

Renaissance School Fund
New Ventures in Education Seminar:
Board Governance

SAMPLES

Tuesday, May 5, 2009
4:00 – 7:00 pm

Presenter:
Marci Cornell-Feist





AGENDA

Highly Effective School Governing Boards

Effective School Governance 101

- Lessons Learned from Creating Hundreds of School Governing Boards
- Characteristics of a Highly Effective School Governing Board
- Top Ten Mistakes of School Founding Boards
- Expectations of a Board Member
- Roles and Responsibilities of a School Governing Board
- Sample Job Descriptions:
 - Governing Board
 - Founding Board

Board Structure

- How big should your board be?
- Do you need officers?
- What committees should you have?

Board Composition

- Who makes an ideal board member?
- What are the skills we should be looking for?
- What is the role of parents, teachers and students on the board?

Finding, Recruiting & Retaining Board Members

- How to find and screen potential candidates
- Board recruitment scenarios
- Board-building activities

Board Meetings

- Agendas, board packets, minutes
- Strategic rather than reactive

Governance-Management

- Defining
- Case Studies



Lessons Learned in the Creation of School Governing Boards

I have been involved in the founding of hundreds of public schools. Regardless of the location or type of school there seem to be a few important keys to creating successful school governing boards.

1. Clarity of Purpose

- Be clear what you want this board to do and what you don't want it to do.
- Write a clear job description that details the expectations for the full board as well as individual trustees.
- Set the board up to focus on results and govern—rather than dealing with management issues.

2. Understand what you have promised to deliver

- Developing clear and consistent ways to measure this

3. Be prepared to govern for what matters most:

- The academic success of every student
- Effective oversight of the financial health of the school
- Support, guidance and evaluation of the school leader

4. Right People on the Bus: Selection of Board Members

A great deal of effective governance hinges upon getting the right people on the bus. “Right” means:

- Passionate, unwavering belief that every child deserves a high quality education and can achieve this regardless of their background or personal circumstances.
- Lack of personal agenda.
- Time to devote to serving on a hands-on, “working” board.
- Patience, a sense of humor, entrepreneurial spirit, strong people skills.
- Brings a concrete skill to the board—target areas should be finance, academic oversight, organizational development, fundraising, community connections, etc.
- Ideally the board should bring skills that the staff of the school will never have – the board's skills should be complementary.



5. Selection / Not Election

- The ability to select board members is essential.
- The selection process should be clear, transparent and all candidates should go through exactly the same process
- There should be a standard:
 - Nominating policy for identifying and screening candidates
 - A standard set of interview questions
 - A standard rubric for evaluating the fit of the candidates

6. Perspective Not Representation

- For the board to govern effectively, they need to understand that they are representing the broad public – the overall taxpayer base that is funding the public school – not specifically lobbying for the interests of the current “direct consumers of the product” (i.e. parents).
- Governance implies a long-term strategic view.
- “Representation” rarely works well on governing boards. Stakeholder input is vital to a successful school. This is a management function. An effective principal receives input from parents and teachers throughout the year and creates an environment where key stakeholders and employees feel heard. Having a few seats on a board does not ensure this.
- It is often more effective to think of the parent or teacher on the board as providing the perspective of a key constituency, rather than representation.

7. An exceptional board chair is key

- The most important skill for a chair is group facilitation skills.
- There should be a clearly written job description for the board chair.

8. Effective governance hinges on board-savvy School Leaders

- The board is at many levels only as good as the CEO who is leading them.
- In the public school context most school leaders have never worked with a board.
- Helping your school leader understand their role and feel empowered to work with the board will be critical. The board should feel like an energizing boost not a burden being foisted upon them.
- It is essential that the school leader play an active role in screening and selecting their board members.



9. Developing a healthy respect for the distinctions between governance and management.

10. A Good Board is a Victory Not a Gift

- Effective boards work hard at becoming good boards; they devote time to learning about best practice and don't reinvent the wheel.



Top 10 Characteristics of a Highly Effective[®] Charter School Governing Board

1. Passionate, unwavering belief in the charter school's mission and core values.
2. Clarity of collective vision – where the school is and where it wants to be in the future.
3. A firm understanding of the charter promises and a clear, consistent way to measure them.
4. Clarity of roles and responsibilities
 - Role of the full board
 - Role of individual board members
 - Role of committees
 - Role of the School Leader
5. Demonstration of a clear understanding of the difference between governance and management.
6. Focused on results.
7. The right structure
 - Board size
 - Composition
 - Committee structure
 - Officers
8. Board meetings – focused on strategic questions not just reporting.
9. A School Leader who assists in the creation of effective governance.
10. A strong partnership between the board and the School Leader that is built on mutual trust and respect.



The Top Ten Mistakes of Charter School Founding Boards

1. Not understanding the charter

- Too often the charter is the vision of one lead founder and the rest of the board understands only the biggest brush strokes of the charter.
- Every board member needs to understand the charter promises, the methods proposed to deliver the promises, and have a clear sense of how these promises will be measured.

2. Not having a clear plan to conduct oversight of the academic program

- An effective charter school board is not comprised primarily of educators; it should have a few people with broad educational management experience, but needs to primarily have the skills that the school staff will never have.
- Although most of the board members are non educators, they need to fully understand the academic plan and partner with the school leader to develop a clear and consistent way to measure academic performance.

3. Not enough expertise to conduct proper financial oversight

- The number one reason why charter schools fail is financial mismanagement. This is generally not due to malfeasance but to the lack of financial sophistication on the board.
- It is vital that there is more than one board member with strong financial skills on the board. And, in addition, it is vital that the financially savvy board members ensure that the rest of the board can comprehend the annual budget and monthly financial reporting, and is aware of the short and long-term financial projections and their implications for the health of the school.

4. Original board composition

- Very often the initial composition of the board that is created for the charter application is flawed.
- More often than not these initial boards:
 - Lack a level of objectivity, by being close personal friends and colleagues of the lead founder.
 - Are comprised of board members who were placed on the board to “lend their names and credibility” and generally are not prepared to carry out the hard work of governing a start-up charter school.



- Were unclear about the time commitment needed to govern a start-up charter school.
- Are lacking the right mix of skill sets and tangible ties to the community.
- Have difficulty adding non-founders to the board. Many founding board members put in an incredible amount of time to make the chartering happen and in the process create an expectation of such a significant time commitment that it becomes impossible to find non-founders willing to join the board. Sometimes the founding board is such a tight knit group that it is hard for new board members to fit in and find ways to contribute.

5. Board size

- Many founding boards are too small, generally 5-7 people.
- A high functioning charter school board needs to be larger; I recommend ultimately a board 11-15 people, with a board of perhaps 9-11 by the time the doors open, in order to have public credibility, the right mix of skills, and enough people to have functioning committees capable of accomplishing significant work in between meetings.
- It is a natural tendency to want to start with a small, tightly-knit and tightly-controlled group, but there is so much work to do in the early years that a board of 5-7 is a mistake.

6. Lack of previous governance experience

- Many founding boards run into problems because they do not have enough board members with previous governance experience and because their School Leader has no previous governance experience.
- In addition, the school leader needs to have the time and the desire to assist in creating effective governance.

