

BOARD GUIDEBOOK

Best Practices in Public Charter School Board Governance



Welcome Back to School!

This is an exciting time of year. Students and teachers are back in classrooms and administration is preparing to lead a successful year. The workload is picking up quickly!

What is your role as a board? Board members should be prepared to review the school's financial audit, use academic data to inform strategic planning, and support the development of strong school culture. Each of these tasks are complex and important.

This issue of the guidebook offers some reminders and resources to help you prepare for meaningful and efficient work, so that you all board members can support their schools with confidence.

THIS MONTH

**STAY MOTIVATED:
"3 RULES TO SPARK
LEARNING"**

**ARTICLE:
STUDENT FEES**

**BOARD EXERCISE: BOARD
PERSPECTIVE ON
ASSESSMENT DATA**

**SCHOOL HIGHLIGHT:
TOP PERFORMERS**

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Don't Forget!

IDAPA 08.02.01.801 establishes the requirements for each school's annual Continuous Improvement Plan. This plan should fit nicely with your strategic planning work as a board, reflect your most recent academic performance results, and your school's progress toward the goals established in the PCSC annual report.

Your school leader will prepare it, but take time to look it over before it is due in Oct.

Stay Motivated

["3 Rules to Spark Learning"](#)

TED Talk by Ramsey Musallam

Musallam is a chemistry teacher who loves his work. In this TED talk, he shares his journey from "newbie" teacher to effective educator.

What's the secret? Sparking curiosity. This is a great way to set the tone for the upcoming school year.

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Need a Good Book?

[How Children Succeed: Grit, Curiosity, and the Hidden Power of Character](#), by Paul Tough.

How Children Succeed asks readers to reconsider how we define "success". This book suggests that character skills such as grit, curiosity, conscientiousness, and optimism, have a greater effect on a child's development than more traditional measures, like IQ.

While this book presents a case for a focus on character traits, which are notoriously difficult to measure, it draws supporting research from

scientific fields such as neuroscience, economics, and psychology.

Excerpts from this book are great discussion starters for deeper dives into your own strategic planning efforts. How does your school balance hard data with indicators of cultural success that are more difficult to measure? In what ways does this philosophy mesh, or not mesh, with your school's mission and vision?

In addition to being a great tool for mission "calibration" exercises, this book is a positive read that delivers on hope for the future of education.

Governance Exercise

Reviewing Academic Performance

We all know that academic performance data is important. But what data, exactly? And what does it actually impact? Of course, student achievement is the most important factor. All of us share the mission of helping our students succeed, but from a school governance perspective, it is important to understand the connections between academic performance and the overall operational success of your school. Understanding those connections will help you more clearly identify the data points your board wants to monitor, and can help you provide clearer guidance for your administrator.

PCSC Performance Framework, Academic Section

Purpose - to measure the outcomes of charter school program efficacy against standards defined in an established framework that is specific to charter schools.

Indicators - academic proficiency in math and ELA, academic growth of individual students, college and career readiness, and graduation rate.

Possible Consequences - charter school authorizers must decide whether to renew or non-renew each charter school's performance certificate based largely on academic performance every five years. Schools who fail to meet the established standards risk closure.

SDE Consolidated Plan

Purpose - The Consolidated Plan is a federal requirement for every state department of education under the Every School Succeeds Act (ESSA).

This plan outlines a state-specific system of measuring outcomes to determine school efficacy.

Indicators - various factors as they apply to federal programs; academic proficiency in math and ELA, academic growth as compared to a state developed trajectory, college and career readiness, graduation rate, and a stakeholder survey inform ratings in this system.

Possible Consequences - Schools (charter and traditional) who do not meet the established standards may be identified as "under performing" or for targeted interventions. Once identified, the SDE provides additional supports in all cases, and in some cases, additional funds are available to support training and program implementation.

Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP)

Purpose - the CIP provides assurances and evidences that inputs are in place and that strategic planning is aligned across established categories.

Indicators - various indicators in the following categories: safety, fiscal management, governance, program, school linkages, and family, youth, and community engagement.

Federal Programs via SDE

There are many federal programs that charter schools may participate in through the State Department of Education. These programs provide funds based on demonstrated need (such as demographics) to help schools implement the services their students need most.

Because these funds are provided for specific reasons, reporting and documentation is required. A school that isn't meeting the expected outcomes or effectively implementing the plan risks losing the funds for that program.

Board Role

The board's role in supporting school success is to consider the expected inputs and outcomes and to establish policy, strategic plans, and administrator evaluations that support the school's growth toward these measures.

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Fact and Fiction

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Fact - Charter schools and traditional schools share many common goals, and because charter schools offer programs and environments that the districts often do not, together charters and districts are meeting the needs of more students than ever before.

Further - Check out this recent article, "[Bridging the District-Charter Divide to Help More Students Succeed](#)" - National Charter School Resource Center.

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Student Fees

Student fees are a sensitive issue to address. This document outlines in what instances a school can collect fees and when that is not appropriate.

Any activity or material that is considered part of the educational or learning experience for students may not be associated with a fee. Public education must be provided cost-free to all students. However, extracurricular activities may require a fee. Donations may be accepted.

This [PCSC Guidance on Student Fees](#) document is a key reference as you consider your school's practices.

National Alliance Celebrates Idaho Grads

The charter school movement has been moving forward in Idaho for 20 years. ["Celebrating Idaho's 2018 Graduates"](#), written by Kristen McCarver from the Idaho Charter School Network and published by the National Alliance of Public Charter Schools, takes a broad look at the graduation successes in charter schools across the state of Idaho.

Across the charter schools that serve high school students, Idaho celebrates almost 1,400 graduates as they move into college and career.

Weekly Notes

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September 2018

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Check it Out

Idaho Statute requires charter schools to have an audit conducted each year. Audits take place after June 30th and consider all transactions and changes in long term debt for the preceding fiscal year.

The school's auditor prepares a final report providing a non-biased perspective of the school's fiscal standing. The report must be accepted by the school's board (motion noted in meeting minutes) prior to submission to the PCSC (Nov. 1) and the SDE (Nov. 10).

To make all of those deadlines line up, the audit report should ideally be in the board's hand in September. This gives you time to read and review and ask questions before a vote is required.

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SDE Names Top Performers

The Every Student Succeeds Act requires each state to develop a Consolidated Plan for implementing this law. Idaho's Consolidated Plan outlines an accountability system by which all schools are measured.

Schools who fail to achieve goals are eligible for additional services and supports. This work will begin in September. Read the [Consolidated Plan](#) here.

[Read more about the supports](#) the SDE provides for qualifying schools here.

Congratulations

The following PCSC schools were celebrated for achieving in the 90th percentile one or more categories in 2017-18. Congrats to you!

American Heritage Charter School
Bingham Academy
Coeur d'Alene Academy
Compass Charter School
Falcon Ridge Charter School
Idaho Connects Online
Kootenai Bridge Academy
Legacy Charter School

Liberty Charter School
North Idaho Stem Academy
North Star Charter School
Palouse Prairie Charter School
Taylor's Crossing Charter School
White Pine Charter School
Victory Charter School
Vision Charter School

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September 2018

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Did You Know?

Dedicating time at the beginning of the year to deliberately teach school culture can seem counter-intuitive. However, helping new students, families, and teachers, understand and experience the cultural expectations of your school can lead to stronger retention rates. Check out this article from a [Principal's Perspective](#).

Every school is held to high academic standards. It is your school's culture that sets it apart. Strong school cultures recruit and retain families, teachers, and students. As a board member, you can help these efforts move in a positive direction if you fully understand your school's culture and your school leader's approach to supporting it.