

Authorizer Meeting notes
1/18/2011

Nora Flood with the League introduced the authorizer BCSQ projects

- Standard Application and Review Rubric
- Common Contract and Narrative
- Closure Timeline and Checklist
- Renewal Framework
- Future projects
 - Application Reviewer's Training
 - Authorizer Readiness checklist for districts not currently authorizing charter schools
 - Replication Readiness for charter schools preparing to open second (or more) campuses

Vinny Badolato with the League: Legislative update

HB 1055 – Bill sponsored by the League regarding Charter School Facilities

- Clarifies the vagueness of the current language
- If the charter school identifies a district facility that is appropriate or land that is appropriate (available, suitable, and appropriate) then the school can request the facility and the district has 30 days to reply.
- Can be appealed to the state (capital construction unit) and the unit can direct the district to make the facility available to the school.
- CSI is included in the bill for state agency facilities or land, but not district facilities.
- Extends to new schools or currently operating schools.
- Discussion:
 - Authorizers feel that 30 days is a very short period of time to turn around a decision. The request would be for a process to review that would allow the district to evaluate growth and projections for need.
 - Authorizers express concern that the “temporary” use of district land becomes permanent and the land becomes unavailable to the district or the charter school is asked to vacate

New Bill in Draft - Follow up to last year's SB161 – Charter School Collaborative

- Last year's bill allowed for charter schools to apply for Federal Grants outside of IDEA and ESEA by partnering with CSI as the LEA.
- This year's bill will include charters to pursue grants within ESEA and state grants without having to go through the authorizer (LEA).
- This makes charter schools more competitive across the country.
- The bill presumes that the reauthorization of ESEA will include a number of grants.

New Bill in Draft - Moral Obligation Program

- Schools who wish to go to a bond for the facility, they can go through a conduit entity (CECFA) to improve the backing to the bond and therefore give them a higher investment grade rating. (lower interest rates, saving money for the school over time)
- State funds essentially are backing the bonds. State is currently backing about \$400 million worth of bonds.
- The bill would put a process in place to ensure that payments on a bond continue should a charter school facility close so that the state's credit is not jeopardized.
- It is a moral obligation, not a LEGAL obligation.
- The bill will also raise a cap on that program. (previously raised in 2006)

- It requires that more funds are maintained by the CS in reserve.
- It also provides CSs to access other conduit entities besides CECFA.
- Discussion:
 - Authorizers feel there would need to be some sort of vetting process up front so that if the district may be “on the hook” for the bond should the charter school fail.
 - Authorizers would prefer that the guarantee should be someone on the front end to assume bond payments should the school default.
 - Authorizers also expressed concern that schools may still be over committing and that extensive funds may not be necessary. The concern is that the bond market investors may not sufficiently keep the financing in check. There remains a significant disparity between the cost of construction and the actual value of the building once built.
 - Authorizers also express concern that elaborate buildings that are used for marketing a school should also be considered, as should geographic locations and their impact on other district schools, all because of the effects on building capacities.

New Bill in Draft – Related to Food Service within Charter Schools

- In early draft.
- Issues revolve around access to federal school lunch funding and programs.

New Bill in Draft – BEST Grant program changes

- The bill will correct a disparity in calculations related to matching funds so that there is more equality for charter schools

Non-League Bill in Draft – Designed to regulated EMOs

- League position is that the issue needs to be addressed, however the bill in its current form is too prescriptive.
- The bill does not differentiate between EMO/CMO/Non Profit/For Profit entities. There is no grandfather clause for any schools currently in existence.
- League position would prefer that instead of regulation through a bill, the HB1412 committee should rather give recommendations and guidance rather than a mandate.

SB 1 – Knowledge Based Economy Fund

- Reserve funding to be set aside and distribute evenly to all school districts.

League Webinar being offered to review legislative bills on Monday, January 24th

Update on SB111 – CSI study on CSs as an LEA for special education will be released this month.

Recommendation is to not pursue LEA status because of the many moving parts.

Denise Mund – Charter School Appeals

Summary of appeals – there have been a total of 155, and 57 times the state board has upheld the local board decision on a first appeal.

Highlights/Historical Perspective:

- In the past there was discussion about “who” could bring an appeal before the state board. The State Board denied the hearing. The issue has never been addressed legislatively.
- (attach handout)

Jen Dauzvardis – Application Rubric

Application Rubric is now separate from the Standard Application so it is a more useful tool for evaluation.

- Took components of the Checklist and the Component description to develop a full rubric with 1-2-3-4 scoring

- Rubric is for use after the application has been determined “complete” (all application components are included)
- Components scoring “1” does not meet design criteria; scoring “2” insufficiently or partially meets the criteria; scoring “3” meets; and scoring “4” exceeds expectations
- Authorizers may consider weighting different indicators for each application component.
- Space provided for reviewers to provide notes, questions, concerns, etc.
- Each application component is rated Overall in addition to the individual indicators in each component.

Denise Mund – Application Reviewer Training

Authorizer group needs to develop and guide the training process.

Training needs to be piloted with the authorizer liaisons.

Intent is to have a collaborative process with a commonly agreed upon training.

Will provide a foundation for removing politics and regulating expectations

Will provide information for appeals to the State Board, becomes a factor considered during appeal

Eventually will help develop a cadre of third party reviewers

Increases capacity across the state and share ideas about quality applications and quality schools

Subcommittee is assembling to design the training with a target date for fall to train the liaison group

Additional Issues

- The 1412 committee standards and recommendations are being formed and feedback is welcome. February 2nd meeting will include a hearing on Online Schools, 10 AM at CASBE.
- Authorizer summit – There will be a free morning at the state charter conference (the League’s conference) from 9-11:30 on Thursday morning February 17th, specifically set aside for the Authorizer’s Summit.
 - NACSA will be presenting quality standards and results of a national study about authorizing.
 - Innovation Schools Act will be discussed.
 - Release of new authorizer materials through the BCSQ grant.
 - There is an open invitation for authorizer liaisons to also request any specific topics.
 - This is for staff, superintendents, board members, and liaisons and anyone with the district who may work with charter schools in their capacity with the district.

Disposition of Charter School Appeals by the State Board of Education

Resolution	Inception-12/31/00	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Total Inception-2010
Upheld local board decision on first appeal	32	3	2	2	4	2	3	5	1	0	3	57
Remanded decision back to local board of education for reconsideration	21	3	2	2	3	4	3	4			1	43
Ordered the establishment of a charter school after the second appeal of a local board's decision	3	1		1	2		2	1			1	11
Overtured a local board's decision to revoke a charter	1											1
Dismissed the appeal because the parties settled the issues in dispute	5			1	1	4	4					15
Dismissed the appeal because of legal defects in the appeal	22	4					2					28
Total	84	11	4	6	10	10	14	10	1	0	5	155