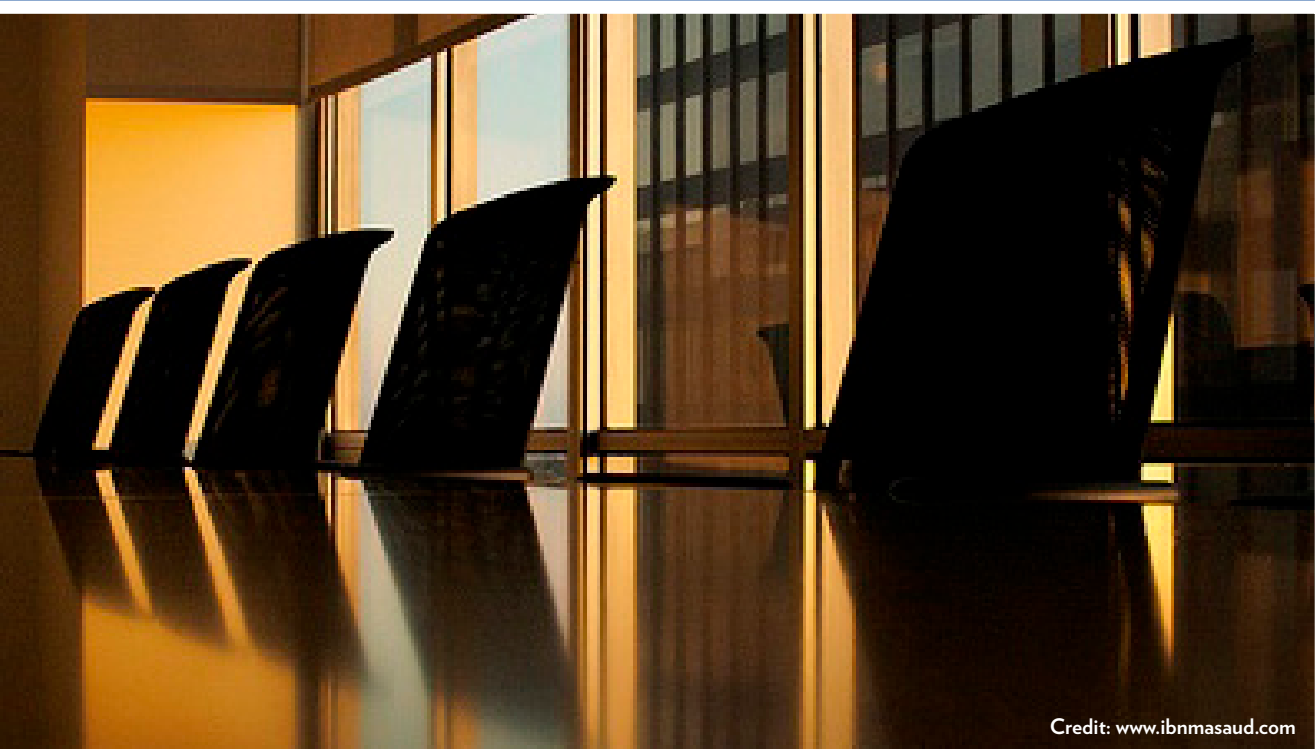# Independent School Leadership: Heads, Boards and Strategic Thinking

Credit: www.ibnmasaud.com

Troy Baker, Stephen Campbell and Dave Ostroff

Peabody College at Vanderbilt University

May 2015

Acknowledgements

This capstone was possible because of generous cooperation from the National Association of Independent Schools. In particular, we appreciate Amada Torres, NAIS Vice President for Studies, Insights, and Research, for her guidance and support.

We are grateful for support, guidance, and expertise provided by Professor Claire Smrekar throughout this process. We also would like to acknowledge Professor Corbette Doyle, who challenged us to reimagine our approach to this project during its infancy. Special thanks also to Professor Will Doyle for his time and insights regarding our statistical analyses.

We are deeply grateful to our friends and colleagues at Lausanne Collegiate School and All Saints' Episcopal School, and particularly to our Heads of School, Stuart McCathie and Dr. Tad Bird, for their support and patience throughout this endeavor.

Many individuals have also made this report possible, including more than 800 respondents from NAIS member schools who completed our survey in October, 2014. We are deeply grateful to School Heads and Board Chairs who gave their time to be interviewed. These men and women were engaged and candid in sharing lessons of board governance and leadership at their respective schools.

On a personal note, we thank our spouses - Lisa, Lori, and Miki - who have been encouraging and patient throughout this process. We are grateful for their unwavering support and partnership.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Executive Summary

The 2008 market collapse ushered in an era that challenged independent school leaders to creatively predict and respond to unique challenges. As the landscape of school choice continues to expand, and options such as charter schools, virtual schools, home schools, vouchers, and magnet schools increase in popularity, independent school leaders must be prepared now more than ever to predict and adjust to forces which may impact the future viability of their respective schools.

The 2012-2013 NAIS Governance Study identified priorities for Heads of Schools and Board Chairs while also reporting descriptive data on how Heads of School and Board Chairs rated their effectiveness and satisfaction with their roles. Although the study yielded some important findings, the issue of how to assess effectiveness remained elusive and relatively undefined.

> **How can independent schools assess the effectiveness of their boards?**

The current discussion regarding board governance at independent schools is riddled with unanswered questions regarding the concept of strategic thinking and its impact on board and school performance. In an attempt to answer questions regarding linkages between governance structures and institutional outcomes, we created a strategic effectiveness metric to encompass the factors associated with perceptions of board effectiveness and an institutional performance metric that includes factors which are critical to the sustainability of an independent school.

We define "Strategic Effectiveness" as the degree to which school leadership is successful in identifying long-term or overall aims and interests while having the resources and focus to achieve them.

We derive "Institutional Performance" from a set of performance indicators designed by Bassett and Mitchell (2006) which includes: strength of admissions demand; rate of attrition among faculty and students; vibrancy of culture of giving; competitiveness of faculty salaries; comparative affordability of tuition; ratios of students to faculty and students to total staff; size of budget for professional development and technology; value of endowment; and measures of students' college readiness.

Findings

Five elements were consistently present and paramount to strategic effectiveness of boards and to a set of institutional outcomes for independent schools in our study:

1. **The percentage of trustees who are current parents has minimal direct influence on strategic effectiveness within boards of trustees.** Leading consultants and NAIS researchers have long hypothesized that a high percentage of current parents on a board - more than 60 percent, generally - impairs that board's capacity to think and act strategically. We find no empirical data to support such claims; instead, our findings suggest schools that scored highly on markers of strategic effectiveness may include high percentages of current parents on their boards. More importantly, we find that board membership is complex and multifaceted; other factors matter more.

2. **Strategically effective boards are intentional about onboarding new trustees.** Although most boards have a process of orientation, boards that exhibited higher strategic effectiveness ratings invested in organizational socialization and acculturation of new trustees ("onboarding") over longer periods of time. Strategically effective boards protect and perpetuate healthy board culture.

3. **The purposeful use of committees is associated with increased strategic effectiveness.** The relationship between the use of committees and strategic effectiveness is an important structural component of board governance. The purposeful use of committees is critical to a board's ability to effectively locate more immediate, tactical concerns within its longer-term strategic focus.

4. **Boards that rate highly on strategic effectiveness contribute positively to institutional performance.** Our findings confirm the assumption that healthy boards positively impact institutional performance of the independent schools they serve. More specifically, perceptions of strategic effectiveness with respect to financial sustainability and strategic planning have positive impacts on institutional performance.

5. **The relationship between board chair and head of school is critical.** A healthy and productive relationship between board chair and school head has a very strong effect on board strategic effectiveness. On this point, our findings align with and support NAIS' long-held conclusions about best practices for board governance.

Recommendations for School Leaders

- **Consider several factors when identifying potential trustees.** Selection of new trustees is a complex process that requires keen situational awareness, and decisions should be guided by the strategic plan. Heads of Schools, Board Chairs, and governance committees must be cognizant of the dispositions and skill sets of potential trustees and how those characteristics could potentially enhance or detract from strategic effectiveness of the board.

- **Make onboarding, as a supplement to cultivation, recruitment and orientation, part of the plan to build strategic effectiveness.** All schools do trustee recruitment and orientation. Highly strategic Heads and Board Chairs do early identification, cultivation, recruitment, orientation and onboarding. Just as important as selecting the right people is the process of orienting them to the nature of the work, with an eye toward nurturing mindsets that prioritize strategic effectiveness. Onboarding, which we define as a sustained, purposeful process for acculturation over an extended timeline, is essential.

- **Focus professional development efforts on activities that build norms of cooperation and collaboration.** A high investment on the front end yields significant returns. Heads of Schools must continue to learn how to work with their boards rather than focusing efforts on how to get their boards to do what they want them to do.

Recommendations for NAIS

- Highlight development and importance of models for onboarding new trustees that focus on strategic development of latent talent.

- With regard to strategic planning processes, provide further guidance about what models of strategic visioning exist that work to balance inherent tension between valuing inclusiveness and efficiency.

- Revise and polish our survey tool (or similar) as a method for member schools to measure strategic effectiveness at the board level. More data will encourage more school leaders to engage in conversations about strategic effectiveness. These conversations will shape school leadership culture in ways that enhance Heads' and Board Chairs' capacity to identify and respond to threats and enhance institutional strengths.

Questions for Future Research

Our findings revealed interesting questions that were outside of the scope of our study. Further exploration of the following questions will prove beneficial for researchers and practitioners:

- **Is there a model or approach that is most effective for identification and cultivation of potential trustees?** Heads of Schools and Board Chairs in our study indicated that they regularly invite potential members to serve on committees or task forces before inviting them to serve as trustees. Do activities such as these make a substantive impact on strategic effectiveness and institutional performance?

- **How might leaders reimagine the balance between evaluation, mentoring, and support in ways that lead to more open lines of communication, more stability and more longevity?** Researchers would be wise to focus more attention on the various ways that Board Chairs and Heads of School can form productive, healthy relationships. We note that the principal-agent relationship between Chairs and Heads remains murky at best.

- **How can boards improve their performance as fundraising bodies?** Our findings suggest that the term "fundraising body" means more than board members' capacity to give as individuals. The capacity to influence the culture of giving warrants further research on which elements of this construct matter most.

- **What accounts for differences in perceptions between Board Chairs and Heads, and is it possible to close that gap?** One of our statistical findings suggested that Board Chairs tend to have more favorable perceptions of the level of strategic effectiveness and leadership practices than do Heads of Schools. We suggest an exploration of the potential sources of dissonance between Chairs and Heads.

- **What is the story behind the schools who rated lowest in strategic effectiveness?** More qualitative research on the lower-rated schools would be beneficial to unpack the quantitative findings just as our case studies were instrumental in our ability to provide context and rich descriptions of the schools we visited.

- **Might other case studies be compelling?** School leaders may benefit from a larger sample of qualitative case studies, perhaps including a wider variety of school contexts: boarding schools, international schools, and schools that serve learners with special needs.

Sweet Briar College: A cautionary tale for school leaders

On March 4, 2015, the board of directors at Sweet Briar College announced plans to close the school at the end of the academic year. "I come to you today with a heavy heart and difficult news," said Sweet Briar president Jimmy Jones, "the current semester will be our last, and the Class of 2015 will be our final graduating class. I know this news is upsetting – and may be surprising."

> **"This is a sad day for the entire Sweet Briar College community."**
> **Paul G. Rice, Board Chair**

Sweet Briar's decision to close underscores the significance of effective strategic thinking. In meaningful ways, Sweet Briar is better positioned in terms of institutional performance markers than many secondary and postsecondary institutions. Founded in 1901, Sweet Briar has more than 20,000 alumnae. The College has developed a substantial endowment which was valued at $85 million in January, 2015.

President Jones explained that "there are two key realities that we could not change: the declining number of students choosing to attend small, rural, private liberal arts colleges ... and the increase in the tuition discount rate that we have to extend to enroll each new class is financially unsustainable."

The Sweet Briar case serves as a cautionary tale for all school leaders about the shifting landscape of private education. We note significant similarities between small liberal arts colleges and independent secondary schools. Sweet Briar's enduring value proposition is mission-driven and, like so many independent schools', centers on meaningful relationships between students and faculty, small class sizes and a distinctive sense of community. With its enrollment of approximately 600 undergraduates, Sweet Briar would fit squarely among mid-size independent schools as 33% of independent schools enroll 500 students or more (2012-13 NAIS Governance Survey).

> **As consumers become more savvy and market-based accountability and competition continue to intensify, the need for strategic school leadership and generative thinking has never been greater.**

The "two key realities" cited by President Jones resonate strongly with independent school leaders. NAIS president John Chubb noted that a smaller percentage of American students attend independent schools today than did a generation ago. Families have a growing range of school options, and lingering economic concerns have "damaged the financial optimism of many" who can afford private education at an independent school (NAIS 2012-2013 Annual Report, p. 2). Competitive pressures on independent schools - and small liberal arts colleges that operate within similar contexts - have grown and will continue to grow.

NAIS envisions "a vibrant community of independent schools for a changing nation and demanding world" (nais.org). Having the right people and structures in place are essential first steps in helping independent schools endure, grow and serve future generations of students. How might School Heads and Board Chairs design boards of trustees that are well-positioned to think strategically about the long-term best interests of the schools they serve?

Given the current challenges that independent schools face, Heads of School and trustees need a strategic focus now more than ever. This capstone seeks to identify and assess factors that contribute to effective boards. As options such as charter schools, virtual schools, home schools, vouchers, and magnet schools increase in popularity, independent school leaders must be prepared to predict and adjust to emerging trends and market forces which may impact the future viability of their respective schools. Our study will offer recommendations that independent school leaders could implement to spur generative thinking and strategic action. We address a pair of guiding project questions:

> *1) To what extent do board characteristics, structures and activities influence strategic effectiveness in NAIS-member institutions?*

> *2) To what extent do board characteristics, structures and activities influence institutional performance?*

Characteristics of a board include both the individuals who comprise the board and also the factors that are considered when recruiting trustees to serve. Board structures include elements of the board that can be spelled out in a document; this category includes term limits, policies on giving, the role of the Head of School, and the overall role of the board within the organizational context of the school. Board Activities describes work that is actually being done. This list includes meeting frequency, recruitment, professional development, and evaluation of the Head.

We define "Strategic Effectiveness" as the degree to which school leadership is successful in identifying long-term or overall aims and interests while having the resources and focus to achieve them.

We derive "Institutional Performance" from a set of performance indicators designed by Bassett and Mitchell (2006) which includes: strength of admissions demand; rate of attrition among faculty and students; vibrancy of culture of giving; competitiveness of faculty salaries; comparative affordability of tuition; ratios of students to faculty and students to total staff; size

of budget for professional development and technology; value of endowment; and measures of students' college readiness.

Research on independent school leadership and governance is dominated by assumptions and claims based on eminence rather than empirical findings. Our study blends quantitative and qualitative evidence in a mixed-methods approach, explores pressing questions for independent schools and highlights essential factors that contribute to effective leadership and governance. Utilizing NAIS' database of more than 1750 independent schools, our own survey data gathered from over 800 heads of school and board chairs, and interviews with school leaders at six independent schools in the Northeast, the Midwest and the South, we offer findings and recommendations in three major categories which impact heads' and boards' capacity to think and act strategically. These areas include: intentional acculturation of new trustees over extended periods of time ("onboarding"); strategic identification and cultivation of potential trustees; and purposeful use of trustee committees. Each of these factors significantly impacts strategic effectiveness, and we find that highly strategic, high-functioning boards contribute positively to institutional performance, especially with respect to building healthy cultures of giving within independent schools. We also offer case study vignettes to highlight the importance of our empirical findings. The remainder of this introduction provides pertinent context and background for our investigation and the independent schools on which it focuses.

Independent Schools in Context

Within the "easy labels" of public and private, there are notable distinctions which are often - and easily - misunderstood (Rush & Gilmore, 2012, p. 13). Charter and magnet schools, for example, often have distinctive educational missions and may design selective admissions policies and procedures that mirror independent schools' practices. Nonetheless, charters and magnets are accountable to state assessments and external curriculum standards, and initiatives such as No Child Left Behind (NCLB) have increased the need for public school leaders to tailor curricula to fit priorities in high-stakes testing. The primary funders for charters and magnets are local, state and federal governments; therefore, achieving goals related to adequate yearly progress on high-stakes indicators often guides both long term thinking and real-time decision-making. Both charters and magnets fall squarely in the public school category.

Well-intentioned observers often use the words "independent" and "private" interchangeably; however, there are key differences between institutions in one category or the other. Independent schools are non-profit organizations sustained by tuition, charitable giving, and ancillary revenue commonly drawn from interest on endowment. Private schools, conversely, are typically governed and subsidized, to a significant extent, by a religious body such a diocese, a corporate entity or a non-profit organization. These governing bodies and funding sources often have influence over many of a private school's important decisions: funding, hiring, curriculum, mission, and accountability. Although independent schools may align themselves with a specific faith tradition or church, they are self-governing institutions and, as such, are not funded by or subject to policies developed by religious or other organizations.

To more fully understand the gravity and importance of effective strategic thinking within the context of independent school governance, it is important to compare and contrast leadership models at independent schools with those in place in public and other private schools. One key difference is the tremendous responsibility that trustees and board chairs hold to secure the future viability of the institutions they serve. Independent schools are led by self-perpetuating boards who hold the school in trust. These Boards of Trustees have responsibilities that fall primarily into three categories: fiduciary, strategic and generative (Bassett, 2001; Chait, Ryan, and Taylor, 2005; McKinsey, 2013). Despite freedom from government-imposed standards-based accountability, independent schools are accountable: to their boards, to standards set by regional and national accrediting agencies, and to market forces: parents choose to enroll their children and pay tuition annually.

An independent school Board of Trustees also serves as guardian of the school's unique educational mission. The board's responsibility is two-fold in this regard: to ensure that the mission is relevant and vital to the community it serves and to monitor the success of the school in fulfilling its mission. Though typically college-preparatory, independent school missions vary across several important dimensions: single gender or coeducational; large or small; day or boarding (or both); traditional or progressive; geared to serve diverse learners or special populations of learners; serving all grade-levels or tailored to particular ages. Rush and Gilmore (2012) describe "four key freedoms" that are core differentiators that separate independent schools from all other types:

- Freedom to define their mission;
- Freedom to set curriculum - free from state curriculum guidelines and testing mandates;
- Freedom to regulate admission; and
- Freedom to define teacher credentials.

Public school policy decisions are often made within the context of a political process with input from professional bureaucrats, elected officials and their constituents. Private schools are often guided by partner organizations which can potentially standardize certain policies and procedures across multiple school sites, incorporating viewpoints and expertise from a wide range of stakeholders. Independent schools, on the other hand, rely on the head of school and a group of trustees to envision, design and evaluate. In short, effective independent school governance is critical. Board characteristics, structures and activities are worthy of deep examination and reflection.

Independent schools by the numbers

NCES, in conjunction with U.S. Census Bureau, has conducted a biennial Private School Universe Survey (PSS) since 1989. The most recent round of PSS results, collected during the 2011/2012 school year, reported that there were 30,861 private elementary and secondary schools with 4,494,845 students in the United States. Of these thirty thousand plus private schools, 1472, or almost 5 percent, were members of NAIS. For comparison, public schools enroll nearly 50 million students in almost 99,000 schools (Private School Universe Survey, 2011–12).

The interval is widening. Kober and Usher (2012) reported that, in the fall of 2008, private schools educated 10 percent of students across the United States. Projections suggest rising total enrollments through 2020; however, private schools' share will decrease slightly to about 9 percent. In its most recent *Digest of Education Statistics*, NCES statisticians have estimated that private school enrollment was 8 percent lower in 2013 than in 1985, and private school enrollment was down 14 percent since its peak in 2005. By contrast, during the same years (1985-2013), public school enrollment increased by 26%. to 49.8 million (NCES Digest of Education Statistics, 2013).

The National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS)

NAIS is a nonprofit organization that serves more than 1,700 member institutions, including more than 1,400 independent, private schools in the United States. NAIS produces research and trend analysis, provides guidance on issues of leadership and school governance, and sponsors professional learning for independent school teachers, school leaders, and boards of trustees. From its headquarters in Washington, DC, NAIS also engages in public advocacy, serving as the "national voice of independent education" (nais.org).

Formed in 1962, the history of NAIS is filled with scholarly publications on school governance and leadership. *The Independent School Trustee Handbook*, originally published in 1964, is currently in its ninth edition. NAIS has also developed *The Selection and Appointment of School Heads*, which is in its second edition. In 2006, NAIS produced "Holding the Trust" - the first booklet in its ongoing *Independent Trustee Series*. More recently, NAIS published an online Trustee Guide (2008), and, in 2011, NAIS launched an electronic newsletter entitled, "The Savvy Trustee". NAIS has also developed Principles of Good Practice for Heads of School, Boards of Trustees and Independent School Trustees (1984). For Heads of School specifically, NAIS has published *The Head's Handbook: A Guide for Aspiring, New, and Experienced Heads of School* (2011), created an Aspiring Heads Fellowship program, and established a summer Institute for New Heads. NAIS' commitment to sharing research and analysis of best leadership practices with its members is clear, consistent and mission-aligned.

STUDY CONTEXT

In 2006 NAIS commissioned a broad-based study of board governance, which included examinations of board-head relationships, levels of satisfaction of trustees, leaders' perceptions of the importance of board roles and functions, and levels of satisfaction that School Heads have with their boards' ability to fulfill their roles. NAIS conducted a follow-up study on board governance in 2012-2013 which provided an opportunity for comparative analysis. Among other findings, results indicated increasing alignment between Heads of School and Board Chairs regarding the roles and functions of trustees.

The fact that Heads of Schools and Board Chairs have worked to close the gap could be an indicator of increased communication and stronger relationships between school leaders. Heads

of Schools and Board Chairs agreed that the most important roles for a Board of Trustees are to ensure the financial sustainability of the school, to evaluate the Head of School, to lead the strategic planning and direction of the school, and to act as a fundraising body. These findings present a positive picture of the state of affairs within independent school leadership.

These NAIS studies on board governance also yielded important findings regarding the perceived areas of improvement for Boards of Trustees. Heads of Schools indicated five major opportunities for improvement and change from their boards: **1) charting the strategic direction of the school; 2) increasing ethnic and racial diversity to reflect the population of the school; 3) assuming a greater role as community ambassadors; 4) self-perpetuating through the creation of succession plans, and; 5) increasing role as a fundraising body (NAIS Governance Study, 2013).**

To extend its analysis, NAIS officials proposed further research to study governance structures, especially related to charting strategic direction. On behalf of its member institutions, NAIS sought recommendations for new models that independent schools could implement to spur generative thinking and strategic action, as well as a theory of action for professional development efforts to focus board practice on effective strategic thinking. NAIS framed each of the following guiding questions:

How can independent schools assess the effectiveness of their boards?
The 2012-2013 NAIS Governance Study identified priorities for Heads of Schools and Board Chairs while also reporting descriptive data on how Heads of School and Board Chairs rated their effectiveness and satisfaction with their roles. Although the study yielded some important findings, the issue of effectiveness remained elusive and relatively undefined: how well do Boards of Trustees plan and act strategically across multiple dimensions of their work?

The ability to think and act strategically encompasses many of the high-priority roles and responsibilities of independent school boards, especially those roles and responsibilities pertaining to the long-term sustainability of schools; therefore, a major focus of our study is Strategic Effectiveness, defined as the degree to which school leadership is successful in identifying long-term or overall aims and interests while having the resources and focus to achieve them.

Is any particular model of board make-up more effective than another?
NAIS seeks to gain a greater understanding of the influence that board characteristics have on strategic effectiveness and institutional outcomes. For example, NAIS hypothesizes that boards comprised of too many parents of current students may struggle to separate tactical issues from strategic considerations. Although assumptions about the salutary effects capping current parents at 60% of board membership is widely accepted, NAIS aspires to provide empirical evidence to either support or challenge the claim.

Is any particular board structure more effective than another?
NAIS seeks to learn more about how boards do their work, both from a tactical level and a

strategic level. A primary concern for exploration is the division of labor that boards employ as they solve real-time issues while also remaining strategic in nature. Our study will add to understandings about relationships between structural components (such as the use of committees) and board strategic effectiveness.

What is the role of professional development in increasing the effectiveness of boards?

In an effort to provide recommendations that encourage boards' continuous growth and improvement, NAIS seeks to gather information on the types of professional development in which Boards of Trustees are engaging. Our goal is to provide more than a descriptive account of professional development activities. We ask whether certain types of professional development opportunities have meaningful relationships with board strategic effectiveness.

What elements are strongly correlated to a strong partnership between School Heads and board members?

The Head of School-Board Chair relationship is important. NAIS seeks to understand factors that contribute to trust, cooperation, and respect. Our exploration of this essential relationship considers implications from efforts to cultivate, recruit and select new board members. The role of the governance committee and the Head of School's influence are important considerations, too.

STUDY DESIGN

In their 1989 study of board governance in universities, Holland et al (1989) lamented the lack of consistency regarding notions of board effectiveness. The concept of effectiveness is multifaceted and highly contextual, which has made it difficult to standardize, quantify, analyze, and evaluate. Our first step, therefore, was to define, operationalize, and ultimately to quantify the concept of effectiveness in a manner that was applicable to the practice of Heads of Schools and Board Chairs in independent schools. We found that much of the existing literature pertaining to independent school leadership is rich in case studies and anecdotal evidence (Holland, Chait, & Taylor, 1989). The literature also revealed a pervading assumption that the capacity for strategic thought and action were key components of successful boards (Dignan & Tenuta; Mott, 2014).

The current discussion regarding board governance at independent schools is riddled with unanswered questions regarding the notion of strategic thinking and its impact on board and school performance. In an attempt to answer questions regarding linkages between governance structures and institutional outcomes, we created a *strategic effectiveness* metric to encompass the factors associated with perceptions of board effectiveness and an *institutional performance* metric that includes factors which are critical to the sustainability of an independent school.

We acknowledge that a focus on strategic effectiveness was accompanied by the risk of ignoring other factors that could contribute to board effectiveness; however, we determined that it was imperative to provide an in-depth analysis of the strategic realm rather than a shallow overview of every aspect of school leadership that could potentially relate to outcomes. Our decision to focus on strategic effectiveness is also supported by the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE) board self-assessment study, which involved over 1300 individuals from 75 organizations. When asked questions about setting strategic direction, assessing the environment, engaging in strategic planning, and separating tactical from strategic, board members rated themselves very critically (Dignan & Tenuta). Chinta and Bhagat (2014) report that high-impact boards spend more time engaged in forward-thinking, strategic activities such as assessing what drives value, debating strategic direction, reviewing non-financial metrics, and evaluating their own processes to identify biases in decision-making. In short, extant literature on board governance suggests a relationship between strategic thought, strategic planning and board effectiveness.

