

Building Strong Board Committees

Maryland Alliance of Public Charter Schools
January 1, 2022

EducationBoardPartners

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Education Board Partners is the only national nonprofit organization dedicated exclusively to strengthening nonprofit boards in education. We focus our work to ensure **quality, equity** and **accountability**.

We are a team of teachers and educational leaders who believe **every child** deserves the opportunity to attend an excellent public school.



Agenda

1	Welcome, Agenda, and Objectives
2	Temperature Check
3	Committee Charges
4	Monthly Calendars
5	Job Descriptions
6	Board Member Agreements
7	Agendas
8	Things to Consider



Objectives

1. Understand how to use a framework for structuring strong board committees.
2. Discuss how to develop board meeting tools, including agendas and calendars.
3. Identify and outline key steps in establishing job descriptions and board member agreements.



Temperature Check



Something to think about...

- Which committees should boards implement?
- How often should committees meet?
- What are the board committee charges that must be enforced?
- How do strong job descriptions enhance the committee experience?



Committee Charges



Implement best governance practices

- Create job descriptions
- Hold regularly scheduled, well-run meetings
- Build robust committee structures
- Assess board effectiveness



Committee Charges

At the minimum, standing committees should include:

- Finance Committee
- School Performance Committee
- Governance Committee



Finance Committee Charge

Roles and responsibilities include:

- ❖ Overseeing the school's budget and asset management
- ❖ Approving short- and long-term financial goals
- ❖ Monitoring the budget to ensure it aligns with the school's priorities
- ❖ Ensures compliance with the audit and strong policies
- ❖ Raises any financial issues, concerns and solutions



Finance Committee

PURPOSE

The finance committee holds itself accountable for the following:

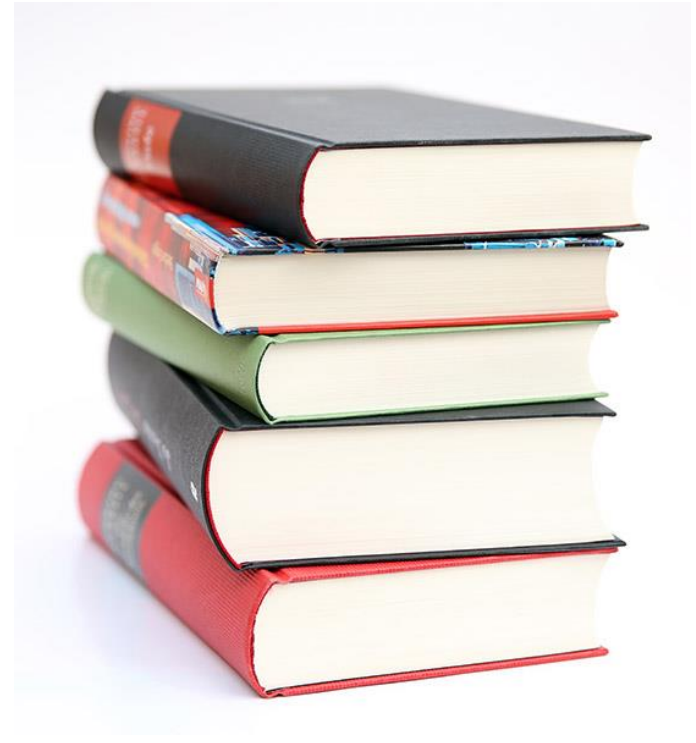
- ❑ Recommending a budget aligned to the school's strategic priorities
- ❑ Overseeing the school's financial resources
- ❑ Providing training or onboarding regarding the school's finances
- ❑ Driving progress toward financial goals
- ❑ Ensuring financial compliance
- ❑ Identifying actions needed to resolve complex financial issues



School Performance Committee Charge

Roles and responsibilities include:

- ❖ Ensures the school provides great educational experiences and outcomes for students
- ❖ Monitors student performance against rigorous academic goals
- ❖ Raises strategic issues for board discussion and consideration
- ❖ Ask the questions, provide advice, and hold the school leader accountable for results