7. Lack of functioning committees

- One of the key transitions that need to take place as the board moves from a founding board to a sustainable governing board is having functioning committees. In the founding phase it is often necessary to do most of the work as a committee of the whole. But by the beginning of the first year of operation it is imperative that functioning committees emerge to tackle strategic issues in greater depth, and with more specific expertise, than the full board will have time for during regularly scheduled board meetings.
- To have an effective board it is essential that substantive work is done by committees in between meetings.



8. Being too dependent on a lead founder

- The founding of most charter schools is led by one dynamic individual. Sometimes this person is the chair of the board, but more often than not they become the School Leader.
- The board needs to transition to taking the lead in partnership with this leader and to ensure that they are not just being led by, or solely reacting to, the direction of this leader.

9. Underestimating the amount of fundraising that needs to happen and the board's role in fundraising

- Most urban charter schools need to raise a significant amount of private funds to augment the school's per pupil funds. Fundraising supports facility acquisition and renovation, after school programming, tutorials, and summer programs—all the “value-added” services needed to take students performing significantly below grade level to a point where they are at or above grade level.

10. Lack of urgency

- “We're just a start-up”, “It's only the first year”, “It's only the second year”, are common refrains used by charter school founding boards. Although it is true that the board and senior management need to give time for things to gel, it is important for founding boards to know that experience tells us if a charter school is not excelling by the end of its second year, it probably won't get there. You only have one chance to form a strong culture of accountability and academic success. It is important to be relentless from the get go! Learn from the most successful schools that have gone before you.



Expectations of a board member

1. Governor

Fulfilling governance functions

2. Ambassador

Reaching out to the community

3. Sponsor

Giving time and money

4. Consultant

Using skills and expertise on behalf of the organization



Governance Defined:

A Board is an organized group of volunteers who, collectively, are legally and morally accountable to the community for the health, vitality and effectiveness of the organization. As representatives of the public, the Board of Trustees is the primary force pressing the organization to the realization of its opportunities for service and the fulfillment of its obligations to all its constituencies.

The general term used to describe the role of the Board of Trustees is “governance”. The governance function encompasses legal responsibilities, general oversight, planning and policy-making, and fiduciary requirements.

The Board only has authority as a group. By its very nature, a board is a collective and its authority is a group function. No single individual within the board has authority for the board itself.

Ten Basic Responsibilities of a Nonprofit Board¹

1. Determine the organization’s mission and purpose
2. Select the Chief Executive
3. Support the Chief Executive and Assess His or Her Performance
4. Ensure Effective Organizational Planning
5. Ensure Adequate Resources
6. Manage Resources Effectively
7. Determine, Monitor, and Strengthen the Organization’s Programs and Services
8. Enhance the Organization’s Public Standing
9. Ensure Legal and Ethical Integrity and Maintain Accountability
10. Recruit and Orient New Board members and Assess Board Performance

¹ Board Source, formerly the National Center for Nonprofit Boards.

Meetinghouse Solutions 2009. All Rights Reserved.

Reprinted with permission by the Renaissance Schools Fund.

www.meetinghousesolutions.com (978) 772-4867 marcicf@charter.net



SAMPLE

The ABC Charter School Board of Trustees Job Description[©]

General Responsibilities:

Responsible for ensuring that the academic program of ABC Charter School (ABC) is successful, that the school's program and operation are faithful to the terms of its charter, and that the school is a viable organization.

Specific Responsibilities:

1. Determine the mission and purpose of ABC and keep it clearly in focus².
 - Create and periodically review the mission statement which:
 - a. Serves as a guide to organizational planning, board and staff decision-making, volunteer initiatives, and setting priorities among competing demands for scarce resources.
 - b. Is used as the vehicle for assessing program activities to ensure that the organization is not drifting away from its original purposes.
 - Understand and support the mission statement.
2. Select the School Leader
 1. Reach consensus on the School Leader's job description.
 2. Undertake a careful search process to find the most qualified individual.
 3. Oversee and approve contract negotiation and renewal.
3. Support and review the performance of the School Leader
 - Provide frequent and constructive feedback.
 - Assist when board members overstep prerogatives or misunderstand their roles.
 - Compliment for exceptional accomplishments.
 - Provide for an annual written performance review with a process agreed upon with the School Leader well in advance.
4. Ensure effective organizational planning
 - Approve an annual organizational plan that includes concrete, measurable goals consistent with the charter and accountability plan.

² Note the 10 titles in this description come from the BoardSource “Top Ten Responsibilities of a Nonprofit Board” and have been adapted to the charter school context. Thanks to the Hill View Montessori Charter School of Haverhill Massachusetts for their model.



5. Ensure adequate resources
 - Approve fundraising targets and goals.
 - Assist in carrying out development plan.
 - Make an annual gift at a level that is personally meaningful.
6. Manage resources effectively
 - Approve the annual budget.
 - Monitor budget implementation through periodic financial reports.
 - Approve accounting and personnel policies.
 - Provide for an independent annual audit by a qualified CPA.
 - Ensure adequate insurance is in force to cover students, staff, visitors, the board and the assets of the school.
7. Determine, monitor and strengthen the programs and services
 - Assure programs and services are consistent with the mission and the charter.
 - Approve measurable organizational outcomes.
 - Approve annual, attainable board and management level goals.
 - Monitor progress in achieving the outcomes and goals.
 - Assess the quality of the program and services.
8. Enhance ABC's public standing
 - Serve as ambassadors, advocates and community representatives of the school.
 - Ensure that no board member represents her/himself as speaking on behalf of the board unless specifically authorized to do so.
 - Provide for a written annual report and public presentation that details ABC's mission, programs, financial condition, and progress made towards charter promises.
 - Approve goals of an annual public relations program.
9. Ensure legal and ethical integrity and maintain accountability
 - Establish policies to guide the school's board members and staff.
 - Develop and maintain adequate personnel policies and procedures (including grievance mechanisms).
 - Adhere to the provisions of the school's bylaws and articles of incorporation.
 - Adhere to local, state and federal laws and regulations that apply to the school.
 - Ensure compliance with all federal state and local government regulations.
10. Recruit and orient new board members and assess board performance
 - Define board membership needs in terms of skill, experience and diversity.
 - Cultivate, check the credentials of and recruit prospective nominees.
 - Provide for new board member orientation.
 - Conduct an annual evaluation of the full board and individual trustees.



SAMPLE
ABC Charter School Individual Trustee Performance Expectations®

General Responsibilities:

Each trustee is responsible for actively participating in the work of the ABC Board of Trustees and the life of the school. Each trustee is expected to affirm and strive to fulfill the performance expectations outlined below. These expectations are to be clearly articulated prior to nominating any candidate as a board member. The ABC Board will nominate the candidate only after s/he has agreed to fulfill these expectations. In addition to the responsibilities below, individual trustees are expected to help each other fulfill the tasks outlined in the collective Job Description of the Board of Trustees.

