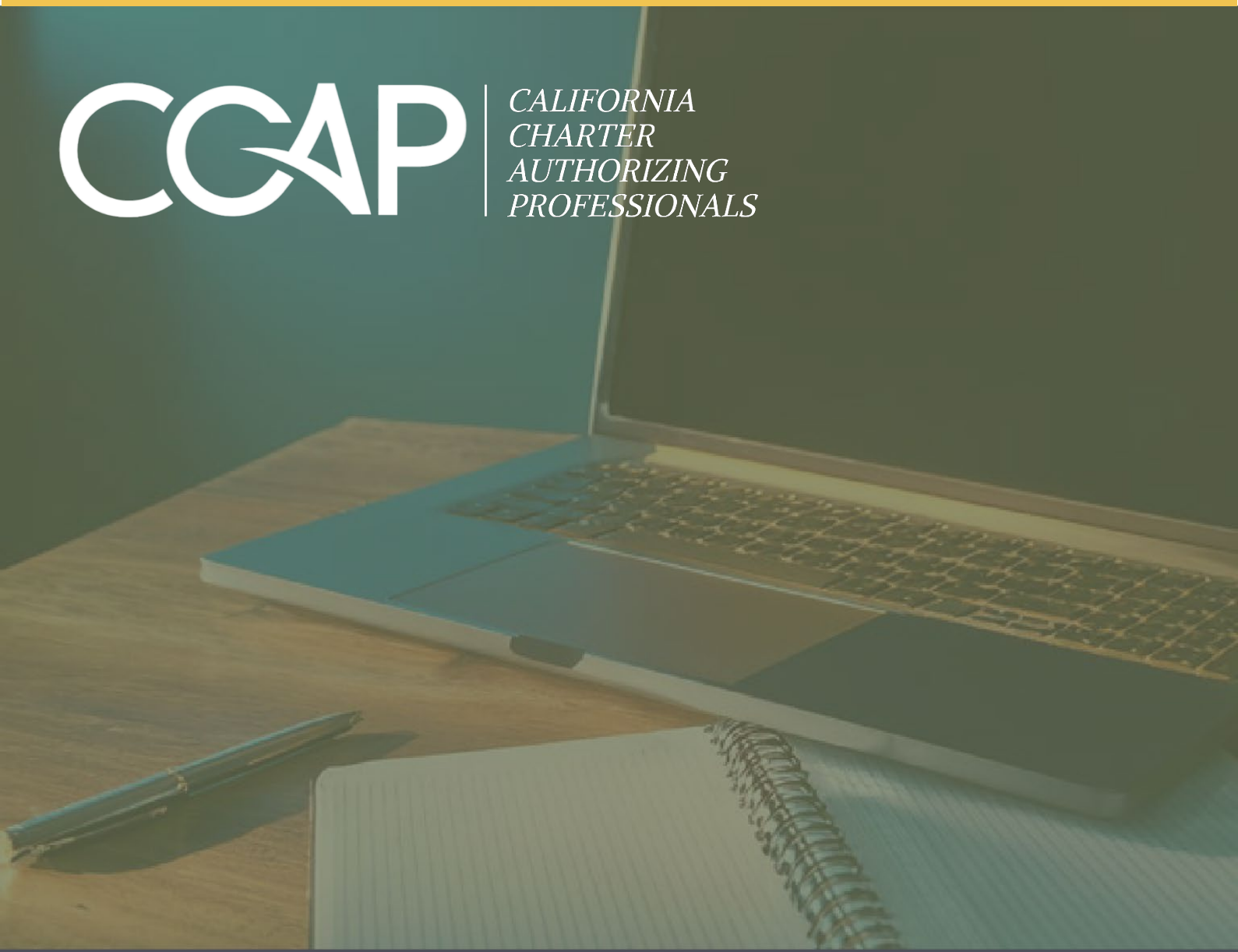




*CALIFORNIA
CHARTER
AUTHORIZING
PROFESSIONALS*



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CHARTER SCHOOL WEBSITE REVIEW TOOLKIT

