

An Inside Look Into the Governing Boards of Texas Public Charter Schools

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SUMMARY

In Texas, charter schools are public schools designed to put the needs of students first, and they face tough accountability standards to deliver on that promise. In fact, in Texas, public charter schools are governed by one of the strongest accountability standards in the nation.

Strict Standards to Serve on Public Charter School Boards

To ensure high levels of public trust Texas public charter boards are:

- Just as open and transparent as boards in traditional school districts,
- Held just as accountable as board members of traditional school districts,
- Comprised of members who receive no compensation for their service and may not have any conflicts of interest,
- Provided training to ensure that they are aware of state law, and,
- Separate from private management companies.

The Role of Public Charter School Boards of Directors

About **1,300 Texans** serve on the governing boards of public charter schools, volunteering their time and talent so that students are well-positioned to succeed. Their experience enriches the way that charter schools – designed to be creative and flexible – operate each day.

Public charter school boards of directors in Texas oversee school operations for over **300,000 students** and manage over **\$3 billion** in taxpayer revenue across the state every year. This role requires an understanding of the education profession as well as finance and governance matters in order to meet high financial, governing, education and operational standards set by the Commissioner of Education.

Public Charter School Boards are Held Accountable Continuously

Texans expect public school boards to run their districts well and follow all state and federal laws when spending tax revenue to educate children. If school board members underperform or break the law, they are accountable to taxpayers.

Taxpayers hold traditional district school board members accountable through elections every three to four years. In major metropolitan areas of Texas less than 3% of residents vote in traditional public school district board elections. Consequently, board members often represent the interests of a small minority of constituents and political influencers who have a disproportionate impact on these elections.

By contrast, taxpayers' elected governor, who is elected by the broader public, holds public charter school boards accountable continuously through his education commissioner.