Specific Responsibilities:

1. Believe in and be an active advocate and ambassador for the values, mission, and vision of ABC.
2. Work with fellow board members to fulfill the obligations of board membership.
3. Behave in ways that clearly contribute to the effective operations of the Board of Trustees:
 - Focus on the good of the organization and group, not on a personal agenda
 - Support board decisions once they are made
 - Participate in an honest appraisal of one's own performance and that of the board
 - Build awareness of and vigilance towards governance matters rather than management.
4. Regularly attend board and committee meetings in accordance with the absenteeism policy. Prepare for these meetings by reviewing materials and bringing the materials to meetings. If unable to attend, notify the board or committee chair.
5. Be prepared to contribute approximately 8-10 hours per month toward board service which includes:
 - Attending a month board meeting (2 hours)
 - Participating on a board committee (2 hours)
 - Reading materials, preparing for meetings (1 hour)
 - Attending events at the school, assisting with fundraising and other ambassador tasks as needed (1-2 hours)
6. Keep informed about the school and its issues by reviewing materials, participating in discussions, and asking strategic questions.
7. Actively participate in one or more fundraising event(s) annually.
8. Use personal and professional contacts and expertise for the benefit of ABC.
9. Serve as a committee or task force chair or member.
10. Give an annual financial contribution and support capital campaigns at a level that is personally meaningful.
11. Inform the Board of Trustees of ABC of any potential conflicts of interest, whether real or perceived, and abide by the decision of the board related to the situation.



BOARD MEMBER AGREEMENT ³
ABC Charter School Board of Trustees

I, _____ understand that as a member of the Board of Trustees of the ABC Charter School I have a legal and moral responsibility to ensure that the organization does the best work possible in pursuit of its goals. I believe in the purpose and the mission of the organization, and I will act responsibly and prudently as its steward.

I have read, understand and am willing to comply with the Board of Trustees Job Description and the Individual Performance Expectations that outline my responsibilities to the Board.

If I ever find myself in a situation where I am unable to fulfill these expectations I will resign from the Board.

In turn, the organization will be responsible to me in several ways:

1. I will be sent, without request, monthly financial statements and an update of organizational activities that allow me to meet the "prudent person" section of the law.
2. The organization will help me perform my duties by keeping me informed about issues in the industry and field in which we are working, and by offering me opportunities for professional development as a board member.
3. Board members and the School Leader will respond in a straightforward fashion to questions I have that are necessary to carry out my board and committee-related responsibilities to this organization.
4. Board members and the School Leader will work in good faith with me towards achievement of our goals.
5. If the organization does not fulfill its commitments to me, I can call on the board Chair and School Leader to discuss these responsibilities.

_____ Date: _____
Member, Board of Directors

_____ Date: _____
Chair, Board of Directors

_____ Date: _____
School Leader

³ Adapted from *Board Cafe*, Vol. 5, No. 3, March 28, 2001



Farm and Enterprise Charter Academy

Founding Board Job Description and Responsibilities

Farm and Enterprise Charter Academy's⁴ mission is to empower students of all backgrounds to achieve personal excellence as learners, leaders, entrepreneurs, and community participants. Organized around two central and connected youth-driven activities—running an organic farm and launching and managing social enterprises—Farm and Enterprise Charter Academy embeds its rigorous, college preparatory curriculum in an authentic context for learning, leading, and growing.

Overview and Purpose

The Farm and Enterprise Charter Academy, a proposed Boston-area charter school, seeks committed, passionate, and entrepreneurial individuals to dedicate their time and expertise to the creation and governance of 6th-12th grade charter school.

Founding Board Duties/Pre-Charter (July 15, 2002-February 1, 2003)

A 7-11 person Founding Board will work together to:

1. Determine the proposed charter school's vision, mission, and strategic direction. The Founding Board is responsible for envisioning the school's desired future, articulating its reason for existing, and defining the criteria by which it will evaluate its success in both the near and the long-term.
2. Craft high-quality educational programming to support the school's mission. The Founding Board will work in partnership with the school's lead founder and educational advisors to create and approve curriculum and school services.
3. Galvanize the resources, expertise and constituencies necessary for a successful school design process. Founding Board members are expected to work in partnership with the school's lead founder, educational advisors, and a pool of volunteers and to gain community-wide support for the school's mission and to leverage resources for the school's benefit.
4. Ensure the timely submission of a high-quality charter application to the Massachusetts Department of Education. The Founding Board will help write and

⁴ Farm and Enterprise Charter Academy is the working name of a proposed charter school to be housed in Greater Boston. The school's official name, as well as its mission statement, will be created in partnership with its founding board and community partners. Its charter status will be determined by the state in February 2003.



review a charter school prospectus due September 17, 2002 and a proposal due November 15, 2002, ensuring that it meets high-standards of excellence.

Board of Trustees Duties/Post-Approval

Upon receiving a charter from the state Department of Education, the Founding Board will expand to 13-15 members, appoint officers, and assume the duties and responsibilities of a Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees will:

1. Safeguard the school's mission and competitive advantage. On an annual basis, Board members will assess the school's mission, strategic plan, and annual goals as well as the external environment to assure that the school is fulfilling its charter and meeting the needs of the community.
2. Secure sufficient resources to fulfill the school's mission. Board members are expected to work in partnership with the school's administration to raise funds to support the school's mission.
3. Ensure strategic and effective resource allocation. As the fiduciary agents of the school, Board members will review and approve the school's budget and funding plan and will hold the CEO accountable for its effective and efficient management.
4. Hire, support, and assess the performance of the school's chief executive officer. The Board will work as the governing partner to the school's management team and will ensure that the chief executive officer has the training, support, and encouragement necessary to fulfill the school's charter. In addition, the Board will assess annually the performance of the chief executive officer and will hold him/her accountable to the job description and performance criteria upon which they mutually agree.
5. Serve as ambassadors for the organization. As the school's primary link to the community, the public, the media, and funders, Board members are expected to garner support from the community through their passionate commitment to and articulation of the school's mission.
6. Set policies and procedures. As the school's governing body, the Board is expected to establish policies and procedures to support the mission.
7. Monitor and ensure legal and regulatory compliance. The Board should review school policies and program to ensure compliance with the law and with state regulations.



8. Assess its own performance. As a component of holding the organization accountable to achieving its mission and efficiently allocating its resources, the Board is expected to evaluate its performance against its job description and performance criteria.

Terms of Service

During the design and application-writing phase (July-November, 2002), Founding Board members will be expected to contribute as much time as necessary to ensure a high-quality process and product, and at a minimum to maintain weekly contact with the founding leader and to attend bi-weekly design meetings.

Once chartered, the Board members will be expected to contribute eight to ten hours a month to the school, including time spent preparing for and attending monthly Board and committee meetings, as well as time spent working on deliverables and ambassador responsibilities.

Qualifications

- Belief in charter schools and in the mission of The Farm and Enterprise Charter Academy.
- Passion and commitment to high-quality education and continuous learning.
- Expertise in the areas of educational design, counseling and supporting services, agriculture, social enterprise, financial management, law, facilities, fundraising, not-for-profit governance, strategic planning, community organizing and/or public relations.
- Availability to meaningfully participate in the founding process.
- Professionalism, entrepreneurialism, resourcefulness, and critical thinking.
- Ability to work effectively on a diverse team.
- Willingness to leverage personal and professional networks and resources on behalf of the school.



