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THE EFFECTS OF SCHOOL BOARD BEHAVIORS

THE EFFECTS OF SCHOOL BOARD BEHAVIORS ON STUDENT OUTCOMES:
AN EVALUATIVE STUDY OF LONE STAR GOVERNANCE

by

MORRIS LYON

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education in School Improvement
School of Education

Wesley Hickey, Ed.D., Committee Chair

College of Education and Psychology

The University of Texas at Tyler
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The University of Texas at Tyler
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Abstract

**THE EFFECTS OF SCHOOL BOARD BEHAVIORS ON STUDENT
OUTCOMES: AN EVALUATIVE STUDY OF LONE STAR GOVERNANCE**

Morris Lyon

Dissertation Chair: Wesley Hickey, Ed.D.

The University of Texas at Tyler

June 2023

The improvement of student outcomes primarily stems from the teacher in the classroom, but Rice et al. (2000) found that school boards in the boardroom can impact student outcomes. This study examines if Lone Star Governance (LSG) is an effective tool to assist all schools in the implementation of best governance practices and the impact of governance coaching has on student outcomes.

The participants in this study were rural school districts in the coastal bend of Texas that participated in the Texas Education Agency's Lone Star Governance training. A mixed-method embedded design, specifically an embedded experimental research model was used to conduct the study. An analysis was conducted to compare accountability score gains, interviews of the school superintendents, and surveys of school board members participating in the study to determine the impact of Lone Star Governance on school board behaviors and the application of the Framework of School Board Development to all schools. The sample size was limited to ensure the consistency of Lone Star Governance training and implementation, but the small sample size created a limitation for statistical analysis.

The study found that a governance coaching intervention increased the effectiveness in implementing the LSG model from superintendents and school board members. The mean accountability scores increased for LSG districts and campuses compared to non-LSG districts and campuses, the results of the Mann-Whitney U test found a significance ($p = 0.01$) with the LSG campus performing better on accountability scores compared to the non-LSG campuses. Perceptions of LSG participants agreed with the findings that improved student outcomes resulted in their district. The data compiled justified the need for additional research for more detailed analysis to reinforce the conclusion of the study that Lone Star Governance is a continuous improvement tool that impacts the classroom.

Keywords: continuous improvement, governance, student outcomes

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM OF PRACTICE

School trustees currently find themselves in a unique educational environment filled with political posturing and consistent change partially fueled by the recent pandemic. For example, the COVID-19 pandemic hit hardest on families with economic hardships, which often included increased child abuse or neglect. Education reform is needed to prevent this type of trauma from impacting school systems for years to come (Lee et al., 2021). Learning loss in Texas schools was significant due to the lack of preparedness for the remote option during the spring of 2020, resulting in a learning loss of up to two months with more severe losses in schools with high poverty (Patarapichayatham et al., 2021). These factors contribute to increased pressure on school trustees through community polarization, limited resources, and staff shortages.

The pandemic's shock to the educational system has repercussions that appear to have caused learning loss, social polarization, and have compounded existing disruptions to school governance (Bonal & Gonzalez, 2020). One thing is sure, educational change is occurring, and the weight of the decisions made by policymakers, educational leaders, and practitioners over the next few years carries a heavy burden with unknown consequences (Engzell et al., 2021). School governance matters and impacts student outcomes (Rice et al., 2000). Critical in the past but even more pronounced in today's school environment, a sound governance structure must be the bedrock to ensure student outcomes are fulfilled, and school systems flourish under new challenges.

Research clearly outlines the teacher's influence in the classroom as the most instrumental relationship leveraged to impact the outcomes of students (Abry et al., 2016; Bartoletti & Connelly, 2013; Dennie et al., 2019; Nairz-Wirth & Feldmann, 2017). The teacher is undeniably essential to the classroom, but due to the disarray of the current landscape, the future of our students will depend heavily on governance teams to take a leading role in their respective school districts to create structure and support for student achievement. Governance teams and state policymakers must join forces to ensure barriers are removed from the teacher's ability to positively impact students, ensure state and federal resources are spent wisely, and develop systematic processes to improve schools' ability to battle the educational hurdles brought forth by the challenges of developing student capacity through education. The Framework of School Board Development is designed to assist trustees in this task.

The Framework of School Board Development is comprised of five pillars adopted by the Texas State Board of Education to help local school boards identify researched-based best practices to guide actions on local governance (Texas Education Agency, 2021). During the fall of 2020, the State Board of Education formed a committee to review and consider updates to the framework. The researcher for this study was employed at the Texas Education Agency during the fall of 2020 and participated on the committee with State Board members, state association leaders, and other members of the Texas Education Agency (Texas Education Agency, 2020). This committee's assignment was to update a structure that school board members could use, ultimately leading to the revised Framework of School Board Development.

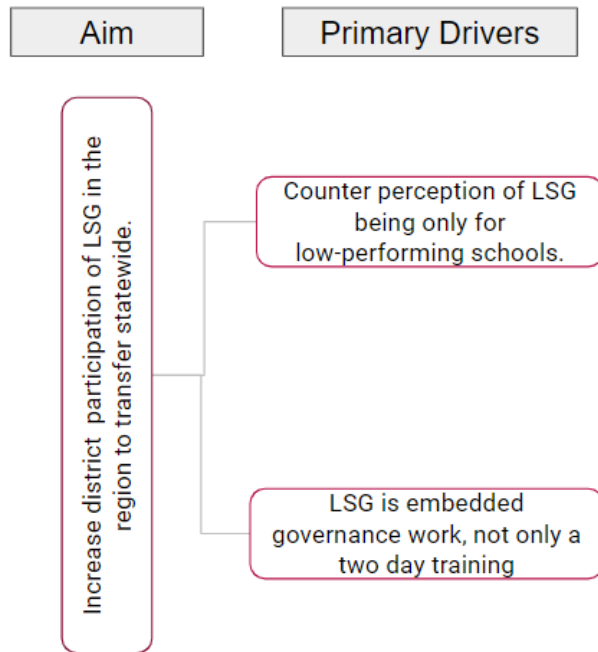
Identifying research-based best practices for trustees is crucial to ensuring good governance in Texas schools, but implementing those practices is the key to transformation. Lone Star Governance (LSG) is a Texas Education Agency initiative of which the researcher provided oversight during employment at the Texas Education Agency. This oversight included ensuring alignment of the integrity instrument and rubric used for board self-evaluation with the Framework of School Board Development (Texas Education Agency, n.d.), as noted in the Lone Star Governance Participant Manual. Not only could Lone Star Governance be a tool to implement the framework, but it could serve the dual purpose of improving student outcomes through governance practices (Crabill, 2017). This led to the following question: Does the current framework of Lone Star Governance achieve its initial goal of improving student outcomes through an effective governance structure?

As with any framework, a governance structure assures monitoring and control over the decision-makers to ensure accountability with organizational goals (Aluchna & Idowu, 2017). Implementing a performance management style structure would help carry out the framework's actions to ensure execution. When associated with governance, performance management creates a higher level of trust and satisfaction with the local community (Beer et al., 2019). Lone Star Governance potentially has the framework of a performance management system by setting goals, goal progress measures, monitoring calendars, creating assignments of ownership, and assuring evaluation processes. Lone Star Governance is an initiative developed by TEA that could add to the accomplishments of good governance practices outlined in the Effective District Framework.

Another benefit of implementing a performance management system for governance would be a clear understanding and guidance for new board members. In the researcher's experience working with board members, understanding the board's role and the differentiation between the school board and superintendent work often becomes blurred. Therefore, a guide created, in collaboration with the members of the governance team, could benefit not only the team but also the students and the community.

Problem of Practice Statement

Learning loss and social polarization created by environmental challenges (the pandemic is one example) may cause an increase in low-performing campuses. Barriers created by a lack of district governance systems and performance management processes could hinder improving student outcomes. The overarching problem facing statewide policymakers is understanding why there are not more districts participating in the research-based LSG framework. The study will attempt to resolve this problem by understanding the impact of LSG on improving all student outcomes and the impact of governance coaching as part of the implementation. The Primary Driver Diagram for the Problem of Practice outlines the primary drivers for increasing participation are outlined in Figure 1.

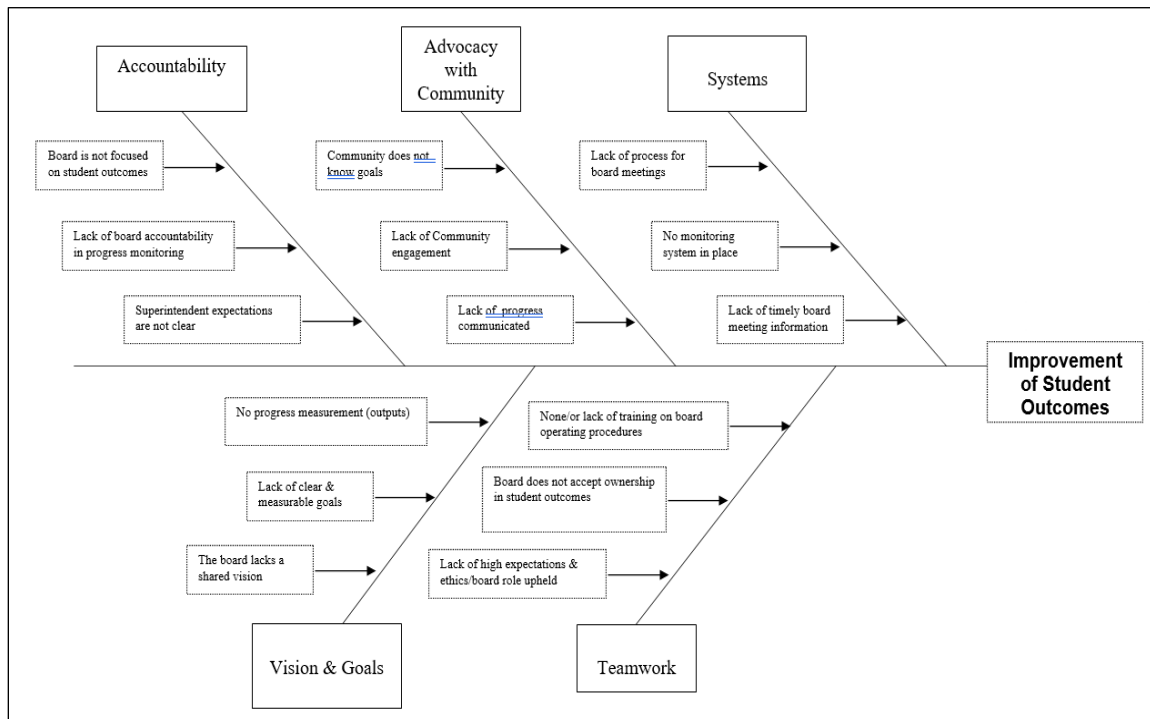
Figure 1*Primary Driver Diagram for Problem of Practice**Understanding the Problem Using a Fishbone Diagram*

To resolve the problem, there must first be an understanding of Lone Star Governance and its impact on student outcomes across all districts. The model used for the fishbone diagram was taken from Bryk et al. (2015) to illustrate the needed governance behaviors to help maximize student outcomes. The fishbone design allows the head of the diagram to be the proposed problem, while the bones represent potential barriers or contributing factors to the problem. The identified behaviors that negatively impact student outcomes are ineffective governance systems, inadequate accountability structures, poor advocacy with the community, a lack of a shared vision and goals, and a lack of unity or teamwork. These limiting factors and the detailed specifics are included

in a single fishbone diagram, shown in Figure 2, that attempts to identify the critical governance behaviors that can influence student outcomes.

Figure 2

Fishbone Diagram



Purpose of the Study

Schools that need systems to support and monitor student growth may encounter difficulties when stressed by incidents such as the pandemic. A study initiated by the U.S. Department of Education, contracted with Stanford Research International, found that more systems for students with special needs were needed to improve outcomes (Rowe et al., 2020). This study spurred the USDE to establish Results-Driven Accountability, which requires state systems to develop improvement plans based on the continuous improvement cycle. These plans show a systemic plan for improvement. The need for

federal mandates could be prevented if such a plan could be established through the local governance team. Systemic change will only occur with alignment throughout the district, and this alignment could be more applicable to the district if it were locally developed. The first step to enhancing district systems could be implementing Lone Star Governance, a critical tool for training the governance team toward performance management.

The impact of the pandemic has magnified the need for systemic change in Texas. State policymakers are researching and preparing for change, and local education agencies are now positioned to implement sound school improvement models to embrace the future. However, it will take the governance team, partnered with community leaders, to implement changes based on a performance framework to see systemic change. In this study, followed by thorough implementation and research, a governance framework will be explored to analyze the systemic weaknesses and determine its ability to improve student outcomes in educational systems.

This study will evaluate LSG as an avenue for school improvement through performance management as a systemic governance framework. While the approach could impact districts in the Education Service Center (ESC) where the study was conducted, along with the organization itself, the framework has the potential for more of a statewide impact in coordination with TEA. This study provides a unique perspective of a researcher through the lens of a former school superintendent and current ESC Executive Director with experience as a state policymaker. Furthermore, the research can implement a state initiative to influence the work of district governance systems within Texas.

In this study, the implementation of the LSG framework across an ESC region, with the foundational focus on how trustee behaviors impact student outcomes, will be measured to determine the impact on student achievement. Before the implementation of LSG in the ESC, the region consists of three A-rated districts, twenty-four B-rated districts, seven C-rated districts, and three D-rated districts. There are sixteen D-rated campuses and seven F-rated campuses. A broader look into the governance systems, including performance management, could help improve all districts, especially low performers. Learning loss that occurred due to the pandemic will add stress to the district systems already struggling. The need to provide district support for all schools through a coordinated framework will be tested.

The Lone Star Governance Framework could be a solution to enhance or remove barriers to implementing researched-based systems for improvement through the implementation of visioning, goal setting, using data, monitoring progress, engaging the community, and developing policy to focus on student learning (Johnson, 2017). The LSG Framework is a research-based best practice designed to improve student outcomes and is built to support the State Board of Education Framework for School Board Development (Texas Education Agency, 2021).

Theory of Change

The overarching question is, “How can governance teams best use their time to ensure improvements to student outcomes?” This study intends to consider the framework of Lone Star Governance as a tool for school boards to shape their meetings and focus on improving student outcomes. Secondly, the Lone Star Governance initiative at the Texas Education Agency is housed in the Commissioner’s strategic

priority four, which is to improve low-performing schools. This labeling has given Lone Star Governance the impression from school districts that the framework is only meant for low-performing schools. This study will also ask, “What schools are best suited for Lone Star Governance?”

Upon completing the fishbone, the next step was to accomplish the drivers to help drive change for school boards, as described as a logical step by Bryk et al. (2015). The driver diagram is used as a visual model for the factors to influence change. The drivers of change to improve student outcomes are aligned with the Framework for School Board Development adopted by the Texas State Board of Education (Texas Education Agency, 2021). The drivers identified in the fishbone were a need for governance systems, accountability structures, advocacy with the community, a lack of a shared vision & goals, and a lack of unity or teamwork. These areas align with the Framework of School Board Development and are embedded in the Lone Star Governance model (Texas Education Agency, n.d.). The driver diagram was developed to help boards incorporate best practices in school board research, including 1) providing an understanding of the behaviors or actions that are most impactful for a board to improve student outcomes, 2) implementing effective coaching practices for school boards, 3) build skills and practices that will ensure implementation fidelity, and 4) embed a mindset to continue the Lone Star Governance model as a school system.

The Primary and Secondary Drivers

The first driver must be the initial training for board members that provides an outline of the Lone Star Governance process and tools for implementation. A shared vocabulary is essential to engage everyone in an understood dialogue for student

improvement. The process to become a Lone Star Governance school board is very thorough and helps to ensure uniform delivery of the two-day initial training for LSG for all areas of Texas. The secondary drivers for the initial training are the development of effective behaviors by the coach. They are followed by a thorough introduction to the LSG tools for practical board meeting guidance and progress.

The second driver for LSG is the board's effective implementation of governance behaviors or actions. To become a Lone Star Governance district, the board has only to complete the two-day initial training of LSG. This allows for exposure to the concept, but there is no direct and immediate connection to implementing all the tools embedded in the Lone Star Governance process. The implementation of LSG by the board after the two-day training is an essential part of the LSG transformation. This driver requires a great deal of skill building to be an effective LSG board. The secondary driver for this primary driver is the development of days three, four, and five of the LSG implementation. Currently, there needs to be more coordination for days three, four, and five of LSG provided by the Texas Education Agency on the implementation of LSG, which in many ways, is the beginning of the LSG process.

The third driver for LSG implementation is the ongoing evaluation and feedback on the progress of LSG implementation. The integrity instrument, included in the LSG participant manual, is the rubric for implementing LSG (Texas Education Agency, n.d.). This rubric helps the board self-evaluate their progress and allows for goal setting or a focus toward a master's focus level. The board must continue a respectful dialogue of progress to focus on improved student outcomes rather than other distractions a board may face. When starting LSG, implementation is essential, and as with any new

initiative, exemplar models are introduced. A secondary driver for effective progress monitoring is modeling this process to ensure proper questioning and accountability.

The final driver is the mindset of continuous improvement. The belief that the board and the school are on a journey to continuous improvement is central to the work of Lone Star Governance (Texas Education Agency, n.d.). This is grounded in the ability to have collaborative discussions that help to identify current reality and work toward a shared vision. The final two secondary drivers include quality self-evaluation, goal-setting, and a continuous reminder of the aim of LSG. Change can be difficult; consistency and focus can help transform a new process into a habit. It is essential for self-evaluation that continual monitoring exists for the implementation to have sustainability.

The fishbone was used to identify the problems that boards are facing that align with the research; the gap in the research is a tool to apply to the knowns so that boards can implement a plan to improve student outcomes. Often there needs to be more research or data and action to improve. Our drivers for change aimed to identify if Lone Star Governance is an effective tool to put previous research into action. Does Lone Star Governance serve as an effective performance management tool to implement positive board behaviors toward improved student outcomes?

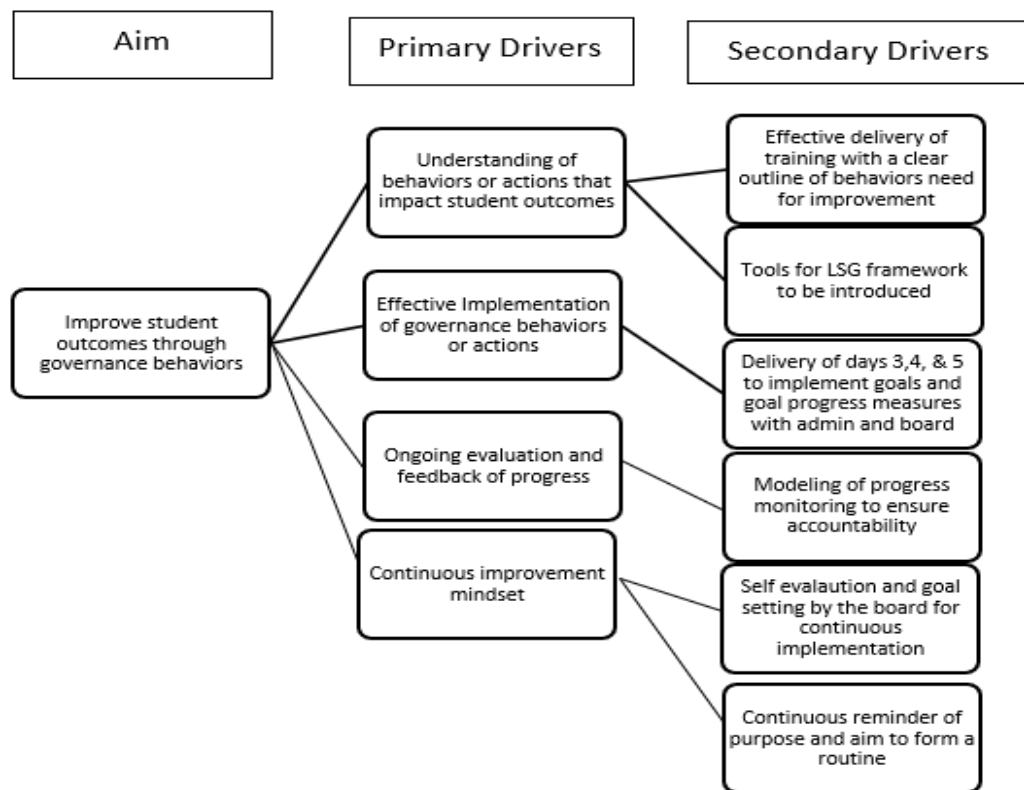
The Driver Diagram

The driver diagram is included in Figure 3. These drivers will impact the implementation of an effective governance tool to improve student outcomes. The theory of action had the following drivers 1) understanding the behaviors or actions that impact

student outcomes; 2) practical implementation of the behaviors or actions; 3) ongoing evaluations and feedback; and 4) a continuous improvement mindset by the board. The secondary drivers in this diagram include 1) effective delivery of the Lone Star Governance training; 2) introduction of LSG tools; 3) effective delivery of days three, four, and five of Lone Star Governance; 4) modeling for the board of accurate progress monitoring; 5) board self-evaluation/ goal setting with constructive feedback for the board; and 6) a continuous reminder of aim and purpose of the Lone Star Governance work.

Figure 3

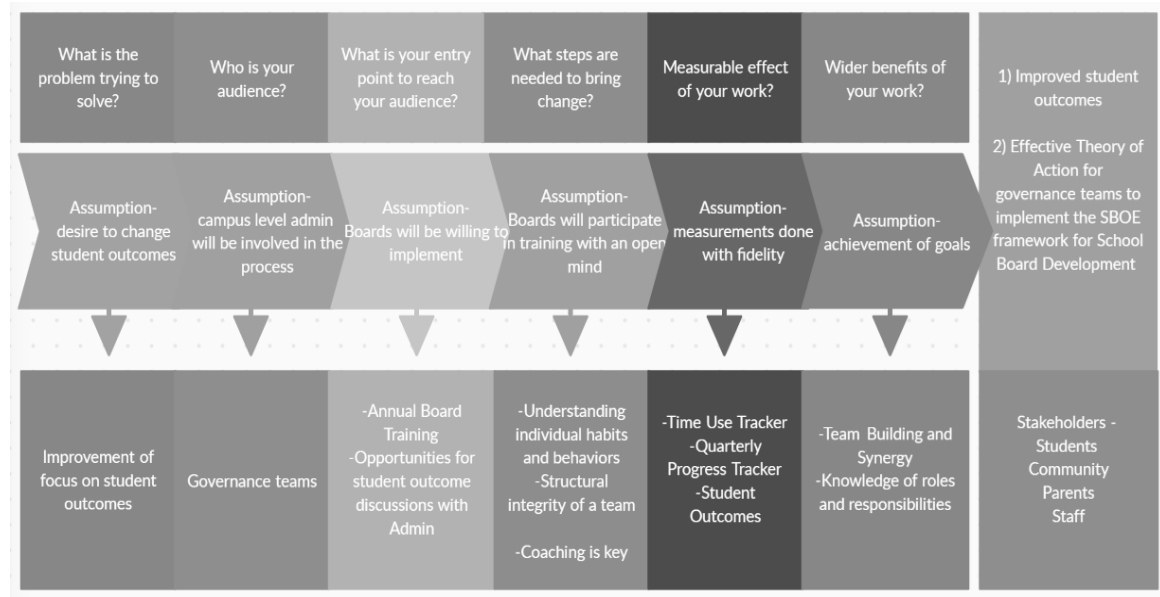
Driver Diagram for Lone Star Governance Implementation



Strategies For Evaluation of Lone Star Governance

The focus on improving student outcomes because of stressed or nonexistent district-wide systems will be addressed by working with the governance team to establish a process. Some districts did not successfully close the achievement gaps before COVID; now, stress on the system may cause others to falter. Organizational systems are made or broken when pressure is applied, and the weak areas will be discovered; thus, the importance of the LSG framework.

The LSG initiative was introduced to all Education Service Center schools as a framework to help districts with low-performing campuses and non-low performing campuses. The LSG Framework requires continuous improvement that can impact student outcomes across all school districts. There will be other limitations beyond participation, including the decision by the district to engage with fidelity in LSG, which includes using all the research-based tools to form the performance management process embedded in LSG. This process requires building systems at the district level, which is only sometimes a quick solution. Building a solid vision, mission, and goals and monitoring those goals for sustained performance can take multiple years. Of course, formative measures give insight into improvement, but this process takes time and effort. The evaluation logic model is outlined in Figure 4.

Figure 4*Evaluation Logic Model of Implementation of Lone Star Governance***Outcome Measures**

An increase in student outcomes will result from board best practices implemented for governance, such as time spent discussing student outcomes in the board meetings, embracing the board self-evaluation tool, in this case the LSG integrity instrument, and implementing LSG practices and tools. Other outcomes will result in allocating resources to areas of need because of the proper formation of goals and focused priorities for resources.

Progress Measures

Progress will include tracking the board self-reports to learn the integrity instrument score, determining the time spent discussing student outcomes, and cross-referencing this information with student outcomes. The monitoring calendar and progress monitoring reports will be analyzed to track the reporting on goal progress

measures, which will be reviewed against student performance to determine improved student outcomes.

Balancing Measures

The focus on improving student outcomes within board meetings will need to be balanced with other systems within the district to ensure proper performance with finance and operations and other requirements assigned by rule or law.

Research Questions

The following research questions will attempt to be answered as a result of this study.

- 1) To what extent does Lone Star Governance improve student outcomes through research-based board behaviors identified as the five pillars of the Framework for Board Development? What is the role of the coach in LSG implementation?
- 2) How does Lone Star Governance benefit both low-performing schools and non-low performing schools?

