A REPORT ON THE GOVERNANCE STATUS OF AUTHORIZED CHARTER SCHOOLS

December 2012

Authored by Governance Performance Analyst  Dr. Charles Speiker
on behalf of the Volunteers of America of Minnesota Charter School Authorizing Program
TABLE OF CONTENTS

VOA Network of Schools - A Description 3

Introduction 12

Governance Defined 13

Methodology for the Report 14

School by School Analysis 19

    Birch Grove Community School 19
    Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School 28
    EdVisions Off-Campus 36
    Global Academy 43
    Green Isle Community School 50
    Harbor City International 57
    Kaleidoscope Charter School 64
    KIPP Minnesota 71
    Lakes International Language Academy 78
    Metro Deaf School 84
    Naytahwaush Community School 91
    New Visions School 97
    Schoolcraft Learning Community 103
    Southside Family Charter School 109
    Spectrum High School 115
    TrekNorth High School 121

Appendix One: Committee Structure in VOA Schools 127
Appendix Two: Hints on Taking Meeting Minutes 128
Appendix Three: Web Site Information Criteria 129
Appendix Four: The VOA Excellence in Governance Award Criteria 130
Appendix Five: The VOA Governance Award Winners for 2012 131
Introduction to Volunteers of America of Minnesota

Network of Authorized Charter Schools

The mission of Volunteers of America – Minnesota is to provide opportunities which will make a significant, lasting impact on the lives of our program participants, and to elicit community support for our program participants.


Serving Minnesota since 1898

Birch Grove Community School
Charter #4145
Director: Diane Blanchette
Post Office Box 2242
Tofte, MN 55615
Phone: (218) 663-0170
www.birchgroveschool.com

Birch Grove Community School (BGCS) promotes academic excellence utilizing our unique natural setting allowing students to reach their potential, preparing them to become socially and environmentally responsible, self-directed, life-long learners. BGCS began operations the fall of the 2005-2006 school year and serves students grades K-5. The school serves students in a small school environment utilizing multi-age classrooms, environmental resources, and community involvement to provide a quality education to its students.
Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School

Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School (CMES) supports children from culturally and economically diverse backgrounds living in or near St. Paul’s East Side through a rigorous and high-impact Montessori program that empowers them to make positive decisions, develop self-discipline, and create a true sense of responsibility for themselves and others in their community. CMES opened in the fall of the 2011-12 school year serving children in grades K-2 and will add a grade each successive year until serving children in grades K-6. One of the guiding principles of Montessori education is the development of the whole person, with particular emphasis on the development of reason and the will, along with a lifelong love of learning.

EdVisions Off Campus (EOC)

EdVisions Off Campus (EOC) offers students throughout Minnesota a personalized, project-based, online learning experience, leading to adults who can achieve their goals, explore their passions and find their place in the world. EOC has been in operation since the fall of the 2005-2006 school year and serves students in grades 7-12. Students enjoy opportunities for interaction with one another both through online outlets and through student planned field trips.
Global Academy
Charter #4186
Director: Helen Fisk
4065 Central Avenue Northeast
Columbia Heights, MN 55421-2917
Phone: (763) 404-8200
www.globalacademy.us

Global Academy seeks to serve a diverse group of students. Global Academy is committed to service in the broader world based on the goals of the International Baccalaureate Organization. Empowered by academic rigor, graduates of Global Academy will be fully prepared for success and leadership in challenging high school programs. Global Academy began operation in the fall of the 2008-2009 school year and serves students grades K-8. All students have access to an internationally competitive education that will prepare them for life in a global economy. Global Academy creates a learning environment in which diverse students will develop a love of learning and become responsible, global citizens.

Green Isle Community School
Charter #4144
Director: Mary Menne
190 McGrann Street
PO Box 277
Green Isle, MN 55338
Phone: 507.326.7144
www.greenislecommunityschool.org

Green Isle Community School (GICS) is committed to providing a quality, child-focused educational program for all students. The staff collaboratively works to ensure that students receive a balanced education that includes academic achievement, physical growth, social education and character development. GICS fosters a positive and respectful multiage environment that promotes educational excellence, service learning, community connections, and responsible citizenship. GICS began operation in the fall of the 2005 – 2006 school year and serves students grades K-6. GICS is a school of excellence, one that supports rigorous and responsible academic, social, and behavioral quests. The school enriches the greater Green Isle community by establishing traditions that celebrate history and heritage.
Harbor City International (HCIS) is a college preparatory charter high school. HCIS is a small learning community that nurtures a sense of belonging and academic excellence. The school began operations in the fall of the 2002-2003 school year and serves students grades 9-12. HCIS prepares students for college by offering a vertically aligned curriculum that combines knowledge of skill development leading to participation in Advanced Placement coursework. Participation in our curriculum and the life of the school instills the ethics of Reach, Responsibility, Respect, and Relationships that sustains our students throughout their lives. The school supports students through a vibrant community of highly qualified teachers and staff. Education and training is provided to families for effective partnering that benefits students’ achievement and goal setting for their futures. Service learning and volunteer programs serve the greater community and provide leadership opportunities for students. Our school is fiscally sound and effectively managed so that students, families, employees, and the greater community benefits from our existence.

Kaleidoscope Charter School (KCS) is an educational family that cultivates inquisitive leaders who possess integrity and a passion for learning. KCS began operations in the fall of the 2004-2005 school year and serves students grades K-8. The program model includes Inquiry-based instruction, ability based instruction, leadership/character development, service learning, and a variety of educational opportunities.
KIPP Stand Academy
Charter #4191
Director: Alvin Abraham
1601 Laurel Avenue
Minneapolis, MN 55403
(612) 381-6664
www.kippstandacademy.org

KIPP Stand Academy (KIPP-MN) is part of the nation-wide “Knowledge Is Power Program” which is a network of free, open-enrollment public schools which is committed to the same philosophies of no shortcuts and high expectations for students. KIPP-MN began operations in the fall of the 2008-2009 school year and is approved to serve students grades 5-8. KIPP-MN’s primary goal is to prepare all of the students for success in college and beyond. To do that, the school is focused on ensuring that students develop both the academic skills and the character necessary to help them define what they stand for. Through a culture of high expectations, the school seeks to instill in our students the values of honor, curiosity, tenacity and joy.

Lakes International Language Academy
Charter #4116
Director: Cam Hedlund
246 SE 11th Avenue
Forest Lake, MN 55025
Phone: 651-464-0771
www.lakesinternational.org

Lakes International Language Academy (LILA) is an IB World School, using the highly respected International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme as its curriculum model. LILA opened in the fall of the 2004-2005 school year and serves students in grades K-6. The school provides a choice of instruction in either a Spanish immersion or Mandarin Chinese immersion environment. The students of LILA are held to a high standard in traditional elementary subjects and at the same time prove capable of establishing a high level of proficiency in both spoken and written Spanish/Mandarin Chinese and English.
Metro Deaf School (MDS) provides a bilingual and interdisciplinary curriculum using American Sign Language (ASL) and English for students who are primarily deaf, deafblind, and hard-of-hearing. Metro Deaf School promotes academic excellence for Deaf and Hard of Hearing students using an ASL/English bilingual approach. Our primary purpose is to empower our students to develop the skills and knowledge to succeed as global citizens. The school completed its second year as a PK-12 school in June 2010. In 2009 Metro Deaf School (MDS) and Minnesota North Star Academy (MNSA) merged to become one educational entity. Metro Deaf School had been in operation since the 1993-1994 school year serving pre-school through grade eight students and Minnesota North Star had been in operation since 2004 serving students in grades nine through twelve. Since the fall of 2009, MDS has provided a seamless PK-12 education.

Naytahwaush Community Charter School (NCCS) is a child-centered environment where learning is relevant and respects the traditions and wisdom of community, family and self. NCCS began operation in the fall of the 2005-2006 school and serves students grades K-6. The school is a place where children are respected as individuals, as community members with a rich cultural heritage. NCCS provides an environment where learning is relevant to the life environment of the child and his/her individual needs. High academic expectations are fostered through environmental learning, the arts and cultural exploration. NCCS promotes the whole child through challenging academics, community involvement and fostering healthy life choices.
New Visions Academy
Charter #4011
Director: Jennifer Geraghty
1800 Second Street NE
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55418
(612) 706-5566
www.newvisionsacademy.com

New Visions Academy (NVA) is a K-8 grade school located in Northeast Minneapolis. Since 1994, NVA teachers have provided students with an academic and social foundation that helps students through the integration of social skills, family involvement and academics. New Visions Academy educates students to ensure they are high school ready and college bound. As students grow and develop, they are not only encouraged to succeed academically but form lasting friendships and support their community.

Schoolcraft Learning Community
Charter #4058
Director: Scott Anderson
9500 Ruppstrasse Blvd
Turtle River Township, MN 56601
(218) 586-3284
www.schoolcraft.org

Schoolcraft Learning Community (SLC) exists to help develop individuals to be self-directed, lifelong learners who have the skills and knowledge to confidently and compassionately navigate in the world. SLC is an environment where learning occurs through expeditions. The school opened in the fall of the 2000-2001 school year and serves students in grades K-8. Learning expeditions are long-term, in-depth investigations of a theme or topic that engage students through authentic research, projects, fieldwork, service, and adventure. SLC emphasize the fact that development of personal character for students is as important as academic growth and that, in fact, the two go hand in hand to build confident compassionate lifelong learners.
Southside Family Charter School
Charter #4162
Director: Toni Wilcox
4500 Clinton Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55419
Phone: 612-872-8322
www.southsidefamilyschool.org

Southside Family Charter School (SFCS) is a small school that meets the needs of a culturally and ethnically diverse population by engaging children in critical thinking and problem solving, involving children in political and social activism, encouraging creative expression, offering a wide range of electives and advocating for children and families. SFCS began operations in the fall of the 2006-2007 school year and serves students grades K-8. SFCS is dedicated to academic excellence, innovation in curriculum, and family and community involvement. Their commitment to civil rights and social justice has fostered a curriculum that develops children who are leaders in their communities and the world.

Spectrum High School
Charter #4160
Director: Vanessta Spark
17796 Industrial Circle NW
Elk River MN 55330
Phone: 763-241-8703
www.spectrumhighschool.org

Spectrum High School (SHS) mission is to foster academic and personal excellence through a program emphasizing high academic standards in a small school setting. SHS began operations in the fall of the 2006-2007 school year and is approved to serve students grades 6-12. SHS core philosophy focuses on students in a small school setting which provides a college preparatory education with an emphasis on technology. In addition, students are also given an opportunity to become involved in their community through a service learning program. Currently, Spectrum has nine College in the School (CIS) courses through Anoka-Ramsey Community College.
TrekNorth Jr. and Sr. High School
Charter #4106
Director: Dan McKeon
2520 Hannah Avenue NW
Bemidji, MN 56601
(218) 444-1888
www.treknorth.org

TrekNorth Junior and Senior High School’s (TrekNorth) mission is to prepare young people to make a positive difference in their local and global communities, and to maximize student academic success by challenging and supporting individual students on an academic path that includes participation in a spectrum of vertically aligned college-readiness courses, including Advanced Placement courses.

TrekNorth began operation in the fall of 2003-2004 school year and serves students in grades 7-12. TrekNorth develops leadership skills in all students through required participation in wilderness experiences and outdoor skill development, and fosters a sense of value for service through required participation in service experiences.
INTRODUCTION

This report is intended to assist Volunteers of America (VOA) in its demonstration of transparent and accountable oversight of its authorized schools. It is intended to provide a conceptual framework for the review of the VOA schools in the area of governance. It contains an application of that framework to design standards and apply those standards to the schools. Minnesota Statutes, US Code and assorted regulations were referenced to provide sources of legitimacy to the analysis.

The report utilized information from state websites including those of the Secretary of State, the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) and the Office of the Attorney General. The report utilized minutes of meetings, board policies, bylaws, annual reports and audits and strategic planning documents. The report utilized methods used to conduct oversight of operations, including director evaluation as well as methods used to renew the board itself. This report will reflect information from the 2012 annual report of each school, if it was available prior to submission of the governance report to VOA.

Some schools may have a judgment withheld on a particular standard or indicator of performance. In those cases, no statement of correction is offered. It is a claim for more information and that information was not available at the time of the report writing. Also, every school had an opportunity to assist in the improvement of the report with the submission of additional information to the writer. Most schools provided some comments or information. Many schools that did not provide additional information sent an email stating agreement with the report on their schools.

Finally, the VOA Governance Award of Excellence is presented to those schools that met all standards of this review. The governance award information is contained as an appendix at the end of this report in Appendices Three (Criteria) and Four (Winners).
GOVERNANCE DEFINED

Governance carries several definitions and has numerous perceptions attached to its operations, depending upon the focus and context of the governance. It can be the governance of a country, state, county or city. It can be the governance of a nonprofit organization designed to promote the research on a cure for cancer where its primary job is that of fundraising. It can be governance directed to the implementation of ideas generated by a Parent Booster Club, where planning and management are intertwined. Or, it can be the governance of a school system, either in a traditional or charter configuration. If the governance is within a charter school setting, is the governance executed by a founding-planning board where little resources for management may be available? Or, is it a charter board, duly elected with strong management to carry out the policies of the board?

Whatever the setting for governance, it is clearly a matter of exercising authority and placing proper controls and oversight on leadership and management of the school. Governance includes the general initiation and oversight of planning and controls, policy making, legal and ethical compliance, and fiscal responsibility. Governance is the job of directing the generic affairs of the school and providing restraints as needed to ensure the proper focus of the mission, vision and goals of the school.

‘Govern’ has an etymology that is traced back to old French and to the Greek word to steer or drive. It was a nautical reference and therefore was meant to “steer or pilot the ship” as in the ship of state. The charter board steers the school ship on its desired course (ends or goals), while management makes sure that the staff and other resources (means) are properly ordered to reach the destination.

Therefore, the study of governance takes on a “rare air” perspective, as contrasted with the nuts and bolts of conducting management activities. Governance is analyzed through the lens of policy shaping, decision making and compliance. It is analyzed with a regard for the distinction between ends and means.
METHODOLOGY FOR THE REPORT

The methodology for the report requires that a set of standards be developed such that some form of analysis or evaluation could be conducted. Standards take their strength from statute, code, laws and extra-legal frameworks. Critical to the shaping of standards was the oft quoted “Three D’s,” Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.10 and the original MDE framework for basic board member training.

The Three D’s

The literature is replete with references to the duties of a nonprofit board. They are summarized as the three main ethical responsibilities of a nonprofit board and by inference to this report, a board of directors of a charter school, which is also a nonprofit board.

Duty of care: Board members should actively participate in school planning and decision-making. They need to make informed judgments that guide the school into a safe and prosperous future. The board members exercise prudent care as decisions are made by the stewards of the school.

Duty of loyalty: Board members should set aside their personal or professional concerns, avoiding real or apparent conflicts of interest when acting in their role at a board meeting. The board members must use information obtained for the best interests of the school, never for personal gain. Some refer to this duty as a measure of faithfulness to the school.

Duty of obedience: Board members must ensure that the school complies with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations. The board members remain committed to the mission of the school, while continuing to test the mission and values against future developments. They are not permitted to act in ways that are inconsistent with the central goals and core values of the school.

Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.10 and MDE Training Framework.

The Minnesota Legislature amended Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.10 to highlight the need for board training. The legislature articulated in general terms four areas for board training, that is, governance, finance, employment matters and roles and responsibilities. The MDE created a framework for training that was based on that legislation. That framework included three main standards within governance and numerous indicators under the standards to guide state-approved trainers in the design and implementation of programs for board members.
The three main standards within the governance component were:

1. The board of directors is properly engaged.
2. The board of directors provides strategic direction.
3. Board business is properly conducted.

If the duties and the training standards are combined, a framework can result to aid in the analysis and evaluation of governance and its practices. The duties become an ethical base for the activities of a governance structure dedicated to educating children. The standards provide the needed focus to concentrate on governance as a policy making entity, not a management strategy.

Difficulties in Governance Evaluation

The analysis and evaluation of governance in VOA charter schools presented a unique problem. One can access governance effectiveness through the use of anecdotal information and end up with a misleading or incomplete judgment. On the other hand, strict measurements can be employed, such that data collection would be extremely simple. That method would likely result in trivializing the work of the charter board and its various manifestations. Therefore, the standards for training will be used for the analysis, but variations in indicators will be used, some of which may be judged by qualitative measures.

Qualitative measures need not be devoid of a degree of objectivity. That is, the judgment of particular acts or activities may be reviewed or observed by several people, all of whom arrive at the same or similar conclusions. It is similar to an Olympic diving event where 10 judges show a score immediately after a diving event. To the extent that the judges can remain “objective” and can judge without regard to the country of origin of the diver, the scores are quite tightly organized within a point or two. That phenomenon is known as “inter-subjective testability.” It is a practice that lends credence to what is otherwise termed “subjective.” It is also a phenomenon that is the opposite of capriciousness, since there is an attempt to describe the standards or measures for evaluation, the rubrics or the criteria.
Standards and Data Sources for Governance

The three main legislative areas for basic board training included governance. Within governance, there were also three areas that were defined for training by the Minnesota Department of Education in the early days of board basic training. Some of the indicators of that training were used as standards for VOA governance analysis. Data sources are contained under the standards and become the detail of evaluation and the governance award.

Area One: The board of directors is properly engaged.

The focus of the board is that of setting the course for “steering the ship.” The board must be engaged, but properly. It needs to avoid micromanagement. It must maintain its proper membership on the board. It developed appropriate substructures, methods of renewal and compliance. Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.10 provides considerable guidance for the standards listed below. Likewise, non-profit law and writings provides some guidance.

The use of committees is recommended for at least two reasons:

1. Committees provide a means of expanding expertise beyond board membership.
2. Committees provide a board recruiting tool.

However, schools were not penalized during this evaluation for not having committees or committees of a particular type. Some of those committees used by VOA schools are listed in Appendix One.

Standard One: The board functions with an appropriate membership.

(a) Bylaws contain detailed membership arrangements (size and representation).
(b) Current membership lists with terms and position are consistent with statutes.

Standard Two: The board is free from real or apparent conflicts of interest

(a) The policy on conflict of interest is enacted and complete.
(b) The board assurance statements are signed by each member.
Standard Three: The board prepares for sustainability.

(a) The board is trained in basics according to Minnesota Statutes.
(b) The board executes an effective board development plan.
   a. Newly elected board members are oriented to the task of governance.
   b. The board members conduct individual assessments at least annually.
   c. The board evaluates operations and goals at least annually.
   d. Methods exist to revitalize board membership.
   e. Every board member takes advantage of on-going training opportunities.
(c) Board members attend VOA required training and network events.

Standard Four: The board is organized for effectiveness.

(a) The board has an effective committee structure.
(b) The board election process follows statutes and bylaws.
(c) The board has an effective policy guidance system.
   a. Critical and required policies are enacted.
   b. The board has an effective policy review process.

Area Two: The board provides strategic direction.

Standard Five: The Board reviews the performance of students.

(a) Each board meeting has an item or items on student performance and activity.
(b) The Annual Report contains detailed information on student growth.

Standard Six: The Board provides financial oversight of the school.

(a) Each board meeting has an item on the financial status of the school.
(b) The board monitors its health through the use of committees, audits, annual reports and workshops on finance.

Standard Seven: The Board regularly oversees the mission, vision and goals of the school.

(a) The mission and vision are articulated at each formal school event or board meeting.
(b) The goals of the school are evaluated for progress on a quarterly basis.
Standard Eight: The Board promotes the engagement of parents and the community.

(a) The board creates methods for parent and community involvement in the school.
(b) The board reviews a parent survey on satisfaction at least annually (85% satisfaction).

Area Three: Board business is properly conducted.

