

The Charter Institute at Erskine

Trading Autonomy for Outcomes

The proverbial approach to chartering for many in the authorizing industry requires schools to exchange autonomy for accountability. Knowing the term accountability can be synonymous with words like obedience, blameworthiness, and even liability, the Charter Institute at Erskine focuses instead on the tangible and actionable term outcomes as the proper measure of a school’s success. Therefore, it is not a stretch to say that the *Institute’s philosophy is to trade autonomy for outcomes*. This specified approach has led the Institute to be highly involved with schools by actively supporting their operations in order to increase capacity and outcomes at the local level. The impact of this approach is particularly effective in rural or remote areas that often face challenges in recruiting and retaining qualified staff. For other schools, this approach may allow geographically concentrated schools to pool or share resources, as well as more intentionally budget towards the classroom and mission-specific components of the charter. Without this institutional support, many rural charter schools would struggle to succeed operationally, and other schools may struggle to innovate in the ways their charters espouse. This Institute philosophy seeks to utilize as much of the 2% administrative fee as possible to provide schools with the tools and resources to capably execute their required operations and simultaneously lessen the burden on school administration, so that focus may be directed towards the educational program and students in the classroom.

Below is a summary of the services currently provided to specifically support school programming and operations.

- Optional. This indicates no cost services that are available to schools, but not required.
- Value-Add. This details no cost augmented Institute support in areas of school programming and operations that are tied to state or federal requirements.
- Cost-Shared. This summarizes services that involve a cost-sharing component with other schools.
- Charter-Specific. This highlights initiatives or supports that are specific to charter schools.

Department	Descriptions	Resources
Human Resources	The Institute Human Resources office provides annual and ongoing training and resources to schools regarding national and state best practices for hiring, termination, contracts, posting jobs and addressing any local school board questions.	Sonja Bradford, Asst. Director of Human Resources assistantdirectorhr@erskinecharters.org Paula Gray, Director of School and Board Relations hrbenefits@erskinecharters.org
SC Public Employee Benefit Authority (PEBA)	The Institute handles all the paperwork and training for PEBA requirements, and maintains a resource repository of relevant materials for portfolio schools.	Sonja Bradford, Asst. Director of Human Resources assistantdirectorhr@erskinecharters.org Paula Gray, Director of School and Board Relations hrbenefits@erskinecharters.org
Employee Relations	The Institute posts vacant positions for schools on CERRA’s job bank; enters certification information in the SCDOE PCS system; renews or requests extensions for teacher certificates; runs SLED reports as needed; and frequently visits schools to stay in contact with leaders.	Paula Gray, Director of School and Board Relations hrbenefits@erskinecharters.org

<p>Communications</p>	<p>At no cost to schools, our Communications office brings expertise to produce and assist with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Press Releases ▪ Developing high-quality videos ▪ Social media support ▪ Attendance at major school events for video and / or photographic documentation and Institute representation ▪ Assisting schools with local media outlets ▪ Assisting schools with marketing and recruitment <p>Beyond this, the Institute Communications office stands prepared to assist with specialized communications that relate to school policies or procedures in the areas of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School calendaring or closures ▪ School emergencies ▪ Enrollment efforts and procedures <p>No other authorizer has shed more visibility on the unique features of each charter school than the Institute, helping schools to celebrate their niche and advocate for their communities.</p>	<p>https://erskinecharters.org/communications/</p> <p>A few Marketing Videos Developed for Schools https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QQ6VerXuG54 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pi9o0w4vN11 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=779k9r3Rijg https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YO6HhN8CD5Y https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yequDwnXn7w</p> <p>Virtual Schools Videos https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w78Kw8rsSOg https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5segmAYPx_w&t=128s https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9PYPbF7bjjo https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ohGyGKAaBdg https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8NJXtqdmdbM&t=5s https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y3l23oaawHE https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0NYcmvftg60</p>
<p>Data and Accountability</p>	<p>The Institute in-house Data Scientist analyzes the summative and formative school assessment data and provides summary reports for schools. Instead of focusing on disparities or trends that may simply be observable, the accountability team helps schools pinpoint those that are statistically significant or the result of overlapping variance between attributes (such as subject, grade, or demographic).</p> <p>The Institute Accountability Director works with schools on their state and charter goals, supporting the triangulation of a variety of quantitative and qualitative data sources, and providing technical assistance and resources throughout the year.</p>	<p>https://erskinecharters.org/accountability-3/</p> <p>https://www.facebook.com/ErskineCharters/posts/970387179994696?_tn=-R</p> <p>https://www.facebook.com/ErskineCharters/photos/a.609439739422777/962375484129199/?type=3&theater</p> <p>https://www.facebook.com/ErskineCharters/photos/a.613075559059195/957753514591396/?type=3&theater</p> <p>https://www.facebook.com/ErskineCharters/photos/a.613075559059195/953997858300295/?type=3&theater</p>

