

I'm on the School Board! What does this mean?

A Webinar By Bruce Braun
Assistant to the President –
Superintendent of Michigan District
Lutheran Schools - LCMS



Board Basics

- Many times congregations believe anyone with a temperature can serve. Training for your role is essential to make your service worthwhile.

Who shouldn't be on the Board?



Understand your congregation's Governance Model

- Traditional Governance is Abdon Model Uses Boards, Laity Driven, Voter's Meetings, etc..
- Congregations are also using Carver Model which is staff driven, few Boards, Executive Council, etc...
- **You need to know the one in use at your ministry location!**

Two roles of Administration

- The Principal operates the school so it is open tomorrow. The Board creates policy that assures the school will be open in five years.



The central issue is Governance

- “It is apparent that how the school handles change will affect its organizational life, the process for decision making, and the nature and amount of conflict it experiences. How we handle change is critical. The school must be able to identify:
 - What must not change, what ought to be changed, and what constitutes a clear process for making changes. These issues are central to the purpose and function of governance systems.”
 - Page 25 Mission Directed Governance

Change ?

- Technology Use by Students
- Social Media use by Adults and Organization
- Common Core State Standards and the implications for teaching and learning
- Safety Challenges and Parental Expectations
- Divorce and Parental Custody
- Gospel Influence in Culture

Board Basics



- A board member is only a board member when the board is in session or when carrying out a board assigned task. (You are not on 24/7 call!)
- You do not represent a group or grade. (You represent the congregation and have the best interest of the school, and all children, as your first priority.)
Trustee not rep!

Board Basics continued



- You are not the principal's boss or supervise other school employees. (You may be part of a principal evaluation but you adopt policy that ensures all school employees are accountable for their ministry.
- You are not a "lightning rod" for complaints. (You participate in the Ministry of Redirect – which gets conflicted groups talking to each other.)

Board Basics continued

- Confidentiality must always be exercised when considering Board issues. (You must not discuss events of meetings unless you are directed to be the spokesperson.)
- If confidentiality is breached = trust eroded.
- Use your established, agreed upon, assigned methods of communicating your decisions.

Board Meetings

- Begin with a prayer/devotion to remind the Board of the school's mission.
- Should have a planned agenda that is published in advance.
- Contains no surprises or last minute additions.
- A timed agenda can be developed to keep people on task.
- Forward Looking – NLSA – 3 Year Plan -
- Someone (Secretary) takes and files written minutes! How will you distribute them?

Clarity vs. Confusion?

- Policy is what the Board does.
 - A formal statement that directs future behavior of administrator or Board.
 - Not intended to solve a current problem
- Administration – what the administrator does.
 - Carrying out Board policies.
 - Establishing procedures for school operations.
 - Making decisions not limited by policy. Numerous opportunities in any given day.
- Decision – deals with an immediate issue.
- Procedures – routine actions occurring regularly.
- Operation – day –to-day running of school, in accord with policies using set procedures – the responsibility of school staff.

How are issues brought to the board?

- Principal may inform Board of School Challenges
- Board Member can request an item added to printed agenda prior to it being distributed
- Late items should be deferred to the next meeting to allow time for consideration and preparation

Policy Manuals

- Every Board member should have copies of current policies that can be easily updated.
- Electronic updates are desirable.
- Policies should be dated when they are revised to be certain all are working from the current copy.

Personal Expectations

- You will be present!
- You will participate!
- You will pray for the school ministry!
- You will be involved in the school ministry!
- You will financially support the congregation's ministry!
- You will promote and speak well of the school ministry.
- Know the school's mission statement!

Personal Expectations

- Work toward common goals!
- Be helpful, respectful and Christ-like towards those in your school/church community.
- Support all policies even those you did not vote to support.
- Avoid personal agenda. Don't use Board membership to solve your children's issues!

You can't fix others' problems!

- People will seek to triangulate you to solve a problem.
- You need to always redirect them to staff who can assist them.
- Follow a printed “Chain of Command”.



