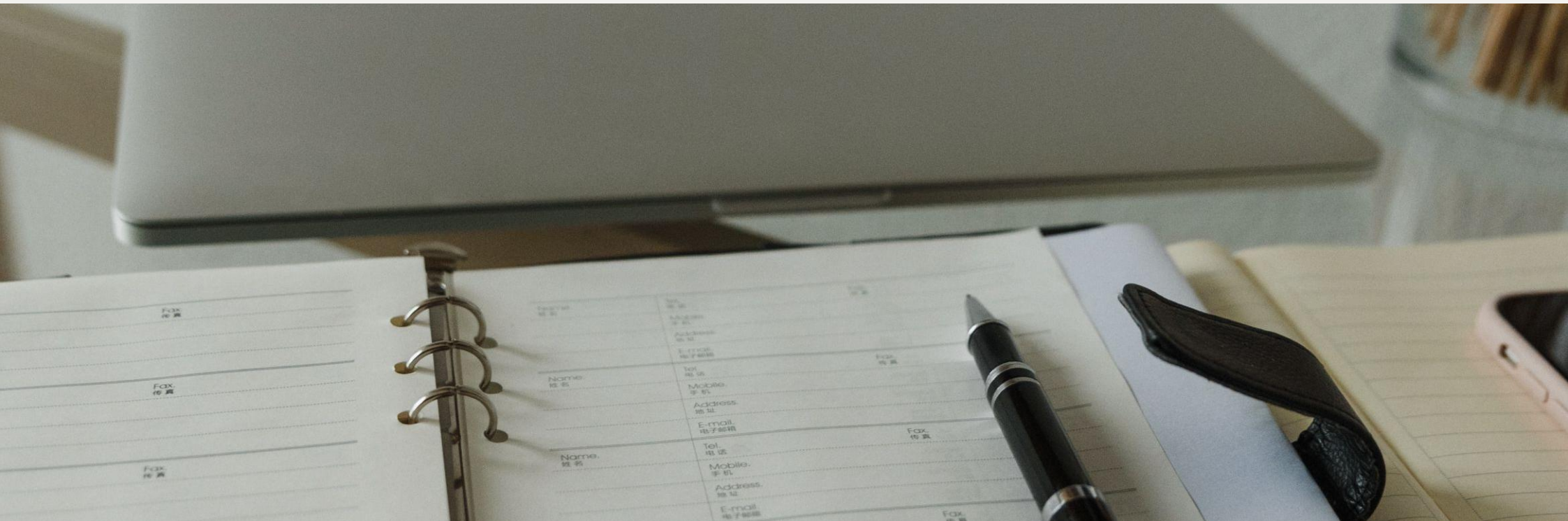


A YEAR OF GOOD GOVERNANCE

An Annual Planning Tool for International School Boards



PLAN THE GOVERNANCE YEAR

Strong boards do not wait for important responsibilities to appear on the agenda by chance. An annual governance calendar helps the Board distribute its work realistically, prepare for major decisions, and give sustained attention to both school oversight and its own effectiveness.

A meeting calendar tells trustees when to attend. A governance calendar shows the Board what work it must accomplish.

WHAT BELONGS ON THE CALENDAR?

MISSION & STRATEGY • Annual priorities • Strategic progress • Key indicators • Emerging opportunities and risks	FINANCIAL OVERSIGHT • Budget assumptions and approval • Regular financial monitoring • Audit oversight • Year-end financial review	HEAD SUPPORT & EVALUATION • Annual goals and expectations • Regular Chair–Head check-ins • Formal evaluation • Contract and compensation decisions
BOARD COMPOSITION • Trustee terms and vacancies • Recruitment and nominations • Elections or appointments • Officer succession and orientation	GOVERNANCE & POLICY • Board self-assessment • Policy review • Foundational documents • Conflicts of interest and compliance	LEARNING & ACCOUNTABILITY • Board retreats and development • Community reporting • Governance improvement priorities • Reflection and lessons from the year

KEEP THE CONTEXT IN VIEW

The calendar should reflect the school’s fiscal year, governance model, election cycle, accreditation requirements, and Head evaluation process. The work matters more than the month in which it occurs.

ANNUAL BOARD CALENDAR: EXAMPLE

August	September	October	November
• Set Board priorities • Confirm Head goals • Approve meeting schedule and committee plans • Complete annual trustee commitments (conflict of interest, code of conduct, etc.)	• Review enrollment and staffing • Revisit budget assumptions • Orient new trustees • Confirm strategic measures	• Review finances and enrollment trends • Monitor strategic progress • Hold a retreat or learning session • Begin priority policy reviews	• Review enrollment projections • Discuss tuition and budget assumptions • Review audit findings • Identify upcoming decision needs
December	January	February	March
• Review midyear progress • Examine the financial forecast • Check progress on Head goals • Confirm second-semester priorities	• Reconfirm Board priorities • Review updated enrollment projections • Prepare for tuition and budget decisions • Review upcoming trustee vacancies	• Approve tuition and fees • Review the preliminary budget • Monitor strategic progress and risk • Continue trustee recruitment	• Review the developing budget • Evaluate the Head • Conduct the Board self-assessment • Confirm trustee candidates
April	May	June	July
• Approve the final budget • Complete Head contract decisions • Elect or appoint trustees • Plan trustee transition and orientation	• Confirm officers and committees • Review year-end projections • Assess annual priorities • Approve next year's meeting calendar	• Orient new trustees • Capture lessons from the year • Set governance improvements • Confirm summer responsibilities	• Archive the previous year's records • Complete outstanding governance tasks • Prepare materials for new trustees • Finalize the coming year's Board calendar

BUILD BACKWARD FROM MAJOR DECISIONS

Place fixed decisions - such as tuition, budget approval, Head evaluation, elections, and audit acceptance - on the calendar first. Then schedule the information and discussion the Board will need before those decisions occur.

The example calendar is a starting point, not a prescribed schedule. Each Board should adapt the timing to its school's fiscal year, governance structure, election cycle, evaluation process, and local requirements.

BEFORE FINALIZING THE CALENDAR, ASK:

1. BALANCE

Is the Board's work distributed realistically across the year?

2. PREPARATION

Are major decisions scheduled early enough for proper preparation?

3. FOCUS

Have we made room for strategic thinking—not only approvals and reports?

4. DEVELOPMENT

Are the Board's learning and effectiveness visible on the calendar?

5. COMPLETENESS

What important responsibility is still relying on someone to remember it?

A good governance year is designed before it begins.

ABOUT CD GOVERNANCE PARTNERS

CD Governance Partners works with international school boards and school leaders to strengthen governance, build effective board practices, and support the partnerships that enable schools to thrive.

Our services include governance reviews, board retreats and facilitation, policy and bylaw development, governance training, and strategic governance support tailored to the international school context.

CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION

Every Board's governance journey is different. If this guide has prompted questions or highlighted opportunities for your Board, we would be pleased to discuss how CD Governance Partners can support your work.

To learn more:

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Practical guidance for stronger boards and sustainable international schools.