We aspired to operationalize the concept of *strategic effectiveness* through the lens of strategic thought, planning and practice. We were interested in exploring not only what is working well now, but also about the characteristics, structures, and activities that are associated with a board's ability to successfully plan, address, and adapt to the many strategic issues that independent schools face. We also leaned on our client's questions for guidance:

Given the current challenges that independent schools face such as new forms of school competition, changing demographics, and a weak economic recovery, board members need more than ever to be on top of these issues and understand how they can impact their schools. Having the right type of players and structures is a first step in helping independent schools strengthen and advance from NAIS capstone proposal.

Explanation of variables

In order to quantify strategic effectiveness and institutional performance, we created independent variables based on three categories.

Board Characteristics: *Are effective boards comprised of individuals with diverse skill sets? Which, if any, combinations of skill sets and professional backgrounds are associated with increased strategic effectiveness? Is there an ideal board size? Do boards with fewer current parents tend to be more strategic in nature than boards dominated by current parents? Does the relationship between the Board Chair and Head of School affect strategic effectiveness?*

The concept of board characteristics relates to the individuals who comprise the board. The characteristics of a board include both the individuals who comprise the board and also the factors that are considered when recruiting trustees to serve. These factors include: gender, professional background & expertise (ie finance, construction and grounds), capacity to give financially, collegial and collaborative disposition, and level of commitment to the school. Of note in our study is the decision to recruit and retain board members considering whether or not they are parents or non-parents. We are interested in determining whether or not any of these characteristics are associated with increased strategic effectiveness. We also gathered information pertaining to the relationship between Heads of Schools and Board Chairs.

Board Structures: *Are term limits for trustees and Board Chairs associated with strategic effectiveness? What effect, if any, do term limits have on strategic effectiveness? Are there key roles in which boards must excel in order to increase strategic effectiveness? What role does the Head of School play in encouraging strategic thought and action? Is there a committee structure that influences strategic effectiveness? Are there benefits associated with utilizing committees vs. whole group work?*

Board structures include elements of the board that can be spelled out in a document; they include features of the board that may be present regardless of the individual characteristics of the people who comprise the board. How boards develop and utilize committees (finance, building and grounds, etc) is an indicator of how boards tackle real-time issues. This category

also includes term limits, policies on giving, the role of the Head of School, and the overall role of the board.

Board Activities: *Is there a process for trustee identification and recruitment that is associated with strategic effectiveness? What factors should be considered when recruiting trustees? Is there a process of onboarding that is associated with strategic effectiveness? In what types of professional development and ongoing education are strategically effective boards engaging?*

Board Activities provide more of a description of the work that is actually being done. This includes frequency of meetings, recruiting, onboarding, professional development, evaluation of the Head, and strategic planning. What boards actually do has major implications on culture and mindset of the board.

Dependent Variables

Strategic Effectiveness: Strategic Effectiveness is comprised of four major concepts which were gleaned from extant research (NAIS, 2013; NAIS, 2012; Katsouros, 2011; DeKuyper, 2007; Chait, Ryan & Taylor, 2005; Chait, Holland & Taylor, 1996; Holland, Chait & Taylor, 1989). Strategic effectiveness includes information on how boards balance their efforts and the amount of time and energy devoted to strategic issues versus tactical issues. It also includes the board's attention to mission alignment and their capacity to ensure that the school is indeed fulfilling its mission. We developed a scale for strategic effectiveness that included each of the following concepts:

- Capacity to refrain from the tactical in favor of strategic and long term
- Capacity to separate role on the board from real-time parent concerns and complaints
- Capacity to displace personal motivation and interest in favor of the long term aims and mission of the school
- Capacity to predict challenges

Institutional Performance: Indicators of Institutional Performance represent the so-called "bottom line." These outcomes include performance indicators which are critical to the sustainability of an independent school. The culture of giving is an indicator of the buy-in of stakeholders and the school's ability to communicate the need for giving. Admissions demand is an indicator of the school's ability to engage the local community and to increase or maintain their brand. Whereas enrollment health pertains directly to the number of students occupying seats in the school. When combined, these indicators comprise the factors of an independent school that have the greatest implications for its future. Please see figure 2.1.

Methods

We employed a mixed-methods approach. We sought to provide both statistical analysis and rich, descriptive qualitative analysis to more fully explain findings revealed in the quantitative portion of the study.

Our qualitative data were focused, purposeful and informed by analysis in the quantitative portion of the study. We constructed our interview protocol based on initial findings generated by responses to our survey instrument. We also utilized our quantitative findings to guide site selections for in-depth interviews.

Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework

INPUTS

Board Characteristics
Percentage of parents
Professional background and expertise
Capacity to give financially
Number of board members
Relationships between chair and head, between trustees

Board Structures
Role of the head
Role of the board
Committee structure
Policies on giving
Term limits

Board Activities
Trustee identification and recruitment
Onboarding
Professional development
Meeting frequency
Head evaluation

OUTPUTS

Strategic Effectiveness
Capacity to refrain from the tactical in favor of strategic and long term
Capacity to separate role on the board from real-time parent concerns and complaints
Capacity to displace personal motivation and interest in favor of the long term aims and mission of the school
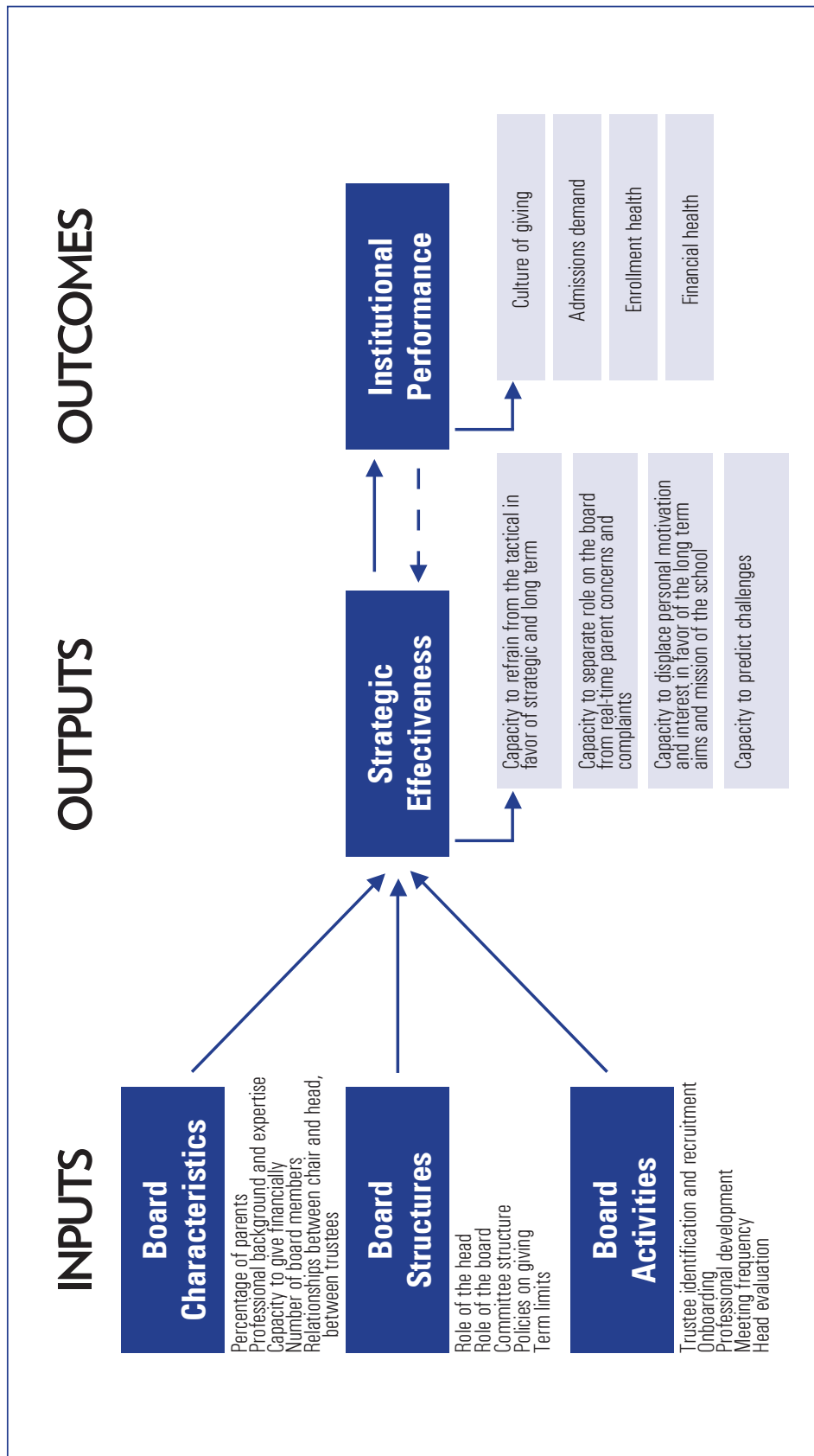Capacity to predict challenges

OUTCOMES

Institutional Performance
Culture of giving
Admissions demand
Enrollment health
Financial health

QUANTITATIVE STUDY

Instrument

To gather data on effective board governance, we created a survey comprised of three sections. Each section was built around questions gleaned from surveys that are recognized to be effective instruments (NAIS, 2012; Katsouros, 2011; Bassett and Mitchell, 2006; Jackson and Holland, 1998; Holland, Chait & Taylor, 1989). The first section is comprised of question items that would be used to generate a strategic effectiveness measure for each school. We used the Board Self-Assessment Questionnaire developed by Holland, Chait, and Taylor (1989) to provide the foundation of these questions, as well as the NAIS Board Self-Assessment Survey (2012). In the second section, question items that would enable us to develop an institutional performance measure for each school was generated from Bassett and Mitchell's (2006) ten financial markers. The third series of questions was built from NAIS's Board Governance survey to gather information about board structures, activities, and characteristics of each school surveyed.

On Strategic Effectiveness

To develop the strategic effectiveness metric needed to measure the dependent variable in the question "to what extent do board characteristics, structures and activities influence strategic effectiveness in NAIS-member institutions?" we adopted a series of questions from the Board Self-Assessment Questionnaire and the NAIS Board Self-Assessment Survey (BSAS).

Board Self-Assessment Questionnaire

Holland, Chait, and Taylor (1989) developed the Board Self-Assessment Questionnaire (BSAQ) to assess the effectiveness of boards in non-profit organizations. Holland et al. commented that:

> Although many potential criteria of effectiveness may be inferred from the diverse literature, most of the available material is exhortative rather than empirical, more anecdotal than systematic, providing a limited foundation on which to build knowledge about governance and its influences in educational institutions (1989).

The BSAQ measures six different dimensions of board effectiveness: the contextual dimension, educational dimension, interpersonal dimension, intellectual dimension, political dimension, and strategic dimension. Holland et al. initially found that there were issues with the self-evaluative nature of the questionnaire that limited the reliability of the instrument. Jackson and Holland (1998) then revised the questionnaire to account for this limitation by modifying the question and answer choices of the BSAQ, which resulted in a higher variance in responses. Jackson and Holland, therefore, developed a more reliable instrument for self-evaluation. This was critical to our project, as we relied on self-evaluation, and a wide variance indicates that the question items were worded in such a way that respondents chose a wide range of responses, rather than just their perceived 'best' response. Their 1998 analysis of the BSAQ, which included data from 623 board members from 34 institutions, reported an alpha of .78 for the strategic scale portion of the

instrument. They stated that "the revised BSAQ provides nonprofit organizations and those who study them an empirically supported and inexpensive tool for assessing the performance of their boards" (p. 177). We selected portions of the BSAQ questionnaire that measured the strategic dimension to provide a foundation for our strategic effectiveness measure.

NAIS Board Self-Assessment Survey

While the BSAQ was developed to measure board effectiveness at nonprofit organizations, our survey sought to measure elements of strategic effectiveness unique to NAIS member schools. In order to do this, aspects of the NAIS Board Self-Assessment Survey (BSAS) that measured certain elements of strategic effectiveness within independent school boards were modified and adapted for our survey questionnaire. The BSAS is designed to measure the board's "personal effectiveness, the board's performance as a whole, and how these affect the board's strategic ability, fiduciary responsibilities, and partnership with the head of school" (NAIS, 2012). The survey is widely used by NAIS member institutions to track longitudinal data regarding board effectiveness at their schools and is regarded within the industry as a reliable tool for measuring independent school board effectiveness. The questions adapted from the BSAS were modified to match the BSAQ's scale of answers in order to maintain consistency within the strategic effectiveness measure.

The strategic effectiveness metric consists of 25 questions, the 12 questions of the strategic dimension of the BSAQ and 13 questions adapted and modified from the BSAS. The mean of the responses from the 25 questions served as each school's strategic effectiveness score, which

> **"Last year our board filled out the NAIS survey, and our plan is to do it annually so we can get some longitudinal data."**
>
> David Muenzer, Board Chair at Washington International School

became the dependent variable in all statistical analyses that examined the project question. It was also used to rank schools by the strategic effectiveness of their boards. This ranking was then used as the first step in determining the schools that would be included in the qualitative portion of this mixed methods study. This scale has an alpha score of .94, indicating strong inter-item consistency.

On Institutional Performance

Bassett and Mitchell's Financial Markers

Pat Bassett, former president of NAIS, and Mark Mitchell, vice-president of School Information Services at NAIS, co-authored Financing Sustainable Schools (2006) to provide guidance for thoughtful consideration of institutional performance at independent schools. They outlined ten performance indicators:

1. Market demand as a measure of the market's perception of the school's success.
2. Low attrition among faculty and students as a measure of the stability of staff and the satisfaction of parents.
3. Generous giving as a measure of constituent loyalty.

4. Competitive faculty salary as a measure of a school's capacity to attract, keep and reward high-quality faculty.
5. Relatively low tuition and moderate annual tuition increase as a measure of a school's comparative affordability and an element in its value proposition.
6. Commitment to socioeconomic diversity balanced by context of financial prudence as measured by a combination of a stable proportion of students receiving financial aid to a fiscally responsible degree.
7. Efficiency in workload productivity as represented by ratios of students to faculty and students to total staff.
8. Investment in support for high quality learning environment as represented by a significant budget for professional development and technology.
9. Commitment to financial security, intergenerational equity, and long-term stability as represented by maintaining or growing the value of endowment.
10. Effective preparation to succeed in future competitive academic environments represents student outcomes and overall success of mission.

<div align="right">(Bassett & Mitchell, 2006)</div>

Indicators of institutional performance include components that are critical to the sustainability of an independent school. We used these ten markers to develop questions related to the institutional performance of schools. We then used responses from the questions to develop an institutional performance marker. As the questions used different scales in the answer sets, we created z-scores to standardize the responses and to create a mean value for each school, which served as the dependent variable for the research question "to what extent do board characteristics, structures and activities influence institutional performance?" This scale has an alpha score of .807, indicating that the scale is consistent.

Board Structures, Activities, and Characteristics

NAIS Board Governance Survey

In order to gather data on board characteristics, structures, and activities, we relied on the NAIS' 2013 Board Governance Survey (BGS), which includes (but is not limited to) questions about the percentage of parents on a given board of trustees, the number of board meetings per year, engagement in professional development, trustee selection processes, and board chair-head relationships. We refined the BGS to a smaller set of questions that measured critical elements of board structures, activities, and characteristics. We then modified the questions to maintain internal consistency and relevance within our survey instrument.

Data Collection

NAIS provided the email addresses of all Heads of School from NAIS member institutions. We utilized Qualtrics to email our survey instrument to Heads of School. We did not have access to email addresses for Board Chairs, so we included a cover letter requesting Heads of School to complete the survey and, upon completion, to forward a survey link to their Board Chairs (see Appendix 1). Each link was uniquely coded to negate the possibility of duplicate responses. Each

link was also protected. Once Heads of School opened the survey, they were not able to forward their incomplete survey to Board Chairs, and Board Chairs were not able to view the responses of Heads of School (Heads were also not able to view the responses of Board Chairs). It is important to note that we also asked Heads of School and Board Chairs to indicate the name of their school. The inclusion of school names is potentially sensitive information, so we informed respondents that they were not required to provide the name of their school. However, we also informed them that our study, and our results, would be more useful if school names were included. We felt that school names would be useful to our study for several reasons: 1) it would allow us to match Heads of School with Board Chairs; 2) it would allow us to gather data pertaining to school characteristics; 3) we would be able to match strategic effectiveness and institutional performance ratings with schools; 4) our sample method for qualitative interviews would be more sound. Heads of School and Board Chairs were generally cooperative and willing to share the names of their respective schools (87%).

The initial survey was emailed on October 2, 2014, and it remained open for three weeks. We emailed two reminders to schools who had not completed the survey (October 9 and October 16), and the survey closed October 24, 2014. In an effort to increase personalization, each reminder email included a unique cover letter (3 cover letters in total), and we monitored survey completion daily to ensure that schools who had completed the survey did not receive reminder emails.

In total, we received 807 completed responses: 597 from Heads, 209 from Board Chairs, and 9 from 'others.' We note the following response rates: 33.8% of Heads (597/1765) and 35% of Chairs (209/597).

In an effort to determine our ability to generalize to the larger population of NAIS member schools, we compared the demographic characteristics of the schools in our sample to the characteristics of the NAIS membership as a whole. As table 2.1 shows, the characteristics of the schools in our sample are representative of the general population of NAIS, which suggests a high level of external validity and ability to generalize to the larger population.

Table 2.1: Comparison of Survey Sample to Survey Population

	Survey Respondents	NAIS Membership
% Day	83.9%	83.5%
% Coed	88.2%	87.6%
% 301-500	24.9%	26.8%
% West	16.5%	19.5%

Data Analysis

Once we collected data pertaining to board characteristics, structures, and activities along with institutional performance and strategic effectiveness, we imported the data from Qualtrics to SPSS. We conducted a series of statistical analyses to determine whether or not there were statistically significant relationships between the independent and dependent variables. We also reviewed data to account for open-ended (text box) responses. For example, if a respondent skipped the choice to select "trustee committee" but instead chose to write "trustee committee" in a free response field, then the answer was re-coded. All continuous variables were standardized into number values.

Our next step was to develop strategic effectiveness and institutional performance metrics. The variable "strategic effectiveness" was developed by ensuring that answer choices were arranged in a likert-style format from most strategic (4) to least strategic (1). We reversed the coding for questions Q3.1, Q3.3, Q3.4, and Q3.6 to ensure proper alignment (see Appendix 1). For example, the question item that reads, "the board has on occasion evaded responsibility for some important issue facing the school," the coding of 1-strongly disagree to 4-strongly agree was reversed to account for the fact that 'evading responsibility' had a negative association with effectiveness. An answer of 'strongly agree' (4) to this question has different implications on strategic effectiveness ratings than an answer of 'strongly agree' (4) may have in association with other questions. We then developed a new variable in SPSS from the mean of the items in the strategic effectiveness metric for each school. (For survey results, please see Appendix 3. For statistical tables, please see Appendix 4.) This was used as the dependent variable for all analyses related to strategic effectiveness.

As the answer choices within the institutional performance metric were different, we used the z-score of each item to develop the metric and to ensure internal consistency. We then took the mean of the metric to develop the second dependent variable called "institutional performance." We conducted t-tests for binary variables, comparing the dependent variable "strategic effectiveness" and independent variables related to board characteristics, structures, and activities that consisted of two possible answers. For question items which respondents select multiple answers from a list of items, such as committees, a non-response was coded as zero, and a response was coded as 1; t-tests between the independent and dependent variables were conducted for each selection from the list. The majority of questions regarding board characteristics, structures, and activities were multiple choice questions, so we conducted ANOVAs between each scale independent variable and the strategic effectiveness metric. For all continuous independent variables, we conducted correlations, generating p values and r-squared scores. When we identified statistically significant relationships, we used eta tests to determine the strength of relationships between the dependent and independent variables. We repeated this process for the institutional performance metric.

QUALITATIVE STUDY

Silverman and Marvasti (2008) have argued that "what counts as detail tends to vary between qualitative and quantitative researchers." For the qualitative components of our study, "detail is found in the precise particulars of...people's understanding" (p. 14).

We conducted a series of interviews with School Heads and Board Chairs to "illuminate the people behind the numbers and put faces on the statistics ... to deepen understanding" (Patton, 2002). Findings from the quantitative section of our study, our conceptual framework, and guiding questions from NAIS informed the development of interview protocols. In order to understand why and how more deeply, we organized data from each Head and Chair interview into a single concept-clustered matrix built around our project questions and conceptual framework. Following guidance from Patton (2002), this matrix was used as a tool to "ask questions of the data" and provided a "source of focus in looking for themes and patterns" (p. 477).

Instrument

We developed our interview protocol (see Appendix 2) by analyzing key findings from our study's quantitative data within the context of extant literature (NAIS, 2012; Katsouros, 2011; Bassett and Mitchell, 2006; Jackson and Holland, 1998; Holland, Chait & Taylor, 1989). We used broader themes outlined in our project questions about relationships between board characteristics, structures, and activities as well as the strategic effectiveness of boards and institutional performance of schools. We carefully probed for the interview subjects' thinking behind best practices related to committees, meeting frequency, selection processes for board members, and terms of service. We also investigated professional development practices, roles of the board, and approaches to strategic thinking. We ended our interview protocol with questions related to the percentage of parents on the board.

Data Collection

We visited six schools and interviewed both the Head of School and the Board Chair. All interviews were recorded digitally. In order to focus on the features of highly strategic Heads and boards, we targeted schools that ranked in the top 10 percent according to our strategic effectiveness metric. We chose top-performing schools in order to focus our efforts on addressing specific NAIS questions around establishing and/or confirming best leadership practices for Heads of School and boards.

We selected schools through a purposeful stratified sampling method in an effort to garner a solid representation of the breadth of variation among NAIS member institutions. We created our initial pool of potential sites based on strategic effectiveness rankings, targeting only the top 10% of schools as ranked by the strategic effectiveness metric. Next, we created a two-tiered system: Category 1 included factors such as enrollment, tuition, school type (boarding/day, single

sex/coed), and grade levels served (ie K-6, K-8, K-12). Category 2 included factors such as geography and mission orientation (ie faith-based).

We chose Washington International School, St. Andrew's Episcopal School, The Seven Hills School, Presbyterian Day School, Boston Trinity School, and Pace Academy. Each of these schools ranked in the top 10% of the strategic effectiveness metric, and satisfied our need to observe a range of types of schools from categories 1 and 2. We obtained verbal consent from each Head of School and Board Chair to include the actual names of their respective schools in this report.

Table 2.2: Interview Sites

School	Enrollment	Tuition	Location	Grades	Gender
Washington International School	900	$35K+	Mid Atl	K-12	Co-ed
St. Andrew's Episcopal School	950	$20K+	Mid Atl	K-12	Co-ed
Presbyterian Day School	645	$18K+	Mid South	PreK-6	Boys'
The Seven Hills School	1000+	$23K+	MW	PreK-12	Co-ed
Boston Trinity School	230	$16K+	NE	6-12	Co-ed
Pace Academy	1000+	$20K+	SE	K-12	Co-ed

We contacted each of our target schools and arranged for interviews with the Board Chair and Head of School within the time frame of December 8th and December 19th, 2014. Each member of the research team visited two schools. Each interview was conducted individually, and the same interview protocol was followed for all interviews (see Appendix 2). Through these semi-structured interviews, we gathered qualitative data from Heads of School, Board Chairs, and, in some instances, key administrative personnel at these schools.

Data Analysis

We listened to the interviews and transcribed details relevant to our project questions into concept-clustered matrices. We distilled these clusters into key themes and developed the main findings for this report through an examination of both quantitative and qualitative data.

Limitations

Figure 2.2: Internal Validity of Strategic Effectiveness Dependent Variable

Mean = 3.14086543
Std. Dev. = .465517454
N = 835
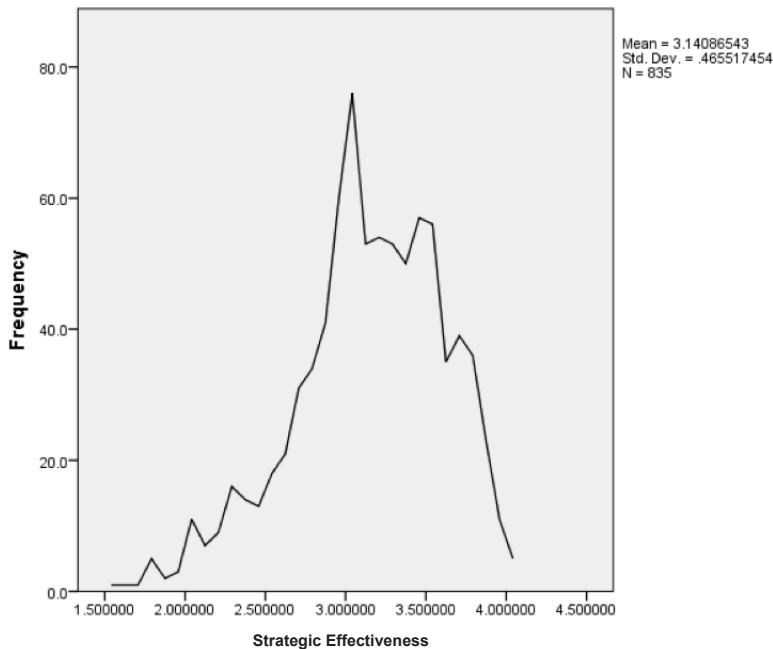
Our quantitative data is gleaned from self-reported ratings, and we recognize the challenges to validity that these types of opinion-based, subjective responses may impose. While we are confident in the internal validity of our strategic effectiveness and institutional performance scales, we also recognize the potential for respondents to rate themselves in a manner that may not truly reflect both their actual behavior and relative levels of effectiveness. More specifically, we were cognizant of the fact that our sample may have produced an extreme positive skew based on either a disconnect between their perceptions and their actual practice or a desire to portray themselves and their schools favorably. In order to mitigate this possibility, we anchored survey questions and scales in the BSAQ, which--due to its structure and sequencing--is an instrument that is proven to produce a wide variance in answers. Once we calculated strategic effectiveness and institutional performance ratings for each school based on survey responses, we calculated the sample means for each dependent variable. As shown in figure 2.1, the sample mean (scale of 1-4) for strategic effectiveness was 3.14, with a standard deviation of .466. The sample mean for institutional performance was -.0048 on a scale from -2 to 2, with a standard deviation of .61 (see Figure 2). Based on high levels of variability in answer responses and sample means, we can surmise that our instrument is reliable, and that our data can be regarded with minimal concern for the possibility of Type I errors. Our study design and methodology minimizes the potential for bias and inaccuracy.

