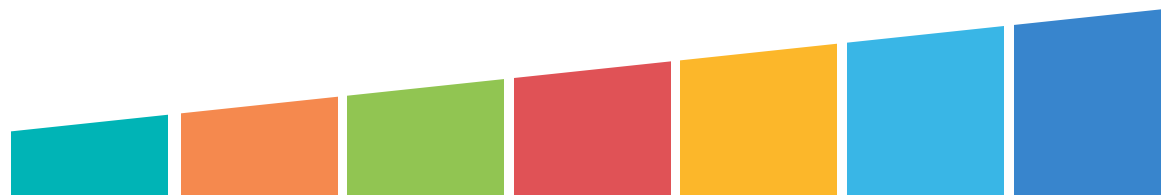




Strengthening Your Board-CEO Partnership

Working Session

Achievement First Charter Network Accelerator
April 2015



www.BoardOnTrack.com



Framing Thoughts



Framing Thoughts

Definition of a Charter School Board

- ▶ Not a collection of well meaning people

Rather...

- ▶ A highly effective team, strategically assembled to bring the skills, expertise, temperament and time to govern a multi-million dollar public enterprise.



Framing

Simply put,

A charter is a contract to increase student achievement.

*The contract is given to
the board not the CEO*



Governance Grounding Principle

The Board Focuses on Results

CEO focuses on means to get to results



Why are boards so ineffective?



Why Are Boards Ineffective?

The Board's Contributions

- ▶ They are unclear about what they are supposed to do.
- ▶ They don't have "their own work".
- ▶ There are no consequences if they don't do the work.
- ▶ They use the "we're only volunteers" thing as an excuse for poor performance.
- ▶ What is being asked of them is unrealistic.
- ▶ The board does not have good time management.
- ▶ The board does not have the right leadership.
- ▶ Board's work doesn't focus on the strategic.
- ▶ Lack of data-driven decision making.



Why Are Boards Ineffective?

The CEO's Contributions

- ▶ The CEO does not know how to harness the energy and talent of the board.
- ▶ The CEO does not have time to develop and motivate the board.
- ▶ For board meetings the CEO does all the work and all the talking.



How Good is Your Board?



How good is your board? How do you know?

- ▶ Most boards think they are pretty good.
- ▶ But compared to what?
- ▶ Excellence should be your bar.
- ▶ Showing up, having meetings, creating board packets, taking minutes isn't excellence – that is just the scaffolding to help you get to excellence.
- ▶ Much of excellence has to do with the focus of the board's time and work.
- ▶ As the organization ages you should shift from reactive work to more strategic, long-term work.



Strategic Not Reactive: Creating the Future

# Yrs Old	% Time Creating the Future	% Time Oversight Here & Now
5	90%	10%
4	80%	20%
3	60%	40%
2	40%	60%
1	20%	80%

BoardOnTrack

Accelerating Excellence

Membership guides you through a structured organizational development process.





BoardOnTrack

Guides Your Board to Improve in 4 Key Areas

Engaged Team

- Fully engaged team achieving tangible results
- The right structure and composition
- Succession planning

Systems and Processes

- Strong repeatable, institutionalized systems for compliance, transparency and group accountability

Performance Management

- Exceed charter promises
- Set and achieve annual goals
- Annual evaluation of board and CEO performance
- Continuous improvement loop

Impact

- Deepening and broadening impact



Annual Membership

Designed to Guide Your Board Along the Path to Excellence

Level	Engaged Team	Systems and Processes	Performance Management	Impact
1. Founding <i>Focus on 0-2 years out</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Right people on the bus• Organized for productive engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Basic systems for compliance, transparency and group accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Board and CEO Goals• Board and CEO Annual Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consistent tracking results against charter promises
2. Sustaining <i>Focus on 3-5 years out</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consistent participation by all• Strong partnership with CEO	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consistent use of “best practice” systems and processes• Sustainability of systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consistently setting and tracking goals• Consistently conducting effective evaluations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consistently meeting and exceeding charter promise
3. Thriving <i>Focus on 5-10 years out</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• High engagement by all• Leadership succession plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improvement “loop” in place	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Best in class performance measures• Long term focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Opportunity to deepen and broaden impact



500+ Charter Schools Lessons Learned



Big Lessons Learned

The Partnership is Everything

- ▶ For your organization to survive and thrive the governance piece is vital
- ▶ You can have a great school with a lousy board, but you can't sustain a great organization with a lousy board
- ▶ Eventually the lousy board will do in a great organization



Big Lessons Learned

It Really Should Look and Feel Like a Partnership

- ▶ Sure you may be the founder
- ▶ Sure they are your bosses
- ▶ But the day to day should feel like a partnership



What does that mean: Look and Feel Like a Partnership?

- ▶ The Board and CEO relationship feels like team work
- ▶ You have a shared vision of excellence; and are clear about the steps the board and the CEO need to take this year to get closer to achieving that vision
- ▶ The partnership is built on mutual trust and respect
- ▶ You communicate effectively and efficiently
- ▶ Communication is tied to a focus on results
- ▶ You work as a team to run a multi-million dollar enterprise and bring the professionalism, skills, and temperament that is needed. This is serious business, not “amateur hour”.



Big Lessons Learned

It Takes Two to Tango

- ▶ CEO has a really important role to play in making the partnership work – more of the burden is on you than on the board
- ▶ Board also has an important role to play and you need board leadership (Board Chair, Committee Chairs) to make this a priority and back you



Most Important Ingredients Board-CEO Partnership



Most Important Ingredients

- ▶ Right people on the bus (and in the right seats)

- ▶ Clear communication
 - Consistent
 - Manageable
 - Focused on results: strategic direction and annual goals



Most Important Ingredients

- ▶ Shifting the board work and Board-CEO interactions from reactive to strategic
- ▶ Full board engagement
- ▶ Use of data to inform and guide decision making
- ▶ Board speaks with one voice – one boss for CEO not 9



Key Issues to Unpack

Please refer to results of pre-session survey.



Issues to Unpack Question #1

Who should be doing what?

Relationship of:

- ▶ Individual board members to CEO
- ▶ Work of the collective board – committees v. full board

How should this evolve over time?



Issues to Unpack Question #2

FUNDRAISING

- ▶ Who does what?
- ▶ Management team? Committee? Full Board?

How should this evolve over time?



Issues to Unpack Question #3

Connecting Board with Mission

- ▶ “Better understanding of significant drivers of our work”

Governance – Management Line

- ▶ Define
- ▶ How should this evolve over time?



Issues to Unpack Question #4

Board Chair – CEO Partnership

- ▶ Unique relationship, define
- ▶ Who picked the current chair?
- ▶ Ideally how should this happen?



Board Chair

Role

- ▶ The chair is the senior volunteer leader of the organization who presides at all meetings of the Board of Trustees

Characteristics

- ▶ Strong group facilitation skills
- ▶ Works well with/complements the CEO



Board Chair

Common Misconceptions or Flaws in Implementation

The Board Chair is NOT

- ▶ The CEO's boss
- ▶ The decision maker for the board
- ▶ Invested with more power or more of a vote than the other trustees
- ▶ The “best name on the letterhead”



Additional Issues to Unpack?



Concrete Tools You Can Use



Questions?



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