

1. One-page description of the individual(s) or entity wishing to provide training

## Brian L Carpenter PhD & Associates LLC

because school performance is ultimately a reflection of board performance.®



### Meet “The Board Doctor”

Although he began professional life as a seventeen-year-old high school dropout, Dr. Brian L. Carpenter (aka, *The Board Doctor*) has become a trusted voice on charter school governance across the US. He believes and teaches a simple truth: School performance is ultimately a reflection of board performance.

During the past twelve years, Brian has also personally trained and/or formally evaluated nearly 200 individual charter school boards nationwide, first as CEO of the National Charter Schools Institute at Central Michigan University for four years, then as a freelance consultant beginning in mid-2009.

Having first been taught as a young Marine four decades ago that responsible leadership demands integrity *first and foremost*, the foundational concept that underlies all of his services and products is that charter school boards must exemplify ethical leadership. In his view, duty, transparency and setting the tone at the top are not jargon. They are non-negotiable prerequisites to proper board leadership.



Brian L Carpenter, PhD  
“The Board Doctor”

Just how far Brian’s impact on charters has extended, however, is impossible to determine. Besides having produced numerous white papers, training videos and podcasts, Brian’s two books, *Charter School Board University* and *The Seven Outs*, are industry standards, having been used by authorizers, state associations, university professors and others.

In addition to teaching boards how to govern with integrity using the COSO framework, Brian is perhaps best known for defining the key difference between governance and management in plain language. He says that “the role of the board is to provide oversight *of* school management, not to be a participant *in* it.” And as a former school leader and board member himself, this is a difference he ably explains in practical terms. Perhaps this is why, along with his acerbic wit, he has been a requested speaker at more than 50 state and national charter school conferences since 2005.

While Brian continues to maintain a busy training, writing and speaking schedule, he has recently been studying forensic accounting and fraud investigation. As an associate member of the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners, he wants to be better prepared to help charter schools and authorizers prevent (and if necessary, detect) fraud. He has also been personally trained by John and Miriam Carver in the theory and implementation of Policy Governance and is a member of the International Policy Governance Association.

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2. Experience in providing charter school governing board training with references.

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### Dr. Carpenter's Experience

Consultants can say anything they want about their own effectiveness. It may be valid information, but it's subjective by definition. (Who doesn't think they do a good job?) A better litmus test is whether a consultant is credible among his or her professional peers. In Brian's case, boards should consider what other professionals within the charter sector think of his work. To answer that, here's a partial list organizations working in the charter school sector that are staffed by professionals that have engaged Brian to conduct training seminars or provide other assistance. It's also worth noting that almost any consultant can be retained by a few local clients, but a list this lengthy and geographically dispersed requires wide-ranging credibility *established by repeated successes over time.*

#### Authorizers

- Anchorage Public Schools
- Atlanta Public Schools
- Arkansas Department of Education
- Ball State University (Indiana)
- Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (Louisiana)
- Charter School Admin Office (Hawaii)
- Ed Resource Center of Central Ohio
- Ferris State University (Michigan)
- Office of the Governor of Delaware
- Ohio Council of Community Schools
- SC Public Charter School District
- Utah State Office of Education

#### State & National Associations

- Arizona Charter Schools Association
- Idaho Charter School Network
- Louisiana Assn of Public Charter Schools
- MO Charter Public School Association
- Nt'l Alliance for Public Charter Schools
- NM Coalition of Charter Schools
- SC Assn of Public Charter Schools
- TX Assn of Public Charter Schools
- Utah Assn of Public Charter Schools

#### Other Organizations

- Accord Institute
- Alaine Locke Initiative
- Arizona State University
- California State University

#### EMOs/CMOs

- Concept Schools
- K12, Inc.
- SABIS® Educational Systems, Inc.
- IDEA Public Schools

#### Law Firms

- Gordon & Rees
- Young, Minney & Corr LLP
- Zausmer, Caldwell & August, PC

#### Property Developers

- HighMark School Development

#### Individual Charter Schools

- Trained and/or evaluated nearly 200 individual boards since 2005.

