

New Operator Charter School Application Questions

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The executive summary shall be no longer than two pages.

1. **Mission and Vision.** State the mission and vision of the proposed school. The mission is a statement of the fundamental purpose of the school, describing why it exists. The vision statement outlines how the school will operate and what it will achieve in the long term. The mission and vision statement provide the foundation for the entire proposal. The mission and vision statement, taken together, should:
 - a. Identify the students and community to be served;
 - b. Illustrate what success will look like; and
 - c. Align with the purposes of the state charter school law.
2. **Anticipated Student Population and Educational Need.** Describe the anticipated student population you seek to serve through the approval of the proposed school. Explain how the intended student population is representative of the demographics of the location. Provide rationale for seeking to serve this specified student population and community.
3. **Education Plan.** Provide an overview of the education program of the proposed school, including major instructional methods. Describe the evidence that demonstrates the school model will be successful in improving academic achievement for the above defined student population. Summarize what the proposed school would do more effectively than the schools that are now serving the targeted population.
4. **Applicant groups that have submitted charter applicants previously,** list the dates of previous submissions. Explain how you have taken the feedback from previous evaluations to reflect and revise the application. Address the deficiencies identified in the most recent evaluation and describe the changes made. Additionally, describe any changes to board leadership or school leadership since the most recent application.

SECTION 1: EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AND CAPACITY

School Establishment

1. Provide a narrative analysis of the community you seek to serve in the proposed school including:
 - a. A description of the community the school will locate, including proposed physical address, and parish;
 - b. The applicant's rationale for selecting the community;
 - c. Performance of local schools in meeting the community's need; and
 - d. How the proposed school would serve the community you seek to serve more effectively than the schools that are now serving the intended community.
2. Provide an overview of the student population you seek to serve in the proposed school, which includes:
 - a. Racial and socioeconomic demographics;
 - b. Percentage of special education students;
 - c. Percentage of English Learners;
 - d. Percentage of homeless students; and
 - e. Anticipated academic, social, emotional, and physical health needs.
3. Based on your outreach, research, and understanding of the community and students you seek to serve, what are the top three things that present challenges to the success of the students in the community you seek to serve? What does your proposed school intend to do to address these challenges?
4. Why is the proposed school a good fit for the previously identified community and students?
5. Describe the programmatic impact the proposed school would have on existing schools in the same geographic area as the proposed school location. Responses should include:
 - a. A table listing the existing educational options and grades served available to the intended student population; and
 - b. Analysis of the various educational programs and/or instructional approaches currently offered to the intended student population compared to what the proposed school will offer.
6. Provide a narrative description of the way in which stakeholders in the intended community were engaged regarding the proposed charter school, including:
 - a. Description of the stakeholders engaged;
 - b. Reflection of stakeholders not engaged and potential barriers to them being included;
 - c. Strategies used to solicit community input regarding the educational and programmatic needs of students and the plan to meet those needs;
 - d. The method and nature of feedback received from community stakeholders and the process for incorporating that feedback into the submitted application; and
 - e. The extent to which, if at all, the proposal incorporates community input regarding the educational and programmatic needs of students.
7. Provide a narrative description of support for the proposed school from community stakeholders, including a candid analysis of the depth of support and opposition to the school.

Appendix 1: Submit documents that provide evidence of community support (e.g. letters of support from community stakeholders, emails with evidence of support, and/or survey results. Please refrain from submitting signed petitions.) Include a cover sheet with a table that identifies each document included with the evidence for this request, its page number, and a brief description of the document.

