

Frequently Asked Questions: La. Government Budget Act – La. R.S. 39:1301-1315

Compliance

- All charter schools must comply with the La. Local Government Budget Act – La. R.S. 17:3996(G) & BESE Bulletin 126 §2503(A)
 - *All actions taken to adopt, finalize, implement, & amend the budget must be taken in open meeting* – La. R.S. 39:1309(A), 1310(A)

Important Dates

- Must budget on a **fiscal year of July 1 – June 30** – BESE Bulletin 126 §2503(B)
- Must **adopt the budget by Sept. 15 and submit it by Sept. 30** – La. R.S. 17:3996(G); 39:1303(D) & 17:88

Budget Preparation

- Must prepare a *comprehensive* budget that presents a complete financial plan for each fiscal year – La. R.S. 39:1305(A)
 - Budget must be balanced with approved expenditures *not* exceeding the total of estimated funds available – La. R.S. 39:1309(B)
- Must submit budget on forms required by LDOE and must comply with *Bulletin 1929 – La. Accounting & Uniform Gov't Handbook* – BESE Bulletin 126 §2503(D)
 - In general, charter schools must maintain records in a manner that reflects compliance with generally accepted accounting practices – BESE Bulletin 126 §2503(E)
- The proposed budget must include the following:
 - A budget message signed by the budget preparer that includes a summary of the proposed plan, policies & objectives, assumptions, budgetary basis, and a discussion of important features – La. R.S. 39:1305(C)(1)
 - Itemized revenues & expenditures in accordance with LDE guidelines – La. R.S. 39:1305(C)(2)(b)
 - A proposed budget adoption instrument – La. R.S. 39:1305(D):
 - This instrument must be an appropriation ordinance, adoption resolution, or other legal instrument necessary to adopt and implement the budget document
- The chief executive or administrative officer must retain and file certified copies of the adopted budget, budget adoption instrument, duly authorized budget amendments, and copies of supporting schedules and correspondence related to the budget at the domicile of the governing authority – La. R.S. 39:1313

Notice & Public Participation

- Must give the public an opportunity to participate in the budgetary process prior to adoption of the budget – La. R.S. 39:1307(A)
- Charter schools must take the following steps to properly approve a budget – La. R.S. 39:1307:
 1. Complete the proposed budget & make it available for public inspection *at least 15 days before budget is approved*
 2. Publish notice that the proposed budget is available & will be discussed in an open meeting:
 - a. This notice must include information as to the specific date, time, & location of the first public meeting that will be held by the school to discuss the proposed budget
 - b. This notice must also be published in the school’s official journal (i.e., the local newspaper) *at least 10 days prior to that first public meeting*
 - i. There must be at least one public hearing on the proposed budget before the meeting at which the board votes to approve the proposed budget – La. R.S. 39:1307(C)
 3. Publish certification of the school’s completion of the budget process in the school’s official journal
 - a. Best practice – Certificate info should include: i) date notice was published & when budget was made available; ii) dates & locations of all public meetings at which the budget was discussed; iii) date budget was adopted by the school; and iv) date budget was submitted.

IN SUM: (i) budgets must be adopted by Sept. 15; (ii) budget must be completed & made available 15 days prior to the date the budget is adopted; (iii) there must be at least 1 meeting before the meeting at which the board votes to adopt the budget; (iv) there must be at least 10 days published notice before the *first* meeting at which the budget is discussed; and (v) you must publish a certificate of completion of process after budget is submitted.