

its leadership, and board members (trustees) understand that they must be thoughtful and engaged leaders – not merely competent but passive stewards [...]

(We can) distinguish between responsible boards and exceptional boards. A responsible board is capable and dutiful in carrying out its responsibilities. A responsible board understands its fiduciary responsibilities, and it adds value to the organization by approving strategic plans and budgets, regularly reviewing financial statements, evaluating the chief executive (Head) annually, and participating in fundraising.

An exceptional board operates on a higher level [...] (They) measure organizational impact and evaluate their own performance, discuss and debate issues, and open doors and make connections. The difference between responsible and exceptional lies in thoughtfulness and intentionality, action and engagement, knowledge and communication”.

A comparison of the behaviour of responsible and exceptional boards is summarised in table 4.1 (on the previous page).

THE 4-D MODEL OF OPTIMAL SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

The ‘Four Dimensional’ framework that follows springs from a thorough review of scholarly research into effective governance, extending it to articulate a comprehensive picture of the characteristics of school boards that operate optimally.

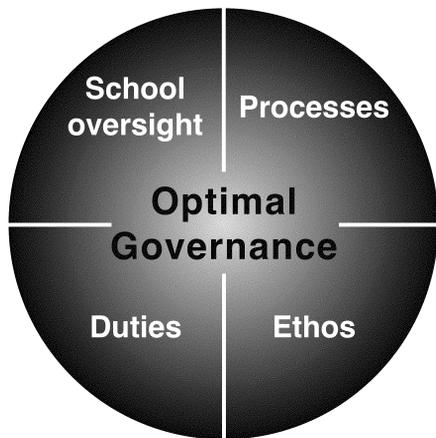


Figure 4.1 – The Four Dimensions of Optimal Governance

Naturally, the details of this framework will need to be varied to suit the governance structures of individual schools. However, the broad principles of optimal governance are applicable to all school boards, irrespective of the finer points of the school’s specific legal structures.

The ‘Four Dimensional Model of Optimal School Governance’ begins by identifying four dimensions of performance (see figure 4.1).

School oversight – The board takes responsibility for the state of the school;

Processes – The board adopts the best possible processes for its own operations;

Ethos – The board directs and enhances the school’s ethos and values; and

Duties – The board fulfils its required duties as the governing body.