



CHARTER SCHOOLS HANDBOOK



OKLAHOMA
Education

Updates Tracking Sheet

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INTRODUCTION

The Oklahoma Charter School Handbook is designed to be a brief overview of important resources for both new and existing charter schools on topics such as getting started, application process checklists, accountability, and other important links. It is intended to provide charter school leaders information that is vital for the successful operation of their school. The handbook has captured state and federal regulations that apply to charter schools in Oklahoma and suggestions of operational best practices. Numerous resources were used to compile the information in this document, and the content will be continually reviewed and revised in order to provide the most up-to-date guidance available.

CHAPTER 1: Definition of Charter Schools

In general, charter schools are independently operated public schools, open to all students, free-of-charge, with the flexibility to be organized differently than traditional public schools. In addition, charter schools are given the freedom of more innovation, while still being held accountable for advancing student achievement and other financial specific results.

To qualify as a charter school LEA in Oklahoma, the Local Educational Agency (LEA) must meet criteria of a charter school under the state and federal definition.

1.1 Oklahoma State Definition of Charter Schools

For purposes of the Oklahoma Charter Schools Act, Section 42.14 “charter school means a public school established by contract with a school district board of education, a higher education institution, an institution of higher learning accredited pursuant to Section 4103 of Title 70 of the Oklahoma Statutes, a federally recognized Indian tribe, or the Statewide Charter School Board, provide learning that will improve student achievement and as defined in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, 20 U.S.C. 8065.”

1.2 Federal Definition of Charter Schools

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Section 4310(2) defines charter schools as a public school that -

- “(A) in accordance with a specific State statute authorizing the granting of charters to schools, is exempt from significant State or local rules that inhibit the flexible operation and management of public schools, but not from any rules relating to the other requirements of this paragraph;
- (B) is created by a developer as a public school, or is adapted by a developer

- from an existing public school, and is operated under public supervision and direction;
- (C) operates in pursuit of a specific set of educational objectives determined by the school's developer and agreed to by the authorized public chartering agency;
 - (D) provides a program of elementary or secondary education, or both;
 - (E) is nonsectarian in its programs, admissions policies, practices, and all other operations, and is not affiliated with a sectarian school or religious institution;
 - (F) does not charge tuition;
 - (G) complies with the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.), section 444 of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. 1232g) (commonly referred to as the "Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974"), and part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act;
 - (H) is a school to which parents choose to send their children, and that—
 - (i) admits students on the basis of a lottery, consistent with section 4303(c)(3)(A), if more students apply for admission than can be accommodated; or
 - (ii) in the case of a school that has an affiliated charter school (such as a school that is part of the same network of schools), automatically enrolls students who are enrolled in the immediate prior grade level of the affiliated charter school and, for any additional student openings or student openings created through regular attrition in student enrollment in the affiliated charter school and the enrolling school, admits students on the basis of a lottery as described in clause (i);
 - (I) agrees to comply with the same Federal and State audit requirements as do other elementary schools and secondary schools in the State, unless such State audit requirements are waived by the State;
 - (J) meets all applicable Federal, State, and local health and safety requirements;
 - (K) operates in accordance with State law;
 - (L) has a written performance contract with the authorized public chartering agency in the State that includes a description of how student performance will be measured in charter schools pursuant to State assessments that are required of other schools and pursuant to any other assessments mutually agreeable to the authorized public chartering agency and the charter school; and
 - (M) may serve students in early childhood education programs or postsecondary students."

CHAPTER 2: Getting Started as a New Charter School

2.1 Starting-up Charter Schools in Oklahoma

For individuals who envision creating a charter school in Oklahoma, below are some of the first steps regarding the start-up of a charter school:

