Charter Schools and Transfer Students
MCPSA Guidance
*Revised July 9, 2016

With the passage of Senate Bill 638 into law, charter schools may now enroll transfer students (non-resident students from an unaccredited school district). This is a great opportunity to welcome new students whose parents have been desperately seeking a better option for their children!

What students are eligible?
Students residing in an unaccredited school district in an adjoining county.

160.410.1 states, "A charter school shall enroll: (2) Nonresident pupils eligible to attend a district's school under an urban voluntary transfer program", AND "(3) Nonresident pupils who transfer from an unaccredited district under section 167.131, provided the charter school is an approved charter school, as defined in section 167.131, and subject to all other provisions of section 167.131."

Do the students still need to apply and go through the lottery?
Yes, transfer students are treated the same as all applicants in accordance with your board's enrollment policies and State Law.

160.410.2 states "if capacity (number of available seats) is insufficient to enroll all pupils who submit a timely application, the charter school shall have an admission process that assures all applicants of an equal chance of gaining admissions and does not discriminate based on parents' ability to pay fees or tuition..."

Can we charge tuition?
Yes.

160.410.11 states, "A charter school may not charge tuition or impose fees that a school district is prohibited from charging or imposing, except that a charter school may receive tuition payments from districts in the same or an adjoining county for nonresident students who transfer to an approved charter school, as defined in section 167.131, from an unaccredited district."

Furthermore, 167.131.1 states, “The board of education of each district in this state that does not maintain an accredited school pursuant to the authority of the state board of education to classify schools as established in section 161.092 shall pay the tuition of and provide transportation consistent with the provisions of section 167.241 for each pupil resident

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therein who attends an accredited school in another district of the same or an adjoining county or who attends an approved charter school in the same or an adjoining county.”

**For the 2016-17 school year, because the law does not go into effect until August 28, 2016, although a student may begin attending the charter school at the beginning of the school year the charter school may not charge tuition for the student prior to August 28th.**

**How much do we charge for tuition?**
Equivalent to the per student cost of educating your current students. However, if your total cost per student is higher than the district in which your charter school resides (Kansas City or St. Louis) you can only charge the equivalent to the local school district’s total cost per student (Kansas City Public Schools or St. Louis Public Schools)*.

167.131.2 states, "The rate of tuition to be charged by the district attended and paid by the sending district is the per pupil cost of maintaining the district’s grade level grouping which includes the school attended. The rate of tuition to be charged by the approved charter school attended and paid by the sending district is the per pupil cost of maintaining the approved charter school’s grade level grouping." "For an approved charter school, the cost of maintaining a grade level grouping shall be determined by the approved charter school but in no case shall it exceed all amounts spent by the district in which the approved charter school is located for teachers' wages, incidental purposes, debt service, maintenance, and replacements."

*MCPSA is in the process of seeking this information.

**How do we know if we are an "approved charter school"?**
A charter school is approved if it has been open less than 3 years or has a 3-year APR average of 70% or higher.

167.131.3 states, "For purposes of this section, "approved charter school" means a charter school that has existed for less than three years or a charter school with a three-year average score of seventy percent or higher on its annual performance report."

Please note the interpretation that “approved charter school” refers to the charter LEA and not individual attendance centers within the LEA.

**Does the charter school provide transportation?**
No, the law does not require the receiving charter school to provide transportation. The Department of Education’s interpretation of the law (below) is that sending districts are only required to pay transportation to their designated school districts.
167.241 "Transportation for pupils whose tuition the district of residence is required to pay by section 167.131 or who are assigned as provided in section 167.121 shall be provided by the district of residence; however, in the case of pupils covered by section 167.131, the district of residence shall be required to provide transportation only to approved charter schools as defined in section 167.131, school districts accredited by the state board of education pursuant to the authority of the state board of education to classify schools as established in section 161.092, and those school districts designated by the board of education of the district of residence."

Can students with IEP's transfer?
Yes, points 13-15 on the attached Department of Education Guidance provide information regarding special needs students with IEPs. These are in accordance with State and Federal Law.

