

Position Description



Te Kawa Mataaho
Public Service Commission



Position	Chief Executive
Agency	Charter School Agency

Position purpose

The Government is committed to delivering world-class public education, improving attendance and engagement, lifting academic achievement, and delivering positive change for New Zealand children and future generations.

Charter schools provide parents with further choices over how their children are educated. They are public schools, operated by a Sponsor – a governing body that has signed a contract with the Crown to operate the school. The first new charter schools opened at the beginning of 2025, with growth expected over time in the number of schools and students.

Sponsors operate with considerable flexibility over their governance, management, curriculum, hours of operation and staffing, in exchange for achieving the outcomes set out in their contract. These are the specified academic and other performance achievement levels that the Sponsor must attain.

The charter schools model involves a bespoke machinery of government arrangement:

- The Authorisation Board (a statutory board established under the Education and Training Act 2020) that has decision rights over key elements: assessing, considering and approving or declining applications from sponsors to establish charter schools; overseeing schools’ performance; and deciding on any interventions to apply if a school is not performing as contracted. The Board also provides advice to the Minister on the operation of the charter school model and provides any other advice or oversight that the Minister requests in writing. The Authorisation Board (Board) is accountable to the Responsible Minister and its decisions are operationalised by the Charter School Agency.
- The Charter School Agency (a departmental agency established under the Public Service Act 2020) provides Secretariat services to the Authorisation Board to enable it to perform its role. It also: funds contracts with sponsors; gathers and assesses data on the performance of charter schools and reports on this to the Authorisation Board; and carries out operational interventions with schools as determined by the Authorisation Board.

The Chief Executive of the Charter School Agency is appointed and employed by the Public Service Commissioner. They work alongside the Board to the Responsible Minister, to provide advice on how the charter school model is working. The Chief Executive also works with the Ministry of Education in advising Ministers on charter schools’ policy settings as necessary.

The Agency has a small staff, with most employed on a fixed-term basis, and a departmental operating budget for 2024/25 of approximately \$6.5 million. Following on from the establishment phase of the Agency this will move to \$3 million per year.

Accountabilities	
Critical success priorities	<p>The Chief Executive of the Charter School Agency is expected to direct their effort and achieve success in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refine and execute the Agency's work programme in support of government priorities for charter schools. These priorities include growing the number of charter schools and students in the model, including, in particular, by facilitating the conversion of state schools to charter schools. • Ensure that secretariat support, information, performance data and advice provided to the Authorisation Board is of high quality, surfaces risks and opportunities, and positively assists the Board in making well-informed, well-considered judgments. • Improve and refine the Charter School Agency's systems, processes and capabilities, to ensure its core functions are fit-for-purpose, robust and efficiently delivered. Maintain a culture of responsiveness and continuous improvement in the quality and value of its work. • Ensure the Agency has effective leadership, capability and culture to deliver its role successfully into the future, including earning and maintaining the trust and confidence of Ministers, Authorisation Board, Sponsors, stakeholders and members of the public. • Maintain valued professional relationships with the Ministry of Education, the Education Review Office and other organisations across the education sector, as required, to effectively deliver the Agency's functions.
Agency	<p>The Chief Executive of the Charter School Agency is accountable for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Secretariat for the Authorisation Board</i> - providing professional Board secretariat services, performance data, information and advice to enable the Authorisation Board to make high quality statutory decisions in respect to the establishment, disestablishment, performance and interventions relating to charter schools. • <i>Monitor</i> – gathering necessary data and information on the performance of Sponsors that enables the Authorisation Board to discharge its functions. • <i>Contract with charter school Sponsors</i> - contracting with Sponsors approved to establish and operate charter schools; and undertaking the operational work associated with the routine management of contracts. • <i>Interventions</i> – executing Authorisation Board pre-intervention and intervention decisions. • <i>Engagement with others</i> – engaging at a senior level with other agencies in the education sector, including engagement that is required by legislation, and to support policy advice. • <i>Advice</i> - providing advice to Ministers on the charter school model and its implementation. <p>The Charter School Agency is a departmental agency hosted by the Ministry of Education, which supports the Agency in the delivery of its functions, based on working arrangements that are set out in a departmental agency agreement, agreed with the Secretary of Education.</p>
System	<p>As a Public Service Chief Executive, the Chief Executive must perform the functions and duties as set out in relevant statutes and legislation, including demonstrating and upholding the values of the Public Service and general responsibilities to the appropriate</p>

	<p>Minister as set out in the Public Service Act 2020, and complying with the Public Finance Act 1989.</p> <p>These responsibilities include upholding the principles of political neutrality, free and frank advice, merit-based appointments, open government, and stewardship, and ensure the Agency also does so. It also includes ensuring the integrity and conduct of the Agency's employees and supporting the Crown in its relationships with Māori under the Treaty of Waitangi.</p>
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Leadership Roadmap

The Chief Executive will need to demonstrate their experience and/or aptitude to deliver across the following priority areas:

Organisational Leadership	Context Management	System Leadership	Sector Experience	Personal Leadership
Ability to manage, lead and shape a small, responsive, high-performing public service agency with diverse staff working in a high-pressure environment, and position it for strategic impact.	Experience providing advice to Ministers and Boards on complex or contentious issues; dealing with conflict or conflicting demands; and balancing priorities in response to increasing or changing requirements.	Ability to lead across a sector to build consensus and drive change, and innovation.	Ability to deliver government priorities for charter schools' education including growing school and student numbers.	Resilience and tenacity to lead in contentious or scrutinised contexts, with influence and effectiveness.
Ability and interpersonal skills to set and maintain a positive, fit-for-purpose organisational culture.	Experience providing high quality, professional secretariat support to a Board and/or working within comparable governance arrangements.	Proven ability to build and maintain relationships of respect, trust and confidence with staff and a broad range of stakeholders.	Sound judgment on key risks and opportunities facing the charter school model, and how to mitigate or seize those.	Mana and wisdom in managing challenging situations.
Ability to ensure the organisation has the capability and range of systems and processes to deliver on its key functions. These include in particular - rigorous data collection and analysis, and Board secretariat functions.	Understanding the high-trust, high accountability Charter School model.	Experience advising, collaborating and influencing at a senior level.	An understanding of the education system in New Zealand including the points of similarity and difference between the Charter School and mainstream models.	A strong commitment to leading with integrity, role-modelling and upholding Public Service standards.

Experience in data driven decision making, legal analysis, procurement contracting, and financial management expertise - a proven focus on efficiency and value for money in the delivery of services.	Experience leading engagement with stakeholders and the media and being able to explain complex issues simply, with precision.		Deep understanding of the common characteristics of underperforming state schools and the strategies required for their remediation.	Personal commitment to improving educational outcomes in New Zealand.
Experience building high performing, professional teams.				

Key relationships

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| Government | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Associate Minister of Education as the Responsible Minister • Minister of Education • Minister of Finance |
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| Public Service | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Charter School Authorisation Board • Ministry of Education • Education Review Office • The Treasury • The Public Service Commission • Social Investment Agency |
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| Wider communities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charter School Sponsors • School Boards and Principals • Education sector unions and peak bodies • Professional bodies and research communities • Treaty partners and iwi • Pacific and ethnic communities • Learning support and disability groups |
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| International | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other jurisdictions which have charter school models |
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Security Clearance	Appointment will be subject to a New Zealand Government Secret security clearance.
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