Figure 2.3: Internal Validity of Institutional Performance Dependent Variable
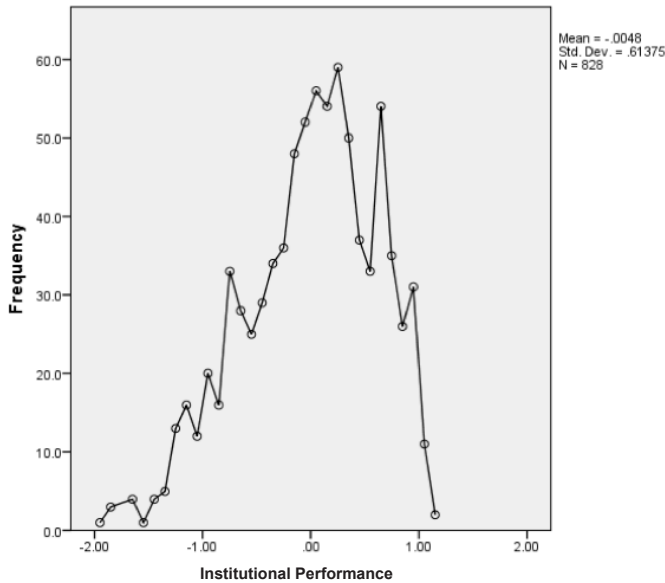
Internal Validity of the survey

We distributed the survey by email to Heads of School and we asked Heads of School to complete the survey and to also forward the email to their Board Chair. There is the possibility that some schools chose not to respond to the survey because of the sensitivity of the question items, or a lack of knowledge of the items. This survey gave schools the option to self-identify themselves or remain anonymous, and 706 of the 809 respondents chose to self-identify. This may have led to some selection bias in the responses as the schools may be framing their responses in the best light.

External Validity of the survey

The email was sent to the entire membership of NAIS. Great care was taken to ensure that the respondents of the survey represents the overall membership (see Table 2.1). We are confident that the responses in this survey are generalizable to the independent school population of NAIS, but we cannot account for independent schools that are not within the NAIS population.

Qualitative limitations

The construction of our interview protocol was guided by the data that we gathered and analyzed from our survey instrument. We structured the interview protocol based on patterns and trends that emerged from the quantitative data. The questions in our survey instrument were constructed with language from both our survey instrument and from an analysis of extant research literature around board governance. Common words and phrases were used in all interviews, and we adhered to the interview protocol carefully in their interviews. The research team reviewed interview results from all six sites and developed a set of common themes based on conclusions reached by each member of the team. These themes were consistent across our six school sites, which suggests our findings are broadly generalizable the population of NAIS member schools.

Site Descriptions

BOSTON TRINITY ACADEMY (Boston, Massachusetts)

In 2002, a group of prominent leaders in education, business, and faith had a vision to provide a college preparatory, Christ-centered experience to all students, regardless of their socio-economic status. This lofty goal, spurred the founding of Boston Trinity Academy.

> **"We wanted to provide a service to the community...to address a need that had been ignored. Everybody deserves a world-class education."**
>
> **Robert Bradley III, Board Chair at Boston Trinity**

As a result of a tremendous amount of planning, fundraising, and collaboration, spearheaded by Robert Bradley III, who has been the Board Chair since the school's inception, Boston Trinity Academy opened its doors to 59 students in grades 6-9 in 2002, in a rented school building in Brookline, Massachusetts.

Despite limited facilities and a competitive independent school marketplace, Boston Trinity experienced early success. 100% of the first class of graduating seniors matriculated to college in 2006, and in the same year the school acquired a 5-acre site in Boston's Hyde Park neighborhood (Boston Trinity Academy, 2014).

Today, Boston Trinity Academy is located in an urban setting in Boston's Hyde Park neighborhood. The school sits on 5-acres in the midst of a residential neighborhood with easy access to bus routes and commuter rails. The campus has an urban feel, with limited green space, large parking lots, and a well-kept, intimate main building with wings for administration, Middle School, Upper School, and a gymnasium. At first glance, the campus has a spartan feel, but the interior exudes warmth and intimacy that is evident of a strong community. What emerges from the halls of Boston Trinity is a diverse, joyful, and cohesive atmosphere.

Although they are still in the nascent stages, the school has managed to send 99% of their graduates to colleges and universities all over the United States, with acceptances top-tier universities such as M.I.T., Stanford, and Northwestern.

The leadership at Boston Trinity is cognizant of the fact that their commitment to awarding substantial financial aid to a large percentage of students is risky. They have established a strategic goal to establish a financial structure that relies less on gifts to fund operations, and they

are in discussions to devise strategies to attract more full-paying students to enroll. They believe that an enrollment of 300, with more full-paying students will be critical to achieving that end. In an effort to attract more students, both Robert Bradley III and Frank Guerra stated that they will need to make efforts to improve the overall curb appeal and quality of facilities.   The major challenges at hand for the leadership of Boston Trinity are to simultaneously grow enrollment to 300 while also making preparations to renovate the campus to increase their ability to attract and retain students.

There is a plethora of independent school options in the Boston area, and the leadership at Boston Trinity are up to the challenge of growing their student body by approximately 70 students while also ensuring that family finances are not a barrier for students who aspire to attend the school. Director of Admission, David Mawhinney, believes that they have exhibited the positive trends in inquiries and applications to support an additional 12-15 students for the 2015-2016 school year, which fits consistently with the school's five-year plan to reach 300.

Boston Trinity Academy	Boston Trinity educates students from diverse backgrounds in an academically demanding, Christ-centered community; inspiring them to lead lives of faith, integrity, and service.
School Type	Coed, Day, 6-12
Year Founded	2002
Enrollment	235
Location/Geography	Boston, MA, Northeast
Tuition	$16,500
Head of School	Frank Guerra
Board Chair	Robert Bradley III
Noteworthy	high percentage of low SES students enrolled, high level of global diversity through international student hosting program

PACE ACADEMY (Atlanta, Georgia)

Pace Academy, which is located in the Buckhead neighborhood, is home to 1080 students ranging from Pre-K-12th grade. The coed, day school, is amongst the most expensive schools in the Atlanta area with tuition ranging between $21,000 (pk-5) to $24,200 (6-12). The 34-acre campus boasts state-of-the-art facilities, manicured lawns, courtyards, and breath-taking views of "Pace Mountain" in the distance. The recently constructed 25-acre Pace Athletic Complex, includes Walsh Stadium, soccer fields, and a baseball stadium. The campus also boasts a state-of-the-art Fine Arts Center, which includes a 600-seat theater, 12 art studios, classrooms, and a gallery.

The academic program at Pace is robust and rigorous. Pace enjoys a 9:1 student-teacher ratio

with an average class size of 12 students in the Upper School. Pace offers 23 Advanced Placement courses, and 25 percent of seniors are recognized by the National Merit Scholarship Program.

The school was founded in 1958, when an inter-faith group purchased the private home of the Ogden family estate with a goal of creating an education environment with "fresh ideas and debate" (Pace Academy, 2014). The Ogden home, now known as "The Castle," serves as the administration building and in many ways it remains the cornerstone of the campus.

Pace was founded on Judeo-Christian values, but they encourage a culture of inclusion regardless of beliefs. The school's mission, *To create prepared, confident citizens of the world who honor the values and legacy of Pace Academy*, is grounded in desire to prepare students to understand and appreciate the world around them and their place in it. Pace Academy strives to instill a global mindset and to guide students to celebrate their differences and to "have the courage to strive for excellence" (Pace Academy, 2014). The founding ideals of creating global citizens and the exchange of "fresh ideas" remains the core principles of a Pace education. As the Pace Academy website states, "We would like to think that our school community today is exactly what our founders had in mind."

Challenges of capacity

The major issues at hand for the leadership of Pace Academy revolve around enrollment management. Fred Assaf spoke candidly about the growth they have experienced over the past decade (18%-20%) and currently, they receive seven applications for each seat. The trustees are currently examining cost structure and "doing a deep dive into expense ratios" to plan for the growth and the point at which they reach their enrollment cap. Both Fred Assaf and Robert Sheft communicated the complex issues that arise when an independent school meets their enrollment cap. The challenge for Pace will be in thinking strategically about what capacity means and how that will influence its decisions. This includes devising a cost structure to support its efforts to continue to improve the student experience while not relying on the luxury of raising tuition each year by 3%. While positive trends in enrollment are considered a positive indicator in independent schools, they can only keep growing for so long.

> "We are going to have a huge enrollment management problem...You can only raise tuition for so long."
>
> *Fred Assaf, Head of School at Pace Academy*

Pace Academy	To create prepared, confident citizens of the world who honor the values and legacy of Pace Academy
School Type	Coed, Day, K-12
Year founded	1958
Enrollment	1080
Location/Geography	Suburban Atlanta, GA, Southeast
Tuition	PK-5: $21,000; 6-12: $24,200
Head of School	Fred Assaf
Board Chair	Robert Sheft
Noteworthy	18%-20% growth in enrollment over the past 10 years, at enrollment capacity

PRESBYTERIAN DAY SCHOOL (Memphis, Tennessee)

Presbyterian Day School (PDS) is a pre-K through sixth grade boys' school with all-time high enrollment and $20 million in newly designed and remodeled facilities.

In 1949, Second Presbyterian Church, one of the oldest churches in the city of Memphis, founded a kindergarten at its new location on Poplar Avenue. Today, PDS and Second Presbyterian share a 29-acre campus in the heart of East Memphis. Church steeple and the school portico are focal points of a long city block with tall trees, well-manicured lawns and gardens, and tall red brick and stone buildings whose colonial stylings blend together well. Immediately upon entering, visitors discover that the PDS community has covered its wall space with evidence of its innovative learning culture: including colorful examples of students' work and well-integrated reminders about norms, values and expectations.

The school's chaplain, Braxton Brady, has been instrumental in developing its distinctive "Building Boys, Making Men" program of character development, which focuses on seven biblically-based virtues that define PDS' approach to giving boys a vision of manhood: the true friend, the humble hero, the servant leader, the moral motivator, the bold adventurer, the noble knight, the heart patient. Brady, together with former PDS Headmaster Lee Burns, have framed their approach in a book, *Flight Plan*, and a set of curriculum materials for the school's sixth grade character education seminar.

Character education is one distinctive programmatic element: health and fitness, global citizenship, and design thinking are also parts of PDS' strategic innovation portfolio. A predominant long-term focus of the academic program at PDS is on developing critical and creative thinking skills and is increasingly customized to the learning profile of each boy.

To balance the school's operating budget, Mr. Hancock and the Board identified non-instructional cuts and opportunities for cost savings. PDS will also plan to redefine "capacity" to allow

strategic, incremental enrollment growth across all ten grade levels. The Headmaster explained that his strategic admission goal is to:

> sprinkle [new students] around the grade levels ... Class size is not going to increase, and, if done well, the community won't really even notice. We're trying to keep our class sizes at 18. Within our first grade, we might have three classes of 17 and one of 18 ... we're going to try to have all the class sizes at 18. We're not we're going from class sizes of 18 students to 20 or 22.

PDS has rolled out plans to start a Young Knights program for young three-year-olds. Mr. Hancock explained his strategy:

> in the past we've told these families that we don't really think your children are ready for our pre-K program. So what did they do? They go find some other place, and then they stay. We're looking for 12 kids ... who would go to pre-K next year. So they would be with us for hopefully ten years.

The story of strategic effectiveness at PDS includes powerfully transformational examples of forward-focused shifts in the culture of teaching and learning extensive building and remodeling of facilities to support pedagogical and curricular innovation. And, most recently, leaders at PDS have adapted their strategic approach in response to market forces - with remarkable results. Leaders at PDS demonstrate that effective strategic mindsets influence culture and institutional performance in ways that serve school communities well.

Presbyterian Day School	Presbyterian Day School strives to glorify God by developing boys in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man.
School type	All Boys, Day; Pre-K through 6th grade; Faith-based
Year Founded	1949
Enrollment	647
Location/Geography	suburban Memphis, TN, Mid-south
Tuition	$12,990 - $18,860
Head of School	Steve Hancock
Board Chair	Don Batchelor
Noteworthy	Over 85% of PDS teachers have supplemental training from Project Zero at Harvard's Graduate School of Education.

ST. ANDREW'S EPISCOPAL SCHOOL (Potomac, Maryland)

St. Andrew's Episcopal School is located on two campuses in Potomac, Maryland, a suburb of Washington D.C. Founded in 1978 with 40 students in grades 7, 8, and 9, the school has since expanded to a full Pk-12th grade program with more than 500 students. The second campus, which houses pre-kindergarten to 2nd grade students, was acquired with the purchase of the campus of a former feeder school in a strategic decision to extend the offerings of the school by adding pre-kindergarten to 6th grade in response to an enrollment drop. The school is now at capacity (saes.org). The Head of School, Robert Kosasky, has been at St. Andrew's for 14 years, and this is the first year the Board Chair, Sandy Horowitz, has held this position, though she has been a member of the board several years prior.

St. Andrew's is well known for its Center for Transformative Teaching and Learning, founded in a partnership with Harvard University's School of Education (CTTL). The center strives to be at the forefront of educational research and to drive innovative teaching practices in the classroom. The first line of the first goal of its strategic plan reads "Become an internationally recognized leader in innovative, research based teaching and learning through the application of Mind, Brain, and Education Science." It has reached out and built partnerships with Teach for America, Harvard University's Graduate School of Education, and The Johns Hopkins University School of Education to build programs at the Center that teach teachers how to engage in the field of 'Mind, Brain, and Education' to enhance their pedagogy.

St. Andrew's Episcopal School	To know and inspire each child in an inclusive community dedicated to exceptional teaching, learning, and service.
School type	Coed, Day, PK-12
Enrollment	529
Location/Geography	Mid-Atlantic
Tuition	$21,990 to $37,990
Mission Type	Faith based
Head of School	Robert Kosasky
Board Chair	Sandy Horowitz
Noteworthy	St. Andrew's has engaged in an innovative reaccreditation process framed by five guiding questions developed by the school community.

THE SEVEN HILLS SCHOOL (Cincinnati, Ohio)

Located on two campuses in suburban Cincinnati, Ohio, The Seven Hills School serves nearly 1,050 students in pre-K through twelfth grade. The Seven Hills of today is the result of a 1974 merger between three schools with traditions of excellence: College Preparatory School, the Lotspeich School, and the Hillsdale School. Miss Mary Harlan Doherty founded the oldest,

College Preparatory School, in 1906. The former College Preparatory School is now Seven Hills' Doherty campus, which serves students in grades pre-K through five. The campus which was previously home to both Lotspeich School and Hillsdale School now serves as Seven Hills' Hillsdale Campus, which includes the School's administrative offices along with Lotspeich School (Pre-K through fifth grade), Seven Hills Middle School (grades six through eight), Seven Hills Upper School (grades nine through twelve).

Seven Hills has grown in remarkable ways over the last six years. When Chris Garten was installed as the fifth permanent Head of School in 2009, Seven Hills' enrollment had fallen to 957 students from a record high of 1069 in 2004-05. Rebuilding enrollment to 1047 for 2014-15 represents an impressive resurgence - especially within the context of lingering economic uncertainty from the 2008 Great Recession. Inside those numbers is more evidence of strong institutional performance. In the last five years, Seven Hills added more than $15 million to its endowment, raised teacher salaries to the 90th percentile of peer schools in the Midwest, doubled its investment in faculty professional learning aligned with curricular innovation, and tripled its budget for tuition assistance. The school now draws students from more than 65 zip codes and the community is more diverse than ever: students of color make up 30% of the school's student body.

The Seven Hills School	Seven Hills engages hearts and minds, challenging students to develop their unique capacities and preparing each for a meaningful role in a rapidly changing world.
School Type	Co-ed; Day; Pre-K through 12th grade
Year Founded	1974
Enrollment	1047
Location /Geography	Cincinnati, OH / suburban, Midwest
Tuition	$15,995 - $23,222
Head of School	Chris Garten
Board Chair	Beth Schiff
Noteworthy	The College Preparatory School ("Miss Doherty's School"), the Lotspeich School, and the Hillsdale School merged in 1974 to create Seven Hills.

WASHINGTON INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL (Washington, D.C.)

Washington International School is perched on a hilltop in the corner of the Tregaron Conservancy in Washington D.C. The forest and winding hiking trails that surround the school belies its location in an urban city, and the stately mansion at the heart of campus commands beautiful vistas of both the city and the calm woods around it. The mansion and most of the other buildings on campus were once the residence of Ambassador Joseph Davies and his wife, Marjorie Merriweather Post, who named their estate Tregaron. Washington International School

settled on in the estate in 1972 and eventually bought the buildings and surrounding six acres in 1980, with the rest of the twenty acres going to the Tregaron Conservancy, which holds the lands in trust and preserves the natural environment originally envisioned by Marjorie Post. The school renovated the buildings and went to great lengths to keep the character of the estate in place, ensuring that all new buildings reflect the architecture of the original buildings (Tregaron Conservancy).

The school itself was founded in 1966 by Dorothy Goodman to serve international families in Washington with the mission to help children become multilingual and prepared for a college experience anywhere in the world. It became an IB school in 1975. More than 95% of the class of 2014 earned the IB diploma, and 68% of them earned the prestigious bilingual IB diploma.

The board is currently in the silent phase of a capital campaign to build a new science building, and this "phase of this capital campaign is going incredibly well, we've had much bigger gifts than in the past," according to David Muenzer, the chair of the WIS board. The school has seen record levels of annual giving, breaking school records every year for the past three years. However, this has not always been the case.

> **We want to transform the community's commitment to philanthropy.**
>
> Clayton Lewis, Head of School at Washington International School

Washington International School	To provide a demanding international education that will challenge students to become responsible and effective world citizens.
School Type	Coed, Day, PK-12
Enrollment	900
Location/Geography	Washington, D.C., Mid-Atlantic
Tuition	$31,840 to $37,030
Mission Type	Nonsectarian
Head of School	Clayton Lewis
Board Chair	David Muenzer
Noteworthy	There are more than 90 countries represented in the school community.

Section 4:
Findings

Analysis of our data produced five elements that were consistently present and paramount to strategic effectiveness of boards and to a set of institutional outcomes for independent schools in our study:

1. **The percentage of trustees who are current parents has minimal direct influence on strategic effectiveness within boards of trustees.** Leading consultants and NAIS researchers have long hypothesized that a high percentage of current parents on a board - more than 60 percent, generally - impairs that board's capacity to think and act strategically. We find no empirical data to support such claims; instead, our findings suggest schools that scored highly on markers of strategic effectiveness may include high percentages of current parents on their boards. More importantly, we find that board membership is complex and multifaceted; other factors matter more.

2. **Strategically effective boards are intentional about onboarding new trustees.** Although most boards have a process of orientation, boards that exhibited higher strategic effectiveness ratings invested in organizational socialization and acculturation of new trustees ("onboarding") over longer periods of time. Strategically effective boards protect and perpetuate healthy board culture.

3. **The purposeful use of committees is associated with increased strategic effectiveness.** The relationship between the use of committees and strategic effectiveness is an important structural component of board governance. The purposeful use of committees is critical to a board's ability to effectively locate more immediate, tactical concerns within its longer-term strategic focus.

4. **Boards that rate highly on strategic effectiveness contribute positively to institutional performance.** Our findings confirm the assumption that healthy boards positively impact institutional performance of the independent schools they serve. More specifically, perceptions of strategic effectiveness with respect to financial sustainability and strategic planning have positive impacts on institutional performance.

5. **The relationship between board chair and head of school is critical.** A healthy and productive relationship between board chair and school head has a very strong effect on board strategic effectiveness. On this point, our findings align with and support NAIS' long-held conclusions about best practices for board governance.

Finding 1: The percentage of trustees who are current parents has minimal direct influence on strategic effectiveness within boards of trustees.

Leading consultants and NAIS researchers have long hypothesized that a high percentage of current parents on a board - more than 60 percent, generally - impairs the board's capacity to think and act strategically (Bassett, 2014; Mott, 2014; NAIS, 2013; NAIS 2012; DeKuyper, 2007). We find no empirical data to support such claims; in fact, our findings suggest schools that scored highly on markers of strategic effectiveness may include high percentages of current parents on their boards. More importantly, board membership is complex and multifaceted; we find that other factors matter more.

To explore this concept, we developed survey questions to examine relationships between strategic effectiveness and:

Percentage of current parents on the board. We asked Heads of School and Board Chairs to report actual percentages of current parents on their boards (see Appendix 1, question 67). In our survey, 786 School leaders responded: 403 respondents (52%) reported that more than half of their board members are current parents. 343 respondents (44%) reported that their boards included more than 60% current parents. The decile with the greatest number of respondents (122) is 71%-80% (see Figure 4.1). Extant literature predicts that we would find a negative relationship between the percentage of current parents on boards and the strategic effectiveness of those boards. We analyzed a series of correlations to investigate this assumption. We reported a p-value of .41, indicating that this assumed board characteristic is not statistically significant in terms of strategic effectiveness (see Table 4.1). Any observed relationship between the percentage of current parents on a board and strategic effectiveness in likely to have been the result of random chance.

Figure 4.1: Percentage of Current Parents Serving as Trustees
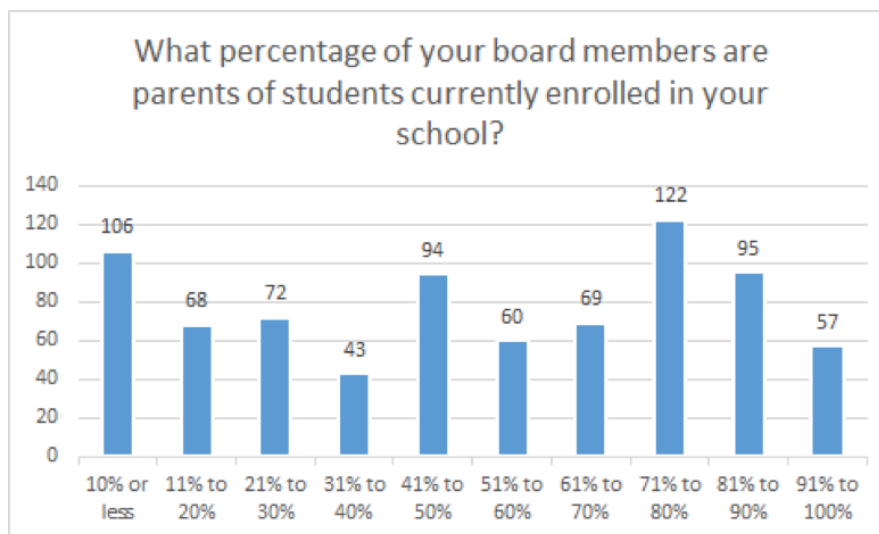
Table 4.1: Preferences and Policies Regarding Current Parents as Trustees and Strategic Effectiveness

Survey Question	Strategic Effectiveness
	p-value
What percentage of your board members are parents of students currently enrolled in your school?	.41
Does your school have PREFERENCES regarding parents of students currently enrolled at your school?	.88
Does your school have POLICIES regarding parents of students currently enrolled at your school?	.27

Heads of School and Board Chairs' preferences regarding percentages of current parents on the board. We asked about preferences regarding the percentage of current parents on the board to explore the possibility that respondents may have parent / non-parent ratios in their current boards that are not indicative of their preferences regarding ideal board makeup. 799 respondents answered this question in our survey; 41% (330) expressed no preference; 20% (163) preferred a majority of current parents; and 16% favored an equal balance of current parents and non-parents. Only 22% (177 respondents) chose majority non-parents as their preferred mix within their boards (see Figure 4.2). We conducted analysis of variance (ANOVA) to examine relationships between group means for preferences and strategic effectiveness dependent variable. We report a p-value of .88 which indicates no statistically significant relationship between heads' and board chairs' preferences and the strategic effectiveness of their boards (see Table 4.1).

Figure 4.2: Policies on Current Parents as Trustees
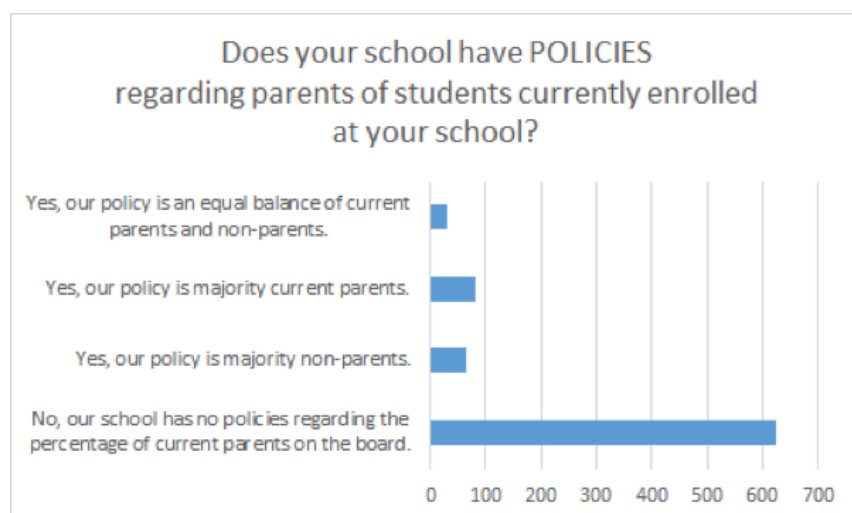
Policies regarding percentages of current parents on the board. We sought to determine whether or not boards with policies regarding the percentage of current parents were associated with higher levels of strategic effectiveness. 798 respondents answered this question in our survey; 78% (623) responded that their board had no policies; 10% (80) had a policy of a majority of current parents; and 4% (30) had a policy of an equal balance of current parents and non-parents. Only 8% (65 respondents) reported a policy that formalized their preference for board makeup with majority current non-parents (see Figure 4.3). We conducted an analysis of variance (ANOVA) to examine relationships between group means for policies on board makeup and strategic effectiveness variable. We report a p-value of .27 which indicates no statistically significant relationship between policies regarding current parents and the strategic effectiveness of boards (see Table 4.1).

Figure 4.3: Preferences on Current Parents as Trustees
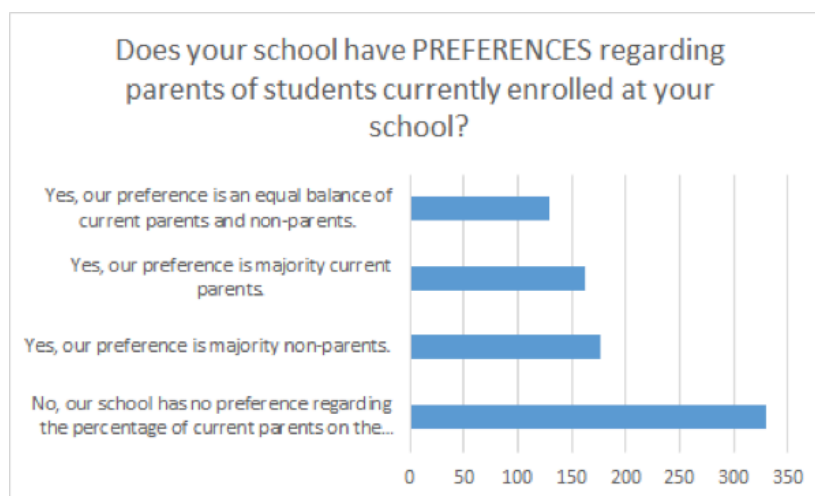
We created items within our interview protocol in an attempt to explain the negligible impact that policies, preferences, and percentages of current parents have on strategic effectiveness (Appendix 2). In a comment that was illustrative of the overall theme of our finding, Pace Academy's Board Chair explained, "One of the reasons we can be effective is because we are parents and we understand the school. Outsiders don't have the same perspective on your school." Pace Academy's Head of School agreed, adding, "current parents are keenly aware of the culture of the school and the needs of the school. Issues arise through the parents first." Schools that scored highly on strategic effectiveness may actually prefer a higher percentage of current parents within their Boards of Trustees.

