

# CharterBoardPartners

great boards for great schools



Charter School  
Board Service 101:  
What to Do and How  
to Do it Well

**NAPCS Conference**  
**June 30, 2014**

# The Charter Board Partners Model



## GREAT BOARD MEMBERS

CBP provides a **talent pipeline** by selectively recruiting, training, and matching senior professionals to charter school boards



## GREAT BOARDS

CBP helps to **transform governance** by providing coaching, resources, and training to help partner boards reach high standards for effective governance



## GREAT SCHOOLS

CBP partner boards become more effective, assume accountability for academic outcomes, and work strategically with school leaders to drive **improved student achievement**

# Board service matters.



# CBP Standards for Highly Effective Charter School Governance

*Believe in and commit to the mission of the school*

- 1. Focus Relentlessly on Student Achievement**
- 2. Recruit and Retain an Exceptional Leader**
- 3. Invest in Exemplary Governance**
- 4. Act Strategically and Hold The Board Accountable**
- 5. Raise and Use Resources Wisely**
- 6. Commit Steadfastly to Legal and Regulatory Compliance**

# Overarching Principle of Good Charter School Governance

The board must  
maintain an  
unrelenting focus  
on student  
achievement



# #1 Focus Relentlessly on Student Achievement

## ▶ Own Student Achievement

- Assume responsibility for student results
- Agree on definition of academic excellence
- Ensure the school's program is raising achievement

## ▶ Evaluate Achievement

- Understand how it is measured
- Use data to inform decisions
- Know how you compare to other schools



## #2 Recruit and Retain an Exceptional Leader

### ▶ Partner with the School Leader

- Champion/support
- Strong relationship between chair and school leader
- Succession plan

### ▶ Hold the Leader Accountable

- Define role
- Establish annual goals
- Evaluate performance



# #3 Invest in Exemplary Governance

- ▶ **Build a Competent and Engaged Board**
- ▶ **Implement Best Governance Practices**





# Build the Board Strategically

► **Collectively, the board needs the right combination of skills required to achieve the school's goals**

- Finance
- Fundraising
- Real estate
- Leadership
- Governance
- Communications/marketing
- Human resources
- Legal
- Strategic planning
- Experience relevant to the organization's mission



# Build a Competent, Engaged Board

- ▶ **Actively engage all members/  
remove disengaged members**
- ▶ **Invest in the board's development**
  - orientation
  - ongoing training
  - annual retreats
- ▶ **Board member succession plan**



# Implement Best Governance Practices

- ▶ **Hold regularly scheduled, strategic, well-run meetings**
- ▶ **Create job descriptions for your board**
- ▶ **Employ a robust committee structure**
  - Governance
  - Finance
  - Fundraising
  - Education
  - Executive?
  - Ad hoc



## #4 Act Strategically and Hold the Board Accountable



### ▶ Focus on Strategy Not Implementation

- Balance between governance and management
- Strategic planning

### ▶ Measure the Board's Performance

# #5 Raise and Use Resources Wisely

- ▶ **Manage Assets Carefully**
- ▶ **Expand Awareness and Opportunities**



# Manage Assets Carefully

- ▶ **Responsible for school's short- and long-term financial sustainability**
- ▶ **Analyze financial data to make decisions**
- ▶ **Ensure all existing resources—time, people, and money—allocated towards improved student learning**



# Expand Awareness, Opportunities

## ▶ **Board members are fundraisers by definition**

- Should be a personal philanthropic priority for each board member

## ▶ **Serve as ambassadors**

- Cultivate donors and bring new partners to the school

## ▶ **Tips on fundraising**

- It's an opportunity
- Most important factor in effectiveness? Your passion/knowledge
- Find your fundraising comfort zone



# #6 Commit Steadfastly to Legal & Regulatory Compliance

## ▶ Minimize risks

- Duties of loyalty, obedience, and care
- Control policies
- Transparency and reporting



Department of the Treasury  
**Internal Revenue Service**

## ▶ Meet expectations

- Legal requirements
- Bylaws





# Setting the Board Up for Success

- ▶ **How can you organize and prepare your board to meet these high standards?**
  - Train your board
    - Empower your governance committee to lead this
  - Focus on setting goals based on the standards
    - School goals → board goals → committee goals
    - Monitor progress throughout the year—and act as if you are not on track
  - Organize committees around standards
    - If no one is responsible for something, it won't happen

# For Effective Governance, Start Here!

- ▶ **Laser-like focus on student achievement**
- ▶ **Strategic board composition**
- ▶ **Robust committee structure**
- ▶ **Strong evaluation of school leader**
- ▶ **Clear understanding of the balance between governance and management (and how to operationalize it)**
- ▶ **Keeping the board focused on longer-term strategy**
- ▶ **Effective board meetings**

**Board service matters.**





**Govern well.  
Be accountable.  
Lead.**

**Because  
every child  
deserves a  
great  
school.**

# Join Us!

## CharterBoardPartners

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[www.charterboards.org](http://www.charterboards.org)

[learnmore@charterboards.org](mailto:learnmore@charterboards.org)



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