

## **School Governance Scenarios**



## The Context

Governance issues are at the heart of debate about school reform.

The 2005 Schools White Paper centres on schools acquiring Trust status. Several ideas are combined in the idea of a Trust. Much of the debate about Trusts has obscured the principles behind the idea: changing the way schools are governed should change how they take risks, manage resources and how leadership is exercised.

First, Trust status will bring new partners into governance. The White Paper's argument is that Trusts will allow schools to mobilise support (skills, assets, political support) from beyond education to transform school performance. Trust style governance, will allow new players to partner with schools – businesses, charities, voluntary groups, universities.

Second, Trust status will allow central government to ease restrictions on schools. A school with Trust governance will automatically get more freedom to innovate (a blanket Power to Innovate). Trust status schools will be allowed to differentiate themselves through their curriculum and admissions policies. A Trust school will own and manage its own assets and that too should allow more creativity.

Third, a single Trust could run a group of schools. Schools that have been collaborating through "soft" or "hard" forms of federation will be able to sustain longer term and more effective collaboration by jointly forming a Trust. At the moment schools in networks and federations are frustrated they cannot go further.

Fourth, stronger governance should create the conditions for more dynamic school leadership. Within a single school the head should have more leeway to manage risks and create a distinctive school ethos. In a

group Trust, a single executive head or leadership team would run several schools. That could create economies of scale – for example in shared administration – that would allow head teachers within the "subsidiary" schools to focus on teaching and learning. A new leadership division of labour would emerge.

However Trust status is just one factor affecting how schools are governed. Accountability will also flow down to parents, laterally to public sector partners and up to ministers.

Existing accountability and governance systems are often indirect: parents have to rely on inspection to assure quality rather than through direct consumer choice. Schools will face more intense bottom-up pressure for direct accountability to parents and children. (A policy theme also promoted in the White Paper.)

Schools are expected to work in closer collaboration with public service partners on community regeneration and social inclusion agendas, through integrated children's services. Systems for lateral accountability to public service partners will become more important.

Pressure from national policy for improvements in standards and performance will not abate.



## The Scenarios

The scenarios presented below are different ways to explore how groups of schools could be governed to work together more effectively and to work more effectively with other public sector partners. They could provide templates for how Trust status could develop as applied to groups of schools.

Different kinds of goals, ethos, working methods lend themselves to different kinds of governance arrangements.

The scenarios have been built around a few criteria:

- The principles of governance – how decisions are made, legitimated, authority created and distributed – must be applicable to more than one school. They must provide a way to govern a group of schools as well as an individual school.
- Has to be a clear way for schools to join the group either through acquisition, merger, voluntary membership. i.e how the Trust is governed affects how it can grow.
- Has to be clear how governance frames the way schools are managed and lead.
- Scenarios raise critical questions about: role of partners, parents, the local authority.

After each story, you'll find a matrix designed to highlight the main characteristics of each scenario. In other words which ingredients go into that particular governance 'recipe'.

On the top of the table is a list of key school governance challenges. And on the side is a list of possible ways in which each task can be handled. You'll see that as you move from left to right the characteristics tend to deal with increasingly externally based relationships (from the institutional to the extra-institutional); as you move from the bottom up, the mechanisms become increasingly participatory and open.

Red means 'NO!'

Dark green mean 'YES!'

Pink means 'no—but negotiable'

Light green means 'yes—but negotiable'

So a scenario with most of its green boxes in the top right hand side of the will mean governance mechanisms that are particularly open to the community around it and participatory in nature;

A scenario with most of its green boxes in the bottom left corner would mean governance that is particularly hierarchical and relatively closed to outside relationships.

Most, as you can imagine, are somewhere in between.

After the 6 scenarios, you'll find a blank page and blank table to tell us how you imagine your own story and elaborate your own governance recipe. Happy cooking!

