THE PUBLIC CHARTER'S GUIDE TO BOARD COMMITTEES

Which committees you need & how to ensure they're effective

BoardOnTrack

Committees are the engine of every high-performing board.

That is, active, high-functioning committees that do substantive work between board meetings, are the engine of high-performing boards.

Yet, establishing real, active committees remains among the top challenges faced by public charter school organizations nationwide.

The charter leaders who've solved this are clear about which committees the board needs, what they do, and who should serve on them.

This e-book will reveal exactly that, and more.

We'll explain the five committees your board needs.

You'll learn what they're responsible for, who should serve on them, and what makes the highest-performing committees so effective.

And, each section includes a sample job description you can use with your own board.

But first, we'll answer your most common questions about running board committees -- how often to meet, whether you need to take and approve minutes for committee meetings, and more.

BOARD COMMITTEE BASICS

Simple answers to your most commonly asked questions

1 Why do your committees matter?

Committees do the deep work between board meetings, ensuring your board meetings are strategic and productive.

Committees make recommendations for deliberation by the full board and facilitate the board's decision-making. They help decide whether a matter needs to be addressed by the board at all. They advise staff on key issues. And they take on special projects.

In committee meetings, you distill the big issues and frame recommendations for the board to discuss.

By digging into the weeds outside of full board meetings, your committees outline key issues, prepare to educate the full board on key subject areas, and save the board time.

For example, a detailed review of the cash flow for the organization may be done by the Finance Committee, which then recommends to the board that a line of credit be established. Although the full board is responsible for the decision, board members rely on the diligence and thoughtfulness of the Finance Committee's recommendations.

All of this adds up to enabling good process and decision-making, while saving the full board valuable time. And that keeps board members engaged and focused.

2

How often do committees meet?

Committees should meet between board meetings; as often as needed.

Committees should meet as often as necessary to accomplish their work. And they should only meet when there's substantive work to be done.

For example, a Facilities Committee racing to close a deal on a new building might need to meet every week for six weeks straight. Whereas, the Finance Committee might just hold a standing meeting once a month to review the monthly financials.

PLAN YOUR MEETINGS WELL IN ADVANCE.

Trustees and committee members are volunteers -- and very busy. They're more likely to attend meetings, and to arrive prepared, if meetings are planned in advance.

To the extent possible, map out all of your committee meetings for the year. And put them on your committee members' calendars.

Even if you're uncertain about how many meetings any committee will need, it's better to pencil them all in for the year well in advance. It's easier to cancel meetings than it is to ask busy people to participate at the last minute.

KEEP ACCURATE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES. AND MAKE THEM ACCESSIBLE TO THE BOARD.

Your committees' minutes serve as a record of the actions taken at each meeting, and by whom. They allow other trustees to follow each committee's work. And they create an institutional memory that will even survive changing committee chairs.

BoardOnTrack makes it simple to create, store, and share your committee's work. The platform automatically creates a folder for each committee meeting in the meeting archive. As you create agendas, take minutes, and share documents for each committee meeting, it's all automatically placed in the correct meeting archive folder for you.

3 What do committees need to succeed?

A JOB DESCRIPTION AND SET OF MEASURABLE GOALS.

Annually, the full board should approve a job description and a set of prioritized goals for each committee. These documents set the parameters for the committees' work and confirm the full board's buy-in to that work.

Throughout this book, you'll find example goals and tasks for each committee, along with template committee job descriptions that you can use with your board right now.

THE RIGHT MEMBERS, STAFF, AND LEADERSHIP.

On the following pages, you'll find recommendations for the skills and talents to look for in the people who serve each committee.

In addition to recruiting the right trustees and non-voting committee members, your committees need the right chairs and staff liaisons.

STRONG BOARD COMMITTEES START WITH SKILLED COMMITTEE CHAIRS.

Much like board chairs, great committee chairs have strong group process and facilitation skills. They set clear direction and norms. They can keep strong personalities focused on the right things, hold committee members accountable, and steer the group to a decision.

Because partnership with staff is integral to each committee’s work, chairs must establish the right protocols for interacting with staff. They'll learn how to preserve the governance-management line, and help committee members follow suit.

CEO AND C-SUITE LEADERS PLAY KEY ROLES ON YOUR BOARD’S COMMITTEES.

Your committees will need direct, expert support from staff to be successful.

At the beginning, without a leadership team to lean on, the CEO will be integral to each committee's work, as well as guiding the board as a whole. For instance, committee meeting agendas are created in partnership between the Committee Chair and the CEO or their designee {a C-suite member}.

As the organization grows, the CEO will be able to delegate committee liaison work to their C-suite. Staff must be assigned to their roles by the CEO, and clear about the expectations, in order to support and sustain effective committee work.

4

Is your board too small to staff the right committees right now?

If you're in founding mode, you might need to work as a committee of the whole. In that scenario, the whole board does the work of each committee.

Even if that's where you are today, you'll need to know exactly what each committee does and what skillsets each committee needs.

This will equip you to consciously shift gears or mindset from one committee to the next within each board meeting.

And, you'll be on the lookout for the right trustees or non-voting committee members to recruit as your board's capabilities evolve.

Founding boards sometimes choose to do most tasks as a committee of the whole, this is not sustainable. This is fine during the initial founding and startup years.

But, as you grow and your organization evolves, it will be essential that you grow your board enough to form functioning committees that do substantive work in between meetings.

THE FIVE ESSENTIAL BOARD COMMITTEES

On the following pages, we'll introduce you to what each committee does.

You'll learn who should serve on each committee, as well as what the highest-performing committees do well.

And, we'll provide a sample committee job description you can use to clarify your own committees' roles and responsibilities.

Governance

Development

Finance

Academic Excellence

CEO Support & Evaluation

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

The Governance Committee is essential to your board's overall strength.

Have you struggled to recruit the right trustees? Are you uncertain that each trustee understands their roles and responsibilities, and is held accountable for fulfilling them?

The Governance Committee is the crux of this and more.

A well-staffed Governance Committee manages board member recruitment, nominations, and orientation.

That includes organizing the annual retreats to facilitate strategic planning, assessing the board's strengths, and ensuring the board receives necessary professional development.

And, they handle all issues relating to your board's bylaws.

WHO TO RECRUIT

Install the right chair. And don't leave it all to your Board Chair.
Ideally, your Board Chair will serve on this committee ex-officio. And someone else will actually chair the committee.

Sometimes, the biggest problem with a board's governance is actually its Board Chair. So having someone else serve in the position of Governance Committee Chair means that there's a check on the Board Chair. There's someone else on the board who can speak to the Board Chair from a position of authority as it relates to governance issues.

For example, maybe the Governance Committee discovers that full board meetings don't feel productive. Trustees are frustrated, and the board is at risk not only of faltering engagement but actually of losing great people.

Best case scenario: the Board Chair needs tips on meeting facilitation. Worst case scenario: the Board Chair needs someone to have a frank conversation with them about possibly stepping down and making room for new leadership.

