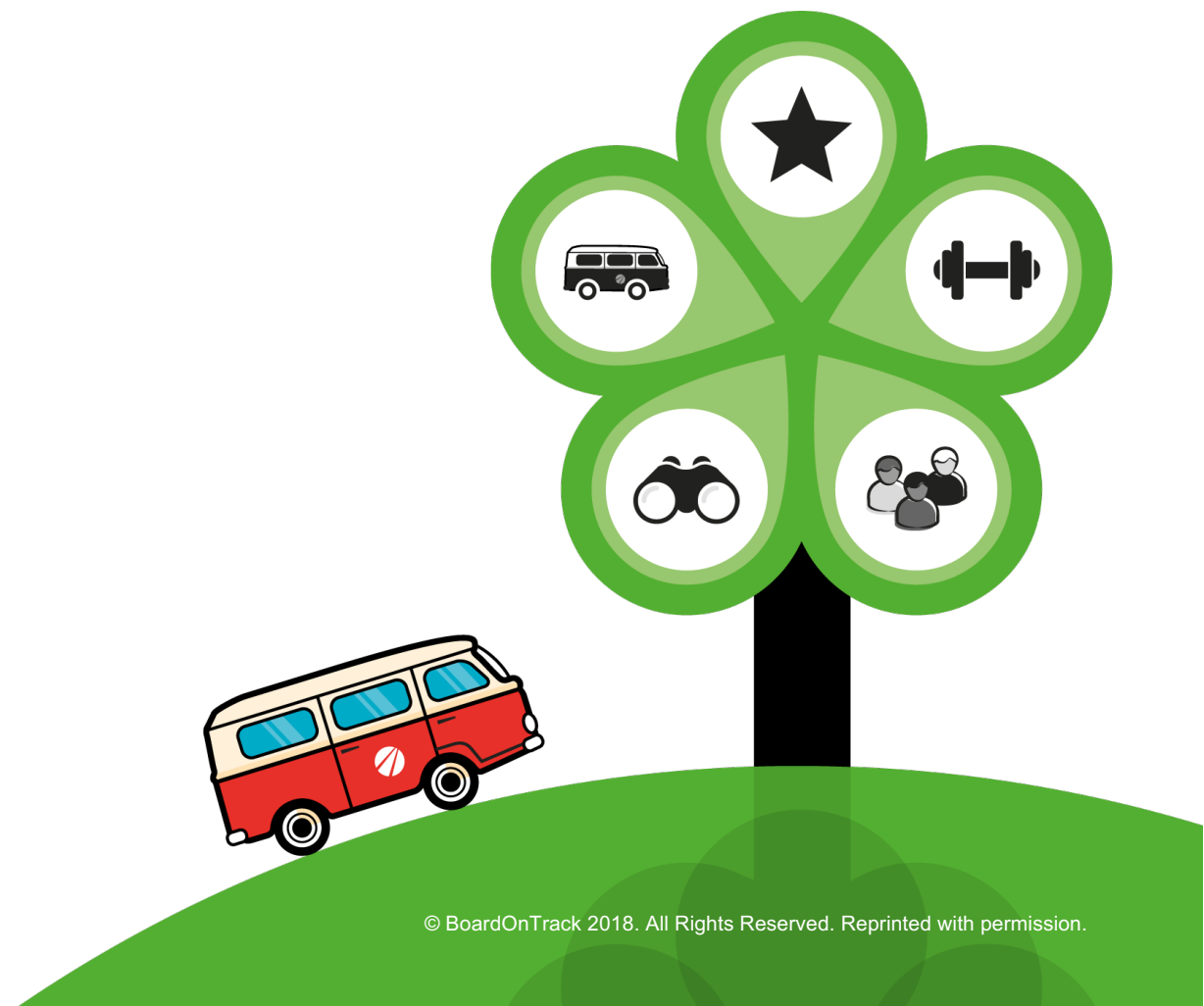




Data-Driven Governance Action Guides  
Defining the 4-Star Journey

**GUIDE 02**

# Creating a 3-Year Board Recruitment Road Map



## About This Series

Our world has been transformed by technology and data. This is an inescapable fact. But, this transformation has been slow to come to the nonprofit sector and has particularly lagged in the governance of nonprofits.

At BoardOnTrack we are pioneering a new, data-driven approach to nonprofit governance. We developed this series to showcase the rich data set you are receiving as part of your annual BoardOnTrack Membership and to give you actionable recommendations on how to use this data to build a better, more sustainable, and effective organization.