Ministry of Redirect

- 3 Types of Complaints:
- If it's a rule, redirect to Administration.
- If it's a person follow Matthew 18, redirect to that person.
- If it's a policy, redirect to address the Board.
What process does your Board have for direct, constructive criticism. i.e. 10 minutes, person directs concern, Board discusses privately and gets back to the person.

The Board Chair should:

- Develop the meeting agenda with the administrator.
- Conduct the meeting.
- Focus the board on issues, not people.
- Be a confidant for the administrator.
- Hold members accountable.
- May act for the Board in an emergency or safety crisis.

Administrators should:

- Keep Board mission focused.
- Consider what new policies are needed.
- Provide written reports and information.
- Work with Board chair on agenda.
- Supervise Staff.
- Operate school using procedures that are shared with Board.

Policies are:

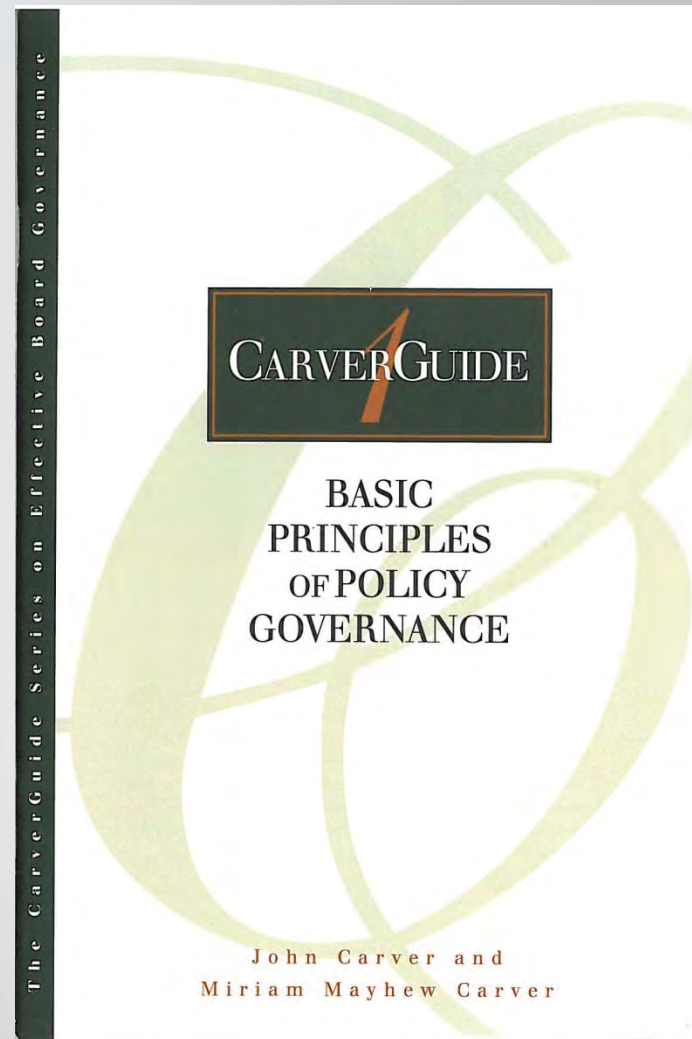
- Never Retroactive.
- Passed in the first meeting.
- Adopted because of anonymous letters.
- Should be developed to reference State Law.
- Should be approved by your attorney.
- Should reflect Governance Style adopted in your congregation.

Resources

- LEA Webinar (Free to LEA Members)
www.lea.org -> Resources ->
Webinars “Serving on the School
Board”

