Appendix 2: New School Application Guidance

New School Application Guidance

Updated: August 2016

OFFICE OF PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS

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OFFICE OF PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS

Overview

Welcome to Pillsbury United Communities (PUC) Office of Public Charter Schools (OPCS). Thank you for your interest in our organization. We enthusiastically invite charter school founders whose vision, mission and values align with that of PUC-OPCS to submit an intent to apply proposal. This document is designed to provide guidance in the development and review of new charter school applications and is the first step in our application process.

Pillsbury United Communities

PUC creates choice, change and connection in underestimated populations across Minneapolis. Through PUC's interconnected network of community centers, schools, and social enterprises, PUC fosters the resilience and self-sufficiency of individuals, families, and the community as a whole. We are creating multidimensional solutions to move individuals faced with multiple and complex challenges to economic stability. PUC' programs and services address a spectrum of intersecting needs in five impact areas—education, youth and family services, wellness and nutrition, employment and training, and asset creation.

PUC Office of Public Charter Schools

Vision: PUC authorized schools are committed to creating communities where students can excel academically and socially to realize their opportunities and potential for higher education, citizenship, self-sufficiency and personal fulfillment.

Mission: PUC authorized charter schools will: offer bold and innovative educational strategies; provide an environment that promotes respect for all students and their individual identities; and engage students in academic and authentic learning opportunities, service learning and personal development.

Values: We are motivated by the success of the people we serve; We value open and honest communication; We work in partnership and collaboration, and participate in peer review; We value diversity in all of its forms: We strive toward continuous improvement; We value transparency; We understand that fiscal responsibility is required; We value quality board training and development.
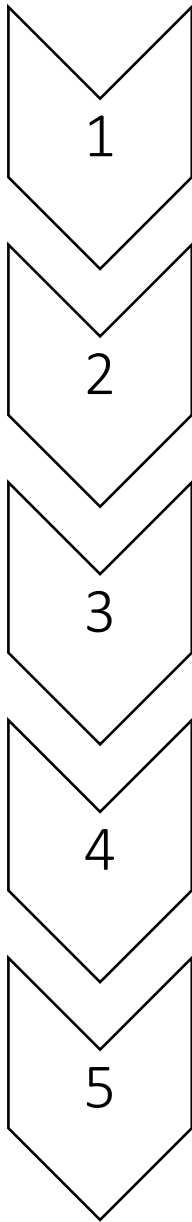
1
- 1a. Applicant(s) submits intent to apply proposal
- 1b. PUC-OPCS reviews intent to apply

2
- 2a. New school application is submitted
- 2b. Application is reviewed for completeness
- 2c. Supplements to application are submitted (If requested)

3
- 3a. Application is evaluated by review team
- 3b. Applicant(s) interviewed by Advisory Council
- 3c. Supplemental information is requested and submitted (If necessary)
- 3d. Review Team makes recommendation

4
- 4a. PUC-OPCS submits recommendation to PUC Board to approve or decline application
- 4b. PUC Board makes final decision

5
- 5a. Applicant is informed of final decision
- 5b. If approved, PUC-OPCS drafts new charter school affidavit and submits to MDE
- 5c. Charter contract negotiations begin
- 5d. Charter contract is executed

1. Intent to Apply
    a. Applicant(s) submits an intent to apply proposal
    b. Upon receipt of the proposal, PUC-OPCS will review and contact the applicant(s) to:
        i. inform applicant(s) of interest or capacity to accept new school application and/or;
        ii. request meeting with applicant(s) for further discussion and/or;
        iii. invite submission of a new school application
2. New School Application Submission
    a. Application is submitted to PUC-OPCS
    b. Application is screened to determine whether:
        i. application was turned in on time
        ii. application was submitted properly, as outlined
    c. If requested, additional information is provided by applicant
3. Application Review
    a. Application is distributed to PUC-OPCS staff and Advisory Council, reviewers independently assess application
    b. Interview of applicant(s) by Advisory Council
    c. Additional information or documents are requested from applicant(s) founding team (if necessary)
    d. Recommendation is made by Review Team
4. Final Decision
    a. PUC- OPCS submits recommendation to the PUC Board of Directors to approve or decline application
    b. Final decision is made by PUC Board of Directors
5. Applicant Follow-up
    a. Applicant is informed of the decision within 150 days following receipt of completed application
    b. If approved, PUC- OPCS drafts the new charter school affidavit and submits to the Minnesota Department of Education in alignment with State Statute and associated timelines.
    c. Charter contract negotiations begin, including decision upon the performance framework as aligned with all PUC authorized charter schools
    d. Charter contract is executed

Intent to Apply

New schools intending to apply to Pillsbury United Communities (PUC) Office of Public Charter Schools (OPCS) for charter school authorization must first submit an intent to apply proposal (visit www.puc-mn.org for current contact information). Please do not exceed 5 pages, excluding resume attachments.

