

4. The Outer Context Role of the College of Teachers

4.1 Governance and Management

The success of the school depends largely on the relationships that exist between the school's key personnel.

The role of the College of Teachers at the Vancouver Waldorf School can only be properly understood within the context of the school's overall governance and management structure. This, in turn, must be understood in terms of the conventional wisdom regarding best practice in school organizational structure. This insight is based on an understanding that there exists a clear difference between "governance" and "management" and that between them there is a specific relationship. This leads to the following insight:

Governance and *management* perform *separate* but crucially interrelated functions. Each sphere has specific authorities, defined in terms of each other and these form natural inherent boundaries with clear relationship rules between them. Problems always arise when the boundaries are blurred, when governors try to manage or when managers try to govern.

The Australian peak independent schools representative body, Independent Schools Victoria (ISV), produced a document titled "Across The Board" to assist member schools to establish and maintain best practice in school organization. That body, which is the equivalent of the FISA in British Columbia, invests a considerable resource into this area because professional experience has shown that lack of attention to it has contributed significantly to issues encountered by member schools. This document states:

It is an essential aspect of good governance that clear boundaries exist between the overall governance of the School, which is the responsibility of the Board, and the day-to-day management of the School, which is the responsibility of the Principal and senior management team. (I.e. College of Teachers in our setting and stated here after)

It is not the Board's responsibility to become involved in the day-to-day management and operations of the School. This is the responsibility of the (College of Teachers)

It is pivotal to organizational success and efficiency that the Board does not impose on the duties and authority of the (College of Teachers) and vice versa. *The success of the school depends largely on the relationships that exist between the school's key personnel.* (Italics added)¹

4.2 Management

In this picture "management" refers to the responsibilities associated with all the operational decision-making activities required for the day-to-day organization and operation of the school, both educational and financial. These responsibilities are carried out with full authority defined in accordance with the school's aims, its strategic direction, its policies and procedures and its budget. In a traditional school structure a *Principal supported by a management team* fulfills this role. In a Waldorf school, it is fulfilled by the College of Teachers. Identifying this distinction will be useful for clarifying the often-fraught relationship in a Waldorf school between the College of Teachers as "manager" and the Board of Trustees as "governors". However there are *significant differences* between the way a school principal and a College of Teachers will fulfill this managerial role. Most notably these differences arise from the fact that the College must fulfill its inner context role in relation to spiritual work and that it is collective and not individual. So applying the "governance/management" paradigm still requires clarity on this matter in order to avoid confusion in the necessary relationship for, taking excellent professional *skills* as given,

The success of the school depends largely on the *relationships* that exist between the school's key personnel.

¹ Ref: <http://www.is.vic.edu.au/schools/governance/atb/index.htm> downloaded 29th June 2013

To recap, it is useful to refer to the College of Teachers in two different but clearly related contexts, the inner and the outer. [NOTE: This aspect is discussed in detail in the full document]

The inner refers to the responsibility of the College for spiritual work and the outer concerns its place as a “manager” defined in terms of the difference between “governance” and “management”. In this context it is appropriate to see the College of Teachers as directly equivalent to the Principal with a supportive management team. However the inner context image is how the College of Teachers fulfills its role in terms of the aims of Waldorf education understood anthroposophically and in actuality this is really the only way that a College of Teachers can be *properly and fully understood*. (The next section *The Inner Context Role of the College of Teachers* deals with the description of the way that the College of Teachers fulfills that role.) But this does not mean that the outer context expression is not valid; the College of Teachers must work within the laws of society, hence the need to also understand its role in the “structural/legal” context. What this highlights though is the need to be clear about what context we are referring to when we are speaking of the College of Teachers. The *meanings* of words change *depending on the context* to which they relate, and it is quite truthful to have different, but equally true meanings, for a single word. This is particularly important to bear in mind in relation to complex organizations because the more complex the organization, the greater are the number of possible contexts. In fact acknowledging of this reality marks a level of sophistication in organizational thinking that is a sign of it becoming more mature in its development. Failure to do so however risks regularly putting organizational dialogs at “cross purposes”.

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However in order to explore the role of the College of Teachers in this outer, structural/legal context, a clear description of “governance” is first required.

