

LOUISIANA CHARTER SCHOOL PERFORMANCE COMPACT

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INTRODUCTION

Louisiana charter schools are public schools operated by non-profit boards that are allowed increased autonomy in exchange for increased accountability. Louisiana has six types of charter schools. Three of those types of charter schools, Type 2, Type 4, and Type 5, are authorized by the state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE). The Charter School Performance Compact (CSPC) is the accountability framework for all charter schools authorized by BESE, and it also ensures that the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) is accountable to charter schools.

The LDOE is accountable for implementing a rigorous and fair oversight process that respects the operator autonomy that is vital to charter school success. This oversight process ensures that charter schools are serving all students equitably and ensuring the school complies with state law and policy. The objective of the Charter School Performance Compact (CSPC) is to provide charter school operators and boards with clear expectations, fact-based oversight, and timely feedback while ensuring operator autonomy.

It is this mutual obligation that drives the CSPC – a collaborative effort with the common objective of providing Louisiana students with a high-quality education that prepares them for post-graduation academic and career success. The CSPC is an adaptive tool that is subject to continuous review and improvement. Charter schools and the LDOE are charged with working together to ensure that the CSPC is a strong, fair representation of rigorous expectations for high quality charter schools.

The Charter School Performance Compact clearly outlines:

1. LDOE's expectations for all BESE-authorized charter schools,
2. Procedures and mechanisms for gathering data to assess charter school performance relative to these expectations,
3. Specific measurements of school performance for each expectation, and
4. Decision points, actions, and interventions for charter schools based on whether or not they are meeting expectations.

PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS FOR HIGH-QUALITY CHARTER SCHOOLS

The LDOE uses the CSPC to assess schools on their ability to make academic progress with a diverse population of students while operating as sound, independent entities. The CSPC identifies the following set of expectations for high-quality charter schools:

All students, regardless of background, need, or ability, are afforded an educational environment that provides them with opportunities for academic growth and achievement.

- High-quality charter schools show evidence of high performance and/or substantial growth in indicators of academic quality.
- High-quality charter schools identify students' individual academic needs and ensure that all students are making academic growth.

Schools enroll and serve all students through prioritizing equity in their enrollment and discipline policies and procedures.

- High-quality charter schools have a fair, transparent process for enrolling students that abides by Louisiana law and policy.
- High-quality charter schools have a student body that reflects the community in which they are located.
- High-quality charter schools maintain steady levels of enrollment indicating family satisfaction with the opportunities offered to students.
- High-quality charter schools use discipline practices that address behavioral challenges fairly, provide due process, and do not unnecessarily interfere with the provision of instruction.

All special student populations receive the services and supports they need to ensure academic success in accordance with applicable law and policy.

- High-quality charter schools identify students that may require additional services or accommodations promptly and in compliance with law and policy.
- High-quality charter schools have the appropriate programming to ensure all students, including those with disabilities and English Language Learners, can excel academically.
- High-quality charter schools maintain compliance with all federal and state laws and policies for special populations.

Schools and governing boards responsibly follow all laws, policies and contractual obligations.

- High-quality charter schools provide a safe and healthy learning environment for all students.
- High-quality charter schools have governing boards that operate in a way that is open, transparent, and responsive to families and the community.
- High-quality charter schools develop and maintain operational policies and procedures that comply with law and policy.

Schools demonstrate strong financial practices resulting in fiscally viable and responsibly maintained institutions.

- High-quality charter schools fulfill their fiduciary responsibilities and act in accordance with law and LDOE requirements.
- High-quality charter schools use public funds properly to support the best interest of students.

ANNUAL ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING OF CHARTER PERFORMANCE

Data and information collected through monitoring processes is used to produce the Annual Review. The Annual Review is a public document that reports the performance of every charter school according to the expectations for high-quality charter schools outlined in the CSPC. It is released each winter using data to assess the performance of each school in the prior school year.

