



SAMPLE BOARD MEMBER ORIENTATION PROCESS

Phase I: Recruitment

In the recruitment stage, a prospective board member will receive printed materials such as the charter application, relevant information regarding the educational program and financial data, and any other pertinent background information.

The prospective member will also receive a list of expectations of a board member, including the schedule of board meetings, committee assignments, length of board term, and an idea of the required time commitment.

List of Materials:

- Executive Summary from the charter application
- Organization chart of board and school leadership
- Board member biographies
- Overview of the U.S. charter school movement
- Overview of our state's charter school movement

Phase II: Orientation

New board members will attend a mandatory orientation session, which will be conducted by the board chair, the CEO, and the chair of the committee to which the new member would be potentially added.

The session will be held before the board meeting following the member's election to the board and will last for approximately one hour.

In designing an orientation curriculum, it is important that the new member be provided with information that will help them address the major decisions and policy questions facing the organization.

The orientation session will be comprised of three elements:

1. A comprehensive review of the board and the organization:

The mission, vision, and values of the organization; the history of the board and founding of the organization, roles and responsibilities of the board and the CEO, the administrative calendar with the board meeting schedule and other major activities of the board, an organizational chart that includes the list of current and planned committees, how the board conducts meetings, including relevant actions from Roberts' Rules of Order.

2. A broader discussion about the external environment the organization operates within:

This will include information about political, economic, demographic, legislative, competitive trends and changes that have significant impact on the organization and the children it serves), financial information, and detailed information about the educational program.

3. An in-depth orientation to the new member's committee work:

A more detailed conversation about the role of the new member on an existing committee, current issues and topics being examined by the committee, tasks and an action plan being executed by the committee, and any other information that would be helpful to the new member about committee work.

In addition to this session, a school tour independently arranged with and given by the CEO would introduce the new member to the school site and allow him or her to meet some of the administrative faculty at the school.

After the initial orientation session has taken place and some time within the first three months of tenure, a follow-up meeting would be held comprising the new board member and either the board chair or the governance committee chair or vice chair.

The purpose of this meeting would be to give the new member an opportunity to discuss any outstanding issues and or questions that he or she may have regarding the board governance process or a particular topic relevant to his or her committee work.

While the orientation session, the school tour, and follow-up meeting should provide a solid foundation from which the board member can successfully perform his or her duties, it may also be a good idea to provide a mentor to the new member.

An informal mentoring program could help build a sense of teamwork and support for new members. A mentor would be a skilled and reliable board member who would work closely with the new member to help him or her better understand board procedures, talk through basic issues and questions, and be available for any other support that the new member might require.

List of Materials:

- Final Charter Application
- Bylaws
- Board member résumés and contact information
- Staff résumés (CEO and other members of the leadership team)
- Board Policy Manual
- Authorizer Handbook for Charter School Board Members
- Board agendas and minutes from the previous year
- State Disclosure Forms