Farm and Enterprise Charter Academy Individual Performance Expectations for Founding Board Members

In accepting a position as a founding board member of the Farm and Enterprise Charter Academy, I acknowledge that I have read and agree with the performance expectations listed below, and that I will make every effort to meet these expectations. All Board members are held to the same performance expectations.

Performance Expectations

1. **Govern** by helping to fulfill the Founding Board's collective responsibilities, detailed by the Founding Board's job description and expectations.
2. **Advocate** for the school's vision and mission and be a champion in building the diverse constituencies necessary to support the successful launch and sustainability of the school.
3. **Serve** as a liaison with the public, interpreting the school's program to the community and informing the school of needs of the community.
4. **Lend** credibility to the school with professionalism, integrity, and enthusiasm.
5. **Satisfy** all legal requirements for the school.
6. **Consult** by lending specific expertise for the benefit of the school.
7. **Cultivate** prospective donors and raise financial resources to support the school.
8. **Contribute** to the school's fundraising goals by making an annual contribution of a size appropriate to your financial means and comfort level.
9. **Attend** regular Board meetings and participate in a meaningful and productive manner by focusing on strategic and critical questions and issues and by coming to meetings prepared.
10. **Be accessible** for personal contact in between board meetings and for committee duty.
11. **Volunteer** as needed to complete tasks during the pre-chartering phase of the school. Focus energies on governance and support the lead founder.



12. **Assist** with the completion of the charter school application by providing consultation on sections of the application and by attending state Department of Education interview.
13. **Collaborate** with fellow Board members to fulfill the obligations of the Board and to ensure that diverse perspectives are heard and incorporated into the governance structure. Focus on creating group, not individual success; support Board decisions; participate critically in the appraisal of the Board's performance.
14. **Disclose** to the Founding Board any potential conflicts of interest, whether real or perceived, and abide by the decision of the Founding Board related to the situation.

Signed: _____

Date: _____



Board Structure

- Board Size**

- Officers**
 - Term Limits

- Committees**
 - Which committees?



Job Description: Chair of the Board

Member of, Elected by and Reports to: The Board of Trustees

Supports: The Executive Director

Term of Office: One year; renewable for three consecutive years with the approval of a majority vote of the board.

General Responsibilities:

The chair is the senior volunteer leader of the Charter School who presides at all meetings of the Board of Trustees and other meetings as required. The Chair is an ex officio member of all committees of the organization. The Board Chair oversees implementation of board and school policies and ensures that appropriate administrative practices are established and maintained.

Specific Responsibilities:

1. Works with the Executive Director, other board officers, and committee chairs to develop the agendas for Board of Trustees meetings, and presides at these meetings.
2. In consultation with other board officers, appoints volunteers to key leadership positions, including positions as chair of board committees and task forces, and cultivates leadership succession.
3. Recognizes his or her responsibility to set the example for other board members by contributing financially at a level that is meaningful to him/her and by playing a major role in fundraising activities.
4. Works with the Board of Trustees and paid and volunteer leadership, in accordance with the Charter School's bylaws and mission, to establish and maintain systems for:
 - Planning the organization's human and financial resources and setting priorities for future development.
 - Reviewing operational effectiveness and setting priorities for future development.
 - Ensuring the legal and ethical standard.
 - Hiring and evaluating the school's Executive Director.
 - Developing and maintaining an effective board culture.
 - Developing an effective pipeline of future leaders of the board.
5. In conjunction with the Governance Committee, manages the development of the Board in order to help it work more effectively and efficiently.



6. Works with the Executive Director and other board officers to develop both immediate and long-term goals and expectations for the board that support organizational priorities and governance concerns.
7. Communicates effectively with and supports the Executive Director in his/her job as manager of the school. In this capacity, focuses on ensuring that the board governs rather than manages.
8. Works with the Committee Chairs and the Executive Director to keep apprised of committee work and to ensure that committees have the resources needed to do their job. Also, works to ensure effective and efficient communications between the committees and the Board.
9. Creates a safe environment for decision-making by inviting participation, encouraging varying points of view and stimulating a frank exchange of ideas in an effort to provide shared decision-making.
10. Communicates with the Board effectively so the board information system focuses on decision-making, stimulates participation and supports an appropriate balance of responsibility between board and staff.
11. Links with major stakeholders when it is agreed that the Chair is the most appropriate person to represent the organization at a key meeting, write an editorial for a newspaper or thank a major donor.

Qualifications:

- Commitment to and energy to support the Charter School and its values; an understanding of the school's mission and goals, and the responsibilities and relationship of paid and volunteer staff.
- Strong leadership skills to inspire a shared vision for the school and for the Board's work. Stimulated by a commitment to the mission, the Chair should guide the Board toward articulating and committing to a commonly held perception of the future of the School.
- Strong network of relationships within the greater community to leverage resources (money, people) for the organization.
- Strong shared vision with staff about school mission and goals for student learning.
- Strong facilitation and communication skills and an understanding of group process.
- Objectivity so that dialog is productive and contributions are encouraged from all sides of an issue.



- Decisiveness in order to tackle and resolve difficult issues and to keep the business of the Board moving.
- An ability and willingness to support, encourage and develop a strong, entrepreneurial school leader.
- Strong organizational skills.

Indicators of effectiveness:

- Meets annual goals as identified and adopted at the beginning of the leadership term, including specific goals for development.
- Is perceived by other board members as being fair, open to all points of views, decisive, and contributing to a culture that focuses on results and student needs.
- Is perceived by staff as supporting and adding value to their work.
- Is perceived by a majority of parents and other community members as being accessible, fair, constructive, and representative of the interests of the broader school community.



Job Description: Vice Chair of the Board

Member of, Elected by and Reports to: The Board of Trustees

Supports: The Chair

Term of Office: One year; renewable for three consecutive years with the approval of a majority vote of the board.

General Responsibilities:

The Vice Chair is the secondary volunteer leader of the Charter School and as such, discharges the duties of the Chair as required in the Chair's absence. The Vice Chair supports the activities of the Chair including sharing responsibilities as appropriate.

Specific Responsibilities:

1. In Chair's absence:
 - Presides at meetings of Board of Trustees.
 - Serves as ex officio member of standing committees.
2. Recognizes his or her responsibility to set the example for other board members by contributing financially at a level that is meaningful to him/her and by playing a major role in fundraising activities.
3. Works with the Chair to assist in developing the agendas for Board of Trustees meetings.
4. Advises the Chair on appointing volunteers to key leadership positions, including positions as chair of board committees and task forces.
5. Assists the Chair by taking on responsibility as necessary for communication with Committee Chairs.
6. Supports and challenges the Chair in all his/her responsibilities to ensure organizational priorities and governance concerns are addressed in the most effective and efficient manner.
7. Represents the board in the community, especially at events at which the chair cannot attend.
8. Other duties as delegated by the Chair.

Qualifications:

- Commitment to and energy to support the Charter School and its values; an understanding of mission and goals, and the responsibilities and relationship of paid and volunteer staff.

Meetinghouse Solutions 2009. All Rights Reserved.

