

**Frequently Asked Questions Document
Charter Schools
Updated September 2012**

1. Will charter schools receive on-site support from the Differentiated Accountability (DA) Regional Education Directors, or be expected to utilize the DA Strategies and Support Matrix?

No. House Bill 7127 set up a parallel system for charter schools and eliminated the requirement to comply with the Differentiated Accountability Matrix of Supports and Services. Charter schools will not receive on-site support from the Differentiated Accountability Regional Education Managers (REDs).

2. Are charter schools required to develop and implement School Improvement Plans (SIPs)?

Charter schools that receive a school grade of “D” or “F” are required to develop and implement a School Improvement Plan (SIP). The SIP must contain the nine components outlined in State Board of Education Rule 6A-6.1099827, which can be found at <https://www.flrules.org/gateway/ruleNo.asp?id=6A-1.099827>.

3. Who is responsible for notifying the charter school that a School Improvement Plan is required?

Upon release of school grades the Department of Education will publish a list of charter schools that received a school grade of “D” or “F”. The list will be published at http://www.floridaschoolchoice.org/Information/Charter_Schools/.

Upon publication of the list by the Department of Education, a Sponsor shall notify, in writing, each charter school in its district that is required to appear before the Sponsor and submit a School Improvement Plan. The notification shall include the following:

1. The date, time, and location of the publicly noticed meeting that the director and a representative of the Charter School Governing Board shall appear before the Sponsor. For the purposes of this rule the term “Director” shall mean charter school director, principal, chief executive officer or other management personnel with similar authority. The appearance shall be no earlier than thirty (30) calendar days and no later than ninety (90) calendar days after notification is received by the school;
2. The date by which the school must submit its proposed School Improvement Plan to Sponsor staff for review which shall be no earlier than thirty (30) calendar days after notification is received by school; and
3. Whether the school is required to select a corrective action

Although the Sponsor is required to notify the charter school that a School Improvement Plan is due, the Department strongly encourages charter schools to be proactive and begin developing a School Improvement Plan as soon as school grades are released.

3. Who reviews School Improvement Plans for charter schools?

The director and a representative of the governing board shall submit to the Sponsor for approval, a School Improvement Plan to raise student achievement. (Section 1002.33(9)(n)1., Florida Statutes)

The director and a representative of the governing board must appear before the Sponsor at a public meeting to present the plan. The Sponsor will determine the meeting date and will notify the school, as described above in question 3.

The Sponsor may require the charter school to submit the School Improvement Plan to Sponsor staff for review prior to the meeting at which the Sponsor will review. The date for submission should be included in the notification that is described above in question 3, and is further explained in State Board of Education Rule 6A-6.1099827, F.A.C.

4. What happens if a Sponsor does not approve a School Improvement Plan submitted by a charter school?

A Sponsor may deny a School Improvement Plan if it does not comply with the requirements found in State Board of Education Rule [6A-6.1099827](#), F.A.C. If a School Improvement Plan is denied, the Sponsor shall provide the charter school, in writing, the specific reasons for denial and the timeline for resubmission. If the Sponsor and charter school cannot agree on a School Improvement Plan either party may request mediation pursuant to [Section 1002.33\(6\)](#), Florida Statutes.

4. Are charter schools required to use the state template for School Improvement Plans?

No. The School Improvement Plan must contain the nine components outlined in State Board of Education Rule [6A-6.1099827](#).

5. Are charter schools that receive an “A”, “B”, or “C” required to develop and implement a School Improvement Plan?

No. Only charter schools that receive a school grade of “D” or “F” are required to develop and implement a School Improvement Plan.

6. Are charter schools that receive a School Improvement Rating (SIR) or do not receive a school grade required to develop and implement a School Improvement Plan?

The statute does not address School Improvement Plan requirements for charter schools that receive a school improvement rating (SIR) or are not graded.

7. Are Title I charter schools required to develop and implement School Improvement Plans?

Title I charter schools that receive a “D” or “F” are required to develop and implement a School Improvement Plan. The requirements described in this FAQ are the same for Title I and non-Title I charter schools.

8. Who is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the School Improvement Plan?

The governing board of the charter school and the Sponsor are responsible for monitoring implementation. The Sponsor must, at a minimum, annually review implementation of the School Improvement Plan to monitor the school’s continued improvement. (Section [1002.33\(9\)\(n\)3.](#), Florida Statutes)

9. Are charter schools required to provide updates to the Sponsor?

Yes. The director and a representative of the governing board of a graded charter school that has implemented a School Improvement Plan shall appear before the Sponsor at least once a year to present information regarding the progress of intervention and support strategies implemented by the school pursuant to the School Improvement Plan and corrective actions, if applicable. (Section [1002.33\(9\)\(n\)5.](#), Florida Statutes)

10. Are charter schools required to develop a new School Improvement Plan every year?

Charter schools that receive a school grade of “D” or “F” must develop and implement a School Improvement Plan. A charter school with a grade of “D” or “F” that improves by at least one letter grade must continue to implement the strategies identified in the School Improvement Plan, but is not required to develop a new one.

11. What are Corrective Actions?

If a charter school earns three consecutive grades of “D,” two consecutive grades of “D” followed by a grade of “F,” or two nonconsecutive grades of “F” within a 3-year period, the charter school governing board shall develop a School Improvement Plan **and** choose one of the following corrective actions:

- (I) Contract for educational services to be provided directly to students, instructional personnel, and school administrators, as prescribed in state board rule;
- (II) Contract with an outside entity that has a demonstrated record of effectiveness to operate the school;

- (III) Reorganize the school under a new director or principal who is authorized to hire new staff; or
- (IV) Voluntarily close the charter school.

12. When must Corrective Actions be implemented?

The charter school must implement the corrective action in the school year following receipt of a third consecutive grade of “D,” a grade of “F” following two consecutive grades of “D,” or a second nonconsecutive grade of “F” within a 3-year period.

13. May a charter school request a waiver from the requirement to select and implement a corrective action.

Yes. A Sponsor may annually waive a corrective action if it determines that the charter school is likely to improve a letter grade if additional time is provided to implement the intervention and support strategies prescribed by the School Improvement Plan.

The waiver is at the sole discretion of the Sponsor.

14. How long must a charter school implement a corrective action?

A charter school is no longer required to implement a corrective action if it improves by at least one letter grade. However, the charter school must continue to implement strategies identified in the School Improvement Plan.

A charter school implementing a corrective action that does not improve by at least one letter grade after 2 full school years of implementing the corrective action must select a different corrective action. Implementation of the new corrective action must begin in the school year following the implementation period of the existing corrective action, unless the Sponsor determines that the charter school is likely to improve a letter grade if additional time is provided to implement the existing corrective action.

15. Are Charter schools required to provide intensive reading courses to students who score Level I on FCAT reading, pursuant to Section 1003.4156, Florida Statutes?

[Section 1002.33\(16\)](#), Florida Statutes, exempts charter schools from the Education Code (Sections 1000-1013), with exceptions. Unless otherwise agreed to in the charter contract, charter schools are not required to comply with the provisions of Section 1003.4156. Charter schools are required to provide reading instruction in accordance with the educational program design and curriculum plan as described in their approved charter application and/or charter contract.

16. Are charter schools subject to extended day requirements if they are found to be among the 100 lowest-performing elementary schools?

Yes. Districts must ensure that all schools, including charter schools, found to be among the 100 lowest-performing elementary schools comply with the statute regarding the additional hour. While districts have flexibility in the manner that funds for the additional hour are distributed, districts should collaborate with these charter schools on issues of funding and transportation to ensure that the additional hour of instruction is provided at these schools.