

CHARTER SCHOOLS: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW AND BE PREPARED TO DO

The purpose of this planning document is to help you outline key discussion and action steps that you can take back to your County Board and County Office of Education to improve the effectiveness of charter school approval and oversight. Your work today can be the catalyst for your board, working in collaboration with your county superintendent, to examine your current practices, and consider best practices and policies that will ensure charter schools are academically, operationally and fiscally strong and accountable.

Activity 1 - Building an Effective Authorizer/Charter School Relationship

What is our organization currently doing to...:

- Provide clear guidance on the process and standards for charter school approval and renewal? [Examples: adopted policy and procedures, website with process, sample documents, etc.]

- Establish expectations for school performance and authorizer monitoring over the term of the charter? Do we have standards and process for renewal? [Examples: MOU, start-up process, handbook, etc.]

What can we do to ensure an open, productive and transparent relationship with charter schools in our county in order to best serve the interests of students and families in our community?

Activity 2 - Monitoring Financial Performance

What process and standards are currently in place for our review of charter school finances?

Does that process generate timely, useful information to alert us to potential problems?

Do the charter schools we authorize understand the fiscal monitoring process and have we communicated our expectations for financial performance?

What improvements in monitoring should we consider?

Activity 3 - Monitoring Academic Performance

What process and standards are currently in place for our review of charter school academic performance?

How are we using information on charter school academic performance to promote student success?

Are we communicating our evaluation of charter school academic performance to school leadership; both to their executive officer as well as to the charter school's governing board? To the public?

What improvements in monitoring should we consider?

Activity 4 – Annual Charter School Progress Report that guides the renew/not renew decision for the school.

Do we provide an annual written report to the charter school regarding the school's success/progress in meeting the standards set for that school that informs all parties and ultimately guides the renew/not renew decision for the school?

My Responsibilities as an Authorizer – My Next Steps

What steps can I take as a board member to support my organization to be a more effective charter authorizer?

- Questions I will ask regarding charter school agenda items.
- Schedule one or more Board Study Sessions. (Possibly using CSBA Charter School: A Guide for Governance Teams as source a documents)
- Possible policy changes I will discuss with my colleagues and the superintendent.
- Ways I will become better informed on charter school issues.