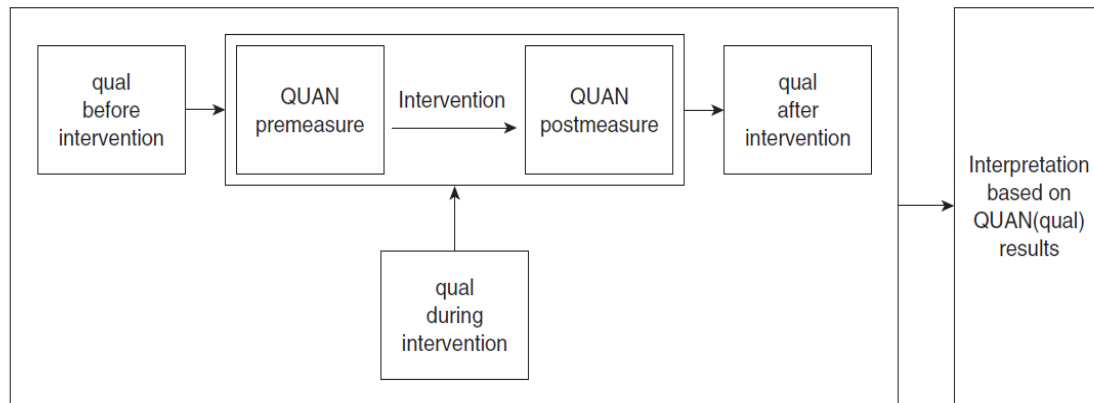
Evaluation Plan of Current Context

A mixed-methods model will be implemented to determine the effectiveness of LSG districts participating in the study. Student performance will be measured against board self-evaluations and time-use tracker scores to understand the impact of implementation fidelity. Interviews will be conducted to gather qualitative information to understand why boards decided to participate in Lone Star Governance. Pre- and post-evaluations from the two-day training will be analyzed to determine the effectiveness of the two-day training. The first iteration will be the implementation of LSG coaching to ensure that the accountability and planning of implementation are effective. The LSG coach will work alongside a district staff member for a gradual release of LSG coaching

duties over a one to two-year period. The intervention will be to form more detailed and effective coaching practices beyond the two-day training. Surveys and interviews will help to determine the coaching effectiveness and implementation of LSG practices beyond the first two-day training.

Research Design (Mixed Methods)

A mixed-method embedded design, specifically an embedded experimental research model, as shown in Figure 5, was used to determine if the Texas Education Agency initiative, Lone Star Governance, made a difference in student outcomes as intended. The initial intervention was the delivery of the two-day Lone Star Governance Training to determine the impact of governance practices. A pre- and post-training evaluation is given to all LSG participants to understand the impact or qualitative measure to assess training effectiveness. The board self-evaluation embedded within LSG is a quantitative measure to help with the efficacy of Lone Star Governance actions. The Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycle was used to make iterations of improvement on the Lone Star Governance intervention. A networked improvement community will be used to help improve the governance coaching process since uniform guidance does not currently exist. In the final analysis, the impact of self-evaluation, Texas Education Agency accountability results, school board surveys, and superintendent interviews will be used to help with the simultaneous collection of both quantitative and qualitative data to make a final analysis to answer the impact of governance behaviors on student outcomes.

Figure 5*Mixed Method Embedded Design: Embedded Experimental Model*

Note: The Mixed Method Embedded Design: Embedded Experimental Model diagram was adapted from Creswell et al. (2003).

Limitations in the Research

The research suggested that time spent on the discussion of improving student outcomes during meetings will, in turn, improve student outcomes (Delagardelle, 2008; Goodman & Zimmerman, 2000). Rice et al. (2000) found that school boards that invest time in student improvement will see higher student outcomes. While Rice et al. (2000) outlined their methodology to uncover findings to show student improvements. An overall plan or framework that could be applied on a grand scale has yet to be researched. An evaluation of a holistic tool for a board to implement best research-based best practices in the Texas Framework for School Board Development needs to be improved in current research. Also, the need for such a tool to replicate successful governance practices is in higher demand given the COVID era that has caused stress on governance teams and school systems. Therefore, the evaluation of the Lone Star Governance model will be administered, evaluated, and iterated upon to develop a resource to increase

teamwork and synergy on the governance team for the improvement of student outcomes across districts by a limited team to ensure consistency of implementation. The research limitations will include the sample size for complete data analysis and the amount of time needed to understand the full effect of the implementation of researched based governance practices to coordinate with the time constraints of the study.

Conclusion

Lone Star Governance is a framework created to improve student outcomes in Texas public schools by changing the behaviors of school board members (Crabill, 2017). This study will measure the effectiveness of Lone Star Governance in a sample of rural South Texas school districts located within the boundaries of the Education Service Center. The researcher and other Lone Star Governance coaches employed at the Education Service Center will deliver the training and coaching for the participating school districts.

The COVID-19 pandemic has layered additional stress on educational systems that already need more resources and consistent governance practices. The extra pressure on the system could cause student outcomes to continue to digress in some school districts. School governance matters when it comes to improving students' outcomes, according to Rice et al. (2000). The study intended to evaluate the current application of Lone Star Governance and make iterations to implementation to consider what changes, if any, are needed to impact school board behaviors.

Chapter 2

COMPREHENSIVE LITERATURE REVIEW

Public education's primary purpose is simple: Provide students with an education that prepares them to be productive adults and to do so efficiently (Ford, 2013). If schools exist to provide positive educational outcomes and produce productive citizens, why do many leaders spend time and resources on results or interests apart from student outcomes? This literature review aims to examine the role of Texas school boards, including school board behaviors or actions that lead to increased student achievement and those that create dysfunction.

It is essential to examine the literature on school governance to understand better the issues that emerge from the research. Delagardelle (2006) stated that the traditional understanding of good governance was approving the budget, dealing with constituents, generating revenue, and keeping the public satisfied around politically sensitive issues. Many school boards focused on financial outcomes, legal concerns, and constituents' problems instead of academic achievement (Ehren et al., 2016; Ford, 2013; Shoher & Hartney, 2014). Board members often bring their perspectives on how the district should operate from their lens of experience and campaign promises (Danzberger, 1994). Once board members are elected and start to understand the duties and constraints of the board, they find themselves with conflicting demands (Lorentzen, 2013). The power of campaign promises and personal interests can tax the trustee, staff, and district. Good governance is the key to ensuring a smooth and focused course of action. Every school leader's duty, including those of trustees, is understanding their influence and the

behaviors necessary to fulfill the district's mission (Lorentzen, 2013). Good governance, actual solid school governance, requires work and focus from the board and superintendent as a collective (Elsbernd, 2018). Given that literature suggests that school boards tend not to focus on student achievement, it is essential to ask why this is the case. The era of accountability provides a strong rationale for school boards to examine student achievement and other student outcomes as their primary purpose.

Topic: Improving Student Outcomes with Research-Based Governance

The passage and implementation of No Child Left Behind presented a new shift toward greater federal accountability and added more academic focus from governance teams (Curry et al., 2018). Many times, traditional areas of school board oversight, such as budget, tax rates, facilities, or personal agendas, are the issues that drive the community member to run for election to the board of trustees. While budgets, facilities, and community needs are still functions of the board, the challenge of improving student outcomes suggests the need for a more dynamic leadership role for school boards (Delagardelle, 2006). Some board members might still focus on the traditional part of the school board; however, many stakeholders call upon school boards to lead the nation toward improved schools, higher achievement, and a better citizenry (Plough, 2014).

The Texas legislature passed a new law in 2015 that enacted much tougher school accountability sanctions, including school closure, for low-performing schools across the state. The law charged the Texas Education Agency (TEA) with enforcement of this law (Crabill, 2017). This allowed the Texas Education Agency to help districts focus on increasing the governance team's impact on student achievement. An idea was formed by TEA staff that shifted the focus from immediately closing schools to providing training

that reached far beyond the classroom (Crabill, 2017). As a result, TEA began working collaboratively with the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB), regional Education Service Centers (ESC), and school board members across the state to develop an instrument to help guide boards in implementing research-based best practices. One of the partners, the Texas Association of School Boards, is a statewide organization that supports districts in policy development and advocacy and provides various resources to support school board trustees. Texas Education Code 8.002 allows for the establishment of the other partner, Education Service Centers, to provide efficiencies for school districts and implement legislative and TEA initiatives (Texas school law bulletin, 2020). As a result of the collaboration between these groups, a self-evaluation instrument was developed that allowed boards to assess themselves on best practices to improve student outcomes and align with the State Board of Education (SBOE) Framework for School Board Development (Crabill, 2017).

While this framework for improving student outcomes was initially developed to improve low-performing schools, the adoption of the Texas Education Code (TEC) Section 11.1515 during the 85th legislature in 2017 made the oversight of academic achievement an emphasis for all school boards. TEC Sec. 11.1515 reads, "The board of trustees of an independent school district or the governing body of an open-enrollment charter school shall provide oversight regarding student academic achievement and strategic leadership for maximizing student performance" (Texas school law bulletin, 2020). Due to this increased accountability, the need arose for researched-based leadership strategies and responsibility for action to be spread across a more extensive network (Houston, 2001).

The research-based strategies have been evident in many districts. In some high-achieving districts, school board members use their influence for effective change in areas such as improvement goals, curriculum, instruction, assessment, and staff development (Rice et al., 2000). This allowed the board to identify the purposes and processes of school improvement initiatives and identify the board's role in support of school initiatives (Rice et al., 2000).

A commonly held misunderstanding of the board's role is to steer away from teaching and learning, and this may have driven some boards away from behaviors that may impact student achievement (Delagardelle, 2006). Learning how to influence teaching and learning as part of governance has often been absent from the training and development of school boards, which may have left school board members needing clarification about their roles in these areas (Delagardelle, 2006). Holmen (2016) found a relationship between school boards that practice effective exercise of influence over instruction and improved student achievement results. This influence comes with great responsibility for boards to clarify the roles between the school board and the superintendent. It is essential to understand that influence does not mean micromanagement; in this context, it refers to oversight. Much like the responsibility of the board to provide oversight for finances, so is the requirement to provide oversight for student achievement. One example of student achievement oversight could be progress monitoring for student outcome goals. As the internal governing body, the school board's words, actions, and behaviors will set the tone for how the staff perceives support from the district (Curry et al., 2018).

Problem of Practice

Texas Law outlines the school board's general governance powers and duties in Texas Education Code 11.151 (Texas school law bulletin, 2020). The board is considered a body corporate, and as such, it is granted the power and responsibility to establish rules, regulations, and oversight for the financial and academic achievement of the local school district. TEC 11.1511(b) outlines the role of the board to include building partnerships with the community to meet their needs, adopting a vision statement, developing comprehensive goals for the district, establishing performance goals, monitoring the progress of the goals set, and holding the superintendent accountable through expectations and an annual evaluation (Texas school law bulletin, 2020).

The duties and roles of the board align with research for advancing student performance. Puig (2014) identifies six variables as significant predictors of school board behaviors that increase student achievement. They include:

- vision guides all decisions
- teamwork and problem-solving
- reviewing data to ensure progress
- high expectations
- annual formal review
- following policies and procedures.

In addition to Puig, there have been several studies in recent years researching school board actions or behaviors and how those behaviors impact student performance. The Lighthouse Inquiry is one of those studies (Rice et al., 2000). It identifies seven characteristics of effective school board governance: shared leadership, continuous

improvement and shared decision-making, creating and sustaining initiatives, supporting the workplace, staff development, supporting school sites through data and information, and community involvement (Ford, 2013; Lorentzen, 2013; Rice, et al., 2000). The Lighthouse studies show that if goals for significant gains in student learning are present, school boards must master their role as solid leaders for school improvement (Delagardelle, 2008). Texas Education Code 11.1515 clearly outlines the responsibility of the school board to provide oversight to maximize student outcomes. However, it is only through good governance actions that results are actualized.

School Boards Matter in Improving Student Learning

Districts that are more successful academically have board members who prioritize improving student learning (Curry et al., 2018) based on surveys from over 900 school board members across 417 unique districts in the United States. The results of the study concluded that board members who spent time learning their roles and understood the academic system within their school district produced higher student outcomes on state assessments. When it comes to student learning, school boards sometimes fail to appreciate their influence over student achievement (Delagardelle, 2008; Goodman & Zimmerman, 2000). Curry et al. (2018) and Shober et al. (2014) found that when a higher percentage of members have an academic focus, the more likely they are to govern districts that "beat the odds," meaning that regardless of demographic or financial factors, the students tend to perform better. The relationship between board governance and academics is complex, but recent research is helping to improve the board's role in this work (Washington State School Directors' Association). Since it was based on a small sample, the Lighthouse study did not lead to conclusive results of a causal link between

board governance and academics; however, the Lighthouse study did establish that boards make possible a culture of learning (Rice et al., 2000). Through the development of policy and creating a structure to support student achievement as a core function, school boards are the architects of policies that affect student learning (Washington State School Directors' Association, n.d.). One example of a policy to improve student outcomes would be the development of strong academic goals followed by progress monitoring that measure the impact of student performance. These goals and progress measures are locally developed and provide the oversight required by boards to ensure that both academic and financial decisions are aligned with the district's vision. When school boards focus resources or create a vision that is not centered on student achievement, this causes the district to steer away from the purpose of existence, which is to improve student outcomes.

For some time, there has been a shared understanding of a teacher's impact on the classroom and the importance of the student-teacher relationship in influencing student performance (Berry et al., 2005). The same could be said for the impact on campus leadership. Although removed from the classroom, a great deal of student achievement comes from campus leadership (Eberts & Stone, 1988). However, only recently has the impact of the school board and the importance of governance been brought to the conversation. If schools exist to improve student outcomes, then the school board is essential because their impact involves virtually all functions, from internal governance and policy formulation to communication with teachers, building administrators, and the public (Dervarics & O'Brien, 2016).

The challenge remains that many school boards need to understand fully the specific actions or behaviors required to be more effective (Holmen, 2016). Many school board members begin their role of academic oversight of the district with only the experiences they encountered in school. Understandably, the need for board members to learn the current structure of the district's academic program will help in more informed decisions. While the school board's effect on student achievement is indirect, specific actions must be understood to fulfill the board's essential duty (Lorentzen, 2013). Expressly, board actions and behaviors can be provided through focused and prescriptive school board training designed to increase the district's effectiveness as measured by improved student outcomes (Lorentzen, 2013). Boards focused on improving student outcomes have taken the opportunity to understand essential behaviors and actions to engage the community and parents, thus increasing student achievement in their school district.

TEC Sec. 11.1515 states, "The board of trustees...shall provide oversight regarding academic achievement and strategic leadership for maximizing student performance" (Texas school law bulletin, 2020). This is crucial from a systemic perspective to ensure a proper balance between oversight and leadership to ensure that the board performs within its expected duties. For instance, when researching the use of sound instructional strategies at the middle school level, it was found that the lack of knowledge by classroom teachers was alarming. A solid system of oversight and balance between management and leadership, as outlined in TEC Sec. 11.1512, along with a collaboration between the board and superintendent, could help strengthen this gap in instructional practices (Texas school law bulletin, 2020).

The lack of understanding proper instructional strategy implementation by middle school teachers is concerning (Khalil et al., 2016; Lotter et al., 2016; Munter et al., 2021; Northrop et al., 2019; Pozas et al., 2019; Teague et al., 2012), and a school board that was actively involved in a review of student outcomes could provide appropriate support. Teague et al. (2012) revealed a disconnect between teacher beliefs and actual practice. The research found that one-third of the teachers disclosed that the primary strategy in the classroom was an authentic inquiry, but the observations found little evidence of this strategy. In the results of Lotter et al. (2017), teachers acknowledged that as they teach a more student-centered learning strategy, a better understanding of questioning skills is needed. When Teague et al. (2012) asked teachers to identify their teaching style, there was little to no understanding, and they had difficulty responding. These same teachers admitted to a lack of research understanding and, thus, the implementation of effective strategies. This idea compounds the need for district systems to allow teachers to grow and understand the content they teach middle school students.

The responsibility to ensure a systemic instructional framework for schools falls firmly at the feet of the administrator (Allen et al., 2015; Day et al., 2016; Sowell, 2017; Teague et al., 2012). The instructional leader for the campus or district must set an example of high expectations and professional growth for the educators. A lack of district systems and supports that account for professional behaviors on the campus will allow for student outcomes to diminish. Day et al. (2016) discovered that successful principals would implement improvement over time by combining transformational and instructional strategies. Two systems mentioned in the research for principals to help implement

instructional strategies were a strong mentorship program and a solid job-embedded professional development system.

The most resounding systemic need for sound instructional practices was implementing a job-embedded professional development program. Teague et al. (2012) stressed the importance of collaboration and shared discussions among teachers. They found that this activity needed to be supported in their districts. This study showed a glaring deficiency in the need for general best practices and the failure of classrooms across the nation for not allowing an organized, professional development process to allow for teacher growth toward best instructional practices. School principals must lead the charge to ensure that proper training is delivered to meet the needs of middle school students in building a culture that promotes both staff and student engagement in learning (Day et al., 2016; Allen et al., 2015).

The research on middle school performance could easily be corrected through strategic leadership and oversight by the board. Progress monitoring and administrative accountability could lead to improved student outcomes, thus fulfilling the requirements of TEC Sec. 11.1515.

Duties of the Superintendent

The duties of the superintendent in TEC Sec. 11.201(d) include assuming the administrative responsibility and leadership for planning, organizing, operating, supervising, and evaluating educational programs, systems, services, facilities, and staff (Texas school law bulletin, 2020). The superintendent, chief educational leader and chief executive officer of the district, provide oversight of the day-to-day district operations and ensures the board policies are upheld as stated in Texas Education Code 11.1512(a)

(Texas school law bulletin, 2020). Like the school board, external pressures of accountability fall upon the superintendent. The superintendent's duties are assigned to strengthen district systems that help ensure the above responsibilities are completed with fidelity.

To ensure the success of day-to-day operations, including finance and instruction, the systems should rely heavily on continuous improvement tools. If these systems are not in place, an environment of anxiety could be created. Many administrators' concerns occur when the pressures of accountability fall at the end of the cycle. Some administrators, who are not proactive, wonder and hope there has been enough done for the year to reach accountability benchmarks. Waiting until the end of the cycle is both stressful and not in the best interest of students, teachers, parents, or taxpayers. The need to embrace continuous improvement that gauges the progress toward goals is the only way to ensure positive student outcomes. A superintendent should not wait until the accountability ratings are announced to provide targeted remediation. Improving student outcomes is an ongoing process.

The continuous improvement needed for school systems is outlined in many districts' board policy BQ(LEGAL), built from the district-level planning and decision-making process described in TEC 11.252 (Texas school law bulletin, 2020). This is possibly the most underused and misunderstood tool in the performance of public schools. This section of the Texas Education Code describes a Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) cycle of continuous improvement for school districts, but it is often thought to be only a task that must be completed for compliance and not a tool for improvement. When this narrow lens of a compliance-driven mindset is used, the full power of the

improvement planning process is not fully embraced. This behavior may result in policies, practices, and procedures that are not aligned with positive student outcomes.

The Superintendent Matters in the Improvement of Student Outcomes

The school's organization requires administrative actions embedded in improved student outcomes, such as the proper knowledge, skills, and dispositions of principals and superintendents (Waters & Marzano, 2007). Waters and Marzano (2006) outlined five leadership practices that significantly correlate to improved student outcomes. All five practices are related to setting goals and keeping districts focused on student learning. The reality is that superintendents must change their approach to the job to meet the growing demand for instructional achievement (Houston, 2001). Some leaders have been focused on the management of the "B's" (buildings, buses, budgets, books, and bonds) and should be focused on student outcomes and building relationships (Henrikson, 2018; Houston, 2001).

Superintendents of the future should be leaders who focus on the systemic qualities of learning that speak to the opening of the mind to develop more critical thinking (Houston, 2001). The new ideas and measures of success will have to be more adaptative to finding a solution for learners to succeed. Superintendents must become better communicators and facilitators, understanding the community, and framing the conversation to meet everyone's needs (Houston, 2001). The superintendent can use effective communication to gain the community's support and lead the staff to embrace initiatives to improve student outcomes. This facilitation skill is often needed to help staff, parents, and community members understand and achieve the district's goals. These

actions will help build ownership in the district's direction because school board behaviors and activities must align with the quest for improved student outcomes.

Interventions

As we have discussed, the role of the superintendent is to provide leadership in planning, organizing, operating, supervising, and evaluating educational programs. The board's role is to help with oversight and ensure the vision, goals, accountability, and policy development are set to meet high expectations focused on student learning. The challenge for some boards is a lack of understanding of specific actions and behaviors to be more effective (Holmen, 2016). This challenge is exacerbated by a level of "tacit" knowledge that runs just below the surface of an organization that prevents many from expanding opportunities (Rice et al., 2000). This tacit knowledge may have been how things have always been done and perhaps falls back on school management instead of academic achievement. Implementing board development can help expand this knowledge base into best practices for governing teams. Once a board has established a sound system of governance, they need to provide mentorship for new board members to share the best practices and clarify constraints (Lorentzen, 2013). Ford (2013) found that by changing school board behaviors toward strategic planning, collaboration with the superintendent, maximizing cooperation, and following a clear division of roles and responsibilities, the district saw increased graduation rates, lower dropouts, and improved student achievement (Ford, 2013).

Research suggests that school boards that focus on student outcomes create the conditions for students to grow academically (Crabill, 2017). This supports the statement from the Lone Star Governance training developed by the Texas Education Agency:

“student outcomes do not change until adult behaviors change” (Crabill, 2017). Ford (2013) and Plough (2014) found that school board governance behaviors improved student outcomes. Delagardelle (2006) found the crucial overarching behaviors that improved schools were the discussion of student learning and the idea that staff can impact student learning, along with ensuring strong leadership within the district. The development of long-range goals also had a positive student outcome.

These behavior changes for a governance team can be accomplished through the knowledge attained at board training, including the development of skills to implement the knowledge, and a mindset shift that actual change begins with the self. Only through systemic processes and accountability can the achievement of these goals occur (Delagardelle, 2006). The accountability to ensure this behavior change occurs must happen through a board self-evaluation (Puig, 2014). This board self-evaluation is grounded in research and outlined in TEC Sec. 11.182 (Texas school law bulletin, 2020).

Effective Board Behaviors to Improve Student Outcomes

Boards in high-achieving districts are more likely to engage in goal-setting processes and monitor their progress (Dervarics et al., 2016). Through the discussions generated with goal setting, board members possess detailed knowledge of their district and have a better working relationship that is centered on respect and collegiality with teachers and administrators (Dervarics et al., 2016). Table 1 outlines the findings of Dervarics et al. (2016) on comparing board behaviors.

Table 1*Characteristics of an Effective vs. Ineffective Board*

Characteristics of an Effective School Board	Characteristics of an Ineffective School Board
Commit to a vision of high expectations for student achievement and quality instruction and define clear goals toward that vision.	Only vaguely aware of school improvement initiatives and seldom able to describe actions to improve student learning.
They have shared solid beliefs and values about what is possible for students, their ability to learn, and the system and its ability to teach all children at high levels.	Focused on external pressures as the main reasons for lack of student success, such as poverty, lack of parental support, societal factors, or lack of motivation.
Accountability-driven, spending less time on operational issues and more time focused on policies to improve student achievement.	Offer negative comments about students and teachers and look at data from a “blaming” perspective, describing teachers, students and families as major causes for low performance.
Have a collaborative relationship with staff and the community and establish a strong communications structure to inform and engage internal and external stakeholders in setting and achieving district goals.	Micromanage day-to-day operations
Are data savvy;? They embrace and monitor data, even when the information is negative, and use it to drive continuous improvement.	Disregard the agenda process and the chain of command.
Align and sustain resources, such as professional development, to meet district goals.	Left out the information flow; little communication between board and superintendent
Lead as a united team with the superintendent, each from their respective roles, with strong collaboration and mutual trust.	Slow to define a vision and do not hire a superintendent based on the vision.
Take part in team development and training with their superintendents to build shared knowledge, values, and commitments for their improvement efforts.	Little professional development together as a board.

Note: Dervarics, C., & O'Brien, E. (2016). Characteristics of effective school boards. *The Education Digest*, 81(7), 39-42.

The understanding and implementation of best practices are essential to effective school governance. The State Board of Education has created a Framework for School Board Development for the school boards of Texas to embrace. This framework should be the foundation for good governance training to exhibit effective school board behaviors, resulting in improved student outcomes. The Texas Education Agency (2021) lists the focus areas as follows:

- Vision and goals
- Systems and processes
- Progress and accountability
- Advocacy and engagement
- Synergy and teamwork

The Texas State Board of Education's Framework of School Board Development presents these focus areas in detail. They result from school board behaviors that, through implementation, can positively impact student outcomes.

Framework for School Board Development

The first pillar of the Framework for School Board Development is the creation of a vision and goals. The Framework stated that the board should ensure a shared vision is created and locally developed, along with the development of measurable goals that improve student outcomes that provide support for opportunities and experiences (Texas Education Agency, 2021). The board:

- keeps the district focused on the well-being of all children.
- adopts a shared vision that incorporates input from the community to reflect local aspirations as well as the present and future needs of all children.

- ensures that the vision aligns with the state’s mission, objectives, and goals for education established by law or rule.
- adopts a reasonable number of specific, quantifiable, research-based, and time-bound goals that align with state law, are developed with community input, and support the vision to improve student outcomes.
- embraces, supports, and fulfills the vision that all students receive what they need to learn, thrive, and grow, including resources, opportunities, and experiences
- uses the vision and goals to drive all deliberations, decisions, and actions (Texas Education Agency, 2021).

Commitment to a concise shared vision, goals for student achievement, and quality instruction will impact the classroom (Ehren et al., 2016). The goals developed during the visioning process must have a baseline, target, population, be time-bound, and challenge the organization. It is important to establish goals for change and not maintain the status quo (Waters & Marzano, 2007). Setting a solid vision and goals with high expectations developed in collaboration with the community will chart a course centered on school improvement (Curry et al., 2018; Ehren et al., 2016; Ford, 2013; Lorentzen, 2013; Puig, 2014; Waters et al., 2007; Washington State School Directors' Association, n.d.).

This first pillar is crucial for establishing a solid vision and common direction for the district. The ability to allow for a clear understanding of expectations is critical in building consensus and ownership. This process cannot be done in isolation; it must involve all stakeholders as a team. Creating a vision collectively provides rights and will allow a sense of stability in the organization's future.

The vision and goals are the core directions of the district, and this process must be done with strategy and fidelity. When done effectively, the vision and goals will lead the district to grow and improve student outcomes by providing resources and structures to hold the program and people accountable (Ehren et al., 2016).

The second pillar of the Framework is systems and processes. The Framework describes this as the board ensuring systems and procedures are in place to accomplish the vision and goals. The board:

- regularly develops, reviews, and adopts board policies for adequate support of the district's vision and goals.
- approves a budget that aligns with and maximizes resources to fulfill the district's vision and goals.
- monitors multiple, measurable elements of student progress and achievement throughout the year.
- incorporates equity when making decisions and evaluating systems and processes.
- focuses its actions on following board operating procedures while providing oversight of the superintendent, policymaking, planning and goal setting, progress monitoring, and evaluation while avoiding involvement in daily operations and management.
- approves goals, policies, and programs that ensure a safe and secure learning environment.
- ensures the equitable distribution of resources, opportunities, and experiences based on the diverse needs of students and schools.

