

The Role of the Board and the Executive Director

Introduction

Recognizing that charter schools are governed by boards, not by individual board members, and the relationship between the Board of Directors (Board) and the Westlake Charter School's (WCS) Executive Director (ED) is crucial to the effective operation of the school, ensuring that the academic program of WCS is successful, that the school's programs and operations are faithful to the terms of its charter, and that the school is a viable organization, this policy clarifies the Board's and the ED's primary roles in governing and operating WCS

The Composition of the WCS Board of Directors

WCS is governed by a corporate Board of Directors (Board) in accordance with applicable California Corporations Code Sections and its adopted bylaws. The Board has a legal fiduciary responsibility for the well-being of WCS, and shall be comprised as follows:

- The Board shall have no less than seven (7) and no more than eleven (11) directors consisting of at least seven (7) Community Representatives and two (2) Staff Representatives to be nominated by the Governance Committee and appointed by a majority vote of the Board at the Annual Meeting in accordance with the Bylaws of Westlake Charter School and Board Policy #16-08.

The Board of Directors Primary Roles and Responsibilities

1. Determine the mission and purpose of WCS and keep it clearly in focus. This includes the development, review, or revision of WCS' accountability and mission.
2. Hiring, supporting, and evaluating the ED of WCS so that the vision, goals and policies of the school can be effectively implemented. This includes, but is not limited to, providing frequent and constructive feedback, providing direction to the ED pursuant to established policies, assisting when board members overstep prerogatives or misunderstand their roles, and complimenting for exceptional accomplishments.
3. Conducting regular and timely evaluations of the ED based on the vision, goals and performance of the school, and ensuring that the ED does the same for other personnel of WCS.
4. Ensure effective organizational planning by reviewing the WCS organizational plan for concrete, measurable goals consistent with the charter and accountability plan.
5. Approval of all contractual agreements that are in excess of the authority granted to the ED or his designee.
6. Adopting a fiscally responsible budget based on WCS' vision and goals, and regularly monitoring the fiscal health of WCS.

7. Act as the fiscal agent by receiving funds for the operation of WCS in accordance with charter school laws and the receipt of grants and donations consistent with the mission of WCS.
8. Contracting with an external auditor to produce an annual financial audit according to generally accepted accounting practices and approval of these annual fiscal and performance audits.
9. Determine, monitor and strengthen WCS programs and services, by ensuring that programs and services are consistent with the mission and the charter, approving measurable organizational outcomes, approving annual, attainable board and management level goals, monitoring progress in achieving the outcomes and goals, and assessing the quality of the program and services.
10. The Board may establish committees of parents, students, educators, and community members as necessary, in the support of school programs and the development of a common vision for WCS which is focused on learning and achievement and that is responsive to the needs of all students.
11. Exercising control of the school in accordance with the State and Federal Constitution, and applicable laws and regulations.
12. Executing all other responsibilities provided for in the California Corporations Code.
13. Development and approval of the school calendar and schedule of Board meetings.
14. Adopting, evaluating, and updating Board policies and procedures consistent with the law and the school's mission.
15. Review and action on requests for out of state or overnight field trips.
16. Participation in the dispute resolution procedure and complaint procedures when necessary.
17. Maintaining accountability for student learning by adopting the school's curriculum and monitoring student progress.
18. Consulting with the ED on his or her recommendations and taking action in consideration of them.
19. Ensuring that a safe and appropriate educational environment is provided to all students.
20. Ensuring adequate housing, equipment, supplies and other facilities for the operation of WCS.
21. Hearing communications, written and/or oral, from citizens and organizations on matters of administration, finance, organization, policy and program.

22. Approval of charter amendments.

23. Approval of personnel discipline (suspensions or dismissals) as needed and/or requested by the ED and in accordance with school policy.

24. Appoint an administrative panel to act as a hearing body and take action on recommended student expulsions.

25. Conducting annual elections of officers and as needed new board members.

The Executive Director's primary roles include:

