

ILLINOIS STATE CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION

ENROLLMENT CERTIFICATION POLICY

Introduced: September 27, 2016

Adopted: April 25, 2017

PURPOSE

This policy sets forth the procedures for enrollment certification established pursuant to the Illinois Charter Schools Law, 105 ILCS 27-A7-10(e)(2). Through ongoing oversight, evaluation and support, this policy is designed to *ensure accountability for the stewardship of public funds*. 23 Ill. Admin. Code 650.100

DEFINITIONS

“Enrollment Cap” is the maximum number of students that the charter school is eligible to enroll.

“Enrollment Variance” is the difference between projected enrollment and actual student enrollment.

“Commission” means the Illinois State Charter School Commission.

“Resident District” means the school district a student would be assigned to attend if not enrolled in the charter school.

“ISBE” means the Illinois State Board of Education.

“PCTC” means per capita, tuition charge, as determined by ISBE, based on prior two-year Annual Financial Report for a district.

“True-Up” means an accounting method employed by Commission, during the second and fourth quarter, to ensure schools receive accurate PCTC payment based on any adjustments in enrollment.

POLICY

Background

- A. The Illinois State Charter School Commission (Commission) is an independent body with “statewide chartering jurisdiction and authority.” (105 ILCS 5/27A-7.5)
- B. As an authorizer, the Commission submits quarterly certification of student enrollment, to the Illinois State Board of Education. (105 ILCS 5/27A-9(g))

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- C. The Commission holds schools accountable for meeting certain fundamental obligations to the public, including stewardship of public funds. (23 Ill. Admin. 650)
- D. Charter schools authorized by the Commission are open to any student residing within the geographic boundaries of the areas served by the local school board. (105 ILCS 5/27A-4(d))
- E. School funding for Commission-authorized schools is allocated on a quarterly basis based upon the percentage of PCTC approved by the Commission and set forth in the school's charter agreement.
- F. Each school pays an annual Operational (Authorizer) Fee in an amount up to 3% of the school's PCTC that the Commission approves annually.

II. Enrollment Certification and Attendance

Pursuant to the Illinois Charter Schools Law, the Commission shall certify to ISBE the student enrollment for each of the charter schools it authorizes. 105 ILCS 5/27A-9(g)

A. Attendance

Charter schools must maintain an accurate record of daily attendance. 105 ILCS 5/27A-9(f) Commission-authorized charter schools are required to maintain an accurate record of daily student attendance. Enrollment data must be recorded monthly in the state's Student Information System (SIS).

B. Documentation Required By Schools

Schools submit quarterly enrollment certification forms to the Commission on or before **August 1, October 15, January 5, and March 15**. The enrollment certification forms require the school to state the current total student enrollment number and to identify the resident district students would otherwise attend. Schools shall also supply supporting enrollment documentation, including enrollment, transfer and any waitlist(s) for the respective quarter.

C. Commission Certification Process

Commission staff shall review the State's Student Information System (SIS) each quarter and, when deemed necessary, shall conduct on-site enrollment and attendance audits. Upon verification of enrollment, the Commission shall certify each school's enrollment and submit the required certification to ISBE. The Commission will also publish notice of enrollment on its website and issue a written notice to the resident school district for each respective charter school.

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III. Enrollment Capacity and Projections

The charter agreement between the Commission and the charter school governs the enrollment capacity for each charter school.

Enrollment certification shall not exceed enrollment capacity as provided in the school's charter agreement. Commission approval is required for any request to increase or decrease enrollment capacity¹. The Commission reserves the right to approve any increase or decrease in the enrollment capacity for the next academic year. Increases in enrollment capacity, generally, will not be approved in a school's initial five years of operation

On or before July 1, schools that have not reached enrollment capacity are required to submit five-year, grade-level, enrollment projections. Commission staff will monitor and address any aggressive growth that may subject the school to exceeding its enrollment cap before the initial five-year term.

IV. Enrollment Adjustments and Audits

Commission-authorized charter schools receive four (4) quarterly payments directly from ISBE based on certified enrollment. The quarterly payment is calculated by ISBE based on the PCTC.²

The Commission recognizes that student mobility and attrition are a reality for all schools, including charters. Student transfers are a reality and in effort to ensure school funds follow the student, the Commission will perform a "true-up" in the second and fourth quarters to address adjustments in enrollment. The "true-up formula"³ equalizes student enrollment from the first to second and third to fourth quarters. Any enrollment variance (increase or decrease in student enrollment) will be reflected in the payment disbursed in the second and 4th quarter payments.

The Commission may conduct enrollment and attendance audits based upon its quarterly review of the state SIS as necessary. An audit may include on-site review of attendance records, classroom observations, interviews with school personnel and review of enrollment, waiting and transfer list documentation.

¹ Requests to increase/decrease enrollment projections or capacity must be submitted in a Material Modification.

² PCTC is computed and annually set by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) based on the local districts' two-year prior Annual Financial Report (AFR). Upon authorization by the Commission, a percentage of the PCTC, pursuant to the Charter Schools Law, is approved by Commissioners for allocation to the school for the duration of the charter term.

³ True-Up Formula: $((\text{Annual PCTC Allocation} * \# \text{ of certified students}) / 2) - 1^{\text{st}}$ or 3^{rd} quarter payment

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V. Accountability Actions

The charter school board has a fiduciary duty to ensure proper and sound management of fiscal affairs. 105 ILCS 5/27A-5(f) Schools authorized by the Commission are required to submit quarterly financial statements, an annual budget and an audit, conducted by an independent auditor.

These documents provide data to perform routine compliance monitoring, annual reviews and renewal evaluations. These accountability measures are enacted in accordance with the charter agreement and the Illinois Charter Schools Law. In addition to the above, a revised fiscal year budget and five-year budget may be requested.

Schools found to have repeatedly submitted inaccurate enrollment forms, non-compliant financial statements, reported attendance rates below 85%, or otherwise committed actions that amount to material violation of the charter agreement and/or threaten the fiscal health of the charter school will be subject to Commission action pursuant to the Accountability Plan.

VI. Policy Review and Effective Date

This policy is effective immediately. The policy shall remain in place unless or until it is repealed or amended.