- adopts a planning calendar and engages in a decision-making process consistent with state law and rules to help achieve the district's vision.
- ensures that the district's planning and decision-making process enables all segments of the community, families, and staff to contribute to achieving the district's vision meaningfully.
- welcomes and values all people and cultures as essential stakeholders in the process of student success.
- ensures the district has a system that monitors for sound business and fiscal practices.
- adopts policies regarding hiring, assigning, appraising, terminating, and compensating school district personnel in compliance with state laws and rules.
- ensures the district adopts a protocol regarding the recruitment, determination of professional development needs, building of leadership capacity, and retention rates for the district's teachers.
- fulfills the statutory duties of the local board of trustees and upholds all laws, rules, ethical procedures, and court orders about schools and school employees (Texas Education Agency, 2021).

The second pillar ensures the board is armed with a plan supporting the vision and strategic goals, providing steps to inquire whether the vision and goals drive every aspect of the school district's programs (Washington State School Directors' Association, n.d.). Systems and processes must be employed to ensure that actions are followed to review the district vision (Lorentzen, 2013). This regular monitoring must be done with integrity and transparency to ensure fidelity to the strategic plan (Elsbernd, 2018). Regularly

reviewing the data to ensure progress on the goals allows the district to perform significantly higher than those that fail to monitor progress (Puig, 2014). This regular monitoring of results will also provide progress checks for the staff and the board, enabling boards to be more focused on their decisions (Ford, 2013; Holmen, 2016; Puig, 2014).

These processes help overcome many boards' challenges through individual interests and self-prescribed agendas (Holmen, 2016). The processes help to form a focus for shared decision-making. Ford (2013) found that little attention has been spent on how boards go about their work, concluding that it matters regarding student achievement issues and how they go about these decisions. Research done by Holmen (2016) also reinforced that if boards develop processes for shared decision-making, then improved student outcomes will result.

The third pillar of the Framework is progress and accountability. The board sets clear goals, provides resources and support, evaluates goal attainment, and engages in ongoing feedback on progress and commitments. The board:

- holds itself accountable to its adopted vision, goals, commitments, and operating procedures.
- ensures progress toward achievement of district goals through systematic, timely, and comprehensive reviews of relevant reports and student data that illustrate progress toward locally developed student outcome goals.
- ensures equity throughout the system by regularly identifying inequities, updating policies, and appropriately distributing resources.

- differentiates among resources, intermediate measures, and outcomes, mainly when focusing on student outcomes.
- monitors and evaluates the allocation of resources in support of the district's vision and goals and sustainability.
- reviews the efficiency and effectiveness of district operations and use of resources in supporting the district's vision and goals.
- employs and annually evaluates the superintendent on the achievement of district goals, including locally developed academic goals, demonstration of educational leadership, and management of daily operations (Texas Education Agency, 2021).

The Washington State School Directors Association (n.d.) emphasized that school boards are the link between ensuring the school's accountability for meeting student progress and communicating that result to the community. The Association continues to emphasize that this accountability to meeting student needs only comes with effective leadership between the board of trustees and the superintendent. This commitment to accountability and progress must be completed by measuring quality and achieving the established goals. This process is done through school board meetings that report established quality measures for student success and begin a collaborative discussion with the administration toward improved curriculum, professional development, and instruction in the school (Ehren et al., 2016). Hofman (1995) and Land (2002) found that high-achieving school boards develop habits of monitoring data and basing decisions on data and student needs. This data-driven decision-making ensures accountability and fosters mutual respect from a place of joint commitment from the teachers, administration, and board (Hofman, 1995; Land, 2002).

The board further ensures accountability to the community by regularly evaluating the superintendent. The evaluation is conducted through clear goal progress measures aligned with the district's goals based on community values (Lorentzen, 2013). The potential for system-wide growth is most significant when the superintendent's evaluation is done effectively with a comprehensive and multi-faceted approach rooted in student outcome goals (Elsbernd, 2018). The regular monitoring of student outcome goals and goal progress measures forms a sense of clarity that allows for continual conversation throughout the year. This professional dialogue around student achievement provides a sense of awareness rather than an annual surprise if progress is not going well. If things are not going as planned, the superintendent is responsible for providing a rationale for improvement and providing a plan for guidance to correct the progress (Elsbernd, 2018). The superintendent must rely on strong leadership skills and encourage the principals to build relationships to foster success toward district goals (Waters & Marzano, 2007).

When professional learning communities are in place with established relationships for professional dialogue, this leads to job satisfaction and retention. Like teachers, keeping good administrators and the superintendent is also tied to student success. Elsbernd (2018) found a positive correlation between the length of superintendent service and student achievement. Student outcomes will be improved when processes are in place to ensure good communication, strong relationships, data-driven decisions, and problem-solving strategies (Elsbernd, 2018).

While student outcomes are the highest priority, another important responsibility for the school board is allocating resources efficiently. As with student outcomes, vital processes must be in place to manage resource allocation. We have established why

schools exist, so if we continue that frame of reference, resources should be allocated to meet this goal. Boards should base resources on the strategic plan (Washington State School Directors Association, n.d.). The proper training for boards to function as a team with the ability to leverage community resources to benefit all students will support and sustain effective governance (Plough, 2014).

The fourth pillar of the Framework of School Board Development is advocacy and engagement. Advocacy and engagement are primarily about building partnerships within the community and across the state to promote the vision and goals of the district effectively. The board also advocates on behalf of Texas public schoolchildren. The board:

- demonstrates its commitment to, and advocates on behalf of, the shared vision and goals by clearly communicating them to the superintendent, staff, and community.
- regularly reports district progress to families and the community, which could include an online dashboard for the community.
- ensures multiple forms of two-way communication will be used to engage, empower, and connect students, families, staff, media, and community with the district.
- builds collaborative relationships and partnerships with families and community, businesses, nonprofits, higher education, education support organizations, and governmental leaders to influence and expand educational opportunities and experiences to meet the needs of students.

- recognizes the respective roles of and provides input and feedback to the legislature, State Board of Education, and the Texas Education Agency to ensure maximum effectiveness and benefit to Texas schoolchildren.
- promotes school board service by educating the community about the role of a school board and encouraging leadership opportunities within the community (Texas Education Agency, 2021).

Holmen (2016) confirms that a strong relationship exists between boards that practice practical advocacy focus and positive student achievement. Partnerships built by the board, either in the community or statewide, are beneficial for support and resources to the district. A clear message and focus on goals and progress help build a sense of pride and achievement for the school district. When the goal-setting and visioning process has been created with community input, the advocacy and communication of progress will continue to build a sense of ownership (Washington State School Directors Association, n.d.; Waters & Marzano, 2007).

Henrikson (2018) points out that we can no longer pretend that learning stops at the school's door. As the environment of virtual learning grows, so does the dependence on the community. While Henrikson (2018) did his research before the pandemic, the points still resonate. Superintendents and boards must be advocates for children and use whatever power possible to ensure family and community support for student learning.

The fifth and final pillar of the Framework for School Board Development is synergy and teamwork. Synergy and teamwork have been mentioned throughout the Framework. Still, here it is taken to a deeper level of setting parameters, policies, self-evaluations, and holding the board team accountable to commit to improving student

outcomes. The board's duties are distinct, and they must work effectively as a collaborative unit with the superintendent to lead the district's vision and goals. The board:

- recognizes its distinct role in establishing the vision and the goals, adopting policies that guide the district, setting priorities, establishing governance protocols to oversee the management of the district, adopting and overseeing the annual budget, and hiring and evaluating the superintendent.
- recognizes each trustee's duty as a trustee and fiduciary for the entire district.
- remains focused on its goals and priorities, as opposed to individual agendas separate and apart from the shared vision.
- annually evaluates its performance as a team, with attention given to the district's vision and goals; fulfilling the board's duties, responsibilities, and commitments; and the board's working relationship with the superintendent.
- makes decisions as a whole only at properly called meetings and recognizes that individual members have no authority to take personal action in policy or district and campus administrative matters.
- respects the right of individual members to express their viewpoints and vote on their convictions and honors the decisions of the majority.
- develops teamwork, problem-solving, and decision-making skills as a team with its superintendent.
- understands and adheres to laws and local policies and respects the superintendent's responsibility to manage the school district and to direct employees in district and campus matters.

- adopts and adheres to established policies and procedures for welcoming and addressing ideas and concerns from students, families, staff, and the community.
- establishes and follows local policies, procedures, and ethical standards governing the conduct and operations of the board.
- understands the leadership role of the board president and adheres to local policies and procedures regarding the duties and responsibilities of the board officers (Texas Education Agency, 2021).

Delagardelle (2006) says, “How board superintendent teams understand and carry out their roles can make the difference between dysfunctional leadership teams incapable of leading change and highly effective leadership teams that build district-wide capacity to ensure every student succeeds (p. 160).” Governance teams may not directly affect school improvement in the same scope as teachers but can significantly affect school improvement through policy development. When policy and authority get in the way of effective practice and instructions, a breakdown in student achievement will potentially occur. The governance team must work together to lead districts toward system-wide best practices to improve student outcomes (Delagardelle, 2006; Lorentzen, 2013; Waters & Marzano, 2006). The future of public education rests mainly on the cooperation, leadership, and decision-making of board and superintendent teams (Puig, 2014).

The board and superintendent partnership must be consistently developed as they jointly navigate through policymaking roles, clear communication, and administrative duties to prevail even through strong political pressure (Henriksen, 2018; Waters & Marzano, 2006). Boards must place importance on a positive working relationship with the superintendent and work to reduce conflict with each other through continual board

development (Ford, 2013). This process for board development lies with self-evaluation and seeking to implement research-based board behaviors for quality improvement (Ehren et al., 2016; Washington State Director's Association, n.d.). These research-based practices will build sustainability and deter inconsistent actions that may cause strained team relations, especially when working with the superintendent (Henrikson, 2018).

Some school boards need help with a clear outline of the superintendent's role versus the school board's role, and board development can deter this lack of clarity. Holmen's (2016) study confirms that school boards that practice effective role boundaries have increased student achievement. Holmen found that trust will erode and cause conflict between the board and the staff without these boundaries. He asserts that it is essential that boards develop a comprehensive understanding of the school district's trends and needs to provide the necessary support and oversight for their students and the community. Rice et al. (2000) stated that school board members should be dynamic leaders; however, they may not be educational experts in school renewal and should be abiding by their roles and having appropriate systems.

The Impact of Polarity on Governance Teams

How should school administrators and governance teams lead through the increasing polarization of our current educational landscape? In the recent past, when it came to making an important decision, governance teams could expect that a portion of the community would not agree with the decision or action of the board. However, in our current political landscape, almost every decision comes with a challenge. As many governance teams have experienced, the polarization of many issues has caused the stakeholders to divide, resulting in many communities being on opposite sides of the

continuum. This continual pressure and constant stress on educational leaders have many considering retirements or other careers (Superville, 2021). At this moment, we need governance teams willing to deconstruct this polarization to ensure that the best interest of students is held as the vision, but this is difficult when the community is split on that vision. The polarization of community beliefs requires a robust governance structure to ensure a solid foundation for student learning.

In Merriam-Webster's Dictionary (n.d.), polarization is divided into sharply distinct opposites. While education has always faced clashing ideals such as centralized/decentralized systems, collegiality/individuality, mandatory/discretionary, student-centered/adult-centered focus, or product cost/quality, it is not until recently that polarization has impacted governance structures.

Freeman (2004) states that actively engaging the “both/and” polarity thinking and understanding the “either/or” logic will help to navigate and impact educational leaders and teams in stressful situations. Polarities are much more complex than a common problem of practice that one would encounter in an organizational system. Usually, with a problem of practice, there are one or more solutions with multiple ways to come to a resolution. The various steps or the different avenues to an answer may cause the problem to be complicated but solvable (Poli, 2013). From an organizational approach, navigating polarity is a way to manage an unsolvable problem. Complex problems are the opposite of complicated problems. Poli (2013) writes that complex issues are unknowable, such as the many governance teams tackling the pandemic with masks, returning to schools, or dealing with social-emotional stress from students and faculty. These issues cause a great deal of division in the community and often cause the

governance team to get derailed on matters that may not follow the school's vision. It is essential for the governance team to recognize the difference between complicated and complex problems and then further realize that the more complex the issue, the greater polarity will exist.

Johnson (1996) describes a team-building workshop designed to polarize performance as individuals or as a team. Johnson's model (1996) split the individualism pole into two quadrants of benefits and challenges. Similarly, teamwork also created benefit/challenge quadrants. After the training, Johnson (1996) put all four quadrants together to facilitate a deeper understanding of polarizing ideas. This allowed the team to recognize and appreciate each side even though a solution may not have been created.

Managing polarization cuts across several disciplines, not just education. Burns (1999) identifies polarity management principles in health care, in which leaders must manage ambiguities and determine multiple directions for action. Hirshhorn (2001) identifies project management in the tech world as learning to create a win-win solution and an awareness to know when polarity has interrupted the workflow. Collins and Porras (2002) suggest it is crucial not to get caught in the "Tyranny of the OR" but to embrace the "Genius of the AND." Other important organizational focal points to manage polarity include embracing a positive change, significant stability, focusing on the culture, and confident leadership. Sometimes to build, we must first tear back to the foundation. These organizational focal points are grounded in one common factor: the impact of the behaviors of the governance team in being rooted in organizational synergy and the values of the community. The effect of polarization in education has ramifications that are profound and may impact every inch of a district from the boardroom to the

classroom, as research tells us that the governance team has an impact on student outcomes through the influence and decisions that affect the teacher (Abry et al., 2016; Bartoletti & Connelly, 2013; Dennie et al., 2019; Nairz-Wirth & Feldmann, 2017; Rice et al., 2000).

Summary

In conclusion, the future of schools will depend on many things, but one significant factor will be the effectiveness of governance teams (Puig, 2014). While the governance team is a distal component of the school improvement process, they profoundly affect the conditions for change (Lorentzen, 2013; Rice et al., 2000). Ford (2013) concluded from his study that if one thing is taken away from his work, it must be that governance matters. Ford felt that if the school board's system was flawed, it was the flaw of the individual human, and through teamwork and systems, the board could serve as the solution for change. Houston (2001) holds the future to be present in a school a student wants to attend. There is a limited amount of research on school improvement regarding the impact of governance teams compared to the effects of teachers and principals. School board leadership matters, and the decisions relating to academic oversight, financial resources, and policy development affect student outcomes. The Framework of School Board Development outlines a great foundation, but research needs to be done to determine the impact of the implementation of the Framework. Effective governance teams must work collaboratively to build systems for developing a vision, establishing goals, monitoring those goals, establishing non-negotiables, establishing operational procedures for the board, and focusing on student outcomes.

A school board that will engage in meaningful work that allows an open mind to achieve effective teaching and learning will improve student outcomes. The future holds uncertainty. However, if trust can build from solid relationships, teamwork is used to solve critical issues, processes are established to work through conflicts, and a clear vision with challenging goals focused on students is implemented; school board teams may be the solution.

Chapter 3

EVALUATION STUDY

Abstract

The improvement of student outcomes primarily stems from the teacher in the classroom, but Rice et al. (2000) found that school boards in the boardroom can impact student outcomes. This study examined if Lone Star Governance (LSG) is an effective tool to assist all schools in the implementation of best governance practices and the impact of governance coaching has on student outcomes.

The participants in this study were rural school districts in the coastal bend of Texas that participated in the Texas Education Agency's Lone Star Governance training. A mixed-method embedded design, specifically an embedded experimental research model was used to conduct the study. Analysis was conducted to compare accountability score gains along with interviews of the school superintendents, and surveys of school board members participating in the study to determine the impact of Lone Star Governance on school board behaviors and the application of the Framework of School Board Development to all schools. The sample size was limited to ensure the consistency of Lone Star Governance training and implementation. The small sample size created a limitation for statistical analysis.

The study found that a governance coaching intervention was essential in implementing the LSG model from superintendents and school board members. The mean accountability scores increased for LSG districts and campuses compared to non-LSG districts and campuses with the results of the Mann-Whitney U test finding a significance

($p = 0.01$) with the LSG campus performing better on accountability scores compared to the non-LSG campuses. LSG participants agreed with the findings that improved student outcomes resulted in their district. The data compiled justified the need for additional research for more detailed analysis to reinforce the conclusion of the study that Lone Star Governance is a continuous improvement tool that impacts the classroom.

The Problem of Practice Evaluated

Student outcomes do not change until adult behaviors change, which in this context are the actions of the school board, and it represents the motto of the Texas Education Agency's Lone Star Governance initiative (Texas Education Agency, n.d.). If we take this literally, as it is intended, then the behaviors of adults within the governance structure most certainly affect the trajectory of students. Rice et al. (2000) found evidence that the governance team's decisions impact student achievement. This is important in the current environment, as twenty years later, the impact of COVID-19 on families and school districts could have a long-term effect on our school systems (Lee et al., 2021). Learning loss in Texas accelerated due to the spring of 2020 and the absences following in the 2021-2022 school year, especially in high-poverty areas of the state (Patarapichayatham et al., 2021).

The learning loss resulting from the pandemic and the political polarization of complex problems have caused many school boards to focus on things other than student outcomes. The continual habits of adults coupled with the lack of reflective training to build an effective governance team may not equip today's school boards with the skills

needed to perform in a new challenging landscape. Journell (2014) recognized that the increase in cable news and social media over the past two decades has engrained this polarization in everyday life. COVID isolation has advanced the issues as schools face complex problems from public safety to selecting curriculum. Hakansson et al. (2021) concluded that quality school governance should be based on data use, leadership, and intensive dialogue, which will cause tight alignment for organizational systems. High performing governance teams with the tools to build trust will increase relationship-building capabilities to move toward a collective purpose (Klarner et al., 2018). The change in our environment forces us to look at the development of our governance teams to acquire skills to address current problems facing our communities.

This study will evaluate Lone Star Governance's effectiveness in improving student outcomes by recognizing the importance of governance behaviors, building governance skills to tackle complex problems, and understanding the board member's role. Delgardelle (2006) acknowledged that a commonly held misunderstanding of school boards is that they are not responsible for teaching and learning in the district. She further stated that this fallacy might be attributed to the lack of school board training. The overarching problem to address is if a governance framework has been developed based on research and best practices. The obvious question comes to mind, why are more governance teams not adopting the framework to address the problems created by the recent pandemic? This researcher hypothesizes that a practical framework coupled with school board coaching could assist governance teams in navigating the political unrest of the community and also help improve student outcomes. Two areas could contribute to the overarching problem of adopting a governance framework; the first is the perception

that only low-performing districts need LSG, and the second is the lack of a robust coaching model for implementation. Klarner et al. (2018) noted that the integration of knowing the tasks to perform and performing those tasks as a governance team is equally important. The disconnect between the two-day LSG training and the LSG coaching component could contribute to the problem.

Research Questions

A clear and compelling researched based framework has been outlined in the Framework of Board Development by the Texas State Board of Education. As with any initiative or framework, a performance measurement process should align with the framework to ensure implementation. The creation of Lone Star Governance was the model developed in 2017 to answer an increased effort from the legislature to improve student outcomes (Crabill, 2017). However, following the pandemic, this model may be called upon not only to improve student outcomes but also to help build synergy and teamwork for the board to help weather the storm of complex community problems. To better understand the implementation of LSG, the following questions have guided this study:

- 1) To what extent does Lone Star Governance improve student outcomes through research-based board behaviors identified as the five pillars of the Framework for Board Development? What is the role of the coach in LSG implementation?
- 2) How does Lone Star Governance benefit both low-performing schools and non-low performing schools?

Literature Review

Research on the impact of governance teams is limited, and what is available dates back a few decades. When reviewing the research for improving student outcomes through the impact of the governance team, one study stands as a foundation for this research. Rice et al. (2000) outline seven key behaviors that impact board governance: shared leadership, continuous improvement, creating and continuing initiatives, supportive culture, development of staff, data-based decisions, and community involvement. Delagardelle (2008) affirms that the behaviors identified in the Lighthouse Inquiry, such as setting challenging student outcome goals, will make board members leaders in school improvement. Curry et al. (2018) also confirmed with their research that the districts that are more successful academically have board members who prioritize student outcomes.

One prominent area of school board behavior affecting student outcomes is the polarization of beliefs around accountability and whether we should have an accountability system (Curry et al., 2018). While accountability has been a standard topic of conversation over the years, other issues have surfaced since the pandemic, including wearing masks, banning school library books, and many other areas of political interest. While the ordinary discourse of the best decisions for students should be a topic, everyday conversations have become much more aggressive and personal, resulting in many educators and boards resigning (Superville, 2021). Governance teams are left with the task of deconstructing this polarization to ensure that positive student outcomes can result from the conversations.

Freeman (2004) presents the idea of a both/and approach to resolving polarity rather than an either/or approach. Complex problems, problems that are offered without a solution or with multiple solutions, are often the types of issues that governance teams are presented to resolve (Poli, 2013). Heifetz and Linsky (2002) refer to these problems as adaptive, which constantly change with the environment, causing them to become more challenging to solve. This is in opposition to technical problems, which are easily handled by the school administration and rarely escalate to the board level because they are more easily solvable.

Finding a solution to political polarity in our communities is a very complex problem because there is no easy answer when the community is divided on specific issues. Building skills to work as a team through a framework model can be used to continue the board's business of dealing with complex issues. Johnson (1996) developed a tool to help serve as a decision tree by dividing the considerations into four quadrants to ensure a thorough exploration of a complex problem. This tool is essential to ensure logically controlled debate and consideration is given to the polarization topics before the board. Managing polarization cuts across many disciplines and is not a new topic, but due to the aggressive nature of community members is a growing concern. Collins and Porras (2002) point out that those who get caught in the struggles of "either/or" rather than exploring the "both/and" will find themselves in a no-win situation. Polarization has become a distraction, but the board must focus on students' outcomes while addressing adults' concerns through a deconstruction of polarization. This deconstruction must be a priority because the Texas Education Code has outlined the board's accountability to student outcomes in TEC 11.1515 (Texas School Law Bulletin, 2020).

The proper balance comes when the focus is on the right outcome. Of course, governance teams must focus on traditional duties such as budgets, facilities, management oversight, and other board functions, as Delegardelle (2006) outlined. When these topics become unbalanced and need to be managed correctly, the district outcome may need to align with their goal of producing students able to be successful citizens (Plough, 2014). To emphasize the role of the school, in 2017, the Texas legislature included the oversight of student outcomes as a requirement of Texas school boards in the Texas Education Code (TEC) Section 11.1515 (Texas school law bulletin, 2020).

The governance team must adequately understand the role of the board and the superintendent, including building trust to make interactions productive (Klarner et al., 2018). The behaviors of the board and the superintendent are instrumental in the team's success. Puig (2014) concludes that teamwork and problem-solving, reviewing data, developing a vision, setting high expectations, evaluating the board, and following policies are all key behaviors that contribute to the success of the governance team. These behaviors are grounded in The Lighthouse Inquiry by Rice et al. (2000) of shared leadership and decision-making. Conflict occurs when the board tries to own the superintendent's work or vice versa, especially under high-stress situations that produce considerable community disagreements.

The ability to ensure that the governance team improves student outcomes while staying in their role comes with the development of policy to monitor student performance (Washington State Director's Association, n.d.). The result of solid academic goals by the board, as discovered by Rice et al. (2000), coupled with progress

monitoring during board meetings, suggests the proper oversight for student outcomes. The direction of management to the development of policy positions the board in a critical role in impacting student outcomes (Dervarics et al., 2016). However, the critical gap for many boards is the proper knowledge or skills to perform specific actions or behaviors to ensure appropriate performance management for improved student outcomes (Holmen, 2016).

The superintendent's role in the governance team is crucial in implementing the board's vision. The position of the superintendent has changed in the last couple of decades, just as the board's role has changed (Waters et al., 2007). The change in behavior regarding superintendent action is more prevalent today than ever. Henrikson (2018) found that even pre-pandemic superintendent work must focus on student outcomes and building relationships over previous duties related to facilities and budget management practices.

When the board and superintendent behaviors align, the results create a better system alignment for the district (Ford, 2013; Lorentzen, 2013). As a result of such alignment, the district will produce strategic planning, collaboration, cooperation, and a clear division of roles, which often leads to increased graduation rates, lower dropouts, and improved student performance (Ford, 2013). The behavior changes needed to accomplish this alignment must come through board training, practicing skills, and a mindset shift; through these processes, the district's goals can be achieved (Delagardelle, 2006). The board's accountability to ensure behavior change must be through a board self-evaluation (Puig, 2014).

The State Board of Education has identified the five research-based behaviors that are most important for a district to maximize student outcomes; they include developing vision and goals, systems and processes, ensuring progress and accountability, promoting advocacy and engagement, and finally, building synergy and teamwork (Texas Education Agency, 2021). The first pillar of the Framework for School Board Development is the development of a shared vision and goal setting. Ehren et al. (2016) found that a shared vision and goal committed to student achievement and quality instruction will impact the classroom. Having such a vision committed to student achievement developed in collaboration with the community will improve school outcomes (Ehren et al., 2016; Curry et al., 2018; Lorentzen, 2013; Waters et al., 2007; Ford, 2013; Puig, 2014; Washington State School Directors' Association, n.d.).

The second pillar in the framework is systems and processes. This behavior is confirmed to be essential to support the vision and goals of the district (Washington State School Directors' Association, n.d.). Systems and processes must be employed to ensure that actions are followed to review the district vision (Lorentzen, 2013). This regular monitoring must be done with integrity and transparency to ensure fidelity to the strategic plan (Elsbernd, 2018). Regularly reviewing the data to ensure progress on the goals allows the district to perform significantly higher than those that fail to monitor progress (Puig, 2014).

The third pillar in the framework centers around progress and accountability. This process builds from establishing a process through board meetings that allow for quality measures of student success and collaborative discussion with the administration toward curriculum, professional development, and quality instructional practices (Ehren et al.,

2016). Hofman (1995) and Land (2002) found that high-achieving school boards develop habits of monitoring data and basing decisions on data and student needs. This data-driven decision-making ensures accountability and fosters mutual respect from a place of joint commitment from the teachers, administration, and board (Hofman, 1995; Land, 2002).

The fourth pillar of the framework is advocacy and engagement. Holmen (2016) confirms that a strong relationship exists between boards that practice advocacy and focus on positive student achievement. Partnerships built by the board, either in the community or statewide, are beneficial for support and may provide resources to the district. A clear message and focus on goals and progress help build a sense of pride and achievement for the school district. When the goal-setting and visioning process has been created with community input, the advocacy and communication of progress will continue to build a sense of ownership (Washington State School Directors Association, n.d.; Waters & Marzano, 2007).