In addition to all of that, the Board Chair typically has a lot on their plate already, and gets saddled with too much of the prodding and nudging that the chair of the Governance Committee has to do in the spirit of helping the Board Chair look at the overall health of the board.

The ideal members of this committee are:

- Board members who have previous governance experience, ideally on a school board
- Attorneys or people who understand governance structures and laws
- Someone who has great networking and recruiting experience
- Individuals who have worked in leadership or organizational development
- Former charter, private, or public school leaders

WHAT SUCCESSFUL GOVERNANCE COMMITTEES DO

PRIORITIZE YOUR GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

This committee should be one of the first established by your board. Tending to the health, education, and evolution of your trustees is vital to having an effective board.

FACILITATE FULL BOARD OWNERSHIP FOR ALL WRITTEN POLICIES

Creating policy should be the purview of the entire board and each committee. All policies do not need to flow through the Governance Committee.

The Governance Committee should focus only on policies related to board process: job descriptions, attendance policies, bylaws, etc.

OPERATE BEYOND THE NOMINATING FUNCTIONS

Some boards have a Governance Committee in name, but the committee really only focuses on the nominating aspects.

Prioritize sufficient time on evaluating the board annually, organizing board training, and facilitating an annual retreat.

SAMPLE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE GOALS AND TASKS

As with any committee, your Governance Committee's work should be organized around goals and tasks.

GOAL	TASKS
Implement a board recruitment & succession plan.	Complete board terms & skills inventory. Review bylaws and charter for board member requirements. Set timeline and consistent process for annual recruitment and elections. Cultivate and keep pipeline reserve of potential board candidates. Develop a standard board orientation packet and process.

GOAL	TASKS
Conduct an annual assessment of the board's strengths and areas to improve.	Develop a timeline for the assessment. Select an assessment tool. Schedule a time to review the results and decide next steps. Ask committees to set goals based on assessment results.

Governance Committee

General Purpose

The Governance Committee is commissioned by and responsible to the Board of Trustees to assume the primary responsibility for matters pertaining to Board of Trustees recruitment, nominations, orientation, training, and evaluation in accordance with the bylaws of the organization as well as with established policies and practices approved by the Board of Trustees.

Appointments and Composition

Appointments of the Chair and members of the Board Governance Committee shall be made annually by the Chair of the Board with the advice and consent of the Board in accordance with the Bylaws.

The Chair of this committee shall be a member of the Board of Trustees.

Other members of this committee shall be members of the Board of Trustees.

Additional committee members may be appointed and need not be members of the Board of Trustees.

Responsibilities

- → Analyze the skills and experience needed on the Board.
- → Create a short and long-term board recruitment strategy.
- → Work with Board Chair and CEO on a succession plan for board officers.
- → Recruit members to serve as members of the Board and develop a slate of trustees for consideration by the membership at the annual meeting in accordance with selection/election procedures outlined in the bylaws.
- → Develop and review annually the procedures for Board recruitment.
- → Develop an orientation and training plan for new trustees.
- → Assist in the planning of an annual Board retreat and other deeper strategy sessions as needed.
- → Develop and revise a Board Member handbook outlining the responsibilities of the Board and Board members, Board policies, and other relevant information.
- → Conduct board education as needed.
- → Create specific measurable board-level goals for the year as part of the full board planning process.
- → Regularly evaluate the effectiveness of board meetings and make recommendations for improvement to the Chair and the full board as needed.
- → Annually coordinate an evaluation of the full board and individual trustees.
- → Report to the Board of Trustees at regular meetings of the Board in a manner determined by the Board.
- → Annually evaluate its work as a committee and the objectives it has committed itself to and report on same to the Board of Trustees.

DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

The Development Committee assumes the primary responsibility for raising non-grant funds to support the organization’s mission.

Ensuring that the organization has sufficient funding to support the growth and expansion of the organization is critical to long-term sustainability.

WHO TO RECRUIT

Also known as the Fundraising Committee, the ideal Development Committee members have a track record of raising funds for nonprofit organizations.

Fundraising is a skill and a profession. The trustees on this committee should be seasoned development professionals.

Often, charter school boards don't seek out skilled professionals to serve on this committee. Thus, they leave too much responsibility in the hands of people without this expertise.

Look for people who know how to develop and implement a realistic fundraising plan, and who can mentor the other trustees in this area so they might contribute.

This is especially the case for the chair. You want this committee to be led by someone who has deep practical knowledge of the strategies and tactics that work, and has a proven track record of motivating people to take action in support of a mission.

In addition, your Development Committee members should be highly skilled in communicating their needs to the board, staff, and external personnel.

Your board will need to have a frank conversation about the funding that your organization's goals will require — and whether you'll need to seek private fundraising.

Most charter school boards find themselves split between members who feel fundraising is essential, and those who are nervous about fundraising or even disdain the concept.

It's essential that your Development Committee is staffed by people who can effectively lead these conversations.

People with backgrounds in marketing or PR, especially in the nonprofit sector, can be excellent members of a Development Committee.

WHAT SUCCESSFUL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEES DO

GET ON THE SAME PAGE

Have an honest conversation with your full board about whether you can achieve your organization's goals without private fundraising.

If you decide that private fundraising is necessary, clarify what the full board's responsibility is in achieving your short- and long-term fundraising goals.

MAKE DEVELOPMENT A FULL-BOARD AFFAIR

As with each of the other committees, the Development Committee's job is to facilitate the full board achieving its goals. Not to go it alone.

The committee plans and supports the execution of key tasks. But ultimately, the full board is responsible for participating in and achieving annual fundraising goals.

UTILIZE STAFF EXPERTISE WISELY

A group of committed volunteers can certainly add a great deal to an organization's fundraising efforts. But it's unrealistic to place all the weight on the shoulders of a volunteer board.

Just like there is substantive work for a Finance Committee to do while a full-time staff fulfills the day-to-day financial management of the organization, the same is true for fundraising. The committee has a role to play, but substantial private funds cannot be raised by the board without the support and expertise of paid full-time staff dedicated to this important function.

SAMPLE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE GOALS & TASKS

As with any committee, your Development Committee's work should be organized around goals and tasks. Each committee goal will be tied to the overall organizational goals. And, to ensure you meet that goal, you might assign specific committee members specific tasks.

GOAL	TASKS
Develop an annual fundraising plan that includes standard operating procedures, guidelines, and protocols.	Create an annual fundraising plan that outlines management vs. governance role, role of individual trustees, full board and committee in implementing development plan. Gain board approval of the development plan, timeline, and tasks.

GOAL	TASKS
Raise $30k for the new playground.	Develop a realistic fundraising strategy. Set expectation for minimum donation from each trustee. Plan flagship fundraising event.

Development Committee

General Purpose

The Development Committee is commissioned by and responsible to the Board of Trustees to assume the primary responsibility for raising non-grant funds to support the organization's mission.

