

**New Schools for New Orleans
Charter School Board of Trustees Training Institute**

**The Board's Role in Academic Excellence
September 20, 2006**

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Setting Annual Goals

If you are widely successful this year what will that look like?
What will your school have accomplished by June 2007?

Be as specific as possible:

-
-
-
-

What specifically will the board do to help the school accomplish these things?

Be as specific as possible:

-
-
-
-



Governance Defined:

A Board is an organized group of volunteers who, collectively, are legally and morally accountable to the community for the health, vitality and effectiveness of the organization. As representatives of the public, the Board of Trustees is the primary force pressing the organization to the realization of its opportunities for service and the fulfillment of its obligations to all its constituencies.

The general term used to describe the role of the Board of Trustees is “governance”. The governance function encompasses legal responsibilities, general oversight, planning and policy-making, and fiduciary requirements.

The Board only has authority as a group. By its very nature, a board is a collective and its authority is a group function. No single individual within the board has authority for the board itself.

Ten Basic Responsibilities of a Nonprofit Board¹

1. Determine the organization’s mission and purpose
2. Select the Chief Executive
3. Support the Chief Executive and Assess His or Her Performance
4. Ensure Effective Organizational Planning
5. Ensure Adequate Resources
6. Manage Resources Effectively
7. Determine, Monitor, and Strengthen the Organization’s Programs and Services
8. Enhance the Organization’s Public Standing
9. Ensure Legal and Ethical Integrity and Maintain Accountability
10. Recruit and Orient New Board members and Assess Board Performance

¹ Board Source, formerly the National Center for Nonprofit Boards.
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Expectations of a charter school board member

1. Governor

Fulfilling governance functions

2. Ambassador

Reaching out to the community

3. Sponsor

Giving time and money

4. Consultant

Using skills and expertise on behalf of the organization



Hill View Montessori Charter School of Haverhill
The Board of Trustees Job Description

General Responsibilities:

Responsible for ensuring that the academic program of Hill View Montessori Charter School (HVM) is successful, that the school's program and operation are faithful to the terms of its charter, and that the school is a viable organization.

Specific Responsibilities:

1. Determine the mission and purpose of HVM and keep it clearly in focus.
 - Create and periodically review the mission statement which:
 - a. Serves as a guide to organizational planning, board and staff decision-making, volunteer initiatives, and setting priorities among competing demands for scarce resources.
 - b. Is used as the vehicle for assessing program activities to ensure that the organization is not drifting away from its original purposes.
 - Understand and support the mission statement.
2. Select the Executive Director
 - Reach consensus on the Executive Director's job description.
 - Undertake a careful search process to find the most qualified individual.
 - Oversee and approve contract negotiation and renewal.
3. Support and review the performance of the Executive Director
 - Provide frequent and constructive feedback.
 - Assist when board members overstep prerogatives or misunderstand their roles.
 - Compliment for exceptional accomplishments.
 - Provide for an annual written performance review with a process agreed upon with the Executive Director well in advance.
4. Ensure effective organizational planning
 - Approve an annual organizational plan that includes concrete, measurable goals consistent with the strategic plan.
5. Ensure adequate resources
 - Approve fund-raising targets and goals.
 - Assist in fundraising activities as needed.
 - Make an annual gift at a level that is personally meaningful.
6. Manage resources effectively
 - Approve the annual budget.
 - Monitor budget implementation through periodic financial reports.
 - Approve accounting & personnel policies.
 - Provide for an independent annual audit by a qualified CPA.
 - Ensure adequate insurance is in force to cover students, staff, visitors, the board and the assets of the school.