The fifth and final pillar of the framework is synergy and teamwork. When policy and governance hinder effective classroom practice, a breakdown in student achievement will occur (Drelagardelle, 2006; Lorentzen, 2013; Waters & Marzano, 2006). The future of public education is directly linked to the ability of boards to cooperate, provide leadership, and make sound decisions in collaboration with the superintendent (Puig, 2014). The board and superintendent partnership must be consistently developed as they jointly navigate through policymaking roles, clear communication, and administrative duties to prevail even through strong political pressure (Henriksen, 2018; Waters & Marzano, 2006). Boards must place importance on a positive working relationship with

the superintendent and work to reduce conflict with each other through continual board development (Ford, 2013).

Governance matters, but governance is made up of humans who make mistakes (Ford, 2013). It is essential to understand that boards must also undertake an improvement process to be a better governance team (Lorentzen, 2013; Rice et al., 2000). The Framework of School Board Development is a road map to research-based best practices. Implementing the Lone Star Governance model is the vehicle to implement the framework for effective school boards. School board effectiveness is critical to the success of the future of our school districts (Puig, 2014).

Theory of Change

In any change process, the beginning should be grounded in the organization's needs with an aim statement clearly outlined. The same is true for the research into Lone Star Governance and its application in school systems. If the boards are trained and coached to develop measurable goals, performance monitor those goals, and establish appropriate accountability structures to ensure implementation; if school boards provide oversight and a good vision, the administration should build systems to carry out the board's vision and the board's processes for governance; if boards engage in the roles and responsibilities of a board member and embrace job-embedded measures to communicate to the community; if boards engage in teamwork, disregard personal agendas, refrain from campaign promises or acting outside their board role.

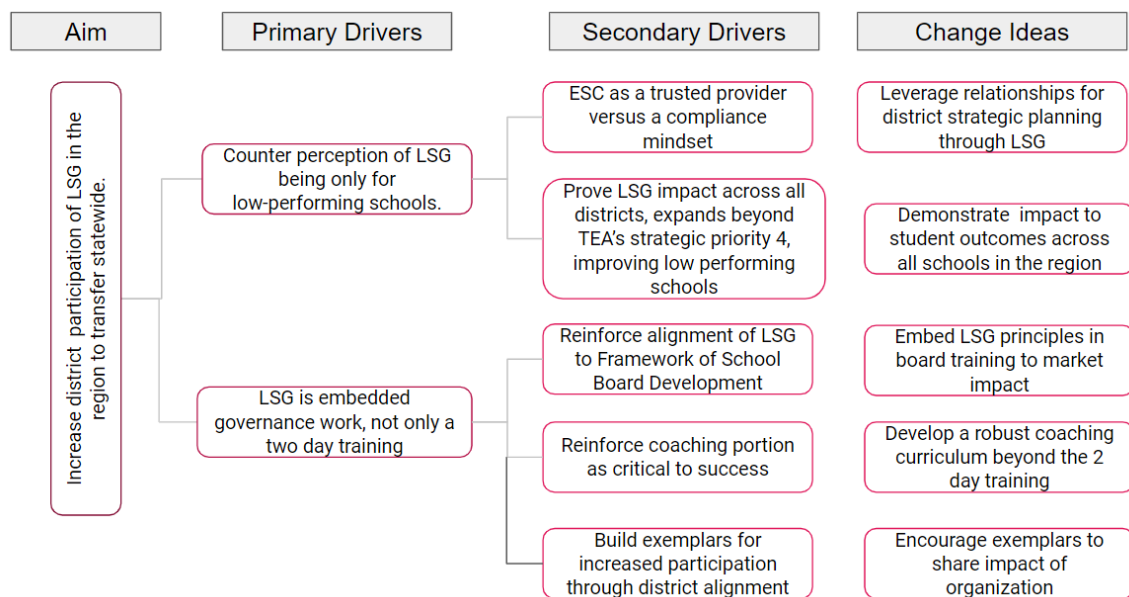
Then the disruption of the governance team should be minimized when these objectives are met, and the appropriate amount of board meeting time would be spent on student

outcome discussions, which will, through this focus, produce a positive effect on student achievement. The Lone Star Governance initiative drives this theory of change, and it is essential to test that theory of change to help answer the problem of practice in this study.

All theories of change for LSG are linked to the Framework for School Board development and grounded in the five pillars of school board improvement. Supposing Lone Star Governance is applied to school districts; in that case, a proven framework could be used to governance teams across the state to improve student outcomes. So, to resolve the problem of LSG being truly a catalyst for improving student outcomes, why is the initiative perceived to only be for low-performing schools and not more widely adopted? The overarching theory of change driver diagram is shown in Figure 6.

Figure 6

Theory of Change Driver Diagram for LSG Implementation



The primary drivers of LSG implementation rest with the perception of LSG only being for low-performing schools and the ongoing, embedded work and implementation by an LSG coach. The change ideas to meet this aim will be with the ability for the service center to leverage relationships with local education agencies (LEAs), demonstrate an improvement of student outcomes across all schools (not just low performing), embed LSG ideas into other board training for an introduction to best practices, develop a robust coaching plan, and encourage LEAs to share experiences with others.

Study Setting

This study was conducted to understand the impact of Lone Star Governance on school districts in the coastal bend of Texas. The study will evaluate the participation and effect of Lone Star Governance on governance practices in the districts' implementation of Lone Star Governance through the regional education service center. The study will help determine the impact of the participation of Lone Star Governance for a broader impact across Texas. The study includes the implementation of Lone Star Governance facilitated by three Lone Star Governance coaches, including a former superintendent who formerly led the Lone Star Governance initiative at the Texas Education Agency, a former superintendent from the region, and a former school board president and interim superintendent who now all work at the education service center.

The study will be focused on the change in school board behaviors associated with the Texas Framework of School Board Development and attempt to measure the impact on student outcomes. The study will also determine which school districts are

most suited for the initiative. The education service center comprises 37 school districts ranging from 105 to 13,870 students. At the beginning of the study, the region consisted of three A-rated districts, twenty-four B-rated districts, seven C-rated districts, and three D-rated districts. However, there are sixteen D-rated campuses and seven F-rated campuses.

The region comprised of 51,289 students, with 63.8% classified as economically disadvantaged (Texas Education Agency, 2022). The region's demographics consist of 7.5% African American, 58.8% Hispanic, 30.7% White, 0.2% American Indian, 1.1% Asian, and 1.7% Two or More Races (Texas Education Agency, 2022). The region has 8.7% participating in Bilingual/ESL Education, 5.5% in Gifted and Talented, and 11.7% in Special Education (Texas Education Agency, 2022).

All 37 districts were invited to participate in the Lone Star Governance implementation, with ten choosing to attend the two-day initial training, nine districts engaging in Lone Star Governance coaching through the service center, and nine participating in the research. Of the 63 survey responses distributed, there were 48 responses. Nine superintendents volunteered for the interview process of the research study, with one declining and one excluded due to a lack of time between the initial Lone Star Governance and the interview collection.

Methods

This study used a Mixed Method Embedded Design: An Embedded Experimental Model to determine if the Lone Star Governance, created by the Texas Education Agency, could increase student outcomes. The two-part intervention focused on the

understanding of the behaviors or actions that impact student outcomes that are delivered in the two-day school board training (primary driver) and the effective of coaching on the implementation of Lone Star Governance (primary driver). Qualitative evidence documented the intervention and the superintendent's perspective on the process. The impact of the intervention was also collected through quantitative means, including a Likert-type survey provided to the school board members, combined with board self-evaluations, the use of board meeting times, and accountability results for both Lone Star Governance districts and campuses.

The purpose of the study was to explore the Lone Star Governance framework as a tool for governance teams to use as a resource to build on the existing research of the Lighthouse Study by Rice et al. (2000) that helped to identify the differences between board and superintendent behaviors that caused extreme differences in student achievement. The study will determine what schools are best suited for Lone Star Governance rather than conforming to the perception of Lone Star Governance only being intended for low-performing schools.

The initial intervention was to implement the Lone Star Governance two-day training to school districts to help initiate the understanding of behaviors that help to influence student outcomes. The Texas Education Agency has established a comprehensive training process to become a coach to administer the two-day training. Lone Star Governance coaches must undergo a series of training to include becoming a registered provider of board training, mastering the Evaluating and Improving Student Outcome training, participating in Lone Star Governance knowledge and skills,

completing with a partner of series of mindset scenarios in fifteen days, observe a two-day Lone Star Governance training, and finally completing a two-day cofacilitation training with a passing score of eighty points on an observation rubric scored by a master coach. While there is uniformity in the two-day training, the fidelity of implementation can vary from coach to coach, each bringing in a different perspective on the delivery of material. The study was implemented in a regional context to ensure consistency in delivering the content for Lone Star Governance.

The second intervention is the implementation of coaching to ensure the adequate performance of the governance behaviors discussed in the two-day training. The initial two-day training and preparation are highly prescribed, but the opposite is true for the implementation portion after the initial two-day training of Lone Star Governance. While this leaves some variance for local implementation, there is a lack of a robust guide for implementation and direction in the performance of Lone Star Governance, leaving much of the direction up to individual coaches, allowing more variability in the implementation of Lone Star Governance.

The regional Lone Star Governance team used the improvement science inquiry protocol of Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) to test the interventions as shown in Table 2. The PDSA model is a commonly used protocol in school improvement that provides a continuous cycle of reflection and change (Bryk et al., 2015). The team also used the board self-evaluation scores embedded in the Lone Star Governance tools to help determine the success of the governance teams, which is also based on a 90-day self-evaluation timeline.

After each two-day training, the team would reflect on the training and review artifacts to help develop a coaching plan for the district team. The artifacts would include sample outcome goals, goal progress measures, board self-constraints, sample superintendent constraints, ideal board agendas, and pre and post-evaluations. The team would review these items to help improve the implementation of the two-day training and to help identify district and campus needs for each school.

Table 2

Two-Day PDSA Cycle

<u>Plan</u> Prepare materials for the two-day training. Coordinate with the administration for the training. Advertise the training for additional attendees. Meet to discuss the needs and ideas for the upcoming training with the team and the school district.	<u>Do</u> Distribute the pre and post-evaluations. Prepare ourselves as facilitators to ensure we are in the correct mindset. Engage participants in conversations. Implement the training with fidelity.
<u>Study</u> Review the artifacts from the training. Review the pre and post evaluations. Reflect with the facilitation team to determine what went well and what improvements are needed. Visit with district staff to reflect on what worked and what needed improvement.	<u>Act</u> Adjust the facilitation for the next two-day training. Develop a coaching plan for the district. Practice on areas for improvement because of feedback from facilitation.

The second intervention valued but not emphasized as much through the Texas Education Agency training is the implementation or coaching of Lone Star Governance. One school district from our sample did not participate in coaching for Lone Star Governance. Therefore, the board self-evaluations and documents were not generated to help determine the implementation for the school not participating in coaching. This lack of implementation of the board evaluation causes concern for the fidelity of the model and reinforces the value of a coach to ensure implementation. The positive impact of coaching skills in our school systems is well documented (EĞMİR, & YÖRÜK, 2015; Johnson, J., 2017; Sommers & Zimmerman, 2018).

The governance coaching followed a PDSA model to engage districts in implementation. Since the coaching was not established in a comprehensive model before our implementation, the collaborative process among the three Lone Star Governance coaches in our region service center was essential in implementation. A total of ten districts were included in the study; nine of the ten districts engaged in coaching services from the region's Lone Star Governance coaches. Six of the nine districts coached began the Lone Star Governance implementation in the 2021-2022 school year. The other three districts were included in the board surveys and interviews but not in the accountability analysis to determine student outcome improvement.

The PDSA cycles occurred over the 2021- 2022 school year and through the fall of the 2022-2023 school year. The same methodology will improve the district and Region coach's performance continuously. The surveys and interviews of this study will also be used to improve the region and statewide practices for coaching and implementing Lone Star Governance.

Ethical Considerations

Before the initiation of the research collection, all appropriate permissions were obtained from the University of Texas-Tyler Internal Review Board as shown in Appendix A: Informed Consent. During this research study, the researcher served as the Senior Governance Advisor at the Texas Education Agency, having oversight and responsibilities of the Lone Star Governance initiative. Beginning in the summer of 2021, the researcher began serving as the Executive Director of the Region Service Center serving the schools represented in this study. The researcher crafted a letter to convey to the schools in our study that there would be no issues or repercussions for not participating in the study. The researcher allowed the other Lone Star Governance coaches to present the surveys to the school boards. Surveys and interviews were voluntary, and the researcher allowed participants to opt-out at any time. Every effort was made to be a fair and impartial researcher and to communicate the importance of valid results in the interviews and surveys for knowledge and in the spirit of improving student outcomes.

The researcher is a certified Lone Star Governance coach and facilitated several of the two-day training in partnership with other Lone Star Governance coaches in the

region. The researcher also served on the ad-hoc committee formed by the State Board of Education to help update the Framework of School Board Development while working at the Texas Education Agency. The researcher also collaborated with school boards and other school employees to collect board self-evaluations and time-tracking board meetings.

Designed-Based Research (DBR) has drawn some criticism, in other research similar to this study where the researcher might also be involved in training study participants. The research of Anderson and Shattuck (2012) finds the involvement of the research in the implementation of the study is common in DBR to solve complex issues that impact student outcomes. Anderson and Shattuck (2012) also find that while DBR research is a relatively new form of research, it is used by practitioners invested in small iterative changes in education that could impact the improvement of student outcomes. From the research lens of Anderson and Shattuck (2012), the researcher conducted the study to alleviate bias to focus on the evaluation of LSG's impact on student outcomes.

Instruments and Data Collection

The quantitative data collected during this study included a board self-evaluation tool, a Likert-type survey of board members administered after the implementation of LSG coaching, a time-use tracker tool, and an Independent Samples T-Test comparing state accountability ratings. The qualitative data included in the study was a pre-and post-survey of the two-day training, and the superintendent interviews administered after the coaching implementation and progress monitoring had begun for each district.

Two evaluations were conducted to determine the effectiveness of the LSG implementation. The first was a pre and post-evaluation of the two-day training as a stand-alone survey used to evaluate workshops and the effectiveness of the facilitators generally used in the region. The second evaluation was a comprehensive survey used to evaluate the effectiveness of LSG, along with a more extensive evaluation of the LSG coaching model. The board survey consisted of fifteen Likert-type questions rating from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) shown in Appendix B: Board Survey. LSG has internal evaluations built as tools for the board to self-evaluate themselves shown in Appendix C: Intergirly Instrument. The board self-evaluation tool is an extensive rubric developed by TEA to align with the Framework of School Board Developments pillars of research-based best practices for school boards. This quarterly progress monitoring rubric allows school boards to self-evaluate their implementation of Lone Star Governance practices. TEA hypothesizes that sixty points on the self-evaluation is optimum and will positively affect student outcomes. The time use tracker, shown in Appendix D: Time Use Tracker, is also a tool to help school boards focus their time on discussing student outcomes, with the ideal amount of time being fifty percent of board time being used to discuss student outcomes, as outlined in Rice et al. (2000).

The Likert-type survey explores the board members' perceptions of Lone Star Governance, the effectiveness of behavior change, and the establishment of processes. Behaviorism is the driving force behind Lone Star Governance. The LSG training will center on realizing that behaviors influence the success of the governance team. The behaviors/choices of the board will determine the student's success. Guthrie's (1942) research on habit formation is embedded in LSG. The same habits from the board will

produce the same results. Time spent on “common pretending,” an excuse plus an action, will not have the desired effect. The coaching approach follows Skinner’s (1974) work in returning feedback to the board and working to build new processes rather than continuing past habits. The survey intended to determine the board members’ perception of this work.

The interviews of the superintendents were by invitation and conducted after the implementation of progress monitoring. There were nine superintendents, and all the superintendents from the districts engaging in the coaching participated in the interviews. The interviews were all conducted either face-to-face or via Zoom. All interviewees signed a consent form to participate, received an outline of the study, and stressed the volunteer status of the interview shown in Appendix A: Informed Consent. There were no recording devices used, only notes collected on the computer. The superintendents answered eighteen open-ended questions ranging from the effectiveness of Lone Star Governance to the need for coaching to the changes in board behaviors. The notes were then focused coded, which includes the keywords being identified into themes and the number of theme occurrences recorded. Other LSG coaches helped to verify the themes, and the data was shared to verify the results.

Data Analysis

The interventions aimed to measure the effectiveness of the Lone Star Governance Framework to determine if student outcomes were improved through school board behavior change. A linear regression of time tracked in board meetings, the score on the board self-evaluation, and accountability scores were chosen for analysis. An

Independent Samples T-Test was used to perform statistical analysis. An exploratory factor analysis was planned for the Likert-type survey to determine the possible factors in the survey. Generalizability of the data was not possible because the population size needed to be larger to produce an accurate analysis. Evaluations of the two-day Lone Star governance were captured to determine the effectiveness of the training; however, the pretest data were destroyed prior to the analysis. The survey results from the board member survey, conducted after coaching implementation, was also added, and the means were used to determine the effectiveness of the Lone Star Governance framework.

The accountability scores of the Lone Star Governance districts were compared to a representative sample of non-Lone Star Governance districts in the region. An Independent Sample T-Test was run to determine if there was a significant difference between LSG and non-LSG districts. The non-LSG districts were determined by numbering the districts and using a random number generator to select the comparison group. The exact process was used to compare LSG and non-LSG campuses to see if there was a difference between district and campus accountability scores.

The superintendent interview notes were focus coded to determine common themes and compare the experience of the superintendents implementing LSG in their districts. The population size was too small to make any correlational comparisons between the interviews and survey results. The themes from the interviews were compared against the means of the survey results to provide additional data to support general findings between the quantitative and qualitative findings.

Results

The study aimed to determine the effectiveness of Lone Star Governance and whether the change in school board behaviors would improve student outcomes. The study also sought better to understand the coach's role in the implementation process. Finally, the study intended to determine what schools would benefit from Lone Star Governance. To provide consistency in implementation for the Lone Star Governance process, especially the coaching intervention portion, the study was conducted in one regional education service center rather than across the state. While this helped to provide consistency of implementation, it limited the population size of the study, thus creating difficulties in the analysis of the results. Several areas of analysis were considered for the study, such as linear regression to determine the interaction between the board self-evaluation, the use of time during board meetings, and accountability scores, along with exploratory factor analysis for the Likert-type survey conducted with the school board members to determine significant factors related to Lone Star Governance in the survey responses. However, in each attempt, the sample's population size created problems, resulting in too small of a sample to create a nonbiased result. Therefore, in each attempt at analysis, the assumptions were violated, resulting in a nonnormal distribution of data. Therefore, a Mann Whitney U nonparametric test was used to analyze the accountability gains between campuses and districts.

Student Outcomes Measured by Accountability Gains

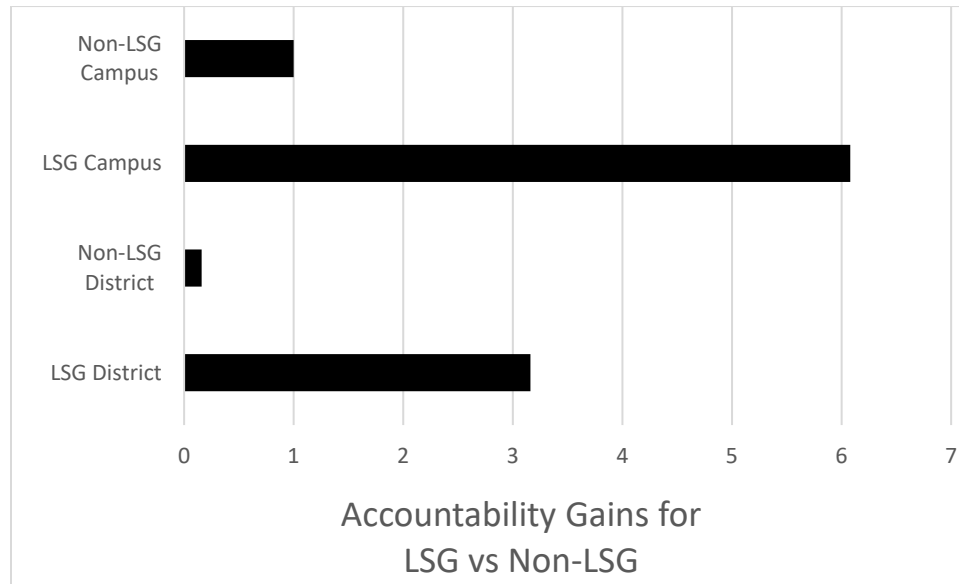
The results of the surveys and interviews presented some descriptive analysis to help shape the Lone Star Governance program, even though additional research needs to

be done to measure the statistical significance of the Lone Star Governance initiative. The first question to address is the results of student outcomes on the campuses and districts that were engaged in the study. The accountability scores of participating campuses and districts were evaluated. There were six districts and 39 campuses that were measured. The campuses and districts in the study were compared to a pool of comparable districts within the region by using a computer random number generator to determine the comparison group for LSG versus Non-LSG districts and campuses.

As shown in Figure 7, the accountability mean gain comparison between LSG and non-LSG schools outlines the districts that participated in LSG had a mean gain in accountability of 3.16 ($SD = 6.96$) compared to non-LSG districts at 0.16 ($SD = 5.84$). An Independent Sample T-Test was conducted to compare the accountability mean gains of the control group to the LSG district group. The assumptions of normality were met, verifying a normal distribution of data. The results of the Independent Samples T-Test found that there was no significant difference ($p = 0.43$) between the control group ($x = 0.16$) and the LSG district group ($x = 3.16$) on accountability gains for the two-day LSG training.

Figure 7

Comparison of 2019 Accountability Scores to 2022 Accountability Scores for LSG versus Non-LSG Participants



One key purpose of the study was to examine the effect of LSG on improving student outcomes. A total of 62 campuses were compared in the study, with the control group ($n = 23$) not receiving LSG training and the experimental group ($n = 39$) receiving the LSG training. The accountability gain mean for the control group was 1.00, with a standard deviation of 8.13. The mean accountability gain for the LSG campuses was 6.07, with a standard deviation of 10.08. An Independent Samples T-Test was conducted and a deviation from normality was found due to a significant ($p = 0.008$) Shapiro-Wilk test. This could cause an error in the results for the t-statistic of -2.05, with $df = 60$ ($p = 0.04$).

The Mann-Whitney U test was used because our data violated the assumptions of the independent samples T-test. Specifically, visual inspection of the distribution plot for

each of the independent variables was not normally distributed. The results of the analysis indicated that the LSG campuses had a higher accountability gain ($Mdn = 6$) compared to the control group of campuses ($Mdn = 0$), with $W = 285$, $p = 0.01$. Effect size estimates, according to Cohen (1988), indicate that the difference between the conditions were small in magnitude ($r_{rb} = -.36$). The small effect size and the standard deviations being larger than the means resulted from a campus with a 20-point accountability score loss due to a midyear leadership change. Due to the small population size and the effort to be transparent with the findings, the campus data remained in the analysis rather than being excluded as an outlier.

Student Outcomes Through Governance Coaching

The coach's role is vital; however, most research is done on instructional coaching, not governance coaching. Instructional coaching is well-documented for improving student outcomes (Bruns, 2018; Chen, Chen, & Tsai, 2009; Passmore, 2010; Knight, 2007; Mudzimiri et al., 2014). As governance teams are held more accountable for improving student outcomes, especially post-COVID, when regaining learning loss is paramount, a connection could be made to the importance of governance coaches to help school boards understand how they can impact student outcomes while staying within the role of the school board member. An analysis was conducted on the impact of coaching versus noncoached LSG campuses and districts when comparing the means of the campuses and districts that underwent LSG coaching for implementation versus those districts and campuses that opted out of coaching. Figure 8, Lone Star Governance coaching impact on student outcomes, gives an example of the results comparing the 2019 results to the 2022 results.

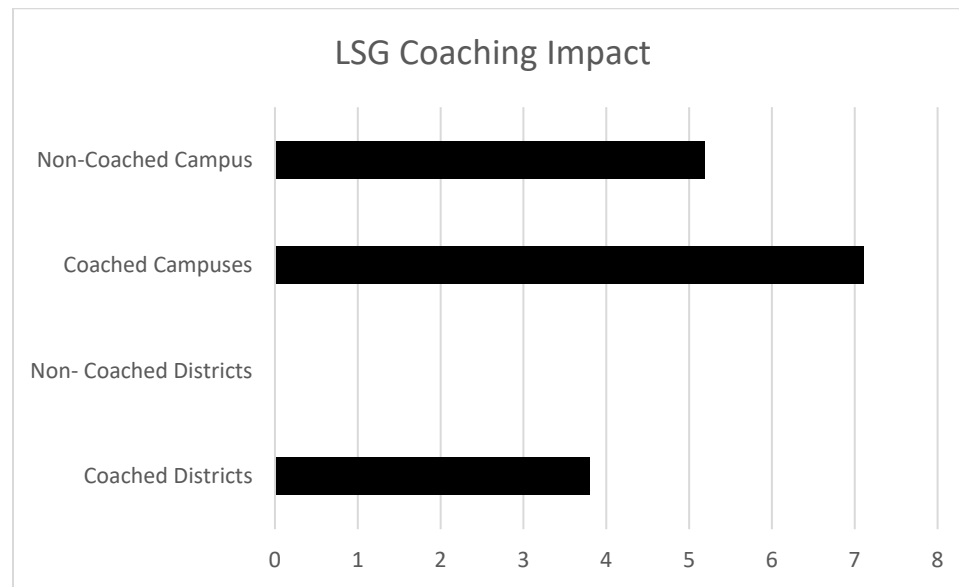
Figure 8*Lone Star Governance Coaching Impact on Student Outcomes*

Figure 8 shows the coached districts exhibiting an advantage as the improvement of student outcomes at a mean of 3.8($SD = 7.59$) gain in accountability points since the non-coached districts had no increase in accountability scores. An Independent Sample T-Test was conducted to compare the accountability mean gains of the control group to the LSG district group. The assumptions of normality were met, verifying a normal distribution of data. The Independent Samples T-Test results did not compute due to the small population in the control group; the Independent Sample T-Test statistic was NaN^a. The limitation of data continued for the non-coached districts due to their not tracking of time use nor a performing a board self-evaluation, so there was no comparable measurement for the progress made by the governance team on the self-evaluation rubric.

The difference in the coached and non-coached LSG campuses were similar, with non-coached campuses gaining a mean of 5.19 ($SD = 8.38$) accountability points, slightly

outgained by coached campuses at a mean of 7.11($SD = 11.94$) points. An Independent Samples T-Test was conducted and a deviation from normality was found due to a significant ($p = 0.009$) Shapiro-Wilk test.

The Mann-Whitney U test was used because our data violated the assumptions of the independent samples t-test. Specifically, visual inspection of the distribution plot for each of the independent variables was not normally distributed. The results of the analysis indicated that the LSG coached campuses had a higher accountability gain ($Mdn = 6.5$) compared to the non-coached campuses ($Mdn = 6.0$), with $W = 155.50$, $p = 0.35$. According to Cohen (1988), effect size estimates indicate that the difference between the conditions was of no effect in magnitude ($r_b = -.17$).