Academic Plan

1. Provide a clear and concise overview of the proposed school model, highlighting the key design elements of the school model critical to its success in serving the intended student population, including:
 - a. The key design elements that reflect the school's mission and vision; and
 - b. A clear rationale for the school model and key design elements, citing research and evidence of success for improving academic achievement with similar student populations, or for innovative or untested models, a strong rationale for the likelihood of success.
2. In Louisiana, charter schools are able to purchase instructional materials that are best for their students. For core content areas (English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies), identify the curricula your school will use, such as textbook selections and supporting materials by subject and/or grade level, including:
 - a. A summary of how the selection supports the intended student population;
 - b. Identification of the Tier of the chosen curriculum as determined by the Louisiana Department of Education (this shall be included on the overview template);
 - i. If the selection is not rated by LDOE, submit evidence that you have conducted a local review process, inclusive of a timeline (see pg.4), using the [Instructional Materials Reviews](#).
 - c. Evidence of how this curriculum includes specific strategies for diverse learners; and
 - d. An explanation of the way in which you will intentionally supplement the curriculum to provide the intended student population with representations of their racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds without the perpetuation of stereotypes or deficit perspectives.
3. Describe the basic learning environment, including class size and structure.
4. Describe the instructional strategies, methods and techniques to be employed in the school, including:
 - a. Research or existing models that support the use of these instructional strategies, methods, and/or techniques;
 - b. An explanation of the alignment to the school's model that will further its specific mission and key design elements; and
 - c. Evidence they are well suited for the intended student population.
5. Provide a detailed hybrid learning plan that includes the following:
 - a. Circumstances under which this plan would be implemented;
 - b. A plan to acquire and disseminate technology to students;
 - c. A plan to track and monitor attendance in a virtual setting;
 - d. Identification of the Learning Management System (LMS) to be employed;
 - e. A plan to provide training and technical support on the LMS to staff, families, and students; and
 - f. A plan to communicate with staff, families, and students virtually.
6. In addition to core content offerings and graduation requirements (for high schools), are there other classes or courses the proposed school will offer? If so, explain how these offerings align to the proposed school model and mission and how they will benefit the intended student population.

FOR APPLICANTS PROPOSING HIGH SCHOOLS

7. What diploma pathways, Jump Start 2.0 pathways, IB, and Cambridge Courses will the proposed school offer?

Appendix 2: Provide an outline of course offerings by diploma type(s) offered at the proposed school by grade level and year of operation for the initial charter term.

Appendix 3: Using a table, identify by grade level and year of operation, Advanced Placement Course Offerings, Dual Enrollment, ACT preparation, and Career and Technical Education Courses you will offer to students.

Appendix 4: List the Industry-Based Credentials students will have the opportunity to earn aligned to the CTE course offerings.

8. What Industry-Based Certificate assessments will be offered to students on a Jump Start 2.0 pathway?
9. Explain what systems and structures the school will implement for students at risk of dropping out.
10. Does the school plan to seek approval to participate in athletics with the Louisiana High School Athletic Association?

ASSESSMENTS

11. Describe the diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments the school will use to evaluate student knowledge and skills. This response should:
- Describe each assessment's purpose, design, format, and rationale for its selection;
 - Describe the alignment to LEAP 2025 and ACT (for high school applicants);
 - Describe how the school will collect and analyze assessment results;
 - Describe how instructional leaders and teachers will use the assessment data to inform programmatic and instructional planning decisions and adjust instruction, curricula, and professional development; and
 - Explain how the school will communicate with parents/guardians and students about academic achievement and progress.

SCHOOL CALENDAR AND STUDENT SCHEDULE

12. *Appendix 5: Provide a copy of the school's proposed calendar for its first year of operation that clearly articulates:*
- Total number of instructional days (this shall be included in the overview template);
 - Total number of hours of instruction (not including breakfast, lunch, bathroom breaks, transition times, dismissal, or after-school activities [this shall be included in the overview template]);
 - First and last day of class;
 - For high schools, clearly indicate any adjustment to seniors last day of class;
 - Organization of the school year (semester, trimester, quarter, etc.);
 - All planned holidays and other days off, including half days; and
 - Dates for summer school, orientation, and any other activities outside of the core academic calendar, if planned.
13. *Appendix 6: For each division of the school (e.g., lower elementary, upper elementary, middle, and high), provide a sample student schedule for a typical week.*
14. *Appendix 7: Provide a sample student schedule for a typical week for a student that is an English Learner.*
15. *Appendix 8: Provide a sample student schedule for a typical week for a student with exceptionalities.*