7. Determine, monitor and strengthen the programs and services
 - Assure programs and services are consistent with the mission.
 - Approve measurable outcomes for academic, personal and social achievement including the skills and knowledge a student must demonstrate in order to graduate from HVM
 - Approve annual, attainable program goals.
 - Monitor progress in achieving the outcomes and goals.
 - Assess the quality of the program and services.
8. Enhance HVM's public standing
 - Serve as a link with the school's staff, volunteers, members, constituents and clients.
 - Serve as ambassadors, advocates and community representatives of the school.
 - Ensure that no board member represents her/himself as speaking for the board unless specifically authorized to do so.
 - Provide for a written annual report and public presentation that details HVM's mission, programs, board members, and financial condition.
 - Approve the goals of the annual public relations program
9. Ensure legal and ethical integrity and maintain accountability
 - Establish polices to guide the school's board members and staff.
 - Develop and maintain adequate personnel policies and procedures (including grievance mechanisms).
 - Adhere to the provisions of the school's bylaws and articles of incorporation.
 - Adhere to local, state and federal laws and regulations that apply to the school.
 - File and make available, accurate, timely reports required by federal, state and local governments.
 - Protect the organization's staff, volunteers, and clients from harm of injury by ensuring compliance with occupational safety, health, labor and related regulations.
10. Recruit and orient new board members and assess board performance
 - Define board membership needs in terms of skill, experience and diversity.
 - Cultivate and check the credentials of and recruit prospective nominees.
 - Provide for new board member orientation to the board and to the school.
 - Provide for a written board self-assessment on at least an annual basis, and report back to the Board.



Hill View Montessori Charter School of Haverhill
Trustee Job Description

General Responsibilities:

Responsible for actively participating in the work of the Hill View Montessori Charter School (HVM) Board of Trustees and the life of the school. Each trustee is expected to affirm and strive to fulfill the performance expectations outlined below. These expectations are to be clearly articulated prior to nominating any candidate as a Board member. The HVM Board will nominate the candidate only after s/he has agreed to fulfill these expectations. In addition to the responsibilities below, individual trustees are expected to help each other fulfill the tasks outlined in the collective Job Description of the Board of Trustees.

Specific Responsibilities:

1. Believe in and be an active advocate ambassador for the values, mission, and vision of HVM.
2. Work with fellow board members to fulfill the obligations of Board membership.
3. Behave in ways that clearly contribute to the effective operation of the Board of Trustees:
 - Focus on the good of the organization and group, not on personal agenda
 - Support Board decisions once they are made
 - Participate in an honest appraisal of one's own performance and that of the Board
 - Build awareness of and vigilance toward governance matters rather than management.
4. Regularly attend Board and committee meetings in accordance with absenteeism policy. Prepare for these meetings by reviewing materials and bringing the materials to meetings. If unable to attend, notify the Board or committee Chair.
5. Keep informed about the school and its issues by reviewing materials, participating in discussions, and asking strategic questions.
6. Actively participate in one or more fund-raising event(s) annually.
7. Use personal and professional contacts and expertise for the benefit of the HVM.
8. Serve as a committee or task force chair or member.
9. Give an annual financial contribution and support capital campaigns at a level that is personally meaningful.
10. Inform the Board of Trustees of HVM of any potential conflicts of interest, whether real or perceived, and abide by the decision of the Board related to the situation.



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.



Distinctions between Board Roles and Responsibilities and that of Administration

The general rule of thumb is:

If it sets a goal, states an expectation, clarifies a direction, if it is a WHAT,

Then it is POLICY, and “belongs” to the board.

If it acts in any way to accomplish a goal, if it carries out an activity,
if it is a HOW,

Then it is PROCEDURE, and “belongs” to the administration.

