The nature of hybrid governance:

A case study of a large and well-established European international school

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Author declaration

I hereby declare that this dissertation is original. All sources used are fully acknowledged and quotations are properly identified.

Abstract

International schools are growing in number at an unprecedented rate and nearly 5 million students are now estimated to be in international education. Despite this, the governance of international schools remains largely unexplored, although existing data points to great diversity of governance structure. Evidence suggests that hybrid governance comprising both elected and appointed board members may be optimal.

This exploratory case study sought to investigate the nature of hybrid governance. Interview and observation data from board members and school leaders of an international school in western Europe was processed using a deductive approach and triangulated with interviews with experts in international education. Hybrid governance was found to offer the advantages of both elected and appointed boards. Elections foster transparency, representation of stakeholders and interest from the school community, while appointments allow the board to be populated with particular skills. The hybrid structure may also buffer against the disadvantages of fully elected and fully appointed boards; however, the processes of governor recruitment and training also appear to play a significant role.

A model was presented for hybrid governance in the international school context in which the hybrid structure is underpinned by recruitment practices that ensure governors complement the existing skillset of the board and have desirable motivations for serving. Governor training promotes long-term strategic planning, positive relationships and representation of stakeholders, by establishing protocols and ensuring governors understand their role. This model may be useful for informing international school improvement efforts as it is compatible with the diverse landscape of international education.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The number of international schools globally is growing at an unprecedented rate (ISC Research, 2018) and the landscape has shifted from mainly not-for-profit institutions to a patchwork of for-profit and not-for-profit schools, differing in terms of their culture, language, curriculum, composition, accreditation and governance (Hayden & Thompson, 2013; James & Sheppard, 2014).

Governance is known to impact the educational outcomes of students (Connolly & James, 2011) yet little research has been done into international school boards. Given that 5 million students are estimated to be in international education (ISC Research, 2018), it is vital that schools are provided with guidance to optimise their governance.

James and Sheppard (2014) provide the only comprehensive overview of governance structures within the international school context. Their research, detailed further in section 2.4, suggests it may be advantageous to combine elected and self-perpetuating models into a hybrid structure. This study intends to further explore this idea through addressing the following research question:

What is the nature of hybrid governance in an international school?

The next chapter is a review of the literature pertaining to international schools and their governance. Chapter 3 outlines the methodology of the study and chapter 4 is a summary of the data collected during interviews and observations. In chapter 5, data is analysed and a model is provided for the hybrid governance of international schools. In the final chapter, recommendations are made for the international school community.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter begins with an introduction to the nature of international schools. Section 2.2 provides a brief overview of school governance in general and international school governance in particular. Sections 2.3 and 2.4 consider the individuals that make up international school boards (stakeholder versus skills-based governance) and how they are selected (elected or appointed). Section 2.5 explores how we can define 'good governance'. The final section provides a summary of the review.

2.1. The nature of international schools

Historically, international schools have been regarded as not-for-profit institutions, founded to provide an education for globally mobile families or promote a particular philosophy (Hayden & Thompson, 2013). Hayden & Thompson (2013) categorise these as Type A and Type B international schools respectively. Their common features include accreditation by international bodies, delivery of an international curriculum by multi-national teachers, a multi-lingual and multi-national student body, and an English or bilingual language of instruction (Hayden & Thompson, 2013).

According to ISC Research (2018), the number of international schools has grown by 335% since 2000. Many of these new schools do not fit neatly into the Type A or Type B categories. Instead, they tend to fall within Hayden & Thompson's (2013) third group, Type C. Such international schools are usually operated for profit under private ownership and serve the wealthy local population. In fact, approximately 80% of international school students now attend Type C schools (ISC Research, 2018). This increase in commercialisation of the international school sector is exemplified by the growth of corporate brands of schools (Hayden & Thompson, 2013). These changes challenge past generalisations.

It is difficult to define international schools because there is no international body with the authority to set standards (Bunnell, Fertig & James, 2016). The term 'international school' can therefore be used indiscriminately and, as a result, Hayden and Thompson (2013) conclude that the only shared feature of all international schools is the provision of an international curriculum. Wilkinson (2002, pp. 189) supports this view, claiming the IB Diploma is "the most obvious outward manifestation" of an international school. It has been argued, however, that an international curriculum itself is hard to define (Bunnell, Fertig & James, 2016) because international curricula are increasingly being offered in national schools (Hill, 2014).

Some researchers have instead defined international schools based on their shared values. Hayden and Thompson (1995; 1998) found that students and teachers value the development of an international attitude above studying an international curriculum. This may include international mindedness, openness, collaboration and democracy (Hayden, Rancic & Thompson, 2000). There is evidence, however, that these values are not restricted to the international education context or universally held (James, 2005). This was exemplified by McKenzie (1998) who found that educators in the UK and Japan could not agree on a single set of values. Furthermore, eurocentricity is acknowledged as informing the curriculum and pedagogical values of most international curriculum providers (James, 2005).

A tension exists in international schools where their cultural context is at odds with the curriculum they deliver (Guthrie, 2016), particularly given that increasing numbers of teachers and students come from the host country (Hayden & Thompson, 2013). In fact, cultural context emerges as a major factor affecting international schools. Sternberg (2007) found that students are more successful, and schools teach and assess more effectively, when cultural context is considered. Furthermore, Walker (2007) argues that cultural context is vital for

successful, values-driven leadership, and that failure to take cultural context into account often leads to the failure of new initiatives in schools.

The diversity of international schools and wide range of cultural contexts means their leadership and governance is highly complex (Connolly & James, 2011). In the national context, it has been highlighted that such diversity may negatively impact upon community values (Wong, 2011). Others argue, however, that diversity leads to innovation and competition, which raises standards (Connolly & James, 2011). What is certainly the case, however, is that the immense variation in international schools is reflected in the diversity of their governance, and this will be explored in the following sections.

For the purposes of this dissertation, the term 'international school' will encompass the three school types (Type A, B and C) as identified by Hayden and Thompson (2013), while being mindful of the diversity that exists within these groups.

2.2 School governance

It is generally acknowledged that governing bodies take overall responsibility for their organisations, although governance structure can take many different forms (James & Sheppard, 2014). James et al. (2010) outline three common governance models: the stewardship model, the principal-agent model and the stakeholder model. In the stewardship model, there is a common interest between the shareholders and the management of an organisation; in the principal-agent model, there exists a disconnect of interest; and, in the stakeholder model, the board directly represents those with a stake in the organisation (James et al., 2010). Wide variation occurs within and between the voluntary and corporate sectors (James & Sheppard, 2014).

School governance in particular has been a significant topic of research over the last 20 years and numerous studies have explored the contribution of governance to school improvement (Ranson, 2011). Governing bodies have been found to safeguard the quality of institutional leadership through providing strategy, scrutiny and support (Ranson, 2011). They can also directly impact upon student attainment by improving the working structures of the organisation, leading an improved learning environment (Ranson, 2011). Mackenzie (2012) places these ideas within the international school context, describing how governing bodies are crucial to the success of international schools because they are responsible for selecting the head of school, safeguarding the school's finances, and creating and enacting a strategic vision (MacKenzie, 2012).

The board model for school governance is prevalent in international schools (James & Sheppard, 2014) in which long- and medium-term strategic planning tends to be separated from the day-to-day operations of the school (Connolly et al., 2017). Wide variation exists in terms of how the boards are constituted, however, with elements of the stewardship model, the principal-agent model and the stakeholder model apparent within the international school sector (James & Sheppard, 2014). Sections 2.3 and 2.4 explore who is on the board of international schools (stakeholder versus skills-based governance) and how they are selected (elected vs appointed boards).

Throughout this dissertation, the 'board' refers to the governing body of an international school. The terms 'governors' and 'board members' are used interchangeably to denote those who have seats on the board. These individuals shoulder significant responsibilities as they make decisions on behalf of children, teachers and parents (MacKenzie, 2012).

2.3 Stakeholder versus skills-based governance

The stakeholder and skills-based models for governance are two approaches for determining who should govern a school, and both these approaches appear extensively in the international school setting (James and Sheppard, 2014). In the stakeholder model of governance, groups within the school are directly represented in their governance structure (Connolly et al., 2017). Juxtaposed is the skills-based model, which emphasises skills over representation, and constitutes boards based on their expertise (Connolly et al., 2017).

Over 40 years ago, government reform in the UK led to the creation of school governing bodies based upon the stakeholder model (Connolly et al., 2017). Connolly et al. (2017) provide an overview of the different definitions of 'stakeholder' and highlight that the ambiguity of this term can make it difficult for schools to effectively engage with. Nevertheless, in this dissertation, the term 'stakeholder' will align with Freeman's (1984: 46, pp. 32, in Connolly et al., 2017) conceptualisation of a stakeholder as "any individual or group who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organisation's objectives". In the international school context, this often comprises the faculty, staff, parents and students of the school.

Stakeholder representation in international schools centres around the role of parents as governors (James & Sheppard, 2014). This model is viewed positively by some because parents have a direct, personal interest in the success of a school (MacKenzie, 2012), and it promotes transparency and democratic participation (James & Sheppard, 2014). Nevertheless, engaging parents in governance is a well-documented challenge across different schools and systems (Connolly & James, 2011). Heystek (2011), for example, describes how parental involvement in the governance of South African schools is limited by a lack of competence and a lack of desire to participate in governance. This reluctance to

participate may be echoed in international school settings where parents are from a different cultural background or do not speak the working language of the school.

Some international schools support direct representation of faculty or staff through a specific seat on the board. In many European countries, it is the norm that employees are represented at board level, yet many international schools are in countries with little tradition of this (MacKenzie, 2012). MacKenzie (2012) advocates for the faculty board member role because it provides the perspective of someone currently working in a school, as opposed to other board members who may have only vague recollections of their own schooling. Nevertheless, MacKenzie (2012) concedes that a teacher on the board occupies a challenging position, privy to confidential information inaccessible to other colleagues.

The skills-based model for school governance contrasts with the stakeholder model because it values the individual attributes of governors above their role in the school community. Recent years have seen a drive to recruit leadership expertise from the business world as part of an effort to professionalise school governance (Connolly & James, 2011). New regulations for schools in England (DfE, 2015), for example, are steering school leadership towards smaller governing bodies with a greater focus on skills (Connolly, Farrell & James, 2017). This requires boards to undertake an audit of their collective skills and invite individuals to join the board based on what they can contribute to the overall skillset of the board (Connolly et al., 2017).

There exists a tension, therefore, between the individual capabilities of governors and the participation of stakeholders in governance (Connolly & James, 2011). Haikio (2012) describes this in terms of legitimacy versus accountability: legitimacy is conferred through governors having the skills to be able to effectively lead the school and accountability is promoted by governors being stakeholders. Connelly et al. (2017, pp.14) suggest a "stakeholder plus" approach, in which governors have stakeholder interests but also fill

expertise gaps identified by the board, as a way to promote both legitimacy and accountability. This aligns with the hybrid model described by James and Sheppard (2014) and outlined in section 2.4.

Finally, it is worth noting the significant role that governments can play in influencing governance structure (Connolly & James, 2011). The stakeholder approach was promoted in the UK for decades, yet recent years have seen a shift towards the skills-based model (Connolly et al., 2017). In contrast, Heystek (2011) describes how a participative democratic model is now mandated in South Africa, in which the chair must be a parent and the parents must form the majority group on the board (Connolly & James, 2011).

While international schools may look to national systems for direction, it can be country-dependent and changeable as to which governance model is favoured. Furthermore, the accrediting bodies of international schools vary in their requirements with relation to governance (e.g. NEASC, 2018; CIS, 2018a). This means international schools have little guidance as to which governance model to utilise and has led to great diversity within the international school community. This was investigated by James and Sheppard (2014) and their findings are outlined in section 2.4.

2.4 Comparing elected and self-perpetuating boards

James and Sheppard (2014) provide the most comprehensive study into international school governance and reveal two main structural approaches: elected and self-perpetuating boards. They identify self-perpetuating boards as where the board itself is responsible for the appointment of new members (James & Sheppard, 2014). While self-perpetuating boards tend to align with a skills-based approach to governance, this is not always the case: in some for-profit schools, boards may comprise the owner and their family members (James & Sheppard,

2014). Elected boards, meanwhile, tend to align with the stakeholder model described in 2.3, as both support democratic participation (James & Sheppard, 2014). Typically, elected boards of international schools include current parents (James & Sheppard, 2014).