1. Draft a vision and mission statement for the charter school.
2. Form a board of governance/education.
3. Complete required training provided by the Statewide Charter School Board or an organization approved by the Statewide Charter School Board on the oversight duties of the sponsor.
4. File paperwork to become a 501c3 entity - visit irs.gov for more information.
5. Complete a market analysis for the intended community in which the charter school will be located.
6. Draft a budget with stated assumptions, revenues, costs, and projected cash-flows for the first five years of operation.
7. Secure a treasurer and/or an encumbrance clerk with experience in Oklahoma school finances.
8. Start looking for a physical location of where you will conduct business.
9. Start looking for a sponsor, also known as an authorizer.
10. Create a performance framework to measure the effectiveness of the charter school.
11. Complete a first full draft of the application to be submitted to the sponsor.
12. Solicit support from parents (may be through surveys and petitions.)
13. Retain legal services for the upcoming submission and contracting phase.
14. Take the first full draft to the applicable governance board for review and edits. Take the second draft to a small group of parents and/or educators for review and feedback.
15. Complete a third draft of the application.
16. Complete a draft contract to be entered into with the chosen sponsor before application submission to the sponsor that will include a performance framework.
17. Submit full application and contract to the sponsor.

2.2 Checklist of Documents to Be Submitted with the Charter School Application to the Sponsor

Now that you have prepared the documents and developed the processes listed above, you are probably ready to apply to your sponsor to become a charter school.

The checklist below is a minimum list of requirements made to help you navigate the process that is required in order to submit a charter school application to a sponsor or (authorizer). You must include **all** items listed below within your Charter School Application to the sponsor:

- ☐ A mission statement of the charter school.
- ☐ A description - including background information- of the educational structure and the governing body of the charter school.
- ☐ A financial plan for the first five years of operation to include policies and audit requirements, as well as information about a treasurer, encumbrance clerk and other officers who shall have primary responsibility for the finances of the charter school.
- ☐ A description of the hiring policy.
- ☐ The name(s) of the applicant(s) and the requested sponsor.
- ☐ The description of the facility and location of the charter school.
- ☐ A description of the grades being served.
- ☐ An outline of criteria designed to measure effectiveness of the charter school.
- ☐ Demonstrate the support from residents of the school district where the charter school will be located.
- ☐ Documentation that applicants completed a charter school training.
- ☐ A description of the minimum and maximum enrollment planned per year for each term of the charter contract.
- ☐ The proposed calendar for the charter school and sample of daily schedule.
- ☐ A description of the academic program aligned with Oklahoma state standards.
- ☐ A description of the instructional design of the charter school, including the type of Learning environment, class size and structure, curriculum overview and teaching methods.
- ☐ The plan for using internal and external assessments to measure and report student progress on the performance framework developed by the applicant.
- ☐ A performance framework that sets forth the academic and operational indicators, measures and metrics that will guide the evaluations of the charter school by a sponsor.
- ☐ The plan for identifying and successfully serving students with disabilities, students who are English language learners and students who are academically behind.
- ☐ A description of co-curricular or extracurricular programs and how they will be funded and delivered.
- ☐ Plans and timelines for student recruitment and enrollment, including lottery procedures.
- ☐ The student discipline policies for the charter school, including those for special needs students.
- ☐ An organizational chart that includes descriptions and roles/responsibilities that clearly presents the organizational structure of the charter school, including lines of authority and reporting between the governing board, staff, and any related bodies such as advisory bodies or parent and teacher councils and any external organizations that will play a role in managing the charter school.
- ☐ The leadership and teacher employment policies for the charter school.

- ☐ Proposed governing bylaws.
- ☐ Explanations of any partnerships or contractual partnerships central to the operations or mission of the charter school.
- ☐ The plans for providing transportation, food service and all other significant operational or ancillary services.
- ☐ Opportunities and expectations for parental involvement.
- ☐ A detailed school start-up plan that identifies tasks, timelines, and responsible individuals.
- ☐ A description of the insurance coverage the charter school will obtain.
- ☐ Start-up and five year budgets with clearly stated assumptions.
- ☐ Start-up and first year cash flow projections with clearly stated assumptions.
- ☐ Evidence of anticipated fundraising contributions.
- ☐ A sound facilities plan, including backup or contingency plans.
- ☐ Board member addresses, meeting locations, and meeting dates to be no less than four times per year.
- ☐ A statement declaring the charter school's intent to faithfully adhere to the Oklahoma Open Meeting Act and Oklahoma Open Records Act.

