

Austin Peace Academy

School Board Charter

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Document Change Record

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Introduction

The ICGA Board of Trustees is establishing the governing document for the Austin Peace Academy (APA) and its School Board (SB) to ensure successful operation of the school. This document describes the goals, objectives, structure, roles, responsibilities, hiring, finance, reporting, and dispute resolution procedures for the SB. This governing document must be implemented and followed by all parties involved.

Article 1. APA Mission Statement

Austin Peace Academy's mission is to produce Muslim American leaders by providing our students with exemplary education based on Islamic morals, values, and the highest academic standards in a challenging, stimulating and diverse environment.

Article 2. APA Belief Statements

- 2.1. The Islamic foundational sources, foremost of which are the Quran and the Sunnah (the teachings of the Prophet Mohamed, peace be upon him) should be the guiding principles in APA learning and character building.
- 2.2. APA seeks to improve our society through model citizenship and by promoting religious tolerance and respect for diverse ethnic backgrounds.
- 2.3. APA should cultivate strong Islamic values and identity in its students and prepare them to be constructive participants in American society.
- 2.4. In order to instill exemplary behavior, the school integrates into the curriculum Islamic principles and values with emphasis on faith, character, and morals, and prepares its students to be believing and practicing Muslims
- 2.5. The promotion of student learning should guide all educational decisions.
- 2.6. Students must be able to demonstrate their understanding of essential knowledge and skills and must be actively involved in solving problems and producing quality work.
- 2.7. For every student admitted, APA provides the best possible learning services to meet their educational needs and help them reach their maximum potential.
- 2.8. Students learn in different ways and should experience a variety of instructional approaches designed to promote their learning.
- 2.9. APA should actively engage students in the learning process and set challenging expectations to strengthen students' performance.
- 2.10. Each student is a valued individual with unique spiritual, intellectual, physical, social and emotional needs.

- 2.11. Assessment of student learning should provide students with a variety of ways to demonstrate their academic achievements.
- 2.12. A student's self-esteem is enhanced by positive relationships and mutual respect among and between students and staff.
- 2.13. A safe and physically comfortable environment promotes student learning.
- 2.14. Cultural diversity can increase students' understanding of different peoples and cultures.
- 2.15. Teachers, administrators, parents and the community share the responsibility for advancing the school's mission and should be excellent role models.
- 2.16. APA should provide opportunities for all those who have a stake in its success to work together as a community of learners.
- 2.17. APA is committed to enable students to become confident, self-directed, lifelong learners by implementing continuous improvement process at APA.

Article 3. School Board Goals and Objectives

The Board of Trustees (BT) of Islamic Center of Greater Austin (ICGA) has set the following goals and objectives for the SB:

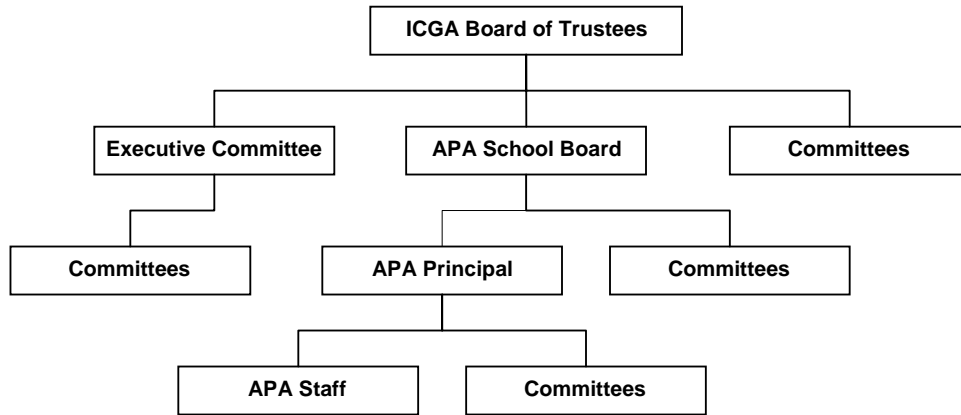
- 3.1. Adopt policies, plans, and procedures for the school that are consistent with the mission, vision, and beliefs of Austin Peace Academy
- 3.2. Ensure that the school has capable and qualified leadership and administration
- 3.3. Provide adequate support and resources to the school principal and empower him/her to execute the school's mission and day-to-day operations
- 3.4. Hold the principal accountable for performance and results in the areas of academics, curriculum, Islamic and character education, staffing, operational, and fiscal effectiveness, school enrollment, student well-being, and parental and staff satisfaction
- 3.5. Maintain regular and open communication with parents and community members to keep them informed in matters related to school performance, goals, and plans
- 3.6. Plan yearly budgets and raise funds to meet school's operational and growth needs
- 3.7. Expand the school to a successful high school based on well studied plans that sustain the educational standards and services for elementary, middle and high school.
- 3.8. Formulate and execute plan to earn accreditation and take steps to maintain it

