



ASPIRE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Board Management

June 2007

INFORMATION ABOUT THIS TOOL

A highly qualified board that is managed and engaged appropriately can be a significant contributor to organizational success. Aspire Public Schools puts considerable effort into developing and managing its board, and has created structures and systems to ensure that the work of the board is informed, relevant, and meaningful.

This case study was prepared by FSG Social Impact Advisors. FSG is a nonprofit consulting firm that provides guidance to foundations, corporations, nonprofits, and other public sector entities on issues of strategy, evaluation, and operations. FSG was commissioned by NewSchools Venture Fund to document “promising practices” of portfolio ventures in a format that could be shared across the NewSchools portfolio. To complete this case study, FSG conducted background research on Aspire Public Schools and interviewed Don Shalvey, Aspire’s CEO and Founder, and Beth Hunkapiller, Aspire’s Board Chair. Joanne Weiss of NewSchools Venture Fund provided additional context on Aspire.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

We hope that reading this case study sparks conversations about how the practices highlighted here relate to your own organization. To help facilitate that process, we have developed the questions below to help guide these discussions. We encourage you to keep them in mind as you read through the case study and to refer back to them as your organization reflects on the case study’s implications for your own organization.

1. What is your organization’s approach to board recruitment and development? How do you factor into this approach elements like your organization’s stage of development or strategic needs?
2. Are there additional individuals you would like to add to your board? How will you cultivate them?
3. Do you have a specific set of selection criteria for prospective board members?
4. How do you communicate to your board about their roles and responsibilities, and about what is expected of them as effective and engaged board members?
5. Does the board engage in a process of self-evaluation?
6. Have you developed consistent systems and processes for sharing information with and receiving feedback from your board?

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

For charter school management organizations (CMOs), governing boards can play a critical role in achieving success. A well-run board of directors provides an outside perspective and a new set of skills and ideas that can help CMOs think through important strategic issues, such as where and how quickly to open new schools, and how to build the right capacity to support those growth plans. To reach their full potential, these boards must be carefully developed and managed by the management team of the CMO. However, many organizations struggle with questions like what to look for in prospective board members, how to communicate expectations for board members' roles and responsibilities, and how best to work with board members in a way that fully utilizes their strengths and leverages the resources that they can provide. While many of the elements of effective board management may seem obvious, managing a board well is primarily a matter of how these elements are implemented, which requires a time, well-conceived processes, and an organizational commitment to keeping the board informed and engaged.

The following case study examines the board structure and governance process developed by Aspire Public Schools. It provides an instructive model for the management teams of other CMOs who are thinking about ways to manage their own boards more effectively.

Background on Aspire Public Schools

Aspire Public Schools establishes and operates public charter schools in California focused on providing low-income, urban youth with a high-quality education that will prepare them for college. Founded in 1998 to “enrich students’ lives and to reshape the public school system,”¹ Aspire currently operates 17 schools serving more than 3,600 students in grades K – 12.

BOARD STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE PROCESS

Roles and Responsibilities

The primary role of Aspire’s board is to serve as a group of engaged thought partners for Aspire’s management and staff as they work to design and implement the organization’s strategy. One way the board does this is by helping to identify potentially “fatal flaws” in staff’s decision making that may not be apparent to the team itself. For example, when Aspire was first considering opening a cluster of schools in Los Angeles (after years of operating schools only in northern and central California), the board recognized that the team did not yet have the skill set in place to open schools so far away from the home office in Oakland. The board made a strategic decision to postpone geographic expansion until the organization reached a more mature stage of growth. Once Aspire had successfully opened more schools in Northern California and had sufficiently built up its home office staff, the board gave the green light for Aspire to expand into Los Angeles. This type of guidance and insight is critical to ensuring that Aspire stays focused and avoids potential pitfalls.

¹ Aspire Web site, <http://www.aspirepublicschools.org/about/about.html>

Specific areas of board responsibility are well-defined and clearly communicated to new members (see Toolkit for *Aspire Public Schools Board of Directors Job Description*). The three primary areas for board involvement are:

- ***School site expansion*** – deciding whether to pursue a new school site;
- ***Finance*** – budget oversight and fundraising; and
- ***Strategy*** – variations on the original business plan, such as geographic expansion.

Board Structure

Aspire’s board consists of 12 members. Nine of these members were appointed by the board itself, and the remaining three were appointed by the school districts in which the organization has charters (see Toolkit for *Aspire Board Members*.) Members bring to bear a wide range of backgrounds, including education, law, finance, management consulting, venture capital, politics, and philanthropy. Officers include a Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary. The Chair reviews and gives final approval to the board meeting agenda and moderates the quarterly meetings. The Vice Chair presides over board meetings in the absence of the Chair, and the Secretary works with the other officers to evaluate the CEO annually and to help them come to agreement on a CEO compensation recommendation for the full board.

Many board functions are delegated to the Executive Committee, which serves as the primary decision making body. The Executive Committee meets monthly and is responsible for making policy and budgetary decisions, as well as discussing strategic issues that require more immediate dialogue than the quarterly full board meetings permit.

