

National **Charter School**
Resource Center

at American Institutes for Research

Welcome to the Webinar!

Finding, Recruiting, and Retaining Outstanding Board Members

We will be starting soon.



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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May 23, 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

Finding, Recruiting, and Retaining Outstanding Board Members

National Charter School Resource Center Webinar

May 2013

Facilitated By:

Marci Cornell-Feist



AGENDA

- ▶ Quickly define the ideal charter school board structure
- ▶ Finding
- ▶ Recruiting
- ▶ Retaining
- ▶ Q&A



HOUSEKEEPING

You can find this presentation at:

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

- ▶ Questions submitted in advance – will leave ample time at the end of the presentation for questions.



Defining an Effective Charter School Governance Structure:

Crash Course



Defining the Intent of a Charter School Governing 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.



Board Composition



What's the Right Size for a Charter School Board?

Bigger than you think

- ▶ At least 4 committees: Governance, Finance, Development, Academic Excellence
- ▶ Probably need some other taskforces: Personnel, Facilities, etc.
- ▶ Minimum of 3 people on a committee
- ▶ Trustees only serve on one committee – serving on more than one committee leads to burn out

11-15 is the optimal number



Prioritized Skills

- ▶ Finance
- ▶ Facilities—acquisition, build out, financing
- ▶ Legal
- ▶ HR, Personnel
- ▶ Fundraising
- ▶ Education – but not too narrow a focus
- ▶ Previous governance experience



Start with Balanced Skill Sets but Don't Stop There

Board Member Qualities

- ▶ Entrepreneurial
- ▶ Sense of humor
- ▶ Passion for the mission
- ▶ TIME
- ▶ Group process

Diversity Considerations

- ▶ Ethnicity
- ▶ Gender
- ▶ Age
- ▶ Geography
- ▶ Religion
- ▶ Socio-economic



Role of Stakeholders on the Board

CAUTION!!!!

**Key to effective governance
is a level of objectivity**



Proceed with Caution!

Role of Stakeholders on the Board

- ▶ Parents
- ▶ Teachers
- ▶ Students



Roles & Responsibilities

- ▶ Job Description for the Full Board
- ▶ Individual Performance Expectations
- ▶ Board Member Agreement

- ▶ See samples at www.reachthehighbar.com



How Do We Find Great Candidates?



FINDING CANDIDATES

TIPS

- ▶ Board Candidates vs. Referral Sources

Examples:

- ▶ People too close to you or the school to be effective on the board
- ▶ Great connectors
- ▶ People that you know are too busy for your board but would like to help



FINDING CANDIDATES

Examples of referral sources:

- ▶ Local politicians who are supportive of your mission
- ▶ ED of a local nonprofit that you admire
- ▶ Local college and university presidents
- ▶ Chair of the local chamber of commerce board
- ▶ Anyone who is a great connector!



FINDING CANDIDATES

Advertise. Public Speaking. Ambassador Role.

- ▶ Local United Way Banks
- ▶ Affinity groups:
 - Hispanic MBAs
 - Bar Association's African American Lawyers Group
 - Local chapter of Association of Fundraising Professionals



FINDING CANDIDATES

Cold Call?

- ▶ Target areas of expertise at local corporations
 - Head of HR, Marketing, Finance, PR
- ▶ Law firms and accounting firms
- ▶ Closest office of big management consulting firms
 - Bain, McKinsey, etc.



FINDING CANDIDATES

Getting the Most Out of Referral Sources & Cold Calls

- ▶ Don't waste their time
- ▶ Be Specific! – about qualities, skills, TIME!!!
- ▶ Each referral is a marketing opportunity for you
- ▶ Have easy to circulate materials
 - One pager about the school
 - Job description and expectations for trustees



How Do We Screen Candidates?



