



GOVERNING COUNCIL PROCESS POLICY

This is policy was approved by the Governing Council on March 30, 2016.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to clearly lay out the principles and procedures used by Mountain Phoenix Governing Council.

Governance by Principle

Mountain Phoenix is committed to effective school governance. At the heart of Mountain Phoenix's approach to governance are seven proven principles championed by non-profit board experts Brian Carpenter and John Carver. These principles, tailored to Mountain Phoenix, are as follows:

Seven Enduring Principles for Effective Governance

Principles	Descriptions	Responsibilities
Govern as Stewards	Stewardship is central to governance. Council members serve the interests of the community and public, not themselves.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uphold ByLaws, Council Code of Conduct, operating principles, and other policies • Develop, review and approve policies that are necessary for the day-to-day operation of the school
Establish Organizational Purpose	Council establishes and adheres to the school's mission, vision, philosophy, and values.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish and uphold the school's mission, vision, and core values through the development of the strategic platform and long term strategic plan • Support and promote the school • Build strategic alliances
Exercise Fiduciary Responsibility	Council has a fiduciary responsibility to safeguard every stakeholders right to physical and emotional safety in the school, especially through oversight of the school's finances, property, and program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguard stakeholders' right to safety in the school • Safeguard the school's finances and property • Safeguard the stakeholders' right to educational excellence through Waldorf Education • Grow the school's resources • Support and promote fundraising efforts • Ensure legal and financial stability • Provide oversight and final approval of hiring, dismissal, job descriptions and employment agreements • Provide approval of directors' recommendation for expulsions
Delegate Authority and Ensure Accountability	Council delegates administrative authority. This delegation begins with the selection of exceptional school leaders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delegate authority to School Directors • Ensure attainment of school goals and performance outcomes as stated in the strategic plan

Speak and Act as One	Council recognizes that individual Council members do not possess any authority of the Council as individuals. Once the Council speaks as a unit, either through approved written policy or adopted resolution, all Council members are obligated to support the action.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uphold ByLaws, charter, Council Code of Conduct, operating principles, policies, and meeting agreements or norms • Redirecting operational and educational conversations to appropriate directors, teachers, and/or staff • Ensuring Council business is done within the framework of Council meetings, as per applicable open meeting laws • Maintain clarity of roles and responsibilities within the governance structure
Do What Matters Most	Council spends most of its time on what matters most. This includes setting policies and monitoring student outcomes, as well as overseeing the school's finances and growing the school's resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor school's progress on school goals and performance outcomes as stated in the strategic plan • Adopt school policy • Oversee school financial health
Invest in Board Capacities	The principles of good governance must be learned and practiced. Council allocates regular time and energy to develop its own governance capacity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in ongoing and focused professional development such as scheduling capacity-building opportunities • Recruit and seat capable, qualified and diverse Council Representative • Evaluate Council's performance

The Governing Council generates and adopts ByLaws and school policies necessary to comply with the terms of the charter and the law, as well as any other policies necessary to operate Mountain Phoenix Community School. The Governing Council is responsible for assuring that all aspects of the financial and programmatic accountability systems fulfill Mountain Phoenix's contract with Jefferson County School District, as well as any legal obligations to state and federal agencies.

Regular Meetings

The Governing Council will meet at least quarterly, but typically meets monthly in order to conduct school business in a timely fashion. The Council can also hold special meetings if needed. Council meetings are typically held on the Mountain Phoenix campus, which also functions as the corporation's official address. Council meetings are conducted in compliance with the Brown Act to allow access and transparency with regard to the running of the school.

