CharterBoardPartners

great boards for great schools

STANDARDS FOR EFFECTIVE CHARTER SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

STANDARD ONE:

Focus Relentlessly on Student Achievement

Govern to Fulfill the Mission of the School and the Promises of the Charter

- Believe in the mission of the school
- Assume ultimate responsibility for school and student success
- Use student data to inform board decisions

Know Whether Students are on Track for High-level Achievement

- Agree on the definition of academic excellence
- Understand how student achievement is measured at the school
- Review indicators of student success regularly to measure progress toward school goals

STANDARD TWO:

Ensure Exceptional School Leadership

Hire and Support a Strong School Leader

- Hire the right leader who can manage the school to achieve its goals
- Cultivate a trusting, candid relationship with the school leader, addressing challenges proactively
- Build an effective partnership between the school leader and board chair
- Champion the school leader
- Maintain an up-to-date school leader succession plan

Evaluate and Hold the School Leader Accountable

- Collaborate with the school leader each year to establish his/her annual goals
- Evaluate the leader each year using a formal and transparent process, and hold him/her accountable for achieving concrete results
- Invest in ongoing professional development to support the leader's progress toward his/her goals

STANDARD THREE:

Commit to Exemplary Governance

Build and Maintain a High-Functioning and Engaged Board

- Recruit and maintain a full slate of excellent board members who bring diverse skills, experience, and perspectives
- Elect a board chair who can successfully lead the board and engage all members
- Remove disengaged members from the board
- Invest in the board's development, providing orientation and ongoing training

Implement Best Governance Practices

- Adopt job descriptions for the officers, committees, and board members
- Require that each board member sign an annual agreement, committing to fulfill his/her responsibilities
- Hold well-run, regularly scheduled, strategic meetings
- Employ a robust committee structure to accomplish board work strategically and efficiently
- Assess board performance annually, holding the board accountable for achieving its goals and governing effectively

STANDARD FOUR:

Act Strategically

Determine the Strategic Direction for the School

- Oversee the development of a clear strategic plan that reflects the board's vision and priorities for the school's future
- Set annual goals for the school, board, and each board committee
- Organize the board, its committees, and all meetings to advance the aims of the school's annual goals and strategic plan

Respect the Balance Between Oversight and Management

- Define and build board-wide understanding of the oversight role of the board and the management role of the school leader
- Give the school leader the autonomy and authority to manage the school while maintaining strong and close oversight

STANDARD FIVE:

Raise and Use Resources Wisely

Manage Resources Responsibly

- Ensure that all members understand the school's finances, and provide necessary training
- Review financial data regularly and carefully, using it to make sound decisions that protect the school's short- and long-term sustainability
- Approve a budget each year that allocates resources strategically and aligns with the student performance goals of the school

Expand Awareness and Raise Funds

- Set and meet realistic fundraising goals to provide additional resources the school needs
- Require that each board member make the school a top personal philanthropic priority each year
- Raise the school's profile and engage donors
- Understand the political context of public charter schools and advocate for policies that promote and support the charter sector

STANDARD SIX:

Maintain Legal and Regulatory Compliance

Minimize Risks

- Adhere faithfully to the legal and ethical duties of loyalty, obedience, and care
- Oversee the development, board approval, and regular review of all school and board policies
- Maintain the highest standards of transparency by accurately documenting meeting proceedings and board decisions
- Apply sound business judgment by avoiding conflicts of interest, observing tax requirements, and maintaining liability insurance

Meet Expectations

- Confirm that the school is proactively adhering to the legal requirements set forth by the authorizer, the federal and local governments, and the Internal Revenue Service
- Operate in accordance with bylaws and review them at least every three years
- Comply with open meeting laws of the school's jurisdiction