Welcome to the Webinar!

Fix Your Board Meetings, Strengthen Your Boards

We will be starting soon.
Fix Your Board Meetings, Strengthen Your Board

February 13, 2013
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**.
Marci Cornell-Feist
Founder and Chief Executive Officer
The High Bar
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?

BoardOnTrack
www.reachthehighbar.com
# Agenda

**THB Preparatory Academy Board Meeting**

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

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

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

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

## CEO Reports on Measureable Goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOAL</th>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>Y</th>
<th>R</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Enrollment</td>
<td>320 students by 3/30</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>$50,000 from foundations by 5/1</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Retention</td>
<td>95% of those invited sign return letters by 4/1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Board Meeting Tips

### Board Committees Report on Measurable Goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOAL</th>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>Y</th>
<th>R</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expand the board</td>
<td>By 4 trustees with prioritized skills of fundraising, finance &amp; HR by May 15&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>100% participation by board by June 30&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Strategic Not Reactive: Creating the Future

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># Yrs Old</th>
<th>% Time Creating the Future</th>
<th>% Time Oversight Here &amp; Now</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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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.
National Charter School Resource Center
1000 Thomas Jefferson Street NW
Washington, DC 20007-3835
Phone: 877-277-2744
Website: www.charterschoolcenter.org
E-Mail: charterschoolcenter@air.org