4.3 Governance

Governance, on the other side, refers to the role and responsibilities of the Board of Trustees of the company who in turn act on behalf of the members. As governors they are responsible in *two directions*:

1. Inward: Looking inwardly they must monitor the processes of management to ensure that it is being carried out with the highest degree of professionalism.

This means:

- a. Approving the *legality* of all school policies, as these are the documents that define the expectation of management in a range of areas. They are the “governance tools” of Management. The Board does not necessarily have the expertise to *frame* these and therefore this is an activity delegated to Management however the Board does need to ensure that the policies are legal.
- b. Approving and monitoring the yearly budget.
- c. Monitoring the on going activities of the management of the school through receiving and examining reports provided by Management. In this function the Board of Trustees understands that it has no power to change or interfere in Management decisions (as per the need for clear separation of roles) except in certain conditions. These are, if a decision is one that:
 - i. Is Illegal
 - ii. Is Outside of a mandated authority
 - iii. Is significantly outside of budget guidelines without prior approval
 - iv. Contravenes school policy
 - v. Brings, or risks bringing, the organization into disrepute
- d. Appointing the school “Manager”. In the conventional sense this refers to the Principal and Business and/or Finance Manager. However as discussed, in the context of Waldorf education the school “Manager” is a

collective, the College of Teachers. A way through this difficulty must be found and will be discussed later. For now it is sufficient to note that the Board of Trustees has a responsibility to monitor the operational management of the school. *How* it does this is not fixed, *only that it does it.*

- e. Reviewing the performance of the school Manager.
 - f. Approving the audited accounts for the Annual General Meeting.
2. Outward: Looking outwardly they must ensure that the *strategic direction* of the school is developed and applied to on-going budgeting purposes. The strategic direction of the school articulates the school's commitment to the educational outcomes it sees as essential to cultivate in its graduates. It indicates the specific programs designed to support those outcomes to which the school is committed. It is a document that must be based on a deep penetration of Waldorf pedagogy and its educational aims. It often takes the form of a 5 to 10 year plan with clear objectives for achievable *short, medium* and *long-term* goals. The Board of Trustees *does not set* the strategic direction but it has the responsibility to ensure that it is clearly articulated. The role of the Board of Trustees in this case is to support and resource the school's Management to develop the periodic review and articulation of the strategic direction that shows an adequate response to local and world events.

4.4 The College of Teachers in the context of "Management"

Now is the moment to address the role of the College of Teachers in the structural/legal context of the school operation.

In this context the College of Teachers must act *like* a school Principal with a management team. That is it must ensure that sound Waldorf pedagogical principles are being reviewed, developed and practiced in the school and that the school is being managed well and within both the budget and the law. That is the responsibility that it,

and by implication each member of the College of Teachers, undertakes to *ensure*. It must be made quite clear at this point that this is a *real and specific legal responsibility* formally transferred by the Board of Trustees to the College of Teachers². This formality, included in the company constitution³, makes the College of Teachers *in this context*, accountable to the Board of Trustees.

However as discussed in relation to the three-fold social order, pedagogical responsibility in a Waldorf school is understood in a very different way than it is in conventional schools. In Waldorf education, pedagogical responsibility includes the ideal that the responsibility for decision-making on all levels be invested in the collective of practicing teachers working with a specific spiritual practice, and so within this paradigm they are accountable to no other body in the school.⁴ As discussed this charge was very specifically and consciously connected to the founding of the educational movement; it is an essential aspect of the education that makes it what it is and so it is imperative that this spiritual imperative not be lost for purely expedient purposes. On the other hand it is also fully recognized that there is an equal and eminently practical imperative to establish an efficient school management complying with the laws of the land and good financial and organizational management practices. The following organizational structure balances these apparently contrary demands on the College of Teachers. It sets out a map allowing for necessary formal legal relationship between the College of Teachers and the Board of Trustees while simultaneously allowing it to exist as a body that operates in freedom in the cultural sense. To interpret this “map” it is necessary to continue to hold in view the relationship between the inner and outer contexts of the College of Teachers.

