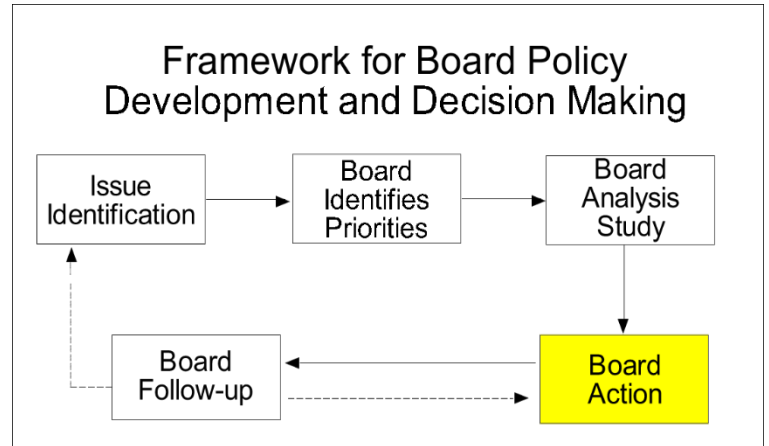


Iowa State Board of Education

Executive Summary

February 6, 2024



Agenda Item: Charter School Performance Framework Approval

State Board Priority: Goal 5

State Board Role/Authority: The State Board of Education is the sole authorizer of Iowa charter schools. Iowa charter school law (256E and 256F) and Iowa Administrative Code 281.19 requires the State Board to use nationally recognized best practices for charter school authorizing.

Presenter(s): Deborah Elder
Chief Operating Officer

Attachment(s): One

Recommendation: It is recommended that the State Board approve the Charter School Performance Framework.

Background: The Iowa State Board of Education “shall employ procedures, practices, and criteria consistent with nationally recognized principles and standards for reviewing charter school applications.” 256E.1(5). As the authorizing agent for the State Board, the Department of Education presents a performance framework aligned with nationally recognized standards.

Iowa Charter School Performance Framework

About the Performance Framework: This document outlines the criteria by which authorized charter schools will be measured and evaluated in alignment to the Iowa State Board's commitment to national principles and standards for authorizing charter schools. The framework identifies indicators of adherence to applicable laws, the charter contract and quality indicators in the areas of academic, financial, and operational performance. Each charter school's performance will be published in the annual report presented to the Iowa State Board of Education and will inform renewal decisions.

Academic Performance

Innovative and quality academic programming is pivotal in a charter school’s mission to ensure academic achievement and long-term success for its students.

The following academic performance indicators establish the success criteria to meet the expected standard. Relevant data sources to evaluate each indicator are included.

Failure to meet the standard on a single measure may or may not signal actionable distress. The Iowa Department of Education may seek additional information regarding any indicators of underperformance to inform mitigating action.

Contents

Academic Performance	2
Mission-Specific Goals	4
State Accountability Index: Iowa School Performance Profile	4

State Accountability: Iowa’s state plan for school accountability and support under the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) unifies Iowa’s school accountability systems. It maintains a focus on school accountability, reflecting high expectations for all students, incentivizing evidence-based instructional practices and prioritizing partnership with schools most in need of support.

Identification of Iowa schools for support and improvement is based on these measures:

- Proficiency: Percentage of students in a school who are proficient in math, English language arts, and science based on assessment results.
- Student Growth: Measures overall student growth by looking at student percentiles and determining whether the student is meeting or exceeding growth targets.
- Graduation Rate (high schools): Determines percentage of students who graduate from high school in four or five years.
- English Language Growth: Measures a student’s progress in obtaining English language proficiency across the domains of reading, writing, listening and speaking.
- Chronic Absenteeism (measures the following):
 - Chronic Absenteeism: Measures the percentage of students who miss 10 percent or more of their school year.
 - Attendance Growth: Measures the growth in attendance rate of previously chronically absent students.
- Postsecondary Readiness (high schools): Includes the percentage of students who earn college credit while in high school and the percentage of students who participate in high quality work-based learning programs.

Schools receive a rating based on their overall performance across multiple measures. The total number of points differ between elementary/middle and high schools. Due to the differences, the point totals vary by school type with 700 points for elementary schools and 900 points for high schools. The percent of points earned produces a common metric that can be applied across school type in order to create one set of cut points listed below. A school is considered Comprehensive if the overall performance is at or below the Priority/Comprehensive cut point. A Targeted school is a school who has one or more student group(s) performing below this same cut point. See the [Iowa Department of Education ESSA website](#) for more information.