SEPTEMBER 2025

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CHARTER SCHOOL WEBSITE REVIEW TOOLKIT

OVERVIEW

Charter schools are required by law to adhere to various federal and state mandates regarding transparency and accessibility on their websites. These legal obligations are meant to ensure that all relevant stakeholders, including prospective students, families, and the general public, can access clear, accurate, and legally required information. In addition to statutory requirements, many review items outlined in this toolkit represent best practices that promote transparency and inclusivity—values that go beyond mere compliance to significantly enhance the school’s accountability and public image.

This toolkit is designed to guide charter school authorizing staff through the process of reviewing school websites annually. Website reviews are essential in ensuring compliance with legal requirements and promoting best practices that support transparency and inclusivity.

NOTE: The Charter School Website Review Toolkit can be edited to best meet the needs of each authorizer. All items listed on the enclosed tables and **highlighted in green** are legally required and must be included on each school’s website.

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IMPORTANCE OF WEBSITE REVIEWS

For charter authorizing staff, reviewing school websites is not just a procedural task but a critical element of oversight that ensures schools under their jurisdiction remain transparent and compliant with laws. By conducting these Reviews annually, authorizers help safeguard access to key information for students and families, reduce the risk of non-compliance, and encourage schools to adopt practices that build trust with the community. A thorough, user-friendly, and well-maintained website reflects the school's commitment to transparency and openness, which can foster better relationships with stakeholders and strengthen public confidence.

WHY IT MATTERS

Authorizers play a vital role in holding schools accountable to both legal requirements and high standards of practice. By ensuring that charter school websites are regularly reviewed and compliant, authorizers uphold their responsibility to the public, particularly to families seeking accessible, transparent information about educational opportunities. Schools that adhere to both the legal obligations and best practices outlined in this toolkit not only comply with regulatory standards but also position themselves as leaders in community engagement and public transparency.

Annual Website Reviews provide a mechanism for charter authorizers to ensure transparency legal compliance. Schools are legally mandated to post specific information regarding policies, services, and programs, and best practices also encourage the posting of additional relevant data. Regular Reviews ensure charter schools are up to date with their responsibilities, helping to create an inclusive and accessible environment for families, students, and the wider community.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS VS BEST PRACTICES

While charter school websites are required to comply with several state and federal laws, including Title IX and enrollment policies, many additional elements are considered best practices. These elements—like posting an academic calendar or detailed enrollment information—enhance transparency and trust within the community.

AUTHORIZER EXPECTATIONS BEYOND COMPLIANCE

Whenever a charter school authorizer contemplates possible expectations beyond what is explicitly required by law, it is important that it think carefully about the role of authorizing. On the one hand, there is wide recognition that doing the bare minimum charter oversight currently required by law is inadequate to safeguard the public, students and families, and the charter schools themselves. On the other hand, it is not the authorizer's role to dictate in great operational detail how a charter school fulfills its legal obligations and its mission. The charter school's autonomy and flexibility to innovate are fundamental to the charter school concept.

The best practices included in this resource are intended to be limited to those that serve important public policy purposes related to transparency and the efficacy of high-quality charter schools. However, an authorizer considering setting one of these additional expectations should understand and be able to explain its importance. As a practical matter, if these practices are not already included in the charter school's petition, the authorizer may want to consider including them in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the school.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

Several legal provisions require specific content to be posted on charter school websites. For instance, every school must post notices related to Title IX, enrollment procedures, and policies prohibiting discrimination. Schools are also required to prominently display certain documents such as the Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) and notices regarding student services, like mental health resources and services for homeless students. Authorizers must ensure that these legally required elements are consistently reviewed for compliance.