## About This Guide

This guide focuses on the Skills and Demographic Inventories in BoardOnTrack and the valuable data that is compiled in the Members Report.



## What's Inside

<b>Quick Context Setting</b> .....	<b>3</b>
Shifting from Reactive to Strategic: Creating a 3-Year Board Recruitment Road Map .....	3
Action Steps to Get the Data .....	4
Action Steps to Use the Data .....	6
Who Is On The Hook To Find and Recruit New Trustees? .....	8
<b>Additional Resources</b> .....	<b>9</b>
Definition of Excellence The High Bar of Board Composition Defined .....	9
Assessments .....	9
Sample Board Expansion Goal .....	10
Featured Resources from BoardOnTrack Resources Section .....	11

# Quick Context Setting

## Shifting from Reactive to Strategic: Creating a 3-Year Board Recruitment Road Map

As your organization moves from launching to sustaining you need to ensure that you are building strong, repeatable systems, and processes. This is the crux of our capability maturity model, also known as the Path to Excellence and illustrated below:



Building a sustainable, predictable process to find and recruit new talent for your board is absolutely essential. Even the most effective boards have regular trustee turn over. Term limits, burn out, and the ever-changing, busy lives of volunteer board members will lead to attrition each year on your board. Built right in to your BoardOnTrack Membership is an easy way for you to understand the relative strengths and areas to improve with regards to your board's composition, and a quick and easy way to develop a longer-term, strategic board recruitment road map. This guide will show you how to harness the power of this component of your BoardOnTrack Membership.



## Action Steps to Get the Data

### What is the Members Report?

The Members Report takes skills, demographic, and term limit information from your voting board members in BoardOnTrack and turns it into an interactive report that gives you a three-year look at your board's composition. It highlights strengths and areas where we recommend you consider adding additional skills. Our recommendations of board size and composition come from our national standards that were developed through work in the trenches with over 500 charter school boards.

### Generating the Data

#### Individual Trustees

All voting board members should click on their profile located in the upper right-hand corner of BoardOnTrack, and complete the skills and demographic inventory questions. For the report to be accurate, you need 100% of your voting board members to complete this task. It takes less than three minutes, so this should be a snap!

#### Term Limits

Next, one person on your team with BoardOnTrack administrative privileges, will enter your trustees' term limits in the team section.

Once the individual trustee information has been created and the term limits populated, you will see a completed Members Report located in both the team and report sections in BoardOnTrack.

### Key Components of the Report

#### Skills

The skills highlighted in the report are the skills that are vital to run your multimillion-dollar public entity. As you look under each of the skills categories (for example: Academic Excellence), you will see sub categories (closing the achievement gap, state test data, etc.). This level of detail is key. Often boards have a false sense of security that they have "educators" generally on the board but fail

to see that they don't have the specific, targeted educational skills needed. This holds true for each of the categories that the BoardOnTrack report is highlighting.

Included within the skills section, are a few essential key board member qualities. Pay attention to these as you think about your current board composition and the ideal candidates you want to recruit. Often candidates have the requisite skills but are lacking in these key qualities. Make sure to probe for both.

## Demographics

The Members Report highlights age, ethnicity, and gender. It is important for your board to have an authentic conversation about diversity on your board. How do you define diversity? Why is it important? How does it relate to your mission and vision? When boards think about diversity they quickly jump to race and ethnicity. And yes, this kind of diversity is vital. But a robust conversation about diversity should include gender, age, socio-economics, sexual orientation, and even geography. You are trying to build a strategically assembled team with the skills, temperament, and life experience to govern a multimillion-dollar public enterprise. The more diverse your board is, the less groupthink you will have and the better your creative problem-solving will be.

## Term Limits

Term limits are essential to ensure there is a regular influx of new talent, energy, and perspectives on the board. As start-up organizations, charter schools are susceptible to "founder's syndrome", where founding members stay beyond the point of effectiveness. This can be a lead founder who is the CEO or can refer to a group of founding board members. Term limits are an important safeguard against this.

Typically, a two-year term renewable three times or a three-year term renewable two times works well in the charter school context, as charters are given for five years, and this ensures a fair amount of continuity during that time period.

Once the three two-year terms are up, a trustee should take a minimum of two years off before being considered for re-nomination. This waiting period ensures there will be an influx of new talent, voices, and perspectives on the board.