Appointments and Composition

Appointments of the Chair and members of the development committee shall be made annually by the Chair of the Board with the advice and consent of the Board in accordance with the bylaws.

The Chair of this committee shall be a member of the Board of Trustees.

Members of this committee shall be members of the Board of Trustees, subject to the conditions stated in the bylaws.

Additional committee members may be appointed and need not be members of the Board of Trustees.

Responsibilities

- Develop annual and multi-year fundraising plans that will generate the funds needed to meet the non-public and non-grant fundraising goal.
- Coordinate the implementation of the fundraising plan with fundraising efforts by senior staff, parents, and other volunteers.
- Develop the necessary sub-committee systems to successfully carry out the fundraising events and activities that are part of the annual fundraising plan; supervise the functions of the subcommittees.
- Develop a plan for involving all Board trustees in the non-grant resource development activities of the organization.
- Arrange for Board training on development issues, as needed.
- Create specific, measurable board-level goals for the year as part of the full board planning process.
- Report to the Board of Trustees at regular meetings of the Board in a manner determined by the board.
- Annually evaluate its work as a committee and the objectives it has committed itself to and report on same to the Board of Trustees.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Every public charter school is a multimillion-dollar venture. And financial mismanagement is the top reason charter schools fail.

Sound financial oversight is a critically important function for your board.

The Finance Committee works with the CEO and Chief Financial Officer (CFO) to create the upcoming fiscal year budget, presents budget recommendations to the board, monitors implementation of the approved budget on a regular basis, recommends proposed budget revisions, and recommends policies for the management of the organization's assets.

Still, a Finance Committee is not a substitute for the full board understanding and carefully reviewing the organization's financial statements and financial health.

WHO TO RECRUIT

While it's important for every committee to be adequately staffed, this is especially important for the Finance Committee.

With the proper size, finances will be a strength for your organization. This committee should be large enough to bring several different perspectives and a variety of financial skills to the important task of financial oversight.

This committee's needs are highly influenced by where your board is on its path to excellence.

It's important for all of the committees to think about where the organization is in its life cycle and where the board is on the capability maturity model. This is most relevant for the Finance Committee. The skills that are needed for Level 1 work for are markedly different than Level 4 and 5 work.

If you're governing a growing CMO, the finance skills represented on this committee should be more strategic and less tactical.

If you're governing a single-site charter school with no finance professionals on staff yet, your Finance Committee will have a very different focus than it will when your organization hires a finance team of three, five, or even just one full-time employee.

The ideal members of this committee are:

- Accountants
- People with finance experience like budget directors, and ideally with school finance
- Someone with experience running a business office
- Someone who has kept the books for an organization before, and can quickly interpret financial spreadsheets or other documents
- People who understand financial controls and oversight for organizations of a similar size to where you are now or where you're headed.

Look for people who speak the language of complex organizational finances. They'll be effective partners to your CFO.

WHAT SUCCESSFUL FINANCE COMMITTEES DO

FULL BOARD RESPONSIBILITY

A Finance Committee is not a substitute for the full board understanding and carefully reviewing the organization's financial statements and financial health. The full board is responsible for the long-term financial viability of the organization.

MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES ON THE COMMITTEE

A robust Finance Committee is large enough to bring several different perspectives and a variety of financial skills to the important task of financial oversight. You're able to be frank, have hard conversations, and make sound decisions together.

COLLABORATE WITH PAID STAFF MANAGERS

The organization's finances must be properly handled by a paid staff member of the organization. The Finance Committee should not directly manage the organization's finances. Instead, the committee will partner closely with the right staff member(s) to accomplish its objectives.

EDUCATE THE FULL BOARD

As each trustee is equally responsible for the financial oversight and long-term viability of the organization, the trustees rely upon the Finance Committee to lead the board in this area. This includes educating the full board on the financial health of the organization and how to conduct proper oversight.

SAMPLE FINANCIAL COMMITTEE GOALS AND TASKS

As with any committee, your Finance Committee's work should be organized around goals and tasks.

GOAL	TASKS
Create multiyear scenarios to improve salary scale and other benefits.	CEO shares thoughts about areas to strengthen and recommended approach at board retreat. Faculty and staff survey complete. List of non-financial benefits compiled and prioritized. Provisional plan created. Plan shared with full board for feedback.

GOAL	TASKS
Develop a Financial Policies and Procedures Manual.	CEO performs due- diligence to determine what policies, procedures and controls are currently in place to manage the assets at the school. Finance Committee researches FFP samples from other schools, and consults with accountant to determine content. CEO and finance committee draft a Table of Contents for manual for board approval. CEO and business manager begin to compile manual, starting with currently used forms, etc. Committee works with CEO to develop balance of needed procedures for manual.

Finance Committee

General Purpose

The Finance Committee is commissioned by and responsible to the Board of Trustees.

It has the responsibility of: working with the CEO and Chief Financial Officer (CFO) to create the upcoming fiscal year budget; presenting budget recommendations to the Board; monitoring implementation of the approved budget on a regular basis and recommending proposed budget revisions; recommending to the Board appropriate policies for the management of the charter school's assets.

The finance committee shall be assisted by the CEO and CFO.

Appointments and Composition

The members of the finance committee shall be the Treasurer of the Board, who shall serve as Chair; the Chair, who shall serve as an ex-officio member, together with other trustees appointed by the Chair with the advice and consent of the Board in accordance with the bylaws.

Both the CEO and the CFO will be members of the Finance Committee.

Additional committee members may be appointed and need not be members of the Board of Trustees.

Responsibilities

→ Prepare an annual budget for the organization in collaboration with the CEO and CFO.

→ In collaboration with the CEO and CFO, develop and annually revise a five-year financial forecast and develop long-range financial plans based on that forecast.

→ Arrange for an annual audit to be provided to the Board of Trustees.

→ Provide oversight of the procurement process.

→ Review monthly financial statements and variances from budget, and recommend action to the Board, as appropriate.

→ Create specific measurable board-level goals for the year as part of the full board planning process.

→ Develop and implement a board-level training program to ensure that all trustees (especially those without a financial background) can be effective stewards of the organization's financial resources.

→ Report to the Board of Trustees at regular meetings of the Board in a manner determined by the Board.

→ Annually evaluate its work as a committee and the objectives it has committed itself to and report on same to the Board of Trustees.

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE COMMITTEE

At the heart of every public charter school is a focus on ensuring nothing short of academic excellence for every child.

Your board's Academic Excellence Committee measures the academic results of the organization against the goals established in your charter, accountability plan, and annual CEO goals, respectively.

This committee ensures that the board and CEO share the same vision of academic excellence, that all trustees understand the charter's academic promises, and leads the board in conducting proper oversight of the academic program.

WHO TO RECRUIT

DO YOU NEED PROFESSIONAL EDUCATORS TO SERVE ON YOUR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE COMMITTEE?

Certainly, it can be useful for some committee members to have a background in education. This is especially true for the committee chair. But it's by no means necessary for every member to be an educator. Many effective Academic Excellence Committees don't have educators on the committee.

