



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

**Guidance for Reporting Charter School
Entities**

2014-2015

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Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| 1.0 Introduction | 1 |
| 1.1 Organization of This Document | 1 |
| 1.2 Use of Data | 1 |
| 1.3 Charter School Data Requirements | 2 |
| 1.4 Data Quality | 2 |
| 2.0 Entities Associated with Charter Schools | 3 |
| 2.1 Education entities | 3 |
| 3.0 Charter School Data Submitted to ED | 5 |
| 3.1 <i>EDFacts</i> Data Set..... | 5 |
| 3.2 Directory guidance..... | 6 |
| 3.3 Charter Schools Program Awards Database | 8 |
| 3.4 National Charter School Resource Center Authorizer Survey..... | 8 |
| 5.0 Hierarchy For <i>EDFacts</i> Reporting on Charter Schools | 9 |
| 5.1 Reporting Charter Schools in Regular School Districts | 9 |
| 5.2 Reporting Charter Schools in Independent Charter Districts | 9 |
| 5.3 Reporting Charter Schools with More Than One LEA Relationship..... | 10 |
| 6.0 Data Flow for <i>EDFacts</i> Reporting | 12 |
| 6.1 LEA is Authorizer of one or more Charter Schools..... | 12 |
| 6.2 LEA is Not Authorizer of a Charter School | 12 |
| 6.3 LEA as Authorizer and Not Authorizer | 12 |
| 6.4 Considerations for Data Flow..... | 13 |

7.0 High Quality Data 15

 7.1 Consistent, Accurate Identifiers 15

 7.2 Timely Exchange of Information 16

 7.3 Consistent Reporting 19

8.0 Data Governance 19

Appendix A: Data Governance Best Practices 21

 Recommended Communication and Data Sharing Processes..... 21

 Coordination of File Update/Correction Processes 22

 Establishment of Data Quality Control Processes across Databases..... 22

 Coordination of Data Quality and Review Process Prior to Federal Submission 23

1.0 Introduction

Guidance for Reporting Charter School Entities is a reference guide for reporting data on charter schools to the U.S. Department of Education (ED) for 2014-15. The primary purpose of this document is to assist staff in state education agencies (SEAs) with reporting data on all charter schools to ED for:

- Annual Mandatory Collection of Elementary and Secondary Education Data through *EDFacts* (OMB 1875-0240)
- Charter Schools Program Awards Database (OMB 1855-0016)

This guidance should also assist SEA staff with responding to requests to complete reconciliation reports on charter schools.

1.1 Organization of This Document

This document contains seven sections:

Section 1 provides background on charter schools and the data collected.

Section 2 explains the entities associated with charter schools.

Section 3 describes the data submitted to ED.

Section 4 explains the hierarchy of entities used in reporting to *EDFacts*.

Section 5 explains the flow of data from charter schools to the SEA.

Section 6 provides guidance on submitting high quality data.

Section 7 suggests data governance processes to help SEAs submit high quality data.

This document also includes one appendix that contains additional information on data governance and best practices.

1.2 Use of Data

Data on charter schools are used for a variety of purposes. Program managers and analysts at ED use the data to inform decisions on program management and budget. Researchers and stakeholders use this data for external review of charter schools. Therefore, providing ED complete and accurate data on charter schools ensures appropriate policy changes and funding determinations for schools.

1.3 Charter School Data Requirements

Charter schools that receive federal funding are subject to federal data collection and reporting requirements. This includes schools that receive federal funding under Title I or Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), or funding through the Charter School Program (CSP). The charter school, authorizer and/or local education agency (LEA) must work with the applicable LEA and state education agency (SEA) federal program representatives to ensure that the appropriate data are collected and reported.

All charter schools are required to meet federal reporting requirements for the following:

- *EDFacts*, including:
 - school and authorizer/LEA directory information
 - membership/staff/other Common Core of Data (CCD)
 - academic achievement (assessment/participation)
 - graduation rates/counts & dropout counts
 - accountability
 - highly qualified teachers
 - teacher evaluation programs
 - school improvement grants
- Consolidated State Performance Report (CSPR)
- Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC)
- Race to the Top (RTT) Reporting
- Common Core of Data (CCD) Local Education Agency Finance Survey (F-33)

1.4 Data Quality

Federal reporting requires submitting accurate, high quality data. Criteria, established by *EDFacts* Data Governance Board, for this data includes:

- *Timeliness* - Data are considered timely if submitted by the specified due (closing) date of the data collection.
 - *Completeness* - Data are considered complete if all of the required data are submitted, at each reporting level, for all education units, for all required category sets, subtotals and totals. No data are missing and no placeholder data are submitted.
 - *Accuracy* - Data are considered accurate if they pass edit checks and data quality rules, contain no errors, and are certified by the appropriate party.
-

- *Validity* - Data are considered valid if they are reported in a consistent manner and measure what they were intended to measure.
- *Usability* - Data are considered usable if the calculations/analyses are appropriate to the data and include explanations of anomalies.¹

2.0 Entities Associated with Charter Schools

ED collects data at the SEA, LEA, and school levels.

