



Structuring an Effective Governing Board

A STARTER'S GUIDE

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Structuring an Effective Governing Board: A Starter’s Guide

This Starter’s Guide is designed to equip new governing boards and board members with foundational knowledge and practical tools for effective charter school governance. It offers an overview of board responsibilities, governance infrastructure, decision-making practices, and compliance requirements—all essential to ensuring the academic, financial, and operational success of a charter school.

Introduction: Understanding Charter School Governance in a Nutshell

Charter schools are public schools operating under a contract—or charter—that grants autonomy in exchange for accountability. This “charter bargain” allows flexibility in curriculum, staffing, and budget decisions while holding the school accountable for student achievement, fiscal responsibility, and operational compliance.

The governing board is the steward of this balance. It ensures the school remains true to its mission, fulfills its charter contract, and operates ethically and efficiently. Effective governance means focusing on policy, strategy, and oversight—allowing school leadership to manage day-to-day operations while maintaining clear accountability for results.

1. The Role of the Governing Board

The governing board is the legally accountable body for the school and the direct holder of the charter. The governing board’s authority comes from state law and the charter contract, not from any individual member. The board acts collectively to govern in the public interest.

Core Responsibilities

Mission Fidelity	Uphold and protect the mission, vision, and values of the school.
Strategic Oversight	Set long-term goals and ensure alignment with the charter and strategic plan.
Policy & Compliance	Adopt policies that establish expectations for management and ensure compliance with all laws and contracts.
Financial Stewardship	Approve budgets, monitor fiscal health, and ensure an annual audit is completed.
Leadership Evaluation	Hire, support, and evaluate the school leader based on measurable performance goals.
Community Transparency	Maintain transparency through the Open Meetings Act, Open Records Act, and meaningful stakeholder engagement.



Fiduciary Duties

Duty of Care	Make informed, prudent decisions based on relevant data.
Duty of Loyalty	Place the interests of the school above personal or professional interests.
Duty of Obedience	Ensure all decisions align with the school’s mission, bylaws, and applicable law.

2. Governing Board Committees & Key Annual Activities

Throughout each year, the board cycles through key activities that align with the academic, financial, and operational compliance calendars. These activities support the board’s fiduciary responsibilities and ensure ongoing oversight of the school’s performance and health.

A well-defined committee infrastructure is the backbone of effective governance. Committees allow the board to divide its work strategically—enabling deeper analysis, more informed recommendations, and efficient full-board decision-making. By distributing oversight across specialized committees, the board ensures that critical areas such as finance, academics, governance, and facilities receive focused attention throughout the year. Committees also build leadership capacity by engaging members in meaningful work between meetings and preparing future board officers.

The chart below provides a general framework; however, each board should adapt its committee structure and annual cycle to reflect its size, strategic priorities, and stage of development. For example, smaller boards may combine functions—such as governance and operations—into a single “Governance & Operations Committee.” No matter the board’s structure, what matters most is that all essential governance functions—academic oversight, financial stewardship, policy review, and leadership evaluation—are addressed systematically and reported regularly to the full board.

For detailed committee descriptions, see **Appendix B: Comprehensive Committee Descriptions**.

Committee/Category	Key Actions
Academic	Review student performance data, review/recommend academic policies, monitor strategic progress.
Finance	Approve annual budget, review financial reports, ensure a timely and quality audit, review/recommend fiscal policy.



Operations	Review/recommend other operational policies through a compliance lens, approve personnel structures, monitor compliance, evaluate leader, oversee the facility.
Governance	Ensure compliance with bylaws, annual Conflict of Interest disclosures, and required board training; monitor adherence to state and authorizer governance standards; oversee ongoing board recruitment, orientation, and succession planning to maintain a skilled and compliant governing body.

Committee Logistics & Best Practices

- Each committee should have a clear understanding of its purpose, membership, and authority. Creating a brief one-pager can be helpful.
- Committees should meet at least monthly and provide regular reports to the full board.
- Each committee chair should prepare an annual work plan aligned with cyclical activities and the school’s strategic priorities.
- Membership should include at least one board officer and one additional member with relevant expertise.

3. Governing Board Officers

A well-structured board ensures accountability, stability, and strategic focus. At the heart of that structure are engaged board officers who provide leadership, coordination, and oversight across all aspects of governance. Each officer plays a vital role in maintaining continuity—guiding discussions, ensuring compliance, and upholding the integrity of board operations.

Clear, well-defined officer roles—supported by active participation from the Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer—are essential to sustaining an effective governance culture. Strong officer leadership keeps the board organized, compliant, and focused on strategic priorities while modeling the professionalism and commitment expected of all members. As boards grow and evolve, officer responsibilities may shift, but the need for clarity, collaboration, and accountability remains constant.

