



Citywide Governance Training: How Successful Will Your School be By June 2009?

**Thursday, September 25, 2008
5:30 – 8:00 pm**

Presenter:
Marci Cornell-Feist

**New Schools for New Orleans
200 Broadway, Suite 108
New Orleans, LA 70118
504-274-3630
www.newschoolsforneworleans.org**

Excellent public schools for every child in New Orleans

Marci Cornell-Feist Meetinghouse Solutions
82 Shaker Road, Harvard, MA 01451
(978) 772-4867 marcicf@charter.net

1



**New Schools for New Orleans
Citywide Governance Training
September 25, 2008
5:30 – 8:00 pm**

How successful will your school be by June 2009?

It's the beginning of another school year...Is the board of your charter school and the school leader partnering to set ambitious, yet attainable, goals? How do you even know where to set the achievement bar?

How well is my school doing academically?

What should Charter Board Members should know about test scores?

- How to best interpret the state's accountability system and how to determine if your school is on the way to closing the achievement gap.
- Review the state's LEAP and iLEAP assessments, the school performance score and assessment index ratings for each school.
- Share some best practices in how to engage your school leader in a thoughtful and detailed conversation about what metrics the board should use to hold leadership accountable for achievement gains.

The second ½ of the session will focus on:

Creating a set of board level and management level goals for the year



Is Your Charter School Board Effective?

Take this quiz and see how you do!

	YES	NO	Don't Know
1. I know the key charter promises we have made to our authorizer and our community.			
2. I know how we measure these charter promises.			
3. We have a job description that details the roles and responsibilities of the full board.			
4. We have individual performance expectations for trustees that are written down and hold each board member accountable to these.			
5. Our board is large enough to have several active, well-functioning committees, who dive into substantive strategic issues and bring information back to the full board for further discussion and decision-making.			
6. Our board consistently demonstrates a clear understanding of the difference between governance and management.			
7. The leadership structure at our school allows our School Leader to take an active role in shaping effective governance.			
8. We have a strong partnership with our School Leader that is built on mutual trust and respect.			
9. We have an effective process for evaluating, communicating with and supporting our School Leader.			
10. Our board meetings are always well attended.			
11. We have a system in place to deal with chronic non-attending and underperforming board members.			
12. Our organization uses academic achievement data to make decisions and improve results.			
13. Our board has formal tools and measures in place to measure organizational performance.			
14. We have a succession plan for both board and school leadership.			
15. We review financials monthly and every board member has a firm grasp on the school's financial health.			
16. Our board spends most of its time setting the stage/creating the future rather than reacting and responding to immediate needs.			
17. Our board conducts an annual performance appraisal of the full board and of individual trustees.			
18. Annually there is 100% board giving to the best of personal ability to the school's fundraising efforts.			
19. Each year the board establishes strategic board level goals that are specific and measurable.			
20. The majority of our board meeting time is focused on strategic issues rather than reporting on past events.			



An Effective Charter School Board –School Leader Partnership

An effective board adds value to a charter school in a whole variety of ways.

The most effective boards strike a balance of a focus on three key tasks:

1. Oversight of the here and now
2. Creating the future
3. Care, feed, support, coaching, evaluation of the school leader

Typically the boards of newly launched charter schools spend all their time on #1: Oversight of the here and now. But after the initial launch it is crucial that the board shifts their focus to be able to create the future and create a strong partnership with their school leader.