The Annual Review assesses a school in three areas that correspond to the performance expectations for high-quality charter schools. Each school receives a single score for academic, organizational, and financial performance as based on the metrics in the Annual Review. There are measurements that align to each subcomponent of each expectation. These scores are derived by looking at both quantitative measures of performance as well as compliance-based actions.

Expectation	Area of Annual Review	Types of Measurement	Possible Score
All students, regardless of background, need, or ability, are afforded an educational environment that provides them with opportunities for academic growth and achievement.	Academic	School Performance Score (SPS) and Letter Grade	Letter grade A, B, C, D, F, or T
Schools enroll and serve all students through prioritizing equity in their enrollment and discipline policies and procedures.	Organizational	Consideration of data related to enrollment of students who are economically disadvantaged and students with disabilities as well as enrollment stability, discipline rates, and special education indicators Compliance with enrollment, special education, governance, and safety-related laws and policies	Meets All Expectations, Meets Most Expectations, or Does Not Meet Expectations
All special student populations receive the services and supports they need to ensure academic success in accordance with applicable law and policy.			
Schools and governing boards responsibly follow all laws, policies, and contractual obligations.			
Schools demonstrate strong financial practices resulting in fiscally viable and responsibly maintained institutions.	Financial	Performance on annual audits; Financial Risk Assessment; Appropriate use of funds in accordance with law and policy	Meets All Expectations, Meets Most Expectations, or Does Not Meet Expectations

The Annual Review framework can be found in [Appendix A](#).

Performance on the metrics in the Annual Review determines the LDOE’s recommendations to BESE related to high stakes decisions, which are described in the section on Accountability Decisions and Interventions. The impact of a school’s performance on extension and renewal recommendations is included in [Appendix B](#).

MONITORING OF CHARTER SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

Each year, the LDOE assesses each Type 2, 4, and 5 charter school on each component of the Annual Review and reports this information publicly. The LDOE collects the information needed to compile the Annual Review through a set of monitoring and oversight activities. The information collected through these activities is aligned with the performance expectations that charter schools are held to.

Each year, all charter schools are subject to the following oversight and reporting activities.

School Visits

During the year, LDOE staff members visit each charter school at least once and use data to inform the activities that are conducted during the visit(s). Visits may be announced or unannounced. The activities conducted during the visits depend on a school's performance and may include the following.

- Classroom observations
- Staff interviews
- Audit of student files and records
- Review of policies and procedures
- Health and safety review
- Facilities review
- Discussions with school and board leadership

Systematic Review of Data and Documents

As information is reported throughout the school year, LDOE conducts systematic data reviews in order to assess school performance in a variety of areas. Additionally, the LDOE routinely reviews school policies, procedures, and other materials for compliance with law and policy. LDOE's Annual Monitoring Plan outlines the type of data and documents reviewed and the process for doing so. This plan is assessed and updated as needed.

Coordinated Monitoring of Federal Programs

Each Type 2 and Type 5 charter school participates in the annual Coordinated Monitoring process through which compliance with state and federal programs are assessed. This process is conducted by the Statewide Monitoring Team and schools will receive communications regarding this process each year.

Monitoring of Financial Performance

All charter schools are required to submit an Annual Operating Budget, Quarterly Financial Reports, and the Annual Financial Report. Additionally, each school's financial performance is evaluated annually using the Fiscal Risk Assessment. These processes are managed by the Education Finance Team and schools receive ongoing communications throughout the year on requirements and deadlines.

As needed, the LDOE may also assess schools based on information and data collected through:

- Additional school visits
- In-depth reviews of student records including, but not limited to the areas of discipline, attendance, enrollment, testing, special populations, and special education
- Targeted review of school policies
- More in-depth facility reviews
- Discussions with families and community members

ACCOUNTABILITY DECISIONS AND INTERVENTIONS

The LDOE uses information collected from the processes outlined above and the metrics included in the Annual Review for three purposes:

1. To undertake actions and interventions in instances where schools fail to meet expectations in one or more areas;
2. To make high stakes decisions and recommendations related to charter school extension and renewal as outlined in BESE Bulletin 126, *Charter Schools*; and
3. To make decisions and recommendations about charter school expansion and replication.