Elementary and Middle Schools

Measure	Points
Proficiency	300
Growth	300
Chronic Absenteeism	100
Total	700

High Schools

Measure	Points
Proficiency	300
Growth	300
Chronic Absenteeism	100
Graduation Rate	100
Postsecondary Readiness	100
Total	900

Mission-Specific Goal(s):

Each authorized charter school will identify a unique goal(s) that is directly aligned to its mission. This provides an opportunity for the charter school to represent innovative strategies and programming. Charter schools will report on progress toward the mission-specific goal(s) in addition to state accountability measures.

Goal(s) in this area are designed to be student and outcome driven. As such, goals must be clearly measurable with correlating quantitative data available. There must be direct alignment in the developed goal(s) to the charter school's mission and must not repeat another indicator in the Iowa Charter School Performance Framework.

Mission-Specific Goals

Meets Standard

- Aligned to innovative charter school mission
- Student-centered
- Quantitative data demonstrates goal attainment

Data Sources

- Measurement tool identified by the charter school
- Other student learning measurement tools, as needed

State Accountability Index: Iowa School Performance Profile

Meets Standard

- The charter school achieves a categorical rating of “Acceptable” or higher and “No Support Required” in the annual release of the Iowa School Performance Profile.

Rating Category	% of Points Earned	Elementary/Middle School Points Earned	High School Points Earned
Exceptional	78.25% and above	547.75 and above	704.25 and above
High Performing	69.60% - 78.24%	487.20 – 547.74	626.40 – 704.24
Commendable	60.95% - 69.59%	426.65 – 487.19	548.55 – 626.39
Acceptable	52.30% - 60.94%	366.10 – 426.64	470.70 – 548.54
Needs Improvement	42.37% - 52.29%	296.59 – 366.09	381.33 – 470.69
Priority/Comprehensive	42.36% and below	296.58 and below	381.32 and below

Schools either 1) identified for targeted support and improvement or 2) having less than a 95 percent participation rate on state assessments for any student group drop one rating category.

Data Sources

- Iowa School Performance Profile for the charter school

Financial Performance

Near-term and long-range financial performance and sustainability is critical to ensuring a charter school's operational and innovative programming for students.

The following financial performance indicators establish the success criteria to meet the expected standard. Relevant data sources to evaluate each indicator are included.

Failure to meet the standard on a single measure may or may not signal actionable distress. The Iowa Department of Education may seek additional information regarding any indicators of underperformance to inform mitigating action.

Contents

Financial Performance	5
Financial Audit	6
Financial Reporting and Compliance.....	6
Enrollment	6
Financial Projections	7

Financial Audit

Meets Standard

The school complies with applicable laws, rules, regulations, the charter contract, and quality indicators relating to financial management, controls, and oversight as evidenced by an annual independent financial audit, including:

- The audit report contained an unqualified audit opinion.
- The audit report was devoid of significant findings, material conditions, or significant internal control weaknesses.
- The audit report (including separate or supplemental schedules) identified no repeat findings of significance.
- The audit report did not include a going concern disclosure in the notes or an explanatory paragraph within the audit report.

Data Sources

- Annual audit

Financial Reporting and Compliance

Meets Standard

The school complies with applicable laws, rules, regulations, the charter contract, and quality indicators relating to financial reporting requirements including timely and complete submission of required documents, including:

- Reporting to the state
- Reporting to the authorizer
- Making payroll and related IRS submissions and payments on time, to include timely filing of IRS Form 990s
- Making full and timely teacher and other retirement fund payments.

Data Sources

- Annual, independently audited financial statements
- Certified Annual Report
- Special Education Supplement
- Annual Transportation Report

Enrollment

Meets Standard

- Actual enrollment equals or exceeds 95% of the projected enrollment.

Data Sources

- Projected enrollment: Original board-approved budget
- Initial and certified enrollment
- Winter and Spring SRI

Financial Projections

Meets Standard

- Current financial projections throughout the five-year contract period are sent to the Department annually after the budget is published and throughout the year if significant fiscal impacts are experienced.
- Includes enrollment and staffing projections
- Defines detailed revenues and expenditures
- Illustrates expenditures do not exceed available resources
- Demonstrates fiscal sustainability.

Data Sources

- School budget
- School financial projections
- Certified Annual Report

Operational Performance

The operational performance of a charter school is an essential indicator of overall success and stability. Weaknesses or deficiencies in operational performance may signify other potential issues in the overall condition of the charter school.