Your committee is not there to pick curriculum or evaluate teachers. You're there to look at goals, and know if they're overly ambitious or not. And you're there to monitor.

The key functions of the committee are helping the CEO to set appropriately ambitious goals and then monitoring data to assess progress towards those goals.

People who have strong analytical skills, who are great at interpreting data and asking good questions, can be excellent members of this committee.

They're likely to interpret the data the right way, to ask the right questions. And, they don't have a lot of preconceived ideas about what they should be seeing.

For instance, people who work for management consulting companies, like McKinsey or Bain, look at data from companies all the time. They tend to add a lot of value on these committees.

SHOULD TEACHERS BE ON THE ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE COMMITTEE?

The more objectivity you have on your board, the better. To preserve objectivity, we recommend that your board be built mostly of people who aren't directly vested in the organization. Plus, having teachers on this committee can quickly lead to the board stepping over the board/management line.

However, the academic leadership absolutely should be engaged with this committee. That includes your CEO and, if you have one, a Chief Academic Officer — whoever's in charge of the academic program.

There can be exceptions to this rule, of course. Let's say you're engaged in a curriculum overhaul. The teacher who's leading the project should be part of the Academic Excellence Committee this year. After all, this is a high-priority effort. The teacher is, for this effort, in a leadership position. So it makes sense to include them on the committee for the life of the project.

WHAT SUCCESSFUL ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE COMMITTEES DO

This committee is especially rife with potential pitfalls.

Should you focus more on the means by which the organization pursues its mission, or the outcomes it achieves? Does your committee need to be staffed by professional educators? How does your committee avoid crossing the line into management work, when the work of the organization is academics?

UNDERSTAND THE ROLE AND FUNCTIONS OF THIS COMMITTEE.

The main purpose of the Academic Excellence Committee is to measure the academic results of the organization against the goals established in the organization's charter, accountability plan, and annual CEO goals.

In a sense, the Academic Excellence Committee is similar to the Finance Committee. Both exist to monitor performance against stated goals. For the Finance Committee, this means measuring financial results against the budgeted goals. For the Academic Excellence Committee, this means measuring organizational outcomes against stated goals for metrics such as:

- performance on state tests,
- performance on nationally normed standardized tests (e.g., the TerraNova, SAT 10, etc.)
- performance on interim assessments (e.g., Achievement Network tests, the STEP, the DIBELS, or interim assessments created by the school).

In addition, this committee may look at budgets-to-actuals on metrics such as attendance, student and staff retention, and family and staff satisfaction surveys.

FOCUS ON OUTPUTS RATHER THAN INPUTS.

One of the biggest pitfalls for Academic Excellence Committees is to engage over inputs—the means by which the organization pursues its mission, rather than outcomes — the objective data used to assess how well the organization is meeting its mission.

Inputs are management-level issues, which should be handled by the CEO.

Outputs are what the board should be focused on and governing towards.

The best Academic Excellence Committees help CEOs set clear goals for the year, by building on outcomes that are related to the mission. They then set up check-ins throughout the year, at which they meet with the CEO to monitor progress towards those goals.

KEEP YOUR FOCUS ON BOARD-LEVEL WORK; NOT MANAGEMENT LEVEL.

Academic Excellence Committees should not be involved in management-level work like:

- evaluating teachers
- selecting, designing, or reviewing the quality of curricula
- planning professional development for teachers
- interacting with teachers or other staff members on a regular basis (i.e., daily or weekly)
- interacting with families or students on a regular basis (i.e., daily or weekly)
- presenting themselves as an outlet for staff, family, or student complaints or concerns that have not first been formally addressed to the CEO

SAMPLE ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE COMMITTEE GOALS AND TASKS

GOAL	TASKS
Establish protocol for the board to conduct more effective oversight of the academic program through a quarterly board program review cycle.	In partnership with the CEO, identify appropriate benchmark metrics for student achievement Review CEO's and Chief Academic Officer's analysis of monthly benchmark data for each grade level in reading, writing, and arts skills Prepare summary report for board meeting once/quarter

GOAL	TASKS
Develop and submit academic growth plan to authorizer by March 1st deadline.	CEO and leadership team create a position paper with pros, cons and in-depth analysis Position paper shared, discussed, vetted and iterated on by Expansion Taskforce Task force meets with each overlapping board committee (finance, academic, etc.) to discuss and get feedback Taskforce organizes a full day board retreat with the board and school's senior leadership team

Academic Excellence Committee

General Purpose

The Academic Excellence Committee is commissioned by and responsible to the board of trustees to assume the primary responsibility for working with the CEO to define academic excellence, ensure that all board members know the charter promises that were made to the community and the authorizer, and to devise clear and consistent measures to monitor these goals.

Appointments and Composition

Appointments of the chair and members of the academic excellence committee shall be made annually by the chair of the board with the advice and consent of the board and the CEO and in accordance with the bylaws.

The chair of this committee shall be a member of the board of trustees.

Members of this committee shall be members of the board of trustees, subject to the conditions stated in the bylaws.

Additional committee members may be appointed and need not be members of the board of trustees.

Responsibilities

It is important to note that academic excellence is a governance function, not a management function, and it is anticipated that the CEO will have a great deal of input into the work and composition of this committee. The committee's main role is to assure that academic excellence is defined, and that the board approves annual goals to attain academic excellence.

→ Define and continue to refine what academic excellence means for our organization. Ensure that all board members understand the key charter promises we have made to our community and to our authorizer.

→ Work with the CEO to devise clear and consistent ways to measure progress towards stated goals.

→ Work with the CEO to set annual academic achievement goals, to be presented to and approved by the full board.

→ Work with the CEO to share with the board annual successes, barriers to reaching academic excellence, and strategies to overcome these barriers.

→ Arrange for board training on issues related to academic oversight and academic achievement, as needed.

→ Create specific measurable board-level goals for the year as part of the full board planning process.

→ Report to the board of trustees at regular meetings of the board in a manner determined by the board.

→ Annually evaluate its work as a committee and the objectives it has committed itself to, and report on the same to the board of trustees.

CEO SUPPORT & EVALUATION COMMITTEE

THE CEO SUPPORT AND EVALUATION COMMITTEE IS CRITICAL TO PROVIDING THE YEAR-ROUND SUPPORT YOUR CEO NEEDS.

Your charter school is headed up by one person. Though their titles vary widely, we call this person your Chief Executive Officer.

Whether you're one school or a growing Charter Management Organization, having the right person in the CEO role, and ensuring they're fully supported to do the best job possible, is absolutely vital.

Your CEO Support and Evaluation Committee designs and develops the systems and processes that support the board-CEO partnership and help the CEO get better at their role. It's a year-round process, as you'll see below.

WHO SHOULD SERVE ON YOUR CEO SUPPORT & EVALUATION COMMITTEE

The chair of the board should appoint the committee's chair and members, with input from the other trustees. Three members tends to be the right number of people.

