

**Application to Form a
Public Charter School
within the
Howard County Public School System**

Submission Timeline

For Public Charter School Opening in school year 2020–2021

The Intent Form & Prospectus are due by 4:00 p.m. on or before **May 1, 2019**.

A full application will only be accepted from potential applicants who have submitted a Letter of Intent and Prospectus by the above deadline. A decision on the application will be rendered within 120 days of receipt of application.

Applications are due by 4:00 p.m. on or before **August 1, 2019**.

Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) contact and who to submit materials to:

Policy/Charter Schools Office

10910 Clarksville Pike

Ellicott City, MD 21042

410-313-6870

charterschools@hcpss.org

The Howard County Public School System does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, religion, physical or mental disability, age, gender, marital status, or sexual orientation in matters affecting employment or in providing access to programs.

Inquiries concerning the application of Title IX should be referred to: Title IX Coordinator, Office of Equity Assurance, Howard County Public School System at 10910 Clarksville Pike, Ellicott City, MD 21042 or call 410-313-6654.

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INTRODUCTION

In 2003, the Public Charter School Law was enacted in Maryland to establish the Charter School Program. The general purpose of a charter school program, as defined by law, “is to create alternative means within the existing public school system in order to provide innovative learning opportunities and creative educational approaches to improve the education of students” (Maryland Public Charter School Act, 2003 and The Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article §9-101 (b)). Subsequently (2010), the Maryland State Board of Education developed policy for the Charter School Program that clearly defines the obligations of charter schools and their authorizers. A new law, the Public Charter School Improvement Act of 2015, went into effect in June of 2015.

Key Principles of Innovation and Accountability

Historically, there are two key principles that guide charter schools. The first is that they are provided an opportunity to operate autonomously in exchange for school innovation, and second, that they are held accountable for student achievement and school performance as a condition of their charter.

Innovation in education has been defined as a new approach that brings an improved result. The innovations can be small or large, mostly recognizable, or entirely new and different (Smith, 2009). Pincus (1974) elaborated that innovations in education should be thought of as technologies that improve educational outcomes, improve working relationships or processes within schools, or reduce the costs of education without significantly reducing the quality of desired outcomes or processes. Some of the major areas in which charter schools have implemented educational innovations are: teaching and learning, school organization, governance and management, and parent and community engagement (Arsen, Plank, & Sykes, 1999; Smith & Wohlstetter, 2009).

In return for autonomy, charter schools are held accountable for:

- Meeting or exceeding state and district academic achievement targets
- Success in meeting the performance goals set in the contract
- Responsible use of public funds
- Compliance with all applicable laws and regulations not waived for charter schools.

U.S. Department of Education’s Definition of High-quality Charter School

The U.S. Department of Education defines a high-quality charter school as: (1) showing evidence of strong academic results based on indicators; and (2) has no significant issues in the areas of student safety, financial management, or statutory or regulatory compliance. The full federal definition is included in Appendix B. For more information on the various provisions of the federal charter school program authorizing statute (Title V, Part B of the Elementary Secondary Education Act (ESEA)), refer to the U.S. Department of Education’s charter school program non-regulatory guidance handbook.

Maryland Charter School Quality Standards

To strengthen the quality of charter schools in Maryland, the Office of School Innovations of the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) identified quality charter school indicators, standards, critical success factors (CSF), and performance measures. Indicators are a general dimension of school quality or achievement. The identified five indicators address:

- (A) Culture of continuous improvement;
- (B) Innovative practices;
- (C) Student learning and achievement;
- (D) School and community engagement; and
- (E) Governance, leadership, and organizational structures.

Each indicator includes a standard. The standard is a quality benchmark that is established as a model or an example of a high quality charter school. Connections with the Charter School Quality Standards are made throughout the document and indicated by a [QS and CSF#]. The bracket will indicate the indicator and the critical success factor that the charter school developer should refer to in preparation of the application.

MSDE has prepared Implementation Guides with a review of the research and literature, references, and resources for each of the five indicators. Each implementation guide has several purposes: (1) describes Maryland’s quality charter school standards for charter school authorizers, operators, and stakeholders; (2) helps map out charter school improvement, growth, and development; (3) serves as a resource for the charter school stakeholder community on the latest literature and research on charter schools. The ultimate goal is that charter schools in Maryland will take ownership of the standards and use the standards to define quality for their school.

It is strongly encouraged that potential applicants review the Maryland Charter School Quality Standards Implementation Guides using a reflective process. MSDE has also produced a guide which team members can review - *Facilitation Guide for Discussion of Maryland Charter School Quality Standards Implementation Guides for Indicators A through E*. The purpose of the facilitation guide is to assist discussion groups of charter school stakeholders in reviewing

and developing a common understanding of the Maryland Public Charter School Quality Indicators and Standards as described in the Maryland Charter School Quality Standards Implementation Guides.

References

- Arsen, D., Plank, D., & Sykes, G. (1999). *The rules matter: School choice policies in Michigan*. East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University.
- Maryland Annotated Code. (2003). Title 9 of the Education Article, *Annotated Code of Maryland*, is known as the “Maryland Public Charter School Program”.
- Maryland State Board of Education (2010). *Maryland State Board of Education Policy: The Charter School Program*. Baltimore, MD: Author.
- Maryland State Department of Education, Office of School Innovations (2012). *Maryland charter school quality standards implementation guides for indicators A through E*. Baltimore, MD: Author.
- Maryland State Department of Education, Office of School Innovations (2011). *Facilitation guide for discussion of Maryland charter school quality standards implementation guides for Indicators A through E*. Baltimore, MD: Author
- Pinkus, J. (1974). Incentives for innovation in the public schools. *Review of Educational Research*, 44 (4), 113-144.
- Smith, J., & Wohlstetter, P. (2009, October). *Parent involvement in urban charter schools: A new paradigm or the status quo*. Prepared for School Choice and School Improvement: Research in State, District and Community Contexts, Vanderbilt University. Nashville, TN: National Center on School Choice, Vanderbilt University.
- U.S. Department of Education (no date). *Federal definition of high quality charter schools*. Washington, DC: Author.

Howard County Public School System Charter School Application

The HCPSS application process aligns closely with the Maryland Charter School Law adopted in 2003 and the Public Charter School Improvement Act of 2015.

The application process incorporates three phases:

- 1) Pre-application;
- 2) Submission of the Application; and
- 3) Review and evaluation of the application

The primary application components include:

- A) Education Plan;
- B) Organizational Plan, and
- C) Business Plan.

Each section includes background information for consideration, and application description. The application requirements checklist on page 9 may be used by both the applicant and the authorizer to monitor the completeness of the application. The Evaluation Criteria provides the authorizer with means of determining the quality of the application sections. The Evaluation Criteria may also be used by the applicant to target the development of a high quality charter school application.

Although the format for the standard application is compartmentalized into the different application components, it is important to remember that each of the components relates to one another. The completed application should present a clear picture of what the school will look like, feel like and what the school will accomplish. The vision and mission should be evident throughout the application and all program elements and resource allocations should be in alignment with the proposed budget and school program. Key to a successful application is that the process provides transparent communication that outlines clear expectations and provides the guidance to provide a comprehensive package.

As a charter school authorizer, the Howard County Public School System invites proposals to start charter schools that are likely to achieve strong educational outcomes. Charter schools are expected to provide families with educational options of many different shapes and sizes but with one thing in common: quality education.

This application packet will guide you through the steps of developing a charter school proposal. Each section requests information about a specific aspect of your plan and presents the evaluation criteria that reviewers will use to determine whether the section meets the standard for approval. Experience has shown that successful charter schools tend to have a number of common characteristics:

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- A clear, focused, results-oriented mission statement that aligns all parts of the proposal and is furthered by specific, strategic and measurable goals and objectives;
- Demonstrated understanding of the population that the school is likely to serve;
- An educational program with research based components that have proven to be effective for the target population to be served;
- Strong and diverse leadership and governance; and
- Strong financial planning and management.

Charter schools are nonsectarian, tuition-free public schools that operate as independent nonprofit organizations. They offer new public education options to children, families, teachers and school leaders. Maryland's charter school legislation offers students, families and educators more choices in public education. It allows charter schools flexibility in how they operate in exchange for establishing higher expectations for educating students well.

We look forward to receiving well-developed applications from capable charter school developers who are committed to educating their students well and improving the lives of children and families in our community. Thank you for your interest in creating a public charter school in Howard County.

Please refer to Appendix A for an Introduction to the Chartering Process.

If you have any questions regarding this application or the evaluation process, please contact:

***Policy/Charter Schools Office
Howard County Public School System
10910 Clarksville Pike
Ellicott City, MD 20142
410-313-6870
charterschools@hcpss.org***

Application Process, Components and Guidelines

Please read the application carefully

Application Process

The application process consists of the following phases: 1) pre-application; 2) the application components; and 3) the application review and evaluation.

Phase I: Pre-Application

☐ ***Letter of Intent and Prospectus***

Each applicant must submit a Letter of Intent and Prospectus identifying pertinent information about the proposed charter school, including but not limited to the location, projected grades served, enrollment, and identification of the founding group. The Prospectus template that may not be altered except to insert the required information unique to each applicant. By completing the template, the applicant acknowledges and accepts the requirements and expectation therein.

Phase II: Submission of the Application

The Application Components

☐ ***Cover Sheet***

The Cover Sheet provides a summary of key information related to the proposed school, including geographic location, enrollment projections, and applicant contact information.

☐ ***Executive Summary***

The Executive Summary provides the HCPSS with basic and key information regarding your school design. It also serves as an introduction to your overall charter school application.

☐ ***The Narrative (Sections A through C)***

The three sections of the Narrative are the Education Plan, Organizational Plan, and Business Plan. Within each section, there are specific response categories (e.g., Curriculum and Instruction under the Education Plan or Budget under the Business Plan). Each response category includes the following:

- Applicant Instructions that inform you what you are expected to present.
- Statutory Reference(s) that document the legal authority for the request. (The Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article, §9-101).
- Applicable Maryland Charter School Quality Standards and Critical Success Factors.

□ ***Evaluation Criteria and Required Exhibits***

This section contains the evaluation criteria by which reviewers will evaluate your response and the required exhibits (if applicable) listing attachments that you are required to provide as part of the response.

Application Format Requirements

The Application should adhere to the following format:

- Hard copy on white, 8.5" x 11" paper
- One-inch margins on all sides
- Minimum 11-point font
- Paragraph formatting may not be more compact than standard single space
- Spiral-bound (3-ring binders are also acceptable; no paper clips or folders, please)

There is no minimum length for an application.

There are, however, strict limits on the maximum number of pages: Narrative: maximum of 50 pages, Attachments: maximum of 50 pages. There is ample opportunity to develop a high quality application within these boundaries.

Application Deadline and Submission Requirements

The application package should include the following:

- One *clearly labeled*, unbound original copy
- Thirty copies either spiral-bound or in 3-ring binders
- An electronic version of the application (MS Word or compatible format) on either a CD or USB compatible flash drive (only attachments easily transferable to disk need to be included electronically)

The fully completed application must be received by our office no later than 4 p.m. on the date of the deadline. An Applicant must notify the Policy/Charter School Office one week in advance on how the application will be delivered.

Please mail or hand deliver the application package to:
Policy/Charter School Office
Howard County Public School System
10910 Clarksville Pike
Ellicott City, MD 20142

A copy of the fully completed application should also be submitted to the MSDE's Office of School Innovations located at 200 W. Baltimore Street, 4th Floor, Baltimore, MD 21201

Phase III: Review and Evaluation of the Application

Review for Requirements:

The application is reviewed upon receipt to ensure that it meets requirements. If the application does not meet requirements, the applicant will be notified that they are not qualified to enter the next stage of this process. Due to the time bound nature of the process, the HCPSS will not extend an opportunity for the applicant to address deficiencies at any stage of the process once the application cycle has officially begun. It is therefore important that you carefully cross check your application against the guidelines in the document before it is delivered to the HCPSS.

Application Evaluation:

The fully completed application will be reviewed by the HCPSS Review/Evaluation Committee using the *Application Evaluation Criteria* which summarizes the evaluation criteria for each of the application sections. Applicants will be notified no later than 120 days after submission if the Application has been accepted.

Capacity Interview:

An applicant may be invited along with their founding group and/or proposed Board of Directors to participate in the final phase of the application process. The primary purpose of the interview is to assess the capacity of the board to effectively oversee the school's academic program, organizational viability, and finances. The interview is designed to determine the founding group's understanding of academic and operational accountability as well as the demographics and other characteristics of the area where the proposed school will be located. In addition, the interview will provide opportunities to address questions generated by reviewers during the application review process, provide further verbal clarification, or elaborate on responses within the written application. The schedule for the Capacity Interviews will be determined during the review process.

Application Notification: An applicant will be notified no later than 120 days after submission if the application has been accepted.

Issuing the Charter

- Letter of Charter Approval
- Performance Contract (refer to the Maryland Charter School Model Performance Contract)
- Pre-Opening Plan - Final Approvals

Application Requirements Checklist

An applicant is required to complete and submit a full application (30 spiral-bound hard copies, one unbound hard copy, and an electronic copy (MS Word or compatible format) on a CD or flash drive) detailing the proposed charter school's educational, organizational and business plans. The minimum requirements for submission of a complete application package are as follows:

- Letter of Intent
- Cover Sheet
- Executive Summary
- Table of Contents
- Narrative (3 Main Components: Education Plan, Organizational Plan, and Business Plan)
- Required Application Exhibits:

Non-Profit Documentation:

- Articles of Incorporation
- Maryland Certificate of Good Standing from Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation
- Copy of IRS Form – Proof of completed application to, or approval letter from, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) documenting nonprofit status 501(3) (c) (IRS Form 1023)
- Proposed charter school Board of Directors form, resume, and questionnaire responses (the questionnaire must be completed by each prospective board member).
- Governing board assurances
- By-laws
- Schedule for Meetings
- If applicable, Education Management Organization Documents
 - Description of the proposed contract;
 - Draft of the proposed management contract;

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- Recent corporate annual report and audited financial statements, and Maryland Certificate of Good Standing;
 - Description of the firm's roles and responsibilities for the financial management of the proposed charter school, including descriptions of the accounting software to be used, the procedures for financial reporting to the Board of Directors, and the internal controls that will be in place for the proposed charter school;
 - Names, addresses, and telephone numbers of other schools managed by the Education Management Organization (EMO)/ Community-Based Organization (CBO)/ Charter Management Organization (CMO)(*refer to appendix for definitions*) as well as descriptive information on the grades served, numbers of students, years of operation, and student performance data; and
 - A summary of the company's history, including a description of how it implements the program, past results of its management efforts, the company philosophy, and the background on corporate leaders.
- Organizational Chart
 - Position descriptions for key leadership positions
 - Education Service Provider background information (if applicable), with ESP financial records, Maryland Certificate of Good Standing, and copy of service agreement
 - Decision-making matrix
 - Communications with stakeholders (Board of Directors meeting, school progress)
 - Hiring recommendations for principal and staff
 - Dispute resolution
 - Procurement policy
 - Student grading and promotion
 - Student application
 - Budget for the charter term
 - Opening Cash flow analysis for first fiscal year of operation

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For more information on application submission, please refer to the *Application Process, Components and Guidelines* section of this document (pgs. 6-7). For further information and resources, access the Maryland State Department of Education, Office of School Innovations website.

Letter of Intent to Apply

An applicant seeking to establish an authorized charter school must submit a Letter of Intent and Prospects, not to exceed 20 pages in length, by the due date specified.

Submission of the Letter of Intent and Prospectus is the first step in the public charter school application process but implies no further obligation for either party. Submission expresses non-binding intent, as authorized by the charter school's Board of Directors, to apply for a public charter school within one year. The filing of the Letter of Intent and Prospectus may not be used for promotion or advertising although it may be noted in internal communications. Please inquire with any questions regarding these restrictions.

The purpose of the Intent Form & Prospectus is to provide the school system with a thorough overview of the applicant's plan to open and operate a proposed charter school. Sufficient information should be provided in each of the identified areas to demonstrate commitment and capacity for providing quality educational programming for children. The Letter of Intent & Prospectus will allow the school system to provide sources of technical assistance as appropriate to facilitate the submission of a completed and viable application

Following acceptance of the Intent Form & Prospectus, applicants may schedule a meeting with the HCPSS charter school contact to begin work on the formal application.

Any potential applicant who does not submit a complete *Letter of Intent and Prospectus* by the deadline will not be permitted to submit a *fully completed application*.

Letter of Intent Form & Prospectus

Charter School Information

Name of Proposed Charter School:

This Letter of Intent Form & Prospectus is being submitted by (check, and complete as appropriate, all that apply)

___ Staff of a public school (Name of School)

___ A parent/guardian of a student who attends a school in the county

(Name)_____

___ A nonsectarian nonprofit entity

(Name)_____

___ A nonsectarian institution of higher education

(Name)_____

Authorized Agent Contact Information

(Must be a member of the local founding group and not serving as a consultant or affiliated with an educational service provider.)

Name: _____ Title: _____

Address: _____

Daytime Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Fax: _____ Website: _____

Start Up Information

Proposed Start Date: _____

Grades to be Served: _____ Anticipated enrollment by grade: _____

Public charter schools in Howard County must comply with all Maryland statutes regarding their operation, as well as all relevant federal, state and local laws and requirements applicable to the operation of a public education facility.

I certify that all information contained in this Intent Form & Prospectus is complete and accurate, realizing that any misrepresentation could result in disqualification from the charter application process or revocation after award. I have the legal authority to attest to all information contained in this Intent Form & Prospectus and to submit this Intent Form & Prospectus on behalf of the chartering group for the above-named school.

Authorized Agent (please print)

Notarized Signature of Authorized Agent Date

Letter of Intent Form & Prospectus

(continued)

Please provide the following information in twenty (20) pages or less:

1. **Applicant Founding Group:** The names of each member of the applicant founding group, including all applicants, along with a very brief description of relevant experience and skills. Please identify the current or prospective role that each member has or will hold in relation to the proposed charter school.
2. **Board of Directors:** The names of proposed members of the school's initial board of directors, which must include a minimum of five members, along with a very brief description of relevant experience and skills if not provided above.
3. **Application History:** If you or another member of the current or a previous founding group has ever applied to this or another charter authorizing entity to open this proposed school or another charter school, please indicate the date the application(s) was/were submitted and to which charter authorizing entity, and briefly describe the outcome of the charter authorizing entity's decision.
4. The purpose of the proposed public charter school, including a mission statement that indicates what the school intends to do, for whom, and to what degree
5. A brief description of the school's goals
6. The grades to be served and the anticipated enrollment by grade
7. A brief description of how the proposed school will meet the needs of the community
8. A brief description of the curriculum and instructional practices to be used
9. The plans for delivery of educational programs
10. A description of how the program will enable all students to meet or exceed challenging Maryland student academic achievement standards
11. A description of how the school will be managed and how that structure will provide for the school's legal, programmatic, and fiscal accountability.

Within your narrative include ways in which the school may provide innovative learning opportunities and creative educational approaches to improve the education of students; address how it will be different from what the HCPSS currently offers.

Additional information that supports the narrative may be included as attachments and will not be counted in the twenty (20) page limit. The choice of attachments is up to the applicant, although they should be used to provide evidence, support a particular aspect of the prospectus, or lend insight into the qualifications, capacity, and commitment of the

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applicant to open and operate a charter school. Examples of attachments include curriculum samples, academic standards, letters of support, and financial statements. All attachments should be numbered and clearly referred to by number in the Prospectus narrative.

Note: Several sections of the full application will ask for the same or similar information as the Letter of Intent Form & Prospectus; however, further expansion of the information will be required in the full application.

Note: The submitted *Letter of Intent Form & Prospectus* (and all other charter school application material) will become public record once this information has been submitted to the school system. Personal contact information will be redacted from the document, but all other information will become public.