Standard Nine: The board complies with items in Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.10

(a) The board complies with the open meeting law.
   a. Meetings are properly publicized.
   b. The board takes action with a quorum.
   c. The board executes a proper closed meeting procedure.
(b) The board complies with fiscal reporting requirements.
(c) The board complies with state and federal special education requirements.

A sample set of hints on taking minutes of a meeting are contained in Appendix Two.

Standard Ten: The board conducts a quality meeting.

(a) Board materials are delivered to members at least 5 days before the meeting.
(b) A public input policy is enacted.
(c) Meetings have a discernible method of organized conduct.
(d) Minutes of meetings are reflective of a corporate educational system.
(e) Appropriate materials are available for public inspection at each meeting.

Board members should be receiving materials 4-6 days in advance to give materials due review.

Standard Eleven: The Board effectively oversees the school leader.

(a) The performance of the school leader is evaluated annually.
(b) The professional development of the school leader is evaluated annually.

Standard Twelve: The board oversees the quality of school communications.

(a) The Annual Report is properly written and published.
(b) The school website has the required and requested information items.
(c) Regular and quality communications are conducted with parents and community.
(d) Regular and quality communications are conducted with the authorizer.
SCHOOL BY SCHOOL ANALYSIS

Birch Grove Community School (BGCS)

There are several standards that were examined. The information and judgment on each standard and its indicators are contained below. Minutes of meetings, bylaws, committee reports and communications such as annual reports, web site information and director reports were examined.

Area One: The Board is Properly Engaged

Standard One: The board functions with an appropriate membership.

(a) Bylaws contain detailed membership arrangements (size and representation).
(b) Current membership lists with terms and position are consistent with statutes.

The Bylaws and rosters for Birch Grove were examined for consistency with Minnesota Statutes. The school has a seven (7) member board with a roster that is consistent with statute. However, there is no mention of the detailed membership arrangements in the bylaws, nor is there a mention of the need to be consistent with Minnesota Statutes.

The board roster was examined and found to have a paraprofessional on the board, who was also listed as a parent. The statute was changed to note that the parent representative cannot be an employee of the school.

Standard Two: The board is free from real or apparent conflicts of interest

a) The policy on conflict of interest is enacted and complete.
(c) The board assurance statements are signed by each member.

The board needs to reaffirm its position on conflict of interest in policy and bylaws. The language of the bylaws may need minor improvements. At the same time, the bylaws on conflict of interest affirm that it must be consistent with 124D. 10.
Standard Three: The board prepares for sustainability.

(a) The board is trained in basics according to Minnesota Statutes.
(b) The board executes an effective board development plan.
   a. Newly elected board members are oriented to the task of governance.
   b. The board members conduct individual assessments at least annually.
   c. The board evaluates operations and goals at least annually.
   d. Methods exist to revitalize board membership.
   e. Every board member takes advantage of on-going training opportunities.
(c) Board members attend VOA required training and network events.

The concept of an internal orientation to the board for newly elected board members is relatively new in the world of many charter schools. However, it would appear that most new board members to the Birch Grove board were either on board committees or in regular attendance at board meetings prior to their election. There did not appear to be a formal orientation program.

Board members are trained per Minnesota Statutes 124D.10 and also participate in on-going training opportunities including VOA sponsored events such as the Elevate program. There is no formal development plan for the board, nor is training mentioned in the bylaws.

Standard Four: The board is organized for effectiveness.

(a) The board has an effective committee structure.
(b) The board election process follows statutes and bylaws.
(c) The board has an effective policy guidance system.
(d) Critical and required policies are enacted.
(e) The board has an effective policy review process.

The Birch Grove Charter School has a strong committee structure as a way to increase productivity and a way to involve the community. There are numerous committees mentioned in the bylaws as well as the minutes of meetings. The election process appears to be consistent with statute but is absent from the bylaws in any detail. It is held during the annual meeting, but there is no mention of when that is held other than in January.

The minutes of the board reflect a periodic review of the bylaws and the policies. However, there does not appear to be a formal statement in bylaws or committee write ups concerning the policy review process.
There are numerous lists of what are critical and required policies for charter schools. A checklist was created to begin the process of this examination in the VOA schools. Any formal judgments are withheld until someone of significant stature or legal insight can articulate the true set of required policies.

**Area Two: The board provides strategic direction.**

**Standard Five: The Board reviews the performance of students.**

(a) Each board meeting has an item or items on student performance.
(b) The Annual Report contains detailed information on student growth.

The minutes of most meetings contained information on student growth, student performance or awards. The annual report contains information on student achievement.

**Standard Six: The Board provides financial oversight of the school.**

(a) Each board meeting has an item on the financial status of the school.
(b) The board monitors its health through the use of committees, audits, annual reports and workshops on finance.

The board regularly reviews its financial condition. It has earned the MDE finance award. BGCS has a strong finance committee and regularly reviews the finances of the school. The committee meets at 4:00 pm prior to every board meeting.

**Standard Seven: The Board regularly oversees the mission, vision and goals of the school.**

(a) The mission and vision are articulated at each formal school event or board meeting.
(b) The goals of the school are evaluated for progress on a quarterly basis.

The mission statement is stated at each board meeting and is contained in most of its literature and its minutes. The goals of the school are evaluated on an occasional basis, to the extent discerned. There are meetings to review student scores, progress on grants or projects as well as fund raisers.
Standard Eight: The Board promotes the engagement of parents and the community.

(a) The board creates methods for parent and community involvement in the school.
(b) The board reviews a parent survey on satisfaction at least annually (85% satisfaction).

The school is very community oriented. It places community members on the board. It has community services in the school as well as activities for the community.

The results of a parent survey suggested strong support for the school. The results were given to VOA personnel during the fall visit. Numerous activities are well attended by the community.

Area Three: Board business is properly conducted.

Standard Nine: The board complies with items in Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.10

(a) The board complies with the open meeting law.
   a. Meetings are properly publicized.
   b. The board takes action with a quorum.
   c. The board executes a proper closed meeting procedure.
(b) The board complies with fiscal reporting requirements.
(c) The board complies with state and federal special education requirements.

The board and leadership do an excellent job with compliance on meeting protocols and reporting requirements. BGCS exemplifies what it means to conduct a transparent and open operation.

Standard Ten: The board conducts a quality meeting.

(a) Board materials are delivered to members at least 5 days before the meeting.
(b) A public input policy is enacted.
(c) Minutes of meetings are reflective of a corporate educational system.
(d) Meetings have a discernible method of organized conduct.
(f) Appropriate materials are available for public inspection at each meeting.

Minutes of the meetings are well-written. There is an opportunity for public input and so characterized in the minutes. The extent to which board receives materials well in advance of the board meeting was discerned.
Standard Eleven: The Board effectively oversees the school leader.

(a) The performance of the school leader is evaluated annually.
(b) The professional development of the school leader is evaluated annually.

There is regular evaluation of the school leader, her performance and professional development plan. The process for the school leader review is contained in the annual report.

Standard Twelve: The board oversees the quality of school communications.

a) The Annual Report is properly written and published.
b) The school website has the required and requested information items.
c) Regular and quality communications are conducted with parents and community.
d) Regular and quality communications are conducted with the authorizer.

The annual report is written and approved by the board. It is placed on the website. There appears to be quality communications with parents and community as well as with the authorizer. The website is in the process of update and improvement.
Standards Summary, Discussion and Recommendations

AREA ONE: PROPER ENGAGEMENT

Standard One: Board membership

The school met the spirit of the standard by having a roster that is compliant with Minnesota Statutes. The board could review the bylaws by noting the representation on their board and/or the fact that the bylaws for BGCS are intended to always be consistent with Minnesota Statutes.

Standard Two: Conflict of Interest

The school should revisit its policies and bylaws that describe the conflict of interest clause of 124D.10 to affirm a consistent message with statute.

Standard Three: Sustainability

The board continues to participate in VOA activities; is trained according to statute and has a form of induction into board activities. The board could use a board development plan that would focus on individual board attendance and growth. It could also be a vehicle for a periodic review of needed skills or expertise on the board.

Standard Four: Organized for Effectiveness

The school has a strong committee structure. The school could use a calendar to guide policy review. At the same time, the school regularly reviews its bylaws and places policies on board agendas for discussion and action. Improvements to the committee structure are under consideration.

AREA TWO: STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Standard Five: Student Performance

This is a board that clearly understands its mission and the importance of a focus on and review of student achievement in a variety of ways including state assessments. The board has authorized several strategies for student performance improvement. This is an area needing strong guidance.
Standard Six: Financial Oversight

The board does a good job of financial oversight, both at the committee and the board level. The board continues to attempt to address methods to improve the fiscal condition of the district through expenditure reduction and improvement of fundraising.

Standard Seven: Vision, Mission, Goals

The board, leadership and staff understand the importance of the mission of the school for its community, parents and students. The school became a focus of the community for the education of the children as well as a point of service for community.

Standard Eight: Engagement of Parents and Community

Specific results of parent surveys were not received by this writer. The results of the most recent survey were shared with Ms. Olsen during a site visit. Engagement of parents and support from the community are “strong suits” for this school.

AREA THREE: CONDUCT OF BOARD BUSINESS

Standard Nine: General Compliance

Generally, there is strong compliance at this school. There is a need to review the annual report for possible improvements in the future as well as to continue to improve the web site.

Standard Ten: Quality Meetings

This is a well-run organization at the board level as well as at the director level. The meetings are well organized with materials available to the public for inspection.

Standard Eleven: Leadership Evaluation

School leadership is evaluated, but there did not appear to be a professional development plan in the annual report.
Standard Twelve: Effective Communications

There appears to be effective communications with several constituencies including parents, community and authorizer.

There was a considerable amount of work to be done on the website to make it compliant with statute. The website is being improved to show current leadership. Several other items are in need of placement. Board and board committee membership are to be on the website.
Estimate of Meeting Standards

There are several embedded recommendations in the body of the analysis and discussion of the school. An estimate of the extent of meeting goals is offered below as a summary statement. However, the estimates are based upon materials examined to date. Estimates could change with continued examination of more relevant information.

Key for estimates

- **Not Met** The standard has not been properly addressed by the school
- **Partially Met** The standard is addressed, but is in need of improvements
- **Met** The standard is properly addressed.
- **Exceeds Standard** The standard is properly addressed to an exceptional level.

Some of the standards do not lend themselves to exceeding standards. Many times, Met (Standard) would be the highest achievement.

AREA ONE: PROPER ENGAGEMENT

- **Standard One: Board Membership** MET
- **Standard Two: Conflict of Interest** MET
- **Standard Three: Sustainability** PARTIALLY MET
- **Standard Four: Organized for Effectiveness** MET

AREA TWO: STRATEGIC DIRECTION

- **Standard Five: Student Performance** MET
- **Standard Six: Financial Oversight** MET
- **Standard Seven: Vision, Mission, Goals** MET
- **Standard Eight: Engagement of Parents and Community** MET

AREA THREE: CONDUCT OF BOARD BUSINESS

- **Standard Nine: General Compliance** MET
- **Standard Ten: Quality Meetings** MET
- **Standard Eleven: Leadership Evaluation** PARTIALLY MET
- **Standard Twelve: Effective Communications** PARTIALLY MET
Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School (CMES)

There are several standards that were examined. The information and judgment on each standard and its indicators are contained below. Minutes of meetings, bylaws, committee reports and communications such as annual reports, web site information and director reports were examined.

Cornerstone has a blanket statement that cites several Minnesota Statutes with respect to compliance with the law. Even though a specific citation on a particular topic is not found in the bylaws or in policy, it is assumed that the expected behavior or perspective is consistent with law.

Standard One: The board functions with an appropriate membership.

(a) Bylaws contain detailed membership arrangements (size and representation).
(b) Current membership lists with terms and position are consistent with statutes.

CMES Bylaws reflect a membership that is consistent with the Charter Law. The school added its own area of representation by mandating that one member must be AMI (Montessori) trained. The extent to which parent or community members are also employed is unclear. This is a founding board and will have formal elections and attend to statutory elections, tentatively scheduled for spring 2013.

The election procedure that was prepared by the school was submitted to VOA for its review. The school continues to strive for quality procedures and representation.

Standard Two: The board is free from real or apparent conflicts of interest

(a) The policy on conflict of interest is enacted and complete.
(b) The board assurance statements are signed by each member.

The board has both a policy and has cited the conflict of interest statement in the bylaws. It also acknowledges that all their materials are consistent with 124D.10.
Standard Three: The board prepares for sustainability.

(a) The board is trained in basics according to Minnesota Statutes.
(b) The board executes an effective board development plan.
   a. Newly elected board members are oriented to the task of governance.
   b. The board members conduct individual assessments at least annually.
   c. The board evaluates operations and goals at least annually.
   d. Methods exist to revitalize board membership.
   e. Every board member takes advantage of on-going training opportunities.
(c) Board members attend VOA required training and network events.

Cornerstone does not appear to have a board development plan per se, but has many elements that could be called a plan. Certificates of training were reviewed and appeared to be complete at the time of the review. Fourteen certificates were on file as evidence that board members completed required training. The April visitation report noted that the board continues to actively participate in VOA activities and training opportunities.

There was detailed information in the annual report that stated an enthusiastic approach to board assessment, on-going training and participation in VOA activities. The board participates in a self-survey to assist the board in the improvement of its efficiency and to support staff.

Standard Four: The board is organized for effectiveness.

(a) The board has an effective committee structure.
(b) The board election process follows statutes and bylaws.
(c) The board has an effective policy guidance system.
(d) Critical and required policies are enacted.
(e) The board has an effective policy review process.

CMES may have committees at the discretion of the board according to the bylaws. The election process is described in bylaws. The annual election will be held in May. A formal policy review process was not discovered, although numerous policies are in a state of development and approval.

Several committees were mentioned in meeting minutes and are listed in the VOA Appendix. The annual report mentions committees as did the site visit reports. There was an extensive effort to assure that critical policies were developed. The annual report contained a list of many policies that were developed this past year.
Recently, the school disclosed that the governance committee is addressing a board calendar and other issues mentioned in the site visit.

**Area Two: The board provides strategic direction.**

**Standard Five: The Board reviews the performance of students.**

- (a) Each board meeting has an item or items on student performance.
- (b) The Annual Report contains detailed information on student growth.

This past school year (2011-2012) was the first year of student operation for the school. The report contained information on student performance. The board does periodically attend to student performance and achievement activities.

**Standard Six: The Board provides financial oversight of the school.**

- (a) Each board meeting has an item on the financial status of the school.
- (b) The board monitors its health through the use of committees, audits, annual reports and workshops on finance.

The board reviews its finances with an external vendor at each meeting. There is also a finance committee to review the condition of the school and its procedures. This fall (2012) the board approved and posted its first annual report with financial information contained in it.

**Standard Seven: The Board regularly oversees the mission, vision and goals of the school.**

- (a) The mission and vision are articulated at each formal school event or board meeting.
- (b) The goals of the school are evaluated for progress on a quarterly basis.

Goals are mutually agreed upon by VOA and CMES. Mission and Vision are addressed in the annual report. Most board meetings address the mission of the school in either a direct or indirect manner including the accomplishment of training programs for teachers in Montessori methodology.

**Standard Eight: The Board promotes the engagement of parents and the community.**

- (a) The board creates methods for parent and community involvement in the school.
- (b) The board reviews a parent survey on satisfaction at least annually (85% satisfaction).

Methods exist to involve parents and community in the school. There was a request to provide parent satisfaction data. That data was received by writer as well as contained in the annual
report. The results of the parent satisfaction survey disclosed that only 36% responded to the survey, but that a vast majority of parents were satisfied with the school and its communications. In fact, 100% of respondents felt welcome when they came to the school.

There was evidence that staff, parents, and community members actively participate in the shaping and strengthening the school programs.

**Area Three: Board business is properly conducted.**

**Standard Nine: The board complies with items in Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.10**

(a) The board complies with the open meeting law.
(b) Meetings are properly publicized.
(c) The board takes action with a quorum.
(d) The board executes a proper closed meeting procedure.
(e) The board complies with fiscal reporting requirements.
(f) The board complies with state and federal special education requirements.

This is a board that executes with efficiency. A quorum appears in place when motions are made as evidenced from a review of minutes. The open meeting law appears to be properly addressed.

**Standard Ten: The board conducts a quality meeting.**

(a) Board materials are delivered to members at least 5 days before the meeting.
(b) A public input policy is enacted.
(c) Minutes of meetings are reflective of a corporate educational system.
(d) Meetings have a discernible method of organized conduct.
(e) Appropriate materials are available for public inspection at each meeting.

There is an opportunity for public input at each meeting. Minutes are well written. However, there needs to be precision in the documentation of motions. Who made and seconded the motion is needed in clear fashion as well as whether it was unanimous or not.

More information is requested on the delivery of board materials. It is assumed that materials are available for public inspection.

The minutes reflect a well-organized and efficiently run meeting. Individual reports are professionally delivered with clarity for the reader.
Standard Eleven: The Board effectively oversees the school leader.

(a) The performance of the school leader is evaluated annually.
(b) The professional development of the school leader is evaluated annually.

The Head of School provides monthly reports as well as is evaluated annually by the Head of School review sub-committee of the Accountability Committee. There was extensive information in the annual report on the professional development plans of the Head of School and the Director of business operations. The report also contained review committee activities that were performed throughout the year.

Standard Twelve: The board oversees the quality of school communications.

e) The Annual Report is properly written and published.
f) The school website has the required and requested information items.
g) Regular and quality communications is conducted with parents and community.
h) Regular and quality communications is conducted with the authorizer.

The first annual report was well organized and well written. The website is in need of improvement to include current and required information. There is also a list of recommended pieces of information contained in the VOA appendix.

Parents and community members appear to be in receipt of quality communications. The authorizer also notes as does this writer that communications are timely and complete. Every request for additional information was met in an efficient and effective manner.
Standards Summary, Discussion and Recommendations

AREA ONE: PROPER ENGAGEMENT

Standard One: Board membership

The school met the spirit of the standard by having a roster that is compliant with Minnesota Statutes. The bylaws also assure that there is representation of a Montessori trained person on the board. There was a complete list of training activities in the annual report by the board. This is a board that is earnestly striving to grow and develop into an accountable group of governance leaders.

Standard Two: Conflict of Interest

The school should revisit its policies and bylaws that describe the conflict of interest clause of 124D.10 to affirm a consistent message with statute.

Standard Three: Sustainability

The board continues to participate in VOA activities; is trained according to statute. The board could use a board development plan that would focus on individual board attendance and growth. It could also be a vehicle for a periodic review of needed skills or expertise on the board in addition to the AMI reference.

Standard Four: Organized for Effectiveness

The school could use a calendar to guide policy and bylaw review. At the same time, the bylaws contain a strong compliance statement in its bylaws that would seem to cover most concerns, if the statutes are periodically reviewed.

AREA TWO: STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Standard Five: Student Performance

This is a school with a Montessori base. It takes its mission seriously and information at board meetings continues to suggest the importance of student performance within the context of the Montessori model.
Standard Six: Financial Oversight

Board meetings, the external vendor and the finance committee work together to provide quality financial oversight. The finance vendor, BKDA, was judged to have done a quality job in support of the school and was recently awarded a multi-year contract.

Standard Seven: Vision, Mission, Goals

According to a recent site visit report, CMES is a “very mission driven….school.” It is off to a successful second year of operation with students.

Standard Eight: Engagement of Parents and Community

The school takes the engagement of parents and community seriously. Comments and survey data suggest support for the school and its mission.

AREA THREE: CONDUCT OF BOARD BUSINESS

Standard Nine: General Compliance

Standard Ten: Quality Meetings

This is a first year school and has operated with quality conduct. The overall meeting structure, minutes, actions and reports are well documented and completed.

Standard Eleven: Leadership Evaluation

The Head of School review process appears to be comprehensive. It extends throughout the year and culminates in an annual report on the HOS as well as information in the annual report of the school.

