



# Transparency Reporting

## Recognized Best Practices

### Regulatory Framework

[MCL 380.502](#) 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.”

The Revised School Code, [MCL 380.503\(6\)\(l\)](#), requires that the Academy Board “shall make information concerning its operation and management available to the public and to the authorizing body in the same manner as is required by state law for school districts.”

The State School Aid Act includes several requirements regarding transparency. See [MCL 388.1618](#), subsections 2, 3 and 11 for details.

MCL 388.1618 also includes language that imposes a penalty on those schools not in compliance with the Budget Transparency requirements. To avoid a state aid penalty, schools must ensure their transparency page is updated continuously throughout the year in accordance with the Michigan Department of Education’s (MDE) guidance.

MDE created the [Transparency Reporting Requirements Guidance](#) and [the Budget and Salary Compensation Transparency Reporting webpage](#) to help schools understand the transparency requirements.

### MCCSA Guiding Principles and Standards

MCCSA has adopted Principles and Standards (Standards) that guide authorizers as they develop strong authorizing practices. Focusing on performance and accountability ensures that student success remains paramount to authorizing decisions. 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...”

## What is transparency and why is it important?

Transparency is operating in such a manner that it is easy to see what actions are performed. Transparency implies openness, communication, and accountability. It is important because it is the foundation of trust. While the law requires charter public schools to be transparent for certain things, authorizers should value transparency in all operations.

To ensure compliance with the law, an authorizer may include transparency reporting requirements in the charter contract and create a Transparency Reporting Certification Form that a board would complete certifying that the school is in compliance with the law. The form would require the charter public school board to certify that the following information, which is required by law and subject to change, is available to the public:

1. A copy of the school's charter contract.
2. A list of currently serving members of the charter public school board, including name, address, and term of office.
3. Copies of policies approved by the charter public school board.
4. The board meeting agendas and minutes.
5. The budget approved by the board and of any amendments to the budget.
6. Copies of bills paid for amounts of \$10,000 or more, as submitted to the charter public school board.
7. Quarterly financial reports.
8. A current list of teachers and administrators working at the charter public school that includes individual salaries as submitted to the Registry of Educational Personnel.
9. Copies of the teaching or administrator's certificates or permits of current teaching and administrative staff.
10. Evidence of compliance with the criminal background and records checks and unprofessional conduct check required under sections 1230, 1230a, and 1230b of the Revised School Code for all teachers and administrators working at the charter public school board.
11. Curriculum documents and materials.
12. Proof of insurance.
13. Copies of facility leases or deeds, or both.
14. Copies of any equipment leases.
15. Copies of any management contracts or services contracts approved by the charter public school board.
16. All health and safety reports and certificates, including those relating to fire safety, environmental matters, asbestos inspection, boiler inspection, and food service.
17. Annual financial audits and any management letters issued as part of the school's annual financial audit.
18. Any other information specifically required under the Revised School Code.

## What should a board member do to ensure transparency?

The charter public school board should conduct its business in a transparent manner thus establishing a culture that is founded on transparency. The charter public school board should also ensure management makes the required information available to the public and its authorizer.

## What should a board expect management to do with transparency?

The charter public school board should expect management to be transparent and create a culture of transparency for the charter public school. Management should ensure all transparency requirements are fulfilled and report such to the charter public school board.

### Reflective Questions

How do your practices ensure compliance with the Transparency requirements?

How can you support your charter public school(s) to help ensure compliance?

### Resources

[MDE Transparency Guidance](#)

[MDE Budget Transparency Guidance](#)

[Transparency Reporting Certification Form](#)