Balanced Governance™
Formative Assessment & Comprehensive Evaluation Proposal

Thomas L. Alsbury, EdD
Professor, Northwest University
President, Balanced Governance Solutions™
Consultant/Trainer

Thomas L. Alsbury is founder and president of Balanced Governance Solutions and served for 16 years as a Professor of Educational Leadership at Iowa State, North Carolina State and Seattle Pacific Universities. He served 18 years as a former high school science teacher, principal, and district administrator and for 8 years as Director of the national UCEA Center for Research on the Superintendency and District Governance. He is currently professor and director of the educational leadership program at Northwest University. Dr. Alsbury is listed as the foremost expert on school governance by the Associated Press and has consulted, trained, and evaluated boards on school governance issues in 12 countries and across the United States. He has over 50 publications on school board and superintendent research. His book “The future of school board governance: Relevance and revelation” earned Dr. Alsbury the UCEA Culbertson Award. His 2015 book by Harvard Press entitled Improving local school board governance: A Balanced Governance approach introduces Dr. Alsbury’s Balanced Governance™ model. The Balanced Governance™ model is unique amongst school governance models, in that it is developed from 50 years of research on exemplary school boards and the findings from two recent national studies of school board members. The new Balanced Governance™ model is being adopted by both small and large school districts and gaining popularity as a Model that best balances the role of the Board Member and Superintendent in our current educational climate.

Contact Information

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“Best workshop I’ve been to as a board member EVER!” (Nevada School Board Assoc. Conference)

“Fabulous and engaging” (Arizona School Board Assoc. Conference)

“Dr. Alsbury’s research and tools get to the heart of improving school board performance”
(National School Board Association Pacific Region Executive Training)

“Research from the Commission’s consultant, Thomas L. Alsbury, Ed.D., and common sense tell us that education boards that positively influence student achievement gains are characterized by their use of the Balanced Governance approach, and that is what we enthusiastically recommend to help our children succeed and for West Virginia to become a leader in education reform.”
(Thomas Campbell, WV Governor’s Commission on Governance)

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Balanced Governance: Comprehensive Board Self-Evaluation

Completion Target Date: October 2018

It is important for Board Members to self-evaluate the Board’s use of (a) Balanced Governance standards of board effectiveness, and (b) Balanced Governance characteristics of individual board member effectiveness. In addition, to complete a comprehensive evaluation, an external assessment of the Board’s use of balanced and effective board meeting protocols and procedures is critical.

The proposed comprehensive self-evaluation uses two approaches:

- Conducting a face-to-face interview for **1 hour** with each Board Member to become more familiar with each Board Member’s interests, preferred assessment styles, and to answer specific questions regarding the Balanced Governance assessment processes and outcomes.
- Conduct 2 anonymous on-line surveys so Board members can assess their practice of effective Board governance using the Bellevue School Board Evaluation tool. In addition, an external assessment is needed to provide additional insight into Board meeting practices and allow benchmarking Evaluation results of the Bellevue School District Board against high performing Boards nationally. The report would also include recommendations for areas benchmarked as areas of growth.

Comprehensive Evaluation Deliverable #1:

1. Conduct a **face-to-face 1-hour interview** with each Board member.
3. The on-line administration of Balanced Individual Board Member Characteristics using the Bellevue School Board Evaluation tool.
4. The analysis of data collected from the online assessment.
5. The analysis of the survey data will include the board’s use of:
   a. Balanced Governance standards of board effectiveness
   b. Balanced Governance characteristics of individual board member effectiveness
   c. Balanced and effective board meeting protocols and procedures
   d. alignment to BSD Strategic Goals
6. A comprehensive report including (a) quantitative data, (b) standardized benchmarking against high-performing boards, and (c) recommendations for improved performance for all evaluation metrics listed in item #5a-d above.
Fall/Winter/Spring, 2018-2019

Balanced Governance: External Formative Board Assessments

In addition to a comprehensive self-assessment for the School Board, a systematic set of external observations and formative assessments are recommended for school boards striving for Balanced Governance. This is because understanding effective Trustee practice is not enough; the implementation of those practices is what makes the difference for the board and for district improvement. In addition,

- boards and superintendents understand the benefits of on-going assessment and reflection to assist with high quality implementation of effective governance practice.
- boards see the value in modeling continual improvement through regular formative assessment and reflection; an expectation of all professional employees in the school district.

