Governance and Management

High-Level Framework

One high-level framework to understand governance and management is assignment of key responsibilities. In your role as board member or school leader, what areas are within your domain of responsibility and as a result, which employees' jobs concern you?

Board members have one employee—the school leader. It is the board's job to support and hold the school leader accountable for leading the school toward achieving its goals. If the board is going to worry about someone's job performance at the charter school, it should be the school leader.

The school leader is responsible for creating and directing the school program. His/her concern is the performance of staff and teachers, making sure that they are implementing a program that achieves the school's goals.

Use this framework as a quick guide to determine whether your board is executing its governance role or overstepping authority into management concerns. Are you focused on the right content, people, and outcomes? When thinking about specific examples of tension between the board and the school leader, does the issue become clearer when considered in these terms?

The	must account for	the performance of the
Board	→	School Leader
School Leader	→	Staff/Teachers
Teacher	→	Students

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Scenarios

Consider the following five scenarios to determine who is stepping over the governance line.

Scenario 1: The board spends a significant amount of the board's meeting time discussing the effectiveness of individual teachers and whether they should be retained.

- The board needs to focus its efforts on the school leader—is he/she effective? The school leader determines whether the staff is effective. The board is stepping over the oversight line if it is discussing individual teachers. Boards should confirm that the school leader evaluates teachers, keeping the most effective ones as a practice, but should not evaluate the effectiveness of staff for the school leader.

Scenario 2: As a start-up board, you wonder how far the board should step in on operational issues in the planning year.

- Because there may be limited staff in the planning year, the board might step over the typical oversight line, roll up their sleeves, and get things done. There must be open communication between the board and the school leader on this temporary authority until the school is fully staffed. Once the school is operating, the board must step back from these management roles and provide oversight and support in its governance role solely.

Scenario 3: The school leader receives frequent three-page long emails from the board chair demanding details of daily happenings at the school.

- The board is overstepping its oversight role. The board and school leader determine which targets and goals to assess and evaluate the school leader. The school leader needs to report these metrics to the board.

Scenario 4: The board wants to interview and have input into whom the school leader hires as vice principal.

- The school leader determines who will staff the school. The board can offer support and guidance, but hiring is the domain of the school leader. The board is exceeding its role in this case.

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Scenario 5: The school leader doesn't think that he/she needs to share much information about school operations with the board.

- The board holds the school leader accountable for specific metrics of the school including operations. The board and school leader need to have a clear conversation on what data pertaining to benchmarks and goals needs to be reported and at what frequency. This information gathering *is* in the board's domain.

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