Seven Hills' Head of School amplified our finding when he explained his perspective on current parents as board members. When asked whether or not current parents tend to bring more tactical and personal issues to the attention of the board, he stated, "It doesn't really happen. I honestly can't remember in my time here an issue arising in a board meeting where someone represented a viewpoint or raised a question as a parent."

At Boston Trinity, both the Head of School and Board Chair noted that having a Board of

> "Our trustees do a very good job of putting their parent hats aside. I've heard Clayton say that this trustee came to him and made it very clear that they are talking to him as a parent, not a trustee."
>
> David Muenzer, Board Chair at Washington International School

Trustees comprised of current parents is one of the key components of their success. Boston Trinity's Head of School was emphatically supportive of having a board dominated by current parents. He argued that "there's no way we could get non-parents to give as generously as our parents have given. They are more invested when their children are here." He has been pleased with the Board's capacity to think strategically, despite the fact that every trustee (with the exception of The Board Chair) is a current parent.

Other Factors Matter More

One key predictor of strategic effectiveness is school leaders' capacity to identify and cultivate new board members. Within our survey questionnaire, 67% of respondents indicated that new trustee selection was "very important." We also found a strong positive relationship between respondents' perceptions of how well the board selects its new trustees and strategic effectiveness ($p < .00$; eta squared $= .28$).

We included new trustee identification and new trustee cultivation as components of our board activities independent variable. In our survey questionnaire, we asked Heads of School and Board Chairs to select characteristics that matter most when identifying and cultivating potential trustees. We conducted ANOVAs for each of these responses in an attempt to

> We ask ourselves, who can effectively change the course of the school?"
>
> Fred Assaf, Head of School at Pace Academy

identify relationships with the strategic effectiveness dependent variable. When appropriate, we administered eta tests for each statistically significant relationship to measure effect sizes.

Whether or not a potential new board member is a current parent at the school notwithstanding, we report statistically and substantively significant relationships between two board roles and strategic effectiveness: 1) capacity to influence the culture of giving and 2) capacity to offer professional advice that serves the school's strategic context. Our qualitative data suggests that Heads of School and Board Chairs value collegial, collaborative dispositions as well.

Capacity to Influence Culture of Giving

Our findings suggest that boards which demonstrate a higher capacity to serve as fundraising bodies within schools are, on average, more strategically effective ($p < .00$). Regarding substantive significance, we show a strong 24% effect (eta squared $= .239$) on strategic effectiveness in terms of the capacity of a board to carry out its role as a fundraising body (see Table 4.2).

Table 4.2: Capacity to Serve as Fundraising Body and Strategic Effectiveness

Survey Question: "How WELL do you think your board carries out each of the following roles?"	Strategic Effectiveness		
	p value	Eta Squared	Effect Size
A fundraising body	p < .000	0.239	24%

We probed the concept of "fundraising body" within our survey questionnaire by asking whether individual board members are required to make monetary contributions to the school. We found a statistically significant (p < .00), small effect (eta squared = .023) on strategic effectiveness from requiring board members to make monetary contributions to the school. Moreover, among schools that reported sharing a minimum contribution requirement as part of the identification and cultivation process for new trustees, nearly three-fourths (73%) identified "according to the board member's ability and capacity" as their standard for defining a minimum contribution. Only four percent of survey respondents defined their minimum expectation for board members' contributions at $5000 (see Figure 4.4).

Figure 4.4: Minimum Suggested Contributions for Board Members
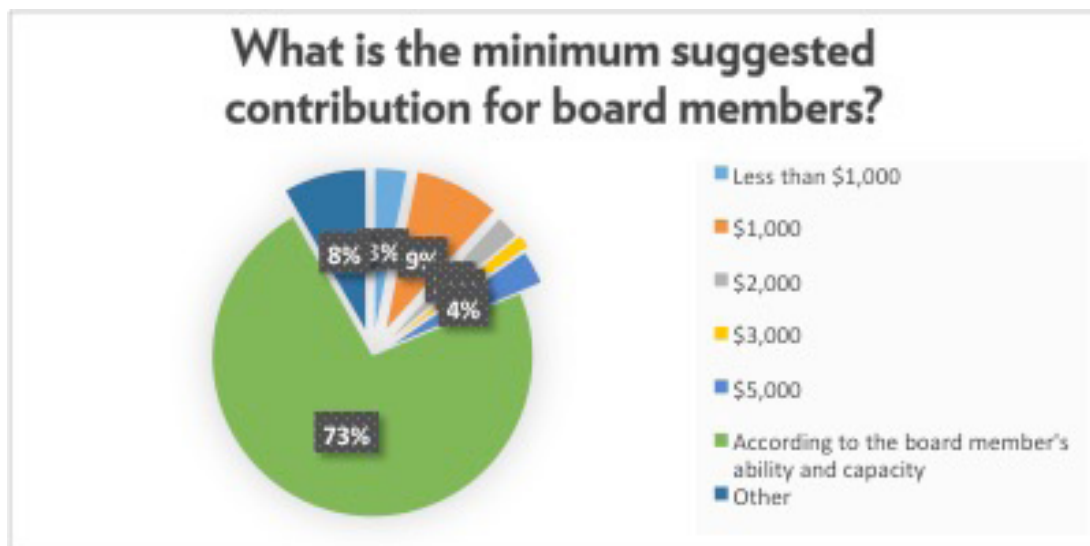
From this data we find that the size of individual board members' financial contributions is one component of a board's ability to act as a fundraising body; however, a willingness and capacity to influence the giving habits of others is a significant component of this role as well. Because we define culture in terms of the conversations among members within a community, we define

individual board members' efforts with regard to fundraising as shaping the culture of giving within their independent school community (Eliot & Pritchard, 2012). The Board Chair at Seven Hills supported this assertion when she stated,

> Right now we are in a capital campaign mode, and one of the things we've looked is new board members' ability to fundraise, or desire to fundraise, or their ability, themselves, to be part of

"We're not a checkbook board, where you have to give x amount or you're not allowed a seat on our board. We have people who give $1000 and we have people who give $1,000,000."

Sandy Horowitz, Board Chair at St. Andrew's Episcopal School

the fundraising. All board members are asked to give, but the critical piece is whether or not they can ask others to give.

A Group of Experts

From our survey results we also found that high-functioning boards of trustees serve as experts who can be called upon to offer professional advice that contributes meaningfully to strategic effectiveness ($p<.000$; eta squared $= .197$). Within the context of identifying and cultivating board members, developing a varied and contextual mix of professional expertise matters (see

Table 4.3: Board as Group of Experts and Strategic Effectiveness

Survey Question: "How WELL do you think your board carries out each of the following roles?"	Strategic Effectiveness		
	p value	Eta Squared	Effect Size
A group of experts who can be called upon for professional advice	p < .000	0.197	20%

As our data demonstrate, boards that are more strategically effective seem to have a varied and contextual mix of professional expertise among potential members. We probed this finding more deeply by asking Heads of School and Board Chairs about the characteristics they value most when considering potential trustees to serve on the board. Seven Hills Head of School explained:

> Board building should also be strategic. It's about thinking about the skill sets that you're going to need, not for next year, but for four or five years from now. And then orchestrating a process of progressive seduction or cultivation so that people who could really be assets to your board are moved closer and closer to your institution to the point where when you ask them to serve there's actually a chance that they would say yes.

Pace Academy approached trustee identification through a strategic lens. They view their board

as a strategic and evolving body, and they consider the future direction of the school when looking for the right skills sets to add. When asked about the process of trustee identification, Pace's Academy's Board Chair asserted, "We look for what we don't have." For example, Pace Academy has recently experienced unprecedented athletic success, which has presented the need for strategic leadership in athletics. Pace's Board Chair observed,

> We've never had someone who could strategically think about athletics. Athletics represents such a huge part of every school's life and it's a very challenging place to get strategic thinking. We've seen a marked improvement by putting strategic energy behind that. We knew athletics was getting attention and we needed people who could help us.

The ability of school leaders to identify strategic needs is critical to their success in identifying the right mix of trustees. For example, a board that is considering building new facilities might focus their attention towards identifying and cultivating members who have some expertise in architecture, design, construction, or specific experience in finance. St. Andrew's Board Chair asserted, "You need to have your financial experts--of course--and we have a number of people that are not only CPAs, but they also have legal expertise in the financial arena. They have building expertise, construction expertise...you know...what we will need moving forward."

Collegial and Collaborative Disposition

Our quantitative data suggests that a potential trustee's level of expertise in various fields and the ability to influence the culture of giving are important characteristics. However, our interviews, which probed this concept more deeply, revealed a third theme: *a collegial and collaborative disposition is an important characteristic to consider when identifying potential trustees.* Heads of School and Board Chairs in our interviews noted the importance of identifying potential trustees who are able to collaborate well with others, who understand group dynamics, and those who demonstrate a willingness to embrace collegiality. Heads of School and Board chairs in our sample seek trustees who understand the importance of being a part of a process rather than each acting as a single, directive voice.

> "I consider who we choose to be on the board, it's almost like a recipe, you need a little bit of a number of different ingredients, and it depends on if you need more flour or you need more sugar on this particular board."
>
> Sandy Horowitz, Board Chair at St. Andrew's Episcopal School

When asked about the most important attribute for trustee selection, Washington International's Head of School, asserted:

> Disposition. I think that it's the one. A person may not have a particular skill set...you may or may not have philanthropy, but you know that when you're going into it. But if you get the disposition wrong, if they're the person who comes in and doesn't work with the group, who has an axe to grind, who's temperamental or whatever, that's where the

price is tears. So you want to get that right.

The Board Chair for St. Andrew's Episcopal School highlighted the importance of a collegial, collaborative disposition when she stated, "If someone gives a lot of money but doesn't play nice at the table, it's not worth it." Pace Academy's Board Chair supported her assertion when he spoke to the importance of balancing individual expertise and collaboration. He offered a simple, yet profound explanation when he stated, "Smart people who clash get you nowhere."

> **"The ability to play well in the sandbox with others is really important."**
> **Robert Kosasky, Head of School at St. Andrew's Episcopal School**

Presbyterian Day School's Board Chair surmised that a collaborative disposition was a necessity for trustees in order to effectively work in conjunction with the Head of School. He explained that the concept of shared leadership was only possible when trustees and Heads of School worked collaboratively, rather than through a top-down, didactic approach. He stated, "We don't direct the head of school here... none of us on the board are educators, but I think it's a very collegial, collaborative, environment between us." He also noted that a collegial disposition is just as important as the capacity to give financially. When asked about the importance of identifying trustees with the ability to contribute financially to the school, he described a mindset that illustrates our finding:

> There is a strong, successful history here of the board supporting the school ... We're not looking at people's personal balance sheets in order to consider whether or not they come on the board. We're looking for influence, passion for the school, interest in PDS and a heart to see the kind of education in our mission statement carried out.

Finding 2: Strategically effective boards are intentional about onboarding new trustees.

Organizational socialization, or onboarding, describes the process by which newcomers move from being organizational outsiders to becoming organizational insiders. In contrast with orientation, which tends to happen within a narrowly defined window of time, onboarding refers to a longer acculturation process for sharing knowledge, skills, and behaviors that initiates need to succeed in their new roles and organizations. Newcomer acclimatization is associated with important outcomes, including: satisfaction, commitment, turnover, and performance (Bauer, Erdogan, Berrin, Zedeck, & Sheldon, 2011).

Although most boards have a process of orientation, boards that exhibited higher strategic effectiveness ratings invested in organizational socialization and acculturation of new trustees ("onboarding") over longer periods of time. Strategically effective boards in our sample invested in onboarding to nurture and perpetuate healthy board culture.

We developed a series of questions (see Appendix 2) to examine professional development for new trustees. We asked if the respondent's board had a formal orientation process for their new trustees; we asked respondents to rate the importance of orientation and succession plans; and we asked them to report perceptions of how well their board performs these duties. We asked whether school leaders invite potential trustees to serve on *ad hoc* committees or task forces as a component of the recruiting and cultivation process.

We conducted ANOVA analyses for each of these responses, then examined the effect sizes of each by implementing eta tests for each question. We found a statistically significant relationship ($p < .00$) between each question item and the strategic effectiveness variable. Regarding substantive significance, we show a very strong 28% effect (eta squared = .28) for the capacity of a board to effectively perpetuate itself by choosing and orienting new members as part of a succession plan. Continuous professional development is a key component of an effective onboarding process.

With regard to strategic effectiveness, we note a small effect size of a formal orientation process for new board members (eta squared = .07), and a small effect size for the decision of a board to invite a new member to serve on a committee or task force before being invited to serve on the board (eta squared = .02). Our findings also suggest a small effect on strategic effectiveness for those who engage in professional development more frequently (eta squared = .02). See Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Orientation, Onboarding and Strategic Effectiveness

Survey Questions	Strategic Effectiveness	
	p-value	Eta Squared
How well the board effectively perpetuates itself by choosing and orienting new trustees/creating succession plans	.00	.28
Does your board have a formal orientation for new members?	.00	.07
How important it is for a board to effectively perpetuate itself by choosing and orienting new trustees/creating succession plans	.00	.05
As a practice, does your board invite potential new members to serve on committees or task forces?	.00	.02
How often does your board engage in professional development?	.00	.02

We developed questions for the interview protocol in an effort to more fully understand the implications of our statistical findings regarding the onboarding process (see Appendix 2). Heads of School and Board Chairs at all six schools indicated that the orientation and onboarding process for new trustees provides the majority of guidance and professional development for trustees and is, therefore, a critical component for board that think and act strategically.

This process is deliberately structured around shaping new trustees' understandings of their roles within the broader school community in addition to their responsibilities as board members. A critical component of the onboarding process is to educate new board members who are also current parents to enhance their understanding of the complexities of their dual roles and how to manage them. The Head of School for Washington International School's sentiment is illustrative of this onboarding function. He explained that "about three-fourths of our trustees are parents. So we educate them on the role of being a trustee and a parent and what that really means...and about leaving the parent hat outside the boardroom when we're talking about decisions for the school."

The importance of the orientation and onboarding process at Boston Trinity is critical to the establishment of board culture, mission alignment, and role definition for trustees. Boston Trinity provides specific guidelines and consistent acculturation for trustees. The Head of School for Boston Trinity spoke to the importance of maintaining mission alignment with each trustee. He declared, "Trustees have to understand and appreciate the mission of the school if they are going to be able to contribute to the highest level." The leadership at Boston Trinity Academy acknowledged the fact that their trustees have a unique set of circumstances and challenges that can potentially complicate their roles. The school has only been in existence for 12 years, and the trustees are sometime required to be more "hands-on" with tactical issues than trustees of long-established institutions. Therefore, the onboarding process for trustees at Boston Trinity is paramount and is underscored by the school's Governance Document (See Appendix 5). An excerpt from the Governance Document highlights the complex roles and responsibilities that trustees at Boston Trinity must balance.

With a relatively new school such as BTA, there are usually not enough financial resources or staff for the Board to operate as a purely supervisory or oversight Board. Accordingly the Board exercises its oversight functions but also helps out, where desired by the Headmaster and as appropriate, in some operating aspects of the school such as fundraising, marketing, and budgeting and other financial matters. While necessary, this can cause problems as Board members are therefore involved not only as Trustees (in a supervisory role) but also as a servant/employee of the school and under the direction of the Headmaster or his delegated authority. This can be difficult to juggle, and good judgment and good will are often necessary to avoid potential conflicts. (Boston Trinity Governance Document)

Pace Academy deals with a different set of challenges regarding trustee onboarding, related to the characteristics of their trustees. Pace's Head of School stated, "We are fortunate to have such a high level of talent…people who manage thousands of employees…they already know how to think strategically." However, he surmised that the most difficult challenge to establishing a healthy board culture lies in creating a common understanding amongst the trustees of how schools work. The Board Chair at Pace also offered insight into the complex challenge of acculturating their trustees to the school environment. He stated, " we tell them to separate the tactical from the strategic. We tell them to identify the strategic from the tactical....you have to have leaders who reinforce it." He further highlighted the importance of the orientation and onboarding process in initiating a paradigm shift for new trustees from the corporate sector approach to the educational sector mindset. He argued, "You can't fire the bottom 10% in an independent school like you can as a CEO."

Fred Assaf, Pace Academy's Head of School, described the role of a trustee as an "embattled position".

At Pace, the quality of being approachable and accessible to parents while also adhering to board protocol is a necessity. Trustees must possess the ability to interact with and listen to parents at extra-curricular functions and events, while also resisting the urge to react to parent concerns outside of the scope of their responsibility. Pace's Head of School described the role of a trustee as an "embattled position." He believes that "Board members must be proud and confident that the school is doing the right thing when approached with tactical problems. They must have a sense of pride...it is important that people are able to insulate themselves from operational issues." The onboarding process for trustees at Pace stresses the importance of this complex role.

Finding 3: The purposeful use of committees is associated with increased strategic effectiveness.

The balance of tactical and strategic work for boards of trustees is highly complex. On one hand, committees are critical to task completion and the tackling of real-time issues. On the other, some researchers surmise that heavy reliance on committees may inhibit a board's ability to function strategically and that committees may contribute to silos (Chait, Ryan, & Taylor 2005).

We examined committees as a component of our board structures independent variable. Board structures include elements that can be spelled out in a document; they include features of the board that may be present regardless of the individual characteristics of the people who comprise the board. The manner in which boards develop and utilize committees (finance, building and grounds, etc) is an indicator of how boards tackle real-time issues, how they manage complex, strategic planning, and how Heads of School bring "ground-level" issues to light through a process of detailed discussion and review. In an effort to explore relationships between committee use and strategic effectiveness, we developed a matrix of questions from the NAIS Board Governance Study which asked respondents to identify the committees that were presently being utilized on their boards. Our list of committees was not exhaustive. Therefore, we offered "other" as an option and allowed respondents to list any committees that were not included in our list of answer choices.

97% of schools in our sample utilize committees. Our survey respondents identified finance, development, governance, executive, and building and grounds as the most commonly utilized board committees (see Figure 4.5):

Figure 4.5: Committees

We administered t-tests to examine relationships between each individual committee and strategic effectiveness. We then administered eta analyses to explain the magnitude of individual committees' impact on board strategic effectiveness.

We found that Heads of School and Board Chairs utilize committees in a variety of ways to address complex issues. We identified eight committees that are associated with heightened strategic effectiveness (p < .00): Governance / Nominating, Development, Executive, Buildings and Grounds, Strategic Planning, Diversity, Finance, and Head of School Evaluation. We note small effect sizes (eta squared = .04) across a variety of committee types, including Governance / Nominating and Development (see Table 4.5).

Table 4.5: Committees and Strategic Effectiveness

Survey Question: "Which committees are part of your board?"			Strategic Effectiveness	
	# of responses (N = 807)	% of sample	p-value	Eta Squared
Governance/Nominating	676	81%	.00	.04
Development	709	85%	.00	.04
Executive	658	79%	.00	.03
Buildings and Grounds	599	72%	.00	.03
Strategic Planning	314	38%	.00	.02
Diversity	121	15%	.00	.02
Finance	774	89%	.00	.02
Head of School evaluation	278	33%	.00	.01

We also note that only twelve (12) respondents - out of 807 in our sample - reported that they do not use committees at all as part of their board governance structures. These twelve schools rated themselves, on average, a full standard deviation below the mean for strategic effectiveness in the sample as a whole. This finding calls into question Chait, Ryan and Taylor's (2005) claim that "committees generally select ... micromanagement over strategic governance" (p. 66).

In order to further explore the pattern of statistically significant relationships between the use of various committees and strategic effectiveness in an interview setting, we asked Heads of Schools and Board Chairs to describe the ways in which committees contributed to their board's strategic effectiveness (see Appendix 2). According to interview responses, the use of committees is vital to the ability of boards to be strategically effective.

Our findings suggest that committee work and leadership go hand-in-hand. Although the functions and purposes of committees vary, school leaders at all six sites spoke to the capacity of their committees to act as bridges that help Heads manage

"**Most of our work is done in the committee structure. The board meetings tend to be used more for votes and some discussions but the heavy lifting of work is really done by the committees.**"

David Muenzer, Board Chair at Washington International School

complex schoolwide strategic and tactical challenges. Committees address, distill, and buffer complex issues through a detailed review process before they are presented to the Board as a whole. Heads of School described the usefulness of committees to complete tasks, while also adding structure to the exploration of complicated strategic issues. Respondents also expressed appreciation for the usefulness of committees to complete tasks, while also adding structure to the exploration of complicated strategic issues.

The Head of School for Pace Academy believes that committees have been instrumental in the board's ability to think strategically while also being able to handle tactical issues efficiently and skillfully. "Committees are the place where work gets done. Also, we are able to put people in places where they are experts. They are able to meet more frequently and are able to meet about specific purposes".

> **"With a board of 23, at a very dynamic school, you really have to avoid being a committee as a whole, and being off track, and there's nothing that great trustees hate then having their time wasted. So, there's great respect on the board for the committees doing their work"**
>
> Robert Kosasky, Head of School at St. Andrew's Episcopal School

An interesting theme that emerged from our analysis was the issue of principal-agent relationships within boards. Although boards hire and evaluate heads of school, board members may have little or no professional expertise in nonprofit governance (generally) or leading schools (specifically). Pace Academy's Board Chair explained the finance committee's function not only in terms of support but also as an essential sounding board for new ideas and a testing ground for potential shifts in strategic focus. He described the finance committee chair as an important filter and link between the Head of School and the Board as a whole when he asserted, "We put the right people on the finance committee---they have to be willing and able to say no. Having a strong finance chairman is really important in an independent school. It is a critical factor of the people we put on the board. A common sense approach and a strong finance chair are critical to success."

The Head of School for Boston Trinity provided a powerful metaphor to illustrate the purposeful role that committees play in bridging the gap between the Head of School and the Board when he explained, "Trustees have the 30,000-foot view. As the Head of School, I am on the ground level, in the trenches. The Board of Trustees is at the 30,000-foot level. Committees stand on the mountaintops, in between the Board and the faculty. They can see further than those in the trenches, but they are close enough to the ground to deal with tactical issues that are not evident to the Board of Trustees as a whole."

The Head of School at St. Andrew's credited committees for their ability to analyze, synthesize, and explain complex issues in a manner that leads to efficient decision-making on the board level. "When we make decisions of any magnitude on the board, we've had a minimum of one, sometimes two or three committees, vet it…[they] go through it two or three times so that before

the board decides, they have gotten feedback. So by the end, what was a very thorny, complex contentious issue, is usually passed very readily because the real issue, the saliency, is well defined."

The Head of School for St. Andrew's further clarified his assertion by providing a concrete example of an instance in which the school benefited from the formation of a temporary committee, or task force, to address a dramatic drop in enrollment in the 6th grade. With the precipitous drop in enrollment, St. Andrew's formed a sustainability task force to examine the problem and to ensure the future viability of the school. The task force, although defined as a temporary group assigned to a specific task, operated over the span of almost two years. St. Andrew's Head of School explained, "We spent a year to 16 months looking at the data in the sustainability task force about what we could to do protect the school and strengthen it. We really came out of it saying, we'd really be strongest if we were a pre K to 12th grade school." After a careful examination of the campus, the task force determined that the most viable solution was to consider merging with another school.

Meanwhile, St. Francis Episcopal Day School, a nearby Pre K-3rd grade school funded in part by St. Francis Episcopal Church, was floundering. The school was placing an increasingly large drain on their parent church, which was already experiencing difficulties with its finances.

> **"I talked with my counterpart in that small feeder school that was struggling. Two months later, we bought it."**
> Robert Kosasky, Head of School at St. Andrew's Episcopal School

Eventually, the leadership from St. Francis Day School and St. Francis Episcopal Church had exhausted all of the possible options for continued operation, and the decision was made to sell St. Francis Episcopal Day School.

St. Andrew's was prepared to act quickly. St. Francis Episcopal School closed its doors for the last time in May 2008, and St. Andrew's opened its new Lower School campus that fall. St. Andrew's Head of School stated,

> It was an opportunistic event. A lot of things had to come right...you can imagine saying, 'we're thinking about buying a school.' We'd already talked to the board for a year about this, and said 'here's what we're finding'. Even the previous spring, we're thinking of expansion with the practical way to do that is investigating at some point some kind of merger or acquisition. So it was in people's heads. I won't say it wasn't intense. We had a lot of conversation, obviously the actual merging and incorporation of the school to us was a multiyear process culturally, but it's been very successful.

The Head of School for St. Andrew's indicated that there was no way for the board to truly anticipate the purchase of another school. "When we wrote the strategic plan in 2004, there was no concept of this." The sustainability task force was instrumental in engaging the board through a process of exploration, discovery, and strategic thought which enabled them to act swiftly to make decisions to ensure the sustainability of the school. St. Andrew's Head of School

highlighted the merits of the sustainability task force when he stated, "It was just two years later that we said, you know, things are starting to change. It was a year and a half after that when we said, you know, this is something we really need to do when it comes available. Six months after that, opportunity presented itself. "

Finding 4: Boards that rate highly on strategic effectiveness contribute positively to institutional performance.

It is a widely-accepted assumption that healthy boards contribute to positive school outcomes. In fact, it may seem logical to assume that strategic boards make positive impacts on the institutions they serve. There is a plethora of mitigating factors that may positively influence the institutional performance of a school regardless of the level of strategic effectiveness of its board. However, there is a lack of empirical data to support the notion. We sought to provide evidence that supports or challenges the claim, while also identifying and analyzing the factors that may contribute to healthy boards.

To examine the relationship between strategic effectiveness of boards and institutional performance of the schools they serve, we grouped questions from our matrix into categories related to finance and governance, and we conducted ANOVAs of each question item within the strategic effectiveness metric against the institutional performance metric. We then generated an eta score for each question to clarify the effect that each component of our strategic effective variable has on the institutional performance of schools. Our decision to deconstruct the strategic effectiveness variable was driven by a desire to identify and understand more fully ways that strategic actions and processes impact institutional performance.

Table 4.6 presents the magnitude of the positive impacts that strategic budget oversight and long-term financial planning had on the institutional performance of the schools in our sample. Our findings suggest that several relationships exist between components of board strategic effectiveness and institutional performance. Schools that approached budget approval and review within the context of the long term financial needs of the school yielded a positive effect on their institutional performance ($p < .00$, eta squared = .11). Those who had a process for conducting long-term planning to address the current and future needs of the school enjoyed an even greater positive impact on their school's overall institutional performance ($p > ,00$, eta squared = .18). In short, our findings suggest that boards who viewed financial planning, approval, oversight, and review in a strategic manner contributed positively to their school's institutional performance.

