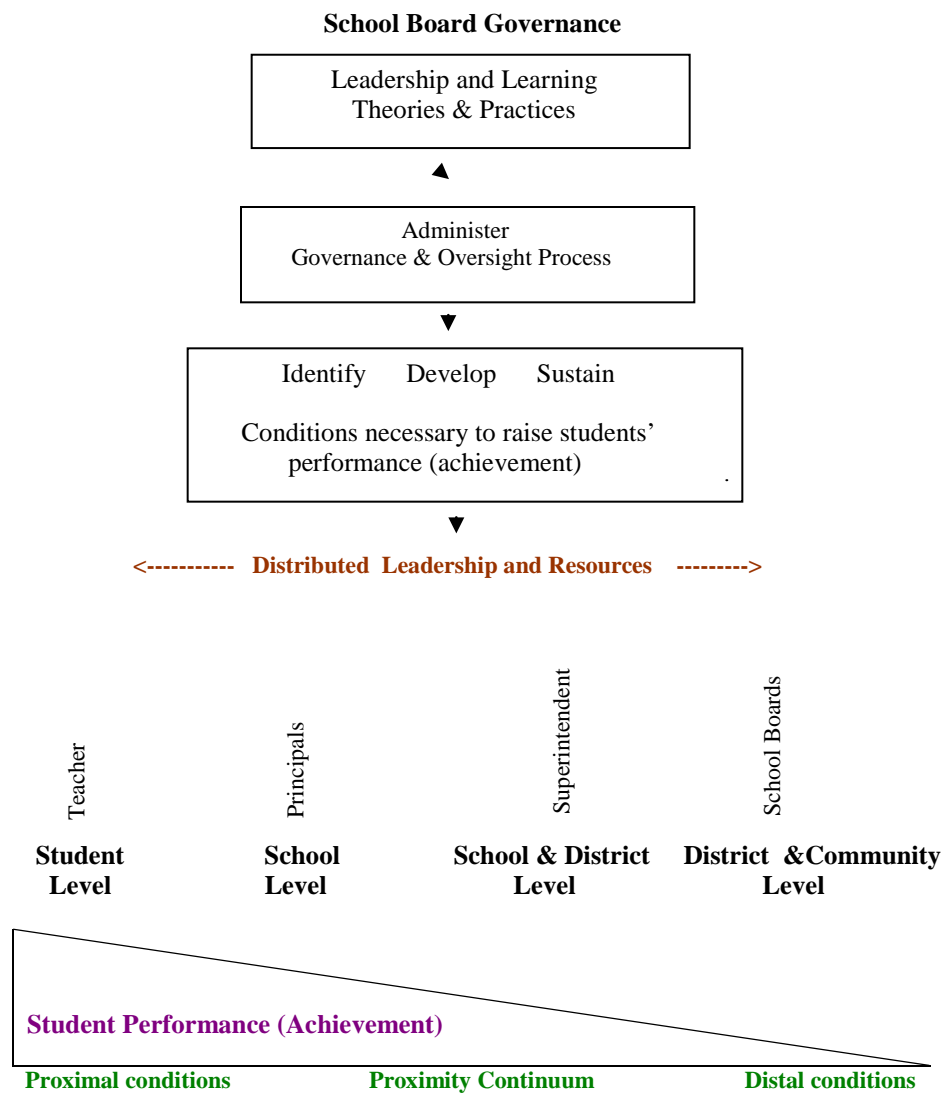


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework.

Significance of the Study

Land (2002), in her meta analysis of school board governance, reveals the

reveals the rife of conclusions and recommendations about the relationship of school board governance and students' achievement based on opinion and observation. However, Land confirms that there is a paucity of designed studies that support these conclusions (2002). This designed study contributes to the field of Human Resource Development because it supports this relationship.

The study also contributes to the field of HRD because the findings from this study can be used by HRD professionals to identify the governance conditions necessary to improve a school districts' educational performance. This is enriched through the perspective of the school board members. This provides the HRD professional with a practical, procedural, and experiential perspective of the relationship between school board governance and student performance.

This study provides HRD professionals with information to identify and assess school boards' and school districts' training and organizational development needs and skills to administer a governance process to raise students' educational performance. There is widespread consensus among school board experts that school board members need governance and organizational development training to improve their skills (Carol et al., 1986; Danzberger et al., 1992; Goodman & Zimmerman, 2000; IASB, 2000). Hess, (2002), in a national survey of school board members, reveals that school board members value the human resource development functions and prioritize their training needs as governance, fiscal, policymaking, and legal issues.

There is less agreement over the form, content, length of training, who

should provide it, and whether it actually enhances governance effectiveness (Schmidt, 1992). Critics of formal training programs charged that they are often too concerned with dispensing information rather than building skills, and too focused on individuals rather than the board as one body (Carol et al., 1986; Goodman & Zimmerman, 2000; Schmidt, 1992). Despite the frequent and urgent calls and requirements for training, there is little data to prove the effectiveness of current training materials and activities (Land, 2002).

Lastly, the findings from this study can be used by HRD professionals to better understand the leadership structure of the school board and how it affects the entire school district's organizational structure. This knowledge enables HRD professionals to understand how to help school boards structure and administer a governance process to produce and deliver effective educational performance outcomes (ROI). With this knowledge professionals are better able to help school districts and boards foster a district-wide culture focused on high student performance/achievement. HRD functions will become more important to school board leaders as they are increasingly held accountable for meeting their students' annual yearly progress goals and state and national student performance (achievement) standards.

Boundary of the Study

This study is bounded to only one Florida school board composed of five elected members. The selected school board governs the Florida school district that earned the highest number of A and B rated schools in Florida and the highest

percent of level 3, 4, and 5 composite scores on the Florida Comprehensive Achievement Tests (FCAT) for the 2004-2005 school year. The sample size is limited to the five elected school board members in the school district.

School board literature contains few examples of operational definitions of school board effectiveness. Instead, the characteristics of effective school boards are usually described in general terms and often focus on what school boards should not do, thereby not providing information regarding optimal activities (Campbell & Green, 1994). Since I am employed by a Florida school district I am affected by the challenges to raise students' performance and the school boards' decisions to meet these challenges. While I have never been a school board member my experience in education and as a board member on two nonprofit organizations influenced my decision to study the roles and affects of the governance process within the field of education.

Definition of Terms

This study includes the use of specific terms that are defined as follows:

Governance -- the process used to demonstrate the responsibility to others.

In profit and non-profit corporate terms, boards of directors are elected or appointed to be accountable for outcomes on behalf of the stakeholders (Florida state statutes and Rules; 8.01(b) – Model Business Corporation Act, 1999).

School Board – is a group of elected individuals who lead the school district by way of a governance process (Doyle & Smith, 2001).

Student performance / Student Achievement – describes the act

of performing or carrying out a work or role as successfully expected / as an end product and as a measurable result. These terms refer to the accomplished skills or practices as measured by test scores on standardized competency tests. A broader definition includes acceptable student performance including, behaviors, high graduation rates, low drop-out rates, scholarship awards (Goodman & Zimmerman, 2000; The National School Boards Association, 2002).

Summary

The ability to raise students' performance depends on the school boards' governance and oversight skills; yet school boards nation-wide are struggling to meet this challenge. However, research linking school board governance and student performance is notably absent in the literature (Land, 2002). In chapter 1, I introduced the background of the problem and identified the problem statement for this study. I also addressed the purpose of this study and presented the research questions I used to guide this study. The research questions were followed by the conceptual framework that explains how my a governance process is used to raise students' performance. Chapter 1 concluded with the significance and boundaries of the study.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Chapter Two provides a theoretical foundation for this case study of effective school board governance as determined by student performance. This chapter includes an overview of school board governance and selected leadership and learning theories that support this study, including the proximal, distributed leadership, transformational, and shared leadership theories. Finally, Chapter 2 provides an overview of the relationship of school board governance and student performance/achievement.

School Board Governance

Local school boards were founded on the belief that citizens should control the policies that determine how the children in their communities are educated (Gudvangen, 2002). Until the reform movement of the 1980s and 1990s school board governance in the United States was a history of independence and local control (Gudvangen, 2002). As a result of the reform movement, school board governance primarily means meeting state and national student achievement standards (Guthrie & Springer, 2004).

Glass (1992) revealed that school boards are seldom mentioned in the literature and overlooked in reform initiatives while much of their decision-making authority was transferred to the school level. A review of school board

meeting minutes by Devlin-Scherer & Devlin-Scherer (1993) showed that only four percent of all motions were related to school reform. It became a fair question to ask whether local school boards had the will or the capacity to take on the responsibility of leading change (Glover, 2004).

The Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL) recommended the repeal of legislation requiring school boards be responsible for virtually every aspect of education (Danzberger et al., 1992). They recommended focusing school boards on policymaking and oversight and restraining them from administration. School board leaders talked of school board obsolescence if they did not turn their attention away from school management and toward community leadership and vision (Iowa Association of School Boards, 2000). The supporters of Carver's (2000) policy governance model advocated that the role of the school board was to govern a system, rather than run it.

Contrary to the IEL's persuasion, the Educational Research Service and the New England School Development Council reported that too many state laws required or allowed school boards to engage in the operational detail of a school system (Goodman & Zimmerman, 2000). Florida's state statutes (revised 2003) revealed that school boards are involved in all school related activities and that their responsibilities appeared to be interchangeable with those of the superintendent.

Florida's state statute (1001.42) requires or allows school boards to engage in the operational details of the school system. The statute provides that district school boards operate as the governing body of the district and hold the

responsible for the control, operation, organization, management, and administration of public schools in the county. Florida's state statute (1001.5149) provides the superintendent with the authority, and when necessary for the more efficient and adequate operation of the district school system, the general oversight over the district school system.

The roles and responsibilities of the school board remain confusing to the public (Danzberger et al., 1992; Land, 2002). In a study of 304 superintendents the most frequently reported conflict between school boards and superintendents are centered on role confusion (Grady & Bryant, 1991). Although, Goodman and colleagues (1997) found that role confusion and micro-management by the board are problematic, there is limited research to substantiate that strict separation of roles is essential for effective governance (Campbell & Green, 1994; Carol et al., 1986). Land (2002) also reveals few examples of operational definitions of school board governance and that school board responsibilities themselves are not operationalized. Regardless, most educational researchers agree that school districts can only be effective with a strong school board and superintendent team (Danberger, et al., 1992; Goodman and Zimmerman, 2000; The National School Boards Association, (2002).

Many view the national and state standards, goals, and performance assessments as a threat to the authority of local school board's (Gudvangen, 2002). Others view the involvement of the national and state governments as a revitalization of local control (Gudvangen, 2002). Danzberger et al. (1992) suggest that school boards can expand their influence, "if they undertake

aggressive policymaking and leadership for education reform within their communities” (p. 35).

School board members are beginning to realize that accountability to the standards means that local control can still be preserved by implementing their own plans to meet the standards (Gudvangen, 2002). Since school districts are incorporated by law, school boards have the fiduciary responsibility to provide governance and oversight of their plans (8.01 (b) – Model Business Corporation Act, 1999; Florida state structure and that their success depends on how these elected members with diverse backgrounds and expertise administer their governance and oversight responsibilities. They emphasize that school boards have the power to govern but it is how they administer this power that results in success or failure.

Leadership and Learning Theories

I selected the proximal, distributed, transformational, and shared leadership theories for this study because they help us understand how the school board governance process can transform leadership, teaching and learning into higher academic performance. Collectively, these theories (1) empower others to bring about major educational change, (2) move all leaders and resources into their most proximal relationship to the learner and (3) transcend all demographic conditions.

Proximal Concept

The proximal concept explains how learning is mediated by the social

interaction of students and more knowledgeable others (IASB Lighthouse Study, 2000; Vygotsky, 1978). Essentially, environmental conditions take their place on a continuum ranging from those closest to the learner (proximal conditions) to those that are farther away (distal conditions). Those conditions closest to the learner have the greatest effect on learning.

In the case of students' performance, the educational environment created in the classroom is more proximal than the governance process and is likely to have the most positive influence on students' learning (IASB Lighthouse Study, 2000; Land, 2002). Therefore, a school board can assess the school district's demographics and create and administer a governance process that focuses its policies, resources, and leadership (superintendent, principals, qualified teachers) in the most effective proximal relationship with the student learners. In their effort to be effective they could support a district-wide culture of student achievement (IASB Lighthouse Study, 2000; Land, 2002).

