



# Columbus Academy

## **BOARD OF TRUSTEES RESPONSIBILITIES AND EXPECTATIONS**

The trustees of Columbus Academy are the ultimate stewards of the institution and the School is profoundly grateful to those who serve. There is no single set of criteria for board membership – the diversity of the Columbus Academy Board is not only one of its chief characteristics, but also one of its great strengths. The Board includes members from a wide range of professions and personal backgrounds. The members join the Board with different amounts of available time, different financial circumstances and different sets of skills.

This statement of responsibilities and expectations is intended to inform prospective and current trustees of what is expected as a member of the Columbus Academy Board of Trustees.

### **1. KNOW AND EMBRACE THE SCHOOL'S MISSION, VALUES AND GOALS**

- A significant portion of every Board meeting consists of education about the School. Trustees must make themselves broadly knowledgeable about all aspects of school structure and operations.
- Get to know fellow Board members. It is an extraordinary group of people and one of the best sources of insight and information about the School, its personnel and the issues it confronts.
- Trustees are encouraged to familiarize themselves with current issues in education, more generally, and independent schools more specifically.
- Membership on the Board requires that each trustee know and embrace the school's mission, values and goals as articulated in the mission statement, diversity statement and the faculty and student handbooks.

### **2. SERVE THE SCHOOL AS A WHOLE**

- It is not appropriate to use Board service to advance any personal or political cause. Board members who are Columbus Academy parents and/or graduates must particularly attend to keeping their personal experiences "at bay" while considering issues of the School.
- Trustees are expected to be familiar with the School's policies and rules, including its conflict-of-interest policies, and to avoid conflicts of interest or the appearance of conflicts.

### **3. WORK AS A COLLEAGUE WITH THE HEAD OF SCHOOL AND RECOGNIZE THE HEAD'S LEADERSHIP ROLE**

- Board members should recognize that the Head of School is responsible to the Board as a whole and not to individual trustees.
- In Board activities and discussion, trustees should bear in mind the difference between oversight and management – that is, between the roles of the Board and of the administration.
- Requests for specific data or information should be directed first to the Head of School, Board President and committee chair to avoid unduly asking staff members for special requests.

#### **4. PREPARE FOR, ATTEND AND PARTICIPATE IN ALL BOARD MEETINGS**

- An essential component of effective Board governance is the trust and respect all Board members show toward one another. Board members should act with independence of judgment and foster a healthy and open exchange of ideas with respect for divergent opinions. However, once a decision is reached, trustees are expected to speak with one voice.
- Board members must maintain confidentiality of the Board's executive sessions and of all confidential information. The Board President is available to provide guidance as necessary.
- Attendance at Board meetings is required. Trustees should attend all meetings of Board committees as assigned and any related school activities when asked.

#### **5. BE PREPARED TO SERVE IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS AND UNDERTAKE SPECIAL ASSIGNMENTS, INCLUDING:**

- Serving as a public advocate and ambassador for Columbus Academy – someone who advocates the School's interests but speaks for the Board or the school only when asked to do so by the Board President or the Head of School.
- Counseling the Head of School as appropriate, providing support and guidance through challenging or difficult circumstances.

#### **6. SUPPORT THE SCHOOL'S DEVELOPMENT BY:**

- Contributing to the school's annual fund, as well as to special campaigns or special projects, in an amount that is personally meaningful for each trustee.
- Assisting the development staff by helping to identify potential donors and facilitating prospect cultivation where possible.
- Participating generally in fundraising activities and implementing fundraising strategies under the guidance of the development staff.
- Assisting the development staff by helping to identify potential leaders for key volunteer roles, including prospective future trustees.