James and Sheppard (2014) create a framework for analysis in which international schools are divided into 4 types:

1. Community, for-profit

2. Private, for-profit

3. Community, not-for-profit

4. Private, not-for-profit

James and Sheppard (2014) argue that ownership affects decision-making, hence dividing schools into whether they are owned by a single owner or group of shareholders (private), versus owned by a trust or foundation (community). They also distinguish between schools that produce a profit to directly benefit the shareholders or owners (for-profit), compared with schools that use any surplus to develop and enhance the school itself (not-for-profit).

Their analysis reveals that private schools, both for-profit and not-for-profit, tend to have self-perpetuating boards (James & Sheppard, 2014). The community, not-for-profit category, was more diverse, including schools with an elected board, a self-perpetuating board, and a hybrid of the two (James & Sheppard, 2014). From their data, James and Sheppard (2014) identify the advantages and disadvantages of each model, and these are outlined in the subsequent paragraphs.

Not-for-profit schools with elected boards were viewed most positively in terms of promoting a democratic approach (James & Sheppard, 2014). Bunnell (2016) is in favour of such democratic participation in the running of international schools, yet suggests it is becoming an ever more distant goal as the number of schools being run for profit increases. Data from James and Sheppard (2014) supports this view: only 7% of for-profit schools had fully elected board compared with 30% from the whole sample. Nevertheless, a number of problems are identified with elected parent boards, including lack of strategic oversight and long-term planning, and high turnover of board members (James & Sheppard, 2014).

With self-perpetuating boards, a different set of challenges emerges. Self-perpetuating boards have an increased potential to become set in their ways, reluctant to take risks, yet become involved in the micromanagement of the school (James & Sheppard, 2014). Self-perpetuating boards are also viewed by heads of school as lacking both stakeholder voice and transparency. Furthermore, where the owner of the school is the board chair, the head of school can find they have no recourse (James & Sheppard, 2014).

An advantage of the self-perpetuating model is that governors often have a personal interest in the school's financial stability and long-term sustainability (James and Sheppard, 2014). Nevertheless, the most positive feedback about self-perpetuating boards came from the community, not-for-profit group, which valued the "continuity, stability, and institutional memory" provided by a self-perpetuating board (James and Sheppard, 2014, pp.15).

As an outcome of their research, James and Sheppard (2014) suggest a hybrid between the elected and self-perpetuating models may serve to offset the disadvantages of each. Participants experiencing governance under the hybrid model viewed it positively, highlighting in particular the balance it provides between democratic participation and "takeovers by agenda-wielding parents" (James & Sheppard, 2014, pp.16), and did not state any

disadvantages. These findings were the inspiration for this study of hybrid governance in the international school context.

2.5 Defining good governance

In order to explore hybrid governance, it is important to first consider what is 'good governance'. Although it is known that governing bodies play a role in the nature and quality of education (Connolly & James, 2011), it is difficult to define 'effective' or 'high quality' governance (Forrest, Goodall, Hill & James, 2016).

Forrest et al. (2016) suggest governance is evaluated through the concept of its legitimacy, defined as conforming "to a socially constructed set of norms, definitions, beliefs and values and are therefore proper and desirable" (Suchman, 1995, in Forrest et al., 2016, pp. 6). Scott (2014, in Forrest et al., 2016) outlines three pillars underpinning the legitimacy of an institution: regulatory, normative and cultural-cognitive. The regulatory pillar refers to legal regulations pertaining to the host country of the institution. The normative pillar is the norms and values of the institution itself. Finally, the cultural-cognitive pillar is the shared understanding of the community of stakeholders.

Training can promote the legitimacy of governance through the normative and cultural-cognitive pillars, for example through developing a sense of shared responsibility for the whole school, as opposed to narrower stakeholder groups (MacKenzie, 2012). Hill and James (2017) interviewed board chairs in the UK further education context and found they had general support for board training provided it was role- and context-specific, but note that there is a dearth of training opportunities in governance. Hill and James (2017) suggest that mentoring and coaching by expert chairs may provide a route to role-specific training.

Huber (2011) provides a national example of how training can promote good governance. Until recently, Swiss schools were run by a governing body of local elected representatives, typically not educational professionals. The idea of having a school principal is relatively new to Switzerland and, as schools make the shift towards being independent and self-managing, one result of this restructuring is that principals and other school leaders must undergo extensive professional training, as they take on responsibilities previously assumed by the governing body (Huber, 2011). An implication of this is that as schools become more self-governing, the need for professional development and support is greater (Connolly and James, 2011). Extrapolating this into an international education context, where most schools are standalone institutions independent of the state, suggests a high need for training and support for the governance and management of international schools.

Recent years have, in fact, seen an increase in guidance and training opportunities regarding international school governance. Dubai's Knowledge and Human Development Authority, for example, recently released a document aimed at promoting good governance across schools in Dubai (KHDA, 2018). The Educational Collaborative for International Schools (ECIS, 2018) now offer an 8-hour online governor training course aimed at international school governors. Many of the experts interviewed in this study offer consultancy and training regarding the governance of international schools, and the Council of International Schools (CIS, 2018b) provides a list for schools of consultants who focus on improving school leadership and governance.

In UK further education, the regulatory and normative pillars, and thus the legitimacy of governance, were also found to be promoted by the clerk (Forrest et al., 2016; Hill and James, 2017). The clerk facilitates effective governance by organising meetings, agendas, induction, training and through managing communications (Hill and James, 2017). Furthermore, Hill and James (2017) also found that board chairs often looked to the clerk for procedural and process

guidance. Although it appears the role of the clerk is more prominent in UK colleges compared with UK schools (Hill and James, 2017), it is not yet explored in the international school context to what extent administrative assistance confers legitimacy to the board.

The normative and cultural-cognitive pillars of the institution both support and are underpinned by the relationship between the board and the head of school. This is identified as key to successful governance (Connolly & James, 2011). Clear delineation between school management and governance is central to this relationship (Connolly & James, 2011). James and Sheppard (2014) describe examples of how micromanagement by board members negatively impacts governance. In some cases, the head teacher was excluded from board discussions, meaning that decisions could be made solely on financial grounds, with little or no regard for the educational implications (James & Sheppard, 2014).

Hill and James (2017) highlight the multiple roles of the board chair in relation to head of school as a complicating factor. Among others, the chair must be a sounding board, an advisor and also a performance manager to the head of school. The chair, on the other hand, may have a high level of dependency on the head of school regarding pedagogical matters, due to their lack of expertise in this area (Hill and James, 2017). These conflicting sub-roles have the potential to bolster or damage the legitimacy of the institution.

Attracting and retaining governors of suitable calibre also emerges as a challenge of good governance (Forrest & Hill, 2017). One of the reasons for this is that governors tend to be in employment themselves, limiting the time they can commit to governance (Connolly & James, 2011). It is unclear in the current literature as to whether recruitment issues impact the governance of international schools. Nevertheless, Hill and James (2017) highlight this issue with relation the board chair of further education colleges, and question whether it is appropriate that the role is unremunerated given the substantial responsibility it entails.

Research by Forrest and Hill (2017) in Northern Ireland indicates that payment may result in greater engagement by governors, as evidenced by increased attendance at meetings, as well as a reported improvement in the experience and expertise of governors. Furthermore, payment correlated with an increase in applications for governor vacancies from women. Although this was only a small study with 32 questionnaire respondents and three interviews, it paves the way for future research into whether remuneration can be used to improve school board effectiveness.

The question of legitimacy is particularly relevant to the international school context. Due to the rapid growth and diversification international schools, Bunnell (2016) warns that the legitimacy of international education is at risk. As the way a school is governed impacts its legitimacy as an educational institution (James and Sheppard, 2014), it is vital that international schools are provided with guidance for strengthening their regulatory, normative and cultural-cognitive pillars.

2.6 Summary

The governance of international schools reflects the heterogeneity of the international school community. Nevertheless, three board structures have been identified as common in international schools: elected, self-perpetuating and a hybrid of the two (James & Sheppard, 2014). The hybrid model is suggested by James and Sheppard (2014) as a way of benefitting from and offsetting the disadvantages of each.

Both the stakeholder model and a fully elected board structure promote transparency and democratic participation (James & Sheppard, 2014). A lack of competence or desire by stakeholders to participate in governance are disadvantages of the stakeholder model

(Heystek, 2011). Fully elected boards tend to have high turnover and lack strategic oversight and long-term planning (James & Sheppard, 2014). Meanwhile, a skills-based approach ensures governors have the necessary skills to effectively lead the school, yet limits the extent to which stakeholders are represented in governance (Connolly et al., 2017). Self-perpetuating boards are more likely to become stagnant, micromanage, and lack stakeholder voice and transparency (James & Sheppard, 2014). However, they confer stability, institutional memory and sustainability (James & Sheppard, 2014).

Finally, good school governance can be defined in terms of its legitimacy and this can be promoted in a number of ways, as listed below:

- Attracting and retaining governors of suitable calibre (Forrest & Hill, 2017);

- Role-specific training of board members (Hill & James, 2017);

- A shared sense of responsibility, ensuring governors make decisions in the best interests of the school as a whole (MacKenzie, 2012);

- The relationship between the board and the head of school (Connolly & James, 2011);

- The use of procedures and processes to guide the organisation of the board, including meetings, agendas and communications (Hill & James, 2017).

In order for international schools to remain legitimate organisations (Bunnell, 2016), it is vital they are provided with guidance for governance that reflects best practice.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter provides an overview of the methodology of this dissertation, including sections on the research strategy, research design, methods of data collection and analysis. In section 3.5, I describe how the validity and reliability of the data will be safeguarded. Section 3.6 outlines the ethical considerations of the study.

3.1 Research strategy

This study is grounded within an interpretive paradigm, using a naturalistic approach in which knowledge is viewed as personal, subjective and unique (Cohen et al., 2007). The experience of international school governance is a highly personal one, dependent on multiple factors including experience, position held and the cultural context. During this study, individual accounts and observations were used to develop an understanding of the unique perspective of participants.

3.2 Research design

An exploratory case study (Yin, 1994) was undertaken of an established international school in western Europe, referred to hereafter as the Case Study International School (CSIS). CSIS is a Type A school (Hayden and Thompson, 2013), a not-for-profit school predominantly serving globally mobile families in the local area. CSIS offers the International Baccalaureate (IB) Primary Years Programme and culminates in the IB Diploma Programme. Grades 6-10 follow a school-designed curriculum. The CSIS board comprises six elected and five appointed board members. An additional seat is reserved for a faculty member, elected by employees of the school.

Yin (1994, pp.13) defines a case study as, "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context". A case study approach allowed me to explore the complexities of hybrid governance within an authentic context (Yin, 1994) and capture the subjective and multi-layered perceptions of participants. This facilitated the study of hybrid governance in a holistic way; it would have been difficult to achieve this with surveys or experimental research (Zainal, 2007). Furthermore, a case study approach allowed for the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data (Zainal, 2007), enhancing the external validity of the study (section 3.4).

Case studies have been criticised for their lack of rigour (Zainal, 2007) and a naturalistic approach has been faulted for being too narrow and subjective to make useful generalisations (Cohen et al., 2007). Additionally, the literature suggests it is challenging to make generalisations across international schools due to their wide diversity (Connolly & James, 2011). To address these issues, two methods of data collection at CSIS were used: interviews and observations. This data was further triangulated with interview data from experts in international education, so that conclusions are based upon multiple data sets. Section 3.5 addresses the validity and reliability of the study in more detail, while sections 3.3 and 3.4 outline how data was collected and analysed.

3.3 Methods of data collection

This section describes the two methods of data collection for this study: interviews and observations. Prior to any data collection, informed consent was obtained from the participants. Further ethical considerations are detailed in section 3.6. Sample information letters and consent forms can be found in appendix 3.

Interviews

Individual interviews at CSIS were carried out in person or via telephone with four elected board members, three appointed board members, one faculty board member and four school leaders. These participants are listed in table 1 below with the codes used to distinguish their quotes in chapter 4.

Table 1. The codes used to distinguish CSIS interview participants.

Code	Role
EBM1	Elected Board Member
EBM2	Elected Board Member
EBM3	Elected Board Member
EBM4	Elected Board Member
ABM1	Appointed Board Member
ABM2	Appointed Board Member
ABM3	Appointed Board Member
FBM	Faculty Board Member
SL1	School Leader
SL2	School Leader
SL3	School Leader
SL4	School Leader

Further interviews were carried out via Skype with nine experts in international education. Table 2 overleaf gives an overview of the experience of the experts and the codes used to distinguish their quotes in chapter 4. The experts exhibit at least two of the following characteristics and were identified using the websites of international education organisations and word-of-mouth recommendations:

- Current or former international school heads

- Current or former international school governors

- On the board of international school organisations, such as accreditation bodies

- Involved in the provision of governor training or consultancy for international schools

All interviews were recorded (see section 3.6) and a timeline of interviews is provided in appendix 1. The interview questions for both CSIS and expert participants (appendix 2) were based upon the findings of the literature review in chapter 2, grounding the study in prior research. The questions explored the perceived advantages and disadvantages of elected and appointed board members and sought to identify other factors that participants believe contribute to good governance.

