

## Quality Community Schools Support Criteria and Frequently Asked Questions

House Bill 166 (FY20-FY21 state budget bill) established a quality community schools support grant<sup>1</sup> to provide additional funding to each community school designated as a Community School of Quality. Qualified community schools under the program are eligible to receive up to \$1,750 in each fiscal year for each pupil identified as economically disadvantaged and up to \$1,000 in each fiscal year for all others. Payments for the current fiscal year are calculated using the final adjusted full-time equivalent number of students enrolled in the community school for the prior fiscal year, except for a school in its first year of operation. For a school in the first year of operation, the payment is calculated using the adjusted full-time equivalent number of students enrolled in the school for the current fiscal year as of the date the payment is made, as reported by the school pursuant to section 3314.08 of the Ohio Revised Code. By Jan. 31 of each fiscal year, the Ohio Department of Education will make payments to each community school designated as a Community School of Quality.

Community schools must satisfy **at least one** of the following criteria to receive funding.

### Criteria 1:

The community school meets all of the following criteria:

- (a) The school's sponsor was rated "Exemplary" or "Effective" on the sponsor's most recent evaluation conducted under section 3314.06 of the Revised Code.
- (b) The school received a higher Performance Index score than the school district in which the school is located on the two most recent Ohio School Report Cards issued for the school under section 3302.03 of the Revised Code.
- (c) The school received an overall grade of "A" or "B" for the Value-Added progress dimension on the most recent report card issued for the school under section 3302.03 of the Revised Code or is a school described under division (A)(4) of section 3314.35 of the Revised Code and did not receive a grade for the Value-Added progress dimension on the most recent report card.
- (d) At least 50 percent of the students enrolled in the school are economically disadvantaged, as determined by the Ohio Department of Education.

### Criteria 2:

The community school meets all of the following criteria:

- (a) The school's sponsor was rated "Exemplary" or "Effective" on the sponsor's most recent evaluation conducted under section 3314.016 of the Revised Code.
- (b) The school is in its first year of operation or the school opened as a kindergarten school and has added one grade per year and has been in operation for fewer than four school years.
- (c) The school is replicating an operational and instructional model used by a community school described in division (B)(1) of this section.

### Criteria 3:

---

<sup>1</sup> Amended in House Bill 164 making changes to Criteria 3.

The community school meets all of the following criteria:

- (a) The school's sponsor was rated "Exemplary" or "Effective" on the sponsor's most recent evaluation conducted under section 3314.016 of the Revised Code.
- (b) The school contracts with an operator that operates schools in other states and meets at least one of the following criteria:
  - (i) Has operated a school that received a grant funded through the federal Charter Schools Program established under 20 U.S.C. 7221 or received funding from the Charter School Growth Fund; or
  - (ii) Meets all of the following criteria:
    - (I) One of the operator's schools in another state performed better than the school district in which the school is located, as determined by the Department.
    - (II) At least 50 percent of the total number of students enrolled in all of the operator's schools are economically disadvantaged, as determined by the Department.
    - (III) The operator is in good standing in all states where it operates schools.
    - (IV) The Department has determined the operator does not have any financial viability issues that would prevent it from effectively operating a community school in Ohio
- (c) The school is in its first year of operation.

A school designated as a Community School of Quality under division (B) shall maintain that designation for the two fiscal years following the fiscal year in which the school was initially designated as a Community School of Quality.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### OVERVIEW

**Q:** How does a community school earn the designation of a Community School of Quality and receive the accompanying funding (if the school hasn't received the designation previously)?

**A:** There are three criteria a community school can meet to be designated as a Community School of Quality.

1. Section 265.335(B)(1) - Meet the academic requirements using data from the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 report cards (along with the results of the 2018-2019 sponsor evaluations). Community schools that meet the requirements appear on [this list](#) and are not required to submit additional information to the Department.
2. Section 265.335(B)(2) - If a community school opened for the first time in the 2020-2021 school year, or if a community school opened within the last four years with only kindergarten and added only one grade level each year since opening, the school may qualify to receive the designation as a Community School of Quality if the school opened replicating an instructional and operational model of a school identified as a Community School of Quality under Section 265.335(B)(1). Community schools on [this list](#) who want to be considered for the grant must submit a response to the Department's [Request for Information](#) in order for the Department to make a final determination on eligibility.

