

Louisiana Believes

2019 Charter School Application Evaluation Rubric

For applications submitted to The Louisiana Board of
Elementary and Secondary Education

2019 Charter School Application Evaluation Rubric

The purpose of the state’s charter school application process is to provide a rigorous, comprehensive, unbiased evaluation of all charter applicant groups according to clearly defined standards. Charter applicant groups should use the standards described in this document to develop written plans, craft short personal responses, and prepare for in-person interview questions and performance tasks that will take place throughout the charter school evaluation process.

The Evaluation Process

The charter evaluation process for BESE-authorized charters consists of multiple assessments so that applicant groups are afforded the opportunity to present various forms of evidence of their readiness to launch a school. Charter applicant groups will be evaluated by an independent charter evaluation organization with which the Department has contracted.

Evaluation Stage	What to Expect
1 (Written Application)	The third party evaluator will holistically review all submitted components of the charter application against the standards found in this document. The application will be rated on every standard based on the textual evidence found in the application. The evaluator will prepare an initial recommendation that shows the applicant group what standards they have satisfied and where there are deficiencies in their application.
2 (Response to Evaluator Initial Recommendation)	The applicant has the opportunity to submit a five-page written response that addresses the deficiencies found in the evaluator’s initial recommendation. The evaluator will review this response and prepare an updated recommendation that takes into consideration the applicant group’s response. Updated documents submitted in the initial written application (such as the finance template or overview template) that are submitted as part of the response will not count towards the page limit.
3 (Interview and Performance Tasks)	All applicants will meet with the evaluator for an in-person interview. During this interview, the applicant will be afforded a limited amount of time to address any unmet standards still found in the updated recommendation in a limited amount of time. The applicant will also engage in a series of performance tasks that assess their school leader and board’s readiness to open a new charter school. Applicant groups will not be asked to present evidence in the interview of a standard that is already met; but if an applicant voluntarily presents new evidence that a standard is not met, the evaluator may change a previous determination.
4 (Final Recommendation)	The evaluator will create a written final recommendation for all applicant groups following the interview and performance tasks stage of the evaluation process. If the applicant finds any factual inaccuracies in the final recommendation, the applicant may address those inaccuracies in a response to the Department. Support must be provided to back up all claims of factual inaccuracy. If there are no factual inaccuracies in the final recommendation, the applicant does not need to submit a response.

Applicant groups must meet all standards for the evaluator to advise that the Department recommend to BESE to approve a charter applicant group.

Louisiana Believes

The Department recommends to BESE whether to approve or deny each charter application.

The Standards

The charter school application process rubric includes two sets of standards:

- (1) Holistic standards that evaluators will apply across all evidence presented
- (2) Standards that apply to specific pieces of evidence presented in the application

Holistic Standards:

When evaluating the evidence provided by charter applicant groups, the evaluator will evaluate the following holistic standards in addition to the standards within each section. The evaluator will identify evidence pertaining to the holistic standard at each stage of the application process. The final recommendation made by the evaluator will take into account both the holistic standards and the standards that apply to specific sections of the application and performance tasks.

Standard	Example Evidence of Standard Not Being Met
Comprehensiveness - No requested information or essential pieces of the school's plan are left out of the proposal.	The application mentions that there is a student recruitment plan, but the plan is not discussed anywhere in the application.
Support - All claims are backed up with data, citations, or expert testimony.	The application states that 150 parents would send their kids to the proposed school, but the application does not provide evidence that speaks to how the data was collected or why it is reliable.
Mission Alignment – All pieces of the plan are working towards the same purpose.	The application includes a character education program, but character education is neither a component of the mission nor is there a description of how character education will contribute to the academic purpose of the school described by the mission.
Cohesion – All pieces of the plan are integrated with each other.	The number of students used to create financial projections is not the same as the target number of students described in the overview template.

The rest of this document outlines the New Operator and Experienced Operator standards that will be used by the evaluator to judge charter applications submitted to BESE.

New Operator Application Standards

Vision

Question 1: Explain the mission and vision of your school. What will your school set out to achieve in the long term, what will success look like, and how will your school get there?

- (A) The mission statement identifies the role of the school in addressing the problem or demand that the school seeks to address in the location in which it seeks to serve.
- (B) The vision describes what success for students beyond school looks like if the applicant group fulfills the role described in its mission.

Question 2: Explain why your school would be important to the community in which you are proposing to locate.

- (C) The applicant group proposes a school that solves a problem related to student outcomes that is either shown to exist with data or is in response to demonstrated demand for a particular school model.

Students

Question 1: Demonstrate by using data that the student population that you wish to serve exists.

- (A) The applicant group intends to recruit a student population that is shown to exist with current data and includes a percentage of Economically Disadvantaged students and Students with Disabilities that meets or exceeds the minimum legal percentage.

Question 2: Describe your recruitment strategy and provide your recruitment plan. Provide any evidence that you have collected that demonstrates that parents and guardians have committed to enrolling their children in your school. You may provide evidence in Appendix A. Appendix A will not count against the page limit.