**See Attachment A for References**

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### 3. Instructor's qualifications.

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### Dr. Carpenter's Qualifications

**Professional experience.** In addition to the expansive client work with individual schools, associations, attorneys and authorizers summarized on the previous page, Dr. Carpenter:

- possesses more than a decade of experience as a school leader (private and charter)
- has served on the board of directors of a charter school.
- taught college (as an adjunct) at the undergraduate and graduate levels.
- led York Preparatory Academy (Rock Hill, SC) in the 2015-16 school year as an interim head of school. YPA was named one of three (out of 35 authorized by the SCPCSD) to achieve the status of "Distinction" in *both student growth and achievement.*
- has conducted approximately two dozen high stakes governance and operations audits of charter schools for Ball State University as part of its renewal process requirements.

#### Academic credentials.

- PhD in Education (2008), Capella University
- MA in Education Counseling (1992), Northern Arizona University
- BA in Behavioral Sciences (1987), National University (San Diego)
- AA in general studies (1985), National University (San Diego)

In addition to possessing the earned academic credentials above, Dr. Carpenter has applied to study forensic accounting and fraud examination at WVU (anticipated completion, 2017).

**Professional affiliations.** Dr. Carpenter is a member of the following professional organizations:

- Association of Certified Fraud Examiners (associate member)
- SE Michigan Chapter of the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners (associate member)
- International Policy Governance Association (member)

**Publications.** The following is a partial list of Dr. Carpenter's publications:

#### Books (available on [amazon.com](http://amazon.com))

- *Charter School Board University*
- *The Seven Outs: Strategic Planning Made Easy for Charter Schools*

Board training videos (available free of charge on the website and YouTube)

- *Follow the Money*
- *Frequently Asked Board Questions*
  - ✓ *Episode 1: What's the Difference Between Governance and Management?*
  - ✓ *Episode 2: What is the Board Responsible for Ensuring?*
  - ✓ *Episode 3: Four Questions a Board Should Ask at Every Regular Meeting*

Podcasts (available for purchase on the website)

White papers (available free on various websites)

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4. Name(s) of training course(s)
5. Length of training course(s)

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### Names and Length of Board Training Courses

Dr. Carpenter offers two training course options, as follows:

#### **Course 1:** Board Oversight Fundamentals

**Duration:** Six hours\*

**Description.** After thoroughly reviewing the board's key documents including its bylaws, charter, minutes from the previous twelve months, audit report, various internal control policies and so forth, Dr. Carpenter arrives at a location arranged by the school and presents a customized governance retreat. Seminar content varies depending on the needs and experience of the individual board, however, the following topics are generally explained:

- **setting the tone at the top** with respect to ethical, transparent conduct throughout the organization
- every board member's fiduciary duties as a representative of the school's true owner (i.e., the State's citizens)
- the difference between governance and management along four dimensions (primary focus, primary questions, nature of authority and nature of accountability)
- organizing the board's work (using Dr. Carpenter's Systematic Oversight Calendar)
- basic parliamentary procedure and appropriate minutes content
- managing your authorizer relationship
- the proper role of board policy within governance

#### **Course 2:** Board Financial Oversight

**Duration:** Three hours\*

**Description:** In this seminar, Dr. Carpenter presents the fundamentals associated with charter school budgeting, monitoring financial performance and the role of policy as it relates to internal controls. The content of the seminar includes the following topics:

- **setting the tone at the top** with respect to ethical, transparent conduct throughout the organization
- using the COSO framework to manage risks, including fraud risk management
- how to interpret the three basic financial reports
- why a segregation of duties policy is essential to protecting your school
- why a whistleblower policy is essential to protecting your school
- 12 additional critical policies for effective the oversight of financial management
- the importance of background checks
- common areas in which charter school fraud has occurred, with an emphasis how to prevent (or at least quickly detect) fraud if it occurs
- dispelling myths about what a financial audit does and does not tell a board
- the correct role of the board's audit committee (hint: It is not to co-manage the school's finances.)