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Charter School Application Cover Sheet

Name of Proposed Charter School:	
Name of non-profit 501(c) (3) organization that will hold the charter:	
Primary Contact Person: (charter school operator or founding board president)	
Mailing Address:	
Telephone (primary):	Telephone (secondary):
Education Service Provider or Partner Organization (if applicable):	
Physical Address of School (if known):	
Projected Opening Date (school year: e.g. fall of 20 - -):	
Proposed Charter Term (no fewer than 3 and no more than 5 years):	

Enrollment Projections (*if applicable)

SCHOOL YEARS:	GRADE LEVELS	ENROLLMENT PER GRADE LEVELS
Yr. 1- 20.....		
Yr. 2		
Yr. 3		
Yr. 4*		
Yr. 5*		
		TOTAL SCHOOL ENROLLMENT =

Charter School Application Cover Sheet (*continued*)

School Description: Provide a brief description (a shortened version of your executive summary) of the proposed charter school that includes: the name, the mission, grades served and other information you would like to include in a brief communication of this type. Your description will be used by the HCPSS to provide information to the public about the approved charter schools.

Application Certification

I certify that I have the authority to submit this application and that all information contained herein is complete and accurate. I recognize that any misrepresentation could result in disqualification from the application process or revocation after award. The person named as the contact person for the application is so authorized to serve as the primary contact for this application on behalf of the organization.

Printed Name _____

Signature: _____ Date _____

Executive Summary

The executive summary serves as a concise explanation of the proposed charter school and identifies who is submitting the charter application and should also be included in the application package to serve as an introduction.

This section should be two to three pages long and should include:

- Vision and mission statements including a brief explanation of how they were created.
 - ✓ *The vision and mission statements describe the purpose for the charter school with a focus on outputs (performance measures) rather than inputs (resources).*
 - ✓ *The vision and mission statements are the driving force and rationale behind all other components of the application. The school's goals, educational program, operations, etc., must align with and support the fulfillment of the vision and mission statements.*
 - ✓ *The vision and mission statements express the ideal, long-term impact, scope and scale of the school. The vision articulates what the school hopes to be. The mission statement explains how the school will reach that goal.*
- Student body to be served, such as key demographic data, targeted geographical area, etc.
 - ✓ *A complete explanation of the student population the school intends to serve.*
- Size of the school when it reaches full enrollment capacity, including the number of classes per grade level and the number of students per class.
 - ✓ *Criteria used to determine number and grade levels to be, how this links with the educational philosophy and the mission and vision of the school.*
- Evidence of a community need for a school of this nature.
 - ✓ *Information on community members and leaders who publicly support the proposed school and their role in the development of the school and application, if the proposed school is not being developed by parents.*
 - ✓ *Include letters of support from community leaders, business people or elected officials. These letters should state why the individual believes a new charter school would best serve the community.*
 - ✓ *Explain the applicant team's ties to and knowledge of the community. If the applicant has established any partnerships or networking relationships, describe them and any resources or agreements that are planned.*
- A short explanation of the key programmatic features the school will implement in order to accomplish its' vision and mission.
 - ✓ *Description of educational philosophy and how this will be linked to school design*
- Any other unique features, such as: a non-traditional school year, longer school day, key partner organizations, multiple campuses, school culture, etc.

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- How the proposed school will be more effective than the schools currently serving the targeted student population.
 - ✓ *Improve student achievement by increasing learning opportunities for all students, and requiring the continuous measurement of learning outcomes, with a special emphasis on low-performing students.*
 - ✓ *Encourage the use of innovative learning methods.*

A. Education Plan

The Education Plan should define what students will achieve; how they will achieve it; and how the school will evaluate performance. It should provide a clear picture of what a student who attends the school will experience with respect to educational climate, structure, assessment and outcomes. The Education Plan should address the following:

(A.1.) educational school design; (A.2.) curriculum and instruction; (A.3.) assessments, (A.4.) school-specific goals and objectives/comprehensive performance measures, (A.5.) family involvement, (A.6.) target population, (A.7.) special student populations, (A.8.) school climate and discipline, (A.9.) student health and safety, (A.10.) school calendar and daily schedule, and (A.11.) waivers needed to implement the educational program.

Section A.1. Educational School Design

Background Information for Consideration:

The educational design is made up of those elements in the proposed school that will be implemented to create programs, systems and processes to ensure that the school's mission and vision are accomplished successfully. Elements of a school design must address: alignment of goals and objectives to the school [QS A.1, C.1., C.2]; school size; special programs that will be offered [QS C.5, D.6]; how professional development will be designed [QS A.3, A.4, B.3, C.3]; instructional frameworks [QS C.6, C.7, C.9, C.10]; the use and infusion of technology[QS B.2]; the use of partnerships [QS D.3]; performance, promotion, and graduation standards [QS E.14]; and how resources (time, space and human capital) will be allocated.

Application Description

- Describe the proposed charter school's educational design, including all components identified under Background Information for Consideration under this section: alignment of goals and objectives to the school; school size; special programs that will be offered; how professional development will be designed; instructional frameworks; the use and infusion of technology; the use of partnerships; performance, promotion, and graduation standards; and how resources (time, space and human capital) will be allocated.
- Describe why the proposed school design and the founding group are likely to accomplish any of the following outcomes. Address each outcome specifically and separately.
 - School design or plan draws on existing school models
 - Presents a clear rationale and historical evidence that your design or components of your design has led to similar outcomes in existing schools.

Replication of Existing School Design:

Describe the applicant's capacity to replicate an existing school design: *The capacity to replicate can be demonstrated by providing credible and well-defined strategies for replication, including the financial and human resources necessary to replicate the design.*

If the school intends to replicate an existing school design:

- ✓ *Provide evidence that the existing design has been effective and successful in raising student achievement.*
- ✓ *The effectiveness of an existing school design can be demonstrated by providing evidence of organizational viability and the success of the academic program, including compliance with legal requirements, as well as a direct relationship between program elements and student achievement.*

New School Design:

If the school design or plan does not have a precedent, present a clear rationale for the design and any research or other supporting information that leads you to believe the plan or model will fulfill the following eligibility criteria and outcomes:

1. Increase student achievement and decrease student achievement gaps in reading/language arts and mathematics;
2. Increase high school graduation rates and focus on serving at-risk high school student populations (including re-enrolled drop-outs and those below grade level, if applicable);
3. Focus on academic achievement of middle school student populations and preparation for transition to high school (if applicable);
4. Utilize a variety of high-quality assessments to measure student understanding and critical application of concepts (identify assessment tools);
5. Increase implementation or instructional improvement systems to assess and inform instructional practice, decision-making, and effectiveness;
6. Partner with low-performing, local public schools to share best practices (conversion or turnaround);
7. Demonstrate the ability to overcome start-up challenges to open a successful school through management and leadership techniques;
8. Provide access to viable education alternatives to students in regions where there are a lack of alternatives.

Section A.2. Curriculum and Instruction

Background Information for Consideration:

Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards

In June 2010 the Maryland State Board of Education unanimously adopted the Common Core State Standards in English/Language Arts and Mathematics. These national education standards establish a set of shared goals and expectations for what students should understand and be able to do in grades K–12 so that students are prepared for success in college and the workplace. Common standards help ensure that students are receiving an equally rigorous, high quality education consistently, from school to school and state to state. The Common Core State Standards form the foundation upon which Maryland is building its new State Curriculum.

Maryland College and Career-Ready State Curriculum

The Maryland College and Career-Ready State Curriculum implemented in Maryland schools for 2013–2014 school year and beyond will have two main components, the Curriculum Frameworks and the Online Curriculum Toolkit. The Maryland Curriculum Frameworks in English/Language Arts and Mathematics define the essential skills and knowledge that students need to know and be able to do in order to achieve the academic goals of the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards. There are also frameworks for literacy in history/social studies and literacy in science and technical subjects. The Frameworks are the foundation of Maryland’s curriculum and guide the development of curriculum resources.

Maryland Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM Education)

On April 24, 2012, the Maryland State Board of Education accepted the definition of STEM education and the STEM Standards of Practice presented by the Office of STEM Initiatives. STEM education is an approach to teaching and learning that integrates the content and skills of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. The STEM Standards of Practice guides instruction by defining the combination of behaviors, integrated with STEM content, which is expected of a proficient STEM student. These behaviors include: engagement in inquiry, logical reasoning, collaboration, and investigation.

Instructional Technology and Virtual Opportunities

The MSDE Instructional Technology and School Library Media Program (ITSLM) provides leadership, coordination, and support in the implementation of the *Maryland Educational Technology Plan for the new millennium: 2007–2012*. The office collaborates with local school systems, institutions of higher education and other organizations to increase the integration of technology into instruction in all schools and to implement the Standards for School Library Media Programs in Maryland for the development of quality library media programs statewide.

For information regarding the Maryland Virtual Learning Opportunities (MLVO) program, contact the MSDE.

The MSDE's Definition of an Online Course is as follows: an online course is "a course provided through the Internet and other technologies in which 80% of more of the instruction is conducted online with the teacher and student separated by distance or time or both and in which two-way communication between the teacher and student is required."

Note: The Annotated Code of Maryland , Education Article, §9-102 (12) (Definition of a public charter school), provides that a public charter school means a school that requires students to be physically present on school premises for a period of time substantially similar to that which other public school students spend on school premises.

HCPSS Policies and Procedures

For online courses, COMAR 13A.03.02.04D (1) specifies that “Consistent with local school system policy and procedure, credit may be given for Department-approved online courses.” MSDE has developed an approval process for online courses that are administered by a local school system. This approval process helps ensure the quality of the online courses offered by our public schools and ensures that such courses align with state content standards and core learning goals. Credit can only be awarded for MSDE-approved online courses.

Students may take a course through the MVS only with permission from the local school system and school principal.

Be sure to review HCPSS policy and procedures and references

Contact the HCPSS person who is responsible for coordinating online courses and services at the system level.

Application Description

Provide a description of the curriculum and instruction to be used by the school, including the following:

- Provide measurable objectives and subject area content and skills for each grade level. [QS A.2, C.1, C.2, C.6]
- Show how the curriculum aligns with the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards and Grade Level Expectations. [QS C.1, C.2, C.3]
- Discuss the specific instructional strategies/ methods that will be relevant or necessary to successful implementation of the curriculum. [QS B.2, C.7]
- Discuss how curriculum and instruction needs are reflected in plans for professional development. [QS A.3, A.4, B.3, C.3]
- Describe the process and procedures used to evaluate whether the curriculum is effective and successfully implemented. [QS A.2, C.8]
- Explain how the school will ensure that teachers are proficient in delivering the chosen instructional methods. [QS A.4, B.4, C.3]
- Describe strategies for differentiating instruction for above, average, and low performing students. [QS C.5, C.7, E.5]
- Describe, and present the rationale for the instructional materials to be adopted.
- For secondary programs, describe how the courses and curricula will prepare students for career-ready and college-level work. [QS C.9]

For virtual learning opportunities, describe the following:

- Courses and/or programs to be offered online and offline.
- Describe the teachers’ roles and how they will differ from traditional roles with online courses.

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- The technology, including types of hardware, software, equipment, and other materials the school will provide and the plan for providing and handling materials.
- Plan for technical support and troubleshooting for students, teachers, administrators, and parents.
- Back-up plan for delivering instruction in the case of technical or other delivery problems that may arise.

Section A.3. Assessment System

Background Information for Consideration:

An integrated assessment system uses the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards as a foundation and serves as a structure for how teachers and administrators will measure what students know and are able to do as a result of the delivery of curriculum and instruction. Components of the assessment system can also be used to establish and monitor goals in the school's required Accountability Plan. Information from assessments serves to help determine what areas of instruction need additional time, the needs of individual students, the quality of instruction, decisions on improvement strategies, and the school's overall progress in meeting Accountability Plan goals. While choosing which data to collect and setting up the systems to track data in a reliable and consistent manner can be a challenging and time intensive activity, it can also be a truly valuable one. Ultimately, the assessment system provides information to all stakeholders on whether the school is an academic success.

Maryland's Current State Assessments

The *Maryland Charter Schools Model Performance Contract, Section 1.26 Assessment of Student Performance*, states that the charter school shall implement the plan for assessment of pupil performance and administration of statewide assessments identified in the contract. At a minimum, the charter school shall administer the: Maryland State Assessments for grades 3–8, and the Maryland High School Assessments for grade 11. In addition, annually, the charter school must certify that pupils have participated in the State testing program.

Student attainment of Maryland's standards is measured through State assessments (e.g., *Maryland School Assessment, High School Assessment*) in academic content subjects (e.g., English language arts, mathematics, and science). The Maryland School Assessments in mathematics and reading have been replaced by the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessment in mathematics and English language areas. These assessments are aligned to the Common Core State Standards and are administered in grade 3–8, and at the high school level in English 10 and Algebra I.

During the 2016–2017 school year, the Maryland School Assessments for science in grades 5 and 9 will be replaced by the Maryland Integrated science assessment (MISA). The MISA assessment is aligned to the Next Generation Science Standards and will also replace the Biology High School Assessment in the 2017-2018 school year.

The High School Assessments measure student's knowledge of Maryland's Core Learning Goals at the indicator level in: Biology and Government.

For more information about State assessments, contact the Maryland State Department of Education.

Application Description

- Describe the school's approach to an assessment system. The proposed system should reflect how the school would link curriculum and instruction to assessment by measuring the academic progress of individual students, cohorts of students over time, and students in school as a whole, with the goal of continual school improvement. [QS A.1, A.2, C.1]

In responding to this section, consider the following question:

- How will the school use student assessment data to drive key decisions aimed at the evaluation, retention, and support of the teaching staff, aligned with the State's approach to incorporating status and growth data? [QS A.2, C.1, C.2,C.5]

Section A.4. School-Specific Goals and Objectives/Comprehensive Performance Measures

Background Information for Consideration:

Maryland's Accountability System

Under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Flex Waiver and new Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Maryland is rewriting the state accountability system to incorporate the new assessments and regulations. The accountability system utilizes state assessments to set school and district level goals and to measure the program of student groups.

Student Learning Objectives (SLOs)

Specific Learning Objectives are specific, rigorous long-term goals for groups of students that educators create to guide their instructional and administrative efforts. The objectives represent the most important learning during an interval of instruction. Using a variety of current and available student data and professional experience, educators set rigorous SLOs for student achievement. The SLOs are aligned to Maryland's College and Career-Ready Standards, standards for other content areas, Curricular Frameworks, and LEA and school priorities. For courses where state standards do not exist, SLOs can align to other recognized standards (standards from content groups like the National Council for Social Studies or industry standard). School level goals should align to the district Strategic Plans. SLOs can be set for any subject, grade, or group of students. The SLOs identify the grade, subject, and number of students included in the measure, a timeframe for evaluating progress toward the objectives (usually one school year), assessments to measure progress, and expected student growth.

Application Description

Present a clear, credible, and sound plan for measuring and reporting the educational performance and progress of individual students, student cohorts, and the charter school as a whole including valid and reliable measures of student outcomes.

- Describe the comprehensive academic and behavioral measures that the school proposes to use. Explain how these measures align with the school's mission, the proposed educational program, and the statewide accountability system. If approved, the comprehensive measures will be used in addition to standardized public school measures to evaluate school performance. [QS A.1, A.2, C.1, C.2, E.14, and A-E performance measures]
- Establish **S.M.A.R.T. Goals** – *Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Reflect the Mission, and Time-Specific*. SMART goals reflect an understanding of the targeted student population and align with the vision, mission, and educational philosophy of the school, state standards, and the overall accountability/ assessment plan for the school. SMART goals also demonstrate that the school is dedicated to high academic achievement, successful and measurable student outcomes, and accountability for results. [QS A.1, A.2, C.2,]
- State key goals for the academic and operational performance of the school (i.e., in areas such as student performance, fiscal management and fundraising, and parental/community engagement, etc.). These goals must be consistent with the vision, mission and educational philosophy of the school. [QS A.1, B.1, C.6, E.2, E.3, E.4, E.6, E.9, E.14]
- Based on Annual Measureable Objectives, present annual growth targets for the school and for each student group on State Assessments by completing the Goals Worksheet. The student groups include: race/ethnicity, English learners, students with disabilities, and students who qualify for Free and Reduced Meal Services (FARMS). [QS A.1, C.1, C.2]

Note: The school design team, leadership and Board of Directors should recognize that goals stated in the charter application are preliminary – based on assumptions about the student population to be served – and may well need to be revised or refined once the school knows its population and has collected baseline achievement data.

Goals Worksheet

Description of Academic and Behavioral Measures

- Present a clear and sound plan for how student assessment will be used to assess progress toward your goals.
- Describe which assessments will be used to assess short-term, medium term, and long-term progress toward your goals. This should include discussions of assessments generated in classes, school-wide benchmark and formative assessments, and state assessments.
- Describe when each type of assessment will be implemented – by whom, and how this data will be collected and used.
- Describe how the data will be shared among staff, administrators, parents, and students and how it will be used.

Description of Goals

Identify short-term and long-term proficiency goals for English language arts and mathematics on State assessments. There is an expectation that a proposed charter school will reach proficiency on state mandated assessments and demonstrate growth in the content areas and in areas specific to the school's mission. (Proficiency goals should identify the targets for how many students will achieve a level of performance. Improvement goals should demonstrate growth within a period of time).

Application Description

- Identify short-term proficiency goal.
- Identify long-term proficiency goal.
- Identify any mission-specific goals for proficiency and improvement.
- Identify any operational performance goals and describe how the school will demonstrate growth in its ability to operate an efficient organization.

Section A.5. Family Involvement

Background Information for Consideration:

One of the most distinctive aspects of charter schools is that they are choice schools. This means that parents submit applications for these schools and students are selected by lottery, if more students apply than can be accommodated.

The application should demonstrate the expectations and plans for ongoing family involvement and the support of volunteers through volunteer networks. [QS A.6, B.2, C.4, D.1, D.2, E.7]

Application Description

- Describe how the school plans to build and maintain family-school partnerships that focus on strengthening support for student learning, improving communication, and encouraging parental involvement in school operations.
- Explain how you will work with parents and provide the information and training that enables them to support their children's involvement.
- Explain how parents will be involved in the governance of the charter school.
- Identify methods for handling disputes between parents and the school.
- Describe how parental satisfaction will be obtained and the process for gathering and publicizing parental satisfaction results.

Note: Community involvement is addressed under B. Organizational Plan, Section 4. Affiliations and Partnerships.

Section A.6. Target Population

Background Information for Consideration:

The target population refers to the group(s) of students a program is designed to serve. It could be students that have specific interests that match with the educational design of the school or specific needs. In order for a program to remain focused and to deliver effective services, it must clearly define its target population and establish a recruitment mechanism that will ensure it receives the appropriate population it will be serving. The purpose, goals, and objectives of the program should be the driving force behind the selection of a target population.

Application Description

- Describe the population to be served by the school and how the school will offer educational opportunity to students, including the needs of students and their families. These are essential factors that inform the design of a successful charter school, ultimately driving support for and enrollment in the school. [QS B.2, D.3, D.5, D.6]
- Explain how the services the school will provide to the target population, will help students attain the Maryland Core Educational Standards and what will be different in the educational experiences of the proposed school. [QS B.2, C.1, C.2, C.5, E.14]
- Drawing on the target population information presented in the Executive Summary, explain how the proposed mission, curriculum, teaching methods and services align with the educational needs of that population. [QS B.1, B.2, D.6]

See also Section B.5. Student Recruitment and Enrollment which includes:

- Provide evidence to prove that there is a need for the school. [QS B.2]
- Using data as well as descriptive language, please describe the plan for the recruitment of students. Explain how the school will be publicized and marketed throughout the community to a broad cross-section of families and prospective students.
- Indicate the strategies the proposed charter school will use to reach hard-to-reach families and those that are traditionally less informed about educational choice options. [QS D.1]
- Explain how your school will enroll students in numbers that are comparable to or greater than the HCPSS.
- Describe the grade levels at which students will be admitted to the school.
- Include an enrollment and admissions process that is open, fair, and in accordance with applicable law.

