

THE BROWARD COUNTY LEAGUE OF CITIES'
SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY PUBLIC SAFETY
TASK FORCE

INITIAL REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

June 4, 2018

Exhibit #18

League of Cities
Community Task Force Meeting
April 26, 2018

Current Status:

There are 93 charter schools sponsored by The School Board of Broward County, Florida (SBBC) serving over 46,000 students.

Charter Schools are publicly-funded schools managed by independent governing boards who receive funding to support the charter schools' operations.

Application Process:

A charter applicant must apply to the school district (sponsor) in which the applicant wishes to establish a charter school. The applicant must submit the state-mandated charter application, that, in turn, must be reviewed and evaluated by the sponsor within a specific timeframe, as determined by statute.

The state-mandated charter application requires the applicant to outline the plan for safety and security for students, staff, facility and property. The applicant's safety and security plan should describe the types of security personnel, technology, equipment, and policies that the school will employ.

The sponsor is required to review the plan outline to determine if the applicant has a reasonable understanding of what might be necessary, while noting that a full plan is not required until after the application is approved. The applicant is not required to provide specific information regarding a location or facility at the time of application. The applicant is not required by statute to provide a certificate of occupancy or a temporary certificate of occupancy earlier than 15 calendar days prior to the first day of classes. Therefore, the applicant provides general information regarding a safety plan that is theoretical and not operational.

Charter Negotiations:

At the time of charter negotiations, the applicant must provide a viable location, but again, a CO, issued by the entity having jurisdiction, commonly the municipality in which the charter is located; is not required until 15 calendar days before the first day of classes. The applicant is not required to agree to comply with the district's safety plans, codes of student conduct, or other policies unless agreed to in the subsequent executed contract. The charter school must articulate its plan to develop its own emergency management procedures or to utilize the district's sample charter school emergency preparedness plan template, adapting it to their own individual needs and site. The contract must also indicate if the charter school will follow the district's code of student conduct or create its own. The statute states that any term or condition of a proposed charter that the district requires to be different from the state's standard contract shall be presumed as a limitation of the charter school's flexibility. The sponsor shall not apply its policies to a charter school unless mutually agreed to by both the sponsor and the charter school. If a charter operator agrees to follow a district policy, which may later change, the charter is not required to implement such change.

Annually the SBBC's Risk Management staff provides information on emergency management procedures and an overview of the district's emergency preparedness manual to the charter operators in Broward County, Florida. The district staff makes available a sample charter school emergency preparedness plan template for the charter schools' governing board to adapt to meet the needs of their independent site. The procedures outlined in the manual are those generally taken by the SBBC and are offered to charter schools operating in Broward County, Florida for informational and guideline purposes which may be considered should a similar emergency occur at their facility. The charter school governing board is responsible for the development and implementation of the charter specific management plans, as noted in the state-mandated charter application. Section 1002.33(9)(e), Florida Statutes, provides that a charter school shall meet all applicable state and local health, safety and civil rights requirements. The sponsor requires that the charter schools inform the sponsor of their completion of tornado and fire drills and upload their governing boards' approved safety plans. Additionally, the district provides information to the charter operators regarding access to active shooter training opportunities.

The district's Office of the Chief Fire Official is responsible for the inspection of all district sites and charter schools operating within Broward County, Florida. Based on state statute, the district does not have authority regarding fire safety for charter schools, only for casualty and sanitation. The Office of the Chief Fire Official will notify the local fire marshal if areas of noncompliance or non-responsive fire safety requirements are observed for municipal fire chief follow-up and enforcement. Many municipalities conduct joint inspections with the district inspectors to review fire, casualty and sanitation during the same visit.

Recently, the Florida Legislature passed the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Act, which provides for the development and implementation of enhanced safety features at each publicly-funded school. The SBBC is currently developing its plan as related to district-operated school facilities. Charter school operators should be adjusting the charter schools' budgets to allow for the added costs of providing the necessary safety and security measures as required in Senate Bill 7026 at their independent charter sites.