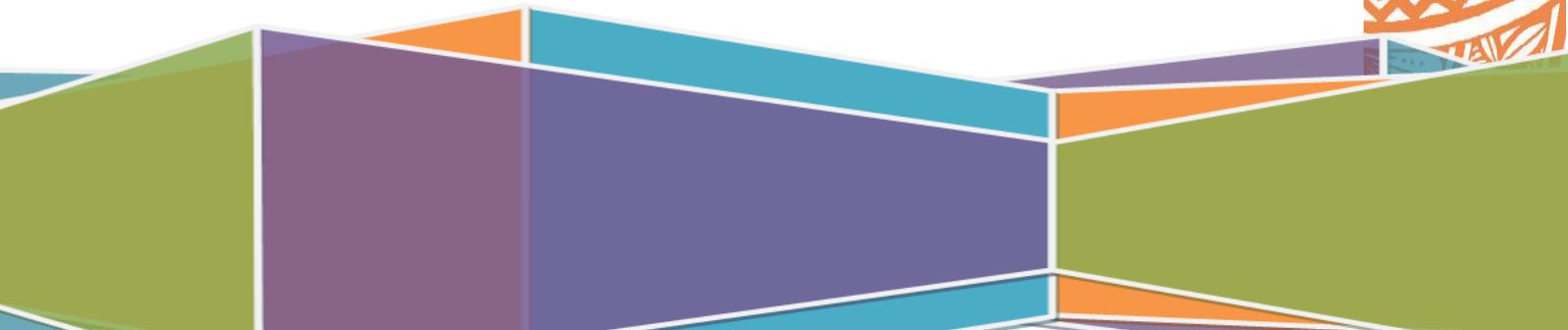




Government of Samoa
Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture

School Governance Policy

2018 - 2023



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MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SPORTS AND CULTURE

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

MESC	Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture
MSS	Minimum Service Standards
PABER	Pacific Benchmarking Education for Results
PTA	Parent – Teacher Association
SAMP	School Annual Management Plan
SAR	School Annual Report
SGP	School Governance Policy
SIP	School Improvement Plan
SOD	School Operations Division
SSFSGS	Samoa School Fee Grant Scheme
UN ESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

Policy	A course or principle of action adopted or proposed by a government, party, business or individual. (<i>Australian Concise Oxford Dictionary</i>)
Governance	The “process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented. (or not implemented)” (<i>UN ESCAP</i>)
School Governance	“Schools, whether public or private institutions, also have a number of stake-holders in their activities. Their governance is therefore done through a coalition of interests working together, but performing different functions, all aimed at enabling each school to operate and to achieve its aims and objectives.”(www.researchgate.net/post)
School	<p>A school is an institution designed to provide learning spaces and learning environments for the teaching of students (or "pupils") under the direction of teachers. From the Education Act 2009, school means “an organisation for the provision of education from the first level of primary education for any of the years up to the final year of secondary education.”</p> <p>A government school in Samoa is under the jurisdiction of MESC in partnership with the communities in which the schools are located, represented by either a village school committee, a district school committee, or a school board in which a variety of coalitions of interest are represented. The teachers are paid by the Government, while the communities build the schools and provide other resources. In recent years, the Government of Samoa has provided more and more resources for the schools especially after the effects of natural disasters such as cyclones and floods.</p>

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FOREWORD



The School Governance Policy (SGP) ensures collaboration between the School Principal and School Committee/School Boards in their combined efforts to improve school performance as reflected in student learning outcomes.

The SGP identifies key stakeholders of the school and the roles they must play in the overall governance of the school, and as well articulating clearly the links between these roles eliminating confusion and misunderstanding. It provides guidance for all government schools in promoting the principles and/or the characteristics of good governance as set out in the MESC School Governance Framework.

Further, the School Governance Policy will strengthen ownership and engagement of the wider community in the development and progress of their school in relation to student learning outcomes. This requires the commitment of the community in particular the School Committee, Parents and Teachers Association (PTA), Old Pupil Association, village Council and the wider community of faifeau, members of Parliament, and all other relevant stakeholders who are contributing to the development of schools.

The SGP will also assist in the monitoring of the Samoa School Fee Grant Scheme (SSFGS), Minimum Service Standards and the Education Act 2009 (including its Amendment). While there are manuals and guidelines in place for school management, the SGP assures a coordinated approach, by bringing together all the essential aspects for effective governance of schools.

This SGP is derived from the School Governance Framework, which will be the overarching strategic document that ensures the effective implementation of the policy and to promote a more active engagement of the School Committee (Komiti o Aoga), Parents Teachers Association (PTA) and the wider community.

I encourage all school personnel and communities to use this policy effectively as a guide to effective school governance.