Distributed Leadership Perspective

Spillane et al. (1999) argue that in order to understand leadership practice, leaders' thinking and behavior, as well as their situation, need to be considered as an integrated framework. The relationship of the distributed leadership theory and educational leadership is based on three assumptions. First, school leadership is best understood through considering the tasks of formal and informal leaders. Second, leadership is stretched over the practice of actors within an organizations, and third, leadership is distributed in and through an organization's situation or context. The distributed leadership perspective is centered on how leadership and

resources support a transformational perspective—the transformation of teaching and learning.

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership is defined as the ability to empower others for the purpose of bringing about a major change in form, nature, and function of some phenomenon (Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Leithwood, Begley, & Cousins, 1994). Transformational leaders have a vision and move their followers toward higher and more universal needs (Bolman & Deal, 1997). In this study transformational leadership relates to the school board member's ability to empower school personnel, parents, students, and the community to bring about a major educational change—to raise students' performance through teaching and learning. Andert's (2002) study of the role of HRD at the board of director's level shows that organizational HRD like school board governance supports growth and transformation.

Shared Leadership

Shared leadership is viewed as a social process that happens to and between members of a team (Fairholm, 1991). In any situation one team member may lead because of his/her expertise and in another situation a different team member may assume the leadership (Burns, 1978; Doyle & Smith, 2001). Teams require both individual and mutual accountability. For such leadership to develop, special attention is given to three factors: ownership, learning, and sharing (Gastil, 1997). Shared leadership theory enables school board members, with diverse experience and expertise, to complement each other's leadership and

decision and policy making skills. Nemerowiz and Rosi (1997) identify shared leadership by the quality of people interactions rather than position and evaluate shared leadership by how people work together. They view the leaders as interdependent participants in the leadership process (Nemeowiz & Rosi, 1997).

School Board Governance and Student Performance

For the past decade educational leaders and organizations, embodied student achievement as the school boards' primary concern (Goodman & Zimmerman, 2000; NSBA, 2002). Since the purpose of human resource development is to improve an organization's performance, the purpose of school districts (an organization) is to improve its educational performance (Lashway, 2002). School boards, through their governance process, are responsible to provide the educational performance the community expects (Goodman & Zimmerman, 2000; Land, 2002; Spillane et al., 1999). The governance process is viewed as the organizational strategy to administer and oversee a performance-based system to improve students' academic performance (Kirst & Bulklley, 2000).

State boards of education and school districts nation-wide made the commitment to raise students' academic achievement. Whatever controversies the accountability movement generated, a decade of standards-based reform has established student achievement as the ultimate measure of educational value (Lashway, 2002). He reveals that in the current reform model, standards set at the state level and translated into instruction at the school level have left an ill-

defined mediating role for school boards and districts. Lashway (2002) questions how school boards can reconcile their long-standing hands-off approach to student learning with the national and state demand for aggressive leadership to improve student learning.

Some critics conclude that school boards are not up to the challenge and should be replaced by other forms of governance (Streshly & Frase, 1993; Whitson, 1998). Reformers argue that boards cannot effectively improve students' academic performance unless they have decision making authority (Lindle, 1995; Ziebarth, 1999). Those more optimistic, such as Elmore (1993) believe that school boards can provide checks and balances to the state and national actions, adapt state reforms to local conditions, mobilize local support, and serve as a source of innovation.

With the devolution of decision-making authority to individual schools the role and responsibilities of the school board is unclear. School boards have been reluctant to cede their authority, particularly when the state may hold them accountable for the schools success (Danzberger, 1992; Danzberger et al., 1992). Land (2002) reports that there is no compelling link between site based management and students' performance.

The literature almost exclusively defines student achievement in terms of students' scores on standardized state competency tests. Yet, parents and community stakeholders consider student achievement to be broader than test scores (Goodman & Zimmerman, 2000). They expect schools to produce knowledgeable citizens, with good character and values, healthy lifestyles, and

marketable skills (Goodman & Zimmerman, 2000; The NSBA, 2002). This continues to challenge school boards' governance skills to accommodate the state's mandate and the community's expectations (Goodman & Zimmerman, 2000).

My review of the literature produced few studies of school board effectiveness that contained student performance as an outcome. The few studies that linked school board governance to improving students' academic performance focused on (1) the school boards' and superintendent relationship (Goodman and Zimmerman, 2000), (2) generic best practices and conditions perceived necessary for effective governance (Goodman & Zimmerman, 2000), (3) board policy, vision, & political influences (Carol et al., 1986; Carver, 1997) and (4) belief and attitudes of school board members (IASB Lighthouse Study, 2000).

Lashway (2002) referenced McCarthy and Celio's (2001) interviews with educators in schools that failed to meet academic standards and found a common theme of district passivity and school board disengagement. The IASB Lighthouse Study (2000) found certain board attitudes and behaviors were correlated with students' achievement. The study examined school boards in three high achieving districts and three low achieving school districts. In high-achieving districts school board members were more knowledgeable about learning conditions, encouraged learning, could describe processes they were putting in place to focus on student improvement and change, and identify clear district-wide goals for improving student performance.

In low-achievement districts board members and personnel could not describe how improvement plans were being implemented, focused on factors that they believed kept students from learning, discussed goals as ends rather than means to an end of improving student learning, and didn't indicate what was expected or how they would accomplish it. The Iowa researchers found that although the study does not lead to the conclusion that board action caused improved achievement, it does suggest that board actions are a key part of a district-wide culture focused on improvement in student learning (Land, 2002; IASB Lighthouse Study, 2000).

Goodman and colleagues (1997) found that districts with effective governance tended to have greater student performance as measured by dropout rates, the percentage of students going on to college, and aptitude test scores. Although these findings are significant, the study did not describe how they measured quality governance; and they only describe the characteristics that typified quality governance in their sample (Land, 2002). The Council of the Great City Schools (2002) embarked on an effort to raise student achievement test scores in large urban school districts. The results of their study found that in faster-improving urban school districts (1) political and organizational stability contributed to their educational reform and meaningful change, (2) school boards focused on policy level decisions that support improved student achievement and (3) the school boards sold their vision to their communities and stakeholders (Snipes, Doolittle, & Herlihy, 2002).

Many studies demonstrate that some teachers and teaching styles

(Brophy and Good, 1986), curriculums and instructional methods (Bloom, 1984; Wang, Haertel, & Walberg, 1993), principal-teacher and teacher-student relationships (Darling-Hammond, 1996), and school size, climate, and conditions (Cotton, 1996) generate higher student achievement. We also know that schools with a sense of collective responsibility for students academic success create incentives and opportunities for teachers to improve their practice and raise students' achievement (Bryk & Driscoll, 1985).

Although these conditions and practices have not been studied in relationship to school board governance, they represent the educational conditions necessary to raise students' academic performance when effective governance is administered and they are in a proximal relationship with student learners. These conditions generate the questions; do some school boards generate higher student academic performance and if so, do they do so in a way that can be described and learned by others (IASB Lighthouse Study, 2000)?

Summary

Chapter Two presented a review of the literature in the area of school board governance, described the confusion between the role of the school board and the superintendent, and revealed the problems this creates for the public. Following the discussion, Chapter Two described the leadership and learning theories that support this study. Lastly, Chapter Two presents a review of the literature in the that student achievement is defined almost exclusively as student scores on standardized achievement tests and that there is a paucity of studies and

literature linking school board governance and students' academic performance.

Though school boards are only one component of school district leadership, they are the focus of this study because they are held accountable for students' academic performance.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Chapter three presents the procedures and methodology for this qualitative single case study. This chapter begins with a description of the case study design, and the process and criteria used for the purposive selection of the participants. Chapter three also describes the data collection techniques used to conduct the research, including participant interviews, document reviews, field notes, and an observation. This chapter concludes with a discussion of the data analysis process and the methods used to ensure the validity and reliability of this study. This qualitative single case study examines school boards' governance process and the conditions necessary to raise students' academic performance.

Restatement of Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to understand and describe how school board members, through their perception, administer a governance process to identify, develop, and sustain the conditions necessary to raise students' academic performance. The problem statement calls for a need to understand and describe this phenomenon in order to provide school boards with the information and knowledge they need to improve their role and substantiate that school boards affect academic performance. The study focuses on two areas: (1) school board members' perceptions of how their governance process raises students' academic

performance and (2) governance conditions necessary to raise students' academic performance. The following research questions guides my study:

1. How do school board members perceive their governance process raises students' academic performance?
2. What governance conditions are necessary to raise students' academic performance?

Research Design and Rationale

According to Doyle and Smith (2001), a school board is a group of elected or appointed individuals who lead the school district by way of a governance process. My choice of a qualitative approach for this study was based on the purpose of the study, and the exploratory research questions that guide the study. As noted in chapter one, I conducted this case study to understand and describe how the school boards' governance process, from the perspective of the school board members, was used to raise students' academic performance. A qualitative approach is often recommended when the goal is to understand and describe a phenomenon from the participants' perspective within the complexities of a social setting (Janesick, 1998; Stake, 1995).

Yin (1984) defined case study as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple source of evidence are used" (p. 23). Case studies strived toward a holistic understanding of a set of interrelated actions engaged in by the actors (Feagin,

Orum, & Sjoberg, 1991). The conceptual framework in chapter one illustrated these interrelated actions and the proximity of the actors (leaders) to student learners. The use of this qualitative case study was substantiated in that the school board members are individuals in a group and this study is an exploration of the governance process as a bounded system (Creswell, 1998). In seeking to determine what research method best addressed the purpose of this study my choice of the qualitative case study method was also guided by my philosophical belief. As a member on two nonprofit boards I believe that problems are best resolved by aligning the appropriate leadership and resources closest to the source of the problem and making them part of the solution. This qualitative case study provides me with the opportunity to understand the phenomenon of school board governance and students' academic performance and enables me to better assist others to do the same.

This study took place in the school board members' natural setting and included the use of multiple data collection methods including participants' interviews, document reviews, observations, and field notes. These methods, described in the data collection section of this chapter, were used to elicit the participants' feelings, perceptions, stories, and personal experiences to describe the school board governance process and its relationship to students' academic performance. To discover what it is like to gain a deeper understanding of school board members' experiences, open-ended interviews and observations were used (Stake, 1995). We better understand individuals' perceptions, feelings, experiences, and attitudes about a process through qualitative methods inquiry

in their natural setting (Yin, 1994). In her meta-analysis of school boards, Land (2002) acknowledged that the phenomenon linking school boards to students' achievement was not well understood. According to Stake (1995) this "uncharted territory" (IASB Lighthouse Study, 2000, p. 2) required a qualitative exploration to better understand a phenomenon's unknown nature and complexity.

Participant Selection

Sampling

The sampling method I used to determine the participants in this qualitative case study was purposeful sampling. Purposive sampling is used where particular settings, persons, or events are deliberately selected to provide "information rich" data that may not be secured from other choices and exemplify the purpose of the study (Creswell, 2002; Patton, 1990). Typical case sampling was used to identify and select the "average-like" participants (Patton, 1990) because Florida school districts are typical in structure, purpose, and selection of school board members. I also used extreme sampling to select the Florida school district that received the *highest* academic performance ratings.

With the assistance of the assistant director of research for my school district, I accessed Florida's Department of Education's student FCAT data. This data was aggregated by school district, grade level, and subject. I then manually calculated and aggregated the data to determine the: (a) number of schools by district that received A, B, & C grades; and (b) the percentage of students by district that received level 3, 4, or 5 FCAT scores. To meet the criteria established for this study, I selected the Florida school district that obtained the:

(a) highest percentage of A and B rated schools and (b) the highest percent of level 3, 4, and 5 composite scores on the Florida Comprehensive Achievement Tests (FCAT) in reading, math, and writing during the 2004-2005 school year. Because of the school district's success their school board members were the most able to provide the information-rich data needed to understand the phenomenon of school board governance and students' academic performance. The sample size of this study was limited to the number of elected or appointed school board members of this school district. For clarity, the FCAT and school grading process is explained next.

