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BOARD GOVERNANCE: KEEPING BOARDS HEALTHY

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Littleford & Associates has over 800 clients world wide on the subject of board governance, board/head relations, board evaluation, head evaluation, and the structure of boards.

To insure the long-term health and stability of the board, and hence, the institution, boards need to understand and implement principles of good practice on terms of office for trustees and the chair; the role of the executive, committee on trustees, and other subcommittees; the cultivation, recruitment and training of new members; and the use of appropriate channels and boundaries for the board and other constituencies.

Institutional memory and the vital role played by the committee on trustees are two important areas that most boards ignore.

Board members who are educated and effectively trained in healthy governance practices support and guide the independent/ international school or the nonprofit organization in the advancement of its strategic initiatives. It is crucial that new trustees receive this training, but experienced trustees also benefit from board governance review, as the board dynamics and the challenges and opportunities facing the institution change.

Mr. Littleford conducts on-site visits/workshops that acknowledge the unique characteristics of each board of trustees serving an institution that has its own history, culture and issues. The workshops are not “canned” but tailored to the special situation and needs of each client. Ideally each workshop is preceded by the gathering of confidential input from board governance questionnaires completed by each participant as well as by individual or focus group interviews with each trustee. The workshop is lively and interactive using the Harvard case study approach.