

Policy Guide



Policy No. 139

Section PROGRAMS

Title CHARTER SCHOOLS

Adopted FEBRUARY 16, 1999

Last Revised JUNE 30, 2020

POLICY NO. 139 CHARTER SCHOOLS		
Section 1	<p><u>Purpose</u></p> <p>In order to provide students, parents/guardians and community members an opportunity to establish and maintain schools that operate independently from this school district, the Board shall evaluate applications submitted for charter schools located within the District, in accordance with the requirements of law and those established by this Board.</p> <p>The Board shall work cooperatively with individuals and groups submitting proposals and applications for charter schools.</p>	SC 1702-A
Section 2	<p><u>Definitions</u></p> <p>Appeal Board means the State Charter School Appeal Board established by the Charter School Law.</p> <p>Board of Trustees of a charter school shall be classified as public officials.</p> <p>Charter School means an independent, nonsectarian public school established and operated under a charter from the local Board in which students are enrolled or attend. A charter school must be organized as a public, nonprofit corporation; and charters may not be granted to any for-profit entity nor to support home education programs.</p> <p>Local Board of Directors (Board), means the Board of Directors of the school district in which a proposed or approved charter school is located.</p>	<p>SC 1703-A</p> <p>SC 1715-A</p> <p>SC 1703-A, 1715-A, 1717-A</p> <p>SC 1703-A</p>

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Section 3	<p>Regional Charter School means an independent public school established and operated under a charter from more than one local Board and approved by an affirmative vote of a majority of all Board members of each of the school districts involved.</p>	SC 1703-A, 1718-A
	<p><u>Authority</u></p>	
	<p>The Board shall evaluate submitted applications for charter schools based on the criteria established by law, regulations and any additional criteria required by the Board.</p>	SC 1717-A
	<p>A charter school application shall be approved or denied by a majority vote of all Board members at a public meeting, in accordance with the provisions of the law. Written notice of the Board’s decision shall be sent to the applicant, Department of Education and the Appeal Board, including reasons for denial and a clear description of application deficiencies if the application is denied. The Board shall evaluate denied applications that are revised and resubmitted.</p>	SC 1717-A 65 Pa C.S.A. 701 et seq
	<p>Upon approval of a charter application, the Board and the charter school’s Board of Trustees shall sign the written charter, which shall be binding on both. The charter shall be for a period of three (3) to five (5) years and may be renewed for five-year periods by the Board.</p>	SC 1720-A
	<p>The Board may approve a leave of absence for up to five (5) years for a district employee to work in a charter school located in the District of employment or in a regional charter school in which the employing district is a participant, and the employee shall have the right to return to a comparable position in the District. The Board at its discretion may grant tenure to a temporary professional employee on leave from this District to teach in a charter school located in the District, upon completion of the appropriate probation period.</p>	SC 1724-A
	<p>The Board shall annually assess whether each charter school is meeting the goals of its charter and shall require each charter school to submit an annual report no later than August 1 of each year.</p>	SC 1728-A
<p>The Board shall conduct a comprehensive review prior to granting a five-year renewal of the charter.</p>	SC 1728-A	

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	<p>The Board shall have ongoing access to the records and facilities of the charter school to ensure that the charter school is in compliance with its charter, Board policy and applicable laws.</p>	SC 1728-A
	<p>In cases where the health or safety of the charter school’s students, staff or both is/are at serious risk, the Board may take immediate action to revoke a charter.</p>	SC 1729-A
	<p>The Board affirms that the Board of Trustees and the charter school shall be solely liable for any and all damages and costs of any kind resulting from any legal challenges involving the operation of a charter school. The local Board shall not be held liable for any activity or operation related to the program of a charter school.</p>	SC 1727-A
	<p>A charter school shall execute a “hold harmless” agreement indemnifying and insuring/agreeing to defend the District in any and all kinds of liability areas so that the District and Board are protected in any litigation related to the operation of the charter school.</p>	
Section 4	<p><u>Delegation of Responsibility</u></p> <p>Applications for charter schools shall be submitted to the Superintendent or designee, who shall be responsible for communicating and cooperating with all applicants.</p> <p>The Superintendent or designee shall be responsible to discuss with applicants technical assistance and contracted services that may be provided by the District.</p>	
Section 5	<p><u>Guidelines</u></p> <p>A charter school shall be subject to all federal and state laws and regulations prohibiting discrimination in admissions, employment and operation on the basis of disability, race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, ancestry or need for special education services or any other protected class.</p> <p>A charter school shall submit monthly enrollment figures and other required reports to the District, as stated in the charter.</p>	SC 1715-A

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Transportation

The District shall provide transportation to resident students attending a charter school located in the District, a regional charter school of which the District is a member, and a charter school located within ten (10) miles outside district boundaries, in accordance with distance requirements established for district students.

SC 1726-A

Transportation shall be provided to charter school students on the dates and periods that the charter school is in session, regardless of whether transportation is provided to district students on those days.

Applications

Applications for charter schools must contain all the information specified in the Charter Schools Law and any additional information required by the Board.

SC 1717-A, 1719-A

Applications for charter schools shall be submitted to the Board by November 15 of the school year preceding the school year in which the school will be established.

SC 1717-A

Within forty-five (45) days of receipt, the Board shall hold at least one (1) public hearing on the charter application, in accordance with law. At least forty-five (45) days must pass between the first public hearing and the final decision of the Board. No later than seventy-five (75) days after the first public hearing, the Board shall grant or deny the application.

SC 1717-A

Insurance/Risk Management

The charter school shall adequately protect against liability and risk through an active risk management program approved by the Board. The program shall include proof of purchase of insurance coverages as required by the Board.

SC 1719-A, 1727-A

Minimum coverages and levels of appropriate coverages shall be established in the charter.

A charter school shall operate in a manner that minimizes the risk of injury and harm to students, employees and others.

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References:

PA School Code – 24 P.S. Sec. 1701-A et seq, 1702-A, 1703-A,
1715-A, 1717-A, 1718-A, 1719-A, 1720-A, 1723-A, 1724-A,
1726-A, 1727-A, 1728-A, 1729-A

PA Sunshine Act – 65 Pa. C.S.A. Sec. 701 et seq