In addition to the Executive Committee, the board includes three other standing committees, each of which has three members:

- ***Finance Committee*** – reviews budget proposals and year-to-date expenses and revenues;
- ***Audit Committee*** – elects an auditor, reviews the annual audit, and reports to the full board; and
- ***Governance Committee*** – responsible for board recruitment and development.

Terms

Board members are appointed for two-year terms and can opt to stay on the board for an unlimited number of terms. Most members have remained on the board indefinitely, and Aspire considers the stability this provides as a major strength. Only a few members have left, and in most cases this was due to a conflict of interest. For example, one early board member, Reed Hastings, was elected as President of the California State Board of Education and felt that he would not be able to remain impartial on either board in making decisions about Aspire’s state-level activities, such as its application for a statewide benefit charter.

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCESS

One of the particularly unique aspects of Aspire's approach to board management is the careful thought that is given to recruiting and selecting new board members. Aspire's senior team and board conduct extensive due diligence to ensure that new board members are a strong cultural fit with the organization and that they will add value in specific areas that are integral to the organization's growth and success.

Recruitment, evaluation, and selection of new board members typically involves the following six-step process (see Toolkit for *Board Recruitment and Selection Process*):

- **Step 1:** Solicit nominations and compile names
- **Step 2:** Initial meeting with nominating board member
- **Step 3:** Nominator reports back to full board
- **Step 4:** Prospective member meets with CEO, other board members, and staff
- **Step 5:** Visit schools and attend board meeting(s)
- **Step 6:** Final meeting with CEO or nominator

Once a candidate completes this process, a decision is then brought to the board for a final decision based on a majority vote.

At a high level, there are three broad categories that define what characteristics Aspire looks for in prospective board members:

- **Skill Set** – all board members must have expertise in either real estate, finance, multi-region business operations, or education
- **Wealth** – one-third of all board members must contribute at least a five-figure gift each year to annual fundraising efforts
- **Diversity** – geographic, ethnic, and gender diversity are important factors

At a more detailed level, Aspire’s recruitment efforts focus on identifying individuals with a very specific set of background experiences to ensure that key organizational needs are met:

<i>Professional Background</i>	<i>Organizational Need Fulfilled/Skill Set Provided</i>
<i>Real Estate/Facilities/Finance Professional</i>	Facilities sourcing and development, financial management
<i>Venture Capitalist</i>	Risk assessment and help with pattern recognition related to what things work/don’t work
<i>Public School Administrator</i>	Understanding of governance processes
<i>Entrepreneur</i>	Understanding of organizational structure, strategy, and design issues
<i>Statewide Education Leader</i>	Understanding of education politics in California
<i>Multi-Region Retail Professional</i>	Expertise and guidance on site expansion
<i>Higher Education Professional</i>	Help with Early College High School (ECHS) design
<i>Elected Official (Mid- to Long-Term Seated Democrat)</i>	Advice and support on navigating legislation affecting Aspire and charter schools in general
<i>Civic Leader with Strong Philanthropic Interest (in Key Geographic Regions)</i>	Local fundraising for Aspire schools

BOARD DEVELOPMENT

Expectation-Setting, Communication, and Goal-Setting

Aspire’s CEO Don Shalvey and its Board Chair invest a lot of time and energy in keeping board members engaged and well-informed, particularly as it relates to expectations for their role. Don Shalvey and the Chair each meet with new board members individually to discuss norms and to ensure that they have a clear understanding of what their role as a board member will entail. This helps orient them and sets guidelines for expected behavior, such as the importance of returning phone calls within 24 hours. There is also strong communication between Shalvey and individual board members on an ongoing basis. Shalvey interacts at least twice a month by phone or e-mail with each board member, and makes a point of getting together informally with board members to build rapport and reinforce the relationship. The Chair meets formally with Don three times a month, and is in regular phone and e-mail communication with him to discuss important issues. All members also participate in an annual board retreat, which provides them with an opportunity to reflect on the past year and to set goals for the year ahead.

Board Self-Evaluation Process

One of the most important board development tactics is a self-evaluation process in which the Executive Committee engages each year. Each Executive Committee member completes a self-evaluation in which they rate the full board’s performance in several key areas, including finance, fundraising, strategic planning, academic performance, school management, and board/staff relations. Members then rate their

own individual performance in nine specific areas. This data is then compiled and used to guide the development and prioritization of the following year’s board goals. The areas for which goals are established include leadership, adequate resources, strategic mission and strategy, and effective board processes (see Toolkit for *Executive Committee Self-Evaluation Process*.)

BOARD MEETINGS

Aspire’s board meetings are well-run, focused, and highly productive. While many factors contribute to this effectiveness, one distinguishing factor is the pre-work that Aspire’s staff does to plan for board meetings.