Reprinted with permission by the Renaissance Schools Fund.

www.meetinghousesolutions.com (978) 772-4867 marcicf@charter.net



- Strong leadership and collaborative skills to support the Chair and to offer alternative proposals in the interest of best serving the organization.
- Strong facilitation and communication skills and an understanding of group process.
- Objectivity so that dialog is productive and contributions are encouraged from all sides of an issue.
- Decisiveness in order to tackle and resolve difficult issues and to keep the business of the board moving.
- Strong organizational skills.

Indicators of effectiveness:

- Meets annual goals as identified and adopted by the board at the beginning of the leadership term.
- Is perceived by other board members as being fair, open to all points of views, decisive, and contributing to a culture that focuses on results and student needs.
- Is perceived by staff as supporting and adding value to their work.
- Is perceived by a majority of parents and other community members as being accessible, fair, constructive, and representative of the interests of the broader school community.



Job Description: Treasurer

Member of and Elected by: The Board of Trustees

Reports to: The Chair and the Board of Trustees

Supports: Executive Director, Business Manager, accountant or bookkeeper, and auditors as necessary.

Term of Office: One year; renewable for three consecutive years.

General Responsibilities:

Provides direction for the financial management of the school and facilitates the board in meeting its financial oversight responsibilities.

Specific Responsibilities:

1. Chair of the Finance Committee.
2. Provides direction for the oversight of the school's record keeping and accounting policies.
3. Ensures the presentation of timely and meaningful financial reports to the board.
4. Ensures the development of annual budget and its submission to the Board for its approval. Leads the monitoring of budget implementation.
5. Oversees development and board review of financial policies and procedures. With the Finance Committee, monitors the adherence to financial policies and procedures adopted by the Board.
6. Develops and monitors any investment policies adopted by the Board.
7. Ensures that assets are protected and invested according to board policy.
8. Leads the board in assuring compliance with federal, state and other financial reporting requirements.
9. Presents the recommendation of the auditor to the Board for their approval. With the Finance Committee reviews the results of the audit including the management letter, develops a plan for remediation, if necessary, and presents the results to the Board.
10. Recognizes his or her responsibility to set the example for other board members by contributing financially at a level that is meaningful to him/her and by playing a major role in fundraising activities.



11. Takes responsibility for designing an annual board education program so that all board members can effectively conduct oversight of the financial health of the organization.

Qualifications:

- The treasurer must display a commitment to the Charter School and its principles, mission and goals, and the responsibilities and relationships of governance and management and paid and volunteer staff.
- An understanding of the record keeping, accounting systems, and financial reports.
- An ability to focus on both the short-term and long-term financial health of the organization.

Indicators of effectiveness:

- Meets annual goals as identified and adopted by the board at the beginning of the leadership term.
- Is perceived by other board members as being transparent and efficient in delivering financial reports and as being aggressively protective of the integrity of the organizations fiscal management.
- Is perceived by staff as supporting and adding value to their work.
- Is perceived by a majority of parents and other community members as being accessible, fair, constructive, and representative of the interests of the broader school community.



Job Description: Secretary

Member of and Elected by: The Board of Trustees

Reports to: The Chair and the Board of Trustees

Supports: Member of the staff or volunteer taking minutes.

Term of Office: One year; renewable for three consecutive years.

General Responsibilities:

Provides direction for the keeping of legal documents including minutes of all meetings of the board of the school.

Specific Responsibilities:

1. Certify and keep at the principal office of the corporation the original, or a copy of the By-Laws as amended or otherwise altered to date.
2. Keep at the principal office of the corporation or at such a place as the Board may determine a book of minutes of all meetings of the Trustees and meetings of committees. Minutes shall record time and place of meeting, whether regular or special, how called, how notice was given, the names of those present or represented at the meeting and the proceedings thereof.
3. Present for approval by the Board copies of all minutes of meetings of the board.
4. Ensure that all notices are duly given in accordance with the provisions of the By-Laws or as required by law.
5. In general, serves as the protocol officer of the board, ensuring that the keeping and posting of meeting minutes, meeting notifications, and committee report, the adherence to open meeting laws, and other procedural requirements are followed legally and ethically.
6. In general, perform all duties incident to the office of the Secretary and such other duties as may be required by law, by the Articles of Incorporation or By-Laws, or which may be assigned to him or her from time to time by the Board of Trustees.
7. Recognizes his or her responsibility to set the example for other board members by contributing financially at a level that is meaningful to him/her and by playing a major role in fundraising activities.



Qualifications:

- A commitment to the school and an understanding of the school and its values, mission and goals and the responsibilities and relationships of governance and management and paid and volunteer staff.
- An understanding of the required record keeping and the laws of the jurisdiction (city, state) in which the school operates.
- A capacity for attention to detail.

Indicators of effectiveness:

- Meets annual goals as identified and adopted by the board at the beginning of the leadership term.
- Is perceived by other board members as being an accurate and reasonable steward of the decision-making history of the organization and as being ever mindful of the duties and requirements of public service.
- Is perceived by staff as supporting and adding value to their work.
- Is perceived by a majority of parents and other community members as being accessible, fair, constructive, and representative of the interests of the broader school community.



Which committees should we have?

Your bylaws should spell out as few standing committees as possible. Then I recommend that the rest of the groups remain as task forces so they can come and go as needed.

In my opinion a charter school board absolutely can't function without the following committees:

- Academic Excellence
- Finance
- Governance
- Development (Fundraising)

You will see sample job descriptions for these committees on the following pages.

The other key things you may need to focus on can be handled with task forces:

- Personnel—once all your personnel policies have been created, you can probably disband this committee.
- Executive Director Development, Support & Evaluation—form this group right away, don't wait until the end of the year.
- Facility—sometimes this is joined with the finance committee listed above.



Key Components of Effective Committees[®]

1. The organization's by-laws specify as few standing committees as possible. In addition, the organization adds or dissolves task forces as needed.
2. Every board member actively participates on a board committee.
3. A board member chairs each committee.
4. Committees have non-board members on them.
5. There is a clear policy outlining how non-board members are added to committees.
6. Each committee develops, and the full board approves, the following:
 - a. A job description
 - b. Annual, prioritized goals
 - c. An action plan with deadlines and deliverables
7. The full board discusses, clarifies and reaches consensus about what work the committee will do and what issues need to be brought to the full board vs. what can be decided by the committee.
8. There is appropriate staff support for committees.
9. The board creates and adopts as policy standard operating procedures for committees.



Academic Excellence Committee

General Purpose

The Academic Excellence Committee is commissioned by and responsible to the Board of Trustees to assume the primary responsibility for working with the school leader to define academic excellence, ensure that all board members know the charter promises that were made to the community and the authorizer, and to devise clear and consistent measures to monitor these goals.

Appointments and Composition

1. Appointments of the chair and members of the Academic Excellence Committee shall be made annually by the chair of the Board with the advice and consent of the Board and the school leader and in accordance with the bylaws.
2. The chair of this committee shall be a member of the Board of Trustees.
3. Members of this committee shall be members of the Board of Trustees, subject to the conditions stated in the bylaws. Additional committee members may be appointed and need not be members of the Board of Trustees. It is anticipated that given the nature of this committee that it maybe necessary to have several outside academic leaders on the committee.