Standard Twelve: Effective Communications

This school strives to effectively communicate with a variety of constituencies including analysts, authorizer, parents, staff and community.
Estimate of Meeting Standards

There are several embedded recommendations in the body of the analysis and discussion of the school. An estimate of the extent of meeting goals is offered below as a summary statement. However, the estimates are based upon materials examined to date. Estimates could change with continued examination of more relevant information.

Key for estimates

Not Met The standard has not been properly addressed by the school
Partially Met The standard is addressed, but is in need of improvements
Met The standard is properly addressed.
Exceeds Standard The standard is properly addressed to an exceptional level.

Some of the standards do not lend themselves to exceeding standards. Many times, Met (Standard) would be the highest achievement.

AREA ONE: PROPER ENGAGEMENT

Standard One: Board Membership MET
Standard Two: Conflict of Interest MET
Standard Three: Sustainability MET
Standard Four: Organized for Effectiveness MET

AREA TWO: STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Standard Five: Student Performance MET
Standard Six: Financial Oversight MET
Standard Seven: Vision, Mission, Goals MET
Standard Eight: Engagement of Parents and Community MET

AREA THREE: CONDUCT OF BOARD BUSINESS

Standard Nine: General Compliance MET
Standard Ten: Quality Meetings MET
Standard Eleven: Leadership Evaluation MET
Standard Twelve: Effective Communications MET
EdVisions Off-Campus School

There are several standards that were examined. The information and judgment on each standard and its indicators are contained below. Minutes of meetings, bylaws, committee reports and communications such as annual reports, web site information and director reports were examined.

**Standard One: The board functions with an appropriate membership.**

(a) Bylaws contain detailed membership arrangements (size and representation).

(b) Current membership lists with terms and position are consistent with statutes.

EdVisions board membership contains 50% teacher membership.

**Standard Two: The board is free from real or apparent conflicts of interest**

(a) The policy on conflict of interest is enacted and complete.

(b) The board assurance statements are signed by each member.

There is a conflict of interest statement in the bylaws. There does not appear to be a policy on the topic of conflict. Assurance statements were requested. There is a disclosure statement on conflict possibilities at each board meeting which is a practice that is admirable and suggested as a practice for others.

**Standard Three: The board prepares for sustainability.**

(a) The board is trained in basics according to Minnesota Statutes.

(b) The board executes an effective board development plan.

   a. Newly elected board members are oriented to the task of governance.
   b. The board members conduct individual assessments at least annually.
   c. The board evaluates operations and goals at least annually.
   d. Methods exist to revitalize board membership.
   e. Every board member takes advantage of on-going training opportunities.

(c) Board members attend VOA required training and network events.
The board members are trained in the basic components. Members who were recently elected are scheduled to receive training for FY2013, according to the annual report. There may not be a formal board development plan, but the elements of a plan are in place. They attend VOA activities. More information is needed.

**Standard Four: The board is organized for effectiveness.**

(a) The board has an effective committee structure.

(b) The board election process follows statutes and bylaws.

(c) The board has an effective policy guidance system.
   a. Critical and required policies are enacted.
   b. The board has an effective policy review process.

The board has a committee structure that is listed in Appendix One. They have an organized method of reviewing policies. No calendar of policy review was evident. The election procedures follow statute.

**Area Two: The board provides strategic direction.**

**Standard Five: The Board reviews the performance of students.**

(a) Each board meeting has an item or items on student performance.

(b) The Annual Report contains detailed information on student growth.

The board agenda begins with educational data, whether or not information is presented. Q-Comp and forms of testing are addressed. The annual report contains information on student achievement.

**Standard Six: The Board provides financial oversight of the school.**

(a) Each board meeting has an item on the financial status of the school.

(b) The board monitors its health through the use of committees, audits, annual reports and workshops on finance.

The board receives excellent financial information from its vendor and reviews it accordingly at its meetings. There is a finance committee that functions effectively with strong representation from the cooperative. The board has assured a strong fund balance.
Standard Seven: The Board regularly oversees the mission, vision and goals of the school.

(a) The mission and vision are articulated at each formal school event or board meeting.
(b) The goals of the school are evaluated for progress on a quarterly basis.

The mission statement is printed at the top of board minutes. There is the periodic review of student data. There are several instances in board minutes that mention progress being made on specific issues within the school and its operations. The annual report noted that academic and “beyond academic” goals were met.

Standard Eight: The Board promotes the engagement of parents and the community.

(a) The board creates methods for parent and community involvement in the school.
(b) The board reviews a parent survey on satisfaction at least annually (85% satisfaction).

Overall, the parents expressed satisfaction with the school. According to the annual report and parent survey data, there was considerable parent interaction and satisfaction at the school.

Area Three: Board business is properly conducted.

Standard Nine: The board complies with items in Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.10

(a) The board complies with the open meeting law.
   a. Meetings are properly publicized.
   b. The board takes action with a quorum.
   c. The board executes a proper closed meeting procedure.
(b) The board complies with fiscal reporting requirements.
(c) The board complies with state and federal special education requirements.

The board appears to comply with all essential requirements of the operations. Minutes appear to reflect action based upon a quorum and the open meeting law was properly addressed.

Standard Ten: The board conducts a quality meeting.

(a) Board materials are delivered to members at least 5 days before the meeting.
(b) A public input policy is enacted.
(c) Minutes of meetings are reflective of a corporate educational system.

Minutes are easily read and there is an “open forum” at each board meeting for public input. Board agendas are on line. Board materials are delivered between 3-7 days before the meeting.
Standard Eleven: The Board effectively oversees the school leader.

(a) The performance of the school leader is evaluated annually.
(b) The professional development of the school leader is evaluated annually.

The school leader is evaluated with a rubric. Staff members participate in the evaluation. The directors are also evaluated three times a year using the EdVisions Cooperative Checklist.

There is no mention of a professional development plan for those non-licensed people who have administrative, supervisory or instructional leadership duties.

Standard Twelve: The board oversees the quality of school communications.

(a) The Annual Report is properly written and published.
(b) The school website has the required and requested information items.
(c) Regular and quality communications is conducted with parents and community.
(d) Regular and quality communications is conducted with the authorizer.

The annual report seems complete and was found on the web. There are other required items to be added to the website because of recent statutory changes. Other recommended pieces of information are also missing. There appeared to be difficulty between the school and the authorizer with respect to compatibility. The school recently approved the search for a new authorizer. Three authorizers have been identified as potential authorizers for the school.
Standards Summary, Discussion and Recommendations

Area One: Proper Engagement

Standard One: Board membership

The school met the spirit of the standard by having a roster that is compliant with Minnesota Statutes. The board could review the bylaws by noting the representation on their board and/or the fact that the bylaws for Ed Visions are intended to be consistent with Minnesota Statutes.

Standard Two: Conflict of Interest

The school should revisit its policies and bylaws that describe the conflict of interest clause of 124D.10 to affirm a consistent message with statute.

Standard Three: Sustainability

The board continues to participate in VOA activities; is trained according to statute and has a form of induction into board activities. The board could use a board development plan that would focus on individual board attendance and growth. It could also be a vehicle for a periodic review of needed skills or expertise on the board.

Standard Four: Organized for Effectiveness

The school has a strong committee structure. The school could use a calendar to guide policy review. At the same time, the school regularly reviews its bylaws and places policies on board agendas for discussion and action.

Area Two: Strategic Direction

Standard Five: Student Performance

All 4 annual goals were met. Students continue to demonstrate growth at the school.

Standard Six: Financial Oversight

The activities of the board and its committee assure that proper oversight is conducted. There was another increase in the fund balance for this past year.
**Standard Seven: Vision, Mission, Goals**

**Standard Eight: Engagement of Parents and Community**

Surveys from parents, staff and students appear to support the claim of strong acclaim for the school. There are four parent/teacher conferences. Parents are comfortable with student progress, field trips and a host of other items on the survey.

**AREA THREE: CONDUCT OF BOARD BUSINESS**

**Standard Nine: General Compliance**

A review of MDE information and board minutes suggest that there is strong compliance from this school.

**Standard Ten: Quality Meetings**

The meetings appear to be well run with effective and readable minutes.

**Standard Eleven: Leadership Evaluation**

Leadership evaluation is taken seriously by the board. One co-director has a license. No professional growth plans were evident in the annual report.

**Standard Twelve: Effective Communications**

EOC continues to strive for more effective communications with its constituencies. It is investigating the possibility of a new authorizer that will be more compatible to the mission and vision of the school.
**Estimate of Meeting Standards**

There are several embedded recommendations in the body of the analysis and discussion of the school. An estimate of the extent of meeting goals is offered below as a summary statement. However, the estimates are based upon materials examined to date. Estimates could change with continued examination of more relevant information.

Key for estimates

- **Not Met** The standard has not been properly addressed by the school
- **Partially Met** The standard is addressed, but is in need of improvements
- **Met** The standard is properly addressed.
- **Exceeds Standard** The standard is properly addressed to an exceptional level.

Some of the standards do not lend themselves to exceeding standards. Many times, Met (Standard) would be the highest achievement.

**AREA ONE: PROPER ENGAGEMENT**

- Standard One: Board Membership **MET**
- Standard Two: Conflict of Interest **MET**
- Standard Three: Sustainability **MET**
- Standard Four: Organized for Effectiveness **MET**

**AREA TWO: STRATEGIC DIRECTION**

- Standard Five: Student Performance **MET**
- Standard Six: Financial Oversight **MET**
- Standard Seven: Vision, Mission, Goals **MET**
- Standard Eight: Engagement of Parents and Community **MET**

**AREA THREE: CONDUCT OF BOARD BUSINESS**

- Standard Nine: General Compliance **MET**
- Standard Ten: Quality Meetings **MET**
- Standard Eleven: Leadership Evaluation **PARTIALLY MET**
- Standard Twelve: Effective Communications **PARTIALLY MET**
Global Academy

There are several standards that were examined. The information and judgment on each standard and its indicators are contained below. Minutes of meetings, bylaws, committee reports and communications such as annual reports, web site information and director reports were examined.

Standard One: The board functions with an appropriate membership.

(a) Bylaws contain detailed membership arrangements (size and representation).
(b) Current membership lists with terms and position are consistent with statutes.

Global has a teacher majority. The bylaws state a consistency is needed with 124D.10. Terms of membership and officers are listed. The board roster updated on 10/11/11 was consistent with statute.

Standard Two: The board is free from real or apparent conflicts of interest

(a) The policy on conflict of interest is enacted and complete.
(b) The board assurance statements are signed by each member.

There is a conflict of interest statement in the bylaws. A policy was found. Assurance statements were requested of the school and received.

Standard Three: The board prepares for sustainability.

(a) The board is trained in basics according to Minnesota Statutes.
(b) The board executes an effective board development plan.
   a. Newly elected board members are oriented to the task of governance.
   b. The board members conduct individual assessments at least annually.
   c. The board evaluates operations and goals at least annually.
   d. Methods exist to revitalize board membership.
   e. Every board member takes advantage of on-going training opportunities.
(c) Board members attend VOA required training and network events.
The board members are trained in the basics. There is no evidence of a board development plan. However, most or all of the components of a plan exist. Board members engage in self-assessment and self-reflection and are provided training on the basis of that data. Board members take advantage of on-going training and attend VOA required network events.

Standard Four: The board is organized for effectiveness.

(a) The board has an effective committee structure.
(b) The board election process follows statutes and bylaws.
(c) The board has an effective policy guidance system.
   a. Critical and required policies are enacted.
   b. The board has an effective policy review process.

There was no mention of committees in bylaws and on the web other than the bylaws state that the board has the power to create committees. The school relies on a strong and involved board. There was a formal policy review process and the board consistently reviews policies.

The board election process appears to be consistent with statute to the extent that the June annual meeting is conducted during the school year.

Area Two: The board provides strategic direction.

Standard Five: The Board reviews the performance of students.

(a) Each board meeting has an item or items on student performance.
(b) The Annual Report contains detailed information on student growth.

Several board meetings have student activity and achievement data presented. There did not seem to be a regular and consistent attempt to discuss performance at each meeting. The annual report contains detailed information on student growth.

The board engages in a continual process of renewing and evaluating its programs and organizational needs as they relate to student performance. They see the review of student growth and performance as much greater than merely overseeing test results. The board is regularly updated. For example, the Director’s reports for 11-12 contained some of the following items: August – Arabic curriculum, September – IB program, testing, November – annual testing report, January – ESL testing, data analysis, February – ACCESS/WIDA updates, April – reading program, May – MCA testing.
Standard Six: The Board provides financial oversight of the school.

(a) Each board meeting has an item on the financial status of the school.
(b) The board monitors its health through the use of committees, audits, annual reports and workshops on finance.

The board continues to express oversight on its financial condition and procedures. There is information on audits and annual reports.

Standard Seven: The Board regularly oversees the mission, vision and goals of the school.

(a) The mission and vision are articulated at each formal school event or board meeting.
(b) The goals of the school are evaluated for progress on a quarterly basis.

The school mission is contained on the front page of each board agenda. The goals of the school are part of the generic calendar. The calendar contains numerous events that relate to the evaluation of the school.

Standard Eight: The Board promotes the engagement of parents and the community.

(a) The board creates methods for parent and community involvement in the school.
(b) The board reviews a parent survey on satisfaction at least annually (85% satisfaction).

There appears to be a strong interest in the concerns of parents as evidenced in surveys and public input sections of the board minutes. There was a major concern about prayer in the school that seemed to create a degree of unrest in parent groups. The school confirmed the law.

The parent survey is administered each October and collects positive information. The survey from October 2012 reported that over 90% of the parents were somewhat satisfied or very satisfied with the school as measured on almost all of the 24 items.

Area Three: Board business is properly conducted.

Standard Nine: The board complies with items in Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.10

(a) The board complies with the open meeting law.
   a. Meetings are properly publicized.
   b. The board takes action with a quorum.
   c. The board executes a proper closed meeting procedure.
(b) The board complies with fiscal reporting requirements.
(c) The board complies with state and federal special education requirements.

The board appears to be well run with a strong and organized board chair. The board meetings are properly publicized and votes are recorded in minutes. There appears to be compliance with fiscal reporting and special education requirements.

Standard Ten: The board conducts a quality meeting.

(a) Board materials are delivered to members at least 5 days before the meeting.
(b) A public input policy is enacted.
(c) Minutes of meetings are reflective of a corporate educational system.

There is a public input section and it appears to be properly utilized. The minutes are well written and free from the clutter of idle chatter. Board packets are emailed to the board members the Wednesday or Thursday before the board meeting. All board members have Global Academy email addresses to facilitate communications and exchange of information.

Standard Eleven: The Board effectively oversees the school leader.

(a) The performance of the school leader is evaluated annually.
(b) The professional development of the school leader is evaluated annually.

The school leader is evaluated annually with a comprehensive procedure guided by the board. The director report at each meeting is used. Staff and parents are surveyed. Additional information is requested as needed. There was no evidence of a review of a professional development plan due to the fact that the director is licensed.

Standard Twelve: The board oversees the quality of school communications.

(a) The Annual Report is properly written and published.
(b) The school website has the required and requested information items.
(c) Regular and quality communications is conducted with parents and community.
(d) Regular and quality communications is conducted with the authorizer.

The web site appears to be well designed and informative. The annual report attends to the required and requested sections per statute and authorizer. The authorizer reports that there is regular and quality communications with parents, community and the authorizer itself.
Standards Summary, Discussion and Recommendations

AREA ONE: PROPER ENGAGEMENT

Standard One: Board membership

The school met the spirit of the standard by having a roster that is compliant with Minnesota Statutes. The board could review the bylaws by noting the representation on their board and/or the fact that the bylaws for BGCS are intended to always be consistent with Minnesota Statutes.

Standard Two: Conflict of Interest

The school has a Conflict of Interest Policy. They board members sign conflict of interest statements each year. All policies are reviewed on a three-year basis.

The school should revisit its policies and bylaws that describe the conflict of interest clause of 124D.10 to affirm a consistent message with statute.

Standard Three: Sustainability

The board continues to participate in VOA activities; is trained according to statute and has a form of induction into board activities.

Standard Four: Organized for Effectiveness

The school does not use committees. It relies on a strong and involved board. The school has a formal calendar to guide policy review. At the same time, the school regularly reviews its bylaws and places policies on board agendas for discussion and action.

AREA TWO: STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Standard Five: Student Performance

The data and minutes suggest that student performance is critical to the mission of the school. IB has been attained and overall student performance measures were positive.

Standard Six: Financial Oversight

The board and its external vendor provide quality reports and assure that fiscal health is maintained. Audits continue to be reported as “clean” and free from material findings.
Standard Seven: Vision, Mission, Goals

The school is vigilant when it comes to attention to its mission and goals. There are periodic reviews throughout the year. The board periodically receives a comprehensive strategic plan update on priorities and accomplishments. This document appears to be a strong communications device for the board.

Standard Eight: Engagement of Parents and Community

The school has strong parent support as well as attendance at events, especially the parent conferences, where 77-84% attendance is recorded.

AREA THREE: CONDUCT OF BOARD BUSINESS

Standard Nine: General Compliance

Standard Ten: Quality Meetings

The board meetings appear to be run effectively. There are several people on the board who have extensive experience running and attending board meetings. There are several board members who do not have strong attendance.

Standard Eleven: Leadership Evaluation

The board relies on multiple indicators of success when evaluating the leader. It appears to be an effective procedure.

Standard Twelve: Effective Communications

Global attends to all aspects of communications. The annual report, the web site and the communications with the authorizer and the parents appear to be good.
Estimate of Meeting Standards

There are several embedded recommendations in the body of the analysis and discussion of the school. An estimate of the extent of meeting goals is offered below as a summary statement. However, the estimates are based upon materials examined to date. Estimates could change with continued examination of more relevant information.

Key for estimates

- **Not Met** The standard has not been properly addressed by the school
- **Partially Met** The standard is addressed, but is in need of improvements
- **Met** The standard is properly addressed.
- **Exceeds Standard** The standard is properly addressed to an exceptional level.

Some of the standards do not lend themselves to exceeding standards. Many times, Met (Standard) would be the highest achievement.

**AREA ONE: PROPER ENGAGEMENT**

- Standard One: Board Membership **MET**
- Standard Two: Conflict of Interest **MET**
- Standard Three: Sustainability **MET**
- Standard Four: Organized for Effectiveness **MET**

**AREA TWO: STRATEGIC DIRECTION**

- Standard Five: Student Performance **MET**
- Standard Six: Financial Oversight **MET**
- Standard Seven: Vision, Mission, Goals **MET**
- Standard Eight: Engagement of Parents and Community **MET**

**AREA THREE: CONDUCT OF BOARD BUSINESS**

- Standard Nine: General Compliance **MET**
- Standard Ten: Quality Meetings **MET**
- Standard Eleven: Leadership Evaluation **MET**
- Standard Twelve: Effective Communications **MET**
Green Isle Community School (GICS)

There are several standards that were examined. The information and judgment on each standard and its indicators are contained below. Minutes of meetings, bylaws, committee reports and communications such as annual reports, web site information and director reports were examined.

Standard One: The board functions with an appropriate membership.

(a) Bylaws contain detailed membership arrangements (size and representation).
(b) Current membership lists with terms and position are consistent with statutes.

The bylaws appear to be consistent with 124D.10 as does the board roster. Decisions are made by consensus and removal of a board member is possible with the missing of three consecutive meetings.

Standard Two: The board is free from real or apparent conflicts of interest

(a) The policy on conflict of interest is enacted and complete.
(b) The board assurance statements are signed by each member.

There is a disclosure of or request to disclose conflicts of interest on particular board items on many board agendas. Board assurance statements were requested.

Standard Three: The board prepares for sustainability.