Table 4.6: Strategic Effectiveness metrics (Finance) and Institutional Performance

Survey Question	Institutional Performance	
The board at our school...	p-value	Eta Squared
has a process in place for reviewing and approving the annual budget in context of the long-term financial needs of the school.	.00	.11
has a process in place for conducting long-term financial planning on behalf of the school.	.00	.18

Regarding strategic governance practices and institutional performance, we grouped questions

from our survey instrument that asked Heads of Schools and Board Chairs to rate their approach to strategic governance and strategic planning. To analyze these relationships, we conducted ANOVAs between each question and our institutional performance metric. Table 4.7 illustrates the effects that planning for the future and balancing current issues with long-range priorities had on institutional performance of our sample schools. We note a moderate effect size ($p <$ .00, eta squared = .13) on institutional performance resulting from a board's ability to focus more time and energy on preparing for the future than putting out fires. A higher frequency of board discussion and planning for the future of the school five years or more into the future positively impacted institutional performance ($p <$ .00, eta squared = .09). Boards that made explicit use of long range priorities when dealing with current issues had a similar impact on the institutional performance of their schools ($p <$ .00, eta squared = .10). In sum, boards who were forward-thinking and focused their efforts on long range priorities made positive impacts on the institutional performance of the schools in which they serve.

Table 4.7: Strategic Effectiveness metrics (Governance) and Institutional Performance

Survey Question	Institutional Performance	
The board at our school...	p-value	Eta Squared
often discusses where the school should be headed five or more years into the future.	.00	.09
makes explicit use of the long range priorities of this school in dealing with current issues.	.00	.10
is not more involved in trying to put out fires than in preparing for the future.	.00	.13

These three items delineate the general trend in the data regarding strategic board governance and institutional performance by suggesting that the more strategically a board can govern, the more sustainable the school becomes based on measures of institutional performance.

The patterns of significant relationships between components of strategic effectiveness and institutional components guided us to further investigate the relationships we found in our quantitative analysis. We constructed a category of questions to include in our interview protocol in which we asked both Heads of Schools and Board Chairs to describe

The drive to create sustainable institutions comes out of the fact that "we're only 36 years old. We couldn't live on tradition, we can't live on alumni, we can't live on endowment, we can't live on the 3000 acre campus, etc, we have to be dynamic and we have to be opportunistic, and we have to take some chances. I think we have a board that is willing to do that and think that way. This enables the board to use strategic thinking to respond to rapid changes in the marketplace."

Robert Kosasky, Head of School at St. Andrew's Episcopal School

the roles in which their boards excelled, how their board's performance influenced their capacity to act strategically, and ultimately, what effect these factors had on institutional performance (see Appendix 2).

Our qualitative data supports and further explicates the findings from our quantitative research in relation to the impacts of strategic financial processes and long-term planning on a school's institutional performance. Heads of School and Board Chairs in our sample celebrated their boards' ability to function highly as strategic bodies, focused on guiding and facilitating sustainability and growth. They also espoused the importance of board ownership throughout the strategic planning process. According to the Heads of School and Board Chairs whom we interviewed, the ability of the board to be strategically effective has a positive impact on multiple factors of Institutional Performance, including enrollment, culture of giving, renovation and expansion of physical plant, and financial sustainability.

Strategic development needs to come from the people who are living there.
Robert Sheft, Board Chair at Pace Academy

The value of a strong, sustained institutional commitment to strategic planning is a core theme that emerged from our six school sites. At Seven Hills School, strategic plans created in 2003 and 2008 helped prepare the cultural seedbed for successfully identifying long-term goals and aligning resources to achieve them. The focuses of both plans included commitments to increasing diversity; sustaining the strength of the teaching faculty; refining the curriculum to prepare students for a rapidly-changing global community; and, in the wake of the recession, rebuilding enrollment while operating the school as cost-effectively as possible.

Seven Hills' Head of School began his tenure by focusing his efforts on building faculty understanding, buy-in, and ownership of the school's strategic plan. His goal was to act as a bridge between the Board of Trustees and the school as a whole, and his initial conversations with faculty and administration were focused on asking questions to gauge understanding of the school's strategic plan and how relevant it was in their work. He recalled:

> What I felt I had to do was to create some discussions around: here is what the strategic plan says - is this in fact what we believe? The board has said this is the goal. Do you personally believe that this is the goal? What part of this do you own? How does that affect your daily life? And the answer - as I think it is in most schools - was that they saw that process as something that had gone on at the board level. Faculty, particularly, but certainly even senior administrators weren't really thinking that the strategic plan was central to their lives as a school.

Several outcomes of Seven Hills' 2008 strategic plan explain the school's recent enrollment rebound. Seven Hills' Head of School and his leadership team leveraged conversations about strategic plan implementation into opportunities to more clearly articulate the school's value proposition in terms of defining characteristics. Specifically, within the context of the strategic

goal of "refining the curriculum to prepare students for a rapidly-changing global community," Seven Hills rewrote its mission statement and drafted three documents to anchor its forward-focused vision of teaching and learning: *Portrait of a Seven Hills Graduate, Statement of Educational Philosophy* and *The Seven Hills Method*. At the same time, the school launched two new early childhood education initiatives: "Beginnings" for children 12-36 months and a new pre-kindergarten program for 2-year-olds.

When asked about the role of the board's long-term strategic plan in relation to finance, The Seven Hills Head of School noted that "all of our budget conversations at the board get linked back to the strategic plan." In accordance with our quantitative findings, Seven Hills' Head of School and Board Chair noted positive changes in the school's culture of giving, financial outlook, and physical plant. The Upper School faculty has grown by four full-time positions, and the division has introduced new course offerings, including Mandarin, computer science, engineering, and digital journalism. Seven Hills has added a new Director of Experiential Learning to their administrative team, and the school's new, state-of-the-art Early Childhood Center is under construction on the Hillsdale campus. An innovative Makerspace has been created in the Middle School, where a passionate, well-respected science teacher coaches students in design thinking and shares her curiosity with students.

At PDS, the board's ability to operate in the strategic realm has dramatically impacted the school's approach to teaching and learning and has transformed the culture of the school as

> **"We are building an ethos and culture of growth, of teachers as life-long learners. We pose provocative questions to ourselves as a community on subjects both within and outside of the specific field of education."**
> Lee Burns, former Head of School at Presbyterian Day School

a whole. Over the past fifteen years, PDS has undergone a series of major strategic shifts. Its school culture has embraced progressive approaches to teaching and learning, its faculty have designed truly distinctive programs, and school leaders have raised millions of dollars to build innovative new learning spaces. The Board of Trustees has endorsed a substantial commitment to faculty professional learning, most notably by funding for more than 90 percent of teachers to attend intensive workshops designed by Project Zero at Harvard's Graduate School of Education. These strategic investments have returned big dividends: PDS teachers have virtually eliminated traditional teaching methods; instead, teachers have changed what and how they teach - transforming the culture of teaching and learning with support from peers and school leaders. The Head and his leadership team have charged a faculty Teaching and Learning Committee to "act as incubator, gatekeeper, and facilitator of innovative practices" (Lichtman, 2014). PDS teachers use few textbooks, and half of instructional time in reading and math is taught in small groups of highly customized for enrichment or remediation.

More recently, the Headmaster and Board of Trustees have slammed the brakes on rising tuition--which is counter to the majority of schools in the Memphis marketplace-- as part of their strategic process to redefine PDS' value proposition within an increasingly competitive Memphis

market. For all of these reasons, PDS rates highly on metrics of strategic effectiveness. More importantly, they also are also reaping the benefits in tangible ways that further ensure the future sustainability of the institution.

It is important to note that the recent cultural shifts were not born of crisis. PDS has long, stable relationship as a primary feeder to one of the oldest, most established and recognizable independent school in Memphis. In a recent PDS sixth grade graduating class, all 66 boys who applied were admitted. Also, with 647 boys enrolled for the 2014/2015 academic year, PDS has reached its largest enrollment in the history of the school. Although the strategic decisions made by school leadership were not specifically aimed at increased enrollment, the school has benefited from the shift. The Director of Admissions and Enrollment at PDS stated, "Our goal wasn't to reach that record, but we have enjoyed such strong re-enrollment rates and great interest from families with bright boys."

The strategic thought and action of the Head of School and the board have had similar impacts on the culture of giving and the physical plant at PDS. A recent capital campaign added thousands of square feet of learning space and included significant upgrades to existing facilities. Acting strategically, PDS has aligned new campus construction to support its emerging culture of innovation. For example, PDS designed a Learning Studio space to support Learning Circuit concepts. The Learning Studio facilitates small group collaboration with the inclusion of non-traditional furniture to align with the untraditional approach of Learning Circuits. The oversized room is filled with a variety of flexible furniture including bean bag chairs and lightweight bar stools, tabletops that enable grouping and regrouping, and ample vertical whiteboard space including a floor-to-ceiling writeable idea wall. Learning specialists and learning coaches move among groups, collecting data as they offer guidance and support. PDS also recently built a new early childhood wing, a second gymnasium, two new playground areas and a fitness center which includes a climbing wall and exercise bikes arranged for spin class. Extensive elementary building renovations also included a new science center with extensive laboratory space and expanded spaces for art and music.

Pace Academy's Head of School, attributes much of the school's success to the trustees' ability to think and act strategically, and he surmised that Pace has benefited from having a

> "We own the process. We do not outsource the process. We see this role on the board as one of the most important things a trustee can do...to engage in strategic planning."
> Fred Assaf, Head of School at Pace Academy

board who makes a concerted effort to maintain ownership of the strategic planning process.

He also challenged the merits of hiring third-party consultants to guide the strategic planning process. When describing the value of the strategic planning process for not only the school, but also for individual trustees, Pace's Head of School asserted, "Most of the chairmen come out on the other side thinking this is a growth experience...the consultants try to provide something that I think is not the healthiest thing to cultivate." He further explained his assertion when he stated,

Consultants tell you, 'I can help you create this plan to present to your board...I can help you get your board to do what you want them to do.' That's the sales pitch. It's all about how you as head can get the board members to think a certain way. I have never thought that was a good idea. At one point we hired a consultant and got the boiler-plate strategic plan. If felt like nobody actually owned it. There were things in there that didn't make sense.

The Board Chair at Pace shared a similar sentiment regarding the importance of ownership in the strategic planning process when he stated,

When you use consultants you end up with a plan that looks really great, costs a fortune…and you do nothing with it. Strategic development needs to come from the people who are living there. Every five years you do a strategic plan for accreditation. Some schools do it because they have to. We use it as an opportunity to actually do strategic planning. We take the time to determine our priorities for the next five years and create a plan for how to achieve them. We end up with things we care about and things that we are passionate about achieving. That's why I think we have been successful.

> **"If people don't trust what you are doing, they are not going to give. We had campaigns that didn't make sense, and they didn't go well. It has to make sense. When you do the things that you say you are going to do, and you articulate it, you are able to raise more money. They are inextricably tied."**
>
> **Robert Sheft, Board Chair at Pace Academy**

Pace Academy has grown tremendously over the past decade, not only in terms of campus development, but also in terms of enrollment, physical plant, endowment, and reputation. Recent additions and renovations include the 57,000 square-foot, Garcia Family Middle School (2004), the 75,000 square foot Arthur Blank Upper School (2014), and the 25-acre athletic complex (2014) which is located a few miles from the main campus. The athletic complex, which includes Walsh Stadium, and the Arthur Blank Upper School were the result of a successful $30 million capital campaign which received tremendous support and leadership from the trustees.

Both the Board Chair, and Head of School at Pace Academy, indicated that the ability of school leadership to influence the culture of giving has been extraordinary, and they attribute much of their success to the strategic leadership and transparency of the Board of Trustees. When asked about the areas in which the Board of Trustees at Pace excels, Pace's Head of School stated, "I can't think of a way they don't excel. They have been incredible champions of the school…they have been incredibly supportive…they have been ridiculously generous…they have been present and responsive…they have healthy relationships with the faculty and administration."

At Pace, the ability of the board to demonstrate sound decision-making is the lynchpin for successful capital campaigns and annual fund drives. The element of trust is critical to Pace's

ability to garner financial support from their community. Pace's Head of School recalled a land acquisition that did not go according to plan. When the plans went south, and it was obvious that the investment resulted in a loss, the school leadership devised an amortization plan to pay themselves back on money lost. That plan and its implementation was instrumental in building reinforcing trust in the Board of Trustees and their choices.

At Boston Trinity, the role of trustees to influence the culture of giving is paramount to the school's survival. The leadership at Boston Trinity acknowledged the unique challenges they face in their effort to provide access for all students, regardless of their ability to pay full tuition. They have made a conscious decision to provide significant financial aid awards to a high proportion of their students, and, as a result, they must rely heavily on contributions outside of tuition to cover operating expenses. When asked about the role of the Board in influencing the culture of giving, the Head of School noted the importance of having trustees who were committed to influencing the culture of giving. He stated, "Our financial model is nuts! But we are committed to adhering to our mission of providing a first-class education to students who could otherwise not afford it." This unyielding adherence to the mission and vision of the school has placed a heavy responsibility on the Board of Trustees to garner resources through gifts and fundraising efforts to sustain operations. Each year, the board of trustees contributes up to 80% of the annual fund gifts, either through personal gifts or solicitations to community members and business leaders. They are indeed the lifeblood of the institution, and when they are successful in carrying out their roles as individuals and a group that influences the culture of giving, the school thrives.

Qualitative data from The Washington International School embodies the notion that a focus on both strategic governance and the ability to influence the culture of giving impacts institutional performance. Efforts at Washington International has been focused on creating and implementing a strategic plan to transform the culture of giving at the school. The Board Chair for Washington International reported, "We've really tried to be ahead in terms of our thinking of where we think international education will be in the future, for instance, in facilities."

When the school started its most recent strategic plan in 2012, they made fundraising a priority. Washington International's Head of School approached strategic planning with a goal of transforming philanthropy. He reported, "We want to do what we hope will be a transformation in the community's commitment to philanthropy." The board started with the question: "How can we really transform philanthropy at the school?" They started with a deliberately strategic view of the process which accounted for the unique challenges that were inherent in a school with a high percentage of transient families with varying perspectives on giving.

The Head of School at Washington International described the challenges that confronted the school in 2012. "14 years ago, we had no reserves. We were operating pretty much on a zero surplus basis." The dichotomy between the international community and the local community of WIS threatened the financial stability of the school, and the school's future. When asked what the greatest challenge of his board Washington International's Board Chair stated,

To transform philanthropy at the school. If we look back at the history of philanthropy at the school, we've always had this dual personality, as an American independent school while also an international school. The American independent school side of us says that philanthropy is really important, that we need to give...giving's really important, and the international aspect, and the international community, was always, 'really, you're kidding, we pay all this tuition…' So that's something we've been dealing with for a very long time.

Typically, international schools partner with local institutions that aspire to ensure that their employees' children receive a quality education at a reputable school.   Companies are willing to donate money for facilities and programming to ensure that school quality remains high, while using the partnership as leverage to recruit and retain a world-class workforce.

Washington D.C., with its higher level of governmental organizations, is not conducive to this practice of auxiliary funding. Therefore Washington International relies solely on tuition and gifts to fund operations and capital projects. Washington International's Board Chair described the phenomenon when he explained, "When we look at the models that other international schools have, in Europe or Asia, where there's a company that has 30 or 40 expats, and they want seats. They have corporate support. We don't have that here. It very much comes from the parent community and the extended community related to us."

> **"We are utterly and completely a hybrid of an international school with parents who come to us from international schools around the world, and local parents who expect us to be like the other independent schools in the area."**
>
> Clayton Lewis, Head of School at Washington International School

With those factors in the forefront, the board started a slow, deliberate approach to shift the culture of philanthropy by engaging in the international community by educating them about the necessity of philanthropy at a young school with a small endowment. Washington International's Board Chair described the initial thought process of the transformational process when he stated,

Cultivation by its very definition takes time. It can't happen three meetings in a row, three weeks in a row. And information, and explaining to people, sharing a lot more information about the school's finances, about other schools around the area, and not using the excuse that we're an international school anymore, not to say 'Oh, those international people, they'll never give' just not accepting that as a given anymore.

The success of this strategic initiative is clear; in 2013 the school was able to transfer $2.5 million to the school's reserve funds, while also designating $3.3 million dollars in financial aid to students in need. In the school year 2013-2014, the school was able to tap into this emerging culture to launch a capital campaign to expand their increasingly crowded facilities. They were, at the same time, able to raise the funds to match a $250,000 E.E. Ford grant that allowed the

school to build on a long standing partnership with Project Zero to create a summer outreach program to Washington D.C. area educators. The ongoing process of transforming philanthropy at WIS has had a profound impact on the lives of its students and faculty. WIS's Board Chair surmised, "I wouldn't say we've transformed philanthropy yet, but we're definitely transforming it. It's something that's never finished, but we've really seen incredible growth in giving, but also in people understanding why it's so important."

Table 4.8: Annual Giving at Washington International School (2011-2014)

Year	Annual Fund Giving
2011-2012	Approximately $200,000
2012-2013	Approximately $700,000
2013-2014	Approximately $1,000,000

The WIS board is currently in the silent phase of a capital campaign to build a new science building, and the WIS Board Chair asserted, "this phase of this capital campaign is going incredibly well, we've had much bigger gifts than in the past." The school has also enjoyed record levels of annual giving, breaking school records every year for the past three years. (See Table 4.8.)

Finding 5: The relationship between board chair and head of school is critical.

The relationship between Board Chair and Head of School is both important and complex. Heads of School often depend on Board Chairs for support and advice; at the same time, Board Chairs are influential voices in terms of executive accountability, evaluation, and contract renewal. In our survey questionnaire and interview protocol, we sought to determine to what extent - if at all - the Board Chair-Head of School relationship impacts board strategic effectiveness and institutional performance.

In order to gather quantitative data to test these relationships, we asked both Heads and Chairs to rate the strength of their relationships with one another. We conducted ANOVAs comparing those responses to our strategic effectiveness dependent variable. Our findings suggest that there is a strong relationship ($p < .000$, eta squared = .26) between leaders' perceptions of the strength of the Head-Chair relationship and strategic effectiveness. We also found a statistically significant relationship between the independent variable of how well the Board supports the Head and our strategic effectiveness dependent variable ($p < .000$, eta squared = .32). Most schools indicated a strong relationship between the head and chair (see Table 4.9). Eta squared tests on each of these statistically significant relationships yielded substantively meaningful effect sizes. We explored these relationships more fully by adding follow-up questions to our qualitative interview protocol.

Table 4.9: Head of School-Board Chair Relationship and Strategic Effectiveness

Survey Question	Strategic Effectiveness	
	p-value	Eta Squared
How would you rate the relationship between the Head of School and the Board Chair?	.00	.26
How well does the board serve as a group to give support to the school head?	.00	.32

> "The times when the school has really flourished in my thirteen years, it's not coincidental that those have been my best relationships with board chairs."
>
> Robert Kosasky, Head of School at St. Andrew's Episcopal School

Our quantitative findings guided the formulation of interview protocol questions to further explain the strong relationship between a board's capacity to support the Head of School and increased strategic effectiveness. We asked both Heads of Schools and Board Chairs to describe the Head of School-Board Chair relationship at their school and its impact on the Board's ability to function as a leadership body (see Appendix 2).

Board Chairs and Heads of Schools at all six school sites stressed the importance of a strong Board Chair-Head relationship. At Pace Academy, this relationship is paramount, and the Pace Academy Board Chair unequivocally holds himself responsible for supporting the Head of School. When asked to explain the importance of positive Board Chair-Head of School relationship, he stated, "There's been an unspoken code that the chairman's number one job is to support the Head of the School."

> **"There's been an unspoken code that the chairman's number one job is to support the Head of the School."**
> **Robert Sheft, Board Chair at Pace Academy**

School leaders at Boston Trinity also championed the importance of a strong Board Chair-Head of School relationship. Both the Head of School and Board Chair acknowledged the potentially negative implications of the extended term of service for the Board Chair, who has been in office since the school's inception. He was very thoughtful about the potential implications of the length of his tenure at the helm of the Board of Trustees, but he believes that a certain level of commitment, trust, and institutional knowledge is a necessity to provide the proper level of guidance to the Head of School and the Board of Trustees during the early stages of the school. The leadership at Boston Trinity takes a pragmatic approach to mitigate any circumstances that may be potentially detrimental the Head of School-Board Chair relationship. Both the Head of School and Board Chair are steadfast in their efforts to maintain appropriate relationships between faculty, administration, and trustees. An excerpt from the Boston Trinity Governance Document provides clear guidance for both the Head of School and the trustees.

> **In a school that has been around for a hundred years, it is probably wise to impose term limits for trustees and board chairs...eventually, we will get to that point."**
> **Robert Bradley III, Board Chair at Boston Trinity**

> The Headmaster is not responsible for doing what each individual Board member requests. The Headmaster is not accountable to each individual on the Board of Trustees but rather to the entire Board of Trustees. (Boston Trinity Governance Document)

Boston Trinity's Board Chair makes a concerted effort to ensure that all trustees understand the parameters of proper interaction with the Head of School and he considers himself responsible for upholding the stipulations that are mandated in the Governance Document as a component of his efforts to support the Head of School.

Based on responses from Boston Trinity's Head of School, it is evident that the Head of School-Board Chair relationship is predicated on trust, admiration, and respect. In fact, he attributes the success of the school to the efforts of the Board Chair. When asked about his relationship with the Board Chair, he asserted, "He gives more of his time and resources than could be expected. Without his vision, leadership, and generosity, we would not be as successful as we have been to this point."

At Washington International School, the Head of School indicated that open and honest communication with the Board Chair was key to success. He stated, "it's really in my court to keep the board informed with what we see as the academic programmatic changes coming along in the school and how those impact the facilities, as well as other aspects of the school." He surmised that it was necessary to make a concerted effort to keep the Board Chair informed, not for the sake of accountability, but rather for the sake of efficiency, transparency, and guidance.

The Board Chair at Pace Academy echoed the importance of great communication between board chairs and Heads of School. He spoke more to the role of the Head of School as a provider of insight and expertise to the Board Chair and trustees when he explained, "Heads of school bring the perspective of the profession to the board, grounded in experience in education. They are also involved in the day to day operations of the school, and are sole link between the operations of the school and the Board Chair, and the board as a whole."

The Board Chair at PDS depicted a relationship that included an element of mentorship. PDS's Board Chair believes that the Head of School needs a sounding board to discuss ideas and concerns without having to engage with employees whom their decisions may impact. The Board Chair is the first person the Head of School should be able to go to for these conversations, and the benefits of open communication are twofold. It enables the Head of School to engage the Board Chair in the culture of the school community, providing insight into real-time issues. It also helps to ensure that the Head of School is consistently guided in the strategic direction that the board envisions. By mentoring the head of school, the board chair can ensure that the head of school is upholding the mission of the school. The Board Chair at PDS further developed this notion when he recalled his mindset upon the hiring of the new Head of School. He stated, "we wanted to give our new headmaster an opportunity to get his feet on the ground, really learn inside and out who we are and what we are, before really engaging him and asking him, 'What are your goals for this year?' He and I have had conversation about that all along." His relationship with the Head of School at PDS has been focused on providing stable ground, reliable information, and opportunities for inquiry.

Section 5:
Discussion

Trusteeship is complex. Boards fulfill a variety of interrelated roles: guardian of mission and identity, top fundraisers, lead strategic planners, protectors of financial sustainability, selectors and evaluators for Heads of School, ambassadors and champions in the community, and recruiters for future trustees (Beavis, 1992; Gill, 2005; Guernsey, 2003; National Association of Independent Schools, 2012; Weitzner & Peridis, 2011). Rather than acting as directors, independent school board members actually hold the school "in trust." The implications of their decisions can be tremendously beneficial, or they can be disastrously detrimental. On the one hand, Boards of Trustees at independent schools enjoy a large amount of autonomy; each independent school is free to define its mission, develop curricula, and set policy. On the other hand, Boards of Trustees are under pressure to make choices that shape the future of their institutions; therefore, it is incumbent upon trustees to not only balance and oversee operations and policy decisions in the present, but to also have a keen eye on strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats over the horizon.

Boards of Trustees must handle real-time issues while also predicting market trends and factors that may affect the long-term viability of the institutions that they serve. The school leaders in our study were cognizant of the fact that different combinations of individuals and approaches were useful at different times. Although board makeup may differ according to school setting, time, and a host of other factors, strategically effective school leaders display a keen awareness of context and the ability to be flexible. This was evident across all six school sites in our study, from the "purposefully inefficient" strategic planning process at Seven Hills to the more agile approach at St. Andrews.

Trustee selection was strategic. Heads of School and Board Chairs utilized a backwards design approach when identifying trustees, in which school leaders asked, *What are our goals? What are our challenges? Who can help us get there? OR Where are we? Where are we going? Who can help us get there?* This approach paid dividends for school leaders in our study because of their ability to tailor their boards to strategic issues at hand.

This section examines three major themes that arose from our research. First, we look for lessons from the literature on nonprofit board governance that align with raising levels of strategic effectiveness - and institutional performance - at independent schools. Next, we consider the effects of leadership, especially with respect to the complementary roles of the Head of School and the Board Chair. Finally, we discuss organizational theory, with emphasis on characteristics of learning organizations, in the context of developing more strategic and effective boards of trustees.

Board Governance and Strategic Effectiveness

In *Improving the Performance of Governing Boards*, Harvard scholar Richard Chait and his research team (1996) defined governance "as a collective effort, through smooth and suitable processes, to take actions that advance a shared purpose consistent with the institution's mission" (p. 1). Chait et al. observed:

> Nearly all ... volunteers want to be effective board members, yet most are uncertain about how to do so for several reasons. First, the vast majority of trustees are not systematically prepared for the role prior to their appointment to a governing board . . . Second, not many trustees have the benefit of a thorough orientation or ongoing board-development programs after joining a board. Finally, much of the 'knowledge' about trusteeship might better be described as conventional wisdom that has not been empirically based or methodically tested. As a result, trustees and presidents must draw more upon hand-me-down shibboleths than upon a solid body of knowledge about governance and its influence on not-for-profit organizations. (Chait, Holland, & Taylor, 1993, p. 8)

As their terms begin, new board members at independent schools typically receive a copy of Mary Hundley DeKuyper's (2007) *Trustee Handbook: A Guide to Effective Governance for Independent School Boards.* At first glance, Fr. Stephen Katsouros (2011) contends, "The Trustee Handbook appears to be very much what Chait et al, would describe as prescriptive and hortatory. Missing is any discussion of how school heads or boards can apply [Chait's] dimensions for the purpose of a more effective, higher performing board" (p. 51).

Chait's essential research question remains salient: *"Why are there so many 'how-to-govern' handbooks, pamphlets, seminars, and workshops, but such widespread disappointment with board performance and efforts to enhance board effectiveness?"* (p. xvi). Initially Chait, Ryan and Taylor (2005) answered by offering analyses of boards of trustees at twenty-two private colleges and universities. (These institutions are similar in size and mission to Sweet Briar.) Over the past decade, their findings have gained a broad following among independent school leaders, too. From their study, Chait et al. concluded that "there are specific characteristics and behaviors that distinguish strong boards from weak boards" (pp. 1-2). The authors identified six essential "competencies" (p. 3):

1. **Contextual dimension** The board understands and takes into account the culture and norms of the organization it governs.