2.3 Performance Framework Checklist for a Charter School

A checklist is provided below of items to help you include a performance framework that is required within the charter school application to the sponsor. It clearly sets forth the academic and operational performance indicators and metrics that will guide the evaluations of the charter school by the sponsor:

- ☐ Student academic proficiency.
- ☐ Student academic growth.
- ☐ Achievement gaps in both proficiency and growth between major student subgroups.
- ☐ Student attendance.
- ☐ Recurrent enrollment from year to year as determined by the methodology used for public schools in Oklahoma.
- ☐ In the case of high schools, graduation rates as determined by the methodology used for public schools in Oklahoma.
- ☐ In case of high schools, postsecondary readiness.
- ☐ Financial performance and sustainability.
- ☐ Governing board performance and stewardship, including compliance with all applicable laws, regulations, and terms of the charter contract.

2.4 Checklist of Items to Be Included in the Contract Between the Charter School and the Sponsor

By preparing a draft contract (between you, as a charter school, and the sponsor) before you apply to become a charter school to your sponsor, you will be prepared for

contract negotiations. The minimum requirement checklist below is provided to help you create a contract between a sponsor and a charter school:

- ☐ A description of the program to be offered.
- ☐ Admission policies and procedures.
- ☐ Management and administration of the charter school.
- ☐ Requirements and procedures for program and financial audits.
- ☐ A description of how the charter school will comply with the charter requirements set forth in the Oklahoma Charter Schools Act.
- ☐ Assumption of liability by the charter school.
- ☐ The terms of the contract.
- ☐ A description of the high standards of expectation and rigor for the charter school plans and assurance that charter school plans adopted meet at least those standards.
- ☐ Policies that require the charter school be as equally free and open to all students as traditional public schools.
- ☐ Procedures that require students enrolled in the charter school to be selected by lottery to ensure fairness if more students apply than a school has the capacity to accommodate.
- ☐ Policies that require the charter school to be subject to the same academic standards and expectations as existing public schools.
- ☐ A description of the requirements and procedures for the charter school to receive funding in accordance with statutory requirements and guidelines for existing public schools.
- ☐ The percentage of state aid the sponsor will charge for administrative services, not to exceed 5%.
- ☐ The enumerated services the sponsor will provide the charter school in exchange for the authorization fee.

Note: Eligible sponsors have 90 days to respond to each application. If an application is rejected, applicants may within 30 days submit a revised application, which must be answered within 30 days. If it is rejected a second time, applicants may seek mediation or binding arbitration. However, applicants seeking sponsorship by a local board of education may appeal the denial of a revised application to the State Board of Education.

CHAPTER 3: OSDE Guidelines

3.1 Charter School Application for Accreditation

Like any other public school, charter schools must go through an accreditation process which is run through the Office of Accreditation at the OSDE. This is to ensure that charter schools are compliant with all federal and state laws.

The Accreditation Application opens for data entry on October 1st every year, on OSDE Single Sign-On (SSO). The superintendent must review, certify, and submit the Accreditation Application by October 15th each year, on OSDE SSO. The district must complete and keep a copy of this paper application on file in the superintendent's office at the local district. For more information contact the Office of Accreditation at OSDE (405) 521-3335.

3.2 Obtaining County-District Number from the Office of Accreditation at OSDE

By May 1st of the opening year, the school will request a county/district/site code number from the Office of Accreditation at the Oklahoma State Department of Education.

Email a copy of the **approved** Charter Contract, the board minutes approving school opening, and a request for school codes on school letterhead to: sde.accreditation@sde.ok.gov, phone (405) 521-3335

3.3 Charter School Responsibilities to Apply for Federal Funds with the Office of Title Services.

Charter schools are required to set up a meeting with the Office of Title Services (OTS) at OSDE for technical support. Please call (405) 522-5035 to arrange a meeting.