- 3.9. Encourage an active Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) that contributes to the success of the school
- 3.10. Establish communications with the Muslim community in Austin and close working relationships with local Islamic Centers in order to promote the school's vision, build broad base community support and participation for the school
- 3.11. In cooperation with the BT formulate a strategic plan to make the school financially self-sufficient and ensure its long term success and stability
- 3.12. Ensures that the school complies with all applicable statutes and governmental regulations, including the State of Texas Child Protective and Regulatory Services (PRS) and Texas Education Agency's (TEA) rules and requirements

Article 4. School Board Structure

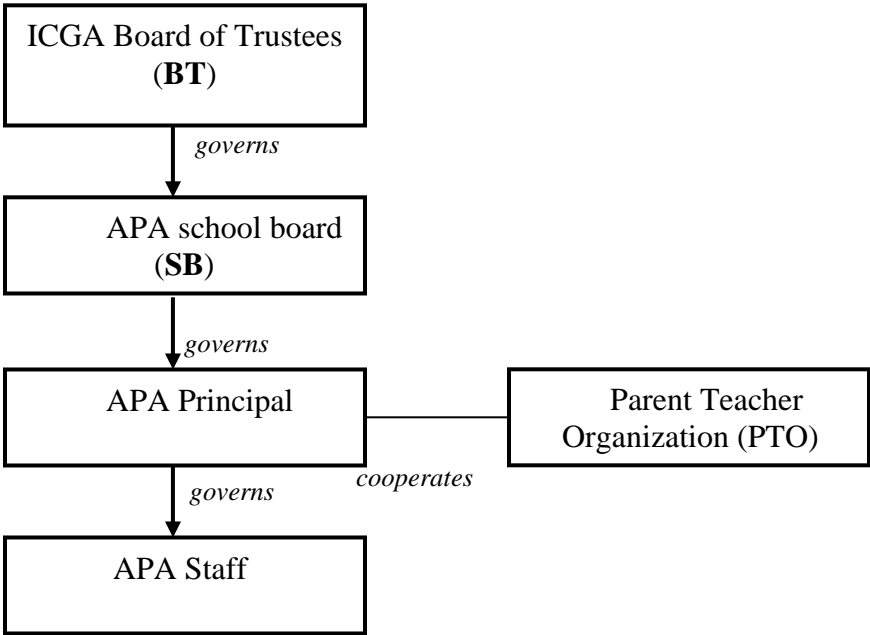
- 4.1. The Islamic Center of Greater Austin (ICGA) is a non-profit organization registered with the state of Texas and the US government. It is governed by the ICGA Constitution and Bylaws.

The following chart depicts the organizational structure of ICGA.



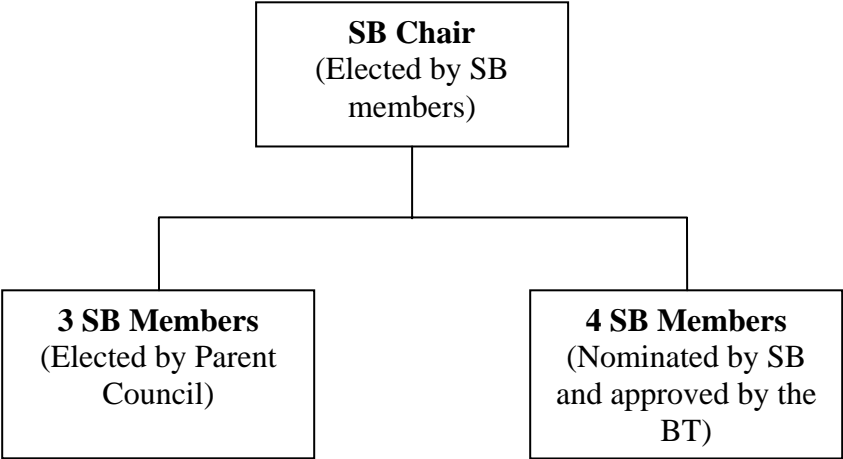
- 4.2. ICGA Board of Trustees (BT) is the highest governing authority of APA. The APA School Board (SB) reports to the BT and provides direction to the Principal. The Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) coordinates its activities with the APA Principal.