	<p>The Institute Accountability team visits schools upon request, adapting presentations for a variety of stakeholders that include boards and leadership teams, as well as teachers and school staff.</p> <p>The accountability model used reinforces the Institute values of being fair, transparent, and consistent. To this end, the accountability team works with schools throughout the year to ensure a shared understanding of school performance against expectations outlined in the Student Success Profile, as well as incorporation of charter-specific components that reflect each school's unique mission, vision, and purpose.</p>	https://www.facebook.com/ErskineCharters/photos/a.613075559059195/953471301686284/?type=3&theater
PowerSchool/IT	<p>The Institute pays \$6000 per school from its own fund balance for PowerSchool services, providing a centralized Coordinator-like role to review school-level data on a timely basis, ultimately supporting data accuracy and utility for state reporting and submissions. In-person support and training are available upon request, and regularly scheduled webinars and office hours ensure consistent access and messaging for portfolio schools.</p>	https://erskinecharters.org/powerschool/
Finance	<p>The Institute finance team reduces the workload on its schools through the utilization of a standard set of policies and procedures for schools to utilize and adapt. These forms and practices create a shared foundation and understanding of fiscal health and organizational sustainability.</p> <p>The Institute conducts ongoing technical assistance throughout the year.</p>	https://erskinecharters.org/institute-fiscal-policies/ https://erskinecharters.org/institute-fiscal-forms/
Federal Programs	<p>The federal programs office aims to provide high-quality technical assistance through the development of policies and procedures for schools, as well as the provision of samples, forms, and templates that aim to reduce burdensome paperwork requirements. The Institute Federal Programs Director is dedicated to ensuring readiness for school, Institute, and Department audits, and managing the request for funds approval processes for portfolio schools. This role also navigates all federal compliance requirements on behalf of schools, further reducing the time spent on these obligations by portfolio schools.</p> <p><i>Note: This area is included for schools at no cost. Schools reduce overhead as they no longer have to pay accounting vendors for this service. The</i></p>	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6OwHA4c-sUQ&t=174s

	<i>position also dramatically lowers the administrative burden on local schools and streamlines all processes ensuring smooth audits and operations at the local school level.</i>	
Special Education	<p>The Special Education Department has a Director and two school level Special Education Coaches who support schools on a day to day basis.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide high-quality technical assistance 2. To the extent possible, develop policies and procedures, sample documents for schools so they don't spend time on paperwork. 3. The Director of School Special Education is on site at schools to assist with their needs and to help them build institutional capacity. 	<p>Celina Patton, Chief of Student Services Laura Merrick, Director of School Special Education Programs https://erskinecharters.org/special-education/</p>
Multi-Tier System of Support (MTSS)	<p>The Institute MTSS coordinator to assists schools in meeting the MTSS requirements of the state and in supporting student intervention efforts. The Institute and its schools are actively implementing MTSS and ensuring a solid school level infrastructure.</p>	<p>Sophie Ellis, Coordinator of MTSS and Psychological Services https://erskinecharters.org/special-education/mtss/</p>
Psychological Services	<p>The Institute is piloting a model for school psychological services with its four new schools. This allows schools to save individual costs, while ensuring the delivery of high-quality services to each of these schools. At the completion of this year, the Institute will evaluate the program success to determine options for augmentation and expansion. Currently, each school is paying \$2000 for the psychological services for the entire year. This allows the school to utilize the</p>	<p>Sophie Ellis, Coordinator of MTSS and Psychological Services https://www.dropbox.com/s/alk8dchclazzvmw/Shared%20Service%20School%20Psychologist%20MTSS%20job%20descrip%20docx.docx?dl=0</p>
Board Relations	<p>The Institute maintains records of all schools' Board of Directors, attends meetings, reviews practices against bylaws to ensure smooth and compliant board operations, monitors school websites to flag for inconsistencies with transparency standards, facilitates needed trainings, and assists with any board-related questions.</p>	<p>Paula Gray, Director of School and Board Relations hrbenefits@sccharters.org</p>
Charter Development	<p>The Institute brings specific expertise and tailored processes to charter development, including specific support in navigating charter amendments, charter expansion, and replication. This ranges from support in market analysis that matches school success with areas of need statewide, to assistance in navigating transitions in structure and management, to simple legal updates of founding documents, to strategic planning support, and even to opportunities for external grant funding specific to school development efforts.</p>	

Reducing Requirements	This Institute recently launched an initiative that will allow schools to appeal requirements (mandatory trainings, reports, submissions, etc.) through a process that aims to ensure local, state, or federal requirements are not duplicative or unnecessary. Schools have an opportunity to inquire about the purpose of the requirement, or the utility of the information, if it is believed that it does not support the mission of the schools or the Institute. This helps the Institute review the requirement, research its utility, and ultimately, ensure that schools utilize as much of their time as possible to educate children. In situations where it is determined the requirement is, in fact, unnecessary or overly burdensome, the Institute will work with external stakeholders to reduce or remove the requirement for portfolio schools.	https://erskinecharters.org/dear-paperwork-game-on/
Resource Repository	The Institute’s highly experienced team fully understands the unique needs of public charter schools. The team consists of educational leaders who actively remove barriers and assist partner schools in their pursuit of academic and operational excellence. Collectively, the Institute staff has 151 years administration experience in the field of education, including 94 years of experience specifically in charter schools. The Institute staff has nearly 54 years of direct experience in the classroom. Combined, this experience and expertise is made available to portfolio schools to meet identified needs through direct support, connection with staff or peer networks, or referrals to beneficial resources.	https://erskinecharters.org/our-team/

Future Service Models

- The Institute is working on implementing the below services to schools. The Institute will collect feedback from all schools on their needs before implementing these services.
 - Medicaid
 - National School Lunch Program