Please note that the intent to apply proposal is not scored as part of the overall application process. It is for pre-application informational purposes only. Please respond to the following as comprehensively as possible.

1. Name of proposed school: Click here to enter text.
2. Primary contact person: Click here to enter text.

   Mailing address:

   Street or PO Box Click here to enter text.

   City: Click here to enter text. State: Click here to enter text. Zip Code: Click here to enter text.

   Phone (day): Click here to enter text. (evening): Click here to enter text.

   Email address: Click here to enter text.

3. Describe proposed school program and how it aligns with the statutory purposes of forming a charter school. Please describe any innovative design concepts of the school.

4. Describe any curriculum choices or recommendations made to date.

5. Grade levels to be served and target student population. Describe why the school is needed and how it will provide a more effective option than school options that currently exist.

6. What is the proposed general location for the new school? Please describe why the location was chosen.

7. Does the school expect to contract with a charter management organization (CMO) or company for school management or operations? If so, please provide further reasoning for the choice and identify the CMO or company.

8. Proposed director, principal or lead administrator information (if already identified). ***Include, as attachment, a resume for the named proposed director, principal or lead administrator.**

   Proposed candidate:Click here to enter text.
   Current employment: Click here to enter text.
   Phone (day): Click here to enter text. (evening) Click here to enter text.
   Email address:Click here to enter text.

9. Name(s) of applicant team or founding entity:

   a. Names, roles and current employment of all persons on the applicant team, including outside consultants assisting in the application process (where applicable).

NAME	ROLE	CURRENT EMPLOYMENT

b. Do any members of the team currently operate or are employed by any other school (e.g. charter, traditional public or private)? If yes, please describe.

c. Explain the individual and collective qualification of the applicant team members to establish a high-quality charter school, in particular, the capacity to assume responsibility for public funds, administration and governance.

d. Identify any applicant team members that plan to become founding board members and/or staff at the new school.

e. Explain the circumstances and motivations that brought the applicant team together to propose this charter school.

* Include, as attachments, resumes for each individual on the applicant team.

10. Identify any organizations, agencies, consultants or institutions of higher education that partners in planning and establishing this charter school, along with a description of their current and planned role and resources they have contributed to the school's development.

Application Submission and Format

New school applications are submitted electronically or in printed format to PUC-OPCS (visit www.puc-mn.org for current contact information). Checklists are provided in each section below the component description; checklist and rating rubrics are included in the application materials for your reference. The application will be checked for completeness to ensure all questions/requirements have been addressed and that all additional documents have been provided. Applications that are missing information, responses and/or documents may not be considered for further review.

Application Rating Criteria

All written components of the application except the initial intent to apply proposal and executive summary will be rated. Applications receive a rating for each section of the application as well as an overall recommendation for the application as a whole.

Section Rating: Reviewers will assign one of four ratings to each section for **Level of Completion** and **Strength of Response:** *Inadequate, Fair, Satisfactory or Excellent* - with applicable comments for each section.

RATING GUIDE	1 - Inadequate	2 - Fair	3 - Satisfactory	4 - Excellent
Level of Completion	Adequately addresses few or no criteria	Adequately addresses some criteria	Adequately addresses most criteria	Adequately addresses all criteria

Strength of Response	Important weaknesses outweigh strengths	Some strengths but also indicates some important weaknesses	Strengths outweigh weaknesses	Key strengths and only minor or no weaknesses

Applicants may be requested to provide supplemental information in a meeting or document submission format. Any supplemental information provided prior to decision-making will be considered as part of the application.

Final Decision

The PUC Board of Directors makes all final decisions. PUC-OPCS will make a recommendation to approve or decline the application based on ratings and comments from the application and recommendations from the Advisory Council. Additional factors considered in the recommendation from PUC-OPCS include mission fit, PUC-OPCS capacity, the larger educational landscape, and the conduciveness of this type of the school in the current market. If PUC-OPCS considers one of these factors and it contradicts with the Advisory Council recommendation, PUC-OPCS makes a written explanation upon the matter. PUC-OPCS reserves the right to decline an application without legal recourse.

Application Components

Application components are outlined in the subsequent sections:

1. Executive Summary* (up to 2 pages)

The executive summary serves as a concise overview of the proposed charter school and identifies who is submitting the charter application, and should include:

School Founders:
- Summarize the relevant experience of the school's founders and why you are seeking to open a public charter school.

Vision and Mission:
- Briefly state the vision and mission of the proposed school (there will be opportunity for further expansion within the application in component 2).
- Describe key programmatic features the school will implement in order to accomplish its vision and mission.

