

Missouri Charter Public School Commission	
Core Sponsorship Principles	2.01

Policy

The Commission accomplishes its mission by sponsoring new and existing public schools overseen by strong, mature boards that hold school leaders accountable for student performance.

The Commission adheres to core principles of sponsorship that are well researched and proven to make it easier for educators and community members that operate charter public schools to offer their students the best chances of success. These principles are also embedded in the laws passed by the Missouri General Assembly and promulgated by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE):

- Focus on quality,
- Protect the public’s interest, and
- Provide autonomy and reduce burdens on schools.

Focusing on quality

The right to operate a charter public school is granted to educators, entrepreneurs, and community members who demonstrate the capacity to operate high performing schools designed to meet the needs of the children they intend to serve. Quality public education can be delivered in different models of schools, with different kinds of leaders and in a variety of settings. The Commission is open to replication of proven school models and innovative models with demonstrated potential for success. Innovations may be in the educational program design, governance, or operations.

Sponsorship is determined on quality of the application, capacity of the founding team and demonstrated demand for the school. All grades, locations, and models are eligible to apply for sponsorship.

The Commission is clear and consistent about quality expectations in its application materials, review processes, compliance and accountability practices, and decisions to renew or revoke charters.

High-performing schools want to associate with other performing schools. The Commission and its schools actively participate in the dissemination of best and promising practices to assure the sector is stronger and children gain access to quality schools. This commitment to quality sometimes necessitates closure of poorly performing schools.

Missouri Charter Public School Commission	
Core Sponsorship Principles	2.01

Protecting the public's interest

The Commission is a public entity and the schools the Commission sponsors are public. The public is the Commission's customer and is present in our work. Commission sponsored charter public schools must:

- Produce evidence that they are meeting their obligations and are accountable for the promises they made to students, the community, and taxpayers.
- Demonstrate that they are free and open to all children. Children in charter public schools are expected to meet the outcomes the school promises, regardless of their socioeconomic status. Charter public school boards are public boards and must conduct their business in the open, and demonstrate they are, and continue to be, reliable stewards of public funds.

The Commission works on behalf of the public. We hold the schools we sponsor to the commitments they make to the children and families within their charter application and performance contracts. We operate in the open so that others can see what we do, inform our practice and replicate what works. We eagerly seek the public's input and encourage their involvement in the charter public school sector.

All of our business is conducted in accordance with Missouri Sunshine Laws. The Commission's meetings are publicized and materials made available to all, within the limits of the law.

The Commission's review and decisions are made in public. Applications are accepted throughout the year and deadlines are for the benefit of the school. The public hearing demonstrates a commitment to stakeholder voices and assures the best match of the school to a community.

Providing autonomy

The Commission vets school applicants for academic quality and assesses their capacity for sound fiscal stewardship and organizational effectiveness and efficiency. During the review process and while overseeing its schools, the Commission respects and works to preserve autonomy crucial to school success.

The Commission respects and supports the independence of each school's governing board from the Commission, allowing those governing boards to determine how to best operate their schools in order to meet their missions while complying with all applicable laws and regulations.

Missouri Charter Public School Commission	
Core Sponsorship Principles	2.01

The Commission’s application, performance contract, and oversight and monitoring programs define the autonomies granted to its schools, including the following autonomies, within the limits of applicable laws and regulations:

- Educational program design and curriculum,
- Length of the school day, week, or year (beyond any Missouri minimums),
- Personnel selection and management,
- Budget and financial matters, including the right to generate revenue and make expenditure decisions, and
- Facility management and other operations.

Reducing burdens

The Commission actively works with DESE, the General Assembly, and the Attorney General to reduce unnecessary reporting and regulatory burdens on its schools. As required by 5 CSR 20-100.260, the Commission defines expectations and compliance requirements from federal, state, and local agencies. And, the Commission works to minimize administrative and reporting burdens and to conduct its oversight activities in ways that respect school autonomy and avoid operational interference.

The Commission creates systems and uses technology to ease the reporting burdens on schools, so school leaders can focus more on the children than on paperwork. These efforts also help the Commission staff carry out their sponsorship duties in a more time and cost-effective manner. And the Commission’s use of technology increases accessibility of information to the public.

The Commission only imposes requirements on its schools when there is a legal basis or compelling reason to do so. It holds schools accountable for outcomes, not processes. And the Commission periodically reviews its policies and practices to increase school autonomy (especially for high performing schools) and reduce requirements based on the law and opportunities for increased efficiency in oversight.