DIVERSE LEARNERS

16. Discuss the school's methods and strategies for identifying and serving students are struggling academically and at risk of academic failure, including:
 - a. How the school will determine and identify which students are struggling within the context of a Response to Intervention (RTI) program;
 - b. Clearly defined the term "struggling student" as it would be applied in the school;
 - c. The strategies, programs, supports, resources, and personnel the school will devote to assisting struggling students within the general education setting;
 - d. Any research or evidence that supports the appropriateness and effectiveness of the proposed approach;
 - e. The process the school will use to evaluate the efficacy of the program; and
 - f. The system the school will use to monitor the demographic data of the students identified as struggling students and the approach that will be taken if data suggests disproportionate or over-identification of any sub group.
17. Discuss the school's methods and strategies for identifying and serving students with exceptionalities in compliance with all federal laws and regulations without regurgitation of the law and include:
 - a. The process for identifying students with disabilities (child find), within the context of the school's RTI process;
 - b. The resources, personnel (including administrative responsibilities), and direct and related services the school is likely to provide both within general education classrooms and in other settings (e.g., collaborative team teaching ("CTT"), Special Education Teacher Support Services ("SETSS"), speech therapy, physical therapy, occupational therapy, counseling, planning time, instructional materials, technology, professional development, staff and consultants, etc.);
 - c. Any research or evidence that supports the appropriateness of the school's approach to serving students with disabilities;
 - d. The process for coordination between general education teachers and special education teachers or service providers;
 - e. The process that will be used to monitor the achievement and progress of students with disabilities;
 - f. Specific professional development for identifying, supporting, and evaluating the progress of special education students including the implementation of RTI and behavioral intervention plans ("BIPs") in the classroom;
18. Discuss the school's methods and strategies for identifying and serving English Learners in compliance with all federal laws and regulations without regurgitation of the law and include:
 - a. The process for identifying students whose first language is not English and the methods for determining the scope of assistance that these students may need including how the school will ensure that they are not inappropriately identified as students with special education needs;
 - b. The approach, resources, and personnel (including qualifications and associated administrative responsibilities) the school will use to meet the needs of ELs (both within general education classrooms and in other settings);
 - c. The research and evidence that supports the appropriateness of this approach;
 - d. The process for coordination between general education teachers and staff serving ELs and professional development for general education teachers serving ELs;
 - e. The process that will be used to monitor the achievement and progress of ELs including exit criteria;
 - f. The process that will be used to evaluate the efficacy of the program, instructors, and ensure that the needs of EL students are being met;
 - g. How the school will make all necessary materials available to parents of ELs in a language that they can understand; and
 - h. How the school will make after school and other extra-curricular programming accessible to ELs.
19. Describe how your education program will identify and meet the needs of academically advanced students and include:
 - a. If the school will offer gifted/talented instruction;
 - b. How the school will identify advanced and/or gifted and talented students;
 - c. Strategies and programs the school will use within the general education classrooms and in other settings to accelerate learning; and
 - d. Specific programs, services, and supports.
- g. The process that will be used to evaluate the efficacy of the program and ensure that the needs of these students are being met; and
- h. The system the school will use to monitor the demographic data of the students identified as students with exceptionalities and the approach that will be taken if data suggests disproportionate or over-identification of any sub group.

Culture, Social Emotional Learning, and Behavior Management

SCHOOL CULTURE

20. Explain how the school will establish and maintain a culture that supports students' intellectual and social development, maintains a safe environment, and recognizes and celebrates racial, cultural, and social differences. (*This response shall not include holidays or monthly celebrations.*)
21. Describe any extra-curricular activities that the school will offer to develop and nurture the social needs of students.
22. Explain how student voice will be included in decision making?
23. Detail ways in which students will have ownership in the school culture.
24. Describe how you will build cultural competency amongst school staff. Given the intended student population, how will conversations be facilitated with school staff regarding racial and cultural differences?
25. Explain a plan for creating and building a positive adult culture, inclusive of expectations and conditions that will lead to a high rate of staff retention annually.

