

# SELECTING YOUR **GOVERNANCE BOARD, LEADER AND MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION**

**SCSC Petitioner Boot Camp**  
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# Governance Board Development

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**GOSA**  
Georgia Charter Schools Association

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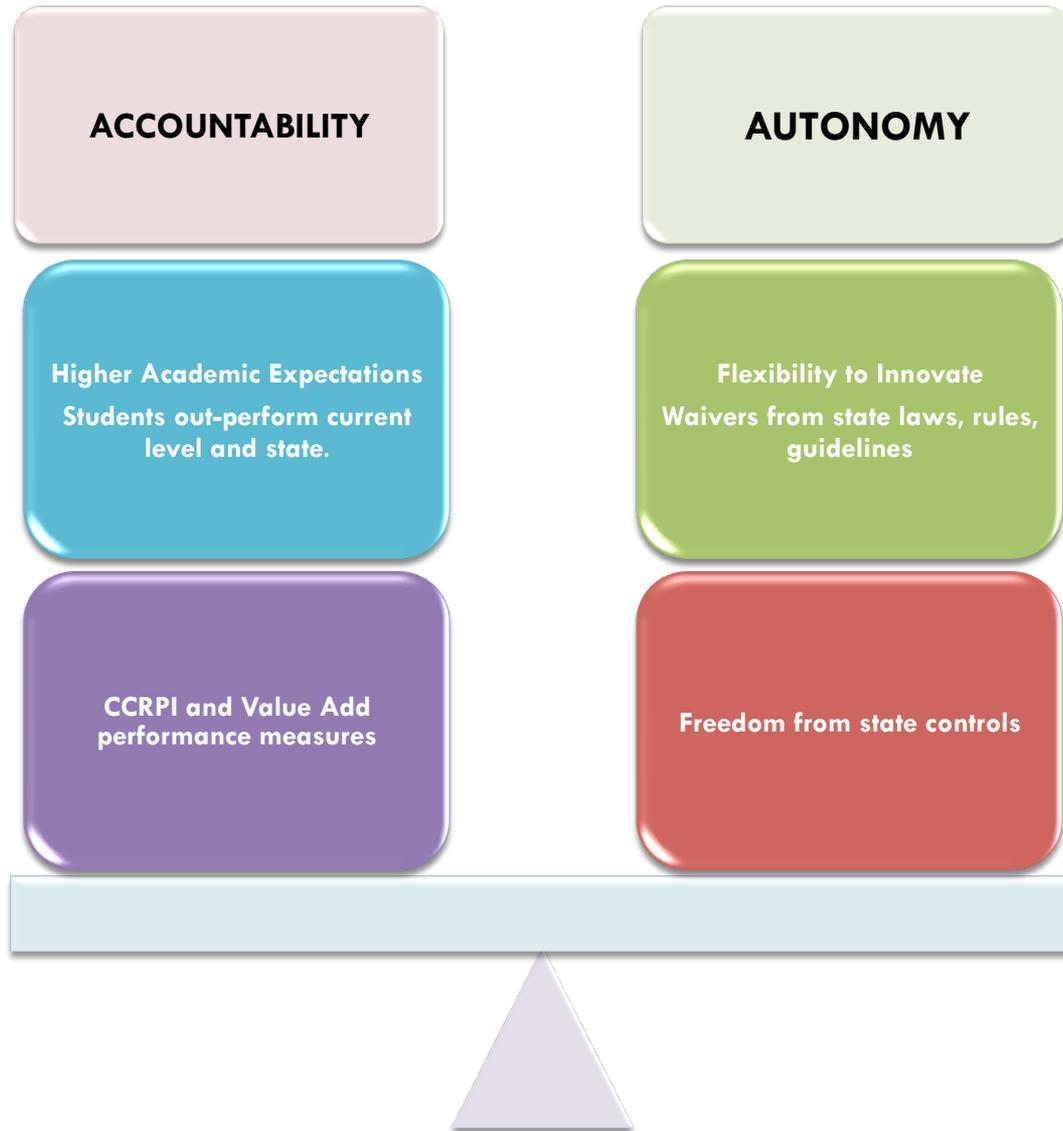
*“Much of the ultimate success of a charter school hinges on the board’s ability to govern effectively. In fact, it can be argued that no other single factor is more important to the health and sustainability of a charter school than its board.”*

Marci Cornell-Feist



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# What is the basic flexibility bargain?