The Board Meeting Agenda
 Typical board meeting agenda items include:

- Achievement Update
- Budget Update
- Fundraising Update
- New Site Development Update

Pre-Work

Aspire staff puts a significant amount of work into preparing for board meetings and has found that this up-front investment in gathering and sharing relevant and meaningful information is critical in enabling the board to provide constructive guidance. Preparation for board meetings is focused on agenda-setting (see Toolkit for *Sample Executive Committee Agenda*.) assigning staff members to report on key issues, and developing the board packet. Steps in the process are as follows:

STEP	TIMELINE	WHO’S INVOLVED
Determine agenda for next meeting	End of current meeting	Full board
Refine agenda based on major topics of interest	Between end of current meeting and beginning of following meeting	CEO and Board Chair
Draft final agenda	2 weeks prior to board meeting	CEO and Board Chair
Assign team members to report on key issues	1 week prior to board meeting	CEO
Create board packet materials	1 week prior to board meeting	COO
Assemble board packet materials	5 days prior to board meeting	Executive Assistant
CEO reviews and distributes board packet	4 days prior to board meeting	CEO
CEO and Board Chair discuss agenda items and strategy for the meeting	2 – 3 days prior to board meeting	CEO and Board Chair

Board Packet

Aspire staff assembles a detailed board packet that is distributed four days prior to board meetings, which allows board members a chance to review background information and enables them to arrive at the meeting prepared to discuss agenda items in depth (see Toolkit for *Sample Board Packet*.) Standard elements of every board packet include: a student achievement report, a

Our board wouldn’t be so good if it weren’t for the quality of the staff and their focus on data and results. Aspire has the most talented, results-oriented staff I can imagine. Decisions are so research-based and executed by such energetic people that it makes the board’s job really easy.

- Beth Hunkapiller, Board Chair

finance report, and a fundraising report. Other items in the board packet might include an overview and analysis of a new school site under consideration (see Toolkit for *Prospective New School Summary*) or a PowerPoint slide deck outlining potential new sites under consideration (see Toolkit for *Growth Options 2007*). Aspire staff is diligent about providing board members with the relevant data and information they need to make informed decisions; board members feel that this contributes significantly to their ability to operate effectively.

SUCCESS FACTORS

There are a number of key factors that contribute to the effectiveness of Aspire's board management. These include:

- ***In-depth recruitment and selection process.*** Aspire's team has a very specific set of selection criteria for prospective board members, and invests a great deal of time and energy to ensure that they recruit individuals who will add value to the organization in key areas of need.
- ***Clear roles and expectations.*** The committee structure and written job descriptions both help provide members with an explicit understanding of roles and responsibilities, which helps board members stay focused on key priorities and makes them feel better able to add value.
- ***Ongoing communication.*** Shalvey makes a personal commitment to keeping board members informed and engaged, through regular phone calls, e-mails, and meetings.
- ***Evaluation and reflection.*** Through annual board retreats and a self-evaluation process, Aspire creates a structure that allows the board to regularly evaluate its performance and reflect on its goals for the year ahead.
- ***Well-developed materials.*** Aspire's staff makes a concerted effort to provide the board with meaningful materials that build their understanding of key issues and enable them to be effective thought partners.

I think we have an extraordinary board because they understand what boardsmanship is about. They have no special interests other than Aspire and are willing to work in whatever way possible to support the organization's success.

- Don Shalvey, CEO, Aspire

CHALLENGES

Though its process of board management has worked well, Aspire has encountered some challenges:

- ***Building an understanding of the education landscape.*** Since most board members are not educators, making them aware of key education issues requires a significant investment of time and energy.
- ***Operating as a unified entity.*** Given the broad range of backgrounds and personalities on Aspire's board, it can sometimes be difficult to get everyone in alignment about a particular decision or action.

- ***Focusing staff time on board preparation.*** For this young and growing organization, it remains an ongoing challenge for Aspire’s senior team and other staff to devote such a significant amount of time to creating materials for board meetings, preparing for board meetings, and interacting with board members.

ADVICE AND LESSONS LEARNED

- ***Invest in building the knowledge base of the board.*** Providing the board with the background information they need to make well-informed decisions results in much more effective board governance. In addition to providing the information that staff deems important, it is also important to be responsive to what the board says they need.
- ***Make sure you’re getting the right board members and the right skill sets.*** Develop a clear understanding of the skill sets and other characteristics that will add the most value and help your organization operate effectively. This will vary significantly across organizations, so invest sufficient time to think through what your organization most needs in general and from the board.
- ***Get to know your board well.*** It is important to invest the time to develop trust and a personal rapport with each board member.
- ***Encourage and model transparency.*** Share information openly and encourage candid dialogue, particularly around sensitive issues such as the organization’s financial health.
- ***Develop consistent systems and processes.*** Be explicit and consistent about when and how information should or will be shared with the board, such as by creating an annual calendar of agenda items and developing a standard board packet template.

The open transparency around what board members need is really good. We have become much more transparent about finance matters, which has led to a more robust budget.