\* Seminar may run longer depending on board engagement and questions.

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6. Syllabus, which includes standard(s) to which each course is aligned

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### Sample Syllabus for Course 1: Board Oversight Fundamentals

<b>SUBMITTING AGENCY:</b>	<i>Brian L Carpenter PhD &amp; Associates, LLC</i>
<b>COURSE TITLE:</b>	<i>Board Oversight Fundamentals</i>
<b>CONTACT:</b>	<i>Dr. Brian L. Carpenter PO Box 483 Sanford, MI 48657 Cell: 989-205-4182 Email: <a href="mailto:Brian@BrianLCarpenter.com">Brian@BrianLCarpenter.com</a></i>
<b>COURSE DESCRIPTION:</b>	<i>An overview of the curriculum topics as required by law and SBOE standards.</i>
<b># OF CONTACT HOURS:</b>	<i>Minimum of six (depending on board engagement and questions).</i>
<b>MAJOR ACTIVITIES:</b>	<i>Overview by instructors of required topics, case studies; video vignettes; workbooks; individual participant exercises; role playing; on-line survey.</i>
<b>Training Goals/Objectives:</b> (Aligns with Domain Standards: I, III, IV, V, VI, VIII)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>exposure to topics required by law</i></li><li>• <i>exposure to “tone at the top” concept</i></li><li>• <i>board members can define school performance in actionable terms</i></li><li>• <i>board members can define the four key differences between governance and management</i></li><li>• <i>the board understands how to organize its work</i></li><li>• <i>understand how to evaluate the school leader</i></li></ul>
<b>Target Audience:</b>	<i>Locally approved non-profit charter school boards</i>
<b>Training Time:</b>	<i>Any six hour-block to time (plus breaks, etc.) between 9am and 9pm, Monday through Saturday except holidays.</i>

6. Syllabus, which includes standard(s) to which each course is aligned

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### Sample Syllabus for Course 2: Board Financial Oversight

<b>SUBMITTING AGENCY:</b>	<i>Brian L Carpenter PhD &amp; Associates, LLC</i>
<b>COURSE TITLE:</b>	<i>Board Oversight Fundamentals</i>
<b>CONTACT:</b>	<i>Dr. Brian L. Carpenter PO Box 483 Sanford, MI 48657 Cell: 989-205-4182 Email: <a href="mailto:Brian@BrianLCarpenter.com">Brian@BrianLCarpenter.com</a></i>
<b>COURSE DESCRIPTION:</b>	<i>An overview of the curriculum topics as required by law and SBOE standards.</i>
<b># OF CONTACT HOURS:</b>	<i>Minimum of three (depending on board engagement and questions).</i>
<b>MAJOR ACTIVITIES:</b>	<i>Overview by instructors of required topics, case studies; video vignettes; workbooks; individual participant exercises; role playing; on-line survey.</i>
<b>Training Goals/Objectives:</b> (Aligns with Domain Standards: VII and VIII)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>exposure to topics required by law</i></li><li>• <i>exposure to “tone at the top” concept</i></li><li>• <i>exposure to COSO risk management standards including fraud risk management</i></li><li>• <i>how to read basic financial reports</i></li><li>• <i>understand how to operate and effective board audit committee</i></li><li>• <i>familiarity with GA approved code of ethics and conflict of interest models and <u>why</u> they are valuable</i></li></ul>
<b>Target Audience:</b>	<i>Locally approved non-profit charter school boards (beyond their first year)</i>
<b>Training Time:</b>	<i>Any three hour-block between 9am and 9pm, Monday through Saturday except holidays.</i>

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- 7. Probable delivery method for delivery of content.
- 8. Proposed location(s) of training course(s).

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### **Delivery Method**

Both of my seminars are delivered in person to whole boards, although the seminars do include video training materials that boards are able to access at a later point.

