

Missouri Charter Public School Commission	
Existing Schools Applying for New Sponsorship	2.03

Policy

The Commission decides whether to approve, deny, renew or close charter public schools are made based on recommendations provided by staff after the approved review process has been completed.

This policy governs applications for Commission sponsorship by a school finishing a charter term with another Missouri sponsor. Missouri charter schools transferring to the Commission prior to expiration of existing charters (performance contracts) are reviewed based on the Commission Transfer Policy 2.03.

This application process is founded on the recognition that a new relationship has been formed for accountability purposes. The State Board of Education (SBOE) will only approve renewals of charter schools with their current sponsors. Thus, when applying to the Commission at the end of a current performance contract (the “charter”) with another sponsor, the school is largely treated as a “new” school, not as a school applying for renewal or as a school transferring prior to the expiration of a current charter.

The application requirements and review process are modified from the process used for new schools. The Commission accounts for the fact that the school already exists, has enrolled students and operates a facility (with attendant financial obligations). Thus, the Commission provides a shorter application process that allows the school to pre-populate or carry over elements of the application from the school’s last application and materials from the existing school-sponsor relationship. For example, if the school hasn’t changed its academic program, it will not need to recreate that portion of the application.

Application Process

Currently operating schools applying for sponsorship by the Commission at the end of their current performance contract must notify the Commission by **[DATE]** of their intent to apply to the Commission.*

Schools must complete a **[MODIFIED APPLICATION]** by **[DATE]**. The current **[MODIFIED APPLICATION]** and instructions will be posted to the Commission’s website.

Applicants should not contact individual commissioners regarding their applications until after the application process is complete. In addition to the recommendations of review team members and staff, commissioners consider input from the community. So, applicants are encouraged to demonstrate community support for their proposal by including recommendations in their application.

The Commission will review applications within 90 days.

Missouri Charter Public School Commission	
Existing Schools Applying for New Sponsorship	2.03

Review

To review each application, the Commission assembles teams of internal evaluators and may engage external evaluators with relevant and diverse educational, organizational (governance and management), financial and legal expertise, as well as an understanding of the principles of accountability and autonomy. The Commission trains reviewers to ensure consistent standards and fair treatment of all applications. To ensure decision-making processes are free of conflicts of interest, review assignments are made only after a full disclosure of any potential or perceived conflicts of interest between reviewers and applicants.

Reviews are based on applicable Missouri State Statute, Code of State Regulations, Principles and Standards, and the evaluation expectations outlined for each section. This includes the charter school’s mission, organizational design (with a focus on strong governance), academic program, and financial management.

The Commission may contract with external reviewers to evaluate and report on the academic, financial, and operational strength of the school, as well as the governance of the school. Since these schools are already operating, the review will include:

- The school’s current performance contract,
- Past annual reports,
- Academic and financial data over the life of the charter,
- All organizational, legal and assurance documents, and
- Any documents related to performance concerns such as intervention, remediation, or probation.

The reviewers may contact schools, sponsors/authorizers, funders and stakeholders to gain a deeper understanding of the school’s performance.

Based on the review, and using the school’s existing performance contract and the Commission’s’ standards, the school is given one of the three designations: “meeting expectations,” “partially meeting expectations,” or “does not meet expectations.”

- A school partially meeting expectations must provide the Commission with specific plans for improvement/turnaround. Once accepted by the Commission, the plans will be incorporated into the new performance contract.
- A school not meeting expectations will be asked to submit an intervention plan. Once accepted by the Commission, the plan will be incorporated into the new performance contract.

Missouri Charter Public School Commission	
Existing Schools Applying for New Sponsorship	2.03

Public hearing and interview

Based on the recommendation of staff and prior to a formal vote to approve sponsorship, the Commission *may* hold a public hearing regarding the school.

Prior to a formal vote to approve the charter school, the Commission *will* interview board members to assess their capacity to govern and operate a high-quality charter school in a fiscally responsible manner that advances the mission of the charter school. The Commission may also pursue questions based on the comments generated at the public hearing.

The public and media are invited to attend, but may not participate in the interview. The officers of the governing board and the school leader (if named) shall attend the interview. Up to eight (8) total representatives may attend the interview, including all members of the governing board, school leadership positions, and key personnel.

Sponsored Schools

Once approved, Commission-sponsored schools must meet specific requirements for oversight, such as using the Commission’s document reporting platform and setting aside funds in case of closure. These requirements are included in other Commission policies and may be referenced in the performance contract.

Schools newly approved by the Commission will enter a performance contract for five (5) years. Renewals may be awarded for up to 10 years based on performance.

Because a school sponsored by the Commission through this process is already operating, enrolled students do not need to reapply, provided the school is following statutory application and enrollment requirements. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) will allow the school to retain its existing county-district code number, building numbers and associated data.

Definitions

High-risk student: Pursuant to RSMo 160.405, at least one-third of schools sponsored by the Commission “shall be to schools that actively recruit dropouts or high-risk students as their student body and address the needs of dropouts or high-risk students through their proposed mission, curriculum, teaching methods, and services.”

New school application: An application to the Commission for sponsorship of a new charter public school.

New sponsor application: An application for Commission sponsorship of an existing charter public school at the end of its performance contract with another Missouri sponsor.

Missouri Charter Public School Commission	
Existing Schools Applying for New Sponsorship	2.03

Performance contract: The “charter” is established through a performance contract executed by the Commission and the governing body of the approved school. It includes the original charter application.

Renewal application: An application to renew the current performance contract between the Commission and a charter public school.

Transfer charter: An existing charter public school applying to transfer sponsorship to the Commission from another Missouri sponsor, prior to the expiration of the school’s current performance contract with the other Missouri sponsor.

Designations

Meeting Expectations: The school generally meets the standards of the Commission, is performing well, is meeting expectations for performance, and/or may have minor concerns.

Partially meeting expectations: The school meets some aspects of the standards of the Commission, but not others and/or there are moderate concerns.

Does not meet expectations: The school falls far below the standards of the Commission, and/or there are significant concerns. The failures are material and significant to the viability to the school.