Responsibilities

It is important to note that this is a governance function, not a management function, and it is anticipated that the school leader will have a great deal of input into the work and composition of this committee. The committee's main role is to assure that academic excellence is defined, and that the board approves annual goals to attain academic excellence.

1. Define and continue to refine what academic excellence means for our charter school.
2. Ensure that all board members understand the key charter promises we have made to our community and to our authorizer.
3. Work with the school leadership to devise clear and consistent ways to measure progress towards stated goals.
4. Work with school leadership to set annual academic achievement goals, to be presented to and approved by the full board.
5. Work with school leadership to share with the board annual successes, barriers to reaching academic excellence, and strategies to overcome these barriers.
6. Arrange for Board training on issues related to academic oversight and academic achievement, as needed.
7. Annually evaluate its work as a committee and the objectives it has committed itself to and report on same to the Board of Trustees.
8. Report to the Board of Trustees at regular meetings of the Board in a manner determined by the Board.



Governance Committee

General Purpose

The Governance Committee is commissioned by and responsible to the Board of Trustees to assume the primary responsibility for matters pertaining to Board of Trustees recruitment, nominations, orientation, training, and evaluation in accordance with the bylaws of the school as well as established policies and practices approved by the Board of Trustees. This committee is also responsible for developing and revising a Board handbook as needed.

Appointments and Composition

1. Appointments of the chair and members of the Board governance committee shall be made annually by the President of the Board with the advice and consent of the Board in accordance with the Bylaws.
2. The chair of this committee shall be a member of the Board of Trustees.
3. Other members of this committee shall be members of the Board of Trustees.
4. Additional committee members may be appointed and need not be members of the Board of Trustees.

Responsibilities

1. Analyze the skills and experience needed on the Board.
2. Recruit people to serve as members of the Board and develop a slate of trustees for consideration by the membership at the annual meeting in accordance with selection/election procedures outlined in the bylaws.
3. Develop and review annually the procedures for Board recruitment.
4. Develop an orientation and training plan for new members and assist in the planning of the annual Board retreat.
5. Develop and revise a Board member handbook outlining the responsibilities of the Board and Board members, Board policies, and other relevant information.
6. Conduct board education as needed.
7. Coordinate board retreats with the Board chair as needed.
8. Annually conduct an evaluation of the full board and individual trustees.
9. Annually evaluate its work as a committee and the objectives it has committed itself to and report on same to the Board of Trustees.
10. Report to the Board of Trustees at regular meetings of the Board in a manner determined by the Board.



Finance Committee⁵

General Purpose

The finance committee is commissioned by and responsible to the Board of Trustees. It has the responsibility for working with the School Leader and Chief Financial Officer (CFO) to create the upcoming fiscal year budget; presenting budget recommendations to the Board; monitoring implementation of the approved budget on a regular basis and recommending proposed budget revisions; recommending to the Board appropriate policies for the management of the charter school's assets. The finance committee shall be assisted by the School Leader and CFO.

Appointments and Composition

1. The members of the finance committee shall be the treasurer of the Board who shall serve as chair, the president who shall serve as an ex-officio member, together with other trustees appointed by the president with the advice and consent of the Board in accordance with the bylaws.
2. Both the School Leader and the CFO will be members of the finance committee.
3. Additional committee members may be appointed and need not be members of the Board of Trustees.

Responsibilities

1. Prepare an annual budget for the charter school in collaboration with the School Leader and CFO.
2. Also in collaboration with the School Leader and CFO, develop and annually revise a five-year financial forecast and develop long-range financial plans based on the forecast.
3. Arrange for an annual audit to be provided to the Board of Trustees.
4. Provide oversight of the procurement process.
5. Review quarterly financial statements and variances from budget, and recommend action to the Board, as appropriate.
6. Annually submit objectives as part of the planning and budgeting process.
7. Annually evaluate its work as a committee and the objectives it has committed itself to and report on same to the Board of Trustees.
8. Report to the Board of Trustees at regular meetings of the Board in a manner determined by the Board.

⁵ Committee job descriptions courtesy of Two Rivers Charter School, Washington, D.C.

© Meetinghouse Solutions 2009. All Rights Reserved.

Reprinted with permission by the Renaissance Schools Fund.

www.meetinghousesolutions.com (978) 772-4867 marcicf@charter.net



Development Committee

General Purpose

The resource development committee is commissioned by and responsible to the Board of Trustees to assume the primary responsibility for raising non-grant funds to meet the budgeted needs of the charter school. The Board of Trustees, in consultation with the resource development committee, finance committee, School Leader, and CFO will determine the fundraising goal for the resource development committee, as well as for school-based committees and grants.

Appointments and Composition

1. Appointments of the chair and members of the resource development committee shall be made annually by the president of the Board with the advice and consent of the Board in accordance with the bylaws.
2. The chair of this committee shall be a member of the Board of Trustees.
3. Members of this committee shall be members of the Board of Trustees, subject to the conditions stated in the bylaws. Additional committee members may be appointed and need not be members of the Board of Trustees.

Responsibilities

1. Develop an annual fundraising plan that will generate the funds needed to meet the non-public and non-grant fundraising goal.
2. Coordinate fundraising plan with fundraising efforts by staff, parents, and other volunteers.
3. Develop the necessary sub-committee systems to successfully carry out the fundraising events and activities that are part of the annual fundraising plan; supervise the functions of the sub-committees; develop a plan for involving Board trustees in the non-grant resource development activities of the charter school.
4. Investigate new resource development projects, activities, and ideas for possible use in the future.
5. Cultivate large financial and in-kind donors.
6. Arrange for Board training on development issues, as needed.
7. Annually submit objectives as part of the planning and budgeting process.
8. Annually evaluate its work as a committee and the objectives it has committed itself to and report on same to the Board of Trustees.
9. Report to the Board of Trustees at regular meetings of the Board in a manner determined by the Board.



Board Composition

Prioritized Skills

Diversity

Qualities

Role of Parents

Role of Teachers

Role of Students



Board Recruitment: Finding & Landing Great Directors

FINDING

Board Candidates vs. Referral Sources

- Too often we jump to thinking of “candidates”-- making a list of candidates is good, but you should also develop a list of **referral** sources.
- Referral sources are:
 - People too close to you or the school to be effective on the board
 - Great connectors
 - People that you know are too busy for your board but would like to help

Examples of referral sources:

- Ask teachers at your school – you might be amazed at their connections
- Local politicians who are supportive of your mission
- Executive Director of a local nonprofit that you admire
- Local college and university presidents
- Chair of the local chamber of commerce board
- Your current donors – foundations are connected, ask their advice
- Anyone who is a great connector!

Where to advertise candidates?