### **Proposed Location**

All training seminars are delivered at a location accessible to the public determined and acquired by the board (for example, at the school itself, a hotel conference room or other meeting venue).

9. Fees (if any) to be charged for each training course.

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**Course 1** fee: \$5,500

**Course 2** fee: \$3,500

Both courses taken together fee: If purchased together and conducted over one or two consecutive days, the fee is \$7,500.

**Important Note:** Course fee are ALL-INCLUSIVE, meaning that there are NO additional fees or charges for travel, workbooks or training videos unless the board changes the seminar date after it has been booked.

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### Response to hypothetical scenario #1

How would you advise this board in terms of [its] duties, roles and responsibilities, and next steps?

First, I'd urge this board to slow its roll. I'd share with them that the conflicts they're facing are entirely common in first-year charter schools. I would advise them *against* terminating the school's principal in the midst of the year without cause (as the hypothetical narrative suggests to me) because, besides being fundamentally unfair to the principal, doing so will not, in my experience, help the school. Doing so without cause also runs the risk of exposing the board to a wrongful termination suit. (I might even tell them about a former client board [omitting names, of course] that disregarded this advice to its detriment.)

Next, I would explain to the board that the present conflicts, as I understand them, fall into one of six categories and therefore require different solutions. Here are the six conflict categories:

1. **Conflict Category 1:** There is an absence of board clarity (or commitment) concerning how its duties, roles and responsibilities differ management's duties, roles and responsibilities.
  - **Next steps:** I would provide the board with training on the four key differences that distinguish governance from management. This training usually helps my clients recognize that matters such as carpool management, teacher training and on-boarding are not the board's responsibilities. (An exception would be if carpool management was being conducted unsafely.)
2. **Conflict Category 2:** The board's composition is less than optimal (in my experience).
  - **Next steps:** A change to its bylaws prohibiting a majority of the board from consisting of parents would be optimal in my opinion, however, most parent-dominated boards are resistant to relinquishing what they perceive as their power and control. Alternatively, the best I can usually do is to advise the board to create "firewalls" between it and management such as having a clear board mission statement (not to be confused with the school's mission statement), adopting board policies that circumscribe the nature of board authority and participating in ongoing board development and meaningful self-assessment (i.e., against objective standards).

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3. **Conflict Category 3:** There exists a potential for board member conflict of interest when board members are related to employees.
  - **Next steps:** In my experience, it is never optimal for board members to be related to employees of the school. As with board composition consisting of mainly parents, however, boards are generally reluctant to prohibit this potential conflict. Accordingly, the director and officer conflict of interest template should include strong language requiring related members to recuse themselves from actions where their objectivity or independence might be reasonably called into question.
4. **Conflict Category 4:** Charter schools located in wealthy communities sometimes have difficulty managing expectations.
  - **Next steps:** Although the hypothetical scenario didn't explicitly state any specific problems arising out of this dynamic, I would go into this training with the assumption that they exist and I would advise the board accordingly. For example, if the school's website doesn't make it clear that it's a charter school, some parents will likely believe that the school has the resources of a private school. (I've encountered this several times in the past 12 years.) Posting the adopted budget on the website is one way, for example, to help manage community expectations.
5. **Conflict Category 5:** The board lacks (or is not enforcing) key policies such as how teacher grievances will be addressed.
  - **Next steps:** I regularly advise boards to adopt what I call a "no action until" policy similar in wording to this: "The XYZ charter school board will take no action on any stakeholder concern or complaint with the exception of matters that allege conditions that are unlawful or unsafe, until the principal has first had a reasonable opportunity to address the concern or complaint directly with the aggrieved party."
6. **Conflict Category 6:** Some conflicts appear to be arising simply because cash is in short supply (e.g., facilities and transportation).
  - **Next steps:** I would advise the board that its adopted budget is one of the primary vehicles by which it expresses its spending priorities. Nevertheless, first year schools often struggle with inadequate funding because of the costs associated with commencing operations. If specific problems such as a leaky roof arise, the school may have to borrow money. In such case, a majority vote of the board in a properly noticed meeting at which a quorum is present is sufficient to direct the principal to obtain the funds and fix the problem.

