

Charter School Performance Standards (CSPS)

Value Questions

Purposes of CSPS:

1. Measure overall institutional effectiveness; provide a holistic overview of performance
2. Hold charter school governing boards accountable for performance on key metrics that are both available and common across all Utah charter schools
3. Identify and tier schools
 - a) Identify high performing schools in order to recognize and share best practices
 - b) Identify low performing schools in order to provide assistance and review potential areas of policy change
4. Use in considering charter school continuation and amendment requests
5. Spur improvement in charter schools on the identified metrics
6. Inform a potential differentiated approach to state technical support based on charter school performance and need

1. Should the different categories of metrics (academic, governance, and finance) be combined into a single overall score?

A single score combines different information in such a way as to provide a measurement of overall institutional effectiveness. For example, if a school does well on operations but not on academics (or vice versa), is the school doing well or poorly? Or, if a school performs at the top in language arts but only average in mathematics, is the school academically high performing? Providing a single score resolves these types of situations in a standard and reliable way. However, putting different categories of metrics together may require a level of complexity behind the scenes that may not be easily understood. Additionally, a single score can hide strengths/weaknesses in a single measure and could incentivize schools to focus on the area or metric that will give them the best overall score, but not necessarily the area that needs the most attention.

Staff Recommendation: Combine the metrics into a single overall score to indicate schools' overall performance, but also report scores for all categories. This would allow CSPS to provide information on how schools are doing overall, but also show how schools are doing on the different categories of metrics, thereby holding schools accountable for their overall performance as well as on the different categories. Depending on the need, the overall score or an individual category may be used.

2. Assuming CSPS will have a single overall score, how should the different indicators (academic, student engagement, governance, finance) be combined?

The currently approved performance standard framework uses a compensatory model, where the different metrics are added together and weighted so that *academic* is 60% (student proficiency + student progress + student engagement) and *operations* is 40% (governance 20% + finance 20%). There are other methods for combining the different categories. For example, a school could be identified as high, middle, or low performing for each category (or subcategory, or even metric). If a school is high/low performing in all categories (or some number of categories) it would be high/low performing. This method would weigh all categories the same.

Staff Recommendation: Continue with the currently approved framework.

3. Approximately what percentage of schools should be identified as high performing by CSPA? As low performing?

Identifying fewer charter schools in either category leads to more confidence that those identified are truly high- or low- performing. It also means that the “middle category” of schools will be large and include a wide spectrum of performance, including those moving toward high performing and those moving toward low performing.

Staff Recommendation: Identify relatively few charters as high or low performing (10% would be high performers and 10% would be low performers).

4. How many categories?

- 3 categories: high performing, middle, low performing. With 3 categories, the focus is on identifying only those charter schools that are high or low performing. All other charter schools are grouped together in the middle category.
- 4 categories: high performing, leaning to high performing, leaning to low performing, low performing. This splits the middle category into two and forces all charter schools to be identified on one side or the other (low or high). This will also distinguish CSPA from grading schools.
- 5 categories: high performing, leaning to high performing, middle, leaning to low performing, low performing. This splits the middle category into three but allows for a middle category where charter schools would not be identified on one side or the other. This may conflict with grading schools where a charter school may receive a C (or the equivalent category) on CSPA and a B (or the equivalent category) on grading schools.

Staff Recommendation: 3 categories

5. Should cut points for each category be standard, or should they be relative to all school performance in that year?

Setting standard cut points does not allow the cut points to vary from year to year. This works best for metrics that are very stable and are not impacted by other factors. Setting cut points relative to other schools’ performance (i.e., percentile rankings) could lessen the impact of external factors (i.e., changes in Utah core standards or state assessments) since theoretically all schools will be affected. However, by setting cut points relative to other schools’ performance will mean that there will always be a certain number of schools identified as high- and low-performing.

Staff Recommendation: Set cut points relative to other schools’ performance so that the bottom 10% will always be identified as low performing and the top 10% will always be identified as high performing.

