

Community School Request to Change Sponsors

Community schools defined as low performing under Ohio Revised Code [3314.034](#) must receive approval from the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce prior to entering into a contract with another sponsoring organization. Please note, community schools nonrenewed for reasons detailed in ORC [3314.07\(B\)\(1\)\(a\)](#) or (b) must close and will not be approved for a change in sponsorship.

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

CONDITIONS WHICH PROHIBIT A CONTRACT WITH NEW SPONSOR

Any community school to which either of the following conditions apply shall be prohibited from entering into a contract with a new sponsor without approval of the Department of Education and Workforce:

1. A performance rating of less than three stars for achievement under division (D)(3)(b) of section 3302.03 of the Revised Code and a performance rating of less than three stars for progress under division (D)(3)(c) of that section; or
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.

A community school to which the criteria above apply, may only enter into a contract with a new sponsor if the Department approves the school's request. See below for instructions and documentation required to review the application for a change of sponsor.

SCHOOLS PRIMARILY SERVING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Community schools in which a majority of the enrolled students are children with disabilities may enter into a contract with a new sponsor, provided that the new sponsor is rated effective or exemplary if:

- (1) The school received, on its most recent report card a performance rating of at least three stars for progress under division (D)(3)(c) of that section; and
- (2) The school's performance index score for students with disabilities was higher than the performance index score for students with disabilities for the school district in which the school is located.

Please notify the Department of Education and Workforce no later than February 15, 2025, of your school's intent to change sponsors under this provision. The Department will review the relevant data and confirm that criteria have been met. Please send requests to

Community.Schools@education.ohio.gov.

PROCESS FOR REQUESTING APPROVAL TO CHANGE SPONSORS (Schools not primarily serving students with disabilities)

Schools shall submit a request to change sponsors and all supporting documentation to the Department **not later than 5 p.m. on February 15, 2025**. Application and materials should be sent by email to Community.Schools@education.ohio.gov. The Department shall approve or deny the request within 30 days of receipt of the request. If the request is denied, the community school may submit an appeal to the Department, which shall hold a hearing in accordance with Chapter 119 of the Revised Code.

Notice of appeal to the Department must be filed not later than 10 days after receiving the decision from the Department. The Department 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.

The Department will make a determination based on the information submitted by the community school.

Applicants should read each section thoroughly and provide detailed responses. Schools that are applying should make sure the answer to each question is clearly identified in their responses.

A community school seeking a change in sponsorship must submit a cover letter addressing the reason for change, along with a narrative describing the school's impact on the students and community it serves, plan for academic improvement, school's financial viability and school's operational performance.

REQUIRED NARRATIVES

Responses must be limited to 1,000 words or less.

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 community it serves;
 - 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 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 the governing board is self-sustainable and 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.

ADDITIONAL REQUIRED SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

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 nonrenewal.
3. Proposed contract with new sponsor.

The Department shall also consider documents in their 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.

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.

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

If the request is denied and the community school requests a hearing, the factors shall be considered:

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, considering 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.

Should you have any questions, please contact the Office of Community Schools at community.schools@education.ohio.gov.