

Community School Request to Change Sponsors As Required by 3314.034

The following guidance and application process is provided for community schools requesting approval for a change in sponsor from the Ohio Department of Education due to low performance as prescribed by Ohio Revised Code 3314.034. Community schools non-renewed for reasons detailed in ORC 3314.07(B)(1)(a) or (b) are mandated to close and are not permitted to request changes in sponsorship.

Please read the guidance in its entirety prior to submitting the requested documentation.

Ohio Revised Code 3314.034

CONDITIONS WHICH WOULD PROHIBIT CONTRACT WITH NEW SPONSOR

(A) Subject to division (B) of this section, any community school to which either of the following conditions apply shall be prohibited from entering into a contract with a new sponsor:

(1) The community school has received a grade of "D" or "F" for the performance index score, under division (C)(1)(b) of section [3302.03](#) of the Revised Code, and an overall grade of "D" or "F" for the value-added progress dimension or another measure of student academic progress if adopted by the State Board of Education, under division (C)(1)(e) of that section, on the most recent Ohio School Report Card (report card) issued for the school pursuant to that section.

(2) The community school is one in which a majority of the students are enrolled in a dropout prevention and recovery program, and it has received a rating of "does not meet standards" for the annual student growth measure and combined graduation rates on the most recent report card issued for the school under section [3314.017](#) of the Revised Code.

(B) A community school to which division (A) of this section applies may enter into a contract with a new sponsor if all of the following conditions are satisfied:

(1) The proposed sponsor received a rating of "effective" or higher pursuant to division (B)(6) of section [3314.016](#) of the Revised Code on its most recent evaluation conducted according to that section, or the proposed sponsor is the office of Ohio school sponsorship established in section [3314.029](#) of the Revised Code.

(2) The community school submits a request to enter into a new contract with a sponsor.

(3) The community school has not submitted a prior request that was granted.

(4) The Department grants the school's request pursuant to division (C) of this section.

(C) A school shall submit a request to change sponsors under this section not later than the 15th day of February of the year in which the school wishes to do so. The Department shall grant or deny the request not later than 30 days after the Department receives it. If the Department denies the request, the community school may submit an appeal to the State Board of Education, which shall hold a hearing in accordance with Chapter 119 of the Revised Code. The community school shall file its notice of appeal to the State Board not later than 10 days after receiving the decision from the Department. The State Board shall conduct the hearing not later than 30 days after receiving the school's notice of appeal and act upon the determination of the hearing officer not later than the 25th day of June of the year in which the school wishes to change sponsors.

(D) Factors to be considered during a hearing held pursuant to division (C) of this section include, but are not limited to, the following:

- (1) The school's impact on the students and the community or communities it serves;
- (2) The quality and quantity of academic and administrative support the school receives from its current sponsor to help the school to improve;
- (3) The sponsor's annual evaluations of the community school under division (D)(2) of section [3314.03](#) of the Revised Code for the previous three years;
- (4) The academic performance of the school, taking into account the demographic information of the students enrolled in the school;
- (5) The academic performance of alternative schools that serve comparable populations of students as those served by the community school;
- (6) The fiscal stability of the school;
- (7) The results of any audits of the school by the auditor of state;
- (8) The length of time the school has been under the oversight of its current sponsor;
- (9) The number of times the school has changed sponsors prior to the current request;
- (10) Parent and student satisfaction rates as demonstrated by surveys, if available.

INTRODUCTION

A community school seeking a change in sponsorship, under ORC [3314.034\(A\)](#), for the upcoming school year must submit a letter to the Ohio Department of Education stating the reason(s) for the request no later than Feb. 15. The community school also must submit all the supporting documents with the request. Within 30 days of receiving the letter and supporting documentation, the Department shall grant or deny the request.

The Department will make a determination based on the information submitted by the community school. Other pertinent information also may be considered in making a final determination. A review panel of Department officials will be convened to evaluate applications. The review panel's scoring and recommendation will be the primary factor in determining the approval or denial of the request, including length of such contracts.

PROCESS OVERVIEW FOR APPLICATION SUBMISSION

A community school seeking a change in sponsorship must submit a cover letter addressing the reason for change, along with a narrative describing school's impact on the students and the community it serves, plan for academic improvement, the school's financial viability and the school's operational performance. The request for approval to change sponsors and all required documentation is due to the Department **no later than 5 p.m. on Feb. 15, 2020**. All documentation must be submitted via email to Community.Schools@education.ohio.gov.

The Department will review the application and all required documentation submitted by the community school. If the Department determines the application is insufficient, the community school's request will be denied.

The Department will notify the community school of its decision to grant or deny the request **within 30 days**. If the Department denies the request, the community school may submit an appeal to the State Board of Education. Any school denied such a request will be notified of the appeals process.

Should you have any questions, please contact Karl Koenig at Karl.Koenig@education.ohio.gov or by phone at (614) 387-2197.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION FOR CHANGE OF SPONSORSHIP REQUEST

Schools requesting a change in sponsor under Ohio Revised Code [3314.034\(A\)](#) Sections 1 and 2, also must submit a letter addressing the following requirements. Applicants should read each section thoroughly and provide detailed responses. Schools applying should make sure each question is clearly identified in their responses.

Required Narratives

Responses must be limited to no more than 1,000 words.

- 1. Description of school's impact on the students and the community or communities it serves, including:**
 - A description of the school's impact on the students and the community they serve;
 - Results from parent and student satisfaction surveys, if available;

- A description of positive academic impact on the students it serves.
2. **Description of how implementation of the academic plan improvement plan will significantly improve academic performance, including:**
 - The school's graduation requirements and how they comply with Ohio graduation requirements (only for schools that offer opportunities to earn high school diplomas);
 - A description of how the new sponsor will help ensure academic improvement goals are met.
 3. **Description of operational performance, including:**
 - Compliance with applicable laws and rules, school management and governance, staff recruitment and development, and parent and community involvement;
 - The governing board's capacity and commitment to its roles and responsibilities to ensure the success of the community school. This must address the governing board's compliance with all laws and any conflicts of interest;
 - Information regarding any of the school's compliance items found to be noncompliant on the most recent sponsor evaluation, school management and governance, staff recruitment and development, student recruitment and enrollment, and parent and community involvement;
 - The governing board's capacity and commitment to ensuring the success of the community school. Information included demonstrates that the governing board is self-sustainable and is compliant and will maintain compliance with legal, ethical and conflict of interest requirements for the governing authority developer and management company.
 4. **Description of why the school plans to change sponsors, including:**
 - Reason the school is requesting to change from its current sponsor to a new sponsor, including any action by the school or sponsor to terminate or not renew the sponsorship contract;
 - How a change in sponsorship will help the school improve its performance;
 - An explanation of any prior changes in sponsorship during the life of the community school, if applicable.

REQUIRED SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION TO SUBMIT TO THE DEPARTMENT

1. Audit reports, including any findings for the three most recent years.
2. Communication, including any board resolutions, between school and sponsor acknowledging end of contract, including any notices of non-renewal.
3. Proposed contract with new sponsor

THE DEPARTMENT WILL REVIEW THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS IN ITS POSSESSION:

1. Academic report cards for the three most recent years.
2. Five-Year Forecast.
3. Three most recent annual financial audits.
4. Current and proposed sponsor's annual evaluation ratings.
5. Proposed sponsor's agreement with the Department.