Quality Charter School
Governance

Governance Board Functions
(NACSA Authorizing Matters: Issue Brief, Good to Govern: Evaluating the Capacity of Charter School Founding Boards, September 2007 and from this author and USDE-CPS federal grant funding requirements)

- Ensures contract compliance on the part of the charter school and authorizer
- Sets policy, establishes the budget, selects staff (within contracts), supervises the administrator, evaluates the school and administrator
- Selects supports and terminates, when necessary, the school leader within the terms of the contract
- Ensures operational and financial viability
- Defines educational excellence (with the school leader)

Effective Governance Boards
(NACSA Authorizing Matters: Issue Brief, Good to Govern: Evaluating the Capacity of Charter School Founding Boards, September 2007 and this author)

- Have a clear understanding of oversight role and fiscal management role
- Have the needed combination of skills (i.e. financial, legal, education, curriculum focus, etc. expertise)
- Use non-profit board best practices
- Maintain a clear role delineation of board, school leader, parents, teachers, contractors, service providers, etc. roles
- Remember that no one board member (even the board president) speaks for the board unless specifically delegated the authority to do so
- Are large enough to govern but not too large to function effectively
- Enforce term limits to avoid “founders disease”
- Utilize board committees such as:
  1. Academic excellence
  2. Finance
  3. Governance
  4. Strategic Planning
  5. Board development and training
Clarity of Roles and Responsibilities

- Operate with a clear distinction between governance and management
- Understand that founders and the founding boards are frequently different (They often require a different skill set.)
- Clearly define and separate the roles of board members, the administrator, education service provider(s) and the management organization

Elements of Quality By-Laws

- Board Members
  1. Number
  2. Qualifications
  3. Selection Process
  4. Procedures for filling vacancies
  5. Guidelines for removals and resignations
  6. Term limits
  7. Powers
  8. Fees and compensation
- Officers
  1. Number
  2. Selection process
  3. Job descriptions
  4. Process for filling vacancies
- Meeting
  1. Location
  2. Number of meeting per year
  3. Policy for special meetings
  4. Compliance with open meeting laws
  5. Quorum and voting rules
- Staff/administration
  1. Who reports to board
  2. Who votes
- Committees
  1. Number and purpose
  2. Rules under which they operate
  3. Procedure for creating
• Other
  1. Fiscal year begin and end date
  2. Rules of order
  3. Amendments
  4. Consistency with state and federal laws and rules and regulations

Measures of Board Quality
(Source – NAPCS Assessment Criteria and Rubric Draft, January 2008)

• School and student achievement
• Ethical leadership
• Focus on continuous improvement and training
• Responsible Governance
• Fiscal Accountability

Reasons for From a 501 (c) 3 Non-Profit Corporation

• One means of providing organizational structure for a charter school
• Articles of incorporation and bylaws provide: mission, organizational structure, rules and procedures
• Have no stockholders
• Corporate structure provides liability protection for individuals forming the charter school
• Employees of instrumentality charters are entitled to indemnification from the district if operating within their scope of authority
• Allows charter school operators to contract
• May allow organizers to apply for grants and gifts
• Can apply for IRS tax exempt designation