

National **Charter School**
Resource Center

at American Institutes for Research

Welcome to the Webinar!

**Fix Your Board Meetings,
Strengthen Your Boards**

We will be starting soon.



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The National Charter School Resource Center is funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Innovation and Improvement and administered by American Institutes for Research, under contract number ED-04-CO-0109/0004.



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Fix Your Board Meetings, Strengthen Your Board

February 13, 2013



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About the Resource Center

The **U.S. Department of Education** is committed to promoting effective practices, providing technical assistance, and disseminating the resources critical to ensuring the success of charter schools across the country. To that end, the Education Department, under a contract with American Institutes for Research, has developed the **National Charter School Resource Center**.

Presenter

Marci Cornell-Feist
Founder and Chief Executive Officer
The High Bar



BOARD SMART • SCHOOL SAVVY

Fix Your Board Meetings, Strengthen Your Board

National Charter School Resource Center Webinar

February 2013

Presenter:

Marci Cornell-Feist



What we're going to cover

- ▶ Observations from 200+ charter school boards
- ▶ Preparation for an effective meeting
- ▶ Roles and Responsibilities: CEO, Board Chair, Committee Chairs, Board Members
- ▶ Board meeting agendas, reports, minutes
- ▶ Practical Tips
- ▶ Real Life Scenarios
- ▶ Q&A



A FEW NOTES BEFORE WE DIVE IN

- ▶ It's all about the kids.
- ▶ I am going to articulate a very high bar. The students in your charter school deserve nothing short of excellence.
- ▶ Terminology:
 - I use the term “CEO” to denote the person at the very top of the org chart, who reports directly to the board

You can find this presentation at
<http://pages.reachthehighbar.com/NCSRC.html>



Why are board meetings so ineffective?



WHY ARE BOARD MEETINGS INEFFECTIVE?

BOARDS

- ▶ 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.
- ▶ Advanced materials don't guide the board to be strategic.
- ▶ The board does not have the right leadership.



WHY ARE BOARD MEETINGS INEFFECTIVE?

CEO

- ▶ The CEO does all the work and all the talking.
- ▶ 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.



KEY COMPONENTS OF EFFECTIVE MEETINGS



Key components of effective board meetings:

- ▶ Compliance with Open Meeting Law
- ▶ Agenda Setting
- ▶ Advanced Board Packet
- ▶ Meeting is well facilitated
- ▶ Meeting focuses on the most important, strategic issues facing the school
- ▶ Minutes are taken
- ▶ The meeting is evaluated



OPEN MEETINGS LAW



Open Meeting Law

- ▶ Most charter school boards are a bit fuzzy on the interpretation of the Open Meetings Law.
- ▶ **The most important thing is to understand the intent of the law but not to be paralyzed from doing good work because of it.**
- ▶ Remember that your board's composition is constantly changing and people need periodic training and orientation around the Open Meetings Law.



Open Meeting Law

- ▶ The spirit of the law is that the public sees the board doing its work in public, but don't let that stop you from having open, honest and difficult conversations.
- ▶ Let the public hear the tough questions you are asking and see the hard choices you are making as a charter school board.
- ▶ The more we all understand about what it takes to deliver exceptional public education the better off we will be, and observing a public charter school board in action is an excellent way to educate interested members of the public.



Take Our Open Meeting Law Quiz

see webinar resources link



HOW OFTEN SHOULD WE MEET?



How often should a charter school board meet?

- ▶ A charter school board, particularly in its first five years, should meet once a month, or at a minimum, 10 times a year.
- ▶ During the start-up (pre-opening phase), it may be necessary to meet twice each month before there are paid staff people at the school.
- ▶ Once the school is open, and unless there is an unusual situation, the full board should not have to meet more than once a month.



Our members are too busy to meet monthly

Best Practice Tip:

- ▶ Many charter school boards have said that meeting once a month is very time-consuming, board members are too busy to do this, and they would like to meet every other month.
- ▶ Find people who can make the kind of time commitment you need.
- ▶ The board holds the charter and is ultimately accountable to your authorizer and the community for the well-being of the school. There are too many critical, policy-level decisions that need to be made, particularly in the first few years of the charter, for the board to hold fewer than 10 meetings a year.