Educational Plan:
- Describe the educational philosophy and instructional approach.
- Include other unique features, such as non-traditional school year, longer school day, key partner organizations, multiple campuses, school culture, etc. and how (if at all) this school departs from traditional education in the proposed location.
- Explain how the school will increase learning opportunities and improve student achievement, specifically for the intended student population.

Community:
- Provide evidence of a community need for a school of this nature.
- Identify the proposed school's name, grade levels to be served, planned opening date (month/year).
- Identify students to be served, such as key demographic data, targeted geographical area, etc.
- Projected size of school – start up enrollment and growth plan (if school does not plan to initially open with all grade levels).

*Please note that statements made in your Executive Summary should align with the contents of the entire application and vice versa.

*The Executive Summary is required but is not rated.

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2. Mission, Strategy and Goals (6-7 pages)

a. Under Minnesota Statute, *Chapter 124 E,* charter schools must be designed to improve all pupil learning and all student achievement. The law states five additional purposes that include:
1. Increase learning opportunities for all pupils;
2. encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods;
3. measure learning outcomes and create different and innovative forms of measuring outcomes;
4. establish new forms of accountability for schools; and/or
5. create new professional opportunities for teachers, including the opportunity to be responsibility for the learning program at the school site.

Determine which of the above five additional purposes (one or more) the charter school intends to meet. For each purpose identified, provide a paragraph or two describing how the school's educational program meets these purposes.

Checklist for Comprehensive Application 2a

- ✓ Describe how the charter school will improve all pupil learning and all student achievement.
- ✓ Identify at least one of the five additional statutory purposes the charter school seeks to serve.
- ✓ Provide a narrative description of how the charter school shall fulfill the above-identified purposes.

b. Developing strong vision and mission statements will help stakeholders in your school reach a common understanding of purpose and goals. These guiding statements should be succinct, easy to understand, inspiring, and memorable. They should demonstrate alignment with PUC and OPCS' vision and mission statements (see OVERVIEW).
- Provide a **vision** statement that articulates your school's goal – where you hope to see it in the future
- Create a **mission** statement that provides an overview of how the school will attain its vision for the future
- Explain how the school will evaluate whether the vision is realized and the mission has been accomplished

Checklist for Comprehensive Application 2b

- ✓ The vision and mission statements are clear, focused and compelling.
- ✓ The vision and mission statements describe the guiding purpose for the charter school with a focus on impact rather than inputs.
- ✓ 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. 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 attain the vision.
- ✓ The vision and mission statements link to program features throughout the application.
- ✓ The vision and mission statements align with PUC-OPCS vision and mission statements.

c. The application should reflect an understanding of the requirements of the law and alignment with PUC's use of multiple measures and data-driven decision-making. Provide a clear plan for:
- what and how goals will be measured;
- how ongoing progress toward goals will be measured throughout the year; and
- how the data are relevant to the target population. Explain how data will be obtained stored and utilized for program improvement

Note: It is understood that there are not actual baseline test ratings, attendance rates or other data before the school is established. In addition to goals required by state law, a charter school may choose to utilize other measures for which

they will be held accountable. Include measures that the school is willing to be held accountable for over time, as these additional measures become a part of the school's academic and non-academic goals (as required by state statute).

Checklist for Comprehensive Application 2c

Goals:
- ✓ Specified student achievement goals for achieving the school's mission and the Minnesota Academic Standards including mathematics, reading, and any other content areas applicable to the school's program focus.
- ✓ Specified student performance goals for achieving other accountability measures such as attendance, graduation, and appropriate aspects of school's proposed program.
- ✓ Specified goals for student growth over time in content areas, especially mathematics and reading, when appropriate, and are tied to future decision-making regarding goals.
- ✓ Additional measures appropriate to student population are outlined.
- ✓ Clear realistic strategies for improving student achievement and closing achievement gaps.
- ✓ Goals are written in the SMART framework (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, and Reflective of the school's mission, and Time-bound) and includes objectives and benchmarks.

Data:
- ✓ Reflects basic understanding of state achievement and reporting requirements.
- ✓ Explanation of how the school's assessment system will provide baseline data and appropriate ongoing data throughout the year to continuously monitor student achievement and performance toward SMART goals and make adjustments to teaching and learning.
- ✓ A plan for data-driven decision-making is articulated.
- ✓ Data gathering, maintenance, and storage capacity appear to be adequate for the school's immediate and future decision-making needs as well as reporting to authorizer, students, parents, and other stakeholders.

d. The evaluation of the education program model will include information on the school's achievement of SMART goals and student performance expectations in relationship to the fidelity of implementation of both the school's instruction and assessment system and identified curriculum scope and sequence. Student assessment results should be aligned to the Minnesota Academic Standards and associated with instruction, assessment, and curriculum behaviors. The process should include both: (1) formative evaluation to adjust teaching and learning as well as job-embedded professional development, and (2) summative evaluation to judge the value added by the school's unique educational program model.