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### What are some considerations moving forward to avoid these conflicts?

- Orientation for new board members is a must. Even if this board implemented all of my recommendations willingly and successfully, board turnover *without proper orientation* can cause the same (or similar) conflicts to needlessly recur.
- The board should have a principal employment contract. Among other things, it should contain a clause agreeing that it will not terminate the principal without cause (which does not appear to exist in the scenario).
- Budget adoption is the time during the school year for the board (and other stakeholders) to explore and express priorities in depth. Knowing in advance that this occurs every year, I would advise the board to plan discussions prior to management doing the work of developing a recommended budget.
- The board should adopt policies *prescribing* the accomplishment of the student outcomes it considers a priority and policies *proscribing* any pertinent parameters. (Note: This concept was adapted from Policy Governance.)
- The board should adopt a policy requiring any board member with a potential conflict of interest (e.g., related to employees) to recuse themselves from discussion and votes touching that conflict. Board members should also sign annual statements disclosing those matters, relationships or situations that could give rise to conflict.
- The board has a duty to represent the citizens of Georgia. Teacher training, teacher opinions about principal strictness and carpools, (unless the latter is related to safety) are not within that duty. *Moreover, focusing on the wrong things usually results in the board failing to oversee the right things.* This is why creating a Systematic Oversight Calendar<sup>1</sup> is critical.
- It's vital, in my view, that a first year board focus on establishing robust internal controls, completed background checks and that it learns how to systematically organize its work.
- Boards that do not learn how to do these things are increasingly subjecting their charters to revocation or non-renewal. Ongoing training should remind the board of this.

### Response to hypothetical scenario #2

In my view, the student, faculty and board racial composition of a charter school should ALL reasonably reflect the diversity of the communities it serves. As a school leader, I have even made the decision to operate bus routes at substantial expense outside the surrounding community in order to improve diversity. Even with this,

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<sup>1</sup> The SOC is a proprietary tool that I designed which I sell and use with my client boards.

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however, parents made choices to send their children to what were inferiorly performing schools. Proximity seemed to play an outsized role.

Within the hypothetical narrative, two statements in particular suggest to me that there is a problem that has nothing to do with spending money on transportation or parent choices based on proximity. These statements were as follows: (1) “The board does not believe that there is anything it can do to diversify.” (2) “It also believes that it does not need to diversify.”

### What would you do with this board and why?

Given these two statements, I would address the second statement first because the board’s beliefs will ultimately define how much effort and expense it is willing to exert and expend in order to diversify. Starting from a presumption of good will, I would hope to discover that the board is simply unaware of its responsibilities (both statutorily and ethically). In this light, for example, it may have never considered the importance of starting the process with a racially diverse board. If that is the case, I would explain the board’s responsibilities to it and work with it from there to develop a plan to address the issue. That plan would ultimately address strategies for making sure that the composition of the board, faculty and students reasonably represented the composition of the community or communities served by the school. (This is to say, in my view, there’s more to building a diversified charter school than simply running bus routes.)

If I concluded, however that the board believes it does not need to diversify *because it is composed of a majority of individuals whose actions or remarks reflect that they are racist*, frankly, I would drop it as a client and file a report with the authorizer or other appropriate governmental agency. High performing or not, taxpayer dollars should not be allocated to schools operated by racists.

### What are the issues here?

1. I believe that a society or social order that advocates or even tolerates racism is unjust. Sadly, the span of human history from its dawn through to the twentieth century and beyond does not reflect a good track record for human rights. Examples of racism and oppression in the past 100 years alone include Nazi Germany, late 20th century apartheid in South Africa, the 1994 Rwandan genocide (the Hutu genocide of Tutsis), the Bosnian Wars, the 1999 Kosovo refugee crisis (in which I participated as a refugee relief worker) and mid-20th century America’s oppression against African Americans in quest of their civil rights.
2. U.S. public schools, including chartered schools, are uniquely positioned in the vast sweep of human history to stop racism by teaching respect for diversity to our

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children. (Though progress is slow, I'm encouraged by changes I've witnessed in my lifetime of 57 years.)