For detailed role descriptions, see **Appendix C: Comprehensive Officer Descriptions**.

Officer Roles Overview:

Officer	Key Responsibilities
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Chair	Leads the board, sets agendas, oversees strategic priorities, and serves as liaison with the school leader.
Vice-Chair	Supports the Chair, plays active role in board success (e.g. oversees training, and succession planning).
Secretary	Maintains records, ensures Open Meetings compliance, and manages board documentation.
Treasurer	Oversees financial integrity, budget review, and audit processes.

4. Oversight vs. Management: The Governance Decision Matrix

Effective governance also requires clarity between **oversight** (the role of the board) and **management** (the role of school leadership). Even in well-structured boards, the lines between these two domains can blur—particularly in a school’s early years, when there is much to accomplish and few people to share the work. It’s not unusual for board members or officers to take on tasks that lean operational simply to keep things moving. When this happens, the key is to recognize it as a short-term necessity, not a long-term norm.

As the organization matures, the board’s role should evolve from building and doing to monitoring and governing. Officers and committees help anchor that transition by ensuring that decisions flow through the appropriate channels and that board discussions stay focused on strategy, policy, and accountability rather than daily management.

Strong boards also make it a habit to revisit and recalibrate roles. A brief review each year—often during a retreat, self-evaluation, or committee planning session—helps clarify boundaries, confirm responsibilities, and strengthen the partnership between the board and the school leader. This reflection reinforces the shared goal of every high-functioning board: staying in the right lane while driving the school toward its mission.

The matrix below summarizes these distinctions and provides common examples of how responsibilities are typically divided between the board and school leadership; however, it is not an exhaustive list, and each school’s structure may vary slightly based on its size, staffing, and stage of development.

Area	Board Oversight	School Management
Strategic Planning	Sets mission, goals, and outcomes.	Develops and implements strategies to achieve goals.
Academics	Approves curriculum framework, monitors achievement.	Implements instruction and assessment.

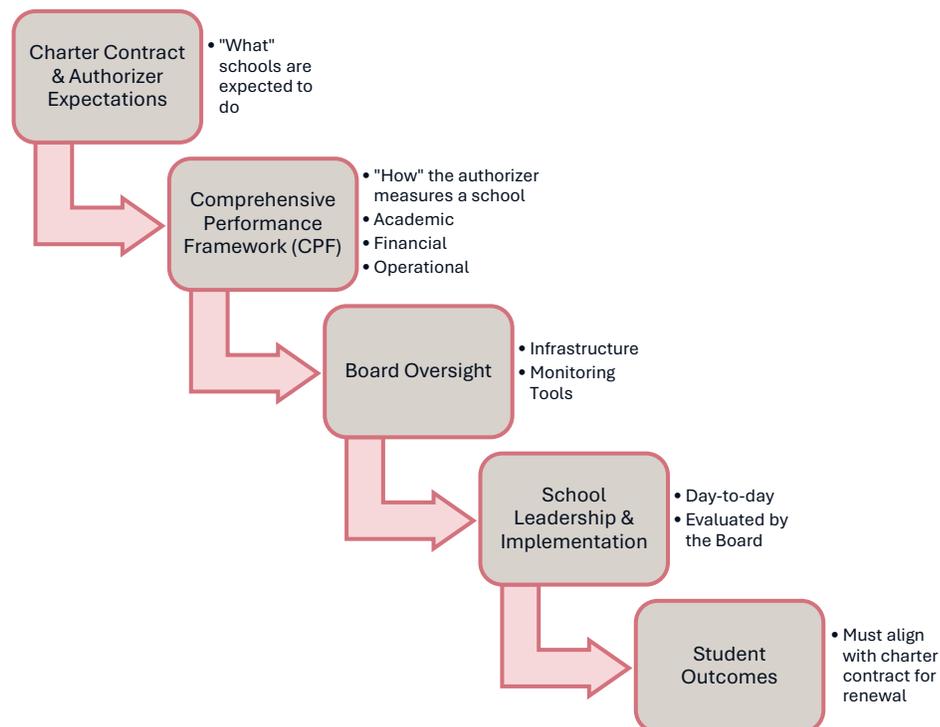


Finance	Adopts budget, monitors performance, ensures audit.	Handles purchasing, payroll, and financial operations.
Operations	Adopts policy, broadly oversees facilities and staffing.	Manages daily operations and logistics.

5. Accountability Framework

Accountability is the foundation of charter governance. The structure below illustrates how responsibility flows from the charter contract and authorizer expectations down through the school's systems and outcomes. The board is accountable to the authorizer for the school's academic, financial, and operational performance as typically measured by a Comprehensive Performance Framework (CPF).