Council Composition

Council Representatives and officers are selected in keeping with the ByLaws. Council Representatives are committed to the school's Waldorf-inspired mission, vision, and core values. In an effort to maximize institutional capacity, Mountain Phoenix will recruit Council Representatives who have professional skills that complement the existing Council composition. Effort will be made to recruit Council Representatives from both the school community and the community at large, who reflect expertise and experience in any of the following areas:

- Legal
- Financial
- Educational—with particular focus on Waldorf methods
- Leadership
- Fundraising
- Facilities
- Public relations, Marketing and Communications
- Non-profit board experience
- Human Resources
- Group collaboration and facilitation
- Legislation

With the understanding that effective teamwork and high levels of trust are necessary ingredients for success, Council Representatives are expected to be collaborative, committed, and forward-thinking. The Administrator(s) act in an advisory capacity to Council and are responsible for implementing Council policies in the day-to-day operation of the school.

The Council will have seven members the composition will reflect a balance of parents and community members with expertise. Because parental involvement in the governance of the school is highly valued, the majority will be parents or guardians of students enrolled at Mountain Phoenix. Council Representatives will be elected and appointed in accordance with the adopted Election Policy. In the decision making process, the Governing Council gathers input from stakeholders: the district, parents, educators, staff and other community members.

Council Training

New board members should undertake the following training to get up to speed on their role as a Mountain Phoenix Governing Council member:

1. Prior to election or within the first month of the start of the board term, read these documents:
 - a. Bylaws
 - b. Charter Contract
 - c. Policies
 - d. Strategic Plan
 - e. Fundraising Handbook
 - f. The Charter School Act
2. Prior to attending any board meetings, sign a confidentiality/conflict of interest policy agreement and volunteer agreement.
3. By October 15th of the board member's first term, complete the board training modules and review reference documents.
 - a. Modules: <http://onlinelearning.enetcolorado.org/course/view.php?id=141>
 - b. CDE References: <https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdechart/guidebook/gov/index>
4. At least once within the first three months of the start of board term, the Board president will facilitate a meeting with the Director of Education and Director of Operations
 - a. DE: strategic plan, academics, school history, curriculum and assessment, organization chart, relationship with outside entities
 - b. DO: budget, finance, campus master plan

Compliance with Corporate Law

The Mountain Phoenix Governing Council shall adhere to all applicable laws for non-profit public benefit corporations operating a charter school. The Council follows applicable laws regarding interested parties and conflict of interest. In addition, since the Mountain Phoenix Governing Council assumes responsibility for a public charter school, it agrees to conduct Council meetings in compliance with Open Meeting Laws. Mountain Phoenix shall adopt and regularly update a Conflict of Interest Policy as required under the Political Reform Act, and Council members comply with the requirements of the Policy. Council members and other designated employees file annual Statements of Economic Interest.

NON PROFIT CORPORATION

Mountain Phoenix is organized and operated as a Colorado non-profit public benefit corporation and is legally and operationally independent from JCSD. Mountain Phoenix has also been granted tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) by the IRS based on its charitable purposes and operations.

OPERATING STRUCTURE AND SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

In keeping with the seven principles for effective governance, the Governing Council is an autonomous governing body that delegates significant authority for operational responsibilities and execution of policy and procedures to the Mountain Phoenix School Directors). The School Directors supervise all staff (see below for leadership responsibilities) and reports directly to the Governing Council. The Governing Council monitors the school's progress on the stated performance outcomes. The Administration collaborates closely with two key groups, the Faculty Council and Parent Council (see below for more information). All groups work interdependently and support each other. Detailed descriptions of the roles and responsibilities of the Administrator, Faculty Council and Parent Council are contained in sections below.

Governing Council Calendar

To accomplish its mission, the Governing Council shall follow an annual agenda that includes all Council business. The cycle will follow the fiscal year beginning July 1 and concluding June 30.

