

# CHARTER SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



**Alabama State Department of Education Accountability Section  
Charter School Accountability Frequently Asked Questions**

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## Introduction

Charter schools will be treated in the same manner as all non-charter public schools as it relates to accountability. Please click the following link <http://www.alsde.edu/sec/acct/Pages/resources-all.aspx?navtext=Resources> and select the “Alabama Accountability Models: Frequently Asked Questions” to obtain information about the Accountability Models. It is suggested that you read the Accountability FAQs for background information prior to reading the Charter School FAQs below.

## How does ESEA flexibility affect public charter school LEAs and public charter schools?

ESEA flexibility affects public charter schools (including public charter school LEAs and public charter schools within a regular LEA) in the same manner as all other LEAs and non-charter public schools (See “Alabama Accountability Models: Frequently Asked Questions”).

Principle 1: The college- and career-ready standards that the ALSDE has adopted under Principle 1 apply to public charter schools and non-charter public schools alike as it relates to assessments.

Principle 2: The ALSDE and its LEAs, as appropriate, must include public charter schools in the state’s system of differentiated accountability, recognition, and support. Accordingly, the ALSDE must apply its annual measurable objectives (AMOs) to public charter school LEAs and schools. Additionally, it must include Title I-participating public charter schools in the pool of schools from which it identifies reward, priority, and focus schools. A public charter school that the ALSDE identifies as a priority or focus school must implement interventions consistent with the ESEA flexibility request.

Principle 3: Public charter schools and non-charter public schools must develop and implement teacher and principal evaluation and support systems that are consistent with the guidelines developed and adopted by the ALSDE.

## Are charter schools required to participate in the state accountability system?

Pursuant to the charter school law in Alabama (Act 2015-3), charter schools, as non-charter public schools, are subject to Alabama’s Accountability System (See “Alabama Accountability Models: Frequently Asked Questions”).

## In which LEA will a public charter school’s accountability be reported?

*Conversion* public charter schools will remain part of the LEA in which they were established; therefore, the accountability data of conversion public charter schools will be reported in the LEAs in which they exist.

*Start-up* public charter schools will function as their own LEA; therefore, the accountability data of start-up public charter schools will be reported as their own LEA.

## **How is a start-up charter public school that is its own LEA included in the ALSDE’s differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system, as an LEA or as a school?**

A start-up public charter school that is its own LEA is subject to the recognition, accountability, and support provisions that apply to non-charter public schools. The ALSDE would include start-up public charter schools that act as their own LEA when it identifies reward, priority, and focus schools. A public charter school LEA that is identified as a reward school would be eligible for recognition and rewards like non-charter public schools, and a public charter school that acts as an LEA that is identified as a priority school would need to implement interventions consistent with the turnaround principles and the ALSDE’s flexibility request.

## **What accountability measures are in place for public charter schools under Alabama’s New ESEA Accountability Model?**

Student progress will be measured using the same accountability indicators as non-charter public schools. The accountability indicators are Achievement, Attendance Rate, and Graduation Rate (See “Alabama Accountability Models: Frequently Asked Questions”).

## **What data sources will be used for accountability indicators for public charter schools?**

Public charter schools will use the same data sources as non-charter public schools (See “Alabama Accountability Models: Frequently Asked Questions”).

## **How will annual measurable objectives be set for public charter schools?**

Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) for public charter schools will be established in the same manner as non-charter public schools. The baseline year will be the first year the public charter school is in existence (See “Alabama Accountability Models: Frequently Asked Questions”).

## **How will the A-F Law apply to public charter schools?**

The A-F Law (Act 2012-402) will apply to public charter schools the same as non-charter public schools (See “Alabama Accountability Models: Frequently Asked Questions”).

## **What annual reports will measure performance of charter schools?**

The Accountability Section of the ALSDE will provide annual performance reports for public charter schools the same as non-charter public schools (See “Alabama Accountability Models: Frequently Asked Questions”). However, pursuant to Alabama Act 2015-3, in addition to the Accountability Section reports, on or before November 1 of each year beginning in the first year after the state has had public charter schools operating for a full school year, the department shall issue to the Governor, the Legislature, and the public at large, an annual report on the state’s public charter schools, drawing from the annual reports submitted by every authorizer as well as any additional relevant data compiled by the department, for the school year ending in the preceding calendar year. The annual report shall include a comparison of the performance

of public charter school students with the performance of academically, ethnically, and economically comparable groups of students in non-charter public schools. In addition, the annual report shall include the department's assessment of the successes, challenges, and areas for improvement in meeting the purposes of this act, including the department's recommendations as to any suggested changes in state law or policy necessary to strengthen the state's public charter schools.

**NOTE:** This **working document "highlights"** some key components of the *Alabama School Choice and Student Opportunity Act* (Act 2015-3), but does not attempt to address all guidance specific to public charter schools. Information included in this working document will be updated as the Alabama State Department of Education develops specific guidance regarding Alabama public charter schools. Please send questions to [pcs@alsde.edu](mailto:pcs@alsde.edu).