A board can always make an exception to this rule, if necessary, but these are our recommended guidelines.

## Action Steps to Use the Data

The BoardOnTrack mantra is Knowledge + Action = Results. So, generating the data is great, but is only as good as the actions you take with that data. Our recommended action steps include the following:

### 1. Governance Committee Review

Ideally your board has a governance committee. This is the committee that is tasked with finding and recruiting new trustees, as well as organizing board education, new trustee orientation, and focusing on the overall health and functioning of the board. The governance committee should meet and review the Members Report in detail. Before jumping to the end result and setting a board expansion goal, the committee should spend some time isolating the key strategic questions/issues raised by looking at the data. Often this includes questions such as:

#### **Prioritized Goals**

What are the most important things our board will do to add value to the organization this year? What about over the next 3 years? If form follows function, who do we need on our governance team to achieve these goals? Where are the gaps?

#### **Board Size**

Our board is much smaller than the ideal size that BoardOnTrack recommends. Do we understand their rationale? Are we ready to move to a larger board doing substantive work in between board meetings? How important are functioning committees to achieving our strategic priorities?

#### **Board Skills**

Where do our skills match the BoardOnTrack recommendations, and where do they differ? How do we want to strategically approach this? Where are our biggest risks? Where do we need to build bench strength?

#### **Qualities**

The committee should look at the qualities you want or need on the board. Are there enough trustees with a good sense of humor? Will the “devil’s advocate” be rotating off at the end of this year? Are there enough entrepreneurial trustees on the board that thrive in startup situations? What are the additional value-add characteristics that new trustees could bring to enhance the functioning of our team? Are there qualities that we think all trustees should have?

#### **Demographics**

What does the report tell us about the current levels of diversity on our board? What role should diversity play on our board? How does our current board make-up align with our organization’s mission and vision? How does our current board composition align with our student population, service area, and broader community?

#### **Succession Planning**

How urgent is succession planning? For board members in general? For board officers?

### 2. CEO’s Input

Ideally your CEO plays an active role in the work of the governance committee and was part of the discussions above. Make sure that your CEO has a chance to weigh in on the board expansion goals and timeline. Your board should have skills that complement the skills of the senior management team of the organization and should serve as a valuable thought partner to the CEO. It is vital that the CEO is aligned with the board on the skills and perspectives that would be most helpful to them.

### 3. Committee Input

Form follows function. The governance committee should connect with each committee, discuss their prioritized goals, and learn what additional skills those committee members think are needed to round out their team and tackle the priority issues over the next few years.

### 4. Draft Board Expansion Goals

Based on the results of the discussion above, the governance committee should formulate a clear set of board expansion goals.

### 5. Full Board Alignment

Once the committee and CEO are in agreement about the recommended path forward, the final step is to review and discuss the strategic questions with the full board and to request a vote to approve the board expansion goals. If done right, finding and recruiting trustees takes a significant amount of time, and it is vital that the full board is in agreement about the strategic priorities and timeline. Getting this alignment now will save a great deal of potential frustration later on.

#### One Big Tip for Building a Board Pipeline

Although you'll find lots of tips and tools for building a great board in the resources section of BoardOnTrack, there is one big tip that we want to highlight front and center: building a board pipeline by starting with non-board members on committees.

Typically, boards think about finding and recruiting full, voting trustees for their board. But, if you really want to shift your board recruitment efforts to be strategic rather than reactive, you would be wise to think about adding potential board members to your committees first. Think about this as building a farm team. We have seen this technique used successfully with your peers across the country and highly recommend it. It benefits the board by allowing you to recruit someone with a specific skill, place them on a committee, and see if they show up, do the work, are good at group process, and don't have a personal agenda, etc. Then, as seats on the full governing board open up, you are nominating someone who is a known entity and has already proven their worth to the organization.

It turns out that this technique is also really helpful to the candidates. Governing a charter school is a complex task and serving on a charter school board is quite different than board service on traditional nonprofits. There is a great deal to learn, so starting someone off on a committee using their skills and expertise in a focused way is a great way for them to get up to speed on just one component of the organization. In addition, there are other significant benefits to serving on a committee rather than the full board, including that the individual does not have to deal with financial disclosures and it is less of a time commitment than full board service.

So, it turns out this technique is typically a win-win for both the candidate and the organization.



