

Six Charter School Sustainability Tips from Experienced Charter School Leaders

We hope these six sustainability tips help your team be more adaptable, strategic, data-driven, analytical, and efficient—all in support of your school's continued success.

- 1 BE MINDFUL OF—AND ADAPTABLE TO—PIVOTAL MOMENTS**
An active board member retires, a storm renders three classrooms unusable, a well-loved teacher leaves. It's impossible to predict every circumstance that can disrupt a school's operational rhythm and culture. The important thing is to acknowledge the disruption when it occurs and to have a plan to maintain operational and cultural continuity for your students no matter what.
- 2 UNDERSTAND THAT STRATEGIC ENROLLMENT = STABILITY**
Mature-stage schools are past the point of increasing enrollment by 30 - 40% every year, and that's great news. But remember: strategically increasing enrollment can be an effective way to ensure financial and operational stability. If you have staff and space in your facility, weigh the financial costs and benefits of recruiting a small number of students to every grade, in addition to the traditional focus on the incoming class of kindergarteners, sixth graders, or ninth graders.
- 3 CONTINUE TO FOCUS ON A DATA-DRIVEN CULTURE**
Ensure that everyone, including students and parents, knows the goals for the academic year and can access school-wide metrics whenever they like. Keeping the goals and the metrics top of mind will help to keep everyone focused and let you know if you're meeting key benchmarks along the way.
- 4 CELEBRATE YOUR SUCCESS AND VIEW FAILURES AS STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITIES**
Celebrate every goal that's achieved, award that's won, and staff member that receives recognition. But look at the failures, too. That's where your opportunities for improvement lie. Analyzing failures can be a great way to begin next year's strategic plan.
- 5 DEVELOP THE PILLARS THAT DEFINE THE CULTURE YOU WANT TO HAVE**
Look back at your charter; have you fulfilled the promises you made at the outset? Sit down with your team and think about the values at the core of who you are now and who you want to be in the future. Choose four or five pillars so students and staff can remember them, and give public recognition to any individual who goes out of their way to embody a value.
- 6 ASSESS ALL MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS REGULARLY**
We've all been there—using a billing system that makes you grit your teeth or sitting through half a dozen interviews with unqualified candidates. At any school there will be frustrations on occasion, but schedule time to review and replace faulty and time-wasting systems whenever possible.



LEARN MORE

To learn more about how to tackle the primary challenges at any stage of growth or sustainability, download: [The Charter School Growth Manual: Expert Tips and Pitfalls to Avoid as You Grow](#)



Charter School Capital has provided more than \$2B in financing to more than 600 Charter Schools and served over 1,000,000 students across the country. Our mission is to help charter school leaders access, leverage, and sustain the financial and other resources they need to succeed.