

Accountability in Charter Schools

I. Levels of Accountability

A. National

- Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA; f.k.a. No Child Left Behind Act). Mandatory testing, Highly Qualified teachers, Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).

B. State

- Accredits school districts (Education Accountability Act of 2009, 22-11-101 et seq., C.R.S.)
- School View website (www.schoolview.org) contains school performance data including school level data (Colorado Growth Model & CSAP performance), the school's Unified Improvement Plan (UIP) and School Performance Framework (SPF) that are issued by the state (the School Performance Framework replaces the School Accountability Report)

C. Authorizer: School District or Charter School Institute

- Accredited by State Board of Education
- Accredits individual schools
- Approves and renews charter applications and contracts
- Monitors and oversees charter schools

D. Charter School

- Operates with an independent governing board
- Develops and implements a Strategic Plan (a tool used by the board and school to define and prioritize goals and communicate the direction of the school)
- Monitors progress towards outcomes or goals academically and operationally – Efficiently monitored through a board dashboard & use of data policy
- Establishes a School Accountability Committee (SAC) to function in compliance with statute, 22-11-401 & 402, C.R.S., and a reporting structure to provide data and information to inform board decision making
- Ensures completion, submission to authorizer and implementation of the assigned improvement plan type through review, approval and monitoring of outcomes
- Accredited by the authorizer in a manner similar to the plan approved by the State Board
- Provides required reports and plans to authorizer
- Ensures operational viability (including student demand (wait list or lottery size))

II. Performance Indicators, School Performance Frameworks, Plan Types and Accreditation

A. Performance Indicators

- 4 state indicators
 - Academic Achievement
 - Academic Growth
 - Academic Growth Gaps
 - Post Secondary Readiness (high schools only)

B. School Performance Framework

CDE tool to report school performance on the 4 indicators. Results are used to assign plan types. SPFs on SchoolView.

C. Plan Types

- 4 plan types as a result of performance in 4 indicators
 - Performance

- Improvement
- Priority Improvement
- Turnaround

D. Unified Improvement Planning

- State template required beginning in 2011-12
- Posted on SchoolView

E. Accreditation Rankings for School Districts

- Rankings
 - Accredited with Distinction
 - Accredited
 - Accredited with Improvement
 - Accredited with Priority Improvement Plan
 - Accredited with Turnaround Plan

III. School Accountability Committees: How they fit in the charter school structure

A. Background

- Originally created to provide parents a meaningful role in their child's education
- Grandfather clause for charter school boards created before Jan. 1, 2000 and serving as SAC eliminated in 2009.
- Education Accountability Act (SB09-163 or Article 11) is different than Educational Accountability Act (Article 7). SAC was previously in Article 7, but is now in Article 11 within the context of all state accountability.
- There is guidance available to authorizers and charter schools in the [CDE District Accountability Handbook](#) – Appendix I: Understanding the Role of School Accountability Committees in Charter School (page 55).

B. Statutory purpose of the SAC

- Recommend school priorities for spending school moneys;
- Advise on the preparation of the UIP; and
- Meet at least quarterly to discuss whether school leadership, personnel and infrastructure are advancing or impeding school performance.

C. Philosophy and Structure

- In many ways, a charter school governing board meets the legislative intent of the SAC statutory responsibilities.
- Charter school boards have the SAC established as a committee that reports to the governing board. Board policy should define membership guidelines, expected reporting schedule and a job description.
- Governing boards can expand the responsibilities of the SAC, for instance ask them to review a particular content area each year. Consulting the priorities in the strategic plan help to identify the work that the SAC should focus on.
- Most charter school SACs conduct the parent survey with the final draft going to the board for approval before the survey is disseminated and the results provided to the board after it's completed.
- UIPs developed by administration and staff with the SAC supporting data collection (i.e., parent survey results). **The governing board must approve the UIP before it's submitted to the authorizer.** Working with the administrator to understand the timeline around the submission of the UIP to the authorizer is important.