- Don Shalvey,
CEO, Aspire

ASPIRE BOARD MANAGEMENT TOOLKIT

Toolkit Contents

- **Aspire Public Schools Board Member Job Descriptions (Aspire Document)**
- **Aspire Board Members (Aspire Document)**
- **Board Recruitment and Selection Process (FSG Document)**
- **Sample Executive Committee Agenda (Aspire Document)**
- **Prospective New School Summary (Aspire Document)**

Additional Documents (Available Separately)

- **Executive Committee Self-Evaluation Process (Aspire Document)**
<http://www.newschools.org/files/AspireBOD-A.ppt>
- **Sample Board Packet (Aspire Document)**
<http://www.newschools.org/files/AspireBOD-B.pdf>
- **Growth Options 2007 (Aspire Document)**
<http://www.newschools.org/files/AspireBOD-C.ppt>



Aspire Public Schools Board of Directors
Job Description
Draft

Aspire Public Schools Board Responsibilities

The Board is a governing and policymaking board.

The Board of Directors as a whole is generally responsible for:

- Ensuring that by-laws and appropriate board policies are in place and followed to meet expectations outlined in the California Nonprofit Integrity Act and the IRS Intermediate Sanctions Regulations and other applicable laws.
- Monitoring the financial stability and integrity of the organization, through reports made by the Finance and Audit Committees to full board, by reviewing quarterly financial statements, approving the external auditor, and reviewing annual audited statements.
- Every year, reviewing and providing feedback on reports from the Executive on agency performance against the priorities as well as other objectives.
- Supporting the Chief Executive Officer (“CEO”) to lead the organization; and with the Executive Committee’s leadership annually reviewing his/her performance against annual objectives and organizational priorities, and approving his/her annual compensation package.
- Selecting and employing the Chief Executive Officer.

Individual Board Members are responsible for:

- Attending the quarterly board meetings, including reading the board briefing materials ahead of the meeting and participating in meeting discussions.
- Reporting to the CEO and Board President any potential conflicts of interest between what is in Aspire Public Schools best interests and what might be in the best interest of the individual Board Member or of other agencies with which he or she is closely affiliated.
- Keeping Aspire Public Schools finances, fund development, or business development strategy, and other information as requested confidential.
- Providing input and feedback to staff – in board meetings and between meetings as requested – on Aspire Public Schools publications and other program activities.
- Enhancing the organization’s public image, visibility and credibility.
- Bringing resources to the organization by making a personal annual donation, and by sharing personal contacts with foundation staff with the CEO.
- Connecting and networking the organization to constituencies, audiences, organizations, and influential individuals to which individual members have access.
- Identifying and recruiting strong Board Members who will contribute time and energy to the agency’s credibility, visibility, quality, and growth while ensuring a broad range of education perspectives consistent with Aspire Public Schools’ mission.
- Annually and candidly assessing one’s own participation on the board, and looking for opportunities to increase contribution over time.



Contributing Time to Aspire Public Schools:

- Attendance at quarterly board meetings is expected, and is important to ensure a quorum and full involvement. It is the single most important contribution a Board Member can make because it is the one time staff is able to hear the full board discuss issues and react to one another's ideas and questions. This exchange between Board Members expands the thinking and knowledge of Aspire Public Schools' staff, and thus improves the quality of work. With the consensus of the board, some quarterly meeting(s) or the triennial strategic planning retreat may include a retreat.

In addition to attendance at quarterly meetings, the majority of Board Members also contribute additional time by doing at least one or even all of the following at various times:

- Serving as an officer or as a member of a standing or ad hoc committee. Most meetings take place in the morning before a regular board meeting, or between quarterly meetings by phone, online, or in person.
- Attending events to cultivate funders and provide hospitality to speakers; or as requested by staff, to present or moderate at an Aspire convening.
- Review drafts of Aspire Public Schools publications and providing comments to staff in writing or over the phone.

Board Leadership and Committee Assignments:

The board has the following officers: Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary. In practice, the Chair reviews and gives final approval to the staff-general agenda and moderates the quarterly meetings. The Vice Chair presides over board meetings in the absence of the Chair. The Secretary may be asked to preside over meetings in the absence of the Chair or Vice Chair, and works with the other officers to annually evaluate the CEO and to agree on a recommendation to the full board on CEO compensation.

The Board also delegates many of its functions to the Executive Committee, which is comprised by the officers and four additional members. The Executive Committee meets monthly. In addition to the Executive Committee, Aspire Public Schools has the following other three standing committees: Finance (reviews budget proposals and the year-to-date expenses and revenues; Audit (recommends auditor selection, reviews annual audit, management letters, and Form 990, and reports to full board on integrity, compliance, and solvency); and Governance (responsible for board recruitment and development). Some Board Members are needed to serve on these committees.

Bringing Financial Resources to Aspire Public Schools:

Aspire Public Schools' Board Members will be asked by the Chair in early December of each year to make a financial contribution, either personally or through their organization to Aspire Public Schools. The amount is not as important as is 100% board participation, an indication to staff and to funders of the board's commitment to Aspire Public Schools' mission.