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING

26. Describe the school's plan to support the social and emotional health of students, including:
 - a. A plan to provide social and emotional skills instruction for all students;
 - b. A plan to provide trauma-informed care;
 - c. A plan to provide social and emotional support;
 - i. How students will be referred;
 - ii. Protocols for implementation; and
 - iii. Overview of supports provided;
 - d. Identification of a mental health screener and rationale for selection aligned to the intended student population;
 - e. A plan to administer the selected mental health screener; and
 - f. Explanation of how families will be included in the process and informed of progress.

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

27. Describe the school's approach to student discipline, behavior intervention, and classroom management. Highlight key policies, systems, and structure related to these areas. Additionally, your response must include:
 - a. Describe how the school will communicate its approach and related policies to students and families;
 - b. Describe your school's approach to exclusionary discipline, including a list of offenses that may lead to suspension or expulsion;
 - c. Explain interventions and consequences the school will use as alternatives to exclusionary discipline;
 - d. Explain how the school will afford due process for all students;
 - e. Describe the appeals procedures that the school will employ for students facing possible expulsion;
 - f. Explain how the school will protect the rights of students with exceptionalities in disciplinary actions and proceedings;
 - g. The system the school will use to monitor the suspension and expulsion and the approach that will be taken if data suggests disproportionate or over-identification of any sub group; and
 - h. *Attachment 9: Provide the school's code of conduct, specifically highlighting the discipline policy.*

28. If the school plans to implement a dress code policy, describe the policy and the rationale for its selection. Identify potential barriers of access to the uniform, given the intended student population, including proposed remedies.

PARENT AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

29. How will the school engage parents/guardians and the community once it's open, include:

- a. How the school will build strong family-school partnerships to engage parents/guardians throughout the life of the charter;
- b. Formalized mechanisms to ensure parent/guardians and the community are involved in decision making and have opportunities to provide regular feedback to the school leader and charter board;
- c. Provide a plan for how parent/guardians, students, and community can submit or share a concern about a charter board decision, administrative procedure, or practice at the school; and
- d. *Attachment 10: Grievance Policy*

ACADEMIC GOALS

30. List and provide a detailed description of the charter school's measurable academic goals aligned to LEAP 2025, ACT, and graduation rate (as applicable) reflecting where the school envisions itself academically each year of its contract year for the initial term. Include an overall percentage of proficiency for each grade level and content area, as well as subgroup percentages (economically disadvantaged, students with disabilities, and English Learners).

SECTION 2: ORGANIZATIONAL PLAN AND CAPACITY

Staffing

1. *Attachment 11: Provide organizational charts for the first and fifth year of operation clearly showing the reporting structures between the CEO, school leader(s), charter board, and all staff including instructional, operational, and financial staff. If the charter board intends to contract or partner with an entity for management or educational service provider, the organizational charts should also reflect that relationship.*
2. Provide a narrative explaining the organization's lines of reporting and accountability, the rationale of how this structure supports the proposed school model, and the roles of any management or partner organizations.
3. Describe plans to recruit and retain a diversified staff to serve the intended student population including:
 - a. The process and timeline to recruit and hire a diversified staff;
 - b. Specific strategies for recruiting EL certified, special education and other high need teacher specialties; and
 - c. The strategies for retaining a diversified staff.

School Leadership Team Capacity

All responses in this section must speak specifically to the proposed school leadership team that includes instructional, operational, and financial leadership. Specifically, this should be the senior most individuals of the team in each of these areas.