The use of open-ended questions allowed participants to answer using their own words (Denscombe, 2007) and a semi-structured approach to the interviews afforded flexibility in terms of the order and follow-up of questions, whilst still providing a clear framework for the interview (Cohen et al., 2007). To help me develop a natural and conversational interview style and to check for ambiguity, double-questions, and presuming or leading questions (Bell, 2005), I first piloted the questions with three heads of school unrelated to CSIS.

Table 2. Participant codes and experience summaries of the experts.

Participant	Experience summary
P1	Experience with mostly British-style international schools; current governor of two international schools; on the board of an international school accrediting body
P2	On the board of a number of international school organisations; current governor of several schools; has experience of different school systems and programs but most familiar with the American system
P3	Previously served as CEO of a British-style school group in the Middle East; currently working as an education advisor to develop good governance practice
P4	Had a senior role in a large British-style international school group before taking on a consultancy role, which focuses on supporting recruitment and development of international school leadership and governance
P5	Previously head of school in Europe, Africa and Asia; has authored a book on international education which includes a section on governance; involved with a number of international school organisations/accrediting bodies
P6	Currently provides consulting services and coaching for international schools in leadership and governance; has served as head of school of several international schools in the Americas
P7	Has a research-focused role in a government organisation; evaluates, develops guidelines for and supports implementation of good practice in international schools
P8	Works for an international school accrediting body; has experience of being head of school and governor at British-style international schools in South-East Asia
P9	Provides consultancy services to international schools with a focus on governance and leadership; has leadership experience within and outside the education sector; has a particular interest in cross-cultural leadership

Observations

Two board meetings and seven committee meetings at CSIS were attended over a period of seven months. Interactions between attendees were recorded and coded. Individuals were identified by role as per table 3.

Table 3. The codes used to identify the role of meeting attendees.

Code	Role
EBM	Elected Board Member
ABM	Appointed Board Member
FBM	Faculty Board Member
SL	School Leader
FS	Faculty or staff of the school
PM	Parents who are not board members

Interactions are defined as spontaneous comments, questions, responses or feedback that are incidental to the agenda or are prompted by an agenda item. This includes back-and-forth conversation stemming from an agenda item being presented. It does not include the presentation of an agenda item. Observations were categorised using the codes in table 4 overleaf. These codes are derived from the literature review, as summarised in section 2.6, and noted in question form in column 3 of table 4. In cases where an interaction fitted multiple codes, a best-fit approach was taken. Each interaction was assigned a maximum of two codes. A timeline of observations is provided in appendix 1.

Table 4. Observation codes and their link to the literature.

Code	Abbreviation	Questions arising from the literature
Professional skills, experience or knowledge	PS	How do participants use their professional skills during meetings? (Connolly et al., 2017; Forrest & Hill, 2017)
Parental or personal experiences or concerns	PE	Is there a focus on long-term strategic planning or short-term issues? (James & Sheppard, 2014) Are decisions made based on the best interests of the school as a whole? (MacKenzie, 2012) How do procedures and processes guide the organisation of meetings / communications? (Hill & James, 2017)
Representation of stakeholders	RS	How is stakeholder voice represented in meetings? (James & Sheppard, 2014)
Questions related to the professional language of education	PL	Are participants able to engage with educational issues raised in meetings? What is the impact of training? (Hill & James, 2017)
Long-term strategic planning	LS	Is there a focus on long-term strategic planning or short-term issues? (James & Sheppard, 2014) How do procedures and processes guide the organisation of meetings / communications? (Hill & James, 2017)
Short-term, reactive, operational, minor	ST	Is there a focus on long-term strategic planning or short-term issues? (James & Sheppard, 2014) How do procedures and processes guide the organisation of meetings / communications? (Hill & James, 2017)
Knowledge shared as a result of prior experience	KE	How does experience affect participation in meetings? Does retention matter? (Forrest & Hill, 2017)
Information gathering (usually a question)	IG	Are decisions made based on the best interests of the school as a whole? (MacKenzie, 2012) What is the impact of training? (Hill & James, 2017)
Pedagogical concern	PC	How is stakeholder voice represented in meetings? (James & Sheppard, 2014) Are decisions made based on the best interests of the school as a whole? (MacKenzie, 2012)
Providing facts or figures	FF	How do participants use their professional skills during meetings? (Connolly et al., 2017; Forrest & Hill, 2017)

3.4 Methods of data analysis

This section describes how data was analysed and interpreted in this study. Denscombe (2007) suggests that data analysis ideally takes place in the following order: preparation, familiarity, interpreting, verifying and representing the data. Although this sequence was broadly followed, for practical reasons a more iterative approach was taken in which interview and observation data was analysed as it was collected.

Qualitative data from the interviews was analysed according to four guiding principles outlined by Denscombe (2007):

- Development of theories, hypotheses and generalisations should involve a back-and-forth process between the data and the categories being used;

- Explanations should be derived from the data;

- Conclusions should be firmly grounded in the data;

- Bias through preconceptions should be avoided (see section 3.6).

In order to analyse the interview data in accordance with these principles, interviews were transcribed and responses were categorised in order to identify similarities, differences and other significant aspects of the data. Broad categories identified from the literature (summarised in section 2.6) were first used and then further categories were added or prioritised into themes as they arose as noteworthy (Bell, 2005). A deductive approach was taken in which I considered how the interview participants felt about the hybrid model for governance and the factors they considered to be important for facilitating good governance.

Observation data gave a different dimension to the study by providing discrete, quantitative data. Graphing the data provided a visual image of the interactions between attendees at

board and committee meetings. Observation data was triangulated with the interview data during its analysis to provide a basis from which conclusions can be drawn.

3.5 Validity and reliability

As this study is set within the interpretive paradigm, I adhered to the principles of the naturalistic approach to maximise validity (Cohen et al., 2007). Through using a combination of interviews and observations, the data collected was both descriptive and holistic.

External validity was promoted by the inclusion of expert interviews with which to triangulate the CSIS data, thus enhancing both the validity of research (Cohen et al., 2007) and its generalisability to other international schools, although generalisability will also be determined by how similar other institutions are to CSIS in terms of their governance structure and cultural context (Denscombe, 2007).

Internal validity was safeguarded through the systematic tracking and storage of information (Cohen et al., 2007). As data collection was spread over a period of 7 months, there was ample time between data collection points for data to be organised and analysed in a systematic way, so that conclusions are derived from data (Cohen et al., 2007). The sample size was small, and so the findings are presented in context.

Reflexivity can help a researcher to avoid observer effects and bias (Cohen et al., 2007). I recognise that my own experiences of international school leadership and governance as a teacher will have influenced my outlook on this subject. Furthermore, although I am not employed by CSIS, my husband is a teacher there. This had the potential to affect my interactions with interview participants from CSIS, and how participants responded to me. By showing reflexivity, I endeavoured to interpret data without bias, giving an accurate account of the thoughts and feelings of the participants.

3.6 Ethical considerations

This study was conducted in accordance with the standards set by the British Educational Research Association (2018). Prospective participants were provided with information (appendix 3) and the opportunity to ask questions to ensure they fully understood the research process, including why their participation was necessary, how and to whom the study will be reported, and of their right to withdraw at any time, for any reason.

Participants were treated with respect and sensitivity. Their privacy was safeguarded through the confidential handling of data, in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (BERA, 2018). The difference between confidentiality and anonymity was clarified for participants (Bell, 2005). In this study, confidentiality means that individual participants will not be identified in the study; however, complete anonymity is not possible because participant responses are presented by role. There is only one faculty board member currently on the board of CSIS and this means the individual is identifiable to the school community. This was explained to the faculty board member and written confirmation was obtained that the faculty board member agrees to publication.

Interviews were recorded using a digital audio recorder and stored only on the researcher's laptop. All data about individual participants has been kept confidential and accessed only by the researcher. Personal data has been stored separately to the record of committee comments and interview responses. Audio recordings will be destroyed immediately after the dissertation has been evaluated by the university.

As this is a self-funded MA dissertation, there is no sponsor funding or commissioning the research. Findings from the study will be published so they can be used to benefit other educational professionals, educational researchers, policy makers and the general public.

Chapter 4: Data

In this chapter, data from the expert interviews, CSIS interviews and CSIS observations are reported sequentially. The two sets of interview data are organised into the following five themes which emerge as key areas affecting school governance. Sub-themes differ for each data set.

1. Board structure

2. Representation of stakeholders

3. The personal disposition, capabilities and motivations of governors

4. Understanding and fulfilling the governor role

5. The relationship between the board and school leadership

4.1 Expert interview data

Theme 1: Board structure

The experts describe a wide range of approaches to the governance of international schools. Models from the literature are mentioned by most participants, including self-perpetuating, elected and hybrid, plus multi-layered governance, for example, *"…three schools with overarching group board*" (P2) and cases where a single owner takes all responsibility for governance (P6). Other sources of variation include whether or not the board has financial responsibility for the school (P9), the size of the board (P7) and strategic boards versus those which participate in operational activity (P1, P6). As P9 highlights, it could be said there are

"*infinite models*" because each school differs in their mission and every country has different requirements (P8).

There is no consensus about which model dominates in the international school community, although P1 suggests that appointed boards are more common in for-profit institutions whereas elected boards are more common in not-for-profit schools. P6 considers elected parent boards to be more common in the international school sector, whereas P2 has observed a shift in recent years away from the "*fully elected board taken from the American public-school approach*".

No participants stated that structure was the most important factor in good governance and there was no agreement about the most effective governance structure. Four participants emphasised that there is room for multiple structures within the international school community, and that a successful board is dependent on many other factors, as addressed in subsequent themes.

P2 says, for example, "*If you find the right people who understand their role, the way they get there doesn't matter.*" This is echoed by P1:

> "*It doesn't matter for individuals how they get onto the board. It is more important the board as a group has a clear sense about what its directed purpose is.*"

Nevertheless, most participants had strong feelings one way or another about efficacy of the different models. The advantages and disadvantages they highlight are outlined subsequently.

Elected boards

P2, P4 and P5 favour elected boards and value the explicit representation of stakeholders in governance. As P4 explains, "*The greater degree of election the better; [boards] should be transparent.*" Representation of stakeholders is further addressed in theme 2.

P3 is concerned that elected boards lead to "*parent power*" driving decision-making and P6 has found that elections tend to be agenda-driven rather than a way of finding the best people to govern a school. P6 describes how a group of dissatisfied parents successfully waged a campaign to get on the board and remove the Head of School. P5 supports this anecdote, "*Elected boards have a higher turnover of Heads.*"

P2 outlines how an elected board can work, or not, depending on the understanding parents have about their role:

> "*When you are elected and think you are representing a stakeholder group then it is a bad thing, but when you are elected and understand it doesn't matter who elected you…then it can work… in order to serve at all you should be pre-assessed on the fact you don't represent any particular stakeholder group.*"

P8's primary concern with elected boards is that particular skills can be missing from the board:

> "*You could have a board with nobody with financial skills. [You have] got to have at least one person on your governing board who is business orientated, who understands spreadsheets, fiscal planning.*"

Self-perpetuating boards

P9 favours self-perpetuating boards as a way to co-opt individuals with the right skill-set:

> "*Securing the financial wellbeing of the school; is the school operating within its legal remit? Schools need people familiar with both these.*"

P5 agrees, noting the potential benefits to a school of having taxation expertise, architecture expertise and business expertise on the board, "*Everyone has equal say in the meetings but if it is your area of expertise your view carries more weight.*"

P5 goes on to caution, however, that conflicts of interest must be mitigated against, and describes a scenario in which the architect on a board got all the tenders, possibly due to insider information. "*[The architect on the board] should help… [the school] get the best tender – which would not include him!*"

P6 also prefers a self-perpetuating board because "*it does not tend to be affected as directly by the whims and interests of the consumers.*" In contrast, P4 says that appointments "*smack of insider dealing*", although concedes there is a "*case for governors to be co-opted for particular seats when the governors themselves look at their own sustainability*."

Hybrid boards

Most participants considered a hybrid model to be an effective compromise between the two models, as P5 explains, "*Self-perpetuating members to give continuity, understanding and history…elected members to keep current, representing the stakeholders - a good balance.*"

Likewise, P1 states, "*Structure should allow for new blood, as well as understanding of the institution*".

