

Board Member Screening Policy

A. Screening and written nomination process for Board of Trustee candidates.

As approved by the Promontory board of trustees, the process for the election of board members for the upcoming school year shall follow the procedure outlined in the Promontory by-laws;

- i. The Board shall publicly announce the number of vacancies available
- ii. The Board shall consider any nominations from parents or the community at large,

with the following additions:

1. The board chair will appoint a nominating committee to solicit and review nominations. This committee will include the board chair or vice chair plus at least one additional board member.
2. The nomination committee will discuss with the board of trustees and the director the board recruitment process and clarify the director's role in the process.
3. The nomination committee will facilitate discussion with the board to define and prioritize the skills, qualities and diversity needed on the board (see section (B) below).
4. The nomination committee will present a job description (see section (C) below) for a Board of Trustees to the board for approval by majority vote and upon approval post it publicly on the school website.
5. Board candidates will complete a nomination application and/or submit a resume, letter of interest, and references.
6. Board candidates will agree to submit to a background check.
7. Board candidates will participate in a personal interview with at least the nominating committee (see section (D) below).
8. The nomination committee will bring recommendations of potential board members to the board for election at a board meeting (see section (E) below).
9. The full board shall consider and vote on the recommended candidates.
10. Vacancies shall be filled by the affirmative vote of a majority of the trustees then in office.
11. Candidates will be notified of the result immediately following the process.
12. If vacancies are not filled by the affirmative majority vote, the nomination process must start again.

B. Prioritization of skills, qualities and diversity needed on the Board.

Charter school boards are designed to be self-perpetuating, as such, Promontory School of Expeditionary Learning Board of Trustees will nominate and recommend new board members as vacancies occur. This will be an ongoing and active process, followed by a thorough plan for orienting new colleagues to their board responsibilities.

When preparing to fill a vacancy, the board will consider the following:

- Who is currently sitting on the board and what skill set does each individual bring to the table?
- Based on the school's mission, what additional skills would be helpful to continue progress toward the mission?

Skills and attributes to consider include the following:

➤ **IDEAL ATTRIBUTES**

- Passionate about the mission
- Time to commit to this important endeavor
- Ability to bring a concrete skill to the board
- Willingness/ability to serve as a governor (fulfilling governance functions), ambassador (reaching out to community), sponsor (giving time and money) and consultant (using skills and expertise on behalf of the organization)
- Ability to understand the distinctions between governance and management
- People comfortable with at start-up situation
- Ability to ask tough questions

➤ **PRIORITY SKILLS**

- Financial—both accounting and bigger picture financial management skills
- Real estate—facility identification, negotiation, financing and property management
- Fundraising—especially cultivating individual donors, building a donor base
- Public relations/marketing—especially as it relates to fundraising and community building
- Human resources—personnel policies, salaries, benefits
- Legal expertise—general law as opposed to educational law
- Education—especially accountability, systems, and big-picture administration of educational institutions
- Previous governance experience (non profit or corporate)

C. Job description for Board of Trustee.

Promontory School of Expeditionary Board of Trustees Job Description

The governing board of Promontory School of Expeditionary Learning is seeking board members to participate in the development and on-going success of the new charter school, whose experience, knowledge, and drive will help to develop the vision and values outlined in the school's charter and ensure that they are implemented as the school opens its operations. Working closely with other governing board members and the school director, responsibilities include ensuring that the culture, programs, and protocols are all in line with the original vision of Promontory School of Expeditionary Learning. Additionally, it is the responsibility of all board members to ensure that the school is a viable organization.

What are the Qualifications that Make an Effective Promontory School of Expeditionary Learning Board Member?

1. Commitment to the long-term future of the Promontory School of Expeditionary Learning Public Charter School.
2. Support of charter schools as an integral method of education reform
3. Understanding of Expeditionary Learning Core Practice and Benchmarks and Design Principles and support of Expeditionary Learning as an exemplary educational model.
4. Read "An Ethic of Excellence: Building a Culture of Craftsmanship with Students," written by Ron Berger, and agree with the principle that. . . .
5. Agree with the educational philosophy, discipline policy and administrative structure of Promontory School.
6. Understand the curriculum that has been approved by the board.
7. Ability to evaluate alternatives and make informed and timely decisions
8. Strong communication skills and an ability to work in teams
9. Expertise in education, finance, marketing, community relations, management, or organizational development are preferred, but not required

What is the Time Commitment for Serving on a Charter School Board?

