

A policy to consider.

Instruction

Program Adaptations/Alternative Programs

Relations with Charter Schools

The Board of Education supports efforts by parents, teachers, or other interested persons or organizations, including public or independent institutions of higher learning, Boards of Education, or Regional Service Centers interested in establishing charter schools within the district. The Board believes that public school programs should be designed to fit the needs of individual students and that parents and educators have a right and responsibility to participate in the schools which serve them. Connecticut has authorized charter schools. The Board shall work cooperatively with individuals and groups submitting proposals and applications for charter schools because charter schools can serve as centers for innovation and educational leadership to improve student performance. Charter schools can also impact the racial, ethnic and economic isolation of the student population.

A charter school shall be a public, non-sectarian, non-religious, non-home-based school which operates within the public school district independently of the Board of Education in accordance with the terms of its charter and the provisions of Connecticut General Statutes 10-66aa to 10-66ff, inclusive. It shall be subject to all federal and state laws and constitutional provisions prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, disability, athletic performance or proficiency in the English language. Enrollment may be limited to particular grade levels or a specialized educational focus and shall be open to all students within the state. A local charter may give preference to district students and may target at-risk students. Tuition shall not be charged in local or state charter schools.

Each charter school shall be governed by its own governing body as specified in its approved charter. The governing body will have overall responsibility for the operation and management of the school, including its curriculum, the development of staff and student policies, staffing and financial operation.

The Board of Education shall be involved in the approval process for local and state charter schools. The Board will initially receive applications for local charters. The Board shall vote on the application after holding a public hearing and surveying teachers and parents to determine if there is sufficient local interest. Emphasis shall be placed on determining if the application meets the requirements imposed by the law. If approved, the application will be forwarded to the State Board of Education for approval. Applications for state charters shall be submitted to the State Board of Education which shall conduct a hearing in the school district in which the school will be located and also shall solicit comments from the Board of Education in which the school is to be located and from contiguous districts.

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Program Adaptations/Alternative Programs

Relations with Charter Schools (continued)

All laws which apply to a Board of Education apply to charter schools unless waived. Applicants for charter schools may request a waiver from various statutory provisions that apply to Boards of Education. Mandates regarding health, safety, certification, mastery testing and collective bargaining may not be waived.

An approved charter school is considered a separate statutory entity, which may hold property, make contacts, sue or be sued and borrow money. Neither the State nor the Board of Education are liable for the debts or other actions of a charter school except as such obligations may be created by contract.

The Board of Education shall, for a local charter school, pay the amount specified in the charter for each student enrolled in the school. State charter schools will receive funding from the state, as specified in the statutes. Transportation shall also be provided to students enrolled in the charter school within the district unless the charter school makes other arrangements. The Board of Education will/will not (*choice*) provide transportation for students attending a charter school who reside in another district. (No statutory requirement) A student enrolled in a local charter, not a state charter school, shall be considered a student enrolled in the school district for purposes of education equalization aid.

The Board of Education shall receive from the local charter school, a copy of the annual report to the Commissioner of Education, which shall include the progress of its students; its financial condition, including a certified audit statement of all revenues and expenditures; and the accomplishment of its mission, purpose and specialized focus of the school. The charter school must determine compliance with the provisions of its charter and applicable laws or face probation or revocation of its charter.

Teachers at local charter schools are subject to the collective bargaining agreement that applies to teachers in the district in which the charter school is located. The terms of the contract may be modified only upon a majority vote of the teachers employed at the charter school. Teachers employed by the Board of Education shall be granted a two year leave of absence to work in a charter school, which may be extended at the request of the teacher for an additional two year period. The teacher may return to the same or a comparable position at any time during the leave, and such leave time will not be considered as an interruption of service for purposes of seniority or retirement. Such time may not be included for the purpose of achieving tenure.

The district recognizes its responsibility to charter school resident students for conducting planning and placement team meetings regarding children with disabilities. Representatives from the charter school will be invited to the PPTs. The district will also pay the difference, as required, between the amount received by the charter school and the reasonable cost of special education instruction.

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Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

10-66aa Charter schools: Definitions.

10-66bb Application process and requirements. Charter renewal. Probation. Revocation.

10-66cc School profile. Report.

10-66dd School professionals employed in charter schools. Charter schools subject to laws governing public schools; exceptions; waivers.

10-66ee Charter school functions. Student count for purposes of education equalization aid. Transportation. Contracting authority.

10-66ff Powers. Liability limited.

Policy adopted:

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