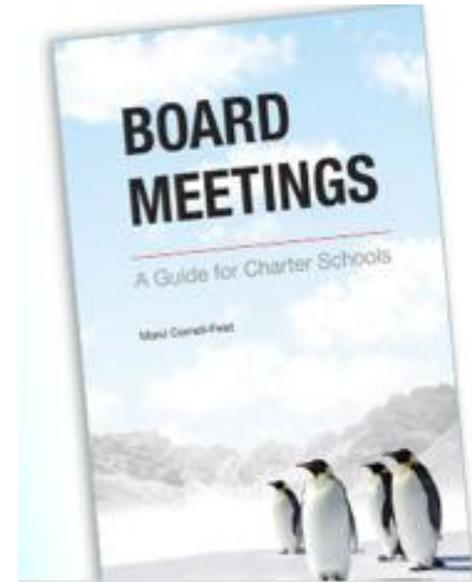


BOARD MEETING AGENDA



BOARD MEETING AGENDAS

- ▶ Who sets the agenda?
- ▶ When is the agenda set?
- ▶ What does it look like?



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Agenda

THB Preparatory Academy Board Meeting

Tuesday Mar 13, 2012 @ 5:00 PM at at the school

Agenda Item	Purpose	Who	Time
I. Opening Items			
A. Record Attendance and Guests			
B. Call the Meeting to Order			
C. Approve Minutes from Previous Meeting	Vote		
II. Academic Excellence			
A. Review Interim Assessment Results	Discuss	L. Johnson	15
B. state test scores	FYI	M. Cornell-Feist	20
III. Development			
A. Results of Annual Gala	Discuss	J. Luminière	20
IV. Finance			
A. Review monthly financials	FYI	M. Beneke	25
V. Governance			
A. New Trustee Recruitment Policy	Vote	B. Ferrie	20
VI. Closing Items			
A. Adjourn Meeting	Vote		



BOARD MEETING MATERIALS



Board Meeting Materials Sent Out In Advance

- ▶ Board meeting packet
 - What is in it?
 - When does it go out?
 - Who prepares it?
 - Who receives it?



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Sample Agenda Item Cover Sheet

Agenda Item Cover Sheet ABC Charter School

Agenda Item #: _____

Agenda Item: _____

Purpose:

- For your information To get your perspective For board action
 Recommendation
 Vote

Submitted By: _____

Background:

This section should provide context for the agenda item, such as why it is on the agenda and why it should be approved. In the case of a discussion item, why the information is being presented--- such as a request at a prior Board meeting. Make sure to outline all the hard work that has preceded this item being discussed at the board meeting. Often without this context committee work is inadvertently undone by the board.

Recommendation:

This section should be worded in the form of a motion or motions, if it is intended to have the item voted on by the board. The language of the motion can be changed if necessary at the meeting following any discussion.



BOARD MEETING FACILITATION



Board Meeting Facilitation

- ✓ Chair's role
- ✓ The agenda is used and followed
- ✓ There are no surprises
- ✓ CEO role
- ✓ Individual board member roles
- ✓ Committee roles
- ✓ Role of the public
- ✓ Role of other staff members

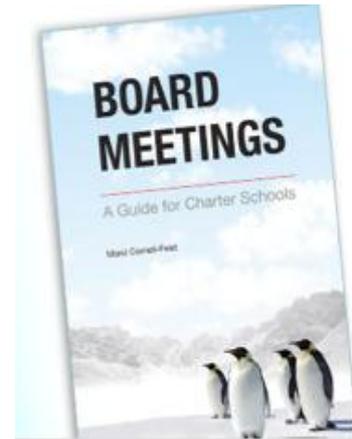


MEETING MINUTES



MEETING MINUTES

- ▶ Meeting minutes are a formal recording of transactions that happened at a particular time and place.
- ▶ Minutes are a record of what was **done** at the meeting, not what was said by members.



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Present:

N. Burvant, B. Spire, B. Upman, J. Luminière, E. Moony, T. Upman, L. Summit, S. Topper, B. Ferrie, W. Spire, A. McCue, G. Sorenson, L. Johnson, M. Cornell-Feist

Absent:

T. Moony, E. Sanchez, M. Beneke

I. Opening Items

Call the Meeting to Order

M. Cornell-Feist called a meeting of the board of trustees of THB Preparatory Academy to order on Thursday Mar 1, 2012 @ 5:00 PM at at the school.