- (B) The applicant group provides a legal and logical plan to garner interest in the school and subsequently enroll students.
- (C) The applicant group demonstrates with data that they have identified pools from which to recruit students that will enable them to meet their enrollment targets.
- (D) Admissions requirements, if any, comply with R.S. 17:3991(B)(3).¹

Academics

Question 1: Explain how you will set, and measure progress towards, performance goals that put your students on a path towards achieving your vision. Include your plan to gather baseline data necessary to establish goals.

¹ R.S. 17:3991 states that “Admission requirements, if any, that are consistent with the school's role, scope, and mission may be established pursuant to rules promulgated by the state board. Such admission requirements shall be specific and shall include a system for admission decisions which precludes exclusion of pupils based on race, religion, gender, ethnicity, national origin, intelligence level as ascertained by an intelligence quotient examination, or identification as a student with an exceptionality as defined in R.S. 17:1942(B). Such admission requirements may include, however, specific requirements related to a school's mission such as auditions for schools with a performing arts mission or proficiency in a foreign language for schools with a language immersion mission.”

- (A) The applicant group has accurate estimates of baseline performance for the student population that they propose to serve.
- (B) The applicant group provides a logical plan to establish student performance goals that relies on diagnostic data that uses the same metrics as the performance goals themselves.
- (C) The applicant group has a plan to establish performance goals for all student achievement data considered in calculating schools' performance scores.
- (D) The applicant group provides a plan to improve student performance at a rate that they show is reasonable and ambitious and takes into consideration the renewal and extension performance standards of the [Charter School Performance Compact](#).
- (E) [If applicable] If the applicant group additionally names mission-specific goals, the goals are measurable, ambitious, and feasible.

Question 2(a): For all core content and mission-related subject areas, identify the curricula that your school will use and your reasons for these choices.

- (F) For English Language Arts and Mathematics, the applicant has selected curricula that are either rated [Tier 1](#) by the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE), OR if the LDOE has not yet rated the selected curricula, the applicant correctly demonstrates using the LDOE's [Instructional Materials Review Rubric](#) they meet the standards of a Tier 1 rating.² For all other core content subject areas, the applicant has identified the curriculum they will use and correctly demonstrates how these curricula will prepare students for the Louisiana State Standards.

Question 2(b): For all core content and mission-related subject areas, identify the interim assessments you will use and how these align to the curricula.

- (G) The applicant has selected assessments that are rated either Tier 1 by the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE), are produced as part of a Tier 1-rated curriculum, are part of Louisiana's Comprehensive Assessment System (LEAP 360), OR if the LDOE has not yet rated the selected assessments, the applicant correctly demonstrates using the LDOE's [Instructional Materials Review Rubric](#) they meet the standards of a Tier 1 rating.³

Question 2(c): For all core content and mission-related subject areas, describe your professional development plan for teachers and how this plan is linked to the curricula and assessments.

- (H) The applicant group demonstrates that the professional development plan for all teachers corresponds with and supports both the proposed curricula and the school's student performance goals.
- (I) The applicant group provides a process by which teachers will receive differentiated coaching that is data-driven.
- (J) Professional development ensures teachers are trained to use targeted supports in addition to, rather than in place of, high quality instruction to support Students with Disabilities, English Learners (ELs), and academically struggling students.

² The applicant's third-party recommendation will reflect whether their scoring of proposed curricula is found to be accurate.

³ The applicant's third-party recommendation will reflect whether their scoring of proposed assessments is found to be accurate.

Question 3: Describe the system by which your instructional staff will design interventions for all students. If you are applying for a virtual school, additionally describe the system by which struggling students will receive at least twenty percent of instruction in person, including the location for providing these services, the transportation services that will be available, and a plan for evaluating struggling students on at least a monthly basis.

- (K) The applicant group presents a logical process by which they will screen all students, identify students requiring additional supports, and consult with a decision-making team to plan supports and interventions for those students.
- (L) [If applicable] The applicant group details a logical and feasible plan for how struggling students at the virtual school will receive at least twenty percent of instruction in person.
- (M) [If applicable] The applicant group details a plan for how no-cost transportation services will be provided to struggling students at the virtual school for in-person instruction.
- (N) [If applicable] The applicant group details a plan for how struggling students will be evaluated by the virtual school on an on-going basis, the tools that will be used for this evaluation, and the frequency of the evaluation.

Question 4: If you are proposing a specialized school⁴, describe the concrete structures, policies, and practices that will differentiate your school from options already available to the community you propose to serve.

- (O) [If applicable] The applicant group demonstrates that the selected structures, policies, and practices are shown to be effective by sound research and will drive the intended student goals.

Question 5: [Applicable to applicants proposing to serve grades 9-12] Provide an example of a daily schedule for a student attending your school as well as your school's academic calendar.

