

Governing for What Matters Most: Academic Success of Every Student

**National Charter Schools Conference
June 23, 2008
3:30 -5:00 pm**

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National Association of Independent Schools Design of the Partnership¹

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 style="text-align: center;">Head's Decision</p>

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

¹ From the excellent resource, *Trustee Handbook A Guide to Effective Governance for Independent School Boards*, by Mary Hundley DeKuyper, National Association of Independent Schools, 1998, p.53.



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 2008, 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 senior management team of the school has crafted a new policy to determine which students will need to repeat a grade and which students will be promoted to the next grade.

Questions:

1. What is the board's role in conducting effective oversight of the academic program?
2. What kind of information should the board expect around the academic program and how frequently?



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 and the core charter promises.
3. Develop a shared vision of academic excellence.
4. Be honest about where the school is academically. Use contextual data –how good are we really, who should we be comparing ourselves too?
5. Design a board education program.



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.



Key Components of an Academic Excellence Committee

Primary responsibility for working with the school leader to:

1. Define academic excellence
 2. Ensure that all board members know the charter promises that were made to the community and the authorizer
 3. Devise clear and consistent measures to monitor these goals.
- Similar to the way the full board holds the fiduciary responsibility but the finance committee delves deeper into the numbers and frames strategic budgetary conversations for the full board.
 - 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**
 - Who should be on this committee?



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**



ABC Charter School: Management-Level Goals

	Current Status (Baseline)	Annual Goal to be achieved by June 2008	Annual Goal to be achieved by June 2009	By end of accountability plan/ charter 2010
Academic Achievement				
Curriculum				
Instruction				
Our graduates				
Teachers				
Social- Emotional Preparedness				

ABC Public Charter School
Public Charter School Accountability Plan
School Years 2004-2005 to 2008-2009

The mission of the school is to nurture a diverse group of students to become lifelong, active participants in their own education, develop a sense of self and community, and become responsible and compassionate members of society.

I. Academic Performance Objectives

Performance Objectives	Performance Indicators	Assessment Tools	Baseline Data	Annual Target	Five-Year Target	Strategies for Attainment
Students will demonstrate competence in reading.	Students will demonstrate grade level or above grade level proficiency in reading and strong comprehension of what they read.	Standardized exams based on NCE gains	Spring 2006	2% annual increase over baseline of students will receive a 0 or > NCE gain score.	X% of students will receive a 0 or > NCE gain score. (Dependent upon baseline data)	Instruction in Balanced Literacy including guided reading, phonics, the writing process, reading comprehension, etc.
Students in grades K-8 (as growth permits) will demonstrate improvement in reading.	Students in grades K-8 (as growth permits) will demonstrate one year of academic growth in the area of reading as measured by Brigance subtests.	Brigance subtests	Spring 2006	X% of students will make a minimum of one year of progress. (Dependent upon baseline data)	2% annual increase over baseline resulting in X% of students demonstrating one year of academic growth in reading.	Instruction in Balanced Literacy including guided reading, phonics, the writing process, reading comprehension, etc.
Pre-kindergarten students will demonstrate pre-literacy skills.	Students will demonstrate kindergarten readiness in literacy as measured by Brigance subtests.	Brigance subtests	Spring 2006	X% of pre-kindergarten students will demonstrate kindergarten readiness. (Dependent upon baseline data)	2% annual increase over baseline resulting in X% of pre-kindergarten students demonstrating kindergarten readiness.	Instruction in Balanced Literacy including guided reading, phonics, the writing process, reading comprehension, etc.

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 	11

Spring 2007 MCAS Tests

Urban Charter School Comparisons

KIPP: 86% low income

Roxbury Prep.: This is recognized as the highest performing urban middle school (Grades 6-8) in Massachusetts. (64% low income)

Boston Collegiate: This is one of the highest performing 5-8 urban middle schools in MA (41% low income)

Community Day Charter School: This is one of the highest performing urban K-8 schools in MA (64% low income)

Boston Preparatory Charter School: This is one of the higher performing urban 6-12 schools in MA (75% low income)

Academy of the Pacific Rim: This is one of the higher performing urban 6-12 schools in MA (51% low income)

Excel Academy: This is one of the higher performing urban 6-8 middle schools in MA (73% low income)

