

Welcome to the Webinar!

Integrating Special Education Into Key Practices: Rubrics To Examine Charter Applications And Monitoring

We will be starting soon.



National Charter School
Resource Center

at American Institutes for Research

Integrating Special Education Into Key Practices: Rubrics To Examine Charter Applications And Monitoring

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About the Resource Center

The **U.S. Department of Education** is committed to promoting effective practices, providing technical assistance, and disseminating the resources critical to ensuring the success of charter schools across the country. To that end, the Education Department, under a contract with American Institutes for Research, has developed the **National Charter School Resource Center**.

Presenters

Lauren Morando Rhim & Paul O'Neill
*National Center for
Special Education in Charter Schools*

Webinar Overview

- Introduce presenters and the National Center for Special Education in Charter Schools
- Learn about the recently published rubrics that have been developed to help authorizers evaluate a charter during the application, operation, and renewal phases.
- Determine how the rubrics could be used to help authorizers that are under a state agency improve their special education oversight.
- Engage in an interactive conversation with other SEA CSP grantees about ways to improve special education authorizing practices.

National Center for Special Education in Charter Schools

All students should
have access to high
quality public
schools.

National Center for Special Education in Charter Schools

To address:

- the need for information and thoughtful policy,
- widespread negative assumptions,
- poor relationships between the charter sector and traditional special education advocates,

And:

- to build capacity to deliver quality special education services...

We created NCSECS in January 2013

- *NCSECS will operate as a nonprofit organization*

National Center for Special Education in Charter Schools

Establish Facts

- Review and synthesize existing research and conduct original research to establish an accurate understanding of the extent to which students with disabilities have equal access to charter schools, the services they receive, outcomes attained and emerging innovations.

Communicate Facts

- Disseminate accurate information about the status of special education in the charter sector and actively engage parents of students with disabilities and special education advocates.

Inform Policy

- Track and inform federal, state, and local policy to ensure that adequate structures are in place to support students with disabilities enrolling in charter schools.

Build Capacity

- Develop and disseminate tools and programs to build authorizer, operator and support organization capacity related to educating students with disabilities.

National Center for Special Education in Charter Schools

Current Projects

- Policy scan examining existing and emerging policy strategies related to special education in charter schools
- Issue brief regarding special education challenges, legal framework, federal statutory requirements, policy priorities, enforcement mechanisms and best practices in the charter sector
- Report synthesizing examination of brick-and-mortar and virtual networks of charter schools experience managing special education responsibilities and opportunities
- Direct technical assistance to state education agencies and authorizers regarding delivery of high quality special education programs in the charter sector
- Presentations at national and state conferences such as the National Charter Schools Conference, the National Association of Charter School Authorizers Leadership Conference and the OH Alliance for Public Charter Schools Special Education Conference

Special Education Technical Assistance

Problem

To date, most technical assistance related to special education has focused on charter school operators but states and charter school authorizers are uniquely positioned to make certain that:

- new and replication applicants have the capacity to educate children with disabilities and
- existing operators are providing high quality special education and related services to all students with disabilities and are complying with all applicable laws, rules and regulations.

Charter Authorizer Rubric Project

Response

Develop three phase rubric for authorizers that will improve their capacity to support development and maintenance of high quality special education programs thereby ensuring that students with disabilities have equal access to charter schools

Authorizer Rubric

Three Phases:

Application/Replication

Operations/Oversight

Renewal/Reauthorization

Application Phase

Objective:

Provide authorizers with means to assess applicant's capacity to deliver high quality special education program

Infuse an additional layer of transparency into the authorization process

Operations/Oversight Phase

Objective:

Provide a structure to ensure that operating charter schools are meeting obligations to enroll and support students with disabilities.

Renewal/Reauthorization Phase

Objective:

Provide a structure for authorizers to examine individual charter school practices over the life of charter (e.g., Child Find, enrollment procedures, initial evaluations, development of IEPs, provision of related services and transition services) for the purpose of informing renewal decisions

Rubric Categories

- Administration/Governance
- Curriculum and instruction
- Assessment
- Enrollment
- Service provision
- Specialized personnel (e.g., certified special education teachers, administrators, related services personnel)
- Budget
- Discipline
- Facility
- Transportation
- Management company experience and practices (where applicable)
- Track record (for schools seeking to replicate)