Only P6 raised a concern about the hybrid model, suggesting:

"*From philosophical perspective it might cause tension between elected members who feel a sense they should protect the community that elected them, whereas the appointed board members would have a greater sense of a broader sense of responsibility to the whole school in a blended board.*"

Committees

An organisational structure in which several committees with specific remits feed into the board are viewed as commonplace, although P6 suggests that they are more common in British-style schools and that US-style schools are moving away from committees. As P8 explains:

"*Committees are a way to divide responsibilities and allow a small group to focus on and discuss a particular issue in depth. Board meetings should be more about ratifying their findings/recommendations (with questions of course).*"

P8 cautions, however, that committees are "*potentially an issue because it encourages crossing over the fine line between management and governance.*" P6 also finds challenges with committees:

"*Committees can become a pain - too many meetings. The more committees the more interference and involvement in lower level decisions. I felt as head of the school, I had to be involved in every committee because I didn't want something moving so far forward that if I felt it was wrong it would be difficult to block it later on.*"

This is echoed by P8, "*There needs to be trust and dialogue…so the head doesn't need to attend all committee meetings.*"

Theme 2: Representation of stakeholders

Direct representation of stakeholders

Whether stakeholders are directly represented on the board emerges as a dividing issue between experts. Some cite representation as the most important factor in good governance; others believe it is unimportant provided all governors understand their role. P3, P4 and P5 all advocate strongly for "*properly balanced representation*" (P4). As P3 explains:

"*It is important the governing body is representative of everybody who contributes to the school…by doing that, the students are well-represented and so are their parents.*"

P4 and P5 were also in favour of elected boards. In contrast, P1 says, "*It is not really about representation on the board, it is about ensuring the board's success as an institution.*" Likewise, P2 says a board member is *"an advocate or representative of all the kids in the school. [Representing a particular group] is not conceptually what we do."*

Faculty board members

Experts are divided on whether faculty should be directly represented on the board. P5 is strongly in favour: "*It is key to have a faculty member elected from their bodies. This person could straddle the expat/local divide.*" P8 gives a positive but measured response:

> "*It comes down to what the role is, what they are there for, how this has been explained, how professional they can be at setting aside their everyday role…I wouldn't say no to it but there would have to be a very good reason for them being there.*"

P1 and P9 both prefer not to have a faculty board member but highlight the need to include faculty voice during the decision-making process, when appropriate. P2, P4 and P6 speak out strongly against having a faculty board member, or indeed allowing faculty to vote on "*who pays their checks*" (P2). P6 explains:

> "*The organisational reality is that the head of school is their representative on the board. If the head is not effective at understanding the needs of their community, they are not an effective head of school.*"

Student voice

An area of more consensus involves the direct inclusion of students within governance. Most participants agree that it is challenging to meaningfully include students (particularly young students) in school governance, and that efforts are often tokenistic. Nevertheless, participants express a desire to capture more student voice and suggest how this may be achieved:

"Elect a student rep to attend a slot in the board meeting or sub-committee, or host visits to the school by board members." (P3)

"[Ask] the Head Boy or Head Girl to give a report." (P4)

"Students should be engaged at the management/operational level under the HOS, e.g. with regard with policy, planning." (P6)

"Time [should be] set aside for students to attend meetings in an ex officio way to be able to give their perspective; students can be consulted [on specific issues] where appropriate." (P8)

"In one school with a self-perpetuating board, the nominations committee is looking to maintain a certain percentage of alumni on the board. Another school actively seeks to recruit alumni [to the board]." (P9)

Theme 3: The personal disposition, capabilities and motivations of governors

The transient nature of the international school community can result in a lack of suitable community members to draw from (P4, P7) and a high turnover of governors (P7). Nevertheless, recruiting governors with the right personal disposition, capabilities and motivation emerges as an important theme.

Disposition and capabilities

P2, P5 and P6 consider the personal disposition and capabilities of individual governors to be essential for facilitating good governance by. As P2 explains, governors will not be effective if they cannot "*make a decision in a team… detach from their own idea…listen and hear another point of view without argument.*" Likewise, P6 explains the most important qualification of being a governor:

> "*[A board member is a] moral owner of the school…fully committed to the school, its purposes, its philosophy…some people are not able to set aside personal agendas for the overall good.*"

Motivation to serve as a governor

P2, P3, P5 and P6 also highlight the motivations of governors as important. Positive motivations include being of service to the community (P3), "*enriching your own experiences [through being] exposed to people who have different capabilities in terms of leadership*" (P6) and "*expanding their mind and discovering what it takes to run a top-quality school*" (P5). P6 and P2 caution against governors who serve primarily to gain *"financial remuneration* (P6) or "*status within the community*" (P2).

Theme 4: Understanding and fulfilling the governor role

Five participants emphasise the importance of "*understanding the differences between governance and management*" (P1) and the board "*limiting its involvement to providing direction to what is being accomplished by the school*" (P6). Seven participants highlight governor training as a way of promoting this understanding. As P6 explains:

"*In-service training is important - you have to learn to govern. Many board members are managers…so naturally drift towards areas of management.*"

Training can also be used to support non-educationalist board members who may struggle to engage with the language and literature of education (P1, P5), as exemplified by P1 in the following scenario:

"*A governor asked, 'Key stage 3, does that mean they are 3 years old?' He didn't know what the board had been talking about for half an hour.*"

P5 notes that there has historically been a dearth of training opportunities for international school governors, but a recent increase in online learning opportunities for governors is paving the way for easier and increased board training for international schools. In addition to formal training, P1 emphasises that governors themselves have a responsibility to develop their understanding, for example through "*taking a particular interest in a specific area of the school and becoming more familiar with what is going on there*".

Theme 5: The relationship between the board and school leadership

A positive relationship between the board and head of school is considered vital to good governance by five participants, in particular a high level of trust between the head of school and the chair (P1, P8). There is general consensus that the head of school should not be a voting member of the board but should be present in all meetings except "*when determining the head of school's salary*" (P5), if there is a matter of discipline involving the head (P1), or during the performance review of the head (P8).

A positive relationship between the school leadership and the board is promoted through "*clear roles, sound decision-making policies and procedures, aligned beliefs and values, shared goals, working interdependently to achieve them*" (P9) and "*[a policy of] no surprises…effective structure and management of meetings*" (P1). Conversely, the head of school being asked to leave meetings corrodes trust (P1). Other reasons for a breakdown in relationship include: a disconnect between expectations, promises and reality (P8, P9); cultural differences (P8); and broken trust due to poor communication (P9).

4.2 School interview data

Theme 1: Board structure

The hybrid model at CSIS

The hybrid model for governance is viewed positively by both board members and school leaders, who describe it as a good compromise between a fully elected and fully appointed board:

> *"We don't really have a concern of having a board that isn't continuous, and we also don't have a concern of a board that lacks new blood...so I think it actually works quite well."* ABM3

> *"There's a good balance between having new blood coming in and asking good questions, and those who have been there long enough."* SL3

Elections

Elections are viewed as a way of connecting the governance of the school to the community (EBM1) and avoiding the board becoming too insular (SL3). School Leaders in particular feel the elections give a sense of transparency, providing a "*check and balance system*" (SL2) which would be difficult to achieve with a fully self-perpetuating board:

> *"It is really important [parents] have confidence in the governance, confidence in the direction, confidence in the stability of the institution. They are the stakeholders and the fact that they can elect gives them a sense of ownership."*
> SL4

Low parental participation is raised as a concern by ABM1 and EBM2, and ABM1 would see more value in the process if parents made more informed choices:

> *"I think a platform probably should be given to the candidates in a more prominent way...You don't know all the candidates so how can you then choose to vote? The election is...wishful thinking because you don't actually know the people."* ABM1

Although all participants viewed the elected seats positively, none would be in favour of moving to a fully elected board, for example:

> *"[If the board was only elected] there would be a risk that you wouldn't have the core skills that are needed...even though an elected person could come in and be uber qualified...if that person were not [re-]elected then we would lose it."*
> EBM3

Nominations and headhunting

A nominations/headhunting process is used to draw interest and attract the right people, both for elections and appointments. As EBM4 explains:

> *"There is a threshold where the majority of the community feels 'that's not my thing'...if you…invite or suggest, that increases the pool."*

In fact, two EBMs said they would not have run for election if they had not been nominated. Furthermore, all ABMs said they would not have considered joining the board had they not been approached. The ABM seats are therefore regarded as a way to recruit individuals who would not otherwise put themselves forward, as SL2 explains, *"Given the demands of [ABM's] life, you would realise they would never have time to run for a board."*

Screening

The screening process of potential board members is valued as a way to "*avoid someone coming in with a single issue, even if it is a good issue"* (SL2) and to *"get people with the right competence and the right desire…to work on the board"* (EBM1).

Appointed board members

The ABM seats are highly valued by all participants as an opportunity to strategically populate the board with particular skills and to add diversity.

"[The appointee could be] appointed on the basis of a skills set...we need someone who is a lawyer, or familiar with [country name] law..." FBM

"We wanted more female representation and someone [from a scientific background], and this is where [an ABM] comes from. She probably wouldn't have run otherwise." SL2

SL2 appreciates the role ABMs play in providing institutional knowledge over time, as their term-length is determined by the board rather than by the election cycle: *"In the transient nature of the community, ABMs provide continuity."* Only ABM3 raised a concern about ABMs, highlighting that, *"If you had a board purely based on appointment, you run the risk of…an old boys' network,"* and suggests the school would benefit from formalising the appointment process.

Comparing elected and appointed board members

When asked to compare the approach, behaviour or influence of ABMs and EBMs, most participants said there was no notable difference, for example:

"I don't see a power imbalance at all [between EBMs and ABMs]." EBM4

"Couldn't say [there is a difference between ABMs and EBMs]" FBM

However, SL4 notes that when EBMs first join the Board, they may stand out:

"New [EBMs] may have a particular vision of what their role might be, but then they become inducted into the way it actually works...I think training is key to maintaining the cultures of governance that have served us very well."

The impact of training is addressed more fully in theme 4.

Faculty Board Members

The presence of the FBM is considered a positive addition by board members and school leaders alike as a way of giving *"the board an additional perspective on issues"* (ABM3) and speaking *"from a teacher's perspective…providing an authenticity that is very valuable"* (SL2). The FBM describes one such situation where their unique position had a direct impact on decision-making:

"We had just finished [a lot of building projects] and there were plans for more…we were given a vision of what big construction projects were upcoming or imminent and...it occurred to me that a lot of people on this campus had been here for years and never knew the sound of a quiet [school]. They only knew the sound of...heavy equipment, workers bellowing at each other...and I said, 'I think maybe a rest might be in order'. Everybody sat back and went, 'Oh that really hadn't occurred to us, construction fatigue'...They get to go somewhere else...but I have to stay here...and I think in that moment speaking as a faculty member of the school I was able to bring a level of knowledge and awareness to the discussion which might not have been there."

Nevertheless, it was recognised that a FBM seat may be challenging in different cultural contexts to CSIS where employees are afforded less legal protection (SL1). SL2 also sees a

potential for "*problems of intimidation by the head of school or being the only one in a group of parents.*"

Length of service of board members

There was consensus from board members and school leaders that the two-year term-length is too short. This is more of an issue for EBMs, including the FBM, as ABMs willing to continue in their role can be reappointed by the board. The FBM explains the impact of the 2-year election cycle on EBMs:

> *"There's a learning curve...It seems to me that sometimes just as a person is hitting their stride and developing a rapport and role... suddenly they are out and someone else elected in their place just as they were understanding how to make that work."*

EBM2, EBM3 and ABM3 describe a regular revisiting of this issue at board level. Reasons were provided for why a longer term has not been implemented:

> *"Turnover in the school can be quick too so we want to give everyone in the community the opportunity to [serve]."* EBM2

> *"Three years or longer we might have trouble finding people who could commit to that length of time."* EBM3

Nevertheless, SL3 notes it is "*unusual for a BM not to reapply for a second term*" and, as EBM4 highlights, incumbent EBMs are more likely to be re-elected than new candidates, resulting in little difference in average tenure between EBMs and ABMs.

Committees

Board members and school leaders had mixed views about committees, which sit below the board. It was noted that the main benefit of the committees is that they "*feed up to the board for information or for decisions, so you don't need to know everything in every pipe*" (EBM1). They are viewed as autonomous and trusted in terms of the recommendations they make to the board (SL1, SL2). Committees, however, appear to be the primary area of governance at CSIS in which the strategic and operational aspects of school leadership overlap:

> *"The tension comes around when we are moving in too much to operational themes...I [as chair] try to stop as soon as possible...either [head of school] or myself say, 'Guys, there is a process for that and we are going to focus on...a very clear agenda'."* EBM1

> *"Sometimes I think the board is too much into the daily life...in [some committees] you have a lot of really tiny tactical issues, whether you build the fence 1m50 or 2m is probably not what should be discussed."* ABM3

This may be due in part to the presence of non-board member parents, who *"tend to be a little bit more about 'my kid' [than board members]"* (SL3).