Below are the requirements a charter school **must** comply with, to receive federal funds through the Office of Title Services:

1. A charter school that opens for the first time or significantly expands its enrollment must notify the Office of Accreditation at the Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE) in writing, at least **120 days** in advance of the date the charter school is scheduled to open or expand. [EDGAR, 76.788(a), Authority: 20 U.S.C. 8065a]. When applying for federal funds, the charter school must provide the written notification document indicating the date when the Office of Accreditation at OSDE was notified by the charter school.
2. Establish student enrollment eligibility to receive funds under the program and comply with all program requirements.

3. Upload the Consolidated District Academic Plan (CDAP) in the Grants Management System (GMS). Contact the Office of Title Services at (405) 522-5035 to receive technical assistance on how to complete and submit this plan.
4. A charter school that has not yet opened or expanded must provide OSDE with any data or information available to the charter school that the state may reasonably need to estimate the amount of funds the charter school will be eligible to receive when it actually opens or expands.
 - Provide estimated economically disadvantaged student count for free, reduced and total population, ages 5-17 (Appendix A).
 - See Appendix B for Income Eligibility Guidelines.
5. Once a charter school actually opens or expands, **it must provide actual enrollment** and eligibility data to the state.
 - If using the free lunch program, provide the free lunch, reduced lunch, and 5-17 population in the Child Nutrition e-claims system. Contact the Office of Child Nutrition at the OSDE for more information at (405) 522-5048.
 - If not using the free lunch program, provide actual enrollment on economically disadvantaged student count for free, reduced and total population, ages 5-17 (Appendix A).

3.4. Charter School Responsibilities for Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part B

Agencies responsible for special education and related services must abide by Oklahoma state law, policies and procedures, and the federal regulations for the IDEA, Part B. Agencies having these responsibilities are: local educational agencies (LEAs), educational service agencies (ESAs), public charter schools not otherwise included as LEAs or ESAs, other public agencies (e.g., state schools for students with deafness and blindness and state and local juvenile and adult correctional facilities), and accredited private schools and facilities as described in the applicable federal regulations and established by Oklahoma state laws. [34 CFR § 300.12]

Each LEA (including a charter school) must make available, upon request, information needed by the State Education Agency (SEA) to meet the requirements of the IDEA. In addition, each LEA must, upon request, provide information to the public regarding the eligibility of the LEA for the IDEA Part B funds. The LEA must also cooperate in any efforts to aid in the transfer of records for migratory children. The LEA must assure that it will make available to parents of children with disabilities and to the general public all documents relating to the eligibility of the agency under the IDEA, Part B.

Each local educational agency (LEA) receiving federal IDEA, Part B funds must expend those funds in accordance with the federal regulations which appear in the *Special Education Funding Manual for IDEA, Part B*. The *Special Education Funding Manual for IDEA, Part B* is a technical assistance document for use by LEAs in implementing the

funding requirements of the IDEA, Part B. Within the *Part II, IDEA Part, B LEA Application for Federal Special Education Funds*, each LEA receiving funds must assure that those funds are used only to pay the excess costs of providing special education and related services to children with disabilities. Each LEA must also assure that the funds are used to supplement, not supplant, state and local funds. All employees paid with federal funds must maintain time distribution records. All IDEA, Part B funds are available on a claim reimbursement basis.

3.5 State Aid at OSDE

Oklahoma state law provides that charter schools shall receive the state aid and state appropriated funding generated by their students through the Oklahoma State Aid funding formula, established by law. Up to five percent of a school's allocation may be retained by its sponsor for administrative costs. Charter schools may receive additional funding through public aid, grants, federal funding (such as Title I) and other revenue, as well as private sources.

The Office of State Aid at OSDE is responsible for the state education funding formula, school activity funds, and state grants distribution. To receive more information about state aid including important dates and deadlines, contact the Office of State Aid at OSDE at (405) 521-3460.

CHAPTER 4: Accountability Requirements

In Oklahoma, charter schools are public schools operated independently of public school systems, either by nonprofit or for-profit organizations. Charter schools are exempt from many of the requirements imposed by state and local boards of education regarding hiring and curriculum, but must hold to the same academic and financial accountability measures as traditional schools.

4.1 Student Accountability

Charter schools are public schools that typically allow teachers the freedom to be more innovative to address students' needs. However, charters are still held accountable to the same state and federal measurements and testing requirements as traditional public schools and can be closed due to non-successful academic responsibilities.