Many Aspire Public Schools' Board Members have over time in their other roles developed professional or personal relationships with staff at private foundations or with individual



philanthropists. Board Members are asked to notify the CEO of these contracts and whether they may be potential sources of funding for Aspire Public Schools. If appropriate, the member will be asked to facilitate introductions, write letters of support, attend meetings, or advise on grant proposal strategy.

In Summary

The Aspire Public Schools Board of Directors is a dynamic group of individuals who are committed to the purpose of “Aspire Public Schools.” Board meetings are busy, focused, and lively with conversation. The board leadership ensures that board involvement is kept at the policy and governing level. Because the Aspire Public Schools staff is small and our mission is large, the active commitment of each Aspire Public Schools’ Board Member is welcomed and needed.

Recognition

The Aspire Board of Directors and CEO would like to recognize and thank Trish Williams, CEO of EdSource, and the EdSource Board for her willingness to guide and share EdSource documents with the Aspire team.



Aspire Board Members

Tom Chagnon, Superintendent, Keyes Union School District (Chartering District for University Charter School and Summit Charter Academy)

Tom Chagnon has spent his career in education. For the past four years, he has been Superintendent of Keyes Union School District in California's Central Valley. Tom firmly believes in providing families with viable educational options and is a strong supporter of the charter movement; he was instrumental in opening the Keyes To Learning Charter School in Keyes eight years ago. Tom has also served as Assistant Principal, Associate Principal, Principal, and Assistant Superintendent, developing expertise in all aspects of school operations. Tom has served on ACSA's State Charter Committee and is affiliated with Association of California School Administrators, Phi Delta Kappa, Association of Professional Baseball Players, and Northern California Scouts Association. He has presented at numerous workshops and conferences, including the California School Boards Association Conference, and the National Charter School Conference. (Denver). Tom received his B.A. in History from Stanford University. He holds a Master's Degree in Education in addition to a Master's Degree in School Administration from University of San Francisco.

Linda Darling-Hammond, Professor, Stanford University School of Education

Linda Darling-Hammond is the Charles E. Ducommun Professor of Teaching and Teacher Education at Stanford University, where she works closely with the Stanford Teacher Education Program (STEP) and teaches courses on teaching and teacher education as well as education policy. Previously, she was William F. Russell Professor in the Foundations of Education at Teachers College, Columbia University, co-director of the National Center for Restructuring Education, Schools and Teaching, and executive director of the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future. She began her career as a public school teacher and was co-founder of a preschool and day care center. She has also worked as senior social scientist and director of the RAND Corporation's Education and Human Resources Program. Linda earned her undergraduate degree from Yale in 1973 and her doctorate in urban education from Temple University in 1978.

Linda's research focuses on issues of school restructuring, teacher education reform and the enhancement of educational equity. She is the author of seven books, including *The Right to Learn: A Blueprint for School Reform*; *Professional Development Schools: Schools for Developing a Profession*; *A License to Teach: Building a Profession for 21st Century Schools*; and *Authentic Assessment in Action*.

Bill Hughson, Independent Consultant

Bill Hughson is an independent consultant providing strategic, financial and operational consulting to companies in the healthcare, corporate, and technology start-up companies. Prior to that, he demonstrated extraordinary results leading high-growth multi-site retail companies. As President of A.G. Ferrari Foods, he doubled the size of the organization in 2 years, realigned the company's strategy, improved retail sales per square foot by 25%, implemented new technology systems, and raised \$10 million in 3 series of preferred stock options. Prior to that, he grew Noah's Bagel



Company from 1 store to 39 stores, creating \$75 million in shareholder value in under 4 years. Bill has also been a management consultant with Bain & Company, and a financial analyst with Morgan Stanley. Bill has an undergraduate degree from Williams College, and an MBA from Stanford University.

Beth Hunkapiller, President, San Carlos School District Board of Trustees

Beth Hunkapiller has been an educator all her life. Currently, she is president of the San Carlos Board of Education. She has worked as a middle school teacher and administrator in the Mountain View School District in El Monte, CA, and in a parent cooperative nursery school. She has also worked at the Los Angeles Times.

Beth graduated from Oklahoma Baptist University where she majored in political science and English. She received her masters from USC in 1977.

**Bill Huyett, Superintendent, Lodi Unified School District
(Chartering District for University Public School and River Oaks Charter Academy)**

Bill has been an educator and administrator for the past 20 years. Since July 2000, Bill has been Superintendent of Lodi Unified School District in San Joaquin County, California. Previously, he was superintendent of Dixon Unified School District; he has also served as Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Education, and principal at the middle and high school levels. He began his career as a math/physics teacher. Bill has been President of the Elk Grove Administrators Association, Director of ACSA (Association of California School Administrators) Region III, a National Workshop Presenter for Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development on Restructuring the High School, Chair of the Curriculum Committee for the California High School Task Force "Second to None." Bill graduated with Distinction with a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Virginia, and received his Administrative Credential from California State University, Sacramento.

Melvin J. Kaplan, Chief Executive Officer, Wellington Financial Group

Mel Kaplan has been a real estate investor since 1960. He is CEO of Wellington Financial Group, an entity that invests in commercial real estate nationally.

