

Charter School Accountability

I. Levels of Accountability

A. National

- No Child Left Behind Act. Mandatory testing, highly qualified teachers, adequate yearly progress

B. State

- State Board Accreditation of school districts (Educational Accreditation Act of 1998, 22-11-101 et seq., C.R.S.)
- School Accountability Reports (SARs) (a.k.a. school report cards)

C. Authorizer: School District or Charter School Institute

- Accredited by State Board of Education
- Accredits individual schools
- Charter renewal
- Ongoing monitoring and oversight of charter schools

D. Charter School

- Elected governing board
- Strategic Plan (a tool used by the board to define and prioritize goals and communicate the direction of the school)
- School Advisory Council (SAC), 22-7-10104 – 107, C.R.S.
- Accreditation through the authorizer
- Provides reports to authorizer
- Student demand (wait list or lottery size)

II. Accreditation

School districts and the Charter School Institute accredit their individual public schools in a manner similar to the plan approved by the State Board.

A. Accreditation Indicators

1. Educational Improvement Plan
2. CSAP Goals
3. Closing Achievement Gaps
4. Value-Added Growth
5. Data Regarding Achievement in Other Curriculum Standards Areas
6. Compliance with School Accountability Report (# expelled/suspended students, graduation rates, attendance rates, highly qualified teacher data, etc.)
7. Compliance with Educational Accreditation Act
8. Compliance with Safe Schools Act
9. Compliance with Colorado Basic Literacy Act
10. Annual Assessment Review by CDE

11. Compliance with Budgeting, Accounting, and Reporting Requirements
- B. State Board Options
 1. Accredited
 2. Accreditation Watch
 3. Accreditation Probation
 4. Nonaccreditation

III. School Advisory Councils: How they fit in the charter school structure

- A. Background
 1. Originally called "State/District/Building Accountability Committees"
 2. State Accountability Committee eliminated in 1997
 3. Originally created to provide parents a meaningful role in their child's education
- B. Statutory purpose of the SAC.
 1. Means for determining whether decisions affecting the educational process are advanced or impeding student achievement;
 2. Reporting to students, parents, boards of education, educators, and the school district board of education on the educational performance of the school and providing data for the appraisal of such performance;
 3. Recommendations to the principal on the expenditure of all school grants; and
 4. Safety issues related to the school environment.
- C. Philosophy and Structure
 1. In many ways, a charter school governing board meets the legislative intent of the accountability committee law. Charter school governing boards acting as the building accountability committee on January 1, 2000 may continue to operate that way.
 2. Governing boards often have the SAC report to the governing board. For example, the SAC will develop the annual School Improvement Plan and submit it to the governing board, which then submits it to the authorizer.
 3. Governing boards can expand the responsibilities of the SAC, for instance ask them to review a particular content area each year.
 4. The SAC should be included in the list of board subcommittees listed in board policy along with a job description, membership guidelines and expected reporting schedule.