High Performing Governance: Bridging the Gap between Political Acceptability and Administrative Sustainability

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Outline

• A gap exists and is growing between what is politically acceptable and administratively sustainable
  • Bridging the gap requires political astuteness
• Understanding that politics involves choices among conflicting values—no value profile is best
• Politics and administration involve more than different behaviors; they are different ways of thinking
• Identify bridge building, translating and aligning roles for chief administrative officers and upper level staff (electeds value added)
Have you considered whether the length and width of the line might make a difference in the relationship between the two arenas?
Values

• RESPONSIVENESS =

  • Representation/Participation +
  • Efficiency/Professionalism +
  • Social Equity +
  • Individual Rights
### Characteristics of Politics and Administration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Politics</th>
<th>Administration</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activity</strong></td>
<td>Game/allocation of values</td>
<td>Problem Solving</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Players</strong></td>
<td>Representatives/trustees</td>
<td>Experts-trustees</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Conversation</strong></td>
<td>“What do you hear?”</td>
<td>“What do you know?”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Passion</td>
<td>- Data</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Dreams</td>
<td>- Plans</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Stories</td>
<td>- Reports</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Pieces</strong></td>
<td>Intangible: Interests and symbols</td>
<td>Tangible: Information; money, people, equipment</td>
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<td><strong>Currency</strong></td>
<td>Power (stories), loyalty, trust</td>
<td>Knowledge (deeds)</td>
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<td><strong>Dynamics</strong></td>
<td>Constructive conflict, compromise, change</td>
<td>Predictability, cooperation, continuity</td>
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Political acceptability → Administrative sustainability
Facilitating Roles

• **Translate** the logic of politics and administration
• **Bridge** the gap between what is politically acceptable and administratively sustainable
• **Align**
  • Staff priorities with governing body goals
  • Governing body and staff expectations
Summary

• Bridging the gap is essential
• Cups matter
• Good politics is about values not right answers—stories matter (convey values)
• Do not ignore any value over time
• Democratic process is “messy”
• Politics/administration=ways of thinking
• Role of translator/bridge builder is critical
• Aligning governing body/staff expectations is crucial
• Difference between “representative” and “trustee"