# Responsibilities of a Governing Board

## Strategic Plan and Policy-Making

- Adopt a three to five-year strategic plan
- Adopt policies that ensure the charter is implemented with fidelity and promotes student achievement

## Budget

- Adopt a budget to fund the implement the charter
- On-going fiscal health monitoring and resource development

## CEO/Principal

- Hire a leader to implement the strategic plan within budget
- Ratify hiring decisions
- Adopt and keep updated a succession plan

## Accountability

- Monitor through committees to ensure charter promises and compliance requirements are met
- Hold the leader accountable for implementing the strategic plan within budget
- Conduct an annual self-evaluation
- Meet statutory training requirements
- Education Service Provider / vendor oversight

# Selecting a High Capacity Governance Board



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# Building the Capacity to Govern (1)

## Academic Achievement

- Experienced Educators for the grade span(s) you are serving
- School Administration
- SPED
- Higher Education/TCSG
- Local Industry/Content Experts
- Curriculum Development

## Fiscal Health

- Accounting
- Resource development
- Grant proposal Writing
- Recruiting/Marketing

## Compliance & Policy Development

- Legal & regulatory
- Governance
- School operations and compliance
- Insurance & risk management
- Negotiating skills
- Political savvy

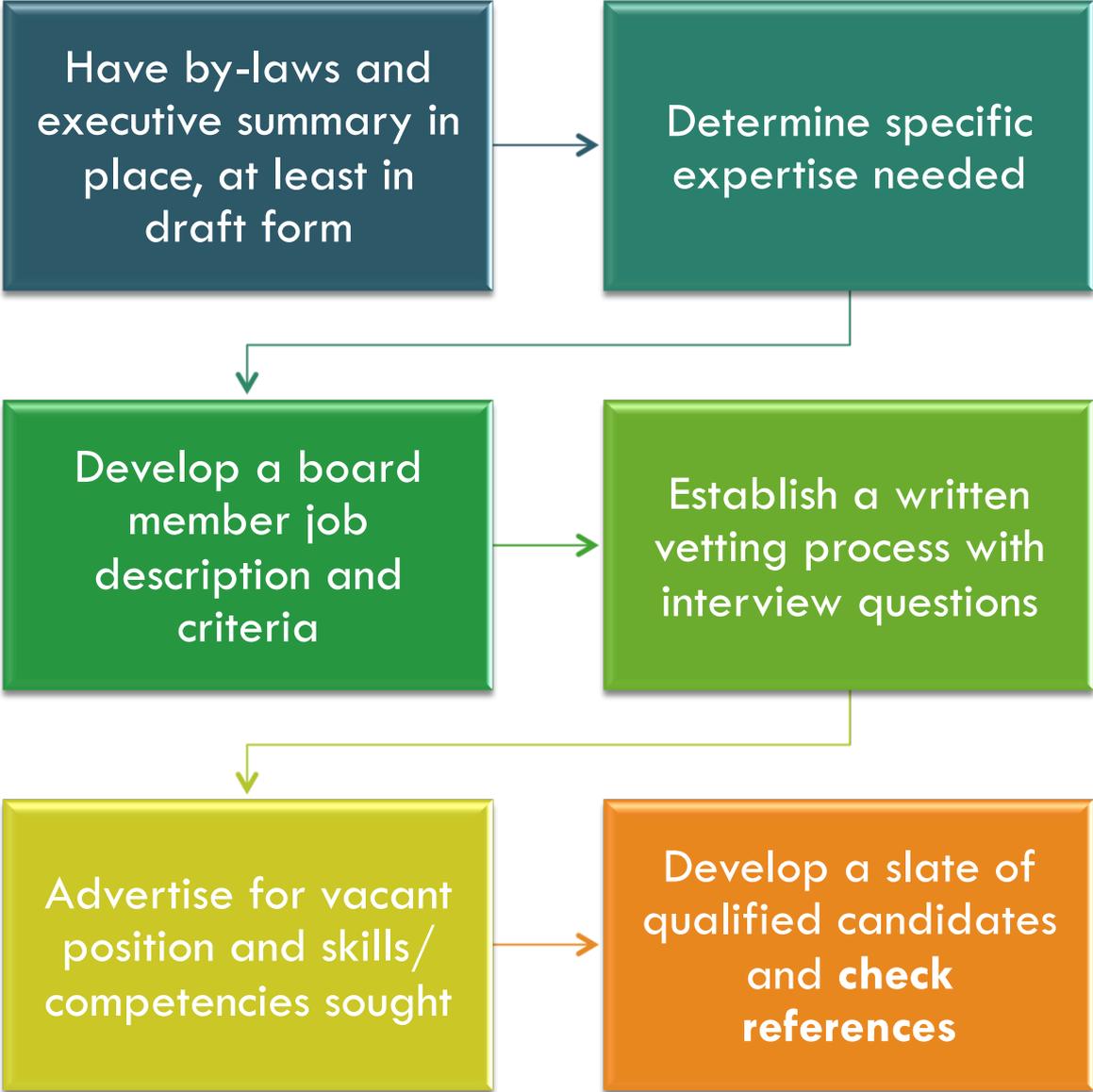
# Building the Capacity to Govern (2)