1. Recognizing and respecting the differences of perspective and style on the Board and among staff, students, parents and the community and ensuring that a diverse range of views inform Board decisions.
2. Working with the Board as a "governance team" and assuring collective responsibility for building a unity of purpose, communicating a common vision and creating a positive organizational culture.
3. Understanding and helping others to understand the distinction between board and staff roles.
4. Understanding that authority rests with the Board as a whole; providing guidance to the Board to assist in decision-making; and providing leadership based on the direction of the Board as a whole.
5. Communicating openly with trust and integrity including providing all members of the Board with equal access to information, and recognizing the importance of both responsive and anticipatory communications.
6. Provide general oversight of all WCS activities, manage the day-to-day operations, and assure a smoothly functioning, efficient charter school.
7. Maintain program quality and charter school stability and sustainability through development and implementation of standards and controls, systems and procedures, and regular evaluation.
8. Maintain a work environment that recruits, retains, and supports quality staff.
9. Set measurables for staff and evaluate performance regularly by instituting accountability systems to ensure that charter promises are met and exceeded.
10. Develop and supervise the processes for recruitment, selection, hiring, initial training, ongoing professional development, and evaluation of teachers and staff.
11. Assist school staff in facilitating board meetings by helping to set the location of the meetings, developing board meeting agendas, and by providing safe storage of agendas, minutes and supporting documents/reports.

12. Inform the Board and its committees about trends, issues, problems and activities in order to facilitate policy-making and provide recommendations to the Board on policy positions.
13. Help the Board articulate its own role and accountabilities, including its committees and individual members, and help evaluate performance regularly.
14. Work with the Board President to enable the Board to fulfill its governance functions and facilitate the optimum performance by the Board, its committees, and individual board members.
15. Along with the Board President, assist in focusing board attention on long-range strategic issues.
16. Work with the board officers and committee chairs to get the best thinking and involvement of each board member and to stimulate each board member to give his or her best.
17. Communicate with school legal counsel to ensure the filing of all legal and regulatory documents and to monitor compliance with relevant laws and regulations..
18. Oversee the fiscal activities of WCS, including budgeting, reporting, and auditing in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles and make regular financial reports to the Board.
19. Promote programs and services that are produced in a cost-effective manner, employing economy while maintaining an acceptable level of quality.
20. Work with the Board to ensure necessary financial planning to support short- and long-term goals.
21. Attend all Board meetings and attendance as necessary at Natomas Unified School District (NUSD) meetings as the charter representative.
22. Foster an amicable relationship between NUSD and WCS and facilitate a sharing of resources between both entities.
23. Establish a Communication Model to facilitate communication among all the groups within the school, between WCS and NUSD, and between WCS and the community at large.
24. Act as an advocate, within the public and private sectors, for issues relevant to WCS, its services, and constituencies.
25. Establish procedures designed to carry out Board policies.
26. Create and submit for approval by the Board a school calendar.

27. Manage communications between the NUSD Board and the Board as needed.

28. Develop and present the School Annual Performance Audit to the Board and NUSD.

29. Present fiscal audit to the Board and after said review present a fiscal audit to the NUSD and the County Superintendent of Schools, the State Controller and the California Department of Education.

The above duties may be delegated or contracted as approved by the Board to a business administrator of WCS or other employee, a parent volunteer (only in accordance with student and teacher confidentiality rights) or to a third party provider.

Each individual member of the Board of Directors shall:

1. Believe in and be an active advocate and ambassador for the values, mission, and vision of WCS.
2. Work with fellow board members to fulfill the obligations of board membership.
3. Understand that the authority rests with the Board as a whole and not with individuals. This includes ensuring that no board member represents her/himself as speaking on behalf of the Board unless specifically authorized to do so.
4. Behave in ways that clearly contribute to the effective operations of the Board. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - Acting with dignity and understanding the implications of demeanor and behavior;
 - Focusing on the good of the organization and group, not on a personal agenda;
 - Supporting board decisions once they are made;
 - Keeping confidential matters confidential;
 - Recognizing and respecting differences of perspective and style on the Board and among staff, students, parents and the community;
 - Participating in an honest appraisal of one's own performance and that of the Board; and
 - Building awareness of and vigilance towards governance matters rather than management.
5. Regularly attend board and committee meetings. Prepare for these meetings by reviewing materials and bringing the materials to meetings. If unable to attend, notify the Board President, ED, and/or the secretary to the Board.
6. Be prepared to contribute toward board service by attending monthly board meetings, being willing to participate on a board committee, reading materials, preparing for meetings, attending events at WCS, participating in professional development, committing the time and energy necessary to be an informed and effective leader, and assisting with other tasks as needed.

7. Keep informed about WCS and its issues by reviewing materials, participating in discussions, and asking strategic questions.
8. Use personal and professional contacts and expertise for the benefit of WCS.
9. Serve as a committee or task force chair or member.
10. Inform the Board of WCS of any potential conflicts of interest, whether real or perceived, and abide by the decision of the board related to the situation.