4. *Attachment 12: Provide the resume for every member of the proposed school leadership team. Provide a cover sheet for each resume that includes the persons proposed role, brief description of major responsibilities, justification for proposed role through evidence of student impact data for instructional leaders, justification for proposed role through evidence of organizational, operational or financial viability for other staff, and any explanation for time lapses listed on the resume.*

Professional Development

5. Describe the school's professional development approach for instructional staff and explain how it supports the effective implementation of the educational plan for the intended student population, including:
 - a. Identification of the staff members responsible for leading professional development;
 - b. An overview of the frequency and format of professional development;
 - c. An overview of professional development topics and timeline to occur prior to school opening; and
 - d. The process by which additional professional development topics will be identified.
6. Explain the school's approach to professional development and training opportunities for operational and financial staff.
7. In addition to professional development outlined above, how will your school prepare teachers and staff to work with a diverse student population that recognizes, affirms, and supports the racial, social, and cultural differences present within the intended student population?
8. Describe the school's approach to ongoing individual teacher support through coaching and feedback systems.

Charter Board Governance

9. *Attachment 13: Provide the resume for every member of the charter board. Provide a cover sheet for each resume that includes the person's role, brief description of major responsibilities, expertise area, and a brief justification for board membership.*
10. Identify any existing relationships that could pose actual or perceived conflicts if the application is approved; discuss specific steps that the board will take to avoid any actual conflicts and to mitigate perceived conflicts.
11. Describe the governance structure and duties of the charter board. Describe any committees, advisory bodies, or councils and their roles and responsibilities. Explain how the proposed structure will ensure accessibility to staff, community and families. Describe how the board will interact with the CEO/School Leader/ESP.
12. Are there any areas of expertise or experience the current board seeks to fill? If so, explain the area and rationale for need on the board, as well as the recruitment plan, to fill that position.
13. Explain how the board will monitor the academic, organizational and financial goals stated within the application, including actions that will be employed if the school is trending toward not meeting set forth standards.
14. Explain how the board will monitor progress toward accountability and renewal standards, including actions that will be employed if the school is trending toward not meeting set forth standards.
15. If a single site/CMO: Describe the role of the board in evaluating the school leader/CEO and holding them accountable for school performance, including:
 - a. The information the board will collect;
 - b. The specific measures and metrics to be used; and
 - c. The timeline and frequency of evaluation.
16. If ESP: Describe the role of the board in evaluating the ESP and holding them accountable for academic, organizational, and financial outcomes including:
 - a. The information the board will collect;
 - b. The specific measures and metrics to be used; and
 - c. The timeline and frequency of evaluation.
17. Describe plans for increasing the capacity of the charter board. Include the plan for training and development of new members and continuing members. Provide an overview of the topics to be covered.
18. Specify where and how frequently the board plans to meet. Describe the procedures that will be in place to ensure compliance with the Open Meetings Laws and Open Records Act.
19. *Attachment 14: Provide a draft of the proposed charter board's governing by-laws.*

Corporate Partnerships (If Applicable)

20. Identify the partner organization as defined in Bulletin 126, Chapter 39, selected to assist in the implementation of the school model and describe the terms of the partnership.
21. *Attachment 15: Provide a copy of the MOU/Contract.*

Educational Services Provider (If Applicable)

22. Provide rationale for consideration of an ESP, including:
 - a. List of all companies/organizations considered;
 - b. Evaluation of all companies/organizations considered; and
 - c. Rationale for selected provider.
23. Provide evidence of the service provider's success in serving the intended student population, including demonstrated academic achievement, fiscal responsibility, and organizational effectiveness.
24. Clearly specify the decisions and services the organization or provider will be responsible.
25. *Overview Template: A list of currently managed schools within the organization or provider's portfolio, location, authorizer, and performance details.*
26. Provide a detailed plan outlining the mechanisms by which the charter board will oversee and hold the ESP accountable to the agreed upon terms. Explain the conditions under which the contractual relationship may be terminated.
27. Disclose and explain any existing or perceived conflicts of interest between the board and proposed ESP or affiliated business entity.
28. Describe the causes that led to and current status of:
 - a. Any performance deficiencies or compliance violations;
 - b. Any litigation of any Louisiana school; and
 - c. Any material audit findings for a school or the organization.
29. *Appendix 16: Provide an independent audit of the ESP. An acceptable submission includes the full ESP independent audit or an independent audit focused only on the charter operations of the ESP.*
30. Attachment 17: ESP MOU or Contract

Organizational Goals

31. List and provide a detailed description of the charter school's measurable organizational goals each year of its contract year for the initial term.