The following operational performance indicators establish the success criteria to meet the expected standard. Relevant data sources to evaluate each indicator are included.

Failure to meet the standard on a single measure may or may not signal actionable distress. The Iowa Department of Education may seek additional information regarding any indicators of underperformance to inform mitigating action.

Contents

Operational Performance	8
Governance	9
Staff	10
Students	11
Education Program Implementation	12
Education Program Implementation: Students with Disabilities	13
Education Program Implementation: English Learners	14
Facilities, Health and Safety	15
Reporting	15

Governance

Meets Standard

The board complies with applicable laws, the charter contract and quality indicators regarding governance, including:

- Board composition and/or membership rules (e.g., community representation, requisite number of qualified teachers, ban on employees or contractors serving on the board)
- Board policies
 - Discipline policies for students making a threat of violence (Iowa Code section 279.65A)
 - Examinations, health screenings, and formal examinations or surveys designed to assess a student's mental, emotional, or physical health in the same manner as a school district (Iowa Code section 279.76)
 - Personnel policies
- Board bylaws, including election of officers
- State open meetings law
- State public records law
- Code of ethics
- Background checks
- Conflicts of interest
- Anti-Nepotism policy
- Student and staff handbooks
- Maximum enrollment review
- Board member training
- Board members possess an array of appropriate and relevant skills with which to oversee the school and recruit additional members when a gap is identified
- The board evaluates the school leader(s), its own performance, and/or the contracted Education Service Provider (ESP) consistently, in accordance with a written board policy
- If school operation is contracted to a management organization:
 - There is evidence of arm's-length negotiations for management and/or facilities contracts;
 - A written agreement exists that includes:
 - Performance measures, consequences, and mechanisms by which the school governing board will hold the provider accountable for performance, aligned with the performance measures in the charter contract;
 - Financial reporting requirements and provisions for the school governing board's financial oversight.

Data Sources

- Corporate formation documents (Article of Incorporation and Bylaws) and regulatory filings
- Board member disclosures or other signed documents related to compliance with ethics and conflict of interest requirements
- School website
- Board meeting agendas, materials, and minutes
- Board policies
- Board meeting observations
- Board assurance of compliance
- Single School Leader evaluation process
- Education Service Provider evaluation process

Staff

Meets Standard

The school complies with applicable laws, the charter contract, and quality indicators regarding employee qualifications and rights, such as:

- Background checks and clearances (for employees, contractors, and volunteers)
- Credentialing requirements (federal and state)
 - Iowa Code section 280.35
- Employee civil and human rights, such as, those relating to the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and employment contracts
- Prohibition of retaliation against employees for disclosing certain information in the same manner as a school district
- Recruitment, hiring, and retention practices that build an effective team that can deliver on the school's mission and its stated goals
- Effective performance management practices, such as staff evaluation, onboarding, and performance improvement practices

Data Sources

Record checks either annually or during site visits (or verified, when possible, through state education or other agencies collecting background check or credentialing information)

- Third-party reports such as court rulings
- Board assurance of compliance
- Whistle blower clause in staff handbook
- Staff retention
- Staff evaluation process includes verification of innovative practices implementation

Students

Meets Standard

The school complies with applicable laws, the charter contract, quality indicators and its own policies relating to the rights of students, including:

- Free of tuition and application fees
- Admissions, lottery, waiting lists, fair and open recruitment, and enrollment (including rights to enroll or maintain enrollment)
- The collection and protection of student information
- Student records maintenance, including complying with privacy requirements
- Due process protections, privacy, civil rights, and student liberties requirements, including First Amendment protections and the Establishment Clause restrictions prohibiting public schools from engaging in religious instruction
- Student discipline and behavior, including discipline hearings and suspension and expulsion policies and practices.
- Student retention rates are high across all subgroups.