2. **Educational dimension** The board takes the necessary steps to ensure that trustees are knowledgeable about the institution, the profession, and the board's roles, responsibilities, and performance.

3. **Interpersonal dimension** The board nurtures the development of trustees as a working group, attends to the board's collective welfare, and fosters a sense of cohesiveness.

4. **Analytical dimension** The board recognizes the complexities and subtleties of issues and accepts ambiguity and uncertainty as healthy preconditions for critical discussion.

5. **Political dimension** The board accepts as a primary responsibility the need to develop and maintain healthy relationships among major constituencies.

6. **Strategic dimension** The board helps the institution envision a direction and shape a strategy.

Five years after identifying these core competencies, Chait and his team were "more convinced than ever that the six competencies are the skill sets that a board must possess to govern ably" (Katsouros, 2011, p.9). Our findings support the impact of these conclusions: nurturing healthy relationships; building norms and culture; and onboarding are essential steps in a process of continuous improvement. Regarding the strategic dimension in particular, Chait, Holland and Taylor (1993) reported that the most effective boards look to organizational future as they "cultivate and concentrate on processes that sharpen institutional priorities and ensure a strategic approach" (p. 66).

Board governance literature also speaks to the importance of setting strategic effectiveness as a board priority. Weitzner and Peridis (2011) explain that "board members must fully understand the strategic activities of the firm and be able to accurately assess the risk involved in the strategic direction of the firm if they are to have a meaningful voice" (p. 34). Researchers at BoardSource add that "a well-functioning board is a strategic resource; board that attend to the quality of its performance will serve organization, mission, members and stakeholders well" (p. 2). McKinsey's consultants echo the importance of strategic thinking, and explain that "winning boards will be those that work in the spirit of continuous improvement at every meeting, while always keeping long term strategies top of mind" (p. 8).

Dr. Dan Guernsey (2003), a leader at the National Association of Private Catholic and Independent Schools, reminds us that principal-agent dynamics may distract boards from their strategic purpose. "Schools are frequently lightning rods for value-laden and passionate conflict" (p. 1). Guernsey makes an important point about ultimate authority in independent schools.

> Issues of who ultimately controls the school are not so clear. As self-contained entities, they are often self-referential. They must form their own Boards, select their own governance structures, and make sense of their own experience outside of the control of a larger religious or civic entity. (p. 1)

Guernsey speaks to principal-agent dynamics between boards and Heads of School and between independent schools and their 'customers' (i.e. parents and, to a growing degree, children). Because trustees typically lack experience in school leadership, Heads of School play a significant role in shaping the board experience through orientation, onboarding, and leading the strategic planning process. Board Chairs and trustees, on the other hand, are charged with selecting, supporting, and evaluating Heads of School. The Board Chair-Head relationship exists within a dynamic range of possibilities. How Boards and Heads frame the principal-agent

relationship, then, will have a significant effect on the dynamics of strategic effectiveness.

A Vision for Shared Leadership

"Effective organizations are full of good stories" (Bolman & Deal, 2008, p. 260). Gardner (1995) surmised that aligning a vision for board strategic effectiveness with effective storytelling is a core characteristic of leadership. Leaders build on stories already known among organizational stakeholders. In this context, Heads of School and Board Chairs might choose a vignette from the history of the school to be woven into a vision for strategic effectiveness in ways that align with mission, values, and future-focused orientation.

Bolman and Deal (2008) also explained that organizational culture is "revealed and communicated through its symbols" (p. 254). School Heads and Board Chairs who use storytelling and symbols in harmony can overcome challenges related to variations of meaning some stakeholders might perceive regarding strategic effectiveness. Leadership that employs stories helps to "grant comfort, reassurance, and direction" as the institution finds its strategic footing, gains momentum, develops change-agent groups, and creates a strategic vision of its organizational future (Bolman & Deal, 2008, p. 255). More specifically, Gardner (1995) wrote that "a leader must have a central story or message" that is simple enough to speak directly to the "unschooled, 5-year-old mind" and becomes central to institutional mission in thought, words, and deeds. (p. 274-275).

A successful change process requires the ability to exert influence and to persuade. "… good persuaders know when to make an emotional plea…and when an appeal to reason will work better" (Goleman, 1998, p. 102). Heads and Board Chairs who prioritize emotional intelligence will be better positioned to "win the hearts and minds" of trustees and move boards toward more strategic focus. More specifically, empathy and social skills are critical components of emotional intelligence that relate to leading change. With regard to empathy, Goleman (1998) encourages leaders to "thoughtfully [consider] employees' feelings – along with other factors – in the process of making…decisions" (p. 100). Goleman describes social skill as "friendliness with a purpose: moving people in the direction you desire…" (p. 101).

In order to build true collaboration between all stakeholders around strategic thinking, stakeholders must have a voice in decision-making processes, as well as the power to influence agenda-setting and act on outcomes. This level of collaboration requires that the leaders have a high level of interpersonal competence. Bass (1990) maintains that specific interpersonal competencies include "empathy, insight, heightened awareness, and the ability to give and receive feedback" (p. 110). Bass suggests that such competence implies "openness to discussions about one's feelings, consensual solutions to conflict, and the development of commitment to actions" (p. 110). Further, this level of collaboration requires transformational leadership on a variety of levels. According to Burns (1978), "[Transformational leadership] appeals to the moral values of followers … and occurs when one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality" (p. 20). Heads and Board Chairs who build a framework of collaboration into

board culture will advance their goal of raising strategic effectiveness.

"Without a sensible vision, a transformation effort can easily dissolve into a list of confusing and incompatible projects that can take the organization in the wrong direction or nowhere at all" (Kotter, 2007, p. 5). For an organizational shift toward strategic thinking to occur, Heads and their Board Chairs must be transformational leaders capable of calling on trustees to commit to service around a shared vision. Together, leaders and followers work toward collective goals because they are fully convinced that their actions align with a high moral calling to serve the best interests of the school. "Leadership is nothing if not linked to a collective purpose" (Burns, 1978, p.20). This framework of leadership and collaboration allows stakeholders to move beyond self-interest for the sake of the school and work collectively toward meaningful, common outcomes. Gaining agreement and buy-in on the vision requires developing of strategies which consider the common interests of all stakeholders. In establishing a vision for strategic thinking and agreeing on key strategies for implementation, school leaders increase the probability of success and sustainability in implementing change.

Leading boards to think and act more strategically involves building systems for trustees that include ongoing professional growth, personal and group accountability, and leadership development on all levels. Human capital management is about growing the capacity of people within the organization for growth and change. The management of human capacity building requires multi-directional leadership. Roust (1991) defines leadership as "a multi-directional influence relationship between a leader and followers for the mutual purpose of accomplishing real change" (as cited in Yukl, 2002, p. 6). The concept of multidirectional influence is critical to the capacity-building of trustees. Toward this end, effective transformational leaders employ "individualized consideration," which "includes providing support, encouragement, and coaching" (Yukl, 2002, p. 254). Further, effective human capital management is often found within the loosely coupled systems of a professional bureaucracy. Growth within a professional bureaucracy occurs when there is recognition of the expertise of all involved and when the different components of the organization are loosely coupled in such a way that they differentiate to best meet trustees' needs based on their roles and experience within the board. By utilizing a bottom-up, democratic style of organization, coupled with leadership committed to effectively serving individual needs, professional growth can naturally occur (Mintzberg, 1991). Professional growth, personal accountability, and leadership development must be embedded in a culture of organizational learning by which all trustees feel empowered to actively participate in the development process of moving toward a more strategic focus. By allowing for differentiated systems of professional growth and accountability, all are empowered to work together to establish professional growth models capable of strengthening institutional emphasis on growing capacity for strategic thinking.

An important goal must be to sustain a culture of strategic thinking that will outlast any individual leader. Institutionalizing strategic processes and mindsets are of the utmost importance in the landscape of independent school trusteeship, where the tenures of heads of school - and the terms of board members - are often shorter than the scope of a strategic plan. John Kotter (2007) has defined eight steps for organizational change. Chief among these steps is the need to

institutionalize new approaches, such that strategic thinking is clearly linked to procedures that support continuous improvement. And also, the recruitment, selection, and promotion of new trustees must be based, in large part, on potential new leaders' willingness and ability to sustain a vision for strategic thinking (Kotter, 2007).

Building and Institutionalizing Strategic Capacity

Bryson (2011) has defined strategic planning as a "deliberative, disciplined approach" to shaping and guiding fundamental organizational decisions (xii). For independent schools in our study, the scope of important organizational decisions included (re)branding reputation within a highly competitive school markets. Strategic planning processes then, address questions that are fundamental to schools and their futures: 1) how might schools position themselves to compete in an increasingly competitive market? and 2) what marks of distinction can schools grow or build to "create significant and enduring value" and offer families a clear choice? (Bryson, 2011, p. xii).

Adopting a more highly intentional strategic focus to answer these questions would seem to fit with Bryson's (2011) view that strategic planning can help organizational leaders "discern the way forward" by clarifying "what an organization is, what it does, and why it does it" (xii). Strategic planning, at its core, clarifies what the school is and what the school aspires to be. Bryson (2011) described 'ABCs' of the process: first, clarify mission and goals; then, formulate strategy in deliberative, disciplined ways; and finally, create structures for strategy implementation (p. 10).

A robust, strategic approach to board governance requires the development of organizational processes and structures that align actions with mission. For Heads and Board Chairs, core structures include onboarding processes and board committees. Bolman and Deal outline several key assumptions with respect to the structure. When designed effectively to fit a renewed emphasis on strategic effectiveness at the board level, for example, Bolman and Deal (2008) explain that "structure enhances morale," increases performance, and enhances efficiency through specialization and division of labor (p. 47 and p. 51). Bolman and Deal (2008) also offer a compelling view of best strategic practice: "set long-range goals and adopt action plans… with concern for long-term direction" (p. 65). Bryson, Crosby and Bryson (2009) described connections between action plans for effective strategic thinking and the necessary underlying structure that facilitates the process:

> The proponents of strategic planning have basically uniformly asserted that strategic planning is best viewed as, in effect, a way of knowing meant to promote strategic thinking, acting, and learning; improve decision making; and improve organizational performance… Strategic planning practices help provide some of the crucial ordering and sense making processes and artifacts needed to relationally constitute the web of heterogeneous elements, where knowing involves keeping them in alignment in a legitimate, viable, productive, and generative way. (p. 201)

Nonetheless, Bolman and Deal (2008) have warned that "interdependence, divergent interests, scarcity, and power relations" create conflict and the necessity to engage in a contest for resources (p. 194-195). For leading the shift to strategic boards, the enduring conflict among may result from "differences in values, beliefs, information, interests, and perceptions of reality" (Bolman & Deal, 2008, p. 195). According to Westerlund and Sjostrand (1979) coalitions of stakeholders, like the so-called 'Old Guard,' sometimes quietly cling to the pursuit of existing goals that are rooted in their own perceptions of reality even when those goals are inconsistent with stated values and strategic vision of the organization as a whole. In other words, the Old Guard clings to a version of board roles and responsibilities which is misaligned with leaders (revised) strategic vision and recent messaging through stories. Weick (1976) has described this relative lack of coordination as "loose coupling" which is characterized by "separateness" and weak, even dissolvable, principal-agent attachments that allow for slow responses to calls for changes in strategy. Coalitions of stakeholders and their dogged pursuit of diverse goals may even seem increasingly out-of-step with school leaders' vision (p. 106).

It is difficult, Weick might argue, for researchers to study a loosely coupled organization by examining only its formal characteristics, structures, activities. Using a semi-structured interview protocol was an important step in our research process because it allowed interviewers to see more of the informal, adaptable and loosely coupled independent school organizations at work identifying strategic questions and engaging in conversations about their long-term futures.

School leaders and board members who are engaged in the work of strategic thinking might be seen as functioning "self-managing work teams" (Bolman & Deal, 2008, p. 113). To some extent, change agents among boards of trustees and trustee committees manage themselves; plan and schedule their own work; and take necessary actions to remedy problems as they arise. Weick (1976) might describe this relative lack of oversight and absence of regulations as characteristic of a loosely coupled organization as a whole, and more specifically, loose coupling might help to explain why some committees of a board could be so agile with respect to adopting strategic mindsets while other parts of the system seem so compartmentalized as to remain resistant to change.

Engaging in action research might be one important step that facilitates boards' ongoing growth process toward building capacity for strategic thinking. Carr and Kemmis (1986) have described action research as a "form of reflective self-discovery undertaken… to improve" (p. 162). Action research is meant to proceed through a cyclical process of questioning, action, and reflection upon action (Carr & Kemmis, 1986). For Heads of School and Board Chairs, for example, a systematic and rigorous action research project could begin with questions about board members' perceptions of board norms, culture and responsibilities. Barrett and Whitehead (1985) have suggested a set of three follow-up questions that would drive deeper, data-driven action and reflection: 1) what kinds of evidence could school leaders collect to help trustees draw some conclusions about the scope of their work in terms of strategic thinking? 2) How would leaders and staff collect such data? 3) How would school leaders check to be sure that conclusions drawn are reasonable and accurate? McTaggart (1996) added a note of caution for Heads and Board Chairs, too: strict adherence to a cycle of questioning, acting, and reflecting is not, by

itself, enough: "Action research is not a 'method' or a 'procedure' for research but a series of commitments to observe and problematize through practice a series of principles for conducting social enquiry" (p. 248). Trustees' power flows from reputation and position; school leaders need not cede control of their change agenda by reacting to questions that distract from what McTaggart (1996) rightly calls "commitments to observe and problematize through practice."

Organizational theorists might label Heads of School and Board Chairs who seek more strategic directions for their boards as "change-agent groups." They would suggest a body of literature on change-agency that is relevant as leaders seek to embed strategic thinking processes within the fabric of the board culture. Bartunek (2003) proposed a "triangle model" of change agency (identity, relationships, and actions) to contextualize the "evolution of a group working to accomplish a change in its organizational setting" (13). At any given time, inherent tensions are at play among all three elements. To some extent, Bartunek (2003) explains that accepting conflict and contradictions (whether implicit or explicit) may actually lead to desired outcomes in the long run. Perhaps it can be useful for Heads and Board Chairs to lean into tensions: taking "contradictions as valuable feedback and opportunities to learn and grow" (Bartunek, 2003, p. 226).

> **To be truly impactful, change initiatives must become embedded in the fabric of organizational culture.**

The process by which Boards of Trustees develop deeper capacities for strategic effectiveness lends itself to analysis through four related organizational learning models. Crossan, Lane, and White (1999) described organizational learning as a "principal means of achieving the strategic renewal of an enterprise" (p. 522). Schilling and Kluge's (2008) perspective focused on individual and organizational behavior and outlined barriers that prevent or impede organizational learning. Serrat (2010) wrote about "structural barriers" that have hampered collaboration among organizational subsystems and explained the challenges of connecting semiautonomous units within a single organization (p. 1). And lastly, Millway and Saxton (2011) wrote about optimizing processes for identifying and sharing valuable information across loosely coupled organizations (Weick, 1976). These organizational learning theories help to define significant challenges that leaders face to institutionalize board culture and embrace strategic thinking as a normative core competency.

For organizational learning to be strategic, Crossan et al. (1999) have written that it "should encompass the entire enterprise – not simply the individual or group" (p. 522). One major challenge is to institutionalize strategic thinking into the culture and fabric of the board so that it will endure even after the early group of stakeholders are no longer involved in the board's work. For strategic thinking to become a board institution, Heads of School and Board Chairs must focus on transferring individuals' learning and the core group's shared understandings to the organization by embedding systems and procedures that make strategic thinking an essential part of the whole board's norms and culture (Crossan et al., 1999). Embedding procedures means first drafting (or redefining) internal guidelines that specify meeting-by-meeting routines, notably within the context of onboarding. Embedding procedures to ensure "that routinized actions

occur" and defining a systematic timeline for completing key onboarding-related tasks are critical steps to consider as Heads and Board Chairs look to make strategic thinking an institutionalized, core component of trusteeship (Crossan, et al., 1999, p. 525).

Section 6:
Recommendations

At least four barriers must be addressed as school leaders seek to embed strategic thinking as a core component of board governance. First, March (1991) has highlighted the fundamental tension between "exploration and exploitation" based on competition for resources (Crossan, et al., 1999, p. 523). For boards of trustees, the scarcest resource might be time: Head of School, Board Chair and the small group of invested stakeholders must strategically divide their time between guiding strategic thinking at an institutional level and meeting their annual fiduciary responsibilities to people and programs.

Organizational learning is a dynamic process; therefore, even as school leaders prioritize embedding policies, systems, and procedures to institutionalize strategic thinking, they must also address a second barrier: bringing diverse groups of trustees along into the interpreting process. "Barriers to interpretation are dominated by aspects of interpersonal relationships," and both Heads of School and Board Chairs must effectively persuade influential members of the Board of Trustees to embrace strategic thinking as a top priority (Schilling & Kluge, 2008, p. 346). We recommend gathering data in context to understand why some might continue to resist supporting a move toward more strategic focus; however, Schilling and Kluge (2008) suggest two possibilities that seem plausible. On the one hand, champions of strategic effectiveness within the organization may lack the requisite social and political skills to be influential. On the other hand, leaders may be perceived as untrustworthy: emphasis on strategic thinking might be criticized, for example, as a veiled attempt to trim schools' budgets, raise tuition and/or solicit large financial contributions from reluctant donors.

To broaden a base of support for emphasis on strategic thinking within boards of trustees, board members - and stakeholders throughout the school community - must see ample evidence that a more intentionally strategic approach serves the best interests of students and aligns with the mission of the school. For some in the school community, they'll 'see it when they believe it' – Heads of School and Board Chairs must continue to share their vision and engage in an on-going process of storytelling. Explaining a vision for change by making metaphorical connections to familiar stories can be another effective method of expanding support. School leaders would do well to recruit influential, politically savvy supporters from among their boards – the sorts who are at the center of informal social networks – to raise their voices in support, too.

A third barrier involves the challenge of integrating a renewed focus on strategic into functionally disconnected organizational subgroups within the community of the board. Serrat (2010) has explained this barrier to sharing and collaboration using the metaphor of

organizational silos. Serrat's model neatly describes turfism that often exists within boards - where some members wield extraordinary influence over key decisions. Silos at the board level might breed defensiveness and contribute to an organizational culture that too often elevates the performance of divisions or departments above a strategic emphasis on the future health of the school as a whole (Serrat, 2010).

It may be too much to ask the Head of School and Board Chair to shape the board's culture into a collaborative, connected system; however, school leaders can begin working to overcome resistance against integration (Schilling & Kluge, 2008). For example, Millway and Saxton (2011) have suggested that building strong communities of practice (CoPs) can build ownership for mission-aligned strategic initiatives through ongoing discussion of and collaboration around key issues. For example, World Vision, an international nonprofit organization with an annual budget in excess of $2 billion, operationalized its CoPs to include formal leadership, clear goals, and administrative support –with the goal of full staff involvement (Millway & Saxton, 2011). For shaping board culture, CoPs could provide both a forum for proponents of strategic thinking to study emerging trends in research and a safe haven for skeptics to ask difficult questions and engage in healthy, civil dialogue.

And lastly, Heads and Chairs must work to capture and share knowledge effectively – especially as key early stakeholders rotate out of leadership roles. For strategic effectiveness specifically, how might leaders build optimal processes for identifying, highlighting, and sharing valuable information among trustees? Millway and Saxton (2011) have called this organizational learning barrier a "process gap" and have recommended starting with answering a few essential questions: "Where is knowledge created? What knowledge needs to be captured? How will knowledge be captured, codified, and shared? What tasks make up each process? What capabilities and resources are required to execute the tasks?" (p. 48-49). It would seem that developing a collaborative and accessible online system to capture and share information, tacit knowledge, and internal guidelines for processes might prove useful.

Crossan et al. (1999) have written that, "essentially, the process of institutionalizing embeds learned behaviors that have worked in the past into the routines of the organization" (p. 531). School leaders must note well the phrase "worked in the past" as a reminder that institutionalizing processes for strategic thinking, building integrated, shared ownership among a larger segments of the board, replacing silos with collaborative, connected systems, and creating an enduring knowledge-sharing process will take time. Along the way, Heads and Board Chairs must develop and sustain strategic initiatives that have "worked in the past." Leaders must balance a commitment to building organizational learning processes over the longer term with effective day-to-day management of programs that are already in place. Striking a balance means that schools must develop both a cadre of trustee-leaders who seek opportunities to think and act strategically and the institutional structures and processes for sharing knowledge about strategic effectiveness across the entire learning organization.

Recommendations for School Leaders

- **Consider several factors when identifying potential trustees.** The selection of new trustees is a complex process that requires keen situational awareness, and decisions should be guided by the strategic plan. Heads of Schools, Board Chairs, and governance committees must be cognizant of the dispositions and skill sets of potential trustees and how those characteristics could potentially enhance or detract from strategic effectiveness of the board.

- **Make onboarding, as a supplement to cultivation, recruitment and orientation, part of the plan to build strategic effectiveness.** All schools do trustee recruitment and orientation. Highly strategic Heads and Board Chairs do early identification, cultivation, recruitment, orientation and onboarding. Just as important as selecting the right people is the process of orienting them to the nature of the work, with an eye toward nurturing mindsets that prioritize strategic effectiveness. Onboarding, which we define as a sustained, purposeful process for acculturation over an extended timeline, is essential.

- **Focus professional development efforts on activities that build norms of cooperation and collaboration.** A high investment on the front end yields significant returns. Heads of Schools must continue to learn how to work with their boards rather than focusing efforts on how to get their boards to do what they want them to do.

Recommendations for NAIS

- Highlight development and importance of models for onboarding new trustees that focus on strategic development of latent talent.

- With regard to strategic planning processes, provide further guidance about what models of strategic visioning exist that work to balance inherent tension between valuing inclusiveness and efficiency.

- Revise and polish our survey tool (or similar) as a method for member schools to measure strategic effectiveness at the board level. More data will encourage more school leaders to engage in conversations about strategic effectiveness. These conversations will shape school leadership culture in ways that enhance Heads' and Board Chairs' capacity to identify and respond to threats and enhance institutional strengths.

Questions for Future Research

Our findings revealed interesting questions that were outside of the scope of our study. Further exploration of the following questions will prove beneficial for researchers and practitioners:

- **Is there a model or approach that is most effective for identification and cultivation of potential trustees?** Heads of Schools and Board Chairs in our study indicated that they regularly invite potential members to serve on committees or task forces before inviting them to serve as trustees. Do activities such as these make a substantive impact on strategic effectiveness and institutional performance?

- **How might leaders reimagine the balance between evaluation, mentoring, and support in ways that lead to more open lines of communication, more stability and more longevity?** Researchers would be wise to focus more attention on the various ways that Board Chairs and Heads of School can form productive, healthy relationships. We note that the principal-agent relationship between Chairs and Heads remains murky at best.

- **How can boards improve their performance as fundraising bodies?** Our findings suggest that the term "fundraising body" means more than board members' capacity to give as individuals. The capacity to influence the culture of giving warrants further research on which elements of this construct matter most.

- **What accounts for differences in perceptions between Board Chairs and Heads, and is it possible to close that gap?** One of our statistical findings suggested that Board Chairs tend to have more favorable perceptions of the level of strategic effectiveness and leadership practices than do Heads of Schools. We suggest an exploration of the potential sources of dissonance between chairs and heads.

- **What is the story behind the schools who rated lowest in strategic effectiveness?** More qualitative research on the lower-rated schools would be beneficial to unpack the quantitative findings just as our case studies were instrumental in our ability to provide context and rich descriptions of the schools we visited.

- **Might other case studies be compelling?** School leaders may benefit from a larger sample of qualitative case studies, perhaps including a wider variety of school contexts: boarding schools, international schools, and schools that serve learners with special needs.

Just as there is nostalgia for the independent schools of yesteryear, there is a longing for the trustees who gave much and demanded little. In John McPhee's The Headmaster, the story of Frank Boyden, who ruled Deerfield Academy for sixty-six years, the school's trustees had a clear role. They showed up with their checkbooks when summoned. The trustees gave money and unquestioned authority over school governance to their charismatic headmaster. (Kane, 1992, p. 9)

Governance is a field beset with patchwork improvements, as if just improving a typewriter enough will somehow make it into a word processor, or that if we knock out the dents and replace the belts, our old car can evolve into a modern automobile ... boards are trapped in a disastrous set of habits. Our time-honoured practice is to peck away at these habits one at a time rather than to look underneath them to ensure a sound foundation. (Carver, 2007, p. 1031)

The need for school leadership that prioritizes highly effective strategic thinking is higher than ever. Heads, Board Chairs and trustees face multiple governance challenges within a context of an increasingly competitive market for education and generally declining independent school enrollments. First and foremost, then, Heads of Schools and Board Chairs are concerned with institutional performance. While they are in agreement about the usefulness of knowing what their peers value and prioritize in terms of governance, they want to know what needs to be done in order to secure and advance the schools in which they lead. They want to know what they are doing well, what needs improvement, and what they need to do in order to improve. One Headmaster of an independent, K-12 school summed it up nicely: when asked about a descriptive study of governance, he remarked, *"So what? How does that help make us better?"* Heads want useful information: how do these numbers help me do my job... both now and into the future?

Why Strategic Effectiveness matters to school leaders

The construction of our strategic effectiveness metric was grounded in the extant literature and widely accepted and validated survey instruments; we were confident in our ability to measure a board's strategic effectiveness. However, we also wanted to ensure that our analysis and findings would be of practical use for school leaders. We aspired to produce findings that matter to the individuals who are responsible for securing the long-term viability of the schools they serve.

Our quantitative findings suggest that strategic effectiveness has a substantial relationship to

institutional performance, and our case studies support this finding. In our study, schools with strategically effective boards were able to influence the culture of giving. Many were able to increase endowments by as much as $20 million over a ten-year period, while others increased their physical plant with the addition of new buildings, facilities and the acquisition of land.

Heads of School and Board Chairs in our study consistently referred to the importance of strategic planning and the benefits of establishing and maintaining a board culture where trustees resisted the urge to focus on tactical issues. Whether it involved a shift in pedagogical approach, or preparing to tackle the potential challenges of rapid enrollment growth, school leaders expressed a desire to be proactive and forward-thinking while also considering the importance of anchoring decisions in the mission and core values of the school. Thus, plans and decisions grounded in a strategic process were not only valued from a philosophical standpoint but also in terms of influencing the bottom line.

Governance is not enough; schools need leadership.

Board governance has been a critical component of independent schools for over a century, and the importance of strong governance has been documented and studied from multiple perspectives in a multitude of settings. What emerged from our initial research on governance was a linear process, with clearly defined principal-agent roles, which can be summed up neatly in organizational charts and policy documents. Discussions on governance, in a traditional sense, have been focused on navigating and managing relationships based on positional authority. However, as school leaders continue to face more complex challenges and issues, the need for Heads of Schools and Boards of Trustees to work in partnership has never been more critical.