Section A.7. Special Student Populations

Background Information for Consideration:

All charter schools in Maryland are public schools that enroll students through a lottery process, if more students apply than can be accommodated. Therefore, all charter schools must be prepared to enroll students with diverse learning needs including limited English learners and students with disabilities, all of whom must be provided with full and meaningful access to the general educational curriculum. [QS C.5, C.6]

The general education classes need to have an environment which is responsive to the educational needs of all children, and accommodates students' needs to the maximum extent appropriate. A continuum of services must also be available through the school so that all students can participate fully in the educational goals and mission of the school as described in its charter. [QS C.7, C.8, D. 6]

Application Description

This section of the application should describe the school's programs and services, and how they will be implemented within the context of your proposed school.

Section A.8. School Climate and Discipline

Background Information for Consideration:

Refer to HCPSS policies and procedures and HCPSS Student Code Conduct.

Discipline policies and procedures related to students identified with disabilities and under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act or the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) must be in accordance with federal, state, and local regulations.

Refer to the MSDE, *Special Education and Early Intervention Division* for publications on the discipline of students with disabilities.

Application Description

- Describe the strategies the school will employ to develop and sustain a safe and orderly school climate that supports fulfillment of the educational goals. [QS B.2, D.4, D.6, E.1]
- Explain the school's student behavior philosophy and discipline policy or code of conduct for both the general student population and for students with special needs. [QS C.6, C.8, D.6, E.1]

Section A.9. Student Health and Safety

Background Information for Consideration:

School officials have a duty to examine the potential risks and have plans in place to prepare for such situations as fires, earthquakes, tornadoes, snow and ice storms, weapons or drugs in schools, civil disruptions, criminal assaults and batteries, bomb threats, trespassers on campus, serious illnesses and injuries. These plans should address, minimally: alarm systems; building evacuation or shelter plans; communications plans, both internal to the school system and external to police and fire departments, parents, and the community at large; and follow-up services such as student counseling. [QS E.10]

An emergency is by definition an unplanned event. It does not follow, however, that school officials have no responsibility for planning for emergencies. The numerous statutory references related to conduct codes, school safety, and student violence demonstrate a heightened awareness of the need to plan for emergencies, so that school personnel can implement the plan immediately. Failure to do what reasonable persons would do creates the risk of negligence claims and resultant legal liability.

After the creation of a plan, the plan should be practiced so that each member of the school staff knows exactly what is to be done. If a real emergency occurs, the plan itself must be rigorously examined for effectiveness and changed to prepare for the next emergency.

Students come to school with medical and health needs, some of which are simple and some are chronic. All of these issues implicate the importance of the provision of school health services in public schools.

Your health and safety plan (your accident prevention “program” in writing) is a valuable tool for organizing and managing the various aspects of an effective health and safety program in your school.

- It provides for a safe and healthful work environment by identifying and controlling hazards.
- It provides a mechanism for organizing thoughts and approaches and documenting activities. The process of “working it through” is as important as the plan, itself.
- It provides a structure for action, especially in an emergency.
- It facilitates coordination and communication with school staff, students, parent and other emergency response organizations and HCPSS.
- It helps maintain compliance with federal and state regulations, and school system policies. [QS E.10]

Application Description

- Describe how you will prepare a student health and safety plan. List the elements that will be part of your plan and why these components are important to include in your plan.
- Explain how you will ensure that you are following federal, state and local regulations.
- Indicate how you will make sure that the plan is implemented.

Section A.10. School Calendar and Daily Schedule

Background Information for Consideration:

The school calendar, organization of students within the educational program, and the school culture are just a few of the elements that characterize a school. The school's characteristics should be consistent with the proposed mission and educational philosophy and program.
[QS A.3, B.2, E.5]

Application Description

- Describe the school's daily schedule and annual calendar, including the annual number of days and hours of instructional time.

Section A.11. Waivers Needed to Implement the Educational Program

Background Information for Consideration:

Charter schools may request to waive certain state laws or HCPSS policies in order to operate differently or to be exempt from certain requirements. These exemptions, however, must be accompanied by plans that detail why the exemption is necessary, how the charter school will remain accountable, and what the expected outcomes will be. The documentation of a plan is called a “waiver request”, or simply a “waiver”. In other words, a waiver request is the documentation for a charter school to carry out a state law or HCPSS policy differently.

Waivers are the legal means in Maryland by which a charter school obtains the flexibility and autonomy to accomplish its educational design. Sometimes charter schools request waivers from state laws that they will abide by, but in a different manner.

A new charter school application may include a waiver request for state laws and school system policies, procedures, and collective bargaining agreements. For each statute or policy waiver the charter school is requesting, there must be a rationale, replacement plan, expected outcome and a description of how the replacement plan will be evaluated. HCPSS will review the charter school’s plan to be implemented in lieu of the state statute or HCPSS’s policy or rule.

Review key documents such as: The Public Charter School Improvement Act of 2015, Code Of Maryland Regulations (COMAR), HCPSS Collective Bargaining Contracts, and School System Policies and Regulations to determine if there are rules that might provide an impediment to accomplishing your mission, vision or to implement your program design.

For more information on filing waivers with the State Board of Education for State rules see The Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article, §9-106.

Application Description

In this section you will formally request any waivers you believe you need to obtain to operate the school. (See attachments for procedures on filing State Board waiver requests).

- First, quote the language of the statute, policy or rule you would like to change and include the reference.
- State what you hope to accomplish with the waiver. Describe briefly the circumstances that brought about the request and why the waiver is necessary to achieve improved student performance and/or streamline or facilitate local agency operations.

Begin this section with one of the following statements that applies to your application:

- ☐ The applicant intends to request waivers from a federal, state, or local statute, regulation or rule that is generally applicable to public schools which we propose be waived, or otherwise not apply to the charter school. *(If yes, please check the box and include justification narrative in this section).*
- ☐ The applicant does not intend to request any waivers to support the implementation of the Education Plan.

B. Organizational Plan

The Organizational Plan should describe the organizational structure and management of the school. It should provide a clear picture of roles and responsibilities and how the school will function. The organizational plan should address: (B.1.) school governance including the founding and governing boards, (B.2.) management and operation (organizational structure, education service providers, resource management, student records, school policies); (B.3.) staffing and human resources; (B.4.) affiliations and partnerships; (B.5.) student recruitment and enrollment; and (B.6.) waivers needed to support the implementation of the organizational plan.

Section B.1. School Governance

Background Information for Consideration:

Public school charters are granted to a Board of Directors or to an operator representing a non-profit organization. Members of Board of Directors are public agents authorized by the state and are responsible for governing charter schools. In general, it is important that individuals on the governing Board of Directors possess a wide variety of skills and qualifications that will enable them to establish and sustain an excellent school. The Board of Directors must be of a number sufficient to provide oversight of the school and to participate in the considerable amount of work required to open and then govern a charter school. [QS E.1, E.2]

The *National Association of Charter School Authorizers* (NACSA) (Cornell-Feist, 2007) recommends that governing board members have expertise in the following areas:

- Academic oversight;
- Human resources;
- Strategic planning;
- Public relations and marketing;
- Legal and financial affairs; and
- Real estate.

Members of a founding group may be proposed for the school's Board of Directors for the non-profit organization or may assume other roles such as a Director of Operations in the school. The founding group is established from the date that it has its first organizing meeting through the time that the charter is granted. Once the charter is granted, the founding group adopts by-laws and elects officers, making it a true, legal governing Board of Directors. Each founding group should be able to clearly define who is proposed to be a member of the Board of Directors and what other roles will be assumed.

Application Description

Describe the entity that will hold the charter and be responsible for governing the school. Provide documentation of the entity's legal status including *Articles of Incorporation*, Bylaws and documentation of legal not-for-profit status. To the extent that the organization exists and has functions independent of the operation of the proposed school, provide a brief description of the organization, its history, its current operation, and the relationship between its existing operations and the proposed school.

A. Governing Board Composition:

- List the members of the proposed governing board including: their names, current employment, and relevant experience or qualifications for serving on the board, including, but not limited to, their relationship to the community in which the school will be located. For each proposed governing board member, the application should include, as an attachment, a resume or Curriculum Vitae (CV) [QS E.1]. Complete forms B.1-A Board of Director listing found in Appendix L and Conflict of Interest Form found in Appendix M.
- Describe any specific plans for recruitment of additional governing board members, including, but not limited to, plans that would involve parental, professional educator or community involvement in the governance of the school. Briefly describe the recruitment, and selection plans for board members.
- Describe the orientation process for new board members. [QS E.8]
- Describe the process the board will use for its own evaluation and development. [QS E.2]

B. School Policies:

- Provide a list of all HCPSS policies and compliance with requirements.

C. School Management Contracts

- If the Board of Directors intends to enter into a contract with an educational management organization (EMO) (in Maryland a for-profit entity cannot be a charter school operator), provide the following:
 - a. Description of the proposed contract, including roles and responsibilities, performance evaluation measures, payment structure, conditions for renewal and termination, and investment disclosure;
 - b. Draft of the proposed management contract describing the services the EMO will be providing to the school;
 - c. Recent corporate annual report and audited financial statements, and Maryland Certificate of Good Standing;

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- d. Description of the firm's roles and responsibilities for the financial management of the proposed charter school, including descriptions of the accounting software to be used, the procedures for financial reporting to the Board of Directors, and the internal controls that will be in place for the proposed charter school;
- e. Names, addresses, and telephone numbers of other schools managed by the EMO, as well as descriptive information on the grades served, numbers of students, years of operation, and student performance data; and
- f. A summary of the company's history, including a description of how it implements the program, past results of its management efforts, the company philosophy, and the background on corporate leaders.

Required Exhibits

- Articles of Incorporation
- Maryland Certificate of Good Standing with Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation
- Proposed Governing Board of Directors, resumes and conflict of interest forms (See Appendix M for forms that must be completed by each prospective board member)
- Governing Board Assurances (See Appendix L)
- Recent audit report
- By-laws
- Schedule for Meetings
- If applicable, Education Management Organization Documents
 - Description of the proposed contract;
 - Draft of the proposed management contract;
 - Recent corporate annual report and audited financial statements, and Maryland Certificate of Good Standing;
 - Description of the firm's roles and responsibilities for the financial management of the proposed charter school, including descriptions of the accounting software to be used, the procedures for financial reporting to the Board of Directors, and the internal controls that will be in place for the proposed charter school;
 - Names, addresses, and telephone numbers of other schools managed by the EMO, as well as descriptive information on the grades served, numbers of students, years of operation, and student performance data; and
 - A summary of the company's history, including a description of how it implements the program, past results of its management efforts, the company philosophy, and the background on corporate leaders.

Section B.2. Management and Operations

Background Information for Consideration:

Management and Operations Processes are a group of activities which are recurring in nature and contribute significantly to the growth and development of the school as an organization. Managing these activities efficiently so that maximum benefits can be captured is an essential component of organizational development and what helps to mold a high performing school.

Organizations with good management processes and skilled leaders have even managed to put an abstract activity such as Innovation as part of their process management cycle. Even thinking or strategizing for the future is part of required management and operational processes since it involves a continuous cycle of school improvement. Thus the first step in implementing effective management systems is to understand the range of activities and processes that must be designed, documented and implemented to ensure adherence to on a consistent and reliable basis.

This section addresses several of these essential components including organizational structure, educational service providers, student records, and school policies.

B.2.a. Organizational Structure

Application Description

- Describe the organizational structure of the school and its day-to-day operation. [QS B.2, E.2]
- Explain the management roles and responsibilities of key administrators with respect to instructional leadership, curriculum development and implementation, personnel decisions, budgeting, financial management, legal compliance, and any special staffing needs. Your narrative should describe the primary responsibilities for each key management position and identify critical skills or experience that will be priorities for fulfillment of these responsibilities. Be sure to give particular attention to the roles, responsibilities and actual (if already identified) or desired qualifications of the school leader. [QS B.2, E.2, E.5, E.14]
- Discuss any plans for recruiting and selection of the school leader if no one is already identified. [QS E.2, E.13]

Required Exhibits

- ☐ Organizational Chart that shows the staffing structure and reporting responsibilities for the Board of Directors, administration, and staff.
- ☐ Key position descriptions, including critical skills or experience for every employee on the organizational chart (description can be general for core content teachers).

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Qualifications for hiring should provide assurance that criminal background checks and child abuse registry check will be conducted for every employee in accordance with the law.

- ☐ Proof of application to, or letter from, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) documenting nonprofit status 501(3) (c) (IRS Form 1023). Once filed the IRS will send you a commitment letter to verify your non-profit status.

B.2.b. Education Service Providers

Background Information for Consideration:

The term “education service provider” (ESP) refers to any number of organizations that contracts with the governing board of a charter school to provide comprehensive services. The major types of ESPs that serve charter schools are: education management organizations (EMOs), charter management organizations (CMOs), and comprehensive school design providers.

Application Description

Indicate if your non-profit intends to contract with an education service provider (ESP). After making the initial declaration, an applicant should complete the remainder of the section only if the school expects to contract with an ESP. Other applicants should proceed directly to the next section.

Select the statement that is applicable and proceed as directed:

- ☐ We do **not** intend to contract with an education service provider. ***Skip to the next section.***
- ☐ We intend to contract with an education service provider. ***Continue with completion of this section.***

If the school expects to contract for services with an education service provider:

- ✓ *Discuss the school’s decision to work with an ESP, in general, and the selected ESP, in particular.*
- ✓ *Describe the planned relationship between the school and the ESP and how that relationship will further the school’s mission and program.*
- ✓ *Provide a clear description of the services to be provided by the ESP.*
- ✓ *Describe the ESP’s roles and responsibilities in relation to the school’s management and governing board. Describe the school’s performance expectations for the ESP and, how the school will evaluate ESP performance?*

Required Exhibits

- ☐ Background information on the ESP including relevant performance data for other schools that the ESP has managed and a list of any other schools managed by the ESP in the State;
- ☐ ESP financial records;
- ☐ Maryland Certificate of Good Standing from Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation;
- ☐ Contact information; and

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- ☐ The services agreement as executed between the school and the ESP (or template version or draft if not yet executed).

B.2.c. Student Records

Background Information for Consideration:

Student records provide a written picture of the academic performance of a child. Therefore, the orderly and complete maintenance of these records is necessary to ensure accurate information is available to plan for a child's education.

The Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) requires schools to have systems of information on enrollment, attendance, and promotion. The Student Record System must be used to initiate student records for each student entering Maryland public schools. Each school is responsible for obtaining the required information in a manner that is most suitable to its own situation. The information that is recorded will be kept as a permanent record of the student and, therefore, must be accurate, readable, and current. Care should be taken to avoid the possibility violating the private rights of both students and parents or guardian. Personal information needed from a parent should be obtained at the time of registration. If it is not obtained at this time, personal information should be obtained in a later conference with the parent(s) or guardian(s).

All student records are to be maintained in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 20 U.S.C. §1232g, and its implementing regulations, 34 C.F.R. pt. 99; the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. §1400 *et seq.*, and its implementing regulations, 34 C.F.R. §§300.610 – 300.627; and the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) 13A.08.02, Student Records.

Application Description

Each school should develop and implement procedures to ensure that these data are collected and records maintained accurately in accordance with the guidelines set forth in Maryland Student Records Manual and in HCPSS policies.

- Describe the system for acquiring and maintaining student records as required by HCPSS and in accordance with applicable laws. Who will be responsible for collecting, maintaining, and using student record information? How will this system be implemented and monitored for accuracy?
- How will the records be secured while the student is enrolled at the school? Discuss how the school will comply with requests from parents or eligible students as pertains to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). How will the school ensure the confidentiality of these student records?
- Describe the system for disseminating information about students as required by HCPSS and in accordance with applicable laws.
- If a student withdraws, what is the policy for releasing records?
- Describe your plan for ensuring that compliance requirements are monitored and met.

B.2.d. School Policies

Background Information for Consideration:

Policies help define rules, regulations, procedures and protocols for schools. All of these are necessary to help a school run smoothly and safely and ensure that students receive a quality education. Schools have policies for several reasons. Policies establish rules and regulations to guide acceptable behavior and ensure that the school environment is safe for students, teachers and school staff. School policies also help create a productive learning environment. [QS E.5- E.14]

Having these policies in place means there are determined procedures for how school operations are handled, down to every minute detail, so that educators, staff and students know what is expected and can act accordingly. This saves time, prevents confusion and unifies the school.

Students, teachers and staff members deserve to feel physically and psychologically secure in their environment. In order to create this environment, policies are created and implemented that establish safety standards for the physical environment and mental state of students and staff. This is done by creating policies such as fire drills, anti-bullying policies and mental health guidelines. [QS E.10]

These policies establish standards and help hold schools and educators accountable to the public. This is important for relating education to the community and making it responsible to the larger world. Accountability through the use of goal-oriented policies ensures that students are receiving a valuable education. [QS C.2, D.4, E.2]

Policies are important because they help a school establish rules and procedures and create standards of quality for learning and safety, as well as expectations and accountability. Without these, schools would lack the structure and function necessary to provide the educational needs of students. Ultimately, policies are necessary to the success and safety of a school.

Application Description

- List and describe the key policies you feel will be necessary to develop before the opening of the school to ensure that the school is operated effectively and ensures that expectations and procedures are fully understood and implemented. Please refer to C.7: Pre-opening Plan for list of recommended school policies and procedures.
- Explain your enrollment policies, including the order of selection; lotteries; and the decision-making on enrollment of siblings, children of founders, and students into grade levels after the opening year.

Look for any HCPSS policies and procedures that might impact the development of your own school policies.

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Required Exhibits

- ☐ Decision-making matrix;
- ☐ Communications with stakeholders (board meeting, school progress);
- ☐ Hiring recommendations for principal and staff;
- ☐ Dispute resolution;
- ☐ Procurement policy; and
- ☐ Student grading and promotion.

Section B.3. Staffing and Human Resources

Background Information for Consideration:

All staff members of the charter school will be employees of the HCPSS and subject to the terms of the applicable negotiated agreement. [QS E.13]

In responding to this section, consider the following questions:

- What strategies does the school have for recruiting and retaining effective teachers?
- How do the staffing-related budget assumptions align with educational program needs?
- How does the staffing plan reflect the anticipated enrollment and growth of the school?
- How will the school determine appropriate experience, training and skills of non-certificated instructional personnel?
- What will be the employer-employee relationship for staff at the school?
- When and how will the Board of Directors review and evaluate the school leader/principal? [QS E.2]

Application Description

- Identify and discuss any request for waivers regarding certification for non-traditional employees and for any provisions contained in bargaining unit contracts that impede the school's ability to implement the school design, mission and vision.
- Describe the standards that will be used in hiring teachers, administrators, and other school staff, and how these standards will meet or exceed the requirements of the *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)*.
- Describe the professional backgrounds, depth of experience, and personal qualities that will be sought in principals, teachers, and other school staff and how those qualities will help the school implement its vision and achieve the goals you have set.
- Describe the recruitment strategies that will be employed to achieve the desired quality of staff. Describe the plan for conducting background checks on all school personnel, including volunteers, prior to the beginning of their employment or service. Be sure to check with the HCPSS Charter School Liaison to find out about any policies and procedures regarding the hiring process in the HCPSS.

- Explain the staff selection process, including interview protocols and the criteria used to make staffing decisions. Develop a staffing plan and describe the anticipated number of staff members, their positions, and the pupil teacher ratio. Demonstrate your knowledge of the HCPSS collective bargaining and personnel evaluation system.

Section B.4. Affiliations and Partnerships

Background Information for Consideration:

When community organizations are engaged in the life of the school, the resources available for teaching and the learning environment expand. When teachers and principals build trust with each other and extend that trust to their work with the school community, they can develop a common vision for school reform and work together to accelerate necessary growth and development in the school. Additionally, an intersecting set of relationships among adults (parents, teachers, community and service providers) can provide a holistic environment in which students are supported with a unified set of expectations and behaviors. The relationship between the school and other community institutions such as community organizations, businesses and religious institutions can also be understood in this way. Interpersonal relationships built between individuals across these institutions provide the glue for innovative collaborations on the institutional level. These partnerships strengthen relationships among people in the entire community. Building the collective capacity for schools to thrive in this way has a direct impact on student achievement.

