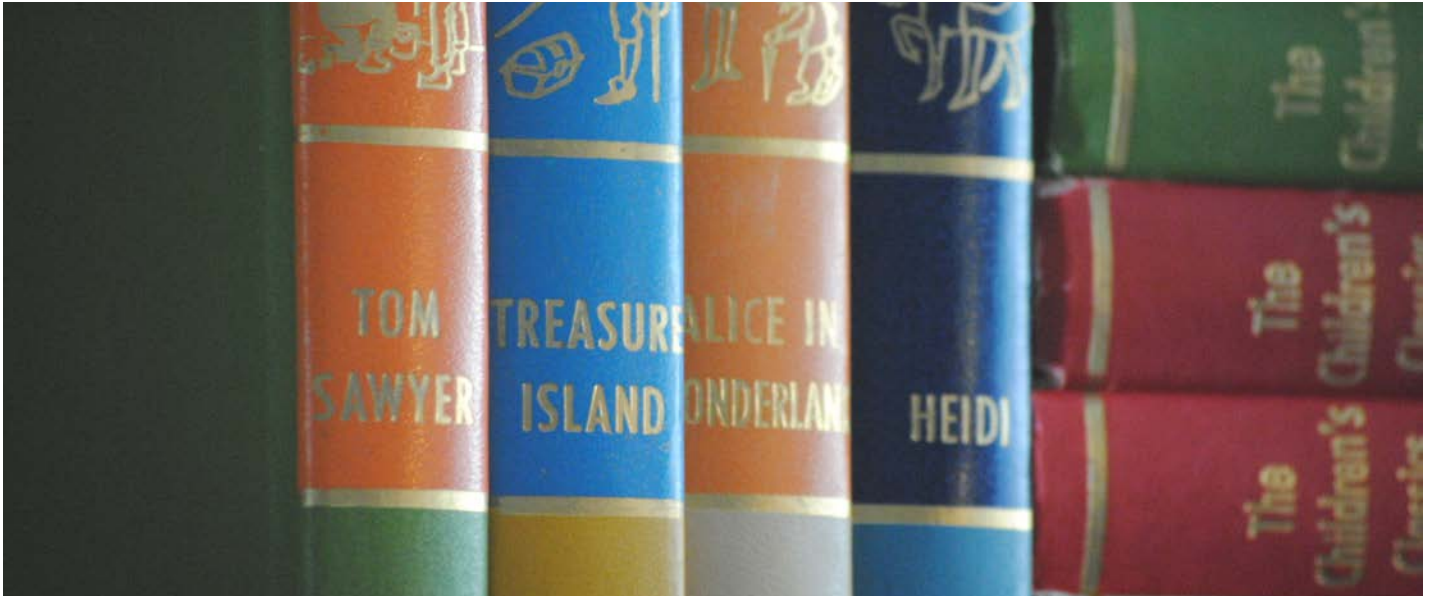


# BOARD GUIDEBOOK

*Best Practices in Public Charter School Board Governance*



## Getting to Know You

This issue of the Board Guidebook aims to provide information about the work of charter school authorizers and the important role they play in the charter sector.

Through a recent survey (to which 73% of PCSC portfolio school's responded), we learned that schools share a desire for commissioners to know them beyond their "data story". We also learned that facilitating informal opportunities within the structure of a formal relationship is complicated.

After reviewing the survey data with a committee of commissioners, several projects are in motion. This issue will share some details about the PCSC's philosophy, direction, and projects in progress.

We hope it serves to inform boards and school leadership about the role we fill and our commitment to encouraging quality charter schools in Idaho.

### THIS MONTH

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**STAY MOTIVATED:  
"HAPPY MAPS"**

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**ARTICLE:  
ESSENTIAL PRACTICES**

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**BOARD EXERCISE:  
THE ROLE OF AN  
AUTHORIZER**

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**SCHOOL HIGHLIGHT:  
CELEBRATING PCSC  
SCHOOLS**

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## Extra! Extra!

