

Explorer Elementary School Board of Directors' Guide

The following information is to assist us as we serve as Board members and assure that new Board members are oriented and fully briefed prior to being seated.

Information to be read by all Board members:

- The Explorer Elementary School Charter
- The Explorer Corporation By-laws - the School is operated as a California 501 (3) non-profit public benefit corporation.
- The Brown Act (especially Chapter IV. regarding Board meetings)
- The School's calendar
- Parent Handbook
- Employee handbook
- Annual budget document and revisions

General School Information

- Charter State Number – 278
- Charter Incorporated – August 31, 1999
- Charter Approval – September 29, 1999
- Charter Renewal Term – September 2004 – June 2009
- Received a California Distinguished School Award – May, 2004
- San Diego City Council approval of HTH Learning & Explorer Elementary Partnership – November, 2004
- Partnership with HTH Learning – March 14, 2005
- District Review, by Charter School Development Center - Spring 2007
- School Location – 2230 Truxtun Road, San Diego, CA 92106
- Office Telephone – (619) 398-8600
- Office FAX – (619) 398-8601
- Explorer Web Site – www.explorerelementary.org

Governing Board Role

The Board is ultimately accountable for the school's success or failure. The Governing Board's major roles and responsibilities include;

- establishing and approving all major educational and operational policies
- approving all major contracts
- approving the School's annual budget and overseeing the School's fiscal affairs
- selecting and evaluating the Principal.

The Board has the authority:

- to adhere to legal & ethical responsibilities,
- to comply with the Brown Act,
- to select new members by a vote of the current Board,

- to elect members to Board positions (Chair, V. Chair, Treasurer, Secretary)
- to hire or fire the School's Principal, if necessary
- to develop short and long-term goals,
- to sue and be sued,
- to monitor the school's performance & its own performance

Individual Board Member Roles

- Adhere to the Explorer Charter and the By-laws,
- Attend Board meetings at designated times.
- Prepare for meetings - read and respond to materials submitted for Board consideration.
- Practice confidentiality on matters regarding personnel, student and family information. Board members must use discretion in all communication. (See the Brown Act).
- Board members to attend Board retreat each year.
- Board members are not empowered to act alone on matters of Board business; individual members represent the Board only when specifically authorized by the Board to do so.
- Participate in the dispute resolution procedure and complaint procedures when necessary.
- Support fund raising events.

School Administrator's/Principal's Role

- Serves as the chief executive officer of the corporation,
- Adheres to the School's Charter
- Assures the implementation of the School's Social Curriculum
- Responsible for day to day decision making and operations.
- Provides a safe and secure school environment.
- Maintains safety and disaster plans
- Defines the school curriculum (in collaboration with the school faculty).
- Adheres to the admission requirements
- Addresses the needs of the students.
- Maintains a climate of achievement.
- Supports staff members in efforts to excel – professional development,
- Listens & responds to people who have an interest in the Explorer school community.
- Works in concert with the Board – attends Board meetings & presents the Principal's report.
- Reviews all policies adopted by the Board and makes appropriate recommendations to the Board
- Prepares the school's handbooks (parent and staff)
- Works with the Finance Committee to prepare a yearly budget.
- Hires, supervises, evaluates and if necessary, terminates school employees.

Within the provisions of the law, Explorer Elementary reserves the right to recruit, interview and hire anyone at anytime who has the best qualifications to fill any of its positions.

- Oversees classroom management strategies and reviews routine student discipline matters.
- Participates in dispute resolution procedure & complaint procedures when necessary.

SCHOOL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Budgeting and Financial Procedures

- The Treasurer and staff develop an annual budget within state required timelines.
- The budget is presented to and approved by the Board of Directors.
- The Treasurer presents regular financial reports to the board and identifies budgetary modifications during the year.
- HTH learning has an investment policy. Until such time as Explorer votes its own investment policy which governs the management of the school's funds, Explorer follows the HTH Learning policy.
- The Board selects or approves an auditor each year and reviews the final audit.
- As part of its affiliation agreement with Explorer, HTH Learning provides accounting, payroll, and financial reporting services to the school.
- Day to day financial management is the responsibility of the staff.
- Borrowing must be approved by the Board and its parent organization, HTH Learning.

Personnel Policies

- Explorer's Employee Handbook, updated 2008, contains all personnel policies.

Conflict of Interest Policy

- The Board adopted a Conflict of Interest Code in September 2006, which is available to review in Board Minute books.

Facility Procedures

- Management of Explorer's site is overseen by HTH Learning.
- In general, the facility is not rented to outside organizations
- The school's building is owned by Liberty Station Education Center, a limited liability corporation. LSEC is governed by a board of directors, 50%

of which is comprised of Explorer appointees. The LSEC articles of incorporation and operating agreement were approved by the Explorer Board in April 2008 and are available for review in the school office.

Policies Regarding Parents and Families

- Explorer's Parent Council operates as an arm of the Explorer organization, and has its own by-laws.
- The Parent Council elects a representative to act as a liaison to the Board of Directors.
- The Parent Handbook, updated in 2008, details school policies regarding discipline, absences, homework, etc.

Fundraising Practices

- The Parent Council organizes all major fundraising events at the school.
- The Board development committee oversees an annual campaign each year.
- A \$1 million capital campaign was successfully concluded in 2007.
- With the exception of one gift wrap fundraiser and a book fair, the school does not generally approve of marketing products to the school community as an approach to fundraising.
- The school does not generally advertise outside fundraising events for other causes.

Legal Representation

- As a part of its affiliation agreement with HTH Learning, Explorer receives legal advice and services from HTH Learning's general counsel.
- When necessary, and if approved by the Board, Explorer may also contract with outside legal counsel.