In turn, the board sets strategic priorities and metrics, monitors progress through its committees and dashboards, and holds the school leader accountable for implementation. This alignment ensures that every decision—from classroom practice to budget allocation—ultimately advances the school's mission and leads to positive student outcomes and stakeholder impact.



6. Setting Up an Effective Board (or Committee) Meeting

Meetings are where governance happens in action. An effective meeting balances preparation, structure, and transparency—ensuring that the board conducts business efficiently and in full compliance with legal requirements. Every meeting, regardless of size or formality, must include four essential components: **public notice, a quorum, an agenda, and official minutes.**

Notice

Proper public notice is the foundation of transparent governance and is required under the Open Meetings Act (OMA). Notice ensures that stakeholders have access to observe the board's work and decision-making process.

Quorum

A quorum—the minimum number of board members required to conduct official business—must be present for a meeting to take place. The number required is defined in the school's bylaws (commonly a majority of members). Without a quorum, no decisions or motions can be legally approved. Establishing quorum at the start of each meeting and documenting it in the minutes is essential for compliance and transparency.

Agenda

A well-structured agenda keeps meetings purposeful and focused. Agendas should align with the board's strategic priorities and clearly indicate which items are for information, discussion, or action. The Chair, working with the school leader and committee chairs, should prepare and post the agenda in accordance with Open Meetings Act (OMA) timelines. Including time allocations for each section can help maintain efficiency and prevent discussions from derailing.

*A sample draft agenda is provided in **Appendix D: Sample Board Meeting Agenda.***

Minutes

Minutes are the official record of board actions and decisions. They should summarize key points of discussion, and must note all motions and votes, and record attendance and quorum verification. If a vote is not unanimous, the minutes must detail the names of the members and their votes. Draft minutes must be prepared and made publicly available within the timeframe required by law, then approved at the next regular meeting. Accurate,



timely minutes not only ensure compliance but also demonstrate the board’s commitment to transparency and accountability.

Together, these elements form the foundation of good meeting practice. The next sections outline the Open Meetings requirements that govern public notice and transparency, and the parliamentary procedures that ensure meetings are orderly, inclusive, and fair.

Open Meetings Requirements

Charter school boards must comply with the Georgia Open Meetings Act (O.C.G.A. § 50-14-1 et seq.), which ensures transparency in public decision-making. The Act applies to all meetings of a quorum of board or committee members where official business is discussed or voted upon. A full summary document is available as **Appendix E**.

Key Requirements:

Notice:

- Regular meeting schedules must be adopted annually and posted publicly (e.g., on the school website and front entrance).
- Special or called meetings require at least 24 hours’ notice to the public and media outlets of general circulation.
- Emergency meetings are permitted only under urgent circumstances, with notice provided as soon as practicable.

Agendas:

- The agenda must be posted at least seven days before regular meetings and 24 hours before called meetings.
- The agenda should list all expected discussion and action items.
- Additional items may be considered if necessary, but transparency should be maintained whenever possible.

Minutes:

- A summary (draft) of the meeting must be available to the public within two business days.
- Official minutes should be approved and posted after the next regular meeting.
- Minutes must include members present, motions made and seconded, vote results, and a record of any executive sessions held.

Executive Sessions:



- Permitted only for limited topics such as personnel discussions, real estate transactions, or legal matters.
- Boards must vote in public to enter executive session and file an affidavit stating the legal basis for the closed session.
- No votes or actions may occur in executive session; all decisions must be made in open session.

Other Requirements:

- Committee meetings are also subject to OMA.
- Virtual participation is limited and must meet quorum and accessibility standards.
- It is best practice to err on the side of openness and document all communications and decisions clearly.

Pro Tip: Designate a “compliance check” role—often the Secretary—to ensure that agendas, postings, and minutes meet OMA timelines each month.

Robert’s Rules: Parliamentary Basics

Robert’s Rules provide structure for discussion and decision-making during meetings, ensuring fairness and efficiency. A brief one-pager is available in **Appendix F**.

Key Steps for Motions:

1. A member makes a motion.
2. Another member seconds it.
3. The Chair restates the motion for clarity.
4. Members discuss and may propose amendments.
5. The Chair calls for a vote and announces the result.

Best Practices:

- Allow one speaker at a time.
- Stay focused on the motion at hand.
- Use motions to guide the process and record decisions clearly.
- The Chair should remain neutral when facilitating debate.



