

State Charter Schools Commission
Comprehensive Performance Framework

Frequently Asked Questions

1. If we opt in for next year, does the 75% rule mean we have to meet for both remaining years?
 - No. If a school opts in, it opts in for the entirety of the charter term. Schools will be assessed for all 4 years by one tool or another (existing charter goals OR performance framework metrics).
2. If we are approaching standards in every area, will we be recommended for renewal?
 - No. If a school is “approaching” a standard, it is not yet performing at the expected level. In an effort to differentiate between performance levels when possible (those schools that are meeting standards, those that are meeting some aspect of the standard, and those that are not meeting any aspect of the standard), the framework often allocates partial points to schools that are “approaching standards”. To be clear, however, a school that is “approaching standards” in several areas is not compliant with SCSC expectations. In the event this language causes confusion, we can amend it.
3. How are the framework measures different from many existing charter contract goals?
 - The SCSC framework was developed to provide a more holistic assessment of school performance than that which is provided under the terms of existing charter contracts. Unlike existing contracts which only assess whether a school “meets” or “does not meet” goals, the framework awards points to schools for making progress toward goal attainment. In other words, the framework recognizes acceptable RANGES of performance (for ex: “meeting standards” = 70-100 pts. in academics; 75-100 pts. in finances; 80-100 pts. in operations.) as opposed to determining compliance based on a school’s ability to meet the various “absolute bar” measures included in existing charter contracts (for ex: “compliance” = meeting all contracted performance goals in every year of the charter term). Additionally—the SCSC expects schools to meet standards in each of the three areas (academics, finances, and operations) during each year of the charter contract; HOWEVER, the requirement for purposes of renewal recommendations is simply that schools meet standards in each area 75% of the time. In other words, the framework differs from existing charter contract terms by recognizing and taking into account the fact that even high-performing schools might have an off-year every once in a while.
4. If a school opts to be evaluated under the terms of its existing contract yet the school doesn’t meet 100% of goals—will the school automatically be recommended for denial at renewal time?
 - Not necessarily; however, if a school isn’t meeting all of its contractual goals—the SCSC is going to evaluate whether or not it’s performing well holistically and whether it is providing a better educational opportunity to students than that which is provided in the traditional schools to which said students are zoned (i.e. we’re going to use the framework measures).
5. When will a board have to make the decision to opt-in or opt-out of the framework?

- Boards may opt in as soon as October 2015, but boards MUST officially opt in or out within 60 days of the 2014-2015 CCRPI release.
6. Why isn't it enough to "tie" with the district in performance?
 - The mission of the SCSC is to provide students with better educational opportunities to students. There are multiple ways to demonstrate a "better" opportunity: growth, performance, and/or value-added impact on student achievement. All these ways are accounted for in the framework.
 7. Will our school be able to earn points for achieving mission-specific goals?
 - Yes. Schools will be able to earn points for fulfilling mission-specific expectations in two places within the operational section of the performance framework. First, a school will earn points for implementing the innovative features of the school that are outlined in the Essential or Innovative Features paragraph of its charter contract. Second, most schools have mission-specific goals within their current charter contracts. (For example, a dual-language immersion school will have goals relating to foreign language proficiency.) A school will also earn points for meeting those mission-specific goals. If your current contract does not contain mission-specific goals, we can include a few of these goals as we amend the contract to incorporate the performance framework.
 8. Can we earn points for the achievement of returning students in addition to the achievement of all students?
 - Yes. The achievement of returning students can be factored into the framework through a mission-specific goal. (See question #6). Please note, however, that the performance of all students—regardless of how long they have attended the school—is of the utmost importance to the SCSC.
 9. Why do state charter schools have to be compared to districts and/or the state in terms of performance given that state charter school funding is often less than that of traditional public schools?
 - While state charter funding is often lower than that of traditional public schools, all schools operating under the authority of the SCSC were aware of the associated funding formula when they voluntarily sought SCSC charter contracts. In other words, part of the charter bargain to which each state charter school agreed at the time of application included an assurance that the educational goals of the school could be achieved at the budgeted funding level.
 10. Are schools penalized in the financial portion of the framework if they receive a "credit" from a management company for services provided?
 - As long as a "credit" from a management company is expected to be repaid, the credit will be included as debt when calculating financial performance. If the management company releases that debt prior to the end of the fiscal year that the debt is incurred and the debt is not included in the audit report's Governmental Funds-Balance Sheet or Statement of Net Position, the debt will not be reflected as a liability on the performance framework. Accordingly, the school may wish to discuss the timing of debt forgiveness with its management company.

11. The operational section of the performance framework is very black and white. A school will lose points for any violation of an applicable law, including complex programs such as Title I. Would it be possible for schools to receive some points for compliance if they are substantially compliant with applicable law?
- The SCSC understands that there are certainly some instances of noncompliance that are less severe than others; however, as an entity charged with the monitoring the compliance of state charter schools, the SCSC cannot take a position that any violation of law is acceptable. Further, attempting to discern what violations are “substantial” or “material” introduces subjectivity that undermines the performance framework’s purposes of transparency and accountability. Nevertheless, the SCSC understands that a well-functioning school may not be wholly-compliant on every aspect of applicable law. As such, the number of measures and weights allow a school to meet expectations without perfect compliance in all areas.
12. Where do the “SPTs” referenced in the academic section of the framework come from?
- SPTs (or State Performance Targets) were/are created by the Department of Education and approved by the US Dept. of Education as a condition of approval for the state’s accountability metric: the College and Career Readiness Performance Index (CCRPI). In other words, the SPTs are part of federal and state accountability requirements that cannot be waived by charter schools. As a result, they must be included in the SCSC’s Comprehensive Performance Framework.
13. Where does the SCSC obtain the compliance data referenced in each section of the framework?
- A complete list of data sources is provided in the appendix of both the “Overview” document as well as the “Indicators and Weights” Performance Framework document.