FUTURE LEADERS
International Private School
Madinat Zayed, Muroor Road - Branch 2

Governance

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What is governance?

Governance describes the means by which organisations are directed and controlled. In effect, governance describes the work that the governing board does and how it sets the values of the organisation. Good governance is about making sure that the organisation is well-run and governed with purpose, and that management works in accordance with the board's requirements. This involves planning for the future and preserving the organisation's values and reputation. It ensures sound financial planning and effective human resources as well as accountability for the organisation's actions and decisions.
In schools, the key difference between governance and management is the distinct separation between strategic leadership (governance) and the operational running of the school (management). Governance is the role of boards while management is the responsibility of the principal.

What is the role of FLIS branch 2 governing board?
Governing boards provide vital leadership to schools. They ensure that schools are well-run by management and that sustainable outcomes are delivered. They act as stewards to ensure a school supports the most promising opportunities for its students. The focus of a school's governing board is to establish the strategy for the principal and school management so as to provide the best education possible for every student at the school.

- All governing boards of private schools have four core functions:
- Setting strategic direction within the context of a clearly-stated vision and ethos; Upholding the UAE values and ensuring this is embedded across the school.
- Holding the senior leadership team accountable for the achievement of strategy and running of the school;
- Overseeing the overall educational performance of the school and suggesting ways for improvement;
- Overseeing the financial performance of the school – this includes setting fees, budget oversight, and achieving financial targets.
- International research and school inspection results have shown that good school governance has a positive impact on school performance - where governance is good, standards of student attainment are likely to be higher. Conversely, poor governance is often cited as a reason why schools fail.
- A school governing board acts as a critical friend to the school, challenging the status quo and setting expectations.

Who can be a school governor?
The governing board of the school is made up of a body of members with specific roles and responsibilities to oversee its operation. The governing board is independent from the school owners. The parent representative is elected from the Parent Teacher Association. A student representative is the chair of the student council. Where possible a UAE National is encouraged to be on the Governing body.

Key features of good governance

1. **Leadership and culture**
   - Acts individually and collectively as a good member of society
   - Understands that the board has rights and responsibilities with obligations to the wider society
   - Enables students to be productive members of society
2. **Clarity of purpose**
   - Develops a clear purpose and strategy to achieve the purpose
   - Does not deviate from the purpose
   - Defines the core values of the school, and its mission and vision
   - Applies school values in policy and practice
   - Understands the links between purpose, risks, opportunities, strategy, performance, the business model and the sustainable development of the school
3. **Accountability**
   - Holds senior management accountable for the achievement of educational and financial performance outcomes in accordance with the agreed purpose and strategy
   - Serves as the focal point and custodian of governance in the school
   - Ensures that the evaluation of the board's own performance and that of its committees, its chair and its members supports continued improvement
   - Ensures good stewardship of the discretionary budget
   - Governs risk, information and technology in a way that supports the school and achieving strategic objectives
   - Ensures optimal school performance through data analysis and reporting to develop strategies for improvement

4. DIVERSITY AND INDEPENDENCE
    - Includes capable board members with a diverse mix of skills, experience, qualities and capabilities to think critically and make effective decisions
    - Has independence that enables it to discharge its governance roles and responsibilities objectively and effectively
    - Features positive group dynamics and teamwork amongst its members
    - Creates standing and ad hoc structures such as sub- or special project committees to delegate work to promote independent judgment and assist with balance of power and the effective discharge of duties

Roles and responsibilities
Has the authority to request any information from the principal and senior management. This information will aid the board's understanding so it can exercise its authority and responsibilities most effectively. Examples include explaining the matrix used to assess student progress and attainment in different subjects.

Compliance
- Ensures all relevant statutory and contractual requirements are satisfied
- Ensures compliance with applicable laws
- Adopts non-binding rules, codes and standards ethically and helps the school achieve its mission and purpose

Community engagement
Adopts a stakeholder-inclusive approach that balances the needs, interests and expectations of important stakeholders in the best interests of the school over time

Leadership and Culture

Good corporate citizenship is about the board acting collectively as an effective leader, and good governing boards lead by example. The board is part of wider society, with rights as well as responsibilities and obligations. It is accountable for its members' ethical and effective leadership. They assume responsibility for setting policy direction and upholding the way in which ethFLIS Branch 2 are approached and addressed by the school. Examples of these include making best use of its resources, teachers, finances, and facilities to produce positive outcomes for its students, and developing sustainable policies that meet the school's and the community's needs.

Individually and collectively, good governing boards behave with integrity, competence, responsibility, accountability, fairness and transparency. Positive personal attributes of board members include selflessness, courage, curiosity, independence, honesty, humility, tact, and the ability to listen and forge relationships.