4.1.1 Accountability to the Sponsor

Charter schools are accountable to their sponsor (authorizer). Initial charter school contracts are for a term of five years and must include criteria by which effectiveness of the school will be measured. If the sponsor intends to deny charter school's request for renewal of the contract, then the sponsor must give a 90 day written notice and

explanation of the intent to terminate the contract. Further, if a charter school ranks in the bottom 5% of all public schools in Oklahoma at the time of renewal of its contract, the charter school is to be closed.

4.1.2 Accountability to their Board of Education

Charter schools are accountable to their board of education. When charter schools are run well, their advisory or governance boards maintain high performance standards and take corrective action when evaluating their performance.

4.1.3 Accountability to OSDE

Like any other public school, charter schools must go through an accreditation process established by the Office of Accreditation at OSDE. This is to ensure that charter schools are compliant with all federal and state laws. Additionally, charter schools are graded on the state report card.

4.2 Financial Accountability

Charter schools' Board of Education, superintendents, business managers, encumbrance clerks, treasurers, independent auditors, and others who have the responsibility for preparation of school district budgets and the administration of school district funds must adhere to and become familiar with policies and procedures for implementation of the Oklahoma Cost Accounting System (OCAS) and school finance.

These policies and procedures have been prepared to assist in the implementation for financial transactions utilizing the coding structure of the Oklahoma Cost Accounting System. The goal of the Office of Financial Services at OSDE is to have consistency in coding and accurate implementation of school laws and the Oklahoma State Board of Education regulations relating to school finances. The rules detailed in the OCAS policies and procedures describe the basis of funding of public schools; the duties and procedures for the financial operation of districts; and the responsibilities of the Oklahoma State Department of Education and individual districts in regard to securing, dispensing, reporting and accounting for school funds.

Contact the Office of Financial Services at OSDE at (405) 522-0275 for detailed financial information.

4.3. Federal Grant Accountability

Many types of federal funding in education carry with them a "Supplement, not Supplant" requirement. The LEA must ensure services provided with federal funding do

not replace, or supplant, services that an LEA would ordinarily provide, or would be legally obligated to provide, to all students in the absence of federal funds.

Charter schools may participate in the following programs through the Office of Title Services at OSDE:

Title I – Part A – Improving Basic Programs Operated by State and Local Education Agencies

Purpose: To ensure that economically disadvantaged students are given the same opportunity as all other students to achieve state-defined academic standards. To provide a funding source for Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) to supplement the local educational program.

Title II – Part A – Preparing, Training and Recruiting High Quality, Teachers, Principals and other Leaders

Purpose: To increase student academic achievement through improving the quality and effectiveness of teachers, principals, and other school leaders.

Title III – Part A – Language Instruction for English Learning Immigrant Students

Purpose: To ensure that English Learners (ELs) and/or immigrant children attain English proficiency, develop high levels of academic attainment in English, and meet the same challenging State academic content and achievement standards all children are expected to meet.

Title IV – Part A – Student Support and Academic Enrichment

Purpose: To improve students' academic achievement by increasing the capacity of States, local educational agencies, schools, and local communities to provide all students with access to a well-rounded education, improve school conditions, and to improve the use of technology.

Title V – Part B – Rural Education Initiative – REAP/RLIS

Purpose: To address the unique needs of rural school districts that frequently lack the personnel and resources needed to compete effectively for Federal competitive grants and receive formula grant allocations in amounts too small to be effective in meeting their intended purposes.

Title IX – Part A – McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act

Purpose: To ensure that each child of a homeless individual and each homeless youth have equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, including a public preschool education, as provided to other children and youths. All LEAs must identify and serve homeless children and youth, regardless of receiving Title IX Part A funding.

