

Board Training Session Trainer's Checklist (2023)

Training Session 1 Trainer Checklist (2023)

Purpose of the Board

Governance model - the Board focuses on the "What to do", Admin focus on the "How to do it", then the Board evaluates "How well did they do it" (by the metrics).

First things first

First year

Board Clerk to-do items

Board Policy

Training - CDE Modules, one conference every two years for non officer, every year for an officer. Provide a written report to the Board. Can present briefly during the meeting.

Officer roles and elections

Establish and build relationships

Meet-n-greet: Legal counsel and president (possibly Compliance officer) Cabinet (in-person is best)

Work outward: Board, President, Admin, Staff, Parents, students, external TCA relationships (order of priority)

Adopt-a-school, attending school events, attend/view District level events, conferences that may be pertinent (relevant BOE meetings, D20 BOE candidate panels, etc)

*****Do not build alliances within the Board*****

Communication

[Board level]

Exercising: "One Voice"

Getting Questions answered. Board, Chain of command (everything through the president), expect to make So. Many. Calls. Discern appropriate timing of our words/answers.

Praise in public, correct in private. Applies to all interactions.

"Closing the loop" on communications that have to do with setting up meetings/calls/short answers.

Official (using ASD20 account) electronic communication vs personnel.

Consider adding another Director to emails/meetings (after meet n' greets) for accountability purposes.

"Reply all" dos and do nots (replying all to schedule is permissible)

of Directors on communications - meeting in person (varying opinion may vary between president/legal counsel. Lean towards legal counsel since his firm oversees 70+ schools and they have a current feel for best practices regarding this topic)

Privileged and confidential documents, emails, texts

Talk2TCABoard - Secretary, responding individually, Board communication policy

Board decisions - daisy chaining

[Admin/Staff] - Seeking understanding vs giving direction. Ask top-level questions vs operational. Refrain from asking questions about personnel. The admin/staff will appropriately set and hold boundaries if Board Directors cross lines.

Meetings:

Read-aheads, gettings questions answered (types of questions - high level vs. operational), timing)

Roberts Rules of Order (allowing others to fully speak, not a place to debate - try to reach out prior to meetings to sort through differing opinions.)

Agenda: Agenda items, sticking to the agenda/time

D20 Liaison Role:

The TCA Liaison attends Board meetings so that I brief the district, answer any questions the Board team may have, and to get a sense about the governance, leadership and community relationships, as well as academic progress that is a part of the annual report.

The role is truly a support one for TCA if issues or questions or concerns come up between school and district. For the district, the TCA Liaison communicates as requested on any specific issues. The TCA Liaison can be a resource to the TCA President, to TCA principals, and with the President's permission and direction, and administrators on any issues with parents, or kids, and can help with any instructional leadership issues or school leadership, including professional development, that come up.

The TCA Liaison also works to make sure that, even as a veteran charter school, TCA does not inadvertently hit a pothole or head to the ditch on an issue--the Liaison can help with that on policy questions or administrative decisions being weighed. The TCA Liaison also works to ensure that, in this case, Academy 20 District is a good authorizer, implements best practices as an authorizer, and treats the school fairly.

The Liaison completes an annual report each year on the charter in the areas of academic achievement, leadership, governance, finance and community relations, which is first shared with TCA (before District 20) to get input and to make any edits that TCA would like to have made in that report.

Finally, the Liaison commits to confidentiality with TCA should an issue arise that does not impact the charter relationship with the school--perhaps a personnel question, discipline question, etc. If there is a facility need or question you need me to bring forward to the district, I am happy to do that as well.

The Liaison role is to be an advocate for TCA in many ways, be an advocate for maintaining the highest authorizing standards and to be a support, whether that be a sounding board or to offer advice and counsel.

With new charters, it often can feel as if the Liaison is the "District spy" in the room, and honestly nothing is further from the truth. When a district tells the Liaison to be careful not to be too much of a cheerleader or advocate for a charter, while at the same time the charter feels that the Liaison is acting as a pipeline to the authorizer, the Liaison should take comfort that they are performing their duties well.

Liaison Note:

In my work as a liaison, I am involved with several school districts and charter schools, which means I interact with several boards of directors. If our country has ever been more vociferously divided by politics, which bleeds over into educational policy, I do not recall that time, and I have been around for nearly 65 years now.

It is a credit to the TCA Board and Administrative Leadership that, together, they have risen above political issues masked as educational policy and are laser-focused on what is best for the students and community of TCA. There is diversity of opinion on the board without question, and the administration and leadership does not always walk lockstep with the board (collectively and individually), but any disagreements take a back seat to the unified commitment the board and administrative leadership have on the TCA mission, the vision and the TCA Creed, which was talked about last evening by 6th grade students. Administration and board talk through issues, which is possible because they listen to each other.

More on this in the annual report, but the board and the administration are to be commended for the way in which they work together. The meetings are long, but substantive. The discussions are meaningful rather than grandstanding a particular position. The professionalism of both the board and the administration is noteworthy and the relationship has steadied the community as we all come out of the (as was said last night) “we cannot gather together time in our history.”

Training Session 2 Trainer Checklist (2023)

Check in with training progress, meetings with key TCA personnel, and answer any questions

Foundational Documents touch point: Board agreement, Bylaws, where the TCA policies are located online

President:

Evaluations (review forms, only provide evaluations in formal Executive Sessions)

Basic TCA overview:

Founders

Brief History of TCA (When various programs started, when Core Values developed - use Chart that Director of Academic Services Created)

#Programs, # students, # families

7 program overview

TCA organizational chart - key TCA personnel (who they are and what they do)

Financial overview

Meet with Director of Finance, Grant of Authority, Legal counsel retainer

Strategic calendar overview (how it is laid out, some Board policies reviewed on even/odd years, when key metrics reviewed, what is covered)

Meetings:

Pre-dinner meetings

Monthly, Special, Working, and Executive Sessions, Summer Offsite Overview, team building

Adding an item to a meeting

How to call a meeting

August 1 meeting overview: Voting for officers

Voting (unanimously?)

Misc Board info:

Current top Board items

Review read-ahead expectations

Review an agenda (what are consent agenda items, how to “pull” an item from consent agenda, when to pull an item vs asking a question before/after a meeting)

Our relationship to all the other stakeholders (Air Traffic Controller illustration)

Officer roles (description, time commitment)

Committees

Stakeholder/school engagement - level of engagement, opportunities (adopt-a-school, key events such as back-to-school nights, key school events at your adopt a school, service runs, retirements, graduations)

Responding to grievances (Talk2TCA, formal conflict resolution policy)

Board conflict policy

End-of-year Board survey (review questions. Goal is to promote a more in depth understanding of roles/responsibilities and so that no one answers “I do not know” to any of the answers. All Directors should feel informed in their roles)

Misc items:

Teacher licensure