The key to maintaining an effective relationship between the Board and Administration is to establish a relationship that is built on clearly defined roles:

| The Board | The Administration |
|--|--|
| ENDS (results) Why? What? How Much? | MEANS (methods) How? When? Where? Who? |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Vision ▪ Mission ▪ Goals ▪ Policies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Objectives ▪ Strategies ▪ Action Plans ▪ Procedures |
| <i>MONITOR</i> | <i>IMPLEMENT</i> |
| VOTE | RECOMMEND |



National Association of Independent Schools Design of the Partnership

| Policies | Time and Attention Graph |
|--|---|
| <p><i>Strategies</i> Mission Survival Leadership Major</p> | <p>Board Decision's</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Head's Advice</p> |
| <p><i>Partnership</i> Authorizations Finance policies Enrollment Employment terms</p> | <p>Shared Decision: Board and Head</p> |
| <p><i>Operational</i> Staffing Program Systems</p> | <p>Board's Advice</p> <p>Head's Decision</p> |

Above the diagonal line = allocation of board's time
Below the diagonal line = allocation of head's time



SAMPLE BOARD GOALS

KIPP Academy Lynn Board Goals 2006-2007

At the September 9, 2006 board retreat, the board agreed to focus it's energy on the following priority areas:

1. By the December 2006 board meeting, have identified a chair, vice-chair, treasurer and secretary and a transition plan for them to assume full leadership by the March 2007 board meeting.
2. To expand the board by 4 trustees with the priority skills of education, fundraising (personal networks), legal and facilities (architect, construction)—with a goal of adding 2 trustees by December and 2 trustees by March.
3. To develop a 1, 3, & 5 year strategic plan by March 2007.
4. To assist the development director in achieving the annual fundraising target of \$300,000 (*specific board actions to be outlined in the board approved development plan*).
5. By November 2006 to launch an effective facilities/finance committee and tackle the pressing issues that need to be incorporated in the 1, 3, & 5 year plan.



SAMPLE BOARD GOALS

City on a Hill Charter School Board Goals 2004-2005

Secure school facility

- obtain a site at least 20,000 sq ft. in size, for at least 10 years time
- insure that facilities cost is no greater than 17% of operating costs

Raise funds for the school

- raise sufficient funds to close a deal to secure a new facility
- raise \$20,000 towards the school's regular operating costs

Strengthen the board

- add 4 new members; 2 by September, 2 by February
- engage in board development activities (training, work w/consultant) throughout the year

Oversee responsible fiscal policies

- oversee the budget to produce an operating surplus of at least \$100,000
- insure audit is completed in a timely way

Complete successful charter renewal

- support senior management's efforts to secure the renewal of the charter

Develop a plan to celebrate 10th anniversary

- Develop a plan that strengthens the school's image among foundations, donors, charter school advocates, policy makers, current/prospective students & their parents

Support and the school leader

- Conduct timely and thorough performance evaluation of Executive Director



SAMPLE BOARD GOALS

City on a Hill Charter School Board 2005-2006

| | Executive | Academic Performance | Real Estate | Development | Finance |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| School-wide goals for 2005-2006 | <p>Demonstrate substantial progress toward achieving Accountability Plan goals</p> <p>Add 2-3 new board members</p> | <p>Improve MCAS scores: Math-Adv from 9% to 20% Math-Prof from 30% to 50% ELA-Adv from 0% to 10% ELA-Prof from 46% to 60%</p> <p>Increase average SAT scores: From 1200 to 1350 (out of 2400)</p> <p>Raise the percentage of seniors admitted to competitive colleges From 64% to 70%</p> <p>Produce a report by 9/15/06 on the rate and causes of student attrition</p> | <p>Purchase a building at least 25,000 square feet in size by 12/31/05</p> <p>Finance the purchase and renovation of a building at a carrying cost that is less than 17% of future operating revenue</p> | <p>Raise \$250,000 for capital campaign by 12/15/05</p> <p>Raise \$165,000 for operations by 6/30/06</p> <p>Raise an additional \$500,000 for the capital campaign by 9/1/06</p> | <p>Produce a surplus of at least \$100,000 while maintaining a robust educational program</p> <p>Secure an unqualified 2004-05 audit opinion</p> |
| Board Objectives | <p>Conduct individual and collective board performance evaluations by 9/15/06</p> <p>Conduct performance evaluation of Executive Director and Principal by 9/15/06</p> | <p>Mentor 4 seniors in their preparation for college</p> <p>Analyze student attrition data</p> | <p>Examine potential school sites for suitability</p> <p>Inform architect in designing school space to suit CoaH's program</p> | <p>Provide 10 names for annual appeal</p> <p>Bring 3 new people to the 11/10 fundraiser</p> <p>Organize/buy a table for the Spring gala; donate or solicit auction items</p> <p>Make a meaningful pledge to the Capital Campaign</p> | <p>Review regular financial reports</p> |