Annual Agenda Planning Calendar

Quarter	Month	Board Business	Policy Monitoring	Other Business
QTR 1	July	Retreat/Review Strategic Plan, 3-5 Year Goals		
		Oath of Office for new GC Members		
		Nomination of Officers and Committee Chairpersons		
	Aug	Review Q4 Report and send Bondholder (Aug 28) + Annual Report	Governance Policies	Meet & Greet with Council, Staff, Faculty
		Q4/Year End Financial Reporting/Review		Final Student Registration
		Approve Independent Auditor of Record		
		Approve Independent Attorney of Record		
		Approve Director's goals for the school year		

	Sept	Approve UIP for submission to Jeffco		
QTR 2	Oct	Review Q1 Budget and submit to the Bondholder Review Final Budget for current year Annual Report Review	Business Policies	Jeffco Count Day
	Nov	Review Supplemental Budget Q1 Report & Annual Report to the Bondholder (Nov 14)		
	Dec	Unified Improvement Plan (UIP) submitted to Jeffco Approve Staff survey for distribution	Education Policies	
	Jan	Review Q2 Budget and submit to the Bond holder Audit Employee Evaluation Process Form Council Election Committee Review Strategic Plan and plan retreat		Open Enrollment Begins
QTR 3	Feb	Q2 Report to the Bond Agent (Feb 14) Organization Review & Employment Agreements 1st draft of Preliminary Budget presented Review results of Staff survey	Employee Policies	Colorado League of Charter School Conference
	Mar	Director Evaluations Final Preliminary Budget presented for adoption School Calendar presented for Adoption Approve Parent Survey for distribution Set Annual Meeting Date Announce Election		
	April	Offer Director's Employee Agreement Review Q3 Budget and submit to the Bondholder Annual Financial Audit Presentation Distribute Council Self-Evaluation Review results of Parent Survey	Operation Policies	Submit Preliminary Budget to JCSD Submit Calendar to JCSD
QTR 4	May	Hold Annual Meeting with "Panel of Candidates" Council Election Review Council Evaluation		Graduation Programs
	June	New Council Member Orientations		

Public Attendance at Governing Council Meetings

The Council desires to provide opportunities for all stakeholders to express interest in and concern for the school. Accordingly, all members of the community, are cordially invited to attend. Meetings are closed to the public only when the Council is meeting in executive session. An executive session may be called only to discuss matters not appropriate for public discussion. An executive session may be called only upon the affirmative vote of two-thirds of a quorum of Council present. The Council may take no formal action in executive session except to approve minutes of prior executive sessions.

Although the Council encourages everyone to attend its open meetings, Council meetings are to conduct the business of the school. Council meetings are not “public meetings,” but meetings held in public, and accordingly public participation shall be controlled so the board can proceed with its agenda within a reasonable time.

Persons who wish to make requests, presentations, or proposals to the board should direct any inquiry to the Director of Education or Operations, or the President of the Board, who shall use the following process:

1. The person shall provide written information to the Director of Education or Operations or the Council President at least two weeks prior to the regular meeting. If presented to the Director of Education or Operations less than two weeks prior to the upcoming regular meeting of the Council, the Directors shall decide whether to make a special request of the President to include the item in the upcoming regular board meeting or to wait until the next month’s regular Council meeting.
2. Written information directly from the person shall be placed in the Council packet distributed to representatives prior to the regular meeting. If the person so requests and the President of the Board agrees, the item shall be placed on the agenda for board attention.

Seeking to add issues to the agenda via the Council President cannot circumvent the Conflict Resolution Policy. If the person requests the Council take a particular action, the specific action being requested should be in the written document submitted to the Council by the person. If so requested by any Representative, the person may present additional information or provide clarification when the agenda item is discussed. Parents are free to address comments or concerns to any representatives at any time. However, if there is a specific remedy or other action being requested, it is required for the parent to follow this procedure. The public shall be given no less than 24 hours notice of any Council meeting.

Governing Council Committees

The Council may have standing committees as designated in the Bylaws. The authority and responsibilities of standing committees shall be expressed in the policy or description. They may also commission advisory committees that consider, advise upon, and make recommendations to the Council with respect to policies of Mountain Phoenix or to pursue goals, goods, or services in accordance with the vision and mission.