### Scenario 1: The Conglomerate

Red means 'NO!  
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 Light green means 'yes—but negotiable'

	TYPE OF DECISION MAKING	TYPE OF ACCOUNTABILITY	COMMUNICATION STYLE	STYLE OF LEADERSHIP	NATURE OF PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT	RELATIONSHIP TO OTHERS SCHOOLS	RELATIONSHIP WITH COMMUNITY
OPEN  CLOSED	OPEN/PARTICIPATORY	Red	Light green	Red	Light green	Light green	Light green
	DECENTRALISED	Red	Light green	Light green	Light green	Light green	Light green
	PRINCIPLE-ORIENTED	Light green	Red	Light green	Light green	Red	Light green
	BOTTOM-UP AND LATERAL	Red	Red	Light green	Light green	Red	Light green
	INFORMAL	Red	Red	Light green	Light green	Red	Red
	OCCASIONAL	Light green	Light green	Light green	Light green	Light green	Light green
	FORMAL	Dark green	Dark green	Dark green	Dark green	Light green	Dark green
	SUSTAINED	Dark green	Light green	Light green	Light green	Light green	Light green
	OBJECTIVE ORIENTED	Dark green	Dark green	Dark green	Dark green	Light green	Dark green
	CENTRALISED	Dark green	Light green	Dark green	Light green	Light green	Dark green
	CLOSED/EXCLUSIVE	Light green	Light green	Light green	Light green	Light green	Light green
	TOP-DOWN	Dark green	Dark green	Dark green	Dark green	Dark green	Dark green

INTERNAL ←————→ EXTERNAL

**Conglomerate Governance fact-sheet:**

**Key idea:** drive improvements in performance;  
**Key resource:** teaching processes, branding;  
**Pros:** effective at spreading best practice and improvements; highly-reliable  
**Cons:** education is reduced to the schooling experience; little room for development of individual creativity; low on personalised learning; heavy on

procedure.  
**Governance drivers:** formal rules and controls, top-down management;  
 Implications for leadership: highly entrepreneurial team leader.

## **Scenario 1: The Conglomerate**

Schools are educational brands and at the heart of that brand is a way of delivering teaching: a process. The Conglomerate's aim is to drive improvements in performance by spreading best processes across a large number of sites.

Imagine a set of schools run like Zara, Tesco or Starbucks. A repeatable format extended across a number of sites, delivering highly standardised but high-quality, reliable, branded services, according to a centrally driven format. It is possible to see the glimmers of this model in "hard" federations such as Nine Stiles in Birmingham.

The "conglomerate Trust" would act as a holding company running subsidiary schools – perhaps once failing schools - which it would acquire through merger and acquisition. An alternative might be a "franchise" model, in which a successful Trust school – Thomas Telford Trust – creating franchises in other towns.

Authority would reside at the centre with the governing Trust and central executive team. Authority would be delegated to subsidiaries or franchises with clear rules about process, working methods, freedom of manoeuvre, branding, to assure consistent approach.

Formal accountability like a corporate model, would be through a board of directors accountable to "shareholders" in the Trust. The board would retain policy-making decisions about educational process & curriculum but delegate operational issues.

Parents might be akin to small investors: able to attend an AGM each year, but with limited rights to be involved in decision-making. Local heads would be like branch managers.

Children would be akin to consumers. Like Tesco: they might get a loyalty/ membership card but they would have very limited voice in school affairs. National politicians and funders might be akin to larger shareholders, fund managers. Communication and governance: would tend to be formal, deal in quantifiable performance figures, in a set timetable of quarterly and annual reports.

The Trust would enter into business-like joint-ventures and alliances with other public sector partners but these would be akin to service level agreements: they would focus on operational delivery of key joint services. They would not involve deeper levels of integration.

Leadership would be driven by highly entrepreneurial central executive team (akin to execs running Tesco all in their mid 40s) working with highly incentivised branch managers. Model would be successful business leadership. Not a lone charismatic CEO but more like Terry Leahy of Tesco, entrepreneurial team leader good at promoting young talent, delivering consistent performance and taking bigger risks.