Every charter school operates under an LEA or is itself an LEA. An LEA can be a traditional school district, an independent charter district comprised of one or more charter schools, or a district that consists of both charter and traditional schools.

2.1 Education entities

- **Local education agency (LEA):** An LEA is a governmental administrative unit at the local level, which exists primarily to operate schools or to contract for educational services. These units may or may not be coterminous with county, city, or town boundaries.
- **Public school:** For *EDFacts* reporting, a site that provides elementary and secondary education services and has one or more grade groups (prekindergarten through 12) or is ungraded; one or more teachers; is located in one or more buildings (does not exclude virtual schools); has an assigned administrator(s); receives public funds as its primary support; and is operated by an education agency.²
- **Charter school:** A public school that provides free public elementary and/or secondary education to eligible students under a specific charter executed, pursuant to a state charter school law, by an authorized chartering agency/authority and that is designated by such authority to be a public charter school. Charter schools can be authorized by regular school districts,

¹ *EDFacts* Data Governance Board Data Quality Components, 2012.

² Appendix B: Glossary in Overview of Public Elementary and Secondary Students, Staff, Schools, School Districts, Revenues and Expenditures: School Year 2004-05 and Fiscal Year 2004. CCD, NCES 2007-309. November 2006. <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2007/overview04/glossary.asp>

state education agencies (SEAs) or chartering organizations.³ Charter schools are autonomous public schools and are held accountable for outcomes outlined in the charter contract. **Charter school authorizer:** A charter authorizer is an authorized public chartering entity that currently oversees charter schools.⁴

- An **authorized public chartering agency** is a state educational agency, local educational agency, a specialized charter granting entity or Independent Charter Board, Higher Education Institute, Non-profit entity, state, county or local governmental entity, or other entity that has the authority pursuant to state law to authorize or approve a charter school, and to decide to renew, not renew, or revoke charter contracts.⁵

Each state's charter school law establishes which entities can authorize charter schools. The majority of charter school authorizers are local education agencies. More than 90 percent of charter school authorizers across the country are LEAs, which authorize 53 percent of the nation's charter schools.⁶

Charter schools maintain relationships with authorizers. Individual state charter laws and the schools' charters prescribe the structure of these relationships.

³ Appendix B: Glossary in Overview of Public Elementary and Secondary Students, Staff, Schools, School Districts, Revenues and Expenditures: School Year 2004-05 and Fiscal Year 2004. CCD, NCES 2007-309. November 2006. <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2007/overview04/glossary.asp>

⁴ ED*Facts* 2013-14 through 2015-16 Data collection OMB clearance package

⁵ ESEA 5210(4): <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/pg62.html>

⁶ *The State of National Charter School Authorizing 2012, Fifth Annual Report on NACSA's Authorizer Survey*, National Association of Charter School Authorizers, Chicago, IL

3.0 Charter School Data Submitted to ED

SEAs submit data on charter schools as part of the *EDFacts* and Common Core of Data (CCD) collections and reporting for Charter Schools Program grants.⁷ Charter Management Organizations (CMOs) and individual charter developers also submit data on charter schools to fulfill reporting requirements for Charter Schools Program grants.

Charter school authorizers have submitted data on charter schools through the National Charter School Resource Center authorizer survey.

3.1 *EDFacts* Data Set

SEAs submit data to *EDFacts* in separate files. Each file contains a set of related data groups appropriate to a particular aspect of the education entity (e.g., directory information, membership) or to a particular program area.

The most important file is the Directory file (X/N029⁸). This file establishes the universe of schools and LEAs within each state and contains their identifiers, contact information and descriptors. ED expects complete reporting includes on ALL charter schools. No other data can be submitted for an entity if it has not been included in the Directory.

The Directory also requires several elements of particular importance in reporting charter schools, including charter status, entity type, operational status and charter authorizer identifiers.

⁷ Individual charter schools may also submit data to fulfill reporting requirements for direct funded charter school program grants.

⁸ X/N029 stands for file specification number 029 for XML and non-XML files. A C in front of the file specification number refers to a combined (both XML and non-XML) specification. *EDFacts* file specifications contain the instructions for submit files to the *EDFacts* system. The file specifications can be found on ed.gov at <http://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/edfacts/file-specifications.html>

In SY2013-14, ED began collecting a Charter Authorizer Directory (C190). Guidance on this file specification is provided below.

