

WISCONSIN CHARTER SCHOOL

Authorizer Definitions



CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORIZER DEFINITIONS

Charter School

Charter schools are public, nonsectarian schools created through a business-like contract or “charter” between the charter governance board and an authorizing school board or other chartering authority.

Authorizer

Authorizing is the process of approving an application for a charter, negotiating a contract, overseeing a school and deciding whether to renew its contract or close the school at the end of the charter.

Authorizers are either public school districts or independent entities.

Under s. 118.40(3m), charter school authorizers must:

- Solicit and Evaluate Charter School Applications
- Consider National Association of Charter School Authorizers’ Principles and Standards
- Give Contract Preference to Charters Serving Children at Risk
- Approve only high-quality charter school applications
- Monitor Performance and Compliance
- Submit Annual Report to State Superintendent and Legislature

Independent Authorizer

Independent charter schools, sometimes referred to as 2r or 2x charter schools, are charter schools that are not authorized by a public school district. Each of the following independent entities have authority to authorize a charter school in Wisconsin:

- The common council of the city of Milwaukee
- The chancellor of any institution in the University of Wisconsin System
- Each technical college district board
- Waukesha County Executive
- College of Menominee Nation
- Lac Courte Orielles Ojibwa Community College

- UW- System Office of Educational Opportunity

Instrumentality

Instrumentality charter schools are authorized by a public school district and are said to be an instrumentality of the district, meaning it remains a district public school; With instrumentality charters, the school board continues governance responsibility and employs charter school staff.

Non- Instrumentality

Non-Instrumentality charter schools can be authorized by school districts or independent authorizers. These schools have a contract relationship with the authorizing agency and employees of the school are not employed by the school district. Typically all business operations of a Non-Instrumentality are the responsibility of the charter school governance board.

Contract

A legal agreement (contract) between an authorizer and an entity or individual (governance board) to operate a charter school.

If a charter school is established through the petition process, the school board is required to contract with the person or business entity named in the petition to operate the school. The contract must include all of the provisions specified in the petition and may include other provisions agreed upon by the parties.

If a charter school is established on the initiative of the school board, the contract must include the 15 provisions listed in state statute 118.40(1m)(b) required to be a petition for a charter and may include other provisions agreed upon by the parties.

If a charter school is established as an independent charter school and authorized by an independent authorizing entity the contract must comply with the regulations set forth in Wisconsin State Statutes 118.40(2r)

Public Hearing

Wisconsin charter school law sets requirements for holding public hearings regarding approval of new or conversion charter schools.

- For new charter school requests generated by petition the board must hold a public hearing within 30 days of receiving the petition. At the hearing,

the board must consider the level of employee and parental support for the school and the fiscal impact of the charter school on the district. After the hearing, the board may grant the petition.

- For conversion charter schools at least 30 days before entering into a contract that would convert a private school to a charter school or that would establish a charter school that is not an instrumentality of the school district, the board must hold a public hearing on the contract. At the hearing, the board must consider employee and parental support for the charter school and the fiscal impact of the charter school on the district.

Governance Board

A charter school is required by law to be governed by a governing board that is a party to the contract with the authorizing entity. A charter school governing board has all the powers necessary to carry out the terms of its contract.

School Autonomy

Charter school autonomy refers to elements of the contractual relationship between the authorizer and governance board. Autonomy affords the charter school the ability to be innovative and create new and effective ways of educating students. Autonomies typically defined in charter school contracts include but are not limited to: budget; administrative services; staffing selection; curriculum; school schedule; support services; and independent contracting.

Intervention

Establishes and makes known as part of the charter contract the general conditions that may trigger intervention and the types of actions and consequences that may ensue. Timelines for remediation and benchmarks for success are contained within a contract intervention policy.

Revocation

Revokes a charter during the charter term if there is clear evidence of extreme underperformance or violation of law or the public trust that imperils students or public funds.

Renewal

The process of reviewing charter school performance and contractual obligations

resulting in the renewal or extension of the charter school contract. Contract renewals are limited to a maximum of 5 years by state statute.

Planning

The active preparation of the rational, resources, and processes required to open a charter school.

Implementation

The initial phase of opening a charter school. Typically seen as the first few years of operation.

Expansion

The process of increasing the student population or grade levels served by an existing highly successful charter school.

Replication

The process of modeling an existing highly successful charter school in a second location. This can be within the same district, or with the same authorizer, or in an entirely new district or with a different authorizer.

SOURCE

For an in-depth explanation of the definitions included in this listing and more visit:

Wisconsin State Statutes

<https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/statutes/statutes/118/40>

Charter Schools Informational Paper 27

https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/misc/lfb/informational_papers/january_2017/0027_charter_schools_informational_paper_27.pdf

Wisconsin Charter School Authorizer Best Practices

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B92AUenrsNqSbTJiZIJKdzJITkFzTU9VOE01dIRSZO VGVnNz/view>