- (P) [If applicable] The applicant group allocates time daily and throughout the year in such a way that all students will complete all courses required to graduate on time.

Special Student Populations

Question 1: Describe your plan to identify, evaluate, and serve Students with Disabilities. Include your staffing plan for serving Students with Disabilities.

- (A) The applicant group provides a logical plan to screen all students and to ensure that struggling students are evaluated for special education services early and accurately, as defined by [LDOE's Special Education Guidebook](#).
- (B) The applicant group presents a plan for developing IEPs that contain rigorous goals and instructional plans that are suitable to meet those students' goals.
- (C) The applicant group presents a monitoring plan that will enable relevant staff to track the progress of all students with IEPs towards the goals articulated in their respective plans.
- (D) The applicant group demonstrates that they will be able to provide all special education and related services needed either by the staff listed on their organization chart or identified external groups with whom they can contract to provide needed services.
- (E) The group's plan for SWDs must identify the staff members who will lead student evaluations, IEP development, and provision of ongoing service. Relevant job description(s) require(s) the expertise and/or

⁴ Examples of a specialized school are: single-sex schools, arts integration schools, or schools focused on Students with Disabilities.

credentials relevant to the services.

Question 2: Will the curricula proposed in Academics (2)(a) be used to instruct and support Students with Disabilities? If not, please describe the curricula used.

- (F) The school intends to use the same grade-level curricula for Students with Disabilities that will be used for the general student population.

Question 3: Describe your plan to identify, evaluate, and serve English Learners. Include your staffing plan for serving English Learners.

- (G) Applicant must show that they have a protocol for (1) identifying students whose primary or home language is not English (2) administering an English Language Proficiency screener to potential English Learners.
- (H) Applicant must be prepared to provide translation/interpretation services for families of English Learners and to translate application/enrollment materials.
- (I) Applicant demonstrates that EL students will utilize the same grade-level materials as their non-EL peers with the necessary language supports and resources.
- (J) The group's plan for EL students must identify the staff member(s) who will serve ELs or include a plan to hire staff member(s) to who will serve ELs. Relevant job description(s) require(s) the expertise and/or credentials relevant to the services.
- (K) Applicant must provide a plan for the professional development necessary to build content-area teachers' capacity for teaching ELs.

Question 4: Will the curricula proposed in Academics (2)(a) be used to instruct and support English Learners? If not, please describe the curricula used.

- (L) The school intends to use the same grade-level curricula for English Learners that will be used for the general student population.

School Staff

Question 1: Provide an organizational chart. Include job descriptions that summarize the scope of work for all staff on the school leadership team.

- (A) The organizational chart and corresponding job descriptions include all essential responsibilities and positions necessary to implement the school's plans.

Question 2: Describe your administrator and teacher recruitment strategy.

- (B) The applicant group presents data that shows that the pool of teachers and administrators from which the applicant group intends to recruit exists.
- (C) The applicant group has identified pipelines from which they can hire individuals with all required skillsets identified in teacher and administrator job descriptions.

Question 3: Describe the expectations for teachers, how you will clearly communicate these expectations and ensure that teachers stay on track towards meeting expectations.

- (D) Teacher expectations are logically connected to student performance goals such that students will meet their performance goals if teachers meet theirs.
- (E) Systems and structures for ensuring teachers achieve their expectations identify and address performance deficiencies.

Louisiana Believes

Culture

Question 1: Describe the culture that you envision for your school and the practices that will foster and maintain that culture. Additionally, describe the behavior expectations of your school as well as the practices that will foster and uphold those expectations.

- (A) The culture described is designed to promote a positive, rigorous, and inclusive academic environment that enables the school to maintain a suspension rate that is consistent with the highest expectations in the [Charter School Performance Compact](#).
- (B) The applicant group describes a logical system of policies and practices for setting and maintaining positive student norms that is supported by sound research.
- (C) The applicant group's disciplinary system is aligned with the law, reflective of best practices, and aligned with their student culture plan.

Mission-Critical Partners [If applicable]

Question 1: Describe the mission-critical partnerships that your school has established and the terms of these partnerships.

- (A) If the school's model requires expertise that goes beyond what is included in the org chart, the organization has identified partners with demonstrated expertise in the needed areas.
- (B) All necessary mission-critical partnerships are evidenced through a letter from partners that includes the intended period of the partnership, the scope of services they will provide, and an approximate cost for the services.
- (C) The applicant group has an unbiased system for setting goals for the partner and holding the partner accountable.

Board Readiness

Question 1: Describe the roles necessary on the board, the responsibilities that align with each role, and identify who will play that role on the board. As Appendix B, provide a one-page resume for each of your identified board members. One-page resumes will not count towards the page limit.

- (A) Each board member's described role on the board matches their professional skill set.
- (B) For each of the following areas, there is at least one board member able to provide expertise – academics, finances, legal issues, management and operations, and community relations.
- (C) The responsibilities enumerated for each role enable a clear division of roles among the board members.

