

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA

SECTION: Charter Schools

TITLE: Charter School
Monitoring Structures

ADOPTED: November 19,

2020

REVISED:

400 CHARTER SCHOOL MONITORING STRUCTURES

Purpose

The Board of Education (“Board”) is committed to providing a high-quality public education to all students in Philadelphia. The Board recognizes that charter schools are an important part of that commitment and is committed to quality charter school authorizing. Additionally, the Board will establish and maintain efficient and effective monitoring structures.

Definitions

N/A

Authority

In Pennsylvania, charter schools operate with a high level of autonomy in educational programming, budget, staffing, scheduling, and governance. In exchange for this high level of autonomy, charter schools will be held accountable to high standards. As the authorizer of charter schools in Philadelphia, the Board will hold charter schools accountable for meeting high and measurable academic, operational, and financial standards within established accountability systems and for providing access to all students in accordance with applicable laws.

The Board is committed to the financial health and sustainability of the system of all public schools in Philadelphia. To that end, the Board is responsible for the sound allocation of limited financial resources to all public schools in Philadelphia, both District schools and charter schools.

Delegation of Responsibility

The Board authorizes the Charter Schools Office (CSO) as the office at the District to monitor charter schools to support the Board's charter authorizing responsibilities and duties effectively and efficiently.

Personnel

The CSO shall be led by a Chief of the Charter Schools Office and/or an Executive Director. The Chief of Charter Schools position shall be a cabinet position in District leadership. The CSO will coordinate with District offices related to, without limitation, charter school student enrollment, special education, transportation, use of District facilities, food services, and payments. The Chief of the CSO and/or Executive Director may issue procedures describing CSO functions, structure, and staff member responsibilities and such procedures would be published and available on the Charter School Office website. The Board shall ensure that the CSO has a staffing level appropriate and sufficient to support the Board's authorizing responsibilities. The Board shall ensure appropriate and sufficient funding of the CSO.

Quality Charter School Authorizing

The CSO shall conduct the following authorizing functions on behalf of the Board, in a manner consistent with Applicable Laws:

- 1) Establishing clear, high standards for charter school academic, operational, and financial performance that are approved by the Board;
- 2) Organizing and conducting new charter application processes to ensure that all new charter schools are of high quality;
- 3) Conducting ongoing performance evaluation and compliance monitoring;
- 4) Reviewing charter school amendment requests;
- 5) Using comprehensive academic, financial, and operational performance data to make renewal, amendment, nonrenewal, and revocation recommendations to the Board;
- 6) Evaluating the CSO's work regularly against Applicable Laws, national standards for quality authorizing, and recognized best practices;
- 7) Protecting all students' rights by ensuring nondiscriminatory and nonselective access, fair treatment in admissions and disciplinary actions, and appropriate services for all students, including those with disabilities and English Learners, in accordance with applicable laws;
- 8) Protecting the public interest by holding charter schools accountable for fulfilling fundamental obligations to the public, including sound governance, management, and stewardship of public funds; and
- 9) Ensuring that family members, students, community members, and other stakeholders are well-informed about charter school evaluation and performance.

Providing Operational Support to Charter Schools

The CSO shall provide the charter schools with appropriate operational support, including, but not limited to:

- 1) Responding to questions and concerns in a timely manner;
- 2) Assisting with operational functions as stipulated in the charter agreement;
- 3) Providing information about pertinent changes in authorizing policies and procedures; and
- 4) Providing compliance-related technical assistance, such as professional development, to charter schools boards and leaders at a reasonable fee as CSO capacity allows and in cooperation with charter schools.

Resources

The CSO shall engage high-quality expertise and leadership for all areas essential to charter school oversight through staff, contractual relationships, and/or collaborations with outside organizations.

Mandatory Regulatory Procedures:

Provisions in this policy are in accordance with the Charter School Law and other laws applicable to charter schools in Pennsylvania.

Legal References:

1. Charter School Law, 24 P.S. §17-1701-A, et seq.

Related Information:

N/A