

Louisiana Believes

**Charter School Authorizers Workshop
Wednesday, September 27, 2017**

Schedule

This is the second of three training sessions on developing a charter school performance framework. Each training focuses on one component of a charter school performance framework.

Wednesday, May 10th – Expectations

Wednesday, September 27th – Oversight

December – Accountability

Introduction

Introduction

In May, the Department hosted a charter authorizer training kickoff workshop. The LDOE reviewed authorizers' five responsibilities:

- School Portfolio Analysis
- New School Approval
- Pre-Opening
- Routine Oversight
- High-Stakes Accountability

The Department also introduced model charter school expectations. Charter school expectations guide the work that authorizers do to carry out each of their responsibilities.

Charter School Performance Compact

The LDOE's trainings in the fall of 2017 will prepare authorizers to carry out two of the five authorizer responsibilities – oversight and accountability – by adopting and implementing a Charter School Performance Compact.

A Charter School Performance Compact is a document that:

- Codifies an authorizer's expectations for charter schools, and
- Describes the processes that an authorizer will use to conduct routine oversight and hold a charter school accountable.

A charter school agrees to abide by its authorizer's Charter School Performance Compact when the school enters into a charter school contract.

Objectives

This morning you will:

1. Learn how to prepare an annual review of a charter school's performance.
2. Give input into the development of the LDOE's model district Charter School Performance Compact.

Annual Review

Purpose

An annual review summarizes a school's performance during the prior school year against the expectations set by its authorizer.

The Department uses a charter school's annual review to:

1. Communicate a school's performance to the school, parents, and BESE
2. Understand whether a charter school is on track for renewal and, if so, how long its renewal term might be.

Expectations

The Department's annual review measures a school's performance against the expectations enumerated in the Charter School Performance Compact.

Area	Expectations
Academic	All students, regardless of background, need, or ability, are afforded an educational environment that provides them with opportunities for academic growth and achievement.
Financial	Schools demonstrate strong financial practices resulting in fiscally viable and responsibly maintained institutions.
Organizational	<p>Schools enroll and serve all students through prioritizing equity in their enrollment and discipline policies and procedures.</p> <p>All special student populations receive the services and supports they need to ensure academic success in accordance with applicable law and policy.</p> <p>Schools and governing boards responsibly follow all laws, policies, and contractual obligations.</p>

Ratings

The Department's annual review identifies overall academic, financial, and organizational performance ratings for a charter school, as well as how the school performed on each of the individual indicators that led to each of these ratings.

Charter schools can earn these ratings:

- **Academic Performance:** Letter grades A, B, C, D, or F.
- **Financial Performance:** Meets expectations, meets most expectations, or does not meet expectations.
- **Organizational Performance:** Meets expectations, meets most expectations, or does not meet expectations.

Performance and Compliance

Within the Annual Review and across its categories, the Department measures schools in two ways:

1. Performance: These indicators can be assessed using a quantitative standard that a school must meet. For example, the annual review assess a charter schools suspension percentage against the national average for schools serving the same grade span.
1. Compliance: These indicators are assessed by determining whether a school violated a specific law or policy. In the annual review, this is measured by looking at whether the Department had to send the school a letter (Notice of Concern or Breach) documenting a violation. For example, a school can receive a Notice for discriminating against a family during the enrollment process.

Academic Information

The Department measures a school's academic performance through the letter grade and School Performance Score issued annually.

This information is included in the Annual Review in order to assess a school's progress toward the letter grade it must meet in the renewal year.

The letter grade and SPS are eventually used to determine whether or not a school can be renewed by BESE and the length of its renewal term.

In a non-renewal year for a school, this information communicates to the school, parents, and BESE whether or not a school is on track to be renewed.

Financial Rating

The LDOE calculates a charter school's financial score using the Fiscal Risk Assessment, external audit, and a review of any Notices of Concern or Breach for misuse of funds.

A school's score is based on its FRA category, number of audit findings, and any misuse of funds identified by the Department. The numeric score determines the overall rating

Category	Score	FRA Status	Audit Findings	LDOE Notices
Meets All Expectations	20	No Action	No more than 1 in the past two years	0
Meets Most Expectations	15	Monitor	No more than 1 in each of the past two years	1
Does Not Meet Expectations	0	Dialogue	1+ in each of the past three years	2+

Discussion Question

The LDOE assigns a Fiscal Risk Assessment status of Dialogue, Monitor, or No Action at the LEA level. Locally authorized charter schools are part of their authorizer's LEA, so they are not assigned an FRA status.

A number of the components of the FRA are available from other sources for district-authorized charter schools and are relevant to those schools' financial health.

What financial information should the model district Charter School Performance Compact direct local authorizers to collect in place of the Fiscal Risk Assessment?

This information should help authorizers assess a school's performance against the Charter School Performance Compact's finances expectation:

“Schools demonstrate strong financial practices resulting in fiscally viable and responsibly maintained institutions.”