The FCAT measures student performance on selected benchmarks in reading, math, and writing as defined by Florida's Sunshine State Standards. These standards articulate challenging content that Florida students are expected to know and be able to do. They are measured in grades 4, 5, 8, and 10. Student scores are classified into five achievement levels, with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest. Schools earn one point for each percent of students who score in achievement levels 3, 4, or 5 in reading and one point for each percent of students who score 3, 4, or 5 in math. Therefore, Level 3 is the minimum acceptable score and indicates that they *meet* state standards.

Grading Florida public schools utilizes a point system. Schools are awarded one point for each percent of students who make learning gains in reading and one point for each percent of students who make learning gains in math. The schools are rated on an A through F grading system.

After I received permission from Barry University's institutional review

board to conduct this study (Appendix A), I sent the selected school board member participants a cover letter to introduce myself, explain the nature and purpose of this study, and answer their questions (Appendix B). I also sent the participants an informed consent agreement to obtain their authorization to audiotape and publish their data in my dissertation, advise them of their rights, and assure their confidentiality (Appendix C).

Data Collection

Data was collected with the intent to understand and describe the central phenomenon of school board governance and students' academic performance from the perspective of the participants. The primary data collection method used in this study was participant interviews. Data was also collected from document reviews, an observation, and field notes. These data collection methods were appropriate for descriptive and data-rich case study design (Merriam, 1998) and provide data triangulation to strengthen the validity and reliability of the study (Patton, 1990). Stake (1995) and recommended the use of multiple methods of data collection to determine that "we have it right" – to substantiate the findings (p.107). In the following sections I explain how these data collections techniques were used in this study.

Interviews

Since the purpose of this study is to understand and describe school board governance and students' performance through the perception of the school board members, one-on-one interviews provided the best means of obtaining a "rich"

source of data (Patton, 1990). According to Janesick (1998), one-on-one interviews captured the interviewees' perspective and serves as an effective way to obtain descriptions of the lived world. Stake (1995) reminded us that, "the two principal uses of case study are to obtain the description and interpretations of others" (p. 64).

Patton (1990) suggested using three types of qualitative questions for in-depth interviews: main questions, probes, and follow-up questions. *How*, *why*, and *what* questions were used to obtain the participants' experiences and perspectives. Janesick (1998) described interview questions as follows: (1) basic descriptive questions, (2) follow-up questions, (3) experience/example questions, (4) simple clarification questions, (5) structural questions, and (6) comparison/contrast questions" (pp. 30-31).

In this study, I used the one-on-one semi-structured open-ended interview approach to elicit data-rich information from my participants. The school board member participants were interviewed individually with interviews lasting approximately thirty five minutes. An interview guide (Appendix D) was used in order to ask each participant the same questions and experience the same interview process (Patton, 1990).

Although this naturalistic inquiry approach provided the participants freedom to choose how to answer the questions and describe their perceptions, it also kept the participants' responses focused on the phenomenon of school board governance and its relationship to student academic performance. The interview questions addressed my two research questions. I used probe questions as verbal

prompts to encourage the participants to elaborate on their initial response and enhance the richness of the data. Follow-up questions were used to explore new issues that emerged from the participant's responses. My approach utilized Patton's (1990) types of interview questions and conformed with Janesick's (1998) definition of interviewing as "two people talking and jointly constructing meaning about a particular topic" (p. 30). The need for understanding necessitated a clear description from those who understand the process (Creswell, 1998).

Document Review

Document review was also considered an important and widely used qualitative data collection method that often uncovers information not revealed through other data collection methods (Merriam, 1998). Creswell (1998) encouraged the use of multiple data collection methods and considered public documents, such as school board minutes, policies, and published articles as supportive sources of data. When reviewing documents, Stake (1995) stated that "one needs to have one's mind organized, yet be open for unexpected clues" (p. 68). For this study school district and school board documents were used to complement and substantiate the interview data. These documents include, students' academic performance data, governance and oversight policies, school board minutes, and documents that chronicled school board governance decisions, reforms, innovations, and community involvement. The data from these documents are included in Chapter Four (data analysis) and Chapter Five (findings) of this research.

Observations

Janesick (1998) described the use of observation and field notes as having the utility to note themes as they arise and analyze and interpret the data throughout the data collections process. Stake (1995) referred to interpretations derived from observations as assertions and considers them a major part of all research. Stake (1995) also cautions the researcher about making assertions on a small data base and to balance how much we rely on interpretation from coded data and from relevant observation. Keeping this balance results in a greater understanding of the case. During the observation a researcher creates a relatively incontestable description for further analysis and lets the occasion tell its story, the situation, the problem, and the resolution or irresolution of the problem (Stake, 1995). For this study, field notes were taken by hand during all interviews and the observation of the school board meeting. This provided a running record of all events and enhanced the data already collected. While observing the regularly scheduled school board meeting I recorded the board member's individual and collective actions and behaviors within their natural setting. This data was coded, integrated and analyzed with the school board member's coded interview responses, and included in the findings of this study.

Data Analysis

Stake (1995) defines data analysis as taking apart what is important to the case and putting these parts back together giving them meaning from first impressions to final compilations. Qualitative case study capitalizes on making

sense of these parts with the intent to understand and describe the central phenomenon through the perceptions of the participants (Stake, 1995). Although this is the focus of a case study an important consideration here is how the case study is used.

This is an instrumental case study because the purpose and the research questions seek to understand and describe the school board's governance process and its affects on students' academic performance. According to Stake (1995) an instrumental case study helps us understand an issue by reaching new meanings through the aggregation of instances as they emerge throughout the data collection and analysis process.

The method of data analysis used for this study was aggregate analysis. Stake (1995) and Creswell (1998) outline the areas of data analysis for a case study design: (a) data managing: creating and organizing files for data; (b) reading and memoing: making interpretation and naturalistic generalizations; and marginal notes and form initial codes; (c) describing: description the case and content; (d) classifying: aggregation & patterns of categories; (e) interpreting: interpretation and naturalistic generalizations; and (f) representing and visualizing: narratives augmented by tables and figures. Essentially, aggregate analysis involves the: (a) open coding of the data from the interviews and documents into categories; (b) data reorganized by identifying overlapping categories and combining information from these two sources under similar categories; and (c) categories being collapsed into major themes with components and sub-themes. This inductive data analysis serves as an

aggregation and labeling process for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive information that emerges throughout the study (Patton, 1990).

Validity and Reliability

The procedure I used to confirm the accuracy of my study is triangulation. Stake (1995) describes triangulation as the protocols used to confirm accuracy and alternative explanations by using multiple data gathering methods and/or data sources. According to Patton (1990), the credibility of a study depends on the following three criteria: (1) rigorous techniques and methods for gathering data that are analyzed with attention to validity, reliability, and triangulation; (2) the credibility of the researcher which depends on training and experience; and (3) the philosophical belief in and appreciation of naturalistic inquiry, qualitative methods, inductive analysis, and holistic thinking.

This study attempts to meet Patton's (1990) criteria. First, triangulation was provided by the use of multiple methods of data collection that included: (a) data gathering—interviews with the school board members; (b) data sources—observation of one of the school district's public school board meeting, and document review; and (c) data analysis—member checking. My training in qualitative methods and work related interviewing skills helped me conduct this study. Merriam (1998) treated the subject of descriptive validity and credibility relative to the interviewer's role in a study when they noted that "skill and knowledge in order to gather valid and reliable data" (p. 151) relate to the credibility of the interviewer. Third, the methodology of this study, as well as

my successful experience in the field of education and tenure on two boards' of directors provided strong evidence of my appreciation for the naturalistic inquiry skills and methods inherent in this qualitative study. The rigors of using triangulation in qualitative research by employing multiple methods and sources of analysis augment descriptive validity and credibility and help capture many aspects of reality (Denzin, 1984).

Researchers Role: Patton (1990) emphasizes that the skill of the researcher is both the greatest strength as well as the greatest weakness of qualitative research. Fontana and Frey (1998) explain that a qualitative interviewer needs to be “flexible, objective, empathetic, persuasive, and a good listener” (p. 55). Although this is important, it is also important that the qualitative researcher gain the trust of the participants in order to obtain valid, reliable, and purposeful data in order to help others address or solve the problem. After 30 years of experience in education, staff development, and as a founder and member of a non-profit organization I appreciate the role of the board of directors, and the impact the governance process has on performance. Therefore, I appreciate the opportunity to explore this phenomenon to understand those conditions that can help school boards have a positive impact on our children’s performance.

Summary

In Chapter Three, I discussed the qualitative research design and rationale for this study. This was followed by the criteria and process for the selection of the participants in this study. Next, the data collection methods, including:

interviews, document review, and observation were explained, and followed by a review of the data analysis methods used in this study. Finally, the methods used to ensure validity and reliability through triangulation and the researchers role in this study were discussed.

This study represents a perspective of the relationship of the school board's governance process and the responsibility and challenge to raise students' performance. Most important, this study contributes to our understanding of this phenomenon and provides useful information to school board leaders.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative case study is to understand and describe how school board members, through their perception, administer a governance process to identify, develop, and sustain the conditions necessary to raise students' academic performance. In Chapter Four, I will present the criteria used to select the school board participants and describe the geographical setting, organizational structure, and the individual school board members. I will then describe the coding methods used to analyze and synthesize the data from my interviews with the five school board members, my field notes from these interviews and my observation of the school board meeting. I will conclude Chapter four with the integrated findings from my interviews with the five school board members, my field notes from these interviews and my observation of the school board meeting, and from the Bevino (2005) report (public document).

Description of the Context

Sample Selection

This study is limited to one school board serving one of Florida's 67 county school districts. The selected school board was chosen because the school district it serves is the highest performing school district in Florida on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Tests (FCAT) and set new state student academic performance records for the 2004-2005 school year. The district obtained the

(a) highest percentage of A and B rated schools in Florida and the (b) highest percent of level 3, 4, and 5 composite scores on the Florida Comprehensive Achievement Tests (FCAT) in reading, math, and writing during the 2004-2005 school year. The selected school district is hereafter referred to as the AKA School District. The purposeful sample for this study was limited to five because only five school board members are elected to the AKA County School Board. My interview with each school board member was intended to provide information-rich data from their perspective to address my research questions.

Organizational Structure

The AKA County School District serves over 30,000 students from pre-kindergarten to adult education. Even though each of the District's 40 schools has its own distinct characteristics, each shares the unified vision of the District, "Our standard of performance is high and clear: I will not be satisfied and neither should you until our schools are the best in Florida and a model for America." The school board is the governing body of the District and is responsible for the control, operation, organization, management, and administration of schools in AKA County pursuant to the provisions and minimum standards prescribed by Florida Statutes and State Board of Education Rules (Section 230.22(2)), Florida Statute.

The School Board of AKA County, Florida, consists of five elected members. Each member must be a qualified elector of AKA County, and a resident of the school district from which he/she is elected. Each school board member is elected county-wide and is responsible for the governance of all

schools in the county. All five school board members make decisions for the entire school district and are legally bound by their fiduciary and oversight responsibilities to represent all of the stakeholders (students, teachers, staff, parents, and citizens) in the school district. The school board determines and adopts policies and programs deemed necessary for the efficient operation and general improvement of the district school system (Section 230.22(2), Florida Statutes). The district school system is part of the state system of public education. The District's organizational chart follows (Figure 2).

Geographical Setting

The AKA County School District is located in the panhandle region of Florida known as the Emerald Coast. The beautiful light green waters of the Emerald Coast complement the area's natural white sandy beaches. Although the Emerald Coast is thought of as a mecca for tourists, few know of the area's successful school district. The county also serves as the home base for many military families stationed at the region's Air Force Bases. Banners on the district's schools display the communities' pride and read "Our Schools Are #1." One of these bright colored banners greets visitors at the doors of the simple, but beautifully restored County School Administration building where I interviewed the school board members. I felt welcomed throughout my two day visit and was consumed by the school board members' and administrative staff's pride.

Description of the Participants

The five AKA school board members graciously accepted my invitation to participate in this study. They said they were honored that my sampling data revealed their district's accomplishments and were pleased to share their successful procedures. This addressed the purpose of my case study, which is to understand and describe how the members of a school board administer a governance process to raise students' performance (achievement).