Once federal funds are received, charter schools are subject to the same federal fiscal requirements as other LEAs, as outlined below:

1) Maintenance of Effort (MOE)

An LEA may receive funds under a covered program for any fiscal year only if the State Education Agency (SEA) finds that either the combined fiscal effort per student, or the aggregate expenditures of state and local funds with respect to the provision of free public education by the LEA for the preceding fiscal year was not less than 90 percent of the combined fiscal effort per student or aggregate expenditures for the second preceding fiscal year. *[ESEA Section 1118(a) and 8521(a)]*

2) Comparability (if applicable)

At the school building level, comparability requires an LEA to ensure that each Title I school receives its fair share of resources from state and local funds. In other words, an LEA may not discriminate (either intentionally or unintentionally) against its Title I schools when distributing resources funded from state and local sources simply because these schools receive federal funds.

3) Supplement, Not Supplant

An LEA demonstrates compliance with the Title I, Part A supplement, not supplant requirement by using a methodology to allocate state and local funds to each Title I school that ensures that each school receives all the state and local funds it would otherwise receive if it were not receiving Title I funds. *[ESSA, Section 1118(b)(2)]*

4) Supplement, Not Supplant Methodology

If applicable, an LEA's methodology must be "Title I neutral" in that it allocates state and local funds to schools without regard for Title I status. This demonstrates that an LEA did not reduce the state and local funds made available to a Title I school because such a school is also receiving Title I, Part A funds.

5) Title I, Part A, 15 Percent Carryover Limitation

For LEAs receiving an allocation greater than or equal to \$50,000, Title I, Part A has a carryover limitation of 15 percent of the current year allocation plus any transfers in, excluding carryover or any re-allocated funds. Unexpended funds exciding the 15% limitation are considered excess carryover.

6) Period of Performance (27 months availability of federal funds)

Under section 421(b) of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA), LEAs and SEAs must obligate funds during the 27 months extending from July 1 of the fiscal year for which the funds were appropriated through September 30 of the second succeeding fiscal year. This maximum period includes a 15-month period of initial availability plus a 12 month period for carryover. However, section 1127(a) of the ESSA limits the amount of Title I, Part A funds an LEA may carry over from one fiscal year's allocation to not more than 15 percent of the total Title I, Part A funds allocated to the LEA for that fiscal year.

7) Independent Audit Reviews

Before June 30th of each fiscal year, each LEA will engage an independent auditor, approved by the Oklahoma State Auditor and Inspector, to examine its financial statements. Each LEA superintendent shall notify the Oklahoma State

Board of Education (OBOE), prior to the end of the fiscal year to be audited, of the independent auditor who has been engaged to conduct the audit. [OS § 70-22-104]

Districts expending more than \$1,000,000.00 in federal funds are required to have an audit per 200 C.F.R. Part 200 and state regulations.

Districts expending less than \$1,000,000.00 in federal funds are reviewed for compliance with state regulations.

Audits for districts are reviewed by Office of Financial Accounting at OSDE.

8) Consolidated Monitoring of Federal Programs

Charter schools shall participate in ESEA Consolidated Monitoring (ESEA Grant Performance Review) of all federal programs every five years, or more often, if classified as “at risk” LEA.

CHAPTER 5: FAQs

5.1 Q: Who can sponsor (authorize) a charter school?

A: The Oklahoma Charter School Act allows several avenues to charter sponsorship. These sponsors review applications for charter schools and then supervise the charter school if approved. Possible sponsors are listed:

1. Any school district in the state
2. Any technology center school district
3. A higher education institution or community college, if the charter school is located within a county having a population of 500,000 or more.
4. A federally recognized Indian tribe, if the charter is located within former reservation or treaty area boundaries of the tribe on property held in a trust.
5. The State Board of Education when the applicant is the Office of Juvenile Affairs or when the applicant has twice been denied by a local school district pursuant to the requirements in the Oklahoma Charter Schools Act

5.2 Q: How do charter schools choose their performance goals?

A: Charter schools and their sponsors must agree on student academic achievement goals before opening the school. These goals are written in the schools’ contract, or charter in partnership with the sponsor.

5.3 Q: Can a charter school change their performance or financial goals in their charter?

A: When a charter is created between a school and a sponsor, a time limit for renewal is specified, usually 3-5 years. During the renewal time, the school contract may be revised or renegotiated by either party. Additionally, sponsors may provide specific goals for struggling schools in an attempt to show satisfactory growth towards sustainable practices.