Data Sources

- Enrollment, lottery, and admissions policies
- Student enrollment forms and related forms
- Lottery observations
- Other relevant board policies
- Student discipline policies and/or student/family handbook
- Evidence of practices, including those for recruitment, hiring, compensation, coaching, collaboration, professional development, and evaluation for leaders, teachers, and other staff
- Student, family, and/or staff survey results
- Student, family, and/or staff interviews
- Discipline data (including data by student subgroup to evaluate for equitable discipline practices; this data may be available through the SEA)
- Board assurance of compliance
- Student retention

Education Program Implementation

Meets Standard

The school complies with applicable laws, rules, regulations, and provisions of state/federal law, the charter contract, and quality indicators relating to education requirements, including:

- Instructional days or minutes requirements (unless specifically waived by the Iowa State Board of Education)
- School calendar with beginning instructional date no earlier than August 1 and no later than September 15 (unless specifically waived by the Iowa State Board of Education)
- Requirements of Offer and Teach (unless specifically waived by the Iowa State Board of Education)
- Graduation and promotion requirements
- Content standards
- State assessments
- Implementation of mandated programming as a result of state or federal funding
- School's innovative program is observable in classroom practice
- A broad, deep, and rich curriculum that supports opportunities for all students to master skills and concepts aligned to the school's innovative programming
- Instructional leadership, common understanding of high-quality instruction, and implementation of practices aligned to this common understanding; instructional practices based on high expectations for all students foster student engagement
- Proactive system to identify and address all students' strengths and needs for academic, behavioral, and social and emotional development, ensuring that all students across all subgroups have equal access and equitable support, interventions, and resources to achieve, grow, and advance

Data Sources

Other agencies, including SEAs (These agencies may monitor compliance with these legal requirements and may have procedures for dealing with noncompliance; the authorizer should find out what is available and avoid duplication of effort.)

- School calendars and daily schedules
- Student/parent handbook that includes course requirements
- Other relevant information gathered through third-party sources, and periodic verification of compliance, such as during site visits
- Board assurance of compliance
- Site visit
- Stakeholder interviews: school leadership, staff, students, parents, and community

Education Program Implementation: Students with Disabilities

Meets Standard

The school complies with applicable laws, rules, regulations, the charter contract and quality indicators relating to serving students with disabilities who currently qualify or who may qualify for services pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, or the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), including:

- Equitable access and opportunity to enroll
- Identification and referral including evaluation of representation of subgroups, (i.e., Child Find process is in place and the school adheres to this process)
- Development and implementation of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and Section 504 plans, including access to the school's facility and programs
- Communication requirements with parents or guardians, including Procedural Safeguards
- Operational compliance, including provision of services in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) and appropriate inclusion in the school's academic program, assessments, and extracurricular activities
- Providing a FAPE for learners with disabilities in accordance with IDEA
- Discipline, including due process protections, manifestation determinations, and behavioral intervention plans
- Accommodations on assessments

Data Sources

- Site visits, including classroom observations
- Record reviews
- Stakeholder interviews: school leadership, special education director, staff, students, parents, and community
- Annual reports, renewal applications, or other school submissions
- General supervision data
- School policies
- IDEA-DA
- ACHIEVE reports

Education Program Implementation: English Learners

Meets Standard

The school complies with applicable laws, rules, regulations, the charter contract (including Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act [ESEA] and U.S. Department of Education authorities), and quality indicators relating to requirements regarding English learners, including:

- Equitable access and opportunity to enroll
- Policies related to the service of English learners
- Compliance with native language communication requirements, including communication with parents or guardians
- Identification of students in need of English Learner (EL) services
- Delivery of services to identified students
- Accommodations on assessments
- Exiting of students from EL services including ongoing monitoring of exited students

Data Sources

- Site visits, including classroom observations
- Record reviews
- Stakeholder interviews: school leadership, staff, students, parents, and community
- Annual reports, renewal applications, or other school submissions
- School policies

Facilities, Health and Safety

Meets Standard

The school complies with applicable laws, rules, regulations, the charter contract, and quality indicators relating to the school facilities, grounds, and transportation, including but not limited to:

- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
- Fire inspections and related records
- Crisis management or related policies and practices
- Viable certificate of occupancy or other required building use authorization
- Documentation of requisite insurance coverage
- Student transportation (if applicable)
- Appropriate nursing services and dispensing of pharmaceuticals
- Food service requirements (if applicable)
- Other services, if applicable

Data Sources

- Site visits, including classroom observations
- Record reviews
- Stakeholder interviews: school leadership, staff, students, parents, and community
- Annual reports, renewal applications, or other school submissions
- School policies

Reporting

Meets Standard

The school complies with applicable laws, rules, regulations, the charter contract, and quality indicators relating to relevant reporting requirements to the school's authorizer, SEA, and/or federal authorities, including but not limited to:

- Accountability tracking
- Attendance and enrollment reporting
- Information required to be posted on school websites
- Compliance and oversight
- Annual Reports
- Additional information requested by the authorizer
- CAR report

Data Sources

- Timely submission of required reports