7. Board Recruitment

Serving on a governing board is meaningful but demanding work, and transitions are inevitable as members' personal and professional circumstances change. Recognizing this reality, strong boards approach recruitment as a continuous and strategic process, not a one-time task. Maintaining a pipeline of qualified, mission-aligned candidates helps ensure steady membership and leadership continuity when vacancies occur. A clear and easily deployable recruitment process helps attract individuals who understand both the rewards and responsibilities of governance.

*For sample materials, see **Appendices G–I** for the recruitment collateral, interview questions, and evaluation rubric.*

Recruitment Process Overview

1. **Needs Assessment:** The Governance Committee reviews board composition and identifies desired expertise (finance, education, legal, community engagement, etc.).
2. **Outreach and Marketing:** Recruitment collateral highlights the school's mission, the importance of charter governance, expectations, and time commitments to attract candidates who are both qualified and mission-aligned.
3. **Screening and Interviews:** Prospective candidates submit a resume and interest statement. A committee conducts interviews using standardized questions and scoring rubrics to ensure fairness and consistency.
4. **Observation and Engagement:** Before being formally nominated, each candidate is required to attend at least one board or committee meeting. This step allows the board to gauge the candidate's engagement and professionalism while giving the candidate firsthand insight into the board's culture, decision-making process, and time commitments.
5. **Selection and Nomination:** Following the observation period, the Governance Committee reviews feedback and presents qualified candidates to the full board for consideration and vote.
6. **Onboarding and Mentorship:** Newly appointed members complete orientation, compliance forms, and required training, and are paired with a veteran board member for mentorship during their first year of service.



8. Onboarding and Activation

A deliberate and well-designed onboarding process ensures that new board members become confident, informed, and effective contributors from the start. Onboarding sets the tone for engagement and helps maintain continuity when transitions occur.

*A sample checklist is available in **Appendix J: Sample Board Onboarding Checklist**.*

New members should receive an intentional orientation that introduces the charter contract, governance structure, board policies, and performance framework. Just as important, onboarding should emphasize the culture and values of the school, helping new members understand both the “why” and the “how” of governance. Mentorship and early activation into meaningful board work help build confidence, accountability, and belonging.

Core Elements of Onboarding

- **Orientation Training:** Provide an overview of the charter school model, the board’s legal and fiduciary responsibilities, and how the board partners with the school leader.
- **Orientation Packet:** Include key documents such as the charter contract, bylaws, board policies, recent audits, strategic plan, and a current roster of officers and committees.
- **Mentorship:** Pair each new member with an experienced board member who can answer questions, model expectations, and support integration during the first year.
- **Integration & Activation:** Assign the new member to a committee immediately and give them an active role or small responsibility to help them engage quickly.
- **Initial Evaluation:** Within six months, conduct a brief check-in to discuss progress, answer questions, and identify any additional training or support needs.

Conclusion

Effective charter school governance is both an ongoing responsibility and a collective commitment. It requires clarity of roles, consistency in oversight, and a shared belief in the mission that drives every decision. While no two boards will look exactly the same, the principles outlined in this guide—transparency, accountability, preparation, and reflection—form the foundation of strong governance at any stage of a school’s development.



Appendix A: Glossary of Key Terms

Academic Accountability: Oversight of the school's academic performance, ensuring alignment with charter goals and state standards.

Agenda: A published outline of topics to be discussed or acted upon during a board or committee meeting.

Annual Audit: A required external financial review that ensures fiscal accountability and compliance with state and federal requirements.

Board Chair: The presiding officer who leads board meetings and ensures effective governance.

Board Committees: Subgroups of the governing board focused on specific areas such as finance, governance, or academics.

Bylaws: The board's governing rules outlining structure, roles, and procedures.

Charter Contract: The legal agreement outlining the school's mission, performance goals, and accountability requirements.

Comprehensive Performance Framework (CPF): The tool used by authorizers to evaluate charter school performance across academic, financial, and operational domains.

Conflict of Interest (COI): A situation in which a board member's personal or professional interests could compromise impartial decision-making.

Executive Session: Closed portion of a board meeting for confidential matters such as personnel or legal issues.

Fiduciary Duty: The obligation of board members to act in good faith and in the best interest of the school.

Finance Committee: A standing committee responsible for budget review, financial monitoring, and audit oversight.

Governance Committee: Oversees recruitment, training, and evaluation of board members to maintain effective governance practices.

Leadership Evaluation: The board's annual review of the school leader's performance against goals and expectations.

Management: The responsibility of the school leader and administrative staff to implement board policies, make operational decisions, and manage the school's daily activities.



Management focuses on execution, supervision, and the practical administration of programs and personnel.

Minutes: The official written record of a meeting's discussions, motions, and votes.

Motion: A formal proposal made by a board member for consideration and vote.

