

1 STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2 2nd Session of the 56th Legislature (2018)

3 SENATE BILL 879

By: Sharp

6 AS INTRODUCED

7 An Act relating to charter schools; amending 70 O.S.  
8 2011, Section 3-132, as last amended by Section 29,  
Chapter 42, O.S.L. 2017 (70 O.S. Supp. 2017, Section  
9 3-132), which relates to charter school sponsorship;  
10 removing language allowing the State Board of  
Education to sponsor a charter school under certain  
11 circumstances; prohibiting the State Board of  
Education from sponsoring certain charter schools  
12 after certain date; requiring certain notification;  
directing certain charter school applicants to enter  
13 into certain contract by certain date; providing for  
dissolution of certain charter schools after certain  
14 date; amending 70 O.S. 2011, Section 3-134, as  
amended by Section 2, Chapter 170, O.S.L. 2015 (70  
15 O.S. Supp. 2017, Section 3-134), which relates to  
charter school applications; removing language  
16 regarding the location of certain charter school  
sponsored by the State Board of Education; modifying  
17 which charter school applicants can seek certain  
arbitration under certain conditions; providing an  
effective date; and declaring an emergency.

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20 BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

21 SECTION 1. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2011, Section 3-132, as  
22 last amended by Section 29, Chapter 42, O.S.L. 2017 (70 O.S. Supp.  
23 2017, Section 3-132), is amended to read as follows:  
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1       Section 3-132. A. The Oklahoma Charter Schools Act shall apply  
2 only to charter schools formed and operated under the provisions of  
3 the act. Charter schools shall be sponsored only as follows:

4       1. By any school district located in the State of Oklahoma,  
5 provided such charter school shall only be located within the  
6 geographical boundaries of the sponsoring district and subject to  
7 the restrictions of Section 3-145.6 of this title;

8       2. By a technology center school district if the charter school  
9 is located in a school district served by the technology center  
10 school district in which all or part of the school district is  
11 located in a county having more than five hundred thousand (500,000)  
12 population according to the latest Federal Decennial Census;

13       3. By a technology center school district if the charter school  
14 is located in a school district served by the technology center  
15 school district and the school district has a school site that has  
16 been identified as in need of improvement by the State Board of  
17 Education pursuant to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of  
18 1965, as amended or reauthorized;

19       4. By an accredited comprehensive or regional institution that  
20 is a member of The Oklahoma State System of Higher Education or a  
21 community college if the charter school is located in a school  
22 district in which all or part of the school district is located in a  
23 county having more than five hundred thousand (500,000) population  
24 according to the latest Federal Decennial Census;

1        5. By a comprehensive or regional institution that is a member  
2 of The Oklahoma State System of Higher Education if the charter  
3 school is located in a school district that has a school site that  
4 has been identified as in need of improvement by the State Board of  
5 Education pursuant to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of  
6 1965, as amended or reauthorized. In addition, the institution  
7 shall have a teacher education program accredited by the Oklahoma  
8 Commission for Teacher Preparation and have a branch campus or  
9 constituent agency physically located within the school district in  
10 which the charter school is located in the State of Oklahoma;

11       6. By a federally recognized Indian tribe, operating a high  
12 school under the authority of the Bureau of Indian Affairs as of  
13 November 1, 2010, if the charter school is for the purpose of  
14 demonstrating native language immersion instruction, and is located  
15 within its former reservation or treaty area boundaries. For  
16 purposes of this paragraph, native language immersion instruction  
17 shall require that educational instruction and other activities  
18 conducted at the school site are primarily conducted in the native  
19 language;

20       7. By the State Board of Education when the applicant of the  
21 charter school is the Office of Juvenile Affairs or the applicant  
22 has a contract with the Office of Juvenile Affairs to provide a  
23 fixed rate level E, D, or D+ group home service and the charter  
24 school is for the purpose of providing education services to youth

1 in the custody or supervision of the state. Not more than two  
2 charter schools shall be sponsored by the Board as provided for in  
3 this paragraph during the period of time beginning July 1, 2010,  
4 through July 1, 2016; or