3. Section 265.335(B)(3) - If a community school did not qualify under number 1 or 2 above, but entered into a contract with an operator on July 1, 2020, is currently contracted with the same operator, and is in its first year of operation, the community school may qualify to receive the designation as a Community School of Quality under criteria 3. Criteria 3 requires the **operator** to submit a response to the Department's Request for Information via the Department's SharePoint site. See [below](#) for more information.

**Q:** What happens if my community school qualifies under multiple criteria?

**A:** A community school only needs to meet one of the criteria listed above to be designated as a Community School of Quality. Qualifying under multiple methods (for example, meeting requirements of both Criteria 1 and Criteria 3) does not impact the school's funding award from the grant.

**Q:** When will the Department release payments to community schools designated as Community Schools of Quality?

**A:** For the first year, the Department will release payment prior to Jan. 31. The Department plans to release payment to qualifying schools with the January State Foundation Payments.

**Q:** When will the Department pull counts of pupils identified as economically disadvantaged (and non-economically disadvantaged) for the payment?

**A:** The Department will use the final adjusted full-time equivalent number for the prior fiscal year. If a school is in its first year of operation, the payment will be calculated using the adjusted full-time equivalent number of students enrolled in the school based on the data reported for the January payment.

**Q :** Are community schools operating a dropout prevention and recovery program and receive the dropout prevention and recovery report card eligible to be designated as a Community School of Quality?

**A:** Community schools that receive the dropout prevention and recovery report card are eligible to be identified under each of the criteria.

- Criteria 1: The school must meet each part of the requirement, particularly Section 265.335(B)(1)(b) – the school received a higher Performance Index score than the school district in which the school is located on the two most recent Ohio School Report Cards issued for the school under section 3302.03 of the Revised Code. During the previous application cycle, no community school that received the dropout prevention and recovery report card met this requirement when the Department pulled the list published [here](#). In the upcoming application cycle, each community school's Performance Index score will be compared to the resident district to determine if the school met the requirements outlined in Section 265.335(B)(1)(b).
- Criteria 2: If the school is in its first year of operation and completed the Request for Information – Criteria 2 identifying an operational and instruction model from a qualified school the school is replicating, the school would be eligible to receive the designation as a Community School of Quality and receive funding.
- Criteria 3: The school is a newly opening school with an operator that demonstrates it meets the requirements under Criteria 3, had a contract in place with the operator as of July 1, 2020, and is still contracting with the operator will be designated as a Community School of Quality and will receive funding.

**FUNDING AND ELIGIBILITY BEYOND 2019-2020**

**Q:** Is funding for Quality Community School Support permanent?

**A:** The funding is tied to an appropriation from the legislature. Funding has been appropriated for the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years. Any distribution of funding for the 2021-2022 school year and beyond will be contingent upon continued appropriations.

**Q:** How long does a community school receive the designation of a Community School of Quality?

**A:** Section 265.335(C) stipulates, “A school that is designated as a Community School of Quality under division (B) of this section shall maintain that designation for the two fiscal years following the fiscal year in which the school was initially designated as a Community School of Quality.” This means a community school identified and receiving a payment in January 2020 will continue to be designated as a Community School of Quality for the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 school years (assuming funding is appropriated).

**Q:** Can a community school that receives designation as a Community School of Quality “requalify” for the designation under one of the criteria each year?

**A:** The Department must annually make payments to community schools designated as Community Schools of Quality. Section 265.335(C) stipulates, “A school that is designated as a Community School of Quality under division (B) of this section shall maintain that designation for the two fiscal years following the fiscal year in which the school was initially designated as a Community School of Quality.” Therefore, once a community school receives the designation, the Department will not reconsider its designation as a Community School of Quality until the renewal period following the two fiscal years in which the school was originally designated. For a community school receiving the designation in the 2019-2020 school year, the Department would not evaluate eligibility to receive the designation until the 2022-2023 school year (assuming funding is appropriated).

