

Sounding Board



A publication of Osprey Wilds Environmental Learning Center Charter School Division

Model Board Performance Evaluation and Training Self-Assessment

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Being an effective charter school board member is not something that happens automatically. It takes intentional effort, ongoing learning, and honest reflection. Minnesota law recognizes this, which is why it builds two related requirements into charter school governance: a training assessment and an annual performance evaluation.

Training: Start with an Assessment

Minnesota law requires that every charter school board member complete annual training throughout their term. But the law doesn't just require training. It requires that training be based on an honest assessment of what individual board members and the full board actually need (MN Stat. 124E.07 Subd. 7(d)). In other words, training should not be random or one-size-fits-all. It should be driven by where your board has gaps.

The process works like this: early in the year, the board identifies areas where individual members or the board as a whole would benefit from additional knowledge or skills. Then, throughout the year, the board completes or offers training based on that assessment. This might look like bringing in a presenter on a specific topic, attending a webinar, or setting aside time at a board meeting for a focused discussion. The goal is that every board member finishes the year more equipped than they started.

Performance Evaluation: Reflect at Year's End

At the end of each school year, Minnesota law also requires that the board evaluate its own performance and report the results in the school's annual report (MN Stat. 124E.07 Subd. 7(g)). This is the board's opportunity to take stock: Where did we do well? Where did we fall short? What do we need to do differently?

The performance evaluation in this resource (Section 1) is drawn directly from Osprey Wilds' Renewal Evaluation Framework, which is the tool OW uses to evaluate your school's governance when it comes time for contract renewal. We recommend that boards use this same criteria for their annual self-evaluation. That way, you are always measuring yourselves against the same standard your authorizer uses, and you can identify and address any concerns long before renewal arrives.

How to Use This Resource

This document has three parts, found on the following pages. The first is the annual board performance evaluation, which the full board should complete together, ideally at the end of the fiscal year. The second is a set of reflection questions to help your board make sense of the past year and begin planning for the school year ahead. The third is a training self-assessment, which asks both the full board and each individual member to reflect on where training would be most useful in the coming year. We suggest completing the performance evaluation first—areas where the board struggled are often exactly the areas where training is needed most.

The model resources offered here are aligned to OW's evaluation of board governance practices, and they are designed to meet the minimum requirements in statute. Your board is encouraged to add to, or adapt, the resources as needed to make sure the board performance evaluation and training self-assessment are robust and relevant to your school. As always, make sure the board records the process of implementation (including discussion and actions taken) in board meeting minutes.

Section 1: Annual Board Performance Evaluation

Statute requires that the board annually evaluate its performance and report the results in the school's annual report ([MN Stat. 124E.07 Subd. 7\(g\)](#)). Reflect on the past fiscal year (June 30-July 1). The first section of this form is designed to evaluate how well the board performed its required functions outlined in charter school law and the charter contract with Osprey Wilds.

In order to answer some of the questions, you may need to refer to the board's Bylaws, past minutes, annual reports or other documents from the charter school contract.

Check the box if the answer to the question is "Yes". If the answer to the question is "No", leave it blank. Make sure you record reflections, observations, evidence, and any additional discussion about the board's performance in board meeting minutes.

2.1 Board Composition and Capacity

Did the board meet composition and capacity requirements?

- Board complied with applicable laws and its own bylaws with respect to board composition, including ex-officio (non-voting) members.
- Board conducted required background checks on all board members prior to being seated in accordance with Section 6.20 of the charter contract.
- Board members completed statutorily mandated initial and annual training.
- Board conducted an annual assessment of the training needs of individual members and the full board as required by statute.
- Board conducted an annual assessment of the board's performance.
- Board elections were consistent with statute and bylaws.
- Officer elections were consistent with statute and bylaws.

2.2 Board Decision-Making and Oversight

Did the board meet decision-making and oversight requirements?