Open Meetings Act (OMA): Georgia law requiring transparency in public board meetings and decision-making.

Oversight: The board's responsibility to monitor, evaluate, and guide the school's academic, financial, and operational performance. Oversight focuses on setting direction, establishing policy, and holding school leadership accountable for results—without managing day-to-day operations.

Policy: A formal board-adopted statement establishing standards or expectations for school operations.

Quorum: The minimum number of members required to conduct official board business.

Robert's Rules of Order: Standardized parliamentary procedure ensuring orderly, fair decision-making in meetings.

Strategic Plan: A long-term roadmap connecting the school's mission to measurable goals and initiatives.

Transparency: Open and clear communication of board actions, ensuring public trust and accountability.



Appendix B: Comprehensive Committee Descriptions

Common Standing Committee Roles

Each committee operates under the authority of the board and serves to investigate, deliberate, and recommend—**not to decide**—unless delegated authority is formally approved by the board.

Finance Committee

Purpose:

To ensure the financial stability and sustainability of the school through oversight, analysis, and transparent reporting.

Key Responsibilities

- Monitor revenues, expenditures, and adherence to the approved budget.
- Review financial statements and variance reports monthly.
- Oversee annual budgeting, audit preparation, and corrective-action plans.
- Develop and recommend fiscal policies (procurement, reserves, expense thresholds).
- Coordinate with external partners such as auditors or fiscal agents.

Best Practices

- Maintain a calendar of recurring financial tasks (budget approval, audit review, filings).
 - Provide brief “Finance 101” refreshers during meetings to build collective literacy.
 - Present information in dashboards or graphs for clarity.
-

Governance Committee

Purpose:

To ensure the board’s ongoing health through recruitment, training, policy review, and evaluation.

Key Responsibilities



- Assess current board composition and identify skill gaps.
- Lead recruitment, interview, and nomination of new members.
- Coordinate annual conflict-of-interest disclosures and required trainings.
- Review bylaws, policies, and committee charters annually.
- Conduct the annual board self-evaluation and report findings to the board.

Best Practices

- Maintain a rolling candidate pipeline to anticipate vacancies.
- Pair new members with mentors and monitor engagement.
- Collaborate with the Chair to plan retreats and governance workshops.

Academic Committee

Purpose:

To oversee the school's academic performance and ensure alignment with the charter and state standards.

Key Responsibilities

- Review academic data (benchmarks, standardized tests, subgroup performance).
- Monitor progress toward Comprehensive Performance Framework goals.
- Recommend academic priorities or policy adjustments to the full board.
- Review reports on curriculum implementation, intervention programs, and staff professional development.

Best Practices

- Focus on *trends and outcomes*, not daily classroom management.
- Align committee discussions with strategic academic goals.
- Invite school leadership to present data summaries for clarity and context.



Development (Advancement) Committee

Purpose:

To strengthen the school's relationships and resources through fundraising, partnerships, and community engagement.

Key Responsibilities

- Plan and monitor annual fundraising goals and events.
- Cultivate partnerships with businesses, foundations, and donors.
- Oversee communication strategies that build awareness of the school's mission.
- Coordinate with the Finance Committee to ensure proper stewardship of funds.

Best Practices

- Align fundraising goals with strategic priorities and capacity.
- Maintain donor recognition practices that reflect the school's values.
- Encourage board-wide participation in development efforts.

Facilities (Operations) Committee

Purpose:

To ensure the school's physical environment supports learning and is safe, efficient, and well-maintained.

Key Responsibilities

- Review facility needs, maintenance plans, and capital projects.
- Oversee lease agreements, insurance coverage, and compliance inspections.
- Evaluate long-term facility planning and potential expansion needs.
- Coordinate with school leadership to monitor safety procedures.

Best Practices

- Conduct at least one site walk-through annually with administration.
- Keep a multi-year facilities plan with budget projections.



- Ensure facility decisions align with enrollment forecasts and financial capacity.
-

Executive Committee

Purpose:

To act on behalf of the board between meetings when urgent matters arise, and to support coordination among officers.

Key Responsibilities

- Set board meeting agendas in consultation with the Chair and school leader.
- Address time-sensitive issues between meetings, subject to later ratification by the full board.
- Review the performance of the board as a whole and plan annual goals.
- Serve as a sounding board for the school leader on strategic or confidential matters.

Best Practices

- Use sparingly—avoid replacing full-board deliberation.
- Document all actions and report them promptly to the board.
- Rotate participation periodically to build leadership bench strength.



Appendix C: Comprehensive Officer Descriptions

Board Officer Roles

Board Chair

Purpose:

To provide leadership and direction to the board, ensuring it fulfills its governance responsibilities while maintaining a productive partnership with the school leader.

