

CHARTER SCHOOLS APPLICATION PROCESS

Charter Schools

Pursuant to the provisions of the Oklahoma Charter Schools Act (Act), the district will sponsor charter schools in the manner set forth in this policy and in the Act. Any persons or entities desiring to apply for a charter school contract with the district shall submit an application in a form prescribed by the administration of the school district. Such application shall contain all information and documentation required by the Act and by the District. In conjunction with the submission of an application, the applicant shall also submit a proposed charter for the charter school, which shall contain all provisions and documentation required by the Act and by the District.

Upon receipt of an application and charter by the District, the administration shall determine if the documents comply with applicable laws, rules, policies, and regulations. If the administration determines that they are not in compliance, the administration shall notify the applicant of the deficiencies and afford the applicant an opportunity to revise the documents before their submission to the board of education. If the application and proposed charter are determined to be in compliance with legal authority, a proposed contract shall be prepared and tentatively agreed to by the applicant and the administration. The contract shall contain all provisions required by the Act.

The application, charter, and contract shall be submitted to the board of education for consideration and a vote to accept or reject the proposed charter school shall be taken within ninety (90) days of initial receipt of the application. The administration shall also provide the board of education with its recommendation to either accept or reject the application and the basis for such recommendation. Basis for recommending rejection shall include the applicant's failure or refusal to correct any deficiencies in the application and/or charter or to agree to the terms of a contract. If the application is rejected by the board of education, the applicant shall be entitled to the procedures provided in the Act.

Initial contracts for a sponsored charter school shall not exceed two years in length; provided that, if the applicant is an enterprise school that has operated successfully for one or more school years, the board of education may grant at its discretion and initial term of up to three years. The term of all charter school contracts shall terminate on June 30. After the performance of initial contracts, subsequent contracts may be for up to five fiscal years. Termination of a contract during its term shall be in accordance with the Act.

The physical location of any charter school sponsored by the district shall be within the district's boundaries. Admission to any sponsored charter school shall be in compliance with the Act. Transportation will not be provided by the district to students attending a sponsored charter school, unless such services are provided by contract on a cost-reimbursement and availability basis. Funding shall be as provided by the Act and rules of the State Board of Education. Any teacher who is employed by a sponsored charter school, who was previously employed by the district immediately prior to such employment, and who was in good standing when such teacher's district and charter school employments were terminated, shall not lose any right of salary status or any other benefit provided by law upon reemployment by the district due to teaching at the sponsored charter school. Such teacher's right to reemployment shall be in accordance with the Act. A decision to not reemploy shall be for good cause.

CHARTER SCHOOLS, APPLICATION PROCESS (Cont.)New Charter School Applicants

It is the policy of Oklahoma City Public Schools Board of Education, regarding establishing and operating charter schools, to be responsive to the enabling legislation, 70 O.S. §3-130, and to receive and accept applications to sponsor charter schools within the District.

The Board of Education of the Oklahoma City Public Schools believes that providing students and families a variety of education choices, representing a range of high quality instructional methodologies, is an important district goal. In an effort to accomplish this goal and the objectives in the district strategic aims, the district recognizes the federal initiative of charter schools and the federal definition of charter schools as: “innovative, nonsectarian public schools which provide educational choices tailored to the community needs” which provide “greater accountability for results.” The basic concept of charter schools is that, in exchange for the greater accountability, they exercise increased autonomy. They are accountable for both academic results and fiscal practices to several groups: the sponsor that grants them, the parents who choose them, and the public that funds them.

The board of education also recognizes the purposes of charter schools in Oklahoma as stated in the Oklahoma Charter Schools Act to be:

Improve student learning;

Increase learning opportunities for students;

Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods;

Provide additional academic choices for parents and students;

Require the measurement of student learning and create different and innovative forms of measuring student learning;

Establish new forms of accountability for schools; and

Create new professional opportunities for teachers and administrators, including the opportunity to be responsible for the learning program at the school site.

In accordance with 70 O.S. §3-130, public charter schools shall demonstrate a commitment to the mission and diversity of public education and promote the law’s purposes in accomplishment of its goals.

Charter schools sponsored by Oklahoma City Board of Education will be educationally sound, quality schools filling a program or under-served student need within the district.

CHARTER SCHOOLS, APPLICATION PROCESS (Cont.)Application Process For New Charter Schools

Applications submitted for charter school status should be submitted to the office of the superintendent. Applications will be reviewed by district staff and legal counsel to determine compliance with the law, fulfillment of the purpose of the Oklahoma Charter Schools Act, and fulfillment of the district goals by adding quality education options not otherwise adequately provided. District staff will review the applications based on the soundness and quality of the charter school proposed, and will communicate their findings to the superintendent for presentation and consideration by the board.