The following chart depicts the organizational structure of APA.



- 4.3. The SB shall consist of seven members. Three SB members shall be elected by the Parent-Council for a two year term. The PC elected SB members shall nominate four or more candidates (from the APA parents and community) to the BT for approval to serve as SB members for two year term. The chairman shall be elected each year by the School Board from among themselves (no BT approval is required).
- 4.4. BT must ensure that a fully functional SB is in place at all times and may appoint new SB members to fill in any vacancies that is not filled within one month.

The following chart depicts the organizational structure of the SB:



Article 5. School Board Term

- 5.1. The term of the SB members shall be for two years, starting on October 1st. Elections for Parent Council representatives (3 SB members) shall be held in even years and nomination for 4 SB selected members shall be held in odd years.
- 5.2. The SB shall establish clear election guidelines and procedures to elect, recall, impeach, or replace, the Parent Council representatives, and shall document them in the APA Parent Handbook. The SB shall be responsible for calling and conducting Parent Council (PC) meeting as per APA Parent Handbook and APA School Board Master Schedule.
- 5.3. The SB shall establish policies and procedures that provide for the orientation and training of the SB members.
- 5.4. SB shall have the authority to remove any of its fellow members due to incompetence or other serious issues affecting the SB's ability to meet its goals and responsibilities. A 2/3rd majority vote of the other SB members shall be required to remove an SB member with approval from BT.
- 5.5. Due, fair, and transparent process must be followed that clearly documents reasons and justification for any termination action.
- 5.6. In case of voluntary resignation, the SB member shall submit a written notice of resignation one month prior to leaving the office. SB shall replace the vacant position (for the remaining term) within 2 weeks with approval from BT.
- 5.7. A vacant "elected SB member" position shall be filled by SB appointment and BT approval, until the next PC meeting, where Parent Council shall elect a new SB member.
- 5.8. Any change to the SB team membership must be communicated to the community within two weeks.

Article 6. Qualification of the SB Members:

- 6.1. The minimum requirements for anyone to become a member of APA school board are:
 - 6.1.1. He/she must be a practicing Muslim
 - 6.1.2. Must be willing to commit time and energy required to execute his/her duties as SB member

- 6.1.3. Must agree to abide by the APA school board charter, ICGA constitution and bylaws, and go thru new SB member orientation
- 6.1.4. Must fulfil work assignments and delivers on commitment to make APA a successful Islamic school
- 6.1.5. Must be a college graduate
- 6.2. It is highly desirable that SB member has prior background in running Islamic schools, and has professional experience and attitude.
- 6.3. SB Chairman shall be an APA parent in good standing and shall not be a BT member. SB Chairman must have previously served in the SB for at least one year.
- 6.4. It is understood that the SB members shall work at no cost to APA or ICGA or the community and purely on voluntary basis. The SB members shall conduct their work in an organized, objective, and professional manner.
- 6.5. SB members can not hold board or executive positions in any other organization. Spouse of an APA staff cannot serve on the APA school board.

Article 7. Roles and Responsibilities:

- 7.1. The ICGA Board of Trustees
 - 7.1.1. BT is responsible for setting the long-term strategic direction for the school, consistent with APA mission and vision, and making the strategy document available to the community, parents, and the school board.
 - 7.1.2. BT is responsible for approval of annual goals, performance measures, and targets submitted by the SB. They shall be consistent with the APA strategy and submitted by the SB each year in a timely manner, according to the APA School Board Master Schedule.
 - 7.1.3. BT shall approve the APA annual budget according to the APA School Board Master Schedule.
 - 7.1.4. BT delegates the responsibility and authority of school operation to the SB.
 - 7.1.5. BT holds SB accountable for successes and failures of APA. The BT is responsible for evaluating the SB chair performance relative to overall APA and SB performance. The SB chair is responsible for insuring that each SB member's performance is satisfactory and shall take actions necessary to rectify any problems or shortcomings.
- 7.2. The APA School Board