ABM1 questions whether board members are needed to run the committees, and also suggests a reduction in both the number of attendees per meeting and the number of committee meetings per year. This view is echoed by FBM, although SL2 believes the frequency of committee meetings is "*about right*".

Theme 2: Representation of stakeholders

Diversity

ABM2 and ABM3 highlight that particular groups within school are underrepresented in the governance structure, for example:

> "*We struggle…to make sure [a particular section of the school] is represented…The board needs to continue to make sure we have representatives from all parts of the school, whether its [different divisions], different nationalities.*" (ABM2)

ABM3 suggests that "*a certain amount of formalisation would probably be helpful*" in ensuring appropriate representation but emphasises that the primary focus of recruitment is competence.

Parental participation

Despite the opportunities that parents have to engage with the governance of the school, parental participation is low in open board meetings and elections. This is expressed as a concern by most board members. School leaders, however, recognise that this low participation could be interpreted as a sign the school governance is going well:

> *"It is hard for [the board] to get the recognition they deserve because people see things work, and when things work people…don't see the need to be such active participants."* SL4

Students

School leaders describe some ways in which student voice is captured and utilised by the school governance, for example through surveys (SL2) and participation in strategic planning days (SL1 and SL4). SL3 describes how student councils have previously been trialled but "*never really gained any traction*". SL4 would like "*to have a structure that would support student voice somehow being represented."*

Theme 3: The personal disposition, capabilities and motivations of governors

Capability audit

Data from theme 1 highlights the importance of nominations/headhunting in recruiting those who may not independently seek to run for election. This process is supported through a capability audit, as described by EBM1: *"We look at every year...what competences do we think we need...if we don't have it on the elected side...we can then bring it in the appointed."*

Motivation to serve

All current Board Members are parents of students in the school and this emerges as a key motivation for serving. As EBM4 explains:

> *"All 12 of us have kids on the board and it is very personal to us...it's an interesting dynamic that you probably wouldn't see in other non-profits or corporate boards".*

FBM and ABM2 both note that board members are not compensated for their time yet are "*highly engaged and believe in the cause" (*ABM2) due to their *"direct and personal investment in what goes on here"* (FBM).

EBM4 and ABM1 describe how being a board member has allowed them to better connect with their own children because *"you know what they are talking about" (*ABM1) and *"can experience…what they are experiencing and share some things in common that we didn't before"* (EBM4). Others speak of professional benefits of serving:

> *"Sometimes the more personal touch of the school has helped me make sure we don't lose the personal touch in the business setting."* ABM2

> *"Certainly, it's been very enlightening...I think it's helped me to see the bigger picture in certain instances more so than maybe before...and maybe valuing the opinions of others...more so than in the past."* ABM3

> *"It's an exciting growth opportunity for me to learn about governance of a non-profit."* EBM4

Theme 4: Understanding and fulfilling the governor role

Induction and training of board members

New board member induction and board training are cited by all participants as key factors in promoting good governance at CSIS. During the formal induction process, new board members are provided with pre-reading and meet individually with the school leadership team (EBM4); this is followed by an annual board workshop led by an outside consultant board

during which board members, *"set up mutual agreements, our goals for every year…that helps to emphasise what is important for us"* (EBM2). ABM3 explains the role of the consultant:

"[S/he] trained us on what the board was, principles, what is a good board, what is not a good board...the purpose of the board" (ABM3).

Informal induction happens in several ways. Each committee has a vice chair, who gets "*on the job training*" (EBM1). Guidance and support are received when needed or sought from the administration assistant to the board, the head of school and other board members (EBM3).

Several Board Members describe their learning curve on joining the board:

"There were points when I felt clueless…there were times when I didn't know how it was supposed to be done." EBM3

"To some extent you learn as you go, probably hold back the first two meetings and see how things go, but over time getting more comfortable." EBM4

"To get a sense of what your role actually is you need to go through at least a year of meetings…I think the induction was good but you still need a fair amount of time to really understand how the board functions and what its role is." ABM3

In terms of improvements to induction and training, EBM3 suggests that formalising the mentoring process may be beneficial: "*Having a specific mentor...could have made the process of settling into the board smoother.*" The FBM is also in favour: "*If asked I would certainly help [mentor a new FBM].*"

The board member role

Board members describe having clear protocols in place for guiding their actions, particularly when approached by parents with an issue (EBM1, EBM4). They are able to articulate a clear understanding of their role, as demonstrated by EBM4 and ABM3 when they explain how policy and self-policing guide the actions of the board:

> *"Policy does certainly help to set out the framework as to what the board should do and what the administration does…at this point I feel very comfortable that I know where our role stops and where the role of the leadership begins."* ABM3

> *"[We] frequently gut check personally and remind each other...you have an experience and...extrapolate and assume everyone else has that experience, and that's not the case, right? [On one occasion] somebody stepped in and said, 'This is not something we should be doing in this group'."* EBM4

This view is supported by school leaders:

> *"They will check themselves and say, 'This isn't really for us; it is for the head of school or the teachers to decide'. They really have a clear understanding of what their role is and what it isn't."* SL1

> *"The board does self-checking. I heard [a board member] saying out of earshot of everyone else, 'You really ought to apologise, you were a little harsh'."* SL2

Nevertheless, there remain some questions about the role of the board (EBM4, ABM3), as ABM3 articulates:

"It's not always black and white, some of it is grey...To what extent do we tackle particular issues, or do we rather leave those up to the administration?"

Theme 5: The relationship between the board and school leadership

The positive relationship between school leaders and the board is cited by some board members and all school leaders as key to ensuring the good governance of the school. EBM2 describes an atmosphere of "*mutual respect*" in which the board works "*hand in hand*" with school leaders. SL4 describes the relationship as "*reciprocal*" in which *"[board members are] respectful of the expertise that we bring and have about pedagogy…I trust their financial guidance of the school.*" SL3 and SL4 value in particular the outside perspective that board members can provide, especially through the asking of challenging questions.

SL4 explains that the positive relationship between school leadership and the board has been fostered by the head of school:

"*[The school] has had successful board relationships as a result of intentional work with the board that the head of school has been pivotal in organising.*"

SL4, SL1 and SL2 all note that this aspect of governance can be somewhat precarious, for example:

"[Head of school] is the buffer and liaison between the board and the school. A different head of school with a different agenda, and a different board with a different agenda could be completely different." SL4

4.3 Observation data

In this section, I present the observation data from committee and board meetings at CSIS. In total, 364 interactions were recorded with 454 codes assigned. 90 interactions were assigned two codes in cases where it was determined that one interaction corresponded equally to both codes.

Figure 1 shows the total number of interactions recorded by role (see table 3 for role codes). Parent board members (PM) and school leaders (SL) made the most contributions, followed closely by elected board members (EBM) and then appointed board members (ABM). The faculty board member (FBM) and faculty/staff (FS) of the school made the fewest contributions.
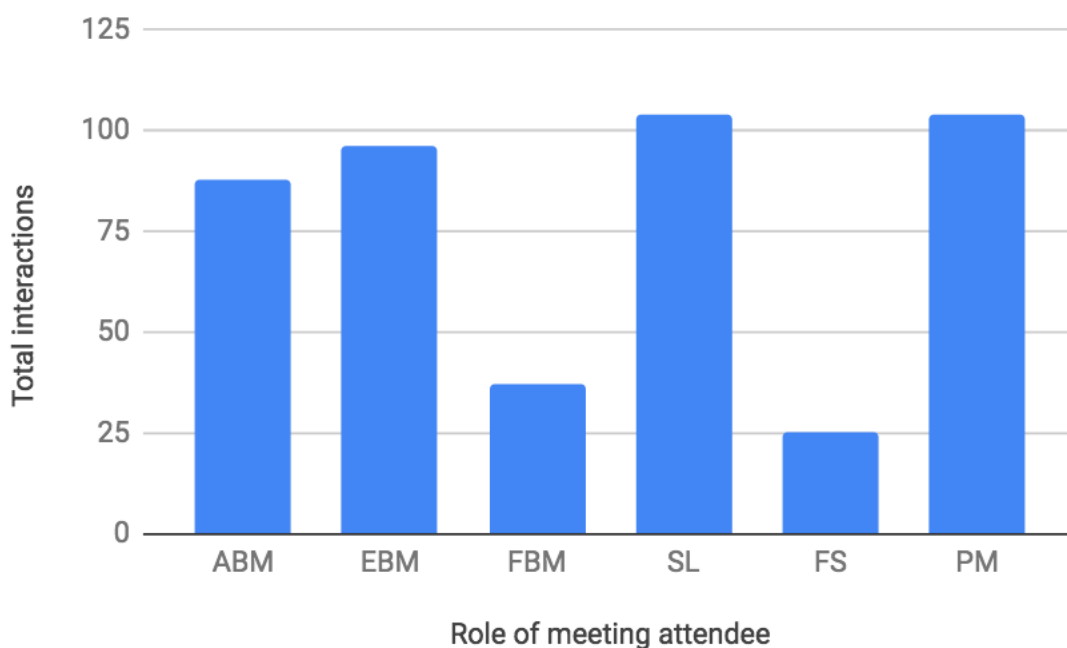

Figure 1. The total number of interactions made by meeting attendees, shown by role.

Table 5 shows the codes used to record interactions between meeting attendees. Figure 2 overleaf presents the total interactions of each code recorded in committee meetings and board meetings at CSIS.

Table 5. The codes used to record interactions between meeting attendees.

|	
Professional skills, experience or knowledge	PS
Parental or personal experiences or concerns	PE
Representation of stakeholders	RS
Questions related to the professional language of education	PL
Long term strategic planning	LS
Short term, reactive, operational, minor issues	ST
Knowledge shared as a result of prior experience on board or committee	KE
Information gathering (usually a question)	IG
Pedagogical concern	PC
Facts or figures / providing information in response to a question	FF
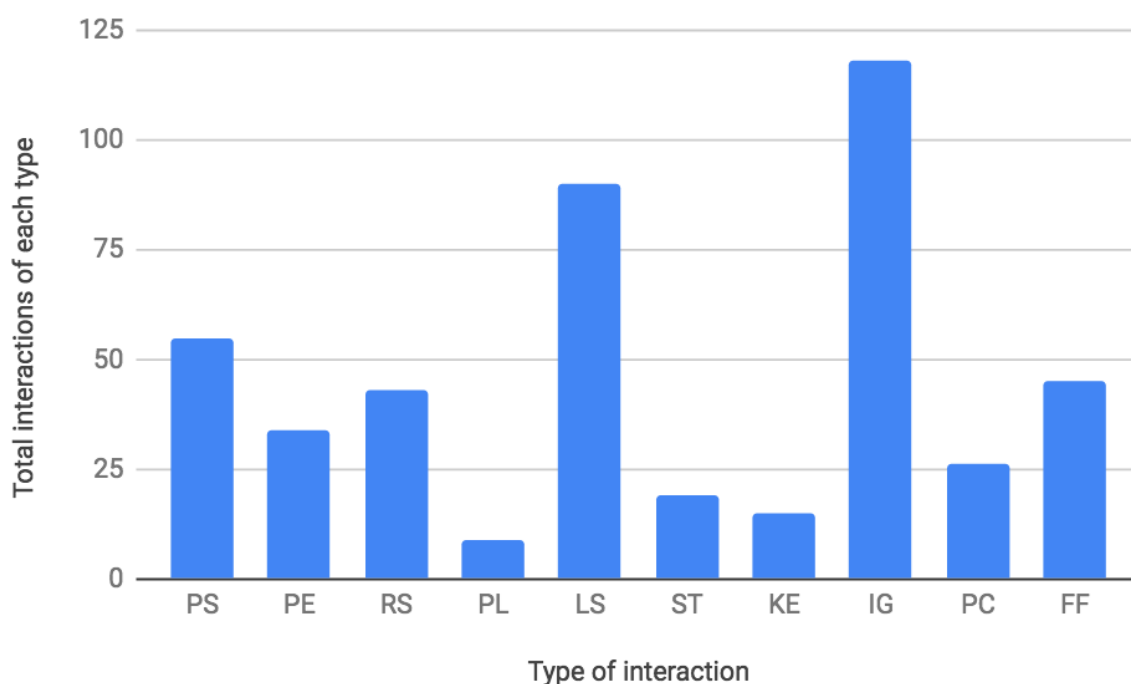
Figure 2. The total interactions of each type recorded in committee meetings and board meetings at CSIS.

