

Key Questions for Charter School Advocates

Standards

- Whose entrance requirements for credit-bearing coursework will states align standards to? Community colleges? Four-year institutions?

Assessments

- How does your state plan to address any streamlining of state and local assessment requirements?
- Both the option to use a nationally recognized assessment at the high school level and the innovative assessment pilot introduce the possibility of students in different districts taking different tests. What safeguards need to be in place to ensure that these assessments are rigorous and truly comparable to statewide tests?
- Have states developed appropriate assessments for English learners, including assessments in the students' native languages? How will they ensure that English learners are provided with the right assessment accommodations?
- How will states ensure that students with disabilities are provided with the right assessment accommodations? Have states developed appropriate alternate assessments for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities?

Accountability

- How is your state planning to transition schools in the bottom 5 and 10 percent to ESSA, per the U.S. Department of Education's Dear Colleague letter from December 18, 2015? Will it identify new schools or freeze the current list? States had to make this determination by January 29, 2015.
- What changes, if any, will there be to reporting on state accountability metrics during the transition years? States are no longer required to report progress on their NCLB annual measurable objectives for 2014-15 and 2015-6.
- What non-academic indicators is the state considering using?
- Will the state apply for the assessment innovation grant?
- How will any local assessment flexibility apply to charter schools?
- Will charter schools have flexibility to weight state indicators in a way that aligns the mission of their school?
- How will the state or district provide students in underperforming schools with options to find seats in high quality schools?
- Will your district reserve 5 percent of its Title I funds for school choice and transportation?
- Will the state allocate funds for school improvement by formula or competitively? What opportunities will charter school operators who want to engage in improving underperforming schools have to apply for these funds or to partner with the SEA or LEA?
- What's a rigorous definition of "consistently underperforming" for student groups, especially on indicators for which there aren't clear goals?

- What are the appropriate supports and interventions for the lowest performers? For schools with underperforming groups?
- For authorizers – what are the implications of changing state metrics for charter performance frameworks?

Title I allocations

- What is your state’s definition of a significantly expanding charter school?
- Is your SEA aware of the requirement to allocate Title I funds to new and expanding charter schools, and that Title I hold harmless requirements apply to all charter school LEAs?

Direct Student Services

- Will your state elect to reserve up to 3 percent of Title I funds to make awards to districts to provide Direct Student Services? These services include supplemental educational courses, tutoring, choice, choice transportation.

Charter School Grants

- What entity is planning to apply for the next CSP competition in 2016? What lines of communication are in place, or need to be developed, to ensure that eligible entities coordinate to ensure that a high quality application is submitted on behalf of charter schools in the state?
- The CSP permits feeder patterns and permits weighted lotteries unless permitted by state law. Does your state law permit pattern enrollment preferences? Where does it stand on weighted lotteries?
- Who has the authority to oversee authorizers and implement the new CSP quality provisions, including the 7 percent set-aside?
- The definition of expansion in the CSP is now one or more grades – a lower bar than current ED guidance. How will this affect CSP grants in your state?

Title I Teacher Credentials

- If your state permits certification waivers under state charter school law, will it ensure that those teachers are considered to have met requirements for purposes of Title I credential and parental notification requirements?

Student Academic Enrichment Grant

- For district authorized charter schools: How is your district planning to spend these funds when they become available (and assuming the program is funded)? ESSA requires that charter school teachers and other charter leaders be consulted on the development of LEA application for this grant. At least 20% must be spent on well-rounded educational opportunities, another 20 percent for safe and healthy students, and an unspecified amount for the effective use of technology.