- 7.2.1. SB is responsible for carrying out its duties as outlined in its goals and objectives in section III of this charter.
 - 7.2.2. SB is responsible for maintaining operational oversight of the school and ensuring that APA is executing its annual and strategic plan successfully.
 - 7.2.3. SB shall establish policies and procedures that recognize and preserve the executive, administrative, and leadership prerogatives of the APA principal.
 - 7.2.4. SB shall not interfere with the day-to-day operations of the school. However, SB shall ensure that APA administration is performing its duties and is carrying out its responsibilities.
 - 7.2.5. SB is responsible for approval of goals, performance measures, targets, and reporting plans submitted by the school principal, and shall hold the principal accountable for the results.
 - 7.2.6. SB is responsible for submitting financial reports, progress reports and results to BT according to the APA School Board Master Schedule and the annual goals, measures, and targets approved by the BT.
 - 7.2.7. SB is responsible for preparing APA annual budget, working closely with APA principal, and submitting it for approval to BT according to the APA SB Master Schedule.
- 7.3. School Board Operations
- 7.3.1. The SB Chair's role is to create a smooth communication channel between the BT and SB.
 - 7.3.2. The chair is the team leader of SB and is responsible for its direction, leadership, harmony, and close cooperation among all team members. As the team lead, SB chair shall treat all members with respect and fairness, motivate and lead them to deliver on SB commitments.
 - 7.3.3. SB shall establish means and shall take all measures necessary to communicate with parents and community members, and to provide timely information and updates.
 - 7.3.4. APA (school board and administration) shall operate with a transparent and an open records policy. APA shall make any and all records or information available within 15 working days of a written request from the BT. Except for confidential, personal, or sensitive records and information, APA (school board and administration) shall also respond, in a timely manner, to any reasonable request for information made by parents or community members.

- 7.3.5. SB shall make itself accessible to any parent, staff, or community member and respond to their requests in a timely and professional manner.
- 7.3.6. Each SB member shall be given a clear set of responsibilities by the SB Chair and be empowered to deliver on his/her assignments.
- 7.3.7. The SB shall develop and adopt “APA School Board Policy Handbook”, which shall include policies and procedures that promote the effective operation of the school including clearly defined lines of authority, relationships, and accountability. The SB secretary shall be responsible for maintaining and updating the policy handbook.
- 7.3.8. Within itself, the SB shall conduct its affairs by decision-making procedures that employ the principle of Islamic Shura (consultation and consensus building). In the event SB cannot reach consensus, the matter should be decided with a simple majority vote.
- 7.3.9. The SB may choose to use the help of other members from the community in order to fulfill its mission.
- 7.3.10. SB shall not share any confidential, personnel, or otherwise sensitive data or information with anyone outside the ICGA board of trustees, school board or school administration.
- 7.3.11. The SB may also create temporary or standing committees to lead specific tasks, in accordance with SB goals and objectives. Each committee shall be given a clear charter by the SB and assigned a SB member as the sponsor of the committee.
- 7.3.12. The SB Secretary shall be responsible for scheduling the SB meetings, setting the agenda in consultation with all SB members, tracking SB action items, documenting and archiving meeting minutes and all SB records and communication, and maintaining the APA web site, e-mail lists, accounts, and web groups.
- 7.3.13. The SB secretary should also maintain the annual APA School Board Master Schedule and must ensure that all SB tasks are executed in a timely manner. The secretary must ensure that all communication to and from BT are conducted according to the Master Schedule and are documented in SB records.

Article 8. APA Staff Hiring, Evaluation, and Termination:

- 8.1. The SB shall be responsible for hiring, evaluation, and termination of the APA Principal. Hiring and termination of the APA Principal must be approved by the BT. Principal hiring and termination letter must be signed by SB chair and

BT chair. The principal hiring committee shall be formed jointly by SB and BT.

- 8.2. The principal shall be responsible for hiring, evaluation, and termination of the APA staff. Hiring and termination of the APA staff must be approved by the SB. All staff hiring and termination letters must be signed by the principal (or designee) and SB chair (or designee).
- 8.3. SB shall ensure that written policies and procedures are in place for such actions and that they are properly followed in each case. Refer to “APA Staff Handbook” for details related to hiring, performance evaluation, and termination of APA staff members.
- 8.4. The staff hiring committee shall be chaired by the principal or his/her designee. All members of the hiring committee shall be nominated by the principal for approval by the SB. The hiring committee shall be empowered to execute the staff hiring plan, except for the final approvals per article 8.2.
- 8.5. If the principal is not available for any reason, the SB shall be responsible for all APA staff hiring, evaluation, and termination activities in a timely manner.