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| | Executive | Academic Performance | Real Estate | Development | Finance |
|--------------------------------------|---|--|--|--|--|
| Executive Director Objectives | <p>Assist the board in identifying and vetting 2-3 new board members</p> <p>Plan and organize annual board retreat</p> | <p>Plan and oversee the expansion of 1 on 1 tutoring program to freshman and sophomores</p> <p>Recruit at least 400 student applicants; insure clear messaging about CoaH's program to prospective applicants</p> <p>Analyze student attrition data</p> | <p>Lead efforts to finance the purchase and renovation of a building.</p> | <p>Produce professional marketing materials (annual report, newsletter)</p> <p>Organize fundraising activities (annual appeal, events)</p> | <p>Provide the Board and Principal with timely financial information.</p> <p>Insure timely completion and submission of audit to DOE</p> <p>Maintain spending levels within budgeted amounts</p> |
| Principal Objectives | <p>Provide the Academic Performance Chair with monthly school reports (criteria set in September) and the Board with quarterly school reports</p> | <p>Lead efforts to improve academic performance at City on a Hill</p> <p>Oversee revision of curriculum to improve proficiency, coursework, and MCAS/SAT alignment.</p> <p>Recruit and retain excellent teachers who are committed to CoaH's mission</p> <p>Implement Silent Sustained Reading program</p> <p>Oversee and expand AP classes offered to seniors</p> <p>Ensure all juniors take SAT prep course prior to June '06 test</p> <p>Analyze student attrition data</p> | <p>Examine potential school sites for suitability</p> <p>Inform architect in designing school space to suit CoaH's program</p> | <p>Participate in efforts to secure and close gifts</p> <p>Mobilize students and teachers to assist with fundraising</p> | <p>Maintain spending levels within budgeted amounts</p> |

SAMPLE MANAGEMENT LEVEL GOALS

KIPP Academy Lynn Proposed Management Goals 2006-207

| Goal | Measurement | Key Strategies | When to report to board | Status |
|---|--|---|---|---------------|
| Academics | | | | |
| KAL students will make significant yearly progress across all of their subjects | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A greater percentage of KAL students, who have been enrolled in the school for at least two years will achieve the performance standard of “Proficient or above on all MCAS exams than their peers are LPS as well as the state. • All grade-level cohorts will demonstrate, on average, an improvement of at least 10 NCEs until the cohorts achieve an average of 70 NCEs, at which point the cohorts will maintain or improve their level of performance on SAT-10 tests (Zero (0) NCE growth is 1 years worth of growth) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer consistent, effective classroom observations & support • Research & develop appropriate professional development for each member of the staff • Use MPSP data to inform instruction | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MCAS: Sept 2007 • SAT-10 July 2007 | |
| Research , develop & execute high school placement strategy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A detailed plan is written & Executed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C. Plummer outreach • All 7th grade students attend weekly high school preparation class taught by C. Plummer | Quarterly <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • October • January • March • July | 15 |