BEST PRACTICES

In addition to legal requirements, there are several best practices that charter schools should adopt to enhance transparency and accessibility on their websites. These best practices may include posting academic calendars, staff directories, and detailed descriptions of educational programs, as well as policies that promote inclusion, such as statements affirming a non-discriminatory admissions process and information in languages other than English. Although not required by law, these elements are encouraged because they provide clarity and build a welcoming, inclusive school environment.



LEGALLY REQUIRED

Certain items are required on charter school websites to ensure transparency, accountability, and compliance with California Education Code. These requirements help provide the public, parents, and stakeholders with essential information about the school's governance, policies, and educational programs.



BEST PRACTICE

While certain items may not be explicitly required by the California Education Code, it is considered a best practice for charter schools to make them available on their websites.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM AND SCHOOL INFO

Item	Education Code/Best Practice	Notes/Completion
Most recent Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP)	EDUCATION CODE §47606.5(H)	This plan outlines goals and strategies for academic achievement and school improvement.
School Accountability Report Card (SARC)	EDUCATION CODE §35258	This report provides performance data on various aspects such as academics, safety, and teacher quality.
Mathematics Placement Policy (High Schools only)	EDUCATION CODE §51224.7(D)	Policy outlines the placement of students in mathematics courses based on their skills and prior performance.
Resources for students experiencing homelessness	EDUCATION CODE §48852.6	Resources available to homeless students such as housing, counseling, and education services.
Notice of Access to Pupil Mental Health Services	EDUCATION CODE §49428	Information on how students can access mental health services, including referrals and contacts.
Comprehensive School Safety Plan	EDUCATION CODE §32280	Plan outlining procedures for keeping students and staff safe during emergencies.
Uniform Complaint Procedures (UCP)	EDUCATION CODE §234.1(E)	Procedures for filing complaints related to the school, including discrimination and safety issues.
Student Discipline Policy	EDUCATION CODE §234.6	Policy detailing how student discipline is handled, including suspension and expulsion procedures.
School's Authorizer	BEST PRACTICE	The authorizer should be prominently identified in the "About the School" or wherever the general description of the school is displayed.
Charter Petition	BEST PRACTICE	A petition that outlines the school's mission, governance, and operational procedures.
Academic Calendar	BEST PRACTICE	School's yearly schedule, including start and end dates, holidays, and breaks.
Daily Bell Schedule	BEST PRACTICE	Daily schedule of class times and any breaks or transitions between classes.
Staff Roster	BEST PRACTICE	List of school staff members and their roles often includes contact information.
Student Grading / Promotion Policy	BEST PRACTICE	Information on how students are graded and the criteria for promotion to the next grade.
School Contact Information	BEST PRACTICE	General contact information for the school, including phone, email, and physical address.
School Leader Contact Information	BEST PRACTICE	Contact information specifically about the school's leadership (e.g., principal, head of school).
Student / Family Handbook	BEST PRACTICE	A handbook for students and families detailing school policies, rules, and expectations.
WASC Accreditation Status (High Schools only)	BEST PRACTICE	Accreditation status of the school, particularly for high schools, from the Western Association of Schools and Colleges.
Independent Study Policy	BEST PRACTICE	Policies related to independent study programs, including how students can participate.
Public Records Act Policy	BEST PRACTICE	Details on how the public can request access to school records and information.