3.2 Directory guidance

Charter status and type

For charter schools, the critical element is the charter status (DG27)⁹ in the school-level Directory file (X/N029).

Starting in SY2013-14, C168 (Charter LEA Status) was added to the LEA-level Directory file specification. In addition, for charter LEAs, the education agency type (DG453) in the LEA-level Directory file (X/N029) needs to be marked as "7 - Independent charter district."

Operational status

The operational status of a charter school is the second important data element. Maintaining up-to-date information about operational status can be difficult. For example, a charter school may receive funding in one school year, but open in another year or never open at all. Alternatively, a single entity may open in one LEA, close, and then open in another LEA with another name. It is essential to maintain and share accurate and up-to-date data between an SEA's charter schools data coordinator and an SEA's *EDFacts* coordinator to ensure accurate reporting.

The office responsible for the directory of schools and LEAs need to receive timely information about new and closed charter schools. SEAs should report schools that are in planning stages with an operational status of "future" in *EDFacts*/CCD. Schools with an operational status of "future" can be closed without ever reporting an operational status of "new" or "open." Additionally,

⁹ DG27 stands for data group number 27. In the package submitted for clearance to collect data, *EDFacts* data are organized into data groups which are an aggregation (i.e., group) of related data that are stored in *EDFacts* to satisfy the specific information need of one or more ED program offices.

SEAs should report schools that have closed with an operational status of “closed” in *EDFacts/CCD*. In instances in which charter schools move from one LEA to another, schools should be reported with an operational status of “Changed Agency.”

Charter authorizer identifier

This number links the charter authorizers that will be in the Charter School Authorizer Directory to specific charter schools in X/N029. In the situation where a charter may have multiple authorizers, two fields are available to input authorizer identifiers. If there are more than two authorizers, it is the SEA’s decision as to which two authorizers should be included. The state is able to create any number they want for these identifiers as long as it is unique within the state. If the authorizer is already an established LEA, the state may use the NCES LEA ID as the charter authorizer identifier. For more details on this element, see below or refer to file specification 190 and 029 at www.ed.gov/edfacts.

Charter Authorizer Directory (C190)

SEAs are to submit C190, which is a directory of charter authorizers responsible for the charter schools in the state. The collection of this information will help consolidate charter-related data currently collected by multiple program offices and will reduce the burden within states. This directory will include the following information:

- Charter authorizer name
- Charter authorizer identifier
- Authorizer mailing address
- Authorizer location address
- Charter authorizer type

The charter authorizer identifier is a state-defined identifier and must be in the school-level Directory (X/N029) file specification in order to link the authorizer to specific charter schools. There may be situations where a charter school has multiple authorizers. To account for this, X/N029 will have two fields available for the charter authorizer identifiers: a primary authorizer identifier and a secondary

authorizer identifier. If a charter only has one authorizer, only fill out the primary authorizer identifier field in X/N029. If a charter has multiple authorizers, each authorizer needs to be included in C190. The primary authorizer should be the authorizer that ultimately issues the charter, and all listed charter schools will have a primary authorizer. The secondary authorizer field would only be necessary for charter schools that complete a two-step authorization process. The SEA should determine whether a secondary authorizer is included based on the charter authorizing requirements in their state. Again, for more details on this element, see below or refer to file specifications 190 and 029 at www.ed.gov/edfacts.

3.3 Charter Schools Program Awards Database

The CSP Awards Database (CSP) collects data on charter schools that receive CSP funding through grants and subgrants. The CSP Awards Database contains historical data about charter school grantees which include:

- Amount, type (e.g., implementation, planning and program design), and date of each grant or subgrant
- Data on whether the school acted as its own LEA
- Data on whether the schools' LEA only had charter schools

3.4 National Charter School Resource Center Authorizer Survey

The National Charter School Resource Center (NCSRC) authorizer survey is voluntary and collects data on authorizers and their portfolio of authorized charter schools. The American Institutes for Research (AIR) has administered the authorizer survey annually and the Office of Innovation and Improvement has provided funding. This survey collects additional data beyond *EDFacts* from charter school authorizers, such as:

- Dates the schools opened
 - Whether the schools were conversion schools
 - Closure information
 - Charter terms
 - Renewal statuses
-