6. Proposed metrics:

Area	Proposed Metrics for 2013-2014
Student Achievement level	Proficiency level on state assessment in all tested subjects and grades <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proficiency portion of the state accountability system
Student Progress over time	Longitudinal growth based on similar starting points on state assessment in all tested subjects and grades <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth portion of the state accountability system, using SGP
Student Engagement	Continuous enrollment rate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of students re-enrolled from one year to the next (see Year-to-year enrollment report) • Percentage of students continuously enrolled throughout the year (see Within year enrollment report) Student membership rate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • $(\text{Total days membership} \div \text{number of students}) \div 180$
Post-Secondary Readiness	High school graduation rate and college and career readiness assessments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCR (College and Career Readiness) portion of the state accountability system <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Graduation rate ○ CCR assessment (TBD, currently ACT, Percent meeting college readiness benchmarks by each subject)
Board Performance & Stewardship	Board member skills, knowledge, and commitment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percent of Board with a GBOT Pass Rate > 85% Regulatory and reporting compliance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percent of Report Compliance • All employees and board members have criminal background checks on file • Percent of teachers identified as being state (USOE) qualified Ethical conduct <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having no board violations
Financial Performance & Sustainability	Liquidity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • $\text{Current Ratio} (\text{Current Assets} \div \text{Current Liabilities})$ • $\text{Days Cash on Hand} (\text{Cash \& Investments} \div \text{Total Annual Operating Expenses}) \div 360$ Sustainability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • $\text{Debt Ratio} (\text{Total Liabilities} \div \text{Total Assets})$ • $\text{Adherence to Budget} ((\text{Budgeted Expenditures} - \text{Actual Expenditures}) \div \text{Budgeted Expenditures})$ • Maintenance of Bond Covenants: No Default Certification Occupancy expense <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • $\text{Total occupancy costs (lease or mortgage)} / \text{Total revenues}$ Annual audit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Unresolved Audit Findings or Recommendations

Area	Additional metrics that can be considered in future years
Student Achievement level	New assessments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> TBD
Student Progress over time	New assessments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> TBD
Student Engagement	Continuous enrollment rate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of students continuously enrolled for multiple years Attendance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of students attending 90% or more of the time enrolled
Post-Secondary Readiness	Postsecondary access & opportunity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of students enrolled in a college-prep curriculum Postsecondary enrollment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of graduates by cohort, enrolled in postsecondary institutions (college, trade, and apprentice programs) Percentage of students, by cohort, enrolled in remedial courses during their first year of postsecondary education Percentage of students completing at least one year's worth of college credit within two years.
Parent & community engagement	Satisfied parents and students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of students and parents who give the school a high rating on satisfaction surveys Excess student and parent demand <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (Current enrollment + Valid excess demand) / School's current enrollment capacity
Financial Performance & Sustainability	Student enrollment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actual student enrollment, per statutorily reported count / Budgeted student enrollment
Board Performance & Stewardship	Board member skills, knowledge, and commitment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Average years of board member experience in each of the following critical areas, at a minimum: Finance, Legal, Education, and Board leadership/governance Percentage of board members who attend more than 80% of board meetings Ethical conduct <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Absence of violations of authorizer-approved board policy governing ethical matters including conflicts of interest Leadership oversight and evaluation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear lines of authority, responsibility, and reporting Board monitoring of school/CMO leadership performance, as appropriate throughout the year Annual evaluation of school/CMO leadership performance against established performance expectations Contract management and oversight <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fulfillment of terms of charter contract Effective management and oversight of all service contracts, including any contracts for education/management services as evidenced by, at a minimum: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear, sound contracts that articulate roles and responsibilities; academic and operational (as applicable) performance goals, measures, timelines and terms; and consequences for inadequate performance Oversight that focuses on contractually-agreed performance

	<p style="text-align: center;">outcomes and quality of service</p> <p>Public accountability and transparency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clear, accurate, regular communication by the school on its academic and operating performance to key constituencies and the public through a variety of means that maximize access and understanding <p>Securing the future / continuous improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Documented board and leadership attention to significant changes in the school's environment including authorizing changes and legislative, regulatory, and policy activity• Formal annual board review of performance and improvement against annual targets and long-term academic and operating goals• Measureable improvement in the school's academic and operating performance over time, aligned with the school's performance contract goals
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Burns, Marlies

From: Gwendolyn Smith <gwendolyn_dba@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 03, 2013 12:58 PM
To: Burns, Marlies; CharterGB; Reyes, Blair
Cc: chrisrbleak@utahcharters.org; kim@utahcharternetwork.com; Beagley, Tim; Lambert, Jennifer; Schmitt, Jo J.; DeLaina Tonks; Jen Christensen; Bart Barker; David Wiley; Deidre Henderson; Broadbent, Kelley
Subject: Re: Charter School Performance Standards

Dear Marlies,

I work with Allegiance, a software company providing Voice of Customer Intelligence. www.allegiance.com.

