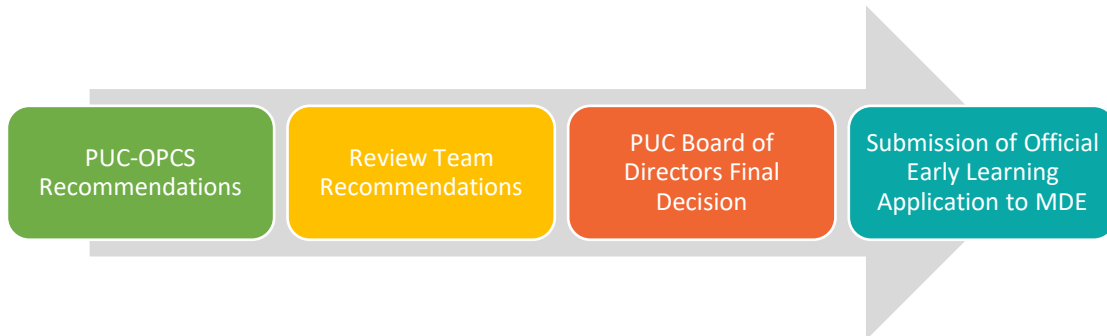# Appendix 20: Early Learning Program Application

Early Learning Program Application

Updated: October 2019

This application is for an officially recognized early learning program (s) request. Pillsbury United Communities (PUC) reserves the right to request additional information and/ or to address the school board with additional questions.

PUC-OPCS will collaborate with the school to determine an appropriate timeline for that will not interrupt with school operations and student learning. The decision period is generally a 6-8 week process that will result in an official written communication to the school. (Direct to statute)

PUC-OPCS Recommendations	Review Team Recommendations	PUC Board of Directors Final Decision	Submission of Official Early Learning Application to MDE

The request will initially be reviewed by PUC-OPCS. A team of reviewers consisting of individuals from the PUC-OPCS and/or Advisory Council will review all information gathered from the school to make a determination regarding grade expansion. Recommendations from this review committee will be reviewed by PUC-OPCS staff and presented to the PUC Board of Directors for a final decision. Pillsbury United Communities (PUC) reserves the right to request additional information and/or to address the school board with additional questions at any point throughout. In accordance with State Statute and associated timelines, PUC-OPCS submits an official early learning application to MDE at the conclusion of this process.

Application Guidelines:
- Submit completed application electronically or mail to Office of Public Charter Schools
- Include a table of contents
- Include page numbers, header or footer with school name and page numbers.
- All attachments should be clearly labeled.

Upon review of the application, if PUC-OPCS find that items are missing the school will be contacted and given 3 days to provide the missing content.

A complete early learning program application includes the following components.
1. Need: Describe the reasons for the request(s): Include data on student/parent demands, letters of support from parents, community, etc. that support your request.
2. Current Academic Data: Provide student academic data and analysis on current students enrolled. Include progress on the academic and non-academic goals contained in the charter contract with PUC.
3. Board Approval: Describe how the board was involved in this decision. Provide a letter of support from the charter school board chair. Attach board minutes approving the expansion for the intended grade levels.
4. Contract Amendments: State the modification(s) the school board would like to the current contract. Include edits to the academic and non-academic goals which includes progress monitors of the expansion and/or student achievement in the expansion grade levels.
5. Operations / Finances: Indicate how the school will address the following areas based on the expansion request.
   a) *Marketing and Student Recruitment Efforts:* Who is the intended audience for the expansion? Describe how student projections for the desired enrollment will be met.

b) *Student and Family Engagement:* Describe how the school will support current students and families during this transition. How will existing students be engaged in this process?

c) *Curriculum/ Instructional Models:* Describe the curriculum and evaluation for the additional grade(s). Include a kindergarten readiness assessment if expanding to pre-kindergarten.

d) *Student Achievement:* What mechanisms will be taken to limit disruption to current grades served and current achievement levels? How will you know that new grade levels are successfully serving students?

e) *Staff Capacity:* Indicate how the school will modify its organizational structure or current staff's roles and responsibilities. What is the model candidate

f) *Facilities:* Indicate the school's facility capacity (including total number of classrooms, class size, and other programmatic spaces (special education, etc.) and the changes the school will make in the facility to accommodate additional classrooms or larger class sizes.

g) *Budget:* Attach a detailed budget that includes the changes. How will the proposed changes increase or decrease financial stability over time (i.e. 1 year, 3 years, 5 years)?