Appendix E: Comparison of 2019 Accountability Scores to 2022 Accountability Scores for LSG versus Non-LSG Participants, shows the individual district and campus accountability scores with the means of the gains and losses. Table 3 illustrates the descriptive statistics depicted in Figure 7, Comparison of 2019 Accountability Scores to 2022 Accountability Scores for LSG versus Non-LSG Participants, and Figure 8 the Lone Star Governance Coaching Impact on Student Outcomes. Due to the small population size, comparing means was the best way to illustrate LSG and Non-LSG differences for both the accountability gains for the campus and district and the impact of governance coaching on accountability gains.

Table 3

Comparison of 2019 Accountability Scores to 2022 Accountability Scores for LSG versus Non-LSG Participants

Category	N	Minimum	Maximum	<i>M</i>	SD
Non-LSG Campus Gains	23	-13.00	20.00	1.00	8.13
LSG Campus Gains	39	-29.00	21.00	6.07	10.08
Non-LSG District Gains	6	-6.00	10.00	0.16	5.84
LSG District Gains	6	-8.00	13.00	3.16	6.96
LSG Non-Coached Campus Gains	21	-15.00	21.00	5.19	8.38
LSG Coached Campus Gains	18	-29.00	20.00	7.11	11.94
LSG Non-Coached District Gains	1	0.00	0.00	0.00	NaN
LSG Coached District Gains	5	0.00	13.00	3.80	7.59

School Board Survey

The survey was given during the progress monitoring phase of LSG after all the implementation had begun. The board member survey covered numerous topics to assist in answering the research questions in the study. An exploratory factor analysis was considered to analyze the responses. However, the population was too small at 48 participants to meet the assumption criteria, so only a descriptive analysis using the mean score of the question was analyzed. The table included the minimum and maximum score range from each survey question, the mean, and the standard deviation. Table 4 presents the mean scores of the responses to the Likert-type survey distributed to the participating board members in this study.

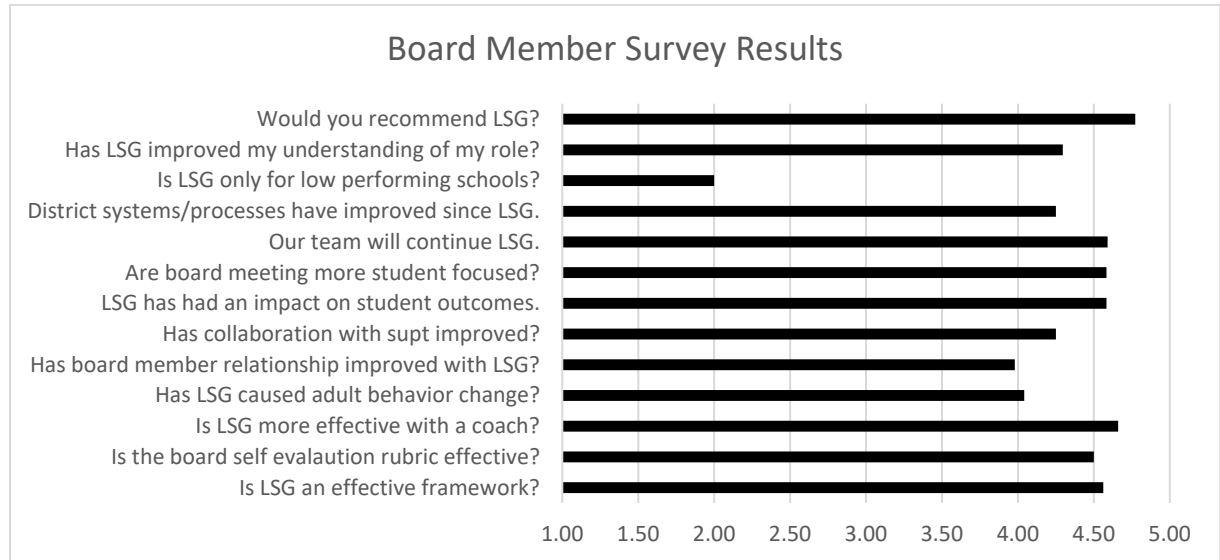
Table 4*Board Survey Results*

Question	N	Minimum	Maximum	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1. LSG has been an effective Framework for our governance team.	48	3	5	4.56	0.68
2. The use of the integrity instrument has helped our board to improve board behaviors.	48	3	5	4.50	0.65
3. LSG is more effective with a coach.	47	3	5	4.66	0.52
4. Have adult behaviors on the governance team changed since the implementation of LSG?	48	3	5	4.04	0.65
5. Relationships between board members have improved since the implementation of LSG.	48	1	5	3.98	0.78
6. The collaboration with the superintendent has improved since the implementation of LSG.	48	1	5	4.25	0.83
7. LSG has had/will have an impact on student outcomes.	48	3	5	4.58	0.57
8. LSG has improved the organization of board meetings to focus on student outcomes.	48	3	5	4.58	0.57
9. Our governance team will continue to implement LSG.	44	3	5	4.59	0.54
10. Have you seen improvements in district systems/processes since the implementation of LSG?	44	3	5	4.25	0.61
11. How many years have you implemented LSG? Check the corresponding number of years.	44	1	5	.65	1.27

Table 4 continued

Question	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
12. How many years have you been a school board member? Please check the corresponding box and select 5 if you have served 5+ years.	44	1	5	3.34	1.69
13. Some board members believe that LSG is only beneficial to low-performing districts. do you agree?	44	1	5	2.00	1.14
14. Has LSG helped to understand my role as a board member.	44	1	5	4.29	0.85
15. Would you recommend LSG to other school districts?	44	3	5	4.77	0.47

One question was directly asked of the board members to address the last research question. Is LSG only valid for low-performing schools? The mean response to this question was 2.0, which equates to disagree. Another question that links to the type of school that would benefit from LSG is embedded in the questions about recommending LSG to another district. The question about recommending LSG to another district received a 4.77 ($SD = 0.47$), with 4.0 representing agree and 5.0 representing strongly agree. Another research question in the survey was asked to determine the importance of coaching implementation with LSG. The response to this question had a mean score of 4.66 ($SD = 0.52$), equating to strongly agree, as shown in Figure 9.

Figure 9*Board Member Survey Results for Lone Star Governance*

The additional questions in the survey addressed improving student outcomes and other organizational outcomes crucial to school operations. The question most direct regarding student outcomes asked the board members to answer if LSG has improved student outcomes in their district. The mean response to this question was 4.58 ($SD = 0.57$), determining that the respondents strongly agree with improving student outcomes in their district. The respondents answered with a mean score of 4.58 ($SD = 0.57$) that the board meetings were more student-focused after the implementation of LSG.

Other areas that play into the organization's systems and processes, such as a quality self-evaluation tool for the board, an effective framework to follow, and the collaboration between the board and superintendent, all received mean scores of 4.50 ($SD = 0.65$), 4.56 ($SD = 0.68$), and 4.25 ($SD = 0.83$), respectively. The overall response to if

the systems and operation of the district had improved since the implementation of LSG received a 4.25 ($SD = 0.61$) mean score.

Shekshnia (2018) wrote that the board should practice teaming, not team building. This follows Edmonson's (2012) definition of teaming as working together. The idea of the growth of the board members through professional development will affect student outcomes. The board member's responses to a better understanding of the board member's role, the improvement of the board member's relationship, and the changing of board member behavior consisted of mean scores of 4.29 ($SD = 0.85$), 3.98 ($SD = 0.78$), and 4.04 ($SD = 0.65$), respectively.

Superintendent Interviews

The results of the superintendent interviews were coded, and the results were analyzed on most of the reoccurring responses by the superintendents and then coded in relation to the Framework of School Board Development. Nine of the ten superintendents in the study agreed to participate, a 90% participation rate, and consequently, all the districts were districts that opted to join in LSG coaching.

The four areas that were in complete consensus across all of the interviewees of the important things brought to their teams were the clearly defined roles of the board versus the superintendent that LSG focused board conversations around student outcomes; LSG has helped to transform their vision/goals, and finally, that coaching was instrumental in the implementation of LSG. Eighty-nine percent of superintendents confirmed that progress monitoring refocused their school system. Seventy-eight percent

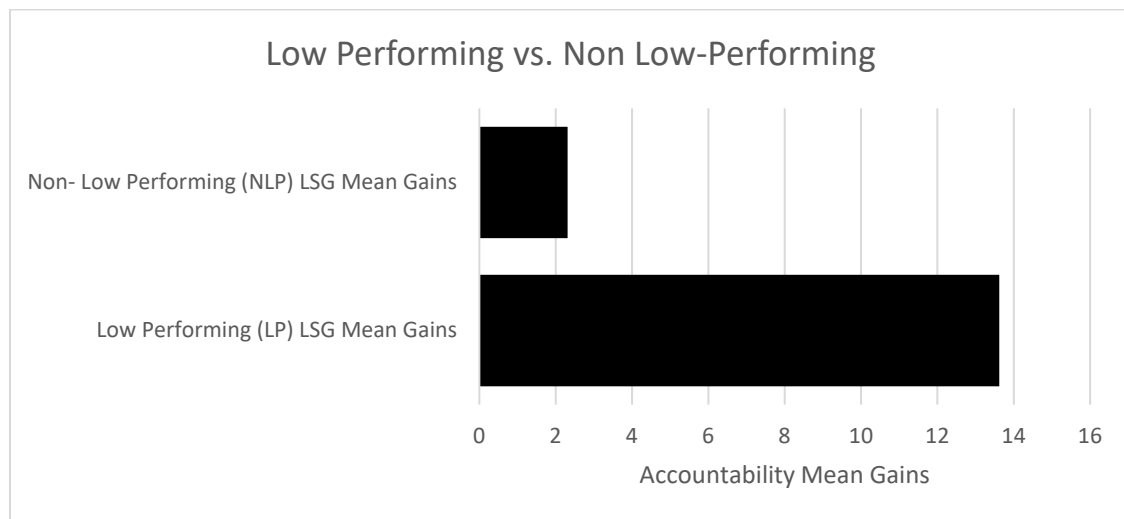
of the superintendents said that LSG had their board meeting planning been transformational and that their board and superintendent relationship had improved since LSG implementation. Finally, fifty-five percent of superintendents claimed that the support to principals through LSG has been outstanding. This finding is important because principal capacity building was not mentioned in the interview, this was a response generated as an unexpected finding.

Low Performing Versus Non-Low Performing Campuses

The definition of a low-performing campus in this study was categorized as the assignment of a D or F rating in the Texas Education Agency 2019 Accountability Ratings, which aligns with the original purpose of Lone Star Governance, to prevent such campuses (Crabill, 2017). When comparing the D & F campuses ($n = 13$) to the non-low performing campuses ($n = 26$), there was a considerably higher mean accountability gain score for the low performing campuses after the intervention. Figure 10, illustrates the difference between the low performing and non-low performing campuses.

Figure 10

Accountability Mean Gains between Low Performing and Non-Low Performing Campuses



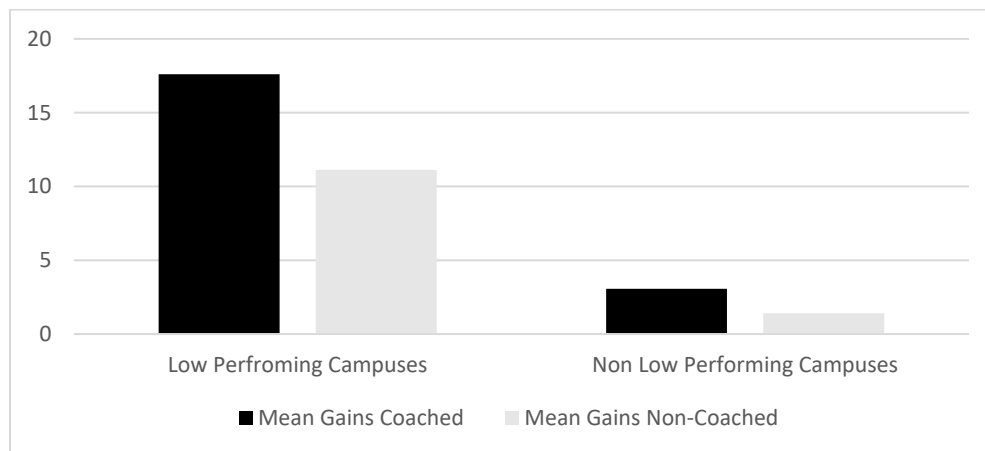
The effect of governance coaching between the low performing and non-low performing campuses produced additional benefits from coaching but not a noticeable difference between campus categories. Figure 11, illustrates the accountability mean gains between the low performing and non-low performing campus categories, comparing the effect of governance coaching.

One noticeable difference when comparing low performing and non-low performing campuses came in the board self-evaluation, also known as the integrity instrument. Low performing campuses ($n = 2$) had a mean self-evaluation score of 84.5 compared to non-low performing campuses ($n = 3$) mean self-evaluation score of 72. The percentage of outcome minutes used during the board minutes for both categories was over fifty percent of the meeting time focused on student outcome discussions. However,

the non-low-performing campuses had a slightly higher student outcome percentage mean at 59.1% compared to the same measurement for low performing campuses at 52.45%.

Figure 11

Accountability Mean Gains between Low Performing and Non-Low Performing Campuses Comparing Governance Coaching



Discussion

Accountability Gains

The study aimed to determine the impact of Lone Star Governance on the behaviors of school board members to improve student outcomes. To assess the importance of a governance coach in implementing LSG and, finally, what type of school LSG could be most effective, should it only be suited for low-performing schools? These questions were intended to lead the researcher to why district participation levels of LSG are low, with only two of the thirty-seven regional districts participating in LSG before the study. An implementation of Lone Star Governance was conducted in ten districts in

a coastal bend region of Texas to answer the research questions. The school board participated in a PDSA self-evaluation of implementation throughout the study that linked to the Framework of School Board Development. The implementation of Lone Star Governance was captured through interviews with the superintendent and surveys of the school board members and measured by comparing the accountability scores from 2019 to 2022.

To understand the accountability impact, campus and district accountability results were compared from 2022 to 2019. This same logic was applied to districts by the Texas Education Agency to determine the 2022 Accountability ratings due to the anomalies of the 2020 and 2021 years due to the impact of COVID. Six schools were used to compare accountability for the study to ensure that most of the school year remained after the initial implementation. As a result of the small population size, statistical analysis was limited due to violations in the assumption checks of the data. An Independent Samples T-Test was used to compare accountability gains among campuses and districts. A mean comparison was conducted comparing the six districts to a comparison group of non-LSG schools in the region. While more testing is needed to produce a larger sample for statistical analysis, the mean data indicates that districts with LSG increased by three points in their accountability score compared to non-LSG districts. The campus level with more schools in the sample produced an increase of 6.08 compared to non-LSG with a one-point increase. This was a significant finding ($p = .001$) after the nonparametric Mann Whitney U test was conducted. This attention to student outcomes through goal setting and progress monitoring of goals suggests increased scores if systems are established. This confirms the idea of the Framework of School Board

Development principals. This result also aligns with Rice et al. (2000) that school boards that focus on student outcomes and develop a system to discuss and monitor those outcomes will, in turn, see an improvement in student outcomes.

Low Performing Compared to Non-Low Performing

In the study, two districts had campuses with a rating of D or F, and these districts were categorized as low performing. The other four districts were classified as non-low performing. The sample size was too small to run a statistical analysis however from the mean comparison, the low performing campuses had a much larger mean accountability point gain than did non-low performing campuses, 13.62 compared to 2.31, respectively. This could be a result of campuses with a lower accountability score naturally having more room to improve. This is certainly an area to further explore with additional research.

When looking at the difference between student outcome minutes and the board self-evaluation scores when comparing accountability gains between the low and non-low performing campus categories, roughly the same amount of time was spent on discussing student outcomes in the board room. The low performing campuses spent 52.45% of their time on student outcomes, while non-low performing campuses spent 59.1%. Only coached campuses had the data to be able to analyze, which consisted of two low performing campuses and three non-low performing campuses.

The most interesting finding is the board's self-evaluation score compared to accountability performance. The low performing district boards received an 84.5 board

self-evaluation score on the LSG rubric compared to a 72 for non-low performing districts. The low performing campuses scored on average 11.31 campus accountability point gain and for the low performing districts, the board had on average a 12.5 higher board self-evaluation score. The self-evaluation rubric measures the number of systems and processes implemented by the board and must be verified by the LSG coach. This data suggests that a lower performing district might be more inclined to put in more systems to improve due to the pressure of low performance. This is a key finding that needs additional research to analyze if this is a statistical finding.

Interviews and Survey Results

The results of the interviews and the survey of board members support the impact of LSG on improving student outcomes, along with the raw scores on district and campus accountability scores. The interviews resulted in 100% of the superintendents agreeing that LSG has focused board conversations on student outcomes, which Rice et al. (2000) also attribute to rising student outcomes. The board confirmed the impact of LSG, causing more influence toward the increase of student outcomes with a mean survey score of 4.63, and the thought that the board meetings were more student-focused after LSG with a mean survey score of 4.58.

The impact of coaching was more difficult to determine through accountability scores since only one district opted out of coaching. This district had identical accountability scores when comparing 2019 to 2022, while the remainder of the group showed a 3.1 growth in accountability raw scores. When comparing the campus to coached versus non-coached within the districts, the mean raw scores were more similar

at 5.19 at noncoached campuses versus 7.11 at coached campuses. The small population size presents a challenge in interpreting the results.

The best indication of the importance of governance coaching comes from the interviews with the superintendents and the surveys from the school board members. The mean score to answer the effectiveness of LSG coaching fell to 4.56, between strongly agree and agree. The superintendents also confirm the value of governance coaching from the interviews, as shown in Figure 12.

Figure 12

Superintendent Perspective on LSG Coaching

SUPERINTENDENT PERSPECTIVE ON COACHING

"Monthly coaching sessions are key to success."

"Coaching keeps the board focused, because they know someone is holding them accountable."

"As a new superintendent, LSG coaching conversations has sped up the relationship between me and my board."

"I do not know how LSG could be done without a coach - due to planning, calibration, self evaluation clarity, and focus."

The superintendent interview process resulted in several positive comments supporting the role of the LSG coach. This also aligned with the research on the effectiveness of the instructional coach that has existed for several years (Chen, Chen, & Tsai, 2009; Forbes & Milliken, 2009; Fraser et al., 2007; Taylor, 2008; Thornbreg & Mungai, 2011).

The superintendent interviews provided insight into the power of LSG in defining the role of the board and superintendent and how that interaction can be strengthened according to the interview and survey results. The board member survey generated a mean result of 4.30 board members acknowledging that LSG helped them better understand their role. All the superintendents interviewed agreed that LSG clearly outlined the role of the board and superintendent, which allows the school to focus on the essential thing, an increased focus on student outcomes. If boards understand their role, then the conversation can be more focused on student performance rather than on the inputs or outputs in an organization which is the superintendent's job, not the board's job. If boards and superintendents fully understand their role, then time is not spent on things that take away from a school's ability to improve student outcomes. There is also less time spent on distractions or disagreement between board members, which aligns with the survey results of board members agreeing that LSG improved relationships between board members.

LSG introduces a board to the concept of focused time during a school board meeting and the importance of how this time should be spent on talking about students' outcomes rather than distractions. Some of these distractions are often the day-to-day operational duties of the superintendent, so the focus back on the achievement processes will improve student outcomes, as shown in this study. On average, our districts spent 40% of minutes discussing student outcomes at the beginning of implementing LSG to 58.7% of minutes after one year of implementation. Time is one resource that is often not measured. This one shift in behavior could explain the perception of those interviewed

and surveyed of changed behavior toward more focus on student outcomes as a result of LSG.

A better understanding of the role of the superintendent and board due to LSG implementation could also result in 78% of the superintendents believing the board/superintendent relationship had improved. This is also confirmed through the survey with a mean of 4.25 about improving collaboration with the superintendent since the introduction of LSG. Both the question if LSG is an effective framework, with a mean result of 4.56, and the importance of the LSG self-evaluation, with a mean result of 4.50, also align with understanding the role of the board and superintendent relationship. All these items require a behavior change to show improvement. The result of behavior changes by board members resulted in a mean survey response of 4.04, with the idea that LSG could lead toward improved systems and processes in the organization.

Since the board member survey question regarding LSG improving systems and processes received a mean result of 4.38, either through the systems of more focused use of time, behavioral change of board members, or better collaboration with the team of 8, this might suggest that LSG could be used for any district that wanted to improve rather than one that is low performing. To further validate an improved system process, 55% of the superintendents in the interview acknowledged the impact of LSG on building principal support. This is a powerful finding since principals were never mentioned in the survey questions, so 55% of superintendents responded without being prompted toward principal growth. Progress monitoring, which often includes the principals at the board meetings, was also believed to have refocused the district by 88% of the superintendents.

Improvements are not reserved for those performing poorly in state accountability; gains should be shared for all. When board members disagreed that LSG was intended for only low-performing schools, the response was a mean survey score of 2.0. This aligned with the overwhelming 4.38 mean survey score of board members agreeing to recommend LSG to other districts. This seems logical if the same board members responded with a 4.38 agreement that systems and processes were improved. This suggests that LSG is intended for all schools interested in continuous improvement, beginning at the governance level.

Conclusions

The separation of the work between the board owning the outcomes of the district and the superintendent acknowledging the inputs and outputs allows for a clear path forward. The dichotomy comes when the board or the superintendent gets the inputs, outputs, and outcomes owned by the wrong individual. A clear understanding of roles between the board and superintendent is the foundation of the Lone Star Governance framework. When a team of eight focuses on being a team rather than individuals, a team's structure or integrity can be upheld; however, as stated in LSG, there must be individual ownership, and each person within the team must hold personal responsibilities to the team. Focusing on the team's roles and responsibilities foundationally leads to improved student outcomes.

Time, often the most under-measured resource, is the most valuable tool for student improvement. Whether it be the teacher in the classroom or the governance team in the boardroom, how time is used is the true catalyst for transformation. If time is

chosen to be spent on things that do not bring us toward our vision and goals, then our vision and goals will be harder to accomplish. As the board and superintendent's roles are established, if the focus is on students, if systems are built to help monitor progress, if time is spent on reflection, if adjustments are made, then the things students should know and be able to do will improve.

The tools of Lone Star Governance to provide a complete framework to guide a board through an effective progress monitoring system that allows for self-reflection and continuous improvement is a transformational opportunity for districts that fully embrace the process. During an unprecedented world pandemic and polarization in many of our communities, the study's results reported collaboration and behavior change to suggest an improvement in what schools are intended to accomplish; to advance what a student should know or be able to do.

Recommendations

The recommendations for school districts would be to embrace continuous improvement and to explore opportunities from the boardroom to the classroom where a progress monitoring system could be established for reflection and adjustments amidst the cycle. Recommendations for the Texas Education Agency, which is currently in process, are to develop a more robust strategic leadership process that will help with coaching implementation. Planning skills have been present for years in education, but a mechanism for action has yet to be embraced. Lone Star Governance is that mechanism for governance teams, but a more robust system needs to be implemented to help administration teams in performance management. Systemic coaching for districts

beyond classroom instructional practices is required to tackle complex problems in our current landscape. The recommendation for researchers would be to expand upon the Lone Star Governance evaluation to collect a more significant population through sharing data and student improvements across all districts to break the perception of LSG being only for low-performing districts. This study lays the foundation that Lone Star Governance indicates student improvement, that governance coaching is effective, and that a continuous improvement framework is helpful at all schools, not just low-performing schools. However, more research needs to be done to confirm these findings through a larger population size.

Chapter 4

EVALUATION OF INTERVENTION MANUSCRIPT

Abstract

Research suggests that the behaviors of governance teams can impact the outcomes of students. The impact of a coach on implementing a governance framework holds an integral role in the success of job-embedded governance work. The use of training to become a team is crucial in the development of the board of governance, and implementing a coach can have a significant impact, as observed through the implementation of Lone Star Governance. A mixed methods study was conducted to determine the effect of Lone Star Governance on the outcomes of students in a regional service center in the coastal bend of Texas. The intervention employed was a coordinated effort for a coaching plan to build consistency in the implementation of Lone Star Governance. Research supports the benefits of instructional coaches in building the skills of teachers; as a result of this study, similar skill development could be transferable in the board member role. While the population size was too small to perform extensive statistical analysis beyond an Independent Samples T-Test, which found no significance between the LSG and Non-LSG campuses mean accountability gains, the qualitative and descriptive statistics support the positive impact of a governance coach. The limited population size warrants further research to support the statistical analysis of the effects of a governance coach.

Problem of Practice and Intervention

The effectiveness of board governance has been an area of focus for many years. The requirement for school boards to get trained in team-building skills is a requirement in the Texas Education Code (Texas School Law Bulletin, 2020). The importance of team-building is thought to be important, but Cheng et al. (2021) wrote that research on school boards as a team is “embryonic”. This lack of research does not change the potential impact of polarization and the effects of the pandemic as added stressors to an already complex problem. Brennen (2022) argues that most board failures are directly associated with people and relationship issues which interfere with teamwork or synergy. Edmonson (2012) defines teaming as working together. This emphasizes Shekshnia’s (2018) point that the board should practice teaming, not team building, because true teamwork is grounded in the power of relationships.

This study intends to evaluate the effectiveness of Lone Star Governance, addressing the already complex problem of effective governance while layering on increasing polarization and the demanding tasks of closing the gaps from the pandemic. While seemingly logical, the idea of a framework for tackling tasks only sometimes exists in our organizational systems. Amidst the implementation of Lone Star Governance, this was quickly realized from an internal and external perspective. Internally, from the perspective of a governance coach of Lone Star Governance at the Texas Education Agency, a majority of the emphasis and training was directed at the two-day initial training. Our team in the region quickly experienced what we already hypothesized, that even for experienced administrators, the transformation expected in LSG comes with the implementation rather than the initial training. So, the development

of an effective coaching process was the intervention deployed for implementing Lone Star Governance.

Research Questions

Implementing the Framework for School Board Development is a clear expectation of school boards in Texas according to the State Board of Education (Texas Education Agency, 2021, April). The need for an effective tool for implementation is the basis of the research study. This study attempts to address the mantra of Lone Star Governance by asking the questions that LSG was built to address. The limited amount of research caused a pause in the implementation of LSG for some school districts since the initiative resides in the improving low-performing school priority of the Texas Education Agency's strategic plan. Therefore, the guiding questions for this study are:

- 1) To what extent does Lone Star Governance improve student outcomes through research-based board behaviors identified as the five pillars of the Framework for Board Development? What is the role of the coach in LSG implementation?
- 2) How does Lone Star Governance benefit both low-performing schools and non-low performing schools?