Article 9. School Finances

- 9.1. The school board shall have its own financial officer who reports to the SB. Duties of the SB financial officer shall include, but not limited to: preparing and managing the school budget, planning and executing fund raising events and activities, paying staff salaries, IRS payroll tax payments, and all other school expenses in a timely manner, maintaining all financial records and artifacts in an accurate and secure manner. The SB financial officer shall communicate with the ICGA financial officer in all financial audit matters.
- 9.2. The SB financial officer shall be responsible for submitting the school’s financial records for annual audit by a professional CPA, filing of quarterly and annual income tax forms, submitting quarterly reports to APA SB, and preparing and submitting an annual written report to SB.
- 9.3. APA SB shall adopt financial plans and strategies that will ensure adequate resources to meet the educational objectives as defined in APA mission and vision
- 9.4. The income from all regular sources shall be sufficient to support all regular school expenditures and SB shall ensure the continuity and stability of educational services.
- 9.5. The ICGA BT shall maintain adequate insurance or equivalent resources to protect its financial stability and administrative operations from protracted proceedings and claims for damage.

- 9.6. SB shall manage school finances within the annual budget approved by the BT. SB shall have the freedom to adjust income and expense categories so long as they do not increase the overall spending limit approved by the BT and do not add new spending categories or remove any of the approved spending categories. Any such adjustments to the budget shall be reported to the BT in the SB quarterly financial report.
- 9.7. Any changes to the BT approved budget that increase the overall spending limit approved by the BT, remove any of the approved spending categories, or add new spending categories, shall be presented to BT in writing and written approval shall be obtained before any such changes may be implemented. BT shall make its decision within 10 working days after receiving such written request from the SB.
- 9.8. The SB financial officer shall provide monthly income and expense report to SB, a quarterly financial report to the SB and presents an annual written financial report to the SB. These reports should be posted on APA website.
- 9.9. The accounts of the school shall be maintained in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles and shall be reviewed annually by an independent licensed accountant. The report of the annual review shall be kept in the school and also be posted on the school web site.
- 9.10. SB financial officer shall have signature authority on all APA bank accounts, all online accounts, and full access privileges to any credit card machines or other financial instruments. In the absence of SB financial officer, the ICGA financial officer shall act as the SB backup financial officer.
- 9.11. The APA annual financial planning should start on July 1st of each year. APA fiscal year is calendar year.

Article 10. Communication and Reporting

- 10.1. In order to have a functional school system, the Board of Trustees (BT), the School Board (SB) and the school administrators shall work together and form a better system of communication. The reporting schedule among these bodies is outlined in the annual APA School Board Master Schedule (a sample schedule is proposed in appendix I).
- 10.2. The APA School Board Master Schedule shall be agreed upon between BT and SB before the end of the prior APA academic year and shall be followed strictly by SB and BT. Changes to the schedule shall be agreed to in advance and documented by the SB and BT secretaries.
- 10.3. School Board communication to the parents and the community
 - 10.3.1. SB shall provide regular updates on school's academic and financial performance, plan, and status to parents and community members and post these on APA website.

- 10.3.2. SB shall adopt communications means such as, but not limited to, e-mails, newsletters, web site updates, parent and community meetings, etc.
 - 10.3.3. In addition to regularly scheduled updates, SB shall also provide timely communication to the parents and community members about any extraordinary events or incidents.
- 10.4. Principal to the School Board
- 10.4.1. The principal shall submit to the SB the annual school plan, a clear set of student performance goals, measures, and targets, and the assessment rubric for each measure, according to the APA Master Schedule. Once approved by the SB, this document shall become the basis for principal's reports, as well as mid-year and annual performance appraisal.
 - 10.4.2. The SB shall develop and maintain a "Principal Performance Expectations and Evaluation Standards" document for detailed reporting and evaluation criteria.
 - 10.4.3. The APA principal shall provide SB a brief informal report to SB each month, three written quarterly reports, and a comprehensive annual school report in accordance with the APA School Board Master Schedule, following the goals and measures approved by the SB.
 - 10.4.4. The APA principal shall submit to the SB an estimated school budget for the next school year, in accordance with the APA Master Schedule. The school budget includes, but is not limited to, staffing plan, enrollment projections, operational expenses, school improvement projects, staff development needs, and any other expenses.
- 10.5. School Board to the ICGA Board of Trustees
- 10.5.1. The APA SB and ICGA BT shall hold two biannual joint meetings per agreed upon APA School Board Master Schedule.
 - 10.5.2. The SB shall provide quarterly financial reports and an annual financial report to BT. These reports shall be shared with ICGA Executive Committee as well.
 - 10.5.3. The SB shall submit preliminary and final budget requests for BT approval, according to the APA School Board Master Schedule.
 - 10.5.4. The SB submits a midyear progress report, an annual performance report, and an annual plan for the next school year to the BT, according to the APA School Board Master Schedule.