| Goal | Measurement | Key Strategies | When to report to board | Status |
|--|---|--|--|--------|
| Financial | | | | |
| KAL will remain financially stable in FY'07 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maintain a balanced budget for FY'07 2. Develop a preliminary budget for FY'08 by March 2007 Board meeting, approved by June 2007 Board meeting 3. Evaluate current operational systems and adjust them to be in compliance with our Fiscals Policies and Procedures guide 4. Receive a "Clean" Audit for FY'07 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. AMS closing books 2. Coordinate with strategic plan 3. IV, ER, AMS and Auditors | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Monthly 2. January Progress Report 3. December 4. October 2007 | |
| KAL will raise enough money to run its extended programming. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and execute a development plan for FY'07 that will raise at least \$300,000 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach to other successful charter schools • Consult MCF | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan presented in Oct. • Monthly updates | |
| Governance | | | | |
| Improve preparation for and quality of board meetings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Board documents and communications follow the Board approved time line | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and follow Board communication timeline (i.e. agenda , packet, review) by October 2006 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly | 16 |

Goal:

(To be achieved by end of the charter)

2006-2007 Strategies to Achieve Goal:

Action Plans:

Strategy #1:

| | Action | Responsible | Due Date |
|----|---------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| 1. | | | |
| 2. | | | |
| 3. | | | |
| 4. | | | |
| 5. | | | |
| 6. | | | |
| 7. | | | |
| 8. | | | |

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STEPS TO TAKE WITH YOUR BOARD: Setting Annual Goals

Some ideas about how to bring this information back to the rest of the board and your school leader:

- Have your full board and school leader complete the exercise on page 2
 - They could do this as homework or take 15 minutes at a board meeting
 - Focus on prioritizing: There are 100+ things that you want to do this year, if you could only pick 3 or 5 what would they be?

- Write annual SMART board-level goals
 - Again, you could assign this as homework, the board chair and school leader could take a stab at a draft set and have the full board respond

- Ask your school leader to write a set of annual SMART management-level goals
 - Present them at a board meeting and have them approved by the full board

- Determine how you are going to measure the board and management goals throughout the year

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The Board's Role in Academic Achievement Governance—Management Vignettes

For each of these scenarios, define the board's role and the school leader's role:

1. It is the fall of your second year of school. The state test scores come out and your students are doing exceptional well in English Language Arts (ELA), but their math scores are terrible.
2. It is June 2007, and the school leader is giving the board a wrap-up of the school year. The board is shocked to hear that 60% of the teachers are not going to return next year.
3. The board hears anecdotal evidence that the school is doing a wonderful job with the lowest performers but that the highest achieving kids in the school are not being challenged and many of them have left or are planning to leave the school.
4. The school leader worked with the board to raise significant money for a new math curriculum for the school. Although lots of money, time, energy and professional development was put into this new math program the math scores have slipped for the third year in a row.
5. The school leader and the staff of the school have taken a hard look at the achievement levels of the students and have determined that on average they are 3 grade levels behind where they should be. They plan to eliminate art, music and physical education from the class time hours and have these as electives after school in order for them to teach math and reading two times a day.
6. The school's instructional leadership team (Director, Principal, lead math and English teachers) determine that the only way they can catch their students up to grade level is to institute an intensive tutoring program. This would require extending the school day for all students.



What's the role of the full board in academic excellence?

1. A firm understanding of what you promised in your charter.
2. In partnership with your school leader, develop a clear and consistent way to measure academic achievement.
3. Be honest about where the school is academically.
4. Develop a shared vision of academic excellence.
5. Design a board education program.



Sample Job Description for the Academic Excellence Committee

General Purpose

The Academic Excellence Committee is commissioned by and responsible to the Board of Trustees to assume the primary responsibility for working with the school leader to define academic excellence, ensure that all board members know the charter promises that were made to the community and the authorizer and to devise clear and consistent measures to monitor these goals.

Appointments and Composition

1. Appointments of the chair and members of the Academic Excellence Committee shall be made annually by the chair of the Board with the advice and consent of the Board and the school leader and in accordance with the bylaws.
2. The chair of this committee shall be a member of the Board of Trustees.
3. Members of this committee shall be members of the Board of Trustees, subject to the conditions stated in the bylaws. Additional committee members may be appointed and need not be members of the Board of Trustees. It is anticipated that given the nature of this committee that it maybe necessary to have several outside academic leaders on the committee.