(a) The board is trained in basics according to Minnesota Statutes.
(b) The board executes an effective board development plan.
   a. Newly elected board members are oriented to the task of governance.
   b. The board members conduct individual assessments at least annually.
   c. The board evaluates operations and goals at least annually.
   d. Methods exist to revitalize board membership.
   e. Every board member takes advantage of on-going training opportunities.
(c) Board members attend VOA required training and network events.

The board is trained in the basics. The board also evaluates itself annually as well as has a board orientation program. The members attend VOA events. The board does not appear to have a formal board development plan, but has most of the components that would comprise a plan.
Standard Four: The board is organized for effectiveness.

(a) The board has an effective committee structure.
(b) The board election process follows statutes and bylaws.
(c) The board has an effective policy guidance system.
   a. Critical and required policies are enacted.
   b. The board has an effective policy review process.

The board has an effective committee structure with many or most committees reporting on activity each month. For example, the facility committee reported on snow removal. There appears to be a continual review of policies to be compliant with required and desired statements. The election process appears to follow statutes. There is a selection committee for teachers. Elections are held in the spring.

Area Two: The board provides strategic direction.

Standard Five: The Board reviews the performance of students.

(a) Each board meeting has an item or items on student performance.
(b) The Annual Report contains detailed information on student growth.

There are several board meetings that have one or more items on student activities and student performance. The annual report contains information on student growth.

Standard Six: The Board provides financial oversight of the school.

(a) Each board meeting has an item on the financial status of the school.
(b) The board monitors its health through the use of committees, audits, annual reports and workshops on finance.

The board recently hired Ed Visions for additional financial services, replacing their former business manager. The board continues to guide the school in financial matters. EdVisions provides payroll and insurance services. There are monthly financial reports. There appears to be an effective use of a finance committee.
Standard Seven: The Board regularly oversees the mission, vision and goals of the school.

(a) The mission and vision are articulated at each formal school event or board meeting.
(b) The goals of the school are evaluated for progress on a quarterly basis.

The mission of the school is stated on each board agenda. Goals of the school are evaluated, but not necessarily on a quarterly basis.

Standard Eight: The Board promotes the engagement of parents and the community.

(a) The board creates methods for parent and community involvement in the school.
(b) The board reviews a parent survey on satisfaction at least annually (85% satisfaction).

There were methods and attention related to involvement of parents and community. There is difficulty getting volunteers. They have several programs for the community and can boast a 96% approval rating from parents about the school.

Area Three: Board business is properly conducted.

Standard Nine: The board complies with items in Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.10

(a) The board complies with the open meeting law.
   a. Meetings are properly publicized.
   b. The board takes action with a quorum.
   c. The board executes a proper closed meeting procedure.
(b) The board complies with fiscal reporting requirements.
(c) The board complies with state and federal special education requirements.

There is no evidence that these items were anything but compliant. There were no current concerns about fiscal or special education.

Standard Ten: The board conducts a quality meeting.

(a) Board materials are delivered to members at least 5 days before the meeting.
(b) A public input policy is enacted.
(c) Minutes of meetings are reflective of a corporate educational system.

Visitors could be recognized at each board meeting. Minutes are fairly well written.
Standard Eleven: The Board effectively oversees the school leader.

(a) The performance of the school leader is evaluated annually.
(b) The professional development of the school leader is evaluated annually.

The most recent survey to staff concerning leadership performance disclosed no areas that needed improvement. The leaders were encouraged to continue to participate in continuing education.

Standard Twelve: The board oversees the quality of school communications.

(a) The Annual Report is properly written and published.
(b) The school website has the required and requested information items.
(c) Regular and quality communications is conducted with parents and community.
(d) Regular and quality communications is conducted with the authorizer.

The annual report appeared to be consistent with requirements including mention of activities of the leaders to continue their professional development. Website requirements are nearly complete with the addition of efforts to post the wellness plan.

There are several forms of communications to parents including weekly newsletters from the classrooms of children.
Standards Summary, Discussion and Recommendations

Area One: Proper Engagement

Standard One: Board membership

The school met the spirit of the standard by having a roster that is compliant with Minnesota Statutes. The board could review the bylaws by noting the representation on their board and/or the fact that the bylaws are intended to always be consistent with Minnesota Statutes.

Standard Two: Conflict of Interest

The school should revisit its policies and bylaws that describe the conflict of interest clause of 124D.10 to affirm a consistent message with statute.

Standard Three: Sustainability

The board continues to participate in VOA activities; is trained according to statute and has a form of induction into board activities. The board could use a board development plan that would focus on individual board attendance and growth. It could also be a vehicle for a periodic review of needed skills or expertise on the board.

Standard Four: Organized for Effectiveness

The school has a strong committee structure. The school could use a calendar to guide policy review. At the same time, the school regularly reviews its bylaws and places policies on board agendas for discussion and action.

Area Two: Strategic Direction

Standard Five: Student Performance

This is a school board of directors that sees student performance as a priority through continual reports and program improvement activities.

Standard Six: Financial Oversight

Financial oversight appears effective with an appropriate measure of vendor involvement and a new in-house support person.
Standard Seven: Vision, Mission, Goals

Standard Eight: Engagement of Parents and Community

The school places emphasis on the engagement of parents.

AREA THREE: CONDUCT OF BOARD BUSINESS

Standard Nine: General Compliance

Evidence suggests that the school is compliant in all the critical areas of school operations.

Standard Ten: Quality Meetings
Standard Eleven: Leadership Evaluation
Standard Twelve: Effective Communications
Estimate of Meeting Standards

There are several embedded recommendations in the body of the analysis and discussion of the school. An estimate of the extent of meeting goals is offered below as a summary statement. However, the estimates are based upon materials examined to date. Estimates could change with continued examination of more relevant information.

Key for estimates

Not Met  The standard has not been properly addressed by the school
Partially Met  The standard is addressed, but is in need of improvements
Met  The standard is properly addressed.
Exceeds Standard  The standard is properly addressed to an exceptional level.

Some of the standards do not lend themselves to exceeding standards. Many times, Met (Standard) would be the highest achievement.

AREA ONE: PROPER ENGAGEMENT

Standard One: Board Membership  MET
Standard Two: Conflict of Interest  MET
Standard Three: Sustainability  MET
Standard Four: Organized for Effectiveness  MET

AREA TWO: STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Standard Five: Student Performance  MET
Standard Six: Financial Oversight  MET
Standard Seven: Vision, Mission, Goals  MET
Standard Eight: Engagement of Parents and Community  MET

AREA THREE: CONDUCT OF BOARD BUSINESS

Standard Nine: General Compliance  MET
Standard Ten: Quality Meetings  MET
Standard Eleven: Leadership Evaluation  MET
Standard Twelve: Effective Communications  MET
Harbor City International School (HCIS)

There are several standards that were examined. The information and judgment on each standard and its indicators are contained below. Minutes of meetings, bylaws, committee reports and communications such as annual reports, web site information and director reports were examined.

Standard One: The board functions with an appropriate membership.

  (a) Bylaws contain detailed membership arrangements (size and representation).
  (b) Current membership lists with terms and position are consistent with statutes.

The membership appears to be consistent with statute. Beginning in May 2011, the board is expanded to 9 members, with 5 teachers, 3 parents and one community member. Most of the key officers of the board are teachers including chair, vice chair and treasurer.

Standard Two: The board is free from real or apparent conflicts of interest

  (a) The policy on conflict of interest is enacted and complete.
  (b) The board assurance statements are signed by each member.

There is a lengthy description of conflict of interest as well as a reference that signed statements are due from board members. A policy statement separate from the bylaws was not found. Assurance statements are being requested.

Standard Three: The board prepares for sustainability.

  (a) The board is trained in basics according to Minnesota Statutes.
  (b) The board executes an effective board development plan.
      a. Newly elected board members are oriented to the task of governance.
      b. The board members conduct individual assessments at least annually.
      c. The board evaluates operations and goals at least annually.
      d. Methods exist to revitalize board membership.
      e. Every board member takes advantage of on-going training opportunities.
  (c) Board members attend VOA required training and network events.
The board is properly trained and attends VOA events. Newly elected board members go through a nominations process. The board conducts an evaluation on goals of the school. There is no evidence that a board development plan exists. However, there are several instances where the board members work to improve their efforts. Most components of a plan are in operation.

Standard Four: The board is organized for effectiveness.

(a) The board has an effective committee structure.
(b) The board election process follows statutes and bylaws.
(c) The board has an effective policy guidance system.
   a. Critical and required policies are enacted.
   b. The board has an effective policy review process.

The board has several committees. The election procedure appears consistent with statute and is conducted during the school year. The board reviews and develops policies. The agenda and minutes reflect that there is a renewed effort to review policies.

Area Two: The board provides strategic direction.

Standard Five: The Board reviews the performance of students.

(a) Each board meeting has an item or items on student performance.
(b) The Annual Report contains detailed information on student growth.

Most board meetings contain some type of information on student performance and activities, either as a formal item on the agenda or through director reports. There is also information on student growth in the annual report.

Student achievement perceptions in the public and behavioral perceptions in the public were reported as negative in a March 2012 board report. At the same time satisfaction surveys show strong support, with a very weak response.

Parent surveys suggest that the parents are satisfied with the academic environment in the school. Also, the comparison of ACT scores between HCIS and the state are generally notable, where HCIS is at or above the state scores.
Standard Six: The Board provides financial oversight of the school.

(a) Each board meeting has an item on the financial status of the school.
(b) The board monitors its health through the use of committees, audits, annual reports and workshops on finance.

The board has financial information at each of its meetings and also utilizes a finance committee. The board reviews its finance policies and has quality in-house support.

Standard Seven: The Board regularly oversees the mission, vision and goals of the school.

(a) The mission and vision are articulated at each formal school event or board meeting.
(b) The goals of the school are evaluated for progress on a quarterly basis.

The mission of the school is read at each board meeting and the goals of the school are evaluated.

Standard Eight: The Board promotes the engagement of parents and the community.

(a) The board creates methods for parent and community involvement in the school.
(b) The board reviews a parent survey on satisfaction at least annually (85% satisfaction).

The school offers a periodic newsletter to parents as well as events. Emails were also utilized. A parent satisfaction survey was administered during the year. Ninety-three percent (93%) of parents who responded were satisfied with the school. Between 18% and 36% of the parents responded.

Area Three: Board business is properly conducted.

Standard Nine: The board complies with items in Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.10

(a) The board complies with the open meeting law.
   a. Meetings are properly publicized.
   b. The board takes action with a quorum.
   c. The board executes a proper closed meeting procedure.

(b) The board complies with fiscal reporting requirements.
(c) The board complies with state and federal special education requirements.
The meetings appeared to be properly conducted. However, there was evidence of inappropriate articulation of proper procedures for closing a meeting (e.g. March 13, 2012). There did not appear to be issues with fiscal reporting or special education requirements.

**Standard Ten: The board conducts a quality meeting.**

(a) Board materials are delivered to members at least 5 days before the meeting.
(b) A public input policy is enacted.
(c) Minutes of meetings are reflective of a corporate educational system.

There is a public input time at board meetings. Minutes are easily read and understood. It is not understood whether board members receive materials in a timely fashion.

**Standard Eleven: The Board effectively oversees the school leader.**

(a) The performance of the school leader is evaluated annually.
(b) The professional development of the school leader is evaluated annually.

The director performance is reviewed on a quarterly basis, based upon the executive director report to the board. In January there is a staff survey. In March, the board completes is survey and meets with the executive director in April.

There is a professional development plan that contains a couple activities for the director.

**Standard Twelve: The board oversees the quality of school communications.**

(a) The Annual Report is properly written and published.
(b) The school website has the required and requested information items.
(c) Regular and quality communications is conducted with parents and community.
(d) Regular and quality communications is conducted with the authorizer.

The annual report is contains most of the required and recommended sections. The authorizer is not on the website, other than in a student handbook.

There is a monthly newsletter for parents as well as a survey. There is a parent-community forum to support the school and its activities. There is an abundance of on-line access to information as well as a “commitment meeting” for parents. More conferences were offered to parents with an apparent increase in attendance and interest from fall to spring.
Standards Summary, Discussion and Recommendations

Area One: Proper Engagement

Standard One: Board membership

Board membership was recently visited for possible improvement.

Standard Two: Conflict of Interest

Elements of proper attention to this issue were in evidence.

Standard Three: Sustainability

An organized approach to a comprehensive board renewal would benefit the school. At the same time, the board participates in all legal and extra legal requirements of statutory training and authorizer expectations.

Standard Four: Organized for Effectiveness

The board renewed its efforts to develop and sustain an organized approach to policy development and review process. The board appears to address policy revision at many meetings in a year. They contain policies in numerous documents and in a variety of styles on the web and in handbooks.

The board would benefit from the development of a comprehensive board policy book with policies written in a consistent style and format. These policies could then be referenced in other handbooks for students, staff and parents/guardians.

Area Two: Strategic Direction

Standard Five: Student Performance

This is a school that could benefit from a review of its instructional model and the extent to which student performance data guides instruction.

Standard Six: Financial Oversight

Financial oversight is properly conducted with the assistance of a committee and in-house support.
Standard Seven: Vision, Mission, Goals

Site visits and meeting minutes confirm that this school attends to its mission and goals.

Standard Eight: Engagement of Parents and Community

Parents are a priority as evidenced by activities and newsletters.

Area Three: Conduct of Board Business

Standard Nine: General Compliance

The school appeared to be compliant in all major areas of operation. However, Minnesota Statutes requires that when closing a meeting, the reason for closure must be stated.

Standard Ten: Quality Meetings

Meetings are effectively run with opportunity for public input. Board materials should be delivered to board members well in advance of a meeting to allow for proper analysis.

Standard Eleven: Leadership Evaluation

Leadership evaluation is effectively executed and has several components that cover the year of activity. The leadership in this school has unique skill sets that become a base for the attempted strategies to grow enrollment. Additionally, the annual report contained a comprehensive write up of the director’s professional growth plan.

Standard Twelve: Effective Communications

A more complete description and contact information for the authorizer on the website would be beneficial.
**Estimate of Meeting Standards**

There are several embedded recommendations in the body of the analysis and discussion of the school. An estimate of the extent of meeting goals is offered below as a summary statement. However, the estimates are based upon materials examined to date. Estimates could change with continued examination of more relevant information.

**Key for estimates**

**Not Met**  The standard has not been properly addressed by the school  
**Partially Met**  The standard is addressed, but is in need of improvements  
**Met**  The standard is properly addressed.  
**Exceeds Standard**  The standard is properly addressed to an exceptional level.

Some of the standards do not lend themselves to exceeding standards. Many times, Met (Standard) would be the highest achievement.

**AREA ONE: PROPER ENGAGEMENT**

- **Standard One: Board Membership**  MET  
- **Standard Two: Conflict of Interest**  MET  
- **Standard Three: Sustainability**  MET  
- **Standard Four: Organized for Effectiveness**  MET

**AREA TWO: STRATEGIC DIRECTION**

- **Standard Five: Student Performance**  MET  
- **Standard Six: Financial Oversight**  MET  
- **Standard Seven: Vision, Mission, Goals**  MET  
- **Standard Eight: Engagement of Parents and Community**  MET

**AREA THREE: CONDUCT OF BOARD BUSINESS**

- **Standard Nine: General Compliance**  PARTIALLY MET  
- **Standard Ten: Quality Meetings**  MET  
- **Standard Eleven: Leadership Evaluation**  MET  
- **Standard Twelve: Effective Communications**  MET
Kaleidoscope Charter School (KCS)

There are several standards that were examined. The information and judgment on each standard and its indicators are contained below. Minutes of meetings, bylaws, committee reports and communications such as annual reports, web site information and director reports were examined.

Standard One: The board functions with an appropriate membership.

(a) Bylaws contain detailed membership arrangements (size and representation).
(b) Current membership lists with terms and position are consistent with statutes.

The Bylaws may need to be revised to reflect consistency with 124D.10. The membership roster does not clearly state representation. There is no mention of a parent or community member representative other than in the annual report. Further, the Bylaws read as though the only membership of the Corporation is the Board of Directors and yet, there is discussion on annual meeting, notices and the like.

Standard Two: The board is free from real or apparent conflicts of interest

(a) The policy on conflict of interest is enacted and complete.
(b) The board assurance statements are signed by each member.

The director provided the most recent conflict of interest writings and has requested that the board work to improve the policy. Assurance statements were requested.

Standard Three: The board prepares for sustainability.

(a) The board is trained in basics according to Minnesota Statutes.
(b) The board executes an effective board development plan.
   a. Newly elected board members are oriented to the task of governance.
   b. The board members conduct individual assessments at least annually.
   c. The board evaluates operations and goals at least annually.
   d. Methods exist to revitalize board membership.
   e. Every board member takes advantage of on-going training opportunities.
(c) Board members attend VOA required training and network events.
Board members are trained in the basics and expressed a need to conduct a Board Improvement Process. There did not appear to be a consistent or organized method to revitalize the board membership or evaluate individual members. An attendance chart was reviewed. The attendance of board members is generally good. However, there are several board members that need to pick up the pace. There did not appear to be a board development plan, though the elements are present for the most part.

**Standard Four: The board is organized for effectiveness.**

(a) The board has an effective committee structure.
(b) The board election process follows statutes and bylaws.
(c) The board has an effective policy guidance system.
   a. Critical and required policies are enacted.
   b. The board has an effective policy review process.

There are several committees of the board as well as regular attention to the improvement of policies. The election process appears to be consistent with statute where elections take place in May. There was evidence of policies enacted in the minutes of meetings. The format for making and recording motions needs improvement.

**Area Two: The board provides strategic direction.**

**Standard Five: The Board reviews the performance of students.**

(a) Each board meeting has an item or items on student performance.
(b) The Annual Report contains detailed information on student growth.

The board appears to discuss student performance on a regular basis, at almost every board meeting in some form. Activities are presented in board items as well as in director reports. The annual report contains information on student growth and performance that is quite positive.

**Standard Six: The Board provides financial oversight of the school.**

(a) Each board meeting has an item on the financial status of the school.
(b) The board monitors its health through the use of committees, audits, annual reports and workshops on finance.

Each board meeting has a report on the finances. There is a finance committee and several finance policies. KCS received the FY2012 MDE finance award and posted a strong fund balance.
Standard Seven: The Board regularly oversees the mission, vision and goals of the school.

(a) The mission and vision are articulated at each formal school event or board meeting.
(b) The goals of the school are evaluated for progress on a quarterly basis.

The mission statement is read at every meeting. The board keeps excellent track of meetings and reports them in the annual report. The board reports its success in the annual report.

Standard Eight: The Board promotes the engagement of parents and the community.

(a) The board creates methods for parent and community involvement in the school.
(b) The board reviews a parent survey on satisfaction at least annually.

A large percentage of parents volunteered in the school. There continues to be a healthy use of the public input portion by parents. The parent satisfaction survey was sent to over 300 families with the vast majority responding. Ninety-four percent (94%) of those responding were satisfied with the school and its operations according to information in the annual report.

Area Three: Board business is properly conducted.

Standard Nine: The board complies with items in Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.10

(a) The board complies with the open meeting law.
   a. Meetings are properly publicized.
   b. The board takes action with a quorum.
   c. The board executes a proper closed meeting procedure.

(b) The board complies with fiscal reporting requirements.

(c) The board complies with state and federal special education requirements.

The board conducts a proper procedure for the closing of a meeting. A school attorney conducted a program for the board on the open meeting law and proper closure procedures. The school appeared to comply with fiscal reporting requirements and special education requirements.
Standard Ten: The board conducts a quality meeting.

(a) Board materials are delivered to members at least 5 days before the meeting.
(b) A public input policy is enacted.
(c) Minutes of meetings are reflective of a corporate educational system.

There is an effective and well-used public input procedure. Minutes of meetings are easily understood and written effectively. However, the structure of motions needs to be revisited. The delivery of materials to board members prior to the board meetings was verified by the director as sufficient in time to review, at least 4 days.

Standard Eleven: The Board effectively oversees the school leader.

(a) The performance of the school leader is evaluated annually.
(b) The professional development of the school leader is evaluated annually.

The leader is evaluated by the board through the use of survey instruments on items such as finance, academic performance, academic improvement and incorporation of the mission of the school. There were numerous other items that were incorporated into the leader evaluation including self-assessments and observations. There is a professional development plan for the new director. There were others listed under administration and management that did not have a plan, nor did they need one. However, there should be caution concerning the reading of the statute when it states people “with administrative, supervisory or instructional leadership duties.”

Standard Twelve: The board oversees the quality of school communications.

(c) The Annual Report is properly written and published.
(d) The school website has the required and requested information items.
(e) Regular and quality communications is conducted with parents and community.
(f) Regular and quality communications is conducted with the authorizer.

Parents appear to consistently express concern about board or school communications with them. The annual report is properly written. The website contains most of the required items. It is in need of improvement.
Standards Summary, Discussion and Recommendations

AREA ONE: PROPER ENGAGEMENT

Standard One: Board membership

This may be an area for further review by the board such that there is a consistency in descriptions of membership in policy, bylaws and statute.

Standard Two: Conflict of Interest

Considerable work may be in order.

Standard Three: Sustainability

The board would benefit from a board development plan that concentrated on board evaluation and sustainability. A board member is working on an evaluation procedure that would help address goals and areas of needed improvement.

The board may wish to revisit its bylaws on attendance of board members. Members can have a low attendance rate and still meet the low threshold of not missing 4 meetings in a row.

Standard Four: Organized for Effectiveness

The board continues to develop effective methods to improve its operation. Each motion of the board needs a second and then a statement of approval, with either unanimous or a record of votes. See for example minutes of April 19, 2012.

AREA TWO: STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Standard Five: Student Performance

This is a board with a focus on student growth and performance. The board appears to continually work to improve the physical and instructional environment.

Standard Six: Financial Oversight

The board renewed its commitment to governance and finance oversight in the past year. It effectively utilizes committees and maintains a positive fund balance. It is a finance award winner and continues to strive for progress according to minutes.
Standard Seven: Vision, Mission, Goals

Standard Eight: Engagement of Parents and Community

This school enjoys a strong sense of parent support according to surveys and the many hours of volunteerism in the school.

AREA THREE: CONDUCT OF BOARD BUSINESS

Standard Nine: General Compliance

This board appears to comply with statutes and regulations including the open meeting law and reporting requirements.

Standard Ten: Quality Meetings

Standard Eleven: Leadership Evaluation

Minnesota Statutes is quite clear on people needing a license or a plan. People with administrative, supervisory or leadership responsibilities are in this category.

Standard Twelve: Effective Communications

The school strives to communicate with its constituencies including the authorizer. The web site can be improved.
Estimate of Meeting Standards

There are several embedded recommendations in the body of the analysis and discussion of the school. An estimate of the extent of meeting goals is offered below as a summary statement. However, the estimates are based upon materials examined to date. Estimates could change with continued examination of more relevant information.

Key for estimates

Not Met The standard has not been properly addressed by the school
Partially Met The standard is addressed, but is in need of improvements
Met The standard is properly addressed.
Exceeds Standard The standard is properly addressed to an exceptional level.

Some of the standards do not lend themselves to exceeding standards. Many times, Met (Standard) would be the highest achievement.

AREA ONE: PROPER ENGAGEMENT

Standard One: Board Membership MET
Standard Two: Conflict of Interest MET
Standard Three: Sustainability MET
Standard Four: Organized for Effectiveness MET

AREA TWO: STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Standard Five: Student Performance MET
Standard Six: Financial Oversight MET
Standard Seven: Vision, Mission, Goals MET
Standard Eight: Engagement of Parents and Community MET

AREA THREE: CONDUCT OF BOARD BUSINESS

Standard Nine: General Compliance MET
Standard Ten: Quality Meetings MET
Standard Eleven: Leadership Evaluation MET
Standard Twelve: Effective Communications MET
There are several standards that were examined. The information and judgment on each standard and its indicators are contained below. Minutes of meetings, bylaws, committee reports and communications such as annual reports, web site information and director reports were examined.

**Standard One: The board functions with an appropriate membership.**

(a) Bylaws contain detailed membership arrangements (size and representation).

(b) Current membership lists with terms and position are consistent with statutes.

The roster is composed of a majority of community members. The Bylaws reference 124D.10. The Bylaws appear to be improved upon or reviewed at least annually.

**Standard Two: The board is free from real or apparent conflicts of interest**

(a) The policy on conflict of interest is enacted and complete.

(b) The board assurance statements are signed by each member.

KIPP has a conflict of interest policy. A signature sheet is periodically updated at board meetings. The policy references 124D.10 and is quite unique in its comprehensiveness.

**Standard Three: The board prepares for sustainability.**

(a) The board is trained in basics according to Minnesota Statutes.

(b) The board executes an effective board development plan.
   a. Newly elected board members are oriented to the task of governance.
   b. The board members conduct individual assessments at least annually.
   c. The board evaluates operations and goals at least annually.
   d. Methods exist to revitalize board membership.
   e. Every board member takes advantage of on-going training opportunities.

(c) Board members attend VOA required training and network events.

All board members appeared to be trained or are scheduled to be trained. There is no mention of a board development plan, but there are components of one. The board members conduct a self-assessment. The executive committee performs most or all the duties that would be contained in a board development plan. They set and evaluate board performance goals; evaluate the school leader; and they monitor and evaluate the committee structure of the board.
Standard Four: The board is organized for effectiveness.

(a) The board has an effective committee structure.
(b) The board election process follows statutes and bylaws.
(c) The board has an effective policy guidance system.
   a. Critical and required policies are enacted.
   b. The board has an effective policy review process.

The board has a committee structure that is periodically reviewed and evaluated by the executive committee. There was a need for more information on the election process and discernment of when the election is held which was provided. It appears to be held in May. Bylaws were improved to reflect the election timing.

The board continually reviews and improves its policies to remain compliant with required and recommended policy statements. Board attendance is 90% according to the annual report.

Area Two: The board provides strategic direction.

Standard Five: The Board reviews the performance of students.

(a) Each board meeting has an item or items on student performance.
(b) The Annual Report contains detailed information on student growth.

The board periodically attends to student performance. For the most part, it appears that the student performance information is contained in and delivered by the director. The annual report has information on state testing and student performance.

Standard Six: The Board provides financial oversight of the school.

(a) Each board meeting has an item on the financial status of the school.
(b) The board monitors its health through the use of committees, audits, annual reports and workshops on finance.

There is a brief report on finances each month. A finance committee is utilized to enhance oversight. The school maintains a strong external finance vendor and receives periodic finance training.

The school uses its committee structures and reports a “clean” audit for the past year.
Standard Seven: The Board regularly oversees the mission, vision and goals of the school.

(a) The mission and vision are articulated at each formal school event or board meeting.
(b) The goals of the school are evaluated for progress on a quarterly basis.

The mission of the school is mentioned in the annual report. There are periodic methods used to evaluate the school goals, board goals and student progress.

Standard Eight: The Board promotes the engagement of parents and the community.

(a) The board creates methods for parent and community involvement in the school.
(b) The board reviews a parent survey on satisfaction at least annually (85% satisfaction).

There is parent survey data in the annual report with positive and negative shifts being stated. The data suggest that 60% are satisfied or very satisfied with the school. The surveys in the annual report do not tell an extremely flattering story of support from students, parents or staff.

Area Three: Board business is properly conducted.

Standard Nine: The board complies with items in Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.10

(a) The board complies with the open meeting law.
   a. Meetings are properly publicized.
   b. The board takes action with a quorum.
   c. The board executes a proper closed meeting procedure.

(b) The board complies with fiscal reporting requirements.

(c) The board complies with state and federal special education requirements.

The board meetings appear to be consistent with the open meeting law, except where motions are recorded. There is no record of who made motions, seconds and whether or not it passed unanimously.

There was no evidence to the contrary when reviewing compliance with fiscal or special education reporting or requirements.
Standard Ten: The board conducts a quality meeting.

(a) Board materials are delivered to members at least 5 days before the meeting.
(b) A public input policy is enacted.
(c) Minutes of meetings are reflective of a corporate educational system.

A public input (open comment) section is contained in each board meeting. The board minutes are extremely sketchy and do not contain a documentation on motions. There is no information on the delivery of materials prior to the board meeting.

Standard Eleven: The Board effectively oversees the school leader.

(a) The performance of the school leader is evaluated annually.
(b) The professional development of the school leader is evaluated annually.

The school leader is licensed and there is a clear evaluation procedure for the leader. The executive committee coordinates the evaluation procedure. There are other administrators or supervisors listed in the annual report. However, a professional plan for each person does not exist.

Standard Twelve: The board oversees the quality of school communications.

(a) The Annual Report is properly written and published.
(b) The school website has the required and requested information items.
(c) Regular and quality communications is conducted with parents and community.
(d) Regular and quality communications is conducted with the authorizer.

The annual report appeared to be properly written. The report was not on the website, nor was most other required or recommended items for the website.

There is a parent university to involve parents in the school. This is a successful KIPP strategy. There is a weekly newsletter as well as the annual survey. There is also a PTO to support the school and involve parents and community.
Standards Summary, Discussion and Recommendations

AREA ONE: PROPER ENGAGEMENT

Standard One: Board membership

This school complies with statute and its bylaws.

Standard Two: Conflict of Interest

The school displays a strong knowledge of the importance of conflict of interest policy and issues.

Standard Three: Sustainability

Board preparation and training are well in hand. The Foundation appears to be a key player in the role of board improvement.

Standard Four: Organized for Effectiveness

The school has an effective committee structure and very strong support from the KIPP Foundation. There are on-site resources as well as digital and phone resources available to the school.

AREA TWO: STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Standard Five: Student Performance

Plans are being implemented to improve student performance and growth data. The school also supports a strong professional growth plan for staff members.

Standard Six: Financial Oversight

The board does an effective job of financial oversight through a variety of methods.

Standard Seven: Vision, Mission, Goals

Standard Eight: Engagement of Parents and Community

The use of a PTO appears to enhance the engagement of parents.
AREA THREE: CONDUCT OF BOARD BUSINESS

Standard Nine: General Compliance

A Primer on taking minutes is enclosed in an appendix. The minutes would be enhanced with clear motions and seconds.

Standard Ten: Quality Meetings

Greater attention to communications about meetings and the materials may improve the understanding of the governance of the school.

Standard Eleven: Leadership Evaluation

The Statutes suggest that a professional growth plan exists and is contained in the annual report for each person holding an administrative, supervisory or leadership position without licensure. There would appear to be several plans that were grouped into a leadership team plan, but there did not appear to be a plan for each person.

Standard Twelve: Effective Communications

Satisfaction measures from students and parents did not appear to be strongly supportive. The fall visit suggested that there could be more effort to engage community. The web site is in need of additional items. See Appendix Three.
Estimate of Meeting Standards

There are several embedded recommendations in the body of the analysis and discussion of the school. An estimate of the extent of meeting goals is offered below as a summary statement. However, the estimates are based upon materials examined to date. Estimates could change with continued examination of more relevant information.

Key for estimates

Not Met The standard has not been properly addressed by the school
Partially Met The standard is addressed, but is in need of improvements
Met The standard is properly addressed.
Exceeds Standard The standard is properly addressed to an exceptional level.

Some of the standards do not lend themselves to exceeding standards. Many times, Met (Standard) would be the highest achievement.

AREA ONE: PROPER ENGAGEMENT

Standard One: Board Membership MET
Standard Two: Conflict of Interest MET
Standard Three: Sustainability MET
Standard Four: Organized for Effectiveness MET

AREA TWO: STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Standard Five: Student Performance MET
Standard Six: Financial Oversight MET
Standard Seven: Vision, Mission, Goals MET
Standard Eight: Engagement of Parents and Community MET

AREA THREE: CONDUCT OF BOARD BUSINESS

Standard Nine: General Compliance MET
Standard Ten: Quality Meetings PARTIALLY MET
Standard Eleven: Leadership Evaluation PARTIALLY MET
Standard Twelve: Effective Communications PARTIALLY MET
Lakes International Language Academy (LILA)

There are several standards that were examined. The information and judgment on each standard and its indicators are contained below. Minutes of meetings, bylaws, committee reports and communications such as annual reports, web site information and director reports were examined.

Standard One: The board functions with an appropriate membership.

(a) Bylaws contain detailed membership arrangements (size and representation).
(b) Current membership lists with terms and position are consistent with statutes.

Lakes Int’l has an appropriate membership, consistent with statute. Minnesota Statutes is cited.

Standard Two: The board is free from real or apparent conflicts of interest

(a) The policy on conflict of interest is enacted and complete.
(b) The board assurance statements are signed by each member.

There is a statement on conflict of interest in the bylaws. It would appear to be consistent with most components of Minnesota Statutes. It may need an improvement clause. Conflicts are addressed at each meeting with a board vote on the particular situation.

Standard Three: The board prepares for sustainability.

(a) The board is trained in basics according to Minnesota Statutes.
(b) The board executes an effective board development plan.
   a. Newly elected board members are oriented to the task of governance.
   b. The board members conduct individual assessments at least annually.
   c. The board evaluates operations and goals at least annually.
   d. Methods exist to revitalize board membership.
   e. Every board member takes advantage of on-going training opportunities.
(c) Board members attend VOA required training and network events.

The board is trained in the basics. It did not appear to have a board development plan, but had several components of a plan. The board is evaluated as are their operations and goals. Members participated in VOA events.
Standard Four: The board is organized for effectiveness.

(a) The board has an effective committee structure.
(b) The board election process follows statutes and bylaws.
(c) The board has an effective policy guidance system.
   a. Critical and required policies are enacted.
   b. The board has an effective policy review process.

The board has an extensive committee structure with periodic minutes reviewed at regular board meetings. The election is held in March and the board continues to review and develop policies with the use of a Policy Review Committee and a policy review schedule. This is a well-organized board.

Area Two: The board provides strategic direction.

Standard Five: The Board reviews the performance of students.

(a) Each board meeting has an item or items on student performance.
(b) The Annual Report contains detailed information on student growth.

There are numerous meetings where there is discussion of curriculum and student achievement. It is found in minutes and the director’s reports. The annual report contains information on student growth.

Standard Six: The Board provides financial oversight of the school.

(a) Each board meeting has an item on the financial status of the school.
(b) The board monitors its health through the use of committees, audits, annual reports and workshops on finance.

Each board meeting has one or more reports on finances. The board is fortunate to have an excellent business manager and a finance committee. The board has also appointed an audit committee, separate from the finance committee that is charged with the duty of reviewing audit work, reports, and IRS 990 filings. The audit committee includes non-board member(s) who have expertise in auditing and nonprofit finance. This is a practice that would place other schools in better quality oversight.
Standard Seven: The Board regularly oversees the mission, vision and goals of the school.

(a) The mission and vision are articulated at each formal school event or board meeting.
(b) The goals of the school are evaluated for progress on a quarterly basis.

There is a statement of purposes in the annual report as well as a mission statement. There does not appear to be mention or attention to the mission statement in board meetings or the minutes of those meetings. The mission statement is also on the web. The goals of the school are periodically addressed, though not necessarily on a quarterly basis.

The board focused heavily on the mission and vision during strategic planning from Jan to May 2012. It is also the framework for board discussions on facilities planning that are now ongoing.

Standard Eight: The Board promotes the engagement of parents and the community.

(a) The board creates methods for parent and community involvement in the school.
(b) The board reviews a parent survey on satisfaction at least annually (85% satisfaction).

The school publishes a newsletter. LILA has a parent survey and is reported in the annual report. There were 146 surveys returned with a score that suggested that most parents were in support and agreement with the school and its practices.

The board addresses volunteers within appropriate policies. The board encourages parent/LILA community attendance at meetings and publishes minutes online.

Area Three: Board business is properly conducted.

Standard Nine: The board complies with items in Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.10

(a) The board complies with the open meeting law.
   a. Meetings are properly publicized.
   b. The board takes action with a quorum.
   c. The board executes a proper closed meeting procedure.

(b) The board complies with fiscal reporting requirements.

(c) The board complies with state and federal special education requirements.

Evidence suggests that the board complies with the open meeting law in notification and procedure. Actions are properly taken. There is no evidence that there is a lack of compliance on fiscal reporting or special education requirements.

The three newest board members attended Open Meeting Law training at IPAD in St. Paul in June 2012, on recommendation of the board training committee.
Standard Ten: The board conducts a quality meeting.

(a) Board materials are delivered to members at least 5 days before the meeting.
(b) A public input policy is enacted.
(c) Minutes of meetings are reflective of a corporate educational system.

There is a public input opportunity at board meetings for scheduled and unscheduled visitors. Most of the minutes are easily understood. Suggestions to make motions more formal are developed later in the report.

Standard Eleven: The Board effectively oversees the school leader.

(a) The performance of the school leader is evaluated annually.
(b) The professional development of the school leader is evaluated annually.

The school leader is evaluated annually as are the other leaders of the school. There was mention of a professional development of staff and for school leaders in the annual report. There was one missing professional growth plan for a school leader who did not have a license as of the writing of the annual report.

The school’s budget annually includes a relatively large amount of funding for professional development of teachers and other staff.

Standard Twelve: The board oversees the quality of school communications.

(a) The Annual Report is properly written and published.
(b) The school website has the required and requested information items.
(c) Regular and quality communications is conducted with parents and community.
(d) Regular and quality communications is conducted with the authorizer.

The annual report is not on the web, nor was it delivered in its entirety. Follow up requests are being made. The majority of website recommendations were found. There appeared to be regular communications with parents and community.
Standards Summary, Discussion and Recommendations

Area One: Proper Engagement

Standard One: Board membership

Standard Two: Conflict of Interest

This school has a conflict clause at each board meeting. A conflict review on items is also conducted during committee meetings such as during the policy committee. This is an excellent practice that allows the board to be deliberate and intentional with regard to disclosures.

Standard Three: Sustainability

The board takes sustainability seriously through active participation in VOA events, hosting VOA events and board training. This board also has a “board training committee: to make sure that board members receive new member orientation, basic training and on-going training.

Standard Four: Organized for Effectiveness

This board has a strong committee structure that actively attends to business, especially the policy and finance group.

Area Two: Strategic Direction

Standard Five: Student Performance

Numerous items are addressed in board meetings and in the annual report. Also, policies are developed to support student performance including student activities.

Standard Six: Financial Oversight

Financial oversight is a strong characteristic of the board with the use of an external vendor, a strong and qualified business manager and a well-executed finance committee.

Standard Seven: Vision, Mission, Goals

Standard Eight: Engagement of Parents and Community
AREA THREE: CONDUCT OF BOARD BUSINESS

Standard Nine: General Compliance

Standard Ten: Quality Meetings

Meetings appear to be effectively organized and executed. Minutes are sometimes difficult to follow. A more formal approach to minute taking would be of assistance.

Standard Eleven: Leadership Evaluation

Leader evaluation is thorough and transparent. A professional growth plan is needed on all non-licensed people who have administrative, supervisory or instructional duties.

Standard Twelve: Effective Communications

The school appears to have effective communications at all levels and to all constituencies including students, parents, staff and authorizer.
Estimate of Meeting Standards

There are several embedded recommendations in the body of the analysis and discussion of the school. An estimate of the extent of meeting goals is offered below as a summary statement. However, the estimates are based upon materials examined to date. Estimates could change with continued examination of more relevant information.

Key for estimates

Not Met The standard has not been properly addressed by the school
Partially Met The standard is addressed, but is in need of improvements
Met The standard is properly addressed.
Exceeds Standard The standard is properly addressed to an exceptional level.