Question 2: Describe how the board will monitor the school's overall performance.

- (D) The board articulates a set of metrics by which they will monitor and gauge the school's academic, operational, and financial effectiveness. These metrics should, at a minimum, include the expectations of the [Charter School Performance Compact](#).
- (E) The board has a clear decision-making process for how they will respond to information they gather in monitoring the school's effectiveness. This process demonstrates that there are clear roles and responsibilities among the board members in considering information that facilitate informed board decision-making.

Question 3: Describe the steps the board will take to evaluate the school leader. Specifically, describe the information the board will collect, the systems by which the board will collect information, the standards -

Louisiana Believes

including and in addition to student performance goals- the board will use to evaluate information it collects, and, the process(es) by which the board will evaluate information and make decisions.

- (F) The board articulates a set of standards that the school leader must satisfy in order to keep the school on track to achieve its vision.
- (G) The board provides logical evidence that the school will achieve its vision if the school leader satisfies the standards set forth by the board for the school leader.
- (H) The board identifies the information that will be used to determine if the school leader has satisfied each standard and the process by which they will collect that information.
- (I) The board has a logical decision-making framework and process to support and hold the school leader accountable according to a set of standards that will further the school's mission.
- (J) The applicant describes the steps the board and leader will take in the event the leader does not meet accountability measures. There are clear metrics that trigger different courses of action, and the board has specific metrics it will use to make personnel decisions.

Question 4: Describe the process by which your board identifies potential conflicts of interest before making decisions.

- (K) The board articulates a logical process by which they identify conflicts of interest and ensure that they do not impact board decisions.⁵

Question 5: Develop the process by which you will develop and train your board.

- (L) The board articulates a logical process by which they will assess their own strengths and weaknesses, as well as a training plan that corresponds with lacking areas of expertise.
- (M) The board articulates a logical new member recruitment plan that prioritizes the required areas of expertise, as well as a logical new member on-boarding plan that ensures that all new members are familiar with board bylaws and requirements.

Financial Readiness and Finances

Standards (a) through (f) are assessed through the Finances Template.

- (A) Projections are based on accurate, conservative, and legally compliant assumptions.
- (B) All funds from external sources are demonstrated to be reasonably expected.
- (C) No essential services are funded at amounts that would preclude the applicant group from implementing their plan.
- (D) There is no evidence that the school ever will become insolvent or lack access to the necessary amount of liquidity.
- (E) [If applicable] There are no material findings in the non-profits organization's most recent audited financial statements.

⁵ Conflict of interest is defined in the Louisiana Code of Ethics as "an economic interest which is of greater benefit to the public servant or other person than to a general class or group of persons, except the interest the public servant has in his public employment or the interest a person has as a member of the general public."

- (F) Assumptions about facilities in all financial statements correspond to a conservative facility plan and account for possible contingencies.

Questions 1-2: Do you plan to use a financial manager or a back-office service provider? If the entity that will provide your financial services has been chosen, please provide its name. If that entity is an individual financial manager, please provide his / her one-page resume as Appendix C. To whom will your financial manager or back-office service provider report: the school leader or the board?

- (G) Either the school has a plan to hire a financial manager who has at least a bachelor's degree in finance and/or accounting, or the school has partnered with an organization staffed by individuals with the necessary expertise that will provide financial management services.

Questions 3: Describe your approach to budgeting, including an explanation of your approach to cutting costs if faced (as schools so often are) with a budget shortfall.

- (H) The charter applicant group protects mission-critical expenses when faced with budget cuts.

Question 4: Describe the accounting and control systems you will install, including essential checks, balances, and segregation of duties. Please indicate how a culture of proper financial controls and reporting will become an essential component of your organizational culture.

- (I) There is appropriate segregation of financial duties.
(J) Control systems ensure that only allowable expenses will be made and that all expenses will be coded appropriately.

Returning Applicant Groups [If applicable]

Describe the activities that your founding team has conducted since your last application to improve your readiness to start a charter school.

- (A) The applicant demonstrates that, since their last application, they have participated in sufficient formal training to develop the capacities previously found lacking. If the applicant had unmet standards related to their school leadership and/or board membership, the applicant has either demonstrated changes to their school leadership and/or board membership since the previous application cycle that are relevant to the standards previously found lacking, OR has had formal school leadership and/or board membership training in best practices in order to develop the capacities previously found lacking.

School Leadership Team Capacity

Resume (Appendix B) & Question 2: Describe the school(s) and/or academic program(s) for which the school leadership team has been responsible. Describe their leadership role(s) and primary responsibilities at the relevant school(s) and/or academic program(s). The response should describe, using data where possible, the impact that these individuals had on their school(s) and/or academic program(s).

- (A) The identified leadership team has managed a school, a team of teachers, or an academic program that showed some level of growth or success under their responsibility.