Responsibilities

It is important to note that this is a governance function, not a management function, and it is anticipated that the school leader will have a great deal of input into the work and composition of this committee. The committee's main role is to assure that academic excellence is defined, and that the board approves annual goals to attain academic excellence.

1. Define and continue to refine what academic excellence means for our charter school.
2. Ensure that all board members understand the key charter promises we have made to our community and to our authorizer.
3. Work with the school leadership to devise clear and consistent ways to measure progress towards stated goals.
4. Work with school leadership to set annual academic achievement goals, to be presented to and approved by the full board.
5. Work with school leadership to share with the board annual successes, barriers to reaching academic excellence, and strategies to overcome these barriers.
6. Arrange for Board training on issues related to academic oversight and academic achievement, as needed.
7. Annually submit objectives as part of the planning and budgeting process.
8. Annually evaluate its work as a committee and the objectives it has committed itself to and report on same to the Board of Trustees.
9. Report to the Board of Trustees at regular meetings of the Board in a manner determined by the Board.



SAMPLE BOARD GOAL: GREATER NEWARK CHARTER SCHOOL

Academic Excellence Goal:

To have measurable quarterly academic benchmarks and clear and consistent monthly reports on academic performance, so that each board member has a deep understanding of the degree to which we are on track to fulfill both our pledge to become best middle school in Newark and the key academic promises made to our community and authorizer.

2006-2007 Strategies to Achieve Goal:

In partnership with the School Director:

1. Ensure that all board members understand the key annual academic achievement goals and strategies—what they are, why they are important, and how they will directly lead to our pledge to become the best middle school in Newark.
2. Create a consistent format to report monthly on progress towards achieving academic goals and plans to address barriers to achieving these goals.
3. Conduct board level education on academic achievement as needed.

Action Plans:

Strategy #1:

Ensure that all board members understand the key annual academic achievement goals and strategies—what they are, why they are important, and how they will directly lead to our pledge to become the best middle school in Newark.

| Action | Responsible | Due Date |
|---|-------------|----------|
| 1. School Director presents plan to board and explains the “why” behind the strategies. | | |

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Strategy #2:

Create a consistent format to report monthly on progress towards achieving academic goals and plans to address barriers to achieving these goals.

| Action | Responsible | Due Date |
|---|--------------------|-----------------|
| 1. School Director and a board task force develop a template for the monthly reports and quarterly benchmark reports. | | |

Strategy #3: Conduct board level education on academic achievement as needed

| Action | Responsible | Due Date |
|--|--------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Hold board level discussion about what education is needed | | |
| 2. Possibly do some reading together, guest lecture, school visits to high achieving middle schools? | | |
| 3. | | |



STEPS TO TAKE WITH YOUR BOARD: The Board's Role in Academic Achievement

Some ideas about how to bring this information back to the rest of the board and your school leader:

- Define academic excellence
 - Conduct a joint exercise between the board and your school leadership team to define academic excellence
 - You might do this by asking if the school is wildly successful academically, what would that look like in 10 years? What about in 5 years? Where will your current students be in 10 years? What will the school's role be in helping them get there?

- Discuss/define the role of the full board in conducting oversight of the academic program.
 - Try the governance-management academic achievement vignettes with your board.
 - Walk through some real-life scenarios to puzzle out what is governance and what is management.

- Determine whether you want/need/it is a priority to have an academic committee of the board
 - Write a job description for the committee
 - Work with the school leader to determine who should be on the committee

- Work with your school leader to determine how you will measure academic achievement

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Hardware Heartbreak

Gary Mann, Executive Director of Safe Haven Shelters, puts the phone down carefully. Talking with Jim Dodge, a long-time Board Member, seems always to result in exasperation. The moment Gary's assistant announces a call from Jim, Gary begins to tense and wonders "what now?" Although the call today was not unusual, for Gary it feels like the last straw.

