

BOARD GUIDEBOOK

Best Practices in Public Charter School Board Governance



Strategic Planning and Charter School Boards

Strategic planning is an important task for a governing board to engage in. However, it is worth considering how much planning and data analysis a school's administrative team does every day, as this can help define roles in the process and empower your board to engage at an appropriate level.

A strategic plan usually includes a mission statement, a vision statement, and a set of core values. These are established by the board. A strong plan also includes an analysis of the school's current strengths and challenges and establishes goals, action plans, and check-in dates for progress monitoring. These parts of the process are not unique to strategic planning. School level employees do this work every day. Efficient use of data and lots of communication are key to building a strong strategic plan.

This issue considers exercises related to strategic planning through which your board can make meaningful contributions to your school's long-term success.

THIS MONTH

**STAY MOTIVATED:
"DO SCHOOLS
KILL CREATIVITY?"**

**ARTICLE:
"THE ROLE OF THE BOARD IN
STRATEGIC PLANNING"**

**BOARD EXERCISE:
BEYOND THE MISSION
STATEMENT**

**SCHOOL HIGHLIGHT:
CHARTER DAY ON THE HILL**

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
25	25	27	28
4	5	6	7
11	12	13	14
18	19	20	21
25	26	27	28

Don't Forget!

Spring is a great time to administer a stakeholder survey. Schools that are accredited do this regularly, but every school can benefit from the practice. Gathering strategic feedback from parents, teachers, and students about safety, climate, communication, or quality of education can help a governing board narrow its focus on the issues that matter most to the school's stakeholders.

Stay Motivated

["Do Schools Kill Creativity?" Sir Ken Robinson](#)

This Ted Talk from 2011 addresses an issue that continues to be at the core of the charter movement: creativity. This is an uplifting (and funny) ten minutes that will strengthen your resolve to celebrate every child in your school, build community, and engage in creative problem solving. This one is worth the time!

Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
1	2	3	
8	9	10	
15	16	17	
22	23	24	
29	30	31	

Need a Good Book?

[Good Strategy/Bad Strategy: The Difference and Why it Matters by Richard P. Rumelt](#)

This book presents a series of examples of both successful and failing strategic plans. From Napoleon to Starbucks, Rumelt strives to identify the common themes of successful strategic planning. The text looks at some of the most common mistakes made in the strategic planning process. For example, we often mistake acts of perseverance or tenacity for strategy. In fact, a well-developed strategic plan may require that we shift directions or let go of something we once thought crucial.

Qualities like perseverance and tenacity are important to successfully executing a strong strategic plan, but this book warns against being fooled into thinking that they *are* the plan.

Opening the dialogue about how you will structure your plan and to what level of depth you will focus as a board is perhaps the most important step in the process.

This book works well as a “jigsaw” activity (each person reading a different chapter). With a few guiding questions to frame your group discussion, this book can help jump start a new plan or fine tune an existing one.

Governance Exercise

Beyond the Mission Statement

The first step in establishing a strategic plan is to develop a mission statement, vision statement, and core values. A mission statement guides the decisions you make today. A vision statement defines what you hope will be true in the future. Core values outline the behaviors your team identifies as most important. This high level of strategic planning is the realm of the governing board. However, once these are established, it is important to keep them as stable as possible. Governing board members should change over time, but a strong mission, vision, and core values can stand the test of time and keep the "business" of your school focused.

Smart Goals: Once your mission statement, vision statement, and core values are established, its time to identify goals. While there are many ways to develop strong goals, the SMART acronym can serve as a good quality check once goals are defined.

S - Specific. Only specific actions can be successfully executed. Vague language in a goal will lead to confusion and conflict later.

M - Measurable. Establish how you will know when you've met the goal before you begin. Be clear about what data needs to be collected along the way.

A - Attainable. Set your sights high, but keep your goals within reach. If the goal is set too high or too low, stakeholders are less likely to take it seriously.

R - Relevant. Choose goals that are aligned to your mission be aware of external requirements.

T - Timely. Set timelines. Some goals may be short-term, others may be take several years to accomplish.

Action Plans: A good action plan considers the steps necessary to accomplish a goal.

For example, if your goal is to buy a new car, you might break that down into steps: review safety, save money, test drive, etc. This is a simple example, but the concept is the same in more complex situations.

If your goal is to improve math proficiency by 3%, you'll need to establish some action plans in order to understand how well your team is making progress toward that goal.

One action plan related to this goal might be reviewing data to identify the best course of action. Another action plan might be to review student achievement at different time through the school year. Maybe choosing new curriculum is in order.

Action plans outline the sub-sections of your goals. It is a good idea to identify who is responsible for taking the actions.

In most cases, the administration and school-level employees are the action takers.

The board's role is to help define the steps and to review the progress and data.

Measuring Outcomes: Each action plan should have clear, measurable outcomes. It can seem like a no-brainer to identify how you will know when an action plan or goal has been achieved. However, identifying quality data is not an easy task. Choose measures that are valid and reliable.

Reliable measures produce similar results over time. For example, If you measure the same data after one week and again after four, the data sets should be similar. If you compare data from one classroom to another, the instructional practices must be controlled for. If the data isn't reliable, it isn't worth your time to collect it. Look for a different measure.

Valid measures are accurate. In other words, they measure exactly what they are supposed to measure. Be sure your measures don't include unintended variables as this can affect the validity of your measure.

Sun 4	
Mon 5	
Tue 6	
Wed 7	
Thu 8	
Fri 9	
Sat 10	

The Role of the Board in Strategic Planning

Presented by Frank Martinelli of the Center for Public Skills Training for the Louisiana Association of Public Charter Schools.

This slideshow is a how-to guide for strategic planning from a board perspective. It includes a process outline and exercises in critiquing sample mission statements. It also presents structures for developing effective goals, objectives, and strategies.

Many of the graphics are particularly useful in illustrating complicated concepts.

10 Effective Steps for Strategic Planning Process

This brief article highlights the key elements of a high-quality plan. Solidifying a common commitment to your mission and vision statement and establishing a set of core values are primary tasks.

The article offers useful exercises your board can engage in to help identify areas of practice that could benefit from strategic thinking. It also includes ideas for choosing the right data to evidence progress on your goals.

This article is published by EDUCBA, a training organization.

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School Highlight

National School Choice Week happens in late January each year. A big thank you to the schools and students who represented Idaho charter schools at this event.

Students set up booths, shared information about their schools, and shared their talents in a presentation. This was a great opportunity for students to learn about government, visit the capitol, and practice public speaking.

Sage, Rolling Hills, and Gem Prep students all gave thoughtful overviews of their educational experiences at the schools they love.



A group of students from Rolling Hills Public Charter school sport the iconic, yellow "School Choice" scarves in the Capitol building.

Thank you for representing charter schools in Idaho. You did a fantastic job!

Weekly Notes

	Sun 25
	Mon 26
	Tue 27
	Wed 28
	Thu 29
	Fri 30
	Sat 31

March 2018

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
25	26	27	28	1	2	3
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18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Did You Know?

41 of the 56 charter schools in Idaho are authorized by the PCSC. These schools represent 15 distinct models, ranging from direct instruction to project based learning, and from extended-day, brick-and-mortar models to fully asynchronous, virtual models.

School choice empowers parents to choose an educational model that suits their family and their child's learning needs. The PCSC is proud to support a diverse group of quality schools in Idaho.

The 2017 PCSC Annual Report includes a full list of schools, models, and grades served.