**Q:** What will the Department do if more schools receive a designation as Community Schools of Quality than the appropriated amount can support?

**A:** In the event more community schools receive the designation as Community Schools of Quality than the appropriation can support, the Department will prorate each school’s payment.

**SECTION 265.335(B)(1) SPECIFIC QUESTIONS**

**Q:** My community school appears on [the list](#) published on the Department’s website. Are there any additional steps I need to take?

**A:** No. Community schools identified on the spreadsheet published on the Department’s website met the criteria established under Section 265.335(B)(1), and there are no additional steps the school needs to complete.

**Q:** Section 265.335(B)(1)(c) discusses the Value-Added progress dimension. Which measure is the Department using for this measure?

**A:** Under this section, the Department uses the grade reported for the Progress measure on the report cards for any year in which the Department is evaluating a community school to be designated as a Community School of Quality.

**Q:** Section 265.335(B)(1)(d) requires at least 50 percent of students enrolled in the school are economically disadvantaged. How will the Department make this determination?

**A:** The Department will use the final pupil count for a community school and the number of students identified as economically disadvantaged on the report cards.

**SECTION 265.335(B)(2) SPECIFIC QUESTIONS**

**Q:** If the community school is identified as a community school that could potentially receive a designation as a Community School of Quality under criteria 2, what do I need to do?

**A:** If a community school opened for the first time during the 2020-2021 school year or opened as a kindergarten-only school and added only one grade level per year (and has been open for fewer than four years), the community school *could* receive the designation. If the community school is identified on the [preliminary list](#), a representative from the school will need to complete the [Request for Information Survey](#) in order for the Department to make a final determination on eligibility.

**Q:** What factors are used to determine a community school's designation as a Community School of Quality under this section?

**A:** Section 265.335(B)(2)(c) requires community schools receiving the designation of a Community School of Quality to replicate "an operational and instructional model used by a community school described in division (B)(1) of this section." The Request for Information seeks to determine if a newly opened community school was opened replicating an operational and instructional model and, if so, what school the new school is modeled after. Department staff will review information submitted with the Request for Information to make a final determination.

**SECTION 265.335(B)(3) GENERAL QUESTIONS**

**Q:** What must a community school do to be designated as a Community School of Quality under this section?

**A:** ***Newly opening*** community schools are encouraged to reach out to their operators to determine if they meet the eligibility criteria. The operator must contract with schools in other states and meet the other criteria outlined in the [Request for Information](#).

**Q:** Section 265.335(B)(3) has two pathways a community school could follow to be designated as a Community School of Quality. Does a community school need to qualify under both to receive the designation?

**A:** No. Section 265.335(B)(3) includes two options for a community school to be identified as a Community School of Quality. Both options depend on the operator submitting a Request for Information to the Department and the Department reviewing to ensure the operator meets the criteria under one of the options. There is no requirement that the operator qualify under both criteria for the school to be considered.

**Q:** What is the difference between the two options outlined in Section 265.335(B)(3)?

**A:** Both options require the school's sponsor to be rated "Exemplary" or "Effective" on the sponsor's most recent evaluation and that "the school contracts with an operator that operates schools in other states that meet the following criteria." The operator must provide information in the Request for Information demonstrating it met one of the criteria.

For criteria under Section 265.335(B)(3)(b)(i), please review page 3 of the Request for Information.

For criteria under Section 265.335(B)(3)(b)(ii), please review pages 4-9 of the Request for Information.

**Q:** How do I locate the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) number for schools outside of Ohio? How would I find the NCES number for the district in which the charter school is located?

**A:** The [National Center for Education Statistics](#) has a search engine that will allow you to find the NCES number for each charter school and traditional public district. You will need some basic information about the school (such as name, state, address and/or county).

**SECTION 265.335(B)(3)(b)(i) SPECIFIC QUESTIONS**

**Q:** I am an operator and believe my organization qualifies under Section 265.335(B)(3)(b)(i). What steps must I complete?