Figure 2 shows the two biggest groups of interactions were information gathering (IG) and long-term strategic planning (LS). Together these comprise nearly half the total interactions. Interactions related to the provision of information (FF), representation of stakeholders (RS), and the sharing of personal or professional experience (PE and PS) also ranked highly. There were comparatively few interactions relating to short-term, operational issues (ST). Likewise, interactions which shared prior knowledge gained from being present on the board or committee in previous years (KE) were in the minority. The lowest number of interactions related to the clarification of technical or professional language of education (PL).

Figure 3 shows the interaction data organised by the relative contribution of each role.
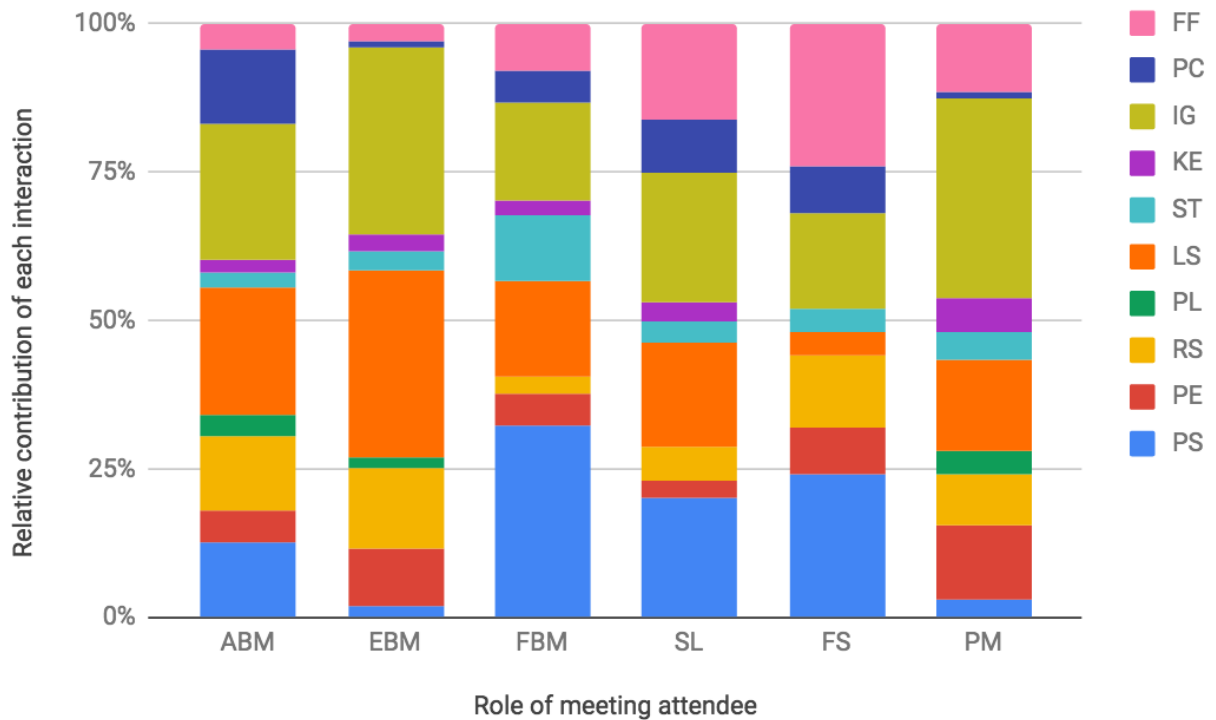
Figure 3. The relative contribution of interaction types by meeting attendees.

Faculty and staff attending board and committee meetings provided the fewest interactions in total. In most cases, they were providing information which related to their professional experience or their role in school (FF, PS). This was normally as a response to a specific inquiry from another member of the committee.

"Non-native speakers are performing higher in pre-primary." (FF)

"[When visiting a US university] there was no security at the entrance." (PE)

The majority of interactions by the FBM related to the sharing of knowledge based on their professional experiences (PS). The FBM provided more interactions in this category than the other groups, as well as interactions related to short term issues (ST).

"*[A psychometric assessment] will be read by the students as a test.*" (PS)

"*[There is] water damage in basement.*" (ST)

The most interactions recorded in total came from school leaders and parent committee members who are not board members, with each group providing 104 interactions. The spread of interactions was different, however, between these two groups. The majority of interactions of school leaders were fairly evenly spread between the provision of information (FF), information gathering (IG), long-term strategy (LS) and input related to their professional skills and experience (PS), for example:

"*Under 14s cannot be indirectly supervised - they must be directly supervised.*" (FF)

"*Do we also look at which subject areas perform better in the Extended Essay?*" (IG)

"*Students find it interesting to verbalise and articulate their soft skills.*" (PS)

"*How do we measure sustainability regarding our buildings?*" (LS)

In contrast, parent committee members tended strongly towards interactions that were information gathering (IG). This group also had the highest number of interactions that related

to their personal experiences (PE), and asked more questions about the professional language of education (PL).

> "*Can a regular IB Diploma student take a career-related study?*" (IG)

> "*I have never been told about any of this.*" (PE)

> "*What is PD?*" (PL)

After parent committee members, EBMs provided the most interactions related to personal experiences (PE); however, these were comparatively small.

> "*What about students watching sports matches? My son and his friends…*"
> (PE)

Both EBMs and ABMs focused their interactions on gathering information (IG) and long-term strategic planning (LS).

> "*How are we currently measuring transdisciplinary skills?*" (IG by EBM)

> "*What does the Global Politics course entail? Is there overlap with other subjects?*" (IG by ABM)

> "*The board's role here is to sign up and agree to policies which are practical and work, and to look at the liability of the school.*" (LS by EBM)

> *"What can we do to increase our political capital before we use goodwill with [more] construction projects?"* (LS by ABM)

These two groups also provided the highest numbers of interactions related to the representation of stakeholders (RS).

> *"Do you collect evidence of teacher feedback from students [to guide professional development decisions]?"* (RS by EBM)

> *"How are we standardising the way people are nominated and suggested [to join] the committee?"* (RS by ABM)

A notable difference between the ABM and EBM groups were the number of interactions specifically related to pedagogical concerns (PC). ABMs provided the largest number of interactions for this category and EBMs (together with PMs) provided the fewest.

> *"Once they have learnt [how to play the coding game], to what extent can the kids extract that information and explain what they are doing*?" (PC by ABM)

Furthermore, aside from school employees (FBM, SL and FS), the ABMs provided the most interactions specifically related to their professional skills or experience (PS), particularly related to finance, such as:

> *"A useful efficiency ratio for this would be..."* (PS)

In contrast, the other non-school employee groups, the EBMs and PMs, provided few interactions related to their own professional skills or experience (PS).

Chapter 5: Discussion

This chapter provides an analysis of the three data sets in chapter 4 as they relate to one another and the literature. In section 5.7, a model is presented for the hybrid governance of international schools. The final section outlines the limitations of the study.

5.1 Elected and self-perpetuating boards: is the hybrid model a happy medium?

This section explores the findings of the study in relation to two different means by which a board can be constituted: election and appointment. These approaches are identified by James and Sheppard (2014) and the experts as commonplace in the international school community. James and Sheppard (2014) identify advantages and disadvantages of elected and fully self-perpetuating boards. The expert data strongly aligns with their findings, although data from CSIS is contradictory in places.

Some experts valued elections as a way of promoting direct participation and representation of parents in governance (see section 5.2). They raised concerns that self-perpetuating boards lack transparency (James & Sheppard, 2014) and can lead to conflicts of interest. Other experts preferred the self-perpetuating model because appointments allow the board to be populated with governors with a particular skills-set (see section 5.3). They worried that elections can result in board members lacking competence (Heystek, 2011) and that elected boards have a higher turnover and lack strategic oversight (James & Sheppard, 2014).

The above concerns raised by experts and in the literatures are not apparent in the data from CSIS. However, the advantages of each structure are visible. CSIS board members and school leaders believe elections foster transparency, representation of stakeholders and

interest from the school community, yet highly value the opportunity to populate the board with particular skills through appointment. Their comments echo the thoughts of Haikio (2012) that appointments confer legitimacy while elections promote accountability.

The CSIS data therefore provides support for the suggestion by James and Sheppard (2014) that a hybrid model is a way to benefit from the advantages and offset the disadvantages of a fully elected or fully self-perpetuating board. It also aligns with the "stakeholder plus" approach described by Connelly et al. (2017, pp.14). Although these findings do point to a positive effect of the hybrid model on governance, they could also result from the school's nominations and screening procedures, as well as the governor training programme. These are further explored in sections 5.3 and 5.4.

To conclude, all groups agree that advantages and disadvantages come with elected and self-perpetuating boards, and this strongly aligns with the literature. A hybrid model appears to provide a happy medium between the two approaches. However, multiple factors in addition to structure contribute to good governance and these are addressed subsequently.

5.2 Stakeholder versus skills-based governance: how important is direct representation?

The literature describes the merits and problems with two opposing approaches to the representation of stakeholders in governance: direct and indirect representation. Direct representation is achieved in a stakeholder-based system, whereby elected representatives govern the school (Connelly et al., 2017). Indirect representation occurs via a skills-based approach, in which governors are selected based on their attributes as opposed to their role in the community (Connelly et al., 2017). All groups in this study consider the representation

of stakeholders to be important for promoting good governance; however, there is evidence to favour both direct and indirect representation.

Representation of students as stakeholders

Direct student involvement in governance is not considered vital by any group. Experts and school leaders show a desire to engage students within the governance structure of a school, yet both concede that many current efforts are tokenistic. Suggestions are provided for how to meaningfully engage students in governance, for example through an alumni seat on the board.

Representation of parents as stakeholders

Some experts consider parental representation via elections to be vital (see section 5.1) while others believe indirect representation of stakeholders to be sufficient, provided governors have a thorough understanding of their role (section 5.4) and the necessary skills (section 5.3).

Data from CSIS indicates that direct representation via elections does not necessarily equate to greater representation, as both EBMs and ABMs have a high number of interactions relating to the representation of stakeholders. Furthermore, low participation by parents in elections further calls into question the value of direct representation, aligning with the findings of Heystek (2011) and Connolly and James (2011) that parents may lack desire to participate in school governance.

Nevertheless, interview data from CSIS reveals direct stakeholder representation is considered important for promoting transparency and accountability and connecting the governance of the school to the community. Board members feel that being parents

themselves is beneficial as it gives them a personal interest in the success of the school (MacKenzie, 2012). Board members at CSIS also express a desire to increase the representation of some groups within their diverse community.

Representation of faculty as stakeholders

Whether faculty should be directly represented on the board also receives mixed responses from experts: some believe a faculty seat is important and others consider it the role of the head of school to represent the faculty. Data from CSIS, however, comes down strongly in favour of a faculty seat. Interview and observation data both support the view of MacKenzie (2012) that the faculty board member role is important for providing the perspective of someone currently working in the school. The FBM at CSIS provides the board with information which they would otherwise not receive, although it is recognised that the FBM role may be challenging in other cultural or legal contexts.

In summary, representation of stakeholders emerges from both the literature and the data as an important element of good governance. However, as this study indicates, direct representation is not required for good governance, although it can be desirable and useful, particularly in the case of a faculty seat on the board. The following sections 5.3 and 5.4 explore how representation of stakeholders can be cultivated through intentional recruitment and training.

5.3 Governor recruitment: how nominations, capability audits and screening can facilitate good governance

Forrest and Hill (2017) identify the attraction and retention of governors of suitable calibre as a challenge of school governance. This issue is apparent in the study. Experts and CSIS participants emphasise how important it is that governors have desirable personal disposition, capabilities and motivation. Experts note, however, that international school communities may have only a small pool of potential governors in the local area and the transient nature of the international school community can impact the stability of the board. These concerns are reflected in the CSIS data: participants worry that extending the 2-year term would negatively impact governor recruitment due to high turnover in the school community. Three recruitment processes emerge from the data through which these difficulties can be overcome in the international school setting: nominations/headhunting, capability audits and screening.

Nominations

A nominations process at CSIS is used to fill both appointed and elected seats. EBMs note that being asked to run for election by the nominating committee prompted them to so, suggesting that without the nominations process, the number of candidates running for election would be reduced. Similarly, ABMs said they would not have considered joining the board if not approached. Nominations, therefore, enable the school to actively recruit individuals with particular skillsets, thus widening the pool of potential board members. This suggests a headhunting approach can boost the recruitment potential of both elected and self-perpetuated models.

Capability audits

Connolly et al. (2017) describe how capability audits can be used during the recruitment process to enhance the overall skillset of a board. A process of self-evaluation by the board highlights competency gaps which are then filled through targeted appointment. The data supports this use of capability audits. All groups valued appointed seats as a means to recruit individuals with specific skills and competencies. It was a shared concern across all groups and in the literature (e.g. James & Sheppard, 2014) that fully elected boards can result in gaps in the skills and capabilities of governors.