10.5.5. The SB shall submit to the BT its annual plan, a clear set of measurable goals and objectives, performance targets for each goal, and the assessment metric for each. Once approved by the BT, these shall be used by SB to develop the budget and annual plan for the next year. The SB's mid-year and annual reports should provide results on each of these goals and targets. BT shall appraise SB performance based on this document.

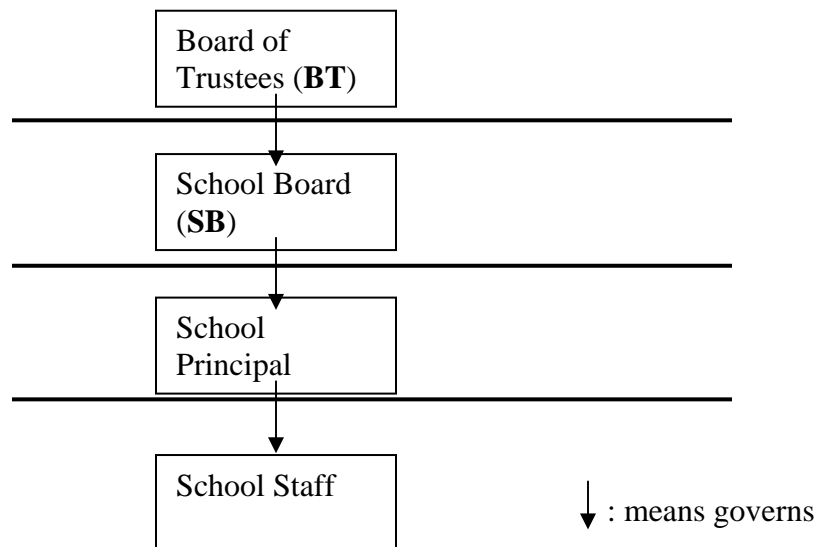
10.6. The ICGA Board of Trustees to APA School Board

10.6.1. The BT shall provide timely feedback and approvals to SB reports, plans, and budgets, according the APA School Board Master Schedule.

10.6.2. The BT shall provide its long term strategic plan and goals to the SB, parents, and the community. The APA strategic plans and goals shall be posted on ICGA and APA web sites.

Article 11. Dispute Escalation Procedure

11.1. The hierarchical and the institutional authorities shall be honored and respected by all members. Dispute escalation at APA is based on the governing hierarchy of the school as follows:



- 11.2. Based on the entities involved in a dispute¹, we distinguish the following cases:
- 11.2.1. ***Dispute between a staff member and another staff member:*** The school Principal intervenes to resolve the issue. The dispute should be resolved within a 10 business-day period. The principal's decision is considered final. In the event of escalation to the SB, it remains at the discretion of the SB whether or not to give any further consideration to the case.
 - 11.2.2. ***Dispute between a staff member and the Principal:*** The principal has to resolve the issue within a 10 business-day period. If issue is not resolved, then escalation can be initiated by either party to the SB. The latter resolves the problem within 10 business days. The decision of the SB is considered final.
 - 11.2.3. ***Dispute involves a school staff (including the Principal) and an outside entity (e.g., a parent).*** The involved staff is responsible to immediately notify the Principal (in the event the Principal is not a party in the dispute). Resolution follows case 1.
 - 11.2.4. ***Dispute involves the Principal and one or more SB members:*** The SB has 10 business days to resolve the issue. Its decision is final. In the event of escalation to the BT, it remains at the discretion of the BT whether or not to give any further consideration to the case.
 - 11.2.5. ***Dispute involves any entity (including school staff as well as from outside the school) and one or more SB members:*** This follows the escalation path as in the case #4.
 - 11.2.6. ***Dispute involves two or more SB members:*** The SB chair intervenes to resolve the issue. The dispute should be resolved within a 10 business-day period. The chair's decision is considered final. In the event of escalation to the BT, it remains at the discretion of the BT whether or not to give any further consideration to the case. In the event BT considers the dispute, their decision shall be considered final.
 - 11.2.7. ***Dispute involves one or more SB member and one or more BT members:*** The SB and BT collectively shall reconcile according to the Islamic principles of conflict resolution, e.g., mediation. If no resolution is reached, the BT members shall reach a decision on a proposed resolution based on a majority vote. However, the BT member(s) involved in the dispute are excluded from this voting process.