Organizational Performance

To complete the organizational performance section of the annual review, the LDOE reviews the following organizational performance information:

- Economically disadvantaged and students with disabilities percentages
- Re-enrollment rate
- Suspension rate
- Percentage of SPED evaluations conducted within the appropriate timeframe
- Percentage of IEPs out of compliance with timelines
- Urgent Intervention Required status based on sub-group performance

Organizational Performance

The organizational performance component of a charter school's organizational score is the average of a charter school's score across the seven organizational performance rows in the annual review.

Row	20 Points	15 Points	0 Points
ED + SWD Percentages	Both meet legal reqs.	One meets legal reqs.	Neither meets legal reqs.
Re-Enrollment Rate	$\geq 80\%$	70-80%	$< 70\%$
Suspension Rate	\leq National Avg.	100-200% National Avg.	$> 200\%$ National Avg.
SPED Evaluations	$< 5\%$ non-compliant	5-10% non-compliant	$> 10\%$ non-compliant
IEP Timeline Compliance	$< 5\%$ non-compliant	5-10% non-compliant	$> 10\%$ non-compliant
Least Restrictive Environment	$\geq 63.5\%$ SPED population	50-63.5% SPED population	$< 50\%$ SPED population
Targeted Support Status	No sub-groups	1 sub-group	2+ sub-groups

Organizational Compliance

The LDOE also reviews information about a charter school's organizational compliance. Specifically, the LDOE reviews the number of Notices of Breach or Concern issued for violating:

- Enrollment policies
- Policies for enrolling students with disabilities
- Policies for serving students with disabilities
- Governance policies
- Ethics policies
- Legal and contractual obligations
- Testing policies

Organizational Compliance

The organizational compliance component of a charter school's organizational score is based on the number of law, policy, and ethics violations a school accumulates across all organizational compliance rows.

Score	Law, Policy, or Ethics Violations	Notices of Breach or Concern
20	0	0
15	≤ 2 minor violations	0 Breach and ≤ 2 Concern
0	1+ significant or 3+ minor violations	1+ Breach or 3+ Concern

This is averaged with the school's organizational performance score to calculate a final organizational rating.

Category	Average Score
Meets All Expectations	20
Meets Most Expectations	11-19
Does Not Meet Expectations	0-10

Discussion Question

The LDOE assesses whether BESE-authorized charter schools uphold the obligations of an LEA to screen for disabilities and maintain IEPs.

A locally-authorized charter school is part of its authorizer's LEA, so its authorizer, and not the school, is responsible for fulfilling some of these duties.

Local authorizers should consider:

- (1) What are the district's and the school's responsibilities for serving SPED students?**
- (2) What special education information should the model district Charter School Performance Compact direct local authorizers to collect?**

This information should help authorizers assess a school's performance against the Charter School Performance Compact's special populations expectation:

“All special student populations receive the services and supports they need to ensure academic success in accordance with applicable law and policy.”

Questions?

Charter Start-Up Grants

Charter Schools Program

In March of 2016 the Department received a three-year federal Charter Schools Program grant. Through this grant the Department is able to issue start-up grants to new charter schools.

Start-up grants are issued during a new charter school's pre-opening period and can be spent by a charter school through its first two years of operation. Grants can be up to \$315,000.

The Department accepts applications for charter school start-up funds on a rolling basis.

Absolute Priority 1

In order for charter schools to be eligible for charter start-up grants, USDOE has instituted a requirement that their authorizer must comply with Charter Schools Program Absolute Priority 1.

Absolute Priority 1 says that a charter school's authorizer must have adopted a policy committing to a mid-term review for all charter schools with contracts greater than five years in length.

Authorizers must have this policy in place to be eligible to receive Charter Schools Program funds even if they have not entered into any charter contracts greater than five years.

Department Policy

The Department has proposed that BESE adopt the following policy as part of BESE Bulletin 126:

For a charter school with a renewal term of six or more years, the department will conduct an in-depth review and evaluation of the charter school, equivalent to a renewal review, at least once every five years to measure the charter school's performance as measured by the charter school performance compact. The department shall present such review and evaluation to BESE at a regular meeting and provide an opportunity for BESE to take appropriate action or impose meaningful consequences, if necessary, as provided for in this bulletin.

Monitoring

Objectives

This afternoon you will:

1. Learn the monitoring activities that authorizers complete during the year.
2. Consider steps you may need to take to monitor charter schools in your district

Purpose of Monitoring

The Department conducts a set of monitoring activities each year that enables it to collect the information it needs to complete the annual review and determine whether a school is meeting the expectations it has set.

For example, consider the organizational expectation: “Schools are enrolling and serving all students through prioritizing equity in their enrollment and discipline policies and procedures.”

Through monitoring, as shown on the following slide, the Department collects the information it needs to complete the six annual review rows that are aligned to this expectation.

Example

Schools are enrolling and serving all students through prioritizing equity in their enrollment and discipline policies and procedures.