Application Category	Core Elements	Key Considerations	Best Practices
Curriculum & Instruction	The core content to be delivered in the school and the method of delivering the content.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the applicant’s plan to accommodate varied learning styles? • What is the applicant’s plan to modify delivery of curriculum (e.g., integration of assistive technology) to ensure that all students can access the general education curriculum? • How does the school plan to train teachers to modify the curriculum and instruction to address the unique needs of students with disabilities? 	<p>Supporting students’ access to the general education curriculum is the purpose of providing special education and related services. Students with identified needs under the IDEA are entitled to a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) provided to them in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) appropriate for their needs. Charter applications should articulate a clear plan to ensure that all students can access the curriculum and that instructional techniques will be adapted to serve all students.</p> <p>If the school has a virtual or blended learning component, the application should contain a detailed description of how the learning management system (LMS), the central component of online learning approaches, will enable students with disabilities to access the curriculum.</p>
Individual Education Program (IEP) Development	The process by which a team of professionals, in collaboration with parents and other external experts as needed, develop a plan to provide special education and related services to a student identified as eligible for special education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the school have a plan to inform parents about their and their child’s rights associated with IDEA? • Does the school have a plan to hire personnel to serve as case managers responsible for implementing the IEP? • Does the school plan to hire a staff member or contract with an external entity to be responsible for scheduling, leading, and documenting IEP meetings? • If the school has a virtual or blended learning model, how will IEP’s be modified to incorporate the virtual or blended learning environment? 	The IEP is an evolving document that reflects a student with a disability’s unique needs and the individual services to be provided to enable them to access the general education curriculum and succeed at school. Developing an IEP requires a significant level of knowledge of IDEA as well as state special education rules and regulations. Charter applicants should articulate a clear and feasible plan for how IEPs will be developed.

Discussion Questions

How do you ensure that applicants fully understand the challenge of serving special needs students and complying with applicable rules?

Are operating charter schools in your state engaging in service delivery in appropriate ways?

Are charter schools serving and retaining a comparable number of students with disabilities relative to other local public schools?

How are charter schools handling disciplining of special education students properly?

How should an imperfect record on special education compliance be factored into an authorizer's renewal decision?

Questions?



Raise your hand or enter your question in the chat box
on the left side of your screen.

Resources

Authorizer Rubrics for Non-Local Education Agency and Local Education Agency Charter Schools (Rhim & O'Neill, 2012).

Special Education Start-Up and Implementation Tools for Charter School Leaders and Special Education Managers (Giovannetti & Opalack, 2012).

<http://www.charterschoolcenter.org/priority-area/special-education-0>

Resources

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- Heubert, J. P. (1997). *Schools without rules?: Charter schools, federal disability law, and the paradoxes of deregulation*. *Harvard Civil Rights-Civil Liberties Law Review*, 32, 301-353.
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act, 20 U.S.C §1413 (2004).
- O'Neill, P. T., Wenning, R. J., & Giovannetti, B. (2002). *Serving Students with Disabilities in Charter Schools: Legal Obligations and Policy Options*. *169 West's Education Law Reporter [1]* (Nov. 7, 2002).
- O'Neill, P. T. & Thukral, R. (2010) *The Unique System of Charter Schools in New Orleans After Hurricane Katrina: Distinctive Structure, Familiar Challenges*, *Loyola University New Orleans Journal of Public Interest Law*, Vol. 11, (2)
- PROJECT INTERSECT PUBLICATION WEBSITE:
[HTTP://WWW.EDUCATION.UMD.EDU/EDSP/PROJECTINTERSECT/PRESENTATIONS.HTML](http://www.education.umd.edu/EDSP/PROJECTINTERSECT/PRESENTATIONS.HTML)
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- Rhim, L. M., & Brinson, D. (2010). *Retrofitting Bureaucracy. Factors Influencing Charter Schools' Access to Federal Entitlement Programs*. Lincoln, IL: Center on Innovation and Improvement.
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- Rhim, L. M., & McLaughlin, M. J. (2007). *Accountability frameworks and students with disabilities: A test of assumptions about improving public education for All students*. *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education* 54(1).
- Rhim, L. M., & O'Neill, P. (2012). *Charter school authorizer rubrics*:
<http://www.charterschoolcenter.org/priority-area/special-education-0>

Questions Suggestions?

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National Charter School Resource Center

- <http://www.charterschoolcenter.org>

Thank you for participating.

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- This webinar will be archived at the following website:
<http://www.charterschoolcenter.org/webinars/>
- Please share your feedback with us through the evaluation.

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