5 8. By a federally recognized Indian tribe only when the charter  
6 school is located within the former reservation or treaty area  
7 boundaries of the tribe on property held in trust by the Bureau of  
8 Indian Affairs of the United States Department of the Interior for  
9 the benefit of the tribe, ~~or~~

10 ~~9. By the State Board of Education when the applicant has first~~  
11 ~~been denied a charter by the local school district in which it seeks~~  
12 ~~to operate. In counties with fewer than five hundred thousand~~  
13 ~~(500,000) population, according to the latest Federal Decennial~~  
14 ~~Census, the State Board of Education shall not sponsor more than~~  
15 ~~five charter schools per year each year for the first five (5) years~~  
16 ~~after the effective date of this act, with not more than one charter~~  
17 ~~school sponsored in a single school district per year. In order to~~  
18 ~~authorize a charter school under this section, the State Board of~~  
19 ~~Education shall find evidence of all of the following:~~

- 20 a. ~~a thorough and high-quality charter school application~~  
21 ~~from the applicant based on the authorizing standards~~  
22 ~~in subsection B of Section 3-134 of this title,~~  
23 b. ~~a clear demonstration of community support for the~~  
24 ~~charter school, and~~

~~e. the grounds and basis of objection by the school district for denying the operation of the charter are not supported by the greater weight of evidence and the strength of the application.~~

B. An eligible non-school-district sponsor shall give priority to opening charter schools that serve at-risk student populations or students from low-performing traditional public schools.

C. An eligible non-school-district sponsor shall give priority to applicants that have demonstrated a record of operating at least one school or similar program that demonstrates academic success and organizational viability and serves student populations similar to those the proposed charter school seeks to serve. In assessing the potential for quality replication of a charter school, a sponsor shall consider the following factors before approving a new site or school:

1. Evidence of a strong and reliable record of academic success based primarily on student performance data, as well as other viable indicators, including financial and operational success;

2. A sound, detailed, and well-supported growth plan;

3. Evidence of the ability to transfer successful practices to a potentially different context that includes reproducing critical cultural, organizational and instructional characteristics;

4. Any management organization involved in a potential replication is fully vetted, and the academic, financial and

1 operational records of the schools it operates are found to be  
2 satisfactory;

3 5. Evidence the program seeking to be replicated has the  
4 capacity to do so successfully without diminishing or putting at  
5 risk its current operations; and

6 6. A financial structure that ensures that funds attributable  
7 to each charter school within a network and required by law to be  
8 utilized by a school remain with and are used to benefit that  
9 school.

10 D. For purposes of the Oklahoma Charter Schools Act, "charter  
11 school" means a public school established by contract with a board  
12 of education of a school district, an area vocational-technical  
13 school district, a higher education institution, a federally  
14 recognized Indian tribe, or the State Board of Education pursuant to  
15 the Oklahoma Charter Schools Act to provide learning that will  
16 improve student achievement and as defined in the Elementary and  
17 Secondary Education Act of 1965, 20 U.S.C. 8065.

18 E. 1. For the purposes of the Oklahoma Charter Schools Act,  
19 "conversion school" means a school created by converting all or any  
20 part of a traditional public school in order to access any or all  
21 flexibilities afforded to a charter school.

22 2. Prior to the board of education of a school district  
23 converting all or any part of a traditional public school to a  
24 conversion school, the board shall prepare a conversion plan. The

1 conversion plan shall include documentation that demonstrates and  
2 complies with paragraphs 1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17,  
3 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 34 and 35 of subsection B of Section 3-134  
4 of this title. The conversion plan and all documents shall be in  
5 writing and shall be available to the public pursuant to the  
6 requirements of the Oklahoma Open Records Act. All votes by the  
7 board of education of a school district to approve a conversion plan  
8 shall be held in an open public session. If the board of education  
9 of a school district votes to approve a conversion plan, the board  
10 shall notify the State Board of Education within sixty (60) days  
11 after the vote. The notification shall include a copy of the  
12 minutes for the board meeting at which the conversion plan was  
13 approved.

