



OKLAHOMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF  
**EDUCATION**  
— CHAMPION EXCELLENCE —

## What's in a Name?

# The What, Why and How of Conversion Schools and Brick-and-Mortar Virtual Programs

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# Disclaimer

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- Everything you are about to hear are the personal opinions of the speaker and not necessarily the policies or opinions of the State of Oklahoma. Information provided should not be construed as legal advice or opinion.
- Humor?

# Roadmap

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- Operational flexibilities
  - Charter schools
  - Empowerment schools
  - Conversion schools
- Virtual instruction

# What is a Charter School?

- Contract
- Specific curriculum?
- Exempt from certain regulations
  - Teacher Due Process; TLE; collective bargaining; certification

# Establishment

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- Training
- Application
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> party develops & submit to sponsor
  - Approval or rejection-90 days; 30 days; 30 more days...
- Contract

# Application Requirements (35)

- Financial plans, financial controls and audit requirements
- Start-up and 5-year budget
- Facilities plan
- Description of minimum and maximum enrollment
- Description of academic program
- Instructional framework
- Plan for assessments
- Plan for serving students with disabilities, ELL, and at-risk
- Demonstration of community support
- Discipline policies
- Organizational structure
- Open Meeting and Open Records Acts

# Compliance

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- Except as provided for in the Charter Schools Act...exempt from statutes, rules, and regulations of school districts

# Compliance (cont.)

- Federal regulations, state law, rules relating to health, safety, civil rights and insurance
- Oklahoma School Testing Program
- Financial audits, audit procedures, reporting requirements
- Oklahoma Cost Accounting System (OCAS)

# More Compliance

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- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
- Board member conflict of interest statutes
- No tuition or fees
- No home school generation of revenue
- Days of instruction (180 days/1080 hours)
- Student suspension
- Open Records Act

# To Further Comply...

- School district for Governmental Tort Claims Act
- Teachers retirement?
- No taxes or issuing bonds, but...
- Quarterly board meetings
- Open Meetings Act
- Enrollment? Non-discrimination?

# What is an Empowerment School?

- Empowerment School Act:
- Local boards to govern and make decisions based on *needs* of students
- Exemption(s) from statutes and rules
- Encourages consideration of innovations
  - Services to students, including those at-risk
  - Curriculum and academic assessments;
  - Reimagining school design

# Establishment

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- ✓ *District* submits *Application* with stakeholder input
  - Statutes and/or rules to be waived
  - Innovations and operations
- ✓ Approve or disapprove w/in 60 days
- ✓ Submit to the State Board of Education
  - 60 days to approve, and must approve unless...
    - Likely to result in a decrease in academic achievement
    - Not fiscally feasible

# Application Requirements

- Mission of *school/zone/district*, and a “why” statement
- Innovations implemented & operations affected
  - Educational program, academic improvements
  - Length of school day and year
  - Graduation policies and student promotion
  - Assessments
  - Staffing
  - Budget (Costs, savings & efficiencies?)
  - Collaboration

Topic	What Empowered Schools Act flexibility <i>might</i> allow:
<p><b>Attendance</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Students could go to school on Saturdays, breaks and evenings</li> </ul>
<p><b>Flexible graduation requirements</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Schools can reorganize content and classes to increase relevance</li> <li>▪ Freedom from “box checking” and pushing students through a regimented course sequence</li> </ul>
<p><b>Limiting definitions of pace, place and proportions</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Students can move as fast as they want and as slow as they need</li> <li>▪ Real-world learning can count for academic credit</li> <li>▪ Removal of limits on pace and time spent out-of-the-classroom</li> </ul>

<b>Topic</b>	<b>What Empowered Schools Act flexibility will <i>not</i> allow:</b>
<b>Attendance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Students stop coming to school</li> <li>▪ Students attend less than the current minimum number of hours/days</li> <li>▪ Students, schools and the district are no longer accountable for attendance</li> </ul>
<b>Flexible graduation requirements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Waiving of state academic standards</li> <li>▪ Waiving of state or district assessment</li> <li>▪ Reducing academic expectations or rigor</li> <li>▪ Eliminating the academic expectations for post-secondary admission</li> </ul>
<b>Limiting definitions of pace, place and proportions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Students do whatever they want, wherever they want</li> <li>▪ Students are not taught by certified teachers</li> <li>▪ Students are not under the supervision of schools</li> </ul>

# Compliance

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- Not waived:
  - Charter School Compliance and...
    - Minimum salary
    - Retirement & Insurance
    - Evaluations
    - Dismissal and Due Process
    - Certified employees

# What is a Conversion School?

- 70 O.S. § 3-132; Oklahoma Administrative Code 210:10-1-22
- School created by converting all or any part of a traditional public school [site] in order to access any or all flexibilities afforded to a charter school

# Establishment

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- Written *plan*  local board of education
- Plan available on district & school website
- Submission to OSDE (60 days)
  - Plan, meeting minutes
- Length of conversion? Changes to plan?

# Plan Requirements (20)

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- Mission
- Organizational structure
- Partnerships
- Community support
- Facility/location
- Measuring effectiveness
- Complete charter training
- Assessments & Standards
- Instructional design
- Serving EL, at-risk and students with disabilities
- Extracurricular/co-curricular
- Discipline policies
- Staffing
- Open Meetings & Open Records

# Compliance

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- Same funding as traditional public school
- Same enrollment requirements as traditional and charter public school
- Same accountability
- EXCEPT, exempt from statutes, rules, and regulations as a charter is

# Virtual Instruction

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- Policy, policy, policy
- Student (and staff) attendance
  - Traditional v. virtual
- Resource allocation
- Policy, policy, policy

# Attendance

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- Traditional
  - 2/3 of the first half; 2/3 of the second half
- Virtual
  - Hours/day measured across a week by login
  - Completion of assignments
  - Statewide virtual?

# Attendance – Statewide Virtual Charter

## 70 O.S. § 3-145.8

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- Quarterly analysis; in attendance if:
  - Assignments completed on no less than 90% of days within the quarter;
  - On pace for on-time completion of course (defined by local board); or
  - Complete no less than 40 instructional activities within quarter
- Instructional activity: logins, offline activities, assignments, testing, face-to-face communication or meetings via email, text or phone.

# Resource Allocation

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- Required program?
- Right to attend school free of charge
- Free of charge = equipment and access
  - Computer, wifi/mifi
  - Equivalent learning materials
  - No library or public space referrals w/out transportation

# Contact

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