Application Description

- Present a vision and strategy for community involvement that is reasonably likely to further the school's mission and program. [QS B.1, E.6]
- Describe the scope of community support for the proposed charter school and its organizers. [QS D.3, D.4]
- Provide a list of the organizations that will partner with your school and the focus of these partnerships. Discuss commitments (if any) for partnerships or other relationships with community organizations or individuals that would enrich the learning opportunities of students in your school. Document any commitments with letters of support that identify specific details of the commitments. [QS D.3, D.4]
- Describe the nature of potential partnerships including examples of how community partners will play an integral part in the life of the school and identify specific organizations with which the school is already working, or likely to partner.
- Describe the coordination strategies that will integrate partnership activities into the school program and plans to further develop additional community partnerships. [QS D.6]

Section B.5. Student Recruitment and Enrollment

Background Information for Consideration:

Important to meeting the school mission and vision, is the ability to attract and retain students and be able to successfully implement and deliver the envisioned educational design and obtain promised outcomes. Developing and implementing a plan that demonstrates an understanding of recruitment best practices is a first step in engaging the participation and involvement of the school community in that vision. Once a community needs assessment has been conducted then it is time to formulate a plan that will fulfill and guarantee school enrollment capacity. A strong strategy includes the development of an effective evaluation of potential target markets used to inform the recruitment plan, and a communication plan that includes many advertising mediums and audiences.

Application Description

- Provide evidence to prove that there is a need for the school. [QS B.2]
- Using data as well as descriptive language, please describe the plan for the recruitment of students. Explain how the school will be publicized and marketed throughout the community to a broad cross-section of families and prospective students.
- Indicate the strategies the proposed charter school will use to reach hard-to-reach families and those that are traditionally less informed about educational choice options. [QS D.1]
- Explain how your school will enroll students in numbers that are comparable to or greater than the HCPSS.
- Describe the grade levels at which students will be admitted to the school.
- Include an enrollment and admissions process that is open, fair, and in accordance with applicable law.

Required Exhibits

- ☐ Student application

See also Section A.6. Target Population.

Section B.6. Waivers Needed to Support the Implementation of the Organizational Plan

Background Information for Consideration:

There are some areas that cannot be waived according to the Public Charter School Improvement Act 2015 - these are: audit requirements, student participation in state assessments and the health, safety or civil rights of a student or an employee of the charter school. It is important to remember that other areas pertaining to state, federal or local regulations and policy can be waived.

Some examples of areas that can be waived and apply to this section are as follows:

Requirements that charter schools:

- receive and /or purchase centralized services from the HCPSS;
- adhere to all HCPSS policies and procedures;
- participate in the choice process for student recruitment and lottery.

Research areas in law, regulations, policy and union contracts that can affect the successful implementation of the organizational plan proposed for your school and identify waiver needs.

Follow the procedures described in the waiver document in the information section of this guide.

Application Description

In this section you will formally request a waiver (See attachments for procedures on filing State Board waiver requests).

- First, quote the language of the policy and/or implementation procedure you would like to change and include the reference.
- State what you hope to accomplish with the waiver. Describe briefly the circumstances that brought about the request and why the waiver is necessary to achieve improved student performance and/or streamline or facilitate HCPSS operations.

Begin this section with one of the following statements that applies to your application:

- ☐ The applicant intends to request a waiver from a federal, state, or local statute, regulation or rule that is generally applicable to public schools which we propose be waived, or otherwise not apply to the charter school. *(If yes, please check the box and include justification narrative in this section).*
- ☐ The applicant does not intend to request a waiver to support the implementation of the Organizational Plan.

C. Business Plan

The Business Plan should outline the management of financial and other procedures, pre-opening tasks, and detail the budget. The business plan should address: (C.1.) budget, fundraising plan, and resource management; (C.2.) financial management; (C. 3.) facility; (C.4.) food services; (C.5.) transportation; and (C.6.) insurances. See also information provided in the Section C.7. Pre-opening Procedures.

Section C.1. Budget

Background Information for Consideration:

A budget is a systematic method of allocating financial, physical, and human resources to achieve strategic goals. Organizations develop budgets in order to monitor progress toward their goals, help control spending, and predict cash flow. Because the budget expresses how resources will be allocated and what measures will be used to evaluate progress, budget development is more effective when linked to the overall organization's strategic plan. Linking the two gives all managers and employees a clearer understanding of strategic goals. This understanding, in turn, leads to greater support for goals, better coordination of tactics, and, ultimately, to stronger organizational performance.

Application Description

- Provide a detailed narrative regarding the school's estimated revenues and expenditures for the proposed term of the charter including the preoperational startup year. [QS E.3, E.4]
- Provide a cash flow analysis for the first fiscal year of operation (July 1–June 30). Include explanation and discussion of key budget assumptions underlying the budget projections and explain how the budget aligns with and supports implementation of the educational program.
- If the school anticipates incurring debt for any reason, such as for acquisition of its facility, the budget must address the schedule for debt repayment and the budget discussion should elaborate on the repayment assumptions and plan.
- Discuss the school's contingency plans for cash flow challenges, a budget shortfall, lower than expected student enrollment or other financial challenges in the early years of operation?
- Provide an operating budget covering each year of the requested charter term that contains revenue projections, expenses and anticipated fund balances. The budget should be based on the projected student enrollment indicated on the cover page of the application.

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Required Exhibits

- ☐ Budget for the proposed charter term; complete attached budget form.
- ☐ Opening year cash flow analysis.

C.1.a. Fundraising Plan

Background Information for Consideration:

Fundraising events can be extremely valuable sources of revenue and awareness for any nonprofit organization. However, there is a lot more to successfully pulling one off than mobilizing a few volunteers and getting participants to encourage pledge donations. Planning a fundraising strategy and then implementing it successfully will help the organization to identify multi-level opportunities that arise; and then build capabilities to capitalize on them. The more diverse your sources of funding; the more you will be able to achieve financial sustainability. Fundraising sources can include revenue streams from individual donors, foundations, school sponsored events, and activities to gain earned revenue in addition to searching and applying for government grants.

Application Description

- Describe the school's fundraising plan. [QS E.4]
- Report on the current status of any fundraising efforts, including verification of any fundraising monies reported in the school's start-up or operating budgets.

C.1.b. Resource Management

Background Information for Consideration:

The efficient and effective deployment for an organization's resources is key to a school's ability to implement a school design. Resource management includes planning for the allocation for using available resources, especially in the near term, to achieve goals for the future. It is the process of allocating resources among the various projects or business units.

Such resources may include financial resources, supplies, equipment and space inventory, human skills, or information technology (IT). [QS B.2]

Application Description

- Describe what criteria the school would use to procure, allocate, use, and maintain resources in the school. [QS E.2, E.5, E.11]

Section C.2. Financial Management

Background Information for Consideration:

The financial plan should provide an understanding of how the applicant intends to develop and manage the school's infrastructure and finances. It should present a clear picture of the school's revenue projections; expenditure requirements; facilities' needs; transportation and food service plans; and pre-opening plan. Overall, the financial plan should reflect the commitment to maintaining the financial viability of the school. [QS E.3, E.4, E.5]

Complete Budget Spreadsheet form found in Appendix O.

Application Description

- Submit a separate explanation and discussion of key budget assumptions underlying the budget projections and explain how the budget aligns with and supports implementation of the educational program.
- If the school anticipates incurring debt for any reason, such as for acquisition of its facility, the budget must address the schedule for debt repayment and the budget discussion should elaborate on the repayment assumptions and plan.
- Discuss the school's contingency plans for cash flow challenges: a budget shortfall, lower than expected student enrollment or other financial challenges that you may foresee in the early years of operation.
- Describe the systems and procedures for managing the school's finances and identify the staff position(s) that will be responsible for financial oversight and management.
- Describe how the school's finances will be managed and who will be responsible for the protection of financial records.
- Describe the method by which accounting records will be maintained.
- Describe the financial controls, including an annual audit and regular Board of Directors review of financial statements, which will be employed to safeguard finances.

The response should address, among other things, the school's plans in the following areas:

- Provisions for an annual independent financial audit;
- Development and dissemination of an annual financial report;
- Internal controls and who is responsible;
- Documentation of Federal Form 990 (IRS);
- Providing recommended liability insurance to indemnify the school, its Board of Directors, staff, and teachers against tort claims; and
- A three year project budget.

Section C.3. Facility

Background Information for Consideration:

Appendix G. Sample List of Facility Requirements for Charter Schools; Appendix H. Leasing; and Appendix I. Construction Plans.

Application Description

- Discuss the school's facility needs based on the educational program and anticipated enrollment. Ensure that the facility is appropriate for the ages and grade levels of students.
 - If the applicant has identified a facility, indicate the location (street address, city, and zip code) and provide either floor plans or a description including, at a minimum, the number and size of the classrooms, common areas, administrative areas, recreational space, any community facilities, and any residential facilities. [QS E.10]
- If the school has discussed or established specific lease or purchase terms, include discussion of the proposed terms and any draft agreements or letters on intent. If the school intends to lease facilities from the HCPSS, discuss the status of those plans and provide evidence of any HCPSS commitments.
- To the extent that the facility will require renovation or 'build out,' describe those plans including anticipated timing and cost. If the school anticipates incurring debt as part of its facilities acquisition plan, the budget must include a repayment plan, as indicated in the Budget section, above.
- If the applicant has **not** identified or selected a facility, specify potential locations that are under consideration and discuss the process and timeline for selecting, acquiring, renovating (if appropriate) and taking occupancy of a suitable facility.
- Explain how the facility will be in compliance with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and provide an assurance that it will be accessible to and meet the needs of students with physical disabilities. Describe the actions that will be taken to ensure the facility is in compliance with applicable laws, regulations and policies and is ready for the school's opening.
- If the school anticipates incurring debt as part of its facilities acquisition plan, the budget must include a repayment plan, as indicated in the Budget section, above. If a facility has not been selected, specify potential locations that are under consideration and discuss the process and timeline for selecting, acquiring, renovating (if appropriate) and taking occupancy of a suitable facility.

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- Explain the anticipated costs for the facility, including renovation, rent, utilities and maintenance. Identify, if applicable, any funding sources (other than state and local funding) that will be applied to facilities-related costs.
- Describe the back-up facilities plan. What is the alternate plan for facilities if the proposed facility is not available or is determined to be inappropriate for the school's opening?

Section C.4. Food Services

Background Information for Consideration:

Every school must meet the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) requirements. Please see the description of the NSLP below. For more information on the specific requirements see: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/lunch/>

Schools participating in the NSLP earn a fixed federal reimbursement for each school lunch program served consistent with United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) nutritional guidelines. All public and non-profit private schools can participate as long as they operate a non-profit food service program; agree to make meals available to students, using federally set income criteria; offer meals that meet federally specified nutritional requirements; and follow the recordkeeping and claims procedures required by the USDA.

If the application is for a waiver to not participate in the HCPSS school lunch program, please see the waiver section. Waiver applicants must present a well thought-out food service plan designed to meet the needs of the school's target population.

Application Description

- Describe the food services that the charter school will provide to students, including whether the school will provide breakfast and/or snacks in addition to lunch.
- Indicate whether the charter school will participate in the Federal school lunch or school breakfast programs.
- Further indicate whether the charter school will participate in the HCPSS food service programs and whether food will be prepared on or off site.
- Propose a way in which you plan to administer the free and reduced lunch program.
- Demonstrate well thought-out plans for food service facilities and equipment that will meet local and state requirements.

Section C.5. Transportation

Background Information for Consideration:

Refer to the following COMAR regulations:

13A.06.07	Student Transportation
11.17.03	Motor Vehicle Administration – Driver Licensing
11.19	Motor Vehicle Administration – School Vehicles

Application Description

- State whether the school intends to provide transportation for students.
- If so, describe the transportation plan and explain budget revenue and expenditure assumptions including those related to anticipated state aid pursuant to Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article, §5-205 and §8-410.
- If the school intends to contract with the HCPSS or any other third party for transportation services, discuss the status of those plans and provide evidence of the third party's readiness and terms for providing those services.

Section C.6. Insurance

Background Information for Consideration:

No applicant will receive final approval to open until a description of the public charter school's insurance coverage plans are provided, including:

- Health and worker's compensation
- General liability
- Property (for leased facilities)
- Directors' and employees' liability coverage
- Business automobile liability
- Catastrophic student accident insurance
- Crime insurance

Approval of insurance will be granted only after submission to the Board of original certificates of insurance signed by authorized representatives of the insurers, or, at the Board's request, certified copies of the required insurance policies. The required insurance shall be in force throughout the term of the charter school's operations.

See information provided in the Section C.7. Pre-opening Procedures for insurance requirements in Maryland.

Application Description

- Indicate the types of insurance and the levels of coverage sought. All insurance policies required shall be endorsed to provide that the policy is not subject to cancellation, nonrenewal, or material reduction in coverage until sixty (60) days prior written notice has been given to the Board of Education of Howard County.

Section C.7: Pre-opening Plan

Background Information for Consideration:

An effective planning process for the successful opening of a school is an essential feature of every successful high performing organization. For schools, this process first involves identifying and developing consensus on the desired school's ethos, culture and learning environment. This vision can then drive the activities that must be implemented, helps to figure out the anticipated level of resources and management support that will be required to achieve what the school wants to achieve within the opening of the school and serve to improve the quality of experiences of the pupils, their parents, school staff and, most importantly, serves to raise the standards for what the school will look and feel like to the school community. The opening school plan itself also provides a framework for the Board, the principal and the staff and serves to harness the collective skills and talents of all the staff in developing a high-performing school environment. It also helps to establish a high level of accountability that ensures that the organization is ready to serve students.

Prior to the opening of the public charter school, the following information must be provided to the HCPSS:

A. Final Facilities Safety Documents

The safety and structural soundness of the school facility and compliance with applicable state minimum building codes and fire protection codes must be met. Submit written documentation of:

- Lease/Purchase
- Inspections required by the state;
- Inspections required by Howard County Fire Department; and
- Compliance with all other federal and state health and safety laws and regulations.

B. Final Governance Documents

- Updated governing board members' names, addresses, phone numbers, resumes, and disclosure information;
- Annual calendar of meetings; and
- Bylaws and list of policies for development during first year.

C. Final Insurance Documents, Budgets, and Financial Records

- Insurance coverage plans, including certificates of insurance for health and worker's compensation, general liability, property (for leased facilities), directors' and employees' liability coverage, business automobile liability, catastrophic student accident insurance, and crime insurance;
- Updated budgets with projections for five years;

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- Purchasing and payroll procedures; and
- Financial recordkeeping and inventory.

D. School Policies and Procedures

- Annual school calendar and school schedule;
- Transportation;
- Food Service;
- Student recruitment, admissions, lottery, and enrollment;
- Health Services;
- Emergency Plan;
- Student and staff records;
- Discipline Policy and Dress Code for students;
- Grading and Grade level structures;

E. Educational Design

- Curriculum Frameworks
- Programs for special populations (English learners, students with disabilities)
- Assessments
- Intervention services
- Instructional materials
- Course descriptions and specialized courses
- Student handbook
- Student Information Management System

F. Staffing Plan

- Employee Handbook
- Organizational Chart
- Teacher and staff rosters
- Office team
- Leadership Team
- Custodial/support Team
- Professional Development Plan
- Orientation and training plan for all staff

Evaluation Criteria

Instructions for Application Reviewers:

The evaluation rubric is designed to guide the review of charter school applications submitted to the HCPSS. The evaluation rubric is aligned to each section and subsection of the application, and lists the criteria by which the reviewers are to evaluate each section and subsection. Throughout the evaluation, reviewer (s) will be asked to rate how well the applicant's responses address the evaluation criteria. Reviewers are to rate their responses with a value between 1 and 4. These ratings are defined as follows:

Points	Rating	Characteristics
4	Meets the Standard	The response thoroughly addresses and demonstrates understanding of key areas and indicates capacity to open and operate a quality charter school. It addresses the topic with specific and accurate information that shows thorough preparation and presents a clear, realistic picture of how the school expects to operate.
3	Approaches the Standard	The response addresses most of the selection criteria, but lacks some detail and requires important additional information in order to meet the standard.
2	Partially Meets the Standard	The response meets some of the criteria but has substantial gaps in a number of areas. It requires significant amount of additional information.
0-1	Does Not Meet the standard	The response lacks meaningful detail; demonstrates lack of preparation; or otherwise raises substantial concerns about the applicant's understanding of the issue in concept and/or ability to meet the requirement in practice.

A. EDUCATION PLAN

Section A.1. Educational School Design

When describing the school's educational school design, a response that meets the standard will:

- Include a persuasive explanation of how the proposed school design and founding group are likely to accomplish performance outcomes;
- Present evidence of school design success (if drawing on existing school models) and evidence that the proposed approach will lead to improved student performance for the school's target population;
- Present research or other information that supports the efficacy of your school design (if your school design does not have a precedent) describes the research used to formulate the design;
- Align with the school's mission and responds to the needs of the school's target population;
- Present evidence of how the school's goals and objectives will further the accomplishment of goals in the plan; and
- Present strategies for measuring performance objectives and outcomes.

A.1. Educational School Design: Evaluator Comments and Questions	
Strengths of Written Proposal:	
Concerns and Questions of Written Proposal:	
Interviews	
Interview Strengths	
Interview Questions and Concerns	
Rating for this Application Component	

Section A.2. Curriculum and Instruction

If the school intends to use core curricula that have already been developed, a response that meets the standard will:

- Present a clear and coherent framework for teaching and learning -- particularly in core academic areas -- and will demonstrate alignment with Maryland's College and Career-Ready Standards and Grade Level Expectations;
- Demonstrate understanding of relevant instructional strategies; and
- Present a coherent framework for professional development that is likely to support effective implementation of the curriculum.

If the school intends to develop core curricula following approval, a response that meets the standards will:

- Present a viable plan for development of the curricula for core academic areas and for ensuring alignment with Maryland State Standards at each grade level;
- Describe the framework for development of the curricula for core subjects; and
- Identify a sound research experience or theoretical base and foundational materials that will guide curriculum development.

When describing the school's instructional processes, a response that meets the standard will:

- Present a comprehensive approach to measurable objectives for subject areas and grade levels;
- Present a description of the major instructional strategies that will be used, the approach for differentiating instruction, the research basis for the strategies; and a process for determining how instruction will be monitored and evaluated; and
- Describe a comprehensive approach to planning and implementing professional development.

For secondary programs, a response that meets the standard will:

- Provide a comprehensive explanation of how the courses and curriculum will prepare students for career-ready and college-level work.

For virtual learning opportunities, a response that meets the standard will:

- Clearly describe the courses and/or programs to be offered online and offline;

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- Differentiates teachers' roles from traditional roles;
- Comprehensively describe the technology hardware, software, equipment, and other materials the school will use;
- Present a sound plan for technical support and troubleshooting; and
- Present a sound back-up plan for delivering instruction in case of technical or other problems.

