



School District Governance Models and Interventions

Presentation to the
Efficient & Effective School District Governance Task Force by the
Office of Education Accountability
November 14, 2024

Study Description

- OEA reviewed:
 - Statutes and regulations, KY and nation
 - OEA 50 state analysis of state and local board laws*
 - Data from the National Center for Education Statistics
 - Research on state intervention and other state policies that change district governance
 - Media reports
- Study provides context for local district governance
 - Does not make recommendations

*Contained in Appendixes D (state board) and E (local boards)

Presentation Outline

- **Major Findings**
- Governance Structures
- State Policies And Governance Changes

Major Findings

- KY state and local board governance structures similar to other states
- State policies that address governance concerns include:
 - Small district consolidation
 - District deconsolidation (attempted)
 - Mayoral control
 - Secession of local communities from existing districts
 - State takeover

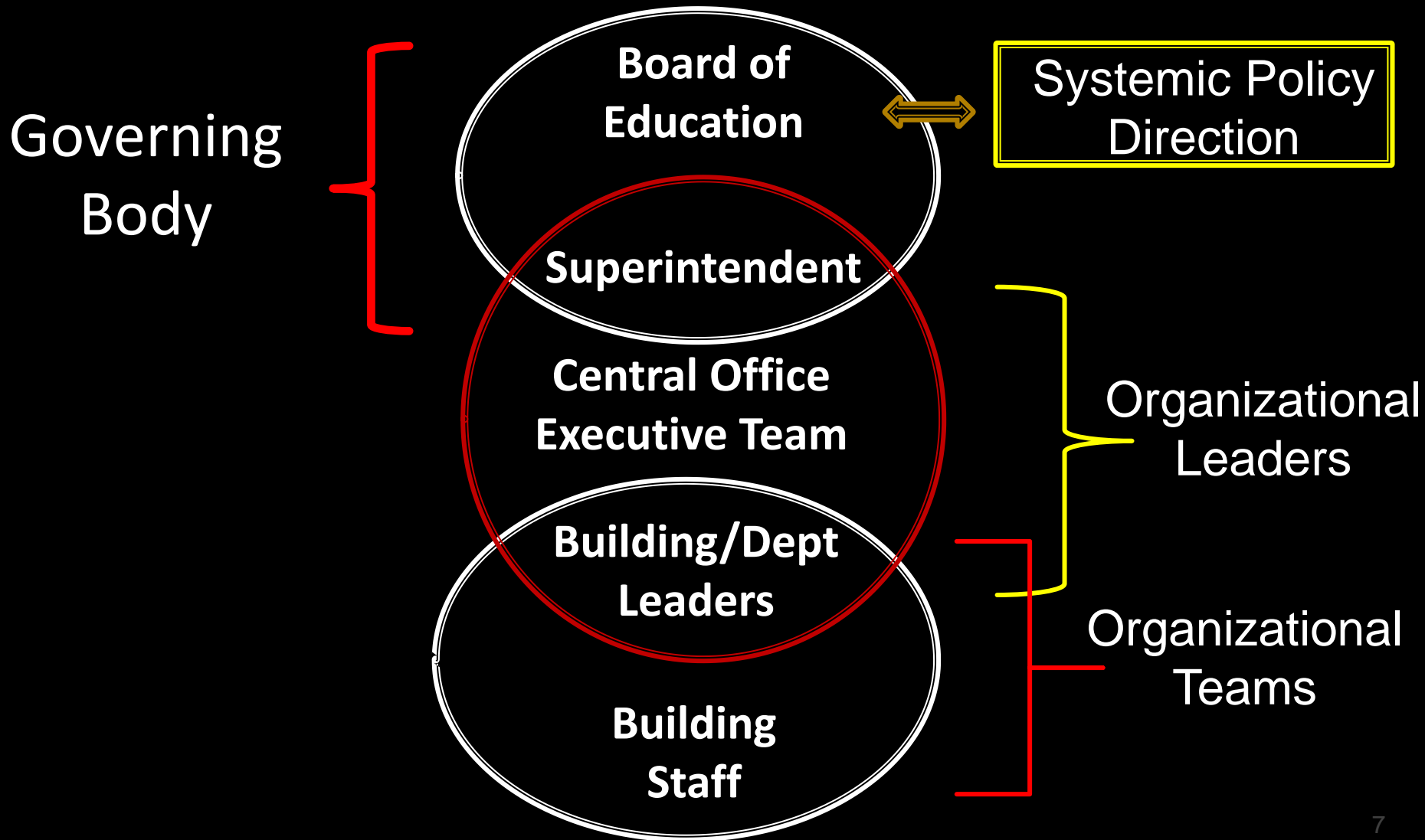
Major Findings

- Reforms achieve intended outcomes in some cases, but none have proven effective in all cases or come without challenges
- Common challenges include
 - Community concerns
 - Implementation/technical issues

Presentation Outline

- Major Findings
- **Governance Structures**
 - District governance
 - National comparison of local boards
- State Policies And Governance Changes

What Is School District Governance?