Resume (Appendix B) & Question 3: Describe relevant leadership positions that the proposed school leadership team has held in which they were responsible for the operations and/or finances of program(s) and/or organization(s). Describe the leadership roles that were held and primary responsibilities for the relevant program(s) and/or organization(s). The summary should describe the impact that these responsibilities had on the success of the relevant entities.

- (B) The school leadership team has held past leadership positions in which they held a high level of responsibility for the operations and/or finances of a given organization.

Resume (Appendix B) & Question 4: Provide multiple years of student academic performance data under the proposed school's leadership team. This data must include, but is not limited to, proficiency and growth on state and national standardized tests (where available), and data on graduation rates and growth for applicants proposing to serve high schools.

- (C) The leadership team has established a track record of improving student achievement, and/or provides sufficient data to demonstrate the leadership team's ability to develop a high performing team of teachers across multiple years.

Resume (Appendix B) & Question 5: Provide data or evidence that speaks to the organizational and/or financial viability of the program(s) and/or organization(s) for which members of the school leadership team were responsible as a leader.

- (D) The leadership team has established a track record of leading operationally and/or financially viable organizations.

Virtual School Standards [If Applicable]

Question 1: Describe your plan for orienting new students and parents (both at the beginning of the year and any time during the school year that a student enrolls) to your online charter school. What expectations will you set for them, and how will you communicate these expectations? How will you ensure they transition smoothly to your online environment?

- (A) The applicant has a logical plan for orienting new students and parents to the school such that both students and parents are given clear expectations on student participation and performance at the beginning of the student's enrollment.

Question 2: What expectations will you set for student and teacher participation and interaction, and how will they be communicated? What systems will be in place to monitor student attendance and participation? How will your school differentiate and measure expectations for student attendance, student engagement, and truancy? What interventions will you develop in response to students who fall short of these expectations?

- (B) The applicant has clear expectations for student participation that differentiates between what it means for a student to be engaged in learning, in attendance, and truant in the virtual setting.
- (C) The applicant has a plan for clearly communicating expectations regarding student participation in the virtual setting to teachers, students, and their families.
- (D) The applicant has a plan in place for measuring, monitoring, and reporting student participation in the virtual setting. This plan includes, at a minimum, monitoring how often students are logging on, how long students are staying logged on, and what amount of time logged on is spent actively engaging in the curriculum and instruction.
- (E) The applicant has an actionable intervention plan for students who are not meeting the school's expectations for engaging and participating in the virtual setting. The intervention plan involves teachers, students, and parents in increasing engaging and preventing truancy.

Question 3: How will you ensure that students and families have adequate access to all of the technology necessary to actively engage with the online curriculum? How will you provide technical assistance to students and families? Additionally, how will you ensure that the loss of instructional time will be minimized in the event of unforeseen technical difficulties?

- (F) The applicant has a plan to ensure that all enrolled students have access to the online learning environment within a reasonable amount of time once they enroll at the virtual school.
- (G) The applicant has a logical plan for how they will provide timely support in the event of technical difficulties that minimizes the loss of instructional time.

Question 4: What kinds of in-person services will your school offer? When and under what circumstances will students be able to access in-person instruction and services? When and under what circumstances will parents be able to speak in-person to a teacher or staff member?

- (H) The applicant provides a plan that outlines the nature, frequency, and location of all required and optional in-person meetings and interactions between parents and school staff, including but not limited to parent/teacher conferences, open houses, and school community meetings.
- (I) The applicant has a plan for complying with Title 28, Charter 11, §1119, Health Screening as part of enrollment and the ongoing functioning of the school.

School Leader & Board Member Performance Tasks

School Leader Performance Tasks

In addition to the standards listed below, the school leader's responses to performance tasks presented on the interview day may be assessed using the vision, academic, special student populations, school staff, culture, and school leadership team capacity standards.

- (A) The applicant builds investment in their school by presenting a coherent vision for an engaging, rigorous, and inclusive school.
- (B) The applicant demonstrates that they are able to apply the plans outlined in their application to real world scenarios related to instructional oversight and teacher development.
- (C) The applicant uses questioning, analysis, and reflection to develop well-reasoned and creative ideas, conclusions, and solutions to common challenges faced by new charter schools.
- (D) The applicant strives for continuous improvement, is receptive to feedback, and takes ownership of school outcomes.

Board Member Performance Tasks

In addition to the standards listed below, the board members' responses to performance tasks presented on the interview day may be assessed using the school staff, mission-critical partners, and board readiness standards.

- (A) The applicant uses questioning, analysis, and reflection to develop well-reasoned and creative ideas, conclusions, and solutions to common challenges faced by new charter schools.
- (B) The applicant demonstrates that they are able to apply the plans outlined in their application to real world scenarios related to school leader accountability, financial oversight, and equity issues.

Experienced Operator Application Standards

Past School Performance

- (A) *[Applicable to groups currently operating schools in Louisiana]* All schools managed by the applicant group have either a "C" or higher letter grade OR a "D" letter grade with a progress index equivalent to an "A".