- BoardNet USA www.boardnetusa.org
- Idealist www.idealist.org
- VolunteerMatch www.volunteermatch.org
- Local United Way Board Banks and Annual United Way Board Matchmaking Fairs
- College alumni networks
- Local chapters of affinity groups/professional groups for example:
 - Chicago Chapter of Hispanic MBAs
 - Massachusetts Bar Association’s Black Lawyers Association
 - Local Chapter of Returned Peace Corps Volunteers
 - Local Chapter of Association of Fundraising Professionals
 - NAACP



Board Recruitment: Finding & Landing Great Directors

Great places to cold call if you don't have a referral source:

- Closest office of the big management consulting firms
 - Bain, McKinsey, etc.
- Specific areas of expertise at local corporations:
 - Head of the HR, marketing, finance, PR or other departments
- Law firms and accounting firms have been great resources

Speaking engagements

- Ed reform and charter schools are hot topics
- Everyone wants to talk and debate these issues
- Offer to speak at a luncheon of one of the affinity groups mentioned above about charters in general and your school specifically – then pitch people getting involved. This is not only a great way to find board members, but to find potential donors as well.

How to get the most out of referral sources and cold calls?

- Don't waste their time
- Don't give them an easy "out"
- Be as specific as possible about what you are looking for:
 - Skills, Qualities, Diversity and TIME!!!!!!
- Remember every time you reach out to a referral source you are representing your school—be organized, be prompt with follow-through.
- Have written materials that can easily be circulated around:
 - One-pager about the school
 - Job description and performance expectations for trustees

Dos and Don't of Advertising

- Be as specific as possible –mention the skills you need, time requirement and other qualities
- Use a phrase like “seeking board members, committee members and other volunteers” to give you an out if someone isn't a good fit for the board
- Create a grading rubric to prioritize candidates



LURING THEM IN

- Get them to the school!!!! It's very hard to say "no" when you see a school in action. Remember, the average person you are courting may have never been in a public school in your neighborhood—or it may have been a very long time.
- Often first thing in the morning, while they are on their way to work is a great time to meet with them.
- If it is hard to set up the first meeting, you may have to go to them first.
- Have them attend a board meeting or meet with one of your board members.

LANDING BOARD MEMBERS

- Don't just "sell" – do some listening too and make sure they are a fit, especially for mission and time.
- Explicitly ask them if they are prepared to use the skill you are recruiting them for. For some people it is easy and natural to use the skills they employ all day (e.g. accounting) when they volunteer, but others are looking to do something totally different when they volunteer. ("Use my accounting skills? No thanks, I do that all day, I was joining this board so I could learn more about curriculum design.")
- Have more than one person meet them and test for mission/culture fit.
- Go through the job description with them, make sure they can commit.
- Develop a quantifiable rubric to compare candidates.
- If they aren't a perfect fit, don't take them.
- If you are unsure, start them on a committee see how they do and then move them up to the board.
- It is recommended that your committees have non board members on them—this is a great way to build a "farm" team.
- Some boards even make a year or six month mandatory on a committee before becoming a full board member.



Questions to Ask Potential Board Candidates

Skills and Expertise:

- What is your past governance experience? Do you believe the board you served on was effective? Why or why not?
- Where are you from? Neighborhood, school, personal story.
- What work do you do right now? How might this work support the mission of this school?
- Why might you want to support this school? What unique contribution will you bring?
- What ideas if any do you have to leverage your networks and connections that could benefit the school?
- How might you advocate for the school publicly and privately?
- What would you do if the media or some local groups opposed the school?
- Off the top of your head can you think of any other individuals, businesses, or community groups that might be of benefit to our board?
- Do you have any past issues or conflict of interests that could potentially interfere with your service on the board?
- Describe a project that you raised money for in the past. What were your goals and what was the outcome?
- I can see many things you would bring to this board, but what do you see yourself bringing to it?
- What do you hope to get out of being on this board?

Teamwork & Group Participation:

- What are the characteristics of effective groups?
- What qualities make some boards more effective than others?
- What do you see as the role of the ideal board member?
- When you are in a professional group, do you often change your mind on an issue about which you feel strongly? Can you think of any examples when this did or didn't happen?
- If your personal views were to come into conflict with a decision of the board of the school, what would you do?
- Would you be willing to make a financial contribution that was meaningful to you and the school if you were a member of the board?
- Describe an experience in which you had leadership responsibilities with a group. What worked? What did you learn about yourself?
- Describe your ideal approach to resolving conflict.



- Describe a situation in which you had a conflict with a team member, employee, or manager. What strategies did you use to resolve the conflict?
- Working on a board requires close teamwork amongst a group that is likely to bring diverse backgrounds and experiences. Can you describe an experience in which you worked with such a team? If not, how does this opportunity strike you?

Time and Energy:

- What projects are you passionately committed to right now?
- What is your current work? How is it going? What do you like and dislike about it?
- Are you willing and able to commit at least ten hours a month to a cause you feel passionately about? Can you think of a recent example where you did just this?
- Do you have any other non-profit commitments that might be a higher priority than your work on the school? If so what are they?
- How many board positions do you currently hold? What conflicts would your service to this Board present?

Philosophical Alignment:

- What does the ideal middle school look like?
- Where do your children go to school? Are you satisfied? Why or why not?
- What is right/wrong with education right now?
- What would you never want to see in this school?
- What is a charter school?
- What do you like and dislike about the charter school idea?
- Do you think that we should hold children from poor urban backgrounds to college preparatory academic standards?
- What do you believe about charter schools? Do you think they are good or bad for public education and the children they serve?
- Do you think public schools should be in the business of teaching character and civic education? Do you think that urban middle school students should be required to wear uniforms and be expected to learn in a highly structured and disciplined environment?
- What is the primary purpose of public schools?
- Describe your vision of an excellent public school?
- Why do you think so many inner city kids are not succeeding academically? What is needed to address these causes?
- Tell me about an experience or achievement from your own schooling that was particularly powerful for you?



Excel Academy Charter School of East Boston
Board Candidate Evaluation Form

Candidate Name: _____ Date: _____
Evaluator Name: _____

1. **RELEVANT EXPERTISE:** Does the candidate have expertise relevant to a board position? Will her/his expertise fill a need unmet by current board members? Has the candidate had enough experience within his/her field such that s/he can make meaningful contributions? Is s/he willing to share her/his expertise as a board member?

Please check only the TWO most relevant areas of expertise:

Strategic planning ____ Senior management/leadership ____ Accounting/finance ____
 Fundraising ____ Legal ____ Marketing/PR ____ Governance ____
 Facilities/Real Estate ____ Education ____ Politics/Connections ____
 Community Representation/Organizing ____

<u>Definitely Reject</u>	<u>Probably Reject</u>	<u>Unsure</u>	<u>Probably Invite</u>	<u>Definitely Invite</u>
1	2	3	4	5

2. **TEAMWORK:** Will the candidate make a good team member? Is s/he open to hearing others' opinions and perspectives? Is s/he sensitive to group dynamics? Is s/he willing to put organizational needs before her/his interests & needs in making decisions?

<u>Definitely Reject</u>	<u>Probably Reject</u>	<u>Unsure</u>	<u>Probably Invite</u>	<u>Definitely Invite</u>
1	2	3	4	5

3. **COMMITMENT:** Is the candidate willing to devote her/his full energy and talent to the board? Is her/his understanding of her/his responsibilities as a board member aligned with our expectations? Does s/he have the time necessary to be an active board member? Even in the face of organizational challenges and difficulties, will the candidate remain committed to the organization?

