

Expectations for State Charter School Governing Boards

SCSC Governance Training
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Presentation Overview

- SCSC Mission
- State Charter Board Responsibilities
- SCSC Comprehensive Performance Framework
- Resources and Reminders

QUESTION: Why is governance training important?

SCSC Mission

The mission of the State Charter Schools Commission of Georgia is to improve public education throughout the state by authorizing high quality charter schools that provide students with *better* educational opportunities than they would otherwise receive in traditional district schools.

Responsibilities of Governing Board Members

Outcomes!

Outcomes result from effective governance:

1. Engaged Participation
2. Transparent Operations
3. Governance vs. Management
4. Understand the Law
5. Allocate Resources Appropriately

Responsibility: Engaged Participation

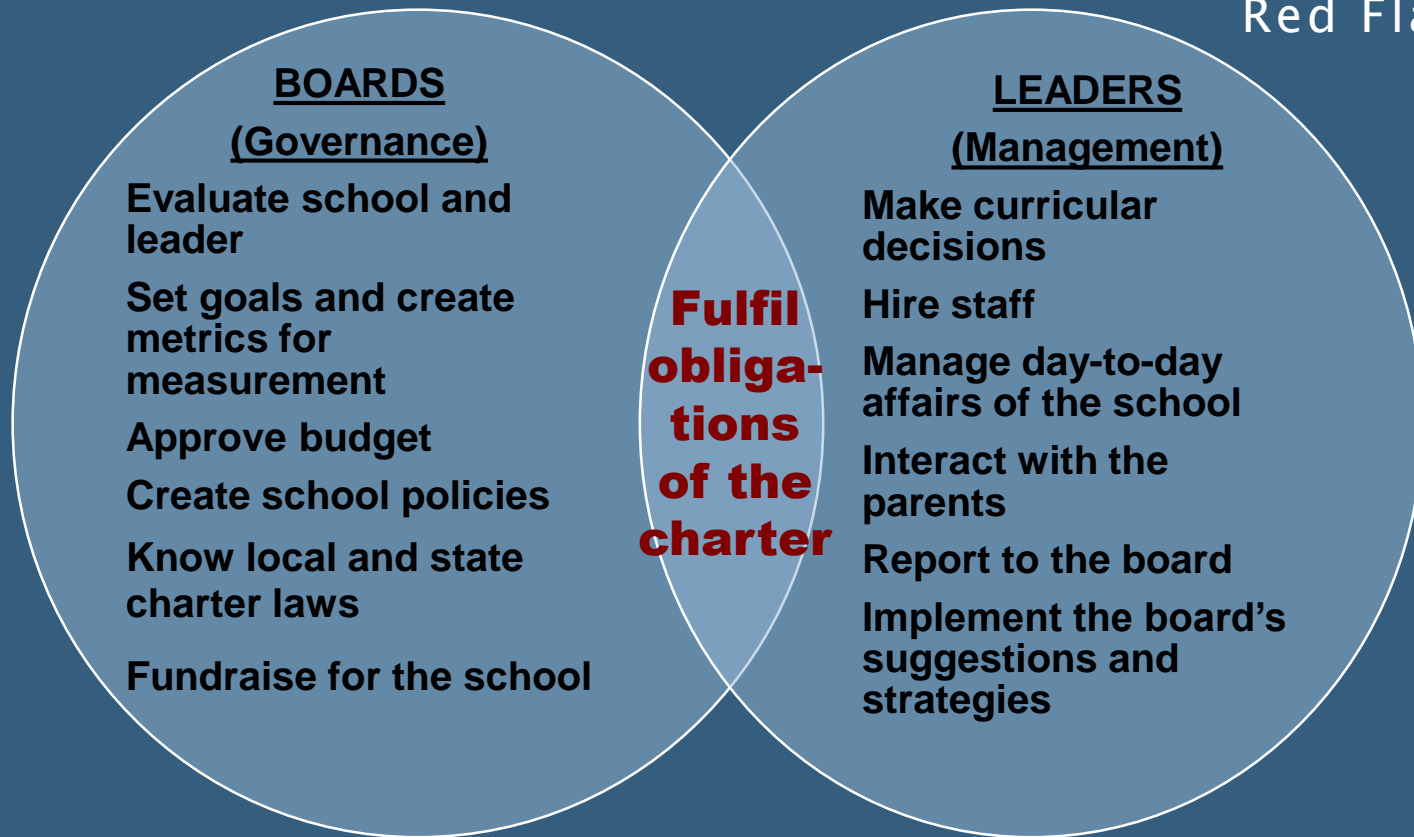
- Engaged board members understand the substantial time commitment required to run a school.
- RED FLAGS = board members who do not:
 - attend meetings and/or arrive on time,
 - obtain required annual training,
 - prepare for meetings ahead of time in order to participate/vote,
 - respect the agenda established by the board chair,
 - refrain from checking texts and emails during meetings,
 - **know how the school is performing and/or the school's prospects for renewal.**

Responsibility: Transparent Operations

- Engaged board members operate in a transparent fashion to avoid even the appearance of bias or conflicts of interest.
- RED FLAGS = boards that do not:
 - operate in accordance with open meetings requirements
 - have regularly scheduled meetings and a predictable meeting schedule
 - post all information on the school's public website pursuant to SCSC Rule
 - adopt, abide by, and regularly review a conflicts of interest policy (and refrain from conflicts of interest at all times!)
 - **know how the school is performing and/or the school's prospects for renewal.**

Responsibility: Govern (Don't Manage)

- Effective board members understand the difference between governance and management.