Some months back, Gary outlined to the Board his plans to begin a major upgrading of computer systems at Safe Haven Shelters. Substantial staff time went into the planning for the upgrade. To Gary's mind, the project represents tangible proof that Safe Haven has turned an important corner: This upgrade marks the end of the handcrafted, make-do phase of the organization's life.

When Gary presented the update about the computer system to the Board, he had wanted to share the good news and get some feedback from Board members. Unfortunately, the discussion was dominated by concern about the cost of the system and the risk of changing existing ways of doing business. Jim's was among the more negative voices.

Now Jim called to accuse Gary of moving ahead with the project without Board authorization. Citing the discussion at the Board meeting, Jim made it clear that in his mind the Board clearly was opposed to the project. By going ahead, Jim said, Gary is overstepping his authority. Jim plans to call the Board Chair and demand a meeting of the Board to discuss the problem. Jim insists that Gary suspend activity on the computer upgrade until the Board can meet.

Gary is astonished by Jim's position. In Gary's mind, the shape and direction of the project has always been his to decide. He carefully budgeted for the upgrade, and the Board approved the budget. For Gary, the discussion at the recent Board meeting was about sharing information and getting advice, not seeking approval.

After hanging up with Jim, Gary picks up the phone and calls the Board Chair.

Clare Stevens has been Board Chair of Safe Haven for two years and a member of the Board for five years. She loves Safe Haven and has been willing to work hard to see the organization succeed. But, Clare is getting weary of some of the conflicts that keep emerging. First Jim calls, complaining about Gary and demanding a full Board meeting. Then Gary calls, ready to quit over constant interference of Board members.



During her conversations with Gary and Jim, Clare listens to each man go on about the other and the situation. Each concludes his conversation with an ultimatum. Jim's ultimatum goes one way: "The project stops right now or I will personally go to each Board member and recommend firing Gary." Gary's ultimatum goes another way: "If the Board reopens this issue, and takes the authority to make this decision away from me, I will quit."

With a promise to call each of them back, Clare hangs up, wondering if life is too short for this.

Questions to address regarding Hardware Heartbreak

- What might have been done to avoid this situation? By Gary as CEO, by Clare as Board Chair.
- How should Gary manage such a call with Jim? What should Gary say? What should Gary do following the call?
- What can be done now to intervene in the situation?
- What can be done now to avoid a reoccurrence of such a situation?
- What are the issues or questions that are raised in this case study? List them without commentary, resolution or bias. Create objective and neutral statements.



Resources

Creating an Effective Charter School Governing Board Guidebook

www.uscharterschools.org/gb/governance/contents.htm

An extensive compendium with lots of tools, samples, and tips.

Charter Schools Trustees Guide, by Marci Cornell-Feist

www.buildingexcellentschools.org

A guidebook designed specifically for charter school board members in a Q&A format, contains tools, and sample documents. Only the tools are available on-line, the guidebook itself is available in hard copy.

The Board Café

www.boardcafe.org

A free, monthly electronic newsletter, short enough to read over a cup of coffee, the *Board Café* offers a menu of ideas, opinions, news, and resources to help board members give and get the most out of board service.

Board Source

www.boardsource.org

Formerly the National Center for Nonprofit Boards. The best source for national standards of effective governance.

Help4NonProfits

www.help4nonprofits.com

Excellent nonprofit library with very user-friendly articles.

Improving School Board Decision-Making: The Data Connection

<http://cmucso.org/boards/ImprovingSchoolBoardDecisionMakingTheDataConnection.pdf>

Written for traditional school boards, but very applicable to the charter school governing board context. Great examples of how boards should use data in making decisions.

The Board-Savvy CEO: How to Build a Strong, Positive Relationship with Your Board

By: Doug Eadie

Available from BoardSource.

Excellent resource!