- Placement under cautionary or remedial action

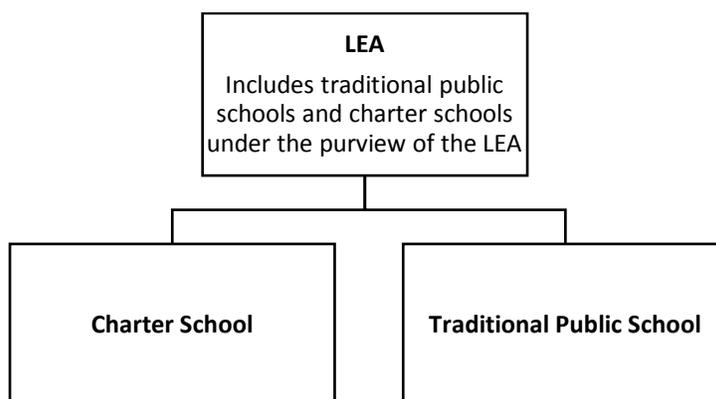
5.0 Hierarchy for ED Facts Reporting on Charter Schools

ED collects and reports data on charter schools in the same way they do for every other public school. ED uses a three-level educational hierarchy of state, local education agency (LEA), and school. The following sections describe how charter schools appear in that hierarchy used by ED Facts and CCD.

5.1 Reporting Charter Schools in Regular School Districts

When a charter school is part of a regular school district, the LEA reports on the charter school in the same manner as any other school in the district (see Figure 5.1).

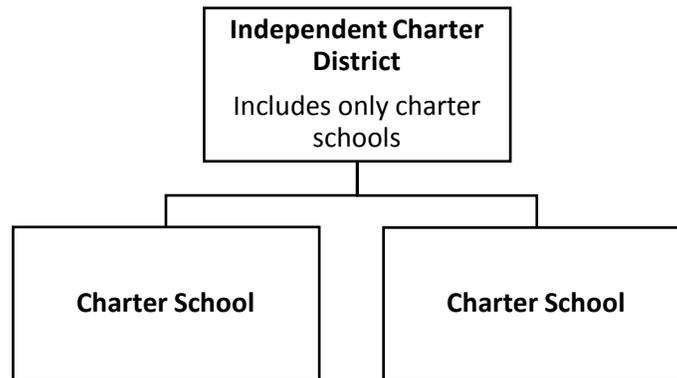
Figure 5.1. Charter schools in a regular school district



5.2 Reporting Charter Schools in Independent Charter Districts

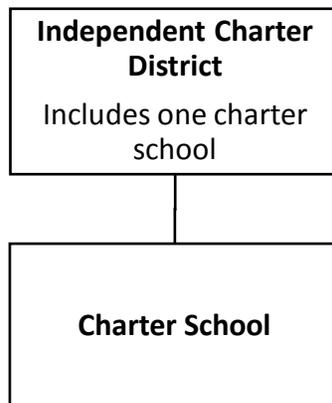
When an independent charter district oversees multiple charter schools, the district is reported as an LEA with the type: “independent charter district.” The related charter schools are reported as schools under that district (see Figure 2).

Figure 5.2 *Charter schools in an independent charter district*



When the charter granted to a charter school gives it the responsibilities of an LEA, the charter school is reported as two entities: an independent charter district and a charter school (see Figure 5.3).

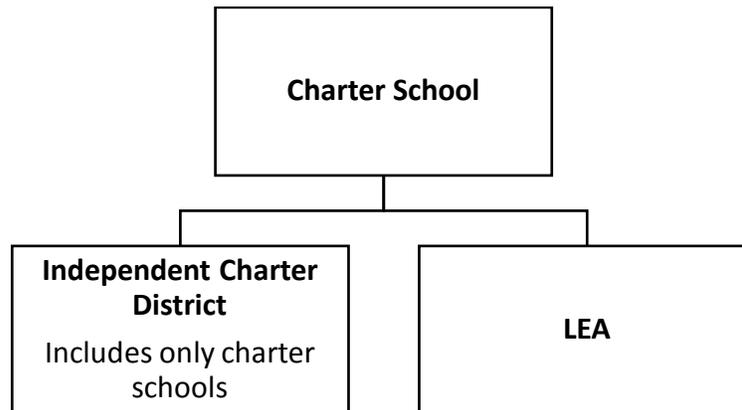
Figure 5.3 *Charter schools that are their own independent charter districts*



5.3 Reporting Charter Schools with More Than One LEA Relationship

Charter schools sometimes have relationships with more than one LEA. The most common of these cases is when an independent charter district provides most but not all of the services to a charter school. For example, the charter school receives IDEA services from a local educational agency, which differs from its independent charter district (see Figure 4). This scenario is aligned with the collection of the Charter LEA Status (C168).

