Professor Angela Thody has many publications and conference papers on the subject of school governance. This lecture is the outcome of many years of research on the topic, beginning with her doctoral thesis in 1990 on the Roles of Governors (University of Leicester). For other examples of her work in this field see:

- *School Governors: Leaders or Followers?* (Editor) Harlow, Longmans, 1994
- *The Governor-Citizen: agent of the state, the community or the school?*, in Macbeth A., McCreath D. & Aitchison A., *Collaborate or Compete? Educational Partnerships in a Market Economy*, Falmer, 1995

For more information about the author, or to book her for lecturing

www.angelathody.com

Professor Angela Thody, Centre for Education Research and Development
University of Lincoln, Brayford Campus, Lincoln, LN6 7TS
Phone: 01522 886071
Email: athody@lincoln.ac.uk/ angelathody450@hotmail.com

Keywords: school governors; Chile; England; Education; schools; democracy; school leaders.
Governors’ roles: A model to import?

Emerita Professor
Angela Thody
Who is Thody, what is she?

Educating school governors for over 20 years (in how to control their principals)
Educating school principals for over 20 years (in how to control their governors)
School governor 12 years -
  2 secondary schools, 1 early years’ school
  (Learning how to control my principal)

Research – PhD on roles of governors;
Research projects on governors from industry, roles, history, composition
Publications – 2 books, many articles,
National and international lectures (NB New Zealand)
School assembly

The 21st century English school governors’ hymn

Thoughts for the day –
the roles of governors since the mid 1980s = ?

Trojan horse? Suburban guerilla? Principal’s supporter?
Critical friend? Trustee (as in independent schools)?
Manager? Pupils’ protector? Staff performance monitor?
Insider with the outside viewpoint? Leader?
CONTEXT  Quick up-date on English and Welsh education post 1986

Each state school:

Is financially self-managing and must manage within their budgets. Contract for their own supplies and services. Select own students (within certain parameters)

Appoints, disciplines and dismisses its own staff

Must follow the National Curriculum. Subject to 4-yearly inspection. Can be closed for ‘failure’.

Expected to achieve examination targets

There is a National College for School Leadership

LEAs have few powers left

2005 - Just developing the extended school
Types of state maintained schools

LEAs: COMMUNITY, VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED

LEAs and religious bodies, some of original funding from religious authorities or historic charities:
FOUNDATION, VOLUNTARY AIDED

Some of current funding from commerce, benefactors:
PARTNERSHIP, CITY (RURAL, COASTAL) ACADEMIES, CITY TECHNOLOGY COLLEGES

Any of these can have SPECIALIST status – languages, performing arts, technology, science, business etc. Some of these (eg Academies) will be directly controlled through central government.

NOTE – THE LIST CHANGES DAILY!!!!!!!
Results of all the changes:

State schools operate more like independent schools (but not in class size, fees and selectivity)

Some improvements in results

Accountability for state schools is mediated through funding mechanisms, inspection, performance management for staff, the return of the national curriculum and national testing and

GOVERNORS: increased powers since 1986
Governors’ roles: A model to import?

The 2000s context in English schooling: each state school is a target orientated, self-managing business
Governors’ roles: a model to import?

English and Welsh maintained foundation schools

Composition of governing bodies: schools decide their own but

Elected parents: minimum 33%.
Elected teaching or support staff: at least 2, maximum 33% including the principal.

LEA appointees (political parties): minimum 1, maximum, 20%

Appointed community: minimum 10% (20% in community schools)

Foundation or partnership: minimum 2, maximum 25% (none in community schools)
Governors’ roles: a model to import?

Composition:
Enormous advance for democracy and adult education

‘Educated’ voices to advise schools of what the outside world thinks of them

Failure as a means of central control
SO WHO CONTROLS WHOM IN THE SCHOOL?
There is no difficulty in showing that the ideally best form of government is that in which the sovereignty is vested in the entire aggregate of the community: every citizen not only having a voice in the exercise of that ultimate sovereignty, but being, at least occasionally, called on to take an actual part in the government.