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## Additional Considerations:

- Facilities experience
- **Time**
- Parents, set up mechanisms to protect against COI
- Ex-officio members
- No related parties
- Independent of future vendors to the school
- Future employees, caution!
- Board members cannot be compensated for their service

# Governance Board Selection Process



# Suggestions for Finding Qualified Candidates..

**Join your local  
Chamber of  
Commerce**

**Technical Colleges &  
Universities**

**Accounting Firms**

**Law Firms**

**Civic/Community  
Organizations**

**Educator Networks  
and Professional  
Organizations**

**Insurance Companies**

**Rotary Club**

# Mission-Aligned Board Composition

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## K-12 STEM, Project Based Learning Model

- **Legal**
- **Accounting**
- **What other skills/competencies are needed for this governance board**



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# Red Flags

- Board members may have “agendas”
- Lack of time
- Divisive behavior
- Work is not evenly distributed
- Lack of balance in decision making
- More passion than capacity/substance
- Board members close friends of founder

# Leadership Selection

“What chance gathers she easily scatters. A great person attracts great people and knows how to hold them together.” -

*Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe*



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# Leadership Selection



# Considerations for Hiring, Monitoring, Evaluating and Supporting a Highly Effective Charter School Leader



# More things to consider....

Instructional vs.  
Business Leader

Experience

Proven Results

Ability to work  
with various  
stakeholders

Pioneering  
Spirit

Shared  
leadership

Instructional  
coaching

Cast a wide  
net

Contingency  
plans

Understand  
strengths and  
weaknesses

Mission-aligned  
leadership  
development

Disposition

# Core Competencies of Effective Charter School Leaders

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# Red Flags

- Lead founder insists he/she is the only option for leadership position
- Prospective leader cannot demonstrate results or capacity to develop teachers
- Prospective leader's core motivation is to work in a smaller school
- Prospective leader is passionate about education, but lacks results
- Prospective leader does not understand chartering
- **Prospective leader has not worked in a “start-up” environment**