Local Board Governance

- The local board is the governing body of the district:
 - Sets policy directions on a wide range of financial, operational, and educational issues
 - Has general control and management of the district
 - Approves budgets and local tax rates
 - Selects the local superintendent
- Little research and no consensus on best *board* governance models
- Research does highlight general best practices, including
 - Common vision
 - Accountability for outcomes
 - Collaborative relationships

Local Board of Education

Process	Kentucky	Number of Similar States
Selection	Elected	36*
Terms	4 years	25
Number of members	Varies; (7 for JCPS and 5 for all others)	40

* In eight states, board members can be elected or appointed.

For example, mayors in some big cities appoint all or most board members.

Appendix E of the report shows laws for all 50 states.

Large District Local Board of Education Membership

Local Board Of Education	Number Of Local Board Members
Albuquerque, New Mexico	7
Austin, Texas	9
Baltimore City, Maryland	9
Denver, Colorado	7
Fort Worth, Texas	9
Jefferson County, Kentucky	7
San Diego Unified, California	5
Shelby County, Tennessee	9

Presentation Outline

- Major Findings
- Governance Structures
- **State Policies And Governance Concerns**
 - Full report describes concerns related to small districts and efforts over time to consolidate those districts
- District size
 - Deconsolidation of large districts
 - District secession
- Board authority
 - Mayoral control
 - State Intervention

Policymaker And Stakeholder Concerns About Large Districts

- Perceptions
 - District may not be responsive to community needs or values
 - District is inefficient
 - The local board does not represent or is not accountable to all stakeholders
- Low academic achievement
 - Achievement in most large school districts is lower than the rest of the state

Cause Of Lower Academic Achievement In Urban Districts

- Cause of lower performance difficult to isolate
 - District practices
 - Students enrolled in districts
- Almost all large urban districts have large percentages of typically lower-performing students compared with the rest of the state
- A 2019 study suggests that, taking student demographics into account, larger districts may not underperform the state
 - JCPS determined to perform very close to predicted score based on student demographics

Attempts to Legislate Deconsolidation Of Large Districts

- **Clark County, Nevada**
 - Legislation proposed 1997 but did not pass; efforts ongoing
- **Omaha, Nebraska**
 - Legislation passed in 2006 but later repealed
- **New Mexico**
 - Legislation proposed in 2017 but did not pass
- **North Carolina Legislative Committee**
 - Joint committee established in 2017 to study deconsolidation
- OEA is not aware of any deconsolidation efforts that have been finalized into law

Issues That Have Been Identified In Deconsolidation Efforts In Other States

- OEA analysis of committee meetings, task force minutes, and media reports identified issues that were considered including:
 - District boundaries
 - Property value disparities
 - Taxing authority
 - State funding and local effort
 - Capital costs
 - Existing debt and cost of new debt
 - Division of assets
 - Possible segregation issues
 - Specialty school status

Secession Laws And Effects

- Laws
 - 28 states have secession laws
 - Kentucky does not
 - Laws vary in permissiveness
 - AL, AR, TN require seceding district voter approval only
 - Most also require approval from voters in district left behind, the state, or both
- 40 districts seceded since 2000
 - Many others failed; some challenged on legal grounds
 - Since 2010, seceding districts located in Alabama, Arkansas, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Tennessee, and Utah
- Effects
 - Advantage – greater local control
 - Disadvantages – more segregated districts
 - Not necessarily more segregated schools

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Mayoral Control

Problems

- Low student achievement
- Perceptions of
 - Lack of board accountability
 - Inefficiency in district operations

Potential Benefits

- Effective leadership
- Strategic resource allocation
- More directly accountable to voters

Effects

- Student achievement improved in some districts but not
 - Consistent
 - Sustained
 - Effective at reducing achievement gaps
- Community resistance

Currently in 11 cities including New York, Boston, and Washington, D.C. Phased out in many others including, recently, Chicago.

State Takeover Of Local Districts

- State departments of education remove decision-making functions and authority from local leaders
 - Authority may be given to state personnel, mayors, or private management organizations
- 34 states, including Kentucky have takeover laws
- Reasons for state takeovers
 - Financial reasons (75%)
 - Academic reasons (50%)
 - Other reasons (30%)*

*Such as mismanagement or noncompliance

Effects Of State Takeover

Based on analysis of stake takeovers nationwide, researchers have concluded that they:

- Are associated with improvements in district financial health on some indicators*
 - May be associated with increase in state assistance
 - Unclear whether efficiency increased
- Are not associated, on average, with improvements in academic performance**

* 104 takeover districts included in analysis.

** 35 takeover districts included in analysis.

Effects Of State Takeover: Case Studies

- The full report contains case studies
 - Houston
 - Tennessee – Achievement School District
 - New Orleans
- Case studies show
 - Positive results related to academic achievement in some (New Orleans) and not others (Tennessee)
 - Common challenges
 - Teacher protests
 - Community concerns
 - Lawsuits

End

Questions?