Figure 5.4 Charter schools connected to more than one LEA



In these cases, the SEA needs to describe the relationship to the *EDFacts* Partner Support Center (PSC) so that ED can provide reporting guidance. The PSC can be reached at:

EDFacts Partner Support Center
Telephone: 877-457-3336 (877-HLP-EDEN)
Fax: 888-329-3336 (888-FAX-EDEN)
TTY/TDD: 888-403-3336 (888-403-EDEN)
EDEN_SS@ed.gov
www.ed.gov/edfacts/support.html

6.0 Data Flow for ED*Facts* Reporting

For federal programs, LEAs are required to submit school- and LEA-level data to the SEA for subsequent ED*Facts* reporting. State charter school laws, as well as SEA data governance policies and business rules, will ultimately determine the exact flow that occurs within each state and LEA; however, the illustration in figure 5 represents the general flow of data from the school to the SEA. While special considerations (described below) may exist within states depending on whether the LEA serves as the authorizer of a charter school, the LEA is always the entity that is held accountable for reporting data to the SEA.

6.1 LEA is Authorizer of one or more Charter Schools

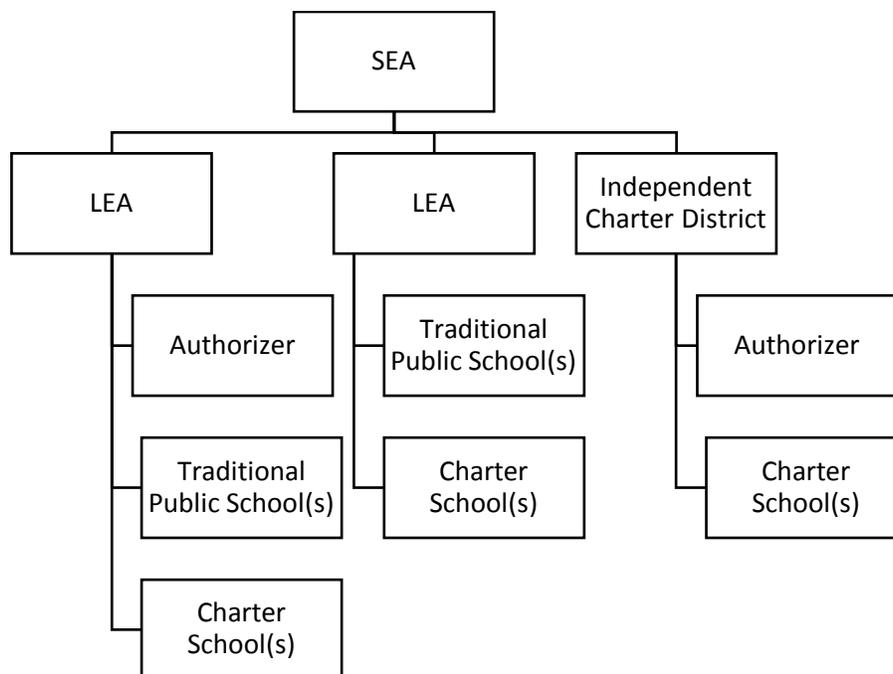
In the simplest case, the LEA serves as the authorizer for a school, and that LEA establishes data collection, maintenance, and reporting policies and processes that ensure all state and federally mandated reports about students, programs, performance, and directory information are submitted each school year. The LEA may or may not also include traditional public schools, and may include multiple charter schools.

6.2 LEA is Not Authorizer of a Charter School

In some cases, LEAs have charter schools in their districts or are entirely comprised of charter schools but do not serve as the charter school authorizer. In this instance, the LEA and charter authorizer will work together to establish data governance policies and processes to ensure that all mandated data collection, maintenance and reporting requirements are met. Regardless of the established data governance policies, **the LEA is responsible for submitting required data to the SEA for ED*Facts* reporting.**

6.3 LEA as Authorizer and Not Authorizer

The most complicated data coordination occurs when an LEA serves as the authorizer for one or more charter schools in the district, but not for all charter schools within the district. In this situation, it is essential for the SEA, LEA and any other authorizers in the district to establish a thorough and well-documented data governance program that articulates which entity is responsible for each data collection, maintenance and reporting process. **However, the LEA with which the charter school is associated remains responsible for submitting student, program, school, and LEA data to the SEA.**

Figure 6.1 *Flow of Data from Schools to SEA*

6.4 Considerations for Data Flow

In those cases where a charter school is considered its own LEA for some purposes, but for a traditional LEA for others, it is important to determine which entity is responsible for collecting, maintaining and reporting data for each student, program area and entity. SEAs must consider multiple issues and establish standardized business rules for student, school, LEA and authorizer data. This will aid in preparing data for SEA data submissions. Publishing well-organized and clear annual updates of SEA data standards to LEAs and charter school authorizers is valuable for effective data governance. A sample of the issues affecting data governance business rules include:

- Student enrollment:** Does the student receive all services at one school or does the student attend another school for a specific program? If the student receives shared services from multiple schools, the SEA needs to determine how to document this. Whether or not this determination is connected to federal program funding, percentage of time spent on each school, or another metric will influence reporting of enrollment and services received at both the school and LEA levels.