14 3. A conversion school shall comply with all the same  
15 accountability measures as are required of a charter school as  
16 defined in subsection D of this section. The provisions of Sections  
17 3-140 and 3-142 of this title shall not apply to a conversion  
18 school. Conversion schools shall comply with the same laws and  
19 State Board of Education rules relating to student enrollment which  
20 apply to traditional public schools. Conversion schools shall be  
21 funded by the board of education of the school district as a school  
22 site within the school district and funding shall not be affected by  
23 the conversion of the school.

24

1        4. The board of education of a school district may vote to  
2 revert a conversion school back to a traditional public school at  
3 any time; provided, the change shall only occur during a break  
4 between school years.

5        5. Unless otherwise provided for in this subsection, a  
6 conversion school shall retain the characteristics of a traditional  
7 public school.

8        F. A charter school may consist of a new school site, new  
9 school sites or all or any portion of an existing school site. An  
10 entire school district may not become a charter school site.

11        G. 1. Beginning July 1, 2019, the State Board of Education  
12 shall not sponsor charter schools except as provided for in  
13 paragraph 7 of subsection A of this section.

14        2. On the effective date of this act, the State Board of  
15 Education shall notify any charter school that is sponsored by the  
16 Board in a manner other than that allowed by paragraph 7 of  
17 subsection A of this section that its sponsorship shall cease  
18 effective July 1, 2019. The charter school applicant shall have one  
19 (1) year from the date of notification to enter into a contract with  
20 a sponsor as provided for in subsection A of this section. If the  
21 charter school applicant does not successfully enter into a contract  
22 with a sponsor by July 1, 2019, the charter school shall be  
23 dissolved.



1       SECTION 2.       AMENDATORY       70 O.S. 2011, Section 3-134, as  
2 amended by Section 2, Chapter 170, O.S.L. 2015 (70 O.S. Supp. 2017,  
3 Section 3-134), is amended to read as follows:

4       Section 3-134. A. For written applications filed after January  
5 1, 2008, prior to submission of the application to a proposed  
6 sponsor seeking to establish a charter school, the applicant shall  
7 be required to complete training which shall not exceed ten (10)  
8 hours provided by the State Department of Education on the process  
9 and requirements for establishing a charter school. The Department  
10 shall develop and implement the training by January 1, 2008. The  
11 Department may provide the training in any format and manner that  
12 the Department determines to be efficient and effective including,  
13 but not limited to, web-based training.

14       B. Except as otherwise provided for in Section 3-137 of this  
15 title, an applicant seeking to establish a charter school shall  
16 submit a written application to the proposed sponsor as prescribed  
17 in subsection E of this section. The application shall include:

- 18       1. A mission statement for the charter school;
- 19       2. A description including, but not limited to, background  
20 information of the organizational structure and the governing body  
21 of the charter school;
- 22       3. A financial plan for the first five (5) years of operation  
23 of the charter school and a description of the treasurer or other  
24 officers or persons who shall have primary responsibility for the

1 finances of the charter school. Such person shall have demonstrated  
2 experience in school finance or the equivalent thereof;

3 4. A description of the hiring policy of the charter school;

4 5. The name of the applicant or applicants and requested  
5 sponsor;

6 6. A description of the facility and location of the charter  
7 school;

8 7. A description of the grades being served;

9 8. An outline of criteria designed to measure the effectiveness  
10 of the charter school;

11 9. A demonstration of support for the charter school from  
12 residents of the school district which may include but is not  
13 limited to a survey of the school district residents or a petition  
14 signed by residents of the school district;

15 10. Documentation that the applicants completed charter school  
16 training as set forth in subsection A of this section;

17 11. A description of the minimum and maximum enrollment planned  
18 per year for each term of the charter contract;

19 12. The proposed calendar for the charter school and sample  
20 daily schedule;