Approve Minutes from Previous Meeting

A. McCue made a motion to approve the previous minutes.

B. Ferrie seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

II. Academic Excellence

Review Interim Assessment Results

Discussion ensued about the change in interim assessments, and why the new tests were providing a more accurate snapshot of student progress.

State Test Scores

III. Closing Items

Adjourn Meeting

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 06:00 pm.



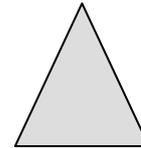
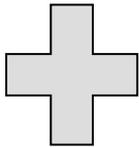
TIPS TO BE EFFECTIVE



BOARD MEETINGS

TIPS

- ▶ Every agenda item linked to an annual goal
- ▶ Use a timekeeper & stopwatch in addition to chair
- ▶ Evaluate the board meeting





BOARD MEETINGS

TIPS

- ▶ Send out an advanced board meeting packet
- ▶ Only discuss the strategic
- ▶ Do not automatically have each committee report out
- ▶ Stop long-winded CEO reports



BOARD MEETINGS: PREP CYCLE

WHEN	WHAT
Day after board meeting	Board Chair and CEO debrief, pencil in agenda for next meeting
4 weeks before	Draft agenda goes out to committee chairs/full board for comment
3 weeks before	Comments incorporated –agenda finalized
1 week before	Committee reports finalized, and advanced board meeting packet sent out
Week of meeting	Full board reads all advanced material comes prepared to discuss the strategic



Board Meeting Tips

CEO Reports on Measureable Goals

GOAL	Metric	G	Y	R
Student Enrollment	320 students by 3/30	✓		
Fundraising	\$50,000 from foundations by 5/1		✓	
Teacher Retention	95% of those invited sign return letters by 4/1			✓



Board Meeting Tips

Board Committees Report on Measureable Goals

GOAL	Metric	G	Y	R
Expand the board	By 4 trustees with prioritized skills of fundraising, finance & HR by May 15 th	✓		
Fundraising	100% participation by board by June 30 th		✓	



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%



REAL LIFE SCENARIOS



REAL LIFE SCENARIOS

- ▶ We have terrible attendance at board meetings
- ▶ Our trustees are all very busy people
- ▶ We rarely have a quorum these days

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?



REAL LIFE SCENARIOS

- ▶ Our board meetings go on and on and on
- ▶ We always meet for 3+ hours and we meet once a month
- ▶ Board members are showing real fatigue and are starting to drop off the board

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?



REAL LIFE SCENARIOS

- ▶ Overall we have a great board, strong trustees, great skills and we all really care about the kids.
- ▶ There is one trustee who talks way too much. They are always off topic and often disagree with the majority. They are becoming fairly toxic and trustees are threatening to quit if something isn't done soon.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?



REAL LIFE SCENARIOS

- ▶ Overall we have a great board, strong trustees, great skills and we all really care about the kids.
- ▶ Our school leader always springs stuff on us at the last minute, we'd prefer to discuss important issues one month and vote on them the next, but this never seems to be possible.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?



REAL LIFE SCENARIOS

- ▶ Overall we have a great board, strong trustees, great skills and we all really care about the kids.
- ▶ As the school leader I find working with my board exceptionally challenging. I carefully plan agendas, and my board always derails conversations about the strategic to talk about more micro-management issues.

WHAT SHOULD I DO?



Questions?

- ▶ You can find the power point here:

<http://pages.reachthehighbar.com/NCSRC.html>

- ▶ And lots of other resources here:

www.reachthehighbar.com

marci@reachthehighbar.com

Questions?



Raise your hand or enter your question in the chat box
on the left side of your screen.

Thank you for participating.

- Learn more about future webinars in the ELL series hosted by the National Charter School Resource Center:
<http://registration.airprojects.org/NCSRCELL/register.aspx>
- This webinar will be archived at the following website:
<http://www.charterschoolcenter.org/webinars/>
- Please share your feedback with us through the evaluation.

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