- Board meeting minutes were complete and included, at a minimum, the following:
 - Board member attendance;
 - Actions taken by the board, including specifics on any amendments;
 - Who made a motion and second; and
 - The result of the vote, including number of votes for and against if other than unanimous.
- Meetings were held consistent with Open Meeting Law
 - Meeting times and location are posted properly on the school website and/or onsite at the school, including for special or emergency meetings.
 - If meeting includes board member participation via interactive technology (e.g. Zoom), it is done so [consistent with MN Stat. §13D](#).
 - A quorum is present when the board meeting is convened.
 - One set of board materials is available for public inspection.
 - If a meeting is closed, it is done so in accordance with MN Stat. 13D: agenda and minutes show statutory authority to close the meeting and minutes appropriately summarize actions taken during the closed meeting.

- The board reviewed the school's performance related to its contractual academic and academic-related goals (Exhibit G) at least four times per year.
- The board reviewed the school's performance related to its contractual environmental education goals (Exhibit H) and environmental literacy plan at least four times per year.
- The board monitored the school's financial management, short-term financial sustainability, and long-term financial viability at each meeting.
- The board reviewed the school's performance related to its Outstanding Obligations from the Previous Contract in Exhibit S of the charter contract at least four times per year (if applicable).
- The board took appropriate action to ensure the school's success based on its review of school performance.
- Required policies are in place and policies that must be approved or reviewed annually are addressed.
- Articles of Incorporation (Exhibit B) are compliant with statute and the charter contract.
- Bylaws (Exhibit C) are compliant with statute and the charter contract.
- The board reviewed and approved or accepted key organizational documents (e.g. Annual Report, Financial Audit, Contract with Authorizer, and other Authorizer related documents).
- The board ensured that the school's affiliated building company complies with all applicable legal requirements (if applicable).
- The board ensured that the school's charter management organization (CMO) or education management organization (EMO) complies with all applicable legal requirements and contractual obligations (if applicable).

2.3 School Leader Management and Accountability

Did the board meet management and accountability requirements?

- Board has established qualifications for all persons who hold administrative, academic supervision, or instructional leadership roles in accordance with MN Stat. §124E.12 Subd. 2(a).
- Board has established a formal performance evaluation process for the school leader or EMO/CMO in accordance with MN Stat. §124E.07 Subd. 6.
- Board implemented a formal performance evaluation process for the school leader or EMO/CMO in accordance with MN Stat. §124E.12 Subd. 2(a).
- School leaders who do not hold a valid administrative license annually develop, implement, and report on a professional development plan approved by the charter school board of directors in accordance with MN Stat. §124E.12 Subd. 2(b) (if applicable).
- School leaders who do not hold a valid administrative license annually complete a minimum of 25 hours of competency-based training corresponding to the professional development plan approved by the charter school board of directors in accordance with MN Stat. §124E.12 Subd. 2(b) (if applicable).
- School leader performance evaluation process evaluated performance in relation to OW contractual academic and environmental education goals and expectations.
- Board engaged in periodic school leadership evaluation activities throughout the school year (at least four times per year) as documented by board meeting minutes.

1.1 Budgeting

Did the board meet budgeting compliance requirements?

- Board meeting minutes and/or audit notes document approval of fiscal year budget on or prior to the June 30 statutory deadline (MN Stat. §123B.77 Subd. 4).
- The board approved mid-year budget updates as necessary.
- At least monthly, the board reviewed and approved quality financial statements in accordance with Section 6.9(a) of the charter contract, which include the following reports: budgeted and actual revenue and expenses by year-to-date percentages, disbursements and deposits, and student enrollment report with enrollment expressed in terms of funding mechanisms (e.g. Pupil Units).
- At least quarterly (for quarters ending 9/30, 12/31, 3/31, and 6/30), the board reviewed and approved quality financial statements in accordance with Section 6.9(a) of the charter contract, which included the following reports: a balance sheet, income statement that includes revenues and expenses by UFARS programs (in accordance with Exhibit R of the contract), up-to-date cash flow projections, and fiscal year-end fund balance projections.
- Revenue and expenditure budget variances were within 5% of the February 1 approved budget.
 - The variance compares actuals to projected revenues and expenditures based on the school's approved budget as of February 1 for all fund areas.

1.2 Enrollment Variance

Did the board meet enrollment variance requirements?

- The school accurately projected enrollment (within 5%).

1.3 Financial Policies and Practices

Did the board meet financial policies and practices requirements?