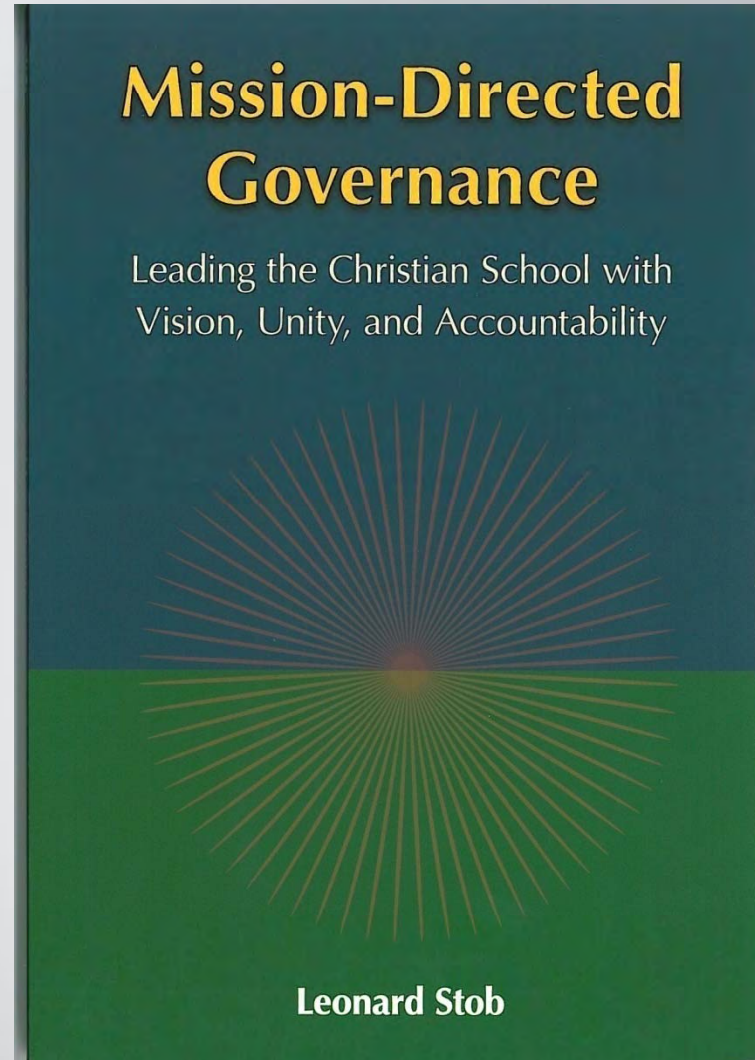
Resources

- Basic Principles of Policy Based Governance by John Carver, Jossey – Bass Publishers
- Available on Amazon
 - New from \$30.15
 - Used from \$25.00
 - Kindle \$9.99



