

Charter School Transfers to the Commission –Policy and Process

Adopted April 11, 2018; Amended May 29, 2018

Three types of charter schools could seek to transfer to Commission:

1. Schools with ineligible sponsor;
2. Schools with a relinquished sponsors;
3. Schools seeking a different sponsor.

The following outlines steps the Commission will take under each of these potential scenarios.

1. Ineligible Sponsor

A. Department Removes Sponsor

If the sponsor is no longer eligible to sponsor, the Department has taken action and the schools immediately become the responsibility of the Commission.

MCPSC has a statutory responsibility to accept all sponsored schools when DESE removes a sponsor. (RSMO 160.400.17(4)). Following the State Board of Education's removal of a sponsor, the Commission assumes sponsorship of the charter schools in the ineligible sponsor's portfolio.

- i. Once the Department notifies the sponsor of a public hearing to remove their eligibly, the Commission or its designee (contracted service) evaluate each school in the existing sponsor's portfolio including a review of:
 - Current performance contract
 - Past annual reports
 - Academic and financial data over the life of the charter
- ii. For schools one year or less left on the contract:
 - Commission accepts current performance contract
 - The Commission determines the performance condition of each school in the portfolio. Using the school's existing performance contract and the standards of the Commission, the school is given one of the three designations: "meeting expectations", "partially meeting expectations", or "does not meet expectations."
 - Schools meeting expectations are presented to the SBOE for renewal, with a new performance contract
 - Schools partially meeting expectations must provide the Commission with specific plans for improvement/turnaround. If accepted by the Commission, it is included in the performance contract and presented to the SBOE for renewal.
 - Schools not meeting expectations may merge with an existing charter or will close at the end of the charter term.

- iii. For schools with two years left on their existing charter
- School receives a six (6) month extension on its existing contract
 - The Commission determines the performance condition of each school in the portfolio. Using the school's existing performance contract and the standards of the Commission, the school is given one of the three designations: "meeting expectations", "partially meeting expectations", or "does not meet expectations."
 - Schools meeting expectations remain on their current performance contract. They are presented to the SBOE for renewal, with a new performance contract the following year.
 - Schools partially meeting expectations must provide the Commission with specific plans for improvement/turnaround. If accepted by the Commission the current contract is amended. The school will be evaluated on its progress. If significant progress is show, the plan will be included in the performance contract and presented to the SBOE for renewal at the end of their charter term. If there is not significant progress made, the school is placed on probation.
 - Schools not meeting expectations or is on probation within six months of renewal may merge with an existing charter or close.

- iv. For schools with three or more years left on their existing charter
- School receives a six (6) month extension on its existing contract
 - The Commission determines the performance condition of each school in the portfolio. Using the school's existing performance contract and the standards of the Commission, the school is given one of the three designations: "meeting expectations", "partially meeting expectations", or "does not meet expectations."
 - Schools meeting expectations are given a revised performance contract until the end of their existing term.
 - Schools partially meeting expectations must provide the Commission with specific plans for improvement/turnaround. It will be included in a revised performance contract until the end of their existing term.
 - Schools not meeting expectations are placed on probation. The Commission will provide an intervention plan, which will be included in a revised performance contract for the duration of their existing term.
 - Schools may relinquish their charter or merge with existing charters.

2. Sponsor Decides to No Longer Sponsor

If the sponsor wishes to relinquish their responsibilities, for a specific school or the entire portfolio of schools, the sponsor works with the Commission to accept the school(s).

- i. The Commission or its designee (contracted service) evaluate the school/each school in

the existing sponsor's portfolio including a site visit, as well as a review of:

- Current performance contracts
 - Past annual reports
 - Academic and financial data over the life of the charter
- ii. The Commission determines the performance condition of the school/each school in the portfolio. Using the school's existing performance contract and the standards of the Commission, the school is given one of the three designations: "meeting expectations", "partially meeting expectations", or "does not meet expectations." Same as ii through iv in 1.A.

