



**Promoting Quality  
Charter School  
Governance**

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**Audubon Center  
of the North Woods**

## **Board Evaluation of School Leaders**

Evaluation of the professional performance of charter school leaders seems to be a responsibility that charter school boards embrace with unequal enthusiasm. Some school boards are very active with this process, while other school boards do not invest much time in it. Let's take a look at the requirements that charter school boards have and the opportunities that robust and thorough school leader evaluations provide for the improvement of the leader's performance and the overall performance of the school and its students.

### **Why Evaluate the Professional Performance of Charter School Leaders?**

1. To comply with MN §124E.12 Subd. 2.
2. To focus the Executive Director's work on board-approved goals and priorities.
3. To provide clear and unambiguous direction to the Executive Director about the board's priorities.
4. To provide timely feedback to the Executive Director about his / her performance.
5. To assist the Executive Director with staying on track, even during stressful, busy, and challenging periods of the year.
6. To model a fair and transparent evaluation system for other school staff members.
7. To create and maintain a school-wide culture of continuous improvement.

*This paper is not intended to be legal advice. Please check with the school's legal counsel and / or relevant Minnesota state statute for additional information.*

## What Minnesota Statute Says About School Leader Evaluation

### 124E.12 EMPLOYMENT.

#### Subd. 2. Administrators.

(a) A person, without holding a valid administrator's license, may perform administrative, supervisory, or instructional leadership duties. The board of directors shall establish qualifications for all persons who hold administrative, supervisory, or instructional leadership roles. The qualifications shall cover at least: instruction and assessment; human resource and personnel management; financial management; legal and compliance management; effective communication; and board, authorizer, and community relationships. The board of directors shall use those qualifications as the basis for job descriptions, hiring, and **performance evaluations of those who hold administrative, supervisory, or instructional leadership roles.\***

(b) The board of directors and an individual who does not hold a valid administrative license and who serves in an administrative, supervisory, or instructional leadership position shall develop a professional development plan. The school's annual report must include public personnel information documenting the professional development plan.

\*The frequency of such performance evaluations is not specified in MN §124E. Emphasis added.

***\*Note: While the statute refers to "school administrator" this is interpreted to be the person identified by the board to lead and manage the day to day operations of the school with others who report directly to that "school administrator." The "school administrator" reports directly and is responsible to the school board that evaluates his/her performance. In ACNW authorized Charter Schools most leaders in this position go by the title of School Director or School Executive Director; however, there is no requirement as to what title that person may hold.***

Simply put, statute says that charter school boards are responsible for both hiring and evaluating the professional performance of charter school leaders and in so doing must do the following:

1. Create and approve the job description for their school leader.
2. Include, at a minimum, the following in that job description:
  - a. instruction and assessment
  - b. human resource and personnel management
  - c. financial management;
  - d. legal and compliance management
  - e. effective communication
  - f. board, authorizer, and community relationship
  - g. Other topics of the board's choosing (Priorities on which the board expects the school leader to focus may include multiple year goals, "stretch" goals for the director, and activities that allow the school leader to "look over the horizon")
3. Use the board-approved school leader job description as a basis for hiring the leader.
4. Use the board approved school leader **job description as a basis for evaluation** of the professional performance of the school leader.

The charter school board may use a variety of processes and procedures to execute the evaluation of the professional performance of a school leader, but it is important to remember that **it is the board's legal responsibility, and no one else's, to evaluate the school leader's professional performance, based on the board-approved job description.**

## Charter School Board Evaluation of School Leaders

The following suggested steps are for charter school boards as it considers the process it will use to evaluate the professional performance of its school leader. Each charter school board is able to use whatever processes and procedures it wishes to use, and there are many variables that may go into the decision about the process that will be used in a particular situation. Thus, these steps are for information only and charter school boards should feel free to use them as is, to modify them, or to use other processes not included here. At the end of making that determination about the evaluation process a board decides to use should result in high quality evaluation that identifies and celebrates the school leader's successes in the accomplishment of the goals the board approved prior the beginning of the evaluation process. Along the way, the process to accomplish this end should be transparent, fair, and involve others in the school community with the school board maintaining the ultimate responsibility for the evaluation of the school leader's professional performance.

### Factors for the board to keep in mind:

1. Transparency – the school leader evaluation process should be developed with as much transparency as MN §124E permits.  
*Subd. 3. What meetings may be closed*  
*(a) A public body may close a meeting to evaluate the performance of an individual who is subject to its authority. The public body shall identify the individual to be evaluated prior to closing a meeting. At its next open meeting, the public body shall summarize its conclusions regarding the evaluation. A meeting must be open at the request of the individual who is the subject of the meeting.*
2. Communication – designate one board member to be the official school board communicator, both to internal and external audiences.
3. Involvement – identify participants in the evaluation process and their roles e.g. board sub-committee, stakeholders, teachers, etc.
4. Timeline – establish a timeline for the evaluation process, beginning to end.
5. Establish activities/milestones to accomplish along the way (see example on p. 4).

### In summary...

1. The evaluation of charter school leaders by their charter school boards is a statutory requirement. ACNW expects such evaluation will be conducted annually.
2. The evaluation of the professional performance of charter school leaders is an ongoing process, not an event. Discuss with your board throughout the year.
3. Both formative and summative evaluations should be part of the overall evaluation process (see example on p. 4).
4. Robust and thorough school leader performance evaluations, when conducted with fidelity, offer one mechanism through which charter school boards can make a positive impact on the school's success.

# Sample Charter School Leader Performance Evaluation Timeline of Activities

**June:** School board reviews/modifies and approves the school leader's job description.

**July:** School board and school leader discuss possible specific performance goals and measures for the upcoming school year.

**August:** Further discussion (as needed).

**September:** School board reviews and adopts school leader's specific performance goals and measures for the upcoming school year.

**January / February:** School board collects data about the school leader's progress toward his / her board-approved goals and measures, AND conducts a formative evaluation that provides the school leader with constructive feedback about that progress.

**May:** School board collects data about the school leader's progress toward his / her board-approved goals and measures.

**June:** School board conducts a summative evaluation that provides the school leader with constructive feedback about that progress and starts the evaluation process cycle again.