One week prior to our scheduled interviews I sent each school board member my interview guide and questions (Appendix D). This provided them time to become familiar with the questions and prepare their responses. The interview guide and questions was also sent to encourage them to share their governance experiences which have led to successful student performance. During the interviews the participants were enthusiastic about describing their school district's and school board's success. They often provided answers to several of my interview questions when asked one question. During every interview it was apparent that the school board members shared much pride in their ability to productively work together and with their community to meet their stakeholders' needs. As demonstrated by the banner, this was yet another sign of their pride. To maintain privacy and confidentiality, each board member is referred to as member A through E. The average tenure of the present school board is seven and one half years. This is twice as high as Florida's average school board tenure.

The AKA school board members bring a diverse array of professional, educational, military, business, accounting, political, and civic experiences and skills to the school board. One member is a lifelong educator with thirty years of service to the County School System and has served on the board for twelve years

(three terms). Another member, who has served on the school board for ten years after a career as a military officer exclaimed that, “his military experience endeavors him to influence and inspire our youth with a love of country and spirit of patriotism”. A third member’s six-year tenure on the school board followed a long career as a clinician in the County School District while a fourth member brings many years of business experience during his eight-year tenure. And, a fifth member, the new “kid on the block” who has served only two years on the school board, explained “his seven-year tenure on the City Council prepared him for this position and to address public issues and meet stakeholders’ expectations.” Four of the school board members have Master’s degrees and one has a professional accounting degree. While all five board members are residents of the county, are residents of the county, only one member graduated from the district school system. However, four of the board members share the legacy that their children currently attend an AKA County school or graduated from the School District. Each school board member also contributes to the community through their civic service including, one member’s dedication as a Trustee of the community college; another member’s Kiwanis activities; a third member’s commitment to the Children’s Advocacy Center and the American Cancer Society; a member’s athletic sponsorships, and Chamber of Commerce activities; and the fifth member’s service to the local Chamber of Commerce and YMCA. Collectively, the five school board members bring respectability and a complement of education, experience, and ability to the school board and school district.

Data Analysis Methods

In order to understand and describe the phenomenon of school board governance that results in high performance outcomes, the interview data was

analyzed through coding techniques. The data was first collected through the use of open-ended interviews with each of the five AKA school board members. Each interview was audio-taped, lasted an average of 40 minutes, and I transcribed them verbatim. The transcribed data was then open coded to provide a line-by-line analysis of the main ideas or thoughts that each interviewee provided in response to each interview question. I did this by memoing these ideas or thoughts in the right side margin across from each line of transcription. The open coding was then displayed on the Consolidated Categories / Sub-Themes /Themes Matrix (Appendix E). On this matrix I analyzed the interviewees' responses and grouped them into categories, sub-themes, and themes and displayed the number of board members who provided these responses in (parenthesis). Lastly, I consolidated and synthesized the redundant categories, sub-themes and themes to generate the emerging themes and sub-themes. The results of the open coding process and the analysis and synthesis of the data collected are presented on The Results of the Open Coding Process Matrix (Table 1). The four emerging themes leadership, community relations, performance outcomes, and governance. In this table the themes, number of participants who elicited each theme, and the sub-themes are presented. Table 1 follows.

Table 1

The Results of the Open Coding Process Matrix

Themes	Number of Participants Who Elicited Each Category (n=5)	Sub-Themes
Leadership	5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. School board members' experience and knowledge to lead (fiscal, legal, policy, educational, and administrative responsibilities). 2. School board and superintendent relationship, fiduciary roles, responsibilities, and accountability.
Community Relations	5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Community expectations, involvement & satisfaction. 2. Board and community shared vision, goals, and culture.
Performance Outcomes	5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Performance based data, action, and measurement to meet stakeholders needs and for resource allocation and accountability.
Governance	5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Governance and oversight process. Fiduciary responsibilities and accountability for students and organizations performance and stakeholders' expectations. 2. Empowerment

The representative cells from the results of The Open Coding Process Matrix (Tables 2, 3, 4, & 5) are used to display the emerging themes and sub-themes as each theme is discussed. Collectively the interview and coding techniques

provided valuable data to support the purpose of this study to better understand and describe how school board members, through their perception, administer a governance process to raise students' performance.

Field Notes

Throughout the data gathering and analysis process, I kept a hand-written journal that included (1) my correspondence with the school board members, including interview confirmations and schedules, (2) field notes of anecdotal information and perceptions during the participants' interviews, and (3) field notes during my observation of the April 10, 2006, school board meeting. The field notes from the participants' interviews and my observation were transcribed, open coded and analyzed to create categories and emergent themes. The coding process for the participants' interviews is presented on the Interview Questions Transcribed Field Notes Coding Form and the coding process for the observation is presented on the Observational Field Notes Coding Form (Appendix F). The findings are reported in the findings section of Chapter Four.

Document Review

I reviewed the April 10, 2006, school board minutes of the meeting I observed to verify my field notes. The school board holds its public meetings every other week. Because most issues presented at the school board meetings are discussed and resolved at their workshop meetings held during the alternate weeks, the board meetings are efficient and usually not controversial. In order to better understand what I observed at the meeting, I also reviewed the minutes from the school board workshop held on April 6, 2006. The findings are

integrated into the following text.

The second public document I reviewed was a report commissioned by the AKA County School Board in September 2005 entitled, *An Analysis of the Turnaround of AKA Schools 2001 –2005 and a Roadmap for Doing Even Better* authored by Terry Bevino. The report chronicled the interventions taken by the AKA School District and School Board in response to the communities' dissatisfaction with their students' performance. The report describes how the district rose from 27th place in students' achievement in 2001 to first in the state in 2004-2005. Although the report provides a detailed description and insight into the "taking-apart" of an ineffective system and "putting-together" a Rolls-Royce the report does not capture the *heart* and *soul* of the leaders and the community who governed and persevered until their school district became # 1. Interestingly, all of the current school board members, except one, served on the school board during the entire 2001-2005 transition period. Because the report was written by an AKA County school administrator, I compared this data with the interview and data I collected to reduce any bias in my findings.

The Findings

The integrated findings from my interview, my observation of the school board meeting, field notes, and my review of public documents generated the following recurrent and emerging themes: leadership, community relations, performance outcomes, and governance. The themes addressed my two research questions and supported the purpose and conceptual framework of this study. The

themes and sub-themes are described next.

Leadership

The first theme, *leadership*, was identified by all of the school board members as an important theme. Through the coding process the school board members defined leadership as the actions that formal and informal leaders, including administrators (including themselves), managers, and those empowered (including teachers and the community), perform to direct the school district towards its goals. Although there is much literature related to the role of school board leaders, there is a paucity of literature on how the school board leadership affects students' performance. The emergent sub-themes associated with leadership are presented in Table 2.

Table 2 The Results of the Open Coding Process Matrix – Leadership

Themes	Number of Participants Who Elicited Each Category (n=5)	Sub-Themes
Leadership	5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. School board members' experience and knowledge to lead (fiscal, legal, policy, educational, and administrative responsibilities). 2. School board and superintendent relationship, fiduciary roles, responsibilities, and accountability.

Sub-themes of Leadership.

Experience and knowledge to lead in the areas of fiscal, legal, policy, education, and administration, as well as the school board's fiduciary responsibilities emerged from the analysis of the data as the primary sub-themes for the theme leadership. This is supported in the literature that reveals that

although school board members must address these educational issues the majority of school board members are elected even though they are elected even though they do not have the background and expertise in these areas (Smoley, 1999). Yet, school boards have the fiduciary responsibility to provide the education the community expects through their leadership and resources (Goodman & Zimmerman, 2000; Land, 2002; Spillane et al., 1999).

When asked, what is unique about your school board's way of working that has resulted in high levels of student achievement (interview question 1), all of the board members agreed they valued their ability to perform as a leadership team. This included the superintendent of schools. Member D agreed but added,

It's up to each one of us to do our homework and that each one of us has a responsibility to make a competent judgment based upon the knowledge and information we have. We try to stay knowledgeable about what we are doing, know the issues, and ask hard question.

Member E acknowledged that, "When I first got on the board I knew a lot about schools but I was very naïve about other issues." Interestingly, Member B responded, "I do not think that the process is all that unique. It is the ability of this board to work together as leaders towards a common goal. We have an average tenure of seven years." The entire board believes that they are very fortunate to be a member of a tenured, experienced, and knowledgeable school board. While taking field notes during Member D's interview, I found that this member added one response that was unique to the conversation. This member felt that a unique attribute of the school board and superintendent's relationship, that resulted in higher students' performance was the absence of micromanagement. The remaining field notes related to leadership were consistent with the tape recorded interview responses. When asked how do five

elected board members with different values and backgrounds work together to make school board decisions that will raise students' achievement (interview question 2), Member B, who served six years as a city council person before being elected to the school board two years ago commented,

With school board members who have been on the board for an extraordinary amount of time, when you discuss or have a debate you have a wealth of information and knowledge and experience to hear the facts and make a good decision.

All of the school board members agreed that shared leadership enabled them to complement each other's knowledge and leadership and decision making skills. The shared leadership theory (Gastil, 1997) supports a school board's unique organizational structure. With a definite sense of unity, all five school board members agreed that their shared leadership experience helped them make the following tough decisions to: (1) eliminate social promotions for students who did not reach the academic standards, (2) borrow millions of dollars through bond issues to address students' performance, (3) convince the community to pass a five-year one cent sales tax for education, (4) provide resources to families of students in need of educational enhancements through their personal plan of care (POC), and (5) allocate ninety-one percent of all district funding for classroom resources, leaving only nine percent for administration overhead. All of the school board members agreed with Doyle and Smith (2001) that the success of school boards depends on how elected school board leaders with diverse background and expertise administer their leadership, governance, and oversight responsibilities.

Member B proudly added, "You have to make the difficult decision. We

certainly enhanced our opportunity of bringing ever one up and our goal is to bring everybody up. We can't do it without resources and we can't do it without a commitment." Member D felt the need to provide an explanation,

We wanted our school improvement plans to be based on students' achievement. We wanted standards to be reasonable and realistic and we wanted the schools to set the bar high. Our concern is trying to get our students prepared. Much of our gains was because we started focusing on the bottom quarter of the FCAT scores.

When asked, "What is the most important decision your board made that contributed to your school district's high student achievement?" (interview question 3), all five school board members agreed that at least two or three of the five major decisions listed above were the answers to this question. They also agreed that, given the complexity of the school districts' issues, "doing what's right for the children" was the best answer. From the field notes, Member D indicated that the single year administrative contracts were important because the board controlled the quality leadership and decision making skills in the district.

Sub-themes Fiduciary Roles and Responsibilities

Through the coding process the fiduciary roles and responsibilities of school board leaders and the superintendent emerged as a sub-theme for the themes, leadership and governance. Although the literature reveals the need for an effective relationship between the school board and the superintendent, this does not always happen, especially among school board members and superintendents who are elected to office rather than appointed. As a result, there is a lack of understanding and confusion about their roles and responsibilities (Land, 2002). Interestingly, every school board member

praised the superintendent's leadership abilities and the level of cooperation between the two roles. Member E commented, "the superintendent sets accountability guidelines for the staff and the schools to follow." Pleased that, "We have been fortunate to have a strong board and a strong superintendent and are marching down the same path," Member D believes the district's success is the superintendent and the board working together." Member A sums up the feelings of the school board members with his observation, "We do what we feel is right." A review of field notes from the interviews and school board observation found consistent school board member responses.

Of particular interest is that the Bevino report showed that post secondary scholarship improved by 50 percent. All participants focused on the FCAT scores, CHOICE program and students' plan of care. The Bevino report also revealed the economic and curricular decision to make school principals serve the dual role as Principal and instructional leader. Although this was not discussed during the Interviews, it is considered important because the leadership at each school is knowledgeable about the day-to-day work in the classroom and the meaning of data and performance outcomes.