For Heads of School, the ability to effectively work in partnership with boards of trustees is crucial to both school success and career longevity. This need is evidenced by the preponderance of literature that champions the importance of strong relationships between Heads of Schools and Board Chairs. One Head of School was very critical of the current dialogue regarding governance; he felt as though much of the literature and professional development for Heads of School has presented a picture that pits Heads of Schools against their boards. He stated, "I am not interested in information or consultants who try to sell me on the idea that they can help me get my board to do what I want them to do. Those kinds of marketing messages miss the mark."

Based on our findings, we suggest a paradigm shift from the traditional, top-down concept of board governance for independent schools to one that regards governance as a concept of shared leadership. We are encouraging a dialogue which focuses on communication, collaboration, and respect. Heads of Schools and Board Chairs need to know how to best work well with one another, not for one another. At first blush, this may appear to be a minor change in semantics, but we believe that the implications for future discussion, research, theory, and practice are tremendous. It is our hope that this paradigm shift will not only provide more practical information for immediate consumption, but that it will also assist in reframing questions and research for the future.

People Matter. What people do and how they do it matters more.

We spent a considerable amount of time exploring board characteristics based on the pervasive assumptions about the types of people that are required to make an effective board. Throughout the literature we found a large number of "fixed" characteristics such as parental status, gender, and profession were a part of the conversation. However, our findings suggest that strategically effective boards and school leaders consistently seek trustees who exhibit the ability to suspend personal motivation and have the capacity work well with others in a collaborative setting. Heads of School and Board Chairs placed a high value on agility and the ability to make decisions based on ever-evolving contextual factors.

The manner in which Trustees, Heads of School and Board Chairs interact with one another as a governing body is paramount. Furthermore, the processes and policies put in place to guide their interactions are critical to maintaining a positive, healthy culture. This includes everything from forming committees and selecting their members to onboarding processes to acculturate trustees to board culture. Regardless of whether or not a school has been operating for twelve years or fifty, school leaders in our study placed a stronger emphasis on educating trustees about school climate than they did on balancing percentages of fixed characteristics.

Our research was comprehensive, and our conversations were enlightening. However, all roads led to the same conclusion: empirical, statistically-supported, relevant, and practical evidence regarding independent school governance is in short supply. "Too often, according to Chait et al., boards are a collection of high-powered individuals engaged in low-level activities, resulting in less-than-optimal governance for the organizations they serve" (Katsouros, 2011, p. 13).

The importance of descriptive and qualitative data cannot be ignored. It is valuable to gather information from successful Heads of Schools and Board Chairs and to tell the stories of the work they do; however, the combination of descriptive data, anecdotal accounts, and statistically significant findings work together to bring a complex picture of strategic board governance into sharper focus.

References

Assaf, F. (2014, December). Pace Academy School Head. (T. Baker, Interviewer)

Bartunek, J. M. (2003). *Organizational and Educational Change: The Life and Role of a Change Agent Group.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., Publishers.

Bass, B. (1990). *Handbook of Leadership*. New York: The Free Press.

Bassett, P. (2014). Presentation at All Saints' Episcopal School.

Bassett, P., & Mitchell, M. (2006). *Financing Sustainable Schools*. Washington, DC: National Association of Independent Schools.

Bauer, T. N., Erdogan, Berrin Zedeck, Sheldon (Ed), (2011). "Organizational socialization: The effective onboarding of new employees."*APA handbook of industrial and organizational psychology, Vol 3: Maintaining, expanding, and contracting the organization.* Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/12171-002.

Beavis, A. K. (1992). *Independent School Governance.* Sydney: St. Andrew's Catholic School.

Bhagat, C., & Kehoe, C. (2014). High performing boards: What's on their agenda? *Mckinsey Quarterly*, 1-5.

Brady, B. (2010). *Virtues*. Retrieved from The Flight Plan Book: http://www.theflightplanbook.com/virtues/

Bradley, R. (2014, December). Boston Trinity Board Chair. (T. Baker, Interviewer)

Bolman, L., & Deal, T. (2008). Reframing Organizations. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Boston Trinity Academy. (2014). *Boston Trinity Mission and Vision.* Retrieved from Boston Trinity Academy: www.bostontrinity.org

Bryson, J. M. (2011). Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations, 4th Edition. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Bryson, J.M., Crosby, B.C. and Bryson, J.K. (2009). "Understanding strategic planning and the formulation and implementation of strategic plans as a way of knowing: the contributions of actor-network theory," *International Public Management Journal*, 12(2), pp. 172 -207.

Burns, J.M. (1978). *Leadership.* New York: Harper & Row Publishers.

Carr, W. & Kemmis, S. (1986). *Becoming Critical: education, knowledge and action research.* London: Falmer Press.

Carver, J. (2007), "The promise of governance theory: beyond codes and best practices," *Corporate Governance*, 15(6), pp. 1030-1037.

Center for Transformative Teaching and Learning. (2015). *Center for Transformative Teaching and Learning.* Retrieved from About Us: http://www.thecttl.org/home

Chait, R., Holland, T., & Taylor, B. (1996). *Improving the Performance of Governing Boards.* Phoenix: American Council on Education/Oryx Press Series on Higher Education.

Chait, R., Ryan, W., & Taylor, B. (2005). *Governance as Leadership.* Hoboken: BoardSource.

Condor, J. (2014, December). Presbyterian Day School Director of Admissions and Enrollment. (D. Ostroff, Interviewer)

Crossan, M.M., Lane, H.W., and White, R.E. (1999). An organizational learning framework: From intuition to institution. *The Academy of Management Review*, 24(3), 522-537.

DeKuyper, M.H. (2007). *Trustee Handbook: A Guide to Effective Governance for Independent School Boards 9th ed*. Washington, D.C.: National Association of Independent Schools.

Dignan, M., & Tenuta, R. (n.d.). *Assessing Board Performance: An analysis of ASAE-BoardSource board self-assessment results*. Washington, D.C.: ASAE Foundation.

Droke, S. (2014, December). Presbyterian Day School Academic Head for Academic Affairs. (D. Ostroff, Interviewer)

Eliot, J. F. and Pritchard K. L. (2012). *Help the Helper: Building a Culture of Extreme Teamwork.* New York: Penguin Books.

Gardner, H. (1995). *Leading Minds: An Anatomy of Leadership,* 2nd edition. New York: Basic Books.

Garten, C. (2014, December). Seven Hills School Head. (D. Ostroff, Interviewer)

Gill, M. D. (2005). *Governing for Results*. Victoria, B.C.: Trafford.

Gilmore, B., & Rush, M. (2012). *When Mission and Market Forces Intercept: A Study of NAIS member schools navigating a recession*. Nashville: Peabody College.

Goleman, D. (1998). What makes a leader? *Harvard Business Review,* pp. 93-102.

Goodman, R. H., & Zimmerman, W. G. (2000). *Thinking Differently.* Arlington: Educational Research Services.

Guerra, F. (2014, December). Boston Trinity School Head. (T. Baker, Interviewer)

Guernsey, D. (2003). *The Function of Boards in Private Schools: Parameters and Best Practices in Current School Board Literature.*

Hancock, S. (2014, December). Presbyterian Day School Head. (D. Ostroff, Interviewer)

Holland, T. P., Chait, R. P., & Taylor, B. E. (1989). Board Effectiveness: Identifying and Measuring Trustee Competencies. *Research in Higher Education*, 435-453.

Horowitz, S. (2014, December). St. Andrew's Board Chair. (S. Campbell, Interviewer)
IBM Corp. Released 2013. IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, Version 22.0. Armonk, NY: IBM Corp.

Institute of Education Sciences. (2015). *National Center for Education Statistics.* Retrieved from Private School Universe Survey: http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/pss/

Jackson, C. (March 4, 2015). *Board of directors votes to close college at the end of 2014-2015 academic year*. Retrieved from: http://sbc.edu/news/academics/board-directors-votes-close-college-2014-2015-academic-year/

Jackson, D. K., & Holland, T. P. (1998). Measuring the Effectiveness of Nonprofit Boards. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 159-181.

Kane, P. R. (1992). *Emerging Issues in K-12 independent school governance. AGB Occasional Paper No. 14*. Washington, D.C.: Association of Governing Boards of Universities and College.

Katsouros, F. (2011). *Study of the Relationships between Board Characteristics and Institutional Performance in Jesuit Schools*. New York: Columbia University.

Kober, N. and Usher, A. (2012). "A public education primer: basic (and sometimes surprising) facts about the U.S. education system." Washington, D.C.: Center on Education Policy.

Kosasky, R. (2014, December). St. Andrew School Head. (S. Campbell, Interviewer)

Kotter, J. (2007). Leading change: why transformation efforts fail. *Harvard Business Review*, pp. 1-10.

Lewis, C. (2014, December). Washington International School Head. (S. Campbell, Interviewer)

Lichtman, G. (2012, November 17). *Template for an Education Revolution; First Post from Presbyterian Day School, Memphis*. Retrieved from The Future of K-12 Education: http://www.grantlichtman.com/template-for-an-education-revolution-first-post-from-presbyterian-day-school-memphis/

Lichtman, G. (2012, November 27). *Leading Classroom Change Permeates Presbyterian Day School*. Retrieved from The Future of K-12 Education: http://www.grantlichtman.com/leading-classroom-change-permeates-presbyterian-day-school/

Lichtman, G. (2012, December 2). *Fluidity Breeds Engaged, Highly Differentiated Learning at Presbyterian Day School*. Retrieved from The Future of K-12 Education: http://www.grantlichtman.com/fluidity-breeds-engaged-highly-differentiated-learning-at-presbyterian-day-school/

Lichtman, G. (2014). *#EdJourney: A Roadmap to the Future of Education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Mawhinney, D. (2014, December). Boston Trinity Director of Admissions. (T. Baker, Interviewer)

McCormick, J., Barnett, K., Alavi, S. B., & Newcombe, G. (2006). Board Governance of Independent Schools: A Framework for Investigation. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 429-445.

McTaggart, R. (1996). 'Issues for participatory action researchers' in O. Zuber-Skerritt (ed.) *New Directions in Action Research*, London: Falmer Press.

Milway, K., & Saxton, A. (2001). The Challenge of Organizational Learning. Stanford Social Innovation Review.

Mintzberg, H. (1991). "The professional bureaucracy," In M.W. Peterson et. al's (eds.) *Organization and Governance in Higher Education*. Boston: Ginn Press, pp. 53-75.

Mott, W. R. (2014). *Super Boards: How Inspired Governance Transforms Your Organization*. Dan Wright Publisher Services LLC.

Muenzer, D. (2014, December). Washington International Board Chair. (S. Campbell, Interviewer)

NAIS. (2012). *Board Self Assessment Survey.* Washington, DC: National Association of Independent Schools.

NAIS. (2012). *NAIS Principles of Good Practice.* Washington, D.C.: National Association of Independent Schools.

NAIS. (2013). *Heads and Board Chairs Working in Partnership: 2012-2013 NAIS Governance Study.* Washington, D.C.: National Association of Independent Schools.

NAIS. (2013). *NAIS Annual Report 2012-2013*. Washington, DC: National Association of Independent Schools.

Qualtrics. (2013). Version 37892. Utah: Qualtrics.

Pace Academy. (2014). *History: Pace Academy: A Timeline.* Retrieved from Pace Academy: http://www.paceacademy.org/Page/About/History

Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Ltd.

Presbyterian Day School. (2014, May). *Farewell Lee Burns, Our Leader and Friend.* Retrieved from PDS Memphis: http://www.pdsmemphis.org/news/school-news/item/3613-farewell-lee-burns-our-leader-and-friend#world

Presbyterian Day School. (2015). *Capital Campaign*. Retrieved from PDS Memphis: http://www.pdsmemphis.org/giving/capital-campaign

Presbyterian Day School. (2015). *EDGE Design Thinking Blog*. Retrieved from PDS Memphis: http://www.pdsmemphis.org/learning/edge-design-thinking

Presbyterian Day School. (2015). *Quick Overview.* Retrieved from PDS Memphis: http://www.pdsmemphis.org/about/quick-overview

Presbyterian Day School. (2015). *Mission and History.* Retrieved from PDS Memphis: http://www.pdsmemphis.org/about/mission-and-history

Presbyterian Day School. (2015). *Tuition and Fees.* Retrieved from PDS Memphis: http://www.pdsmemphis.org/admission/tuition-and-fees

Riven, J., & Batiste, G. (2011). *The Head's Handbook: A Guide for Aspiring, New, and Experienced Heads of School.* Washington, DC: National Association of Independent Schools.

Schilling, J., & Kluge, A. (2009). Barriers to organizational learning: An integration of theory and research. *International Journal of Management Review*s, 11(3), 337-360.

Serrat, O. (2010). Bridging organizational silos. *International Publications*, Paper 120. Access at http://digitalcommons.ilr.cornell.edu/intl/120

Shand, R. M. (2008). *2008 Columns.* Retrieved from St. Francis Episcopal Church: http://www.stfrancispotomac.org/files/Sounds/WMS%202008%20website%20columns.pdf

Sheft, R. (2014, December). Pace Academy Board Chair. (T. Baker, Interviewer)

Silverman, D., & Marvasti, A. (2008). *Doing qualitative research: A comprehensive guide.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Snyder, Thomas D. (2014). Mobile Digest of Education Statistics, 2013 (NCES 2014-085). National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Educational Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC.

St. Andrew's Episcopal School. (2015). *St. Andrew's At A Glance*. Retrieved from St. Andrew's Episcopal School: www.saes.org

Tabachnick, B. G., & Fidell, L. S. (1989). *Using multivariate statistics* (2nd ed.). New York: Harper & Row. As cited by Becker, L. A. http://www.uccs.edu/lbecker/glm_effectsize.html.

The Seven Hills School. (2015). *Mission, Philosophy, and Values*. Retrieved from 7hills.org: http://www.7hills.org/mission

The Seven Hills School. (2015). *Portrait of a Graduate.* Retrieved from 7hills.org: http://www.7hills.org/portrait

The Seven Hills School. (2015). *Seven Hills by the Numbers.* Retrieved from 7hills.org: http://www.7hills.org/bythenumbers

The Seven Hills School. (2014). Retrieved from Seven Hills Annual Report 2013-14: http://issuu.com/scottcagle/docs/ar_7hills2014_issuu_r1_9d541990868bdd

The Seven Hills School. (2015). *Head of The Seven Hills School Named to National Association.* Retrieved from 7hills.org: http://www.7hills.org/podium/default.aspx?t=204&nid=951864

The Seven Hills School. (2015). *The Seven Hills Method.* Retrieved from 7hills.org: http://www.7hills.org/podium/default.aspx?t=154569

Tregaron Conservancy. (2015). *History.* Retrieved from The Tregaron Conservancy: http://www.tregaronconservancy.org/history/

Washington International School. (2015). *Who We Are.* Retrieved from Washington International School: http://www.wis.edu/about-wis/index.aspx

Weick, Karl. (1976). "Educational organizations as loosely coupled systems," *Administrative Science Quarterly,* 21(1), pp. 103-117.

Weitzner, D., & Peridis, T. (2011). Corporate Governance as Part of the Strategic Process: Rethinking the Role of the Board. *Journal of Business Ethics,* 33-42.

Westerlund, G. and Sjostrand, S. (1979). *Organizational Myths.* London: Harper and Row.

Whitehead, J. (1985). An analysis of an individual's educational development: the basis for personally oriented action research, in: Shipman, M. (ed.) *Educational Research: principles, policies and practices.* London: Falmer Press.

Yukl, G. (2002). "Introduction: The Nature of Leadership," Leadership in Organizations. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Publishing, pp. 1-20.

Q1 Independent School Leadership: Heads, Boards and Strategic Thinking About this survey Researchers at Vanderbilt's Peabody College of Education are conducting this study to assess factors that contribute to effective independent school leadership at the institutional level. Also, the study will offer recommendations for new leadership models that heads of schools could implement to promote strategic thinking and transform board practice. With support from our partners at the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), we are gathering responses from heads of school and board chairs at NAIS member institutions across the United States and around the world. Please note that aspects of this survey are property of NAIS. This survey should take approximately 15 minutes to complete. You can complete part of the survey and return later to finish (your answers will be saved). You can also use the back button at the bottom of the survey (do not use the back button on your browser) to see previous sections.

Confidentiality: Your survey responses will be used strictly for research purposes. Although the final report could potentially be published, you are guaranteed that neither you, nor your school, nor any of its personnel will be identified without your consent. Participation in this survey is voluntary and any individual may withdraw at any time.   Thank you very much for your cooperation!

Q2 What is your position?
❍   Head of School
❍   Board Chair
❍   Other _____

Q3 The board at our school...

	Completely Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Not applicable
is more involved in trying to put out fires than in preparing for the future.	○	○	○	○	○	○
sets clear organizational priorities for the year ahead.	○	○	○	○	○	○
delays action until an issue becomes urgent or critical.	○	○	○	○	○	○
has meetings that tend to focus more on current concerns than on preparing for the future.	○	○	○	○	○	○
asks at least once a year that the Head of School articulate his/her vision for the school's future and strategies to realize that vision.	○	○	○	○	○	○
has on occasion evaded responsibility for some important issue facing the school.	○	○	○	○	○	○
often discusses where the school should be headed five or more years into the future.	○	○	○	○	○	○
has reviewed the school's strategies for attaining its long-term goals within the past year.	○	○	○	○	○	○
has had meetings where the discussion focused on identifying or overcoming the school's challenges.	○	○	○	○	○	○
discusses events and trends in the larger environment that may present specific opportunities for this school.	○	○	○	○	○	○
makes explicit use of the long range priorities of this school in dealing with current issues.	○	○	○	○	○	○
spends more than half of its meeting time in discussions of issues of importance to the school's long-range future.	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q4 The board at our school...

	Completely agree	Agree	Disagree	Completely disagree	Don't know	Not applicable
reviews the school's core values to ensure that they are consistent with the school's mission.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
creates needed policies to uphold the mission of the school.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
has a process in place for reviewing and approving the annual budget in context of the long-term financial needs of the school.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
has a process in place for reviewing revenues and expenses throughout the school year to ensure the continuing fiscal health of the school.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
has a process in place for conducting long-term financial planning on behalf of the school.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
has created investment and endowment policies that guide the investment practices of the school.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
supports the fundraising needs of the school by making the school a personal giving priority during years of service on the board.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
supports the development needs of the school by soliciting prospective donors on behalf of the school and participating in the ongoing cultivation of donors.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
gives the head the authority needed to run the school effectively.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
understands the role of its trustees and the role of the head of school.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
gives the head adequate personal support and guidance.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
focuses on recruiting potential members who have the capacity to support the school financially.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
focuses on recruiting members who have a skill set that meets the strategic needs of the school.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q5 How do you rate the culture of giving at your school (annual fund, capital gifts, etc)?
○ Very good
○ Good
○ Fair
○ Poor

Q6 In general, what overall trend do you see in giving (annual fund, capital gifts, etc) to your school?
○ Increasing
○ Staying the same
○ Decreasing
○ Don't know

Q7 How do rate your school's financial capacity to offer competitive compensation packages (salaries, benefits, other) for faculty?
○ Very good
○ Good
○ Fair
○ Poor

Q8 How do you rate your school's financial capacity to fund faculty professional development?
○ Very good
○ Good
○ Fair
○ Poor

Q9 How do you rate your school's overall financial performance?
○ Very good
○ Good
○ Fair
○ Poor

Q10 In general, what trend do you see in your school's overall financial performance?
- ○ Improving
- ○ Staying the same
- ○ Declining
- ○ Don't know

Q11 Within your market context, how would you rate overall admissions demand for your school?
- ○ Very good
- ○ Good
- ○ Fair
- ○ Poor

Q12 In general, what overall trend do you see in your school's admissions demand?
- ○ Increasing
- ○ Staying the same
- ○ Decreasing
- ○ Don't know

Q13 Which of the following best describes your school in terms of its enrollment?
- ○ Significantly over budgeted enrollment
- ○ Over budgeted enrollment
- ○ At budgeted enrollment
- ○ Under budgeted enrollment
- ○ Significantly under budgeted enrollment

Q14 In general, what trend do you see in your school's enrollment?
- ○ Increasing
- ○ Staying the same
- ○ Decreasing
- ○ Don't know

Q15 How would you rate your alumni's preparation for college and/or life beyond your school?
- ○ Very good
- ○ Good
- ○ Fair
- ○ Poor
- ○ Don't know

Q16 How important are each of the following roles for the Head of School?

	Very important	Somewhat important	Not very important	Not at all important	Don't know/no opinion
Developing and managing effective school policies	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Developing and implementing curriculum	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Assuring the overall quality of program	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Enacting appropriate disciplinary measures	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Ensuring the school's financial well-being	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Establishing positive public relations	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Fundraising	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Instilling climate/values consistent with the school mission	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Long-range and strategic planning	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Managing conflict	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Negotiating salaries and benefits	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Recruiting and hiring quality staff and faculty members	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Working effectively with trustees	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Meeting enrollment goals	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q17 How many members does your board have?

Q18 Please indicate the number of board members working in each of the following industry sectors:

	Number of Board Members
Business/private sector	
Education	
Government	
Non-profit	

Q19 What percentage of your board members are parents of students currently enrolled in your school?

Q20 Does your school have PREFERENCES regarding parents of students currently enrolled at your school (aka 'current parents') serving on your board?
❍ No, our school has no preference regarding the percentage of current parents on the board.
❍ Yes, our preference is majority non-parents.
❍ Yes, our preference is majority current parents.
❍ Yes, our preference is an equal balance of current parents and non-parents.

Q21 Does your school have POLICIES regarding parents of students currently enrolled at your school (aka 'current parents') serving on your board?
❍ No, our school has no policies regarding the percentage of current parents on the board.
❍ Yes, our policy is majority non-parents.
❍ Yes, our policy is majority current parents.
❍ Yes, our policy is an equal balance of current parents and non-parents.

Q22 What role does the Head of School serve on the board?
- ○ Full voting member of the board
- ○ Ex-officio member of the board
- ○ Not a member of the board

Q23 Which committees are a part of your board? (Choose all that apply)
- ❑ Admission/Enrollment Management
- ❑ Buildings and Grounds
- ❑ Development
- ❑ Diversity
- ❑ Education
- ❑ Ethics
- ❑ Executive
- ❑ Finance
- ❑ Governance/Nominating
- ❑ Marketing
- ❑ Strategic Planning
- ❑ Head of School evaluation
- ❑ Other
- ❑ Our board has no committees.

Q24 Does your board create special Task Forces (with limited time frames) to address specific issues?
- ○ Yes (Please list) _____
- ○ No

Q25 Please describe the terms of service for board members and chairs.

	What is the stated term of service?						Are the terms renewable?			What limits, if any, do you impose on terms?				
	1 year	2 years	3 years	4 years	More than 4 years	Other	Yes	No	Don't know	One renewable term	Two renewable terms	Three renewable terms	Four or more renewable terms	Don't know
Board Chair	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Board Member	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q26 What is the election process for board members?
- ○ Board and parental vote
- ○ Corporation vote
- ○ Nominating Committee vote
- ○ Parental vote
- ○ Self-perpetuating (board vote)
- ○ Other

Q27 As a practice, does your board invite potential new members to serve on committees or task forces first before inviting them to become a board member?
❍ Yes
❍ No
❍ Don't know

Q28 How frequently does your board meet?
❍ Once a year
❍ Twice a year
❍ Three times per year
❍ Four times per year
❍ Five times per year
❍ Six times per year
❍ Seven times per year
❍ Eight times per year
❍ Nine times per year
❍ Ten or more times per year

Q29 Does your board require trustees to sign a formal commitment letter outlining what board membership requires?
❍ Yes
❍ No
❍ Don't know

Q30 Does your board require trustees to sign a conflict of interest statement?
❍ Yes
❍ No
❍ Don't know

Q31 Does your board have a formal orientation for new members?
❍ Yes
❍ No
❍ Don't know

Q32 How often does your board:

	Every meeting	More than once a year	Once a year	Once every two years	Once every three years	Less often	Never	Other
Engage in professional development?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Hold executive sessions?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Evaluate its performance?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Evaluate the Head of School's performance?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q33 Does your board set annual goals for the Head of School?
○ Yes
○ No
○ Don't know

Q34 How would you rate the relationship between the Head of School and the Board Chair?
○ Very strong: we have an effective partnership.
○ Somewhat strong: we have an effective partnership in some areas and are still working on others.
○ Not very strong: we are working toward a partnership but we are still struggling on many fronts.
○ Not strong at all: there are very few areas in which we work effectively together.

Q35 Are your board members required to make monetary contributions to the school?
○ Yes
○ No
○ Don't know

Q36 What is the minimum suggested contribution for board members?
○ Less than $1,000
○ $1,000
○ $2,000
○ $3,000
○ $5,000
○ According to the board member's ability and capacity
○ Other _____

Q37 How IMPORTANT are each of the following roles for the board?

	Very important	Somewhat important	Not very important	Not at all important	Don't know/no opinion
A group to give support to the school head	○	○	○	○	○
An oversight body assuring financial accountability of the school	○	○	○	○	○
An oversight body assuring the quality of offerings	○	○	○	○	○
A group charged with charting the strategic direction for the school	○	○	○	○	○
A group charged with ensuring the financial sustainability of the school	○	○	○	○	○
A policy-making body, creating new policies to guide practice, minimize legal issues and other risks, etc.	○	○	○	○	○
A fund-raising body	○	○	○	○	○
Community ambassadors for the school/overseers of the school's public image	○	○	○	○	○
A group representative of those they serve and their issues/concerns	○	○	○	○	○
A group of experts who can be called upon for professional advice	○	○	○	○	○
A group that ensures the school's mission is in sync with core values and market needs	○	○	○	○	○
A group charged with selecting, compensating, and evaluating the head of school	○	○	○	○	○
A group who effectively perpetuates itself by choosing and orienting new trustees/creating succession plans	○	○	○	○	○
A group that reflects the ethnic and racial diversity of the student population	○	○	○	○	○

Q38 How WELL do you think your board carries out each of the following roles?

