



“Faux-ccountability”

Charter Hostility Masquerading as Accountability

NACSA LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

OCTOBER 19 – 22, 2015 | COLORADO

Speakers: James Merriman, Jeremiah Grace, Christine Lopes

October 21, 10:45am-12:00pm

Resources for Authorizers

Guiding Questions: Developing a Strategy and Finding Partners

Q: Is there an identified objective problem or event in my state’s charter sector that this proposal is responding to or trying to solve?

Q: What is my authorizing office currently doing on this topic? What are some working models for policies on this topic across the country? How can I make my office’s current actions, and other models, known to policy makers and other organizations?

Q: Is there a more appropriate practice or policy way to solve the identified problem? Who can I share that with?

Q: Is there appetite in my state for a proactive examination of our charter school policies with the possibility for appropriate reform? Who could spearhead those conversations?

Common Tools

NACSA’s *Principles & Standards for Quality Charter School Authorizing*. The national standard for quality charter school oversight practices. If a proposed policy is not supported by the three main principles of autonomy, accountability, and accessibility, it may be overreach. It may be beneficial to highlight to policy makers what quality authorizing looks like and, importantly, how it balances school autonomy with that necessary component of public accountability and accessibility.

<http://www.qualitycharters.org/for-authorizers/principles-and-standards/>

NACSA’s *State Policy Tools and Analysis*. Provides recommendations for state charter school accountability laws and regulations as well as information on what other states have in place.

<http://www.qualitycharters.org/policy-research/state-policy-agenda/>

National Alliance for Public Charter Schools Model Law Ranking. A comprehensive model law and ranking that is designed to support an accountable, autonomous charter sector.

<http://www.publiccharters.org/get-the-facts/law-database/>

Center for Research On Education Outcomes (CREDO). Charter School academic impact, state and urban area data. Faux-ccountability proposals often purport to solve problems with academic performance in the charter sector, even if the academic performance of a charter sector in that state has been outstanding. Data on the performance of charter schools in specific cities or states can combat any misinformation. It can also remind policy makers that what matters first and foremost is the best outcomes for students and families.

<https://credo.stanford.edu/research-reports.html>

National Center for Special Education in Charter Schools

<http://www.ncsecs.org/>

National Charter School Resource Center

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

Common Policy Attributes

Faux-accountability proposals often occur in similar areas of charter school policy. In some cases a state may face real challenges in this area of charter school oversight, and these challenges should not be overlooked. However faux-accountability proposals are characterized by an unbalance of the accountability for autonomy bargain. Policy proposals in these areas may warrant a closer look.

- Extensive board member requirements that dictate the identity of a majority of board members.
- If the state has a non-school district authorizer, community input or impact statements from local school boards or city councils concerning new charter applications or expansion requests, particularly when given significant weight or veto power.
- Restrictions on all authorizing activity in a given jurisdiction, either through the removal of authorizing authority or through blanket charter moratoriums.
- Limitations or restrictions on facilities use or co-locations that do not appropriately represent the needs of charter school students and families.
- Limitations or restrictions on the types of entities a charter school can enter into a contract with.
- Enrollment caps or quotas, on general or special populations, above and beyond those outlined in the charter contract.
- Transparency requirements above and beyond those that apply to traditional public schools, particularly if an authorizer can already easily access all documents and information necessary to conduct public oversight.
- Requiring authorizer to provide extensive support or intervention to failing charter schools.
- Required participation in the exact same state or local accountability systems as traditional public schools. *These can inadvertently subject charter schools to school intervention or turnaround efforts that make it harder to enforce the charter contract.*