5.4 Q: Will the charter school receive an allocation for the current fiscal year, if it notifies the SEA less than 120 days of the date scheduled to open?

A: An SEA that receives less than 120 day actual notice of the date an eligible charter school LEA is scheduled to open or significantly expand its enrollment must allocate funds to the charter school LEA on or before the date the SEA allocates funds to LEAs under the applicable covered program *for the succeeding academic year*.

5.5 Q: What happens if the responsible State agency or LEA does not receive *any* notice that an eligible charter school has opened or expanded?

A: An SEA or LEA that does not receive written notice that a charter school has opened or expanded is not required to comply with the final regulations when allocating funds to the charter school.

5.6 Q: How and when does a State or LEA allocate funds to an eligible charter school that opens or expands between November 1st and February 1st of an academic year?

A: For each charter school that opens for the first time or significantly expands its enrollment after November 1st but before February 1st of an academic year, the state or LEA must implement procedures to ensure that the charter school receives at least a *pro rata* portion of the funds for which the charter school is eligible under the applicable program. The *pro rata* amount must be based on the number of months or days the charter school will participate in the program as compared to the total number of months or days in the academic year. The funds must be made available to the charter school on or before the date the State or LEA allocates funds to LEAs or public schools under the applicable program for the succeeding academic year.

5.7 Q: How and when does a State or LEA allocate funds to an eligible charter school that opens or expands after February 1st of an academic year?

A: Although states and LEAs may provide funds to charter schools that open for the first time or significantly expand their enrollment after February 1st of an academic year, they are not required to do so. States or LEAs that elect to fund such charter schools may provide the charter school with a pro rata portion of the funds for which the charter school is eligible under the applicable program. Again, the pro rata amount must be based on the number of months or days the charter school will participate in the program as compared to the total number of months or days in the academic year. Because states and LEAs are not required to fund charter schools that open or expand after February 1st, states and LEAs that elect to do so may establish their own procedures and timeframes for providing funds. In providing funds to charter schools that open or expand after February 1st; however, the state or LEA must use funds allocated to the state under the applicable program for the academic year in which the charter school opened or expanded, or for the succeeding academic year.

5.8 Q: Do charter schools have to hire state certified teachers to provide classroom instruction and/or tutoring?

A: No. Except as provided for in the Oklahoma Charter Schools Act and its charter, a charter school shall be exempt from all statutes and rules relating to schools, boards of education, and school districts. *[Oklahoma Charter School Act, Section 42.18-5]*

5.9 Q: Do charter schools have to participate in testing and reporting as is required of a school district?

A: Yes. A charter school shall participate in the testing as required by the Oklahoma School Testing Program Act and the reporting of test results as is required of a school district. A charter school shall also provide any necessary data to the Office of Accountability. *[Oklahoma Charter School Act, Section 42.18-4]*

5.10 Q: Are there any financial, audit and reporting requirements for charter schools?

A: Yes. A charter school, to the extent possible, shall be subject to the same reporting requirements, financial audits, audit procedures, and audit requirements as a school district. The State Department of Education or State Auditor and Inspector may conduct financial, program, or compliance audits. A charter school shall use the

Oklahoma Cost Accounting System to report financial transactions to the sponsoring school district. *[Oklahoma Charter School Act, Section 42.18-6]*

GLOSSARY

Abbreviations

CNP	Child Nutrition Program
ESEA	Elementary and Secondary Education Act
ESSA	Every Student Succeeds Act
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Act
LEA	Local Educational Agency
OCAS	Oklahoma Cost Accounting System
RAO	Regional Accreditation Officers
SBE	State Board of Education
SDE	State Department of Education
SEA	State Educational Agency
SES	Special Education Services
SIS	Student Information System
SNS	Supplement, Not Supplant
SSO	Single Sign On
SWSP	Schoolwide School Plans
TLE	Teacher and Leader Effectiveness

Core Academic Subjects

“The term 'core academic subjects' means English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography.” *[Title IX, Part A, Section 9101(11)]*

Experienced Teachers

Experienced teachers will be those in a public school who have been teaching more than a total of three complete school years.