## Scenario 2: The Community

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	TYPE OF DECISION MAKING	TYPE OF ACCOUNTABILITY	COMMUNICATION STYLE	STYLE OF LEADERSHIP	NATURE OF PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT	RELATIONSHIP TO OTHERS SCHOOLS	RELATIONSHIP WITH COMMUNITY
OPEN	OPEN/PARTICIPATORY	Dark green	Dark green	Pink	Dark green	Dark green	Dark green
	DECENTRALISED	Dark green	Dark green	Light green	Pink	Pink	Pink
	PRINCIPLE-ORIENTED	Dark green	Light green	Light green	Light green	Dark green	Dark green
	BOTTOM-UP AND LATERAL	Pink	Dark green	Light green	Light green	Light green	Light green
	INFORMAL	Pink	Pink	Light green	Light green	Light green	Light green
	OCCASIONAL	Pink	Dark green	Pink	Pink	Light green	Light green
	FORMAL	Dark green	Light green	Light green	Light green	Dark green	Dark green
	SUSTAINED	Dark green	Pink	Light green	Pink	Light green	Light green
	OBJECTIVE ORIENTED	Light green	Pink	Light green	Pink	Pink	Pink
	CENTRALISED	Pink	Pink	Pink	Red	Red	Red
	CLOSED/EXCLUSIVE	Pink	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red
CLOSED	TOP-DOWN	Pink	Red	Pink	Pink	Red	Red

INTERNAL ←————→ EXTERNAL

### Community Governance fact-sheet:

**Key idea:** considerable local variation between schools but replicated systems of governance;

**Key resource:** commitment from multiple stake-holders; the governance processes themselves.

**Pros:** variable geometry allows schools to adhere to an ethos without suffering

from too much standardization;

**Cons:** the system is heavily procedural and can become bureaucratic and onerous;

**Governance drivers:** participation, openness, procedures.

Implications for leadership: political style—but could be either weak and consensual or dynamic and inspirational.

## Scenario 2: The Community

A Trust might be like a political community with shared principles enshrined in a joint “constitution.” Different schools would jointly decide to create a Trust by voluntarily making a joint commitment to one another, to pool resources, share services, develop a common education philosophy. The key to a successful school is its ability to mobilise commitment from multiple stakeholders – parents, teachers, children and service partners. Community governance would facilitate that. The Trust would be more like partnership of equals. More like round-table governance.

This kind of Trust would be akin to a political federation such as the United States or the EU. Core to education would be adherence to a set of principles – “truths we hold self-evident” - rather than a process. Governance would depend on principles of subsidiarity setting out decisions the individual schools take and those the Trust takes.

Community Trust schools would allow considerable local discretion about application of principles within the Trust (just as US states have different approaches to taxation and death penalty.) Head teachers would be much more than branch managers. Individual schools would be akin to states in the union. Each would select representatives to sit on the Trust’s senate, its main governance forum. The Trust community might even elect a leader – a president – by direct election. Alternatively governance might be less direct: akin to the Council of Ministers in the EU.

Modes of communication and accountability would be akin to politics, organised around the electoral cycle, which would be different for individual schools and the community as a whole. That would have to be supported by free and open debate, including media, to allow other discussions.

Critical issues would be around power and decision making within the community. Who would be eligible to elect the Trust’s governing council and would election be direct or indirect (i.e via the school?) The constituency could be just parents, or just teachers, or parents and teachers, or also some groups of older children or all children. Allowance would have to be made for other partners – public and private - to play a role in governance. If not, the strengths of democratic model might be offset by difficulties of drawing in non-education partners.

Different Trusts would distinguish themselves with different decision making mechanisms. Some might be like a traditional representative democracy. Others might involve more participatory decision-making and budgeting – the Porto Allegre model – in which citizens are directly involved in debating and deciding on budget priorities.