1. Ongoing Actions and Interventions

Based on the information collected through its monitoring and oversight processes, the LDOE may become aware of concerns related to a school's performance as measured by the CSPC. The LDOE may use this information to address these situations through other interventions including but not limited to:

- Targeted communications with school leaders and board chairs and connection with support organizations
- Additional inquiry and oversight
- Restriction of growth and/or the ability to expand
- Entry into the Accountability Intervention Ladder

Accountability Intervention Ladder

All charter schools are initially considered to be in Good Standing and in compliance with the contract they have with BESE. However, based on routine and ad hoc monitoring and oversight by the LDOE over the course of the school year, may reveal that a school is failing to meet expectations in a certain area that requires immediate remediation. In these instances, the charter school will enter the intervention ladder through the issuance of a Notice of Concern or Notice of Breach.

- **Notices of Concern** are given to schools in instances of less significant non-compliance of law or policy as determined by LDOE staff.
- **Notices of Breach** are given to schools in instances of significant, systemic, or repeated non-compliance of law or policy as determined by staff.

Notices contain specific action steps and due dates required to remedy the issue. Upon remedying the issue, the school returns to Good Standing.

- If a Notice of Concern is not remedied in the time allotted, the school progresses to a Notice of Breach with additional steps required to address the issue.
- If a Notice of Breach is not remedied in the time allotted, additional accountability actions may be taken by the LDOE up to and including a recommendation of revocation to BESE.

In serious situations, failure to remedy a Notice of Breach or repeated Notices of Breach in a single school year can lead to a school entering the charter contract revocation review. Receipt of a Notice of Concern or Breach is considered in the LDOE's assessment of a school's performance, is included in the Annual Review, and can impact decisions related to extension and renewal or expansion.

Revocation Review

In instances where a charter school has ongoing and significant concerns or is threatening the safety, health, and welfare of students, the LDOE can recommend to BESE that the charter be revoked, which may lead to immediate closure of the school. In these situations, the LDOE will engage in a revocation review before making that recommendation.

The revocation review will involve additional data and document collection and may include visits to the school or an in-depth audit to assess financial and organizational health. Findings from the revocation review determine whether a school enters into revocation proceedings or is granted a revised Notice of Breach.

The LDOE recognizes the magnitude of revocation proceedings and only rarely uses this authority in cases of persistent shortcomings or grave incidents that threaten the health, safety, or welfare of students. If a school enters revocation proceedings, the LDOE will follow the revocation procedures outlined in Bulletin 126.

2. Extensions and Renewals

Charter schools are granted an initial contract length of four years. During a school's fourth year of operation, the LDOE assesses each school's performance and makes a recommendation to BESE as to whether the school should be allowed to operate for a fifth year. This is known as the extension process.

During a charter school's fifth year of operation, the LDOE again assesses the school's performance and makes a recommendation to BESE as to whether the school should receive a renewal contract to continue operation. This is known as the renewal process. The renewal process happens in the last year of every charter contract term.

Decisions and recommendations for extensions and renewals are made in accordance with Bulletin 126 and based on longitudinal information over a school's charter term as collected and reported in the Annual Review. Specifically, a charter school's School Performance Score (SPS) and its various components comprise the section of the Annual Review that lays out expectations for academic performance. A school's accountability results, considered against the academic standards for extension and renewal in policy, will inform whether the LDOE recommends a school for extension or renewal, as well as the minimum number of years for the new contract term.

Once a school has been recommended for renewal, the LDOE also determines a recommended renewal term length. The length of the renewal term is guided by a school's performance on the organizational and financial components of the Annual Review over the entire term of the current contract. Schools that continue to meet organizational and financial expectations are eligible for additional years over and above the base number of years earned by their academic performance. In instances where the school has serious, systemic, or repeated non-compliance with organizational or financial standards, the State Superintendent may recommend a term length up to two years shorter than the base number of years.