Finance Committee

The finance committee shall be comprised of the Director of Operations, Business Manager, and Council treasurer and fulfill the financial portion of the School Advisory statute. Additional members may be added from time to time by majority vote of the finance committee; to include but not limited to staff, community members and one other board member. The finance committee shall meet at least quarterly throughout the school year to discuss:

- a. Budget development to support the school’s mission, short and long term financial goals, audits, and other topics that affect the sound financial management of the school’s assets; and
- b. Reporting to students, parents, boards of education, educators, and the community on the financial performance of the school and providing accurate data for the appraisal of such performance, through the MPCS Governing Council.

School Accountability Committee

The School Accountability Committee is comprised of parents, staff, community members and one Council member. They meet at least quarterly throughout the school year to discuss:

- a. Means for determining whether decisions affecting the educational process are advancing or impeding student achievement; and
- b. Reporting to parents, boards of education, educators, and the community on the educational performance of the school and providing data for the appraisal of such performance, through the MPCS Governing Council.

The accountability committee will prepare the accreditation report (Unified Improvement Plan) for the Council to submit to the district, conduct the annual parent survey after receiving approval from the board, prepare or analyze data as requested by the administration, and provide data for the Council as needed.

Master Planning Committee

The Master Planning Committee is comprised of the Director of Operations, the facilities manager and one Council member. Additional members may be added from time to time by majority vote of the Master Planning committee, to include but not limited to staff, community members and one other Council member. The Master Planning committee meets at least quarterly throughout the school year. The Master Planning committee will discuss and advise on, but is not limited to:

- a. all facilities or grounds modifications, additions and other improvements (non-maintenance) either through general budget or specific project approval.
- b. facilities planning and design, construction management, real estate management, building maintenance, grounds maintenance, telecommunications, environmental services and networking.

- c. collaborative responsibilities, with the Directors, including community use of school facilities, temporary buildings and energy management.
- d. renaming of any real property and/or the dedication to an individual or organization of any part of the property owned or used by MPCS or the MPCS Building Corporation.

Marketing Communications Committee

The Marketing Communications Committee shall be comprised of parents, staff, community members and one Council member and meet at least quarterly throughout the school year to discuss the development and execution of an annual marketing plan based on the Strategic Plan. The Marketing Communications Committee will discuss and advise on, but are not limited to:

- a. presenting the marketing plan and communications plan,
- b. reporting on the status of the implementation of the marketing and communications plan to the Governing Council at least quarterly
- c. working with employees who have this work assigned to them in their job descriptions

Council Self-Evaluation

The Council believes that their efficiency and performance directly affects the efficiency and performance of the school. Therefore, the Council performs annual evaluations of its own performance including its progress on its strategic plan.

The following guidelines apply to the Council self-evaluation:

- The evaluation shall be a positive, constructive process, aimed at improvement rather than criticism.
- The evaluation shall be conducted using a formal written evaluation tool.
- Council members shall evaluate the Council collectively and not individual representatives.

Council self-evaluation forms are distributed in April. The Council discusses the self-evaluation at the regular meeting in May or at a special meeting called for such a discussion. It is important for all current Council Representatives to participate, if possible. The Council may seek direct input from former members who have resigned during the year being evaluated. The Council self-evaluation shall be held at an open meeting and all members and the community may attend; however, member and public comment participation shall be limited to a brief public comment session at the beginning of the meeting.

Mountain Phoenix School Director’s

The Director of Education and Director of Operations (“School Directors”) duties include tasks and responsibilities delegated by the Mountain Phoenix Governing Council. These tasks relate to three research-based, broad categories of best practices, which are crucial for the success of Mountain Phoenix leadership over the next five years. As the following table depicts, the categories for responsibilities are: ***Ensuring Organizational Focus, Developing People, and Developing the Organization.***