Red Flags = governing board members who:

- rely too heavily on school leadership to communicate important information from the SCSC/GaDOE—especially with regard to performance (trust but verify!)
- are overly involved in day-to-day activities of the school,
- do not recognize conflicts of interest (or adhere to related policies)
- **do not know how the school is performing and/or the school's prospects for renewal.**

Responsibility: Understand the Law

- Effective board members understand the legal obligations of a state charter school.
- RED FLAGS = board members who do not:
 - participate in the drafting and adoption of school policies.
 - review the results of state and federal monitoring.
 - oversee the school's compliance with applicable corrective action plans
 - **know how the school is performing and/or the school's prospects for renewal.**

Responsibility: Monitor Resources Allocation

- Effective board members understand that managing a school's business affairs is vital to its success.
- RED FLAGS = boards that do not:
 - include members with financial expertise,
 - utilize a finance committee to effectively oversee the budget,
 - amend the school's budget as needed (in general, at least once during a fiscal year),
 - create S.M.A.R.T. policies,
 - request and review monthly financial statements AND monitor the achievement of financial goals and budget projections.
 - **know how the school is performing and/or the school's prospects for renewal.**

SCSC Expectations

To help boards understand their obligations and responsibilities, the SCSC clearly outlines its expectations in the areas of academics, operations, and finances within the SCSC accountability tool: the *Comprehensive Performance Framework (CPF)*.

State Charter Accountability: Comprehensive Performance Framework (CPF)

The three areas of performance covered by the CPF—academic achievement, financial management, and organizational compliance— correspond directly with the three components of a strong charter school application and are the three areas on which a charter school’s performance should be evaluated.

In each of the three areas, the framework asks a fundamental question:

1. **Academic Performance**: Is the educational program offering students a better educational opportunity than they would otherwise receive at a traditional public school?
2. **Financial Performance**: Is the school financially viable?
3. **Organizational Performance**: Is the organization effective, compliant, and well run?

State Charter Schools are expected to meet academic, financial, and operational standards during every year of the charter term; however a school will be considered eligible for renewal if it meets academic, financial, and operational standards at least 75% of the time (in 3 out of the first 4 years of a 5 year charter contract term).

CPF: Academics

Fundamental Question:

- Is the educational program offering students a better educational opportunity than they would otherwise receive at a traditional public school?

Meeting Goals:

- In any year of the charter term, a state charter school will satisfy annual academic accountability requirements by exceeding the average performance level of the district(s) within its attendance zone in terms of **ACHIEVEMENT** (grade-band CCRPI Achievement Scores) OR **GROWTH** (grade-band CCRPI Growth and Achievement Gap Closure Scores).

Second Look:

- If the school does not outperform in either achievement or growth, it can still satisfy requirements by earning a CCRPI single score that's higher than the average CCRPI single score of the district(s) it serves OR a positive value-add impact score in relation to value-add impact score of the district(s) it serves in all relevant grade bands.

CPF: Finances

Fundamental Question:

- Is the school fiscally responsible and financially viable?

Meeting Goals:

- In any year of the charter term, a state charter school will satisfy annual financial accountability requirements by meeting the standards presented in Indicators 1-2 below (near-term measures as well as sustainability measures).

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1. Near Term Measures include current ratio, unrestricted days cash, enrollment variance, and debt default.
 2. Sustainability Measures include efficiency margin (profit margin) and debt to asset ratio.

CPF: Operations

Fundamental Question:

- Is the organization effective, compliant, and well run?

Meeting Goals:

- In any year of the charter term, a state charter school will be deemed operationally compliant if it adheres to the requirements of its charter contract as well as all applicable rules and laws as measured by indicators 1-6 below.

1. The school's educational program, such as adherence to its essential or innovative features and implementation of required programs;
2. Financial oversight such as adherence to GAAP standards;
3. Governance capacity and transparency
4. Protecting students and employees through the appropriate use of compensatory programs and employee qualifications
5. Maintaining a positive school environment by promoting student retention and support services
6. Any additional obligations including the timely remediation of previous noncompliance.

The Big Question

Why is governance training important?

Real Quotes from 2016-2017 Monitoring Visits

- What is a called meeting?
- How can schools meet financial and academic standards, when they have to focus so much on operations?
- Our statewide attendance zone makes our accountability goals too high. Can we have a defined attendance zone?
- What is CPI?
- What do you mean by “Child Find”?
- We can't be expected to comply with all of this.

Real Quotes from 2016-2017 Monitoring Visits

- Can you train our ESP on how to provide service to us?
- Can you send us a copy of our budget?
- We don't have access to personnel records because those belong to our ESP.
- We do our best to serve students with disabilities, but—frankly—some offerings are cost prohibitive.
- We serve homeless students as long as they can get to the school.
- There's no way the SCSC can close the schools that aren't meeting expectations.

Resources and Reminders

1. GaDOE Requirements: LUA Manual
2. SCSC Resources
 - *SCSC Website*
 - *Research*
 - *CPF*
 - *Trainings*
 - *Guidance*

Questions?

Visit SCSC.GEORGIA.GOV

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