At this point it is relevant to reiterate again the fact that conditions in society necessary for the full expression of the ideal of social organization as described in the Three Fold Social Order do not yet exist and that it is one of the most pressing tasks of Waldorf

² This point becomes important consideration in the choice made by a new member

³ See Appendix 3

⁴ Tautz, J. (1991)

education to prepare for its realisation in the future.⁵ [NOTE: This aspect is discussed in detail in the full document] To that extent then one way in which this will be achieved will be through constant striving to *innovate organizational structures within the constraints* of conventional society.⁶ This effort should be understood as a creative act of the school organization that exactly equates with the creative act of a teacher who penetrates Steiner's pedagogical indications when shaping their individual expression of the education. There is no extant "three fold social order" structure that the school can use as a model any more than there is a prescriptive Waldorf curriculum that any teacher can take and apply. It is true that there is a wonderful tradition of educational practice that a teacher can draw on for inspiration; however that is not so strongly present with regards to practical expressions of the three fold social order. This fact tells us, by observation that for all of the wonderful, established practice in Waldorf education in schools we are as a movement still, relatively, at the beginning of our practice with regards to finding our expression of the three fold social order. This is not an insignificant point here because it is again a matter of context. In other words the potential for loss of clarity is only due to confusion of context. In the context of educational practice we are relatively mature and experienced, in the context of organizational development we are *relatively* naïve and inexperienced. The point is made because in this task we are both the researchers and the subject of the research and as such "self awareness" is essential to the task. It is to be understood in the spirit of innovation.

⁵ "There is an expression by Rudolf Steiner: 'We are the forerunners of the forerunners.' Rudolf Steiner said that of himself. It is all a first beginning, and that has to be difficult." Tautz, J. (1982) p.57

⁶ Steiner himself spoke about the need to comply with current requirements and the fact that it was not possible to achieve all he and the founding teachers wished. However, he asked the founding teachers to 'use the holes that remained in the tightly woven web that spreads over the educational system.' ⁶ Steiner, R. (1919)

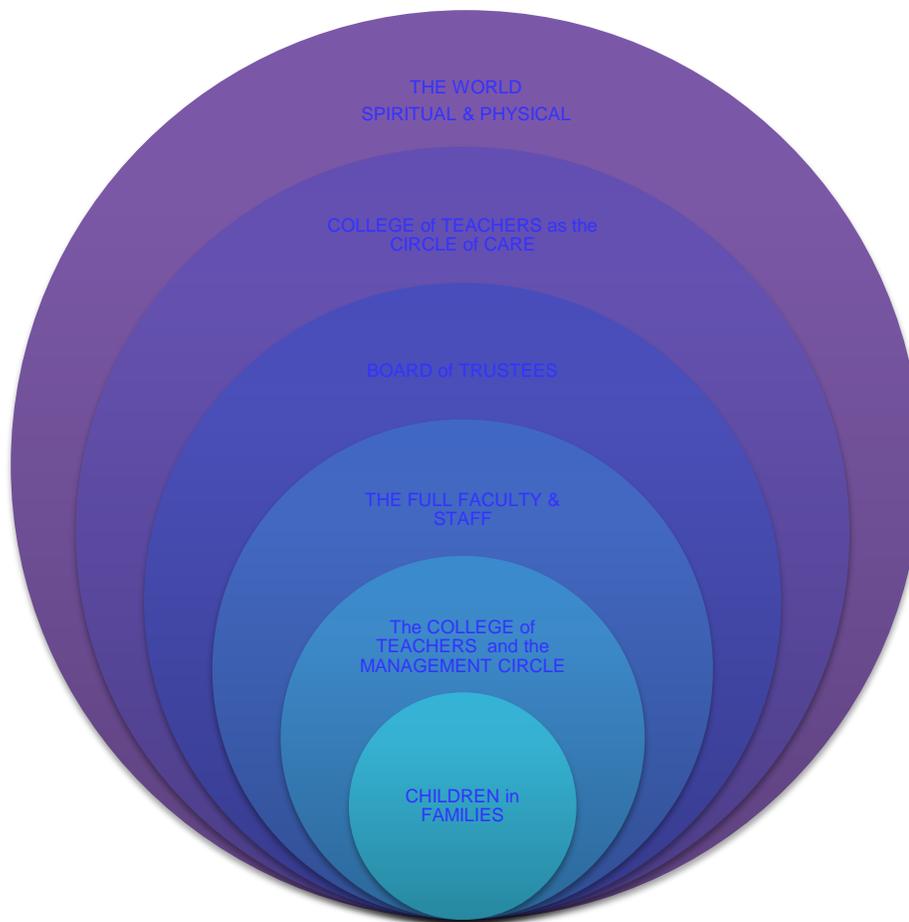
4.4.1 The College of Teachers as a Circle of Care

The following diagram conceptualizes the relationship between the governance and management of the school within a larger picture that includes all necessary relationships. The form of the diagram (i.e. a nested Venn diagram) is specific because, as discussed later, it allows the relationships between each component part of the school to be conceptualized as a “service relationship”. It is necessarily non-hierarchical and introduces a surprising element that accounts for and allows the two separate but related contexts within which the idea of the College of Teachers operates.