Hon. Lōau Solamalemālō Keneti Sio
Minister of Education, Sports and Culture

1. INTRODUCTION

The overall aspiration for any policy in education and schools is to enhance and improve students' learning. Understanding the dynamics of the relationship between any policy domain and those factors that influence learning outcomes however, remains elusive.

The Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture has been part of the World Bank Pacific Benchmarking Education for Results (PaBER) programme which focuses on eliciting understanding about the relationships between education policy and those factors that influence student learning outcomes.

The School Governance and School Management policies' intention were to ultimately assure full community engagement, ownership and accountability in the governance for the development of the schools.

2. PURPOSE

The aim of a School Governance Policy is to clarify key stakeholders and their roles in the governance of the school. All key roles in school governance must agree on a common vision and mission of the school. The links or relationships between the key roles should also be explicit so that in playing their parts, they altogether work towards the achievement of the goals and objectives of the school.

This policy provides guidance for all schools in promoting the principles or characteristics of good governance as set out in the School Governance Framework. The policy also integrates the seven policy goals identified by PaBER and the analysis of current status in Samoa, moderated by the contextual factors of the location of schools especially in the villages.

3. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

This policy is guided by the vision that *"Schools in Samoa are governed by good governance principles providing quality education for all students."*

It is also underpinned by the following guiding principles of good governance as stipulated in the School Governance Framework.

3.1 Participation

Participation by both men and women is a cornerstone of good governance. In school governance this requires that all means must be deployed to include women in School Committees/School Boards and men in PTAs of schools so that decision making is balanced and comprehensive.

3.2 Rule of Law

This policy is premised on the Education Act (2009), Teachers Act (2016) and other related legislation as well as the policies and regulations of MESCS. These must be enforced impartially and ensure the protection of human rights of all stakeholders.

3.3 Quality

Quality is achieved in a system that strives for quality assured standards and qualifications that have been validated by relevant agencies.

3.4 Relevance

Effective school governance is guided and informed by relevant documentation/reports based on MSS for Primary and Secondary Schools, SIP, SAMP, SAR.

3.5 Transparency

All decisions taken and enforced must be done in a transparent manner and follows rules and regulations. It also means that all information by the school and of the school must be freely available and accessible to parents, students, teachers and all stakeholders who are affected by the decisions made.

3.6 Responsiveness

Good governance requires that institutions such as schools must respond to serve all stakeholders in a timely manner and within reasonable timeframes. Responsiveness is also a measure of efficiency and effectiveness.

3.7 Consensus oriented

Consensus decision making is a basic practice of Samoan decision-making processes and must apply to schools. Good governance is reflected in the level of consensus that is achieved amongst the decision makers in the school setting.

3.8 Equity and Inclusiveness

All stakeholders must be made to feel that they have a stake in the school and do not feel excluded in any way. All students, teachers and parents and the vulnerable must be treated equally and supported to improve or maintain their well-being so that they are encouraged to support their children and the school in order for the children to complete their schooling.

3.9 Effectiveness and efficiency

The needs of the school including all their stakeholders must be met in ways that ensure the best use of resources available, both material and human.

3.10 Accountability

This is another key requirement of good governance. It means that the school committees or boards must be held accountable to all stakeholders which are the Government through MESCS, Development Partners, parents, students, and the whole

community. Accountability must be practised in all decisions taken and implemented especially in the management and use of all human, financial and other resources regardless of their sources.

3.11 Gender sensitivity

Gender sensitivity should be reflected in the composition of School Committees/PTAs/School Boards. Traditionally, males are not always associated with the teaching profession and the system needs to be aware of stereotyping and discrimination against men and women.

3.12 Sustainability

Teacher quality education requires careful planning for the effective use of resources to ensure programmes are inclusive of relevant stakeholders such as family members as well as respective Ministries.

4. POLICY STATEMENTS

4.1 Quality Public Education is a Core Function of Government in Partnership with Local Communities.

The provision of quality public education is a core function of the Government of Samoa and involves a partnership between the local communities (villages and districts) and the Government (the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture).

The communities (villages or districts) are represented by a School Committee or School Board while the Government is represented by the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture (MESC).

4.2 The School Agreement¹

Each School Committee or School Board will discuss and sign a School Agreement which sets out the obligations between itself and the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture through the Chief Executive Officer. The School Agreement forms the basis of the partnership between the School Committee/School Board and the MESC.

4.3 Policy Development and Regulatory Functions

The Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture in collaboration with the Public Service Commission provide the policies and regulations with which the schools are governed and regulated.

¹ A sample of the School Agreement is found in the School Management and Organisation Manual 2017.