SCHOOL POLICY AND COMPLIANCE

Item	Education Code/Best Practice	Notes/Completion
Title IX Information	EDUCATION CODE §221.61	Information on Title IX policies regarding gender equity and non-discrimination.
Link to Title IX Information on CDE's Website	EDUCATION CODE §234.6	Link to state and federal Title IX guidelines for transparency and compliance.
Suicide Policy (K-6)	EDUCATION CODE §234.6	School policy regarding suicide prevention and support for K-6 students.
Suicide Policy (7-12)	EDUCATION CODE §234.6	School policy regarding suicide prevention and support for 7-12 students.
Definition of discrimination and harassment	EDUCATION CODE §234.6	Definition of prohibited discriminatory behavior and how it is addressed.
Sexual Harassment Policy	EDUCATION CODE §234.6	Policy detailing how incidents of sexual harassment are handled by the school.
Anti-Discrimination Policy	EDUCATION CODE §234.6	Policy covering protections against discrimination for students and staff.
Hate Violence Policy	EDUCATION CODE §234.6	Policy addressing incidents of hate violence and steps for prevention and response.
Section on Social Media Bullying	EDUCATION CODE §234.6	Specifics on how the school manages bullying that occurs on social media platforms.
Link to statewide resources for bullying victims	EDUCATION CODE §234.6	Links to external resources for victims of bullying, as required by state law.
Section on Code of Conduct on employee-pupil interactions	EDUCATION CODE §44050	Details on staff-student interactions and professional conduct guidelines.
Integrated Pest Management Plan	EDUCATION CODE §17611.5	Plan for the management of pesticides to ensure student and staff safety.
Title I Report Card	20 U.S.C. §6311	Federal report on the academic and financial performance of Title I programs.
SELPA Local Plan	EDUCATION CODE §56205.5	Local plan for providing special education services in compliance with SELPA.
Cardiac Arrest Information	EDUCATION CODE §33479.2	Information on warning signs and preventive measures for cardiac arrest.
Student / Family Handbook	BEST PRACTICE	A handbook for students and families detailing school policies, rules, and expectations.

ENROLLMENT AND ADMISSIONS

Item	Education Code/Best Practice	Notes/Completion
SB 126 Enrollment Complaint Form	EDUCATION CODE §47605(E)(4)(D)	Form for families to file complaints about enrollment practices.
List of required documents for enrollment	BEST PRACTICE	List of documents required for enrollment, such as proof of residency.
Lottery Admissions Timeline, Process, and Procedures	BEST PRACTICE	Timeline and procedure for the lottery-based admission process.
Special Education Enrollment Information	BEST PRACTICE	Information about the enrollment process and a statement regarding the school's services for supporting students with special needs.
Enrollment Information Availability in Different Languages	BEST PRACTICE	Information about the enrollment process should be available in the languages spoken in the community where the school serves students.

GOVERNANCE

Item	Education Code/Best Practice	Notes/Completion
Board Meeting Agendas	EDUCATION CODE §54954.2	Publicly available agendas for upcoming board meetings, required by law.
Board Meeting Audio/Video Recordings (if applicable)	EDUCATION CODE §47604.1	Recording board meetings required for CMOs operating in multiple counties.
Board Meeting Materials	BEST PRACTICE	Minutes from previous board meetings for public review, agendas, and any non-confidential documents.
Board Roster and Contact Information	BEST PRACTICE	List of board members and contact information, promoting transparency.
Board Member Bios	BEST PRACTICE	Biographical information on each board member, including terms of service.
Board Election Process	BEST PRACTICE	Details about the selection or election process for board members.

CHARTER SCHOOL WEBSITE REVIEW FORM

SCHOOL INFORMATION

School Name _____

Point of Contact _____

Name _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Reviewer Name _____

Date _____



REVIEW FINDINGS

School Name _____

Review Date _____

ACADEMIC PROGRAM AND SCHOOL INFO

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Authorizer	BEST PRACTICE	
Charter Petition	BEST PRACTICE	
Academic Calendar	BEST PRACTICE	
Daily Bell Schedule	BEST PRACTICE	
Staff Roster	BEST PRACTICE	
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School Contact Information	BEST PRACTICE	
School Leader Contact Information	BEST PRACTICE	
Student / Family Handbook	BEST PRACTICE	
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Independent Study Policy	BEST PRACTICE	
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Title I Report Card	20 u.s.c. §6311	
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Student / Family Handbook	BEST PRACTICE	

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Board Bios	BEST PRACTICE	
Board Election Process	BEST PRACTICE	