The PCSC is redesigning its website! We are super excited to get this project under way and intend to release the new site late this summer.

We hope the new site will be easy to navigate and provide the resources you need.

Comments? Questions? Suggestions? Now is the time to share your thoughts. We want our site to work for you!

## Stay Motivated

In this TED Talk, Daniele Quercia explores the concept of "[happy maps](#)." Apps can give us the most efficient directions, and that's great . . . if the only goal we have is efficiency.

Quercia asks us to consider our other goals and whether a different path from point A to point B is a better choice. Some paths might take a little longer, but they may allow us to meet other goals along the way. For example, biking to work on a busy street might be the quickest route, but a path through the park, while longer, allows us to arrive feeling calm.

This TED Talk is a great metaphor for making mission aligned decisions. It can spark good discussion about the path your board is on and the direction you want to go.

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## Need a Good Book?

[Drive, by Daniel Pink](#)

"Human beings have an innate inner drive to be autonomous, self-determined, and connected to one another." *Drive* asks us to consider how the community cultures we establish in our schools empower our teams and employees to strive for their best performance each day. This foundational work starts with the board.

As we shift from an industrial age to an informational age, extrinsic motivators are simply less effective. The challenge school administrators face today is finding a balance of extrinsic/intrinsic motivation as they manage a diverse faculty and staff.

Pink argues that intrinsic motivation happens when we give employees tasks that are challenging, but achievable, along with the autonomy they need to solve the problem in their own way.

However, as a school community with a shared vision and mission, it can be complicated to guide work in the right direction while also allowing enough autonomy to encourage intrinsic engagement.

Understanding how motivation works best can help governing boards support the work of school leaders. This book can help develop a balanced understanding of management that offers guidance without control. While these skills are important for successful school leaders to develop, they are also key skills of governance.

# Governance Exercise

## The Role of an Authorizer

Authorizers are entities approved by state legislatures to evaluate new charter school petitions and subsequently to oversee the compliance, effectiveness, and viability of approved schools. Authorizers work to protect the interest of students by holding schools accountable to performance outcomes. They work to protect taxpayer dollars by holding schools accountable to operational and financial outcomes. And they work to support school board autonomy by measuring outcomes rather than inputs.

### Who can authorize a school?

Non-sectarian institutions of higher learning, school district governing boards, and the PCSC (Public Charter School Commission) may authorize charter schools in Idaho. 73% of the charter schools in the state are authorized by the PCSC.

### What is the PCSC's mission? The Public Charter School

Commission's mission is to ensure PCSC-authorized public charter schools' compliance with Idaho statute, protecting student and public interests by balancing high standards of accountability with respect for the autonomy of public charter schools and implementing best authorizing practices to ensure the excellence of public charter school options available to Idaho families.

### What is the structure of the PCSC?

The PCSC's seven volunteer members hail from all around the state. Commissioners are appointed by the Governor (3 members), Senate Pro Tempore (2 members), or Speaker of the House (2 members). They serve four year terms, and officers are elected every two years in the spring.

The Commission is staffed by the Office of the State Board of Education.

### What do authorizers

**do?** Authorizers review new petitions, provide oversight for operating schools, and conduct charter renewal processes. They provide annual reports to schools and the public that outline each schools performance outcomes, and they work to protect student and taxpayer interests while treating school's fairly.

**New Petitions** - The PCSC establishes standards of quality and evaluates new charter petitions (applications). Once a school is approved, the PCSC and the school execute a Performance Certificate that outlines the rights and duties of each party as well as the performance outcome expectations.

**Oversight** - Over the 5-year performance certificate term of a charter, the PCSC annually reviews each school's performance against those stated outcomes, provides reports to the school and the public, and monitors the school's compliance with rules and regulations.

**Renewal** - At the end of each school's term, the PCSC reviews data and collects contextual information. Schools meeting performance outcome standards are renewed for another 5-year term.