FIND AT LEAST ONE PERSON WITH HR EXPERIENCE.

And, preferably, you'll appoint to the committee at least one trustee who brings HR or managerial experience. Someone who works in HR as their day job helps design and implement performance reviews all day long.

ONE PERSON WILL BE THE EVALUATION COORDINATOR.

It's better if that's not the board chair. It's okay if it is, if you're a very lean board, or if they're the only one who can do it. But usually, the CEO has a closer relationship with the chair than with the other trustees; so it's great to have someone else lead this part.

ONLY FULL VOTING BOARD MEMBERS SHOULD SERVE.

A note of caution: While we highly recommend recruiting non-board members into your committees, this committee is different. Only voting board members should serve on the CEO Support & Evaluation Committee.

Recommended Resources

HOW TO EVALUATE YOUR CHARTER SCHOOL LEADER USING BOARDONTRACK

READ THE BLOG

CHARTER SCHOOL LEADER COMPENSATION
ON-DEMAND REPLAY

WATCH THE WEBINAR

SAMPLE CHARTER SCHOOL CEO JOB DESCRIPTION

DOWNLOAD IT

WHAT SUCCESSFUL CEO SUPPORT & EVALUATION COMMITTEES DO

This committee is critical to the health of the whole organization.

One of the most important functions of any governing board is to effectively select, support, and evaluate the CEO. Those efforts are led by the CEO Support & Evaluation Committee.

And yet, we wouldn't be surprised to learn that your board hasn't yet formed one. Or, that your committee members feel frustrated and overwhelmed at their roles and responsibilities.

Supporting and evaluating your leader should feel like a positive professional development experience, not a punitive one.

FULLY ENGAGE THE CEO IN THE EVALUATION PROCESS.

Chances are, your CEO spends a great deal of time working hard to make sure that everyone on the organization's staff receives constructive feedback regularly and has a thorough annual evaluation of their performance. They may have more experience designing evaluation processes and tools than the trustees serving on this committee.

Enlist your CEO in determining what will be the most helpful process for them to receive feedback from the board.

Ideally, align the CEO support and evaluation process to mirror the process that is being conducted for the rest of the staff.

USE PROVEN PRACTICES. DON'T MAKE IT UP AS YOU GO.

Designing a support and evaluation process is complex and important. Rather than making up your own evaluation tools, use proven practices.

BoardOnTrack's online CEO evaluation process, built into our platform, has been used by hundreds of charter school boards nationwide. Learn more about how it works here.

SET UP AND FOLLOW A PROVEN YEAR-ROUND PROCESS.

There shouldn't be a scramble to determine when or how to evaluate the CEO at the last minute. And the actual annual evaluation shouldn't be the only opportunity for the board to help the CEO raise the bar for themselves or the organization.

A solid year-round process is planned well in advance. It includes time for the CEO's self evaluation, input from the board and the CEO's direct reports, discussion within the committee and the full board, and goal-setting for the following year.

BE CLEAR ABOUT YOUR ROLE AS IT RELATES TO SURVEYING PARENTS AND STAFF.

Hearing from stakeholders is a vital management function.

A healthy organization is one that gives parents, students, and teachers the chance to weigh in frequently. But, soliciting this input is a management function.

It isn't the responsibility of the board or a board committee.

The organization should conduct anonymous parent, teacher, and student surveys at least once or twice per year. The organization's leadership should design these surveys and share the data with the board, both generally and as part of an annual evaluation. It is not the work of this committee to design or conduct these surveys.

Recommended Resources

A BOARDSAVVY CHARTER CEO, DEFINED

READ THE BLOG

YEAR-ROUND CHARTER SCHOOL CEO SUPPORT & EVALUATION PROCESS

READ THE BLOG

HOW TO STRENGTHEN YOUR BOARD-CEO PARTNERSHIP

READ THE BLOG

SAMPLE COMMITTEE GOALS AND TASKS

GOAL	TASKS
Create an effective year-round data-driven process for providing feedback to and receiving feedback from or with our CEO.	Develop agreed-upon CEO job description. With CEO, agree to the metrics for annual success. Using BoardOnTrack process and tools, map out a year-long process of providing feedback to and receiving feedback from the CEO. Hold first structured check-in meeting. Hold second structured check-in meeting. Complete end of the year CEO Evaluation using a proven instrument like the one built in to BoardOnTrack.

CEO Support and Evaluation Committee

General Purpose

The CEO Support and Evaluation Committee is commissioned by and responsible to the board of trustees to assume the primary responsibility for developing and implementing a year-round process to strengthen the board's support, evaluation, and partnership with the organization's CEO.

Appointments and Composition

Appointments of the chair and members of the committee shall be made annually by the chair of the board with the advice and consent of the board in accordance with the bylaws.

The chair of this committee shall be a member of the board of trustees.

Members of this committee shall be members of the board of trustees, subject to the conditions stated in the bylaws.

It is anticipated that the committee will be primarily comprised of the primary committee chairs and/or other officers of the board.

Responsibilities

→ Develop an annual timeline to support and evaluate the CEO, and have this timeline approved by the full board.

→ Annually review and revise as necessary the CEO's job description.

→ Establish a process for the CEO to develop, share, and receive board approval of a set of annual organizational goals.

→ In partnership with the CEO, establish a clear and consistent way for the CEO to report to the full board regularly on progress towards the board-approved annual goals.

→ Annually create a survey instrument and process to conduct two structured check-ins between the full board and the CEO. It is anticipated that these will occur in November and March and will involve the CEO completing a self-evaluation and surveying the full board.

→ Annually implement a comprehensive CEO evaluation that includes a CEO self-evaluation, input from the full board, and anonymous input from the CEO's direct reports.

→ Annually prepare or revise the CEO's contract as necessary.

→ Annually recommend CEO compensation adjustments to the full board, as appropriate.

→ Create specific, measurable, board-level goals for the year as part of the full board planning process.

→ Report to the board of trustees at regular meetings of the board in a manner determined by the board.

→ Annually evaluate its work as a committee and the objectives it has committed itself to, and report on the same to the board of trustees.

BOARDONTRACK CAN HELP

As important as active committees are, charter boards nationwide struggle to make them work. BoardOnTrack is built to solve this struggle.