Oversight of the here and now	Creating the future	Care, feed, support, coaching, evaluation of the school leader
<p>FINANCES At least one board member—but ideally two—with strong financial skills taking the lead on the items listed below</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring that the school leader and director of operations are creating the right financial systems • Careful monthly monitoring of budget to actuals • Teach the full board how to read/have ownership over the financial statements 	<p>FINANCES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As early as possible begin to build the 2009-2010 budget so that by Feb/March the School Leader will be able to aggressively recruit new teachers • Have a final 2009-2010 budget approved by April • Develop a three-year budget • Train the rest of the board on the three-year budget scenarios 	<p>FINANCES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help the School Leader to develop financial savvy and a more complete understanding of their budgets • Push the School Leader to engage in strategic discussions about short and long-term financial needs
<p>FUNDRAISING At least one board member with a strong fundraising background to take the lead on the items listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor progress towards reaching this year’s stated fundraising goal • Coordinate cultivation of current and potential donors—by ensuring that a significant number actually visit the school and/or attend school events through out the year 	<p>FUNDRAISING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a three year fundraising plan in coordination with the foundation 	<p>FUNDRAISING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coach the school leader on the cultivation of current and potential donors • Work with School Leader in designing talking points about the school and collateral materials as needed • Push the School Leader to engage in strategic directions about the short and long-term fundraising needs of the school



Oversight of the here and now	Creating the future	Care, feed, support, coaching, evaluation of the school leader
<p>FACILITY At least one board member with a strong facility background to take the lead this:</p> <p>Varies from school to school</p>	<p>FACILITY</p>	<p>FACILITY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate the School Leader about the facility process, allow them to actively participate in the process while simultaneously shielding them from diverting too much of their attention to this area
<p>ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the board has a clear sense of where the School Leader expects to end up at the end of the school year and an agreed upon plan to receive regular updates 	<p>ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the school leader to educate the board about where the school is by the end of this year—where it needs to be by the end of the 2009-2010 year and key strategies to get there 	<p>ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help the School Leader to think through how most efficiently to educate and engage the board on this topic—what kind of updates should they be getting, why, what inputs are being measured, etc.
<p>PERSONNEL/HUMAN RESOURCES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all policies and procedures are in place • Troubleshoot issues as they emerge 	<p>PERSONNEL/HUMAN RESOURCES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with School Leader to think strategically about the HR needs of the school and how they will be filled 	<p>PERSONNEL/HUMAN RESOURCES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coach school leader through thorny issues as needed



Oversight of the here and now	Creating the future	Care, feed, support, coaching, evaluation of the school leader
<p>GOVERNANCE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that there are enough highly skilled trustees with enough time to devote to accomplishing the tasks listed in this document • Streamline board meetings to be as efficient as possible – sending out an advanced board packet, focusing conversations on the strategic 	<p>GOVERNANCE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with the School Leader to think strategically about the skills on the board and begin cultivation of future board members—ideally pursuing the strategy of trying folks out on a committee first 	<p>GOVERNANCE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coach School Leader on engaging effectively with the board in and out of board meetings
<p>SUPPORT OF THE SCHOOL LEADER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be a regular presence at the school and school events—find meaningful ways to connect with the mission • Get to know the place you are governing • See first hand the strengths, the challenges etc. • Lend some valuable cheerleading support to the School Leader, Staff and Students 	<p>SUPPORT OF THE SCHOOL LEADER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the School Leader to ensure that they are creating their own professional development plan 	<p>SUPPORT OF THE SCHOOL LEADER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design a process to provide feedback at regular intervals throughout the year, culminating in an end of the school year school leader evaluation



WRITING SMART GOALS

SPECIFIC - A well-written goal is clear and specific, not general and vague. It describes specifically what is to be achieved and is not open to guesswork. It states simply and clearly what is to be attained, how much and by when. A good goal indicates the results to be achieved, not a set of activities to engage in.

MEASURABLE - A well-written goal specifies criteria for evaluating its accomplishment (quantity, quality, timeliness, impact on others, etc.). The organization can judge their progress toward goal attainment through the measures.

ACHIEVABLE - A well-written goal is attainable, and at the same time, challenging and aggressive. A goal should be realistic, but should also provide a stretch for the organization.

RESULTS-FOCUSED - A well-written goal must focus on results to be achieved. The organization must be able to see that attainment of the goal has a positive impact on the organizational development. The goal must address productivity, quality, and customer service or team effectiveness.

TIME-FRAMED - A well written goal specifies the time frames in which it is to be achieved, as well as benchmarks along the way that indicate progress toward achieving the results.