Community governance would encourage political styles of leadership. In the EU model that is a recipe for weak, consensual leadership, with most power remaining with national heads of states (aka the head teachers.) Would individual schools retain a right to veto decisions taken by the Trust as a whole? The Trust’s central leadership could only be stronger and more dynamic if it were directly elected. But that might prompt tensions with heads of individual schools. Key to successful Trust-community would be combining democratic ethos with dynamic leadership.

### Scenario 3: The Alliance

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	BOTTOM-UP AND LATERAL	Dark green	Light green	Pink	Pink	Light green	Light green
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	SUSTAINED	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink
	OBJECTIVE ORIENTED	Dark green	Dark green	Dark green	Dark green	Dark green	Dark green
	CENTRALISED	Red	Pink	Pink	Red	Red	Red
	CLOSED/EXCLUSIVE	Red	Red	Pink	Red	Red	Red
CLOSED	TOP-DOWN	Red	Red	Pink	Red	Red	Red

INTERNAL ←————→ EXTERNAL

#### Alliance Governance fact-sheet:

**Key idea:** limited objectives, pooling of scarce resources;  
**Key resources:** shared knowledge and expertise;  
**Pros:** excellent way to share resources without loss of autonomy; fuels competition and creativity.  
**Cons:** consensus – even on limited objectives - is often difficult to achieve;

conflicts of interest or contradictory goals can emerge.  
**Governance drivers:** defined objectives, informality of relationships.  
**Implications for leadership:** diplomatic at alliance level; military on the ground.

### Scenario 3: The Alliance

A Trust would be like an alliance of independent nation states that come together for specific tasks such as joint defence. Imagine an alliance of schools organised along the lines of Nato. The Alliance Trust model might overcome some of the weaknesses of the more political, community model, but at the cost of being more limited in its ambitions. The alliance model would allow school to retain a distinctive ethos but combine with others to share resources where it is economic to do so. The Alliance Trust model would require less political integration than the community model and less operational integration than the conglomerate model.

Alliances and consortia are increasingly common in many industries as companies share development costs. For example most “people carriers” are developed on shared platforms. The IMEC research centre in Flanders allows scores of competing semi-conductor companies to collaborate on more basic research problems. The Alliance model would allow schools to compete and collaborate at the same time.

The members of the alliance agree to collaborate and pool resources, but for limited objectives (teaching a particular subject, providing a particular service) and without that compromising their capacity to act independently, with different educational philosophies, admissions policies and distinct governance procedures (think of the very different voting arrangements and politics in states that are part of Nato.) An alliance might include academies, grammar schools, comprehensives, specialist and even fee paying schools.

An alliance might work within a locality, across a region or it could be a national alliance of schools specialising in particular subjects. The alliance might represent its members on critical policy issues, combine their buying power, establish common procedures and deal with difficult

shared issues, such as exclusions.

A school might be in overlapping alliances, each focussed on a different issue, just as European nations are part of the EU, Nato and specific groupings of states, such as Schengen. Most large companies are part of overlapping alliances and networks. That would require more networked leadership at school level to handle these alliances.

Alliance governance could take different forms. Nato has a formal governing council of defence ministers, overseen by occasional summits for heads of state, with a full time, but low profile secretariat. However operational staff working for the alliance’s joint command in the field, in war zones, have a high level of autonomy. The same model applied to schools would imply diplomatic leadership at the Trust, but very driven quasi-military style operational leadership given license to tackle a critical common issue, across many different schools.

Non-education partners could be admitted as alliance members. Alliances work best with a clear cause, a set of yardsticks to be judged against and mechanisms to build trust. Alliances are a good way to share resources without risking losing independent and distinct identities of alliance members. But to deliver real change diplomatic style of alliance leadership would have to be combined with “military” style leadership on the ground.