Community Relations

The second theme, *community relations*, refers to the "feelings" and working relationship/involvement between the school district and the community stakeholders. Goodman and Zimmerman (2000) reveal that the community considers students' achievement to be broader than state tests scores and expects schools to produce knowledgeable citizens, with good character, values, and marketable skills. Thus, school boards' are challenged to maintain a relationship

that accommodates the states' mandate and the community's expectation. The emergent sub-themes associated with community relations are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

The Results of the Open Coding Process Matrix –
Community Relations

Themes	Number of Participants Who Elicited Each Category (n=5)	Sub-Themes
Community Relations	5	1. Community expectations, involvement & satisfaction. 2. Board and community shared vision, goals, and culture.

Sub-themes of Community Relations.

Through the coding process, all of the school board members referenced community relations as an important theme. Every school board member considered the communities' expectations, involvement, commitment, and shared vision and goals to be major factors contributing to the school districts' and stakeholders mutual satisfaction and related to the school district and community culture. The school board members agreed that accountability to the standards means that local control can still be preserved by implementing their own plans to meet the standards. This supports Gudvangen's (2002) studies.

When the school board members were asked how important good community relations are to the school board and school district, every member passionately considered the community a part of their team. Emotionally, Member E responded, "We all live here, know our community, and listen to each other. We all do what we need to do for our children and community." Member

D agreed, “You have to know what the needs of our community are” while Member C, who is also a parent of a student in the school district adds,

As a parent I get a customer survey to analyze my child’s school and determine if it meets the needs of my child. We keep a hand on the pulse and we know the day in and day out struggles of student achievement. The community passed the one-cent sales tax, shares the board members’ and superintendent’s vision, and re-elects them.

Pleased but realistic about the community’s involvement and support, Member B acknowledged that, “There is still a political process and it appears that the voters of our communities are pleased with the way the process is working and the people who are carrying the process out.” Member D, also wanted us to know how important it is to, “know what their feelings and concerns are and make ourselves available to the community.” Member A explained how the community reacted to the controversial decision the board made about social promotion, “When the board and superintendent ended social promotion, the community yelled, ‘the sky is falling’ and some parents wanted to vote us out. But, we had integrity and had to do what we felt was right.” Humorously, reflecting on the community’s reaction, Member D agreed, “We took a lot of heat from the public. But the board and the public now know we all did the right thing.” Member C agreed and said, “We all have children and the need to see the students achieve and be successful. We have to be receptive to making these things happen.” Also feeling strongly about this, Member D said,

We are elected and represent the entire county. We are not just focused on protecting our turf. We are thinking about all the students so that is the way we have to think about it. The commonality is that all of us are or have been parents and our children have been in this school system and is our motivation for getting involved in the school system.

Passionately, the school board members talked about their business relationship as well as their personal relationship with the community. This emphasis on the relationship with the community is consistent with the district's goal reported in the Bevino report to promote parent responsibility and involvement.

When school board members were asked, how they believe the governance process fosters a district-wide culture focused on high student achievement (interview question 7), Member C responded "Everything we do in this school district is based on the community. Our community tells us what they need and we as residents as well as school board members listen and do what we can for our children." Member B exclaimed, "I am a product of these high schools and this county and have a high regard for what we have done in this county. We immerse ourselves into the community, carrying through a mission statement to a goal." From the field notes, Member E expressed that, "the community and the school district learns from each other." Profoundly, Member A concluded, "Culture has pretty much permeated the school system and starts at the district level and goes out through the principals to affect all the teachers, students, and to the parents and the community. Along with shared visions and goals there is a community culture through the expectation of excellence." The field notes from the observation of the school board meeting emphasizes the value of community relations. The beginning of each school board meeting is dedicated to awarding community residents and businesses for their dedication, support, and service on behalf of an educational concern. Students are awarded for merit and performance outcomes. This focus on effective community relations, fosters an

educational-community culture, and brings many people to the board meeting.

Performance Outcomes

The third theme, *performance outcomes*, refers to the results of students' performance tests or actions that reflect their educational abilities or status. During the interviews the school board members expanded this definition to include the assessment of their own administrative or management actions intended to improve the students or organization's performance. The emergent sub-themes associated with performance outcomes are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

The Results of the Open Coding Process Matrix –
Performance Outcomes

Themes	Number of Participants Who Elicited Each Category (n=5)	Sub-Themes
Performance Outcomes	5	1. Performance based data, action, and measurement to meet stakeholders needs and for resource allocation and accountability

Sub-themes for Performance Outcomes.

Performance outcomes emerged as an unexpected theme. Instead of emerging as a sub-theme under the themes leadership or governance the coded data revealed that almost every school board member referenced performance outcomes and/or performance based data, action, and measurements for almost

every interview question asked. Through further analysis, performance outcomes emerged as the theme and performance based data, actions, and assessments emerged as sub-themes. The literature supports this by defining school board governance as an organizational strategy to administer and oversee a performance-based system to improve the performance of education (Kirst & Bulkley, 2000).

When asked what recommendations would you make to raise students' achievement, (interview question 5), Member C, who views performance based data as a business tool, explained,

Along with leadership, using performance data is the key to keeping the pulse of the district. This is done by taking a microscope at student performance and looking at each child individually. If I am wrong and I can make it better why wouldn't I? But you have to prove to me that we are going to do better. And I think the first thing was to identify what works and what doesn't. Performance data does this. The schools' academic plan is presented to the board and is a performance driven process. We are running a business.

All board members agreed that other district school boards could improve their students' performance and meet community expectations if they, "tie their resource allocations to their schools performance plans." All members agreed this represents accountability. Member D elaborated that "this means that we have to expose ourselves, expose our weakness, expose what's working, expose what's not working well, and expose needing help." The District's Bevino report revealed "time" to be a powerful correlate of students' academic performance and explains that "our job is not to cover all the material but give the necessary time it takes to learn what is expected/needed to know." Member E's perspective is "You take the product you have and that is the student and try to push them as far as you can based on this performance data." All members

agreed that, “What we’ve seen here is when we raise the bar the students’ respond.” The school board members recommended a performance based “business like” approach to: (1) inform and empower the community to become working partners, (2) ensure administrative and school based resource allocations address targeted needs, (3) assess administrative, management, and teacher performance to ensure targeted performance outcomes. When asked if their performance based business approach is used to identify, develop, and sustain the conditions necessary to raise students’ performance, they all agreed. This is consistent with the conceptual framework of this study (Figure 1). Member E explained that, “the superintendent sets accountability guidelines for the staff and the schools to follow. Instead of guessing where we are we use our performance data to determine where to allocate the resources and he provides the leadership.” Member D proudly speaks of the administrative budget allocations,

We (the school board) re-allocated administrative costs into resources for the performance of the children. We are the most efficient district in the whole state, but the thing of it is that we set the standard. We wanted our school improvement plans to be based on students’ performance.

Member C adds to this reality, “We have plenty of educators but we also need business managers in the education system who are asking, Am I getting the most bang for my buck? Performance is what the public expects of us.” According to Member A, “you can cut the budget but never the classroom.” Field notes showed budget allocations that are tied to performance and accountability are consistent with all interview responses.

Member E provided an example of a performance-based recommendation to meet the needs of students, who are not going to attend college:

Because of data-based information the school board and superintendent recognized how many of their students were not going to attend college and solicited the resources and community support to create an alternative vocational/career school called Choice to meet the students' and communities needs. This is calculated to produce skilled and responsible young citizens and address future employment needs. This is an educational return on the community's investment.

Once again, using the example of social promotion, Member B stated, "You can't keep passing the students along and hope that they graduate with no skills. You know if a kid goes from kindergarten to seventh grade and they are non-readers at that point it is very difficult, I mean you just don't make improvements over night." Member A recommends, "Already proven curriculum; for example, reading series, could be used to better meet students' needs and be fiscally responsible." The Bevino report revealed that the most important recommendations by the school board members were operating as a performance based business, and community relations.

Governance

The fourth theme *governance* refers to the process or organizational strategy to administer and oversee a performance based system on behalf of its stakeholders (8.01(b) Model Business Corporation Act, 1999). Essentially, school boards have the fiduciary (legal) responsible to provide the education the students need and the community expects through their leadership and resources (Goodman & Zimmerman, 2000; Land, 2002). The emergent sub-themes associated with Governance are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

The Results of the Open Coding Process Matrix – Governance

Themes	Number of Participants Who Elicited Each Category (n=5)	Sub-Themes
Governance	5	1. Governance and oversight process. Fiduciary responsibilities and accountability for students and organizations performance and stakeholders' expectations. 2. Empowerment

Sub-themes Governance.

Throughout the interviews, the school board members referenced the terms fiduciary responsibility and accountability as a leadership (Theme 1) and governance (Theme 4) role. The conceptual framework (Figure 1, Chapter 1) supports the factors, responsibility and accountability, to identify, develop, and sustain the conditions necessary to raise students' performance.

When asked, what governance conditions are necessary to raise students' achievement? (interview question 4), Member C responded that, "We have to ensure that the people in charge are empowered to do what is expected of them. As aboard member my responsibility is to make sure that they do their job and to put the policies in place that best serve them to do that job effectively." All of the school board members agreed that leaders at all levels, as well as stakeholders must be empowered to effectively perform or support the school district's activities and decisions. Member A described how the superintendent empowered the School Advisory Committee (SAC) with knowledge to understand and approve the school budget. With this information the public was as informed as the leaders and could understand and help the district plan effective strategies. Member B described how effective empowerment was when the school board

empowered a committee of community leaders and parents to organize the one-cent sales tax program they successfully sold to the community. “We did not micromanage them, we only provided support when asked.” Member D adds, “We have to use our oversight responsibilities to know what is going on, not when we face a crisis. The data is there to do this and must be used as a measuring stick showing when to be more accountable because money and resources are tied to our performance.” As a caution, Member A warns against haste by stating,

That board members must be able to step out and make policy changes and know it will take two or three years before you see a difference. What is key for us is that nothing comes before us that is just a fly by night – well lets just try this program on what might happen. It’s a process and has been thought about before it even comes to us and that’s the part I like. I can trust those who make the decisions.

Member C introduces the fiduciary responsibilities and accountability aspect,

The students’ Plan of Care (POC) and the schools budget allocations are viewed in the same way. It means accountability of resources. So you can’t tell me you need ten advanced placement classes when you do not have enough kids to fill them. And you can’t tell me you have zero lower level reading classes when 30 percent of your population is below reading level. We account for their spending to meet the needs of the students.

This business approach to accountability is discussed repeatedly as a key condition necessary to effectively administer their governance process and oversight responsibilities to ensure a high level of students’ performance. The field notes were consistent with the emphasis on accountability.

Member D was pleased to receive two calls from parents the other day to discuss issues and said, “That is the way it should be. We must be available to our community.” Once again, Member A pointed out “the need for the Choice vocational and career program to continue, but agreed with the other board members that this program, like all others, must have a return on investment for

students' and stakeholders in terms of students' performance and the community's benefits." At the school board's meeting I attended the board approved a Charter Schools participation in the District's CHOICE vocational/career program with an affirmation that this program would meet the students' needs.

When asked, How are you going to sustain the accomplishment of being the best in the State in performance? (interview question 6), Member C explained,

We are already at the top and we could sit back and say hey! We did it. But our oversight responsibilities only begin here. We will continue to look for ways to put resources back into the schools to help the children who still aren't at the level that you would like them to be at.

Member D felt strongly about this and added,

We have to sustain our programs and we will. Our whole aim has not been to raise the FCAT scores. Our main thing is trying to provide the best educational opportunity for each child. This is our fiduciary responsibility, and we will ensure this.

Although the district reached the top, Member B noted that "our governance responsibility and accountability will ensure that quality programs will sustain and continue to raise students' achievement. I call this, "putting rigor into the educational system." Member A calls this, "Our expectation of excellence."

Summary

In Chapter Four, I presented the criteria used to select the school board participants and described the geographical setting, organizational structure, and the individual school board members. I then described the coding methods used to analyze and synthesize the data from my interviews with the five school board members, my field notes from these interviews and my observation of the April 10, 2006, school board meeting. I concluded Chapter Four with the integrated

findings from my interviews with the five school board members, my field notes from these interviews, my observation of the school board meeting, and the Bevino report (public document) to answer the research questions.