Extension and renewal standards can be found in [Appendix B](#).

3. Charter School Expansion and Replication

Charter schools may seek to serve more students in one of two ways:

- Expansion of the enrollment of a school currently in existence, or
- The opening of a new charter school.

In order to ensure that only the highest-quality schools are expanding, the ability to serve additional students is contingent upon a school's performance as measured by the CSPC and the Annual Review.

The standards for charter school expansion and replication can be found in [Appendix C](#).

APPENDIX A: ANNUAL REVIEW

The Annual Review is a publication that compiles data and information collected from the processes and actions outlined above and provides a year-long evaluation of a school’s performance. In the Annual Review, each school will receive academic, financial, and organizational performance ratings.

Schools earn points for indicators where their performance meets expectations based upon a review of available data. These indicators are aligned to each expectation and are outlined below within the categories of academic, organizational, and financial performance. Schools that fail to meet performance indicators, or who enter into the Intervention Ladder for a particular concern, can lose points for organizational or financial performance.

Category	Overall Rating
Academic	SPS/Letter Grade
Organizational	Average of Performance Rating and Compliance Rating Meets All Expectations: 20 points Meets Most Expectations: 11-19 points Does Not Meet Expectations: 0-10 points Performance Rating: Simple average of each performance indicator (0 to 20 points) Compliance Rating: 20 points: No Notices of Concern or Breach 15 points: No more than two Notices of Concern and no Notices of Breach 0 points: Three or more Notices of Concern and no Notices of Breach
Financial	Meets All Expectations: No Notices of Breach or Concern, AND School is in the “no action” category on the Fiscal Risk Assessment (FRA), AND School has unqualified audit with no consecutive or material findings Meets Most Expectations: No more than one Notice of Concern and no Notices of Breach, OR School is in the “monitor” category on the FRA, OR School has an unqualified audit with no more than one consecutive or material findings Does Not Meet Expectations: More than one Notice of Concern or any Notices of Breach, OR School is in the “dialogue” category on the FRA, OR School has a qualified audit and/or two or more consecutive or material findings

Academic Performance

Academic Performance	Indicator	Measurement
All students, regardless of background, need, or ability, are afforded an educational environment that provides them with opportunities for academic growth and achievement.	School Performance Score	As defined by Louisiana state accountability in BESE Bulletin 111

Organizational Performance

Enrollment	Indicator	Measurement	Scoring
Schools enroll and serve all students through prioritizing equity in their enrollment and discipline policies and procedures.	Economically Disadvantaged and Students with Disabilities percentage (Type 2 and 4s only)	As defined by law and BESE Bulletin 126	Meets required percentage in both economically disadvantaged and SWD: 20 points
			Meets either economically disadvantaged or SWD requirement but not both: 15 points
			Meets neither economically disadvantaged nor SWD requirement: 0 points
	Re-enrollment of students	Enrollment is based on students with no exit date and no graduation flag; excluding students in the terminal grade at the site (February 1 count to October 1 count of the following year)	More than or equal to 80% of students return: 20 points
			Greater than or equal to 70% but less than 80% of students return: 15 points
			<70% of students return: 0 points
	Suspensions	High School/Combination School National Average OR Elementary/Middle School National Average As defined by Office of Civil Rights Data Collection	At or below the national average: 20 points
			Above 100% and up to 200% of the national average: 15 points
			More than 200% of the national average: 0 points

