



Ohio Revised Code

Section 3314.015 Oversight of sponsors.

Effective: October 24, 2024

Legislation: Senate Bill 168

(A) The department of education and workforce shall be responsible for the oversight of any and all sponsors of the community schools established under this chapter and shall provide technical assistance to schools and sponsors in their compliance with applicable laws and the terms of the contracts entered into under section 3314.03 of the Revised Code and in the development and start-up activities of those schools. In carrying out its duties under this section, the department shall do all of the following:

(1) In providing technical assistance to proposing parties, governing authorities, and sponsors, conduct training sessions and distribute informational materials;

(2) Approve entities to be sponsors of community schools;

(3) Monitor and evaluate, as required under section 3314.016 of the Revised Code, the effectiveness of any and all sponsors in their oversight of the schools with which they have contracted;

(4) By December thirty-first of each year, issue a report to the governor, the speaker of the house of representatives, the president of the senate, and the chairpersons of the house and senate committees principally responsible for education matters regarding the effectiveness of academic programs, operations, and legal compliance and of the financial condition of all community schools established under this chapter and on the performance of community school sponsors;

(5) From time to time, make legislative recommendations to the general assembly designed to enhance the operation and performance of community schools.

(B)(1) Except as provided in sections 3314.021 and 3314.027 of the Revised Code, no entity shall enter into a preliminary agreement under division (C)(2) of section 3314.02 of the Revised Code or renew an existing contract to sponsor a community school until it has received approval from the department to sponsor community schools under this chapter and has entered into a written



agreement with the department regarding the manner in which the entity will conduct such sponsorship.

On and after July 1, 2017, each entity that sponsors a community school in this state, except for an entity described in sections 3314.021 and 3314.027 of the Revised Code, shall attain approval from the department in order to continue sponsoring schools regardless of whether that entity intends to enter into a preliminary agreement or renew an existing contract.

All new and renewed agreements between the department and a sponsor shall contain specific language addressing the parameters under which the department can intervene and potentially revoke sponsorship authority in the event that the sponsor is unwilling or unable to fulfill its obligations. Additionally, each agreement shall set forth any territorial restrictions and limits on the number of schools that entity may sponsor, provide for an annual evaluation process, and include a stipulation permitting the department to modify the agreement under the following circumstances:

(a) Poor fiscal management;

(b) Lack of academic progress.

(2) The initial term of a sponsor's agreement with the department shall be for up to five years.

(a) An agreement entered into with the department pursuant to this section may be renewed for a term of up to ten years using the following criteria:

(i) The academic performance of students enrolled in each community school the entity sponsors, as determined by the department pursuant to division (B)(1)(a) of section 3314.016 of the Revised Code;

(ii) The sponsor's adherence to quality practices, as determined by the department pursuant to division (B)(1)(b) of section 3314.016 of the Revised Code;

(iii) The sponsor's compliance with all applicable laws and administrative rules.



(b) Each agreement between the department and a sponsor shall specify that entities with an overall rating of "exemplary" for at least two consecutive years shall not be subject to the limit on the number of community schools the entity may sponsor or any territorial restrictions on sponsorship, for so long as that entity continues to be rated "exemplary."

(c) The department shall adopt in accordance with Chapter 119. of the Revised Code rules containing criteria, procedures, and deadlines for processing applications for approval of sponsors, for oversight of sponsors, for notifying a sponsor of noncompliance with applicable laws and administrative rules under division (F) of this section, for revocation of the approval of sponsors under division (C) of this section, and for entering into written agreements with sponsors. The rules shall require an entity to submit evidence of the entity's ability and willingness to comply with the provisions of division (D) of section 3314.03 of the Revised Code. The rules also shall require all entities approved as sponsors to demonstrate a record of financial responsibility and successful implementation of educational programs. If an entity seeking approval to sponsor community schools in this state sponsors or operates schools in another state, at least one of the schools sponsored or operated by the entity must be comparable to or better than the performance of Ohio schools in need of continuous improvement under section 3302.03 of the Revised Code, as determined by the department.

Subject to section 3314.016 of the Revised Code, an entity that sponsors community schools may enter into preliminary agreements and sponsor up to one hundred schools, provided each school and the contract for sponsorship meets the requirements of this chapter. A sponsor that was rated "exemplary" on its most recent rating under section 3314.016 of the Revised Code may sponsor up to two hundred such schools.

(3) The department shall determine, pursuant to criteria specified in rules adopted in accordance with Chapter 119. of the Revised Code, whether the mission proposed to be specified in the contract of a community school to be sponsored by a state university board of trustees or the board's designee under division (C)(1)(e) of section 3314.02 of the Revised Code complies with the requirements of that division. Such determination of the department is final.