Literature Review

The team dynamic is an interesting one that is often filled with conflict between self-interest and team interest. The reality for a governance team to be successful is the ability for them to work together as a team rather than apart as individuals. Wageman et al. (2005) and Finkelstein et al. (2003) suggest that the board of directors or trustees is

truly a team. The governance team will pull in the work of the superintendent or CEO to work in parallel with the board, but there is a difference in each one's role (Roberts, 2002). Lone Star Governance works on this premise and is a foundation for the work of the Framework of School Board Development. A clear understanding of inputs, outputs, and outcomes is foundational to the training of LSG. This helps establish a clear role and a crucial conversational knowledge of each team member's role. Pastra et al. (2021) identify that clear communication is critical for team action. As with any job, there must be a clear understanding of one's role to succeed, and the team must work together to implement best practices to improve student outcomes (Delagardelle, 2006; Lorentzen, 2013; Waters & Marzano, 2006).

The foundation of LSG is based on the Lighthouse Study by Rice et al. (2000), which concluded that boards that focus on improving student outcomes would achieve improved student achievement. To improve this focus, teaming must be practiced, not just team building (Shekshnia, 2018). A sense of trust and physiological safety must exist for the team to work together to achieve the goals laid out before them (Forbes & Milliken, 1999). The need or the ability to think through complex problems is even more prevalent in a world of increasing complexity, and the team must be able to focus on solving the issues. Without the team grounded in a sense of psychological safety, conflict will arise. Kakabadse et al. (2017) found that there can be a sense of a tipping point when handling conflict that can cause problems in and out of the boardroom if not appropriately addressed. The work of the governance team is to be done in public and not private, and a commitment to the team must exist (Pernelet & Brennan, 2021).

As part of the intervention in this study, the implementation of Lone Star Governance resonated with the research team. The intervention that seemed most appropriate to tackle the issues seen in the implementation of LSG and outlined here in the research was the active engagement of a coach to ensure proper implementation of the LSG framework. However, the amount of research available about engaging boards or governance teams with a coach is limited. Given the limited research on governance coaching and grounding in the flagship research of Rice et al. (2000) that boards can impact student outcomes, a connection was drawn between instructional coaching to help teacher performance and governance coaching to help improve the performance of boards. This connection in the literature on instructional coaching for teachers will be used to connect the two.

There must be ongoing coaching to fully implement the Lone Star Governance framework because job-embedded training helps ensure lasting impact and leads to transformational change (Fraser et al., 2007). As we have found in our experience, and as confirmed by Thornbreg and Mungai (2011), training often does not have a lasting impact if there is no continuous engagement. Chen, Chen, and Tsai (2009) found that coaching had a lasting effect on teachers' professional development. The research team hypothesized the same impact for governance teams as experienced through instructional coaching. Just as Forbes and Milliken (2009) found with psychological safety being present in working with others, so is it true with coaching teachers (Taylor, 2008).

The idea of an effective LSG coach serves the same point as Bruns (2018) documented that a coach can profoundly improve the student outcomes of those we are

training. Also, the constant shoulder partner provided to the governance team would influence growth and skill development in board members, as Knight (2007) and Mudzimiri et al. (2014) found that teachers improve their skills in instruction. In some cases, the improvement in student outcomes through effective coaching could show up to a thirty percent improvement impact (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Hegedus et al., 2016; Tella, 2017).

Both Rice et al. (2000) and Lorentzen (2013) confirm that governance teams must improve student outcomes. In a task that is often an additional opportunity for leadership outside a person's career pursuits, it could be advantageous to have a coach support a new initiative (Gallucci et al., 2010). The effects of a coach can help improve student outcomes (Kraft et al., 2016), skills and strategies (Spelman et al., 2016), and collaboration (Denton et al., 2009). Passmore (2010) found that a skilled, empathetic coach who challenged the coachee's behaviors was crucial for behavioral change. At the same time, many coaches experience resistance during training (Kho et al., 2019; Jacobs et al., 2017). Skilled coaches can be implementers, advocates, and educators to help an organization as understanding, appreciative and flexible partners (Kho et al., 2019).

For Lone Star Governance to be an effective tool in the Framework for School Board Development, there needs to be a quality implementation and an accountability partner that can help the district absorb the knowledge, obtain the skills and keep in the right mindset for successful implementation. The idea of the coach as an intervention in the Lone Star Governance process was to help with the idea of being a team moving toward a common goal.

Theory of Change

The overarching question for this research centers itself on the foundation of the Lone Star Governance mantra that adult behavior change must occur for student outcomes to improve. Research confirms that coaching is essential for changing adult behaviors (Passmore, 2010). So, if success in Lone Star Governance falls to the implementation, there must be an advocate or coach helping the school system through the change process.

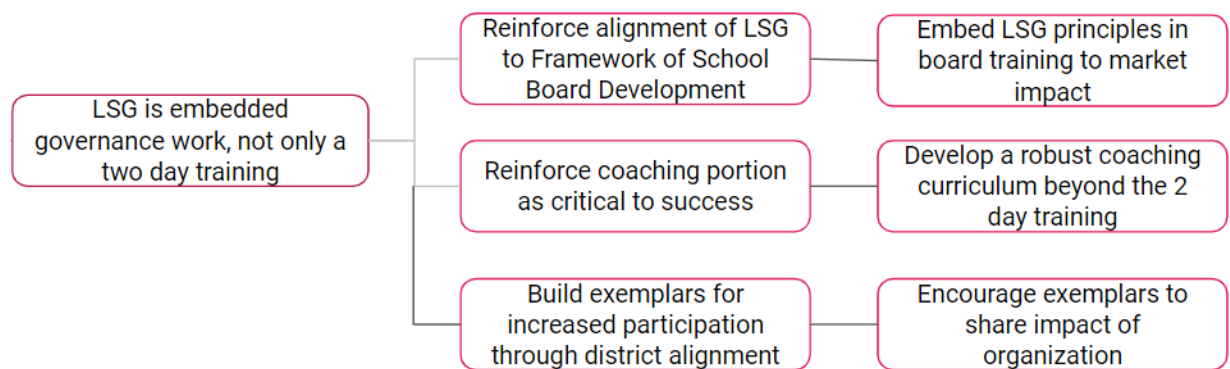
Many Texas Education Agency initiatives require completing the two-day Lone Star Governance training. However, the training is only sustainable with an implementation plan. This was beginning to be a noticeable barrier for LSG implementation when the researcher was leading the LSG initiative at TEA. As the two-day training was delivered, more issues with districts needing more time or capacity to oversee the implementation was noticed. This is especially noticeable in the schools that have yet to follow through with the coaching because there is no evidence of using LSG tools such as the board self-evaluation. When TEA requires the initial two-day course to access a grant or other resources, it is seen more as a compliance measure to access resources rather than a transformative measure to improve student outcomes as a governance team.

A simple theory of action for LSG coaching would follow this logic: if the LSG coaches facilitate the training as designed, if the LSG coaches build trust and provide a safe learning environment, if the LSG builds knowledge of the roles of the governance team, if the LSG coaches model the skills needed to implement LSG, and if the LSG

coach challenges the team to think and problem-solve solutions, then the governance team will be successful, and student outcomes will improve. Figure 13 illustrates the drivers needed to reinforce the need for ongoing coaching support for full district implementation.

Figure 13

Driver Diagram for LSG Coaching



Study Setting

This study was conducted to understand the impact of Lone Star Governance on school districts in the coastal bend of Texas. The study will evaluate the implementation and effect of coaching on governance practices in schools participating in the implementation of Lone Star Governance through the regional education service center. The study includes the implementation of Lone Star Governance facilitated by three coaches, including a former superintendent who formerly led the initiative at the Texas Education Agency, a former superintendent from the area, and a former school board president and interim superintendent who now all work at the education service center.

The intervention will be focused on the change in school board behaviors associated with the Texas Framework of School Board Development and attempt to measure the impact on student outcomes through coaching implementation. The education service center comprises thirty-seven school districts ranging from a district with 13,870 students to a school district with 105. At the beginning of the study, the region was composed of three A-rated districts, 24 B-rated districts, seven C-rated districts, and three D-rated districts. However, there are 16 D-rated and seven F-rated campuses.

The region consists of 51,289 students, with 63.8% classified as economically disadvantaged. The region's demographics consist of 7.5% African American, 58.8% Hispanic, 30.7% White, 0.2% American Indian, 1.1% Asian, and 1.7% Two or More Races. The region has 8.7% participating in Bilingual/ESL Education, 5.5% in Gifted and Talented, and 11.7% in Special Education (Texas Education Agency, 2022).

All 37 districts were invited to participate in the Lone Star Governance implementation, with 10 choosing to attend the two-day initial training, 10 districts engaging in Lone Star Governance coaching through the service center, and nine participating in the research. Of the 63 surveys distributed, there were 43 responses. Nine superintendents volunteered for the interview process of the research study, with one declining and one excluded due to a lack of time between the initial Lone Star Governance and interview collection.

Methods (DBR/DBIR and Mixed Methods)

Passmore (2010) found that with teachers, a skilled and empathetic coach would challenge the learners and have a better success rate at changing behavior. This is also true in LSG training, as witnessed many times in the two-day training. However, once the training is over and the normal day-to-day activities begin, many return to old habits. However, the regional process began with little training and a need for a more uniform and collaborative format from the Texas Education Agency. As observed with the implementation of the first two districts in the study, the value of coaching was more impactful than we initially hypothesized.

With the LSG coaches having all been teachers, the usual thing was to develop a scope and sequence using the board self-evaluation. This was the first step in creating a coaching intervention plan to ensure the adoption of the full Lone Star Governance model. A networked improvement community of Education Service Center coaches, TEA staff and statewide LSG coaches were used to help accelerate our learning through this process. Without these governance coaching supports, we knew that the model would not be adopted, as we had seen in a few districts that had not opted to use coaching support. Once the scope and sequence were developed, the LSG coaching implementation problem was determining the schedule for interaction with the district.

The scheduling for the coaching sessions for implementation was to arrange a follow-up meeting with the superintendent, and possibly the board president, following the two-day training. At this time, arrangements were made to meet with the administrative team to review current goals, establish achievable goals targets, and make

recommendations for adjustments or additions to goals. A board workshop was then scheduled to discuss the vision, draft student outcome goals, board self-constraints, superintendent constraints, and discuss the superintendent evaluation.

Plan Phase

The regional coaching team consisted of three Lone Star Governance coaches, the district team at various stages, the superintendent, principals, central office administrators, and board members. The planning meetings would occur regularly for a series of weeks with each district independently. Still, the regional coaches would meet periodically to make any adjustments to the coaching process based on what was learned in each district. Coaches met weekly to discuss progress and updates during the planning phase. The district planning sessions would consist of setting the next month's agenda, reviewing the district's data, and ensuring all the tools of Lone Star Governance were developed.

Do Phase

In the Do Phase, the progress monitoring of the planning meeting material was conducted to begin the work of board accountability to the administration for achieving the vision and the student outcome goals that were introduced. A monitoring calendar was created during the planning meetings, and the administration and board would know what would be monitored each month. The Lone Star Governance coach attends each monthly meeting with each school board and mentors the administrators and the board through the progress monitoring section of the board meetings. The coach serves as an

example by modeling questions the board should ask the administrators given the progress monitoring reports. Ideally, this builds skills and sets a standard for the proper questions the board members should ask to ensure appropriate monitoring of the board's goals.

Also, during the Do Phase, the coach will help the board perform the self-evaluation every ninety days. This allows the board to evaluate their progress toward implementing board behaviors linked to student outcomes shown in Appendix C: Integrity Instrument. This is an embedded PDSA model for the board to continue to grow, self-reflect as a team, and set a target for the next ninety days.

Study Phase

During the study phase of the coaching PDSA cycle, the intent was to notice if the skills of monitoring goals, keeping track of time spent in meetings discussing student outcomes, and progress on the board self-evaluation instrument were improving. Regular meetings were held with the Lone Star Governance coaches, and meetings with the independent school districts would continue to occur to gain feedback and make adjustments throughout the process. The average growth on the board self-evaluation went from a low of zero points to 77 after a year of engagement, and the results on the time use tracker went from 10% to 56.4% of board meeting time spent on student outcomes during the research period.

Each district had different goals and needs to conquer, so keeping a standard measurement during the phase was difficult. However, the constant was the regularly

scheduled meetings before the board meeting and attending the meeting with a feedback loop to ensure that not only was the board on track with progress monitoring, but there was support on other governance matters such as open meeting act issues, roles, and responsibilities of the superintendent and board.

Act Phase

In studying the overall coaching PDSA model, the Act phase came to help the school district to fine-tune the implementation of Lone Star Governance but also allow each following school district to have a better experience than the last due to the constant feedback loop with the coaches and the school district and the reflection among the coaches. The group learning from the administrator and board team created a deeper understanding of the Lone Star Governance process due to the original implementation of knowledge with the two-day training followed by building those job-embedded skills with the facilitation of a coach to lead the way.

The coaches, we learned how to predict issues or misunderstandings in our approach to be more prepared for the subsequent implementation. They could see the connections made between the staff and board members to understand better how to reinforce the connections in future presentations. In each iteration, the coaches adjusted the curriculum and produced better results through engagement with the participants.

Results

The purpose of the intervention was to ensure the successful implementation of the Lone Star Governance framework produced by the Texas Education Agency in

collaboration with Lone Star Governance coaches. While coaching has always been available, the emphasis beyond the two-day initial training has been limited. The intervention was meant to develop a more detailed approach to implementing Lone Star Governance after the initial two-day training than previously documented. The intervention connects to the overarching research questions of the benefits of changing school board behaviors to improve student outcomes, and how coaching plays a role in the Lone Star Governance process.

The effects of coaching implementation were measured over a fifteen-month research period with different districts engaging in the process, with most of the school districts in the coaching implementation period for over one year. However, the findings regarding the implementation of the coach were similar across all stages. A Likert-type survey was distributed to school board members to determine the effectiveness of Lone Star Governance coaching. Additionally, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the Superintendents of the districts implementing Lone Star Governance. The board self-evaluation tool and the board meeting time use tracker were analyzed for coaching effectiveness across all Lone Star Governance districts. Finally, the accountability scores were compared to the sample of districts using a Lone Star Governance coach compared to the district sample who did not implement coaching to determine if there were any impacts on student achievement.

Board Member Survey

The purpose of the Likert-type survey for board members was to collect the board members' perceptions as related to the effectiveness of the coaching component of the

Lone Star Governance implementation. Survey item three was directly related to the coaching intervention for Lone Star Governance implementation shown in Appendix B: Board Survey. Overall, the survey results were very favorable for the coaching intervention regarding the implementation of LSG, with a mean score of 4.66 ($SD = 0.52$), with 1= Strongly Disagree, and 5= Strongly Agree. Of the 48 survey respondents, not a single person scored the coaching effectiveness below a 4 on the survey.

Superintendent Semi-Structured Interviews

The superintendent's semi-structured interviews were conducted to gather the overall feedback of the superintendent for the Lone Star Governance implementation. A total of nine of ten invited superintendents participated in the interview, which is a participation rate of ninety percent. All nine participants were at districts that were undergoing Lone Star Governance coaching. Question four of the interview was a direct coaching question, "What has been your experience working with your Lone Star Governance coach since the initial two-day training?" Another question that solicited some superintendents' responses toward coaching was question number, "Is there one part of LSG that has been more impactful than others? If so, what?"

According to the interview results, the coach's role seemed crucial in implementing the Lone Star Governance process, especially after the initial two-day training. Due to the lack of a population sample, Table 5, Superintendents' Responses to LSG Coaching, provides a short reference of the response to the coaching questions asked of the superintendent participating in the study. Thirty-three percent of the superintendents responded that the most impactful part of Lone Star Governance to their

district was the LSG coaching portion. The other areas that stand out from the interview when asked about the LSG coaching portion of the process were the focus and clarity the coaches provide for implementation. Also, the guided practice, outside perspective, and constant engagement with the school were all benefits listed from the LSG coaching portion of the program.

Table 5

Superintendents' Responses to Lone Star Governance Coaching

Superintendents Response to Lone Star Governance Coaching	Superintendent's Response to the Most Impactful Portion of Lone Star Governance
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Guided practice and a step-by-step approach have been very beneficial. 2. Initial two -days occurred, and the district went without a coach for several months. This set us back, and we would have been better off starting coaching immediately. 3. Coaches attending the regular board meeting and constant contact have been integral. Give confidence to the team by reinforcing critical feedback for growth. 4. Coach helps to keep the team focused and provides accountability for the team. 5. Not sure how it could be done without a coach clarifying and recalibrating goals. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Board self-evaluation rubric 2. Monthly coaching sessions 3. Progress monitoring 4. Progress monitoring 5. LSG Coaching 6. LSG Coaching 7. Progress monitoring 8. Structural framework for the board 9. Progress monitoring

Table 5, continued

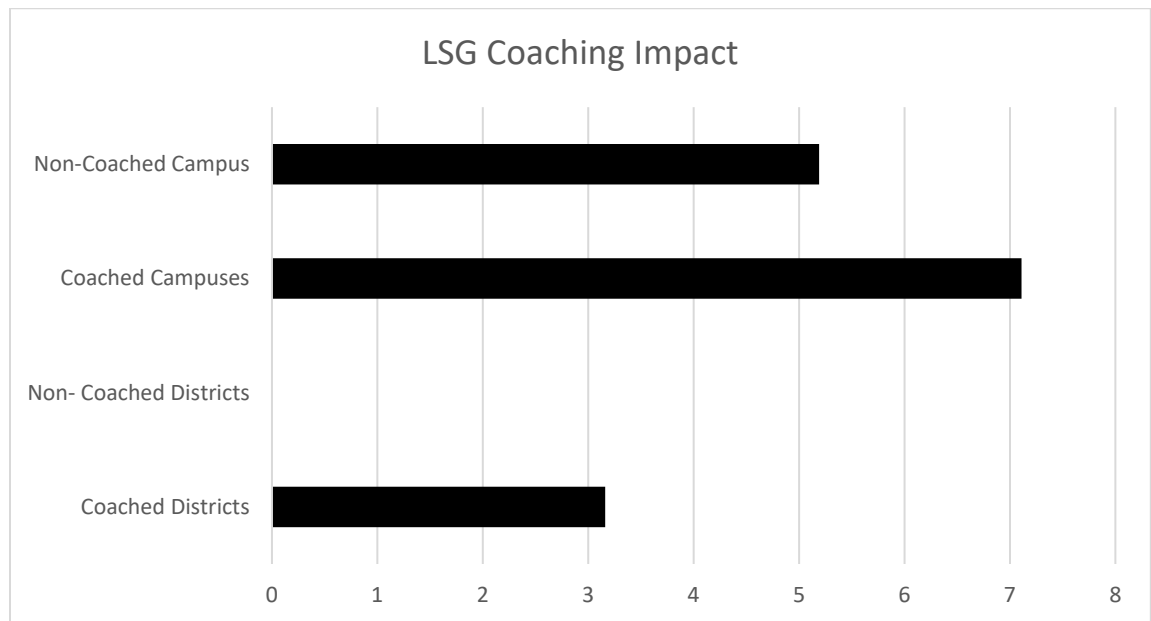
Superintendents Response to Lone Star Governance Coaching	Superintendent's Response to the Most Impactful Portion of Lone Star Governance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Instrumental to the organizational components and the positive support and encouragement has been excellent. 7. Coaching has provided formality to the process and provides an outsider's eyes to provide perspective. 8. The coach adds value and is instrumental to implementation. 9. Important component, especially if the coach is a former superintendent. 	

Accountability Results

Accountability ratings from 2019 were compared to 2022 to link the impact of coaching Lone Star Governance to student outcomes. By using the 2019 accountability data compared to 2022 accountability data, the study followed the same logic of the Texas Education Agency in issuing ratings for school districts. No accountability scores were given during the pandemic in 2020 or 2021. The sample size of this study needed to be larger to perform a more robust statistical analysis due to the inability to meet the assumption checks due to the small sample size. Therefore, a comparison in mean accountability scores was used to compare districts and campuses that chose to participate in coaching. The sample size consisted of six districts, with five districts participating in coaching and only one district not participating in coaching. The one

district that did not participate in coaching had twenty-one campuses, and the other five had eighteen collectively. The mean of the district accountability ratings gains or losses from 2019 to 2022 of coached districts compared to the non-coached district. Similarly, the same comparison was made to the campuses using the mean differences between 2019 and 2022 campus accountability ratings.

The mean of the accountability score gain for coached Lone Star Governance districts was 3.16 ($SD = 6.96$), the average gain per district compared to the non-coached district; the accountability score remained the same from 2019 to 2022. While Lone Star Governance is primarily focused on the board level, the data suggests there is an impact at the campus level. The superintendent survey showed that the most significant effect of LSG was the progress monitoring and the coaching, which affects the campus level. If we look at the campus-level accountability ratings, the average mean growth in the accountability score was 7.11($SD = 11.94$) per campus in districts that engaged in coaching compared to 5.19 ($SD = 8.38$) for non-LSG-coached districts. The comparison of mean accountability gains is shown in Figure 14. The large standard deviation results are due to a small population and a midyear administration change on one campus, resulting in a large loss in accountability points.

Figure 14*Lone Star Governance Coaching Impact on Accountability Scores*

An Independent Sample T-Test was conducted to compare the accountability mean gains of the control group to the LSG district group. The assumptions of normality were met, verifying a normal distribution of data. The Independent Samples T-Test results did not compute due to the small population in the control group; the independent sample t-test statistic was NaN^a. The limitation of data continued for the non-coached districts due to their not tracking of time use nor performing a board self-evaluation, so there was no comparable measurement for the progress made by the governance team on the self-evaluation rubric.

The difference in the coached and non-coached LSG campuses was close together, with non-coached campuses gaining a mean of 5.19 ($SD = 8.38$) accountability points, slightly outgained by coached campuses at a mean of 7.11 ($SD = 11.94$) points. An

Independent Samples T-Test was conducted and a deviation from normality was found due to a significant ($p = 0.009$) Shapiro-Wilk test. Therefore, a Mann-Whitney U test was conducted to compare the accountability gains between the control and LSG campuses.

The Mann-Whitney U test was used because our data violated the assumptions of the independent samples t-test. Specifically, visual inspection of the distribution plot for each of the independent variables was not normally distributed. The results of the analysis indicated that the LSG coached campuses had a higher accountability gain ($Mdn = 6.5$) compared to the non-coached campuses ($Mdn = 6.0$), with $W = 155.50$, $p = 0.35$. According to Cohen (1988), effect size estimates indicate that the difference between the conditions was of no effect in magnitude ($r_b = -.17$).

Discussion

The study aimed to provide insight into the effectiveness of Lone Star Governance on the governance team to improve student outcomes. An organized and purposeful implementation is one of the main components to ensure that any initiative works. Many hours have been devoted to training the Lone Star Governance coaches and developing the initial two-day training for Lone Star Governance. However, more coordination needs to be done regarding developing and training for implementation of the Lone Star Governance initiative. While leading the Lone Star Governance initiative at the Texas Education Agency, I realized this gap in the initiative and the importance of the implementation had been reinforced through this study. Bruns et al. (2018), Fraser et al. (2007), and Thornburg et al. (2011) all point out the importance of a coach and quality implementation toward transformation.

While the study's sample size was limited, causing challenges with statistical analysis, there were still some findings that could help in the implementation of the Lone Star Governance model. Each tool gives us data on the importance of coaching toward Lone Star Governance implementation on days three, four, and five of the LSG training.

The board member survey expressed the board member's perspective on the effectiveness of the LSG coach for proper implementation. The mean response of the board members' perspective was 4.66 ($SD = 0.52$), resulting in a strong agreement toward the effectiveness of coaching. The lowest response was a four from all forty-eight respondents. This is an overwhelmingly positive response to the LSG coaching effectiveness.

The superintendent interview also resulted in a positive response to the effectiveness of LSG coaching toward properly implementing the Lone Star Governance framework, as shown in Table 6. The main benefits of LSG coaching from the superintendents' responses were the clarity toward implementation, the accountability partner through the process, the organization and approach toward implementation, the crucial role toward implementing the framework, and the mentoring along implementation. These areas are essential for the busy schedule of a superintendent in some of the smaller rural districts that do not have the team or capacity to appoint someone to conduct a successful implementation plan. In the interview question regarding the most impactful portion of LSG, the superintendent's most common response was progress monitoring, closely followed by coaching.

Finally, the accountability impact on a coached Lone Star Governance district was minimal. However, our study showed a 3.16 ($SD = 6.96$) mean score for increased accountability raw scores compared to a non-coached district. Understandably there needs to be a larger population to analyze this number to determine the statistical significance between coached and noncoached. However, even with the small sample size in this study, the board and superintendent's perception and confidence in the LSG coaching toward a successful implementation of Lone Star Governance is an essential factor to consider.

Conclusions

In conclusion, a practical implementation must rely on the Lone Star Governance coaching model to successfully implement the framework. Fraser et al. (2007) describe job-embedded training as the most effective way to ensure transformative change. One superintendent responded during the interview that their school went through the initial two-day training and did not immediately begin the coaching model. Old habits or behaviors did not change; it was only when they went back through the training and implemented the coach that true transformation began. The same superintendent attributed a significant student outcome gain to the LSG process. From our experience, ideally, the coaching process of day three should start within two weeks of the initial two-day training to maximize the initiative's implementation. The region believes so strongly in quality job-embedded coaching that the LSG two-day training is not an option for school districts without the implementation coaching. Otherwise, progress monitoring or the board self-evaluations will not occur. These tools are impactful to the superintendents and school board members.

Recommendations

The limitations of this study included a small population size, so additional research is needed to analyze results properly. There is enough positive feedback from board members and superintendents to warrant further investigation. Another recommendation would be for the Texas Education Agency to develop a coordinated, comprehensive performance management process or theory of action to fully implement Lone Star Governance at the district and campus levels.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSIONS, & RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to formulate a solution to help increase the participation of governance teams in implementing a framework of researched best practices to improve student outcomes. An effort by the researcher at an educational service center was carried out to train governance teams in Lone Star Governance to study the impact of student outcomes and to understand how to improve the implementation of LSG on a larger scale to help counter learning loss, and where needed, address polarization created following the pandemic. A better understanding of the implementation of LSG and its impact on improving student outcomes is required to reverse previously held negative perceptions of it being a tool for only low-performing schools. The intervention to instill a successful LSG implementation was to develop a coaching model to ensure the Lone Star Governance best practices were fully embedded in the daily behaviors of the governance team.