Indicators	Measurement	Monitoring
1. High-quality charter schools have a student body that is reflective of the community in which the school is located.	State at-risk and SWD percentage as required by law	Annual state data review
2. High-quality charter schools maintain steady levels of enrollment reflective of school's ability to meet the needs of the families it serves.	School re-enrollment percentage	Annual state data review
	Notices of Breach or Concern related to violations of truancy policy	Community complaints
3. High-quality charter schools follow the laws and policies currently in place regarding enrollment that ensure equity of access to schools for all families.	Notices of Breach or Concern related to discriminatory admissions policies	Policy review; Community complaints
	Notices of Breach or Concern related to violations of admissions policy	Community complaints
4. High-quality charter schools use discipline practices that address behavioral challenges in a fair way that both respects due process and does not egregiously interfere with the provision of instruction.	Suspension rate as compared to national average for school type (K-8 v. HS)	Annual state data review

Types of Monitoring

There are two types of monitoring in which the Department engages to collect the information it needs to complete a school's annual review:

- Annual: The Department annually compiles and reviews data, reports, and evidence that retrospectively looks at a school's performance and compliance with law and policy. I.e., a review of a school's re-enrollment rate
- On-going: The Department conducts on-going monitoring and inquiry, in which it identifies evidence on an ongoing basis that a school may not be on track to meet expectations. I.e., an inquiry into a community complaint

Monitoring Activities

The Department conducts a set of activities that allows it to collect information for both types of monitoring.

Activity	On-going	Annual
Reviewing state datasets and reports		Yes
Reviewing notices of breaches and concern		Yes
Reviewing information in state systems	Yes	Yes
Conducting site visits	Yes	Yes
Collecting documents and reports from schools	Yes	Yes
Tracking complaints and self reporting	Yes	

The Department conducts an annual monitoring activity for every row in the annual review.

Annual Monitoring

In order to conduct annual monitoring, the Department relies primarily on state datasets, reports, and information systems.

This is because the Department has valued:

1. Using data and information that is official and has been certified;
2. Holding charters accountable to metrics that are similar to their traditional school counterparts;
3. Minimizing the burden on schools; and
4. Ensuring the monitoring system can be implemented with fidelity given staff capacity.

State Datasets and Reports

After the school year is over, authorizers analyze reports and datasets that describe performance during the previous school year. The Department completes five annual review indicators by inputting information from LDOE reports and datasets.

Section	Row	Dataset or Report
Academic	School Performance Score	School Performance Scores
Financial	Fiscal Risk Assessment Status	Fiscal Risk Assessment
	External Audit Findings	LLA External Audits
Organizational	ED + SWD Percentages	At-Risk Report
	Targeted Support Status	School Redesign List

Notices of Concern or Breach

The Department assesses a school's performance in eight annual review rows by observing the number of Notices of Concern or Breach the school received throughout the year.

There are several ways that the Department collects information that can result in a Notice of Concern or Notice of Breach:

- Ongoing monitoring of data collected by the Department
- Tracking parent, staff, or school community concerns or self reporting
- Site visits
- Review of documents and reports collected from schools

State Systems

The Department analyzes information in SIS and SER to complete four annual review rows.

Section	Row	State System
Organizational	Re-Enrollment Rate	SIS
	Suspension Rate	SIS
	SPED Evaluations	SER
	IEP Timeline Compliance	SER

The Department also considers information included in state systems on an ongoing basis in order to identify whether additional monitoring is necessary to ensure that charter schools are meeting the expectations in the CSPC.

On-going Monitoring Activities

The Department fields parent complaints, reviews data, and conducts site visits to help collect information it needs to customize oversight based on a school's needs. These activities can also lead to actions that impact a school's annual review.

Site visits can include:

- Classroom observations
- Discussions with school and board leadership
- Reviews of school policies and procedures
- Audits of student files and records
- Health and safety reviews
- Reviews of facility safety requirements compliance

The steps that the Department chooses to take during site visits can also be guided by data reviews and past performance.

Discussion Question

Authorizers determine where to focus each school's ongoing monitoring by looking for early warning signs that a school may not meet the Department's expectations.

For a charter school that your district oversees, consider what you know about their past and current performance. Given this:

- How would you design a site visit? What activities would you complete?
- What would you look for in reviewing the documents/reports you would collect from the school?
- What would you look for in end of the year data?
- What questions would you raise during an annual conversation with the school leader? The board chair?

Questions?

Implementation

Sharing Annual Reviews

An annual review provides a summary of a school's performance over the past year against the expectations that are set in an authorizer's performance framework.

After a charter school's annual review is complete, the Department shares it with:

1. The school,
2. The general public, through the LDOE's website.

The Charter School Performance Compact provides these audiences with an understanding of how each score was calculated and how a school's performance compares to the extension or renewal bar it must meet.

Closing

Upcoming Events

The Department will host the next authorizer workshop in December. That workshop will focus on charter school accountability.

The Department will be hosting two charter authorizer webinars this winter:

- The 2018 Charter School Application Process
- The Department's At-Risk Report for the 2016-2017 School Year