A.2. Curriculum and Instruction: Evaluator Comments and Questions	
Strengths of Written Proposal:	
Concerns and Questions of Written Proposal:	
Interviews	
Interview Strengths	
Interview Questions and Concerns	
Rating for this Application Component	

Section A.3. Assessment System

When describing the school's assessment system, a response that meets the standard will:

- Explain how the school will evaluate progress of individual students, student cohorts over time, and the school as a whole toward meeting the requirements under Maryland's State accountability system;
- Describe how the school will use student assessment data to drive key decisions aimed at the evaluation, retention and support of the teaching staff, aligned with the state's approach to incorporating status and growth data;
- Discuss how the school will use assessment information to modify the educational program and improve instruction, student learning, and staff development;
- Align with the school's mission, objectives, and overall educational priorities, and provide a description of the methods by which the proposed charter school will determine its progress toward achieving its' objectives;
- Demonstrate understanding of the school's obligation to participate in the statewide system of assessment and accountability;
- Demonstrate how the educational program will enable all students to meet challenging State academic achievement standards;
- Explain how the school will use assessment data to drive key decisions aimed at improving academic outcomes;
- Demonstrate understanding of and commitment to compliance with assessment requirements applicable to all state public schools consistent with state law and relevant policies of the State Department of Education including the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards, as applicable;
- Indicate whether, in addition to administering state assessments as required by state law, the school will use additional standardized assessment tools to determine and report student progress. In either case, explain why that decision was made for the targeted population and how the data will be used;
- Include descriptions and/or examples of assessments that are consistent with the school's mission, program, and high expectations of students, and that are based upon research. Provide a schedule for when benchmark and interim assessments will be administered;
- Describe which internal/school-developed instruments will be administered in order to measure and report student progress. Explain why these particular assessments were selected for the targeted student population and how the data will be used; and

- Define a meaningful and practical approach for measuring student progress toward attaining non-academic goals.

A.3. Assessment System: Evaluator Comments and Questions	
Strengths of Written Proposal:	
Concerns and Questions of Written Proposal:	
Interviews	
Interview Strengths	
Interview Questions and Concerns	
Rating for this Application Component	

Section A.4. School Specific Goals and Objectives/Comprehensive Performance Measures

When describing the school-specific goals and objectives/comprehensive performance measures, a response that meets the standard will:

- Provide a complete Goals Worksheet that describes the assessment system and its implementation, as well as short-term and long-term goals (Goals Worksheet);
- Present performance measures that are a valid and reliable means for determining whether students are meeting performance standards;
- Ensure that the school will be held to the same performance standards as other schools and is specific about the timeframe in which students will be expected to meet the performance standards; and
- Provide a thorough, clear, measurable, externally credible, and conceptually sound design for measuring and reporting the performance and progress of the school as a whole and the academic and social development of each student to all relevant stakeholders. Indicate which audiences will receive this information and how often.

A.4. School Specific Goals and Objectives/Comprehensive Performance Measures: Evaluator Comments and Questions	
Strengths of Written Proposal:	
Concerns and Questions of Written Proposal:	
Interviews	
Interview Strengths	
Interview Questions and Concerns	
Rating for this Application Component	

Section A.5. Family Involvement

When describing family involvement, a response that meets the standard will:

- Describe how the school will assist families in understanding and supporting the school's mission and vision (QS D.1.)
- Describe how the school will inform families about the operations and development of the school, including providing information to students of all races, languages, and abilities (QS E.5);
- Provide an overview of how families were involved in the development of the school;
- Identify specific strategies for building and maintaining positive family-school partnerships, including education and training, participation, addressing parental disputes, and parent satisfaction; and
- Describe how the school plans to involve parents/guardians as partners in the education of their children and build and maintain family-school partnerships that focus on strengthening support for the school's goals.

A.5. Family Involvement: Evaluator Comments and Questions	
Strengths of Written Proposal:	
Concerns and Questions of Written Proposal:	
Interviews	
Interview Strengths	
Interview Questions and Concerns	
Rating for this Application Component	

Section A.6. Target Population

When describing the target population the school plans to serve, a response that meets the standard will:

- Speak to the value of the school, based on its own merit;
- Describe the student population that the proposed charter school would serve and the needs of that population;
- Discuss the reason for the selection of the community and the school's ability to serve this particular area;
- Provide a specific rationale for how this school will enhance or expand the educational options, including whether the innovative methods to be used by the proposed school differ from those of the HCPSS, which the charter school is expected to enroll students;
- Describe how the educational option provided by the charter school will address the needs of the student population;
- Provide a description of how the founding group has assessed parental support within the HCPSS for the proposed school;
- Present a persuasive explanation of how the proposed mission, curriculum, teaching methods and services are likely to meet the needs of the target population; and
- Describe attendance and enrollment policy.

A.6. Target Population: Evaluator Comments and Questions	
Strengths of Written Proposal:	
Concerns and Questions of Written Proposal:	
Interviews	
Interview Strengths	
Interview Questions and Concerns	
Rating for this Application Component	

Section A.7. Special Student Populations

When describing the school's plan for special student populations and student services, a response that meets the standard will:

- Describe your plan for responsive general education classes and how you will provide students with disabilities and/or limited English proficiency access to the general education curriculum;
- Describe the processes and procedures, in compliance with all state and federal laws and regulations that the proposed school will employ to identify, assess, and serve students who are English learners (EL) and gifted and talented;
- Include a description of support services to be offered, the settings in which these required services will be implemented, the qualifications of individuals who will implement these services, and how the program will be evaluated;
- Include a description of how services for English learners (EL) will be delivered within the school's daily schedule, the titles, salaries, and qualifications of the individuals delivering the services, and some of the methods they will use;
- Describe the processes and procedures, in compliance with all state and federal laws and regulations that the proposed school will employ to identify, assess, and provide specialized instruction to each student in need of special education. Include a description of support services to be offered and how student identification and assessment will be conducted including the development of individualized education programs;
- Include a description of how services for students in need of special education services will be delivered within the school's daily schedule, the titles, salaries, and qualifications of the individuals delivering the services, and some of the methods they will use;
- Indicate the special education staffing levels the school intends to provide *by year* for each of your school's first five years. Include the Special Education Administrator who will work with your school, teachers, aides, and other staff, as well as the number of staff you propose to hire each year and their qualifications, salary, and the percentage of their time that will be devoted to special education. If you anticipate outsourcing services such as occupational therapy, physical therapy, or speech therapy, indicate that and if possible, indicate with whom you anticipate contracting for the provision of services;
- Describe any ancillary and support services you expect to offer students and families, for example counseling, family outreach, and/or relationships with community organizations or service agencies which may benefit community members. Include your plan to hire a school nurse and his/her role in your school; and
- Describe any modifications to the plan for special student populations and student services of the proposed school from that which is implemented in the HCPSS.

A.7. Special Student Populations: Evaluator Comments and Questions	
Strengths of Written Proposal:	
Concerns and Questions of Written Proposal:	
Interviews	
Interview Strengths	
Interview Questions and Concerns	
Rating for this Application Component	

Section A.8. School Climate and Discipline

When describing the school's climate and discipline, a response that meets the standard will:

- Describe an approach to student discipline that is reasonably likely to promote a safe and orderly learning environment;
- Include evidence that the school will ensure a safe environment conducive to learning;
- Describe the proposed school's methods and strategies for maintaining supports for behavioral interventions, student social development, and enrichment of opportunities that encourage student growth and development (QS D.6);
- Summarize, for illustrative purposes, a typical day from the perspective of a student in a grade level of your choice;
- Summarize, for illustrative purposes, a typical day from the perspective of a teacher of any subject or grade of your choice;
- Describe the culture of the school (norms, values, beliefs, relationships, rituals, traditions, myths, etc. to be shared in varying degrees by members of a school community);
- Provide a clear plan for establishing a school culture and norms consistent with the school's mission and educational program and describe how it is implemented for administrators, teachers, students, and parents, from the first day of the school's operation.

A.8. School Climate and Discipline: Evaluator Comments and Questions	
Strengths of Written Proposal:	
Concerns and Questions of Written Proposal:	
Interviews	
Interview Strengths	
Interview Questions and Concerns	
Rating for this Application Component	

Section A.9. Student Health and Safety

When describing student health and safety, a response that meets the standard will address:

- **Crisis Preparedness:** Provides training, resources and technical assistance in preparedness for, immediate response to, and mitigation of the aftermath of school safety crises;
- **School Environment:** Provides training, resources, and technical assistance in the establishment of a school/community environment that is physically and emotionally safe, well disciplined, and conducive to learning;
- **Violence Prevention:** Information about funds, training, resources, and technical assistance concerning preventing violence, helping students to make safe choices, and collecting data about violence in schools; and
- **Health & Safety:** Information on environmental factors that might impact students' health, including disaster preparedness, and safe walking routes to school.

A.9. Student Health and Safety: Evaluator Comments and Questions	
Strengths of Written Proposal:	
Concerns and Questions of Written Proposal:	
Interviews	
Interview Strengths	
Interview Questions and Concerns	
Rating for this Application Component	

Section A.10. School Calendar and Daily Schedule

When describing the school's calendar and daily schedule, a response that meets the standard will:

- Describe the school calendar, including the number of days school will be in session, the daily hours of operation, and the way the school will be organized for instruction, independent study, intervention programs and extra or co-curricular activities, if any. Please be specific in describing these items and pay attention to State requirements on minimum number of school days and instructional hours as described in Maryland's Regulations;
- Describe any external programs that will be brought into the school and why; and
- Describe the implementation of the educational program in terms of the daily or weekly organization of students and faculty (e.g., multi-grade, tracking, team-teaching, etc.).

A.10. School Calendar and Daily Schedule:	
Evaluator Comments and Questions	
Strengths of Written Proposal:	
Concerns and Questions of Written Proposal:	
Interviews	
Interview Strengths	
Interview Questions and Concerns	
Rating for this Application Component	

Section A.11. Waivers Needed to Implement the Educational Program

When describing the school's waiver requests, a response that meets the standard will:

- Provide an analysis of the needs of the school design, mission, and the flexibilities needed to ensure effective implementation; and
- Include a waiver request that follows state and school system procedures and requirements.

A.11. Waivers for Educational Program:	
Evaluator Comments and Questions	
Strengths of Written Proposal:	
Concerns and Questions of Written Proposal:	
Interviews	
Interview Strengths	
Interview Questions and Concerns	
Rating for this Application Component	

B. ORGANIZATIONAL PLAN

Section B.1. School Governance

When describing the school's governance, a response that meets the standard will include:

- Governing Board includes representation of parents and school community (QS E.1.);
- The school Governing Board will meet regularly and has developed appropriate bylaws for conducting effective meetings (QS E.1.);
- The Governing Board has developed appropriate school plans and policies to ensure school and student success (QS E.1.);
- Present proper documentation that the entity proposing to hold the charter is a nonprofit organization; and
- Demonstrate that the Board of Directors:
 - ✓ Has capacity to oversee the successful development and implementation of the education program presented in the application;
 - ✓ Has capacity to oversee the effective and responsible management of public funds;
 - ✓ Has capacity to oversee and be responsible for the school's compliance with its legal obligations;
 - ✓ Will represent the community well;
 - ✓ Is aware of their duties and responsibilities as public servants in accordance with laws governing non-profits; and
 - ✓ Will have the capacity to found and sustain a quality school.
- The contract with an educational management organization (EMO) has the following information:
 - ✓ Description of the proposed contract, including roles and responsibilities, performance evaluation measures, payment structure, conditions for renewal and termination, and investment disclosure;
 - ✓ Draft of the proposed management contract;
 - ✓ Recent corporate annual report and audited financial statements, and Maryland Certificate of Good Standing;
 - ✓ Description of the firm's roles and responsibilities for the financial management of the proposed charter school, including descriptions of the accounting software to be used, the procedures for financial reporting to the Board of Directors, and the internal controls that will be in place for the proposed charter school;
 - ✓ Names, addresses, and telephone numbers of other schools managed by the EMO, as well as descriptive information on the grades served, numbers of students, years of operation, and student performance data; and

Application to Form a Public Charter School Within the Howard County Public School System

- ✓ A summary of the company's history, including a description of how it implements the program, past results of its management efforts, the company philosophy, and the background on corporate leaders.

Required Exhibits

- ☐ Articles of Incorporation
- ☐ Maryland Certificate of Good Standing from Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation (If new, provide application)
- ☐ Recent audit report
- ☐ By-laws
- ☐ Schedule for Meetings
- ☐ Prospective Board Member Resumes
- ☐ If applicable, Education Management Organization Documents
 - ✓ Description of the proposed contract,
 - ✓ Draft of the proposed management contract;
 - ✓ Recent corporate annual report and audited financial statements, and Maryland Certificate of Good Standing;
 - ✓ Description of the firm's roles and responsibilities for the financial management of the proposed charter school, including descriptions of the accounting software to be used, the procedures for financial reporting to the Board of Directors, and the internal controls that will be in place for the proposed charter school;
 - ✓ Names, addresses, and telephone numbers of other schools managed by the EMO, as well as descriptive information on the grades served, numbers of students, years of operation, and student performance data; and
 - ✓ A summary of the company's history, including a description of how it implements the program, past results of its management efforts, the company philosophy, and the background on corporate leaders.

B.1. School Governance: Evaluator Comments and Questions	
Strengths of Written Proposal:	
Concerns and Questions of Written Proposal:	
Interviews	
Interview Strengths	
Interview Questions and Concerns	
Rating for this Application Component	

Section B.2. Management and Operations

B.2.a. Organizational Structure

When describing the school's organizational structure, a response that meets the standard will include:

- The school's board employs a strong governance structure to promote the vision and mission of the school and ensures there will be strong relationships with the chartering authorizer, within the school and external stakeholders (QS E.2.);
- There is a clear plan for hiring, retaining, supporting, and evaluating the school administrator in collaboration with the local educational agency (QS E.2.);
- That governing and leadership structures are closely aligned (QS E.2.);
- Roles and responsibilities for the school's leadership are clearly delineated and distinct from the board (QS E.2.);
- Show clear delineation of the roles and responsibilities for administering the day-to-day activities of the school; and
- Demonstrate understanding of management needs and priorities.

Required Exhibits

- ☐ Organizational Chart that shows the staffing structure and reporting responsibilities for the Board of Directors, administration, and staff.
- ☐ Key position descriptions including critical skills or experience of every employee that they intend to hire based on organizational chart (description can be general for core teachers). Qualifications for hiring should provide assurance that background checks and child abuse registry will be conducted for every employee in accordance with the law.
- ☐ Proof of application to, or letter from, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) documenting nonprofit status 501(3) (c).

B.2.a. Organizational Structures: Evaluator Comments and Questions	
Strengths of Written Proposal:	
Concerns and Questions of Written Proposal:	
Interviews	
Interview Strengths	
Interview Questions and Concerns	
Rating for this Application Component	

B.2.b. Educational Service Providers

When describing the school's Educational Service Provider/s (ESP), a response that meets the standard will include:

- A clear description of the services to be provided by the ESP;
- Provide coherent delineation of the roles and responsibilities between the school's governing board, management, and the ESP;
- Give a clear picture of the contractual relationship and accountability between the ESP and the school's governing board that is consistent with the school's mission and educational program;
- Explain persuasively the reasons for contracting with an education service provider, in general, and this provider, in particular;
- Show how the proposed relationship with the ESP will further the school's mission and program; and
- Provide ESP performance expectations that are consistent with the school's accountability requirements and the means by which the Board of Directors will hold the ESP accountable for meeting those expectations.

Required Exhibits

- ☐ Background information on the ESP including relevant performance data for other schools that the ESP has managed and a list of any other schools managed by the ESP in the state;
- ☐ ESP financial records;
- ☐ Maryland Certificate of Good Standing;
- ☐ Contact information; and
- ☐ The services agreement as executed between the school and the ESP (or template version if not yet executed).

B.2.b. Educational Service Providers: Evaluator Comments and Questions	
Strengths of Written Proposal:	
Concerns and Questions of Written Proposal:	
Interviews	
Interview Strengths	
Interview Questions and Concerns	
Rating for this Application Component	

B.2.c. Student Records

When describing the school's maintenance of student records, a response that meets the standard will:

- Provide a Records Management Plan that addresses:
 - Physical Storage of Student Records;
 - Clear definitions of ownership and responsibility for each type of student record;
 - Standards designed to physically protect the confidentiality of the total student record are in place;
 - Process for the release of student records;
 - Process for transferring and receiving student records; and
 - Process for retaining records at the end of the school year.
- Include references made to Maryland's Student Record Manual.

B.2.c. Student Records: Evaluator Comments and Questions	
Strengths of Written Proposal:	
Concerns and Questions of Written Proposal:	
Interviews	
Interview Strengths	
Interview Questions and Concerns	
Rating for this Application Component	

B.2.d. School Policies

When describing the school's policies, a response that meets the standard will:

- Have effective policies that provide a sound basis upon which more detailed actions and plans can be layered;
- Discuss how the policy will give members of staff an indication of what their role might be in implementing policy;
- Show the connection between the school mission and design and the need for the policy;
- Include how the policy will provide a united approach that distinguishes the school; and
- Contain critical areas that need to be addressed such as: student release and dismissal, grading and promotion, fire drills, etc.

Required Exhibits

- ☐ Decision-making matrix;
- ☐ Communications with stakeholders (Board of Directors meeting, school progress);
- ☐ Hiring recommendations for principal and staff;
- ☐ Dispute resolution;
- ☐ Procurement policy; and
- ☐ Student grading and promotion.

B.2.d. School Policies: Evaluator Comments and Questions	
Strengths of Written Proposal:	
Concerns and Questions of Written Proposal:	
Interviews	
Interview Strengths	
Interview Questions and Concerns	
Rating for this Application Component	

Section B.3. Staffing and Human Resources

When describing the school's plan for staffing and human resources, a response that meets the standard will:

- Present strategies for recruiting and retaining effective teachers that are realistic and reasonably likely to be effective;
- Ensure that the employed staff meets all state and federal qualifications and standards in collaboration with the local educational agency (QS E.13.)
- Exhibit a sound understanding of staffing needs that are aligned with the budget and with the school's anticipated enrollment;
- Provide a staffing plan that appears viable and adequate for effective implementation of the proposed educational program and will ensure staff is efficiently allocated and organized (QS E.5); and
- Demonstrate a plan for the evaluation, retention and support of the teaching staff that is aligned with the state's approach to incorporating student status and growth data in the evaluation and support of teachers; and present a plan that is reasonably likely to attract and retain effective staff.

B.3. Staffing and Human Resources: Evaluator Comments and Questions	
Strengths of Written Proposal:	
Concerns and Questions of Written Proposal:	
Interviews	
Interview Strengths	
Interview Questions and Concerns	
Rating for this Application Component	

Section B.4. Affiliations and Partnerships

When describing the school's affiliations and partnerships, a response that meets the standard will:

- Provide evidence that anticipated partnerships are realistic and achievable.
- Provide evidence that the proposed school is welcomed by the larger community, has plans to form or has formed partnerships with community organizations, businesses, and/or other individuals.

B.4. Affiliations and Partnerships: Evaluator Comments and Questions	
Strengths of Written Proposal:	
Concerns and Questions of Written Proposal:	
Interviews	
Interview Strengths	
Interview Questions and Concerns	
Rating for this Application Component	

Section B.5. Student Recruitment and Enrollment

When describing the school's plan for student recruitment and enrollment, a response that meets the standard will:

- Include an outreach and marketing plan that demonstrates understanding of the community to be served, including hard-to-reach families and those traditionally less informed about educational options;
- Demonstrate understanding of the target population and has a student recruitment plan that will enable the school to attract its targeted population;
- Demonstrate understanding of and capacity to meet state and federal requirements regarding identification and education of the likely English Learner (EL) population;
- Demonstrate understanding of and capacity to meet state and federal requirements regarding the identification and education of students with disabilities; and
- Include the criteria that will describe your admission and enrollment process.

Required Exhibit

- ☐ Student application

B.5. Student Recruitment and Enrollment: Evaluator Comments and Questions	
Strengths of Written Proposal:	
Concerns and Questions of Written Proposal:	
Interviews	
Interview Strengths	
Interview Questions and Concerns	
Rating for this Application Component	

Section B.6. Waivers Needed to Support the Implementation of the Organizational Plan

When describing the school's waiver requests, a response that meets the standard will:

- Link areas of implementation that requires flexibility and the waiver request to obtain this flexibility; and
- Demonstrate a review and understanding of key documents that can create barriers for the successful implementation of their school design.