<u>Definitely Reject</u>	<u>Probably Reject</u>	<u>Unsure</u>	<u>Probably Invite</u>	<u>Definitely Invite</u>
1	2	3	4	5

4. **PHILOSOPHICAL ALIGNMENT:** Does the candidate believe in the mission and purpose of both our organization and the charter school movement? Will s/he make decisions based on alignment with the organizational mission, rather than based on personal needs and considerations?

<u>Definitely Reject</u>	<u>Probably Reject</u>	<u>Unsure</u>	<u>Probably Invite</u>	<u>Definitely Invite</u>
1	2	3	4	5

TOTAL SCORE (out of 20):

--

OVERALL IMPRESSIONS:



Tips for Keeping Strong Board Members Engaged

- Tighten up your board meetings:
 - Keep them to no more than two hours
 - Keep to your agenda
 - Focus on the strategic not the minutiae
- Provide opportunities for board members to participate in school activities. They need to come in contact with the mission to stay engaged.
- Conduct board member evaluations to gauge member satisfaction.
- Conduct board retreats and outings so individuals develop rapport and feel comfortable challenging one another.
- Task your governance committee with developing a simple annual board building program.



AGENDA
ABC Charter School Board Meeting
June 19, 2008 at 6:30 pm

Agenda Item	Purpose	Action	Who	Materials	Time
I. Minutes from 5/22/08	Review & Approve	Vote	Board Chair	Minutes from 5/22/08	5 min
II. Facility					
A. Year 4+ Facility	Update	None	Chair, Facility Committee	Site Search Summary	10 min
B. Year 3 Facility					
a. Overview	Update	Vote	Chair Facility Committee	3 Year Facility Summary Document	20 min
b. Financing					
III. Finances					
A. Monthly Financial Update	Update	None	Chair Finance Committee	April, May, June Budget to Actual	5 min
B. Final Year 3 Budget	Review & Approve	Vote	Chair Finance Committee	Budget / Summary of Key Changes	30 min
IV. Board Expansion					
A. New Board Members	Update	Input	Chair Governance Committee	2 Board candidate resumes	10 min
V. Development					
A. Fundraising Update	Update	Input	Chair Development Committee	Prospect Worksheet for homework	10 min
B. Increasing Next Year's Goal	Input Homework				
VI. Executive Session					
A. Head of School Salary Review	Discussion & Approve	Vote	Board Chair	Head of School Salary Review Memo	20 min
VII. Housekeeping					
A. Next Board Meeting	Update	None	Board Chair	Draft topics in packet	10 min
B. Board Retreat	Set Date & Outcomes	None		Draft dates & outcomes	
VII. Adjournment		Vote			

(Next Board Meeting: July 17th from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.)



Sample Agenda Item Cover Sheets
ABC Charter School

Agenda Item #: _____

Agenda Item: _____

Purpose:

- For your information** **To get your perspective** **For board action**
 Recommendation
 Vote

Submitted By: _____

Background:

This section should provide context for the agenda item, such as why it is on the agenda and why it should be approved. In the case of a discussion item, why the information is being presented--- such as a request at a prior Board meeting. Make sure to outline all the hard work that has preceded this item being discussed at the board meeting. Often without this context committee work is inadvertently undone by the board.

Recommendation:

This section should be worded in the form of a motion or motions, if it is intended to have the item voted on by the board. The language of the motion can be changed if necessary at the meeting following any discussion.



What should good minutes look like?

Meeting minutes are a formal recording of transactions that happened at a particular time and place. Minutes are a record of what was done at the meeting, not what was said by members.

Often, as legal documents, auditors and other verifiers may review minutes. To this end, minutes must be accurate and must never reflect the opinion of the minute taker.

Minutes are used for constant referral and clarification of past activities and actions. The minutes help ensure continuity within the organization's transactions.

Minutes should be brief and easy to read. A separate paragraph should be used for each subject matter. It is useful to underline or use bold face to identify the topic.

Some specifics:

1. At the top of the minutes, the following should be recorded:
 - Name of organization
 - Date, Time, Location
 - Note whether it is a special or regular meeting
2. List, using full names, those present and absent. Note those that are excused. Note any guests that are in attendance.
3. In the first paragraph, specify the time that the meeting was convened and the name of the presiding officer.
4. Record minutes in accordance with the order of what happened during the meeting.
5. Note the approval (and amendment) of the minutes of the previous meeting. Note the review and acceptance of the financial report.
6. Briefly summarize the main points of discussion, if it sets precedent, is critical, etc. Otherwise simply note "discussion ensued".
 - Indicate major problems stated and suggestions proposed
 - Record conflicting points of view for clarification of action



7. Record all motions. Some organizations record the name of the individual who made the motion; it is not necessary to state the person seconding the motion. Record abstentions. State whether the motion failed or carried.
8. If attendees arrive or leave during the meeting, record the time and name within the flow of the minutes.
9. Note the time of adjournment. End the minutes with the name of the recorder and the secretary who has reviewed the minutes.
10. Remember, minutes are a matter of public record and can be requested by a member of the general public at any time.



Excel Academy Charter School

Board Meeting Minutes

May 20, 2004

A meeting of the Board of Trustees (the “Board”) of The Excel Academy Charter School (the “School”) was held on May 20, 2004 at 6 p.m. at the School.

The following members of the Board were present: Palmer Berry; Seth Reynolds; John Kelly; Richelle Nessralla; Susan Passoni; Owen Stearns (chair), Jordan Meranus and Debra Cave. Yutaka Tamura, Executive Director, and Brian Turner, Principal were also present. Israel Lopez was a Notified Absence.

Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Board:

VOTED: To approve the draft minutes of the last Board meeting held on April 15, 2004, in the form previously circulated.

Management Update

Mr. Tamura provided a management update on recruitment efforts, budget and real estate issues.

Renovation

After discussion, the Board:

VOTED: To approve the \$140,000 renovation of the first floor of the current building to provide expansion space for the School.

Enrollment

Mr. Tamura led a discussion of a proposed seventh-grader enrollment policy, which will be a revision to the enrollment policy currently set forth in the School’s charter. The Board:

VOTED: To approve the Enrollment Policy prepared by Mr. Tamura substantially in the form distributed to the Board at the meeting, and to authorize Mr. Tamura to submit said policy to the Department of Education for approval.

Consulting Agreement

Mr. Tamura next presented the Board with a Consulting Agreement for Mr. Dwight Berg, with respect to work related to the acquisition of a permanent location for the school. After a brief discussion the Board:

VOTED: To approve the Consulting Agreement by and between the School and Mr. Dwight Berg.

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

Richelle Nessralla, Secretary



Resources

Charter Schools Trustees Guide, by Marci Cornell-Feist

www.meetinghousesolutions.com

A guidebook designed specifically for charter school board members in a Q&A format, contains tools, and sample documents. Only the tools are available on-line, the guidebook itself is available in hard copy.

The Board Café

www.boardcafe.org

A free, monthly electronic newsletter, short enough to read over a cup of coffee, the *Board Café* offers a menu of ideas, opinions, news, and resources to help board members give and get the most out of board service.

Board Source

www.boardsource.org

Formerly the National Center for Nonprofit Boards. The best source for national standards of effective governance.

Help4NonProfits

www.help4nonprofits.com

Excellent nonprofit library with very user-friendly articles.