The rich data collected from the school board members and the 2005 Bevino report contributed to an understanding and description of how school board members administer a governance process to raise students' performance. The data provided insight into the "taking-apart" of an ineffective system and "putting-together" a Rolls-Royce. The data also describes changing organizational and instructional variables and the need to understand the basic tenet that schools today will require leaders to work far and more deeply with staff and the community.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In Chapter Five, I will present a brief summary of the content in Chapters One, Two, Three, and the findings portion of Chapter Four. I will then interpret the meaning of the four emerging themes revealed through my data analysis in relation to my modified conceptual framework. I will also discuss the relevance of my finding to those found in the literature review. I will conclude Chapter Five by addressing the limitations of my study, discussing the implications to human resource practitioners working in or as consultants to public educational organizations, and providing recommendations for further research.

Summary

In Chapter One, I provided a human resources development perspective to support the purpose of my qualitative case study. Because school board governance is viewed as an organizational strategy to administer and oversee the performance of education (Kirst & Bulkley, 2000), the purpose of my study is to understand and describe how school board members, through their perception, administer a governance process to raise students' performance. I then provided the background and statement of the problem. The statement of the problem was based on the paucity of literature and studies on school board governance that results in high levels of students' performance and because so many school districts nation-wide are struggling to raise students' achievement (performance).

I then presented my two research questions to address the problem statement and purpose of this study. The two research questions are: (1) How do school board members perceive their governance process raises students' performance? and (2) What governance conditions are necessary to raise students' performance? I concluded Chapter One by presenting the conceptual framework followed by the significance and boundaries of my study.

In Chapter Two, I provided a theoretical foundation for this case study, I then presented an overview of school board governance, and a review of the literature that included the leadership and learning theories relevant to school board governance and students' performance. From the literature review I selected the proximal, distributed leadership practice, transformational, and shared leadership theories. I then modified and integrated the proximal and distributed leadership practice theories to create the conceptual framework for this study. I concluded Chapter Two by providing an overview of school board governance and students' performance (achievement), including current studies.

In Chapter Three, I presented the procedures and methodology for this study. The chapter began with a description of the case study design followed by a description of the criteria for the purposive selection of participants. I then presented the data collection methods used in this study that included interviews, an observation of a school board meeting, field-notes, and document reviews. Chapter Three concludes with a discussion of the data analysis process and methods used to ensure validity and reliability.

In Chapter Four, I reviewed the criteria used to select the school board

participants. The criteria I established was higher than the state's student achievement standards in order to collect data from the school board members whose school district was considered the "highest achiever" of the 67 school districts in Florida. I then described the geographical setting, organizational structure, individual school board members, and the coding methods used to analyze the data and produce the emerging and recurrent themes. Chapter four concluded with the integrated findings from my interviews with the five school board members, my field notes from these interviews, my observation of the school board meeting, and my review of public documents.

Discussion

The data from my interview questions generated the following four recurrent and emerging themes: leadership, community relations, performance outcomes, and governance. The findings addressed my two research questions and supports of the purpose and conceptual framework of this study. My first research question was, "How do school board members perceive their governance process raises students' achievement?" All five school board members provided at least three of the following five answers. Collectively, the school board members perceived their governance process raised students' performance because they made tough leadership decisions to (1) set high performance standards related to social promotion, grading, use of proven methods and programming, individualized curriculum, plan of care assistance (POC), and CHOICE vocational schools, (2) procure large sums of investment monies to

support the programmatic needs of the students, (3) run the school district like a business based on performance data and outcomes and strictly tying budget allocations to performance, (4) provide the needed resources to formal leaders (i.e. principals) and informal leaders (i.e. teachers) to do their job, and (5) involve and empower the community to become knowledgeable about schools and become involved in school business. These primary decision along with other decisions will be discussed in the emerging themes section of this chapter. These primary responses were also provided when asked what recommendations they would make to others to raise students' performance (interview question 5).

My second research question was also one of the interview questions. When asked "What governance conditions are necessary to raise students' performance?" the school board members' recurrent responses were similar and included (1) their fiduciary responsibility to be accountable for staff, as well as, students' performance, (2) accountability to their stakeholders, (3) empowerment of their staff to distribute effective leadership and resources, (4) school board and community shared vision and involvement, (4) standards and performance based assessments, and (5) knowledgeable, experienced, and effective leadership. These factors will also be discussed in the emerging themes section of this chapter. Essentially the analysis of the findings for both of the research questions suggests that a school board, like any corporate board of directors, depend on effective business practices to raise their performance.

Having collected and analyzed my data, I will now present my findings in relation to my conceptual framework and review of the literature. The purpose of

my study is to understand and describe how school board members, through their perception, administer a governance process to identify, develop, and sustain the conditions necessary to raise students' academic performance. In order to serve this purpose I modified and integrated aspects of the distributed leadership practice (Spillane et al, 1999) and concept of proximity (IASB, 2000; Vygotsky, (1978) to create the conceptual for my study (Figure 1). The conceptual framework illustrates how these theories are integrated into a school board governance process used to identify, develop, and sustain the conditions necessary to raise students' performance/achievement.

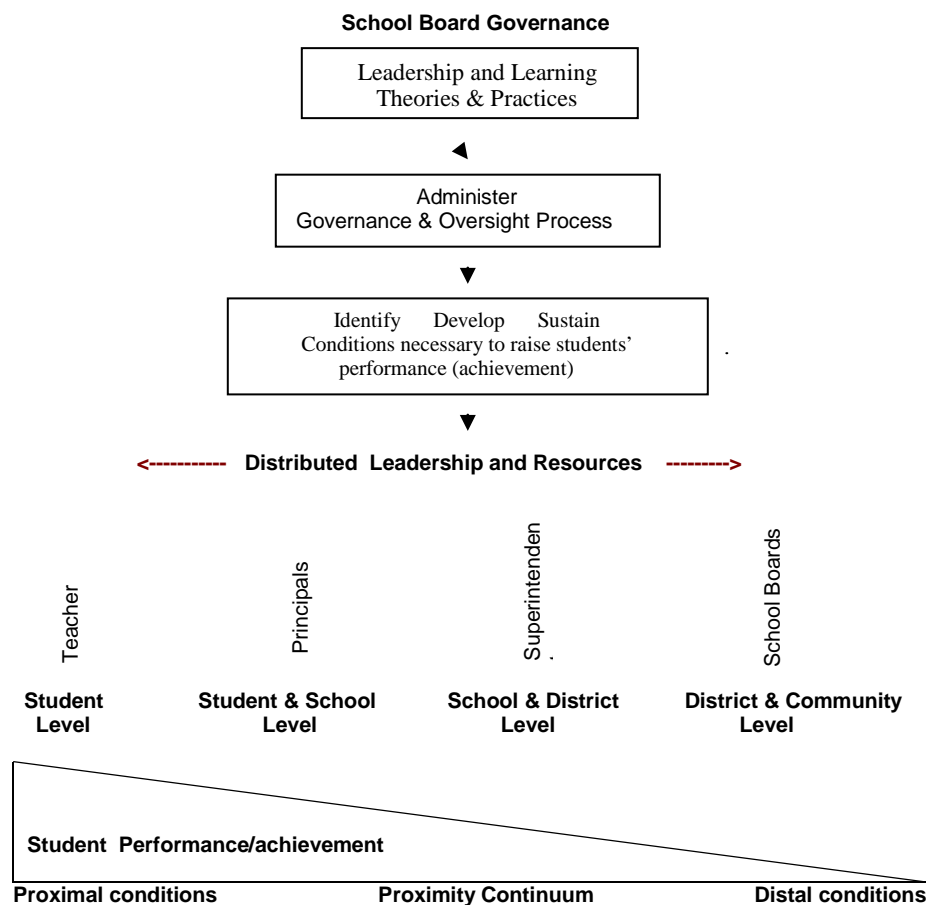


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework.

The distributed leadership practice proposes that the way leaders and resources are distributed throughout the organization and the way leaders enact their roles are critical to instructional innovation (Spillane et al., 1999). The concept of proximity is used to predict the aspects of the environment that are most likely to make a difference in the development and learning behavior of humans (IASB, 2000; Vygotsky, 1978). On a continuum, those environmental conditions closest to the learner have the greatest effect on learning. Therefore, since the educational environment created in the classroom is more proximal than the governance process, a school board can assess the school district's demographics and focus its leadership, resources, and policies in the most effective and proximal relationship with the learner. My findings support the conceptual framework as a transformational perspective—the transformation of teaching and learning.

The transformational theory selected from the literature review supported the empowerment of leadership, including the community, to work together to raise student' performance. The shared leadership theory selected from the literature review supported the ability of diverse school board leaders to make quality decisions related to raising students' performance. I will further relate the conceptual framework and supporting theories as I discuss the meaning of the emerging themes and how the findings of this study compare with the existing literature. The discussion of the emerging themes follows.

Leadership.

The primary finding in the first theme, leadership, is that the school board

members' success is dependent on their leadership skills. For the board members this meant "business as usual." They valued being a part of a tenured and experienced leadership team. This also included the superintendent of schools. The board members average tenure of seven plus years was twice the state average. This provided the school district with continuity. Even though each day brought new challenges, their shared leadership structure compensated for their diverse backgrounds and helped them complement each other's leadership and decision making skills. To the board members, this meant ensuring that their leaders and managers have the skills needed and are empowered to do what needs to be done. For this reason, the school board members agreed that the definition of leadership included the actions that administrators, managers, and those empowered, including teachers and the community, take and the skills they need to direct the school district towards its goal. Therefore, this meant that they needed to empower and distribute their formal and informal leadership throughout all areas of the organization to meet their goal to raise students' performance. This is congruent with the conceptual framework. This is pervasive as I reviewed how the school district leaders transformed their district into the highest achieving district in Florida in the 2004 and 2005 school year.

Bevino (2005), who chronicled the district's transformation, reveals that one management principle from which the Board and Administration worked was that those closest to the students are the most knowledgeable and the most responsible to address the problem. This was also congruent with the conceptual framework of this study. The school district's authority was decentralized to the

schools both financially and instructionally. For example, curriculum specialists moved from the central office into the schools to help the classroom teachers work directly with the students. The proximity of the empowered specialist (informal leader) improved teachers' skills and students' achievement scores significantly year after year. Further, all principals were expected to serve as a principal instructional leader in order to become knowledgeable about the day-to-day work in the classroom, and the meaning of data and its relationship to what was being taught. This is also congruent with the conceptual framework in that the school leadership assesses the school district's demographics and focuses its leadership, resources, and policies in the most proximal relationship with the student learners. To the district this meant changing its focus to individualized instruction, which was a significant culture change that affects the entire organization. This also meant that the school board, superintendent, and principals must provide the resources, clarity, and training needed to make the change successful.

The interview data and the public documents showed that the district leaders operated the school district like a business and the curriculum and programming like an investment. This meant that accountability was a basic tenet of their leadership style. Finally, lest we think these board members are hard and cold calculators at the expense of social graces, this is wrong. I found that this proud and effective leadership team values serving on the school board, respects their community, and does what they believe is best for the children. When asked about their district's vision one board member responded "We have an

expectation of excellence.” The findings from the leadership theme will also be discussed in relation to the literature in the studies section of this chapter

Community Relations

The primary finding in the second theme, community relations, was that school board members were also members of the community and what was good for the community was good for them. All board members agreed that school board-community relations is important to the success of the students’ performance. School boards, like any board of directors, serve as the leadership accountable for their performance on behalf of their stakeholders (Dawson & Quinn, 2004). This meant that they have a fiduciary responsibility to their community which goes beyond being cordial. The Bevino report (2005) revealed that by the year 2000 there was a growing unease in this county regarding the effectiveness and viability of their school system. The citizens were increasingly concerned with the declining academic rank of their schools. This was a wake-up call for the new administration that took office in November 2000. Within the first several months of the new administration the school board and the superintendent defined promoting parent responsibility and community involvement as a primary tenet of the district. To the school board members this meant sharing their vision with the community. Since this board witnessed the problems of the past and many had children in the public school system they agreed with Member C who explained,

We all live here, know our community, and listen to each other. We all do what we need to do for our children and community. We also know the day in and day out struggles of student achievement.

