



Charter School Accountability

Charter schools are held to very high standards of accountability. Below is a list of the major accountability measures in place.

Charter School Performance Framework

The performance framework established by the NJ DOE sets clear expectations for the charter school's academic performance, financial viability, equity of access, service to special populations of students, and organizational performance.

1. Academic performance measures:
 - a. Student achievement
 - b. Comparative performance
 - c. Student progress over time
 - d. Post-secondary readiness
 - e. State and Federal accountability
 - f. Mission-specific academic goals
2. Financial performance:
 - a. Sustainability
 - b. Near term indicators
3. Organizational Performance:
 - a. Education program
 - b. Equity
 - c. School culture
 - d. Governance
 - e. Facilities and safe school environment
 - f. Financial management and oversight

Charter School Annual Report

The Charter School Law requires charters to submit an annual report to the DOE. The report allows the DOE to ensure that each charter school is measuring up to the performance framework on an annual basis. Schools must report on fiscal, academic and organizational targets and these reports are made public.

Charters must provide detailed information on the following in each report:

1. Enrollment and equity including recruitment, admissions, suspension and expulsion rates.
2. Educational program- detailed information on academic performance, mission specific goals and curriculum.
3. Learning environment- detailed information about the environment including student/teacher ratio and attendance.
4. Parental and community involvement- participation in school activities, satisfaction surveys, and community partners involvement with the school.
5. School governance/leadership- detailed information about the board members and school leadership's capacity and diversity.

Charter School Renewal

Charter schools are renewed after the first four years and subsequent renewals take place every five years. In addition to the information provided in the annual reports, a charter school must provide evidence in the renewal application that its academic program is successful and that it is fiscally and organizationally sound, per the performance framework. The DOE will conduct a site visit and interview the school's stakeholders.

Charter School Agreement

Charter schools enter into a legal charter agreement with the NJDOE. This agreement legally holds the charter school to the academic, fiscal and organizational criteria mutually agreed upon by the school and the NJ DOE.

Charter School Closure

If a charter school does not meet the academic, fiscal and organizational criteria agreed to in the charter agreement and outlined in the performance framework, the DOE may close the school.

Charter School Probation

Charter schools that do not meet standards, but show promise of improvement, may be placed on probation. Under these circumstances, the school must submit to the NJ DOE a detailed remediation plan and provide ongoing data that demonstrates successful implementation. The Commissioner, at his discretion, may rescind tenure from all tenured staff in charter schools that are placed on probation.

Funding is tied to actual enrollment

Charter schools do not keep the money for students who have left after the October 15 count. Per N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-15.3(g)5(i)1-4- The money goes back to the district and vice versa. If a student leaves before October 15, the adjustment is made in the current school year, resulting in a reduction of aid. If the child leaves after October 15, the adjustment is made after the end of year count.

Charter schools, like all public schools, must abide by the following:

- Open Public Meetings Act
- Open Public Records Act
- Public Schools Contract Law
- Public School/Charter School Audit Program
- Requirements for state standardized tests as per all other public schools
- Uniform Chart of Accounts and GAAP/GASB 68 Accounting Standards
- Federal Standards for Educational Equity such as IDEA and ESEA (NCLB, Title I, Title II, etc.)
- Local Health, Building, and Fire Regulations and Inspections