3. Federal and state laws, as well as court precedent, prohibit racially segregated public schools.
4. The charter school "movement" will ultimately fail if it consists of schools that do not reflect the communities they serve.

### **Response to hypothetical scenario #3**

#### What are your thoughts on this?

In the research for my doctoral dissertation (*Understanding How Charter School Boards Impact Dissolution*), I found that the boards of failed charters (i.e., schools that had their charters revoked or not renewed) were often either dominated by the school's founder or by a management company that wrote the charter and recruited the board. In my experience with nearly 200 boards in the past 12 years, I've worked with many such boards (though many for-profit management companies have gone to great lengths to keep me away from the schools they operate!) Such schools reflect similar indicators as those posed in Scenario #3:

- excessive turnover in board members
- no deliberative engagement of issues by the board in its meetings
- no deep dive into school performance data
- financial reporting is either non-existent, sparse or not clear
- one person (the principal in this case) does most of the talking
- "a very friendly" demeanor [toward] the principal (might indicate the principal cherry picked only friends as board members)

Based on this information, if I read the minutes for the previous year or two, all would also not be surprised to see:

- meetings frequently lasting less 30 to 45 minutes
- an insufficient number of meetings
- no discussion of student performance (that is, as a pattern)
- few items involving board deliberation
- no new member orientation
- no discussion for the purpose of ascertaining how well internal controls are working (or whether the management even has internal controls in place!)
- no board inquiry about how well the school is doing with respect to special needs students, students who are in the racial minority, students with mobility, English Learners or economically disadvantaged)
- no ongoing board development or board development plan

## 10. Responses to hypothetical questions related to charter school governing boards

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- no robust discussion with the school's financial auditor of the audit results (and the auditor was recommended by the management company instead of the board treasurer or audit committee)
- no review of the 990
- no relationship with an independent attorney selected by the board
- no review of liability insurance coverage
- no formal evaluation of the company's (or the leader's) performance
- no self-evaluation by the board of its own performance
- in short, no governance.

#### What are some suggestions you would make to the board?

In governance parlance, we sometimes refer to such boards as rubber stamp boards because they simply approve whatever the founder or the management company puts in front of them. Unfortunately, the existence of such boards is pervasive among charter schools.

To boards like this, I often start at square one by explaining that it is the board, not the founder or the management company, that holds the charter.<sup>2</sup> As such, the board has a duty to ensure, on behalf of the taxpayers that there money is being properly spent. This starts with recommending that board members read the contract between the board and the management company. (My field experience indicates that beyond the founding board, most do not.)

In my experience, until a board understands and embraces this foundational notion as the very basis of its reason for existing, it is unlikely to govern effectively.

#### How would you incorporate this into the training?

Once the board understands that it is the charter holder and that the management company or the founder works for them and not the other way around, it is now in a position to learn the fundamentals of good governance. As mentioned elsewhere through this document, this includes (but is not limited to):

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<sup>2</sup> As readers of this likely know, some management companies have engineered ways around this by forming what amounts to 501(c)(3) shell companies to be the charter holder. These companies sometimes consist of only three people; two management company executives and some resident who happens to be friendly to the company of the particular state in which the company wants to open a school. Once, the shell company obtains the charter, it will put a school board in place. This clever move—but in my view, ethically challenged—essentially prevents the school board from ever terminating the management company's contract. This practice was permitted in Georgia a decade or so ago, but it's my understanding that the statute has changed. I see that change as a good thing for charter schools.

