



State Charter Schools with Before and After School Programs Operational Requirements

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Introduction

While state charter schools are not required to provide before and after school programs for their students, before and after school programs can benefit both the students and parents as well as contribute to increased academic and financial performance. Before and after school programs can eliminate barriers to enrollment by offering students and parents by offering additional flexibility in the length of the school day to ease transportation, child care, or other logistical needs. Additionally, before and after school programs provide schools additional opportunities to supplement instruction. Further, because these programs can be fee-based, before and after school programs can contribute to a school's revenue to supplement its school-day program.

State charter schools may choose to operate before and after school programs directly or contract with an outside entity to operate such programs. However, if conducting a before and after school program, the state charter schools must adhere to all rules and regulations related to the operation of before and after school programs. The operation of before and after school programs is governed by the rules and regulations of Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL).

Requirements for Directly Operating Before and After School Programs

A state charter school directly operates a before and after school program when the programs are managed and staffed by school personnel. Because a state charter school is a public school, a state charter school that directly operates a before and after school program is *eligible* for an exemption from licensure to operate a before and after school program in accordance with DECAL Rule 591-1-1-.46(b)(1). However, the state charter school must apply for the licensure exemption through DECAL prior to operating the before and after school program.

To apply for a before and after school program licensure exemption from DECAL, a state charter school must complete and submit DECAL's [Exemption Application](#). To qualify for the exemption, the state charter school must select the "Government-owned and operated" option in the Description of Services section of the application.

Once a licensure exemption is approved by DECAL, the state charter school must adhere to all rules and regulations relating to the operation of the before and after school program as prescribed by DECAL. The DECAL Exemption Application identifies applicable rules and regulations, and include, but are not limited to, the prominent posting of the school's exemption approval letter, maintenance of attendance records, and use of parent acknowledgement forms. State charter schools should carefully review the rules and regulations in the Exemption Letter to promote compliance.

For additional information, please contact the DECAL Exemptions Units at 770-293-5977 or by emailing CCSExemptions@decalf.ga.gov.

Expectations for State Charter Schools Contracting with a Before and After School Operator

State charter schools may utilize their autonomy to contract with a third-party to operate a before and after school program at the school. While a state charter school has the discretion to choose a provider that it deems appropriate, schools should carefully evaluate possible options to ensure that the selected provider is the best option to meet the needs of the school, its students, and its families. If a state charter school chooses to contract with a third-party that provides a before and after school program at the state charter school, the provider is ensuring it adheres to applicable licensure or exemption obligations as required by DECAL. However, as part of the provider-selection process, the state charter school should ensure that provider has received an exemption or license from Additionally, the state charter school should continue to monitor the contractor's performance, including adherence to exemption or licensure requirements, to appropriately hold the provider accountable.

Conclusion

Operating a before and after school program can assist state charter schools in generating additional revenue and supporting students' academic progress. Importantly, whether a school chooses to contract with an outside entity or directly operate the program, schools must use due diligence and their best judgement to ensure the safety and wellbeing of their students.