¹ By definition all disputes of concern here are those that involve school matters only. Disputes that have no direct or indirect impact on the school are out of scope of this procedure. Examples of disputes that can be considered related to school may include, but are not limited to, the following: school financials, curriculum, staff and students conducts, and day-to-day operations.

- 11.3. The entity responsible for resolving a dispute should hear from and interview all the parties involved. Problem resolution should be based on the guidelines defined by the relevant policy handbook or manual when applicable to the situation.

Article 12. Charter Amendment Procedure

- 12.1. The BT has the right to change, modify, and update this charter as it sees appropriate at anytime.
- 12.2. BT shall consult and seek input from SB and community; however BT reserves the right to make any changes it sees fit in the best interest of the school.
- 12.3. The BT shall hold charter review meeting during the fourth quarter of the APA academic calendar to discuss amendment requests and approve or disapprove the amendments no later than the start of the following school academic year.
- 12.4. The BT shall publish approved changes and post them on school's bulletin board and website within two weeks of document amendment.
- 12.5. This document shall be maintained and updates by the BT secretary and all approved changes shall be recorded in the "Document Change Record" section.

Appendix I. Sample APA School Board Master Schedule

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>January</u></p> <p>W2: Principal submits next year budget request, hiring and next year plan to SB</p> <p>W3: Principal submits 2Q report</p> <p>W4: SB submits midyear school report & Q2 financial report to BT</p> <p>W4: Second PC meeting</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>February</u></p> <p>W2: SB submits preliminary budget and next year plan to BT</p> <p>W2: Joint BT-SB meeting; review midyear report, next year budget, next year plan & BT goals</p> <p>W4: BT provides feedback on budget and plan to SB</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>March</u></p> <p>W2: SB-BT joint meeting to finalize budget, the hiring plan, and next year plan</p> <p>W4: Principal forms the hiring committee, gets SB approval of the committee, and starts the advertising</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>April</u></p> <p>W2: SB submits Q3 financial report to BT</p> <p>W2: Principal submits 3Q report to SB</p> <p>W3: SB conducts 1:1 parent meetings for each grade</p> <p>W4: SB conducts 1:1 staff meetings</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>May</u></p> <p>W1: Principal submits the staff annual performance appraisal to SB</p> <p>W2: SB reviews and finalizes staff appraisals and salary plan for next year</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>June</u></p> <p>W1: SB completes annual parents and staff satisfaction survey</p> <p>W4: Principal submits annual report to SB</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>July</u></p> <p>W2: SB completes the annual performance appraisal of the principal</p> <p>W4: SB submits Q4 and annual financial report, school annual report, annual performance appraisal of the principal, and next year Master Schedule to BT</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>August</u></p> <p>W2: Joint BT-SB meeting; review annual reports; agree on next year Master Schedule</p> <p>W4: BT releases the SB annual report for public distribution</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>September</u></p> <p>W2: First PC meeting and SB elections</p> <p>W4: SB meets with all SB committees and PTO officers to review their charters, goals, and plans</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>October</u></p> <p>W2: SB submits Q1 financial report to BT</p> <p>W2: BT provides annual goals and measures to SB</p> <p>W4: SB hosts staff appreciation lunch</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>November</u></p> <p>W1: Principal submits 1Q report to SB</p> <p>W2: SB conducts 1:1 parent meetings for each grade</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>December</u></p> <p>W1: Principal completes mid-year staff performance appraisals and submits report to SB</p> <p>W2: SB conducts 1:1 staff meetings</p> <p>W3: SB completes mid-year performance appraisal of the principal</p>