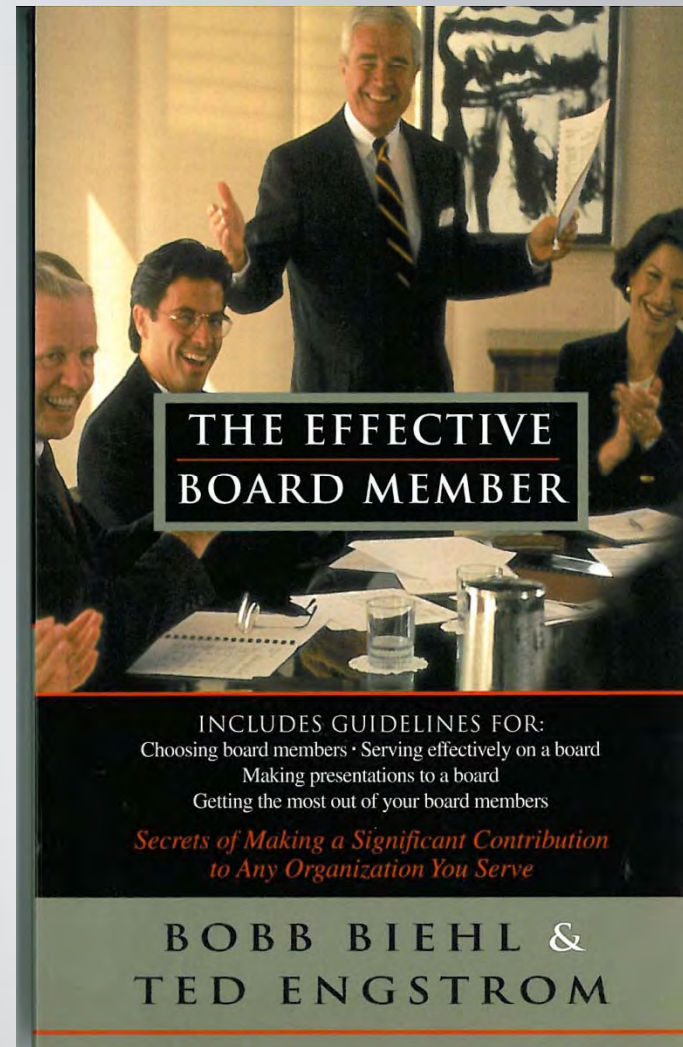
Resources

- Mission Directed Governance by Leonard Stob, The Calvin Press
- Available on Amazon
 - New from \$13.24
 - Used from \$29.68



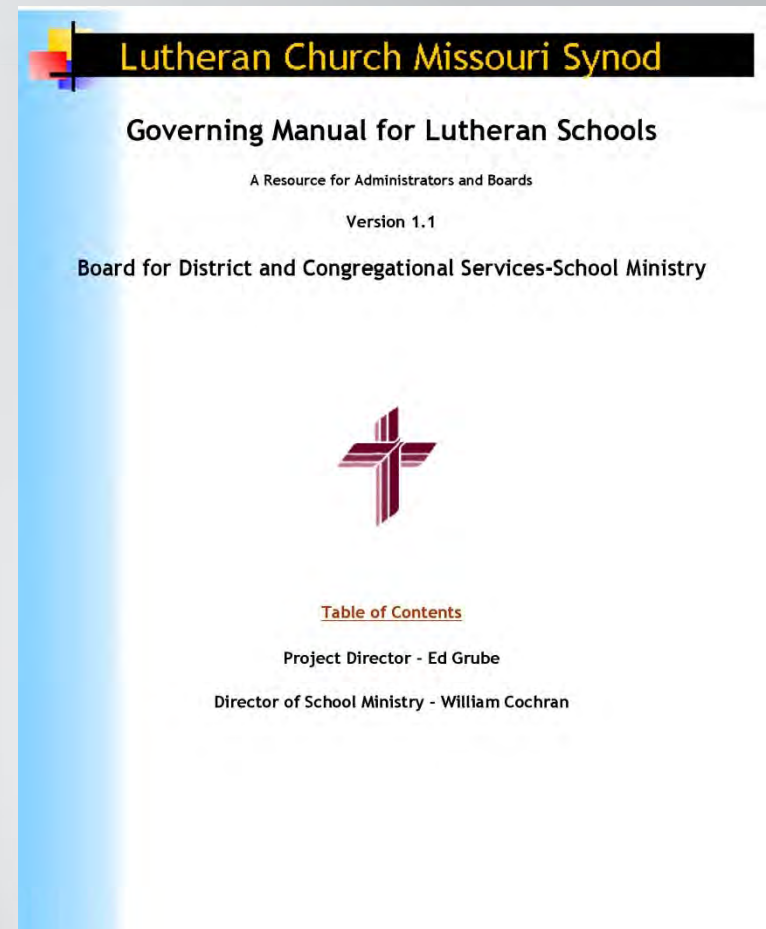
Resources

- The Effective Board Member by Bobb Biehl, Broadman & Holman Publishers
- Available on Amazon
 - New from \$5.50
 - Used from \$0.01



Resources

- LCMS Governing Manual for Lutheran Schools
 - It can be downloaded at <http://www.lcms.org>
 - Click on Resources tab/
 - Publications & Media
 - Print Publications
 - Under Document Library click 'GO'
 - Enter name in 'search criteria'
 - under category click on School Ministry
 - Click on 'SEARCH'



- Thank you for your service to the Kingdom, your congregation and families in your community!



“I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel.”

Philippians 1:3-5

Questions?

LCMS School Statistics
Ten Signs of Healthy Board
LEA Shaping the Future
The Great Board Debate

Bruce.braun@michigandistrict.org

Or 1-888-225-2111 ext 258 (Office)