# Common Mistakes

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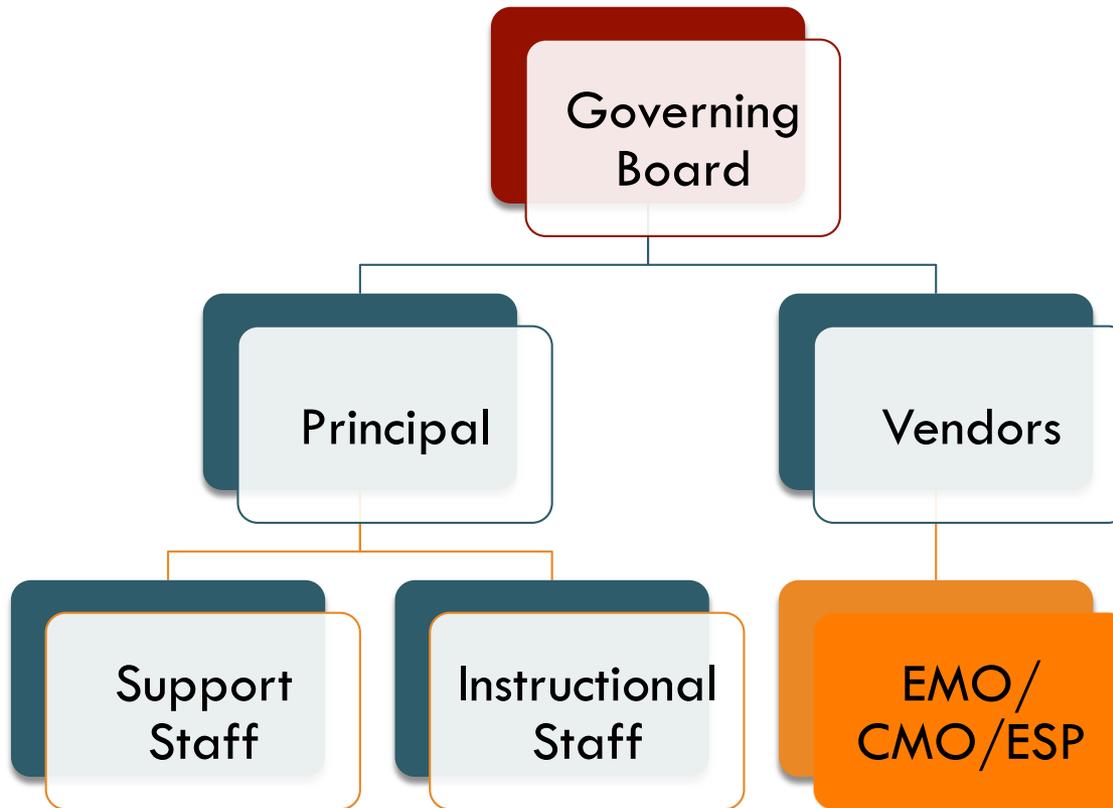
- ❑ Lack of training on effective interview practices
- ❑ Lack of HR expertise on board
- ❑ Board is sold on credentials / resume and doesn't fully vet / check references for candidate
- ❑ Board is unaware of high turn over, shortage of effective leaders
- ❑ Enough thought is not given to the type of leader needed to execute the program



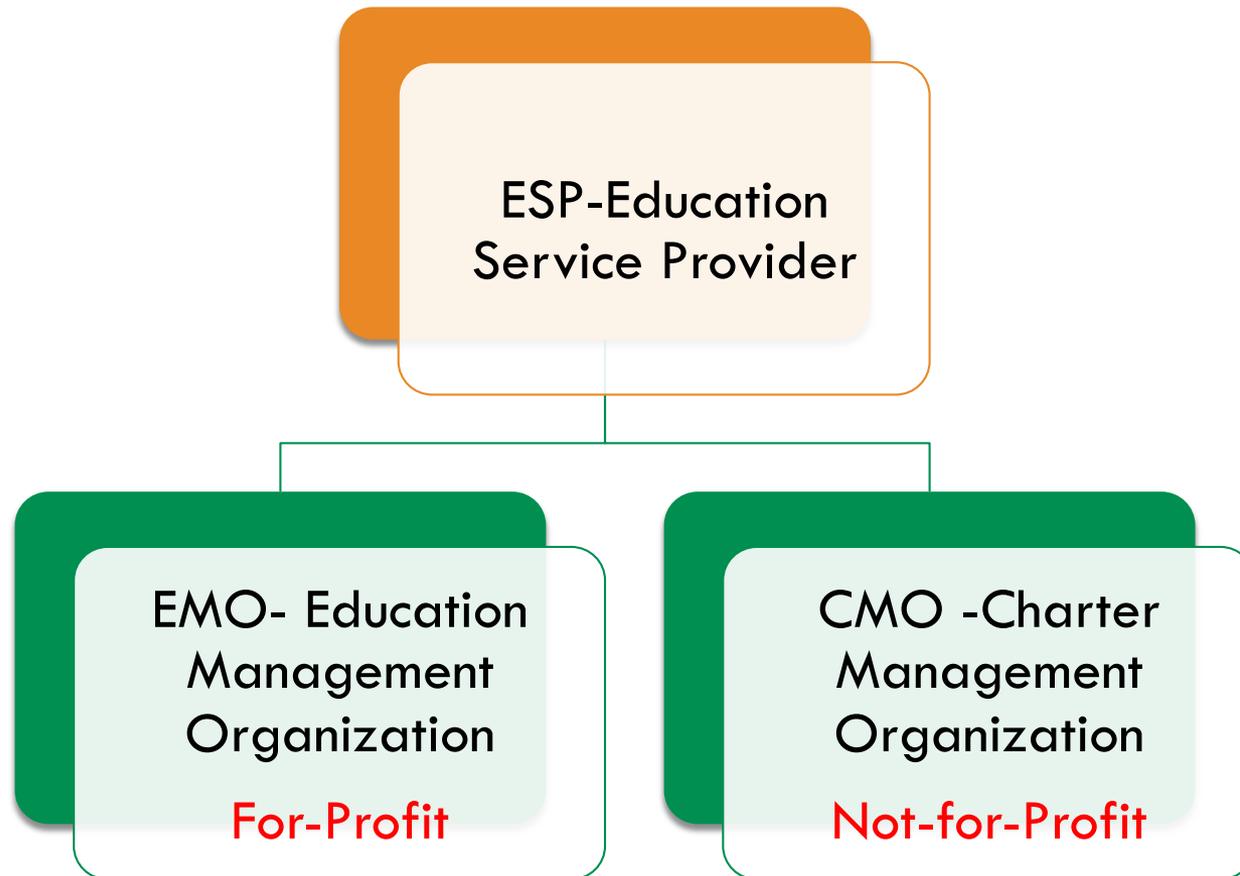
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# Selecting a Management Organization