Comprehensive Evaluation Deliverables #2, #3, & #4:

The goal is to assist the Bellevue School Board of Directors by use of a series of external formative assessments of their Governance policies and practices. To support this goal, the following formative assessments for 2018-2019 will be conducted:

1. View in their entirety, 3 school board meetings over the course of the 2018-2019 school year. The following protocols will be used:
   a. All board meetings of the Bellevue School District will be reviewed using video or audio recordings.
   b. The board meeting, if determined to be representative of a typical board meeting, may be selected for review.
   c. The Superintendent and/or Board President may opt to select one or more particular board meetings for observation, assessment and feedback.

2. The selected board meetings will be virtually viewed and assessed by Dr. Alsbury and at least one other independent evaluator to ensure inter-rater reliability. The board meeting will be assessed using one of the following assessment metrics:
   A. A collection of metrics used to measure high-performing school boards and school board meetings including:
      a. Time spent on identified District Strategic Goals
      b. The Board’s engagement in Goal Progress checking versus Management Inquiry
      c. Time spent on Direct Instructional issues versus Supportive Instructional functions
      d. Analysis of the composition and efficiency of the Board meeting agenda items
   B. Balanced Individual Board Member Characteristics of highly effective Board members.

3. A report will be written for each single board meeting selected for review. Each report will include: the findings, a benchmarked comparison to high-performing board standards, an analysis, and recommendations for improvement.
   a. The report will be produced and delivered to the Superintendent and/or Board President within 2 weeks of the time the board meeting is made available to be viewed for evaluation.

4. A debrief of the findings of the formative evaluation of each single board meeting will be conducted immediately after the report is delivered. The facilitated work session will occur during a monthly 90-minute work session segment.
Facilitated Work Sessions: October & December, 2018
The results of the Board evaluation are only valuable if the self-assessment and the external formative observations of the board are used to address issues specific and unique to the Bellevue School District and Board.

Two 4-hour facilitated work sessions will be used to allow the Board to discuss
- **what** specific strengths and needs of the Bellevue School District and Board are reflected in the evaluation results?
- **how** the overall board has consensus on how issues and needs are perceived by members on the Board?
- **how** do the Boards governance policies, procedures, protocols, and calendar align to and support the District Strategic Goals?
- **what** actions can the Board take to address or alleviate these issues and concerns?
- **what** governance policies, procedures, and protocols can be adopted to alleviate these issues and concerns?
- **what** modifications should be made to the evaluation tools for future Board assessments?

In the course of work sessions policies, procedures, and protocols used by highly effective boards will be shared as examples for the Bellevue Board to consider for revision and consideration.

**Work Session #1: October 2018**
This first 4-hour work session will be focused on the following:
- Facilitated discussion of selected key results of the Comprehensive Evaluation specific to Bellevue SD needs and issues.
- Facilitated discussion of results of the first external observation and evaluation of the Board.
- Effective governance procedures and protocols needing revisions or adoption as indicated from the observational assessment and benchmarking against high performing boards.
- Review and revision of Board meeting protocols and calendar to align to District Strategic Goals.

**Work Session #2: December 2018**
The second 4-hour work session will be focused on the following:
- Facilitated discussion of any remaining key results of the Comprehensive Evaluation specific to Bellevue SD needs and issues.
- Facilitated discussion of results of the 2nd and 3rd external observation and evaluation of the Board.
- Review and revision of Board governance policies and protocols to align to District Strategic Goals and Board evaluation tools.
• Review and revise Board Evaluation tools.

**Evaluation Components:**
The two governance surveys and the external observation of the board provides comprehensive assessment in a variety of areas including:

Board Role/Relationship to Supt.
Community Engagement
Using Data for Improvement/systems thinking
District Culture/Climate/Innovation
Budgeting & Fiscal Accountability
Board meeting focus/effective protocols

Topics will be addressed in the work session discussions only if indicated as an area of need. Each evaluation topic discussion focuses on the application to unique issues and needs of the Bellevue SD and Board.

**Board Comprehensive Evaluation Options & Costs**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training Option</th>
<th>Budget</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensive Board Self-Evaluation: (Deliverables: Comprehensive Evaluation Report)</td>
<td>$2,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comprehensive Board Self-Evaluation: (Deliverables: two 4-hour work sessions)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comprehensive Board Self-Evaluation: (Deliverables: 5 Individual Board Member Sessions)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Formative Audits: 3 Board Meeting Virtual Observations, data analysis, 3 comprehensive reports, &amp; 3 debriefings</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenses for all Services</strong></td>
<td><strong>$18,000</strong></td>
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