This varies from school to school although best practice tells us that the most effective charter school board members give 6-10 hours a month. This generally breaks down as:

- 2 hours per month for board meetings
- 1-2 hours per month for committee meetings
- 1-2 hours for committee work in between meetings
- 2-4 hours per month for ambassador and fundraising tasks
- At a bare minimum a monthly board meetings and at least 2 hours of work in between board meetings.

D. Specific questions for candidates on experience, teamwork, commitment, and philosophy.

➤ **RELEVANT EXPERIENCE**

- What is your past governance experience? Do you believe the board you served on was effective? Why or why not?
- What work do you do right now? How might this work support the mission of this school?
- What ideas if any do you have to leverage your networks and connections that could benefit the school?
- How might you advocate for the school publicly and privately?
- What would you do if the media or some local groups opposed the school?
- Do you have any past issues or conflict of interests that could potentially interfere with your service on the board?
- Describe a project that you raised money for in the past. What were your goals and what was the outcome?
- I can see many things you would bring to this board, but what do you see yourself bringing to it? What unique contribution will you bring?
- What do you hope to get out of being on this board?

➤ **TEAMWORK**

- What are the characteristics of effective groups?
- What qualities make some boards more effective than others?
- What do you see as the role of the ideal board member?
- When you are in a professional group, do you often change your mind on an issue about which you feel strongly? Can you think of any examples when this did or didn't happen?
- If your personal views were to come into conflict with a decision of the board of the school, what would you do?
- Would you be willing to make a financial contribution that was meaningful to you and the school if you were a member of the board?
- Describe an experience in which you had leadership responsibilities with a group. What worked? What did you learn about yourself?
- Describe your ideal approach to resolving conflict.
- Describe a situation in which you had a conflict with a team member, employee, or manager. What strategies did you use to resolve the conflict?
- Working on a board requires close teamwork among a group that is likely to bring diverse backgrounds and experiences. Can you describe an experience in which you worked with such a team? If not, how does this opportunity strike you?

➤ **COMMITMENT**

- What projects are you passionately committed to right now?
- What is your current work? How is it going? What do you like and dislike about it?
- Are you willing and able to commit at least ten hours a month to a cause you feel passionately about? Can you think of a recent example where you did just this?
- Do you have any other non-profit commitments that might be a higher priority than your work on the school? If so what are they?
- How many board positions do you currently hold? What conflicts would your service to this Board present?

➤ **PHILOSOPHICAL ALIGNMENT**

- Where do your children go to school? Are you satisfied? Why or why not?
- What is right/wrong with education right now?
- What would you never want to see in this school?
- What is a charter school?
- What do you like and dislike about the charter school idea?
- What do you believe about charter schools? Do you think they are
- What is the primary purpose of public schools?
- Describe your vision of an excellent public school?
- Tell me about an experience or achievement from your own schooling that was particularly powerful for you?
- For the school we've discussed, 10 years from now, how would we know if it had been successful? What kind of measurable or appreciable results might we see that would have us know we had succeeded?

F. Tool to help “rank” candidates.

Board Candidate Evaluation Form

PHILOSOPHICAL ALIGNMENT:

Does the candidate believe in the mission and purpose of both our organization and the charter school movement? Will s/he make decisions based on alignment with the organizational mission, rather than based on personal needs and considerations?

Definitely Reject	Probably Reject	Unsure	Probably Invite	Definitely Invite
1	2	3	4	5

COMMITMENT:

Is the candidate willing to devote her/his full energy and talent to the board? Is her/his understanding of her/his responsibilities as a board member aligned with our expectations? Does s/he have the time necessary to be an active board member? Even in the face of organizational challenges and difficulties, will the candidate remain committed to the organization?

Definitely Reject	Probably Reject	Unsure	Probably Invite	Definitely Invite
1	2	3	4	5

TEAMWORK:

Will the candidate make a good team member? Is s/he open to hearing others’ opinions and perspectives? Is s/he sensitive to group dynamics? Is s/he willing to put organizational needs before her/his interests & needs in making decisions?

Definitely Reject	Probably Reject	Unsure	Probably Invite	Definitely Invite
1	2	3	4	5

RELEVANT EXPERTISE:

Does the candidate have expertise relevant to a board position? Will her/his expertise fill a need unmet by current board members? Has the candidate had enough experience within his/her field such that s/he can make meaningful contributions? Is s/he willing to share her/his expertise as a board member?

Possible areas of expertise:

Strategic planning____ Senior management/leadership____ Accounting/finance____ Fundraising____
 Legal____ Marketing/PR____ Governance____ Facilities/Real Estate____ Education____
 Politics/Connections____ Community Representation/Organizing____

Definitely Reject	Probably Reject	Unsure	Probably Invite	Definitely Invite
1	2	3	4	5