Primary Responsibilities

- Preside over all board meetings and ensure adherence to the Open Meetings Act.
- Collaborate with the school leader and committee chairs to develop meeting agendas aligned to strategic priorities.
- Facilitate board discussions that are inclusive, time-bound, and focused on decision-making.
- Serve as the primary liaison between the board and the school leader, modeling a relationship of trust and accountability.
- Oversee implementation of board decisions and ensure follow-up on action items.
- Represent the school in official functions and communications as authorized by the board.
- Coordinate the annual evaluation of the school leader.
- Partner with the Governance Committee to assess board performance and plan retreats.

Best Practices

- Prepare thoroughly for meetings by reviewing materials and anticipating key questions.
- Remain neutral during debate, focusing on process, not outcome.
- Empower committee chairs—avoid centralizing all work in the executive role.
- Maintain transparency by summarizing decisions and next steps at the close of each meeting.



Vice-Chair

Purpose:

To support the Board Chair and ensure leadership continuity in the event of absence or transition. While the core functions of each officer are generally consistent, the role of the Vice-Chair is particularly flexible and can be tailored to meet the board's evolving needs. In some cases, the Vice-Chair may lead governance training or officer succession efforts; in others, they may focus on enhancing committee coordination, monitoring strategic plan progress, or strengthening governance operations. What matters most is that the Vice-Chair maintains a well-defined area of leadership that contributes to the smooth operation and long-term effectiveness of the board.

Example Primary Responsibilities

- Fulfill the duties of the Chair when the Chair is unavailable.
- Coordinate professional development for board members and oversee the annual governance training calendar.
- Lead or participate in strategic planning and succession planning initiatives.
- Serve as chair or member of the Governance Committee.
- Support evaluation of the board's own effectiveness.

Example Best Practices

- Stay current on governance best practices and help the board implement them.
- Actively mentor potential future board officers.
- Encourage committee accountability through consistent communication with chairs.

Secretary

Purpose:

To ensure accurate documentation of board actions and compliance with the Open Meetings Act and public-record requirements.

Primary Responsibilities

- Prepare, review, and distribute board meeting minutes and summaries within 48 hours of meetings.



- Maintain official records: bylaws, policies, charter contract, membership roster, and all approved minutes.
- Ensure timely posting of meeting notices, agendas, and minutes in accordance with O.C.G.A. § 50-14-1.
- Maintain board calendar and track term expirations and committee assignments.
- Manage document retention and secure storage of confidential materials.

Best Practices

- Develop a checklist for each meeting (agenda → minutes → postings → other needs (e.g. executive session affidavit)).
- Coordinate closely with the Chair and school administrative staff to ensure compliance with timelines.
- Provide new board members with an overview of OMA requirements during onboarding.
- Work collaboratively with Committee Chairs to ensure broad compliance with OMA requirements.

Treasurer

Purpose:

To safeguard the school's fiscal integrity through oversight, transparency, and partnership with the school's finance staff or external provider.

Primary Responsibilities

- Chair or co-chair the Finance Committee.
- Review monthly financial statements, budget-to-actual reports, and cash-flow projections.
- Present financial updates to the full board in plain language.
- Work with staff or consultants to prepare and recommend the annual budget.
- Ensure that the annual audit is completed and submitted on time.
- Monitor compliance with state and federal funding requirements.



Best Practices

- Provide finance training to board members at least annually.
 - Translate financial data into trends and insights, not just numbers.
 - Establish internal controls and dual-signature procedures for high-value transactions.
-



Appendix D: Sample Meeting Agenda

Item	Details	Explanation
Opening Items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Take Attendance – Approve Minutes – Public Comment 	Attendance will confirm quorum. Boards should approve minutes from the previous regularly-scheduled meetings or any special-called meeting. Placing public comment on the agenda reflects stakeholder engagement and transparency.
Executive Director's Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Celebrations – Challenges – Important/Upcoming Needs or Dates – Academics – Finances – Operations 	Will provide school-level updates on academics, finances and operations. Informs Board about any critical upcoming needs or requests.
Committee Reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Governance – Academics – Finance 	Provides general reports about the work of each committee. Highlights recommendations and action needed.
Action Items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Clear items with recommendations and vote 	Decisions that the Board needs to make/vote on. Clearly state what these are for the agenda/minutes. Ensure supporting documents are available for Board members to review & make an informed decision.