Checklist for Comprehensive Application 2d

- ✓ Description of how the school plans to analyze comparison data of student achievement and performance expectations to identify areas of gaps or deficits including comparisons to: 1) the State of Minnesota, 2) schools with similar demographics.
- ✓ Description of how the 1) school plans to self-monitor student achievement and performance expectation trends to identify areas of gaps or deficits needing attention including school trends of accountability assessment data identified in SMART goals and ongoing assessment data used to measure ongoing progress throughout the year and 2) will use data for decision-making.
- ✓ Description of how the school will gather and organize implementation data for the education program model including instruction/assessment system, curricula, and other identified critical aspects of model identified in section 2A of application.
- ✓ Description of the school's procedures for taking corrective action in the event student achievement results fall below the SMART goals approved by the authorizer in the charter contract.

e. The evaluation of the organizational plan will focus on the fidelity of implementation of the governance plan, the management plan, and the operations plan outlined in the application. Since all of these plans should be coordinated to

provide a cohesive functioning structure for the school, the coordination of these plans should be addressed in the organizational evaluation.

<u>Checklist for Comprehensive Application 2e</u>

- ✓ Description of how the school plans to gather and organize implementation data of each of organization components: a) governance plan; b) management plan; and c) operation plan.
- ✓ Evaluation of the school's organization plan adequately measures the effectiveness and efficiency of the school's governance process, administration plan, and operations plan and establishes a logical structure to use the results for continuous improvement of the organization.
- ✓ Plan clearly outlines roles and responsibilities for implementing the school's comprehensive evaluation plan and is sufficiently frequent to effectively monitor and adjust behaviors or structures within the school.
- ✓ If the school plans to contract with an external service provider for evaluation services, describe evaluation components to be completed by external contractor; describe how contractor will be selected, financial commitments for the evaluation, and level of external evaluator's flexibility in determining evaluation methods.

3. Academics (4-6 pages)

The application should describe the school's educational model and philosophy with rationale and supporting research evidence for the selection of the program. The school's curriculum must be aligned to the Minnesota Academic Standards. Instruction should reflect the needs of the proposed student body as well as carry out the focus of the program model. The supporting assessment system should include diagnostic and formative tools as well as summative assessments.

As public schools, charter schools must open their enrollment to any student and must provide appropriate special education services as needed for students with disabilities. The charter school developer should consider the general philosophy of the school when developing delivery of special education services.

<u>Checklist for Comprehensive Application 3</u>

Educational Program Model:
- ✓ Description of the educational program model with supporting research evidence showing how it will improve student achievement for the proposed student body.
- ✓ Program model reflects the vision and mission for the school.
- ✓ Description of other vital aspects of the program and supporting research evidence to demonstrate how they will increase student academic performance, and/or meet the social and emotional needs of the students.
- ✓ Daily schedule and calendar for first year of operation that align with the educational program and school vision and mission (e.g. extended day, after-school programming, etc.) The calendar and daily schedule meet (at least) the minimum number of hours required by state statute.

Curriculum:
- ✓ Proposed curriculum is identified and a plan for alignment to the Minnesota Academic Standards is clearly described.
- ✓ School has a plan for ongoing curriculum development that is data-driven.
- ✓ Description of core learning areas, including the curriculum and how it will be aligned to the Minnesota Academic Standards.
- ✓ Description of supplemental curricula for Special Education, electives or "special" courses and how they align with Minnesota Academic Standards.

Teaching and Learning:
- ✓ Instruction and assessment clearly support the educational program model, and are aligned from analysis of student achievement through formative and summative assessments.

- ✓ Explanation of how the school's assessment system will provide baseline data gathering, short and long-term types of assessments, and how the school will use this information to revise professional development and instruction.
- ✓ Description of the role of school leadership staff as instructional leaders and are clearly involved in the implementation of the school's educational model.
- ✓ Description of teaching skills and experiences needed by educational staff to effectively carry out the educational program model.

Special Needs:

- ✓ Clear indications are given that the school understands requirements to meet the needs of IEP's and ELL's and to comply with the requirements of IDEA and 504 plans. Include certified personnel, documentation, assessments, adaptations and modifications.
- ✓ Description child find process to address needs for adaptations or special education assessments and staffing.
- ✓ Description of how the school plans to identify and meet the learning needs of at-risk students, students with disabilities, English language learners (ELL), and gifted/talented students.
- ✓ Plans are in place to provide adequate staff to meet the needs of these students including a licensed special education teacher.