Responsibilities of the School Directors

Categories	Major Responsibilities
Ensuring Organizational Focus	<p>The dimension of leadership includes setting school wide goals as well as inspiring others to pursue the school’s mission, core values, and vision into the future. Examples are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expressing the school’s mission, vision, and core values • Ensuring that day-to-day decisions and actions are in strong alignment with the school’s mission • Creating strong community and shared meanings • Creating high performance expectations • Fostering the acceptance of group goals • Monitoring organizational performance • Setting direction in the educational program • Achieving and maintaining a stable and healthy financial situation • Overseeing community outreach and student recruiting • Supporting and promoting the school throughout the community
Developing People	<p>This aspect of leadership is about positively influencing the development of human resources in the school, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offering professional development • Providing support and opportunities for growth • Being an appropriate role model • Empowering instructional coaching • Advocating for powerful teaching and learning • Nurturing the development of families and parents • Selecting, coaching, and retaining excellent staff • Facilitating meaningful staff evaluations • Ensuring the safety of all constituents • Overseeing student admissions, attendance and student records • Supporting Board functions such as record keeping and agendas

Developing the Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing direction, accountability and inspiration
	<p>This component of leadership cultivates a thriving professional learning community to support and sustain high performance, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting Strategic Planning • Strengthening school culture • Growing the organizational structure and developing capacities • Building collaborative processes • Managing a positive learning environment • Designing and implementing effective communication systems • Drafting and recommending operational policies to the Board • Growing the school's resources and overseeing the business office • Drafting and recommending staff plans and job descriptions • Insuring compliance with the laws and the charter

Additional Description

The School Directors are responsible for leading the school in all aspects of its day-to-day operations in close collaboration with stakeholders. The School Directors act according to the policies and procedures as approved by the Governing Council. Personnel decisions are ultimately the responsibility of the Governing Council, however, day-to-day decisions, management, evaluation and the recommendation of hiring and dismissal of teaching and support staff is delegated to the School Directors. All staff reports to the School Directors. The School Directors are responsible for making recommendations regarding school policies, establishing procedures to carry out adopted policies, and creating committees to assist in school planning and function. Committees typically include stakeholders from various groups within the school. The School Directors are the liaison between Mountain Phoenix and JCSD.

The School Directors leads the school staff and consultants. The Administrative staff supports the school School Directors and work to meet the needs of the school. Some examples include: monitoring legal compliance, ensuring safety, managing the business affairs of the school, and overseeing admissions, enrollment, attendance and records.

The composition of the Administrative staff will vary depending on the needs of the school. The composition is determined annually during formation of the staffing plan and budget for the upcoming year. In addition, some positions may be employees while others may provide services as independent contractors or other outside service providers.

School Director's Evaluation

The Council believes that ensuring the school has strong leadership is their primary responsibility. Therefore, the Council performs annual evaluations of its School Directors' performance.

The following guidelines apply to the School Director's evaluation:

- The evaluation shall be a positive, constructive process, aimed at improvement rather than criticism.
- The evaluation shall be conducted using a formal written evaluation tool and based on the written job description.
- Council members shall gather feedback from the Faculty and Staff on how aligned their actions and decision are with the mission and vision of the school and supportive of the teachers' work and Waldorf Education.

School Director evaluation forms are distributed in February. The Council discusses the evaluation in executive session in Feb or at a special meeting called for such a discussion. It is important for all current Council Representatives to participate if possible. The Council may seek direct input from former members who have resigned during the year.

Faculty Council

The Governing Council and the Administration rely on the Faculty Council to deliver the educational program. As the providers of day-to-day teaching and guidance, the Faculty Council is defined as Class Teachers, Special Subject Teachers, and Special Education teachers. The Faculty Council typically meets each week to discuss important instructional issues.

The Faculty also assumes a wide range of roles to support school and student success. Whether these roles are assigned formally or shared informally, they build the entire school's capacity to improve. Faculty Council work closely with all constituents to ensure the quality of educational programs and maintain the highest possible standards for teaching and learning. The Faculty Council acts as an influential advisory body on education, policy, and program matters. Other instructional staff may also be asked to contribute to the support of the school through meetings, committees, etc.

