

CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD GOVERNANCE BEST PRACTICES

BARNEY CHARTER SCHOOL INITIATIVE

The Institution and School have a written mission statement and there is clear evidence it is reviewed regularly by the board.

The size and make-up of the Board provides for sufficient diversity to serve the School, its community, and the public well.

The roles of each Board Member are distinct and described in writing, and the people assigned to these roles can do their work successfully.

The School's mission guides all policies and practices and is evident in the climate, culture, and program of the School.

The Board operates according to deadlines and long-term objectives.

Requirements and expectations for students, parents, faculty, trustees, and employees clearly reflect the mission of the School. Members of the Board are independent, come from a range of professions, and show a range of talents; they also can raise funds to serve the School's mission.

The Board includes both parent and local community interests.

Compelling justification should be provided when voting membership on the Board, including officers, is less than five (5) or more than seven (7).

The Board has deliberated, conducted due diligence on, formed, executed, and is following proscriptively written governance-based policies that allow the Board to fulfill the mission of the School and its responsibility to its bylaws, charter authority, and agreement with BCSI. Such policies and practices should include:

- a. **Conflict of Interest Statement.** A conflict of interest policy written with clear expectations for each Member's dedication to the public trust. Such policy includes the requirement that each Member attests in writing to their commitment to the School's mission and ethical conduct in carrying out his or her duties.
- b. **Board-Management Delegation Policy.** An explicit policy ensuring that the Board's single point of delegation is between the Board and the School Leader and/or the appropriate management company contact. Such policy should express fully and completely the method in which authority is passed from the Board to the School Leader in a way prohibiting the co-management of staff duties by Board Members and focused on how the Board will hold the School Leader accountable while allowing him or her to exercise

prudence. The Board should be unhesitatingly responsive to the requests of the School Leader for board-appropriate tasks, such as assistance in major donor cultivation, property evaluation, and investment management.

- c. School Leader Support and Evaluation Framework. Whether in committee form or by other delegation or policy, the Board exercises effective due diligence in its evaluation of the School Leader whereby it promotes the assessment of his or her performance and the advancement of both the School Leader as an individual and the impact he or she has on the School. The Board supports the School's strategic plan through its effective backing of the School Leader, and, as a vehicle for productivity, provides wisdom and counsel to him or her when sought out.
- d. Board Member Term Limitation Policy. A policy ensuring the regular prudent turnover of all Board Members in a judicious fashion.
- e. Code of Conduct Statement. A proactive and general code of conduct for each Board Member, including each member's signed written agreement to personally and professionally serve the mission of the School as a public service rather than with personal interests (restricted to majority vote) and speak to the School Leader with one voice (determined by majority vote) and recuse him or herself in matters affecting family or close relations in the operations or governance of the School.
- f. Policies outlining the Institution's and School's statutory, regulatory, and contractual compliance.
- g. Limitations placed on the School Leader's authority and purview related to the operation of the School.
- h. The outcome and results that are expected in matters for which the Board is responsible
- i. An established monitoring and governing process dealing with the Board's work and review of itself and the School Leader. Within this consideration, the Institution and School must have complete, accurate, legible, and securely maintained records to include board minutes, school personnel records, student files, and administrative reports.
- j. A strict nepotism policy designed with full transparency of familial and other relationships in mind.
- k. Sound financial oversight policies ensuring assets are mission-directed, properly accounted for, and safeguarded from unreasonable risk. Oversight policies should include the clear separation of financial reporting and transactional duties, and policies on appropriate cash handling, vendor approvals, and purchasing authorization which,

collectively, provide for clear checks and balances in compliance with Generally Accepted Accounting Procedures (GAAP).

- l. A statement from all Board Members, made and signed within ninety (90) days of their election or selection to the Board, stating they are committed to matters of good governance of the Institution and School. Such statement should certify, at a minimum, that each Board Member has read the School's mission, charter, bylaws, the Board's agreement with BCSI, any management-related contracts, and any other prerequisite materials the Board deems appropriate to ensure each Member has been provided clear information on the mission of the School.
- m. A written and/or executed succession plan outlining the transition of the Board from its founding membership and activity to that of long-term governance and strategy. Such plan should have a minimum five-year long-range plan for improvement of the School. In the case of new schools, this plan should be implemented and executed with one (1) year of the opening of the school. In the case of a school being open longer than one (1) year without such a succession plan in place, one should be executed within the next twelve (12) months. Mature schools should have in place a strategic plan projecting their work for at least the forthcoming five (5) years.
- n. The requirement that each Board Member attend or has attended board development and training within one (1) year of his or her election or selection to the board.
- o. Reasonable demonstration of the Board's observance of the latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order, or similar accepted parliamentary procedures, including the providing of proper notice of meetings and the proper completion and adoption of minutes for each meeting in a timely fashion.
- p. A standard practice of keeping all Board-related files and information maintained by BCSI up to date with all changes to bylaws, charter/authorizer agreements and critical communications, and any essential or material policy changes within the School, within sixty (60) days of adoption, notice, or change.
- q. Evidence of reasonably regular professional development and self-assessments or evaluations of the Board and its work, including the Board's compliance with its policies.
- r. A clearly written Institution and School organizational chart supporting all facets of the division of accountability and responsibilities.
- s. The Board's plan for the stable transition of leadership when a change occurs in the School's leadership.
- t. A nondiscrimination policy in keeping with federal and state law.