4. Governance (4-6 pages excluding requested documents)

Charter school governance is extremely important to the success of a charter school. Oftentimes, a proposed charter school's applicant team transitions to become the school's founding governing board. The charter school application should describe how the applicant team was formed, completed its tasks and plans to transition the governance of the school to the governing board.

The number of directors on a charter school board may not be less than five and it is generally considered a best practice to have no more than nine directors. While some existing Minnesota charter schools have a teacher majority on the governing board, others do not. Under Minnesota law, the chief administrator and chief financial officer are ex-officio, non-voting board members. If staff members have voting privileges, there should be clear policies to explain when that board member should excuse him or herself. Any potential conflict of interest by any board member should be disclosed and addressed.

The charter school application should also describe the school's legal status. Schools authorized by PUC are required to obtain a nonprofit corporation status and apply for tax-exempt status with the IRS. The charter school governing board must operate in compliance with the Minnesota Open Meetings Law and Minnesota Government Data Practices Act.

Every charter school governing board should have a set of board policies. Much of what is included in the charter school application will become board policy. For instance, the school's vision/mission statement, legal status, enrollment policy, discipline policy and nondiscrimination policy will all be in the board policy book. These board policies shall be made available to school staff and families

This section should also provide a description of pre-opening tasks assigned to the team members to ensure a successful opening. Charter school may elect to become part of a cooperative or contract with an educational service provider. If so, describe the arrangement.

Checklist for Comprehensive Application 4

- ✓ Description of:

- the process involved in developing the applicant team;
- the individual expertise represented on the applicant team;
- the role of each member of the application team in coordinating and contributing to the start-up process;
- the process to appoint or elect the initial governing board;
- how and when bylaws will be adopted by the board;
- the governance structure for the school; and
- the nature and extent of parental and/or community involvement in governance.

✓ Description of authority the governing board will convey to the school's administrator, along with clear delineation of their respective roles and means by which the administrator will be evaluated.
✓ Explanation of the proposed transition between the applicant team and the school's governing board, including:
- comprehensive description of start-up tasks to ensure a successful opening;
- timeline for start-up tasks with applicant team's duties to ensure successful opening;
- identification of individuals making the transition;
- how the transition plan will provide for a smooth shift of responsibilities; and
- How the founder's group original vision and mission will be brought to fruition.
✓ Description of how a lead administrator will be hired and transition of leadership will happen.
✓ Description of how all board members and school leadership will be trained and/or demonstrate at least a minimal level of understanding needed for informed decision making regarding student achievement, school operations, and finance.
✓ Clear description of working board members selection and removal procedures, term limits, meeting schedules, powers, roles, and decision-making process.
✓ Explanation of the proposed board meeting frequency and focus; the role of any standing committees is included.
✓ Identification of ongoing timeline where student achievement, school operations, and finance are discussed.
✓ Explanation of compliance with Minnesota Open Meeting and Open Records laws.
✓ Explanation of compliance with Minnesota Government Data Practices Act.
✓ Description of how the founding governing board will create and adopt board policies.
✓ Clear explanation of meaningful parent and community involvement in the governance of the school.

Attach the following documents:
- Actual or draft articles of incorporation or bylaws indicating legal status. Proposed bylaws explain powers and duties, size, terms, composition, qualifications, term limits, officer positions and duties, election procedure, vacancy replacement, minimum number on the board, quorum and decision making process, how board members are elected or appointed, when this takes place, open meeting and data privacy.
- Resumes of applicant team members and/or founding board members.
- Draft of initial board policies including Conflict of Interest and Grievance Process policies. Conflict of Interest policy delineates potential conflicts and how they will be addressed appropriately. Grievance process is clear and follows an appropriate route for resolution of concerns raised by students or parents.

5. Financial (3-4 pages excluding requested documents)

The budget and financial plan for the charter school must include a plan for revenues and expenditures plus a plan for compliance with state and federal accounting and reporting requirements. The plan should demonstrate diligent financial practices, clear alignment to the other components in the application (e.g., vision and mission, learning program), and strong oversight. Particular attention should be given to facility and salary costs, as a large portion of the school's budget.

The budget and financial plan for the charter school must include a plan for revenues and expenditures plus a plan for compliance with state and federal accounting and reporting requirements. The plan should demonstrate diligent financial practices, clear alignment to the other components in the application (e.g., vision and mission, learning program), and strong oversight. Particular attention should be given to facility and salary costs, as a large portion of the school's budget.

The proposed budget should be based on reasonable estimates that reflect choices made throughout the rest of the charter application. For example, enrollment projections used elsewhere in the application need to be the same enrollment projections used in the development of the budget.