Louisiana Believes

- (B) *[Applicable to groups not operating schools in Louisiana]* The applicant group demonstrates that, at the time of their application, they would meet the renewal standards of each state in which they operate.
- (C) *[Applicable to groups not operating schools in Louisiana]* Using data collected from nationally normed testing, the applicant group demonstrates that the operator's schools are high performing and that they outperform their peer schools by meeting one of the standards below.⁶
- In tested subject areas, the applicant group's schools' consistently have a higher level of proficiency than their peer schools with an equal or higher percentage of their target student population.
- OR:
- In tested subject areas, the applicant group's schools' student performance growth consistently outpaces that of their peer schools with an equal or higher percentage of their target student population.
- (D) *[Applicable to groups not operating schools in Louisiana that serve grades 9-12]*
- Over multiple years, the applicant group's schools have a consistently higher graduate rate than peer schools with an equal or higher percentage of their target student population.
- OR:
- Over multiple years, the applicant group's schools have consistently higher growth in their graduation rate than peer schools with an equal or higher percentage of their target student population.
- (E) *[Applicable to groups not operating schools in Louisiana that serve grades 9-12]*
- Over multiple years, the applicant group's schools have a consistently higher college matriculation rate than peer schools with an equal or higher percentage of their target student population.
- OR:
- Over multiple years, the applicant group's schools have consistently higher growth in their graduation rate than peer schools with an equal or higher percentage of their target student population.
- (F) *[Applicable to groups not operating schools in Louisiana]*
- The applicant group's schools consistently academically outperform surrounding schools with an equal or higher percentage of their target student population.
- OR:
- The applicant group's schools' student performance growth consistently outpaces that of surrounding schools with an equal or higher percentage of their target student population.

Academics

Question 1: Explain how you will set, and measure progress towards, performance goals that put your students on a path towards achieving your vision. Include your plan to gather baseline data necessary to establish goals.

- (A) The applicant group has accurate estimates of baseline performance for the student population that they propose to serve.

⁶ This includes any nationally-normed and adopted tests such as the PARCC, Smarter Balanced, the ACT, the SAT, etc.

Louisiana Believes

- (B) The applicant group provides a logical plan to establish student performance goals that relies on diagnostic data that uses the same metrics as the performance goals themselves.
- (C) The applicant group has a plan to establish performance goals for all student achievement data considered in calculating schools' performance scores.
- (D) The applicant group provides a plan to improve student performance at a rate that they show is reasonable and ambitious and takes into consideration the renewal and extension performance standards of the [Charter School Performance Compact](#).
- (E) [If applicable] If the applicant group additionally names mission-specific goals, the goals are measurable, ambitious, and feasible.

Question 2(a): For all core content and mission-related subject areas, identify the curricula that your school will use and your reasons for these choices.

- (Q) For English Language Arts and Mathematics, the applicant has selected curricula that are either rated [Tier 1](#) by the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE), OR if the LDOE has not yet rated the selected curricula, the applicant correctly demonstrates using the LDOE's [Instructional Materials Review Rubric](#) they meet the standards of a Tier 1 rating.⁷ For all other core content subject areas, the applicant has identified the curriculum they will use and correctly demonstrates how these curricula will prepare students for the Louisiana State Standards.

Question 2(b): For all core content and mission-related subject areas, identify the interim assessments you will use and how these align to the curricula.

- (F) The applicant has selected assessments that are rated either Tier 1 by the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE), are produced as part of a Tier 1-rated curriculum, are part of Louisiana's Comprehensive Assessment System (LEAP 360), OR if the LDOE has not yet rated the selected assessments, the applicant correctly demonstrates using the LDOE's [Instructional Materials Review Rubric](#) they meet the standards of a Tier 1 rating.⁸

Question 2(c): For all core content and mission-related subject areas, describe your professional development plan for teachers and how this plan is linked to the curricula and assessments.

- (G) The applicant group demonstrates that the professional development plan for all teachers corresponds with and supports both the proposed curricula and the school's student performance goals.
- (H) The applicant group provides a process by which teachers will receive differentiated coaching that is data-driven.
- (I) Professional development ensures teachers are trained to use targeted supports in addition to, rather than in place of, high quality instruction to support Students with Disabilities, English Learners (ELs), and academically struggling students.

Question 3: Describe the system by which your instructional staff will design interventions for all students. If you are applying for a virtual school, additionally describe the system by which struggling students will receive at least

⁷ The applicant's third-party recommendation will reflect whether their scoring of proposed curricula is found to be accurate.

⁸ The applicant's third-party recommendation will reflect whether their scoring of proposed curricula is found to be accurate.

twenty percent of instruction in person, including the location for providing these services, the transportation services that will be available, and a plan for evaluating struggling students on at least a monthly basis.

