

SUBJECT: CHARTER SCHOOLS

A charter school is a public school financed through public local, state, and federal funds that is independent of local school boards. The local school district within which the charter school is located has the right to visit, examine, and inspect the charter school for compliance with all applicable laws, regulations, and charter provisions.

Charter schools may be located in part of an existing public school building, a private work site, a public building, or any other suitable location. At the request of the charter school or prospective applicant, the District will make available a list of vacant and unused school buildings and vacant and unused portions of school buildings, including private school buildings, within the District which may be suitable for the operation of a charter school.

Academic Credit

The District's high school(s) may accept academic credit from students who transfer from the charter school as authorized and/or permitted in accordance with law, Commissioner's Regulations, and local district standards. Either the charter school or the local School Board may issue a high school diploma upon students' graduation from a charter school depending on the charter school's relationship with the Board.

Educational Materials

Students attending a charter school have the same access to textbooks, software, and library materials loaned by the District as if enrolled in a nonpublic school. Within available district inventory and budgetary appropriations for purchase of these materials, the District is required to provide these materials on an equitable basis to all public school students and to all nonpublic school and charter school students who are residents of the District or who attend a nonpublic or charter school in the District. The base year enrollment of students in the charter school may be claimed by the District for the purposes of textbook, software, and library materials aids, in the same manner as nonpublic school enrollments are claimed.

Transportation

For the purpose of transportation, charter schools are considered nonpublic schools. Students attending charter schools who reside within a 15 mile radius of the charter school (or a greater radius if the voters of the district of residence have approved nonpublic transportation for more than 15 miles) will receive transportation from their district of residence on the same basis as nonpublic school students; that is, subject to the applicable minimum mileage limits for transportation in the district of residence, and the requirement of the timely filing of the request for transportation in accordance with Education Law.

A student cannot be dually enrolled in the charter school and district schools. However, the district of residence of students attending a charter school may, but is not required to, allow those students to participate in athletic and extracurricular activities.

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SUBJECT: CHARTER SCHOOLS (Cont'd.)**Special Education**

Special Education programs and services will be provided to students with disabilities attending a charter school in accordance with the individualized education program recommended by the Committee or Subcommittee of Special Education of the student's district of residence. The charter school may arrange to have these services provided by the district of residence or by the charter school directly or by contract with another provider. Where the district of residence provides the special education programs or services, they will be provided in the same manner as provided to students in other public schools in the District. This includes the provision of supplementary and related services on-site to the same extent the District's policy and practices provide such services on the site of other public schools.

Employees

All employees of a public school converted to a charter school are included within the negotiating unit for the local school district, but the collective bargaining agreement of that negotiating unit may be modified by a majority vote of the members who work at the charter school, with the approval of the Board of Trustees of the charter school.

Instructional employees of a charter school which has not been converted from an existing public school and which has more than 250 students during the first year of instruction will be represented in a separate negotiating unit at the charter school by the same employee organization representing similar employees in the local school district. Employees may be included in the Teachers' Retirement System and other retirement systems open to employees of the District. Financial contributions for these benefits are the responsibility of the charter school and the charter school's employees.

Leaves of Absence

A teacher employed by the District may make a written request to the Board for an extended leave of absence to teach at a charter school. Approval for such a leave of absence for a period of three years or less will not be unreasonably withheld. If this approval is granted to a teacher by the District, the teacher may return to teach in the District during the period of leave without the loss of any right of certification, retirement, seniority, salary status, or any other benefit provided by law or by collective bargaining agreement. If an appropriate position is unavailable, the teacher's name will be placed on a preferred eligible list of candidates for appointment to a vacancy that may occur after in an office or position similar to the one the teacher filled in the District immediately prior to the leave of service.

Charter School Finances

The enrollment of students attending charter schools will be included in the enrollment, attendance and, if applicable, count of students with disabilities of the school district in which the charter school student resides. The charter school will report all of this data to the districts of residence in a timely

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manner for reporting to the State Education Department (SED). The school district of residence will pay directly to the charter school for each student enrolled in the charter school the basic tuition as determined by the Commissioner of Education as set forth in Education Law. The district of residence must forward these payments to the charter school in six substantially equal installments each year beginning on the first business day of the months of July, September, November, January, March, and May.

Approved operating expenses include the essential operating cost of the District. Excluded are costs for transportation, debt services, construction, tuition payments to other school districts, some BOCES payments, cafeteria or school lunch expenditures, balances and transfers, rental income from leased property, and certain other limited categories unless otherwise authorized by the State Charter School Facilities Incentive Program.

Charter school financing in the first year of operation will be based on the number of students projected to be served by the charter school and the approved operating expenses of the district of residence of those students. Adjustments will be made in each subsequent year based upon the final report by the charter school of actual enrollment.

Federal and state aid attributable to students with disabilities are required to be paid to a charter school by the school district of residence for those students attending the charter school in proportion to the services the charter school provides such students directly or indirectly. Payment of federal aid attributable to a student with a disability attending a charter school must be made according to the requirements set forth in federal law and regulations. Failure by the District to make required payments will result in the state comptroller deducting the required amounts from state funds due to the District and paying them to the charter school.

The District, the charter entity, and the state are not liable for the debts of the charter school.

Notice and Hearing Requirements

The New York State Board of Regents is required to provide the District information on the charter school process. If a charter school is proposed, the charter entity and the Board of Regents will notify the school district in which the charter school is located and public and nonpublic schools in the same geographic area as the proposed charter school at each significant stage of the chartering process.

This notification will be provided by the charter entity within 30 days of its receipt of an application for formation of a new charter school or for renewal of an existing charter school and at least 45 days prior to initial approval of the charter application by the charter entity.

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SUBJECT: CHARTER SCHOOLS (Cont'd.)

Before a charter is issued, revised, or renewed, the school district in which the charter school is located will hold a public hearing to solicit comments from the community potentially impacted by the proposed charter school. When a revision involves the relocation of a charter school to a different school district, the proposed new school district will also hold a hearing. The school district will, at the time of its dissemination, provide the SED with a copy of the public hearing notice.

No later than the business day next following the hearing, the school district will provide written confirmation to both the charter entity and the SED of the date and time the hearing was held. Copies of all written records or comments generated from the hearing will be submitted to the charter entity and the SED within 15 days of the hearing.

The school district will also be given the opportunity to comment on the proposed charter to the charter entity. The charter entity will consider any comments raised and submit them to the Board of Regents with the application for issuance, revision, or renewal of a charter.

In the event the school district fails to conduct a public hearing, the Board of Regents will conduct a public hearing to solicit comments from the community in connection with the issuance, revision, or renewal of a charter.

20 USC Sections 76.785-76.799

State Charter School Facilities Incentive Program, 34 CFR Part 226

34 CFR Section 300.209

Education Law Article 56 and Sections 701, 711, 751, 912, 3602(11), and 3635

8 NYCRR Parts 100 and 119