B.6. Waivers for Organizational Plan: Evaluator Comments and Questions	
Strengths of Written Proposal:	
Concerns and Questions of Written Proposal:	
Interviews	
Interview Strengths	
Interview Questions and Concerns	
Rating for this Application Component	

C. BUSINESS PLAN

Section C.1. Budget

When describing the school's estimated budget, a response that meets the standard will:

- Present budget priorities that are consistent with and support key parts of the plan, including the school's mission, educational program, staffing and facility;
- Provide a description of effective sound budget practices so that the budget does not exceed the school's resources and assets and all appropriate revenue and program costs are clearly reflected in the budget (QS E.3.);
- Give balanced, evidence-based revenue and expenditure assumptions, including for any plan to incur and repay debt; and
- Provide budget narrative with sufficient information to fully understand how budgetary figures were determined.

Required Exhibits

- ☐ Budget for the proposed charter term; and
- ☐ Opening year cash flow analysis.

C.1. Budget: Evaluator Comments and Questions	
Strengths of Written Proposal:	
Concerns and Questions of Written Proposal:	
Interviews	
Interview Strengths	
Interview Questions and Concerns	
Rating for this Application Component	

C.1.a. Fundraising Plan

When describing the school's fundraising plan a response that meets the standard will:

- Present viable strategies for meeting potential budget and cash flow challenges, particularly for the first year of operation;
- Include a realistic assessment of projected sources of revenue and expenses that ensure the financial viability of the school; and
- Demonstrate a commitment to maintaining the financial viability of the school.

C.1.a. Fundraising Plan: Evaluator Comments and Questions	
Strengths of Written Proposal:	
Concerns and Questions of Written Proposal:	
Interviews	
Interview Strengths	
Interview Questions and Concerns	
Rating for this Application Component	

C.1.b. Resource Management

When describing the school's resource management, a response that meets standards will:

- Identify school goals and expectations and align these to the resources needed;
- Demonstrate that there are clearly defined processes to ensure the equitable allocation, integration, and organization of the resources and that the use of the resources are maximized to support student achievement (QS E.5.);
- Demonstrate that leadership will ensure that all instructional staff have access to resources needed (QS E.11.);
- Demonstrate the resource management process is linked to strategic and project planning; and
- Include an assessment process that will review the usage of allocated resources to make needed adjustments.

C.1.b.Resource Management: Evaluator Comments and Questions	
Strengths of Written Proposal:	
Concerns and Questions of Written Proposal:	
Interviews	
Interview Strengths	
Interview Questions and Concerns	
Rating for this Application Component	

Section C.2. Financial Management

When describing the school's financial management, a response that meets the standard will:

- Demonstrate understanding of the school's financial management obligations;
- Present evidence that the school is prepared to adhere to generally accepted accounting practices;
- Describe processes to secure revenue for stable programming, including additional resources to augment per pupil revenue and increase revenue to address unforeseen shortfalls (QS E.4.);
- Show evidence that the school will have or has capacity to develop adequate policies and processes for tracking student enrollment and attendance eligibility, eligibility for free- and reduced-priced lunch; special education and limited English proficient enrollment; and
- Demonstrate preparation to meet its insurance, annual audit, annual financial report and other key financial management obligations.

C.2. Financial Management: Evaluator Comments and Questions	
Strengths of Written Proposal:	
Concerns and Questions of Written Proposal:	
Interviews	
Interview Strengths	
Interview Questions and Concerns	
Rating for this Application Component	

Section C.3. Facility

When describing the school's facility needs, a response that meets the standard will:

- Reflect a sound understanding of facility needs;
- Demonstrate knowledge of facilities costs including, as applicable, cost of purchasing, leasing, building, or renovating an educational facility that conforms to applicable health, safety, and occupancy requirements;
- Present evidence to support facilities-related budget assumptions;
- Include evidence that the proposed facility will be adequate or present a plan for securing a facility that is appropriate and adequate for the school's educational program, anticipated location, and target population;
- Provide a safe, clean, and effective learning and work environment for all staff and students (QS E.10); and
- Demonstrate that the school's plan for acquisition of a facility is financially viable.

C.3. Facility: Evaluator Comments and Questions	
Strengths of Written Proposal:	
Concerns and Questions of Written Proposal:	
Interviews	
Interview Strengths	
Interview Questions and Concerns	
Rating for this Application Component	

Section C.4. Food Services

When describing the school's food services, a response that meets the standard will:

- Present a well thought-out food service plan designed to meet the needs of the school's target population (only necessary for waiver applicants);
- Demonstrate a well thought-out food service facility and equipment plan that will meet local and state requirements; and
- Demonstrate a clear understanding about the need to address National School Lunch requirements for free and reduced meals such as the collection of applications for the program.

C.4. Food Services: Evaluator Comments and Questions	
Strengths of Written Proposal:	
Concerns and Questions of Written Proposal:	
Interviews	
Interview Strengths	
Interview Questions and Concerns	
Rating for this Application Component	

Section C.5. Transportation

If the applicant has elected to provide transportation, a response that meets the standard will:

- Present a thorough, realistic, and cost-effective transportation plan; and
- Provide specific evidence of third party readiness and terms for providing transportation services consistent with the school's budget assumptions. 3rd party must collect required information [include in application].

If the applicants have elected not to provide transportation, a response that meets the standard will:

- Present a clear statement of the school's intent not to provide transportation services;
- Describe viable transportation options for students; and
- Describe contingency plans for students requiring transportation due to a physical disability.

C.5. Transportation: Evaluator Comments and Questions	
Strengths of Written Proposal:	
Concerns and Questions of Written Proposal:	
Interviews	
Interview Strengths	
Interview Questions and Concerns	
Rating for this Application Component	

Section C.6. Insurance

When describing the school's insurance plan, a response that meets the standards will:

- Provide evidence of ability and preparation to obtain liability insurance coverage; and
- Describe the insurance coverage the school will obtain for:
 - Health and workers' compensation
 - General liability
 - Property (for leased facilities)
 - Directors' and employees' liability coverage
 - Business automobile liability
 - Catastrophic student accident insurance
 - Crime insurance

C.6. Insurance: Evaluator Comments and Questions	
Strengths of Written Proposal:	
Concerns and Questions of Written Proposal:	
Interviews	
Interview Strengths	
Interview Questions and Concerns	
Rating for this Application Component	

Overall Evaluation

Section	Rating	Strengths	Concerns and Questions
A. Education Plan			
A.1.			
A.2.			
A.3.			
A.4.			
A.5.			
A.6.			
A.7.			
A.8.			
A.9.			
A.10.			
A.11.			
B. Organization Plan			
B.1.			
B.2.			
B.2.a.			
B.2.b.			
B.2.c.			
B.2.d.			
B.3.			
B.4.			
B.5.			
B.6.			
C. Business Plan			
C.1.			
C.1.a.			
C.1.b.			
C.2.			
C.3.			
C.4.			
C.5.			
C.6.			
Overall Rating and Comments			

Glossary

Accountability Plan: The mechanism through which the school indicates the goals/objectives/outcomes the school plans to achieve and the performance levels the school will be held accountable for attaining.

ADA (The Americans with Disabilities Act): The ADA gives civil rights protections to individuals with disabilities. It guarantees equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities in employment, public accommodations, transportation, State and local government services, and telecommunications.

Annual Growth Targets: The yearly performance goals that are set for assessments of all students.

Annual Measurable Objectives: State established performance targets that assess the progress of student groups, schools, school districts, and the state annually. (Maryland State Department of Education)

Articles of Incorporation: The legal document filed with a state that creates a corporation.

Assessment: The administration of tests, and other methods of gathering and integrating information to determine a student's current level of performance to illustrate whether the student is achieving appropriately to the instructional program being delivered. (Maryland State Department of Education, Response to Intervention Framework)

Authorizer: The entity which approves the establishment and operation of a charter school. For charter schools operating in Howard County, the Board of Education of Howard County is the authorizer and it is the entity which, as the statutory public chartering authority, reviews the application, and if the charter is granted, enters into a contract or agreement regarding the operation of the charter school and provides oversight for that school.

Best Practice: Evidenced-based program(s), initiative(s) or activities that reflect contemporary research and are associated with positive outcomes. Best practices are considered to be exemplar models and have resulted in positive outcomes following implementation with fidelity. (Maryland Response to Intervention Framework)

Business Plan: Outlines the management of financial and other procedures, pre-opening tasks, and details the budget.

Bylaws: Rules that govern the organization structure and operations pertaining to the Board of Directors including holding meetings, the process for electing the board of directors, the selection of officers, and often a definition of standing board committees. The bylaws also establish the duties and powers of the organization's board of directors. (Colorado Charter School Governing Board Training Handbook Glossary of terms)

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Charter Management Organization (CMO): Non-profit organization that manages a network of charter schools to differentiate them from for-profit education management organizations. CMOs typically have a common identifiable mission or instructional design across its schools. These schools are managed by a leadership team that provides shared academic, human capital, back-office, operational and financial services. Often launched from the base of a single successful charter school, CMOs combine the autonomy of local, school-based decisions with the ability to provide leveraged support and effective management across many schools. They seek to create a flexible, scalable and replicable model for delivering results to their students.

Charter School: A nonsectarian, tuition-free public school that operates under the supervision of the Board of Education of Howard County from which its charter is granted and in accordance with its charter and contract/agreement with the Board of Education.

Charter School Developer: Builds and redevelops charter schools to promote education.

Charter School Operator: Charter Management Organization, Educational Management Organization, or Community-Based Organization that creates and manages public charter schools.

COMAR: The Code of Maryland Regulations. COMAR is the official compilation of all administrative regulations issued by agencies of the state of Maryland. Regulations issued by the Maryland State Board of Education are found in Title 13A.

Community Based Organization (CBO): Public or private nonprofit organization that is representative of a community or significant segments of a community and provides educational or related services to individuals in the community. Typically a CBO is located in the same zip code or close to the people it serves; has firsthand knowledge of the neighborhood's challenges and a personal stake in the success of their solutions; advocates open enrollment to all applicants in the neighborhood or community; has an approach which is flexible; has an effective grassroots program (s) that contains an essential element of reciprocity; has set and communicated clear guidelines; and, provides not only authority and structure, but fosters an environment of care and mutual support.

Comprehensive Performance Measures: Valid and reliable measures that report the educational performance and progress of individual students, student cohorts, and the charter school as a whole.

Critical Success Factors: The critical success factors are the critical activities or factors that need to be taken to reach the Maryland Charter School Quality Standards. The descriptions of the critical success factors are based on the latest literature and research on charter schools and high-performing schools.

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Curriculum: The aggregate of formal courses of study given in a learning environment. Courses are arranged sequentially to increase the efficiency of learning a subject. In schools, a curriculum spans several grades; for example, a math curriculum. In business, it can run for days, weeks, months, or years. Learners enter it at various points depending on their job experience and the needs of the business. (Maryland State Department of Education, Response to Intervention Framework)

Differentiated Instruction: A process of designing instruction that meets the varied needs of a group of learners. Differentiated instruction includes, but is not limited to, varying the instructional content, instructional strategies, groupings or materials, and student assignments based on student skill levels, learning preferences, and interest levels.

Diverse Learners: Includes groups of students who differ in the areas of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, language, exceptionalities, background and experience, religion, region, age, and/or sexual orientation. (Maryland State Department of Education).

Educational Design: The elements in your proposed school that will be implemented to create programs, systems and processes to ensure that the school's mission and vision are accomplished successfully.

Education Management Organization (EMO): For-profit or non-profit organizations that manage public schools. EMOs are contracted by public school systems to manage and run individual schools, both traditional as well as charter schools, or clusters of schools. EMOs that manage networks of charter schools are referred to as charter management organizations (CMOs).

Education Plan: Defines what students will achieve; how they will achieve it; and how the school will evaluate performance.

Education Service Provider: Organizations that contract with the governing board of a school to provide comprehensive services.

Ethnicity: Common heritage, consisting of a common culture, including a shared language or dialect of a group of people. The group's ethos or ideology may also stress common ancestry and religion.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA): FERPA is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education, including public charter schools.

Fiscal management: The planning, directing, monitoring, organizing, and controlling of the monetary resources of an organization.

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Founding group: A group who established from the date that it has its first organizing meeting through the time that the charter is granted. Once the charter is granted, the founding group adopts by-laws and elects officers.

Free and Reduced Meal Services (FARMS): A program that provides free or reduced price meals to eligible students (Maryland State Department of Education).

Gifted and Talented Student: An elementary or secondary student who is identified by professionally qualified individuals as: (1) having outstanding talent and performance, or showing their potential for performing at remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared with other students of a similar age, experience, or environment; (2) exhibiting high performance capability in intellectual, creative, or artistic areas; (3) possessing an unusual leadership capacity; or (4) excelling in special academic fields. (The Annotated Code of Maryland §8-201) Maryland State Department of Education.

Governance: The major policy-making decisions or setting the overall direction of the school.

Governing Board: A group of officers or persons having control over a public charter school.

Development Phase: A process in which a charter school provides its board members orientation and ongoing training.

Founding Phase: At this early stage this board's primary task of overseeing the development of the charter, submitting the application and creating an accountability plan (New York City Center for Charter School Excellence, 2006).

Sustaining Phase: At this point, the tasks broaden to include fundraising and attracting new members with access to key funders and donors. This board may have expanded to include the creation of an executive committee as well as patrons or members who serve an advisory role. (New York City Center for Charter School Excellence, 2006).

IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act): The federal law which ensures that students with disabilities are provided with a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), that is tailored to meet their individual needs. Maryland law and regulations contain provisions that are similar to those contained in IDEA.

Indicators: General dimension of school quality or achievement. Maryland State Department of Education has identified five indicators addressing:

- (A) Culture of continuous improvement;
- (B) Innovative practices;
- (C) Student learning and achievement;
- (D) School and community engagement; and
- (E) Governance, leadership, and organizational structures.

Innovation in Education: A new approach that brings an improved result.

Limited English Proficient: An individual who does not speak English as his or her primary language and who has a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English. (Maryland State Department of Education, RTI Framework)

Management: The allocation and deployment of the school's resources on a daily basis to achieve the school's goals. (New York City Center for Charter School Excellence, 2006).

Maryland Certificate of Good Standing: A certificate of status from the Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation, indicating that the entity has submitted all documents and fees required by law to the department and that no other government agency has notified the department that the entity is delinquent in tax payments.

Maryland Core Educational Standards: Broad, measurable statements about what students should know and be able to do in each content area.

Maryland Grade Level Expectations: Broad, measureable statements that define what students should know and be able to do at each grade, pre-kindergarten through grade 8 and for selected high school courses.

Maryland State Assessments: Student attainment of Maryland's standards is measured through State assessments (e.g., *Maryland School Assessment*, *High School Assessment*) in academic content subjects (e.g., English language arts, mathematics, and science). (Maryland State Department of Education).

Measures: General instruments or means to assess performance in an area defined by an indicator. Measures require the application of specific metrics or calculation methods. (National Consensus Panel on Charter School Academic Quality, 2008).

Metrics: Specification of a quantification, calculation method or formula for a given measure. (National Consensus Panel on Charter School Academic Quality, 2008)

Mission: The mission statement defines the main purpose of the school. The mission reflects the vision, values, and beliefs of the school. The mission explains how the school will reach its vision.

Organizational Effectiveness: Degrees to which an organization is successful in accomplishing their objectives or fulfilling their administrative, instructional, or service functions.

Organizational Efficiency: Organizational efficiency of charter schools, often referred to as productivity, is the extent to which educational inputs (teachers, students) produce desired student outcomes. Increased efficiency means achieving better student outcomes with the same level of inputs, or the same student outcomes with fewer inputs. (Ni, Y., (2007). *The Impact of Charter Schools on the Efficiency of Traditional Public Schools: Evidence from Michigan*. University of Utah).

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Organizational Plan: Describes the organizational structure and management of the school. It provides a clear picture of roles and responsibilities and how the school will function.

Performance Contract: Serves as a basis of solid communication between the authorizer and the charter school and outlines the set of expectations the authorizer has for the charter school. It also defines the conditions under which the charter school will be evaluated and renewed and delineates areas of accountability.

Performance Management: Methods, metrics, process, and systems needed to manage the performance of a charter school (Performance Management Institute, CREDO, Stanford University).

Performance Measures: The performance measures indicate information, tools, or evidence to be used to document the attainment of standards.

Performance Plan: Accountability agreement between an authorizer and the charter school that it oversees. Performance plans are a component of the charter school contract and serve as the “work plan” by which authorizers monitor school performance over the course of the charter term. It contains a completed set of indicators, measures, metrics, and targets in the following areas of charter school accountability: academic program performance, operational program performance, and, if applicable, elements drawn from a school’s specific design.

Professional Development: A comprehensive, sustained, and intensive approach to improving teachers’ and principals’ effectiveness in raising student achievement (Learning Forward (formerly National Staff Development Council), 2010).

Progress Reports: Student progress refers to reports on students’ academic and behavioral performance. The progress reports may be formal (e.g., such as a report card) or informal (through telephone conversations or emails).

Race

American Indian or Alaska Native - A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America), and who maintains a tribal affiliation or community attachment.

Asian - A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam.

Black or African American - A person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa.

Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander - A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.

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White - A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa. (Maryland State Department of Education).

Hispanic or Latino - A person having origins in any countries that were once under Spanish rule (Puerto Rico, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Mexico, Central America, and most South America) where Spanish is the primary language.

Response to Intervention (RTI): A process of providing high quality instruction and intervention matched to student needs that includes frequent progress monitoring to assist in decision making regarding the need for a change in instructional and/or behavioral programming (Maryland State Department of Education, RTI Framework).

School Culture: The norms, values, beliefs, relationships, rituals, traditions, myths, etc. shared in varying degrees by members of a school community.

School Infrastructure: time, human and financial resources, and utilization of space.

S.M.A.R.T. Goals: Goals that are Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Reflect the Mission, and Time-Specific.

Special Populations – means:

- (A) Individuals with disabilities;
- (B) Individuals from economically disadvantaged families, including foster children;
- (C) Individuals preparing for non-traditional fields;
- (D) Single parents, including single pregnant women;
- (E) Displaced homemakers; or
- (F) Individuals with limited English proficiency.(Maryland State Department of Education).

Standard: The standard is a quality benchmark that has been established as a model or an example of a high quality charter school.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL): A framework for applying universal design principles to instructional materials, curricula, and educational activities so that they are achievable and challenging for students with a wide range of abilities and needs. The framework focuses on: Multiple means of representation to give learners various ways of acquiring information and knowledge. Multiple means of action and expression to provide learners alternatives for demonstrating what they know. Multiple means of engagement to tap into learners' interests, challenge them appropriately, and motivate them to learn.

Vision: The vision statement helps the school community to picture what they want the school to become.

Waiver: A legal exception for a charter school to carry out a state law or HCPSS policy differently.

Charter School Application Appendices

- A. Introduction to Chartering Process
- B. Federal Definition of a Public Charter School
- C. Federal Definition of a High Quality Charter School
- D. Maryland Public Charter School Law, as amended by the Public Charter School Improvement Act of 2015
- E. Maryland State Board of Education Policy: The Charter School Program
- F. Sample List of Facilities Requirements for Charter Schools
- G. Leasing
- H. Construction Plans
- I. Maryland Charter School Quality Standards
- J. Charter School Resources
- K. Charter School Board of Directors - Forms for Section B.1-A
- L. Conflict of Interest Form
- M. Affidavit, Disclosure, and Consent for Criminal Background and Credit Check
- N. Budget Spreadsheets

A. Introduction to Chartering Process

Maryland State Department of Education Chartering Phases

Many school districts throughout the state may be receiving charter school requests and applications. The Office of School Innovations (OSI) within the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) has been created to carry out responsibilities under Title 9 of the Education Article, Annotate Code of Maryland (§§9-101 through 9-112). The mission of the Office is to cooperate with community organizations, parents, groups, educators, and other individuals who are committed to improving the quality of education in the State to charter successful, innovative schools.

