



# OPTIMAL SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

## OSG-S2

### CREATING AND SUSTAINING HEALTHY BOARDS IN GOOD TIMES AND BAD

#### OVERVIEW OF THE COURSE

**COURSE RATIONALE:** Healthy boards don't just happen by accident; they need to be planned, directed and managed if they are to operate effectively. This course helps 'responsible persons' understand the characteristics of effective boards and the factors that help create and sustain them, as well as providing insights into the forces that can derail effective governance while providing constructive ways to combat and manage crises.

**COURSE OBJECTIVE:** This course is designed to help 'responsible persons' [as defined under Section 47(1)(b) of the Education Act in New South Wales] understand and implement sound policies and ongoing procedures for effective governance in ways that comply with the NESAs requirements upon school boards. Specifically, the course is designed to provide in-depth appreciation and practical application of ways in which 'responsible persons' can work together to enhance their board operations to ensure (a) effective implementation of established principles of 'best practice' in school governance and (b) compliance with relevant NESAs requirements in the area of creating and sustaining healthy boards. Furthermore, the course provides opportunities through discussion and problem-solving for 'responsible persons' to build unity of understanding, a common purpose, and a commitment to implementing 'best practices' for effective school governance in a strategic manner that enhances the school's outcomes. While the emphasis of the course is addressing ongoing professional learning needs, it is also highly suitable as a component of the induction of new 'responsible persons'.

#### COURSE AIMS:

1. To upskill 'responsible persons' in the theory and effective practice of creating and sustaining healthy boards.
2. To inform 'responsible persons' about the NESAs requirements and expectations in the area of healthy board operations.
3. To expand knowledge of the NESAs requirements and expectations into a solid, practical understanding that is demonstrated by a commitment to fulfil the requirements and adhere to principles and practices of 'best practice' in the area of healthy board operations.
4. To help 'responsible persons' develop a practical strategy to fulfil the NESAs requirements in terms of (a) record keeping, (b) understanding effective governance principles and practices, and (c) implementing 'best practice' in the area of healthy board operations.
5. To help 'responsible persons' reflect upon the board's effectiveness in the area of healthy board operations, and if appropriate, initiate an ongoing process of improvement.

**DURATION OF THE COURSE:** 4 hours.

**MODE OF DELIVERY:** Face-to-face interactive workshop with all the 'responsible persons' in one group, usually delivered at the school or at another suitable venue organised by the school.



## **SUMMARY OF COURSE CONTENT:**

- The importance of focussing on the mission.
- What makes a great board?
- Characteristics of high quality governance.
- Walser's six characteristics of high quality governance.
  - Stability.
  - Meetings.
  - Board operations.
  - Board chair.
  - Board priorities.
  - Collaboration.
- Evidence of compliance with NESA section 3.9.3.1-A.
- Code of conduct.
- Conflicts of interest.
- Evidence of compliance with NESA section 3.9.3.1-D.
- Exceptional boards.
- The importance of ongoing learning.
- Evidence of compliance with NESA section 3.9.3.4.
- Sustaining a healthy board.
- Handling crises.
- Increasing pressures on schools.
- Common features of unhappiness.
- Forms of protest.
- Common dangerous reactions by boards.
- The role of the Head in a crisis.
- The role of the board in a crisis.
- Right and wrong actions under pressure.
- Four hypothetical case studies.

This course covers the following governance requirements as outlined in the *Registered and Accredited Individual Non-government Schools (NSW) Manual (December 2017)*:

3.9.3.1-A; 3.9.3.1-B; 3.9.3.1-C; 3.9.3.1-D; 3.9.3.1-G; 3.9.3.2; 3.9.3.4.

**CERTIFICATION:** Upon successful completion of the course, a signed letter is issued to the school certifying the name of the course, the content covered, the duration of the course, the venue, and the names of those persons who attended.