Subject	KAL Total % Scoring "Adv. / Prof. Spring 2007	State % A/P 2007	Roxbury Prep. % A/P 2007	Boston Collegiate C.S.	Community Day C.S.	Boston Prep. C.S.	Academy of the Pacific Rim C.S.	Excel Academy C.S.
5 th Grade ELA	53%	63%	NA	53%	57%	NA	NA	NA
5 th Grade Math	40%	51%	NA	41%	59%	NA	NA	NA
5 th Grade Science	57%	51%	NA	45%	54%	NA	NA	NA
6 th Grade ELA	67%	67%	67%	77%	76%	46%	52%	79%
6 th Grade Math	70%	52%	76%	77%	81%	58%	57%	75%
7 th Grade ELA	83%	69%	86%	78%	86%	74%	78%	86%
7 th Grade Math	68%	46%	72%	72%	62%	64%	47%	57%

Suburban District Comparisons

Brookline: Recognized as one of the higher performing school districts in the MA

Lexington: Recognized as one of the higher performing school districts in MA

Subject	KAL Total % Scoring "Adv. / Prof. Spring 2007"	Marblehead % A/P 2007	Swamp. % A/P 2007	Lynnfield	Brookline	Lexington
5 th Grade ELA	53%	66%	82%	82%	82%	86%
5 th Grade Math	40%	66%	55%	76%	72%	84%
5 th Grade Science	57%	64%	62%	74%	67%	77%
6 th Grade ELA	67%	84%	73%	83%	88%	91%
6 th Grade Math	70%	66%	55%	65%	77%	83%
7 th Grade ELA	83%	84%	75%	80%	89%	92%
7 th Grade Math	68%	52%	44%	71%	74%	78%

Lynn Public School Comparisons

KIPP Academy Lynn: 86% low income students, 310 students serving grades 5-7

Breed Middle School: 79% low income students, 1,100 students, serving grades 6-8

Pickering Middle School: The highest performing middle school in Lynn, 52% low income students, 660 students, serving grades 6-8

Marshall Middle School: 89% low income students, 850 students, serving grades 6-8

Ford K-8 School: 90% low income students, 830 students serving grades K-5

Shoemaker: The highest performing elementary school in Lynn, 34% low income students, 350 students, serving grades K-5

Subject	KAL Total % Scoring "Adv. / Prof. Spring 2007	LPS % A/P 2007	Breed MS	Pickering MS	Marshall MS	Ford K-8	Shoemaker
5 th Grade ELA	53%	52%	NA	NA	NA	56%	83%
5 th Grade Math	40%	43%	NA	NA	NA	47%	71%
5 th Grade Science	57%	31%	NA	NA	NA	36%	70%
6 th Grade ELA	67%	48%	48%	70%	36%	49%	NA
6 th Grade Math	70%	35%	34%	54%	26%	41%	NA
7 th Grade ELA	83%	49%	48%	64%	31%	66%	NA
7 th Grade Math	68%	28%	31%	41%	16%	29%	NA

Questions About Student Achievement

Here are some sample questions about student achievement that every charter school board member should know the answer to.

Questions concerning accountability systems

1. What mechanisms are in place to align your school's curriculum, standards, and assessments? How does your school make sure they are aligned with state frameworks?
2. Who is involved in this type of work? How does this get addressed in your school?
3. How are your curriculum, standards, and assessment strategies linked to the specific mission and goals for your school? How does the school's culture/mission support the school's accountability strategy?
4. What does student performance and academic achievement mean in your school?
5. What can the board do to support the school's efforts?
6. Who is responsible at the school for the accountability system? What is the role of the board, school leaders, principal, Director of Curriculum and Assessment, and the teachers? Who is responsible for getting the work done?
7. How are your authorizer's requirements around accountability and charter renewal integrated into your school's accountability system?

Questions concerning your assessment procedures

1. How is your school measuring student performance and achievement?
2. What internal assessments are being used?
 - How were they developed?
 - Are they used consistently over time?
 - What do they teach your school about your students' performance?
3. What external assessments are being used?
 - Why and how did you select these assessments?
 - How do you keep track of student scores/performance?
 - When/how does your school review the results?
4. How is your school measuring/accounting for changes in student performance *over time*?

5. What shows that students are making progress?
6. Can your school look at this data on an individual and group basis?
7. How does assessment work get done at the school? How does the school's structure support the assessment activities?

Questions about using results

1. How is your school using information from internal and external assessments to improve teaching and learning in your school?
 - What do the teachers do with the assessments?
 - Does the school use this information to inform practices?
 - i. Inform what goes on in the classroom?
 - ii. Inform curriculum decisions?
 - iii. Inform school improvement efforts?
 - iv. Inform program design?
2. How does your school manage the data on student performance?
3. Is there a system in place that allows your school to analyze student achievement data on a regular basis?
4. How does this information impact / interface with your school's budgeting process?

Questions about communicating results

1. How is your school communicating assessment data to students and parents?
2. How is your school communicating assessment data to the community and other external audiences?
 - What data are reported in annual reports?
 - What data are reported to the media?
 - What are reported to your authorizer?