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- understanding the difference between governance and management
- understanding the contractual nature and requirements of the charter
- understanding the importance of having policies *and making some reasonable effort to systematically ensure those policies are being followed*
- understanding how to read financial reports (and when to recognize smoke when you see it, such as reports that are so intricate or that deviate so far from GAAP standards that they are fundamentally incomprehensible)
- understanding the crucial need for internal controls *and making some reasonable effort to ensure those controls are being adhered to*
- understanding why board independence (of management) is essential to sound governance
- understanding the need for ongoing board development and self assessment

**End of Responses**

11. Participant evaluations of each training course provided in 2014-17

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No state approved training courses have been previously provided to Georgia charter schools, therefore there are no evaluations.

12. List of Georgia charter school governing board members who participated in training courses during 2014-17.

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No state approved training courses have been previously provided to Georgia charter schools.

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## Charter School Governing Board Training

### Nepotism Assurance Agreement

As an instructor/trainer for Brian L Carpenter PhD & Associates, LLC, I will not provide charter school governance training to charter school governing board members who are immediate members of my family without obtaining prior approval from the Associate Superintendent for Policy and Charter Schools or his designee. For the purpose of this assurance, immediate family members shall include a spouse, child, sibling, parent or the spouse of a child, sibling or parent.



Signature

Brian L. Carpenter

Name [printed]

May 2, 2017

Date

Brian L. Carpenter PhD & Associates LLC

Organization



OFFICE OF CHARTER SCHOOLS

Muncie, Indiana 47306-0618

Phone: 765-285-1336

Fax: 765-285-9873

April 21, 2017

To Whom it May Concern

Re: Brian L. Carpenter, Ph.D.

It is my pleasure to provide this letter of reference for Dr. Brian L. Carpenter who is seeking to be certified by the Georgia Department of Education as an approved charter school board service provider.

As an independent contractor, Dr. Carpenter has provided charter schools authorized by the Office of Charter Schools at Ball State University with governance training since 2009. As a nationally recognized subject matter expert, his board training programs and publications are regarded as industry standards by many in our profession. Both the Office of Charter Schools and our schools themselves value his seminars because of his demonstrated mastery of school operations and governance including finance, internal controls, strategic planning, policies and procedures, and the board-management relationship.

Moreover, during the past six years, in my capacity as Executive Director of the Office of Charter Schools, I have engaged Dr. Carpenter to conduct approximately two dozen governance and operations audits, including assessing the financial performance of schools as part of the University's rigorous assessment of its charter contracts.

As high stakes assessments, these audits demand critical thinking, accuracy, thoroughness and timeliness, as well as clear writing. Dr. Carpenter excels at all these skills, resulting in reports that are immensely valuable to the University's decision making processes, as well as to the schools themselves. He exhibits a keen analytical ability which, in several instances, has uncovered circumstances that necessitated further investigation by the University.

Beyond his technical proficiency, I have experienced Dr. Carpenter to be completely reliable and trustworthy. Moreover, in tense circumstances when others were confrontational, Dr. Carpenter maintains a sense of propriety and calm. In his role described in this letter, he has successfully guided boards through extremely difficult situations such as key personnel resignation, voluntary charter relinquishment and dissolution of a school itself.

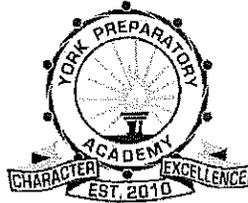
In closing, we were excited to learn of Dr. Carpenter's intent to bring his expertise to Georgia's charter schools. For all these reasons, we heartily endorse him.

Sincerely,



Robert A. Marra  
Executive Director

## Attachment A: 2 of 3 references



1047 Golden Gate Ct, Rock Hill, SC 29732  
803-324-4400 phone 866-496-2083 fax

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is to endorse Dr. Brian L. Carpenter as a charter school board trainer. As I am in the position of having worked for two different boards trained by Brian (one in Utah and one in South Carolina), I can attest to his abilities from a unique vantage point.

I first met Brian in 2009 at Reagan Academy, a charter school located in Springville Utah, just as I had been promoted to the position of executive director. The board and the school were in considerable turmoil, having churned through several leaders in its first few years of operation. Brian was able to quickly cut through the noise and confusion by helping the board understand and implement Policy Governance.

