



OVERSIGHT PRACTICES

Recognized Best Practices

Regulatory Framework

[MCL 380.502\(4\)](#) states “An authorizing body shall oversee... each public school academy operating under a contract issued by the authorizing body. The authorizing body is responsible for overseeing compliance by the board of directors with the contract and all applicable law.”

MCCSA Guiding Principles and Standards

A comprehensive oversight system is essential to the education ecosystem. MCCSA has adopted Principles and Standards (Standards) that guide authorizers as they develop strong authorizing practices. MCCSA Standards include Overseeing and Evaluating a Charter Public School which states, “Excellence in authorizing means understanding the responsibility of establishing a comprehensive system that monitors and evaluates school performance and compliance. This system should provide the necessary information to oversee, evaluate and periodically report the performance of the charter public school. An authorizer’s oversight system should preserve and protect the autonomy of the school while minimizing its compliance burden.”

What is a comprehensive oversight system and why is it important?

A comprehensive oversight system will allow the authorizer to monitor and evaluate a charter public school’s performance and compliance. This system should provide the necessary information to oversee, evaluate and periodically report the performance of the charter public school. An authorizer’s oversight system should preserve and protect the autonomy of the school while minimizing its compliance burden. Ultimately, a comprehensive oversight system will allow the authorizer to answer the following questions during reauthorization:

- Is the charter public school achieving its academic goals as stated in the charter contract? All groups of pupils should be considered.
- Is the charter public school organizationally, educationally, and financially viable?
- Is the charter public school demonstrating good faith compliance in following the terms of its charter contract and applicable law?

Oversight and evaluation responsibilities are described in the charter contract and are the responsibility of the authorizer throughout the charter life cycle, from ensuring that new school applicants are ready to open on day one to ongoing operations at the school. A comprehensive oversight system will include, but is not limited to, monitoring and evaluating academic

performance, financial health and operations, educational service provider accountability and charter public school boards

See the MCCSA Standard: Overseeing and Evaluating a Charter Public School for additional detail.

Oversight Best Practices

While authorizers are required by law to create a comprehensive oversight system, and the law requires certain oversight practices to occur, there is no one size fits all for authorizing oversight systems. Authorizers have the autonomy to establish their oversight systems. The following oversight practices, while not a comprehensive list, are common among MCCSA members based upon the law or experience.

Master Calendar of Reporting Requirements

To ensure clear expectations of reporting requirements for charter public schools, authorizers create and publish a master calendar of reporting requirements (MCRR). The MCRR is a list of each item that must be submitted along with the date it is required to be submitted.

Application and Enrollment

Section 504 of the Code provides that charter public schools shall not charge tuition and shall not discriminate in its pupil admissions policies or practices on the basis of intellectual or athletic ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, status as a student with a disability, or any other basis that would be illegal if used by a Michigan school district. However, charter public schools may limit admission to pupils who are within a particular range of age or grade level or on any other basis that would be legal if used by a Michigan school district and may give enrollment priority as described in law.

An authorizer reviews the charter public school's application and enrollment policies and procedures to ensure compliance with the law. If a lottery is needed, an authorizer will attend to ensure the lottery is conducted in a fair manner.

Staff Reviews

An authorizer conducts reviews of the charter public school's/educational service provider's personnel records to ensure compliance with applicable law. The scope of the review will include teacher and administrator certification, compliance with federal law, state, and federal criminal history record information, as well as unprofessional conduct disclosure information. Some authorizers contract with specialists to complete this review.

Site and Facility Reviews

While all charter public schools must undergo local and state health and safety inspections, authorizers ensure the charter public schools has received occupancy approval from the State of Michigan and require additional reviews to make certain that all settings are conducive to learning. A charter public school's learning environment includes both the interior and exterior of its facility. Authorizers will also ensure that concerns about church/state are addressed. Some authorizers contract with specialists to complete these reviews.

Annual Nonprofit Corporation Information Update

The State of Michigan requires all nonprofit corporations (i.e., charter public schools) to file an annual report. Authorizers verify that their charter public schools have filed the necessary report to ensure they remain a legal non-profit corporation.

Emergency Operations Plans

To ensure the safety of students and staff, Public Act 436 of 2018 (MCL 380.1308b) requires a charter public school to develop an emergency operations plan (EOP) for each school building operated by the school that includes a biennial review of the EOP to be completed in partnership with at least one law enforcement agency. An authorizer should ensure their charter public schools have an EOP for each school building that is reviewed biennial in partnership with at least one law enforcement agency. Some authorizers contract with specialists to complete these reviews.

Board Meetings and Open Meetings Act

The Open Meetings Act is an effective means by which to keep Michigan citizens informed. All meetings of a charter public school board shall be in compliance with the Open Meetings Act. Authorizers will often attend board meetings and read board meeting minutes to ensure compliance with the Open Meetings Act.

See the following Best Practice Guides for additional oversight best practices:

Academic Monitoring
Audited Financial Statements
Board Governance
Budgeting
Charter Application
Educational Service Provider Policies
Fiscal Oversight
Reauthorization

Reflective Questions

Is your oversight system comprehensive? How does it allow you to monitor and evaluate a charter public school's performance and compliance?

Does your oversight system allow you to answer the following questions:

- Is the charter public school achieving its academic goals as stated in the charter contract? All groups of pupils should be considered.
- Is the charter public school organizationally, educationally, and financially viable?
- Is the charter public school demonstrating good faith compliance in following the terms of its charter contract and applicable law?

Resources

Application and Enrollment Process

[Application and Enrollment Form](#)

Board Meeting Reviews

[Master Calendar of Reporting Requirements – Example 1](#)

[Master Calendar of Reporting Requirements – Example 2](#)

[Open Meetings Act](#)

Site and Facilities Reviews