### Scenario 4: The Self Organising Network

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OPEN / PARTICIPATORY	Dark green	Dark green	Dark green	Dark green	Dark green	Dark green	Dark green
DECENTRALISED	Dark green	Dark green	Dark green	Dark green	Dark green	Dark green	Dark green
PRINCIPLE -ORIENTED	Dark green	Dark green	Dark green	Dark green	Dark green	Dark green	Dark green
BOTTOM-UP AND LATERAL	Dark green	Dark green	Dark green	Dark green	Dark green	Dark green	Dark green
INFORMAL	Dark green	Dark green	Dark green	Dark green	Dark green	Dark green	Dark green
OCCASIONAL	Red	Light green	Dark green	Dark green	Dark green	Dark green	Dark green
FORMAL	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red
SUSTAINED	Dark green	Red	Dark green	Red	Dark green	Dark green	Dark green
OBJECTIVE ORIENTED	Red	Red	Dark green	Dark green	Dark green	Dark green	Dark green
CENTRALISED	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red
CLOSED/ EXCLUSIVE	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red
TOP-DOWN	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red

↑ OPEN  
 ↓ CLOSED

INTERNAL ← → EXTERNAL

#### Self-organising network fact-sheet:

**Key idea:** user led, self organising services;

**Key resource:** users;

**Pros:** adaptable, low on processes and high on content;

**Cons:** difficult to steer in times of crisis; bad practice spreads as easily as good practice;

**Governance drivers:** clear-cut principles of openness, minimal interference, permanent and sustained connection to outside world;

**Implications for leadership:** community based through peer recognition

#### Scenario 4: The Self Organising Network

Large communities of learning can self-organise themselves. Scientific inquiry often takes place through international peer networks: the human genome project was a prime example. The Sanger Institute in Cambridge acted like a Trust, hosting a public platform, across which hundreds of other research institutes shared their know-how.

The Internet is taking peer learning to scale: witness Wikipedia, the online voluntary encyclopaedia and Linux open source software. Player-developers create most of the content for multi-user computer games such as the Sims. A similar collaborative do-it-yourself ethic is embedded in eBay.

Imagine an eBay style Trust that operated a platform for sharing educational content and teachers, matching learners to providers. These distributed models might be particularly relevant for children excluded from school – the virtual Not School writ large through a Trust – or children home schooled by choice. Other Trust models assume the school is the primary unit. The networked-Trust delivers education without schools. One version of this model might be the BBC's evolving platform for education, in cooperation with schools. This could be spun off as a Trust.

Key to all these communities of co-learning are some simple design features:

- Kernel of software and rules usually provided by platform host.
- Ease of access for users who able to pick up tools to add/create content.
- Commitment to sharing ideas openly: open methods of working.
- Systematic peer review of contributions against yardsticks of

performance.

- A "commons" or shared platform, on which collaboration can take place.

The Trust would host the platform on which teachers, parents and children shared ideas and information. The Trust would hold these contributions under an open source license: anyone would be free to use them if they make improvements available to the rest of the community. The Trust would manage the educational commons.

Governance of self-organising communities relies on a strong, shared ethos and limited but effective governance. In Wikipedia the ethos is that contributors should adopt a "neutral point of view." Contributions are rated by peers but an "aristocracy" with a track record tend to carry greater weight. If there is a dispute about a contribution then it can go to a vote of a review committee. Overseeing it all is the monarch - founder Jimmy Wales - who has the final say.

Non-education partners could be involved, so long as they make contributions to the greater good, just as commercial companies such as HP and IBM now contribute to open source software. Big companies now sell products via eBay for example. These self-organising Trusts would rely on high levels of user engagement and participation.

Leadership would emerge from within the community, through peer recognition. It could not be imposed, top-down. The leaders of these communities tend to be self-effacing, humble, high on moral leadership and respected by their peers.