- The school has in place required financial policies, including the following:
 - Procurement Policy (MN Stat. §124E.26)
 - Fund Balance Policy (OW Contract, Exhibit P)
 - Credit Card Policy (OW Contract, Exhibit P)
 - Conflict of Interest Policy (MN Stat. §124E.14)
 - Electronic Funds Transfer Policy (MN Stat. §471.38)
 - Contributions and Fundraising Policy (OW Contract Section 6.13)
 - Group Health Insurance Policy (required if the school provides group health insurance coverage) (MN Stat. §124E.12, Subd. 5(b))
 - Assessing Student Fees Policy (required if the school charges fees for textbooks, workbooks, and library books) (MN Stat. §123B.37)
 - School Meals Policy (required if the school participates in the National School Lunch Program) (MN Stat. §124D.111 Subd. 1(a))
- The school has no audit findings related to appropriate use of public funds.
- The school has sufficient internal controls to prevent fraud, waste, and abuse.

1.5 Financial Audit

Did the board meet financial audit compliance requirements?

- The most recent financial audit includes no significant deficiencies or material weaknesses.
- The most recent financial audit included an unqualified/unmodified opinion.
- Any previous year audit findings have not been repeated in the most recent audit.

- An appropriate corrective action plan is in place to ensure any finding is not repeated in the next fiscal year.
- The audit report did not include a going concern disclosure in the notes or an explanatory paragraph within the audit report.

Reviewing the board's performance from the past year above, which indicator/s were the strongest? Select all that apply.

- 2.1 Board Composition and Capacity
- 2.2 Board Decision-making and Oversight
- 2.3 School Leader Management and Accountability
- 1.1. Budgeting
- 1.2 Enrollment Variance
- 1.3 Financial Policies and Practices
- 1.5 Financial Audit

Reviewing the board's performance from the past year above, which indicator/s were the weakest? Select all that apply.

- 2.1 Board Composition and Capacity
- 2.2 Board Decision-making and Oversight
- 2.3 School Leader Management and Accountability
- 1.1. Budgeting
- 1.2 Enrollment Variance
- 1.3 Financial Policies and Practices
- 1.5 Financial Audit

Section 2: Reflection

What are the board's greatest strengths?

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What are the board's greatest areas for growth?

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What was the most useful training you received as a board member this past year?

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Is the board holding the school accountable for the promise it made to students and families in its mission?

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If the board could make one improvement in the coming school year, what should it be?

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Section 3: Board and Individual Training Self-Assessment

Statute requires that every charter school board member must complete annual training throughout the member's term *based on* an annual assessment of the training needs of individual members and the full board ([MN Stat. 124E.07 Subd. 7\(d\)](#)).

An effective practice is to use the board's performance evaluation from the most recent fiscal year as an additional reference to inform the individual and full board's training needs. Areas where the board performed poorly are likely areas where additional training or resources may be needed. Complete the following self-assessment prompts as an individual, then reflect on the board's responses as a group to identify trends and needs for the board moving forward.

Which of the following training topics would be most likely to improve the full board's performance in the coming year? Select all that apply.

- budgeting
- financial management
- recruiting and hiring a charter school director or chief administrator
- evaluating a charter school director or chief administrator
- governance-management relationships
- student support services
- student discipline
- state standards
- cultural diversity
- succession planning
- strategic planning
- program oversight and evaluation
- compensation systems
- human resources policies
- effective parent and community relationships
- authorizer contract and relationships
- charter school law
- legal liability
- board recruitment and elections
- board meetings and operations
- policy development and review
- school health and safety
- Other
- _____

Which of the following training topics would you benefit from most as an individual board member?

- budgeting
- financial management
- recruiting and hiring a charter school director or chief administrator

- evaluating a charter school director or chief administrator
- governance-management relationships
- student support services
- student discipline
- state standards
- cultural diversity
- succession planning
- strategic planning
- program oversight and evaluation
- compensation systems
- human resources policies
- effective parent and community relationships
- authorizer contract and relationships
- charter school law
- legal liability
- board recruitment and elections
- board meetings and operations
- policy development and review
- school health and safety
- Other
 - _____

Are there other resources you need in order to fulfill your responsibilities as a board member?

Other comments: