

GOVERNING BOARD CAPACITY INTERVIEWS

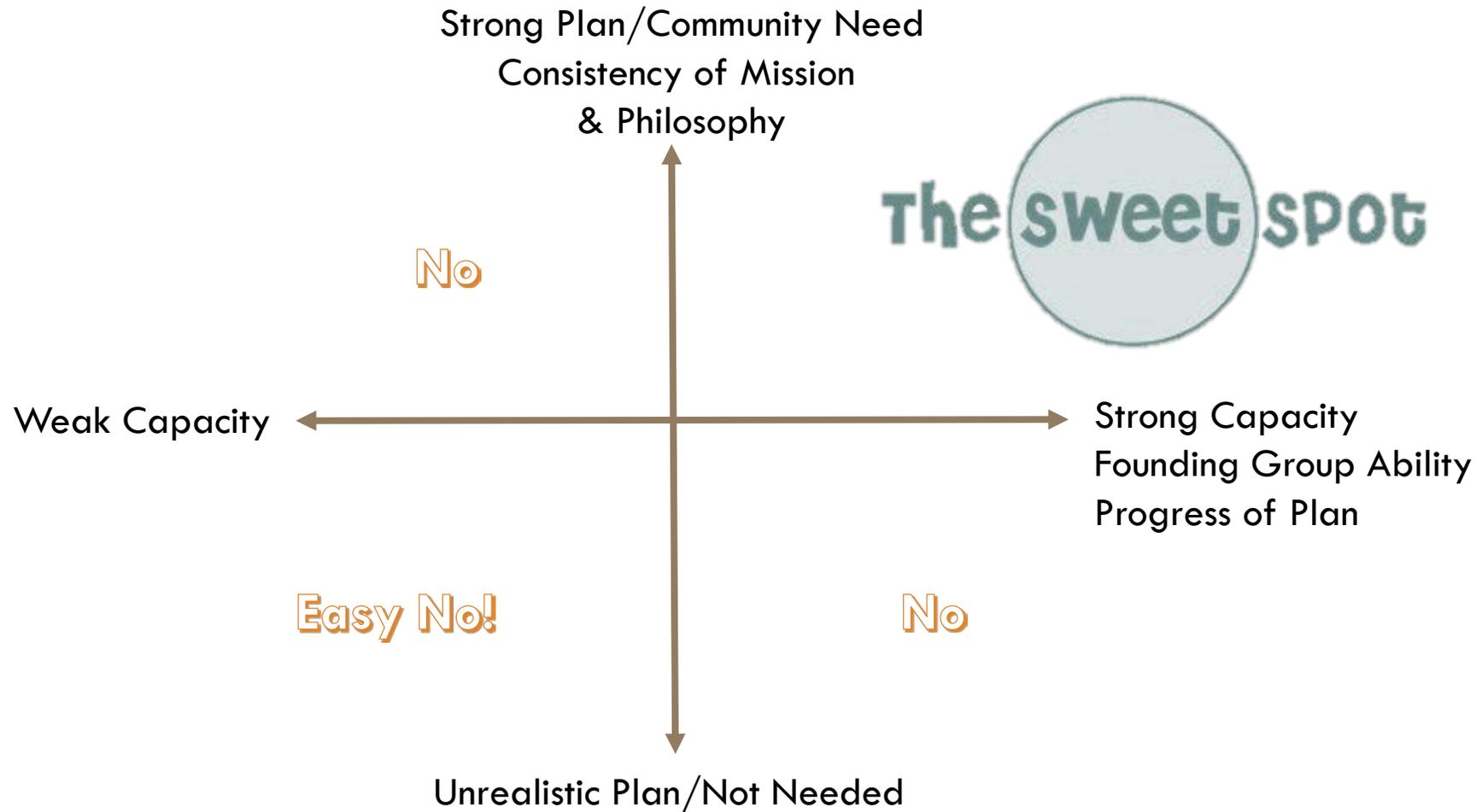
Part 1: Goals, Competencies, and Format



“**Boards that get it right** from the outset are likely to deliver on the academic promised outlined in their charters. Boards that start out on the wrong foot are almost certain not to deliver the academic excellence their students deserve.”

THOUGHTS FROM NACSA

1. Applications approved through rigorous, selective processes have a greater likelihood of being successful schools.
2. As hard as it might be to complete a charter school application and subsequent interview, it's the easiest part of opening a school.
3. Interviews of charter school applicants are a critical component of evaluating the quality of each applicant's plan, as well as the capacity to bring the plan to fruition.
4. "IF YOU DON'T WANT TO CLOSE A BAD CHARTER SCHOOL, DON'T OPEN IT IN THE FIRST PLACE." -Gerard Robinson Former Florida Commissioner of Education



Why does the school exist? What is the primary purpose? How will they know when they've accomplished it?

FOUR CORE COMPETENCIES

1. Preparation

- Does the board have a clear sense of how it will conduct proper oversight of the academic program and maintain the fiscal health of the organization?

2. Capacity and Composition

- Does the board have the skills and expertise to govern?

3. Structure

- Is the proposed governance structure in line with best practice?

4. Clarity of Roles and Responsibilities

- Is there clear delineation of the authority and duties of the board, school leader, parents, teachers, and contractors (e.g. ESP or CMO)?

ARE THEY PREPARED?

Consider if every member of founding board:

- Demonstrated a passionate, unwavering belief in the school's mission and understands the implications of choosing that mission;
- Understands their charter, knows what they are promising to deliver and has clear and consistent ways to measure success;
- Has a clear sense of academic excellence and understands their role in pushing the organization to achieving this;
- Has a plan to conduct effective oversight of the academic program; and
- Has a plan to oversee the financial health of the school.

DO THEY HAVE THE CAPACITY?

Consider:

- Does the board have a diversity of perspective and experience to truly represent the public's interest?
- Is there a level of objectivity on the board or are the members close personal friends or relatives?
- Are there obvious conflicts of interests that need to be addressed?
- Do the members have the skills, time, and experience to do the job?
- Does the board have the financial capacity to run a multi-million dollar enterprise?
- Does the board have the skills to properly conduct oversight of the academic program?

The amount of time it takes to be an effective charter school board member is often underestimated

STRUCTURE (BYLAWS)

Consider:

- Is the board large enough to support effective governance and an effective committee structure?
- Are there term limits in place to help guard against “founder’s syndrome?”
- Are key officer positions in place?

ARE WE CLEAR?

Consider:

- Is there clarity around the role of the full board and that of individual trustees?
- Is the school leader's role clearly defined vis-à-vis governance?
- What will the role (if any) of parents, teachers and students be in governance?
- If the board is contracting with an education service provider (ESP) is there a clear delineation of their responsibilities compared to that of the governing board?

OPENING QUESTIONS FOR ALL NEW SCHOOL GOVERNING BOARDS

1. Please introduce yourselves.
2. Please provide your “elevator pitch” introduction.
3. Are all board members present? If someone is missing, please explain.
4. Which, if any, board members will have any children or grandchildren attending the school?
5. Which, if any, board members plan to be employed by the charter school?
6. Which, if any, board members plan to enter into any type of agreement with the charter school in which money will be involved?
7. How did the founding board form?

Politeness should not limit rigor

OPENING QUESTIONS FOR ALL SATELLITE GOVERNING BOARDS

1. Please introduce yourselves.
2. Are all board members present? If someone is missing, please explain.
3. Which, if any, board members have children or grandchildren attending the school?
4. Please explain your mission and vision.
5. How is your school currently implementing the key elements of your charter?
6. How is your school accomplishing the contractual goals outlined in your charter?
7. What were the pros and cons considered before submitting this application for a satellite or replication?

Politeness should not limit rigor

JAN 11TH FORMAT

Each group was encouraged to be 30 minutes early to keep the meeting moving should the interview end early. Each group will present a one page handout highlighting the intended outcomes of their mission and vision or highlighting their plan for a successful replication.

NEW SCHOOL

TOTAL – 60 minutes each.

45 minutes: Interview

15 minutes: Discussion – Applicant's board is excused to return to the audience

5 minutes: Break before next group

SATELLITE/REPLICATION

TOTAL – 40 minutes each.

25 minutes: Interview

10 minutes: Discussion – Applicant's board is excused to return to the audience

5 minutes: Break before next group

JAN 11TH SCHEDULE

10:00 – 10:10	Board Business
10:10 – 10:15	ISIP Grant Spotlight – Salt Lake Arts Ukulele Performance
10:15 – 11:15	Interview Bridge Elementary School
11:20 – 12:20	Interview LEAP
12:20 – 12:50	Lunch
12:50 – 1:50	Interview Four Corners Academy
1:55 – 2:35	Interview Beehive Academy of Science and Technology
2:35 – 3:15	Interview Esperanza Academy
3:15 – 3:55	Interview Lakeview Academy
3:55 – 4:10	Break & Straw Poll
4:10 – 5:00	Discuss all interviews and final applications; Vote

IN JAN: YOU WILL BE PROVIDED

For each application:

- Summary Sheet, including market analysis & reader's recommendations
- Exhibit A from application
- Questions to be asked of all applicant boards
- Note taking sheet

“Much of the ultimate success of a charter school hinges on the board’s ability to govern effectively. In fact, it can be argued that no other single factor is more important to the health and sustainability of a charter school than its board.”

– Marci Cornell-Fiest