The budget should demonstrate an ability to understand the sources of funding available to the charter school and the types of expenditures required to operate the charter school. When projecting revenue numbers, the single most important factor to understand is enrollment. Enrollment projections must be accurate, and it is best to project conservatively for budget purposes. Expenditures may not exceed revenues obtained from state school funding allotments.

Describe other sources of revenue in funding specific programs or in helping with startup costs such as federal grants, compensatory aid, special education and more. When planning expenditures, it is important to understand how choices affect different areas of the budget.

Describe other costs such as staffing, special education, various professional services, classroom supplies and materials, general supplies and materials, technology, lease, liability insurance, and authorizer fees. Employees of charter schools are public employees and must participate in Minnesota's Public Employees' Retirement Association (PERA) or in the Teachers Retirement Association (TRA).

Checklist for Comprehensive Application 5

- ✓ Start-up plan for staff, planning, preparations and other costs with timelines including only grants or donations already received or for which commitments have been received.
- ✓ Description of financial policies and procedures including checks and balances of cash disbursements and ways to ensure alignment with the school's vision and mission.
- ✓ Description of proposed state-approved financial management system.
- ✓ Identification of who will be responsible for the school's financial management.
- ✓ Budget includes:
    - o Start-up budget: three-year operating budget (including scenarios for minimum enrollment for solvency and 100% anticipated enrollment);
    - o cash flow budget – first 18 months;
    - o realistic assumptions and their basis - using UFARS Chart of Accounts; accounting for direct student instructional expenses; TRA/PERA contributions and other benefits; accounting for state holdbacks;
    - o shows separation of general fund and food service fund;
    - o establishment of emergency/long-term reserve fund;
    - o adequate staffing aligned with the narrative in other application settings; and
    - o list of any planned services to be contracted to outside providers.
- ✓ Budget balances each year with realistic cash flow for first year, has sufficient checks and balances, and does not include 'contingent funds' such as grant money or donations.
- ✓ Adequate and reasonable plan to manage startup costs with available federal, state and/or private grant funds with adequate allocations and anticipated timelines.

- ✓ Spending priorities align with the school's mission, educational plan, plans for management and operations, and growth.

- ✓ Identification of costs associated with the anticipated facilities needs is realistic (based on anticipated location, size, lease aid expected, etc.) and inclusive of renovation, rent, utilities, insurance and maintenance.
- ✓ **Description of the school's process to contract with an audit firm to conduct an annual independent financial audit including how results will be disseminated to MDE and the authorizer.**

- ✓ Explanation of how the financial audit data will be used to make adjustments in fiscal policies.
- ✓ Explanation of how the school will remain fiscally solvent, adhere to generally acceptable accounting practices, have no material breaches, and will address any concerns from the independent financial audit.
- ✓ Descriptions of plan to ensure that STAR, MARSS, UFARS, EDRS, CLICS, SERVS reports and data uploads are completed.
- ✓ School's proposed financial plan clearly describes the school's compliance with fiscal policies and procedures required by MDE and the authorizer.

6. Leadership and Operations (8-10 pages with up to 4 additional pages if contracting with an education service provider (ESP)

a. A charter school must provide an explanation of its proposed management structure, along with an organizational chart to provide a visual picture of the management structure. The narrative should give a clear delineation of employee classifications and who is responsible for oversight of the educational program and of school operations at each level of the organization chart. It must describe the relationship that will exist between the charter school and its employees. Hiring, evaluation processes, and termination processes are part of the relationship. Proposed employment policies should be addressed.

If the proposed school intends to contract with an education service provider (ESP), such as a charter management organization, cooperative, education management organization, or any other type of school management provider, the applicants must describe how and why the ESP was selected and present evidence demonstrating a well thought-out plan to manage the relationship with the service provider for the benefit of the school.

Checklist for Comprehensive Application 6a

- ✓ An organizational chart is included as an attachment; the chart shows the relationship between administrative, teaching and support staff positions.
- ✓ Organizational chart reflects staffing that is aligned with school vision and mission.
- ✓ Explanation of the relationship that will exist between the charter school and its employees, with employee classification clearly defined.
- ✓ Narrative description gives clear delineation of employee classification and who is responsible for oversight of the educational program and of school operations at each level of the organizational chart.
- ✓ Clear definition of where the responsibilities lie for employee hiring, evaluation and termination.
- ✓ Job descriptions for administrator, teachers and key employees are included.
- ✓ Clear standards are in place for determining staff qualifications to meet statutory and licensure requirements.
- ✓ Description of how key employee policies will be provided (e.g. employment practices, benefits, leave policies, grievance policy, conflict of interest policy, harassment, drug-free workplace, classroom practices, and evaluation practices). Description of a clear plan for timely development and intent of such policies.
- ✓ A manageable plan for job-embedded professional development, mentorship, retention, and regular evaluation of staff is linked to the school's mission and educational program, including a timeline, lead contact, and specific actions.
- ✓ Clear plan of support for staff development and funding.