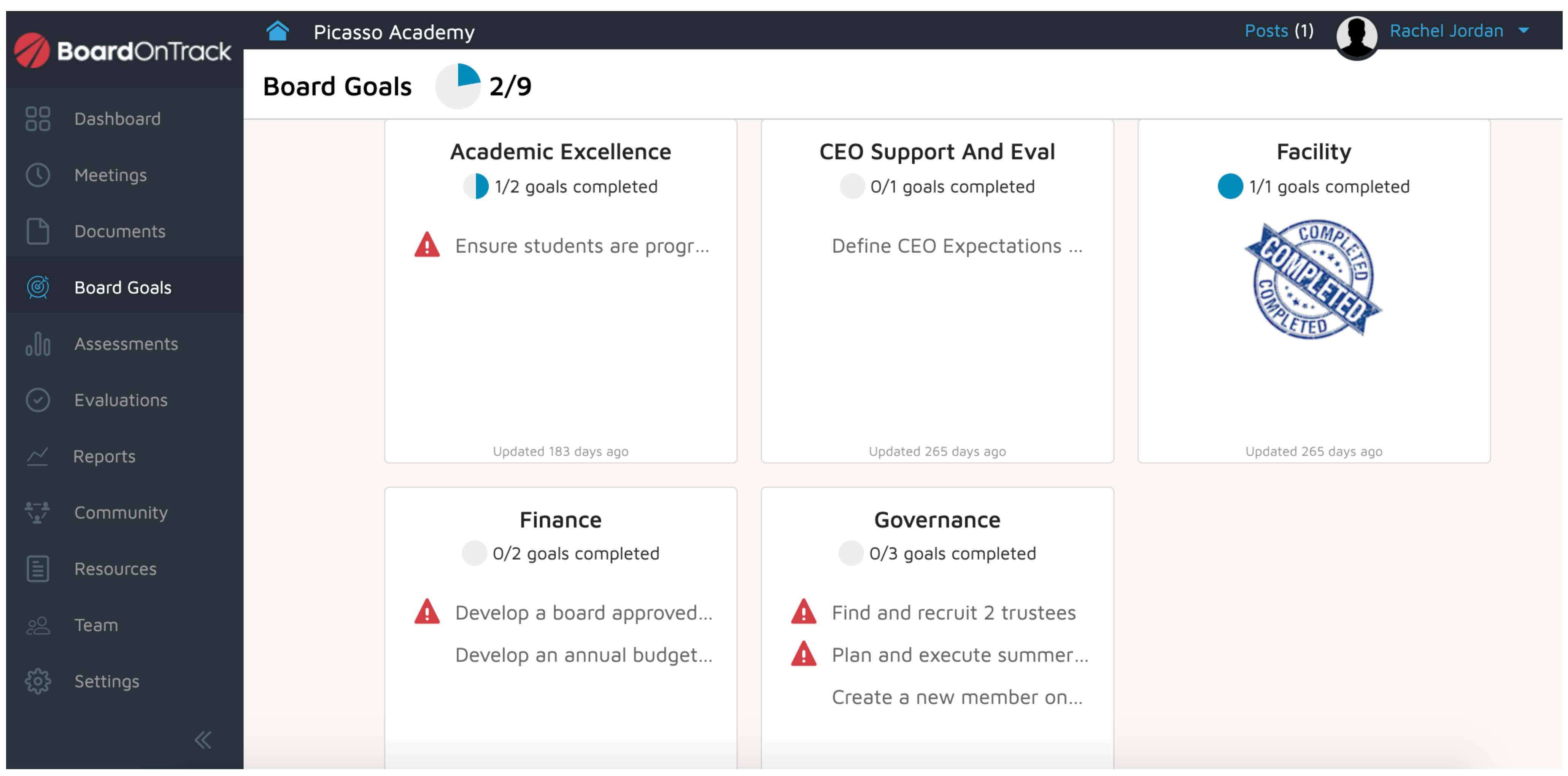
Active committees need measurable goals and a way to track their progress. They need to hold effective meetings where real strategic work takes place. They need meeting minutes that are accessible to the full board. And they need the right members and leadership.

BoardOnTrack is built to help boards solve every one of these challenges.

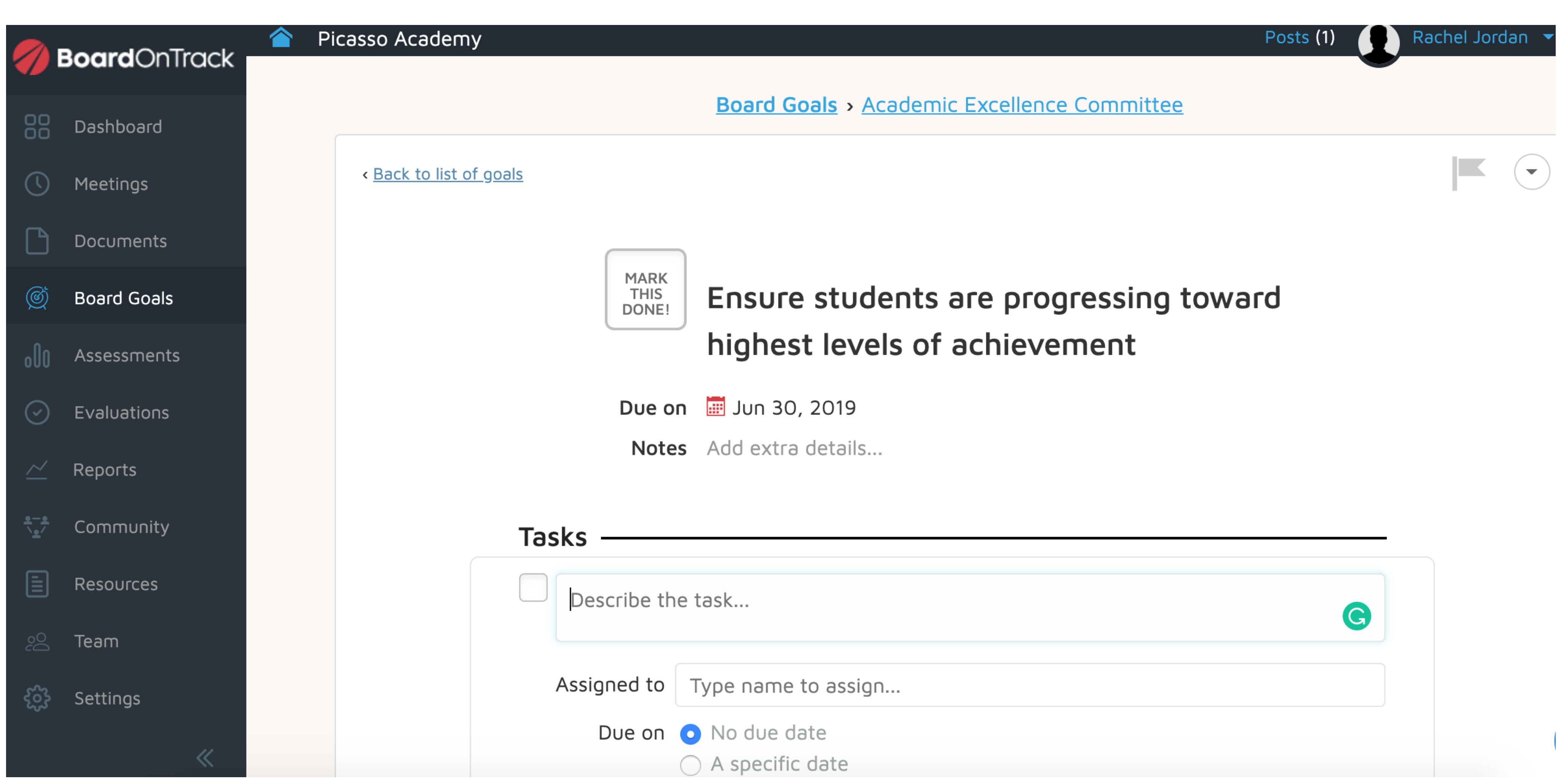
Set measurable goals. And track your progress.