### Scenario 5: The Employee Owned School Network

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OPEN / PARTICIPATORY	Light green	Light green	Pink	Dark green	Pink	Pink	Pink
DECENTRALISED	Light green	Light green	Pink	Light green	Pink	Pink	Pink
PRINCIPLE -ORIENTED	Light green	Light green	Pink	Dark green	Pink	Pink	Pink
BOTTOM-UP AND LATERAL	Dark green	Light green	Pink	Light green	Pink	Pink	Pink
INFORMAL	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Red	Pink	Pink
OCCASIONAL	Pink	Pink	Light green	Pink	Light green	Pink	Pink
FORMAL	Dark green	Dark green	Light green	Light green	Dark green	Pink	Pink
SUSTAINED	Dark green	Dark green	Pink	Light green	Pink	Pink	Pink
OBJECTIVE ORIENTED	Light green	Light green	Light green	Light green	Light green	Pink	Pink
CENTRALISED	Pink	Pink	Light green	Red	Pink	Pink	Pink
CLOSED/ EXCLUSIVE	Red	Red	Pink	Red	Pink	Pink	Pink
TOP-DOWN	Red	Red	Pink	Red	Pink	Pink	Pink

INTERNAL ←————→ EXTERNAL

**Employee Governance fact-sheet:**

**Key idea:** let teaching professionals do what they do best;

**Key resource:** teachers;

**Pros:** mobilises human capital; retains good teachers;

**Cons:** can become inward looking;

**Governance drivers:** professional partnership decision-making;

**Implications for leadership:** professionalized;

## **Scenario 5: The Employee Owned School Network**

Schools depend on high levels of commitment from knowledge workers: teachers. One model for school governance could be the partnerships that are common among professional service firms such as lawyers, management consultants and advertising agencies. This partnership-Trust in this model could be akin to a guild: a coming together of professionals from different institutions.

In the conglomerate model processes of teaching and learning are core. In the community model it is politics. In this partnership model the Trust's main assets are people: the teachers. The governance framework should maximise their commitment.

Employee and mutually owned businesses are common in many areas, such as farming, where producers band together to form marketing cooperatives to give them more power against dominant supermarkets. The outstanding example in the US is the Ocean Spray drinks business, which is based on a cooperative of fruit growers. High levels of employee ownership are also common in entrepreneurial, high-tech Silicon Valley businesses where motivating staff is critical.

In the partnership-Trust senior teachers (either through time served or more likely through qualifications, peer review and performance) would form a partnership covering several schools. The partners would be akin to the equity holders. As in a professional service firm the partners would hire managers to administer the business.

The point of the partnership would be to allow skilled professionals to focus on what they do best. The partnership model would succeed only if it proved able to attract and reward good teachers, by making them partners. This would help to retain talented senior teachers and should

help to attract young talent keen to become partners. The partnership would grow by recruiting groups of teachers who would vote to take their school into the wider partnership, signing up to the partnership's principles. Partners would enjoy a dividend, in the form of money, time or freedom.

The partnership would also take responsibility for career development, training and quality assurance. Parents would sign up to a partnership-Trust for its reputation for attracting and retaining talent and delivering results.

The key to governance would be the way partners made decisions. Relationship with parents and children would be like that of a professional to a client. Parents and children would have a limited say in overall governance. They would buy into the "professional" partnership ethos of the school.

The employee-owned partnership structure might mobilise the human capital in the schools but there would be several risks. First, employee owned business have a reputation for becoming inward looking, accountable to current employees and often after an initial blaze of innovation they become resistant to change. Second, the employee ownership structure might make it more difficult to engage outsiders in governance, as partnerships have found, as they have sought to raise new capital.

### Scenario 6: The Consumer Governed School

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OPEN  CLOSED	OPEN/PARTICIPATORY	Dark green	Dark green	Light green	Dark green		
	DECENTRALISED	Dark green	Dark green	Light green	Dark green		
	PRINCIPLE-ORIENTED	Dark green	Dark green	Light green	Dark green		
	BOTTOM-UP AND LATERAL	Light green	Light green	Dark green	Light green	Dark green	
	INFORMAL	Light green	Light green	Red	Light green	Light green	
	OCCASIONAL	Light green	Light green	Red	Pink	Red	
	FORMAL	Light green	Light green	Dark green	Light green	Light green	
	SUSTAINED	Light green	Light green	Dark green	Light green	Light green	
	OBJECTIVE ORIENTED	Pink	Pink	Light green	Pink	Pink	
	CENTRALISED	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Red	
	CLOSED/EXCLUSIVE	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	
	TOP-DOWN	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	

INTERNAL ←————→ EXTERNAL

**Consumer Governance fact-sheet:**

**Key idea:** parental commitment is key to educational performance;  
**Key resource:** parents;  
**Pros:** responsive to needs;  
**Cons:** parents may not always share the same objectives – governance structures would be elaborated ad hoc; may create instability.