7 STEPS FOR SCREENING CANDIDATES

- Step #1: Tools You Need In Place
- Step #2: Full Board Agree on Priorities
- Step #3: The Right Attitude
- Step #4: Low Stakes Screen
- Step #5: Visit to the School
- Step #6: Attend a Board Meeting and/or
Committee Meeting
- Step #7: Decide to Nominate



SCREENING CANDIDATES

Step #1: Tools You Need In Place

- ▶ Job Description
- ▶ Nominating Policy and Process
- ▶ Interview Questions
- ▶ Ranking Sheet
- ▶ Clarify Roles & Responsibilities in Trustee Recruitment Process
 - School Leader, Committee, Full Board



SCREENING TOOLS: Interview Questions

Ask questions in 4 distinct areas

▶ Skills and Expertise

- What ideas do you have to leverage your networks and connections that could benefit the school?
- Do you have any past issues or real or perceived conflicts of interest that could potential interfere with your service on the board?
- What is your past governance experience? What worked and didn't work about that board? How effective was your service? Why?
- Describe a project that you raised money for in the past. What were your goals and what was the outcome?



SCREENING TOOLS: Interview Questions

Ask questions in 4 distinct areas

▶ Teamwork and Group Participation

- When you are in a professional group, do you often change your mind on issues about which you feel strongly? Can you think of any examples when this did or didn't happen?
- Describe an experience in which you had leadership responsibilities with a group. What worked? What did you learn about yourself?
- Describe a situation in which you had a conflict with a team member, employee, or manager. What strategies did you use to resolve the conflict?



SCREENING TOOLS: Interview Questions

Ask questions in 4 distinct areas

▶ Time and Energy

- What projects are you passionately committed to right now?
- Do you have any other non-profit commitments that might be a higher priority to you than your service on our school board? If so, what are they?
- How many board positions do you currently hold? What conflicts could your service to this board present?



SCREENING TOOLS: Interview Questions

Ask questions in 4 distinct areas

▶ Philosophical Alignment

- Where do your children go to school? Are you satisfied, why or why not?
- Do you think public schools should be in the business of teaching character and civic education?
- Describe your vision of an excellent public school?
- Tell me about an experience or achievement from your own schooling that was particularly powerful for you?



SCREENING TOOLS: Ranking Sheet

Board Candidate Evaluation Form

Candidate Name: _____ Date: _____

Evaluator Name: _____

1. Relevant Expertise:

Does the candidate have expertise relevant to a board position? Will his or her expertise fill a need unmet by current board members? Has the candidate had enough experience within his/her field such that s/he can make meaningful contributions? Is the candidate willing to share his or her expertise as a board member?

Please check only the TWO most relevant areas of expertise:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Strategic planning | <input type="checkbox"/> Governance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Senior management/leadership | <input type="checkbox"/> Facilities/Real Estate |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Accounting/finance Fundraising | <input type="checkbox"/> Education |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Legal | <input type="checkbox"/> Politics/ Connections |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Marketing/PR | <input type="checkbox"/> Community Representation/Organizing |

Definitely Reject

Probably Reject

Unsure

Probably Invite

Definitely Invite

1

2

3

4

5



SCREENING TOOLS: Ranking Sheet

2. Teamwork:

Will the candidate make a good team member? Is the candidate open to hearing others' opinions and perspectives? Sensitive to group dynamics? Willing to put organizational needs before his or her interests and needs in making decisions?

Definitely Reject	Probably Reject	Unsure	Probably Invite	Definitely Invite
1	2	3	4	5

3. Commitment:

Is the candidate willing to devote her/his full energy and talent to the board? Is the candidate's understanding of his or her responsibilities as a board member aligned with our expectations? Does he or she have the time necessary to be an active board member? Even in the face of organizational challenges and difficulties, will the candidate remain committed to the organization?

Definitely Reject	Probably Reject	Unsure	Probably Invite	Definitely Invite
1	2	3	4	5



SCREENING TOOLS: Ranking Sheet

4. Philosophical Alignment:

Does the candidate believe in the mission and purpose of both our organization and the charter school movement? Will the candidate make decisions based on alignment with the organizational mission, rather than based on personal needs and considerations?

