



PRIMARY BOARD TASKS

Steering:

The board looks beyond the immediate horizon by developing a shared vision, articulating guiding values for organizational action, establishing major goals, and outlining strategies for achieving those goals.

Supporting:

The board ensures that the organization has the resources needed to achieve its goals: (i) people to do the work; (ii) money to pay salaries and expenses; and (iii) credibility with the public, on whose support it depends.

Supervising:

The board provides oversight not only of the finances and programs, but also of the organization's legal and moral conduct.

The board delegates authority to the head, who is therefore accountable to the board. The board's oversight role also includes supervising, providing feedback to and supporting the head.

STRUCTURES & PRACTICES

The School:

- Has a written mission statement, vision statement, and code of ethics
- Has a written strategic plan

The Board:

- Is actively involved in visioning and strategic planning
- Engages in a formal planning process every few years and monitors progress against that plan
- Understands the needs of multiple constituencies: professional leadership, donors, parents, and students

The Board:

- Builds, protects, and promotes the school's public standing
- Makes sure that the school has an appropriate mix of income sources
- Provides for board training to build fundraising and friend-raising skills, to educate members about their responsibilities and mission, and to onboard new members

Board Members:

- Serve as ambassadors to the community and are an essential element of a school's marketing, communications, and outreach
- Are active in fundraising, prioritize their own personal contributions, connect staff to potential donors, and solicit friends, colleagues, and alumni

The Board:

- Recognizes that volunteer and professional leaders have distinct and separate roles
- Works in collaboration with the head of school to understand the scope of the school's programs and services
- Establishes appropriate goals for quality and results, and monitors performance data
- When fully informed by the head, decides which programs best support the school's mission and strategies for success
- Approves the annual budget and monitors performance against the budget throughout the year
- Oversees the annual audit to verify that the school is accurately reporting the sources and uses of its funds
- Ensures the school has policies in place to deal with HR grievances, discrimination, and sexual harassment
- Ensures that a job description outlines the head's duties, then evaluates the head annually and determines appropriate compensation
- Works with the head to determine the appropriate levels and forms of communication: how often, by what means (formal and informal), when, and where to share more broadly

BOARD CHAIR CAPACITIES THAT ENABLE THESE PRACTICES

- Facilitates strategic discussions and involves/designates others in prioritizing and addressing challenges
- Communicates and models the school's vision and code of ethics
- Serves as the leader and manager of the board, ensuring that the board does not overstep its limits
- Accepts responsibility to bring discipline to the board and helps counsel unproductive and disruptive trustees
- Takes care to separate the interests of the school from those of a particular student, family, or constituency
- Empowers and develops the capacities of others
- Creates opportunities for collaboration
- Models expectations for individual board members to make a personal financial contribution and participate in fundraising activities
- Promotes the school within the community, and integrates it with the community and its institutions
- Navigates politics and stakeholder interests/conflicts

- Articulates and enforces role definitions and boundaries
- Understands budgeting and financial management
- Willing and able to undertake difficult conversations with trustees and/or the head
- Establishes a solid and supportive relationship of candor and trust with the head to be a confidante and sounding board
- Serves as thought-partner and joint decision-maker with the head