It turned out to be a true turning point for Reagan Academy. In the seven years that followed, we performed in ways that surpassed other schools to such an extent that the Utah State Office of Education engaged me (on the side) to teach our strategies to other charter schools. In this capacity, I frequently shared with my colleagues that the biggest key to our results was a thoroughly trained faculty who were relentlessly committed to data driven instructional strategies. At the same time, however, I often stressed that such a program cannot be built and sustained without a properly functioning board. On this point, I frequently shared that Brian's work with the Reagan Board laid the foundation on which we were able to build as an administrative team.

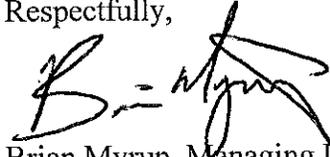
Given the "small world" nature of the charter school sector, it was Brian who first introduced me in the 2015-16 school year to York Preparatory Academy, a K-12 charter school in Rock Hill, SC. At that time, he had agreed to serve as YPA's interim executive while the board conducted a search for a permanent managing director. In this role, Brian engaged me to provide training to the YPA senior leadership team on the use of data to inform instruction, just as I had been doing in Utah. In the months following those engagements, a mutual realization evolved among the board, the leadership team and me that there was a great fit between us. I eventually accepted an offer from the board to become its permanent managing director, effective at the start of the 2016-17 school year. I share all of that to say this: The YPA board knows that the fact the Brian had been coaching them (and is still doing so), strengthened my confidence to relocate my family to South Carolina to take on this new opportunity.

By the way, it turns out that Brian is *not* like the proverbial consultants who *teach* because they can't actually *do* the work. We recently learned that York Preparatory Academy was one of only three schools (out of 35 authorized by the South Carolina Public Charter School District) to achieve the status of "Distinction" on *both* student growth and achievement in the year that Brian was leading it as an interim. When he and I talked about this, he told me that he believed the

work he had done with the board during the year was the first essential step in enabling the leadership team to get such results. I have heard our board president express similar remarks.

How many charter school consultants do you know that can do the work they teach others? I only know one: Dr. Brian L. Carpenter. Please contact me at your convenience if I can be of any further help at this time.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian Myrup". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "B" and a long, sweeping underline.

Brian Myrup, Managing Director  
York Preparatory Academy  
803-324-4400 ext. 1206



Date: April 27, 2017

From: Matthew T. Kirby

To: Georgia State Board of Education

**Subj: Letter of Recommendation for Dr. Brian L. Carpenter**

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Board:

As one of the founders of Atlanta Classical Academy, I am pleased to provide this recommendation for Dr. Brian L. Carpenter. He has informed me that he is submitting the paperwork necessary to be approved by the Georgia Department of Education to provide charter school board training to Georgia charter schools during the 2017-18 school year. I am enthusiastically supportive of his application for the reasons outlined below.

Several Atlanta Classical Academy board members and I first met Dr. Carpenter at a two-day charter school board conference at Hillsdale College in Michigan in June of last year. We were impressed with his presentations which included a number of important points that spoke directly to our own experiences as new board members. After we returned to Georgia, I spoke with our board and then I contacted Dr. Carpenter to ascertain his availability to work with us during the 2016-17 school year. After receiving a detailed proposal, the board promptly engaged him to conduct a year-long Policy Governance implementation seminar.

In addition to guiding us through the process of implementing Policy Governance (which is ongoing as of the date of this letter), Dr. Carpenter has helped our board navigate several complex personnel issues as well as making valuable recommendations to aid us in the leadership transition process. He also helped us revise our bylaws in ways that will strengthen the board's oversight of the school's financial management.

In summary, we're receiving all of the value we anticipated in retaining Dr. Carpenter. I'm confident that Georgia's other charter schools will also benefit by his being approved to provide services. If you have any questions, please feel welcome to contact me.

Sincerely,

Matthew T. Kirby  
Chief Executive Officer