



TENNESSEE
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

CHARTER SCHOOL SUBCOMMITTEE

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

JULY 17, 2019

RECAP OF PC 219

CHANGES TO THE CHARTER LAW

Public Chapter 219 of the 111th General Assembly made the following major changes to Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49, Chapter 13:

- Creation of the Tennessee Public Charter School Commission; and
- Granting the State Board the authority to evaluate authorizer quality.

Given these changes, several of the State Board's charter school responsibilities will be turned over to the Commission in 2021, including:

- Serving as an appellate authorizer; and
- Serving as the LEA for the State Board's currently operating charter schools.

PRIORITY TIMELINE

- By December 2019 – Appoint all Commission members and hold organizing meeting
- By February 2020 – Launch search and hire Executive Director
- By Spring 2020 – Executive Director hires additional staff
 - Priorities before Fall 2020: Attorney and appeal-focused staff
 - Priorities before January 2021: Federal programs, special populations, and finance staff
- Fall 2020 – Commission members/staff participate in State Board’s new start appeal process
- January 2021 – Commission’s first opportunity to receive appeals
 - First appeals may be renewal, revocation, or material modification petitions
- August 2021 – Commission’s first new-start appeals season begins

AUTHORIZER EVALUATIONS

OUR CHARGE

Public Chapter 219 of the 111th General Assembly granted the State Board the authority to evaluate authorizer quality by conducting “periodic evaluations of authorizers.”

The State Board’s authorizer evaluations shall:

- *Determine authorizer compliance with requirements of the Tennessee Public Charter Schools Act of 2002 (Title 49, Chapter 13) and the rules and regulations of the State Board; and*
- *Ensure alignment with the State Board’s quality authorizing standards.*

Who will be evaluated?

- All current district authorizers: Hamilton County, Knox County, Metro-Nashville Public Schools, and Shelby County
- All statewide authorizers: Achievement School District and Tennessee Public Charter School Commission

INFORMATION GATHERING

- State Board staff has taken initial steps to connect with evaluators and stakeholders across the country to learn about their processes and pitfalls.
- At this point, the State Board staff has gathered information from the following evaluators and stakeholders:
 - Minnesota Department of Education
 - Ohio Department of Education
 - Authorizers in Ohio and Minnesota
 - National Association of Charter School Authorizers
 - School Works

GOALS FOR DISCUSSION

- Gather initial feedback from the subcommittee on key questions as we begin the work on development of the evaluation system.
- We will have further touch points with the subcommittee and the full board as this work develops and to gather further feedback.

INITIAL QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. How should we define “periodically” in terms of evaluations?

a.) Annually

- Considerations: Would require significant staff capacity to focus on review process only. May not allow authorizers to apply feedback. Ohio operates on this evaluation timeline.

b.) Every three years

- Considerations: Would allow for regular touch points with authorizers and time to implement feedback. SBE staff preference and/or combination with a differentiated plan based on past evaluations.

c.) Every five years

- Considerations: Would require less staff capacity and more time for authorizers to implement changes. Minnesota operates on this evaluation timeline.

d.) Differentiated based on past evaluations

- Considerations: Allows State Board the flexibility to determine criteria for evaluation frequency. Can be used as a form of intervention.

INITIAL QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

2. Who should participate in the evaluation?

a.) State Board staff only

- Considerations: Would likely require an increase in staff capacity

b.) A mix of internal and external evaluators

- Considerations: Would require budget for contractors to participate as evaluators

c.) A mix of internal and external evaluators with authorizers invited to participate

- Considerations: Would require budget for contractors to participate as evaluators.
- SBE currently runs our appeals process this way and would be the preference. Including authorizers as external evaluators would provide an opportunity for authorizers to understand our process and identify gaps on their own practice outside of their evaluation.

INITIAL QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

3. How should the evaluation weigh an authorizer's alignment with the Quality Authorizing Standards (a focus on the work of authorizing) vs. compliance with the Tennessee Public Charter Schools Act of 2002 (Title 49, Chapter 13)/ State Board rules/policies?

a.) Weighed about the same

- Ohio uses a version of this model which also includes an academic component.

b.) Quality Authorizing Standards is weighed more than compliance

c.) Compliance is weighed more than Quality Authorizing Standards

- Example: Is the authorizer monitoring Title I compliance?

INITIAL QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

4. Should the evaluation include:

- a.) An on-site visit
- b.) Interviews with local stakeholders
- c.) A document submission review
- d.) A combination of all three
 - SBE staff prefers this option.

INITIAL QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

5. Which stakeholders should be interviewed?

- a.) Charter office staff
- b.) Sample of schools/governing boards
- c.) Local board of education members
- d.) A combination of all three
 - SBE staff prefers this option.

INITIAL QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

6. Should the State Board staff explore factoring school academic performance into an authorizer's evaluation?

- Considerations:
 - How much responsibility for academic outcomes does the authorizer have?
 - Should an evaluation focus more on the authorizer's response to their schools' academic performance rather than the academic performance alone?

- National Context:
 - Minnesota does not include an academic performance piece.
 - Ohio weights their academic performance portion of the evaluation based on total number of students. Evaluations cannot be completed until after test results are released.

INITIAL QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

7. Should State Board staff explore differentiation of an evaluation based on authorizer size?

- Considerations:
 - Would an authorizer with 3 schools go through the same evaluation process as an authorizer with 50 schools?
 - Are there opportunities to differentiate? If so, where?
 - Is there a way to differentiate between minimum expectations and advanced practices?

INITIAL QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

8. How should the State Board handle “complaints” outside of an evaluation cycle?

- Considerations:
 - Staff capacity to handle scheduled evaluations in addition to any “complaints”
 - Want to stay within the State Board’s statutory authority with regard to evaluations



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