6. <u>Statutory Requirements:</u> Application must address all areas required in statute to qualify for an Official Early Learning Program as listed below. Please refer to MDE's guidance for submitting an Official Early Learning Application for more information.
   a. Include information on the fee structure and enrollment preference, if applicable.
   b. Compressive Child Assessments for readiness to Kindergarten.
   c. Intentional Instructional Practice aligned with state early learning standards.
   d. Kindergarten transition practices.
   e. Coordination with Relevant Community-Based Services.
   f. Staff Ratios and Licensure.
   g. Teacher Content Knowledge.
   h. Early Childhood Health and Developmental Screening.

7. Application must be signed by the Charter School Leader and the School Board Chair.

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Board Chair

Signature _____ Date_____

Printed_____

Charter School Leader

Signature _____ Date_____

Printed_____

Early Learning Application Evaluation

This portion is filled out by the evaluators reviewing the expansion application. No information is necessary from the charter school applicant.

Directions to Evaluator: Check to see if the following are included in the grade expansion application. If something is missing, indicate so.

☐Current student academic data

☐Description of student projections and how they will be met

☐Description of curriculum and evaluation for additional grades

☐Description of organizational structure, including roles, responsibilities, and need of additional staff

☐Description of facility capacity to accommodate additional space needs

☐Detailed budget addressing financial changes over time as a result of the expansion

☐Description of how the expansion will positively affect student achievement

☐Application signed by the Charter School Leader and the School Board Chair

Any additional documents/ information needed prior to the final decision: Click here to enter text.

School Name:

Reviewer:

Date:

Application Rating Criteria

All written components of the application 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 Ratings

Inadequate: Lacks significant detail; demonstrates lack of preparation, or otherwise raises substantial concerns about the applicant's understanding of the issues, concepts, and/or ability to implement the proposed early learning program(s).

Fair: Addresses some of the criteria, or lacks meaningful detail and requires important additional information in order to be reasonably comprehensive.

Satisfactory: Address most of the criteria, is reasonably comprehensive, and indicates the applicant's understanding of the issues, concepts, and/or ability to implement the proposed early learning program(s).

Application Components	Inadequate	Fair	Satisfactory
Overview and rationale for adding Early Learning Program			
Comprehensive Child Assessment Assess each child's cognitive skills with a comprehensive child assessment instrument when the child enters and again before the child leaves the program to inform program planning and promote kindergarten readiness.			
Intentional Instructional Practice Provide intentional practice aligned with the state early childhood learning standards and kindergarten standards that is based on early childhood research and professional practice focused on children's cognitive, social, emotional, and physical skills and development and prepares children for the transition to kindergarten including early literacy skills.			
Kindergarten Transition Coordinate appropriate kindergarten transition with parents and kindergarten teachers. Include meaningful coordination and planning with kindergarten teachers, and engages families in a variety of ways to support children's learning and successful transition to kindergarten.			
Coordinate with Relevant Community-Based Services Coordination may include referrals to community programs based on child needs, such as local public health, social services, mental health services or other early learning or child care programs. Describe how program coordinates with community organizations and how resources will be shared with families.			
Staff Ratios and Licensure Ensure staff-child ratio or one to ten and maximum group size of 20 children with the staff being supervised by a licensed early childhood teacher.			
Teacher Content Knowledge Have teachers that are knowledgeable in early childhood curriculum content, assessment and instruction.			
Early Childhood Health and Development Screening Ensure participating children have completed health and developmental screening within 90 days of program enrollment. If the charter school is not providing the early childhood health			

and development screening program, describe how participating children will access screening prior to entering the program.			

Supplemental Information Request (if necessary)

State below any supplemental information regarding the proposed early learning program you feel would be helpful to the decision-making process.

Supplemental Information Requested:

Reviewer Recommendation

Please note and explain your recommendation for **approval/ disapproval** of the Charter School Expansion – Early Learning Program.

- ❑ Approve
- ❑ Disapprove

Strengths	
Concerns	
Questions	

Additional Comments:

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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