

Performance Expectations for Board of Trustee Members

The Board of Trustees is the organized group of volunteers who, collectively, are legally and morally accountable to the community for the health, vitality, and effectiveness (Dayton 2001) of the Sturgis Charter Public School. The Board's primary role is "Governance", which encompasses legal responsibilities, general oversight, planning and policy-making, and meeting fiduciary requirements. The Board only has authority when it votes as a group. "No single member has authority for the board as a whole" (Joyaux 2006).

The Board must ensure the School's compliance with all applicable state and federal laws. It must also ensure that the Board itself is operating in accordance with the rules set out by all applicable Massachusetts laws and regulations. The following principles should guide Board members:

1. **Duty of Care:** The Board member owes the duty to exercise reasonable care when he or she makes a decision as a steward of the Sturgis Charter Public School.
2. **Duty of Loyalty:** A Board member must give undivided allegiance when making decisions affecting the Sturgis Charter Public School. This means that a Board member can never use information obtained as a member for personal gain, but must act in the best interest of the organization.
3. **Duty of Obedience:** This requires a Board member to be faithful to the school's mission. He/She must act in a way that is consistent with the central goals of the school. The basis of the rule lies in the public's trust that the school will manage funds to fulfill its mission. (MA DOE CSO 2005)

Each Board member of the Sturgis Charter Public School affirms the expectations outlined below, and strives to perform accordingly. All Board members are treated equally when it comes to these expectations. Board members are expected to:

1. Believe in and be an active advocate and ambassador for the mission and vision of the organization. Act in accordance with the values of the Sturgis Charter Public School.
2. Work with fellow Board members to fulfill the obligations of membership.
3. Contribute to the effective operation of the Board, including but not limited to:
 - a. Focus on the good of the School and the group, not a personal agenda.
 - b. Support Board decisions, once they are made.
 - c. Participate in the appraisal of his/her own performance and the performance of Board committees.
 - d. Support the School's policies and procedures and support the Board's groundrules for conducting business.
 - e. Work with fellow Board members to assure that the Board functions well.
4. Regularly attend and participate in Board meetings of the School. Prepare for these meetings by reviewing materials and bringing the materials to the meetings. Challenge assumptions and ask questions during meetings.
5. Keep informed about the School and its issues by reviewing materials, participating in discussion, and asking strategic questions.

6. Participate in the performance review of the School's Executive Director.
7. Participate in the activities of the School by attending programs and fundraising events.
8. Help support the charitable contributions of the School by:
 - a. Contributing financially to the best of personal ability.
 - b. Participate in a fundraising activity or carry out a fundraising task.
 - c. Help identify and cultivate relationships to support the School as donors, volunteers, and advocates.
9. As appropriate, use personal and professional contacts and expertise for the benefit of the School.
10. Be available to serve as a committee or task force chair or member. Be prepared and be an active participant.
11. Inform the Board of Trustees of the School of any potential conflicts of interest, whether real or perceived, and abide by the decision of the Board related to the situation.
12. Be very clear about the Board and Board members' relationship to the Director and staff. Focus on governance rather than management.
13. Agree to step down from the Board of Trustees if unable to fulfill these expectations. (Feist 1999, 4)

Sources:

Dayton, Kenneth N. 2001. Governance is Governance (an updated paper based on a speech given in 1987). Washington, D.C.: Independent Sector. Also available online at http://www.independentsector.org/pubs_cart.htm. Paraphrased in Marci Cornell Feist, The Massachusetts Charter Schools Trustees Guide (Boston: Pioneer Institute for Public Policy Research, 1999), 2.

Feist, Marci Cornell. 1999. The Massachusetts Charter Schools Trustees Guide. Boston: Pioneer Institute for Public Policy Research.

Joyaux, Simone P., ACFRE. 2006. Personal Communication. Additional materials available online, from Joyaux Associates, at http://www.simonejoyaux.com/resources/pdf_archive_board_development.htm

Adapted from the Massachusetts Department of Education Charter School Office document: The Charter School's Administrative and Governance Guide, Draft May 2005, Available at: www.doe.mass.edu/charter/governance.