Appendix E: Summary of Open Meetings Act (OMA)

Category	Details
What is Considered a Meeting O.C.G.A. § 50-14-1(a)(3)(A)	Any gathering of a quorum of agency members (including committee meetings) where official business, policy, or public matters are discussed or voted upon.
What is Not Considered a Meeting O.C.G.A. § 50-14-1(a)(3)(B)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>Inspections of physical facilities</i> at which no other official business is discussed or official action is taken; – <i>Attending training</i> at which no official action is taken; – <i>Discussions with state or federal officials</i> at which no official action is taken; – <i>Travel to gatherings</i> so long as no official business, policy, or public matter is formulated, presented, discussed, or voted upon by the quorum; and – <i>Social or ceremonial events</i> without official business so long as no official business, policy, or public matter is formulated, presented, discussed, or voted upon by the quorum.
Types of Meetings and Notice Requirements O.C.G.A. § 50-14-1(d)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Regular Meetings: Agenda posted at least one week in advance at place of meeting & on website. Agenda should include time, date and place. – Called Meetings: At least 24 hours' notice given to legal organs or general circulation newspapers. Agenda should be posted at least 24 hours in advance at place of meeting & on website. – Emergency Meetings: Less than 24 hours' notice allowed under special circumstances. Notice and agenda posting should be reasonable under the circumstances and given to legal organ or general circulation newspapers. Reasons must be documented in minutes.
Virtual Meetings O.C.G.A. § 50-14-1(f)-(g)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Only allowable during an emergency and for statewide jurisdictions (i.e. a state charter school with a defined attendance zone cannot hold virtual meetings – including committee meetings). – Virtual meetings are allowable during emergency conditions (e.g. COVID) Notice and public access requirements still apply. – Generally, a <i>member can</i> participate virtually due to health or absence from jurisdiction twice a year provided quorum is otherwise present in person. A member virtually participating in an in-person meeting may vote.
Agenda Requirements O.C.G.A. § 50-14-1(e)	The agenda should include all matters expected to come before the agency or committee at the meeting (e.g. topics of discussion, expected votes, etc.). However, failure to include an item which becomes necessary to address during the course of a meeting shall not preclude considering and acting upon such item.



<p>Executive Session Topics O.C.G.A. § 50-14-3, O.C.G.A. § 50-14-4</p>	<p><i>Executive session is reserved for discussion or deliberation. All votes must be taken in public.</i></p> <p>Discussions are limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Authorizing negotiations, appraisal, contract or option of property transactions (i.e. purchase, dispose, lease) – Meeting with attorney on legal matters (e.g. pending litigation, settlements, administrative proceedings, etc.). – Discussing or deliberating upon the appointment, employment, compensation, hiring, disciplinary action or dismissal, or periodic evaluation or rating of an employee or interviewing applicants for the position of executive head. Does not apply to the receipt of evidence or when hearing argument on personnel matters. (In other words, for employee discipline the evidence must be received in public, the deliberation can occur in private, and the vote must be taken in public.) – Discussing records exempt from disclosure under federal law (i.e. student records.) <p><i>Other:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>The Board must vote to go into Executive Session.</i> – <i>The Chair must execute an affidavit upon conclusion.</i> – <i>Student Disciplinary Hearings are closed under O.C.G.A. § 20-2-757.</i>
<p>Requirements for Meeting Minutes O.C.G.A. § 50-14-1(e)(2)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Summary (i.e. <i>draft</i> minutes) available within two business days. – Official minutes recorded and made public after approval at the next regular meeting. – Minutes must include attendees, motions (including name of people making and seconding), and votes (should be by name unless unanimous). – Executive session minutes must document topics discussed but are not public unless required by court.



Appendix F: Parliamentary Procedure One-Pager

Category	Details
Purpose	Parliamentary procedure exists to clarify and streamline decision-making in meetings. It ensures that every voice is heard, decisions are made efficiently, and meetings are conducted with fairness and order. Understanding the basics empowers all participants to contribute effectively.
Core Principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Order: Ensures a structured process so that business is addressed systematically. – Equality: Gives all members equal opportunity to speak and vote. – Efficiency: Streamlines debate and decision-making to make the best use of time. – Transparency: Makes actions and outcomes clear and well-documented.
Key Roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Chair/Presiding Officer: Guides the meeting, recognizes speakers, ensures rules are followed. – Members: Participate in discussions, make motions, and vote. – Secretary: Takes minutes, records actions and outcomes.
Basic Steps for a Motion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – A member makes a motion. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A motion must clearly state the desired action. Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "I move that we approve the school calendar as presented." ▪ "I move that we adopt the budget proposal with amendments." ▪ "I move that we deny the contract extension." ○ Be specific about what should happen, including references to documents, timelines, or conditions when appropriate. – Another member seconds it. – The chair states the motion. – Members discuss the motion. – The chair calls for a vote. – The vote is taken, and the chair announces the result.
Quick Tips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Stay focused on the topic at hand. – Allow one speaker at a time. – Use motions to guide the process. – Respect the chair's role in managing the flow.