The Goals dashboard inside of BoardOnTrack allows you to translate your overall goals into goals for each committee.

Set up your dashboard to fit the committees you have. Assign goals to each committee. And you've got a dashboard that shows the full board, and each individual committee, exactly how you're doing.



What's more, you can create specific tasks to complete towards each goal, and assign those tasks to the right people on your team, complete with due dates.



Suddenly, you've got a powerful dashboard that ensures every committee meeting is focused on the priorities.

Hold effective meetings where strategic work takes place.

The goals dashboard is just one key to holding effective meetings that covers the real work, and keeps your people aligned with the priorities.

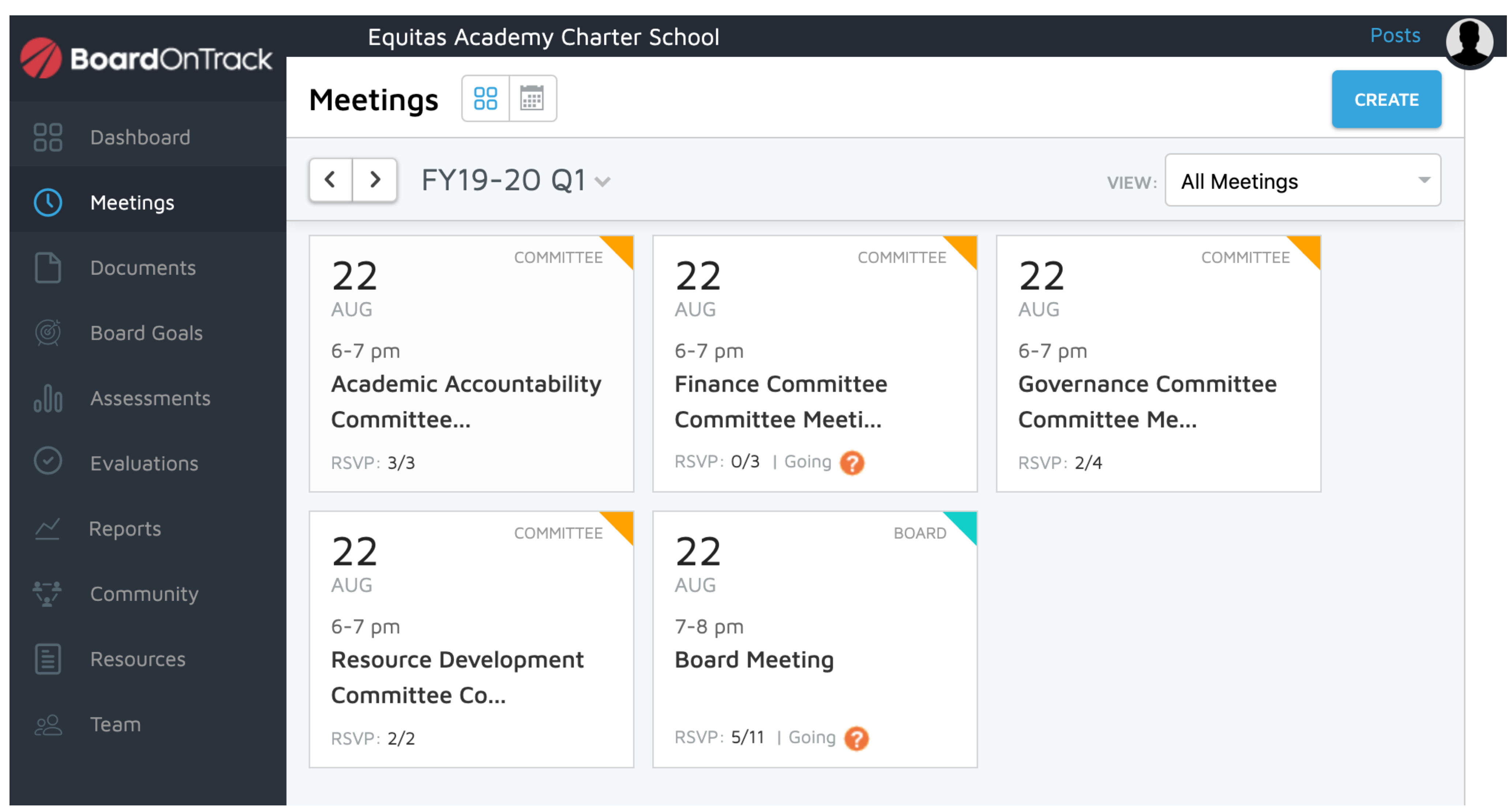
You also need to ensure everyone knows when upcoming meetings will happen.

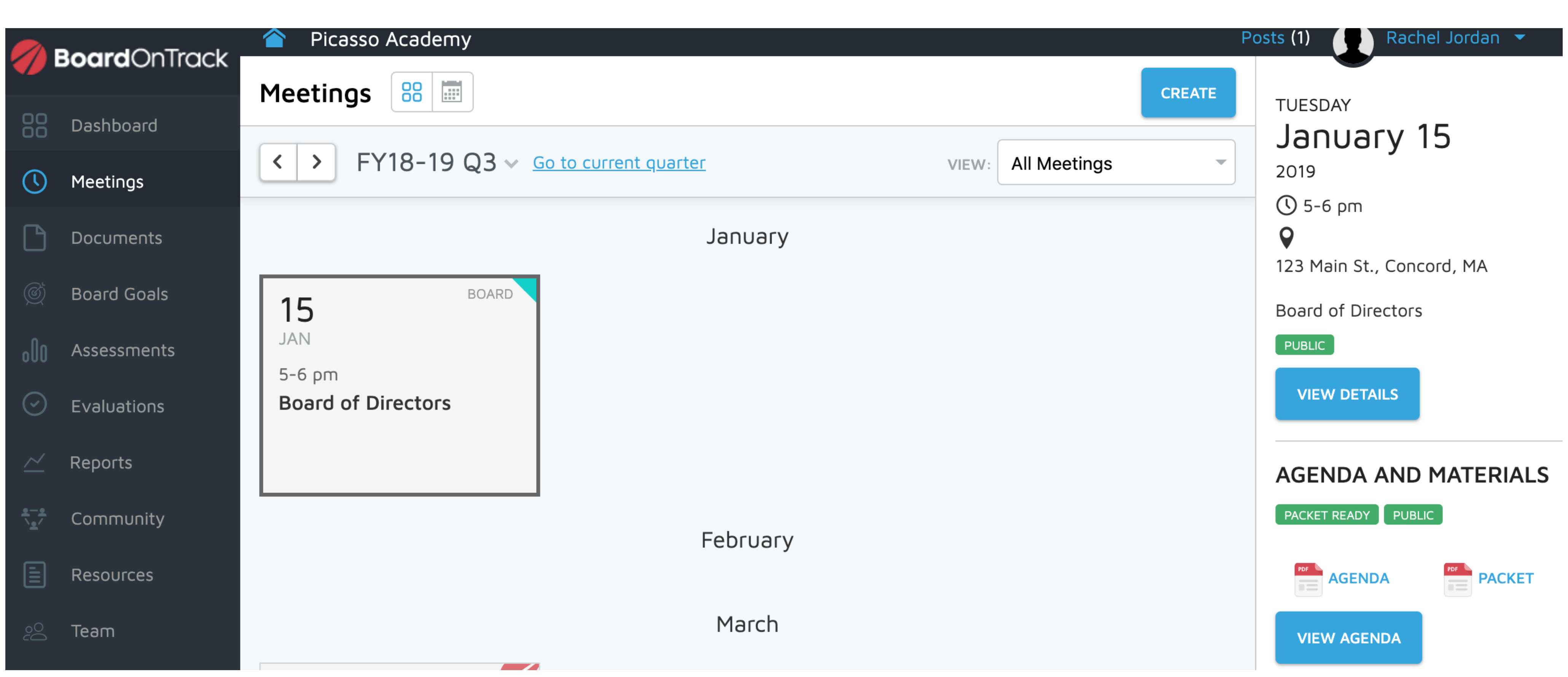
We highly recommend that you plan all of your committee meetings for the year, all at once. And make sure they're on your committee members' calendars.