I reached out to one of our experts, Jennifer Beyer, VP Best Practices. She is well known as a thought leader in the VoC industry and was just awarded the Utah Business 40 Under Forty Award. Jennifer was kind enough to provide the following feedback to your questions.

1. Should the different categories of metrics (academic, governance, and finance) be combined into a single overall score?
 - a. No, adding a composite score traditionally confuses the measurement system and it's hard to understand and it's hard for people to believe in it.
 - b. Recommendation: keep each metric separate so each team/department has direct ownership and hence control over the metric, essentially empowering them to drive the metric.
2. Assuming Charter School Performance Standards (CSPS) will have a single overall score, should the different indicators (academic, student engagement, governance, finance) be the same weight?
 - a. If they do decide to create a composite score they should not weight. Adding a weight dilutes the purity of metric and adds controversy and it's difficult to explain the weights to someone who isn't an expert in measurement.
3. Approximately what percentage of schools should be identified as high performing by CSPS? As low performing?
 - a. Mathematically speaking it's easiest to break up the categories by quartiles. Typically, everyone can understand a quartile system. Easy to understand and it provides a ranking system and people will embrace the math behind it.
 - b. The other way to go about it is to set a goal. However, goals are sometimes set by committee and not by the logic of math and therefore are difficult to achieve. They need to drive to avoid any black box algorithms not based on historical results.
4. How many categories?
 - a. If they are referring to the "percentage of schools" if they run with a quartile system the ranking is set by creating four categories and establishing the mean in order to determine the cut scores.
5. Should cut points for each category be standard, or should they be relative to all school performance in that year?
 - a. They should be relative to the sum of the all schools performance by each of the categories then ranked appropriately by how each category falls compared to the relative performance of others. With this approach the cut scores will need to be calculated each time reporting is pulled. I recommend quarterly and so each of the schools can determine where they rank relative to each of the other schools.

I hope this is helpful. If I can be of further assistance, please let me know.

Best regards,

Gwendolyn P. Smith

VP, PMO

Scaled Agile Framework Program Consultant

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Burns, Marlies

From: Sheron Drake <sdrake@timpacademy.org>
Sent: Thursday, April 04, 2013 11:29 AM
To: Burns, Marlies
Subject: Re: Charter School Performance Standards

Marlies,
Thanks for the opportunity to provide input.
Sheron Drake

Value Questions:

1. Should the different categories of metrics (academic, governance, and finance) be combined into a single overall score?

Absolutely not! I am fine with combining the governance and finance, however to combine the academic scores with governance and finance is ridiculous. They need to be separate.

2. Assuming Charter School Performance Standards (CSPS) will have a single overall score, should the different indicators (academic, student engagement, governance, finance) be the same weight?

No, the governing board needs to be held accountable but to include student achievement either academic or student engagement is not acceptable.

3. Approximately what percentage of schools should be identified as high performing by CSPS? As low performing? If a school is high performing they should be recognized as such, regardless of a percentage. If there are lower performing schools they should be identified as well. Is it possible the higher achieving schools governing board or administrators could act as mentors to assist lower achieving schools through proper governance, experience and expertise?

4. How many categories?
High, average, low

5. Should cut points for each category be standard, or should they be relative to all school performance in that year?
All school performance in that year.

Proposed changes to metrics:

Student Engagement

Student membership rate: $(\text{Total days membership} \div \text{number of students}) \div 180$

Post-Secondary Readiness

High school graduation rate and college and career readiness assessments: CCR assessment

Financial Performance & Sustainability

Liquidity: $\text{Days Cash on Hand} = ((\text{Cash} + \text{Investments}) \div \text{Total Annual Operating Expenses}) \div 360$

Based on the SCSB's answers to these questions (on April 11), staff will revise the CSPS and provide data to all schools chartered by the SCSB by April 19, 2013 for review and correction. Please send any corrections to Jennifer Lambert (jennifer.lambert@schools.utah.gov) no later than April 26. Staff will provide individual school performance with the State Charter School Board at its May 9, 2013 meeting. Thank you in advance for taking the time to review this important information and for providing feedback in the method of your choice.