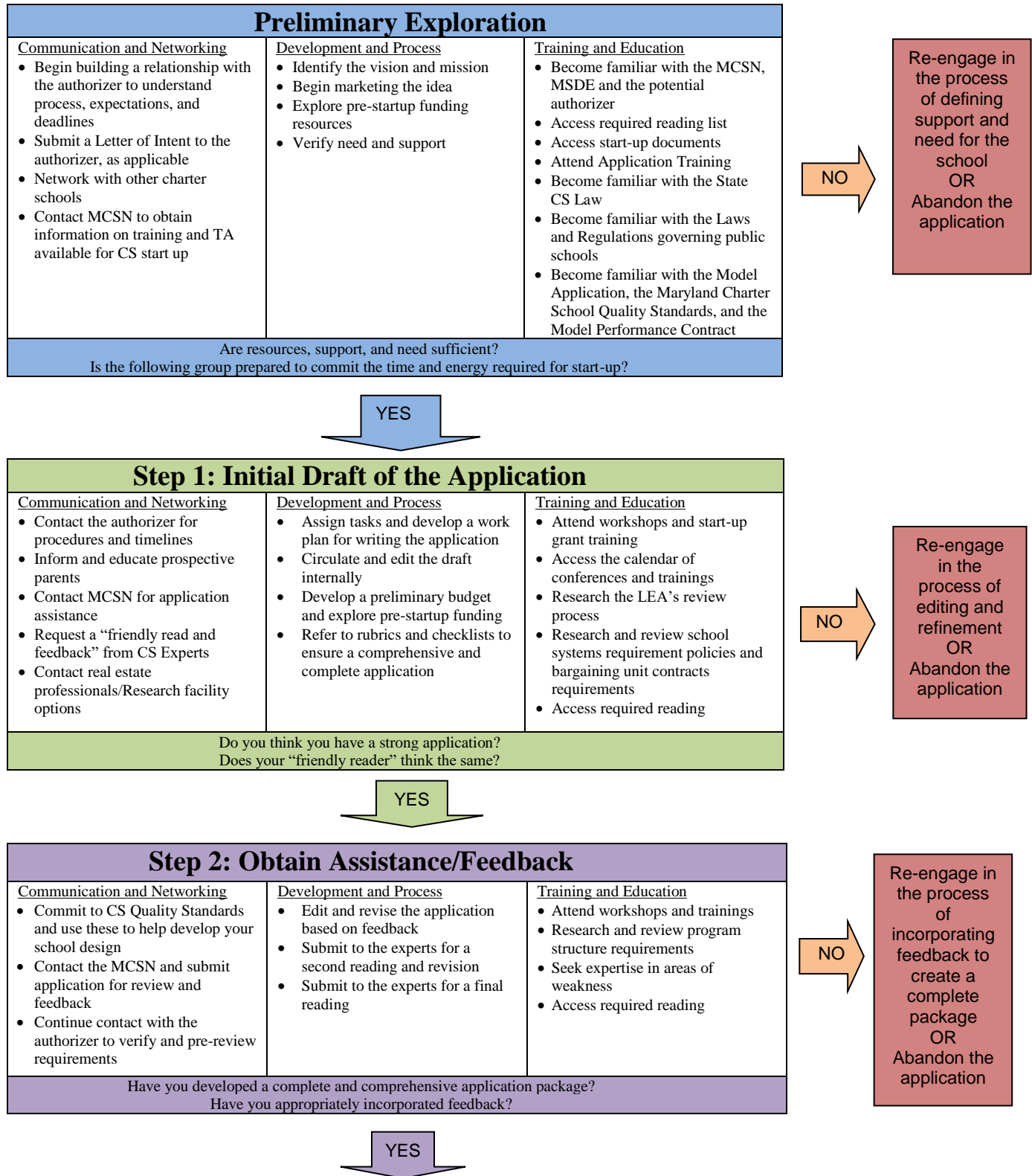
The responsibility of the Office is to: (1) grant charters to organizations, groups, or individuals that demonstrate the capacity to operate a high quality charter school, (2) establish clear expectations for performance, (3) gather data necessary to ensure that expectations are met, (4) evaluate school progress, and (5) take appropriate action to renew or non-renew charters asking for an appeal based on a school's performance in relation to expectations.

The Office is interested in working with organizations, groups, and individuals that seek to develop charter schools based on research and successful practices in urban, suburban and rural environments. The OSI encourages applications based on programs that: (1) present new, innovative organizational and curricular opportunities for students, (2) use models of effective instruction based on research and a demonstrated capability of replication, and (3) integrate both educational and family resource services to address the wide array of issues that face children and families today.

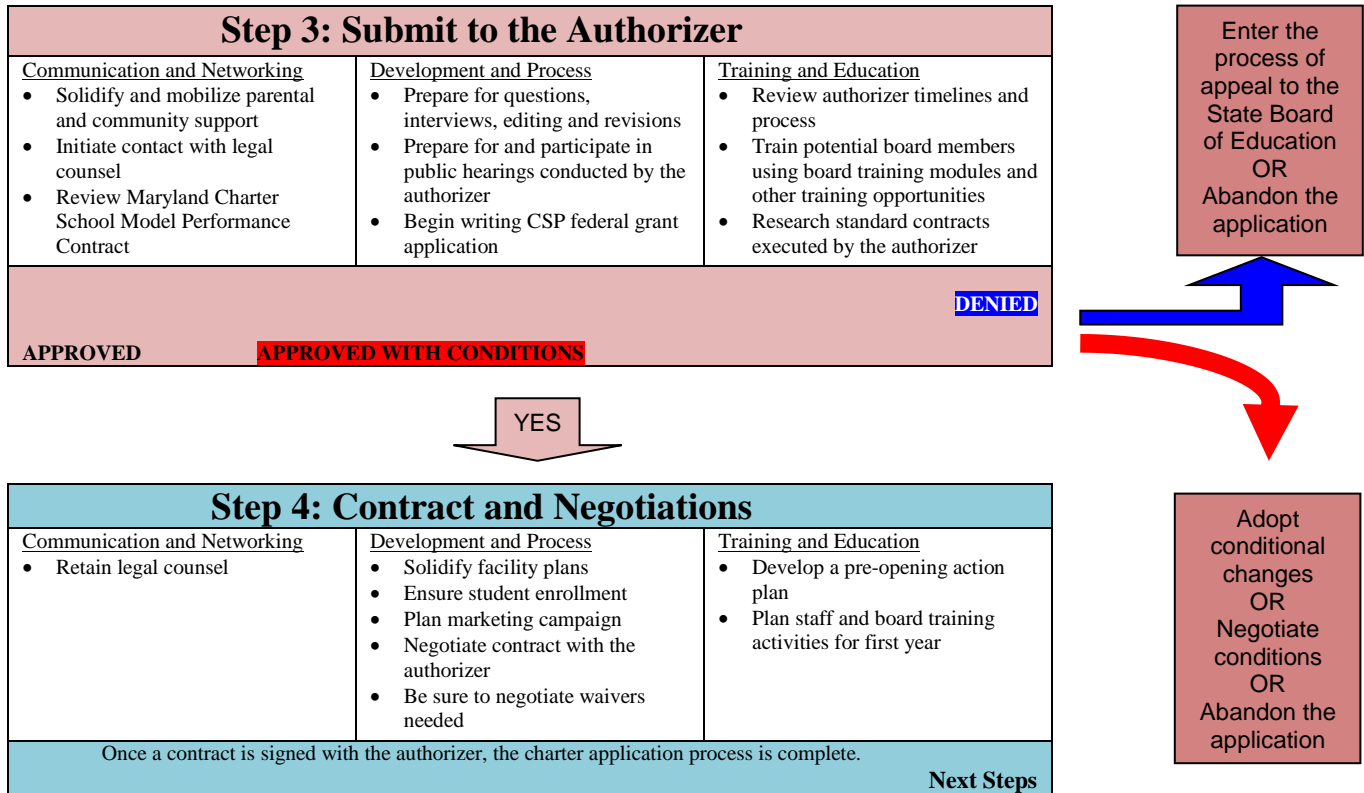
State and federal laws provides a general framework and the minimum requirements for the development of a charter school application. To become an authorized charter school, an applicants need to do much more than comply with the laws. Applicants must provide evidence that the school, as envisioned, truly has the potential to create a high quality educational program with long-term viability.

To this end, the OSI has developed and refined the chartering phases, from start to finish, supporting organizations and school districts through the process. On the following charts, A.1 through A.4, the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder is defined and clarified.

A.1 Charter School Developers Pathway to Becoming a Charter School

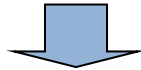


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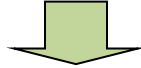


A.2 Charter School Operators Roles and Responsibilities

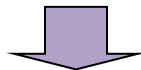
OVERARCHING FEDERAL CHARTER SCHOOL LAW, POLICY AND DEFINITION OF QUALITY CHARTER SCHOOLS		
<u>Communication and Networking</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review federal publications on high quality charter schools Network with high quality charter schools (identified by USDOE) around the nation 	<u>Development and Process</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and internalize federal definition for quality charter schools 	<u>Training and Education</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend national charter school conferences



MARYLAND CHARTER SCHOOL LAW/POLICY/COMAR -STATE REGULATIONS-Section 9-101		
<u>Communication and Networking</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a relationship with the MSDE Office of School Innovations and the Maryland Charter School Network (MCSN) Review state publications on high quality charter schools 	<u>Development and Process</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the Maryland State Board of Education Policy: The Charter School Program 	<u>Training and Education</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend MSDE professional development sessions on charter school topics such as quality standards, grant management, etc.



THE MARYLAND CHARTERING SCHOOL PROCESS		
<u>Communication and Networking</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the <i>MSDE Annual Charter School Summary Report</i> Review the Maryland Charter School Model Performance Contract 	<u>Development and Process</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and internalize state law and policy on the chartering process Review and internalize the Maryland Charter School Quality Standards 	<u>Training and Education</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend professional development sessions on charter schools sponsored by MSDE or MCSN Attend MSDE professional development sessions on charter school topics



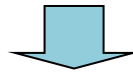
LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCY CHARTERING PROCESS AND ADHERENCE TO THE PERFORMANCE CONTRACT		
<u>Communication and Networking</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Become familiar with LEA Board policy regarding charter schools Establish a relationship with the LEA Charter School Liaison 	<u>Development and Process</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and internalize local policy and regulations on the chartering process Create a performance contract with the LEA 	<u>Training and Education</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend LEA professional development sessions on the chartering process Attend LEA professional development sessions on charter school topics



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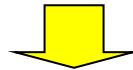
SUBMIT PRE-OPENING PLAN/REPORTS REQUIRED BY THE AUTHORIZER

<u>Communication and Networking</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in a professional learning community network • Request technical assistance on reports due to the State or LEA 	<u>Development and Process</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the <i>Maryland Quality Standards Implementation Guides for Charter Schools</i> and the <i>Maryland Self-Assessment Tool for Charter Schools</i> as guide to implement a quality program 	<u>Training and Education</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend state and local professional development on the chartering process
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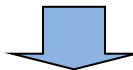
IMPLEMENT THE SCHOOL PROGRAM USING THE QUALITY STANDARDS AND SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL

<u>Communication and Networking</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the <i>Maryland Quality Standards Implementation Guides for Charter Schools</i> and the <i>Maryland Self-Assessment Tool for Charter Schools</i> • Participate in a professional learning community network 	<u>Development and Process</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the <i>Maryland Quality Standards Implementation Guides for Charter Schools</i> and the <i>Maryland Self-Assessment Tool for Charter Schools</i> as guide to implement a quality program 	<u>Training and Education</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend state and local professional development sessions on topics to enhance student achievement
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SELF-STUDY AND EVALUATION

<u>Communication and Networking</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in a professional learning community network • Request technical assistance on reports due to the State or LEA • Inform school staff of self-study analysis and program improvement plan 	<u>Development and Process</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in the self-study process for improvement and development efforts • Develop a program improvement plan to guide the mission 	<u>Training and Education</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend state and local professional development sessions on topics related to school improvement to enhance student achievement • Engage school staff in self-study training
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APPLY FOR RENEWAL

<u>Communication and Networking</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request technical assistance on the renewal, dissolution and revocation process • Participate in a professional learning community network particularly with charter schools that have moved through this process 	<u>Development and Process</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate that the school has met performance goals or demonstrate substantial progress towards meeting them • Demonstrate the ability to lead and implement school improvement efforts • Demonstrate compliance with the terms in the performance contract 	<u>Training and Education</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend state and local professional development sessions on topics related to the renewal, dissolution and revocation process • Attend state and local professional development sessions on topics related to school improvement to enhance student achievement
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B. Federal Definition of a Public Charter School

The Charter Schools Program (CSP) was originally authorized in October 1994, under title X, part C of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (ESEA), 20 U.S.C. 8061-8067. The program statute was amended in October 1998 by the Charter School Expansion Act of 1998 and in January 2002 by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. The current program legislation (title V, part B of the ESEA; 20 U.S.C. 7221-7225g). (U.S. Department of Education, 2004, Charter Schools Program, Title V, Part B Non-Regulatory Guidance, April, 2011).

To receive federal CSP funds, a charter school must meet the definition in section 5210(1) of the ESEA, which is as follows:

The term “charter school” means a public school that:

- a) In accordance with a specific State statute authorizing the granting of charters to schools, is exempt from significant State or local rules that inhibit the flexible operation and management of public schools, but not from any rules relating to the requirements in paragraphs 1 through 12 of this definition;
- b) Is created by a developer as a public school, or is adapted by a developer from an existing public school, and is operated under public supervision and direction;
- c) Operates in pursuit of a specific set of educational objectives determined by the school’s developer and agreed to by the authorized public chartering agency;
- d) Provides a program of elementary or secondary education, or both;
- e) Is nonsectarian in its programs, admissions policies, employment practices, and all other operations, and is not affiliated with a sectarian school or religious institution;
- f) Does not charge tuition;
- g) Complies with the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended, and part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act;
- h) Is a school to which parents choose to send their children, and that admits students on the basis of a lottery, if more students apply for admission than can be accommodated;
- i) Agrees to comply with the same Federal and State audit requirements as do other elementary schools and secondary schools in the State, unless such requirements are specifically waived for the purpose of this program;
- j) Meets all applicable Federal, State, and local health and safety requirements;
- k) Operates in accordance with State law; and
- l) Has a written performance contract with the authorized public chartering agency in the State that includes a description of how student performance will be measured in charter schools pursuant to State assessments that are required of other schools and pursuant to any other assessments mutually agreeable to the authorized public chartering agency and the charter school. 20 U.S.C. 7221i(1)

C. Federal Definition of a High Quality Charter School

A high-quality charter school is a school that shows evidence of strong academic results based on the criteria described in the Criterion below, and has no significant issues in the areas of student safety, financial management, or statutory or regulatory compliance. Significant issue means something that did, will, or could lead to the revocation of a school's charter.

(a) Quality of the eligible applicant (In determining the quality of the school, consider the following factors:

- (i) The degree of demonstrated success in significantly increasing student academic achievement and attainment for all students, including educationally disadvantaged students, served by charter schools operated or managed by the applicant.
- (ii) The degree to which the applicant has demonstrated success in closing historic achievement gaps for the subgroups of students
- (iii) The degree to which the applicant has achieved results for low-income and minority students that are significantly above the average academic achievement results for such students in the State. Include objective data that would provide relevant information in support of these three factors, along with comparison data for similar schools, where available. In particular, the USDOE is interested in the following data:
 - (1) Performance (school-wide and by subgroup) on statewide tests of all charter schools operated or managed by the applicant as compared to all students in other schools in the State or States at the same grade level, and compared with other schools serving similar demographics of students;
 - (2) annual student attendance and retention rates (school-wide and by subgroup), and comparisons with other similar schools;
 - (3) where applicable and available, high school graduation rates, college attendance rates, and College persistence rates (school-wide and by subgroup) of students attending the school.

(b) Contribution in assisting educationally disadvantaged students - The contribution in assisting educationally disadvantaged students served by the school to meet or exceed State academic content standards and State student academic achievement standards, and to graduate college- and career-ready.

D. Maryland Public Charter School Law, as amended by the Public Charter School Improvement Act 2015

View the Public Charter School Improvement Act 2015 at
<http://www.hcpss.org/schools/charter-schools/>.

E. Maryland State Board of Education Policy

THE CHARTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

BACKGROUND:

The Maryland Public Charter School Program was adopted into law by Maryland's General Assembly in 2003 through Title 9, §101-110 of the Education Article of the Code of Maryland. The general purpose of the program, as defined by law, is to establish an alternative means within the existing public school system in order to provide innovative learning opportunities and creative educational approaches to improve the education of students.

INTENT:

This policy is established to clearly define the obligations of charter schools and their authorizers. The State Board of Education recognizes that providing flexibility and autonomy in exchange for high accountability, educational reform and innovation is a key component of the Charter School concept.

PURPOSE:

Consistent with the intent of federal legislation and the Maryland Charter School Program law,

This State Board declares that the purposes of the State's public charter schools are to:

- Allow, through chartering, freedom and flexibility in exchange for exceptional levels of results-driven accountability;
- Improve student learning by creating high-quality public schools with high standards for student performance;
- Increase high-quality educational opportunities within the public education system for all Maryland students and their families;
- Provide parents, community members, and other non-profit entities with expanded opportunities for involvement in the design, development and management of public school models within the public education system.

I. To achieve these purposes, the State Board encourages each County Board to:

- A. Adopt charter school policies and regulations acknowledging the purpose of charter schools and what differentiates them from other public schools. These policies will express a commitment to providing increased flexibilities which will enable charter schools to implement innovations in exchange for higher levels of accountability;

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- B. Adopt charter school policies that include guidelines related to the application process, the process of performance contracting, the process for how charter school operators will be informed of requirements pertaining to children with disabilities, and how commensurate funds will be disbursed to charter schools;
- C. Provide flexibility when applying the school system procedures to the charter school, particularly those that could impede or alter a charter school's ability to design and implement innovative practices in school operations, educational program and school governance and address those flexibilities in the performance contracting process;
- D. Negotiate flexibilities in collective bargaining agreements that allow implementation of charter school innovations;
- E. Provide transparency in the application process by posting their most recent application, along with the description of their review process and assessment rubric on their website thereby making it available to charter school developers and the public;
- F. Adopt and implement a performance contract that contains the following:
 - 1. Roles and responsibilities of both parties (County Board and Charter School Operator),
 - a. performance standards that the charter school must meet or exceed,
 - b. an evaluation process of public charter schools that includes the use of financial, program and compliance audits,
 - 2. A renewal and revocation process,
 - 3. Descriptions of waivers and flexibilities provided to the charter school.

II. To achieve the purposes set forth here, the State Board encourages charter schools to:

- A. Commit to high levels of accountability that include:
 - 1. increased academic growth for all students; and
 - 2. effective school operations.
- B. Create new professional opportunities for teachers, school administrators, and other school personnel that allows them to actively participate in the development of their schools;
- C. Encourage the use of innovative, high-quality models of effective teaching, governing, scheduling, or other aspects of schooling that meet a variety of student needs;
- D. Engage the school community in the development of programs and provide opportunities for involvement through active participation and partnerships;

- E. Support the replication of successful public charter schools.

III. To achieve the purposes set forth here, the State Board directs MSDE to:

- A. Provide training to County School Boards, Superintendents, Local School System Charter School Liaisons, and Charter School Developers, Operators, Governing Boards and Leaders to ensure an understanding of how to implement the Maryland Charter School Law and this policy to achieve the purpose and intent of the Charter School Program goals;
- B. Provide technical assistance in problem solving issues that may impede the implementation of this policy; and
- C. Assist MSDE staff in understanding the unique nature of charter schools in the public education system in Maryland and ensure that these differences are recognized and taken into consideration in the development and design of program procedures and initiatives.