SECTION 3: FINANCIAL PLAN AND CAPACITY

Operations

OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP

1. Describe how the school will manage its non-academic services once it opens and who will be responsible for overseeing which operational aspects of the school, including transportation, food services, facilities, purchasing processes, student records and school safety.

STUDENT ENROLLMENT AND RECRUITMENT

2. *Overview Template: Complete the enrollment projection chart for the initial charter term of the proposed school.*
3. Describe the strategy to recruit and enroll the intended student population including;
 - a. Process, timeline, and requirements for parents and students to apply;
 - b. Identification of potential barriers to access to the school and explain how the school mitigate the barriers;
 - c. Description of the admission policy for the school, including any preferences; and
 - d. Explanation of lottery procedures (if applicable).
4. Explain the plan for ensuring the school will retain the intended student population and specifically remain in compliance with the required economically disadvantaged and special education percentages.

FACILITY NEEDS

5. Describe the facility needs of the proposed school including;
 - a. Desired or acquired location of the school facility;
 - b. Unique features necessary to implement the school design and programming;
 - c. The number of classrooms required each year;
 - d. Any additional spaces needed to support academic programming; and
 - e. Space requirements for administrative and operational functions.
6. Describe the efforts to date to secure a facility for the school including;
 - a. If the applicants have identified a facility, a description of the facility and how it meets the school's needs including its location and whether it is new construction, part of an existing public or private school building, or must be renovated for use; or
 - b. If the applicants have not identified a facility, explain the plans for securing a suitable facility and preparing it for use by the time the school would open (including assuring that it meets specifications). Also, explain any contingency planning including the associated costs.
7. If the charter school education corporation, ESP, CMO, or partner organization would own or lease a facility, provide a description of the ownership or lease arrangement indicating specifically any potential conflicts of interest and arrangements by which the education corporation would manage or avoid such conflicts.

FOOD AND NUTRITION

8. Describe the plans for food services the charter school will provide.

TRANSPORTATION

9. Describe how the school will meet the transportation needs of all its students, including students with exceptionalities, and those in temporary living situations.

INSURANCE PLAN

10. *Attachment 18: Provide a list of the types of insurance coverage the school will secure, a brief description of each, and describe the levels of coverage.*

FINANCIAL PLAN

11. Complete all requirements of the financial template including detailed narratives of assumptions for budgeted items. Provide specific information as requested in the financial model on all revenue sources outside of MFP such as philanthropy, non-committed philanthropy and/or student fees.
12. Provide a narrative describing a contingency plan in the event that the actual revenues are lower or expenses are higher than anticipated in the financial model.
13. Do you plan to use a financial manager or back office service provider? If the entity that will provide your financial services has been chosen, provide the name and a description of services. If it is an individual financial manager, provide the resume as *Attachment 19*.
14. Explain the process the school will use to develop its annual budget including:
 - a. Who will be involved;
 - b. How needs will be identified and weighed;
 - c. The timeline for creating and approving budgets; and
 - d. Procedures for monitoring and modifying budgets and on what interval.

INTERNAL CONTROLS AND PROCEDURES

15. Describe the existing or proposed policies and procedures that the proposed school and board will use for financial planning, accounting, purchasing, and payroll. Explain how these plans will sustain financial health of the organization and ensure legal compliance with any requirements and restrictions for the use of public funds. Include the following information in your response:
 - a. Identify how the board will monitor the school's financial position;
 - b. Identify who is responsible for directly managing and overseeing the school's budget and a description of how they will do so;
 - c. Describe the school's plan to comply with submission of an annual audit of school finances conducted by an outside, independent auditor; and
 - d. Describe what financial controls the organization will have in place at the central and school level to ensure long-term financial viability.

FINANCIAL GOALS

16. List and provide a detailed description of the charter school's measurable financial goals each year of its contract year for the initial term.