From: Monty Hardy [mailto:Monty@redapplefinance.com]
Sent: Friday, April 05, 2013 12:10 AM
To: Burns, Marlies
Cc: Neslen, Valerie
Subject: FW: Charter School Performance Standards

Marlies,

Thanks for the opportunity to provide input. Please see comments below.

From: Burns, Marlies [Marlies.Burns@schools.utah.gov]
Sent: Monday, April 01, 2013 1:11 PM
To: CharterGB; Reyes, Blair
Cc: chrisrbleak@utahcharters.org; kim@utahcharternetwork.com; Beagley, Tim; Lambert, Jennifer; Schmitt, Jo J.
Subject: Charter School Performance Standards

Dear colleagues,

After a year-and-a-half of tracking charter school performance compared to the State Charter School Board's (SCSB) approved performance standards, the SCSB and staff have noticed some areas where standards are too rigorous (over-identifying problems) and others where they fall short (under-identifying problems). The purposes of the performance standards are to 1) identify best practices to share with public schools across the state, 2) act as an early warning system to charter school governing boards to identify areas of improvement, and 3) meet the SCSB's statutory responsibility for monitoring the performance of charter schools. In the spirit of truly identifying high- and low- performing schools (purpose 1), providing charter school governing boards with accurate and helpful data about its performance (purpose 2), and improving the information reported to the State Charter School Board (purpose 3), staff will propose five questions for the SCSB to consider at its April 11, 2013 meeting.

If you would like to provide feedback to the SCSB specific to the Value Questions or the Proposed changes to metrics, please do any or all of the following:

- Share your opinion with the charter school association of which your school is a member
- Respond to this email
- Contact individual SCSB members (contact information found at <http://schools.utah.gov/charterschools/State-Charter-School-Board/Board-Members.aspx>)
- Sign up for public comment at the April 11 meeting

Value Questions:

1. Should the different categories of metrics (academic, governance, and finance) be combined into a single overall score?

No. These tend to be separate issues and would best be addressed separately. Even if you combined the categories into a single overall score, the data would have to be disaggregated to make it a useful assessment.

2. Assuming Charter School Performance Standards (CSPS) will have a single overall score, should the different indicators (academic, student engagement, governance, finance) be the same weight?

Most charter failures occur due to financial mismanagement or problems related to school leadership. Few fail because of program related issues. For that reason, it would be good to weight the score higher for higher risk factors. That being the case you would weight in the following order from highest to lowest: Financial, Governance, Student Engagement and then Academic.

3. Approximately what percentage of schools should be identified as high performing by CSPA? As low performing?

Do we really want to grade schools based on a curve? Other states are implementing performance measures and we could easily compare Utah schools to national benchmarks. We could also use tried and tested benchmarks used by national rating agencies. Any of these solutions would be better than trying to identify an arbitrary percentage of high or low performing schools. If the majority of Utah charters meet the benchmarks, let's celebrate their successes. If they don't, let's fix them.

4. How many categories?

I believe the four categories you have identified (Financial, Governance, Academic, Engagement) are very good and reflect accurately what stakeholders should be watching.

5. Should cut points for each category be standard, or should they be relative to all school performance in that year?

Standard.

Proposed changes to metrics:

Student Engagement

Student membership rate: $(\text{Total days membership} \div \text{number of students}) \div 180$

This is OK as long as you take into account schools that may be located in a transient area or who serve at-risk populations. Perhaps this score should be compared to schools around them to have real meaning.

Post-Secondary Readiness

High school graduation rate and college and career readiness assessments: CCR assessment

I wonder if there is a way with this measure to capture students who are college ready, but may either jump to another school their senior year or choose to move right into an undergraduate associates program.

Financial Performance & Sustainability

Liquidity: $\text{Days Cash on Hand} = ((\text{Cash} + \text{Investments}) \div \text{Total Annual Operating Expenses}) \div 360$

This is fine. We should not include investments or cash that are restricted for debt service reserve covenants. This measure should be compared to industry standards.