Roles & Responsibilities

The following roles and responsibilities are a *sampling* of specific ways the Faculty contributes to Mountain Phoenix:

Instructional Leaders: Faculty members design developmentally appropriate learning experiences employing the 'distinguishing features' of the Mountain Phoenix educational program of Public Waldorf Education. They use a variety of assessment tools to monitor student progress toward meeting school goals and performance outcomes. Faculty members are advocates for principle-driven improvements to the school's educational practices as needed. For example, they serve as representatives on school committees. Faculty members build confidence by displaying competence and character, and through the conscious use of high-trust behaviors, such as "direct talk", "delivering results", and "keeping commitments".

Learners and Facilitators: Faculty Council members function as a community of successful learners. They develop high-quality instruction through active study and current research. Faculty Council members participate in professional development and pursue common goals. They exchange resources and best practices with colleagues and constituents. Through deliberate modeling and explanation, Faculty Council promote Waldorf-inspired learning and teaching. Their efforts are focused on meeting the physical, social, and intellectual needs of all students. Faculty Council regularly engage in artistic expression and celebration to nourish themselves, one another, and the entire school community.

School Ambassadors: Faculty Council continuously promotes the school's mission, vision and values. They engage in effective parent-teacher communication and play an instrumental role in parent education. Faculty Council hold regular class meetings, and build positive momentum for individual classes and the school as a whole. They actively promote the school and build bridges throughout the broader community. Faculty Council participate in the life of the school, including festivals, celebrations, outreach activities and parent development opportunities.

Student Advocates: Faculty Council functions as a bridge between students and essential support services, activities and opportunities. They monitor students and are sensitive to behavioral or academic changes that might warrant further attention. Faculty Council members are advocates for the students, counseling and guiding, connecting personally, and encouraging students in an environment of acceptance and easy rapport. Faculty Council offer assistance, enrichment, and remediation across grades and disciplines. They ensure the safety and well-being of students through child study, effective classroom management, and appropriate discipline procedures. Faculty Council builds strategic alliances with parents and other partners. They care deeply about each student, and implement an array of student interventions to ensure students achieve their full potential

Parent Involvement

Research conducted on the effects of parental involvement in the education of their children is clear--children and schools thrive when parents get involved. Positive outcomes of parental involvement include:

- Improved educational performance
- Better student behavior
- Greater feelings of ownership and commitment
- Increased parent support of the school
- Improved school attendance
- Better understanding of roles and relationships in the parent-student-school triad
- Improved student emotional well-being

One of the most unique features of Mountain Phoenix is its high level of parental involvement. Parents/guardians who have chosen Mountain Phoenix for their children agree to give an average of four hours per month or forty hours over the course of the school year towards various volunteer opportunities. Many families willingly give well over 100 hours per year towards activities that may include: assisting in the classroom, site maintenance, fundraising, hospitality, room parenting, serving on a Committee, Parent Council, or Governing Council, and much more.

This high level of parental involvement enables parents/guardians to become integrally involved in shaping Mountain Phoenix and ensuring it fulfills its overall mission. In order to provide all parents/guardians with the opportunity to be informed about and participate in school level decision-making, information about Board meetings, agendas and activities is readily available to all families. The Mountain Phoenix Governing Council typically holds its meetings on the school campus to insure the parent community has the ability to easily attend.

Parent Council

Parent Council serves as an essential support group formed by parents. Parent Council upholds the mission and vision of Mountain Phoenix, promotes the school's educational program, cultivates community, provides opportunities for volunteerism, supports the fundraising efforts of the Foundation, organizing parent enrichment events, coordinates with faculty to execute festivals and events, and generally provides appropriate support to parents.

Ideally each class at the school is represented in the Parent Council. These representatives attend Parent Council meetings and conduct the business of the Parent Council. All parents are encouraged to attend and participate in Parent Council meetings.

Parent Community

All parents/guardians are considered members of the Parent Community. As established above, they are represented by the Parent Council, which is ideally composed of at least one representative from each class.

POLICY HISTORY

22-32-126, C.R.S. Employment and authority of principals (Automatic Waiver)

Original: proposed by the Policy Task Force on February 24, 2016.

Approved: by the Governing Council on March 30, 2016.