Data from CSIS provides further evidence that the appointed seats do in fact enhance the skillset of the board: one notable difference in the contributions of ABMs and EBMs is that ABMs made more interactions related to their professional skills or experience than EBMs and raised more pedagogical concerns, supporting the findings of James and Sheppard (2014) that the individual competencies of ABMs are an advantage.

Screening

Screening is used at CSIS in conjunction with capability audit data to recruit individuals with desirable skills and motivations for serving. Screening is also considered a vital procedural step for filtering out agenda-driven candidates.

Experts caution against governors who take on the role for financial remuneration or as a way of gaining status within the community. Evidence from CSIS suggests the screening has been effective in avoiding governors with questionable motives: no concerns were raised by school leaders about the personal motivations of board members and the observation data suggests board members demonstrate a good understanding of their role.

Furthermore, while numerous personal and professional benefits of serving on the board emerge from their experiences, all BMs interviewed valued the altruistic nature of their work. This indicates that, contrary to the findings of Forrest and Hill (2017), remuneration is unlikely to affect their engagement in the role.

5.4 Induction and training of governors: developing a shared understanding of the governor role and promoting positive relationships

MacKenzie (2012) emphasises that board members must develop a shared sense of responsibility and make decisions in the best interests of the school as a whole, as opposed to narrower interests such as particular stakeholder groups. Hill and James (2017) suggest that a training and induction programme supports governors in achieving this through the establishment of protocols and norms to guide their actions. Experts are also strongly in favour of governor training.

Data from CSIS supports this view: board members express confidence when articulating their role and cite induction, training and experience as the processes through which they developed their ability to effectively fulfil the board member role. They also describe following policy and protocols to guide them through challenging situations and school leaders describe self-policing action by board members.

Governor induction and training at CSIS not only provides clear delineation of the roles of governors and school leaders, it also promotes positive relationships between the school leadership and the board by establishing a framework for their interactions. The positive relationship between governors and school leadership was highly valued by SLs at CSIS and

identified as a key element of good governance by the experts. This supports the findings of Connolly and James (2011) regarding the importance of a positive relationship between the head of school and the board chair.

Observation data provides further support for a comprehensive governor training programme. Non-board member parents, who are not trained, offered more contributions related to their personal experiences than BMs. Meanwhile, the vast majority of interactions by both ABMs and EBMs related to information gathering and long-term strategy. BMs rarely raised short-term, operational issues or their own personal experiences.

Furthermore, the language of education is raised by experts as a potential barrier to good governance yet is not considered a problem at CSIS; in the observation data, the lowest number of interactions related to the clarification of technical or professional language of education. This again may be an outcome of training.

Hill and James (2017) note the relative importance of the role of the clerk in supporting governors to fulfil their role effectively in UK colleges. This is yet to be explored directly in the international school context, but CSIS board members do note the administration assistant to the board provides them with support and guidance. This could be a topic for further study.

5.5 Committees: where governance meets management

Experts, SLs and BMs all identify division of responsibilities as a benefit of a committee structure. The autonomy of committees is generally viewed positively at CSIS. Committee members are trusted and their recommendations tend to be accepted, although a lack of ownership may be felt by non-members whose jobs are impacted by committee decisions.

There is interview evidence from all groups that committees are a significant area of challenge for international school governance: it is in committees that governance and management appear most likely to overlap. Observation evidence, however, indicates this is not a major issue at CSIS. Comparatively few interactions related to short-term, operational issues. Personal experiences were utilised at times by BMs, but most interactions were focused on information gathering, long-term strategy and input related to their professional skills and experience. This may be attributed to the training individual board members receive (see section 5.4).

BM and expert interviews suggest a committee structure has the potential to become unwieldy, with too many meetings and too many people involved. Observation evidence from CSIS raises a question about the value of including parents in the committees who are not on the board. Their presence increases the number of participants in the meeting, yet their interactions were predominantly information gathering and they gave the most input related to their own personal experience.

The contradictory nature of the data regarding board committees and the complexities of the committees themselves means that a conclusion cannot be reached regarding their impact on governance. Furthermore, no studies focusing specifically on this aspect of governance structure were found in the literature to corroborate the findings.

5.6 Key findings

The key findings from this study are summarised below.

1. A hybrid board structure captures the advantages of both election and appointment. Elections facilitate transparency, stakeholder representation and community engagement; appointments allow for targeted recruitment and maintenance of institutional memory.

2. A hybrid structure may buffer against the disadvantages of fully elected and fully appointed boards, although its relative impact as compared to governor training and recruitment processes is unclear.

3. A hybrid structure allows direct representation of parents and faculty on the board and this promotes democratic participation; however, stakeholders can be successfully advocated for through indirect representation by appointed board members.

4. A successful hybrid board structure is underpinned by recruitment and training processes that ensure governors have desirable skills and motivations, understand their role, and use protocols and policies to guide their actions. This promotes positive relationships and a focus on long-term strategic planning.

5. Committees can be used as an interface between governors and school leadership within the hybrid model. This is a way of dividing responsibilities but is also an area of risk for governors engaging in micromanagement and short-term, reactive actions.

5.7 A model for the hybrid governance of international schools

The flow chart below brings together key findings 1-4 in a model for governance in the international school setting.
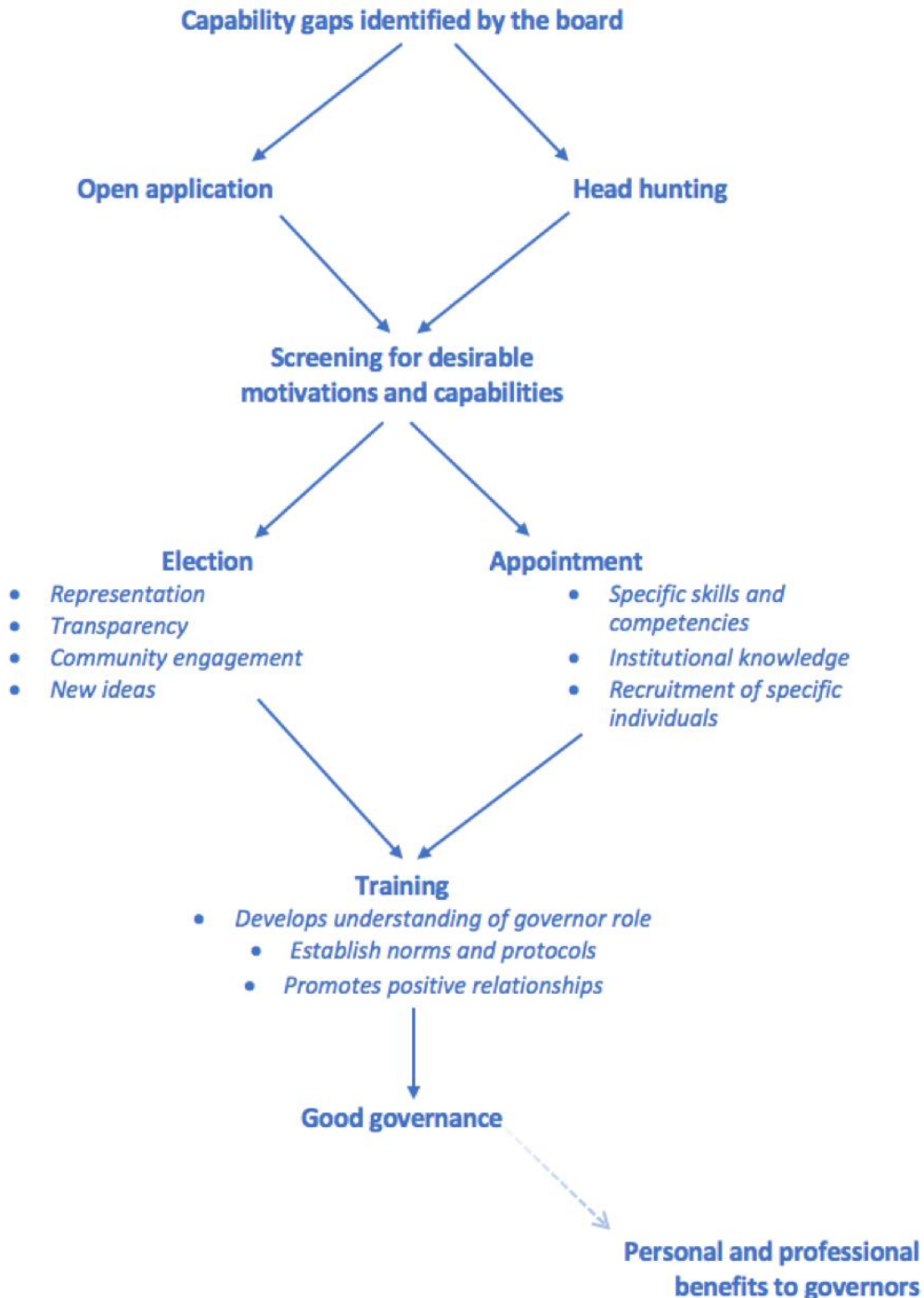
Figure 4. A model for the hybrid governance of international schools.

As the model outlines, an audit first identifies capability gaps in the existing board. Open application and head-hunting/nominations can be used simultaneously to attract potential governors from the local community. The model does not preclude the direct representation of any stakeholder group, such as a faculty or alumni seat, provided the capability audit identifies a need.

During screening, the attributes, skills and motivations of individuals are evaluated against the capability audit data. It could be argued that the screening process prior to elections impedes democratic participation; however, the strength of the data in favour of ensuring only those with desirable skills and motivations join the board supports the inclusion of screening as a safeguard.

Candidates who pass the screening are then appointed to the board or run for election. New governors undertake an induction and training process to develop their understanding of the role and establish protocols and norms that promote positive relationships with one another and the school leadership. Together, these steps facilitate good governance.

A consequence of good governance, shown as an offshoot, is the personal and professional gains of being on the school board. Personal or professional gain is an undesirable motivation for governors taking on a role on the board but is a welcome outcome.

Although the primary purpose of this model is to allow us to visualise how a hybrid approach can be successfully utilised by international schools, fully elected and fully appointed models are visible as possible routes to the same endpoint. As the advantages of election versus appointment are noted within the model, schools have the opportunity to mitigate against the disadvantages of their chosen structure. For example, if a board is wholly elected, the voting community could be informed about capability gaps to guide meaningful voting decisions.

Similarly, a fully appointed board could make the appointment process more transparent through sharing how new appointments fill a gap in their collective capabilities.

A limitation of the model is that it does not include committees, despite them being commonplace in international board structures. While the data indicates committees may have a role in supporting governance, the mixed feedback suggests further research is needed to be able to articulate an optimum approach to their use.

5.8 Limitations of the study

Scheduling and time constraints limited the scope of this study because not all school leaders and board members at CSIS were interviewed and only one faculty board member was currently serving. Furthermore, interviewing more experts may have elicited whether there is a cultural difference in their perspectives. Data points to this because those experts with experience of a British-style education advocated more strongly for direct representation, whereas those from a US background placed more value on skills. A further limitation is that the observation data was at times difficult to narrow down to one or two categories and the categorisation process was subjective.

Chapter 6: Concluding comments

This section summarises the conclusions of the study, which began by asking the following research question:

What is the nature of hybrid governance in an international school?

To explore the nature of hybrid governance, a case study was carried out on a well-established international school in western Europe. Data was collected through interviews with board members and school leaders. Board meetings and committee meetings were observed and the interactions between participants were recorded and analysed. The two data sets from CSIS were triangulated with interview data from experts in international education.

At CSIS, the benefits of both elected and self-perpetuating boards are visible within the hybrid structure. Elections foster transparency, representation of stakeholders and interest from the school community while appointments allow the board to be populated with particular skills. The data from CSIS aligns strongly with the literature and the expert views.

In contrast, the disadvantages of elected and self-perpetuating boards described in the literature and by experts are not apparent in the data from CSIS. This disconnect suggests the hybrid structure may buffer against the disadvantages of fully elected and fully appointed boards, although this may also be attributed to the processes of governor recruitment and training.

The findings of this study suggest governor recruitment and training processes are important for laying the foundations for good governance, irrespective of board structure. Recruitment should be underpinned by an evaluative process which identifies areas of weakness in the capabilities of the board. Nominations/headhunting and screening processes ensure

governors demonstrate desirable skills and motivations. Training ensures governors understand their role and demonstrate this understanding through their representation of stakeholders and focus on long-term strategic planning.

The interrelatedness of these emergent factors suggests generalisations can be made to other international school contexts. As such, I provide the following recommendations to international school boards, based on the model in section 5.7:

- Conduct a capability audit and use the results of this to underpin the recruitment of new governors.

