



BOARD GEAR: COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

Committees are considered the workhorse of any organization and when structured properly, can have a tremendous impact on the organization. Having a proper committee structure allows the board to focus its work more appropriately, on decision making.

COMMITTEE PURPOSE

- » Create board efficiencies.
- » Provide advice and recommendations on assigned items.
- » Research and provide understanding of the effects of decisions.
- » Complete work on behalf of the board in preparation of the meeting.



ESTABLISHING COMMITTEES

- » Must align with bylaws and charter contract.
- » Establish specific expectations, timeframes and deliverables that are clearly understood to ensure that you don't have committee mission creep.
- » Discuss membership makeup — it is important to consider teachers, parents, community members, administrative staff and board members for involvement in committees.
- » Identify a committee chair — this person will organize and ultimately report back to the board on committee meetings.
- » Committee reports should be a standing item on board agendas.

COMMITTEE TYPES

STANDING

Cyclical in nature, with numerous repeating responsibilities year after year. Also helps board develop an annual calendar of discussion items for consideration at board meetings.

Examples: academic, finance and governance committees.

AD HOC

Singular purpose with defined timeframes in which to operate and bring a recommendation back to the board.

Examples: facilities committee or an event planning committee.



ACADEMIC STANDING COMMITTEE

The academic committee's main purpose is to identify student academic excellence based on your mission and charter contract. Once excellence is identified, the committee should define the related measures or benchmarks that indicate success throughout the year that are then reported back to the board on regular intervals. The academic committee creates an academic calendar that targets key board meetings to share reports, data and outcomes. This process allows the board to stay in tune with academic success on a regular basis rather than waiting until the end of the year to understand if they are meeting their goals.



FINANCE STANDING COMMITTEE

The finance committee helps to ensure that the full board fulfills its fiduciary responsibilities associated with financial oversight of the academy including selection and oversight of the annual auditor. The finance committee participates in nailing down the annual budget, to ensure fiscal alignment with key academic, fiscal and operational targets or goals. Monthly budget to actuals, quarterly financial statements and financial reconciliations are all part of the reporting responsibilities that emanate from the finance committee to the full board.



GOVERNANCE STANDING COMMITTEE

The governance committee assists the full board in self-perpetuating membership that strives for continuous improvement in how it provides oversight of the academy's performance. The committee leads board member recruitment and the succession process and recommends new members to the full board. It also develops and implements new board member orientation practices; identifies and recommends opportunities for board development to the full board; and recommends the adoption of new or revised policy to the full board.

Committees will assist the board by funneling detailed and researched recommendations which will create efficiency and increase board engagement. However, committees should not replace the actions of, or act on behalf of, the full board. Committees should have a clear purpose when established by the full board and should report to the full board regularly regarding its activities while always operating in compliance with the Open Meetings Act.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

What committees exist on your board?

How can committees be utilized to learn about potential board members and in orienting new board candidates?

Have we taken the time to set and clarify expectations, timeframes and deliverables that are expected from our committee structure?

Board Gear is a comprehensive governance curriculum focused on charter public school board members and the role governance plays in driving school performance. To view the complete library of videos and resources, visit www.TheCenterforCharters.org/BoardGear.

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