

Governing Board Composition: Best Practices for Family Members of School Staff

We must ask ourselves will the Conflict of Interest be sizable, ongoing, regular? Will it open the door to negative media attention? Will it put us at risk for the “appearance” of poor governance?

“Many charter schools and charter school authorizers consider it a best practice to bar employees and their immediate family members from serving on the governing board.” – Source: Charter School Governing Board Training Handbook on the CDE website

http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdechart/download/Bd_Trng_HBk_051007.pdf

Section 12. Pitfalls to Avoid

Nepotism

Nepotism is the practice of having relatives of board members or the administration employed within the school. Nepotism can have a disastrous effect on a school by creating conflicts of interest, unequal treatment or the suggestion of unequal treatment. If a relative is retained when others are laid off, for example, staff may perceive preferential treatment even if the decision was based solely on budget figures. Nepotism can also encourage inappropriate communications and gossip. – Source: Charter School Governing Board Training Handbook on the CDE website

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“As a matter of best practice, the League recommends that family members of school employees refrain from serving on that school’s governing board.” – Jim Griffin, President and Nora Flood, Vice President, Colorado League of Charter Schools, 2011

“Charter school board members should not be related to each other. In fact, many consider it a best practice to have the school's bylaws stipulate that board members cannot be immediate family members of a school employee or a school employee. The potential for a conflict of interest is too great. Some authorizers are now requiring new charter school governing boards to uphold certain standards such as no nepotism and no employees of the school on the board.” - Colorado Charter Schools blog, August 4, 2009 post