

Governance Strengthening Exercises

*Due May 21, 2021 as part of the Ready to Open Progress Report.
Schools may turn these exercises in any time after the RTO1 December submissions are due.*

(1) Roles and Responsibilities

(Please ensure at least one exercise from the list below is included in the school's Ready to Open Progress Report in May, or earlier).

- a. Establish and adopt as policy *Performance Expectations for Individual Board Members*, including clear roles and responsibilities which should be signed by each incoming board member. Use this document to develop a board self-evaluation tool (each individual board member, full board of directors, or both). **[This exercise requires 2 products.]**
- b. Develop a board member binder (hard copy or electronic version) that contains the important documents that each board member should know to warrant effective governance practices. In addition, develop an orientation process that follows when new members are elected or appointed. This orientation process should be adopted by the board through vote and kept in the board member binder. **[This exercise requires 2 products.]**
- c. To support board members' understanding of Governance vs. Management, develop a document that clearly defines the separate roles of a lead administrator and board members when it comes to the learning organization. Articulate and develop a document depicting the job description and role of the lead administrator and board member. Use the criteria to develop and adopt a clear tool for evaluating the school's lead administrator and each board member's effectiveness. **[This exercise requires 3 products.]**
- d. Diversity is the hallmark of an effective board. Evaluate the board you currently sit on and develop a plan to recruit board members that have the area of expertise/professional skills lacking by the current board of directors. You may use the Charter School Board Profile Worksheet (pages 69-70) provided or feel free to create your own based on the particular charter school's mission and needs. Take the Board Governance Quiz created by Reach the High Bar to find out more about your board. **[This exercise requires 2 products.]**

(2) October Bundle

(Please complete ALL questions from the list below and include in the school's Ready to Open Progress Report in May, 2021).

- a. Provide an update on gaining volunteers and establishing partnerships within the community. How many volunteers beyond board members do you have? What work do you have them assigned to do? How will you get more volunteers? What work will you assign them to do? What community partnerships have been established? What are other possible partnerships in the local area? What is your plan for establishing those partnerships?
- b. What is your contingency plan if lottery applications do not meet anticipated enrollment? In other words, what adjustments will you make to staffing, facility, transportation, lunch, etc. if your school does not enroll the projected number of students?
- c. Has the initial board experienced turnover? If so, please provide the names of these initial board members and the reason for their departure.
- d. Has the governing board approved new members? If so, please provide a one-page resume and criminal background check for each new board member.

(3) Strategic Goals and Accountability

(Please ensure at least one exercise from the list below is included in the school's Ready to Open Progress Report in May, 2021).

All board members should be able to address the following questions: What data and evidences does the board rely on to evaluate the school's performance? Is the school on the right trajectory to getting its charter renewed? The following governance strengthening exercises can be utilized to ensure the governing board has an understanding of the current status of the organization along with the long and short-term goals. Utilize the exercises to develop SMART goals that guarantee the charter school is meeting its promise to the community.

- a. **Write a one- or two-page summary addressing the following:** In order to be effective, a charter school board has to evaluate everything for which it is accountable. Based upon what we learned during this session, what are the priorities of the charter school we lead? Do these priorities align with the school's mission and vision? How is the board working towards achieving the organization performance outcomes stated in the charter? Looking forward, what changes will the board make in its organization evaluation process? Include this summary within the board orientation binder. **[This exercise requires 1 product.]**
- b. **Develop at least one SMART Goal focused on each of the following:** (1) academics, (2) governance, (3) finance, and (4) expansion/facility. Utilize the Balance Scorecard or other accountability tool to develop an accountability map for measuring the goals. **[This exercise requires 2 products.]**

(4) Reporting

(Please complete BOTH deliverables stated below and include them in the school's Ready to Open Progress Report in May, 2021).

The board should require and receive mission-based reports from management that are timely, accurate, and help members adequately perform the spectrum of oversight:

- a. As formal action, the board should adopt a policy regarding the acceptable deliverables and report content from administration in the areas of academics and finances. The policy should include the timeframe of each report that is due.*
- b. When completed, the report schedule should be added to the board's calendar of meetings as a reminder of when to expect and discuss each report.*

*****Products for this exercise: (1) Policy (2) Board Calendar with report schedule**

Below are examples of report content and acceptable deliverables:

Academics	Finances
• Academic Progress ◦ Growth and proficiency ◦ Grade levels and subgroups ◦ Alternative Assessment Results (PBL, Portfolio, etc.) ◦ Progress on new initiatives or programs (implementation and effectiveness) ◦ Teacher training and support (methods, practices, etc.) • Student attendance, attrition, suspension • Exceptional Children statistics	• The balance sheet ◦ Demonstrates current net worth of organization ◦ Assets, liabilities, and equity ◦ Cash flow statement ▪ Demonstrates all transactions for a period ▪ What comes in...and goes out ◦ Income and expense statement ▪ Makes a miniature budget for the particular period ◦ The budget versus the actual report ▪ Demonstrates whether the school is meeting goals, ▪ making a profit (cumulative), etc. • Grants applied for/awarded

**Just suggestions...reports should be results-based and align with the strategic goals of the organization.*

(5) Outcomes-Based Board Meeting Calendar

(Please complete the calendar named below and include it in the school's Ready to Open Progress Report in May, 2021).

Last month's governance strengthening exercise asked you to create a report schedule so that you would be able to plan in advance for the various reports you are requiring from the lead administrator, third party organizations, etc. This month's governance strengthening exercise is asking you to create a full Outcomes-Based Board Meeting Calendar. A sample is located [here](#) on page 25. This exercise should be a collaborative effort in developing a strategic board calendar mapping the monthly topics focused on:

☐ *strategic improvement*

☐ *program oversights*

☐ *academic programs*

☐ *fiscal vitality*

☐ *policy review*

☐ *personnel decisions*

[This exercise requires 1 product.]