Lone Star Governance is built on a mindset of continuous improvement. The study followed the same philosophy and used improvement science to conduct Plan-Do-Study-Act cycles that helped to determine the improvement of schools through coaching and implementation of LSG. The first PDSA was the two-day LSG training created by the Texas Education Agency and implemented by the education service center LSG coaches. The second PDSA cycle was the implementation of the LSG coaching model developed by the education service center LSG coaches, which lead the governance teams through a strategic process, and in some cases, critical conversations. Chapter Five

summarizes the findings, outlines some limitations of the study, and provides recommendations for future research.

Discussion of Findings

Two-Day Lone Star Governance Intervention

The PDSA cycle for the evaluation portion of the study was the two-day Lone Star Governance training, with ten school districts participating in the study with a total of 49 campuses. These ten school districts had the two-day training over a fourteen-month timeframe. Six districts with 39 campuses participated in the training during the first 90 days of the school year and were considered in the student outcome comparison.

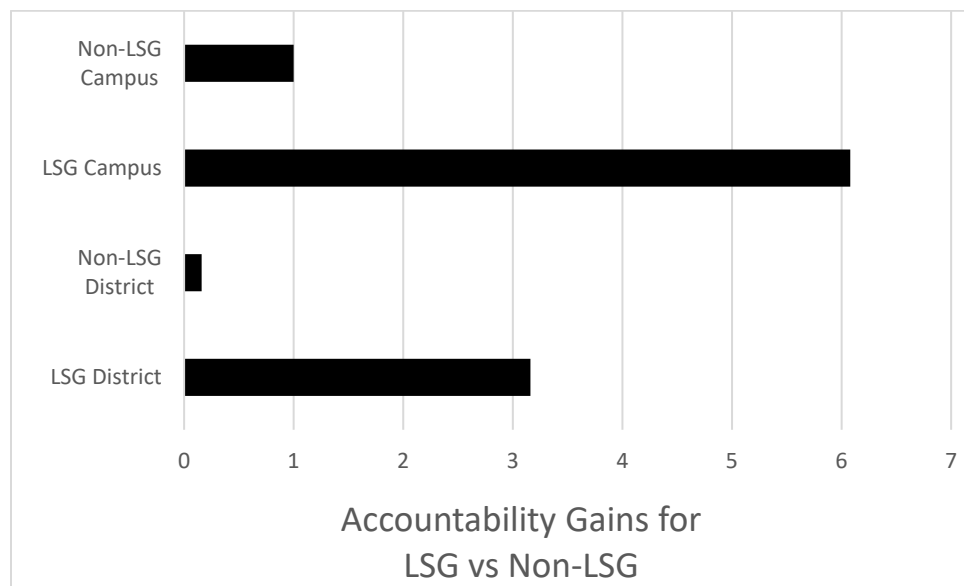
All ten districts began implementing LSG practices immediately upon completing the two-day training. Nine districts engaged in LSG coaching, which will be discussed in the second PDSA intervention cycle. All ten districts were observed for governance best practices introduced during the two-day training. The study's original purpose was to understand the reasoning for the lack of participation in Lone Star Governance, due to its connection to the Framework of School Board development, which is a framework of best practices. The initial consideration was to determine if the Lone Star Governance improved student outcomes as found in the findings of Rice et al. (2000) outlined in the Lighthouse Study.

Even though the population was small and limited the ability to conduct a more robust analysis, descriptive statistics indicated that student outcomes did improve for schools that participated in Lone Star Governance compared to a sample of districts that did not participate. Figure 15 shows the additional mean accountability points gained by

Lone Star Governance Campuses and districts compared to their non-Lone Star Governance counterparts. The limitation of the research was the small population size and the limited time of the research study. The results indicate the need for additional research.

Figure 15

Comparison of 2019 Accountability Scores to 2022 Accountability Scores for LSG versus Non-LSG Participants



The research indicated in Figure 15 paralleled the findings of Rice et al. (2000) outlined in the Light House Study. The accountability point mean gains for the LSG campuses were 6.07 ($SD = 10.08$) points compared to the 1.00 ($SD = 8.13$) accountability point mean gain of their counterparts. The results of the Mann Whitney U analysis indicated that the LSG campuses had a higher accountability gain ($Mdn = 6$) compared to the control group of campuses ($Mdn = 0$), with $W = 285$, $p = 0.01$. Effect size estimates according to Cohen (1988) indicate the difference between the conditions were small in magnitude ($r_{tb} = -.36$). The LSG The Lone Star Governance districts

increased their mean accountability points by 3.16 ($SD = 6.96$) compared to their non-LSG counterparts at a 0.16 ($SD = 5.84$) mean accountability point gain. The results of the Independent Samples T-Test found that there was no significant difference ($p = 0.43$) between the control group ($x = 0.16$) and the LSG district group ($x = 3.16$) on accountability gains for the two-day LSG training.

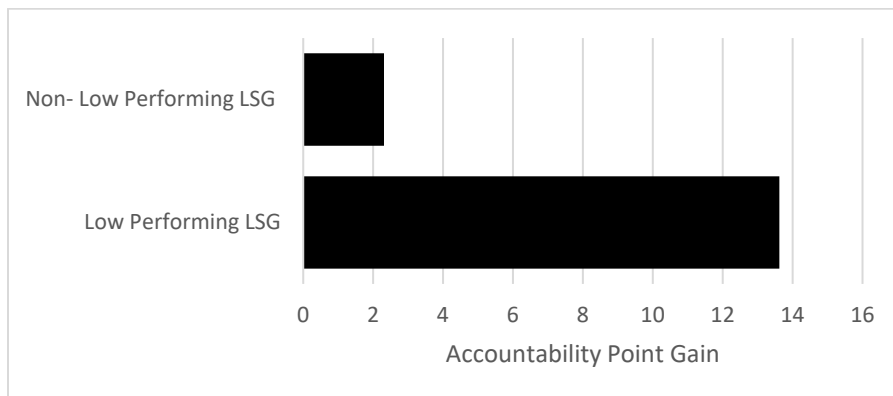
The difference in campus and district gains was surprising based upon data analysis. However, the difference in the point gains may be partially due to how district accountability scores are determined compared to campus data. A total of 35 elementary and middle schools compared to ten high schools were used in the campus calculation. The district accountability scores are aligned to the high school accountability that includes College, Career, Military Readiness (CCMR), and graduation rates compared to only STAAR data on both elementary and middle school campuses. Since many of the LSG goals adopted by the boards in this study were centered around STAAR scores, and given three times as many elementary and middle school campuses as high school campuses, the additional campus gains compared to district gains are understandable.

To explore the additional impact of Lone Star Governance on low-performing schools, the accountability point gains for low-performing LSG campuses in the study were compared to non-low-performing campuses. The definition of low performing for this study is the labeling of a campus at a D or F rating since this follows the reasoning behind the creation of LSG, according to Crabill (2017). There were thirteen of 39 campuses considered low performing in this study. When comparing the accountability gains of the low-performing campuses to those with a rating between A and C, the gains

were, on average, 13.62 compared to 2.31. This is an 11.31 difference in the mean between comparison groups. It is worth noting one campus that did not have a low-performing campus in 2019 but had a 29-point drop in 2022 due to a leadership change. If this one campus is removed from the calculation, then the mean for the non-low-performing campuses increases from 2.31 to 3.56; this is a 1.25 difference in the mean due to one outlier. Figure 16 shows the mean differential from all the study's low performing versus non-low-performing campuses. Again, the low population size was limiting to the results, however, additional research should be conducted to explore this connection in greater detail.

Figure 16

Comparison of 2019 Accountability Score Gains to 2022 Accountability Score Gains for LSG Low Performing Campuses versus Non-Low Performing LSG Campuses



Lone Star Governance was built to improve student outcomes primarily to prevent schools from falling into increased accountability measures passed by legislation (Crabill, 2017). As demonstrated in Figure 16, this is proven to be accurate, given the parameters of this study. However, Figure 16 shows that low-performing campuses had a much larger gain in accountability points after participating in LSG than their non-low-

performing counterparts. The idea of an additional focus toward improvement does not suggest that a school must be low performing to engage in Lone Star Governance, but rather the school must be interested in progress.

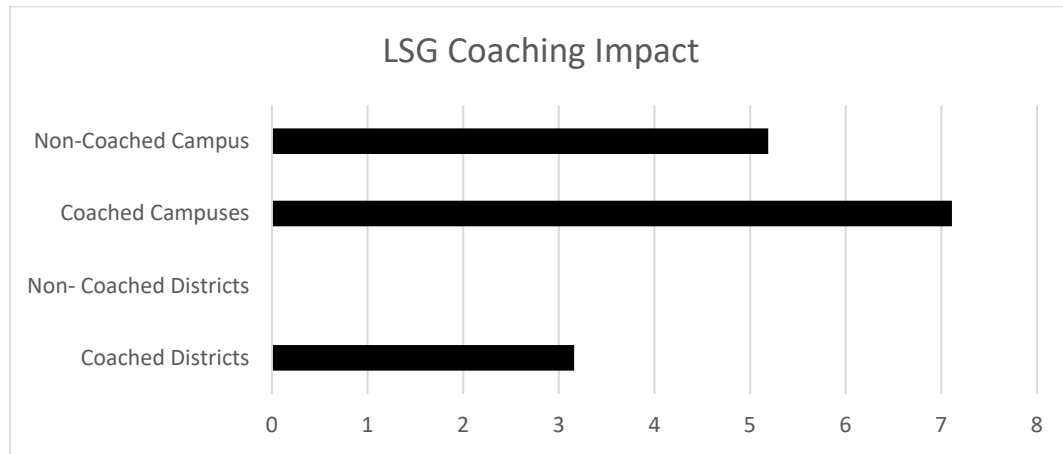
Lone Star Governance Coaching Intervention

Instructional coaching has been more prevalent in recent years and is well-documented for improving student outcomes (Bruns, 2018; Chen, Chen, & Tsai, 2009; Passmore, 2010; Knight, 2007; Mudzimiri et al., 2014). The learning loss resulting from the COVID pandemic amplifies the need for school boards to focus on student outcomes. The improvement of student outcomes through a governance lens is shown in Figure 15; however, in determining the full impact of Lone Star Governance, the hypothesis was that, like instructional coaches, a governance coach would help improve student outcomes from the boardroom level. Therefore, the second PDSA model was administered in nine of ten districts in the study that decided to engage in governance coaching.

The Texas Education Agency training program for Lone Star Governance is heavily focused on building the capacity of coaches to deliver the two-day LSG training. Many of the interventions or grant initiatives that TEA assigns to school districts results in the administration of the two-day LSG training. However, over time a question has developed regarding the implementation and retention of LSG best practices when the board is absent from a coach that provides accountability for a board to undergo job-embedded best practices. In this study, an iterative process of coaching strategies was developed to help LSG district implementation.

Figure 17, Lone Star Governance Coaching Impact on Student Outcomes, shows the difference in student outcomes between campuses and districts that were coached compared to those that did not choose to implement coaching support. The districts that implemented coaching showed an average gain of 3.8 ($SD = 7.59$) accountability points compared to 0 for their non-coached comparison group. Only one district chose not to participate in the coaching intervention, and this district had a zero accountability point gain as a district. Still, the district did see some growth in campus scores. It is also worth noting that one noncoached district did not have the “time use” trackers or self-evaluations to compare to other districts. They did a variation of the LSG tools, which does not align with LSG. Given this small population, more research needs to be done to determine if this impacted student performance. The non-coached district had several campuses, so the number of campuses was more equally balanced when comparing coached versus non-coached campuses, with only a mean accountability gain of 5.19 ($SD = 8.38$) versus 7.11 ($SD = 11.94$) for coached campuses when comparing the 2019 to 2021 accountability point gain.

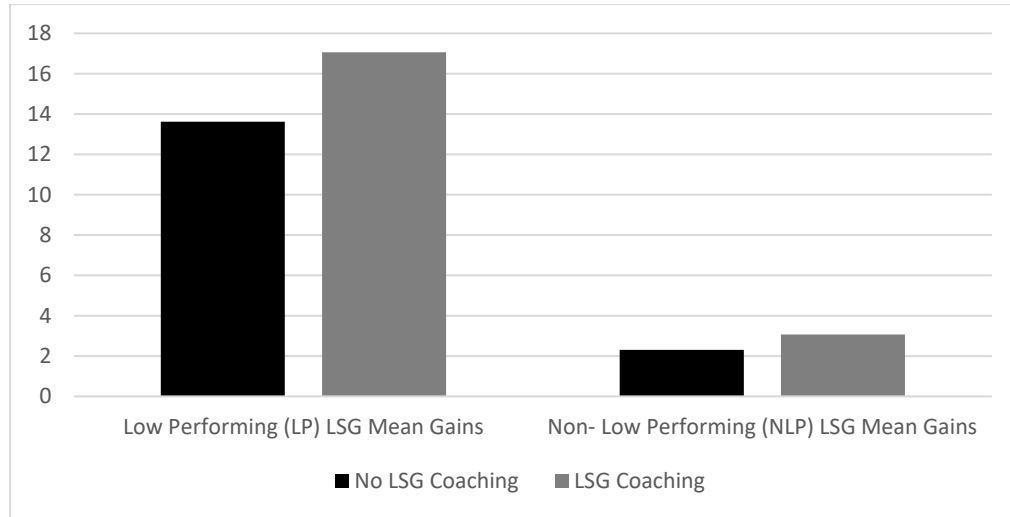
The Mann-Whitney U test was used because our data violated the assumptions of the independent samples t-test. Specifically, visual inspection of the distribution plot for each of the independent variables was not normally distributed. The results of the analysis indicated that the LSG coached campuses had a higher accountability gain ($Mdn = 6.5$) compared to the non-coached campuses ($Mdn = 6.0$), with $W = 155.50$, $p = 0.35$. According to Cohen (1988), effect size estimates indicate that the difference between the conditions was of no effect in magnitude ($r_b = -.17$). This again demonstrates the need for additional research to determine the impact of the coach's role on implementation.

Figure 17*Lone Star Governance Coaching Impact on Student Outcomes*

Another area to consider when looking at the implementation of LSG is the relationship between the board evaluation tool, labeled the integrity instrument, and the number of minutes captured focusing on student outcomes during the school board meeting. This could not be done holistically because LSG progress monitoring was not tracked by the district that did not participate in LSG coaching, so it was analyzed under the schools participating in coaching. Figure 18 shows the mean accountability point gain when comparing the differences in low-performing and non-low-performing campuses.

Figure 18

Comparison of 2019 Accountability Score Gains to 2022 Accountability Score Gains for LSG Coached Low Performing Campuses versus Non-Low Performing LSG Campuses



When comparing the differences of the board evaluation to low-performing and non-low-performing schools, the low-performing campus school boards scored on average 12.5 points better on implementing Lone Star Governance best practices as evaluated through the integrity instrument versus non-low-performing campus school boards. When focusing on student outcomes during the board meeting, the non-low-performing campus boards spent 6.65% more time discussing student outcomes than their low-performing counterparts. According to Rice et al. (2000), the 50 percent threshold is the upper limit to maximize improvements to student outcomes. So, the difference in accountability gains between low performing and non-performing may be attributed more to the increased introduction to LSG best practices rather than additional student outcomes minutes. Another factor in the increased gains in the mean accountability scores for low-performing versus non-low-performing campuses would be the effect of

more opportunities to grow if you are starting at a lower level of performance. This point of comparing low-performing to non-low performing needs additional research.

School Board Member Surveys

To better understand the whole perception of the Lone Star Governance implementation, a survey was conducted of the school board members of the participating districts. The survey was written to address the research questions to determine if LSG does improve student outcomes, what is the impact of the governance coach, and to understand the perception of board members to determine if they believe that LSG is only intended for low-performing districts after participating in the two-day training and governance coaching. The survey consisted of fifteen Likert-type survey questions to address the research questions. A total of 48 participants responded to the survey. The population size was too small to do a statistical analysis due to violating the assumptions for a normal data distribution. Therefore, descriptive statistics were used to evaluate the surveys. Figure 19 shows the means of the survey results that correspond with the questions.

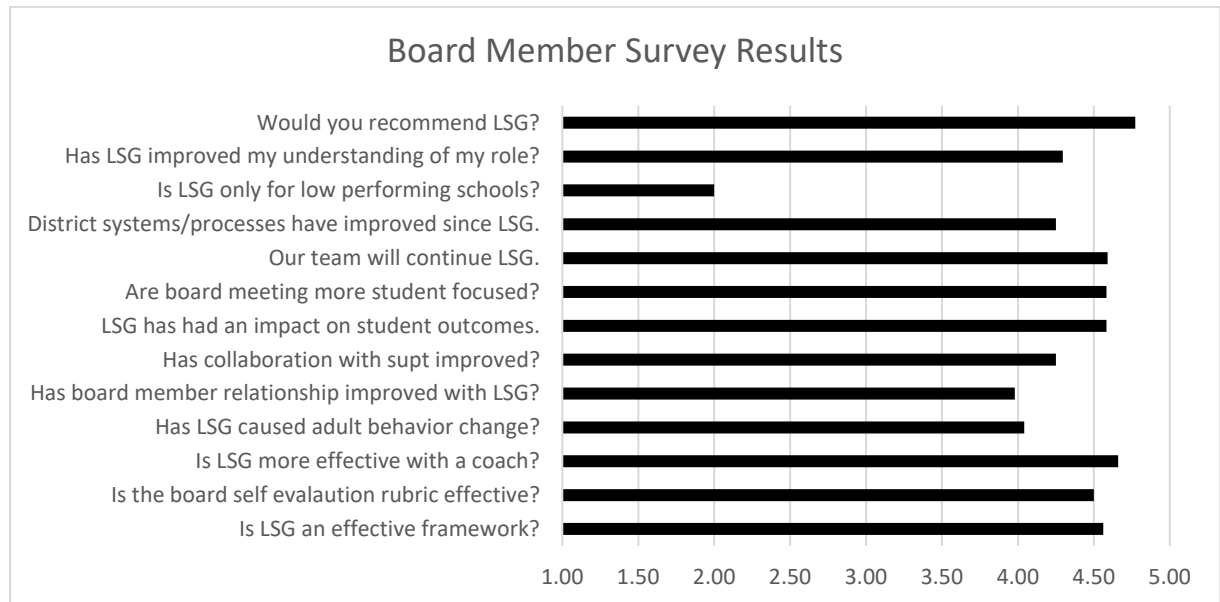
Figure 19*Board Member Survey Results for Lone Star Governance*

Figure 19 illustrates the means of the board members' responses to the surveys.

The board responses demonstrate that LSG impacts the board members' perception of LSG. The first research question asked about the impact of LSG through the behaviors of the Framework of School Board Development. LSG has allowed board members to better understand their role with a mean of 4.29 ($SD = 0.85$), to develop more robust district systems and processes with a mean of 4.25 ($SD = 0.61$), LSG has focused the board on student outcomes with a mean of 4.58 ($SD = 0.57$), with the mean 4.58 ($SD = 0.57$) of members believing that there will be an improvement or they have already seen an improvement. Other areas in the Framework for School Board Development included teamwork and synergy, which also scored well in the board member survey as a result of LSG implementation. The board members said collaboration with the superintendent has

improved after LSG implementation, with a mean score of 4.25 ($SD = 0.83$), and relationships among the board have improved, with a mean score of 3.98 ($SD = 0.78$). The board members' survey agreed that their behaviors have changed with the implementation of LSG with a mean of 4.04 ($SD = 0.65$), and the integrity instrument has helped with the change as confirmed with a mean of 4.50 ($SD = 0.65$).

The intervention of the Lone Star Governance project was the implementation of coaching. The research questions asked about coaching were to determine its effectiveness. We know that the instructional coach can improve outcomes, skills, and collaboration, so a similar hypothesis was drawn to the effectiveness of governance coaches (Kraft et al., 2016; Spelman et al., 2016; Denton et al., 2009). The board members who responded to the survey strongly agreed, with a mean score of 4.66 ($SD = 0.52$).

Finally, the perception of Lone Star Governance only being for low-performing schools and not recognized as a continuous improvement model is a constant battle. However, the board member survey returned a mean score of 2.00 ($SD = 1.14$), meaning that when asked if LSG was intended for low-performing schools, the overwhelming response disagreed. Instead, a mean score of 4.77 ($SD = 0.47$) would recommend LSG to other districts due to their conclusion that LSG was an effective tool for governance teams with a 4.56 ($SD = 0.68$) mean score.

Superintendent Interviews

The superintendent interviews were the qualitative component of the mixed methods research evaluation. Nine superintendents were interviewed from the ten districts included in the study. After coding the interview responses, the following themes arose regarding the LSG training from the superintendent's perspective: understanding of the board's role, focus on academics, formation of a better vision, value in coaching, improvement of board/superintendent relations, support to principals, student-focused, progress monitoring value, the building of board capacity, and improved district systems. When organized with the research questions, the superintendents also found that LSG aligned to the Framework for School Board Development in the finding that 100% of superintendents interviewed expressed that LSG clearly outlined the role of the board and superintendent, allowed conversations to be student outcome-focused, and helped to transform their vision & goals. According to 89% of the superintendents, progress monitoring of their goals has been a critical element in refocusing their district. Both an improvement of board/superintendent relationships and board meeting planning improvements were found by 78% of the superintendents interviewed. One interesting finding was that 55% of the superintendents commented on the support LSG has provided to their principals. Principal support has most likely resulted from LSG coaching sessions that were a part of the intervention in this study. The improvement of principals was not a consideration in the study, as this was a comment that arose as an unexpected finding.

The coaching impact of LSG was also evaluated in an interview question asked to the superintendents. 100% of the superintendents felt that LSG coaching helped significantly in implementing LSG best practices. Figure 20 illustrates some of the comments given by the superintendents about governance coaching.

Figure 20

Superintendent Perspective on Lone Star Governance Coaching

“Monthly coaching sessions are key to success.”

“Coaching keeps the board focused because they know someone is holding them accountable.”

“As a new superintendent, LSG coaching conversations have sped up the relationship between me and my board.”

“I do not know how LSG could be done without a coach - due to planning, calibration, self-evaluation clarity, and focus.”

“Without LSG coaching, old habits will creep back in.”

The superintendent’s perspective on Lone Star Governance only being used for low-performing districts has diminished over the past months. This is partly due to the many positive comments generated at the monthly regional superintendent meetings. Due to positive feedback in the regional meetings, many superintendents have requested more information about Lone Star Governance. One superintendent said, “I heard the great comments being shared at a superintendent meeting, and I had to find out more about LSG!” Another superintendent said, “LSG is the unifier to align all the state’s best practices.” One superintendent offered the true answer to the final research question,

“LSG takes you from where you are and grows you, not just for low-performing schools!”

Conclusions

The Framework of School Board Development has been a guide for effective governance practices for several years. However, a tool has been lacking to help guide school governance teams toward effective governance. The effects of the recent pandemic have made all levels of district leadership reflect on practices and strategies to overcome the loss of learning in this new landscape of education. School boards are no different. Lone Star Governance was developed to help school districts overcome additional accountability measures, so its use is even more necessary now to guide districts to meet current challenges across the State of Texas. Often, governance teams look to see what must be done in the district and fail to understand what must be done in the boardroom. The Lighthouse Study (Rice et al., 2000) provided the foundational research that school boards that focus on student outcomes will see an improvement in those outcomes.

So why would school boards and administrators not want a tool to help them accomplish the reason that school districts exist, to continuously improve the work we do for students? This was the problem to address in the study. Even though the population size was too small to do a thorough analysis, evidence is supported through gains in the mean accountability scores, school board survey, and the interviews from superintendents that Lone Star Governance does indeed improve student outcomes. The outcomes improve through best practices outlined in the Framework of School Board Development developed by the State Board of Education. The collaboration and relationship building

outlined in the LSG training are areas needed in many of the governance teams across the state that are struggling with political and community issues facing the board and the students. Even though the program was developed to improve or prevent districts from being low performing, it does not mean that best practices should not be implemented at all levels.

The perception of Lone Star Governance only being for low-performing schools is indeed a fallacy. The study did show that the low-performing campuses, when implementing LSG, had a more considerable increase in gains; there were also sizable gains for non-low-performing campuses. Many of the board members' surveys and the superintendent interviews reinforced the accountability mean gains noticed after Lone Star Governance implementation. The perception of LSG may be attributed to the labeling of strategic priority four of the Texas Education Agency strategic plan being focused on improving low-performing schools rather than the initiative itself. The research supported the governance behaviors of improving student outcomes through LSG.

The most significant result of the research study is the importance of governance coaching. The fidelity of the best practice implementation can only be done effectively through coaching. As reinforced by combining the accountability gain data and superintendent interviews, only the job-embedded action that comes with coaching will change habits. If a school board attends the two-day training, some great conversations and a sense of collaboration may be obtained, but holistic behavior change will not be sustainable. Behavior change will occur only through regular coaching and job-embedded practice. The behavior change comes with continual conversations about what

is working and what needs to be improved. The facilitation of the 90-day school board evaluation in a public meeting will assist with this change. Some school boards do not like this type of accountability, but an accurate performance-based public evaluation will cause behavior change, as identified in the study. The improvement in low-performing campuses may have partly resulted from the 12.5 additional points from the school board's implementation of best practices. More systems put into place that function at a high level and focuses on improving student outcomes will indeed improve student outcomes.

Recommendations for Future School Improvement

This study was intended to build on the research conducted by Rice et al. (2000) of the Lighthouse Study that focused on student outcome improvement. The hope was to determine if Lone Star Governance was a tool that would improve student outcomes influenced at the board level. The results of the research, even though the population size limited the statistical analysis, confirmed that LSG is a tool to implement best practices described in the Framework for School Board Development.

Future school improvement initiatives might include a more robust coaching model for LSG implementation at the district and campus levels. The need for LSG to be more of an embedded process rather than a two-day training was demonstrated from the study. An example might be a similar process as the Effective School Framework which is a more comprehensive campus level model implemented through the implementation of Texas Instructional Leadership. The Effective District Framework is currently being developed at the Texas Education Agency through networked improvement communities

with Education Service Centers and district leaders to accelerate improvement. This process, known as the Texas Strategic Leadership initiative, has the potential to develop a more robust performance management tool to be used as a governance coaching opportunity with administration in collaboration with the board. There is an indication that a school board component could be included to make this connection between Texas Strategic Leadership with the Lone Star Governance initiative researched in this study.

The partnership with LSG schools is imperative to make a clear connection with the Effective District Framework which is currently being piloted through various Education Service Centers to ensure a strong connection for strategic planning. This networked improvement community could solidify the current gap in training and not only strengthen the current coaching model but also help to alleviate the negative perceptions of LSG only being intended for low-performing schools. As a result of this work, more emphasis needs to be placed on school board trainers and school boards to implement the best practices within the Framework of School Board Development.

