

Bill Summary
1st Session of the 58th Legislature

Bill No.:	SB 516
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Author:	Sen. Pugh
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Bill Analysis

SB 516 creates a nine-member Statewide Charter School Board to have the sole authority to authorize and sponsor statewide virtual charter schools beginning July 1, 2024. It allows the Board to sponsor brick-and-mortar charter schools. The bill provides for membership of the Board and requires appointments to be made by October 31, 2023. It prohibits a member of the Legislature from being appointed to the Board during or for two years after his or her term of office. It states that beginning July 1, 2024, statewide virtual charter schools will be sponsored only by the Statewide Charter School Board, which shall succeed to any contractual rights and responsibilities incurred by the Statewide Virtual Charter School Board. Also effective July 1, 2024, the Statewide Virtual Charter School Board is to be abolished. It states that beginning July 1, 2024, the Statewide Charter School Board will also succeed to any contractual rights and responsibilities incurred by the State Board of Education in sponsorship of charter schools. Beginning July 1, 2024, it allows any charter school to apply to the Statewide Charter School Board for sponsorship after the term of its current contract. The bill provides for the Statewide Charter School Board to have general oversight of all charter schools in the state. It creates the Statewide Charter School Board Revolving Fund.

The bill also modifies brick-and-mortar charter school sponsorship. It removes technology center school districts and the State Board of Education as sponsors of charter schools, and it adds the Statewide Charter School Board as a sponsor. It also removes limitations on charter school sponsorship by an institution of higher education within the Oklahoma State System of Higher Education, and it adds private institutions of higher learning accredited according to state law as a charter school sponsor. The bill modifies sections of law relating to charter schools and virtual charter schools to update and remove references. It directs the Statewide Charter School Board, rather than the State Department of Education, to provide required training to charter school applicants. It also directs the Board, or an organization approved by the Board, to provide training to a sponsor that enters into a new or renewed sponsorship contract on or after July 1, 2024. The bill requires a charter school application to include a copy of any proposed contract between the governing board of a charter school or virtual charter school and an educational management organization. It allows a sponsor to approve or deny any such contract.

The measure requires any application seeking to establish a new charter school after July 1, 2024, to first be submitted to the board of education for the school district in which the charter school is to be located. The board of education must approve or deny the application within 60 days, and the charter school applicant may submit a revised application. Once an application is denied, the bill allows the applicant to submit a charter school application to any authorized

sponsor. It requires the governing board of a charter school or virtual charter school to notify a sponsor within 10 business days if there is any significant adverse action, material finding of noncompliance, or pending action, claim, or proceeding relating to the school or an educational management organization with which it contracts. The measure requires a charter school contract to include a performance framework with academic and operational performance indicators, which is to be used by the sponsor to annually evaluate charter schools it sponsors. The bill requires each charter school to be separate and distinct. It requires a school district that proposes a bond to include a charter school located in its district in planning conversations for the bond.

The measure establishes an initial charter school contract term of 5 years with successive 10-year contract terms. It states that in the final year of a charter school contract term, a sponsor is required to issue a performance report. If there are weaknesses, concerns, violations, or deficiencies, a sponsor may require that a charter school develop a corrective action plan. If the corrective action plan is not substantially complete, the bill allows a sponsor to revoke or not renew the charter contract. The measure allows a charter school sponsor to terminate or not renew a contract for a specific charter school site. It requires a charter school or virtual charter school to disclose a revocation or nonrenewal on any subsequent application.

It prohibits the Statewide Charter School Board from charging any charter school or virtual charter school a fee for administrative or other services. It directs the State Department of Education to develop data codes for the Oklahoma Cost Accounting System to be used to comply with administrative services reporting. It directs a charter school sponsor to publish a detailed report on its website and present the report in a public meeting of the charter school governing board. The measure directs members of a charter school sponsor governing board to designate a representative to complete an annual sponsor workshop beginning with the 2024-2025 school year. It clarifies that limitations on administrative service expenditures apply to charter schools and virtual charter schools that contract with an educational management organization. The measure also removes and repeals sections of law relating to the Statewide Virtual Charter School Board and current guidelines for charter school sponsorship.

CCR Changes

The Conference Committee Report for SB 516 requires charter school governing boards to meet no fewer than 10 months out of the year and adds language relating to severability of the measure's provisions.

Prepared by: Kalen Taylor