1859 John Stuart Mill  On representative government
Governors’ roles: A model to import?
The 2000s context in English schooling: each state school is a target orientated, self-managing business with varied volunteer governors
### Governing Body Roles

**What do Governors Have to Do?**

**Aim – promote higher standards**

- Manage the budget; decide staff complement and salaries
- Check the school complies with Race Relations Act
- Establish performance management policy for staff plus grievance and discipline policies
- Set targets for test results
- Oversee special needs policies
- Draw up the post-OFSTED action plans
- Appoint principal and deputy, decide on procedure for other appointments
- Report results to parents, LEA and Govt.
- Ensure that the curriculum is balanced and broadly based and includes the National Curriculum, sex and religious education
- Pupil exclusions
- Behaviour policy
Governors’ roles: a model to import?

The advantages:

Real power
Real job satisfaction
Real helpfulness
Real decrease for some principals’ stress BUT
Real Work Load for Volunteers

Responsible - to everyone and no-one

Likely collaboration with colleagues and outsiders-

Qualifications - in plumbing and philosophy

Extent of postholder’s authority - From infinitesimal to infinity

Knowledge and Skills - about everyone and everything

Responsibilities - overwhelming

Skills, abilities, aptitude - Weightlifting to carry DfES documents; insomniac – to stay awake to read them

Tasks - everything
International Institute for Education Leadership

REAL WORK LOAD FOR VOLUNTEERS – cont.

Training available – if you have time to attend

£ Pay? None. You have to pay to do the job

Equal
Opportunities –
We’re not
Proud –
we’ll co-opt
anyone

Holidays –
what holidays?

Personality –
Conscientious
but crazy

Work
Hours –
A lot

Experience? None needed - you’ll soon get it.
Governors’ roles: A model to import?
The 2000s context in English schooling: each state school is a target orientated, self-managing business with varied volunteer governors with extensive responsibilities
So governors have the powers –
How do they play the game?
In relation to the governors, the principal is Their instrument to work with Their servant, to carry out their plans and wishes
Their representative, to illustrate and maintain the good principles in which you are all enlisted
Their almoner, to bestow what is better than silver or gold - viz, a good education.

ROLE MODELS

The view from the present –
The governor’s role is to be the critical friend

BUT WHOSE FRIEND?
PARENTS?
GOVERNMENT?
PUPILS?
PRINCIPAL?
ROLE MODELS:
Evaluator

Needs knowledge of teaching and learning

SO GO GET IT

Observe teachers in classrooms
Controversial – but how else can governors learn about the core business?

Performance management powers – policies, check implementation, reward and discipline staff
ROLE MODELS: The non-executive director

Governors each specialise.
Governing bodies have committees.
Strategic role – initiating and checking but not managing
The trustees are the life of the school. If they are active, watchful and faithful, the school will flourish; but if they are irresolute and indifferent, the school will dwindle and eventually go down.
Trustees have responsibilities of stewardship... Legally a trustee is a person entrusted with the administration of property for the benefit of a third party. This third party is usually a minor, hence the trustee is specifically looking towards the welfare of the future generation... the pupils and staff of a school are necessarily transient members but the governing body prevails as the trustee.

Trusteeship fits the style of those who volunteer as governors – altruistic, goal-, interest- and rogue- orientated, bystanding and ambitious; they balance current needs against future needs.
Still room for fun…

Governors’ weeks
Classroom attachments
Helping out
Being an audience
PR
Governors’ roles: A model to import?
The 2000s context in English schooling: each state school is a target orientated, self-managing business with varied volunteer governors with extensive responsibilities and a choice of being critical friends, teaching and learning evaluators, trustees, non-executive directors and fun roles.

So – which will you import?
But keep the governor’s role in perspective...

Who has not repeatedly seen cases of best governance where … everything in the school…has been truly miserable: whilst on the other hand, where governance has been defective…all that is valuable prospers?