Appendix G: Sample Recruitment Collateral Summary

Effective recruitment materials set the tone for a candidate’s understanding of what it means to serve on a charter school governing board. Well-prepared collateral communicates both the mission and the expectations of service, helping potential members make an informed decision about their fit and commitment.

Recommended recruitment materials include:

“About the School”	Provide a short narrative that explains the mission, who the school serves, its unique educational model, and its core values. This section should convey the school’s identity and the impact it aims to have on students and the community.
Explanation of Charter Framework & Board’s Role	Clarify that charter schools operate under a performance contract with an authorizer and that the governing board holds ultimate responsibility for academic results, financial oversight, and operational compliance. This section should highlight how the board’s work differs from that of a traditional district board or parent advisory body.
Outline of Time Commitments	Be transparent about what board service entails, including meeting frequency, expected committee participation, preparation time, and attendance at school events, required trainings or retreats. Setting expectations early helps attract candidates who can fully engage and reduces attrition later.
Overview of Fiduciary Duties & Conflicts of Interest	Summarize the legal and ethical responsibilities of board members, including the duties of care, loyalty, and obedience; and the annual Conflict of Interest disclosure requirement
Instructions on How to Apply or Express Interest	Provide a clear application process—who to contact, what materials to submit, and what steps follow (e.g., interview, meeting observation, board vote). Emphasize that the process is designed to ensure mutual alignment between the candidate and the school’s mission.



Appendix H: Sample Board Candidate Interview Questions

1. What motivated you to serve on our charter school's governing board?
2. How do your skills and experiences align with our school's mission?
3. Tell us about your experience in leadership, education, or nonprofit work.
4. Describe a time you had to make a difficult decision in a team setting.
5. How would you handle disagreement among board members?
6. What does accountability mean to you in the context of charter school governance?
7. How do you balance strategic oversight with not micromanaging school operations?
8. What are your expectations for board training and time commitment?
9. How might you help advance our school's mission through your personal or professional networks?
10. What excites you most about joining this board, and what concerns might you have?



Appendix I: Sample Candidate Evaluation Rubric

Criteria	1 – Needs Improvement	2 – Developing	3 – Proficient	4 – Exemplary
Relevant Expertise	Limited applicable experience.	Some relevant experience.	Strong relevant experience.	Extensive relevant experience.
Commitment	Unclear understanding of time commitment.	Some demonstration of understanding & commitment.	Demonstrates clear understanding & commitment.	Highly motivated and dependable with exemplary understanding.
Philosophical Alignment	Limited understanding of mission, model or governance.	Some understanding and alignment with the mission, model or governance.	Generally understands model, mission and governance.	Comprehensive understanding of model, embraces mission, and robust understanding of governance
Teamwork & Governance Dynamics	May struggle with collaboration.	Appears willing but inexperienced.	Engages respectfully. Demonstrates an understanding and willingness to professionally disagree.	Fosters collaboration and unity; actively builds consensus and strengthens team cohesion.
Growth Mindset	Resistant to feedback.	Open to learning.	Demonstrates adaptability.	Proactively seeks growth.
Overall Recommendation	Do Not Recommend	Recommend on Probationary Basis or With Concern	Recommend	Highly Recommend with No Concerns



Appendix J: Sample Board Onboarding Checklist

Effective onboarding ensures new board members are equipped, informed, and supported from day one. This checklist serves as a guide to help new members gain access to essential tools, complete key training and compliance steps, and understand expectations for engagement. By following this process, new members build confidence, integrate smoothly into the board's work, and contribute meaningfully to the school's governance from the start.

Access

- Gain access to board email account and calendar.
- Receive login credentials for the board portal, document drives, and meeting platforms (e.g., Zoom or Teams).
- Verify access to shared documents, including agendas, minutes, and committee folders.
- Add upcoming board and committee meetings to personal calendars.

Training & Compliance

- Complete and submit the Conflict of Interest Disclosure and Board Member Agreement.
- Review key documents: charter contract, bylaws, board policies, recent audit, and strategic plan.
- Attend a formal orientation training on charter governance, Open Meetings Act (OMA) compliance, and fiduciary responsibilities.
- Complete any required state or authorizer trainings within the designated timeframe.

Expectations & Support

- Meet with the Board Chair or assigned mentor to discuss board culture, expectations, and engagement opportunities.
- Attend the first committee and board meetings as an active participant.
- Review recent board minutes and school performance data to understand current priorities.
- Participate in a six-month check-in to assess engagement, identify training needs, and gather feedback on the onboarding experience.