In 1988 Mel and his family founded the Harry Singer Foundation, a nonprofit educational operating foundation dedicated to youth development. He serves on Harry Singer's Board and advises various other 501c(3) corporations.

Mel is an alumnus of MIT and UC Berkeley where, in the 70s, he lectured at the School of Business Administration. His specialty continues to be problem solving and entrepreneurship. His biography has appeared in Marquis *Who's Who In Finance and Industry* and *Who's Who In The World*.



Steven L. Merrill, Venture Capitalist

Steve Merrill has been active in venture capital investing since 1968, and most recently was a Partner with Benchmark Capital. He was president of BankAmerica Capital Corporation in 1976 and managed this very successful venture activity until 1980 when he formed Merrill, Pickard, Anderson & Eyre (MPAE), a privately held venture capital partnership. MPAE managed funds of approximately \$285 million provided by a group of 50 limited partners, including major corporations, pension funds, insurance companies, university endowments, and prominent families. Some of the companies funded by MPAE include America Online, Aspect Telecommunications, Cypress Semiconductor, Documentum, and Palm Computing. MPAE stopped making new investments in 1996 and the partners founded Benchmark Capital and Foundation Capital. Steven is a limited partner in both of these firms but is no longer involved in the day-to-day management.

Currently, Steven is devoting more time to civic and non-profit activities as well as his private investments. He was chairman of the Board of Trustees of Town School for Boys, a member of the Committee to Restore the San Francisco Opera House, and he is a past director of the Children's Health Council.

Steven is also a past president of the Western Association of Venture Capitalists and a past director of the National Venture Capital Association, and has been a director of numerous privately held companies. He holds an MBA from the Wharton School of Finance and a BA in Sociology from Stanford University.

Steven Poizner, Philanthropist, Poizner Family Foundation*

Steve and his wife Carol created the Poizner Family Foundation to help improve public education in low-income communities. Steve serves on the boards of several innovative nonprofit organizations, including EdVoice and NewSchools Venture Fund. Steve also taught American Government to 12th grade students at Mount Pleasant High School in San Jose, where he received the "Rookie Teacher of the Year" award.

Teaching American Government gave Steve the opportunity to share with students his experience as a White House Fellow (2001-02). As a White House Fellow, Steve served for 6 months under Dick Clarke, the President's Special Advisor on Cyber-Security, and 6 months with the USA Freedom Corps, where he developed and presented two proposals to the President, who ordered their implementation. Specifically, Steve's work resulted in the creation of a White House Task Force for Disadvantaged Youth, to better coordinate and enhance the effectiveness of 100+ federal programs, and the creation of Youth Achievement, a three-year, \$300 million initiative to recruit and train mentors for more than one million disadvantaged youth. Youth Achievement was highlighted by the President in his 2003 State of the Union address.

Steve is the founder and former President of SnapTrack, Inc., which created the GPS-based technology that allows police and emergency medical services to pinpoint the geographic location of cell phone users in emergencies. Steve sold SnapTrack to Qualcomm Inc. in March 2000 for \$1 billion. He was also the founder and CEO of Strategic Mapping, Inc., and served as a management



consultant for the Boston Consulting Group.

Steve has been active in community service groups since 1980. As President of the Palo Alto Jaycees, he was deeply involved in bringing a lawsuit (ultimately decided by the U.S. Supreme Court) to open Jaycee membership to women.

Steve earned a B.S. degree in Electrical Engineering from the University of Texas, and an MBA degree from Stanford University with the distinction of "Arjay Miller Scholar." He has also earned a black belt in Shotokan karate.

**Participation pending due to recent election as State Insurance Commissioner*

Don Shalvey, Chief Executive Officer and Co-Founder, Aspire Public Schools

Don Shalvey has over 35 years of experience in public education, having served as superintendent, assistant superintendent, principal, classroom teacher, and counselor in all levels – primary, elementary, middle, and high schools, college and adult education. Prior to joining Aspire, Dr. Shalvey was Superintendent of the San Carlos School District in Northern California, a district of approximately 2,600 students and six elementary schools. Don has also worked in the Merced School District, a rural district of approximately 11,000 students and in the Lodi Unified School District, a district of approximately 28,000 students that includes a portion of urban Stockton.

Under Don's leadership, the San Carlos District sponsored the first charter school in California and began participation in the Bay Area School Reform Collaborative, the Hewlett-Annenberg Project and a federal Technology Challenge Grant. Don also co-founded Californians for Public School Excellence, the organization that sponsored the California Charter School Initiative that raised the cap on the number of charter schools. Don has been a member of State Superintendent Delaine Eastin's Charter School Committee as well as an advisor to the California Network of Educational Charters. Don earned a Doctorate of Education in Educational Leadership/Administration from the University of Southern California, a Masters of Education in Counseling and Guidance from Gonzaga University and a B.A. from LaSalle College.