This also extends to the code of conduct to which governors adhere, and how the board manages the performance of each of its members. A governing board's code of conduct must feature high levels of integrity and responsibility, and reflect the culture, value and character of the school. Socialising and networking beyond the official settings of board meetings improve relationships between governors.

Governing boards regularly monitor the school's activities and outputs against internal or external standards (determined through policy set by the board, through codes of conduct by school groups, or through existing laws and regulations by government). These standards may cover areas such as workplace safety, health, dignity and development of employees, consumer protection, community development and protection of human rights, and the environment.

Accountability

The board is accountable for monitoring and verifying the performance of the school in accordance with its agreed purpose and strategy, with a view towards improving the quality and impact of educational outcomes. It is the board's role to provide constructive feedback to senior management of the school, assuming the role of a guardian rather than a police officer. The board listens and learns from education professionals in order to impart relevant advice and ask challenging and usefully provocative questions.

It is important to emphasise that school governors are not responsible for the running of a school - their role is to question but not to involve themselves in school operations. Governing boards work alongside the school's senior management team. They work most effectively when there is a positive partnership with the executive team that includes effective and regular communication. The delegation and limits of responsibilities should be clearly communicated to ensure that the demarcation between governance and management is clear.

As the head of the senior management team of the school, the principal is accountable to and reports to the governing board.

Educational performance

The governing board ensures accountability for the school's educational performance through effective data analysis and reporting. It is the board's responsibility to use all information available to improve school performance, including the use of internal school reporting, school inspection reports, TIMSS and PISA results and feedback from parents.

The governing board investigates risk, information and technology in a way that supports the school to set and achieve its strategic objectives. Boards are accountable for governing information and technology including data use, protection, data integrity and social media in a way that supports the school.

Independent analysis of school performance by bodies like the Irtiqaa and accreditation organisations promotes an objective view of the school and highlights areas for improvement. By actively engaging with accreditation bodies and the inspections process, governors can gain first-hand knowledge and advice about school performance from external experts.

Framework and charter

A clear and concise governance charter is essential to enable the effective functioning of a school.

The many benefits of adopting a framework include:

- Improving leadership, decision-making and strategic vision;
- Judging the effectiveness of a board's processes;
- Enacting policies on diversity, terms of office, expected roles;
- Providing checks and balances for the entire governance structure;
- Improving mechanisms to monitor and manage risks;
- Increasing confidence of internal and external stakeholders including learners, educators, parents, and local communities; and,
- Ensuring alignment with asek and uae's position on quality education, including the wellbeing, health and happiness of students, teachers and the school community

The charter includes protocols on requesting information and reporting, setting up meetings and attendance requirements, defining roles and responsibilities, and measuring the board's performance. It is reviewed regularly and formalises existing practices that support continuity and stability.

Policies and practices are scaled and in proportion with considerations specific to the school, such as the size and turnover of staff, resources and students.

Relationships within a group of schools require a governance framework that does not cause conflict with any other related policies within the group.

School governing boards must be able to apply and explain their reasoning when implementing, or not implementing, the key features as set out in their charter. This transparency can also include the process for selection of board members to encourage potential members to apply for positions.

Roles and Responsibilities

Governing boards provide vital leadership to schools. They are integral to ensuring schools are well-managed and that sustainable outcomes are delivered. Boards exercise their leadership role through the following primary responsibilities:

- Steering the school and setting its strategic direction;
- Planning and approving policies;
- Overseeing the implementation of policies;
- Self-evaluation and improvement; and
- Succession planning

Effective governing boards regularly evaluate their own performance and that of its committees, its chair, its individual members and school managers to support continued improvement in its own performance and effectiveness, and that of the school as a whole.
The board will strive to continuously and constructively challenge its own strategy with reference to:

- short-, medium- and long-term timelines;
- risks and opportunities;
- the legitimate and reasonable needs and interests and expectations of stakeholders;
- the interconnection and interdependence of the above points.

Compliance
Governing boards have oversight of their schools' compliance requirements, and stay updated of any changes to these requirements. This involves a thorough understanding of how applicable laws and non-binding rules, codes and standards relate to one another, paying particular attention to the protection and wellbeing of children.
Consultants and trainers may act as a knowledge base and resource repository for governing boards. While applicable legislation sets minimum standards for compliance, boards should strive to achieve the highest aspirations for the benefit of the school and its pupils.
The governing board assumes responsibility for the school's social citizenship by setting the direction for how it is approached and addressed by the school. It includes compliance with the law, setting standards, and adherence to its own codes of conduct and policies.

Community engagement

School boards are encouraged to engage with and listen to the needs of the school's stakeholders, and to put in place formal mechanisms that enable them to do so.

Governing boards which actively engage with their communities – both formally and informally - are more likely to help their schools meet their goals. School governors benefit greatly from networking with each other and the school community at all levels. These activities can range from a school prize-giving ceremony to a governors' social evening.