

**PENNSYLVANIA COALITION OF CHARTER
SCHOOLS**

CODE OF ACCOUNTABILITY

“TRUST AND TRANSPARENCY”

Adopted March 2009

The Pennsylvania Coalition of Charter Schools

The Pennsylvania Coalition of Charter Schools (PCCS) was established in 1998 to provide information and guidance to persons wishing to start a charter public school; to act in an advisory capacity to the Pennsylvania State Department of Education in matters concerning charter public schools; to act as a monitor to charter public school legislation; and, to focus and promote efforts to strengthen charter public school legislation.

Because of the rapid growth of Pennsylvania charter schools and the increased demand for more schools, it became necessary for the Pennsylvania Coalition of Charter Schools to establish the following Code of Accountability. PCCS member schools are asked to voluntarily pledge their commitment to this Code.

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Accountability Standard 1: Academic Accountability

- We will set Sustainable, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timely (SMART) academic, programmatic, and learning goals and objectives.
- These goals will be published in house and readily available to charter school families, school districts, and taxpayers.
- We will implement business policies and procedures that will enable the school to reach its goals and objectives.
- Our leadership will allocate resources needed for student achievement.
- Our school will adopt an open enrollment procedure absent from times when we are oversubscribed with a public lottery enrollment.

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Accountability Standard 2: Ethical Accountability and Responsible Governance

- All members of our charter school and our Board of Trustees will perform their duties in a professional and ethical manner.
- Financial interests of Trustees must not conflict with public interests.
- All charter school administrators will comply with existing and subsequent laws related to compensation and employment regulations.
- Our employees and Board Members will have an understanding of the Pennsylvania Charter School Law as it pertains to their duties.
- We will remain good stewards of school finances and adhere to the measures set forth within Accountability Standard 3: Fiscal Accountability.
- We will thoroughly investigate references to determine the reputation of prospective staff and ensure applicants adhere to our high expectations. The investigation will also include criminal histories and child abuse clearances.
- Except upon occasions where there exists no alternative, we will not engage in contractual arrangements with for-profit or nonprofit entities in which board members or school officials have financial or personal stakes. Should a situation warrant that such arrangements occur, we will notify all stakeholders and make the decision in an open, public manner.
- To provide a stable foundation for ethical leadership, all school policies will be transparent and implemented in a fair and consistent manner.

- Bylaws for charter advisory boards will be amended to include a Conflict of Interest Policy, Meeting Protocols and Procedures, and formal descriptions and organizational charts detailing roles and authorities within the charter school.
- New Trustees will receive formal orientations to their new position. That orientation will be presided by a ranking charter school administrator and two Trustees who have each served at least one-half of a full term.
- All Board Meeting minutes will be available for public inspection within thirty days of each Board Meeting.

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Accountability Standard 3: Fiscal Accountability

- Our school will set sensible annual budgets under the light of full public disclosure. Each budget will consider all long-term debt schedules and multi-year contracts.
- We will maintain immediate and long-range financial plans to effectively implement our school's educational programs.
- Our Board of Trustees will monitor our school's fiscal health.
- Within 100 days of pledging to this Code of Accountability, we will establish rules on salaries and benefits for employees. Those rules will be presented to our Board of Trustees at the meeting immediately following the 100 day period and will be voted upon within 60 days.
- Within 100 days of pledging to this Code of Accountability, we will establish a purchasing policy that provides best practices and thresholds for quotes and bids concerning ordinary operational matters. That policy will be presented to our Board of Trustees at the meeting immediately following the 100 day period and will be voted upon within 60 days.
- Our business manager/CFO will submit monthly financial reports directly to our Board and CEO.
- We will make fiscal records and annual audit reports available to the public.

- We will not use charter school funds, credit cards, lines of credit, or any financial tool for personal gain. All expenditures reimbursed to charter school personnel will be available for public inspection.
- We will not abuse public funds in any regard whatsoever.
- Financial obligations will be paid in a timely manner and disclosed in financial statements.
- We will disclose salaries and expenses to parties requiring such information in the same manner that is expected of our authorizing school district.
- Student Activities Funds will be held in a separate and distinct account and funds will only be applied to student activities. We will adopt procedures that spell out how these funds are accepted and distributed.
- Our Board of Trustees will set reasonable thresholds before large expenditures can be made.
- We will establish an organizational chart that includes precise details such as who has check signing authority, who has banking privileges, and who reconciles financial transactions. The same person can hold no more than one of the aforementioned responsibilities.
- Our treasurer will be forbidden from being seated on our charter school's funding committee.
- Financial accounts will be reconciled monthly.