21 13. Unless otherwise authorized by law or regulation, a  
22 description of the academic program aligned with state standards;  
23  
24

1        14. A description of the instructional design of the charter  
2 school, including the type of learning environment, class size and  
3 structure, curriculum overview and teaching methods;

4        15. The plan for using internal and external assessments to  
5 measure and report student progress on the performance framework  
6 developed by the applicant in accordance with subsection C of  
7 Section 3-135 of this title;

8        16. The plans for identifying and successfully serving students  
9 with disabilities, students who are English language learners and  
10 students who are academically behind;

11       17. A description of cocurricular or extracurricular programs  
12 and how they will be funded and delivered;

13       18. Plans and time lines for student recruitment and  
14 enrollment, including lottery procedures;

15       19. The student discipline policies for the charter school,  
16 including those for special education students;

17       20. An organizational chart that clearly presents the  
18 organizational structure of the charter school, including lines of  
19 authority and reporting between the governing board, staff, any  
20 related bodies such as advisory bodies or parent and teacher  
21 councils and any external organizations that will play a role in  
22 managing the school;

23       21. A clear description of the roles and responsibilities for  
24 the governing board, the leadership and management team for the

1 charter school and any other entities shown in the organizational  
2 chart;

3 22. The leadership and teacher employment policies for the  
4 charter school;

5 23. Proposed governing bylaws;

6 24. Explanations of any partnerships or contractual  
7 partnerships central to the operations or mission of the charter  
8 school;

9 25. The plans for providing transportation, food service and  
10 all other significant operational or ancillary services;

11 26. Opportunities and expectations for parental involvement;

12 27. A detailed school start-up plan that identifies tasks, time  
13 lines and responsible individuals;

14 28. A description of the financial plan and policies for the  
15 charter school, including financial controls and audit requirements;

16 29. A description of the insurance coverage the charter school  
17 will obtain;

18 30. Start-up and five-year budgets with clearly stated  
19 assumptions;

20 31. Start-up and first-year cash-flow projections with clearly  
21 stated assumptions;

22 32. Evidence of anticipated fundraising contributions, if  
23 claimed in the application;

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1        33. A sound facilities plan, including backup or contingency  
2 plans if appropriate;

3        34. A requirement that the charter school governing board meet  
4 at a minimum quarterly in the state and that for those charter  
5 schools outside of counties with a population of five hundred  
6 thousand (500,000) or more, that a majority of members are residents  
7 within the geographic boundary of the sponsoring entity; and

8        35. A requirement that the charter school follow the  
9 requirements of the Oklahoma Open Meeting Act and Oklahoma Open  
10 Records Act.

11        C. A board of education of a public school district, public  
12 body, public or private college or university, private person, or  
13 private organization may contract with a sponsor to establish a  
14 charter school. A private school shall not be eligible to contract  
15 for a charter school under the provisions of the Oklahoma Charter  
16 Schools Act.

17        D. The sponsor of a charter school is the board of education of  
18 a school district, the board of education of a technology center  
19 school district, a higher education institution, the State Board of  
20 Education, or a federally recognized Indian tribe which meets the  
21 criteria established in Section 3-132 of this title. Any board of  
22 education of a school district in the state may sponsor one or more  
23 charter schools. The physical location of a charter school  
24 sponsored by a board of education of a school district or a

1 technology center school district shall be within the boundaries of  
2 the sponsoring school district. The physical location of a charter  
3 school sponsored by the State Board of Education when the applicant  
4 of the charter school is the Office of Juvenile Affairs shall be  
5 where an Office of Juvenile Affairs facility for youth is located.  
6 ~~The physical location of a charter school otherwise sponsored by the~~  
7 ~~State Board of Education pursuant to paragraph 8 of subsection A of~~  
8 ~~Section 3-132 of this title shall be in the school district in which~~  
9 ~~the application originated.~~