Special Populations	Indicator	Measurement	Scoring
All special student populations receive the services and supports they need to ensure academic success in accordance with applicable law and policy.	Students with Disabilities evaluations	Evaluations out of compliance with timelines as measured through a review of SER at a single point in time during the spring semester (percentage of evaluations conducted within the required time frame)	0 to 5% of total evaluations out of compliance: 20 points
			Greater than 5% to 10% of total evaluations out of compliance: 15 points
			Greater than 10% of total evaluations out of compliance: 0 points
	IEP timeline compliance	IEPs out of compliance as measured through a review of SER at a single point in time during the spring semester (percentage of IEPs in timeline compliance on that date)	0 to 5% of total IEPs out of compliance: 20 points
			Greater than 5% to 10% of total IEPs out of compliance: 15 points
			>10% of total IEPs out of compliance: 0 points
	Least Restrictive Environment	Percentage of students with IEPs aged 6-21 served in a regular classroom setting 80% or more of the school day	Between 63.5% and 100% of total students with disabilities population: 20 points
			Between 50% and 63.4% of total students with disabilities population: 15 points
			Less than 50% of total students with disabilities population: 0 points
	Subgroup Performance	Whether or not school has been identified as “Urgent Intervention Required” for any subgroup as measured by the subgroup School Performance Score	School has not been identified as “Urgent Intervention Required” for any subgroup: 20 points
			School has been identified as “Urgent Intervention Required” for one subgroup: 15 points
			School has been identified as “Urgent Intervention Required” for two or more subgroups: 0 points

Organizational Compliance

Enrollment	Indicator	Measurement
Schools enroll and serve all students through prioritizing equity in their enrollment and discipline policies and procedures.	School is non-discriminatory and compliant with laws and policies related to student admissions, discipline, attendance, and truancy	Non-compliance with admissions, discipline, attendance, and truancy laws and policy, as documented by a Notice of Concern or Breach
	School admissions process is non-discriminatory and compliant with laws and policies related to students with disabilities	Discriminatory or non-compliant practices in admissions for students with disabilities, as documented by a Notice of Concern or Breach

Special Populations	Indicator	Measurement
All special student populations receive the services and supports they need to ensure academic success in accordance with applicable law and policy.	School complies with all state and federal requirements regarding services for students with IEPs, IAPs and LEP plans	Non-compliance with law or policy governing students with disabilities or Limited English Proficiency (LEP), as documented by a Notice of Concern or Breach

Law and Policy	Indicator	Measurement
Schools and governing boards responsibly follow all laws, policies and contractual obligations.*	Board adheres to state policies regarding governance and compliance	Significant, intentional, or repeated non-compliance with state or federal governance policies including, but not limited to: open meetings laws, public records act, public bid laws, fire and safety laws, health laws, board structure requirements, as documented by a Notice of Concern or Breach
	School and board have no evidence of violations of Louisiana ethics laws	Non-compliance by the governing board or school with the Louisiana Code of Governmental Ethics, as determined by the LDOE, and as documented by a Notice of Concern or Breach
	School and board have no evidence of violations of legal and contractual obligations	Significant, intentional, or repeated non-compliance with legal and contractual obligations, including but not limited to, background checks, student safety, and student transportation, as documented by a Notice of Concern or Breach
	School has no evidence of intentional violations of required test procedures	Significant, intentional, or repeated non-compliance with state testing policies and procedures and/or evidence of cheating by school staff, as documented by a Notice of Concern or Breach

*Notices of Concern or Breach received by a board for a board action may impact the scores of all schools governed by that board.

Financial Performance and Compliance

Financial Compliance	Indicator	Measurement
Schools demonstrate strong financial practices resulting in fiscally viable and responsibly maintained institutions.	LDE Fiscal Risk Assessment	Assessment measured by the most recent Fiscal Risk Assessment
	Annual External Audit Performance	Consecutive or material findings in the annual audit
	School uses federal and state funds in a fiscally responsible and legal manner	Significant misuse of funds, as documented by a Notice of Breach or Concern