- **School tracking:** Given student mobility and assignment to different schools during the school year (e.g., short- or long-term discipline-related placements, shared services across schools), states and LEAs often develop business rules for attributing students to multiple schools within a school year along with the reasons. For example, a state may collect data for:
 - School of enrollment
 - School of accountability
 - School of residence (if the student lives within one school's geographic boundaries but is enrolled at another school)
 - School of discipline (e.g., juvenile justice program, corrections facility)
- **Types of schools:** In addition to traditional public schools, private schools and charter schools, students also enroll in other types of schools that do not fall under the purview of the SEA reporting requirements (such as Bureau of Indian Education entities, Department of Defense Education Activity schools and postsecondary institutions). Data about concurrent enrollment in public schools (either traditional or charter) and other types of schools is increasingly being incorporated into state data systems.

7.0 High Quality Data

To ensure accurate reporting of charter schools, ED reconciles the list of charter schools from the ED*Facts*/CCD, CSP and authorizer surveys. ED uses the standard identifiers of NCES ID, name and address to match the data. Data that do not match are reported to SEAs as exceptions. ED attempts to reconcile the non-matches and then provides that information to the SEA and requests that they respond to exceptions.

This section provides guidance to reduce the number of exceptions returned to SEAs, thereby reducing burden and delay. The most common types of errors found in previous reconciliation efforts are:

- Transposed digits
- Inconsistent names and abbreviations
- Different mailing or physical addresses
- Inconsistent LEA identifiers
- Out of date charter status
- Inconsistent school counts

7.1 Consistent, Accurate Identifiers

Data reported to ED*Facts*/CCD, CSP, and the authorizer survey must have consistent, accurate NCES IDs, names, and addresses.

Example 1 – NCES ID digits transposed.

| File | NCES ID | School Name |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| ED<i>Facts</i>/CCD | 130012003 <u>03</u> 1 | Theodore Roosevelt HS |
| CSP | 130012003 <u>30</u> 1 | Theodore Roosevelt HS |

Example 2 – Inconsistent names and abbreviations.

| File | NCES ID | School Name |
|---------------------------|--------------|--|
| ED<i>Facts</i>/CCD | 130012003031 | Theodore Roosevelt <u>HS</u> |
| CSP | 130012003031 | <u>Theodore</u> Roosevelt <u>High School</u> |
| Authorizer | Not reported | <u>T.</u> Roosevelt High School |

| | | |
|--------|--|--|
| survey | | |
|--------|--|--|

Example 3 – Physical location versus mailing address.

| File | NCES ID | School Name | Address | City | Zip |
|------------------------------|------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------|-------|
| EDFacts/CD | 1300120030 31 | Theodore Roosevelt HS | <u>202 Grant Cir</u> | Smithvil le | 78239 |
| CSP | 1300120030 31 | Theodore Roosevelt HS | <u>202 Grant Cir</u> | Smithvil le | 78239 |
| Authorizer survey | Not reported | Theodore Roosevelt HS | <u>PO Box 56</u> | Smithvil le | 78239 |

Accurate identifiers, especially the NCES ID, are critical to reporting data to ED. To ensure consistent and accurate identifiers, SEAs need to have controls over the data including:

- Validation for ID fields, e.g., not losing leading zeros
- Conventions for school names (Appendix B of the EDFacts Directory file contains recommended abbreviations for words commonly used in reporting educational data.)
- Clear directions for entering data into address fields

7.2 Timely Exchange of Information

Authorizers, LEAs and SEAs should exchange information about new charter schools, changes to charter schools, and closures of charter schools.

A common exception reported to SEAs from the reconciliation was new charter schools reported in CSP and/or the authorizer survey but not in EDFacts/CCD. For example,

- A newly chartered school can receive planning grants as early as 18 months prior to its opening school day. Since these schools in their planning stage do not yet exist as fully operational public schools, they may not be included in the system used as the source for the EDFacts/CCD school directory file.
- A charter school may receive a planning grant but never open. Thus, the school is never reported to the system used as the source for the EDFacts/CCD school directory.

In both cases, the school will appear in the CSP and possibly the authorizer survey (as an authorizer may report the entity as a “new” chartered school under its purview) but

not *EDFacts/CCD*. Thus, the school will be included as a matching exception to the state. However, SEAs are able to submit schools still in the planning phase into *EDFacts* with a school type of “Future School” and are able to maintain this status for two consecutive years before needing to be changed to either “New” (when it’s in operation) or “Closed” (if it never opened). Including these entities in the Directory (X/N029) as “Future School” will lead to more matches in the reconciliation work. Upon submitting a school with a “Future School” status, that school will be issued an NCES identifier.