3. School Seeks New Sponsor

An existing charter school can decide to transfer their sponsorship to the Commission. This may occur because the school wishes to have increased autonomy, reduced administrative burden, or seeks to align its school to the Commission's mission and vision. They may also seek a sponsor if their current sponsor does not wish to renew.

Charter schools seeking to transfer to the Commission will range in performance (high performing, moderate to low performing) and in terms of the years left on their existing contract (renewal, not at renewal.)

A. High Performing School – At Renewal

- i. School contacts Commission with LOI
- ii. Staff determine if school meets definition of "high performing"
- iii. School uses Commission's renewal application
- iv. Staff reviews; recommends acceptance or rejection
- v. Commission votes

B. High Performing School – Before Renewal

- i. School submits LOI and a letter from their existing sponsor agreeing to release them from their contract to transfer to the Commission
- ii. School forwards existing charter and performance contract to Commission for staff review and recommendation.
- iii. Commission interviews board and votes on transfer
- iv. Performance contract is the existing performance contract, with amendments.
- v. New performance contract at renewal.

4. Turnaround School – At Renewal

- i. School contacts Commission with LOI
- ii. Staff meet with school to determine goals and capacity
- iii. Commission and school sign a MOU about the process of transfer
- iv. Commission contracts with external reviewers for report on academic, financial,

operation and/or governance condition of school, which may include recommendations for the Commission and/or school

- v. School uses Commission's renewal application, addressing reviewers report
- vi. Staff reviews application and recommends acceptance or rejection
- vii. If staff recommend transfer, the Commission follows existing process of a public hearing, board interview and public vote
- viii. If staff rejects transfer, Commission votes on staff recommendation
- ix. If staff recommend, but school does not move forward, school must pay Commission for expense incurred in review process
- x. School goes through renewal with SBOE

5. Turnaround School – Before Renewal

- i. School and Commission staff meet to determine school's goals and capacity
- ii. School submits LOI and a letter from their existing sponsor agreeing to release them from their contract to transfer to the Commission
- iii. Commission and school sign a MOU about the process of transfer
- iv. Commission contracts with external reviewers for report on academic, financial, operation and/or governance condition of school, which may include recommendations for the Commission and/or school
- v. School uses Commission's renewal application, Commission provides interventions
- vi. Commission interviews board and votes on transfer
- vii. Performance contract is the existing performance contract, with amendments.
New performance contract at renewal.

6. Turnaround School – Before Renewal

Any school notified of closure by their sponsor will not be eligible to transfer to the Commission. The school may submit a new application to be consider for sponsorship.

Definitions:

DESIGNATIONS

Meeting Expectations: The school generally meets the criterion of their contract and 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 their performance contract and the standards of the Commission, but not others and or/or moderate concern(s).

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

HIGH PERFORMING

Schools that meet Missouri State Statutes definition of High-Quality or a school with the designation of "meeting expectations" and academic performance exceeds performance contract.

TRANSFER CHARTER

A "transfer charter" is an existing charter school transferring sponsorship from a sponsor no longer sponsoring charter schools to the Commission, in accordance of 160.400.17.(4) or from a sponsor who agrees to relinquish sponsorship to the Commission.

TURNAROUND

Transferring an underperforming public charter school to new management and new board governance.

PROBATION

A condition imposed on a school's charter for violations of law or

- Failure to comply with the action plan from a contract breach;
- Failure to make significant progress;
- Significant health, governance, safety, financial, and/or building issues occurred unexpectedly; and/or
- Transfers from another sponsor and is not meeting the conditions of its performance contract.

Placing a school on probation signals concern about the school's viability and permits the Commission to suspend a school's charter immediately if the school fails to remedy the causes of its probation.

INTERVENTION

When performance levels are not met, it is the responsibility of the sponsor to intervene. The level of intervention is based on the severity and magnitude of the situation. MCPSC's interventions are: Letter of Concern, Breach of Contract Letter, Probation or Revocation. Interventions must be clear, direct and provide an opportunity for the school to make the necessary modifications to assure compliance. Interventions must provide the school with the required outcomes necessary, but not the prescribed path to achieve these outcomes.