Some of the standards do not lend themselves to exceeding standards. Many times, Met (Standard) would be the highest achievement.

AREA ONE: PROPER ENGAGEMENT

Standard One: Board Membership MET
Standard Two: Conflict of Interest MET
Standard Three: Sustainability MET
Standard Four: Organized for Effectiveness MET

AREA TWO: STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Standard Five: Student Performance MET
Standard Six: Financial Oversight MET
Standard Seven: Vision, Mission, Goals MET
Standard Eight: Engagement of Parents and Community MET

AREA THREE: CONDUCT OF BOARD BUSINESS

Standard Nine: General Compliance MET
Standard Ten: Quality Meetings MET
Standard Eleven: Leadership Evaluation PARTIALLY MET
Standard Twelve: Effective Communications MET
Metro Deaf School (MDS)

There are several standards that were examined. The information and judgment on each standard and its indicators are contained below. Minutes of meetings, bylaws, committee reports and communications such as annual reports, web site information and director reports were examined.

Standard One: The board functions with an appropriate membership.

(a) Bylaws contain detailed membership arrangements (size and representation).
(b) Current membership lists with terms and position are consistent with statutes.

Metro Deaf has a composition that complies with the statutes and its mission. It is desirable, according to the bylaws, that a majority of people on the board are members of the signing community.

Standard Two: The board is free from real or apparent conflicts of interest

(a) The policy on conflict of interest is enacted and complete.
(b) The board assurance statements are signed by each member.

The conflict of interest clause in 124D.10 is cited and there is a statement in the bylaws that is quite extensive. Information needed on assurance statements and policy was submitted.

Standard Three: The board prepares for sustainability.

(a) The board is trained in basics according to Minnesota Statutes.
(b) The board executes an effective board development plan.
   a. Newly elected board members are oriented to the task of governance.
   b. The board members conduct individual assessments at least annually.
   c. The board evaluates operations and goals at least annually.
   d. Methods exist to revitalize board membership.
   e. Every board member takes advantage of on-going training opportunities.
(c) Board members attend VOA required training and network events.

They have a governance training session at least once per fiscal year. There is information given to board members on training. There is a retreat scheduled each year. Training information was sent to the VOA offices.
(a) The board has an effective committee structure.
(b) The board election process follows statutes and bylaws.
(c) The board has an effective policy guidance system.
   a. Critical and required policies are enacted.
   b. The board has an effective policy review process.

The annual meeting is scheduled in May where elections take place. The board has several committees that assist in its functioning. There appears to be a continual review of policies and development of policies.

**Area Two: The board provides strategic direction.**

**Standard Five: The Board reviews the performance of students.**

(a) Each board meeting has an item or items on student performance.
(b) The Annual Report contains detailed information on student growth.

The board is quite vigilant in its oversight of student performance. The annual report contains information on student progress. Board meetings attend to student performance and activities at many meetings.

**Standard Six: The Board provides financial oversight of the school.**

(a) Each board meeting has an item on the financial status of the school.
(b) The board monitors its health through the use of committees, audits, annual reports and workshops on finance.

The board consistently oversees the finances of the school by reviewing reports of its vendor. The board has a finance committee. Finance information is contained in audits and reports. There was an issue with providing gift cards. The issue is resolved with the PTO purchasing the gift cards for parent survey drawings.

**Standard Seven: The Board regularly oversees the mission, vision and goals of the school.**

(a) The mission and vision are articulated at each formal school event or board meeting.
(b) The goals of the school are evaluated for progress on a quarterly basis.

This is a school where the vision and mission are reflected in every aspect of the school every day in board minutes and committees. They established an accountability procedure well before any state or authorizer mandate. They promote academic excellence using a bilingual approach.
The school continues to appear to evaluate its progress on goals as evidenced by board and committee minutes. The board retreat is a vehicle for focus and evaluation. Student results are reported to the board.

**Standard Eight: The Board promotes the engagement of parents and the community.**

(a) The board creates methods for parent and community involvement in the school.
(b) The board reviews a parent survey on satisfaction at least annually (85% satisfaction).

The school administers satisfaction surveys to students, parents and staff. Over 96% of parents are satisfied with the school. Licensed staff members are satisfied at the 91% level and paraprofessionals are 100% satisfied.

**Area Three: Board business is properly conducted.**

**Standard Nine: The board complies with items in Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.10**

(a) The board complies with the open meeting law.
   a. Meetings are properly publicized.
   b. The board takes action with a quorum.
   c. The board executes a proper closed meeting procedure.
(b) The board complies with fiscal reporting requirements.
(c) The board complies with state and federal special education requirements.

Evidence suggests that the board complies with fiscal reporting and special education requirements. 100% of students are on an Individual Education Plan, which makes the school a unique school unto itself.

The board appears to conduct a quality meeting with well written minutes and a voting procedure. They follow Robert’s Rules and have an interpreter at each meeting.

**Standard Ten: The board conducts a quality meeting.**

(a) Board materials are delivered to members at least 5 days before the meeting.
(b) A public input policy is enacted.
(c) Minutes of meetings are reflective of a corporate educational system.

There is a public forum that is effectively utilized. At one meeting, many parents expressed concern about being heard. However, there were parents on the other side of that issue as well. Minutes are generally well written. Board members receive materials for review at least three business days prior to the board meeting.
Standard Eleven: The Board effectively oversees the school leader.

(a) The performance of the school leader is evaluated annually.
(b) The professional development of the school leader is evaluated annually.

A subcommittee of the board generates a survey and administers it to key informants each year. The board also utilizes focus groups of parents and teachers. A narrative is developed to portray the strength and areas of focus for the leader.

The board chair and vice chair meet with the leader to make recommendations and generate annual goals. The current leader was licensed as were other administrators or supervisors.

Standard Twelve: The board oversees the quality of school communications.

(a) The Annual Report is properly written and published.
(b) The school website has the required and requested information items.
(c) Regular and quality communications is conducted with parents and community.
(d) Regular and quality communications is conducted with the authorizer.

The annual report is properly written and contains the major points. The website is missing some of the new recommendations. The board live-streams its meetings.
Standards Summary, Discussion and Recommendations

AREA ONE: PROPER ENGAGEMENT

Standard One: Board membership

Board membership is sensitive to “signing” and to the statutes.

Standard Two: Conflict of Interest

Standard Three: Sustainability

Standard Four: Organized for Effectiveness

AREA TWO: STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Standard Five: Student Performance
Standard Six: Financial Oversight

There was an issue with providing gift cards. The issue is resolved with the PTO purchasing the gift cards for parent survey drawings.

Standard Seven: Vision, Mission, Goals
Standard Eight: Engagement of Parents and Community

AREA THREE: CONDUCT OF BOARD BUSINESS

Standard Nine: General Compliance
Standard Ten: Quality Meetings
Standard Eleven: Leadership Evaluation
Standard Twelve: Effective Communications

The school leader promptly responded to requests for needed information. The leader was most helpful.
**Estimate of Meeting Standards**

There are several embedded recommendations in the body of the analysis and discussion of the school. An estimate of the extent of meeting goals is offered below as a summary statement. However, the estimates are based upon materials examined to date. Estimates could change with continued examination of more relevant information.

Key for estimates

- **Not Met** The standard has not been properly addressed by the school
- **Partially Met** The standard is addressed, but is in need of improvements
- **Met** The standard is properly addressed.
- **Exceeds Standard** The standard is properly addressed to an exceptional level.

Some of the standards do not lend themselves to exceeding standards. Many times, Met (Standard) would be the highest achievement.

**AREA ONE: PROPER ENGAGEMENT**

- **Standard One: Board Membership** MET
- **Standard Two: Conflict of Interest** MET
- **Standard Three: Sustainability** MET
- **Standard Four: Organized for Effectiveness** MET

**AREA TWO: STRATEGIC DIRECTION**

- **Standard Five: Student Performance** MET
- **Standard Six: Financial Oversight** MET
- **Standard Seven: Vision, Mission, Goals** MET
- **Standard Eight: Engagement of Parents and Community** MET

**AREA THREE: CONDUCT OF BOARD BUSINESS**

- **Standard Nine: General Compliance** MET
- **Standard Ten: Quality Meetings** MET
- **Standard Eleven: Leadership Evaluation** MET
- **Standard Twelve: Effective Communications** MET
Naytahwaush Community Charter School (NCCS)

There are several standards that were examined. The information and judgment on each standard and its indicators are contained below. Minutes of meetings, bylaws, committee reports and communications such as annual reports, web site information and director reports were examined.

**Standard One: The board functions with an appropriate membership.**

(a) Bylaws contain detailed membership arrangements (size and representation).
(b) Current membership lists with terms and position are consistent with statutes.

The membership roster appears to be consistent with 124D.10. The bylaws do not contain any membership detail as of July 2011.

**Standard Two: The board is free from real or apparent conflicts of interest**

(a) The policy on conflict of interest is enacted and complete.
(b) The board assurance statements are signed by each member.

There did not appear to be a conflict of interest statement in bylaws. There were policy level statements and the board continued to examine assurance statements in minutes.

**Standard Three: The board prepares for sustainability.**

(a) The board is trained in basics according to Minnesota Statutes.
(b) The board executes an effective board development plan.
   a. Newly elected board members are oriented to the task of governance.
   b. The board members conduct individual assessments at least annually.
   c. The board evaluates operations and goals at least annually.
   d. Methods exist to revitalize board membership.
   e. Every board member takes advantage of on-going training opportunities.
(c) Board members attend VOA required training and network events.

The board appeared to be trained in the basic components and they attend VOA programs. There did not appear to be a board development plan. However, there is an annual self-evaluation process. There was an orientation of new board members. There is information on board expertise which is well done.

**Standard Four: The board is organized for effectiveness.**
(a) The board has an effective committee structure.

(b) The board election process follows statutes and bylaws.

(c) The board has an effective policy guidance system.
   a. Critical and required policies are enacted.
   b. The board has an effective policy review process.

The board has several committees to assist the board in its operations. Its elections occur in May and appear to follow statute. The board does not appear to have a formal policy evaluation system, but continues to review and develop board policies on a regular basis.

**Area Two: The board provides strategic direction.**

**Standard Five: The Board reviews the performance of students.**

(a) Each board meeting has an item or items on student performance.

(b) The Annual Report contains detailed information on student growth.

There is a student performance update at each board meeting, either as a board item or as a part of a management report. The annual report contains information on growth. There are numerous examples of attention to curriculum and instruction as well as staff development activities.

**Standard Six: The Board provides financial oversight of the school.**

(a) Each board meeting has an item on the financial status of the school.

(b) The board monitors its health through the use of committees, audits, annual reports and workshops on finance.

The board conducts its finance business quite thoroughly with the use of committees and strong reports each month. The board is trained in finance and attends to finance issues throughout the year. The board receives regular attendance reports and documents those reports in board meetings, which is not typically done in charters. This is a quality action.
Standard Seven: The Board regularly oversees the mission, vision and goals of the school.

(a) The mission and vision are articulated at each formal school event or board meeting.
(b) The goals of the school are evaluated for progress on a quarterly basis.

The mission statement is contained on each director’s report. They discuss vision and mission in the annual report. They evaluate their school goals at least annually.

Standard Eight: The Board promotes the engagement of parents and the community.

(a) The board creates methods for parent and community involvement in the school.
(b) The board reviews a parent survey on satisfaction at least annually (85% satisfaction).

There is a lot of information on parent and community involvement including the immersion in the Ojibwe culture at school and within community activities. There is a 95% satisfaction rate among parents. Increased enrollment is also a signal of parent support. Every family is visited every fall by a staff member. The parent conference had an attendance rate in excess of 90% attendance. The most recent attendance rate was 62%.

Area Three: Board business is properly conducted.

Standard Nine: The board complies with items in Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.10

(a) The board complies with the open meeting law.
   a. Meetings are properly publicized.
   b. The board takes action with a quorum.
   c. The board executes a proper closed meeting procedure.

(b) The board complies with fiscal reporting requirements.

(c) The board complies with state and federal special education requirements.

The open meeting law is followed per statute. However, a statement of why the meeting is closed is required by statute. Meetings are publicized and action is taken with a quorum. There is no evidence that fiscal reporting or special education requirements are not followed.
Standard Ten: The board conducts a quality meeting.

(a) Board materials are delivered to members at least 5 days before the meeting.

(b) A public input policy is enacted.

(c) Minutes of meetings are reflective of a corporate educational system.

Minutes of meetings are well written and activities and motions well documented. There is a public input section in the minutes where visitors have an opportunity to speak. The director reported that materials are given to board members with sufficient time to review them prior to the meeting.

Standard Eleven: The Board effectively oversees the school leader.

(a) The performance of the school leader is evaluated annually.

(b) The professional development of the school leader is evaluated annually.

The leaders are licensed. The board decided to transition to one leader. The board evaluates the leader in March. The evaluation instrument is based upon job expectations. The entire board reviews results with the leader(s) and develop a plan to work on needed improvements.

Standard Twelve: The board oversees the quality of school communications.

(a) The Annual Report is properly written and published.
(b) The school website has the required and requested information items.
(c) Regular and quality communications is conducted with parents and community.
(d) Regular and quality communications is conducted with the authorizer.

There is a well written annual report. A website contains some of the required and requested information. They instituted an “instant alert” system as part of their communications. They have the Friday Family Fun night as well as periodic newsletters and web postings and postings on the community bulletin board.
Standards Summary, Discussion and Recommendations

AREA ONE: PROPER ENGAGEMENT

Standard One: Board membership

Standard Two: Conflict of Interest

The board is advised to review its policy and practices on conflict of interest. There are several excellent examples among the VOA schools.

Standard Three: Sustainability

Standard Four: Organized for Effectiveness

AREA TWO: STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Standard Five: Student Performance
Standard Six: Financial Oversight
Standard Seven: Vision, Mission, Goals
Standard Eight: Engagement of Parents and Community

This school does an excellent job of engaging the parents and community.

AREA THREE: CONDUCT OF BOARD BUSINESS

Standard Nine: General Compliance

Minnesota Statutes states that the reason for closing a meeting must be clearly stated in agenda and minutes. Ex-officio members of a board are non-voting and therefore cannot offer motions as is done with the board meetings.

Standard Ten: Quality Meetings
Standard Eleven: Leadership Evaluation
Standard Twelve: Effective Communications
Estimate of Meeting Standards

There are several embedded recommendations in the body of the analysis and discussion of the school. An estimate of the extent of meeting goals is offered below as a summary statement. However, the estimates are based upon materials examined to date. Estimates could change with continued examination of more relevant information.

Key for estimates

Not Met The standard has not been properly addressed by the school
Partially Met The standard is addressed, but is in need of improvements
Met The standard is properly addressed.
Exceeds Standard The standard is properly addressed to an exceptional level.

Some of the standards do not lend themselves to exceeding standards. Many times, Met (Standard) would be the highest achievement.

AREA ONE: PROPER ENGAGEMENT

Standard One: Board Membership MET
Standard Two: Conflict of Interest MET
Standard Three: Sustainability MET
Standard Four: Organized for Effectiveness MET

AREA TWO: STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Standard Five: Student Performance MET
Standard Six: Financial Oversight MET
Standard Seven: Vision, Mission, Goals MET
Standard Eight: Engagement of Parents and Community MET

AREA THREE: CONDUCT OF BOARD BUSINESS

Standard Nine: General Compliance PARTIALLY MET
Standard Ten: Quality Meetings MET
Standard Eleven: Leadership Evaluation MET
Standard Twelve: Effective Communications MET
New Visions Academy (NVA)

There are several standards that were examined. The information and judgment on each standard and its indicators are contained below. Minutes of meetings, bylaws, committee reports and communications such as annual reports, web site information and director reports were examined.

Standard One: The board functions with an appropriate membership.

(a) Bylaws contain detailed membership arrangements (size and representation).
(b) Current membership lists with terms and position are consistent with statutes.

The bylaws contain membership arrangements as well as a reference to 124D.10. The current membership list appears to be consistent with statute.

Standard Two: The board is free from real or apparent conflicts of interest

(a) The policy on conflict of interest is enacted and complete.
(b) The board assurance statements are signed by each member.

The bylaws reference the conflict of interest clause of 124D.10. Board assurance statements are being requested. There was a conflict of interest declaration at a board meeting.

Standard Three: The board prepares for sustainability.

(a) The board is trained in basics according to Minnesota Statutes.
(b) The board executes an effective board development plan.
   a. Newly elected board members are oriented to the task of governance.
   b. The board members conduct individual assessments at least annually.
   c. The board evaluates operations and goals at least annually.
   d. Methods exist to revitalize board membership.
   e. Every board member takes advantage of on-going training opportunities.
(c) Board members attend VOA required training and network events.

Board member training certificates were reviewed and found to be in order. There did not appear to be a board development plan, but components of the plan existed including a board self-evaluation. The board evaluates its goals as well as attends VOA programs.
Standard Four: The board is organized for effectiveness.

(a) The board has an effective committee structure.
(b) The board election process follows statutes and bylaws.
(c) The board has an effective policy guidance system.
   a. Critical and required policies are enacted.
   b. The board has an effective policy review process.

The board has committees to support the activities of the board. The election and changes of bylaws appear to be consistent with authorizer expectations and statute. Policies are periodically reviewed and developed.

Area Two: The board provides strategic direction.

Standard Five: The Board reviews the performance of students.

(a) Each board meeting has an item or items on student performance.
(b) The Annual Report contains detailed information on student growth.

There are numerous meetings where there is information presented or discussed on student performance. The annual report contains information on student growth. The board also receives information on innovative practices, professional development and the results of grants directed to instructional improvement.

Standard Six: The Board provides financial oversight of the school.

(a) Each board meeting has an item on the financial status of the school.
(b) The board monitors its health through the use of committees, audits, annual reports and workshops on finance.

The board effectively utilizes a finance committee and reports on those minutes and the status of finance issues on a monthly basis. The audit from the prior year noted several findings, most of which related to the lack of immediate resolve on a shortage of cash on-hand.
Standard Seven: The Board regularly oversees the mission, vision and goals of the school.

(a) The mission and vision are articulated at each formal school event or board meeting.
(b) The goals of the school are evaluated for progress on a quarterly basis.

The mission is stated each month on the principal report. The mission and vision are also contained in the annual report. Purpose statements are clearly enhanced with examples from actual school practice.

The goals of the school are periodically evaluated by the board as well as by VOA during annual reviews and visits.

Standard Eight: The Board promotes the engagement of parents and the community.

(a) The board creates methods for parent and community involvement in the school.
(b) The board reviews a parent survey on satisfaction at least annually (85% satisfaction).

The school has a parent portal that contains all necessary school information including grades and handbooks. Results on parent survey revealed that there was a remarkable rate of 85% of parents taking the survey. Eighty percent of those parents were 90-100% satisfied with the school. Information on parent survey results and parent and family engagement were found on page 19 of annual report as well as in the monthly SIG reports.

Area Three: Board business is properly conducted.

Standard Nine: The board complies with items in Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.10

(a) The board complies with the open meeting law.
   a. Meetings are properly publicized.
   b. The board takes action with a quorum.
   c. The board executes a proper closed meeting procedure.

(b) The board complies with fiscal reporting requirements.

(c) The board complies with state and federal special education requirements.
The board appears to comply with the open meeting law and the proper process for closing a meeting. There was no evidence that fiscal reporting and special education requirements were not followed.

**Standard Ten: The board conducts a quality meeting.**

(a) Board materials are delivered to members at least 5 days before the meeting.
(b) A public input policy is enacted.
(c) Minutes of meetings are reflective of a corporate educational system.

The board provides an opportunity for public comment. Minutes are sometimes sketchy and incomplete. Minutes reflect an “informal” atmosphere. It is not known whether the board receives information prior to a board meeting.