New charter schools present unique challenges because the schools do not have an NCES ID and may not even have an address. Even the name of a new charter school may not be established.

Once an authorizer approves a new charter school, the authorizer should notify the LEA and SEA. Obtaining an NCES ID is helpful for schools to apply for non-governmental grants, thus including future charters in the school directory is extremely important.

Upon notification of approval, LEAs, SEAs, and authorizers should do the following:

1. The LEA or charter operator must share the directory information with the SEA’s CCD and/or *EDFacts* coordinator(s) for inclusion in the *EDFacts/CCD* Directory file.
2. The SEA obtains an NCES ID for the charter school after submitting a record for the school in the directory file.
3. The SEA shares documentation about data standards and reporting requirements with the authorizer.
4. The authorizer ensures that the charter school establishes an appropriate data collection reporting system and helps to ensure that resources are in place for necessary maintenance of the collection.
5. A data governance Memorandum of Understanding and processes for coordination with the LEA, authorizer and SEA are established.¹⁰

¹⁰ General information about data governance programs, definitions and resources can be found at <http://www.datagovernance.com>

Reconciliation problems can also occur with established charter schools. When a charter school changes LEAs, the NCES ID changes because the first seven digits of the full 12 digit NCES ID are the IDs of the state and LEA (first two digits: SEA, remaining five digits: LEA). SEAs need to have a formalized method to communicate changes that occur when a charter school changes LEAs, to ensure proper reporting of updated NCES IDs and school type.

Example 4 – Inconsistent LEA ID. EDEfacts/CCD is using the NCES ID with the new LEA ID (00120) while CSP is using the NCES ID with the old LEA ID (00140).

| File | NCES ID | School Name |
|---------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| EDEfacts/CCD | 13 <u>00120</u> 0330 1 | Theodore Roosevelt HS |
| CSP | 13 <u>00140</u> 0330 1 | Theodore Roosevelt HS |

The consistent reporting of charter schools with their LEA goes beyond the NCES ID number. SEAs also need to report the name of the LEA accurately. Therefore, SEAs should have a standardized way to track new charter schools that does not rely on the name of the LEA or the school.

Consistent reporting is also complicated when traditional schools convert to charter schools or when charter schools convert to traditional schools. In these cases, the updated status of the school as a charter school is not always in EDEfacts.

Example 5 – Out-of-date charter school indicator. Theodore Roosevelt HS was a regular public school that reconstituted or converted to a charter school. However, the file submitted to EDEfacts did not reflect that change.

| File | NCES ID | School Name | Charter School Indicator |
|--------------------------|--------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| EDEfacts/CCD | 130012003031 | Theodore Roosevelt HS | No |
| CSP | 130012003031 | Theodore Roosevelt HS | |
| Authorizer survey | Not reported | Theodore Roosevelt HS | |

7.3 Consistent Reporting

ED will reconcile the charter status at the school level every year. It is understood that states may have entities called “campuses.” If these entities meet the EDFacts/CCD definition of a school, they should be included in the Directory as a school, with a charter status of “Yes.” To ensure accurate reporting of charter schools, the SEA needs to have clear guidance on how to apply the EDFacts/CCD definition of a school. In the example below, if the three chartered campuses reported in the authorizer survey meet the definition of a school individually, they should be reported separately into EDFacts/CCD (i.e., not only as one entity “Aspen Charter”).

Example 6 –Multiple entities reported to the authorizer survey while one school is reported to EDFacts/CCD.

| File | NCES ID | School Name | Street Address | City | Student Count |
|-------------------|------------------|---|----------------|------------|--------------------|
| Authorizer survey | Not Reported | Aspen Charter <u>Elementary Campus</u> | 1102 Grant Cir | Smithville | <u>899</u> |
| Authorizer survey | Not Reported | Aspen Charter <u>MS Campus</u> | 400 Main Ave | Smithville | <u>531</u> |
| Authorizer survey | Not Reported | Aspen Charter <u>Academy Campus</u> | 202 Grant Cir | Smithville | <u>676</u> |
| EDFacts/ CCD | 0800120 06051 | Aspen Charter | 202 Grant Cir | Smithville | <u>2106</u> |

8.0 Data Governance

This section contains guidance to help SEAs and charter school authorizers improve their processes. One way to ensure effective and efficient data-related processes is to establish partnerships with the LEA and/or SEA via a thorough and well-documented data governance program.

