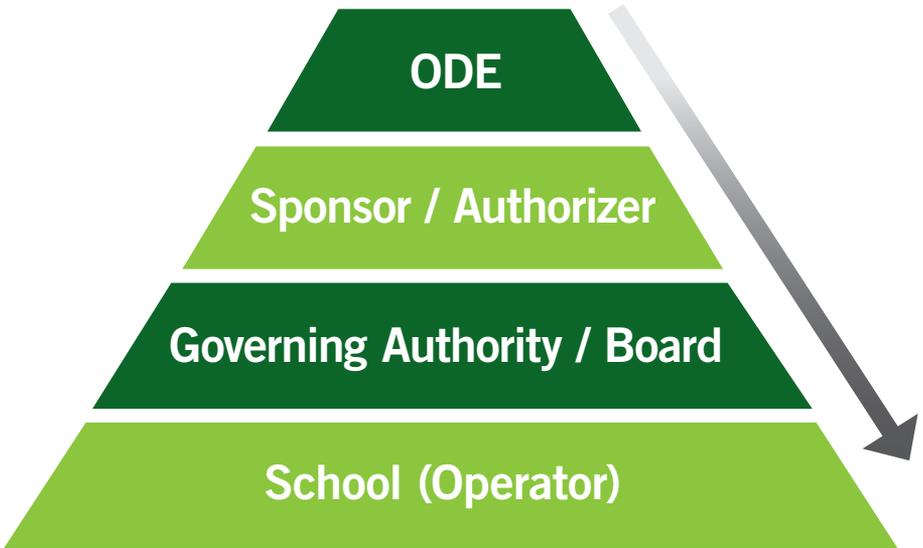


# OHIO CHARTER SCHOOL LAWS ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Many changes have been made to state laws governing public charter (or “community”) schools since they were first authorized in Ohio in 1997. Strong accountability is provided through clearly defined roles of each of the four entities that comprise the charter school segment of Ohio’s system of K-12 public education. This publication summarizes these unique and important roles.

## Ohio Charter Accountability Hierarchy



# Ohio Department of Education (ODE)

The department plays two distinctly different roles in Ohio's charter school community: as a sponsor (aka authorizer) of charter schools through the Office of School Sponsorship (with the same roles and responsibilities as other sponsors); and, as an oversight entity with authority over all charter school sponsors through the Office of Quality School Choice. Key oversight responsibilities include:

- Approval or denial of new sponsors; renewal, non-renewal or revocation of existing sponsors
- Establishing terms of each sponsor's authority (formalized in legal agreements)
- Assessing and reporting sponsor performance in three key areas:
  - Quality authorizing practices (as established by the National Association of Charter School Authorizers - NACSA)
  - Compliance with rule and law
  - Portfolio of schools' academic performance
- Review and approval/non-approval of sponsor corrective action plans, with authority to place sponsors on probation
- Reviewing all charter contracts between sponsors and school governing authorities for legal sufficiency
- Providing technical assistance to sponsors and schools sponsored by ODE
- Publishing an annual report on charter school academic programs, operational and legal compliance, and finances

## Sponsors / Authorizers

Ohio earns high marks from national experts for providing a variety of sponsorship options: traditional public school districts; Educational Service Centers (ESCs); State Universities (or their designees); 501c3 not-for-profit organizations, and ODE. Key sponsor responsibilities include:

- Thoroughly vetting new school proposals and entering into contracts with governing authorities of approved schools deemed likely to succeed
- Renewing (or non-renewing) school contracts based in a rigorous assessment of school performance, compliance and fiscal responsibility
- Providing school monitoring oversight
- Providing technical assistance
- Taking steps to intervene in school operations to correct performance problems
- Placing school on corrective action plans (CAP), probation, suspending school operations or terminating sponsor/board contracts as needed
- Conducting annual site visits to schools prior to opening each school year and providing written assurances of compliance to ODE

## Governing Authority / Board

All Ohio Charter schools operate under the direction of not-for-profit boards (aka governing authorities) with a minimum of five members. Individuals may serve on up to five charter school boards at the same time. Many provisions of state law dictate eligibility for serving on a charter school board, and members are subject to annual disclosure statement filings. Boards outline schools' comprehensive plans-including mission, student characteristics/ages/grade levels, curriculum focus, academic goals, performance standards, and more-in contracts they enter into with school sponsors. Key responsibilities include:

- Hiring, evaluating and, if necessary, terminating school operator or school leader
- Oversight of all aspects of school operations and performance including academics, curriculum and testing
- Ensuring school compliance with state laws and sponsor-board contract requirements
- Providing fiscal management (including budgeting) and accountability
- Publish annual report on school activities, progress in meeting goals and performance standards, and financial data to sponsor, parents and guardians
- Adoption of administrative policies and procedures

## School Operator

Governing authorities hire a school leader directly or a management company to be responsible for the day-to-day operations of the school. Key responsibilities, as outlined in employment agreements or contracts, may include:

- Compliance with all applicable state laws and administrative rules
- Curriculum selection, implementation and alignment with state standards
- Student learning and achievement measurements, including the administration of all state-mandated tests
- Special Education Services-in compliance with both state and federal laws and rules
- Student Services-from health, counseling and social services, to coordination of student transportation (if necessary)
- Human Resources-recruiting/hiring, retention, discipline, professional development and ensuring appropriate licensure, certifications, etc.
- Communication with stakeholders
- Assist the board in the budgeting process and work with the school treasurer to ensure responsible fiscal management
- Facilities and security coordination and oversight
- Food service management
- Assuring access to and use of current technology



Feel free to contact BCSB with your questions!  
BCSB has dedicated, knowledgeable, experienced staff members  
ready to answer your call.

**For Additional Information Please Contact:**

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