Member C's statement brings us to a second important meaning revealed in the data related to the theme community relations. When asked "How do you believe your school boards governance process fosters a district-wide culture focused on high student achievement?", the data revealed that the board-community relations have healed during the past five years. They believe that trust, understanding, and their success has nurtured the culture needed to raise students' performance. The findings showed that the school board members believe that this culture has permeated throughout the school and community. The data indicates that everything they do in the school district is based on the community's expectations. One example is when the school board empowered community leaders and parents to work on behalf of the school district to pass a one-cent educational sales tax. Another example was when the community representatives on the school advisory committee were empowered to understand and participate in the school district's budget process. Lastly, the school board members understand that they are still in a political process which means that the voters/stakeholders must perceive their educational needs are being met. District-wide culture is discussed further in the literature section of this chapter.

Performance Outcomes

The primary finding in the third theme, performance outcomes, was that accountability depended on exposing what was wrong as well as what was right and tying whatever they did to performance data and outcomes. This meant applying business principles in an educational setting. Performance outcomes was a fundamental factor in the conceptual framework of

this study. The purpose and conceptual framework of this study posit the school board members to administer a governance process to identify, develop, and sustain the conditions necessary to raise students' performance. To do this the school board members must have knowledge of leadership and learning theories and practices in order to distribute the leadership and resources necessary to optimize the learning activity and raise students' performance.

One of the district's basic tenets is their effort to select effective administrators who can evaluate the teaching in their school, analyze the student data to make instructional decisions, and allocate resources to affect those decisions. The school board members agreed that this meant you take your product, the student, and try to push them as far as you can based on their performance data. The board members also agreed that when they raised the bar, the students met the expectations. Therefore, the school district's reliance on performance-based data meant they believe there is a high correlate between students' performance and the meaningful monitoring of student work. The district made tough decisions based on performance data, including the reduction of their administrative overhead to nine percent of the district's budget. The meaning derive from this emerging theme is the importance of the use of available data and interpretive skills to account for resource allocations. The school board members said this meant, "the students still get everything they need but we have to be as sure as possible that it will work."

Governance

The primary finding in the fourth theme, governance, was that the

school board members have the fiduciary responsibility to provide the education the community expects. The conceptual framework illustrates that this education was provided through a process where leadership and resources supported the education. The conceptual framework illustrated a governance process to ensure that effective performance is delivered. The continued success of the school district demonstrates that the school board realizes that accountability to the standards means that local control can be preserved by implementing their own plans to meet the standards (Gudvangen, 2002). Interestingly, because the school system is a public organization, the school board members are also stakeholders. The data revealed that they understood this and that their professional decisions affected their personal lives as well.

Studies Related to the Findings

Throughout my literature review, I found a paucity of studies of effective school board governance that contained student performance/achievement as an outcome. A few of the studies that linked school board governance to improving students' academic achievement focused on the relationship of school boards and the superintendent (Goodman & Zimmerman, 2000). Others linked school boards with policy, vision, and political influences (Carol et al., 1986; Carver, 1997; IASB, 2000). This study is designed to understand and describe the school board members' perceptions of how they administer the governance process to raise students' performance. Although the school board members praised the cooperation and skills of the superintendent, they often pointed out the differences

in their roles and how their role is designed not to micro-manage the superintendent. Grady and Bryant (1991) found that role confusion and micro-management by the board are problematic, and that the most frequently reported conflict between school boards and superintendents are centered on role confusion.

As cited in the review of the literature, many studies demonstrate that some teachers, and teaching styles, curricula and instructional methods, principal-teacher and teacher-student relationship, and school size, climate, and conditions generate higher student achievement (Spillane et al., 1999). Although these studies have not been studied in relationship to school board governance, they represent a pallet of learning and leadership theories and practices that are important governance conditions necessary to raise students' academic performance. In my conceptual framework this pallet provides school leaders with the leadership and learning theories and practices to identify, develop, and sustain the conditions necessary to raise students performance.

The findings from my study, like those in the IASB's Lighthouse Study (2000) revealed that school board members in high performing districts were knowledgeable about learning conditions, encouraged learning, and could describe processes they put in place to improve students' performance. This could be because the school board members in my study participated in the comprehensive plan to transform their district into the highest student performance district. Further studies are necessary to determine if these positive attributes are governance conditions necessary to raise students' performance.

Further, the data from my study indicates that the school board members,

believe that their actions created a district-wide culture focused on improvement in student learning. In order to explore the importance of this culture I asked the school board members how they believe their governance process fosters a district-wide culture focused on high student achievement (interview question 7). As discussed in my study the IASB Lighthouse Study (2000) found that the school board members of their high performance districts also believed that their actions created a district-wide culture focused on improvement in student learning. Further research is needed to determine if high student performance creates a district-wide culture focused on improved student learning.

Although Goodman and colleagues (1997) did not describe how they measured quality governance they did find that districts with effective governance tended to have greater student achievement as measured by dropout rates, the percentage of students going on to college, and aptitude tests scores. Although my study did not investigate these factors, the Bevino report (2005) revealed that between 2000 and 2005 the dollar amount of post-secondary scholarships has improved by fifty percent and that out of the 1,950 graduates of AKA's six district-operated high schools in May, 2005, 930 or nearly half earned college scholarships. The document also showed that students going on to college obtained high performance scores. Further research related to this broader definition of students' performance could help us raise graduation rates and lower dropout rates. This means that district school leaders can learn how to better distribute the leadership and resources in the most proximal areas to focus on community demographics and identify student populations in need of individual

or non-traditional education.

Limitations

There are three limitations of this study. Although the AKA School Board administers a successful governance and oversight process based on business practices, it cannot be determined from this one study if these practices are governance conditions necessary to raise students' performance in other high performance school districts. We would benefit by knowing other governance and oversight strategies that can identify, develop, and sustain the conditions necessary to raise students' performance. This will be presented in the recommendations for future studies section of this chapter.

A second limitation of this study is that, while interviewing the school board members, some of my interview questions were so similar they elicited the same responses. Some of the participants said, "I answered that question already." Although, my interview questions produced rich data and addressed my research questions, I could have received more data if the questions were more dissimilar.

A third limitation is the exclusion of the superintendent. Although the literature supports the distinct roles of the school board members and the superintendent, most educational researchers agree that school districts can only be effective with a strong school board and superintendent team (Danzberger et al., 1992; Goodman & Zimmerman, 2000; The National School Boards Association, 2002). In this study all board members praised the superintendent's leadership ability and business experience. It is difficult to determine if the

school board alone could have achieved the same success.

Implications for Human Resource Development Practice

The implications of this study for human resource development professionals are significant. The findings from this study help us understand and describe how the school board members of the school district with the highest student academic performance record in Florida administers its governance process to raise students' performance. This study serves as a catalyst for the human resource development professional to develop and implement district-wide interventions. Because research on educational leaders reveals that there is a relationship between leadership and student performance (Spillane et al., 1999) HRD professionals can ensure that formal and informal leaders such as school board members, the superintendent, designated district administrators, principals, teachers, and others are empowered with the knowledge and skills to perform their roles to raise students' performance. Interventions include skills development training in the areas of leadership, resource distribution, budget allocation, performance assessment, and instructional practices.

HRD professionals must also ensure that the school board and community (stakeholders) are empowered with the knowledge and skills to work together to foster a district-wide culture focused on improved student learning. This will help the school board and community identify their needs and expectations, and share responsibilities and a common vision. Interventions include skills development training in the areas of communications, school planning, budget allocation, and

ways they can participate in the educational process. Further, HRD professionals must ensure that school board members are empowered with the fiscal, legal, policy, educational, and administrative knowledge and skills needed to effectively administer a governance and oversight process to raise students' academic performance. There is widespread consensus among school board experts that school board members need governance and organizational development training to improve their skills (Carol et al., 1986; Danzberger et al., 1992; Goodman & Zimmerman, 2000; IASB, 2000) and prioritize their training needs as governance, fiscal, policy making, and legal issues (Hess, 2002). Interventions include skills development and training in these specific areas to effectively administer a governance and oversight process to raise students' academic performance.

Lastly, HRD professionals must ensure a smooth and effective district-wide transition from the current system to the performance based business model to raise students' performance. Interventions include skills development and training in the areas of school districts' roles and responsibilities and planning for change. For example, since the Sunshine State Standards define the curriculum and the tests to measure students' knowledge of the curriculum (performance), the needs of heterogeneous groups of students now must be re-designed as individualized instruction. This requires district-wide changes in curriculum, instructional practice, assessment, leadership skills, and resource allocations. Collectively, the HRD professional has an excellent opportunity to bring together all levels of formal and informal leaders to assist in the transition and share the

“spirit” of the program. The findings of this study enable HRD professionals to better understand the district-wide leadership structure, community relations, and business practices of the AKA school district and how their school board members used these factors to administer a governance process to raise students’ performance. HRD implications are increasingly more important as school boards and site based schools are held accountable for meeting their students’ annual yearly progress/performance goals.

Recommendations for Future Research

Continued research into the phenomenon of school board governance that results in high levels of student performance is important for human resource development professionals whose goal is to maximize organizational success. The findings from my study, like those in the IASB’s Lighthouse Study (2000) revealed that school board members in high performing districts were knowledgeable about learning conditions, encouraged learning, and could describe processes they put in place to improve students’ performance. Further research is recommended to determine if there is a high correlations between these positive characteristics and high achieving school districts. The results could determine whether these characteristics are governance conditions necessary to raise students’ performance.

A second recommendation for future research is the result of my findings. In my study the school board members believe their school district/board/community relations created a district-wide culture focused on

improvement in student learning. This is the same findings in the IASB Lighthouse Study (2000) study. Further research is recommended to determine if activities that result in high student performance satisfies the community stakeholders to the extent they become involved in the school districts' activities and create a district-wide culture focused on improved student learning.

A third recommendation for future research is related my findings that the school board in my study administers a successful governance process based on performance based business practices. I cannot determine from this one study if these practices are governance conditions necessary to raise students' performance. Further research of high performance school districts is recommended to determine if performance based business practices are governance conditions necessary to raise students' performance.

Conclusion

In summary, an analysis of the findings of this study shows that a School Boards' performance based governance and oversight process can be implemented to meet the individual needs of students and raise the students' performance. The successful governance process in this study is based on a business-oriented approach where all budget allocations are tied to performance data and outcomes. It is impressive that the administrative overhead is only nine percent of the total budget. The participants' responses revealed their pride in this and programs they implemented for the children. The School Board did not cut back on student related resources; their expectations were that all formal and informal district

leaders understand data assessment and present accountability for their resource requests. The board members are community oriented and their tenure added consistency not only to the school board but also the community at large. It is important to add that every school board member felt fortunate to serve with a team of experienced board members and a superintendent they respected and consider a member of the team. The school board's perception of the governance process and students' performance is second nature to them. As I was prepared to defend how congruent my conceptual framework was to their process, they just felt it was their day to day way of doing business. They distributed and empowered their leadership out of necessity not because it was a theory. They also recognized that those closest to the source of the problem had the greatest potential to solve the problem. Therefore, their principals, teachers and specialists work directly with the students and understand their performance.

Although I came to the school board leaders in search of rich data to describe how they administer a governance process to raise students' performance, I left with many insights that cannot be described as a best management practice. Instead, many of the insights can only be understood in terms of people who work together intuitively for a long time on behalf of a worthy goal. School board members feel the same way about their superintendent.

Procedurally, I collected my data through interviews, field notes, from public documents and an observation of a school board meeting. Through the coding process, the synthesized themes evolved from open coded notes. The data,

primarily in the form of quotations from the school board members, were their perceptions of the governance process they administered to raise students' performance. I then described the school district, setting, and structure and provided biographical sketch of school board members. Lastly, I addressed the implications of this study for human resource development professionals working in the public school system or serving as a consultant and made recommendations for further research.

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Appendix A Institutional Review Board Authorization



Barry University

Institutional Review Board
Office of the Provost and Senior Vice President
for Academic Affairs

11300 NORTH EAST SECOND AVENUE
MIAMI SHORES, FLORIDA 33161-6695
Direct (305) 899-3020
Fax (305) 899-3026

Research with Human Subjects
Protocol Review

To: Mark. H. Levine
From: Doreen C. Parkhurst, M.D., FACEP
Chair, Institutional Review Board

Date: March 20, 2006

Protocol Number: 06-04-01
Protocol Title: Effective School Board Governance as Determined by Student
Achievement: A Case Study

Dear Mr. Levine:

The Board has accepted your protocol to be exempt from further review and you may proceed with data collection. Enclosed is the stamped Consent Cover Letter indicating that the IRB has reviewed and accepted your protocol. Please use this form when collecting your data.

