BoardOnTrack

Charter School Board: Overview Of Job Responsibilities

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Introduction



As with any job, your board members are more likely to excel if they know what is expected of them from the outset.

We recommend creating three specific job descriptions:

1. Full Board Responsibilities

What are trustees doing? What are their responsibilities? What should the full board be accomplishing as a team? This document details the specific tactics for each responsibility in a board with optimal performance.

2. Individual Trustee Performance Expectations

What is each trustee responsible for specifically? In this section, you'll find a model outline to help establish clear expectations for your new trustee during the onboarding process.

3. Board Member Agreement

In signing the Board Member Agreement, the trustee acknowledges that expectations have been set clearly, and the trustee agrees to uphold these responsibilities. This will help ensure that there are no misunderstandings between the trustee and fellow board members. And, this proto-contract will serve as a useful reference in case you ever have to remove a trustee.

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Charter School Board Job Description

General Responsibilities

As a board member, you are responsible for ensuring that the academic program of (your school) Charter School is successful; that the organization's program and operation are faithful to the terms of its charter; and that the school is a viable organization.

Specific Responsibilities

1. **Determine the mission and purpose of (Your) Charter School and keep it clearly in focus**[1]
   - Create and periodically review the mission statement, which:
     a. Serves as a guide to organizational planning, board and staff decision-making, volunteer initiatives, and setting priorities among competing demands for scarce resources.
     b. Is used as the vehicle for assessing program activities to ensure that the organization is not drifting away from its original purposes.
   - – Understand and support the mission statement.
2. **Select the CEO**[2]
   - Reach consensus on the CEO's job description.
   - Undertake a careful search process to find the most qualified individual.
   - Oversee and approve contract negotiation and renewal.
3. **Support and review the performance of the CEO**
   - Provide frequent and constructive feedback.
   - Assist when board members overstep prerogatives or misunderstand their roles.
   - Compliment for exceptional accomplishments.
   - Provide for an annual written performance review, with a process agreed upon with the CEO well in advance.
4. **Ensure effective organizational planning**
   - Approve an annual organizational plan that includes concrete, measurable goals consistent with the charter and accountability plan.
5. **Ensure adequate resources**
   - Approve fundraising targets and goals.
   - Assist in carrying out the development plan.
   - Make an annual gift at a level that is personally meaningful.
6. **Manage resources effectively**
   - Approve the annual budget.
   - Monitor budget implementation through periodic financial reports.
   - Approve accounting and personnel policies.
   - Provide for an independent annual audit by a qualified CPA.
   - Ensure the full board has the proper training to be effective stewards of public funding.
   - Ensure adequate insurance is in force to cover students, staff, visitors, the board and the assets of the school.

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[1] Note the 10 titles in this description come from the BoardSource "Top Ten Responsibilities of a Nonprofit Board and have been adapted to the charter school context.

[2] Note about terminology—BoardOnTrack uses the term CEO to denote the person at the very top of the org chart. In some schools this is called the Principal, in others the Director, in larger organizations it may be the Executive Director or the CEO—when we use the term CEO we are referring to the person who directly reports to the board.

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7. **Determine, monitor and strengthen the programs and services**
   - Assure programs and services are consistent with the mission and the charter.
   - Approve measurable organizational outcomes.
   - Approve annual, attainable board and management level goals.
   - Monitor progress in achieving the outcomes and goals.
   - Assess the quality of the program and services.
8. **Enhance (Your) Charter School's public standing**
   - Serve as ambassadors, advocates and community representatives of the organization.
   - Ensure that no board member represents her/himself as speaking on behalf of the board unless specifically authorized to do so.
   - Provide for a written annual report and public presentation that details ABC's mission, programs, financial condition, and progress made towards charter promises.
   - Approve goals of an annual public relations program.
9. **Ensure legal and ethical integrity and maintain accountability**
   - Establish policies to guide the organization's board members and staff.
   - Develop and maintain adequate personnel policies and procedures (including grievance mechanisms).
   - Adhere to the provisions of the organization's bylaws and articles of incorporation.
   - Adhere to local, state and federal laws and regulations that apply to the organization.
   - Ensure compliance with all federal state and local government regulations.
10. **Recruit and orient new board members and assess board performance**
    - Define board membership needs in terms of skill, experience and diversity.
    - Cultivate, check the credentials of, and recruit prospective nominees.
    - Provide for new board member orientation.
    - Conduct an annual evaluation of the full board and individual trustees.