(4) The department shall determine, pursuant to criteria specified in rules adopted in accordance with Chapter 119. of the Revised Code, if any tax-exempt entity under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code that is proposed to be a sponsor of a community school is an education-oriented entity



for purpose of satisfying the condition prescribed in division (C)(1)(f)(iii) of section 3314.02 of the Revised Code. Such determination of the department is final.

(C) If at any time the department finds that a sponsor is not in compliance or is no longer willing to comply with its contract with any community school or with the department's rules for sponsorship, the department shall conduct a hearing in accordance with Chapter 119. of the Revised Code on that matter. If after the hearing, the department has confirmed the original finding, it may revoke the sponsor's approval to sponsor community schools. In that case, the department's office of Ohio school sponsorship, established under section 3314.029 of the Revised Code, may assume the sponsorship of any schools with which the sponsor has contracted until the earlier of the expiration of two school years or until a new sponsor as described in division (C)(1) of section 3314.02 of the Revised Code is secured by the school's governing authority. The office of Ohio school sponsorship may extend the term of the contract in the case of a school for which it has assumed sponsorship under this division as necessary to accommodate the term of the department's authorization to sponsor the school specified in this division. Community schools sponsored under this division shall not apply to the limit on directly authorized community schools under division (A)(3) of section 3314.029 of the Revised Code. However, nothing in this division shall preclude a community school affected by this division from applying for sponsorship under that section.

(D) The decision of the department to disapprove an entity for sponsorship of a community school or to revoke approval for such sponsorship under division (C) of this section, may be appealed by the entity in accordance with section 119.12 of the Revised Code.

(E) The department shall adopt procedures for use by a community school governing authority and sponsor when the school permanently closes and ceases operation, which shall include at least procedures for data reporting to the department, handling of student records, distribution of assets in accordance with section 3314.074 of the Revised Code, and other matters related to ceasing operation of the school.

(F)(1) In lieu of revoking a sponsor's authority to sponsor community schools under division (C) of this section, if the department finds that a sponsor is not in compliance with applicable laws and administrative rules, the department shall declare in a written notice to the sponsor the specific laws or rules, or both, for which the sponsor is noncompliant. A sponsor notified under division (F)(1) of



this section shall respond to the department not later than fourteen days after the notification with a proposed plan to remedy the conditions for which the sponsor was found to be noncompliant. The department shall approve or disapprove the plan not later than fourteen days after receiving it. If the plan is disapproved, the sponsor may submit a revised plan to the department not later than fourteen days after receiving notification of disapproval from the department or not later than sixty days after the date the sponsor received notification of noncompliance from the department, whichever is earlier. The department shall approve or disapprove the revised plan not later than fourteen days after receiving it or not later than sixty days after the date the sponsor received notification of noncompliance from the department, whichever is earlier. A sponsor may continue to make revisions by the deadlines prescribed in division (F)(1) of this section to any revised plan that is disapproved by the department until the sixtieth day after the date the sponsor received notification of noncompliance from the department.

If a plan or a revised plan is approved, the sponsor shall implement it not later than sixty days after the date the sponsor received notification of noncompliance from the department or not later than thirty days after the plan is approved, whichever is later. If a sponsor does not respond to the department or implement an approved compliance plan by the deadlines prescribed by division (F)(1) of this section, or if a sponsor does not receive approval of a compliance plan on or before the sixtieth day after the date the sponsor received notification of noncompliance from the department, the department shall declare in written notice to the sponsor that the sponsor is in probationary status, and may limit the sponsor's ability to sponsor additional schools.

(2) A sponsor that has been placed on probationary status under division (F)(1) of this section may apply to the department for its probationary status to be lifted. The application for a sponsor's probationary status to be lifted shall include evidence, occurring after the initial notification of noncompliance, of the sponsor's compliance with applicable laws and administrative rules. Not later than fourteen days after receiving an application from the sponsor, the department shall decide whether or not to remove the sponsor's probationary status.

(G) In carrying out its duties under this chapter, the department shall not impose requirements on community schools or their sponsors that are not permitted by law or duly adopted rules.

(H) This section applies to entities that sponsor conversion community schools and new start-up



schools.

(I) Nothing in divisions (C) to (F) of this section prohibits the department from taking any action permitted or required under the written agreement between the department and a sponsoring entity without a hearing on the matter, in the event that the sponsor is unwilling or unable to fulfill its obligations.