**A:** Operators must submit a completed Request for Information to the Department's SharePoint folder created for each operator seeking eligibility under this section. At a minimum, the following items are required:

1. Signed copy of Criteria 3(b)(i) Specific Requirements (page 3 of Request for Information);
2. Completed Excel file including all schools (with NCES numbers) the operator works with in Ohio and identification of other states the operator works with;
3. Identification of school receiving funding from the Charter Schools Program established under 20 U.S.C. 7221 or Charter School Growth Fund.

**Q:** I am an operator that contracts with schools in Ohio and at least one other state and operated a school that received funding through the federal Charter Schools Program established under 20 U.S.C. 7221 or the Charter School Growth Fund. What steps do I need to complete for my contracted school to be considered as a Community School of Quality?

**A:** Operators that fall into this category are encouraged to complete the Request for Information specific to (3)(b)(1). Operators must demonstrate the school(s) they contracted with received funding through the federal Charter Schools Program or the Charter School Growth Fund.

**Q:** I am an operator that contracts with schools in Ohio and at least one other state and have received a federal Charter Schools Program Developer grant. Would my schools be considered as Community Schools of Quality?

**A:** Section 265.335(B)(3)(b)(i) stipulates, "Has operated a school that received a grant funded through the federal Charter School Program established under 20 U.S.C. 7221." The Developer grants are awarded directly to Charter Management Organizations and not the schools. Given that the operator received the grant and not the school, the operator would not be considered as meeting this requirement.

## **SECTION 265.335(B)(3)(b)(ii) SPECIFIC QUESTIONS**

**Q:** I am an operator and believe my organization qualifies under Section 265.335(B)(3)(b)(ii). What steps must I complete?

**A:** Operators must submit a completed Request for Information to the Department's SharePoint folder created for each operator seeking eligibility under this section. At a minimum, the following items are required:

1. Signed Operator Affirmation (page 4 of Request for Information);
2. Completed Criteria 3(b)(ii) Operator Assurances Supplement, Financial Viability Assurances and Operator Attestation of Assurances (pages 7-9);
3. Completed Excel file including all schools (with NCES numbers) the operator works with in Ohio and other states:
  - a. Identification of community school outperforming the school district in which the school is located.
4. All supporting documentation identified in the appendix of the Request for Information (page 10).

**Q:** Under Section 265.335(B)(3)(b)(ii), one criterion is, "One of the operator's schools from another state performed better than the school district in which the school is located, as determined by the Department." How will the Department make that determination?

**A:** For the operator to meet this requirement, the operator must demonstrate that one of the schools it operates in another state achieved proficiency level in all reported grades for all students in English language arts, math and science for grades 3 through 8 and/or reported high school equivalency [for proficiency] that is

higher than the district the operator's school is located in based on the most recent available data submitted by each state for federal accountability

**Q:** How will the Department determine “the operator does not have any financial viability issues that would prevent it from effectively operating a community school in Ohio”?

**A:** The appendix within the [Request for Information](#) (pg 10) includes the information the Department is requesting operators to submit for the Department to make a determination under 265.335(B)(3)(b)(ii)(IV). The Department has grouped the information into two categories with a review checklist for each category:

1. Operators with audited financial statements
  - a. [Financial Viability – Audited Statements Review Worksheet](#)
2. Operators with no current audit report
  - a. [Financial Viability – Unaudited Statements Review Worksheet](#)

The Department will collect the information provided by the operator via SharePoint. If there are questions regarding the financial viability review, please email them to [Community.Schools@education.ohio.gov](mailto:Community.Schools@education.ohio.gov)

## REQUEST FOR INFORMATION QUESTIONS

**Q:** I work for an operator and wish to submit the Request for Information. How do I go about doing this?

**A:** The Department will collect documentation from operators seeking to complete the Request for Information using the Department's SharePoint site. Please send an email to [Mary.Cotton@education.ohio.gov](mailto:Mary.Cotton@education.ohio.gov) to request access to the SharePoint site. The email request should include the following:

- Name of the operator;
- Name and email addresses of all persons seeking access to the SharePoint site;
- A point of contact's phone number in case the Department has follow-up questions.

**The deadline to request access to the SharePoint site is Friday, October 2, 2020. The deadline for submission of the Request for Information is Friday, October 9, 2020.**