Guidance on Data Reporting and Charter Flexibility

The Charter Schools Division continues to receive questions from charter schools and charter systems with regard to flexibility and data reporting. In an effort to address some of the confusion, we have created this document.

## Failure to meet data reporting deadlines or reporting data incorrectly means a system or school is not in compliance with their charter contract.

## Systems and schools may not use their flexibility during the data collections process to earn more funding.

* Example: Best Elementary School, a charter school with a broad flexibility waiver, decides to maximize their funding by identifying all BES students as “gifted and talented”. Is this allowed pursuant to the school’s charter status?
  + No. Broad flexibility does not allow schools and systems to waive definitions which drive funding. In this case, only those students that meet the definition of “gifted and talented” would be eligible to receive the additional funding.

## Systems and schools should understand errors and their meanings.

* Data Collections uses a set of “edits” which are aligned to state law and rule.
* When information is entered that does not align with the edit, it produces an error.
* Errors generally indicate some mistake in reporting. For example, Best Elementary School reports John Doe as a 4th grade student with a birthdate of 8/3/2013. Unfortunately, BES made a mistake and they should have reported a birthdate of 8/3/2003. Therefore, BES will receive an error notification.
* *Occasionally*, however, charter schools *may* receive an error due to their use of waivers. For example, assume that maximum class size for a 3rd grade class is 25 students. BES reports that they have 28 students in a 3rd grade class. Under this scenario, BES would receive an error message. In this instance, however, the school’s broad flexibility waiver allows the school to exceed maximum class size. Therefore BES would work with their local district and the State as needed to address the error.
  + *This situation is the exception, not the rule!*
  + Note: BES reported their data truthfully! They did not misrepresent their data to avoid an error.

## So, what happens if you get an error?

* Don’t panic!
* Work to resolve errors while maintaining accuracy and check for reporting mistakes.
* If errors are left unresolved, Data Collections will work with you toward a resolution.

## Charter systems or schools experiencing issues should work closely with the district or State toward a resolution.

* Know your Points of Contact!
* It’s important that systems and schools respond to emails and phone calls in a timely manner.
* Should you require assistance you may contact the GaDOE Help Desk:
  + Before contacting the Help Desk, however, consult any posted documents for helpful information.
  + [dticket@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:dticket@doe.k12.ga.us) – Preferred Method
  + (800) 860-1011