The board's role in the charter school application process will include reviewing reported findings by district staff, as well as reviewing applications, to determine appropriateness for approval based on the stated goals and purposes for charter schools within the state and district. A decision by the board is expected within 90 days of the submission of the application.

The board of education will accept written, materially complete applications from any legally authorized entity wishing to establish a charter school. At a minimum, the application must contain the following:

1. The name of the charter applicant;
2. The mailing address(es) and telephone number(s) of the applicant board members;
3. The school's mission and goals statements;
4. The school's overall student body target or focus;
5. The organizational structure of the charter school (including individuals' names, if determined);
6. The financial plan for the first three years of operation;
7. The names of the treasurer and other officers who will have primary responsibilities for the finances of the school, along with the "demonstrated experience" such a person has in school finance or equivalent;
8. The school's proposed student attendance area, if applicable;
9. Admission policy for the school;
10. A description of the facility and location of the school;
11. A description of the grades being served;
12. The school's curriculum and instruction plan;
13. Plan for increasing student achievement;
14. Plan for increasing student learning opportunities;

CHARTER SCHOOLS, APPLICATION PROCESS (Cont.)

15. A description of the school's "hiring policy";
16. Staffing plan for the school;
17. Any district services (maintenance, custodial, child nutrition, payroll, etc.) the school proposes to contract for use;
18. Proposed procedures for reporting progress to the board of education, including frequency and reporting areas;
19. An outline of criteria to be used in measuring the effectiveness of the school; and
20. A demonstration of support for the charter school from district residents, which may be satisfied by a survey or petition.
21. One-year Term.
22. Fair_ market value leasing facilities.
23. Cap on growth;
24. School information system access or use;
25. A plan for measuring and reporting student learning and achievement using SDE measures and other innovative measures;
26. A plan for updating and reporting changes to the school's charter school application (either annually or during the renewal process.

Submitted should be an original and eight copies of the charter application.

The board will accept or reject the application within ninety (90) days of receipt of the application at a lawfully convened meeting of the board of education. Written notification of the acceptance or rejection and the reasons therefor, will be mailed to the applicants by certified mail, return receipt requested. If the proposal is accepted, the board shall notify the State Board of Education of the sponsorship. If the proposal is rejected, the applicants may resubmit a revised application for reconsideration within thirty (30) days of the rejection. The board will respond to the revised application within thirty (30) days. If rejected again, the applicant may submit the proposal for mediation and/or binding arbitration. If the applicant desires mediation and/or binding arbitration, it shall be the responsibility of the applicant to initiate the process according to Oklahoma law.

If the proposal is accepted, the charter school will fall under the district's insurance programs, unless otherwise stated in the charter contract.

Timelines

- Step 1. Receipt of application, including eight copies, by the superintendent of schools or designee by October 15.
- Step 2. Letter from the district acknowledging receipt of the application and beginning of the 90-day review period.
- Step 3. Applicants will be invited to make a brief presentation of the charter school application to the board of education at a regular or special meeting, within 30 days of submission of the application.
- Step 4.
- A. Copies to various departments with a request to review the application and reply with comments and concerns on the issues specific to that area. Comments and concerns should be submitted within 30 days. Comments should address the substantive qualities of the application related to the perceived strengths and weaknesses in these specific areas: fiscal, facilities, curriculum (appropriate grade level), and administrative.
 - B. A copy of the application will be sent to the district's legal counsel for review of compliance with the Act, other laws, and the district policy relating to charter schools. A review report will be due within 30 days.
 - C. A copy of the application will be reviewed by a committee of the Oklahoma Charter School Association, which will submit a written report of the review to the superintendent within 30 days of receipt.
- Step 5. Accompanied by the reviews from the various parties, the application will be reviewed by the superintendent or designee for overall strengths, weaknesses, and satisfaction of the purpose(s) stated in the Act and this policy.
- Step 6. Copies of the department reviews will be included with the application for board review. Opportunity for questions to the applicant will be provided at a school board meeting.
- Step 7. Board action and written notification to applicant.

Once a charter application has been approved, the District shall contract with the charter school based on the charter's unique mission and/or the student population that the charter serves as indicated in the charter's application.

REFERENCE: 70 O.S. §3-134

CROSS-REFERENCE: I-27

Adopted: December 6, 1999, as policy I-53
Effective Date: April 1, 2002, as regulation EL-12-N