**Background**

Assembly Bill 419 from the 2021 Legislative Session requires each charter school sponsor to establish standards for the governance of sponsored charter schools. WCSD Charter Liaison collaborated with the State Public Charter School Authority and WCSD-sponsored charter school leaders to review research on effective boards and examples of governance standards including but not limited to:

* [Silver State Governance](https://www.nvasb.org/page/silver-state-governance): A school board training initiative supported by the Nevada Association of School Boards.
* Education Board Partner’s [Standards of Effective Charter School Governance](https://edboards.org/resources)
* Center for Public Education’s [Eight Characteristics of Effective School Boards](https://www.nsba.org/-/media/NSBA/File/cpe-eight-characteristics-of-effective-school-boards-report-december-2019.pdf)

The Charter Liaison conducted a focus group with the WCSD-sponsored charter school administrators. Of the seven charter holders sponsored by the WCSD, six participated in the focus group discussion. The discussion was anchored around three questions:

* *What are the most important functions/responsibilities of charter school boards and their sponsor?*
* *What are the characteristics of effective charter school boards?*
* *What commitments should we hold non-negotiable to maintain strong performance and community engagement?*

Using the information gathered through SPCSA research and community discussion groups, WCSD has developed the following *draft* governance standards for review and discussion. WCSD anticipates incorporating feedback from the Superintendent in a final version to bring to the WCSD Board of Trustees for consideration at a future board meeting.

# WCSD Charter School Governance Standards

# As a sponsor of charter schools, the WCSD Board of Trustees (“Board”) recognizes the importance of parent choice when selecting public education options for families. The Board supports student success by sponsoring charter schools that provide rigorous, innovative, high-quality learning opportunities for the students in the Washoe County School District (“District” or WCSD”). The Board shall consider the sponsorship of charter schools that support the district’s mission and core beliefs as provided by law. This governance standard supports these commitments.

1. *The district promotes educational options for students and families to ensure all students remain academically engaged and prepared to graduate college and career ready.*

* Support the academic success of all enrolled students and the overall academic success of the school.
* Support ambitious and attainable goals for student academic growth and achievement that aim to ensure the success of all students.
* Support the establishment of social and emotional benchmarks that aim to ensure and inclusive and supportive environment for all students.
* Understand academic performance expectations established by the WCSD Office of Academics.
* Work collaboratively with the WCSD Student Accountability Office to analyze student growth, achievement, and wellbeing data by student group (race, ethnicity, gender, disability status, etc.) to identify and act on disparities in student performance and experience.

1. *The district is committed to using financial data to frame financial accountability for all charter schools*

* Understand financial performance expectations established by WCSD
* Regular monitor financial data to ensure the short- and long-term financial health of the school and to monitor progress towards the SPCSA’s performance expectations

1. *Monitor Organizational Health of WCSD Sponsored Charter Schools through the professional learning, performance monitoring, and charter renewal processes.*

* Uphold the legal and ethical duties of the school’s board and ensure that the board meets all compliance and reporting requirements.
* Uphold legal requirements for charter schools under state and federal laws and regulations and comply with the terms of the charter agreement.
* Regularly monitor operational data to ensure the organizational health of the school and to monitor progress towards WCSD’s performance expectations.
* Ensure the school has strong operational plans for facilities, food services, transportation, security, and emergency preparedness.
* Ensure all board meetings are conducted in accordance with Nevada’s Open Meeting Law and that the board operates in accordance with the school’s bylaws.
* Oversee the development and implementation of the school’s strategic plan, which should align with the charter school’s mission and vision.
* Regularly evaluate the board’s effectiveness and provide resources for meaningful training conducted by district &/or state-approved organizations.
* Ensure WCSD sponsored charter schools recruit and maintain active board members, ensuring compliance with bylaws and statutory requirements.

1. *The district demonstrates commitment to work with families and community partners to provide a variety of educational options to students and families within Washoe County charter school community.*

* Ensure that the school’s board meetings and its members are accessible to the district sponsored charter school, including parents, teachers, and students.
* Develop and consider district policies and critical decisions transparently and with the district sponsored charter school’s best interests in mind.
* Establish effective communication systems and proactively seek robust input and feedback from the district-sponsored charter school community through ongoing monthly meetings, district sponsored professional learning and academic performance meetings.
* Collaborate with charter school stakeholders to address concerns and challenges.