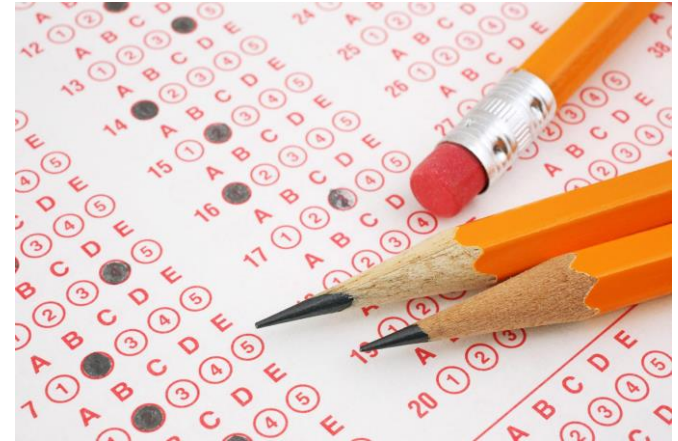


School Performance Committee

PURPOSE

The school performance committee holds itself accountable for the following:

- ❑ Partnering with the school leader to set and reach rigorous academic goals
- ❑ Building board-wide understanding of the school's academic performance and progress toward goals
- ❑ Setting committee goals and maintaining a strong committee membership
- ❑ Review academic dashboards to observe trends and hold the school accountable



Governance Committee Charge

Roles and responsibilities include:

- ❖ Maintaining proper board composition
- ❖ Ensuring that the board governs effectively overall
- ❖ Driving a comprehensive board self-assessment process
- ❖ Fostering the development of new and existing board members
- ❖ Managing board member recruitment
- ❖ Nominating board candidates for officer positions



Governance Committee

PURPOSE

The governance committee holds itself accountable for the following:

- ❑ Monitoring and maintaining board-wide adherence to governance best practices
- ❑ Articulates the responsibilities of individual board members by creating a board member agreement that is signed annually by each board member
- ❑ Onboarding and training new and existing board members
- ❑ Guaranteeing steady board leadership
- ❑ Setting goals



Monthly Calendars



Activities by Month – Example

JUNE – AUGUST

- Hold an annual board retreat

SEPTEMBER

- Onboard new board members
- Host a board back-to-school social event with school staff
- Oversee the school leadership team in preparing for the annual audit (finance committee)
- Hold first presentation of academic dashboard by school leader
- Shares data collected to date
- Board reviews data and continues to use at subsequent meetings as data is updated

Activities by Month – Example

OCTOBER

- Review and accept audit of financial activities from previous year
- Approve proposed changes to marketing and enrollment plans as student recruitment season begins
- Review quarterly progress toward annual school and board goals

NOVEMBER

- Review performance framework reports from authorizer

DECEMBER

- Conduct mid-year review with school leader and discuss progress towards annual goals
- Host holiday social event

Activities by Month – Example

JANUARY

- Review and approve the preliminary enrollment and budget assumptions for next year

FEBRUARY

- Review bylaws and board policies completely
- Identify updating needs
- Prepare a plan for completing any necessary updates in time for approval at annual retreat
 - Review quarterly progress toward annual school and board goals
 - Prepare for budget season
- Receive report from finance committee and school leader on proposed changes
- Evaluate whether proposed changes are aligned with school goals, including personnel changes and/or needs and school leader's intent to return

Activities by Month – Example

MARCH

- Confirm annual board member commitments and identify recruiting needs

APRIL

- Review preliminary budget for next year
- Interview board candidates

MAY

- Review final board-wide dashboard for current year
- Approve annual budget for next year
- Select auditor
- Do preliminary planning for board retreat over summer

Activities by Month – Example

June

- Review standardized test results from school year that has just concluded
- Complete annual board self-assessment
- Complete school leader annual performance evaluation
- Hold final review of performance on school and board goals
- Review fiscal year–end finances
- Draft goals for upcoming fiscal year including
 - School goals
 - School leader professional development plan
 - Board goals
- Review board dashboard

Monthly Committee Calendar - Sample

Board Calendar 2015-16 school year

Monthly Meeting	Academic Excellence	Finance	Governance	Facilities	Development
July	* Review calendar of academic discussions for school year	* Review monthly financials	* Discuss draft annual goals (school, board and ED)	* Update on final plan for AFRH project	* Discuss annual goals
	* Review end of year academic results	* Review/approve outstanding vendor contracts	* Review and approve annual board calendars (agenda items)		* Set expectations for annual board giving
		* Provide update on AFRH project and budget	* Present updated conflict of interest forms (for signature)		
			* Review, approve updated board roster		
			* Discuss plan for board policy manual		
August		* Review monthly financials	* Review, approve revised annual goals	* Final report on AFRH facility project	* Begin discussion of 2015-16 plans
		* Discuss school financial position and final AFRH budget	* Review, approve revised annual board calendar (if necessary)		* Determine size, use of annual board slush fund (plan for fund collection)
		* Review audit plan and timing	* Discuss potential expansion of board		
			* Review progress on board policy manual		
September	* Review academic goals, milestones and schedule for year	* Review monthly financials	* Review/vote on board policy manual (schedule to be set by governance comm)	* Discuss plan, schedule, milestones for any necessary expansion, renovation for year, and roadmap for next several years	* Review final 2015-16 plans for board approval
	* Update on Middle School planning	* Update board on plan to carve our CFA finances	* Review board tenure and annual recruiting plan		
		* Finance 101	* Share plan for annual board retreat		

Monthly Committee Calendar - Sample

Monthly Meeting	Academic Excellence	Finance	Governance	Facilities	Development
October	* Review fall baseline data, results	* Review monthly financials	* Review updated roles/responsibilities documents for board officers and committees	* Review, discuss status, timeline of facility health and safety audits	* Discuss early progress on 2015-16 goals
		* Review/approve annual audit			
November	* Review comparative academic data, results	* Review monthly financials	* Discuss plan for ED mid year review (ask for input)	* Update on next phase of facility planning work	* Confirm 100% annual board giving
		* Review schedule for Form 990			
December	* Update on Middle School planning	* Review montly financials	* Discuss draft ED mid year review (exec session)		* Update on progress to annual board goals
		* Update on OSSE loan restructure			
January	* Alternate date to review comparative academic data, results (if not fully available for Nov meeting)	* Review, approve Form 990	* Review, discuss mid year update on annual goals	* Update on expansion, renovation plans for upcoming year ahead of budget planning	
February	* Present PARCC/PMF results	* Review montly financials	* Update board on status of policy creation, revision	* Review, discuss status of facility health and safety audits	* Coordinate board support for annual CFA auction
		* Provide assessment on Ed-Ops and recommendation on whether to bring finance function in house			
March	* Review, discuss mid-year progress monitoring presentation	* Review montly financials	* Review schedule for annual ED review		* Update on progress to annual board goals
		* Review annual budget plan, schedule	* Discuss annual board elections		* Finalize board plans for CFA auction

Monthly Committee Calendar - Sample

Monthly Meeting	Academic Excellence	Finance	Governance	Facilities	Development
April	* Update on Middle School planning	* Review monthly financials	* Review plan for ED review (surveys)	* Update on health, safety audits	* Update on progress to annual board goals
		* Discuss draft annual budget			* Discuss, coordinate end of year staff appreciation gifts/event
		* Review funds available for reserve fund			
		* Approve ED salary increase (exec session)			
May	* Review plan to package reporting tools to share with PCSB and other schools	* Review monthly financials	* Review, discuss annual progress on annual goals	* Update on upcoming facilities plans	* Update on 2015-16 goals
		* Review, approve annual budget	* Hold annual board elections		
		* Update on CFA account	* Discuss draft ED review (exec session)		
June	* Update on Middle School planning	* Review monthly financials	* Review final report on annual goals		
		* Review and approve contracts for 2016-17 school year	* Review and approve 2016-17 meeting dates		

Job Descriptions



How NOT to Choose Board Officers

Chris- you have not been an officer. Why don't you be chair-eted? Chris? Are you awake?

We need to select new officers.

I want to be secretary. I have good handwriting

zzz



Board Chair

Overarching Duties

- ❑ Ensures that the board is functioning effectively and meeting high standards for effective governance
- ❑ Holds the board accountable for executing key board functions
- ❑ Facilitates all meetings of the board and other meetings or events as deemed necessary
- ❑ Develops board meeting agendas in partnership with the school leader that reflect the school's and board's priorities, drive strategic conversation and decision making, and keep the board's work focused on the goals
- ❑ Makes sure that the board conducts a self-assessment each year and addresses areas for improvement
- ❑ Leads the discussion on planning board retreats

Vice Chair

Responsibilities

- Attends all board meetings
- Executes specific projects at the request of the board chair
- Helps the board chair develop and implement any officer transition or succession plans
- Understands the responsibilities and duties of the board chair, and is ready and prepared to stand in for the board chair as needed
- Actively recruiting new board members
- Helps to retain current board members
- Provides leadership and direction to the board in concert with the board chair
- Ensures transparent communication between all board members

Secretary

Responsibilities

- ❑ Keeps accurate minutes for each board meeting
- ❑ Shares minutes with the board in a timely fashion
- ❑ Ensures that minutes are approved by the board in a recorded vote
- ❑ Makes sure the board adheres to open meeting laws and other legal requirements
- ❑ Assumes responsibilities of the chair in the absence of the board chair and vice chair
- ❑ Provides notice of board and committee meetings to all board members
- ❑ Keeps all legal and official documents up-to-date
- ❑ Maintains the board's records and archives for future reference by board members, the authorizer, and others

Treasurer

Responsibilities

- ❑ Serves as the chair of the finance committee
- ❑ Ensures that all members of the board fully comprehend the financial matters of the school and receive reliable and timely information
- ❑ Works with the finance committee, school leader, and CFO in leading the development of an annual school budget and presenting it for approval
- ❑ Understands financial accounting for charter schools
- ❑ Works with the CFO or other appropriate school leadership to deliver accurate complete financial reports to the board on a regular basis
- ❑ Keeps all records of school accounts current
- ❑ Oversees and reviews the annual audit process
- ❑ Handles all work related to school's financial affairs with integrity and care

Board Member Agreements



Standards for Effective Governance



Focus relentlessly on student achievement



Recruit and retain an exceptional leader



Invest in exemplary governance



Act strategically and be accountable



Raise and use resources wisely



Commit steadfastly to compliance

Center People, Culture and & Equity


Board Member Agreements

Board member agreement components include:

- Board Member Responsibilities
- Belief in Mission and Familiarity with Key Guiding Document
- Expectations for Meetings
- Meeting Attendance and Absences
- Event Attendance
- Board Member Behavioral Norms
- Board Member Training and Education
- Financial Commitment

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CAPITAL CITY
PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL
Board of Trustees Member Agreement

Dear Trustee:
The mission of Capital City Public Charter School (CCPCS) is to enable a diverse group of students to meet high expectations, develop creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills; achieve a deep understanding of complex subjects; and acquire a love of learning, along with a strong sense of community and character. We will graduate young adults who are self-directed, intellectually engaged, and committed to personal and civic responsibility. As a member of the CCPCS Board of Trustees, you are in a position to make a significant contribution to the school and its students. The vitality of CCPCS depends on your commitment as well as imaginative and strategic leadership. You and the other members of the Board hold the charter for our school and therefore are entrusted to act in ways that lead to the long-term sustainability of the organization and exceptional results for our students.

The CCPCS Board of Trustees asks all board members to affirm their personal commitment to the following responsibilities:

1. Commit to and use the highest ethical standard to support the school mission on behalf of the students, parents, teachers, and other key stakeholders of CCPCS.
2. Support the Head of School in developing an annual set of goals and a plan to achieve those goals consistent with and in support of the mission (the annual "School Plan").
3. Develop board goals to support the School Plan and promote effective long-term planning that supports the school's mission and achievement of the board's stated goals.
4. Support and hold the Head of School accountable by providing ongoing feedback and written annual performance reviews in a transparent process, consistent with the School Plan.
5. Hold yourself and the entire CCPCS Board of Trustees responsible for governing effectively.

Agendas



Agendas and Board Packets

Charter school board meeting materials should include two key components:

- **Strategic Agenda**
 - Drives the conversation toward achieving both annual and long-term goals
 - Outlines the flow of the conversation
 - Sets expectations for participation and outcomes
- **Board Packet**
 - School leader report
 - Committee reports
 - Relevant background information



Strategic Agenda

Item

Identifies the key topic for each part of the discussion.

Lead

Identifies who will lead this part of the conversation.

Action

Describes what action the board needs to take regarding this item.

Relevant Background Materials

Highlight key documents that board members should review prior to the board meeting in order to participate fully.

Time

Note the amount of time the board will spend on each item.



Board Packet

Make sure your board packets:

- Well-organized, concise, and easy to follow

Include all regularly reported info:

- Written school leader report
- Board meeting minutes from the prior meeting
- Committee meeting minutes



Briefing Sheets

- ❖ Include briefing sheets **for each agenda item**
 - Help guide board members through the materials
 - Prepare them for relevant board meeting conversation.
- ❖ Briefing sheets often **include recommended motions** as a starting point for board members
 - Provide two alternative motions for the board to consider



Roles and Timing

Creating agenda

- Use the charter school board's annual calendar
- Ask all committee chairs if they have items that need board level discussion
- Reflect on board discussions needed based on evolving or unanticipated events

Creating and disseminating board packets

- Disseminate board packets 72 hours in advance of the board meeting
- Leverage online document storage systems



Sample Board Meeting Agenda

Apex Public Charter
 School Board of Trustees
 Meeting Agenda

January 28, 2014
 6:45–8:45 p.m.

Agenda Item	Lead	Action	Relevant Materials	Time
1. Mission Moment	School Leader	N/A	N/A	6:45–6:55
2. Board member nominations	Governance Committee Chair	Vote	Governance Committee Briefing Sheet, Resumes for John Smith and Jacqueline Lane	6:55–7:10
3. Discuss Board Dashboard tracking progress on FY 14 goals/benchmarks per strategic plan and identify any mid-course corrections	Committee Chairs	For Discussion	Board Dashboard Briefing Sheet, Board Dashboard	7:10–8:25
4. Approve Minutes	Secretary	Vote	December Minutes	8:25–8:30
5. Executive Session	Chair		N/A	8:30–8:45

Sample Board Briefing Sheet

Action:

- No action required on this tool
- Discuss progress toward goals and the required adjustments needed
- Individual board members should use data to focus their committee work

Agenda Item #3:	Board Dashboard
Background	Track board and school's progress toward FY 14 goals articulated in Strategic Plan and identify mid-course corrections
Action	For Discussion
Link to applicable strategic goals	Determine progress toward goals
Submitted by	Board Chair

Reflections and Close



Reflection & Commitment

- What was a significant learning for you?
- When reflecting about building strong committees, where is your board strongest? Where is there room for improvement and growth?
- As a result of what you learned, what are 2-3 actions you can take to improve your committee and various structures to enhance the school board's work.

Looking for more information?

For more information, resources and questions please visit:

<https://mdcharters.org/governance-on-demand>

GOVERNANCE RESOURCES FOR MARYLAND PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS

This website is a Maryland Alliance for Public Charter Schools (MAPCS) curated page, developed specifically for Maryland Public Charter Schools operators and administrators. More resources are coming soon. Please bookmark this page and check back periodically for updated board governance resources.

Questions?

For any questions, please contact:

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