**Standard Eleven: The Board effectively oversees the school leader.**

(a) The performance of the school leader is evaluated annually.
(b) The professional development of the school leader is evaluated annually.

A principal evaluation process was reviewed. It is an on-going process. The principal has a professional development plan and is approved by the board.

**Standard Twelve: The board oversees the quality of school communications.**

(a) The Annual Report is properly written and published.
(b) The school website has the required and requested information items.
(c) Regular and quality communications is conducted with parents and community.
(d) Regular and quality communications is conducted with the authorizer.

The annual report was available for review. The website was either incomplete or down for repair. There was a parent-teacher committee and numerous opportunities for parent and community information gathering.
Standards Summary, Discussion and Recommendations

AREA ONE: PROPER ENGAGEMENT

Standard One: Board membership

Standard Two: Conflict of Interest

Standard Three: Sustainability

Standard Four: Organized for Effectiveness

AREA TWO: STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Standard Five: Student Performance

Standard Six: Financial Oversight

The school took steps to remediate the findings in the past audit.

Standard Seven: Vision, Mission, Goals

Standard Eight: Engagement of Parents and Community

AREA THREE: CONDUCT OF BOARD BUSINESS

Standard Nine: General Compliance

Standard Ten: Quality Meetings

Meeting minutes could periodically use some “brushing” up such that a formal corporate body of information is presented in an easily understood and professional manner.

Standard Eleven: Leadership Evaluation

Standard Twelve: Effective Communications

This may be the only school to truly report in an accountable fashion on the purposes of the school per statute. That is, most, if not all, other schools report on the purposes of their school by listing the purpose statements addressed in statute. This school developed awareness in the reader about how the purposes were being realized in the school. This was an exceptional piece of work that moved beyond “good.”
Estimate of Meeting Standards

There are several embedded recommendations in the body of the analysis and discussion of the school. An estimate of the extent of meeting goals is offered below as a summary statement. However, the estimates are based upon materials examined to date. Estimates could change with continued examination of more relevant information.

Key for estimates

Not Met  The standard has not been properly addressed by the school
Partially Met  The standard is addressed, but is in need of improvements
Met  The standard is properly addressed.
Exceeds Standard  The standard is properly addressed to an exceptional level.

Some of the standards do not lend themselves to exceeding standards. Many times, Met (Standard) would be the highest achievement.

AREA ONE: PROPER ENGAGEMENT

Standard One: Board Membership  MET
Standard Two: Conflict of Interest  MET
Standard Three: Sustainability  MET
Standard Four: Organized for Effectiveness  MET

AREA TWO: STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Standard Five: Student Performance  MET
Standard Six: Financial Oversight  MET
Standard Seven: Vision, Mission, Goals  MET
Standard Eight: Engagement of Parents and Community  MET

AREA THREE: CONDUCT OF BOARD BUSINESS

Standard Nine: General Compliance  MET
Standard Ten: Quality Meetings  NO JUDGEMENT
Standard Eleven: Leadership Evaluation  MET
Standard Twelve: Effective Communications  PARTIALLY MET
**Schoolcraft Learning Community (SLC)**

There are several standards that were examined. The information and judgment on each standard and its indicators are contained below. Minutes of meetings, bylaws, committee reports and communications such as annual reports, web site information and director reports were examined.

**Standard One: The board functions with an appropriate membership.**

(a) Bylaws contain detailed membership arrangements (size and representation).
(b) Current membership lists with terms and position are consistent with statutes.

Bylaws state that membership shall be consistent with Minnesota Statutes. The current membership list reflects a consistency with the statute.

**Standard Two: The board is free from real or apparent conflicts of interest**

(a) The policy on conflict of interest is enacted and complete.
(b) The board assurance statements are signed by each member.

There was no mention of a conflict of interest clause in bylaws. Board assurances are collected by VOA as well as by the auditor.

**Standard Three: The board prepares for sustainability.**

(a) The board is trained in basics according to Minnesota Statutes.
(b) The board executes an effective board development plan.
   a. Newly elected board members are oriented to the task of governance.
   b. The board members conduct individual assessments at least annually.
   c. The board evaluates operations and goals at least annually.
   d. Methods exist to revitalize board membership.
   e. Every board member takes advantage of on-going training opportunities.
(c) Board members attend VOA required training and network events.

Board members appeared to be trained or are readied for training within the context of the statute. A board development plan was not found, but attention was given to the components including on-going training and evaluation of goals. Schoolcraft members take advantage of VOA network sessions. They engage in individual assessments and board orientations.
Standard Four: The board is organized for effectiveness.

(a) The board has an effective committee structure.
(b) The board election process follows statutes and bylaws.
(c) The board has an effective policy guidance system.
   a. Critical and required policies are enacted.
   b. The board has an effective policy review process.

The board has a committee structure and utilizes the Carver Model of governance as strongly as any charter school in the state.

Minutes of April showed that board members are elected in that month at the annual meeting.
New methods of election are being explored.

The board continues to review and develop policies requested or required by statute or its authorizer and good practices.

Area Two: The board provides strategic direction.

Standard Five: The Board reviews the performance of students.

(a) Each board meeting has an item or items on student performance.
(b) The Annual Report contains detailed information on student growth.

There is information in the annual report. There are some discussions of student activities in some meetings. There is a continued review of Ends Goals for Students.

Standard Six: The Board provides financial oversight of the school.

(a) Each board meeting has an item on the financial status of the school.
(b) The board monitors its health through the use of committees, audits, annual reports and workshops on finance.

The board has a finance committee and oversight activities for finance at each board meeting.
There are also monitoring reports that contain budget information and compliance with school ends. The school is fortunate to have a strong business manager and office assistance.
Standard Seven: The Board regularly oversees the mission, vision and goals of the school.

(a) The mission and vision are articulated at each formal school event or board meeting.

(b) The goals of the school are evaluated for progress on a quarterly basis.

Goals of the school are evaluated on a regular basis and contained in the annual report. The mission statement is contained on the first page of the annual report.

Standard Eight: The Board promotes the engagement of parents and the community.

(a) The board creates methods for parent and community involvement in the school.

(b) The board reviews a parent survey on satisfaction at least annually (85% satisfaction).

There is a parent portal on the school website. The portal contains numerous pieces of information including handbooks and surveys. Parents report strong satisfaction with the school. There is a series of activities for parents on a weekly basis as well as Celebrations of Learning.

Area Three: Board business is properly conducted.

Standard Nine: The board complies with items in Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.10

(a) The board complies with the open meeting law.
   
   a. Meetings are properly publicized.
   
   b. The board takes action with a quorum.
   
   c. The board executes a proper closed meeting procedure.

(b) The board complies with fiscal reporting requirements.

(c) The board complies with state and federal special education requirements.

The board appears to comply with the open meeting law and properly publicizes its meetings. There was no evidence that the board did not comply with fiscal reporting requirements or special education requirements.
Standard Ten: The board conducts a quality meeting.

(a) Board materials are delivered to members at least 5 days before the meeting.
(b) A public input policy is enacted.
(c) Minutes of meetings are reflective of a corporate educational system.

Minutes of the meetings are terse and to the point. There is a strong consent agenda and direction expected on agenda items, either discussion or action. Information appears to be delivered in a timely manner. There is a form of public input at the beginning of the meetings. It is an informal “discussion” time for the director as well as other staff, parents and community. This is a time for the board to receive a large amount of information without needing to take action.

Standard Eleven: The Board effectively oversees the school leader.

(a) The performance of the school leader is evaluated annually.
(b) The professional development of the school leader is evaluated annually.

The board uses a committee to guide the evaluation of the director. A professional development plan was not discerned. The director is licensed.

Standard Twelve: The board oversees the quality of school communications.

(a) The Annual Report is properly written and published.
(b) The school website has the required and requested information items.
(c) Regular and quality communications is conducted with parents and community.
(d) Regular and quality communications is conducted with the authorizer.

The annual report is well written. The website contains required and requested information.

Parents are communicated with in many ways, from a monthly newsletter, to bi-weekly email updates, to mailings approximately every other month regarding opportunities for conferences, celebrations, special events, or other opportunities for involvement in the school and their children’s education. Individual classroom teachers maintain blogs, wikis and websites to enhance communication between the school and the parents. An online grading system is in place for the middle school students to engage parents' involvement in their children's education. Parent/Teacher conferences are scheduled twice per year, and student progress reports are mailed out twice per year.

The Director frequently posts on his blog, A Matter of Principal, and is involved in some local collaborative groups to enhance communication among the area districts.
Standards Summary, Discussion and Recommendations

AREA ONE: PROPER ENGAGEMENT

Standard One: Board membership

This appears to be a teacher majority board with strong attendance at its meetings.

Standard Two: Conflict of Interest

Additional information is requested.

Standard Three: Sustainability

This board has an excellent “Governance Style” document that provides clear direction and obligation of the board as well as a distinction between the management and the board.

Standard Four: Organized for Effectiveness

AREA TWO: STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Standard Five: Student Performance
Standard Six: Financial Oversight

This is an award winning school with strong measures of fiscal health.

Standard Seven: Vision, Mission, Goals
Standard Eight: Engagement of Parents and Community

AREA THREE: CONDUCT OF BOARD BUSINESS

Standard Nine: General Compliance
Standard Ten: Quality Meetings

The brand of “Carver” model used by this school is extensive and penetrates all its activities, including the method of minute writing of meetings.

Standard Eleven: Leadership Evaluation
Standard Twelve: Effective Communications
Estimate of Meeting Standards

There are several embedded recommendations in the body of the analysis and discussion of the school. An estimate of the extent of meeting goals is offered below as a summary statement. However, the estimates are based upon materials examined to date. Estimates could change with continued examination of more relevant information.

Key for estimates

Not Met The standard has not been properly addressed by the school
Partially Met The standard is addressed, but is in need of improvements
Met The standard is properly addressed.
Exceeds Standard The standard is properly addressed to an exceptional level.

Some of the standards do not lend themselves to exceeding standards. Many times, Met (Standard) would be the highest achievement.

AREA ONE: PROPER ENGAGEMENT

Standard One: Board Membership MET
Standard Two: Conflict of Interest MET
Standard Three: Sustainability MET
Standard Four: Organized for Effectiveness MET

AREA TWO: STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Standard Five: Student Performance MET
Standard Six: Financial Oversight MET
Standard Seven: Vision, Mission, Goals MET
Standard Eight: Engagement of Parents and Community MET

AREA THREE: CONDUCT OF BOARD BUSINESS

Standard Nine: General Compliance MET
Standard Ten: Quality Meetings MET
Standard Eleven: Leadership Evaluation MET
Standard Twelve: Effective Communications MET
Southside Family Charter School

There are several standards that were examined. The information and judgment on each standard and its indicators are contained below. Minutes of meetings, bylaws, committee reports and communications such as annual reports, web site information and director reports were examined.

Standard One: The board functions with an appropriate membership.

(a) Bylaws contain detailed membership arrangements (size and representation).
(b) Current membership lists with terms and position are consistent with statutes.

The bylaws request consistency with the statutes. There would appear to be a parent majority with terms and positions consistent with statute. There did not appear to be information on whether or not a community member, not employed by the school and not a parent was placed on the board. However, as recently as September, the board hosted an annual meeting where several changes in the bylaws were enacted to more closely align with statutes.

Standard Two: The board is free from real or apparent conflicts of interest

(a) The policy on conflict of interest is enacted and complete.
(b) The board assurance statements are signed by each member.

The policy on conflict of interest appears to be from an MSBA sample policy. It may require a rewrite to be in conformity with 124D.10. Statements of assurance appear to be on the website.

Standard Three: The board prepares for sustainability.

(a) The board is trained in basics according to Minnesota Statutes.
(b) The board executes an effective board development plan.
   a. Newly elected board members are oriented to the task of governance.
   b. The board members conduct individual assessments at least annually.
   c. The board evaluates operations and goals at least annually.
   d. Methods exist to revitalize board membership.
   e. Every board member takes advantage of on-going training opportunities.
(c) Board members attend VOA required training and network events.
Board members appear to be trained per statute. There did not appear to be a board development plan, but there are components of a plan. The board evaluates its purposes and effectiveness at every board meeting. There is an inventory of expertise on the board and expertise planned to be on the board.

**Standard Four: The board is organized for effectiveness.**

(a) The board has an effective committee structure.
(b) The board election process follows statutes and bylaws.
(c) The board has an effective policy guidance system.
   a. Critical and required policies are enacted.
   b. The board has an effective policy review process.

The board has several committees to assist it in its activities. The elections procedures appear to be consistent with statute and the board reviews and develops policies as needed. The board appears to take the process of policy review very seriously as evidenced by discussions about specific policies at board meetings.

**Area Two: The board provides strategic direction.**

**Standard Five: The Board reviews the performance of students.**

(a) Each board meeting has an item or items on student performance.
(b) The Annual Report contains detailed information on student growth.

There are information or action items on student performance and activities at each board meeting. There is information on student growth and performance in the annual report.

**Standard Six: The Board provides financial oversight of the school.**

(a) Each board meeting has an item on the financial status of the school.
(b) The board monitors its health through the use of committees, audits, annual reports and workshops on finance.

The board utilizes a finance committee and reviews finance reports at every meeting. They allow themselves to review the audit as part of training at a board meeting.

**Standard Seven: The Board regularly oversees the mission, vision and goals of the school.**

(a) The mission and vision are articulated at each formal school event or board meeting.
(b) The goals of the school are evaluated for progress on a quarterly basis.
The board reviews its activities at each board meeting to judge the extent to which the mission was addressed. This is a unique practice among charter schools and appears to be extremely important to the growth of the board.

Standard Eight: The Board promotes the engagement of parents and the community.

  (a) The board creates methods for parent and community involvement in the school.
  (b) The board reviews a parent survey on satisfaction at least annually (85% satisfaction).

Over 90% of the parents responding to the recent survey were satisfied with school communications and the guidance and support received by their children. Attendance at parent conferences is approximately 60%. The school also surveys students and staff. The results of these surveys are very favorable.

Parent engagement is a strong priority for the school and there is considerable activity directed to parental involvement in the school and its activities.

Area Three: Board business is properly conducted.

Standard Nine: The board complies with items in Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.10

  (a) The board complies with the open meeting law.
     a. Meetings are properly publicized.
     b. The board takes action with a quorum.
     c. The board executes a proper closed meeting procedure.
  
  (b) The board complies with fiscal reporting requirements.
  
  (c) The board complies with state and federal special education requirements.

There was no evidence to suggest that the board did not comply with fiscal reporting or special education requirements.

The board appears to comply with the open meeting law and takes action with a quorum. In fact, there was at least one occasion where minutes reflected a loss of quorum and the need to suspend the taking of action on items.
Standard Ten: The board conducts a quality meeting.

(a) Board materials are delivered to members at least 5 days before the meeting.
(b) A public input policy is enacted.
(c) Minutes of meetings are reflective of a corporate educational system.

There is a section at each meeting for public comments. Minutes tend to informally address people who make motions and seconds. Minutes tend to be sketchy when particular topics are to be discussed.

The director’s report is quite informative and attends to several other indicators of a quality school including student activities and parent involvement.

Standard Eleven: The Board effectively oversees the school leader.

(a) The performance of the school leader is evaluated annually.
(b) The professional development of the school leader is evaluated annually.

The school leader is evaluated with input from the leader on the form and substance of the evaluation. Stakeholders are invited to participate. A plan is in revision.

Stakeholder and self-evaluation of the leader is combined and discussed by the full board. The executive committee moves the process along.

There is information in the annual report on the professional growth plans for the executive director and the school director.

Standard Twelve: The board oversees the quality of school communications.

(a) The Annual Report is properly written and published.
(b) The school website has the required and requested information items.
(c) Regular and quality communications is conducted with parents and community.
(d) Regular and quality communications is conducted with the authorizer.

The annual report is properly written. It is developed with the assistance of an external consultant.

There appears to be regular communications with parents and activities for parents. Interns worked on a parent survey as a way to improve parent engagement. There appears to be a strong parent volunteer program and it is reported on at each board meeting in the Director’s Report. The website appears quite complete except for the most recent legislative requirements.
Standards Summary, Discussion and Recommendations

AREA ONE: PROPER ENGAGEMENT

Standard One: Board membership

The board continues to improve its organization through the use of annual meetings and organized board meetings. It has an April annual meeting and election. New Bylaws are consistent with statute and require that a minimum of 2 non-staff parents, 2 teachers, one community member and 2 at-large members will constitute the board membership.

Standard Two: Conflict of Interest

Standard Three: Sustainability

Standard Four: Organized for Effectiveness

AREA TWO: STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Standard Five: Student Performance
Standard Six: Financial Oversight

This school has a strong program of soliciting donations from external groups and individuals.

Standard Seven: Vision, Mission, Goals
Standard Eight: Engagement of Parents and Community

AREA THREE: CONDUCT OF BOARD BUSINESS

Standard Nine: General Compliance
Standard Ten: Quality Meetings
Standard Eleven: Leadership Evaluation
Standard Twelve: Effective Communications
**Estimate of Meeting Standards**

There are several embedded recommendations in the body of the analysis and discussion of the school. An estimate of the extent of meeting goals is offered below as a summary statement. However, the estimates are based upon materials examined to date. Estimates could change with continued examination of more relevant information.

Key for estimates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not Met</th>
<th>The standard has not been properly addressed by the school</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Partially Met</td>
<td>The standard is addressed, but is in need of improvements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Met</td>
<td>The standard is properly addressed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exceeds Standard</td>
<td>The standard is properly addressed to an exceptional level.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some of the standards do not lend themselves to exceeding standards. Many times, Met (Standard) would be the highest achievement.

**AREA ONE: PROPER ENGAGEMENT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard One: Board Membership</th>
<th>MET</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standard Two: Conflict of Interest</td>
<td>MET</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Three: Sustainability</td>
<td>MET</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Four: Organized for Effectiveness</td>
<td>MET</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**AREA TWO: STRATEGIC DIRECTION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard Five: Student Performance</th>
<th>MET</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standard Six: Financial Oversight</td>
<td>MET</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Seven: Vision, Mission, Goals</td>
<td>MET</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Eight: Engagement of Parents and Community</td>
<td>MET</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**AREA THREE: CONDUCT OF BOARD BUSINESS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard Nine: General Compliance</th>
<th>MET</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standard Ten: Quality Meetings</td>
<td>MET</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Eleven: Leadership Evaluation</td>
<td>MET</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Twelve: Effective Communications</td>
<td>MET</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Spectrum High School

There are several standards that were examined. The information and judgment on each standard and its indicators are contained below. Minutes of meetings, bylaws, committee reports and communications such as annual reports, web site information and director reports were examined.

**Standard One: The board functions with an appropriate membership.**

(a) Bylaws contain detailed membership arrangements (size and representation).
(b) Current membership lists with terms and position are consistent with statutes.

Bylaws cite consistency with 124D.10 and current membership lists appear to be consistent with statutes.

**Standard Two: The board is free from real or apparent conflicts of interest**

(a) The policy on conflict of interest is enacted and complete.
(b) The board assurance statements are signed by each member.

There is a statement in the February 2012 election procedures that notes conflict of interest per Minnesota Statutes section 124D.10.

**Standard Three: The board prepares for sustainability.**

(a) The board is trained in basics according to Minnesota Statutes.
(b) The board executes an effective board development plan.
   a. Newly elected board members are oriented to the task of governance.
   b. The board members conduct individual assessments at least annually.
   c. The board evaluates operations and goals at least annually.
   d. Methods exist to revitalize board membership.
   e. Every board member takes advantage of on-going training opportunities.
(c) Board members attend VOA required training and network events.