10 E. An applicant for a charter school may submit an application  
11 to a proposed sponsor which shall either accept or reject  
12 sponsorship of the charter school within ninety (90) days of receipt  
13 of the application. If the proposed sponsor rejects the  
14 application, it shall notify the applicant in writing of the reasons  
15 for the rejection. The applicant may submit a revised application  
16 for reconsideration to the proposed sponsor within thirty (30) days  
17 after receiving notification of the rejection. The proposed sponsor  
18 shall accept or reject the revised application within thirty (30)  
19 days of its receipt. ~~Should the sponsor reject the application on~~  
20 ~~reconsideration, the applicant may appeal the decision to the State~~  
21 ~~Board of Education with the revised application for review pursuant~~  
22 ~~to paragraph 8 of subsection A of Section 3-132 of this title. The~~  
23 ~~State Board of Education shall hear the appeal no later than sixty~~  
24 ~~(60) days from the date received by the Board.~~

1 F. A board of education of a school district, board of  
2 education of a technology center school district, higher education  
3 institution, or federally recognized Indian tribe sponsor of a  
4 charter school shall notify the State Board of Education when it  
5 accepts sponsorship of a charter school. The notification shall  
6 include a copy of the charter of the charter school.

7 G. Applicants for charter schools proposed to be sponsored by  
8 ~~an entity other than a school district pursuant to paragraph 1 of~~  
9 subsection A of Section 3-132 of this title may, upon rejection of  
10 the revised application, proceed to binding arbitration under the  
11 commercial rules of the American Arbitration Association with costs  
12 of the arbitration to be borne by the proposed sponsor. ~~Applicants~~  
13 ~~for charter schools proposed to be sponsored by school districts~~  
14 ~~pursuant to paragraph 1 of subsection A of Section 3-132 of this~~  
15 ~~title may not proceed to binding arbitration but may be sponsored by~~  
16 ~~the State Board of Education as provided in paragraph 8 of~~  
17 ~~subsection A of Section 3-132 of this title.~~

18 H. If a board of education of a technology center school  
19 district, a higher education institution, the State Board of  
20 Education, or a federally recognized Indian tribe accepts  
21 sponsorship of a charter school, the administrative, fiscal and  
22 oversight responsibilities of the technology center school district,  
23 the higher education institution, or the federally recognized Indian  
24 tribe shall be listed in the contract. No responsibilities shall be

1 delegated to a school district unless the local school district  
2 agrees to assume the responsibilities.

3 I. A sponsor of a public charter school shall have the  
4 following powers and duties:

5 1. Provide oversight of the operations of charter schools in  
6 the state through annual performance reviews of charter schools and  
7 reauthorization of charter schools for which it is a sponsor;

8 2. Solicit and evaluate charter applications;

9 3. Approve quality charter applications that meet identified  
10 educational needs and promote a diversity of educational choices;

11 4. Decline to approve weak or inadequate charter applications;

12 5. Negotiate and execute sound charter contracts with each  
13 approved public charter school;

14 6. Monitor, in accordance with charter contract terms, the  
15 performance and legal compliance of charter schools; and

16 7. Determine whether each charter contract merits renewal,  
17 nonrenewal or revocation.

18 J. Sponsors shall establish a procedure for accepting,  
19 approving and disapproving charter school applications in accordance  
20 with subsection E of this section.

21 K. Sponsors shall be required to develop and maintain  
22 chartering policies and practices consistent with recognized  
23 principles and standards for quality charter authorizing as  
24 established by the State Department of Education in all major areas



1 of authorizing responsibility, including organizational capacity and  
2 infrastructure, soliciting and evaluating charter applications,  
3 performance contracting, ongoing charter school oversight and  
4 evaluation and charter renewal decision-making.

5 L. Sponsors acting in their official capacity shall be immune  
6 from civil and criminal liability with respect to all activities  
7 related to a charter school with which they contract.

8 SECTION 3. This act shall become effective July 1, 2018.

9 SECTION 4. It being immediately necessary for the preservation  
10 of the public peace, health or safety, an emergency is hereby  
11 declared to exist, by reason whereof this act shall take effect and  
12 be in full force from and after its passage and approval.

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