Guidelines?
When the transfer law went into effect the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education established and placed guidelines on their website (http://www.dese.mo.gov) regarding application deadlines, etc. With the passage of Senate Bill 638 they have made and released revisions. A copy of these guidelines has been attached. These are not requirements but guidelines. You will note the majority use the term "should" as these are suggested guidelines that are not in Statute nor been through a rule making process. I would recommend you review them as there are some good practices within the guidance.

For example, it would be good practice:

1. For the charter school board to adopt a policy regarding the enrollment of transfer students (or amend your current admission/enrollment policy).
2. To post on the website information for families interested in transferring.
3. To invest a portion of marketing/recruitment dollars sharing information with families residing in an unaccredited district. We would also recommend you share this information with the Children’s Education Alliance of Missouri (CEAM) who work very closely with many transfer student families).
4. When you enroll a transfer student to notify the send notice to the district of residence.
5. To establish reasonable billing terms and procedures with the sending district.

Parent Assistance
1. When a parent residing in an unaccredited school district contacts the charter school to make application they should complete the same application process at other prospective families. However,
2. A parent wishing to transfer their child from the unaccredited school district will need to contact the sending district’s central office for the following:

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a. Request an appointment at central office to complete transfer paperwork. For 2016-17:
   i. Normandy Schools Collaborative:
   ii. Riverview Gardens School District:
      Questions and Information - Chaketa Riddle – 314.869.2505 Extension 2490, criddle@rgsd.k12.mo.us
      Parent Appointment Scheduling (Ms. Anderson) – 314.869.2505 Extension 2489
b. Provide proof of residency documents. The parent should request information regarding what documents they need to bring to their appointment. In prior years the following were required by the sending district:
   i. Original state-issued birth certificate for the student with the enrolling parent listed on the certificate OR proof of guardianship (if the person completing the application is not listed on the birth certificate).
   ii. Current driver’s license of state I.D.
   iii. Proof of Residency (three pieces)
c. The parent will be required by the sending district to complete the SAFE SCHOOLS ACT AFFIRMATION (RSMo167.171)
d. The parent should be advised to document EVERYTHING- date, time, copies of the paperwork initialed by sending district, name of the person that takes the paperwork, etc. and audio record if possible.

3. If the parent would like assistance with the transfer process, please contact Cici Tompkins with the Children’s Education Alliance of Missouri. She or a member of her staff will be happy to assist the parent including attending appointments with the sending district. Cici can be reached at 314-561-8646 or cici@ceamteam.org.

Sample District Email for Information
A common district response received by parents seeking to transfer their child is that all transfers for the 2016-17 school year must have been completed in January. This is not accurate, there is no legal deadline. The following is a sample email from a charter school to an unaccredited school district enrollment office regarding a parent wishing to transfer:

Dear X,

With the passage of Senate Bill 638 recently signed by Governor Nixon into law, charter public schools may now enroll transfer students (non-resident students from an unaccredited school district). The law states that students residing in an unaccredited school district in an adjoining county are eligible to transfer to an approved charter public school. Here is the language:

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160.410.1 states, "A charter school shall enroll: (2) Nonresident pupils eligible to attend a district's school under an urban voluntary transfer program", AND "(3) Nonresident pupils who transfer from an unaccredited district under section 167.131, provided the charter school is an approved charter school, as defined in section 167.131, and subject to all other provisions of section 167.131."

In regards to being an approved charter public school.
A charter school is approved if it has been open less than 3 years or has a 3-year APR average of 70% or higher. Here is the language:

167.131.3 states, "For purposes of this section, "approved charter school" means a charter school that has existed for less than three years or a charter school with a three-year average score of seventy percent or higher on its annual performance report."

X Charter School is an approved charter public school. When the family applies to X Charter School we reserve the right to determine which of the attendance centers within our LEA they can select for their child to attend.

Although a parent has the legal right to transfer their child at any time during the calendar year, the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education established guidance for the 2016-17 school year recommending families who intend to transfer their child to a charter public school notify their local unaccredited school district by August 1, 2016. Again, this is guidance and we will encourage families to do so by August 1st but if a family still would like to transfer after August 1st they legally have the right to do so.

In advance please accept our thanks for your assistance with this important process. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at X.