BoardOnTrack makes it easy to do just that, and to ensure that your committee meetings are scheduled to get the right work done in between full board meetings.

Your team can easily see what meetings are happening, see who's attending, and RSVP themselves, all within the platform.

Even send reminders to those who haven't yet RSVP'd.





Plus, with the agenda and packet materials found right in the calendar entry for any meeting, you're confident that everyone will show up to your meetings prepared and ready to do the real work.

Just like the full board, committees must take minutes at each meeting.

BoardOnTrack makes it easy to manage and maintain your committee meeting minutes.

- take minutes in real time
- ensure your minutes are formatted and structured the right way
- distribute minutes for approval
- publish approved minutes for access by the full board
- publish approved minutes to comply with your state's Open Meeting Law requirements

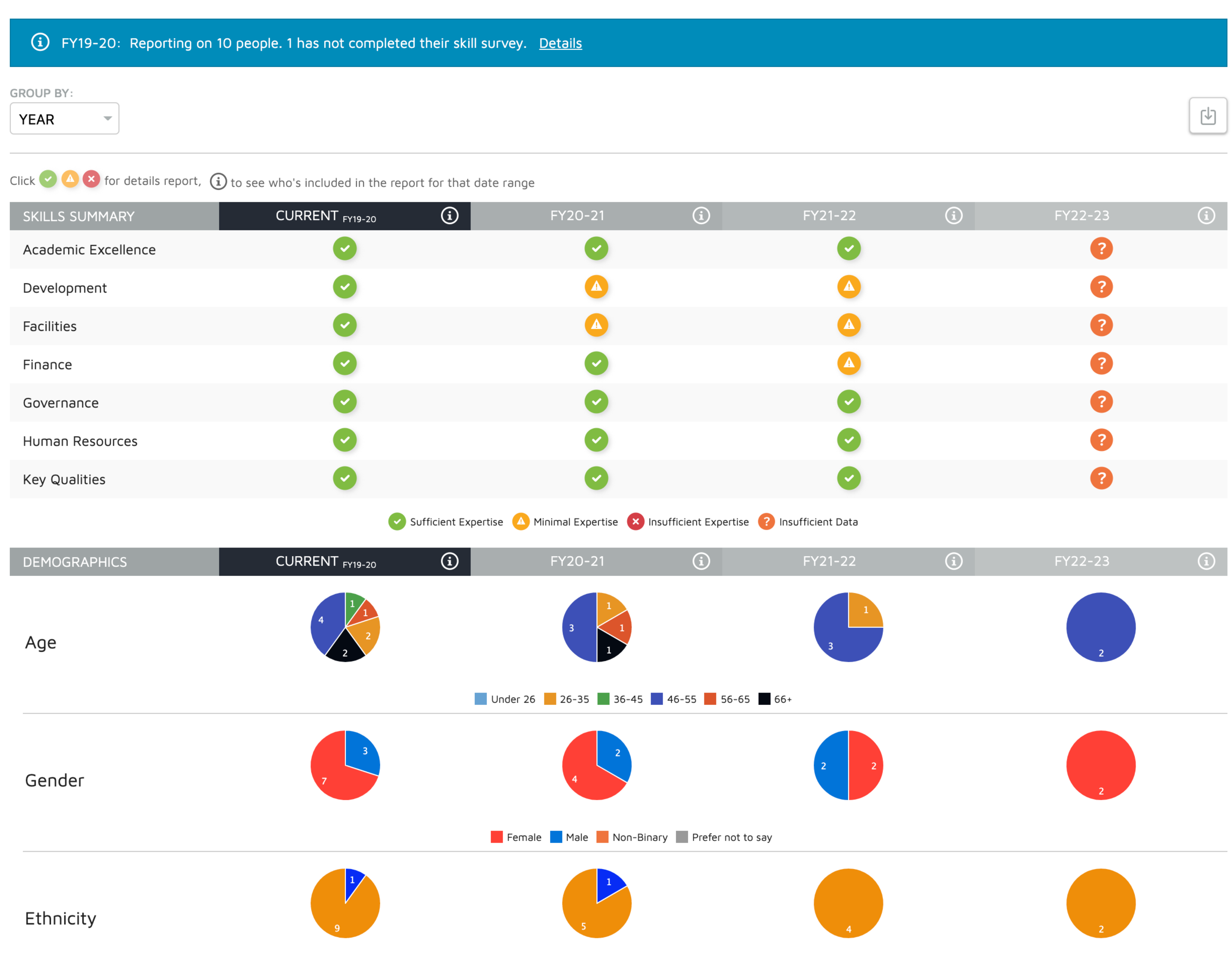
Recruit the right members and leadership.

Recruiting is a perennial challenge to most charter boards. You need the right people, in the right roles, doing the right work.

With term limits, organization growth, and the constantly changing landscape in which you're operating, recruiting can become even more complex.

The Members Report built into BoardOnTrack provides a revolutionary approach to board recruiting.

Using your board's real data, you see at a glance who you've got on your board today and who you'll need tomorrow.



BoardOnTrack helps charter boards deliver exceptional results.

Our online board management platform empowers governance teams with data, online tools, and on-demand resources.

We power high-performing boards who do the real work without drowning in the details of good governance. And BoardSavvy® CEOs who leverage with their boards without making them {yet another} full-time job.

See how easy it is to get your board started.

www.BoardOnTrack.com info@boardontrack.com 844-268-8326