**Governance drivers:** commitment, principles, feedback;  
**Implications for leadership:** dynamic parental leadership;

## Scenario 6: The Consumer Governed School

Educational reforms are giving parents more say and more choice over schooling, including making it easier for parents to set up new schools. Parent controlled schools are common in some other countries, from Scandinavia to the US. Parent governors play a critical role in the day to day management of many British schools. This model would be an extension of these trends: the parent-Trust.

Parental commitment is critical to educational performance. Learning at school is vastly more effective if it is amplified by learning at home. As the home-school link becomes ever more critical, so does the engagement of parents in their child's education. This form of governance is designed to maximise parental commitment.

Parents would be the key actors in the creation of Trusts. Parent owned and governed schools would come together in a larger collaborative, sharing resources and a philosophy of parental involvement in education. Parents would be directly involved in elected a board or governing council. There might be common policies on parental commitment: for example all parents might sign up to a contract setting out what they commit to put into the school. (Selective and private schools have implicit but nevertheless powerfully enforced contracts of this kind with their parents.)

The parent Trust council would be responsible for making major appointments and deciding major educational policy issues – the framework of goals and values – within which the staff would work. The council would appoint the head who would report to the parent council.

The school council might govern the school in a fairly traditional way, with representatives co-opted or elected informally, regular monthly meetings, sub-committees and occasional updates for parents.

It is also possible to imagine a parent governed school operating with much greater transparency and democracy:

- parents would have access to all management information about the school – including teacher and pupil performance and budgets;
- they could have rights to extensive consultation over staff and policy changes;
- they might also have rights to propose changes in policy, through a system of propositions and parental ballots.

The key to this model would be dynamic parental leadership. While staff may come and go, many parents with more than one child have a relationship with a school lasting a decade. Parental governance and ownership would take this commitment to a new level.

Parent governed schools might open themselves up to partnerships with non-educational organisations because parents themselves are a diverse group. Parent governed schools should be no less open to partnerships beyond education than a traditional and formal school. This parent-Trust model may be of less value where parents have few of their own financial and social assets to contribute to the school.

**My Scenario**

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<p><b>OPEN</b></p>  <p><b>CLOSED</b></p>	OPEN/PARTICIPATORY						
	DECENTRALISED						
	PRINCIPLE -ORIENTED						
	BOTTOM-UP AND LATERAL						
	INFORMAL						
	OCCASIONAL						
	FORMAL						
	SUSTAINED						
	OBJECTIVE ORIENTED						
	CENTRALISED						
	CLOSED/ EXCLUSIVE						
	TOP-DOWN						



**Consumer Governance fact-sheet:**

- Key idea: ?
- Key resource: ?;
- Pros: ?
- Cons: ?
- Governance drivers: ?

**Implications for leadership: ?**

## Issues and questions

Each of these scenarios can be interrogated with these questions:

Who is being held exercises authority and who is being held to account for decisions?

(Teachers, governors, parents, children, partner organisations, politicians)

Over what do they have authority?

(Physical assets, people and appointments, educational policies, admissions)

How is it exercised?

(Is control governance direct and participatory or indirect via committees and representatives?

Is the governance system and decision making formal or relatively informal?

Is governance something that happens periodically or woven into day-to-day life of the school/community?

Does communication and decision making flow top down, from those in charge to those who have no power or does it flow both ways, back and forward as well as laterally?)

What role if any remains for the local authority?

And now: try your own