The board is trained per statute. The board does not appear to have a board development plan but does participate in some of the components of a plan including evaluation of goals. The board participates in board workshops to do an effective job of goal evaluation, calendar preparation and a host of other items. This year (2012) the board decided to schedule two additional workshops to conduct the business of planning and development.
The board agreed to have an item on charter school updates and training at each meeting to promote on-going training of the board.

**Standard Four: The board is organized for effectiveness.**

(a) The board has an effective committee structure.
(b) The board election process follows statutes and bylaws.
(c) The board has an effective policy guidance system.
   a. Critical and required policies are enacted.
   b. The board has an effective policy review process.

The board has several committees to assist in the business of the board. Elections take place in April. The election procedures were revised as recently as February 2012 to conform to Minnesota Statutes. The board revises and develops policies as needed.

**Area Two: The board provides strategic direction.**

**Standard Five: The Board reviews the performance of students.**

(a) Each board meeting has an item or items on student performance.
(b) The Annual Report contains detailed information on student growth.

The annual report contains information on student growth. There are several board meetings that have student performance or activity information contained either in a discussion item or in the director’s report.

The May 2012 board meeting contained a statement that Academic Oversight should be part of every board meeting.

**Standard Six: The Board provides financial oversight of the school.**

(a) Each board meeting has an item on the financial status of the school.
(b) The board monitors its health through the use of committees, audits, annual reports and workshops on finance.

The board utilizes a finance committee and several quality finance reports at each meeting of the board. The board has contracted with a quality external vendor to assist with the creation of monthly reports and monitor day to day fiscal activities.
Standard Seven: The Board regularly oversees the mission, vision and goals of the school.

(a) The mission and vision are articulated at each formal school event or board meeting.
(b) The goals of the school are evaluated for progress on a quarterly basis.

The vision, mission and goals are addressed in the annual report. The board receives periodic reports on progress on goals.

Standard Eight: The Board promotes the engagement of parents and the community.

(a) The board creates methods for parent and community involvement in the school.
(b) The board reviews a parent survey on satisfaction at least annually (85% satisfaction).

The parent survey posted a 98% satisfaction rate. The vast majority of parents are satisfied with the school and the programs offered to students. There are numerous activities that address parent involvement including new ways to inform parents at annual meetings.

Area Three: Board business is properly conducted.

Standard Nine: The board complies with items in Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.10

(a) The board complies with the open meeting law.
   a. Meetings are properly publicized.
   b. The board takes action with a quorum.
   c. The board executes a proper closed meeting procedure.

(b) The board complies with fiscal reporting requirements.

(c) The board complies with state and federal special education requirements.

The action to close two meetings appeared to be consistent with the open meeting law.

Meetings appear to be properly publicized and action is taken with a quorum.

There is no evidence that fiscal reporting and special education requirements are not followed.
Standard Ten: The board conducts a quality meeting.

(a) Board materials are delivered to members at least 5 days before the meeting.
(b) A public input policy is enacted.
(c) Minutes of meetings are reflective of a corporate educational system.

There is an opportunity for the community to provide comments at each board meeting.

Minutes are clearly and professionally written. They are complemented by a quality director report at each meeting. It may not be necessary to approve the director’s report as much as acknowledge the report with a motion to receive.

Materials are delivered to board members in advance of the meeting for proper review.

Standard Eleven: The Board effectively oversees the school leader.

(a) The performance of the school leader is evaluated annually.
(b) The professional development of the school leader is evaluated annually.

The school leader is evaluated annually. The leader placed a professional development plan in the annual report. There were other leaders mentioned in the annual report that did not have information on their professional development plans as required.

Standard Twelve: The board oversees the quality of school communications.

(a) The Annual Report is properly written and published.
(b) The school website has the required and requested information items.
(c) Regular and quality communications is conducted with parents and community.
(d) Regular and quality communications is conducted with the authorizer.

The annual report is properly written and published. The website contains required information as well as requested information. The complaint procedure is apparently not so named, but there is a document entitled “notification of rights.”
Standards Summary, Discussion and Recommendations

AREA ONE: PROPER ENGAGEMENT
Standard One: Board membership
Standard Two: Conflict of Interest
Standard Three: Sustainability
This past year, Spectrum experimented with an all-parent nominations committee, which was noted as successful.

Standard Four: Organized for Effectiveness

AREA TWO: STRATEGIC DIRECTION
Standard Five: Student Performance
Standard Six: Financial Oversight

There was the questionable practice of providing gifts to parents for recruiting students to the school as well as providing gifts to parents who enroll their students as a result of recruitment. This was confirmed in a letter to parents in September 2012. The executive director noted that the practice was approved by vendor and auditor in an email on November 8, 2012. No money was paid out as of this writing. The practice was revisited by the school attorney. The practice was discontinued without the “gifting” of funds or without providing incentives to people to enroll at the school. A letter on December 6, 2012 and authored by Ms. Spark confirmed that the Gift Card Program” was never put into action and will not become an active program.

Standard Seven: Vision, Mission, Goals
Standard Eight: Engagement of Parents and Community

AREA THREE: CONDUCT OF BOARD BUSINESS

Standard Nine: General Compliance
Standard Ten: Quality Meetings
Standard Eleven: Leadership Evaluation
The process for the evaluation of the director is extensive and extends itself throughout the year. Survey results are positive. The school appears to be well managed. However, there were no additional professional development plans as required on other leaders or managers of the school.

Standard Twelve: Effective Communications
**Estimate of Meeting Standards**

There are several embedded recommendations in the body of the analysis and discussion of the school. An estimate of the extent of meeting goals is offered below as a summary statement. However, the estimates are based upon materials examined to date. Estimates could change with continued examination of more relevant information.

Key for estimates

- **Not Met** The standard has not been properly addressed by the school
- **Partially Met** The standard is addressed, but is in need of improvements
- **Met** The standard is properly addressed.
- **Exceeds Standard** The standard is properly addressed to an exceptional level.

Some of the standards do not lend themselves to exceeding standards. Many times, Met (Standard) would be the highest achievement.

**AREA ONE: PROPER ENGAGEMENT**

- **Standard One: Board Membership** MET
- **Standard Two: Conflict of Interest** MET
- **Standard Three: Sustainability** MET
- **Standard Four: Organized for Effectiveness** MET

**AREA TWO: STRATEGIC DIRECTION**

- **Standard Five: Student Performance** MET
- **Standard Six: Financial Oversight** NO JUDGMENT
- **Standard Seven: Vision, Mission, Goals** MET
- **Standard Eight: Engagement of Parents and Community** MET

**AREA THREE: CONDUCT OF BOARD BUSINESS**

- **Standard Nine: General Compliance** MET
- **Standard Ten: Quality Meetings** MET
- **Standard Eleven: Leadership Evaluation** PARTIALLY MET
- **Standard Twelve: Effective Communications** MET
TrekNorth Charter School (TNCS)

There are several standards that were examined. The information and judgment on each standard and its indicators are contained below. Minutes of meetings, bylaws, committee reports and communications such as annual reports, web site information and director reports were examined.

Standard One: The board functions with an appropriate membership.

(a) Bylaws contain detailed membership arrangements (size and representation).
(b) Current membership lists with terms and position are consistent with statutes.

The board membership appears to be consistent with statute per bylaws examination and membership lists. The board is a teacher majority board with ex officio membership as well as parents and community.

Standard Two: The board is free from real or apparent conflicts of interest

(a) The policy on conflict of interest is enacted and complete.
(b) The board assurance statements are signed by each member.

The bylaws refer to “prohibited from serving…..” There should be a review of the conflict of interest need as stated in statute.

Standard Three: The board prepares for sustainability.

(a) The board is trained in basics according to Minnesota Statutes.
(b) The board executes an effective board development plan.
   a. Newly elected board members are oriented to the task of governance.
   b. The board members conduct individual assessments at least annually.
   c. The board evaluates operations and goals at least annually.
   d. Methods exist to revitalize board membership.
   e. Every board member takes advantage of on-going training opportunities.
(c) Board members attend VOA required training and network events.

The board appears to be trained according to statutes, except for the most recently elected members of the board. The board does not have a board development plan per se, but has some of the components of a plan including evaluation of goals and new member orientation.

In February there is a mid-year report review. The board initiated a board improvement program.
Standard Four: The board is organized for effectiveness.

(a) The board has an effective committee structure.
(b) The board election process follows statutes and bylaws.
(c) The board has an effective policy guidance system.
   a. Critical and required policies are enacted.
   b. The board has an effective policy review process.

There are several committees that support the board in the conduct of its business. The board election process follows or is consistent with the expectations of the statute. The board periodically reviews and develops policies as required or recommended.

Area Two: The board provides strategic direction.

Standard Five: The Board reviews the performance of students.

(a) Each board meeting has an item or items on student performance.
(b) The Annual Report contains detailed information on student growth.

The annual report contains detailed information on student growth. The board meetings do not typically carry an item on student performance. The director periodically reports to the board on student activities and performance.

Standard Six: The Board provides financial oversight of the school.

(a) Each board meeting has an item on the financial status of the school.
(b) The board monitors its health through the use of committees, audits, annual reports and workshops on finance.

There is an effective use of a finance committee. The school employs a highly skilled business manager. There are reports available for member oversight at each meeting.

Standard Seven: The Board regularly oversees the mission, vision and goals of the school.

(a) The mission and vision are articulated at each formal school event or board meeting.
(b) The goals of the school are evaluated for progress on a quarterly basis.

The mission statement is contained on each of the board minutes.
Standard Eight: The Board promotes the engagement of parents and the community.

(a) The board creates methods for parent and community involvement in the school.
(b) The board reviews a parent survey on satisfaction at least annually (85% satisfaction).

The board and management strive to engage parents in school affairs especially in the parent conferences. There is a 90% approval rating on the school according to a recent online survey that was filled out by 50 people.

Area Three: Board business is properly conducted.

Standard Nine: The board complies with items in Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.10

(a) The board complies with the open meeting law.
   a. Meetings are properly publicized.
   b. The board takes action with a quorum.
   c. The board executes a proper closed meeting procedure.

(b) The board complies with fiscal reporting requirements.

(c) The board complies with state and federal special education requirements.

The closing of a meeting did not appear to comply with the Open Meeting Law in at least one instance. There needs to be a specific legal reason given for closing a meeting. There was no evidence that fiscal reporting and special education requirements were not followed. In fact, this school continues to demonstrate quality fiscal reporting and the earning of finance awards.

Standard Ten: The board conducts a quality meeting.

(a) Board materials are delivered to members at least 5 days before the meeting.
(b) A public input policy is enacted.
(c) Minutes of meetings are reflective of a corporate educational system.

Minutes of the meeting appear to have a quality form. However, several items lack any information on the non-action item discussion including director evaluations, board surveys and student activities. It is sometimes difficult to determine the extent of passage of a motion, since the motions vary in form. There appears to be a part in each agenda for public input under the title “Guests.”
Standard Eleven: The Board effectively oversees the school leader.

(a) The performance of the school leader is evaluated annually.
(b) The professional development of the school leader is evaluated annually.

The review of the leader occurs in January and includes surveys of the entire staff. The professional development of the leader is evaluated as he progresses towards an administrative license.

Standard Twelve: The board oversees the quality of school communications.

(a) The Annual Report is properly written and published.
(b) The school website has the required and requested information items.
(c) Regular and quality communications is conducted with parents and community.
(d) Regular and quality communications is conducted with the authorizer.

The annual report is properly written and published on the web. The website contains required and recommended information items.

There are home visits, on-line parent information systems and Parent Partners. However, the school self-reports that “typically not much happens.” The school recognizes a need to improve communications with parents.
Standards Summary, Discussion and Recommendations

AREA ONE: PROPER ENGAGEMENT

Standard One: Board membership

Standard Two: Conflict of Interest

Standard Three: Sustainability

Standard Four: Organized for Effectiveness

The board recognizes its need for an improved policy review process and has taken steps to resolve the matter. The board has also initiated an interesting training and planning program.

AREA TWO: STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Standard Five: Student Performance

Standard Six: Financial Oversight

This school has an extremely strong business manager, who created one of the few accounting manuals in the state that inform board members of practices and internal controls.

Standard Seven: Vision, Mission, Goals

Standard Eight: Engagement of Parents and Community

AREA THREE: CONDUCT OF BOARD BUSINESS

Standard Nine: General Compliance

The board should review the extent to which they desire to have a consistent method of documenting motions.

Standard Ten: Quality Meetings

Standard Eleven: Leadership Evaluation

Standard Twelve: Effective Communications
Estimate of Meeting Standards

There are several embedded recommendations in the body of the analysis and discussion of the school. An estimate of the extent of meeting goals is offered below as a summary statement. However, the estimates are based upon materials examined to date. Estimates could change with continued examination of more relevant information.

Key for estimates

Not Met  The standard has not been properly addressed by the school
Partially Met  The standard is addressed, but is in need of improvements
Met  The standard is properly addressed.
Exceeds Standard  The standard is properly addressed to an exceptional level.

Some of the standards do not lend themselves to exceeding standards. Many times, Met (Standard) would be the highest achievement.

AREA ONE: PROPER ENGAGEMENT

Standard One: Board Membership  MET
Standard Two: Conflict of Interest  NO JUDGMENT
Standard Three: Sustainability  MET
Standard Four: Organized for Effectiveness  MET

AREA TWO: STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Standard Five: Student Performance  MET
Standard Six: Financial Oversight  MET
Standard Seven: Vision, Mission, Goals  MET
Standard Eight: Engagement of Parents and Community  MET

AREA THREE: CONDUCT OF BOARD BUSINESS

Standard Nine: General Compliance  PARTIALLY MET
Standard Ten: Quality Meetings  PARTIALLY MET
Standard Eleven: Leadership Evaluation  MET
Standard Twelve: Effective Communications  MET
# Appendix One

## COMMITTEE STRUCTURES IN VOA SCHOOLS

This is a partial list of committees used by VOA schools to complement the oversight activities of the board. The committees are also an excellent method used by schools to get a “look” at potential board members, when non-board members are placed on committees.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCHOOL</th>
<th>COMMITTEES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Birch Grove</td>
<td>Finance, Fundraising, Transportation, Student Recruitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cornerstone</td>
<td>Governance, Finance, Accountability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EdVisions</td>
<td>Executive, Finance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green Isle</td>
<td>Policy, Marketing, Technology, Grant Writing, Facility, Hiring (adm?), Wellness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harbor City</td>
<td>Board Develop and Nominating, Strategic Plan, Finance, Executive, Director Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaleidoscope</td>
<td>Finance, Ann Report and Authorizer, Marketing, Gov and Develop, Policy, Expansion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KIPP</td>
<td>Executive, Finance, Development, Governance, Student Recruitment, Facility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lakes Int’l</td>
<td>Finance, Audit, Director Review, Election</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metro Deaf</td>
<td>Finance, Salary, Personnel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naytahwaush</td>
<td>Finance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Visions</td>
<td>Finance, Nominations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schoolcraft</td>
<td>Finance, Election, Facility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southside</td>
<td>Planning, Finance, Policy, Executive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spectrum</td>
<td>Technology, Finance, Nominating, Volunteer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TrekNorth</td>
<td>Finance, Building, Program, Executive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix Two

Primer on Board Minutes

The importance of minutes
Minutes of board meetings are minutes of a governmental body, minutes of a corporate body, a public body. It is an official record of action, not talking, of the corporate entity and acts as a testament over time. It guides in the evaluation of the board and its governance duties. It guides management as it works to implement the actions of the board. Minutes should be treated as a formal document.

Names
Names of people should be written in a formal manner. William Fort made the motion, not Billy. Using first and last names are needed, especially when reviewing historical records. There may be 5 Billies, but only one William Fort. It is also a matter of respect for the people and the corporation.

Communicate
The minutes should be devoid of conjunctions, slang and poor grammar. Minutes should not be “chatty.” Make minutes understandable to a third party, readable and without acronyms. Minutes should be treated as a professional record of excellence on an educational organization.

Motions and discussions
There are times when an item on an agenda is discussed and then discussion trails off. There may be consensus on action, but no motion was made. Therefore, a motion should be made first, then a discussion is conducted and motions are amended as needed. Without action, there is no basis for accountability. Motions should contain simple declarative sentences that provide precise direction. Motions contain a voting record. Motions can be placed into the template for board members to consider. It helps board members focus on what the issue is. If, for example, the agenda says busing, it could be bus safety, bus purchase or bus contracting. The same idea holds for discussion points.

Technique for minute taking
The individual charged with taking minutes should be doing so on a computer during the meeting. If a template is used minute taking is made considerably easier. If minutes are taken at the meeting, they can be immediately e-mailed to board members for comments prior to approval. Typically, minutes are not delivered to board members until shortly before the start of the next meeting. The memory of the board member is taxed. The ability to clearly recall is compromised. The writer of the minutes retains all control. Board members need to respond to draft minutes within 24-48 hours of the meeting.
Appendix Three

EFFECTIVE WEBSITES AID COMMUNICATION

There is a continual need for the board to be assured that management is effectively designing and implementing a website that serves the public at-large, parents and guardians, students, the authorizer and other entities in need of school information. When legislative or regulatory (authorizer or Minnesota Department of Education) changes are monitored, changes will need to be made to websites. Listed below are some current required and recommended items for websites. Review the sites of other charter schools. There are excellent examples.

REQUIRED

- Current Annual Report with required components
- Identity and contact information about the authorizer
- Current names and contact information of board members and committee members
- Board meeting minutes for at least one calendar year
- Board committee minutes for at least one calendar year
- Literacy plan
- Collaborative Agreements
- Wellness Plan (if school receives federal food aids)

RECOMMENDED

- Vision, mission and goals of the charter school
- Description of what a charter school is and enrollment forms including the lottery system
- Management and staff directory information
- Board meeting times, dates and locations
- Board policies including communication and complaint procedures
- Election procedures and practices
- School finances including monthly summary and annual budget
- Staff, Parent and Student Handbooks
- School calendar
- School newsletters and announcements
- Link to MDE reports on academics
- Lottery policy and process
Appendix Four

GOVERNANCE REVIEW CRITERIA

VOA is engaged in the review of governance structures and practices in its network of schools. It will recognize schools that meet the criteria used to judge governance in schools. The criteria listed below are used to determine the annual recognition for governance. Criteria for the award are taken from Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.10, Authorizer Contract and expectations of good governance practice. The analysis of governance is an on-going practice. The awards in governance are given in December 2012, with judgments drawn from data during the period December 2011 through November 2012. Charter schools must meet expectations on the twelve (12) criteria below to be considered for the award.

1. The Board functions with an appropriate membership.

2. The Board is free from real or apparent conflicts of interest.

3. The Board prepares for sustainability.

4. The Board is organized for effectiveness.

5. The Board reviews the performance of students.

6. The Board provides financial oversight of the school.

7. The Board regularly oversees the mission, vision and goals of the school.

8. The Board promotes the engagement of parents and community.

9. The Board complies with the Open Meeting Law.

10. The Board conducts a quality meeting.

11. The Board reviews the results of school leader operations.

12. The Board oversees the quality of school communications.

Each school is expected to have submitted evidence of having met or exceeded the expectations on each of the twelve criteria. The background document explaining the task of governance analysis is reviewed by the board and director to assure compliance with data requirements in each standard in the future.
Appendix Five

GOVERNANCE AWARD WINNERS DECEMBER 2012

This is a first attempt at organizing elements of governance for an overall evaluation of VOA schools. There were twelve (12) criteria used to judge the extent to which the schools met the elements of governance. A school needed to be judged as having earned a “MET” level on each criterion to earn the award for 2012.

CORNERSTONE MONTESSORI ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
GLOBAL ACADEMY
GREEN ISLE COMMUNITY SCHOOL
KALEIDOSCOPE CHARTER SCHOOL
METRO DEAF SCHOOL
SCHOOLCRAFT LEARNING COMMUNITY
SOUTHSIDE FAMILY CHARTER SCHOOL