- Implement a nominations/headhunting and screening process for prospective governors.

- Consider a hybrid structure to capture the advantages of elected and self-perpetuating boards; alternatively, take steps to mitigate against disadvantages of the chosen structure.

- Implement a comprehensive training programme for governors to develop their understanding of the role and establish protocols.

In conclusion, by its nature, hybrid governance allows international schools to benefit from the advantages of both elected and self-perpetuating boards. It may also serve to offset the disadvantages of these structures. The implementation of recruitment and training processes are avenues through which schools can promote good governance irrespective of board structure.

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Appendix 1: Sample interview protocols

1.1 Expert interviews

1. Could you tell me in broad terms about the different approaches to international school governance you've experienced?

2. What do you feel are the core elements of successful governance in an international school context?

3. What do you see as the major challenges to governance in international schools?

4. What do you feel is the most successful governance model for international schools?

5. How important do you think it is that the major stakeholders of the school are represented directly within the governing body?

6. If important, what are the main barriers to achieving fair representation?

7. What would you say are the pros and cons of having elected parents on an international school board?

8. In your experience, what difficulties do parent governors experience?

9. What would you say are the pros and cons of having appointed governors?

10. Can you tell me about any differences you have noticed in the actions and approach of parent governors who have been elected compared with those that have been appointed?

11. How do you think the presence of appointed board members alongside elected board members affects a governing board?

12. Do you think it is easier for an appointed governor to understand the full scope of their role as a custodian of the school?

13. What do you think about having an elected member of the faculty on the school board?

14. Can you describe what you would consider to be a good working relationship between a governing body and the leadership of a school?

15. What might cause a breakdown in relationship between head of school and board?

16. Do you think the head of school should be on the board? If so, in what capacity?

17. What do you think are the personal or professional benefits to governors themselves of serving on a school governing body?

18. What do you think of a hybrid model of governance which includes both elected and self-perpetuating governors?

19. How do you feel about a committee-based governance system in which groups of stakeholders make recommendations to the board?

20. Do you think students should play a role in the school governance, and if so how?

1.2 School leader interviews

1. Can you describe the nature of the relationship between the board and the school leadership at CSIS?

2. What would you say are the key challenges to governing a large international school such as CSIS?

3. Do you think the current size of the board is optimal for the size of the school and the scope of the role the governing board plays?

4. Do you consider the board to be operational or strategic in nature? If strategic, how is this achieved?

5. Do you consider the committees to be generally operational or strategic in nature? If strategic, how is this ensured given that committees have school leaders and teachers?

6. To what extent have you found the decisions and recommendations made by committees to be upheld by the board?

7. What do you consider to be the main benefits to the school of having a combination of elected and appointed board members on the board?

8. To what extent do you think the structure of the board fairly represents the interests of all the major groups within the school? How could representation be improved?

9. Do students currently play any role in the governance system, and if not do you see any role for them in future?

10. Are there any changes to the current structure of the board which you think would further optimise governance at CSIS?

11. Can you tell me about any differences you have noticed in the actions and approach of appointed and elected parent board members?

12. Have you observed any difference in the way elected and appointed board members view their role?

13. How do you think the board would be different if it consisted only of elected parents?

14. How important is the screening process prior to the election of parent board members?

15. How do you think the board would be different if it consisted only of appointees?

16. Can you outline the criteria used when selecting a new appointed member of the school board?

17. How do you think the board would be different if there was no elected faculty member on the board?

18. What challenges do board members face in their role?

19. What specific challenges do you feel the faculty board member faces in their role?

20. How might the board would be different if the head of school was a full voting member of the board?

1.3 Board member interviews

1. Can you tell me about how you came to be on the board?

2. Would you have ever run for election had you not been approached?

3. What are your feelings about the induction process onto the board? How easily did you settle into your new role? Who helped?

4. Has your view of the role of board member changed over time? How?

5. Who do you feel you represent in your role on the board?

6. Are there any ways you may have viewed or approached the role of board member differently had you been elected rather than appointed (or vice versa)?

7. Have there been any occasions where the technical and professional language of education has been a barrier to your participation in board discussions?

8. Do you think you personally would have been more effective in your role had you previously studied or worked in education?

9. Can you recall any times that you have found it difficult to separate your role as parent with your role as a board member?

10. Are there any ways in which you have changed personally or professionally as a result of being a board member?

11. Can you describe the relationship between the board and the school leadership?

12. What are the key challenges to governing a large international school such as CSIS?

13. Is the current size of the board optimal for the size of the school and the scope of the role the governing board plays?

14. To what extent do you think the structure of the board fairly represents the interests of all the major groups within the school? How could representation be improved?

15. To what extent are the decisions made by committees upheld by the board?

16. What do you think are the main benefits to the school of being able to appoint people to the board?

17. How do you think the board would be different if it consisted only of elected parents or only of appointed board members? How would it affect the school community?

18. How important to do you consider the screening process to be which occurs prior to the election of parent board members?

19. What are the benefits and challenges of having a faculty member on the board?

20. How do you think the board would be different if the head of school was a full voting member of the board?

Appendix 2: Interview and observation timelines

Table 6 shows the interview schedule and table 7 overleaf shows the observation schedule of committee and board meetings.

Table 6. Interview schedule for experts (P1-9), school leaders (SL1-4) and elected, appointed and faculty board members (EBM, ABM and FBM)

Participant	Interview date
P1	25-May-17
P2	05-Jun-17
P3	24-Jul-17
P4	03-Aug-17
P5	25-Aug-17
P6	28-Aug-17
SL1	08-Sep-17
EBM1	11-Sep-17
SL2	12-Sep-17
P7	13-Sep-17
SL3	26-Sep-17
P8	27-Sep-17
SL4	12-Oct-17
P9	31-Oct-17
FBM	02-Nov-17
ABM1	13-Nov-17
ABM2	15-Nov-17
EBM2	15-Nov-17
EBM3	17-Nov-17
EB4	07-Dec-17
ABM3	11-Dec-17

Table 7. Observation schedule.

Meeting type	Date
Committee	2-May-17
Committee	2-May-17
Committee	8-May-17
Board	15-May-17
Committee	11-Sep-17
Board	18-Sep-17
Committee	13-Nov-17
Committee	14-Nov-17
Committee	14-Nov-17

Note: The school schedules up to two committee meetings on the same day.

Appendix 3: Participant information and consent forms

Google forms was used to create and share the participant information and consent forms.

Screenshots are provided below.

3.1 Expert information and consent forms

The impact of a hybrid model of international school governance: Participant information sheet and consent form

I would like to invite you to take part in a research study. This study is for my dissertation, which is the culminating assignment of the MA in Educational Leadership and Management with the University of Bath. This document will explain the purpose of the study, including how the data will be used and reported. Before deciding whether to take part, please read the information carefully and ask questions if you need clarification or more information.

Purpose

International schools typically have a governing body and secure governance is a key requirement for the accreditation of schools by organisations such as the Council of International Schools and the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. Despite this, the governance of international schools has not been extensively analysed.

Research has identified two common governance models in international schools: elected and self-perpetuating boards. Advantages and disadvantages have been identified of each model. It has been suggested that a hybrid governance model which includes both appointed and elected members may overcome many of the problems found with fully elected and fully self-perpetuating boards.

The purpose of this case study is to explore the impact of the hybrid model of governance in a large and well-established European international school. Through completing this dissertation, I hope to add to the small body of research on school governance specifically within the international school context. This analysis may also provide guidance to other international schools seeking to revise or develop their governance models.

Participation in the study

You have been approached to take part in this study because it requires information from people who have experience and expertise in the field of school governance.

If you choose to take part, you will give your consent to participating in a 30 minute one-to-one interview via Skype. The audio of the interview will be digitally recorded.

All information and data about individual participants will be kept confidential and accessed only by the researcher. Personal data will be stored separately to the record of interview responses. Audio recordings will be destroyed as soon as the dissertation has been evaluated by the university.

Anonymised direct quotations from the interview may be used in the report of the study. These will be linked to the specific role of the participant, for example school leader, elected board member, appointed board member, parent committee member or external expert.

Benefits and risks

It is hoped that this study will lead to a greater understanding of the hybrid model for governance in international schools. It may also provide guidance to international schools about best practices in school governance.

There are no risks anticipated with participation in this study. If you experience any concerns during the process, you are asked to inform the researcher.

Results

The results of this research will be shared with the Head of School and reported in a dissertation, which is due to be submitted to the University of Bath in July 2018. The dissertation may also be submitted for publication in an academic journal. Participants will receive an electronic copy of the dissertation.

Further information

If you have any questions about the study or would like more information, please contact the researcher, Leila Holmyard, via email: leilaholmyard@gmail.com

Complaints

If you wish to make a complaint or raise concerns about any aspect of this study and would prefer not to speak directly to the researcher, please contact:

Professor Christopher James
1 West North 3.17, University of Bath, Bath, UK
Email: c.james@bath.ac.uk
Tel: +44 1225 38 3280

*Required

Email address *

Your email address

I confirm the following: *

☐ I have read and understood the information provided about what the study entails.

☐ I understand that I can withdraw from this study at any time without giving a reason.

☐ I consent to the use of my personal information and interview responses as described.

☐ I understand that my personal information will be kept confidential.

☐ I understand that my interview responses will be reported anonymously.

☐ I freely agree to participate in this research project.

Name: *

Your answer

Date: *

Date

dd/mm/yyyy

3.2 Case study school information and consent forms

The impact of a hybrid model of international school governance: Participant information sheet and consent form

I would like to invite you to take part in a research study. This study is for my dissertation, which is the culminating assignment of the MA in Educational Leadership and Management with the University of Bath. This document will explain the purpose of the study, including how the data will be used and reported. Before deciding whether to take part, please read the information carefully and ask questions if you need clarification or more information.

Purpose

International schools typically have a governing body and secure governance is a key requirement for the accreditation of schools by organisations such as the Council of International Schools and the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. Despite this, the governance of international schools has not been extensively analysed.

Research has identified two common governance models in international schools: elected and self-perpetuating boards. Advantages and disadvantages have been identified of each model. It has been suggested that a hybrid governance model which includes both appointed and elected members may overcome many of the problems found with fully elected and fully self-perpetuating boards.

The purpose of this case study is to explore the impact of the hybrid model of governance in a large and well-established European international school. Through completing this dissertation, I hope to add to the small body of research on school governance specifically within the international school context. This analysis may also provide guidance to other international schools seeking to revise or develop their governance models.

Participation in the study

You have been approached to take part in this study because it requires information from people who are current board members or who work closely with the school board. Taking part in this research is entirely voluntary and you have the right to withdraw at any time for any or no reason.

If you choose to take part, you will give your consent to the researcher observing and recording by text your contributions to committee meetings. Participation may also involve a 30 minute one-to-one interview. The audio of the interview will be digitally recorded.

All information and data about individual participants will be kept confidential and accessed only by the researcher.
Personal data will be stored separately to the record of committee comments and interview responses. Audio recordings will be destroyed as soon as the dissertation has been evaluated by the university.

Anonymised direct quotations from the interview may be used in the report of the study. These will be linked to the specific role of the participant, for example school leader, elected board member, appointed board member, parent committee member or external expert.

The school name and precise location will be kept confidential. The school will be referred to only as a large and well-established European international school.

Benefits and risks

It is hoped that this study will lead to a greater understanding of the hybrid model for governance in international schools. It may also provide guidance to international schools about best practices in school governance.

There are no risks anticipated with participation in this study. If you experience any concerns during the process, you are asked to inform the researcher.

Results

The results of this research will be shared with the Head of School and reported in a dissertation, which is due to be submitted to the University of Bath in July 2018. The dissertation may also be submitted for publication in an academic journal. Participants will receive an electronic copy of the dissertation.

Further information

If you have any questions about the study or would like more information, please contact the researcher, Leila Holmyard, via email: leilaholmyard@gmail.com

Complaints

If you wish to make a complaint or raise concerns about any aspect of this study and would prefer not to speak directly to the researcher, please contact:

Professor Christopher James
1 West North 3.17, University of Bath, Bath, UK
Email: c.james@bath.ac.uk
Tel: +44 1225 38 3280

*Required

Email address *

Your email address

I confirm the following: *

☐ I have read and understood the information provided about what the study entails.

☐ I understand that I can withdraw from this study at any time without giving a reason.

☐ I consent to the use of my personal information and interview responses as described.

☐ I understand that my personal information will be kept confidential.

☐ I understand that my interview responses will be reported anonymously.

☐ I freely agree to participate in this research project.

Name: *

Your answer

Date: *

Date

dd/mm/yyyy