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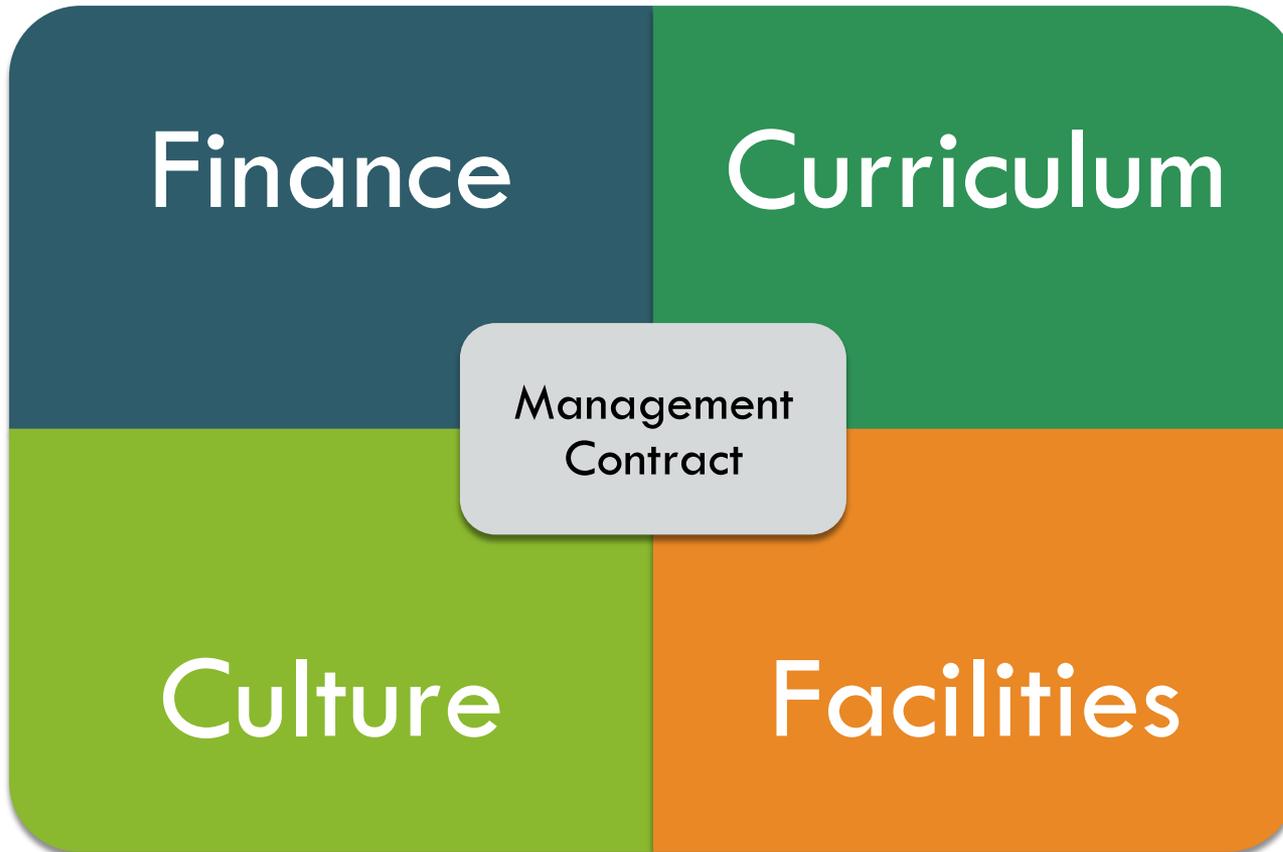