To do this, unlike ordinary organizational structural diagrams it contextualizes the whole organization of the school in relationship to the world⁷ by introducing the notion of a “Circle of Care”. This aspect is not a “structure” in the true sense of the word; it is a *commitment to practice* and is therefore a statement of *activity* rather than structure. This is not a problem here as the whole intent of the diagram is to conceptualize the organization as a holistic enterprise – something that cannot be done separate from its activity.

⁷ Others leave this out and so by omission contextualize themselves relative to themselves

4.4.2 The Vancouver Waldorf School Organizational Structure per Service Relationships



It also deliberately places the children at the heart of the activity *in the context of the family* thus locating the parents in their rightful relationship to the education. The College of Teachers as the expression of the “Circle of Care” is a description of the College in terms of the inner, spiritual context. This is discussed in detail in the following section.

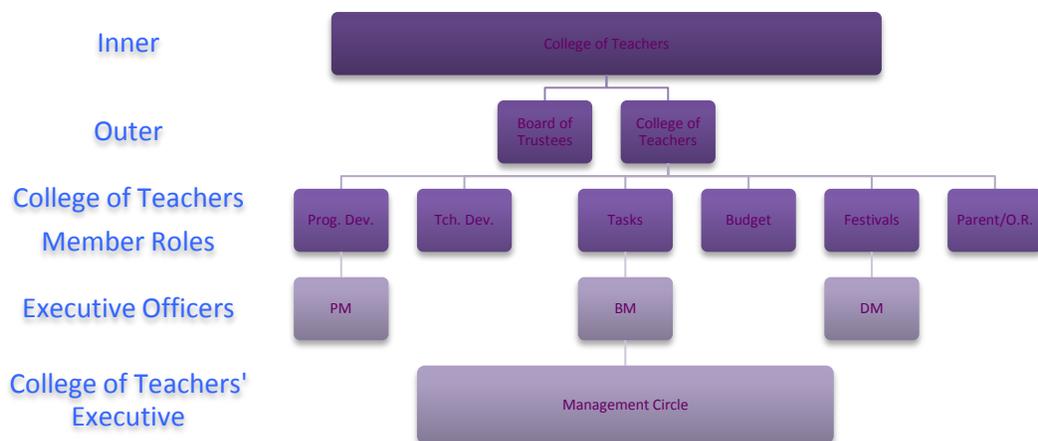
Concerning the College of Teachers in the outer context, the context of Management, this organizational structure introduces the “Management Circle” of the College of Teachers. The mandate of the Management Circle clearly identifies it as the *structural tool* for the outer, Management context of the College of Teachers. It acts as an *executive authority* for the College. This is achieved through three significant features of the mandate:

1. The clear *delegation of authority* to make decisions on behalf of the College of Teachers
2. Its membership and
3. The requirement for it to act consultatively. (These points are discussed below.)

4.4.2.1 Component Organizational Relationships in the Context of “Service”

Finally it is to be noted that this organizational structure diagram is deliberately drawn as a *nested Venn diagram* rather than in the usual connected box form. The nested form diagrammatically communicates what can be characterized as a “service relationship”. In this is the concept that the activity of any outer spheres of activity fully penetrates any sphere inward to it. At the same time each inner sphere provide the complete *raison d'être* for the outer spheres. That is, the activity of an outer sphere is meaningless without the activity of the inner sphere because they *serve* the inner ones. In this sense there is a definite two-way flow between inner and outer. This point is crucial to the conceptualization . . .

4.4.5 Vancouver Waldorf School Organizational Structure per Functional Relationships



[Please note due to technical limitations lines connecting The Management Circle to the PM and DM are, at this point, missing]