Sometimes conditions are put in place to support a school's focus on key areas of improvement

### Why the focus on outcomes?

The role of the authorizer is to balance accountability (by measuring outcomes) and autonomy (by protecting local choice regarding inputs).

As long as a school's choices and actions are compliant with applicable law, and performance outcomes meet the established standards, charter schools are free to develop models of education that provide educational choice to families.

The charter movement has always held that there are many paths to success. Measuring outcomes, rather than prescribing inputs, allows schools the creative space and operational flexibility necessary to serve students well.

**I have more questions.** The PCSC staff is always happy to answer any questions you have. We want to help you succeed. Give us a call!

Questions about logistics?  
Chelsea Cantrell, Admin. Assistant  
[chelsea.cantrell@osbe.idaho.gov](mailto:chelsea.cantrell@osbe.idaho.gov)

Questions about data?  
Kirsten Pochop, Sr. Program Mgr.  
[kirsten.pochop@osbe.idaho.gov](mailto:kirsten.pochop@osbe.idaho.gov)

Questions about operations?  
Jenn Thmpson, Program Mgr.  
[jenn.thompson@osbe.idaho.gov](mailto:jenn.thompson@osbe.idaho.gov)

May / 2018

[illegible]

# Fact and Fiction

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27	28	29	30	31	1	2

**Fiction:** Students at public charter schools do no better or end up doing worse than students in traditional public schools.

**Fact:** Based on the 2016 ISAT scores, the majority of PCSC charter schools evidenced statistically significant student growth in both ELA and Mathematics. Proficiency rates look great, too.

**Further:** Take a look at the data for yourself in the [PCSC Annual Report](#) (pg. 9-12).

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## The ABCs of Great Authorizer/ Charter School Relations

[The Colorado League of Charter Schools](#) sums up the key elements of a strong relationship between charter schools and their authorizers as the ABCs.

**Accountable:** Schools strive to achieve performance outcomes and authorizers strive to identify authentic measures and effective processes.

**Businesslike:** Schools and authorizers work toward common goals within the scope of established statute, rule, and policy.

**Communicative:** Schools and authorizers communicate openly and often about successes and challenges.

## Measuring Up to the Model

[The National Alliance for Public Charter Schools](#) publishes an annual issue of "Measuring Up to the Model: A Ranking of State Public Charter School Laws."

This publication outlines essential components of strong charter school law. Each year, NAPCS evaluates the laws in each state and publishes a ranking.

Idaho's score increased by 3 points. Out of the 45 states with charter school laws, Idaho ranks 20th according to this list.

Essential components include clear renewal processes, no caps on the number of schools authorized, and consistent data collection.

# Weekly Notes

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May 2018

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## Check it Out

### [12 Ways to Create a More Positive Work Environment](#) Good & Co.

With teacher hiring season in full swing, now is a good time to consider the art of teacher retention. Considering little ways to build a more positive work environment is a great place to start.

How does your school celebrate successes? How do you share gratitude? And in what ways does your board participate in building positive relationships with your administrator and his/her team?

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## Celebrating PCSC Schools

Commissioners want to know more about the events happening at your schools. We hope this helps to open a dialogue about school successes and provide opportunities to observe how you are serving your students and families in ways that aren't easily measured by hard data.

The goal is to highlight events you already have planned, such as choir concerts or student work expos, that Commissioners could attend without extra work on your part. While Commissioners couldn't possibly attend every event for every school, we hope you'll join us in extending an invitation to Commissioners to celebrate with you whenever they can.

Don't worry. There is nothing new for you to do.



PCSC staff will compile a list of events every few months based on your public calendars and social media pages.

Please let us know if you'd like to extend an invitation to a specific event. We will be sure to pass it on!

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## Did You Know?

Which organization(s) does your school maintain memberships with? What services are available to your board through this membership? There are great resources out there!