

GOVERNANCE CHANGE

An application of the
Advocacy Design Framework

School Governance

A system by which members of the school:

- identify problems;
- express preferences;
- generate hypothesis about action; and
- make decisions.

What is to be done and how?

How is authority used and distributed?

Outline of basic concepts

- Planning change
- Resources/commitment
- Control of training
- Inquiry into success
- Authority distribution

Self-assessment process

- Analysis of the current school situation
- Description of the school's best future
- Estimate of schools progress
- Suggestions about the presentation format

Governance Overview of School District "A"

Brief History

- Up until last year, the school district as a whole was best described as a collection school. That is, the school operated as a collection of teachers with little interdependency or active commitment to common goals.
- The governance system was predominantly beaurocratic, with the superintendent and administrators (the managers) making the decisions for the teachers (the workers).

*"The villagers
worked hard, but
only for
themselves."*

Jon. J. Muth, "Stone Soup"

Governance Overview of School District "A" (continued)

Current Hierarchy

- 5 out of 7 Board of Education members have < 2 years experience
- Superintendent <1 year experience
- Deputy Superintendent <1 year experience
- 2 Assistant Superintendents with more than three years of experience each
- 6 Central Office administrators with more than three years of experience each
- 6 Building Principals, 2 in their first year, three in year three and one with >5 years
- Approximately 300 teachers and support faculty members
- Approximately 4000 students and their families

Governance Overview of School District "A" (continued)

Current Governance (2006-2007)

Efforts were made to move the governance of the school district into a more inquiry oriented model:

- Superintendent introduced the motto, "Plus Ultra", as a guideline for district to begin conversations about instruction and accountability.
- Deputy superintendent initiated (with limited success), professional learning community meetings.
- District-wide training provided in "Understanding by Design"
- Conversations began at every grade level and in every department regarding instruction and accountability.
- Mentors worked with new teachers
- All schools were represented in professional development conversations
- Superintendent and/or deputy superintendent met frequently with administrators
- Administrators met more frequently with teachers.

School District "A" Governance Overview (continued)

However, there were obstacles:

- Administrators continued to be discouraged from attending BOE meetings.
- BOE and superintendent continued to make top-down decisions.
- Parents were rarely involved in conversations.
- Central Office continued to make most of the decisions about development and training.
- Some of the teachers viewed the professional learning committees as a waste of time and did not have faith in the process.

Governance of School District A

The Governance of School District “A” is best described as being in a state of transition, still a *collection* school yet one that is attempting to move toward being an *inquiry-oriented* school. The conversation is just beginning!

School District A's Best Future



What is to be done and
how?



How should authority be used and distributed?



One by one, the
people came out to
see just what this
stone soup was.

And the monks
stirred.

Do you think it
would be better
with onions?

As each person opened their hearts to give, the next person gave more. And as this happened, the soup grew richer and smelled more delicious.

Everyone sat down to eat. They had not been together like this for as long as anyone could remember.