	Very well	Somewhat well	Not very well	Not at all well	Don't know/no opinion
A group to give support to the school head	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
An oversight body assuring financial accountability of the school	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
An oversight body assuring the quality of offerings	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
A group charged with charting the strategic direction for the school	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
A group charged with ensuring the financial sustainability of the school	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
A policy-making body, creating new policies to guide practice, minimize legal issues and other risks, etc.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
A fundraising body	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Community ambassadors for the school/overseers of the school's public image	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
A group representative of those they serve and their issues/concerns	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
A group of experts who can be called upon for professional advice	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
A group that ensures the school's mission is in sync with core values and market needs	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
A group charged with selecting, compensating, and evaluating the head of school	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
A group who effectively perpetuates itself by choosing and orienting new trustees/creating succession plans	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
A group that reflects the ethnic and racial diversity of the student population	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q39 How many full-time students are enrolled in your school?
- ❍ 200 or fewer
- ❍ 201-300
- ❍ 301-500
- ❍ 501-700
- ❍ 700-999
- ❍ 1000 or more

Q40 On average, what do you charge for tuition? (across all grade levels)

	Day	Boarding
Less than $5000	○	○
$5,001-$10,000	○	○
$10,001-$15,000	○	○
$15,001-$20,000	○	○
$20,001-$25,000	○	○
$25,001-$30,000	○	○
$30,001-$35,000	○	○
$35,001 to $40,000	○	○
$40,001 to $45,000	○	○
$45,001 to $50,000	○	○
$50,001 to $55,000	○	○
$55,001 to $60,000	○	○
More than $60,000	○	○

Q41 Is your school a co-ed, girls, or boys school?
○ Coed
○ Girls
○ Boys

Q42 Where are you located?
○ East (New Jersey, New York)
○ Middle Atlantic (Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia)
○ New England (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont)
○ Southeast (Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee)
○ Southwest (Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Kansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas)
○ West (Alaska, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming)
○ Midwest (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, West Virginia, Wisconsin)
○ Other

Q43 Is your current school a boarding, boarding-day, day, or day-boarding school?
○ Boarding School (enrolling 95% or more boarding students)
○ Boarding-Day School (enrolling between 51 and 94% boarding students, with the balance day)
○ Day School (enrolling 95% or more day students)
○ Day-Boarding School (enrolling between 51 and 94% day students, with the balance boarding)

Q44   What is the name of your school?   (NOTE: Sharing school name will contribute to the strength and quality of research findings. The actual name of your school will not be shared in any published study and will be used for internal research purposes only.)

Appendix 2:
Interview Protocol

NAIS Board Governance Capstone - Interview Protocol

Notes for Introduction
Thank you so much for meeting with me. I appreciate you for spending some time to share your thoughts on independent school leadership.

I am a graduate student at Vanderbilt University, and I am interested in learning more about the strengths and weaknesses of current governance structures at independent schools and whether any one model of board governance is more effective than others at promoting strategic thinking.

All information that is collected in this interview will be treated with respect. Although the final report could potentially be published, you are guaranteed that neither you, nor your school, nor any of its personnel will be identified without your consent.

May I share your name?
Ask Head of School - may I share your school's name?
... may I record our session, please?

I'm GRATEFUL for your help... do you have any questions before we begin?

Conceptual Frameworks

Board Characteristics, Board Activities, Board Strategic Effectiveness, Institutional Performance

QUESTIONS FOR HEADS OF SCHOOL AND BOARD CHAIRS

Board Characteristics

I'd like to share a set of Board Characteristics with you... and ask whether, in your view, each of these is related to successes in developing your Board's capacity to think and act strategically:

* Committees / Committee Structure
* Meeting Frequency
* Selection process for board members / Board Chair
* Term of service for board members / Board Chair (length / renewable?)

* Other??

        ... if answer is yes, then follow-up with "why" questions...

1. Why does your Board have these committees?
2. Why do you chose to meet x times each year?
3. Why do you select board members in this way?
4. Why do you choose x-year terms?
5. Why do you set limits on board members' terms?
6. Why do you set these limits on board chairs' terms?

Board Activities

1. Could you talk about ways your board engages in professional development? / With an eye toward strategic thinking, why do you choose these sorts of professional development?

2. Take a moment to consider the most important roles the Board fulfills at your school... in which of these roles does your board excel? Can you describe their processes?

Board Strategic Effectiveness

1. We're curious about how do you approach strategic planning... could you describe one or two of the most critical strategic issues facing your school? Can you walk us through how you are addressing one of them with the Board?

2. I want to offer a hypothetical... suppose we could give you a magic wand that allows you to wipe away your school's Board of Trustees and rebuild from scratch... could you walk me through your thought process? (Redirect to Mix of Board Members, Board Characteristics and Board Activities)

3. Our client is interested, specifically, in whether you see and feel a connection between influence of current parents on your board and the board's capacity for strategic thinking...

   • Would you prefer a higher/lower percentage of current parents on your board? Why?
   • In terms of strategic thinking, what's a healthy percentage of current parents for your board? Why?
   • Do you notice a difference in Board members' capacity for strategic thinking between current parents and non-parents? If you notice a difference, how do you encourage current parents to think more strategically?

Institutional Performance

** emphasis on links to strategic effectiveness **

I'd like to share a set of institutional performance markers with you... and ask whether, in your view, institutional performance is related your Board's capacity to think and act strategically:

* giving (annual fund, capital gifts, etc) to your school?
* overall financial performance?
* admissions demand for your School?
* your School's enrollment?

> *... if answer is yes, then follow-up: how has the Board influenced trend you've observed?*

1. What factors are most critical in shaping your overall institutional performance—in terms of governing structures or individuals?

2. What factors structures or individuals do you think are responsible for shaping or affecting your institutional performance?

Appendix 3:
Survey Results

Figure 1

Is your current school a boarding, boarding-day, day, or day-boarding school?

- Day-Boarding School (enrolling between 51 and 94% day students, with the balance boarding): 53
- Day School (enrolling 95% or more day students): 667
- Boarding-Day School (enrolling between 51 and 94% boarding students, with the balance day): 58
- Boarding School (enrolling 95% or more boarding students): 17

Figure 2

Is your school a co-ed, girls, or boys school?

56 38

- Coed
- Girls
- Boys

Figure 3

- Other: 69
- Midwest (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, West Virginia, Wisconsin): 93
- West (Alaska, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming): 131
- Southwest (Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Kansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas): 81
- Southeast (Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee): 122
- New England (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont): 108
- Middle Atlantic (Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia): 118
- East (New Jersey, New York): 74

Figure 4

What is your position?

9
209
597

- Head
- Board Chair
- Other

Figure 5

How many full-time students are enrolled in your school?

Enrollment	Count
1000 or more	84
700-999	95
501-700	101
301-500	198
201-300	134
200 or fewer	183

On average, how much do you charge for tuition?

Tuition	Count
More than $60,000	9
$55,001 to $60,000	14
$50,001 to $55,000	48
$45,001 to $50,000	53
$40,001 to $45,000	46
$35,001 to $40,000	68
$30,001-$35,000	88
$25,001-$30,000	121
$20,001-$25,000	151
$15,001-$20,000	230
$10,001-$15,000	143
$5,001-$10,000	72
Less than $5000	40

Figure 6

Figure 7

How important are each of the following roles for the Head of School?

Figure 8

The Board at our school...

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Agree | Completely Agree |

focuses on recruiting members who have a skill set that meets the strategic needs of the school. — 17, 100, 457, 241

focuses on recruiting potential members who have the capacity to support the school financially. — 43, 235, 379, 139

gives the head adequate personal support and guidance. — 15, 81, 389, 337

understands the role of its trustees and the role of the head of school. — 8, 68, 384, 359

gives the head the authority needed to run the school effectively. — 69, 287, 510

— 60, 248, 338, 145

supports the fundraising needs of the school by making the school a personal giving priority during years of service on the board. — 30, 115, 393, 254

has created investment and endowment policies that guide the investment practices of the school. — 16, 107, 282, 380

has a process in place for conducting long-term financial planning on behalf of the school. — 4, 131, 337, 348

— 29, 306, 482

has a process in place for reviewing and approving the annual budget in context of the long-term financial needs of the school. — 3, 50, 309, 458

creates needed policies to uphold the mission of the school. — 4, 117, 473, 216

reviews the school's core values to ensure that they are consistent with the school's mission. — 11, 125, 404, 264

spends more than half of its meeting time in discussions of issues of importance to the school's long-range future. — 39, 300, 348, 130

makes explicit use of the long range priorities of this school in dealing with current issues. — 19, 163, 440, 181

discusses events and trends in the larger environment that may present specific opportunities for this school. — 17, 127, 481, 190

has had meetings where the discussion focused on identifying or overcoming the school's challenges. — 8, 48, 462, 306

has reviewed the school's strategies for attaining its long-term goals within the past year. — 19, 112, 378, 307

often discusses where the school should be headed five or more years into the future. — 30, 178, 403, 212

has on occasion evaded responsibility for some important issue facing the school. — 376, 259, 129, 42

asks at least once a year that the Head of School articulate his/her vision for the school's future and strategies to realize that vision. — 29, 134, 375, 270

has meetings that tend to focus more on current concerns than on preparing for the future. — 151, 429, 221, 26

delays action until an issue becomes urgent or critical. — 297, 438, 77, 13

sets clear organizational priorities for the year ahead. — 29, 128, 474, 200

is more involved in trying to put out fires than in preparing for the future. — 433, 287, 93, 16

■ Strongly Disagree   ■ Disagree   ■ Agree   ■ Completely Agree

Figure 9

Within your market context, how would you rate overall admissions demand for your school?

- 38
- 262
- 296
- 232

■ Poor ■ Fair ■ Good ■ Very good

Figure 10

How do you rate your school's financial capacity to fund faculty professional development?

- 60
- 217
- 287
- 264

■ Poor ■ Fair ■ Good ■ Very good

Figure 11

How do rate your school's financial capacity to offer competitive compensation packages?

- 79
- 294
- 283
- 172

■ Poor ■ Fair ■ Good ■ Very good

Figure 12

In general, what trend do you see in your school's overall financial performance?

- 52
- 215
- 551

■ Decreasing ■ Staying the same ■ Increasing

Figure 13

In general, what overall trend do you see in giving (annual fund, capital gifts, etc)?

- 48
- 249
- 506

■ Decreasing ■ Staying the same
■ Increasing

Figure 14

How do you rate the culture of giving at your school (annual fund, capital gifts, etc)?

- 90
- 147
- 288
- 300

■ Poor ■ Fair ■ Good ■ Very good

Figure 15

How do you rate your school's overall financial performance?

- 42
- 163
- 305
- 318

■ Poor ■ Fair ■ Good ■ Very good

Figure 16

In general, what trend do you see in your school's enrollment?

- 86
- 369
- 356

■ Decreasing ■ Staying the same
■ Increasing

Figure 17

In general, what overall trend do you see in your school's admissions demand?

- 125
- 433
- 260

- ■ Decreasing
- ■ Staying the same
- ■ Increasing

Figure 18

How would you rate your alumni's preparation for college and/or life beyond your school?

Very good	629
Good	150
Fair	19
Poor	16

0   100   200   300   400   500   600   700

Figure 19

Are your board members required to make monetary contributions to the school?

- 369
- 432

- ■ Yes ■ No

Figure 20

Which of the following best describes your school in terms of its enrollment?

Significantly over budgeted enrollment	44
Over budgeted enrollment	272
At budgeted enrollment	309
Under budgeted enrollment	172
Significantly under budgeted enrollment	31

0   50   100   150   200   250   300   350

Figure 21

Does your board require trustees to sign a conflict of interest statement?

76

716

Yes No

Figure 22

Does your board have a formal orientation for new members?

89

708

Yes No

Figure 23

Term of Service

	Board Member	Board Chair
Other	35	77
More than 4 years	40	36
4 years	49	19
3 years	579	253
2 years	69	261
1 year	12	145

0   200   400   600   800

Board Member   Board Chair

Figure 24

Does your board create special Task Forces (with limited time frames) to address specific issues?

113

688

Yes No

Figure 25

How often does your board…

	Never	Less often	Once every three years	Once every two years	Once a year	More than once a year	Every meeting
Engage in professional development?	69	102	37	64	281	189	41
Hold executive sessions?	40	39	4	10	146	264	269
Evaluate its performance?	82	47	17	54	559	23	6
Evaluate the Head of School's performance?	20	17	7	31	666	48	4

Figure 26

What role does the Head of School serve on the board?

- Full voting member of the board: 138
- Ex-officio member of the board: 588
- Not a member of the board: 77

Figure 27

What is the minimum suggested contribution for board members?

Less than $1,000	$1,000	$2,000	$3,000	$5,000	According to the board member's ability and capacity	Other
25	67	18	10	26	572	65

Figure 28

How frequently does your board meet?

Ten or more times a year	141
Nine times a year	101
Eight times a year	104
Seven times a year	73
Six times a year	128
Five times a year	109
Four times a year	93
Three times a year	55
Twice a year	0
Once a year	1

Figure 29

Does your board require trustees to sign a formal commitment letter outlining what board membership entails?

Yes: 301
No: 477

■ Yes ■ No

Figure 30

Does your board set annual goals for the Head of School?

Yes: 612
No: 186

■ Yes ■ No

Figure 31

Term limits

One renewable term — Board Chair: 172, Board Member: 216
Two renewable terms — Board Chair: 93, Board Member: 177
Three renewable terms — Board Chair: 49, Board Member: 135
Four or more renewable terms — Board Chair: 150, Board Member: 128

Figure 32

Are the terms renewable?

Yes — Board Chair: 538, Board Member: 685
No — Board Chair: 155, Board Member: 14

Figure 33

What is the election process for board members?

Other: 50
Self-perpetuating (board: 552
Parental vote: 18
Nominating Committee vote: 111
Corporation vote: 43
Board and parental vote: 30

Appendix 4:
Statistical Results (Tables)

Committees	Institutional Performance		Strategic Effectiveness	
	Eta	p	Eta	p
Admission/Enrollment Management	.02	.00	.00	.83
Marketing	.01	.00	.00	.60
Strategic Planning	.02	.00	.02	.00
Other	.01	.05	.01	.00
Our board has no committees.	.00	.46	.01	.00
Head of School evaluation	.00	.25	.01	.00
Buildings and Grounds	.01	.02	.03	.00
Development	.01	.01	.04	.00
Diversity	.02	.00	.02	.00
Education	.00	.08	.00	.39
Ethics	.00	.50	.00	.26
Executive	.01	.01	.03	.00
Finance	.01	.00	.02	.00
Governance/Nominating	.01	.01	.04	.00

Importance of roles for board	Institutional Performance		Strategic Effectiveness	
	Eta	p	Eta	p
A group to give support to the school head	.00	.69	.04	.00
A group of experts who can be called upon for professional advice	.01	.27	.00	.34
A group that ensures the school's mission is in sync with core values and market needs	.00	.65	.06	.00
A group charged with selecting, compensating, and evaluating the head of school	.01	.05	.02	.00
A group who effectively perpetuates itself by choosing and orienting new trustees/creating succession plans	.01	.11	.05	.00
A group that reflects the ethnic and racial diversity of the student population	.01	.11	.05	.00
An oversight body assuring financial accountability of the school	.00	.41	.00	.41
An oversight body assuring the quality of offerings	.01	.04	.01	.03
A group charged with charting the strategic direction for the school	.01	.03	.06	.00
A group charged with ensuring the financial sustainability of the school	.00	.82	.02	.00
A policy-making body, creating new policies to guide practice, minimize legal issues and other risks, etc.	.00	.51	.01	.05
A fund-raising body	.01	.09	.04	.00
Community ambassadors for the school/overseers of the school's public image	.00	.77	.03	.00
A group representative of those they serve and their issues/concerns	.01	.06	.01	.12

How well the board performs	Institutional Performance		Strategic Effectiveness	
	Eta	p	Eta	p
A group to give support to the school head	.07	.00	.32	.00
A group of experts who can be called upon for professional advice	.06	.00	.20	.00
A group that ensures the school's mission is in sync with core values and market needs	.10	.00	.34	.00
A group charged with selecting, compensating, and evaluating the head of school	.09	.00	.28	.00
A group who effectively perpetuates itself by choosing and orienting new trustees/creating succession plans	.09	.00	.28	.00
A group that reflects the ethnic and racial diversity of the student population	.03	.00	.09	.00
An oversight body assuring financial accountability of the school	.16	.00	.24	.00
An oversight body assuring the quality of offerings	.06	.00	.21	.00
A group charged with charting the strategic direction for the school	.14	.00	.42	.00
A group charged with ensuring the financial sustainability of the school	.18	.00	.28	.00
A policy-making body, creating new policies to guide practice, minimize legal issues and other risks, etc.	.07	.00	.23	.00
A fundraising body	.14	.00	.24	.00
Community ambassadors for the school/overseers of the school's public image	.12	.00	.20	.00
A group representative of those they serve and their issues/concerns	.06	.00	.11	.00

Policies regarding parents on the board	Institutional Performance		Strategic Effectiveness	
	Eta	p	Eta	p
What percentage of your board members are parents of students currently enrolled in your school?	.00	.18	.00	.41
Does your school have PREFERENCES regarding parents of students currently enrolled at your school...	.00	.74	.00	.88
Does your school have POLICIES regarding parents of students currently enrolled at your school (a...	.00	.44	.01	.27

Recruiting/Orientation	Institutional Performance		Strategic Effectiveness	
	Eta	p	Eta	p
As a practice, does your board invite potential new members to serve on committees or task forces...	.00	.19	.02	.00
Does your board have a formal orientation for new members?	.02	.00	.07	.00

Strategic Effectiveness	Institutional Performance	
The board at our school...	Eta	p
asks at least once a year that the Head of School articulate his/her vision for the school's future and strategies to realize that vision.	.06	.00
has on occasion evaded responsibility for some important issue facing the school.	.06	.00
often discusses where the school should be headed five or more years into the future.	.09	.00
has reviewed the school's strategies for attaining its long-term goals within the past year.	.07	.00
has had meetings where the discussion focused on identifying or overcoming the school's challenges.	.00	.34
discusses events and trends in the larger environment that may present specific opportunities for this school.	.04	.00
makes explicit use of the long range priorities of this school in dealing with current issues.	.10	.00
spends more than half of its meeting time in discussions of issues of importance to the school's long-range future.	.06	.00
is more involved in trying to put out fires than in preparing for the future.	.13	.00
sets clear organizational priorities for the year ahead.	.08	.00
delays action until an issue becomes urgent or critical.	.08	.00
has meetings that tend to focus more on current concerns than on preparing for the future.	.09	.00
supports the fundraising needs of the school by making the school a personal giving priority during years of service on the board.	.11	.00
supports the development needs of the school by soliciting prospective donors on behalf of the school and participating in the ongoing cultivation of donors.	.13	.00
gives the head the authority needed to run the school effectively.	.07	.00
understands the role of its trustees and the role of the head of school.	.10	.00
gives the head adequate personal support and guidance.	.09	.00
focuses on recruiting potential members who have the capacity to support the school financially.	.10	.00
focuses on recruiting members who have a skill set that meets the strategic needs of the school.	.09	.00
reviews the school's core values to ensure that they are consistent with the school's mission.	.03	.00
creates needed policies to uphold the mission of the school.	.06	.00
has a process in place for reviewing and approving the annual budget in context of the long-term financial needs of the school.	.11	.00
has a process in place for reviewing revenues and expenses throughout the school year to ensure the continuing fiscal health of the school.	.09	.00
has a process in place for conducting long-term financial planning on behalf of the school.	.18	.00
has created investment and endowment policies that guide the investment practices of the school.	.10	.00

Institutional Performance	Strategic Effectiveness	
	Eta	p
How do you rate the culture of giving at / your school (annual fund, capital gifts, etc)?	.17	.00
In general, what overall trend do you see / in giving (annual fund, capital gifts, etc) to your / sch...	.07	.00
How do you rate your school's overall / financial performance?	.14	.00
In general, what trend do you see in your / school's overall financial performance?	.05	.00
How do rate your school's financial / capacity to offer competitive compensation packages (salaries...	.14	.00
How do you rate your school's financial / capacity to fund faculty professional / development?	.11	.00
Within your market context, how would you / rate overall admissions demand for your / school?	.09	.00
In general, what trend do you see in your / school's enrollment?	.01	.06
Which of the following best describes / your school in terms of its / enrollment?	.04	.00
In general, what overall trend do you / see in your school's admissions demand?	.02	.00
How would you rate your alumni's / preparation for college and/or life beyond your / school?	.05	.00

How important are each of the following roles for the Head of School?	Institutional Performance	Strategic Effectiveness
Developing and managing effective school policies	p < .781	p < .065
Developing and implementing curriculum	p < .555	p < .559
Assuring the overall quality of program	p < .243	p < .054
Enacting appropriate disciplinary measures	p < .398	p < .494
Ensuring the school's financial well-being	p < .660	p < .005
Establishing positive public relations	p < .450	p < .591
Fundraising	p < .590	p < .021
Instilling climate/values consistent with the school mission	p < .030	p < .962
Long-range and strategic planning	p < .297	p < .003
Managing conflict	p < .950	p < .368
Negotiating salaries and benefits	p < .949	p < .940
Recruiting and hiring quality staff and faculty members	p < .217	p < .887
Working effectively with trustees	p < .686	p < .003
Meeting enrollment goals	p < .161	p < .707

Please indicate the number of board members working in each of the following industry sectors:	Institutional Performance	Strategic Effectiveness
Business/private sector	p < .000	p < .000
Education	p < .691	p < .018
Government	p < .542	p < .480
Non-profit	p < .010	p < .011

Task force		
	Institutional Performance	Strategic Effectiveness
Does your board create special Task Forces (with limited time / frames) to address specific issues?	p < .119	p < .000

Please describe the terms of service for board members and chairs.		
	Institutional Performance	Strategic Effectiveness
What is the stated term of service for Board Chairs?	p < .326	p < .952
What is the stated term of service for Board Members?	p < .639	p < .000
Are the Board Chair terms renewable?	p < .050	p < .018
Are the Board Member terms renewable?	p < .010	p < .000
What limits, if any, do you impose on Board Chair terms?	p < .826	p < .244
What limits, if any, do you impose on Board Member terms?	p < .153	p < .001

General board practices		
	Institutional Performance	Strategic Effectiveness
What is the election process for board members?	p < .884	p < .113
As a practice, does your board invite potential new members to serve on committees or task forces?	p < .535	p < .000
How frequently does your board meet?	p < .026	p < .004
Does your board require trustees to sign a formal commitment letter outlining what board membersh...	p < .484	p < .012
Does your board require trustees to sign a conflict of interest statement?	p < .242	p < .000
Does your board have a formal orientation for new members?	p < .000	p < .000
How often does your board engage in professional development?	p < .004	p < .000
How often does your board hold executive sessions?	p < .787	p < .020
How often does your board evaluate its performance?	p < .450	p < .000
How often does your board evaluate the Head of School's performance?	p < .474	p < .000
Does your board set annual goals for the Head of School?	p < .523	p < .000

Appendix 5:
Other Documents

Boston Trinity Academy
Key Aspects of Board Governance
2010

1. The Board of Trustees of Boston Trinity Academy has the ultimate responsibility for the mission, the vision, the operating plan, the finances and all other critical aspects of the operation of BTA.

2. The Board of Trustees of BTA hires the Headmaster of BTA. In this capacity, the Headmaster of BTA serves as the President of BTA and the chief executive officer of the organization. The Board delegates to the Headmaster, the CEO, the Board's authority to execute in all spheres of operation – based upon the Board's approval of a yearly operating plan which includes, among other things, a staffing plan and a financial operating and capital budget.

3. The contract which the Board signs with the Headmaster states, "You will have the overall responsibility for developing, in conjunction with the and with the approval of the Board of Trustees, a strategic vision and plan for Boston Trinity Academy over the next five to ten years. You will have the responsibility for the implementation of this plan."

4. Additionally the contract states that the Headmaster will have " the responsibility for the hiring (and for the termination of the employment, as appropriate) of all faculty, administrative staff, interns and volunteers."

5. The Headmaster also has the authority to establish Admissions and Financial Aid procedures, decide the Curriculum, attract financial resources for BTA, market BTA to prospect families and the broader community, and deal with all matters that deal with the student life including the discipline, suspension and expulsion of students. The Headmaster is an ex officio member of all Board Committees.

6. In all these areas, it is expected that the Headmaster will communicate his or her vision and action plans and will seek to persuade the Board of the direction that is being proposed. It is normal for the Headmaster to seek the advice of the Board on proposals in most of these areas, and in critical ones involving the spending of funds (the operating and capital budgets) and the addition of staff (head count and positions), for the Board to give its approval to the annual operating budget.

7. With an established and mature school such as Deerfield or Roxbury Latin, the Board acts in a purely supervisory/oversight role and does not get involved in the operations of the school (such as fundraising, admissions, marketing, curriculum development financial aid, etc). With a relatively new school such as BTA, there are usually not enough financial resources or staff for the Board to operate as a purely supervisory or oversight Board. Accordingly the Board exercises it oversight functions but also helps out, where desired by the Headmaster and as appropriate, in some operating aspects of the school such as fundraising, marketing, and budgeting and other financial matters.

8. While necessary, this can cause problems as Board members are therefore involved not only as Trustees (in a supervisory role) but also as a servant/employee of the school and under the direction of the Headmaster or his delegated authority. This can be difficult to juggle, and good judgment and good will are often necessary to avoid potential conflicts.

9. Certain other areas that are important to follow: Faculty and staff report to the Headmaster – not to the Board. Should faculty or staff members approach a Trustee with a problem or complaint about BTA or their supervisor, the Trustee should firmly direct the BTA employee to the Headmaster before the employee gets into the issue. Generally Trustees should deal with the Headmaster on BTA issues or problems rather than a faculty member or staff member. This, of course, does not apply to the usual co-operation and teamwork between Trustees and staff members on finances, marketing etc but only where the Trustee wants to deal with a problem about BTA.

10. Board meetings are confidential and opinions of various Trustees (their own or others) about key issues should not be repeated outside the Board other than to BTA Trustees.

11. If a Trustee has a concern about BTA or the Headmaster, the correct procedure is to speak first to the Headmaster about it, if appropriate, and then to the BTA Board Chairman about it, if appropriate. If an individual Trustee has strong opinions about a particular issue and communicates them to the Headmaster, the Headmaster's only responsibility is to listen carefully to the Trustee and respond to the Trustee as soon as possible about the question or the issue(perhaps after investigation of an issue, talking with faculty or another Trustee or the Chairman, etc). The Headmaster is not responsible for doing what each individual Board member requests. The Headmaster is not accountable to each individual on the Board of Trustees but rather to the entire Board of Trustees.

12. Part of the BTA Board Chairman's role is to give occasional Board feedback on an informal basis to the Headmaster, which can be done based on his conversation with various Board members.

13. It is the Chairman's responsibility to request Board members to chair various committees of the Board and to assign Board members to the various Board committees, taking into account the needs of the BTA Board, the talents of the Board members, the desires of each Board member, and the requirements of the Chairmen of the various Board committees.

14. It is the policy of the BTA Board of Trustees to make decisions on key strategic and operating decisions by consensus. In order for this approach to succeed, it is incumbent for Board members to distinguish between those issues or decisions with which they may mildly disagree or dislike and those which they cannot stand.

15. It is the policy of BTA not to pay BTA Board members (or their firms) compensation for advice and services that they may provide such as investment management or legal counsel to preclude conflicts of interest. This applies also to compensation for members of the family of a BTA Board member. Exceptions to these policies must be voted on by the BTA Board.

16. A yearly performance evaluation of the Headmaster in conjunction with a compensation review will be carried out by the Board through the agency of the Compensation Committee with the results presented in summary form to the Board.

5/05/10