



NATIONAL CHARTER SCHOOLS
INSTITUTE

BOARD
NETWORK

GOVERNING FOR GREATNESS SERIES

Does Your Board Know the Score?

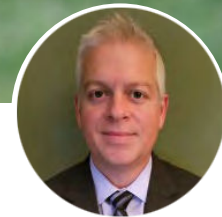
5 Insights Boards Need to Know



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Leadership is not about personality; it's about behavior—an observable set of skills and abilities. When the co-authors of The Leadership Challenge, Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner, first set out to discover what effective leaders do when they're at their personal best, they collected thousands of stories from ordinary people—the moments they recalled when asked to think of a peak leadership experience. Despite differences in culture, gender, age, and other variables, these “personal best” stories revealed similar patterns of behavior. The authors discovered that when leaders experience their personal best, they display five core practices: they Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart. Jim and Barry called these behaviors The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership[®]. Together, these practices provide the basis for The Leadership Challenge[®].



Model the Way

Leaders establish principles concerning the way people (constituents, peers, colleagues, and customers alike) should be treated and the way they should pursue goals. Leaders create standards of excellence and set an example for others to follow. They put up signposts when people feel unsure of where to go or how to get there. Leaders create opportunities for victory.



Inspire a Shared Vision

Leaders passionately believe they can make a difference. They envision the future and create an ideal and unique image of what the organization can become. Through their magnetism and persuasion, leaders enlist others in their dreams. They breathe life into their visions and get people to see exciting possibilities for the future.



Challenge the Process

Leaders search for opportunities to change the status quo. They look for innovative ways to improve the organization. In doing so, they experiment and take risks. Since complex change threatens to overwhelm people and stifle action, leaders set interim goals so that people can achieve small wins as they work toward larger objectives. Effective leaders unravel bureaucracy when it impedes action. And, because leaders know that taking risks involves mistakes and failures, they accept occasional disappointments as opportunities to learn.



Enable Others to Act

Leaders foster collaboration and build spirited teams. They actively involve others. Leaders understand that mutual respect sustains extraordinary efforts. They strive to create an atmosphere of trust and human dignity. They strengthen others, making each person feel capable and powerful.



Encourage the Heart

Accomplishing extraordinary things in organizations is hard work. To keep hope and determination alive, leaders recognize the contributions that individuals make. In every winning team, the members need to share in the rewards of their efforts, so leaders celebrate accomplishments. They make people feel like heroes.

For more information on The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership see:
<https://www.leadershipchallenge.com/research/five-practices.aspx>

Position Description: Charter School Board Chair

The role of the board chair is to focus and guide the full board in its actions at public meetings. They set the agenda for each meeting in partnership with school leadership. Board chairs must ensure that the school's mission always guides its actions, and that the board stays focused on what matters most—educating kids.

The board chair must be a strong communicator and a skilled facilitator. They play an important role in creating an environment in which board members feel engaged, included, respected and are able to make a positive contribution. The board functions best when the chair is responsive to other board members' views, maintains a collegial atmosphere, manages different personalities and perspectives and works hard to foster a trusting yet candid relationship with school leadership. Finally, the board chair must model how to govern the school and protect the role of management that has been delegated to school leadership.

Key Responsibilities

- **Board Meetings:**
 - Facilitate meetings and keep them focused on the school's mission, vision, and values
 - Develop meeting agendas in partnership with leadership that reflect the board's priorities
 - Respect and engage every board member by encouraging open and constructive discussion
 - May also be designated, by a majority vote of the board, special authority to complete certain tasks such as signing checks and approving contracts
- **Monitor School Performance:**
 - Ensure the board receives regular updates on the academic, financial, and operational performance of the school and addresses any areas of concern
 - Share all relevant information from the authorizer and management with the full board
- **Lead with Excellence:**
 - Ensure that the board is practicing effective governance and executing key board functions
 - Champion diversity and inclusion on the board
- **Effective Communication:**
 - Remain approachable, available, and responsive to the public, school leadership, and board members
 - Set the expectation that the board will speak with a single, unified voice
 - Model effective networking with community members and stakeholders
- **Committee Work:**
 - Set clear expectations for committee structure, operations, and communication to the full board
 - Ensure committees of the board act within the authority granted by the board's bylaws and do not overstep into day-to-day operations
- **School Leader Relationship:**
 - Build a constructive, candid relationship with school leadership
 - Participate in regularly scheduled check-ins with school leadership to discuss strategic issues, monitor progress, succession planning, and opportunities where the leader needs support from the board
- **Board Growth and Development:**
 - With board member input, develop a plan for board development and succession planning
 - Ensure the board conducts an annual self-assessment and addresses areas for improvement

Qualifications

- A commitment to the school's mission, vision and values
- A commitment to act in the best interest of the school, the students, and the public it serves
- A clear understanding of the school's contract and bylaws
- Excellent communication, interpersonal, and conflict resolution skills
- The ability to build consensus and make decisions