If there are changes to your protocol in the future, please notify the Board. Please refer to the Protocol Number when you write.

Regards,

Doreen C. Parkhurst, M.D., FACEP
Chair, Institutional Review Board
Assistant Dean, SGMS &
Program Director, PA Program
Barry University
Box SGMS
11300 NE 2 Avenue
Miami Shores, FL 33161

cc: Dissertation Chair

If you have any questions, please contact Nildy Polanco at 305-899-3020

.....
Note: The investigator will be solely responsible and strictly accountable for any deviation from or failure to follow the research protocol as approved and will hold Barry University harmless from all claims against it arising from said deviation or failure.

Appendix B

060401

Cover Letter

Dear Research Participant:

I am a doctoral student completing my Ph.D. in Leadership and Education at Barry University. I am conducting a research study entitled "Effective School Board Governance as Determined by Student Academic Achievement: A Case Study". The purpose of this qualitative case study is to understand and describe how school board members administer a governance process used to raise students' academic achievement and meet national and state student achievement standards.

Your participation in this research study is requested. I selected the ██████████ County School Board members as the participants for this study because your school district successfully obtained the highest percentage of A and B rated schools in Florida and the highest percent of level 3, 4, and 5 composite scores on the Florida Comprehensive Achievement Tests during the 2004-2005 school year. Because of your success, I believe you are in a unique position to provide valuable information about the relationship of school board governance and students' academic achievement and provide guidance to school boards on how to perform this role.

If you agree to participate in my study, all that is required is that you (1) participate in a one-on-one interview with me that will take approximately 30 to 45 minutes; (2) make available your school board minutes, school district policies, and media coverage related to your school district's governance process and students' academic achievement; and (3) review the transcription of your interview to ensure the accuracy of the data. With your permission, I will tape record our interview. I will transcribe the tape and use it as a working document. Additionally, I will attend one of your regularly scheduled public school board meetings to view the school board members' individual and collective participation.

I believe that, "there are no known risks to you because your name will not be associated with any of the interview data and the information derived from your school district documents and my observation are public record". Your identity will remain confidential and my working documentation will be destroyed prior to publication. Your participation is completely voluntary and you have the right to withdraw your consent, discontinue participation, and refuse to answer particular questions at any time.

Approximately one week prior to our scheduled interview I will provide you with a list of interview questions that I will ask during our interview. This will give you the opportunity to think about your responses prior to our meeting. There are no benefits to participate except the opportunity to share your experiences and accomplishments to benefit fellow school board members. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your participation in my study you may reach me, Mark Levine, at (239) 246-6346.

Thank you for your participation.
Sincerely,



Mark Levine, M.Ed

IRB

Date:

3/20/06

Signature:

Dr. Dawn Padhurst (sp)

Appendix C Informed Consent Form

My signature below indicates my willingness to participate in this research study (dissertation) entitled “A Case Study of Effective School Board Governance”. This study is being conducted by Mark Levine a doctoral student in the Leadership and Education Program, at Barry University under the supervision of Dr. Madeline Doran, Assistant Professor (239) 936-6877 and Dr. Betty Hubschman, Associate Professor and Chair of the Human Resources Development Department and Director of the Ph.D. program in HRD specialization (305) 899-3724.

The purpose of this qualitative case study is to understand and describe how school board members administer a governance process used to raise students’ performance outcomes/academic achievement to meet national and state student achievement standards. The study will provide information to help fellow school board members raise students’ academic achievement in their school districts.

I agree to: (1) participate in a one-on-one interview conducted by Mark; (2) allow Mark to tape record this interview; (3) review and return the transcripts of our interview within five days of receiving it, and (4) provide Mark with available public records (school board minutes, policies, and media coverage) related to my school district’s governance process and students’ academic achievement.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I have the right to withdraw my consent or discontinue participation at any time, and refuse to answer particular questions. I also understand that: (1) my participation in the interview, data collection and analysis process, and publication of the dissertation will remain confidential; (2) my name will not be mentioned or linked to any of my comments, responses, or actions associated with the data used and discovered in this study; (3) and that the interview tapes will only be heard by the transcriber, researcher, and the three members of the dissertation committee. Finally, I understand that I can contact Mark, at any time during this study, if I have questions about the research at (239) 245-6346 or by email: MLRUN@comcast.net.

My signature below indicates that I consent to participate in this study.

Signature of Participant

Date

Mark Levine

Date

Appendix D INTERVIEW GUIDE AND QUESTIONS

Dear School Board Members,

The title of my doctoral dissertation is **A Case Study Of Effective School Board Governance**. Your school district was selected to participate in this research because of your successful student achievement accomplishments. This interview guide provides you with the questions I will ask you during our interview. I want you to feel comfortable and express your perceptions, stories, experiences, and insights about how you and your school board administer your governance process to raise your students' achievement. I look forward to meeting you. The cover and informed consent letters you received are intended to protect your rights and honor your confidentiality. The interview questions are:

1. What is unique about your board's way of working that has resulted in such high levels of student achievement in your school district?
2. How do five elected board members with different values and background work together to make a school board decision that will raise student achievement?
3. In your opinion, what is the most important decision your board has made that contributed to your school district's high student achievement?
4. What governance conditions are necessary to raise students' achievement?
5. If you were speaking to other school boards on ways they might raise students' achievement what three recommendations would you make?
6. Now that you have been so successful in becoming the leading school district/school board in raising students' achievement in Florida how are you going to sustain this impressive accomplishment.
7. How do you believe your school boards' governance process fosters a district-wide culture focused on high student achievement?

Thank you for participating in this research and helping children learn,
Mark Levine

Appendix E Open Coding and Consolidated Categories, Sub-Themes, and Themes Matrix

Analysis of Interview Consolidated Categories / Sub-Themes / Themes Matrix

Consolidated Categories (1-2) = # of consolidated interview responses for all questions

Transcription: School board governance. School board member 3 Sally	Categories	Sub-Themes	Theme	Theme
<p>Question 1. What is unique about your board's way of working that has resulted in such high levels of student achievement in your school district?</p> <p>Personally, I believe it is because we all have children and we all have the <u>motivation</u> to see the students achieve and be successful. We also realize that not all students are. And how we might each child be successful and perform at their best requires different strategies. And we have to be open and receptive to making those things happen. And we have been very aggressive. I believe everybody has to be moving forward. But I think as a board we recognize we can do better.</p> <p>Prompt: How did you recognize that you needed help?</p> <p>By using messages at students' performance and really looking at each child individually. Comparing the kids in the past we've always looked at how fourth grade compared to fourth grade and not how the fourth grade did to fifth grade and then how to do to sixth grade. We've always looked at the grades and not at kids and how they have progressed individually instead of how old Johnny do the fourth through sixth grade.</p> <p>Prompt: That data has been there forever.</p> <p>Right. We saw that data was the measuring stick for the state showing that we have got to be more accountable and money will be tied to it and you things kind of talk. You know and it's the right thing to do.</p> <p>Prompt: So what happens from 200 - 2005 (as reported in the memo report)?</p> <p>The study she did looked at where we are going next. The report is very good and is all data driven. I think that for us, it exposed us. You know, and that's tough to do is to expose your weaknesses, expose what is not working, expose what's working but not real well, expose possibly teachers that maybe need some help, some guidance, some training, some in-service and just deciding what you are going to do with it.</p> <p>Prompt: So did you have any problems with your school board members - no resistance?</p> <p>No, because we all know if you are going to talk to our superintendent because he's</p>	<p>Leadership Experience</p> <p>Board/ Superintendent Relations</p> <p>Fiduciary Roles and Responsibilities</p> <p>Knowledge</p> <p>Board/Community Relations</p> <p>Shared Vision/ goals</p> <p>Community Satisfaction</p> <p>Commitment</p> <p>Expectation</p> <p>Board/Community (5)</p> <p>Culture</p> <p>Performance Based Data</p> <p>Performance Standards</p> <p>Achievement/ Measurement</p> <p>Resource Allocation/ Accountability</p> <p>Governance/ Oversight</p> <p>Fiduciary Responsibility/ Accountability (Fiscal/ Resources)</p> <p>Empowerment</p>	<p>1. School Boards Excellence and Knowledge to Lead School Dist's Fiscal, Legal, Policy, Educational, & Administrative Responsibilities</p> <p>2. School Board/ Superintendent Relationship (Fiduciary Roles, Responsibilities, & Accountability)</p> <p>1. Community Expectations, Involvement/ Commitment, and Satisfaction</p> <p>2. Board and Community Shared Vision, Goals, and Culture</p> <p>1. Performance Based Data Action Measurement to Meet Students & Stakeholders</p> <p>Performance Needs (Resource Allocation & Accountability)</p> <p>1. Governance & Oversight Process of Fiduciary Responsibilities and Accountability for the Students and Organizers Performance to Meet Stakeholders' Expectations</p> <p>2. Empowerment</p>	<p>Leadership</p> <p>Leadership</p> <p>Leadership</p> <p>Community Relations</p> <p>Community Relations</p> <p>Performance Outcomes</p> <p>Performance Outcomes</p> <p>Governance</p> <p>Governance</p> <p>Empowerment</p> <p>Empowerment</p>	<p>Leads</p> <p>Leads</p> <p>Leads</p> <p>Comm. Relati</p> <p>Comm. Relati</p> <p>Perform Outcom</p> <p>Perform Outcom</p> <p>Quere</p> <p>Quere</p> <p>Quere</p> <p>Quere</p>

Appendix F Observational Field Notes Coding

Setting: AKA School Board Meeting

Time: 6:00 p.m., April 10, 2006

Length of Observation: 1 hour

<u>Observation</u>	<u>Key Words/Quotes</u> <u>Observation / Interactions</u>	<u>Categories.</u>	<u>Themes</u>
1	All School Board members and the district Superintendent	Social/community	Community
2	were social and non-business-like while over 100 people	(1-3)	relations
3	took their seats in the school board meeting room. The		
4	sound of the gavel brought the meeting to order and	Order/in charge	Leadership
5	the school district leaders were in charge. The members		
6	spent the first 45 minutes presenting achievement awards	Achievement	Performance
7	to staff, community businesses, and students for their	contributions	Outcomes
8	past or present educational contributions. The board then	(5-8)	
9	passed pre-discussed issues. I came to find out that the		
10	school board met in "work-shop" meetings to discuss		
11	and resolve issues on the next school board's agenda.	Resolve issues/	Leadership
12	Therefore public school board meetings are rarely	Not controversial	Leadership
13	controversial. I was not available for the workshop	(8-14)	
14	meetings to observe the process or hear the discussions.		
15	Minutes of special meeting were passed and budget	District business	Governance
16	amendments were recommended by the superintendent	(15-22)	
17	for approval and accepted. The entire process was		
18	professional and efficient Payroll, calendars, zoning		
19	waivers, and bids were recommended by the		
20	Superintendent for approval. No considerations for		
21	school improvement plans or governance were made.		
22	Overall, the meeting was very cordial and efficient.		
23	Each board member appeared prepared and yielded to	Being prepared	Leadership
24	the school board's attorney for explanations as needed.	Seek answers	
25	Actually, the board members and Superintendent	(23-26)	
26	appeared to enjoy their discourse, showed much respect		
27	for each other, and injected much humor although they	Humor &	Leadership
28	maintained a business-like composure and agenda. I	Business-like	
29	was unable to observe issues related to school board	Mood/Comfort	
30	governance and students' performance but was able to	(27-30)	
31	observe a well run and efficient school board meeting.	Efficient process	Leadership/ Performance
32	Unexpectedly, I transformed from the non-participant		
33	observer to a participant observer when I was	Recognition	Community Relations
34	recognized by the school board chairperson for my	(32-37)	
35	research designed to link the administration of the		
36	the Okaloosa School Boards effective governance		
37	with their successful student performance outcomes.		
38	The meeting was adjourned at 7:05 p.m.		
39	In order to link the workshop meetings with the school		
40	board meetings I reviewed the workshop minutes of	Effective	Leadership
41	April 6, 2006.	Efficiency	Performance