Definitely Reject	Probably Reject	Unsure	Probably Invite	Definitely Invite
1	2	3	4	5

TOTAL SCORE (out of 20):

Overall Impressions:



SCREENING CANDIDATES

Step #2: Full Board Agreement on Recruitment Priorities

- ▶ Skills
- ▶ Qualities
- ▶ Diversity



SCREENING CANDIDATES

Step #3: The Right Attitude

- ▶ Screening not begging
- ▶ It is an honor & a privilege to serve
- ▶ Don't just sell – listen – make sure they are a fit – especially for **time** and **mission**
- ▶ Give yourself an out “we’re looking for volunteers, committee members and board members.”
- ▶ Clear, transparent process



SCREENING CANDIDATES

STEP #4: Low Stakes Screen

- ▶ Come with a set of questions
- ▶ Test for:
 - Skills and Expertise
 - Teamwork and Group Participation
 - Time and Energy
 - Philosophical Alignment



SCREENING CANDIDATES

STEP #5: Visit to the School

- ▶ Trustees and CEO Meet
- ▶ Test on same 4 categories of questions
- ▶ Everyone complete a ranking sheet – try to make it quantifiable



SCREENING CANDIDATES

STEP #6: Attend a Board Meeting and/or Committee Meeting

- ▶ In fairness to the candidate, let them get a full sense of what the work will be like



SCREENING CANDIDATES

STEP #7: Decide to Nominate

- ▶ Think about trying everyone on a committee first
- ▶ Think about appropriate ways to say “thanks, but no thanks.”



How Do We Retain Great Trustees?



BOARD MEETINGS

- ▶ No more than 2 hours long
- ▶ Strategic rather than reactive
- ▶ Excellent facilitation
- ▶ Always sticks to an agenda



Thorough Orientation

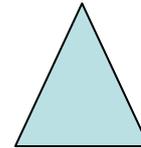
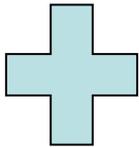
- ▶ Make sure to provide a clear orientation to the school, the charter, and the history and the vision of the organization.
- ▶ What should board induction processes look like? How much info at once, and how to make sure they clearly understand the role of the board?
- ▶ Is there an ideal calendar to adopt, in terms of when to add/orient new board members, and when terms of board members begin/end?



BOARD MEETINGS

TIPS

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





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%



Guilt Free Board Member Card

Governor	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attend 10 board meetings & annual board retreat
Sponsor	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Give personal gift to best of your ability• Find 3 items for the auction
Ambassador	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bring 6 guests to breakfast tours• Host a “learn about charters” event at your workplace
Consultant	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Actively serve on one committee



Q & A

For additional resources, please
visit

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QUESTIONS

- ▶ What are the most important capabilities of board members? Should you look for well-rounded board members, or members who are experts in varied fields? Is there a role for board members who are not financial resources, but are subject area experts?
- ▶ Please address the transition from an interim board (founding board of a charter school - those who made it happen) to the governing board; in particular what to do with dead weight interim board members and how to politely move them along?
- ▶ What advice you would give people who are newly forming a board or organization?
- ▶ Could we discuss the role of parents from the school on the board? Also, issues around having a PTO liaison attend board meetings or sit on the board? Our school is struggling with a PTO who wants a voting role on the board.



QUESTIONS

- ▶ Besides firing a talented, experienced and valued director, what does a board do when the director 'allies' with the parent organization to publicly and privately critique the board frequently?
- ▶ Should the board require that all board members contribute money to the charter school, or set a minimum contribution?
- ▶ How do boards find/recruit chairs that have the time and skills to lead a board from mediocre to great, particularly when the school leader is not fully invested in governance?
- ▶ Please address challenges of recruiting board members from the community that are not parents, staff, or teachers.
- ▶ What is the ideal board term and how do you keep your board empowered/knowledgeable with expiring board terms?



Final Questions?

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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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