# Glossary of Terms



# Management Organizations Provide...

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## Finance

- CFO
- Financial Management Personnel
- Understand Management Organization Fiscal Health
- Financial Management System
- Beware of “sweeps” contracts
- Grant proposal writing and management
- Fee should not exceed 15% of total operating budget

## Key Questions

- Have any schools in the EMO/ESP/CMO network closed due to financial reasons? What role did the ESP play in the closure?
- Are the business practices aligned with your governance board/mission/philosophy?
- How will start-up financing be paid back? How many charters in the network are sustainable?
- What are the long-range strategic goals of the management company?
- What is the company’s track record for securing grant funds for network charter schools?
- How many charters in the network have cash reserves?
- Does the ESP assert intellectual property rights over curriculum and materials tied to the contract?

## Curriculum

- If the management organization requires you use their curricular model, is it aligned with Georgia Standards? How do you know?
- Management organization academic achievement results – *look for trends...beyond the flagship school*
- Benchmark tool – is it a good predictor for GA mandated exams? What proof do you have?
- Student information. Is the management organization responsible for purchasing the student information system?

## Key Questions

- Does the management company have a good track record with the demographic you will be serving?
- **Is the SIS compatible with Georgia's SLDS (Statewide Longitudinal Data System)? If not, who is responsible for paying to make the system compatible?**
- Is the management company's approach to teaching and learning philosophically aligned?

## Culture

- School-wide discipline
- Mission/philosophical alignment
- Standard operating procedures

## Key Questions

- Is there a discipline model required? Does it ensure due process for all students?
- Is the charter school required to use services that establish school culture? How successful are such services at other charter schools?
- Does the management company provide a standard operating procedures manual? How can the school customize these procedures to ensure mission alignment?

## Facilities

- Facility financing
- Market rates/value
- Debt management
- Maintenance and repairs
- Maintenance and facilities personnel

## Key Questions

- Does the management company provide assistance with facilities financing? What about furnishings, fixtures and equipment?
- Does the company charge fair market rates? How do you know?
- How many charters in the network own, or are under contract to purchase their facilities?
- Does the management company derive its sustainability from facilities services?

## More to consider...

- Employees must be employees of the board
- Check **references and results**, (not just the flagship school)
- If the company is not currently operating in Georgia, why not?
- Review the history of EMO/CMOs in Georgia
- Have an attorney review your contract and assist with negotiations
- Board support and development, not best practice to receive from ESP
- Policy development, how do you ensure alignment with GA
- You will have to justify your selection
- Ask to see the annual report & strategic plan
- What happens “contractually” if there is a falling out?
- What is the process for amending the contract?

## More to consider...

- Does the ESP handle human resources on behalf of the board?
- What are the potential problems with this particular service?

# Red Flags

- Board should not delegate authority to ESP.
- ESP should not develop policies for the board/school. Why?
- Beware of balloon payments/fee structures.
- Beware of ESP managing all recruiting / hiring.
- ESP should not set calendar and schedule.
- No ESP “appointee” on board
- No “evergreen” contracts
- Be sure that termination clause(s) are balanced for both parties
- ESP contract should not conflict with local, state, federal laws or SCSC policies

# Questions?

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