APPENDIX B: STANDARDS FOR CHARTER EXTENSION AND RENEWAL

Extension/Renewal Type	Minimum Academic Requirements
Extension or 1st Renewal	“D” or higher letter grade in the most recent year of the contract term
Extension or 1st Renewal, Turnaround Schools Only	“D” or higher letter grade in the most recent year of the contract term OR “F” letter grade in the most recent year of the contract term with a Progress Index equivalent to an A
2nd or Subsequent Renewal	“C” or higher letter grade OR “D” letter grade in the most recent year of the contract term and “C” letter grades for more than half of the letter grades earned during the charter term and the final letter grade earned for the charter’s prior term OR D letter grade in the most recent year of the contract term and Progress Indices equivalent to an A for more than half of the Progress Indices earned during the charter’s current contract term and the final Progress Index earned for the charter’s prior term

*Please consult Chapter 15 of Bulletin 126, Charter Schools for additional provisions related to extension and renewal standards.

Current Letter Grade	Minimum Term Length	Potential Additional Years	
		(Based on Organizational and Financial Performance Over Current Term)	
A	6 Years	“Does Not Meet Expectations” in any year	No additional years
		“Meets All” and/or “Meets Most” Expectations all years	≤ 2 Years
		“Meets All Expectations” all years	≤ 4 Years
B	5 Years	“Does Not Meet Expectations” in any year	No additional years
		“Meets All” and/or “Meets Most” Expectations all years	≤ 1 Year
		“Meets All Expectations” all years	≤ 2 Years
C	4 Years	No additional years	
D, F or no letter grade	3 Years	No additional years	

Notwithstanding, the LDOE may recommend a renewal term that is up to two years shorter than the minimum term length, but no shorter than 3 years for a charter school: 1) where fewer than 50% of the school’s enrolled grades are testable under state accountability; or 2) that has significant, intentional, or repeated non-compliance with financial or organizational requirements.

APPENDIX C: STANDARDS FOR CHARTER SCHOOL EXPANSION AND REPLICATION

New or Existing School	Type of Growth	Approval Process	Academic Standard	Organizational and Financial Standard	Other Requirements
Open a New School	Current Louisiana Operator – New Charter Application	BESE approval required	All schools have a “C” or higher letter grade OR a “D” letter grade with a progress index equivalent to an A	“Meets All” or “Meets Most” financial and organizational expectations for 3 previous years, or full existence of school if less than 3 years	LDOE recommendation for approval
	Auto-Replication	Automatic – no BESE or LDOE approval required	“B” or higher letter grade for previous 3 years AND progress index equivalent to an A for previous 3 years averaged across all of the operator’s charter schools	“Meets All” or “Meets Most” financial and organizational expectations for 3 previous years	Notification to LDOE by December 31st of the year prior to opening
	Open a Growth Plan school	Automatic – no BESE or LDOE approval required	All schools have a “C” or higher letter grade OR a “D” letter grade with a progress index equivalent to an A	“Meets All” or “Meets Most” financial and organizational expectations for 3 previous years, or full existence of school if less than 3 years	Notification to LDOE by December 31st of the year prior to opening
Grow an Existing School	Growth up to 120% of approved enrollment in contract	Automatic – no BESE or LDOE approval required	None	None	None
	Add new grade levels or grow enrollment beyond 120% of approved enrollment in contract	LDOE approval required	“C” or higher letter grade OR a “D” letter grade with a progress index equivalent to an A	“Meets All” or “Meets Most” financial and organizational expectations in the most recent year	Submit material amendment request form to LDOE
		BESE approval required	School does not meet performance standards outlined above for LDOE approval	School does not meet performance standards outlined above for LDOE approval	Submit material amendment request form to LDOE

For charter schools run by management organizations, the performance of other charter schools affiliated with the management organization may be considered.

The LDOE may also may consider the financial and organizational performance of the charter operator’s schools authorized by local school boards, as applicable and appropriate.

The LDOE may waive one or more of the required performance criteria for: charter schools in the first or second year of operation that have not yet been evaluated for academic, financial, or organizational performance; alternative schools, per Bulletin 111 requirements and schools evaluated pursuant to a BESE-approved alternate framework; or a circumstance where anticipated new students would otherwise predominantly be enrolled in equivalent- or lower-performing or schools.