If contracting with ESP, please also address the following:

Note: no preferences are given to applicants for working with an ESP; nor are there preferences for applicants who do not plan to work with an ESP.

✓ Explanation of how and why the ESP was selected
✓ Evidence that the service provider is authorized to do business in Minnesota
✓ Detailed explanation of the ESP's success in serving student populations similar to the targeted student population, including demonstrated academic achievement as well as successful management of non-academic school functions (e.g., back-office services, school operations, extra-curricular programs) if these are to be covered in the contract.
✓ Draft of the proposed management contract setting forth the proposed duration of the management contract; roles and responsibilities; scope of services and resources to be provided by the ESP; performance evaluation measures and timelines; compensation structure including identification of all fees to be paid to the ESP; methods of contract oversight and enforcement; investment disclosure; and conditions for renewal and termination of contract.
✓ Explanation of relationship between the school governing board and the ESP, specifying how the governing board will monitor and evaluate the performance of the service provider, the internal controls that will guide the relationship, and how the governing board will ensure fulfillment of performance expectations, or have a means for severing the contract.
✓ Details sufficient to assure there are no potential conflicts of interest between the ESP and the governing board.
✓ Explanation of which staff will be hired and terminated by the ESP or report to or be paid by the ESP.
✓ Clear understanding of financial obligation to ESP if enrollment increases, decreases or stays the same for the duration of the relationship.

b. The operations section of the application guides the plan to structure the day-to-day functioning of the school and to analyze the adequacy of the identified facility for the school. The most important thing during the application process is to plan as much as possible and to clearly articulate those strategies.

A charter school may choose to provide transportation or have it provided by the resident school district. If a charter school chooses to provide transportation services, the application must briefly describe these services. The transportation services should include provisions for transporting students to and from the charter school and their homes, and to and from the charter school and extracurricular activities.

For food services, the plan should include a description of how this service will be offered. The cost of these services must be included in the charter school's budget.

One of the greatest challenges to opening a new school is finding a suitable facility. It can be difficult to negotiate for facility space without having an approved charter. It is not necessary to have a signed formal agreement for a facility during the application process. Any viable options should be explained and should include reasonable space requirements, a feasible plan for space utilization, a discussion of how the facility will be ready for use when the school opens and, most importantly, reasonable costs of that facility reflected in the proposed budget. Charter schools may rent, lease, or otherwise finance facility space (they may own buildings but at present are not allowed to use public funds for purchase). In some cases, a school district may have an unused facility; in other cases, a charter school may share space with another tenant. With any facility, building permits and inspections are required. Life and safety requirements (including asbestos regulations) also apply to rented or contributed facilities.

Checklist for Comprehensive Application 6b

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Transportation and Food Service:

- ✓ Brief description of the charter school's transportation arrangements. Brief description of the charter school's food service program.
- ✓ Financial plan addressing transportation and food service needs is viable.

Facilities:

- ✓ Description of facility needs assessment including:
  - o how many instructional spaces are needed;
  - o how many specialized spaces are needed (art, music, library, gym);
  - o number of bathrooms needed;
  - o number of offices needed;
  - o amount of common and outdoor space needed; and
  - o approximate amount of total square feet per student. Description of plan for identifying location (if not yet completed).
- ✓ Analysis of alignment between target location (or prospective sites if not affected by confidentiality issues) for school and facility needs assessment including:
  - o overall facility size given design of school's education program model;
  - o zoning and occupancy requirement;
  - o assurance of compliance with applicable building codes;
  - o assurance of compliance with health and safety laws;
  - o understanding of occupancy permit requirement; and
  - o assurance of compliance with the requirements of the American with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- ✓ Identification of additional funding or financing needed to bring facility online with potential sources for needed funding and description of relationship and/or budget impacts if real estate consultants are involved.
- ✓ Explanation of fund allocation based on estimated renovation costs, square foot needs per pupil and cost per square foot, average square foot costs in the intended location, and the percentage of budget designated for facility needs.

7. Student Recruitment, Enrollment and Outreach

A critical factor in developing a sustainable charter school is the capacity to recruit and retain students. The majority of a schools funding comes from state and federal governments through per-pupil allotment. When planning, it is important to understand the number of students you will need to support the school, and that you have realistic expectations for recruitment of target population, and how you will be competitive within the market.