4.4 Policy and Guidelines Implementation

The Principal and Staff of a School, in collaboration with the School Committee/School Board and other members of the community implement all policies and guidelines.

4.5 School Autonomy and Accountability

Full school autonomy is not practicable or desirable given the smallness of the Samoa education system. However, in the Samoan context, the School Committees/School Boards are encouraged to aspire towards full school autonomy observing all principles of good governance.

4.6 Effective Governance

School Committee/School Board and Parents Teachers Association (PTA) members play a vital role in leading the future direction and performance of the school. To govern the school well, School Committee/School Board and PTA members need to understand the purpose of, and practice good governance.

The Management Team must be well versed in all related policies below for good governance.

4.7 Related Documents

RELATED DOCUMENTS	LEGISLATIVE & AUTHORITY	YEAR
Education Act	Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture	2009
Teachers Act	Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture	2016
Public Service Commission Act	Public Service Commission	2004
The National Teacher Development Framework	Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture	2011
The National Curriculum Policy Framework	Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture	2006
National Safe Schools Policy	Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture	2017
Early Childhood Education Policy in Samoa	Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture	2017
TVET Consumables for Secondary Schools Policy	Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture	2017
Inclusive Education Policy	Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture	2016
Bilingual Education Policy	Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture	2011

The Samoa National Assessment Policy	Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture	2010
The Samoa National Sports Policy	Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture	2010
Asset Management Policy	Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture	2018
The Minimum Service Standards for Primary and Secondary Schools in Samoa	Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture	2016
Samoa Professional Standards for Principals	Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture	2014
Professional Standards and Performance Appraisal for Samoa's Teachers	Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture	2011
The Minimum Service Standards for Early Childhood Education	Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture	2015
Samoa School Nutrition Standards	Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture	2011
Behaviour Management Guidelines	Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture	2010
Working Conditions & Entitlements Manual	Public Service Commission	2015
School Management and Organisation Manual	Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture	2017
School Staffing Manual	Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture	2017
Samoa School Fee Grant Scheme Manual of Operations	Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture	2016

5. APPLICATION AND SCOPE

The School Governance Policy is derived from the MESC School Governance Framework. This broadly establishes that MESC is responsible for policy development, regulatory functions, monitoring, and evaluation. The schools and their partners are the implementers.

The School Governance Policy applies to all Government Schools, their School Committees/School Boards, Parent Teachers Association (PTA) and school personnel.

6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1 The Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture

The Ministry provides policies and guidelines to guide school governance and the work of the School Committee/School Board. The MESC also has monitoring and evaluation functions to ensure school and school committee compliance. The PSC and MESC ensure that all the policies and regulations are thoroughly disseminated and understood by the School Committee, Principals and Teachers.

Capacity building for School Committee/School Board members is provided by MESC. The professional development support will help School Committee/School Board achieve effective governance through workshops.

6.2 School Boards and School Committees

The School Committee/School Board has full responsibility to develop the School Resourcing Guidelines, School Improvement Plan and School Annual Management Plan. These must be informed by the School Governance Framework, School Governance Policy, the School Management Policy, the Samoa School Fee Grant Scheme and the Minimum Service Standards for Primary and Secondary Schools (2016).

The School Committee/School Board meets monthly and may hold other meetings as necessary. The School Committee/School Board appoints a chairperson, a secretary and a treasurer for a term of three years.

6.2.1 Accountability to the Community for Improved Student Progress and Achievement

School Committee members are selected by the village councils while School Board members are selected by 'coalitions of interest' such as alumni or parent-teacher associations. They act on behalf of the village and school communities to ensure that schools continue to meet the expectations stipulated in the Minimum Service Standards 2016 for Schools with improved student learning outcomes being the primary focus.

The primary role of School Committee has changed significantly. The primary focus has shifted from non-educational matters such as buildings and finances to a more specific focus on the primary purpose of a school the improvement of school performance and student achievement.

a. *Gender Balance in School Committees*

All School Committees/School Boards must include women as members and work towards selecting an equal number of females and males to the school committees.

The school committee is accountable to parents and the community and continuous communicating of all information about the school to the community is of great importance.

b. *Communication Strategy*

All schools must have a communication strategy that ensures that their stakeholders, parents, students and community members are informed at all times. This is important to enable the community to provide advice and feedback to the school.

c. *Effective use of resources to support student learning*

School Principals and School Committee/School Board members should be fully engaged in decisions pertaining to the effective use of resources to support student learning which will be a priority in the school annual budget.

6.3 The Principal

The Principal is a member of the School Committee/School Board and provides all the information required from time to time.