Data governance for all data systems, including charter schools, refers to decision-making and authority addressing data-related matters, such as the availability, usability, integrity and security of the data employed in an enterprise and is one piece of the overall data management system. Strong data governance includes a governing body or council, a defined set of procedures and policies, and a plan for executing those

procedures and policies. Appendix A contains detailed information about data governance best practice. Effective data governance programs for all education data, both traditional and charter, typically address the following goals:¹¹

- Enabling better decision-making
- Reducing operational friction
- Protecting the needs of data stakeholders
- Training management and staff to adopt common approaches to data issues
- Building standard, repeatable processes
- Reducing costs and increase effectiveness through coordination of efforts
- Ensuring transparency of processes by documenting and publishing information about roles, responsibilities, data standards, and data management processes

Among other activities, an effective data governance program between charter school authorizers, LEAs, and the SEA will document key roles and responsibilities; standard data collection, maintenance and reporting expectations; data sharing, access, and security processes; and data validation responsibilities and processes.

Regarding charter schools, the data governance program should address expected communications and data updates with the SEA with regard to changes in charter school status, including:

- Openings
 - Closings
 - Enrollment status
 - Changes in school, operator or authorizer names
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¹¹ General information about data governance programs, definitions and resources can be found at <http://www.datagovernance.com>

- Changes of operator or authorizer, including those that result in change of school or LEA NCES ID
- Types of programs offered
- Grant status and awards

Charter schools may find assistance in meeting reporting requirements through some type of collaborative or a regional or intermediate service center. These state-specific collaboratives or regional centers often provide data validation services and data training programs that help alleviate time and resource expenses for individual schools.

Appendix A: Data Governance Best Practices

Key data governance processes guiding charter school data will ideally address communication processes, data sharing, coordination of file updates and corrections and the establishment of data quality control processes. A thorough and well-documented governance program is critical to the submission to ED of high quality and consistent charter school data from all sources.

At the charter school and authorizer/LEA level, data governance practices are needed to ensure that all source data are collected, maintained, secured and reported in a timely, accurate and consistent manner to meet district, state and federal reporting and information needs.

At the SEA level, shared data governance practices among the *EDFacts* coordinator, CSP project director and federal program representatives will ensure that all information about charter schools and the students they serve are up-to-date. Some key processes to consider for data governance activities follow.

Recommended Communication and Data Sharing Processes

Create a Memorandum of Understanding that documents communication and data sharing processes, including but not limited to:

- The point of contact for each organization who has authority and responsibility for managing charter school data and overseeing data sharing activities
- The frequency and process for submitting data to the CSP and *EDFacts* systems during the school year

- The frequency and process for updating charter school status information across *EDFacts* and CSP databases at the SEA during the school year
- The SEA data standards for collecting, maintaining and reporting student, staff, facility and financial data to the SEA, including method, format and due dates

Coordination of File Update/Correction Processes

Develop a process to identify and coordinate updates and corrections in data files within school and district files to ensure accurate, consistent and timely data throughout the school year, which includes:

- The process for communicating across organizations about data that needs to be changed
- The position with the authority and responsibility within each organization to update files
- The position with sign-off authority for changes
- The process to ensure the most up-to-date data are submitted through the CSP, the authorizer survey and *EDFacts* data collections
- The process to update files in each database when one or more of the files are affected during the school year due to opening, closure, changes in location, etc.
- The data quality consistency checks across *EDFacts*, CSP and the authorizer survey datasets before federal data submission (see below)
- The position(s) with the authority and responsibility for maintaining historical records for each charter school, including dates authorized, opened, closed, relocated and all metadata or directory data for each iteration
- The business rules for dealing with data inconsistencies across the CSP, the authorizer survey and *EDFacts* datasets, for example, which dataset takes precedence? Is it situation specific?

Establishment of Data Quality Control Processes across Databases

Develop automated and manual processes to match student and entity records across multiple databases, including verification checks to ensure accuracy and consistency of matching.

- Automate processes at the SEA level to verify data and identify data inconsistencies across *EDFacts* and CSP datasets, including but not limited to:
 - Verify the number of charter districts and schools statewide and the number of charter schools within each district. This facilitates identification of particular districts with systemic data problems.
 - Match NCES School ID and LEA ID
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- Conduct subsequent analyses of the databases for schools with matches on ID to ensure consistency and accuracy of the data
- For manual matches:
 - Update appropriate database depending on agreed upon business rules
 - Conduct subsequent automated data consistency checks on directory, enrollment and demographic data; conduct manual checks as necessary
 - Document type, frequency and resolution of data inconsistencies
 - Update databases as appropriate.

Coordination of Data Quality and Review Process Prior to Federal Submission

Develop a process to allow cross-validation of data by key stakeholders prior to data submission.

- Establish a process to allow the CSP project director, authorizers, and ED*Facts* coordinator the opportunity to review files prior to submission
- Allow spot-check and/or automated data verification review and potential updates to files (see above data quality control process)
- Require sign-off from each as to accuracy and validity of files



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