## Who Is On The Hook To Find and Recruit New Trustees?

As we like to say, governance is a team sport. Everyone should lend a hand in finding, recruiting, orienting, and retaining great trustees.

### Full Board

The full board should both approve board expansion goals and actively weigh in on strategic questions around board composition, such as the right size, skills, and demographics for your board. As a team, you should all know the priorities and be actively engaged in seeking new team members.

### Committees

The governance committee should lead the charge in finding and recruiting trustees, but all committees should play an active role in board recruitment. If you are moving forward with the technique of building a farm team/having candidates first serve on a committee before being nominated to the full voting board, then task committees with helping to find and screen candidates. For example, a finance committee is typically populated with trustees with financial acumen. If this is what they do in their day job, chances are they know lots of others with the requisite skills and have a better network to tap in the financial sector than those on the governance committee.

### Individual Trustees

Everyone should know the board and committee recruitment priorities and be on the lookout for potential candidates.

### CEO

Your organization's leader should play an active and engaged role in prioritizing the skills, qualities, and demographics needed on the board, as well as assisting in finding, screening and orienting candidates.



# Additional Resources

## Definition of Excellence

### The High Bar of Board Composition Defined

Boards that reach the high bar of board composition share the following characteristics:

#### Board Size

- 11 to 15 trustees.

#### Previous Governance Experience

- 75% or more of the board have previous governance experience.

#### Skills and Expertise

- 100% of the skills needed to govern effectively.

#### Diversity

- Board membership reflects the broadest level of ethnic, racial, gender, and geographical diversity.
- The diversity of board members heightens the credibility of the board in the broader community's eyes.

#### Level of Objectivity

The board is able to maintain a very high level of objectivity when governing because:

- No trustees have any personal or business ties with the CEO, staff, or each other that could result in a conflict of interest (real or perceived) during decision-making.
- Less than 25% of the board members are parents of students currently enrolled in the school.
- The CEO is the only employee of the organization that is a member of the board.

## Assessments

You may find it helpful to look at the results of the Board Structure, Board Composition and Board Recruitment Assessments built in to your BoardOnTrack membership. Your board's results will highlight strengths, areas to improve, and serve up relevant resources, articles, and templates to help you strengthen these areas of governance.

The definition of excellence above is basically the answer key for the Board Composition Assessment.

# Sample Board Expansion Goal

## GOVERNANCE Committee

### Overarching 3-Year Goals:

By June 2021 have a sustainable governing board of 11-15 diverse trustees who bring the needed skills to the board to ensure effective governance.

Develop enough bench strength so that the board can create and sustain a succession planning process for officers, committee chairs and trustees.

### Board Annual Governance Goals

1. Expand the board by 2 trustees by December 2018 and by an additional 2 trustees by May 2019 with the prioritized skills of human resources, fundraising and finance.
2. Add at least one non board member to each committee by January 2019.
3. By January 2019 have board approved written job descriptions for each officer position and each committee.

### CEO Annual Governance Goals

1. By September 2018, documented the role of senior staff in supporting each board committee, and ensure that each committee is properly staffed.
2. By December 2018, assist committee in developing an onboarding and new trustee orientation process

## GOVERNANCE Committee Action Plan

**Action Plan Goal #1:** Expand the board by 2 trustees by December 2018 and by an additional 2 trustees by May 2019 with the prioritized skills of human resources, fundraising and finance.

Key Actions	Due Date
1. Solicit input from trustees and develop a screening action plan	September 2018
2. Create a written screening process/nominating process	September 2018
3. Begin screening identified candidates	October 2018

## Featured Resources from BoardOnTrack Resources Section

Log in to BoardOnTrack and click on the resources section and you will find a treasure trove of resources about how to find and recruit trustees. Of particular note:

- Sample Board Composition and Expansion Policy
- Sample Board Candidate Interview Questions
- Sample Candidate Ranking Sheet
- Sample Policy for Nominating Non Board Members to Committees



### Time to Get Rolling! We're Here to Help.

We hope you found this primer on using the Members Report helpful. We understand that each charter school board is unique and that this guide might get you rolling, but you may still have questions, need to troubleshoot an issue, or get a little coaching through some thorny implementation. Not to worry! We're standing by ready to help!

The fastest way to reach us is through the HELP button in BoardOnTrack or:

Email: [info@boardontrack.com](mailto:info@boardontrack.com)

and a friendly, knowledgeable team member will be in touch right away.