Identify the number of students expected to attend the school each year by grade level in the following table:

Year of Operation	Grade Level															Total
	Pre-K	KG	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12		
Year 1																

Year 2												
Year 3												
Year 4												
Year 5												
											Total	

The Charter Schools Law requires the charter school to admit by lottery if applications for enrollment exceed school capacity. The lottery policies and plan for enrollment should demonstrate how the school plans to enroll students. State and federal law requires a public charter school to not discriminate on the basis of disability, race, creed, color, gender, national origin, religion, ancestry, or need for special education services. The Minnesota charter schools law prohibits discrimination based on academic ability. Diagnostic or placement exams may be given **after** students have been officially enrolled.

It is important for charter school developers to provide adequate notice to the community about the possibility of the new charter school. Some parts of the community may need additional outreach. For example, publications may need to be translated into other languages. A feasible recruitment plan is essential to attract a projected enrollment.

The application should demonstrate the expectations and plans for ongoing parent and community involvement and the support of volunteers.

Checklist for Comprehensive Application

- ✓ Identified target enrollment for years 1-5 (aligned with budget projections)
- ✓ Chart/table showing the number of students expected to attend the school each year by grade level, demonstrating growth to enrollment cap within 5 years.
- ✓ Market analysis results
- ✓ Description of school's policy and procedures for admissions, including lotteries, admissions preference system (i.e., siblings or children of teachers, etc.); student waiting list, withdrawals and transfers
- ✓ Details of sound plan and timeline to inform the community about the school, especially hard to reach stakeholders, and recruit the projected student population.
- ✓ Defined student recruitment strategy that explains how the school will successfully attract and recruit the target population.
- ✓ Explanation of the process used to transfer student records to or from the charter school. Description of proposed policy for student discipline, suspension, or expulsion that provides due process rights under the Minnesota Pupil Fair Dismissal Act (PFDA).
- ✓ Explanation of parent involvement and volunteer requirements or policies and opportunities after the school is open.
- ✓ Description of definition of partnerships or community involvement with the purpose and expectation

New School Application Review

Prospective School: Click here to enter text.
Reviewer: Click here to enter text.
Date: Click here to enter a date.

Application Rating Criteria

Strengths	Click here to enter text.
Concerns	Click here to enter text.
Compliance	Click here to enter text.

All written components of the application except the initial intent to apply proposal and executive summary will be rated. Applications receive a rating for each section of the application as well as an overall recommendation for the application as a whole.

Application Component Rating: Reviewers will assign one of four ratings to each application component for **Level of Completion** and **Strength of Response:** *Inadequate, Fair, Satisfactory or Excellent -* with applicable comments for each section.

RATING GUIDE	1 - Inadequate	2 - Fair	3 - Satisfactory	4 - Excellent
Level of Completion	Adequately addresses few or no criteria	Adequately addresses some criteria	Adequately addresses most criteria	Adequately addresses all criteria
Strength of Response	Important weaknesses outweigh strengths	Some strengths but also indicates some important weaknesses	Strengths outweigh weaknesses	Key strengths and only minor or no weaknesses

Application Component Ratings

Application Component	Rating	Comment
1.		
Level of Completion	Choose an item.	
Strength of Response	Choose an item.	
2a.		

Level of Completion	Choose an item.	
Strength of Response	Choose an item.	
2b.		
Level of Completion	Choose an item.	
Strength of Response	Choose an item.	
2c.		
Level of Completion	Choose an item.	
Strength of Response	Choose an item.	
2d.		
Level of Completion	Choose an item.	
Strength of Response	Choose an item.	
2e.		
Level of Completion	Choose an item.	
Strength of Response	Choose an item.	
3.		
Level of Completion	Choose an item.	
Strength of Response	Choose an item.	
4.		
Level of Completion	Choose an item.	
Strength of Response	Choose an item.	
5.		

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Level of Completion	Choose an item.	
Strength of Response	Choose an item.	
6a.		
Level of Completion	Choose an item.	
Strength of Response	Choose an item.	
6b.		
Level of Completion	Choose an item.	
Strength of Response	Choose an item.	
7.		
Level of Completion	Choose an item.	
Strength of Response	Choose an item.	

Supplemental Information Request (if necessary)

Applicants may be requested to provide supplemental information in a meeting or document submission format. Any supplemental information provided prior to decision-making will be considered as part of the application.

Information Requested: Click here to enter text.	
Choose an item.	Supplemental Information Addressed Questions/ Concerns: Click here to enter text.

Reviewer Recommendations

Please note and explain your recommendation for approval/ disapproval of the New Charter School Application.

Note: Your recommendation does not indicate an approval or disapproval decision. The PUC Board of Directors makes the final decision to approve or disapprove a New Charter School Application.

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Recommendations: Choose an item.

     If applicable, additional Information necessary: Click here to enter text.

     If applicable, conditions for approval: Click here to enter text.

Please provide a summary of your recommendation citing evidence from scoring rubrics: Click here to enter text.