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(Your) Charter School
Individual Trustee Performance Expectations

General Responsibilities

Each trustee is responsible for actively participating in the work of the (Your) Charter School's Board of Trustees and the life of the organization. Each trustee is expected to affirm and strive to fulfill the performance expectations outlined below. These expectations are to be clearly articulated prior to nominating any candidate as a board member. The (name) Charter School Board will nominate the candidate only after s/he has agreed to fulfill these expectations. In addition to the responsibilities below, individual trustees are expected to help each other fulfill the tasks outlined in the collective Job Description of the Board of Trustees.

Specific Responsibilities

1. Believe in and be an active advocate and ambassador for the values, mission, and vision of (Your Charter School).
2. Work with fellow board members to fulfill the obligations of board membership.
3. Behave in ways that clearly contribute to the effective operations of the Board of Trustees:
   - Focus on the good of the organization and group, not on a personal agenda
   - Support board decisions once they are made
   - Participate in an honest appraisal of one's own performance and that of the board
   - Build awareness of and vigilance towards governance matters rather than management.
4. Regularly attend board and committee meetings. Prepare for these meetings by reviewing materials and bringing the materials to meetings. If unable to attend, notify the board or committee chair. Be aware of, and abide by, the board's attendance policy.
5. Be prepared to contribute approximately 8-10 hours per month toward board service, which includes:
   - Attending a monthly board meeting (2 hours)
   - Participating on a board committee (2 hours)
   - Reading materials, preparing for meetings (1 hour)
   - Attending events at the school, assisting with fundraising and other ambassadorial tasks as needed (1-2 hours)
6. Remain informed about the organization and its issues by reviewing materials, participating in discussions, and asking strategic questions.
7. Actively participate in one or more fundraising event(s) annually.
8. Use personal and professional contacts and expertise for the benefit of (Your Charter School).
9. Serve as a committee or task force chair or member.
10. Give an annual financial contribution and support capital campaigns at a level that is personally meaningful.
11. Inform the Board of Trustees of (Your Charter School) of any potential conflicts of interest, whether real or perceived, and abide by the decision of the board related to the situation.

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Board Member Agreement [3]

(Your) Charter School Board of Trustees

I,_____understand that as a member of the Board of Trustees of the (Your) Charter School I have a legal and moral responsibility to ensure that the organization does the best work possible in pursuit of its goals. I believe in the purpose and the mission of the organization, and I will act responsibly and prudently as its steward.

I have read, understand and am willing to comply with the Board of Trustees Job Description and the Individual Performance Expectations that outline my responsibilities to the Board.

If I ever find myself in a situation where I am unable to fulfill these expectations, I will resign from the Board.

In turn, the organization will be responsible to me in several ways:

1. I will be sent, without request, monthly financial statements and an update of organizational activities that allow me to meet the "prudent person" section of the law.
2. The organization will help me perform my duties by keeping me informed about issues in the industry and field in which we are working, and by offering me opportunities for professional development as a board member.
3. Board members and the CEO will respond in a straightforward fashion to questions I have that are necessary to carry out my board and committee-related responsibilities to this organization.
4. Board members and the CEO will work in good faith with me towards achievement of our goals.
5. If the organization does not fulfill its commitments to me, I can call on the board Chair and CEO to discuss these responsibilities.

Member, Board of Directors	Date
Chair, Board of Directors	Date
CEO	Date

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for more information

[3] Adapted from Board Cafe, Vol. 5, No. 3, March 28, 2001

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