Inexperienced Teachers

The term ‘beginning teacher’ means a teacher in a public school who has been teaching less than a total of three complete school years.” [ESEA, Title IX, Part A, Sec. 9101(3)]

Paraprofessionals

Federal definition: “For the purposes of Title I, Part A, a **paraprofessional** is an employee of an LEA who provides instructional support in a program supported with Title I, Part A funds. Individuals who work solely in non-instructional roles, such as food service, cafeteria or playground supervision, personal care services, and non-instructional computer assistance are not considered to be paraprofessionals under Title I, Part A.”

State definition “A public school paraprofessional is an employee of a school district whose position is either instructional in nature, or who delivers other direct services to students and/or their parents. A public-school paraprofessional serves in a position for which a teacher or another professional has the ultimate responsibility for the design, implementation, and evaluation of the individual educational programs or related services and student performance.” [OS §70-6-127(A)]

RESOURCES

- *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), July 31, 2018*
- *Office of Management and Budget (OMB), 2 CFR Chapter I, Chapter II, Part 200, December 26, 2013*
- *Oklahoma Charter School Act*
- *O.S. § 70-22-104*
- *Oklahoma Public School Resource Center (OPSRC)*

CONTACTS

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Estimated Economically Disadvantaged Student Count Office of Title Services

County Name & #: District Name & #: Site Code:				
<u>If the Charter School LEA is not using the free lunch program please attach documentation on how the LEA determined the poverty data.</u>				
Sending* County Name	Sending* District Name	Economically Disadvantaged (Ages 5-17) or Free Lunch	Economically Disadvantaged (Ages 5-17) or Reduced Lunch	Total Population count (Ages 5-17)
Add more rows as necessary				
*Sending county and district is the county and district that the student would have attended.				

APPENDIX B

INCOME-ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOL YEAR 2026-2027 FOR FREE AND REDUCED-PRICE MEALS

This is the income scale used by _____

(School Food Authority)

to determine eligibility for free meals. *(The Scale Should Not Be Distributed to Families)*

(The Free Scale Should Not Be Distributed to Families)

ELIGIBILITY SCALE FOR FREE MEALS 130 Percent of Poverty Level					
Household Size	Income				
	Annual	Monthly	Twice Per Month	Every Two Weeks	Weekly
1	20,748	1,729	865	798	399
2	28,132	2,345	1,173	1,082	541
3	35,516	2,960	1,480	1,366	683
4	42,900	3,575	1,788	1,650	825
5	50,284	4,191	2,096	1,934	967
6	57,668	4,806	2,403	2,218	1,109
7	65,052	5,421	2,711	2,502	1,251
8	72,436	6,037	3,019	2,786	1,393
For each additional family member, add:	7,384	616	308	284	142

ELIGIBILITY SCALE FOR REDUCED-PRICE MEALS 185 Percent of Poverty Level					
Household Size	Income				
	Annual	Monthly	Twice Per Month	Every Two Weeks	Weekly
1	29,526	2,461	1,231	1,136	568
2	40,034	3,337	1,669	1,540	770
3	50,542	4,212	2,106	1,944	972
4	61,050	5,088	2,544	2,349	1,175
5	71,558	5,964	2,982	2,573	1,377
6	82,066	6,839	3,420	3,157	1,579
7	92,574	7,715	3,858	3,561	1,781
8	103,082	8,591	4,296	3,965	1,983
For each additional family member, add:	10,508	876	438	405	203

APPENDIX C

Estimated IDEA Economically Disadvantaged Student Count

Site Name: _____

IDEA Part B - Please enter data for <u>Child Count</u> .			
<i>If the Charter School LEA has students who are receiving Special Education services or related services and are currently on an IEP, please enter the student information below.</i>			
Student Name	Student Birthdate	Sending* County Name	Sending* District Name
(Add more rows as necessary.)			
Total Site Enrollment of students on Individual Education Programs (IEP)			
*Sending county and district is the county and district that the student would have attended.			

Once a charter school actually opens or expands, it **must provide** actual enrollment and eligibility data to the State.