Recommendations for Future Research

The study confirms a clear link between the school improvement connection from the classroom to the boardroom. Therefore, additional research needs to be done to gain a larger population size to more comprehensively analyze the impact of Lone Star Governance on improving student outcomes. While descriptive statistics can provide an idea for practical application in the school setting, solid correlational research could provide a better understanding of the most effective Lone Star Governance tools to use. Additional research might provide a better understanding and provide additional insights

into the need for the adjustment of the board self-evaluation tool as student outcomes continue to increase and adjust to the added pressures of career and college demands.

This additional research also could be useful to school board trainers as strategies to counter the habits or lack of motivation to embrace change towards best governance practices instead of using an excuse for moving toward improvement. The increased accountability gains made by the low performing campuses boards suggest that more systems in place will result in better results, future research could support this conclusion. One final area for future research is to explore the impact on principal growth that was unexpectedly mentioned in the superintendent interviews. A better understanding of the capacity builder identified for principals could reinforce a larger cultural component toward system improvement from Lone Star Governance across the campus and district. After all, a board that is willing to embrace a governance coach, provides a strong model for continuous improvement across the district.

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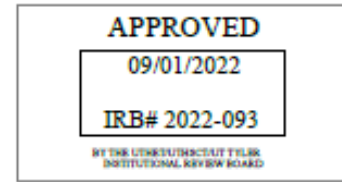
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Appendices

Appendix A

Informed Consent Form to Participate in Research

Appendix A: Figure 1*Informed Consent to Participate in Research***Informed Consent to Participate in Research**

This study is called *Learner-Centered Policy and Governance: An Evaluation of School Board Behaviors on Student Outcomes in Texas*. We are evaluating the use of Lone Star Governance and the impact on improving student outcomes through implementation with schools located in the Region 3 Education Service Center.

Participation is voluntary, and you may quit the study at any time.

If you agree to be in this study, you will:

- Complete a brief survey; or
- Complete an interview

There are no risks in this study other than possibly becoming stressed or tired of answering questions. You can take a break and get back to the survey later. We hope this study will help us understand the effect of Lone Star Governance on student outcomes through the lens of governance. Results from the study will be shared with participants upon request.

Any time information is collected, there is a potential risk of loss of confidentiality. Every effort will be made to keep your information confidential, however, this cannot be guaranteed.

You will not be compensated for your participation in this study.

For questions about the study, contact the researcher Morris Lyon at MLyon4@patriots.uttyler.edu. For questions about your rights as a research participant, contact the UT Tyler Institutional Review Board (IRB) Office at 903-877-7832 or irb@uthct.edu

I understand what has been explained to me here. If I want to participate, I will sign my name below. If I do not want to participate, I will not sign.

I want to be in this study:

Participant Name

Date

Researcher Signature

Date

IRB August 2022

Appendix B
School Board Survey

Appendix B: Figure 2*School Board Survey*

8/07/2022

Learner-Centered Policy and Governance: An Evaluation of School Board Behaviors on Student Outcomes in Texas

Learner-Centered Policy and Governance: An Evaluation of School Board Behaviors on Student Outcomes in Texas

This study is called Learner-Centered Policy and Governance: An Evaluation of School Board Behaviors on Student Outcomes in Texas. We are evaluating the impact of Lone Star Governance on the improvement of student outcomes. Participation is voluntary, and you may quit the survey at any time. Please complete the attached consent form.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. LSG has been an effective framework for our governance team.	①	②	③	④	⑤
2. The use of the integrity instrument has helped our board to improve board behaviors.	①	②	③	④	⑤
3. LSG is more effective with a coach.	①	②	③	④	⑤
4. Have adult behaviors on the governance team changed since the implementation of LSG?	①	②	③	④	⑤
5. Relationships between board members have improved since the implementation of LSG.	①	②	③	④	⑤
6. The collaboration with the superintendent has improved since the implementation of LSG.	①	②	③	④	⑤
7. LSG has had/will have an impact on student outcomes.	①	②	③	④	⑤
8. LSG has improved the organization of our board meetings to focus on student outcomes.	①	②	③	④	⑤

Appendix B: Figure 2, continued*School Board Survey*

8/07/2022

Learner-Centered Policy and Governance: An Evaluation of School Board Behaviors on Student Outcomes in Texas

9. Our governance team will continue to implement LSG.	①	②	③	④	⑤
10. Have you seen improvements in district systems/processes since the implementation of LSG?	①	②	③	④	⑤
11. How many years have you implemented LSG? Check the corresponding number of years.	①	②	③	④	⑤
12. How many years have you been a board member? Please check the corresponding box and select 5 if you had served 5+ years.	①	②	③	④	⑤
13. Some board members believe that LSG is only beneficial to low-performing districts. Do you agree?	①	②	③	④	⑤
14. Has LSG helped you to better understand your role as a board member?	①	②	③	④	⑤
15. Would you recommend LSG to other school districts?	①	②	③	④	⑤

Appendix C

Lone Star Governance Board Evaluation Tool

Appendix C: Figure 3

School Board Evaluation Tool



TEXAS FRAMEWORK: VISION AND GOALS									
Vision and Goals 1: The board has adopted student outcome goals									
Does Not Meet Focus	0	Preparing To Focus	1	Approaches Focus	4	Meets Focus	12	Masters Focus	15
The board does not meet focus if any of the following are true:		The board is preparing to focus if the following is true.		The board approaches focus if all prior conditions and the following are true.		The board meets focus if all prior conditions and the following are true.		The board masters focus if all prior conditions and the following are true.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ The board does not have a vision.❑ The board does not have goals.❑ The board does not consistently distinguish between inputs, outputs, and outcomes.		The board has <ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ adopted a vision statement;❑ owned the vision development process while working collaboratively with the superintendent;❑ adopted three to five goals; and❑ owned the goal development process while working collaboratively with the superintendent.		All goals are specific, quantifiable, student outcome goals that include <ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ a population;❑ a five-year deadline of a month and year;❑ a baseline of a month and a year;❑ annual targets; and❑ annual student group targets.		<ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ All board members and the superintendent agree that the student outcome goals<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. will challenge the organization;2. require adult behavior change;3. are influenceable by the superintendent; and4. are the superintendent's first priority for resource allocation.❑ The board relied on a root-cause analysis, comprehensive student needs assessment, or a similar research-based tool to inform the identification and prioritization of all student outcome goals.		All board members and the superintendent <ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ have committed the vision and student outcome goals to memory;❑ know the current status of each student outcome goal; and❑ agree there is broad community ownership of the board's vision and student outcome goals through involvement and communication with students, staff, and community members.	

Appendix C: Figure 3, continued

School Board Evaluation Tool

TEXAS FRAMEWORK: VISION AND GOALS									
Vision and Goals 2: The board has adopted goal progress measures (GPMs) aligned to each student outcome goal									
Does Not Meet Focus	0	Preparing To Focus	1	Approaches Focus	4	Meets Focus	12	Masters Focus	15
The board does not meet focus if any of the following are true:		The board is preparing to focus if the following is true.		The board approaches focus if all prior conditions and the following are true.		The board meets focus if all prior conditions and the following are true.		The board masters focus if all prior conditions and the following are true.	
<input type="checkbox"/> The board does not have goal progress measures (GPMs). <input type="checkbox"/> The board is treating the annual targets for student outcome goals as if they are GPMs.		<input type="checkbox"/> The board has adopted GPMs for each student outcome goal. <input type="checkbox"/> The superintendent owned the GPM development process while working collaboratively with the board. <input type="checkbox"/> The status of each adopted GPM is able to be updated multiple times during each school year.		<input type="checkbox"/> The board has adopted no more than three GPMs for each student outcome goal. <input type="checkbox"/> All GPMs are student outputs, not adult inputs or outputs, that include <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. a population; 2. a five-year deadline of a month and a year; 3. a baseline of a month and a year; 4. annual targets; and 5. annual student group targets. 		All board members and the superintendent agree that the GPMs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> will challenge the organization; <input type="checkbox"/> require adult behavior change; <input type="checkbox"/> are influenceable by the superintendent; and <input type="checkbox"/> are all predictive of their respective student outcome goals. 		All board members and the superintendent agree there is broad community ownership of the GPMs through involvement and communication with students, staff, and community members.	

Appendix C: Figure 3, continued

School Board Evaluation Tool



TEXAS FRAMEWORK: VISION AND GOALS									
Vision and Goals 3: The board has adopted constraints									
Does Not Meet Focus	0	Preparing To Focus	1	Approaches Focus	3	Meets Focus	9	Masters Focus	10
The board does not meet focus if any of the following are true:		The board is preparing to focus if the following is true.		The board approaches focus if all prior conditions and the following are true.		The board meets focus if all prior conditions and the following are true.		The board masters focus if all prior conditions and the following are true.	
The board does not have constraints.		The board has <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> adopted 1 to 5 superintendent constraints; and <input type="checkbox"/> owned the constraint development process while working collaboratively with the superintendent. 		Each superintendent constraint describes a single operational action or class of actions the superintendent may not use or allow.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The board has adopted one to five board self-constraints. <input type="checkbox"/> The board, where appropriate, relied on a root-cause analysis, comprehensive student needs assessment, or similar research-based tool to inform the identification of and prioritization of superintendent constraints. <input type="checkbox"/> All board members and the superintendent agree that the constraints will challenge the organization to focus on the vision and uphold community values. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The board, in collaboration with the superintendent, has adopted one or more theories of action to drive overall strategic direction. <input type="checkbox"/> All board members and the superintendent agree there is broad community ownership of the constraints through involvement and communication with students, staff, and community members. 	

Appendix C: Figure 3, continued

School Board Evaluation Tool



TEXAS FRAMEWORK: VISION AND GOALS									
Vision and Goals 4: The board has adopted superintendent constraint progress measures (CPMs)									
Does Not Meet Focus	0	Preparing To Focus	1	Approaches Focus	2	Meets Focus	4	Masters Focus	5
The board does not meet focus if any of the following are true:		The board is preparing to focus if the following is true.		The board approaches focus if all prior conditions and the following are true.		The board meets focus if all prior conditions and the following are true.		The board masters focus if all prior conditions and the following are true.	
<input type="checkbox"/> The board does not have superintendent constraint progress measures (CPMs).		<input type="checkbox"/> The board has adopted CPMs for each superintendent constraint. <input type="checkbox"/> The superintendent owned the CPM development process while working collaboratively with the board. <input type="checkbox"/> The status of each adopted CPM is able to be updated multiple times during each school year.		<input type="checkbox"/> The board has adopted no more than three CPMs for each superintendent constraint. <input type="checkbox"/> All CPMs include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. a one- to five-year deadline of a month and year; 2. a baseline of a month and a year; and 3. annual targets. 		All board members and the superintendent agree that the superintendent CPMs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> will challenge the organization to focus on the vision; <input type="checkbox"/> will challenge the organization to uphold community values; <input type="checkbox"/> are all predictive of their respective constraint; and <input type="checkbox"/> are influenceable by the superintendent. 		All board members and the superintendent agree there is broad community ownership of the superintendent CPMs through involvement and communication with students, staff, and community members.	

Appendix C: Figure 3, continued

School Board Evaluation Tool

TEXAS FRAMEWORK: Progress and Accountability									
Progress and Accountability 1: The board invests at least half of its time to improving student outcomes									
Does Not Meet Focus	0	Preparing To Focus	1	Approaches Focus	4	Meets Focus	12	Masters Focus	15
<i>The board does not meet focus if any of the following are true:</i>		<i>The board is preparing to focus if the following is true.</i>		<i>The board approaches focus if all prior conditions and the following are true.</i>		<i>The board meets focus if all prior conditions and the following are true.</i>		<i>The board masters focus if all prior conditions and the following are true.</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/> The board does not have student outcome goals, GPMs, superintendent constraints, superintendent CPMs, or annual targets. <input type="checkbox"/> The board does not track its use of time in board authorized public meetings. <input type="checkbox"/> The board does not have a monitoring calendar.		<input type="checkbox"/> The superintendent owned the monitoring calendar development, working with the board to adopt a calendar that monitors <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. each student outcome goal at least four times per year; 2. no more than two student outcome goals per month; 3. each constraint at least once per year. <input type="checkbox"/> The calendar spans the length of the student outcome goals. <input type="checkbox"/> The board tracks its time in public meetings, identifying each minute according to the time use tracker.		10% or more of the total quarterly minutes in board authorized public meetings were invested in improving student outcomes according to the time use tracker.		25% or more of the total quarterly minutes in board authorized public meetings were invested in improving student outcomes according to the time use tracker.		50% or more of the total quarterly minutes in board authorized public meetings were invested in improving student outcomes according to the time use tracker.	

Appendix C: Figure 3, continued

School Board Evaluation Tool



TEXAS FRAMEWORK: Progress and Accountability									
Progress and Accountability 2: The board evaluates, but does not interfere with, progress toward improving student outcomes									
Does Not Meet Focus	0	Preparing To Focus	1	Approaches Focus	2	Meets Focus	4	Masters Focus	5
The board does not meet focus if any of the following are true:		The board is preparing to focus if the following is true.		The board approaches focus if all prior conditions and the following are true.		The board meets focus if all prior conditions and the following are true.		The board masters focus if all prior conditions and the following are true.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Any individual board member does not know if the school system is in low performing status and for how long. <input type="checkbox"/> Any individual board member does not know if any campus is in low performing status and for how long. <input type="checkbox"/> Any individual board member agrees that their first loyalty is owed to staff or vendors, rather than the vision, community values, and improving student outcomes. <input type="checkbox"/> The board has not voted to approve a self-evaluation within the past 12 months.		The board has <input type="checkbox"/> performed a self-evaluation within the previous 12 months using a research aligned instrument; <input type="checkbox"/> performed a superintendent annual evaluation no more than 15 months ago; <input type="checkbox"/> been provided copies of the superintendent's implementation plan(s) to make progress towards the student outcome goals; and <input type="checkbox"/> not voted to approve the superintendent's implementation plan unless required by law.		The board <input type="checkbox"/> performs self-evaluations using the LSG Integrity Instrument; <input type="checkbox"/> performed a self-evaluation no more than 45 days prior to the most recent superintendent's evaluation; and <input type="checkbox"/> evaluates the superintendent in part on the results and progress toward the student outcome goals and constraints using information within monitoring reports according to the monitoring calendar.		<input type="checkbox"/> The board receives, at least annually, a report on the average cost of staff time spent on governance using the staff use tracker. <input type="checkbox"/> One quarter ago the board 1. Performed a self-evaluation using the LSG Integrity Instrument; and 2. voted to approve the quarterly progress tracker.		The board <input type="checkbox"/> unanimously approved the current quarterly progress tracker; <input type="checkbox"/> has not modified outcome goals, GPMs, constraints, CPMs, or targets during the cycle applicable to the annual superintendent evaluation; and <input type="checkbox"/> considers superintendent performance as indistinguishable from system performance by evaluating the superintendent on only results and progress toward student outcome goals and constraints using information in monitoring reports according to the monitoring calendar.	

Appendix C: Figure 3, continued

School Board Evaluation Tool

TEXAS FRAMEWORK: Systems and Processes									
Systems and Processes: The board operates in a way that allows the superintendent to accomplish the vision									
Does Not Meet Focus	0	Preparing To Focus	1	Approaches Focus	4	Meets Focus	12	Masters Focus	15
The board does not meet focus if any of the following are true:		The board is preparing to focus if the following is true.		The board approaches focus if all prior conditions and the following are true.		The board meets focus if all prior conditions and the following are true.		The board masters focus if all prior conditions and the following are true.	
<input type="checkbox"/> The board has not received a monitoring report . <input type="checkbox"/> There were six or more board authorized public meetings in a month (unless a state of emergency was declared). <input type="checkbox"/> Any meeting of the board lasted longer than eight hours. <input type="checkbox"/> Board members did not receive the final version of materials to be voted on at least three calendar days in advance of the board authorized public meeting.		The board receives and votes to accept monitoring reports that include <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the student outcome goal and GPM or constraint and CPM being monitored; 2. the current status of the student outcome goal and GPM or constraint and CPM compared to previous, annual, and deadline targets; 3. the superintendent's interpretation of performance; and 4. supporting information that describes any needed next steps. 		<input type="checkbox"/> All consent-eligible items were placed on the consent agenda and more than 75% of the items were voted on using a consent agenda. <input type="checkbox"/> The adopted monitoring calendar has not been modified during the past quarter.		<input type="checkbox"/> Board authorized public meetings in the last quarter did not exceed <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. an average of four meetings per month; 2. an average of three hours per meeting; and 3. an average of five other topics per meeting. <input type="checkbox"/> The board has <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. reviewed its existing local policies; and 2. only adopted local policies pertaining to board work. 		<input type="checkbox"/> Board authorized public meetings in the last quarter did not exceed <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. an average of three meetings per month; 2. an average of two hours per meeting; and 3. an average of three other topics per meeting. <input type="checkbox"/> Board members received the final materials to be voted on at least seven calendar days before the public meeting. <input type="checkbox"/> No edits to the board's regularly scheduled meeting agenda in the three days prior to, or during, the meeting (unless a state of emergency was declared).	

Appendix C: Figure 3, continued

School Board Evaluation Tool

TEXAS FRAMEWORK: Advocacy and Engagement									
Advocacy and Engagement: The board promotes the vision									
Does Not Meet Focus	0	Preparing To Focus	1	Approaches Focus	3	Meets Focus	9	Masters Focus	10
The board does not meet focus if any of the following are true:		The board is preparing to focus if the following is true.		The board approaches focus if all prior conditions and the following are true.		The board meets focus if all prior conditions and the following are true.		The board masters focus if all prior conditions and the following are true.	
<input type="checkbox"/> The board has not publicly communicated the board adopted student outcome goals . <input type="checkbox"/> The board has not arranged for any community engagement activities during the previous 12-month period beyond public comments during board authorized public meetings and/or required hearings.		The board has a two-way communication system in place where the board members at least once per year <input type="checkbox"/> listen for and discuss the vision and values of their students; and <input type="checkbox"/> listen for and discuss the vision and values of their staff and community members.		The board has <input type="checkbox"/> provided time during regular scheduled board-authorized public meetings to recognize the accomplishments of its students and staff regarding progress on student outcome goals ; and <input type="checkbox"/> hosted a community meeting to discuss progress toward student outcome goals within each feeder pattern with low performing campuses during the previous 12-month period.		The board <input type="checkbox"/> displays and keeps updated the status and targets of all student outcome goals and GPMs permanently and publicly in the room in which the board most frequently holds regularly scheduled meetings; and <input type="checkbox"/> has led or co-led at least one training on Lone Star Governance for its community during the previous six-month period.		<input type="checkbox"/> Students have been included in at least one Lone Star Governance training or two-way communication meeting in the previous 12-month period. <input type="checkbox"/> Newly selected board members have received an orientation on Lone Star Governance by fellow board members or an LSG Coach prior to being seated.	

Appendix C: Figure 3, continued

School Board Evaluation Tool

TEXAS FRAMEWORK: Synergy and Teamwork									
Synergy and Teamwork: The board works collaboratively and with the superintendent to lead toward the vision.									
Does Not Meet Focus	0	Preparing To Focus	1	Approaches Focus	3	Meets Focus	9	Masters Focus	10
<i>The board does not meet focus if any of the following are true:</i>		<i>The board is preparing to focus if the following is true.</i>		<i>The board approaches focus if all prior conditions and the following are true.</i>		<i>The board meets focus if all prior conditions and the following are true.</i>		<i>The board masters focus if all prior conditions and the following are true.</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The board has not adopted board operating procedures. <input type="checkbox"/> The board does not have a policy that contains a template of ethics and conflicts of interest statement; <input type="checkbox"/> The board has not achieved a quorum in two or more board-authorized public meetings during the previous three months. <input type="checkbox"/> Board members serve on committees formed by superintendent or staff, unless serving is required by law. <input type="checkbox"/> A board member voted on an item for which they had a conflict of interest, as defined by law, during the previous three months. 		<p>The board</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> affirms that at least every two years, it has reviewed all policies governing board operating procedures; <input type="checkbox"/> affirms that all members have signed the ethics and conflict of interest statement in the past 12 months; <input type="checkbox"/> agrees that a committees' role is to advise the board, not to advise the staff; <input type="checkbox"/> agrees that a board officers' role is to advise the board, not to advise the staff; and <input type="checkbox"/> maintained a quorum throughout all regularly scheduled meetings for the past three months. 		<p>The board</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> agrees that every member is responsible for the outcomes of all students, not just students in their region of the school system; <input type="checkbox"/> maintained an average attendance of 70% or higher throughout all regularly scheduled board meetings over the previous three months; and <input type="checkbox"/> has set the expectation that information provided to one board member is provided to all board members. 		<p>The board</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> maintained an average attendance of 80% or higher throughout all regularly scheduled board meetings over the previous three months; <input type="checkbox"/> agrees that all members have adhered to all policies governing board operating procedures; <input type="checkbox"/> agrees that every member has completed all statutorily required trainings; and <input type="checkbox"/> rather than the superintendent, led the completion of Lone Star Governance tasks. 		<p>All board members and the superintendent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> have completed the Lone Star Governance Workshop; <input type="checkbox"/> agree that all board members have adhered to all adopted board constraints during the previous three months; and <input type="checkbox"/> agree that no board member has given operational advice or instructions to staff members during the previous three months. 	

Appendix D

Lone Star Governance Time Use Tracker Tool

Appendix D: Figure 4

Time Use Tracker

TIME USE TRACKER		Please enter district/charter name here		QTR:	Date:	
Framework Pillars	Student Outcome Minutes	Adult Behavior Minutes	The board tracks its time spent during public authorized meetings			
Vision and Goals	0	0	← Minutes setting student outcome goals			
		0	← Minutes setting constraints or theories of action			
Progress and Accountability	0	0	← Minutes receiving, discussing, and voting on Student Outcome Goal Monitoring Reports according to the board adopted Monitoring Calendar			
		0	← Minutes receiving, discussing, and voting on Constraint Monitoring Reports according to the board adopted Monitoring Calendar			
	0	0	← Minutes evaluating the superintendent on student outcome goals, GPMs, constraints, and CPMs			
		0	← Minutes performing board self-evaluations using the LSG Integrity Instrument			
Systems and Processes	Minutes discussing, debating, and voting on other agenda items (including consent agenda items) →				0	
Advocacy and Engagement	0		← Minutes hosting two-way communication meetings on student outcome goals, constraints, theories of action and/or progress toward student outcome goals			
			← Minutes recognizing the accomplishments of students and staff regarding progress on student outcome goals			
Synergy and Teamwork	Minutes fulfilling statutorily required public hearings, forums, and comments					
	Minutes fulfilling statutorily required or Lone Star Governance workshops					
	Minutes in closed session as permitted by law					
Other	Any time spent on an activity that does not meet the conditions listed above →				0	
TOTALS	0	0	0	0		
Use For Student Outcome and Adult Behavior Minutes Percentage Calculation: $\frac{0}{0} \times 100 = 0.00\%$ % Student Outcome and Adult Behavior Minutes						
Use For Student Outcome Minutes Percentage Calculation: $\frac{0}{0} \times 100 = 0.00\%$ % Student Outcome Minutes						
Trustees Present	Trustees Absent	% Attendance	Count of 'Other' Agenda Items	Goals Discussed	Goals on Target	% on Target
		0.00%				0.00%
Consent Items	Consent Items Removed	% Remaining on Consent Agenda		GPMs Discussed	GPMs on Target	% on Target
		0.00%				0.00%

Appendix E

Comparison of 2019 Accountability Scores to 2022 Accountability Scores for LSG versus Non-LSG Participants

Appendix E: Table 1

Comparison of 2019 Accountability Scores to 2022 Accountability Scores for LSG versus Non-LSG Participants

District	2019 Score	2022 Score	+/-	<i>M</i>
<i>Non-LSG</i>				
District A	87	81	-6	
Campus 1	73	80	7	
Campus 2	79	79	0	
Campus 3	86	81	-5	
District B	87	86	-1	
Campus 1	93	91	-2	
Campus 2	89	84	-5	
Campus 3	89	93	4	
Campus 4	78	81	3	
Campus 5	72	61	-11	
Campus 6	86	84	-2	
Campus 7	88	98	10	
District C	97	92	-5	
Campus 1	83	82	-1	
Campus 2	87	93	6	
Campus 3	97	95	-2	
District D	88	88	0	
Campus 1	93	80	-13	
Campus 2	93	80	-13	
Campus 3	82	92	10	
Campus 4	68	79	11	
Campus 5	84	84	0	
District E	77	87	10	
Campus 1	73	93	20	
Campus 2	76	70	-6	
Campus 3	79	88	9	
District F	93	96	3	
Campus 1	86	89	3	
Campus 2	92	92	0	
Non LSG District				0.16
Non LSG Campus				1

Appendix E: Table 1, continued

District	2019 Score	2022 Score	+/-	<i>M</i>
<i>LSG</i>				
District G – (Not LSG Coached)	78	78	0	
Campus 1	86	71	-15	
Campus 2	77	80	3	
Campus 3	61	70	9	
Campus 4	69	82	13	
Campus 5	78	84	6	
Campus 6	75	81	6	
Campus 7	86	95	9	
Campus 8	64	85	21	
Campus 10	76	74	-2	
Campus 11	82	90	8	
Campus 12	69	88	19	
Campus 13	63	59	-4	
Campus 14	69	84	15	
Campus 15	94	94	0	
Campus 16	73	77	4	
Campus 17	73	76	3	
Campus 18	60	66	6	
Campus 19	59	69	10	
Campus 20	75	68	-7	
Campus 21	76	78	2	
Campus 22	78	81	3	
District H – (LSG Coached)	84	89	5	
Campus 1	76	88	12	
Campus 2	68	84	16	
Campus 3	80	84	4	
District I – (LSG Coached)	85	88	3	
Campus 1	76	88	12	
Campus 2	82	88	6	
Campus 3	79	79	0	
Campus 4	76	82	6	
Campus 5	80	87	7	
District J – (LSG Coached)	85	77	-8	
Campus 1	87	58	-29	
Campus 2	83	76	-7	

Appendix E: Table 1, continued

District	2019 Score	2022 Score	+/-	<i>M</i>
District K – (LSG Coached)	67	80	13	
Campus 1	59	79	20	
Campus 2	59	79	20	
Campus 3	60	73	13	
Campus 4	65	84	19	
District L – (LSG Coached)	83	89	6	
Campus 1	72	92	20	
Campus 2	83	85	2	
Campus 3	81	86	5	
Campus 4	87	89	2	
LSG District				3.16
LSG Campus				6.08
District LSG Coached				3.8
District Not LSG Coached				0
Campus LSG Coached				7.11
Campus Not LSG Coached				5.19