- (J) The applicant group presents a logical process by which they will screen all students, identify students requiring additional supports, and consult with a decision-making team to plan supports and interventions for those students.
- (K) [If applicable] The applicant group details a feasible plan for how struggling students at the virtual school will receive at least twenty percent of instruction in person.
- (L) [If applicable] The applicant group details a plan for how transportation services will be provided to struggling students at the virtual school for in-person instruction.
- (M) [If applicable] The applicant group details a plan for how struggling students will be evaluated on at least a monthly basis.

Question 4: If you are proposing a specialized school⁹, describe the concrete structures, policies, and practices that will differentiate your school from options already available to the community you propose to serve

- (N) [If applicable] The applicant group demonstrates that the selected structures, policies, and practices are shown to be effective by sound research and will drive the intended student goals.

Question 5: [Applicable to applicants proposing to serve grades 9-12] Provide an example of a daily schedule for a student attending your school as well as your school's academic calendar.

- (O) [If applicable] The applicant group allocates time daily and throughout the year in such a way that all students will complete all courses required to graduate on time.

Growth Plan

Question 1: Describe the demographics of the student population that your proposed school(s) will serve. Identify the needs of your intended student population.

- (A) The charter applicant group demonstrates with data that there is demand from the target student population they intend to serve.

Question 2 [Applicable only to groups applying for multiple sites]: Describe the number of schools that you plan to open in Louisiana every year for at least the next five years, the year in which each school will open, and how the organization will adapt to meet changing community needs. If your network operates multiple models, identify the model that you will open in each location.

- (B) The charter applicant group articulates a logical plan by which they will adapt to meet changing community needs for any school opening later than the first year in the growth plan.

Scale Strategy

[This section does not apply to Louisiana-based operators that run multiple schools and are only applying to operate one or two additional new schools]

Question 1: Describe the steps that you will take to scale your model to new sites, including the people involved and the resources contributed both by the parent organization and the new school(s).

⁹ Examples of a specialized school are: single-sex schools, arts integration schools, or schools focused on Students with Disabilities.

Louisiana Believes

- (A) The central office provides sufficient financial and human capital resources to support the successful launch of new schools in a new district.

Question 2: If your organization operates schools in other states, compare your efforts to scale operations to Louisiana to past scale efforts in other states.

- (B) [If applicable] The application clearly lists and differentiates between the responsibilities of the central office and local implementers.

Question 3: Identify the greatest new threats to your success and the steps you will take to minimize the possibility that the threats you identified will prevent you from achieving your targeted outcomes.

- (C) Threats identified threaten the organization's ability to achieve its mission and corresponding contingency plans would mitigate those threats.

Board Readiness

Question 1: Describe the roles necessary on the board, the responsibilities that align with each role, and identify who will play that role on the board. As Appendix B, provide a one-page resume for each of your identified board members. One-page resumes will not count towards the page limit.

- (A) Each board member's described role on the board matches their professional skill set.
- (B) For each of the following areas, there is at least one board member able to provide expertise – academics, finances, legal issues, management and operations, and community relations.
- (C) The responsibilities enumerated for each role enable a clear division of roles among the board members.

Question 2: Describe how the board will monitor the school's overall performance.

- (D) The board articulates a set of metrics by which they will monitor and gauge the school's academic, operational, and financial effectiveness. These metrics should, at a minimum, include the expectations of the [Charter School Performance Compact](#).
- (E) The board has a clear decision-making process for how they will respond to information they gather in monitoring the school's effectiveness. This process demonstrates that there are clear roles and responsibilities among the board members in considering information that facilitate informed board decision-making.

Question 3: Describe the steps the board will take to evaluate the school leader. Specifically, describe the information the board will collect, the systems by which the board will collect information, the standards - including and in addition to student performance goals- the board will use to evaluate information it collects, and, the process(es) by which the board will evaluate information and make decisions.

- (F) The board articulates a set of standards that the school leader must satisfy in order to keep the school on track to achieve its vision.
- (G) The board provides logical evidence that the school will achieve its vision if the school leader satisfies the standards set forth by the board for the school leader.
- (H) The board identifies the information that will be used to determine if the school leader has satisfied each standard and the process by which they will collect that information.
- (I) The board has a logical decision-making framework and process to support and hold the school leader accountable according to a set of standards that will further the school's mission.

- (J) The applicant describes the steps the board and leader will take in the event the leader does not meet accountability measures. There are clear metrics that trigger different courses of action, and the board has specific metrics it will use to make personnel decisions.

Question 4: Describe the process by which your board identifies potential conflicts of interest before making decisions.

- (K) The board articulates a logical process by which they identify conflicts of interest and ensure that they do not impact board decisions.¹⁰

Question 5: Develop the process by which you will develop and train your board.

- (L) The board articulates a logical process by which they will assess their own strengths and weaknesses, as well as a training plan that corresponds with lacking areas of expertise.
- (M) The board articulates a logical new member recruitment plan that prioritizes the required areas of expertise, as well as a logical new member on-boarding plan that ensures that all new members are familiar with board bylaws and requirements.

Question 6: Describe your plan for obtaining regional board representation for your proposed school(s).