Richard C. Spalding, Founder, Thomas Weisel Healthcare Venture Partners

In March of 2003, Dick co-founded Thomas Weisel Healthcare Venture Partners, where he focuses on life science investing. The fund has been initially capitalized at \$120 million, and will invest in both the medical technology and life science sectors. Dick also co-founded the ABS Ventures Healthcare investment group in January 2000, again leading the firm's investments in life sciences.

Prior to joining ABS Ventures, Dick was a Chief Financial Officer of public and private companies, an investment banker with Alex. Brown, and a co-founder of the Palo Alto office of Brobeck, Phleger & Harrison. For his entire career he has worked with growth companies, primarily in the health care area, on corporate partnerships, financings and operations. He is currently a director of 3D Systems, a public company, and CBCA, Inc.



He received a BA degree with honors from Harvard College and a J.D. with honors from Columbia Law School.

Joanne S. Weiss, Partner and COO, NewSchools Venture Fund

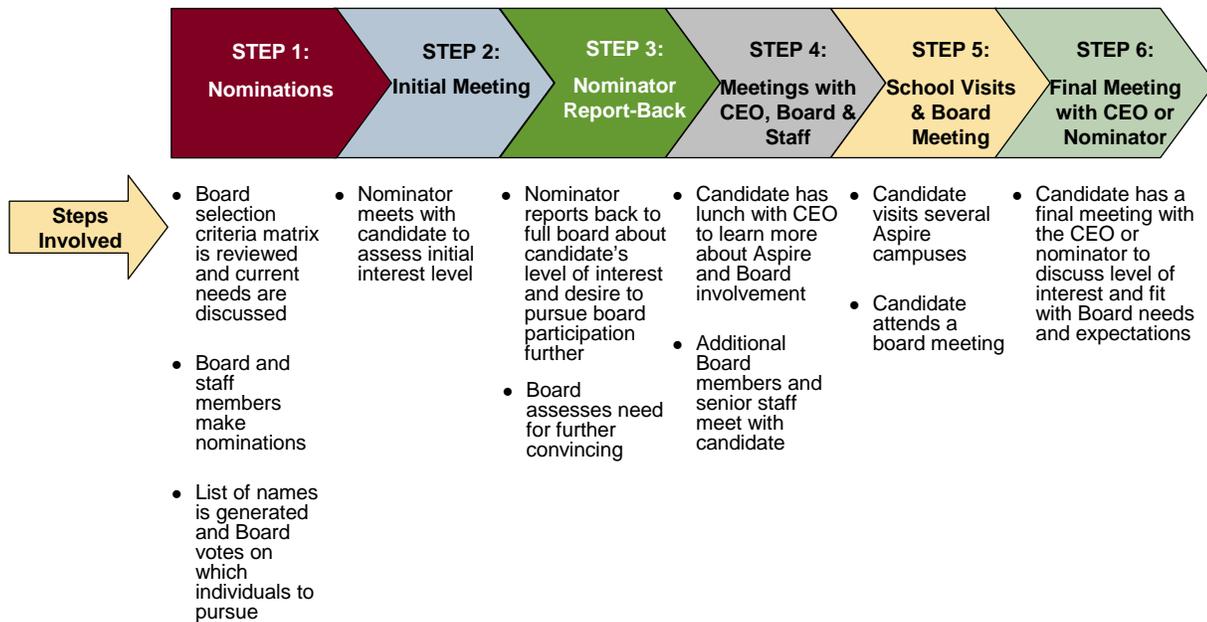
Joanne Weiss is Partner and COO at NewSchools Venture Fund, where she focuses on investment strategy and management assistance to a variety of the firm's portfolio ventures, and oversees the organization's operations.

Prior to joining NewSchools Venture Fund, Joanne was CEO of Claria Corporation, an e-services recruiting firm that helped emerging-growth companies build their teams quickly and well. Before her tenure at Claria, Joanne spent twenty years in the design, development, and marketing of technology-based products and services for education. She was Senior Vice President of Product Development at Pensare, an e-learning company that created business innovation programs for the Fortune 500 market. Prior to Pensare, Joanne was co-founder, interim CEO, and Vice President of Products and Technologies at Academic Systems, a company that helps hundreds of thousands of college students prepare for college-level work in mathematics and English.

In the early 1990s, Joanne was Executive Vice President of Business Operations at Wasatch Education Systems, where she led the product development, customer service, and operations organizations for this K-12 educational technology company. She began her career as Vice President of Education R&D at Wicat Systems, where she was responsible for the development of nearly 100 multimedia curriculum products for K-12 schools.

Joanne has a passion for education, and has spent much of her career pioneering innovative ways of using technology to increase the effectiveness of teaching and learning processes. She holds a degree in biochemistry from Princeton University.

Aspire's Board Recruitment and Selection Process



Once a candidate completes this process, a decision is then brought to the board for a final vote.



