



# INDIANA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

## INDIANA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION COMMITTEE ON VIRTUAL CHARTER SCHOOLS

June 12, 2018

1:00 PM (ET)

Indiana Government Center South  
Conference Room C  
302 West Washington St.  
Indianapolis, IN 46204.

**Members Present:** Mr. Gordon Hendry (Chair), Dr. Maryanne McMahon, and Ms. Cari Whicker.

- I. Call to Order**
  - a. Mr. Hendry called the meeting to order.
- II. Approval of Agenda**
  - a. The agenda was approved by a voice vote.
- III. Presentation – Current Statutes and Regulations**
  - a. Mr. Tim Schultz, General Counsel for the Board of Education, gave an overview of his presentation, which included the controlling statute, the original regulations, and highlights of issues other states have found and the steps they have taken to remedy these issues.
    - i. [IC 20-24-7-13](#) is the controlling statute for virtual charter schools. This statute governs the funding for virtual charter schools, contains reporting requirements, requires a student engagement policy for virtual charter schools, and allows for the creation of regulations that govern the operation of virtual charter schools.
    - ii. Mr. Hendry asked what regulations the Board has approved as of the current date.
      1. Mr. Schultz responded that only one set of regulations has been passed thus far and those are the previously mentioned 2010 regulations.
    - iii. The original regulations focused on providing definitions, but also made it clear that all virtual charter schools are subject to the same regulations as all other charter schools and subject to the same standardized tests as all other schools. The regulations also require various policies and describe the enrollment and attendance practices.
    - iv. There are ten (10) areas that states have been focusing on in recent years when dealing with regulating online education. These include definitions, attendance and enrollment, equal access, teacher requirements, student-teacher interactions, physical locations of learning centers, quality and operational standards for new and existing virtual schools, school growth, school reporting – assessment and accountability requirements, funding, and miscellaneous.

1. Mr. Hendry asked if any of the states with attendance caps were close to their limits. Mr. Hendry also asked how many students Indiana had in virtual charter schools today. Mr. Schultz responded he did not have that information currently, but he could research it. Mr. Schultz also shared that Indiana has slightly over 13,000 students attending virtual charter schools.
  2. Dr. McMahon asked if any states have parent's sign contracts that they will support their student during enrollment. Mr. Schultz responded that he was not aware of any states that used contracts, but some have stringent requirements regarding parent involvement.
  3. Mr. Hendry asked for more information regarding the definition of enrollment. Mr. Schultz responded that a number of states have taken the position that enrollment does not occur until the student completes some form of orientation.
  4. Mr. Hendry asked how student's become un-enrolled and at what point a school may withdraw a student that is not fully participating. Mr. Schultz responded that Indiana Code delegates the authority to the virtual charter school to put an engagement policy in place. Mr. Hendry then mentioned he would be interested in knowing the withdrawal rate and reasoning behind those withdrawals.
  5. Mr. Hendry asked how virtual charter schools were funded. Mr. Schultz responded that these schools receive about 90% of what a normal charter school would receive.
  6. Mr. Hendry asked how requiring students to participate in extra-curricular activities would work in the virtual format. Mr. Schultz responded that some states allow students to participate in the district school's programs.
  7. Dr. McMahon asked about the boundaries of virtual education versus virtual charter education. Mr. Schultz responded he would research this question further.
- b. Mr. Hendry mentioned he thought it may be helpful to take some public testimony at this point to gain feedback as to what has been presented thus far.
- i. John Hammond, representing K12, an educational organization, introduced Mary Gifford, Senior Vice President of Academic Policy for K12. Ms. Gifford shared that she has been a part of virtual charter school regulations and shared that the enrollment caps asked about previously were set at that percentage because historically these schools never had more than two (2) percent. She also mentioned the importance of equal access.

#### IV. **Presentation – Review of Data**

- a. Mr. Ron Sandlin, Senior Director of School Performance and Transformation, [gave a presentation regarding virtual charter school data](#) in the State of Indiana to inform outcomes.

- i. This data includes student to certified staff ratios, enrollment data, student demographic data, performance data, and funding.
  1. Mr. Hendry asked why virtual charter schools served a short-term need for a majority of students. Mr. Sandlin responded that he had heard from parents that their child was involved in a difficult situation in which they needed to be removed from school immediately and they did not have the time to figure out a long term solution before attendance laws kicked in. He also shared that many students were enrolling in twelfth grade. Mr. Hendry then asked for insight on the reason for withdrawal and where they were going after withdrawing from the virtual charter school.
  2. Mr. Hendry asked for reasoning on the material changes from year to year regarding student demographics. Mr. Sandlin informed that he would obtain this information.
  3. Mr. Hendry asked if Mr. Sandlin believed these students were not graduating because they were so far behind when they came into the virtual charter and didn't have the time to catch up. Mr. Sandlin responded this is a regularly heard concern and he would look into data around this issue.

**V. Next Steps**

- a. Mr. Hendry asked for Board Staff to place all the documents discussed at this meeting online. He also mentioned revisiting points that were discussed at this meeting at the next meeting in order to dive deeper into those areas.
  - i. [NAPCS 2016 Annual Report](#);
  - ii. [NAPCS Charter School Model Rules](#);
  - iii. [iNACOL National Standards for Quality Online](#);
  - iv. [iNACOL Quality Metrics](#);
  - v. [North Carolina Report](#);
  - vi. [Original IN Virtual Regulations](#).
- b. Dr. McMahon asked for more information regarding successful virtual charter schools.
- c. Mr. Brian Murphy, Chief of Staff for the Board, recommended that at the next meeting the Committee look at the data brought in by Board Staff to answer some questions and bring in authorizers to help answer specific questions.
- d. Mr. Hendry mentioned that he was interested in talking about virtual education generally and hearing the challenges that virtual charters in Indiana were facing. He also expressed a desire to hear from national virtual education leaders.

**VI. Adjournment**

- a. The meeting was adjourned by a voice vote.