Adopted by the Maryland State Board of Education on June 22, 2010

F. Sample List of Facilities Requirements for Charter Schools*

- ☐ Occupancy permit from County with required approvals including but not limited to:
 - Fire marshal/life safety code
 - Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility
 - County health department code
 - County electrical building code
 - Environmental compliance including:
 - Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA)
 - Lead Contamination control Act
- ☐ Any other County requirements
- ☐ Any State charter school requirements not on this list
- ☐ Updated Pressure Vessel Inspections and Certificates
- ☐ Technology to ensure access to school system main server and software programs necessary for administrator, secretary, and Special Education staff, at minimum
- ☐ Communication system so that teachers can communicate with main office from classrooms for emergency announcements as required in Negotiated Agreement
- ☐ Assurance that mechanical systems provide adequate ventilation in occupied areas
- ☐ Traffic flow plan to ensure safety of charter school students, families, and staff while minimizing impact on surrounding community
- ☐ Prior to release of funds for rent payment:
 - Copy of lease agreement
 - Provisions in agreement that protect school system
 - Copy of insurance policy that provides protection for school system and charter school

*Based on list developed by Frederick County Public Schools, November 2004

G. Leasing

Title: Acquisition of Real Property by Lease for Use as Public School

Authority: Education Article §§4-115(b) Annotated Code of Maryland

Purpose: The following requirements shall be followed by local school systems to obtain the State Superintendent's approval of certain school real property leases.

Applies to: Rental of private or publicly-owned real property by a school system or by a charter school for use as a public school building.

Exceptions: Renewals of leases previously approved by the State Superintendent do not require approval.

Procedures:

1. Requests for approval shall be in writing from the local school system or, for charter schools, from the local school system chartering authority.
2. The local school system shall inspect and approve the site for use as a public school prior to submission of the request for approval to the State Superintendent.
3. The local school system or charter school shall obtain all approvals required by the fire marshal and other State and local agencies prior to submission of the request for approval to the State Superintendent.
4. The Maryland State Department of Education may inspect the site and may require review by other State agencies as a part of its evaluation of the lease.
5. The State Superintendent shall approve or disapprove all applicable leases in writing.
6. If the State Superintendent disapproves a lease, the Superintendent shall state the reasons for disapproval in writing.
7. Requests for approval shall be addressed to:

Barbara J. Bice, R. A.
Chief, School Facilities Branch
Maryland State Dept. of Education
200 West Baltimore Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

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Information to be submitted:

1. Formal request for approval of lease including:
 - a. Description of school (enrollment, grades, etc.)
 - b. Justification for Lease
 - c. Local Board of Education site approval (actions taken, dates)
2. Copy of lease including:
 - a. Name and addresses of parties to the lease
 - b. Location of property to be leased, including map if available
 - c. Description of property to be leased, including floor plans if available
 - d. Description of school uses in leased property
 - e. Duration of lease
 - f. Cost of lease
 - g. Any special conditions in lease

For further information please contact:

Barbara J. Bice, R. A.
Chief, School Facilities Branch
Maryland State Department of Education
200 West Baltimore Street
Baltimore, MD 21201
Phone: 410-767-0097
E-mail: bbice@msde.state.md.us

H. Construction Plans

Title: Approval of Construction Plans

Authority: Education Article, §2-303(f), Annotated Code of Maryland

Purpose: The following requirements shall be followed by local school systems and charter schools to obtain the State Superintendent's approval of certain school construction projects.

Applies to:

1. Plans or specifications for the remodeling of or addition to a school building if the remodeling or addition costs more than \$350,000.
2. Plans or specifications for the construction of a new school building.
3. Change orders that cost more than \$25,000 for the remodeling, restoration, or construction of a school Building.

Exceptions:

1. Capital improvement projects approved for planning and/or funding by the Board of Public Works pursuant to Education Article, 5-301, Annotated Code of Maryland, are not reviewed under these procedures. They are reviewed and approved under the procedures of the Interagency Committee on School Construction, Public School Construction Program.
2. Systemic renovation projects, such as mechanical system upgrades, reroofing, and boiler replacements, do not require review and approval.
3. Construction and installation projects for portable classroom buildings do not require review and approval.
4. Projects in buildings used for administrative, operations, maintenance, and storage use only do not require review and approval.

Procedures:

1. Requests for approval shall be in writing from the local school system or, for charter schools, from the local school system as chartering authority.
2. The local school system or chartering authority shall review and approve the project to its satisfaction prior to submission of the request for approval to the State Superintendent.
3. The local school system or charter school shall obtain all approvals required by the fire marshal and other State and local agencies prior to submission of the request for approval to the State Superintendent.

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4. The Maryland State Department of Education may inspect the site and may require review by other State agencies as a part of its evaluation.
5. The State Superintendent shall approve or disapprove the project in writing.
6. If the State Superintendent disapproves a project, the Superintendent shall state the reasons for disapproval in writing.
7. Requests for approval shall be addressed to:

Barbara J. Bice, R. A.
Chief, School Facilities Branch
Maryland State Dept. of Education
200 West Baltimore Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Information to be submitted (State action):

1. Notification of intent to proceed with a project (information)
2. Educational specifications or architectural program statement (review and comment)
3. Schematic design documents (approve)
4. Design development documents (approve)
5. Construction bid documents (approve)
6. Construction contract award - bid tabulations, alternates, record of local board action (approve)
7. Change orders over \$25,000 (approve)
8. Certification of completion (information)

For further information please contact:

Barbara J. Bice, R. A.
Chief, School Facilities Branch
Maryland State Department of Education
200 West Baltimore Street
Baltimore, MD 21201
Phone: 410-767-0097 E-mail: bbice@msde.state.md.us

I. Maryland Charter School Quality Standards

Indicator A: Culture of Continuous Improvement (Process)

STANDARD: Quality Public Charter Schools sustain a culture and infrastructure of continuous improvements that serves to maintain the long term success of the school.

Performance Measures:

1. Board of Director's policies and procedures for accountability
2. Evidence of the use of data analysis to guide improvements
3. Evidence of action plans/strategic plan/improvement plan/professional development plan
4. School schedules
5. Description of leadership roles and responsibilities
6. Evidence of school organization supporting improvement efforts
7. Evidence of an implemented performance management process (systematic methods to address results)

Critical Success Factors:

1. Strategic planning is used to guide and focus improvement efforts as needed, but minimally on an annual basis.
2. Data analysis helps to design and guide improvement efforts:
 - Data analysis is conducted at distinct levels: school level, classroom level, student level;
 - Data analysis is conducted in three distinct data areas: demographic area, outcome area and process area; and
 - Process data analysis includes: the study of classroom practices, curriculum alignment and teacher development needs.
3. School schedules allocate time for grade level teachers to meet weekly to plan and to develop strategies for improving student achievement.
4. Professional development is guided by strategic planning and data analysis.
5. Distributed leadership is valued and encouraged.
6. Staff and parents are invested in the school mission and vision, and in supporting the process of continuous improvements.
7. The school's administration effectively implements instructional leadership strategies.

Indicator B: Innovative Practices (Process, Input)

STANDARD: Quality Public Charter Schools launch and sustain effective educational innovations and the promising practices of school reform.

Performance Measures:

1. Number of identified researched based innovations and levels of implementation.
2. Balanced Scorecard (a performance management approach that focuses on various overall performance indicators).
3. Charter School Data Dashboards
4. Strategic plan
5. Documentation of continuous development for board, teachers, and instructional leaders

Critical Success Factors:

1. Vision and mission of the school is clearly defined and is supported by the school's strategic plan, culture and infrastructure.
2. Infrastructure of school is based upon best researched practices e.g.: curriculum, assessment, and instructional strategies, resource utilization (i.e. staffing, space, community, parents, materials, technology, equipment, furniture etc.), programs, governance models, school schedules, classroom and school organization etc.
3. Infrastructure supports continuous teacher leadership, instructional leadership and board development.
4. School stakeholders show commitment to implementing practices for producing best results.

Indicator C: Student Learning and Achievement (Outcome)

STANDARD: *Quality Public Charter Schools are dedicated to increasing student learning and achievement and use this value as the foundation of all school efforts.*

Performance Measures:

1. Proficiency levels on state assessments by grade and subject (*Proficiency Rates*)
2. Student performance on benchmark assessments by grade and subject
3. Student performance on school and/or teacher-made assessments (e.g., different types of assessments)
4. Student progress over time – annual growth (Improvement of individual students during the year on particular assessments [*Gain scores*])
5. Student progress over time – cumulative growth (Improvement of individual students across years on particular assessments)
6. Student self-assessments, reflections, surveys, and feedback
7. Student participation (e.g., attendance, continuance enrollment, truancy rates)
8. Rated levels of implementation of research-based innovations
9. Teacher planning documentation
10. Parent involvement activities/communication, progress reports
11. Description of student interventions and acceleration opportunities
12. Student Post-Secondary Readiness / Success (high school graduation, postsecondary education, training, workforce participation or military service)
13. Charter school's accountability system with additional performance measures

Critical Success Factors:

1. All students achieve a high level of proficiency on state assessment measures annually.
2. Achievement goals are defined and targets set by all school staff and students to accomplish annual achievement increases.
3. Teachers meet regularly to discuss learning standards, plan how they will help students to meet or exceed the standards and examine student work against the standards and use this information to adjust their instruction.
4. Progress Report updates are provided to parents regularly.

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5. Students that are not meeting grade level standards receive multiple opportunities for academic intervention and acceleration (in classroom, out of classroom, beyond regular school hours, etc.).
6. Staff holds high expectations for all students.
7. Teachers differentiate their instructional practices to meet the learning needs of all diverse students in their classes.
8. School policies, procedures, programs and resources are aligned to support student learning.
9. Secondary courses and curricula prepare students for career-ready and college-level work.
10. High school students are:
 - Made aware of what constitutes a college-ready curriculum by 9th grade;
 - Assisted in overcoming deficiencies to ensure they are prepared for college;
 - Assisted in completing critical steps for college entry; and
 - Made aware of post-secondary options including career awareness and timeliness.

Indicator D: School & Community Engagement (Input, Output)

STANDARD: Quality Public Charter Schools maintain shared understandings and commitment to provide positive learning environments and experiences through the engagement of all students, parents, staff and community.

Performance Measures:

1. Parent involvement policies and procedures
2. Evidence of parent engagement (active participation in school matters, satisfaction levels, complaints, etc.)
3. Evidence of community engagement (number of partnerships, participation in school development, knowledge regarding school goals)
4. Evidence of student engagement (surveys, attendance, retention, discipline records, behavioral interventions)
5. Descriptions of extracurricular activities and after-school programs for students

Critical Success Factors:

1. Parents understand and support the school's mission and vision.
2. Parents understand how to best support learning at home.
3. Community resources are identified and utilized to support school development and student learning.
4. The school's strategic plan includes strategies to continuously improve the school's learning environment and student experiences.
5. The school has developed tools to ensure that parents and the community are kept informed about school developments.
6. The school maintains a variety of supports for behavioral interventions, social development, and enrichment of opportunities that encourage student growth and development.

Indicator E: Governance, Leadership, and Organizational Structures (Process, Input)

STANDARD: Quality Public Charter Schools implement structures and processes that support effective organizational and learning environments.

Performance Measures:

Board Governance

1. Evidence of recruitment and sustainability of a diversely skilled governing board
2. Board of Directors membership, meeting schedules, agendas, meeting notes
3. Bylaws and policies and procedures with evidence of the adherence to and implementation of state and federal laws and regulations
4. Evidence of active engagement of the governance board in financial, instructional, organizational planning and accountability
5. Job descriptions, roles and responsibilities of board of directors and school leadership

Fiscal Management

6. Budgeting policies, procedures, and practices
7. Financial audits

Management

8. Allocation and organization of resources
9. School accountability/improvement plan
10. Evidence of effective communication systems
11. Professional development records for leadership team and board
12. Evidence of effective management structures and practices, including internal business and financial controls
13. Evidence of safe, clean, effective environment
14. Student enrollment rates
15. Staff qualifications
16. School's promotion and exit standards

Critical Success Factors:

Board Governance

1. The school's governing board includes representation of parents and school community. The school governing board meets regularly and has developed appropriate bylaws for conducting effective meetings. The board has developed appropriate school plans and policies to ensure school and student success.
2. The school's board employs a strong governance structure to promote the vision and mission of the school and ensures the following:
 - adequate resources for programming are provided and that resources are tightly aligned to support school goals;

- strong relationships with the chartering authorizer, within the school, and external stakeholders are developed and secured;
- a clear plan exists for hiring, retaining, supporting and evaluating the school administrator is developed and implemented in collaboration with the local educational agency;
- adopted policies and practices are in alignment with state laws, state rules, and district policies (unless waived) to promote consistency to the implementation of the school's vision and mission;
- guidance is provided in program assessment and renewal processes;
- governing and leadership structures are closely aligned to the approve school's charter;
- bylaws have been developed and implemented to ensure effective board functions and meetings;
- roles and responsibilities of the school's leadership are clearly delineated and distinct from the board; and
- accountability by reviewing and monitoring results, and ensuring that infrastructures effectively support improvement goals.

Fiscal Management

3. Effective use of sound budgeting practices is implemented:
 - the budget does not exceed school resources and assets; and
 - all appropriate revenue and program costs clearly reflected in the budget.
4. Revenue is secured to ensure stable programming:
 - adjustments are made to reduce operating costs to cover any deficit as; and
 - additional resources are secured to augment per pupil revenue and increase revenue to address unforeseen shortfalls.

Management

5. Clearly defined processes to ensure the equitable allocation, integration, and organization of resources in the school are implemented:
 - the use of resources is maximized to support achievement;
 - school staff is efficiently allocated and organized;
 - master schedule provides all students equal access to curriculum; and
 - individual student needs are met and students not meeting learning standards are identified and provided additional learning opportunities.
6. A collaborative process is used to develop the school's vision, mission, and goals and guides decision-making. The School Accountability Committee provides input into the school improvement plan.

7. Effective and transparent communication systems are implemented that are top-down as well as bottom-up for the board, school leadership, school staff, parents, students, and related external agencies.
8. Quality and needs-based professional development that supports their own development is planned and implemented for the governing board and leadership team.
9. Organizational effectiveness and efficiency is maintained as follows:
 - internal business and financial controls are developed and implemented to ensure operational integrity; and
 - a systemic plan of checks and balances is developed and implemented for all accountability areas including: fiscal, operational and academic responsibility.
10. A safe, clean and effective learning and work environment is provided for all staff and students.
11. Leadership ensures that all instructional staff has access to resources needed.
12. Student enrollment rates align with the school's charter.
13. In collaboration with the local educational agency, the employed staff meets all state and federal qualifications and standards.
14. Internal measures linked with the school's promotion and exit standards have been developed and implemented.

J. Charter School Resources

Maryland State Department of Education:

www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/charter_schools/

Maryland Charter School Network:

www.mdcharternetwork.org

National Alliance for Public Charter Schools:

www.publiccharters.org

Charter School National Resource Center:

www.charterschoolcenter.org

Charter School Program Federal Grants:

www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oii/csp/about-cs-competitions.html

K. Charter School Board of Directors - Forms for Section B.1-A

Proposed Charter School Board of Directors⁽¹⁾

Name	Title	Phone	Disclosure Yes or No
Name	Title		Yes or No
Address		Phone	
Name	Title		Yes or No
Address		Phone	
Name	Title		Yes or No
Address		Phone	
Name	Title		Yes or No
Address		Phone	
Name	Title		Yes or No
Address		Phone	
Name	Title		Yes or No
Address		Phone	
Name	Title		Yes or No
Address		Phone	
Name	Title		Yes or No
Address		Phone	
Name	Title		Yes or No
Address		Phone	
Name	Title		Yes or No
Address		Phone	
Name	Title		Yes or No
Address		Phone	
Name	Title		Yes or No
Address		Phone	
Name	Title		Yes or No
Address		Phone	

(1) If more than 12 members include a second sheet; if more than 24 members include a third sheet, etc.

(2) **Important** – Each person listed as a proposed member of the Board of Directors of the Charter Operator must complete a Disclosure Form (Appendix N). The completed forms must be included in Section B-1 of your application.

APPENDIX L - CONFLICT OF INTEREST FORM

(This form must be completed by all Founding and Board of Director Members.)

Instructions: If you answer "yes" to any of the following questions, please provide an explanation on a separate sheet of paper. Please label explanations with the number of the corresponding question.

1	Do or will you or your spouse have any contractual agreements with the proposed charter school?	YES	NO
2	Do or will you, your spouse, or any member of your immediate family have any ownership interest in any educational service provider (ESP) or any other company contracting with the proposed charter school?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Did or will you or your spouse lease or sell property to the proposed charter school?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	Did or will you or your spouse sell any supplies, materials, equipment or other personal property to the proposed charter school?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	Have you or your spouse guaranteed any loans for the proposed charter school or loaned it any money?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	Are or will you, your spouse, or any member of your immediate family be employed by the proposed charter school, its ESP or other contractors?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	Did you or your spouse provide any start up funds to the proposed charter school?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	Did or do you or your spouse, or other member of your immediate family, have ownership interest, directly or indirectly, in any corporation, partnership, association, or other legal entity which would answer "yes" to any of the questions 1-7?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	Does any other board, group, or corporation believe it has a right to control or have input on votes you will cast as a founding member or member of the Board of Directors?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	Do you currently serve as a member of the board of any public charter school?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11	Do you currently serve as a public official?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12	Have you, your spouse, or any member of your immediate family applied to establish or participated in the establishment of a charter school?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13	To the best of your knowledge, are there situations not described above that may give the appearance of a conflict of interest between you and the proposed charter school, or which would make it difficult for your to discharge your duties or exercise your judgment independently on behalf of the proposed charter school?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Signature

Date

Title

APPENDIX M - AFFIDAVIT, DISCLOSURE, AND CONSENT FOR CRIMINAL BACKGROUND AND CREDIT CHECK

Instructions: Return this signed affidavit with the application. Include a copy of this form for all members of the Founding Group and Board of Directors.

Name: _____ SSN: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: () _____ Date of Birth: __/__/__ Place of Birth: _____

<p>1. Have you ever been convicted or pled "no contest" for any violation of law other than minor traffic offenses?</p> <p>If either event has occurred, you must answer YES. If the conviction has been set aside, the charges must be disclosed. Please give details on a separate signed, notarized and dated sheet.</p>	<p>Yes__ No __</p>
<p>2. Have you ever been convicted of, admitted committing, or are you awaiting trial on any of the following criminal offenses in this state or similar offenses in another jurisdiction: (1) Sexual abuse of minor, (2) Incest, (3) First or second degree murder, (4) Kidnapping, (5) Arson, (6) Sexual assault, (7) Sexual exploitation of a minor, (8) Contributing to the delinquency of a minor, (9) Commercial sexual exploitation of a minor, (10) Felony offenses involving distribution of marijuana or dangerous or narcotic drugs, (11) Felony offenses involving the possession or use of marijuana or dangerous or narcotic drugs, (12) Misdemeanor offenses involving the possession or use of marijuana or dangerous drugs, (13) Burglary in the first degree, (14) Burglary in the second or third degree, (15) Aggravated or armed robbery, (16) Robbery, (17) A dangerous crime against children (18) Child abuse, (19) Sexual conduct with a minor, (20) Molestation of a child, (21) Manslaughter, (22) Aggravated assault, (23) Assault, or (24) Exploitation of minors involving drug offenses?</p> <p>If YES, submit certified court record and details of incident(s), signed notarized and dated.</p>	<p>Yes__ No __</p>
<p>3. Have you ever been suspended or debarred by any government regulator/licensing body from participating in government funded/assisted programs?</p> <p>If YES, submit a copy of the administrative record and details of the incident(s), signed, notarized, and dated.</p>	<p>Yes__ No __</p>
<p>4. Have you ever declared bankruptcy? Please give details on a separate signed, notarized and dated sheet.</p>	<p>Yes__ No __</p>

With signature below, permission is hereby granted to the Howard County Public School System to complete the Criminal Background and Credit Check of the individual above for _____ School.

I do solemnly swear or affirm that the foregoing information provided by me is true and correct to the best of my knowledge. Furthermore, should any part of the information herein provided prove to be false, I recognize that it shall be just cause for denial of charter school application, or revocation of charter status.

Applicant's signature _____ Date _____

APPENDIX N - BUDGET SPREADSHEETS

See separate Excel file.