426 17th Street, Suite 200
Oakland, CA 94612-2820
510-251-1660 x118 phone
510-251-1670 fax

**Executive Committee Meeting Agenda
January 9, 2007; 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.**

- I. Approval of minutes from Executive Committee meeting of December 12, 2006
- II. Academic Report
- III. Audit Committee: 2005-06 Audit approval
- IV. Fundraising update
- V. Board Fund
- VI. Growth strategy
 - a. LA plan for Broad
 - b. Bridgespan project
- VII. Governance: Board Membership
 - a. Resignation of Marie Washington from Executive Committee
 - b. Board recruiting update
- VIII. Consent agenda:
 - Approval of Policy on Employees Retired from STRS
 - Resolution of Written Determinations and Findings for 66th Avenue site
 - Resolution Approving LIIF bridge loan for 66th Avenue site
 - Approval of Part II, Consolidated Applications
- IX. Public Comments
- X. Closed session: Personnel



Prospective New School Summary

This is a typical summary document board members will receive when Aspire is considering opening a new school.

Basic Information		
Site Working Name:	Trinity Lutheran	Proj Opening: Fall 2007
Region :	Central Valley	District: State Charter / Stockton USD
Key Partners:	CDE	

Project Score		
Criteria	Score	Comments
Mission: Student Need	2 Of 2	In downtown Stockton
Mission: Likelihood of catalyzing change	1 Of 1	Aspire's 3 rd school in SUSD
Contribution to facilities portfolio target	1 Of 2	Neutral
Ease of quality control	2 Of 2	Within existing region
Availability of philanthropic funding	2Of 2	Sufficient: CDE, Walton
Favorable chartering environment	0.5 Of 1	Imposes state charter on SUSD
TOTAL	8.5 of 10	

Financials	
Projected facility occupancy costs as % of annual budget: 12 %	
Projected contribution towards Aspire facilities portfolio: \$ 0 per year	
Start-up funds required: \$575k (CDE grant to be received under statewide benefit charter); \$275k in renovations could be financed through CDE revolving loan or with a loan from LIIF or Raza Development	Philanthropy to be raised: \$300K
Scale up shortfall: \$0K	

Facility Description – Trinity Lutheran
Address: 444 N. American Street, Stockton CA 95210

<i>Description:</i> Currently used by Aspire as the temporary location for Rosa Parks Academy, which will be moving into a new Prop 47 funded building in the Fall. Church is open to providing Aspire with a long-term lease with options, and an additional building currently used as a day care center (1-2 classrooms) is also included.	
<i>Type:</i> <input type="checkbox"/> District building <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Parochial/Private school <input type="checkbox"/> Adaptive Reuse (former warehouse) <input type="checkbox"/> New construction	
<i>Lot Size:</i> ~1.5 acres	<i>Bldg Size:</i> ~20K square feet total
<i>Parking:</i> 22 spaces of parking	<i>Playground space:</i> Small area w/ small structure
<i>Neighborhood:</i> 80% Residential 20% Commercial	
<i>Safety/Security risk:</i> High	<i>Public Transit:</i> Yes
<i>Amenities:</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Library <input type="checkbox"/> Community Center <input type="checkbox"/> Other	
<i>Overall condition:</i> Building is about 80 years old and is in fair condition. Classroom spaces are spread out over three small buildings, with a total of 10-11 full size classrooms + admin office + multipurpose room. Would require some work to bring to Aspire functional standard: \$210k for HVAC, flooring, electrical, painting. Remodel of the current day care facility is estimated to be \$65k. Most of the renovations could be completed over the summer in time for school opening.	

Projected Student Enrollment	
<i># Students at full scale:</i> 200	<i>Grade Levels:</i> K-5
<i>Ethnicity:</i> 10% White 15% Black 60% Latino 15% Asian 0% Other	
<i>Socioeconomic:</i> 80% Free/Reduced Lunch	<i>Language:</i> 50% ELL

Nearby elementary schools	<i>1 mile radius: 2,993 total K-5 students</i>					
	Enroll	% F/R	% ELL	State API	SS API	Overcrd?
1. Parklane Elementary (Lodi USD)	603	82%	52%	1	1	
2. Clairmont Elem (Lodi USD)	595	83%	54%	4	4	
3. Westwood Elem (Lodi USD)	658	83%	57%	3	2	
4. Pulliam Elementary	662	91%	20%	3	6	
5. Sutherland Elementary	475	79%	36%	2	1	

Comments:

May draw from both Lodi and Stockton USD; neighborhood elementary schools are mostly large and poor performing.

Effects on Aspire and other Aspire schools

1. May cause some students to stay rather than moving when Rosa Parks moves into its new facility, thus requiring RPA to do even more recruiting to fill the campus (although there should be sufficient demand)
2. Will increase pressure on Aspire to open at least one additional secondary school in the Lodi/Stockton area
3. Will require Aspire to present a new charter to Stockton Unified (not a friendly district) for Langston Hughes Academy (the CSU partnership school, current a satellite of Rosa Parks Academy) and originally planned to be designated a state charter site

Start Up Risks

1. Very tight timeline for facility renovations over the summer (Aspire made no investment in the facility last year, as it was expected to be a temporary location only)
2. Fairly tight timeline to hire principal, recruit teachers and enroll students