6.3.1 School Compliance

The Education Act 2009 requires the establishment of a school committee for every government school². Principals and School Committee/School Board need to ensure that their decisions are lawful and fulfill their obligations in the national education system. The School Principal and School Committee will take reasonable steps to ensure the school is managed, organised and administered effectively.

a. *Consensus decision making*

The School Principal and President of the School Committee/School Board will ensure that meetings are held regularly and follow committee procedures of setting an agenda, recording minutes and decisions made.

²This is reflected in Part 5 Section 39 (2) of the Education Act 2009.

6.3.2 Keeping the School on Track

- a. The Principal and School Committee/School Board provide strategic direction and leadership for the school. An efficient and effective school sets standards of excellence and accountability based on the Minimum Service Standards 2017. It also ensures that the school is on track through constant monitoring of the implementation and progress of the School Improvement Plan and School Annual Management Plan.

6.4 The School Inspector

The School Inspector (SI) represents the MESC and may be called, or co-opted into a school committee meeting whenever it is required.

6.5 Other Stakeholders of the School

While the School Committee/School Board is the main conduit for all community members' view into the school, other stakeholders also have direct access to the principal, teachers and students through other forums.

- i) Parent-Teacher Association; All government schools are expected to establish a PTA to help support the school through resource deployment when required.

NB: *The complete functions and responsibilities are in the School Management and Organisation Manual.*

7. MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REPORTING

The Principal together with the School Committee/School Board are expected to carry out monitoring and evaluation of all plans and activities in the implementation of policies and regulations. The Principal prepares all necessary reports that are required to be submitted to the MESC. All reports must have full endorsement of the School Committee/School Board. The reports required by MESC for evaluation of school performance include the following:

- i) Annual school assessment against the Minimum Service Standards for Primary and Secondary Schools (MSS)
- ii) The School Improvement Plan (3 yearly plan) (SIP)
- iii) The School's Annual Management Plan (SAMP)
- iv) The School's Annual Report (SAR)

The SI advises and provides key information to inform decision making at school level. This is in relation to the use of MSS to formulate and evaluate the School Improvement Plan which informs the School Annual Report.

8. PROCEDURE

This policy must be read in conjunction with the *School Governance Framework*, *School Management Policy* and the *School Management and Organisation Manual*. These documents will provide a full description of all relevant procedures that impact on the implementation of this policy.

9. REFERENCES

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12. Pacific Benchmarking Education for Results (PaBER) Paper 7. (2016). *Final Report on SABER School Autonomy and Accountability, and Cross –country Analysis Report October, 2014*.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 2018

RECOMMENDED REVIEW DATE: 2023

APPROVED BY THE HON. MINISTER OF EDUCATION, SPORTS AND CULTURE


.....
Signature

.....14/03/2018.....
Date

Lōau Solamalemālō Keneti Sio

10. APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Risk Management Plan

No.	Risk/Activity	Risk Level	Implications	Mitigation Plan
1	Policy is misinterpreted	Low	Slow rate of implementation	Consultations and workshops
2	Lack of cooperation between the school committee and school principal	Medium	Delay in decision making which result in delayed action and activities	Intervention by the School Inspector or SOD
3	School Committee do not want to be limited to governance functions	Medium	Micro management of the school by the school committee	Intervention by the School Inspector or SOD
4	Mind-sets are entrenched and difficult to change	High	Non-compliance and non-implementation	School Inspector continuously engage with the school committee Regular Training for school committees
5	Non -compliance with policy initiatives	Low	Slow rate of implementation	Sanctions are in built for non-compliance.
6	Inexperience and Lack of capacity by the principal	High	Non-cooperation by the school committee	Training and capacity building for principals
7	Too many related policies to be managed and considered by the principal and senior staff for school management.	High	Principals have little or no understanding which results in poor school management and total neglect of policies.	Continuous Professional development programme for teachers and senior staff on all related policies
8	Weak monitoring and evaluation	High	No real knowledge by the MESC of the issues involved	Monitoring and evaluation processes to be diligently followed by SOD and the School Inspectors. School Annual Reports to be thoroughly analysed and used to provide input and feedback to schools

Appendix 2: Implementation Plan

Phase	ACTION	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBILITY
Awareness and Endorsement	Workshops with key stakeholders School Inspectors School Committee and Boards -identify key professional development needs	August-December 2017	School Operations Division
Transition Phase	i) On-going professional development for school principals, deputy principals and lead teachers. ii) On-going training for school committees	Planned Leadership Training programme for principals, deputies and lead teachers From August 2017 to August 2018 Planned programme for School Committee twice a year for 3 years	Outsourced SOD or outsourced
Monitoring and Evaluation	Periodic visits by MESC to check on implementation of key policy strategies	On-going as part of SOD's work in the schools	SOD to lead
Review Phase	Conduct Review on effectiveness of policy implementation	2020	SOD to lead