Supporting Good Governance in Politically Complex Times

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CASS College of Alberta School Superintendents



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Why Governance Matters Now

- Role Clarity
- Lawful Process
- Evidence Informed Decisions
- Respectful Engagement
- Student-Centred Purpose

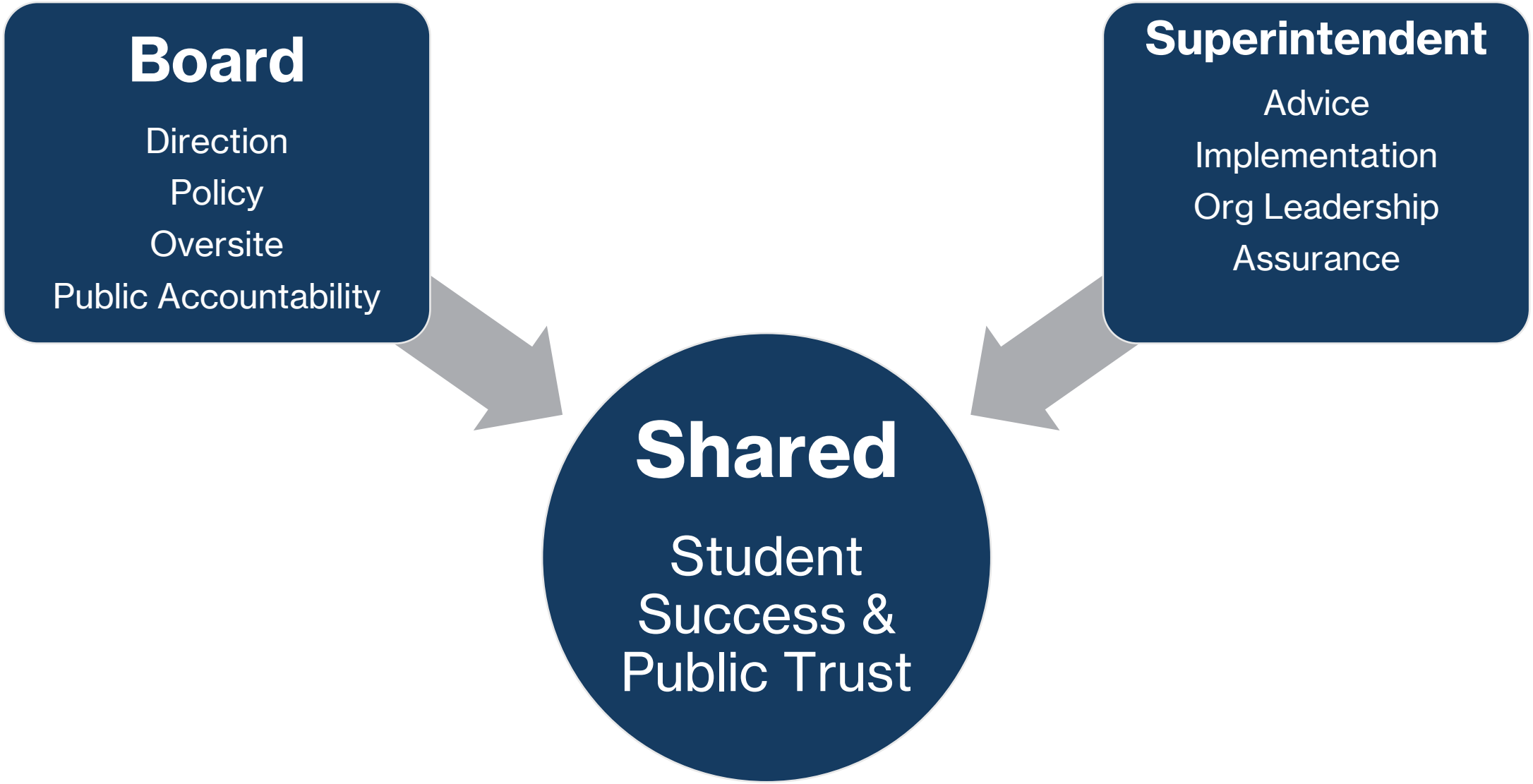
Our North Star

The educational best interests of students.

- Student learning and well-being
- Statutory responsibilities
- Board priorities
- Evidence and consequences
- Long-term public value



Governance and Administration



Fiduciary

- Legal duties
- Financial stewardship
- Compliance

Strategic

- Direction-setting
- Priorities
- Long-term planning

Generative

- Sense-making
- Values
- Emerging Issues

Supporting effective governance

What makes an issue politically complex?

Values are in tension
Facts and narratives become intertwined
Urgency reduces reflection
Operational matters become symbolic
Public pressure accelerates action



Getting to better decisions *with* not *for*...

CLARIFY the decision

NAME authority and constraints

PRESENT evidence and constraints

OFFER viable options

IDENTIFY risks and tradeoffs

RECOMMEND and **MONITOR**



Where do we go from here?

No surprises
- keep the board informed before issues escalate

Clear, consistent advice
- grounded in evidence and professional judgment

Respectful candour
- honest engagement even when views differ

Equal information for all trustees
- no selective briefing

Willingness to name uncertainty
- builds credibility over time

Governance Readiness is Built in Advance

Shared Understanding

Establish shared understanding of roles between board and Superintendent before tensions emerge

Governance Training

Provide ongoing governance education so trustees AND leaders develop shared language and procedural confidence

Annual Planning

Use annual planning cycles to anticipate and prepare for foreseeable areas of challenge before they arrive

Clear Protocols

Clarify protocols for trustee requests, public inquires and media responses

Delegation Review

Review delegations and decisions authorities to ensure clarity over who the decision maker is at each level



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Stay out of Politics AND Maintain Public Interest

- Speak from legislation, board policy, evidence and educational purpose
- Clearly distinguish board decisions from administrative implementation
- Explain impacts without assigning motives
- Correct factual inaccuracies without escalating rhetoric
- Maintain one consistent organizational account
- Protect confidentiality while explaining process and rationale



PROCESS is part of the decision



Calm the Process,

Clarify the Decision,

Protect the Purpose



Q&A