- (N) There is a clear plan for obtaining regional board representation for any new proposed schools in regions the operator does not currently operate in.

Financial Readiness and Finances

Standards (a) through (f) are assessed through the Finances Template.

- (A) Projections are based on accurate, conservative, and legally compliant assumptions.
- (B) All funds from external sources are demonstrated to be reasonably expected.
- (C) No essential services are funded at amounts that would preclude the applicant group from implementing their plan.
- (D) There is no evidence that the school ever will become insolvent or lack access to the necessary amount of liquidity.
- (E) [If applicable] There are no material findings in the non-profits organization's most recent audited financial statements.
- (F) Assumptions about facilities in all financial statements correspond to a conservative facility plan and account for possible contingencies.

Questions 1-2: Do you plan to use a financial manager or a back-office service provider? If the entity that will provide your financial services has been chosen, please provide its name. If that entity is an individual financial manager, please provide his / her one-page resume as Appendix C. To whom will your financial manager or back-office service provider report: the school leader or the board?

¹⁰ Conflict of interest is defined in the Louisiana Code of Ethics as "an economic interest which is of greater benefit to the public servant or other person than to a general class or group of persons, except the interest the public servant has in his public employment or the interest a person has as a member of the general public."

- (G) Either the school has a plan to hire a financial manager who has at least a bachelor's degree in finance and/or accounting, or the school has partnered with an organization staffed by individuals with the necessary expertise that will provide financial management services.

Questions 3: Describe your approach to budgeting, including an explanation of your approach to cutting costs if faced (as schools so often are) with a budget shortfall.

- (H) The charter applicant group protects mission-critical expenses when faced with budget cuts.

Question 4: Describe the accounting and control systems you will install, including essential checks, balances, and segregation of duties. Please indicate how a culture of proper financial controls and reporting will become an essential component of your organizational culture.

- (I) There is appropriate segregation of financial duties.
- (J) Control systems ensure that only allowable expenses will be made and that all expenses will be coded appropriately.

Educational Service Provider (ESP) Contract [If applicable]

If your non-profit plans to use an Educational Service Provider (ESP), please provide as Appendix B a copy of the ESP contract that your non-profit board will sign with the Educational Service Provider that you have selected. Additionally, please provide an independent audit of the ESP as Appendix D.

- (A) The board maintains independence from the ESP by articulating strong accountability provisions and avoiding opportunities for the ESP to gain leverage over the board.
- (B) The ESP cannot control board membership.
- (C) The ESP contract does not allow for any form of leverage – including but not limited to severance fees and facilities ownership – by which the ESP can ensure renewal of their contract.
- (D) There are no material findings in the ESP's most recent audited financial statements.

School Leadership Team Capacity [If applicable]

Resume (Appendix B) & Question 2: Describe the school(s) and/or academic program(s) for which the school leadership team has been responsible. Describe their leadership role(s) and primary responsibilities at the relevant school(s) and/or academic program(s). The response should describe, using data where possible, the impact that these individuals had on their school(s) and/or academic program(s).

- (A) The identified leadership team has managed a school, a team of teachers, or an academic program that showed some level of growth or success under their responsibility.

Resume (Appendix B) & Question 3: Describe relevant leadership positions that the proposed school leadership team has held in which they were responsible for the operations and/or finances of program(s) and/or organization(s). Describe the leadership roles that were held and primary responsibilities for the relevant program(s) and/or organization(s). The summary should describe the impact that these responsibilities had on the success of the relevant entities.

- (B) The school leadership team has held past leadership positions in which they held a high level of responsibility for the operations and/or finances of a given organization.

Resume (Appendix B) & Question 4: Provide multiple years of student academic performance data under the proposed school's leadership team. This data must include, but is not limited to, proficiency and growth on state and national standardized tests (where available), and data on graduation rates and growth for applicants proposing to serve high schools.

- (C) The leadership team has established a track record of improving student achievement, and/or provides sufficient data to demonstrate the leadership team's ability to develop a high performing team of teachers across multiple years.

Resume (Appendix B) & Question 5: Provide data or evidence that speaks to the organizational and/or financial viability of the program(s) and/or organization(s) for which members of the school leadership team were responsible as a leader.

- (D) The leadership team has established a track record of leading operationally and/or financially viable organizations.

Virtual School Standards [If Applicable]

Question 1: Describe your plan for orienting new students and parents (both at the beginning of the year and any time during the school year that a student enrolls) to your online charter school. What expectations will you set for them, and how will you communicate these expectations? How will you ensure they transition smoothly to your online environment?

- (J) The applicant has a logical plan for orienting new students and parents to the school such that both students and parents are given clear expectations on student participation and performance at the beginning of the student's enrollment.

Question 2: What expectations will you set for student and teacher participation and interaction, and how will they be communicated? What systems will be in place to monitor student attendance and participation? How will your school differentiate and measure expectations for student attendance, student engagement, and truancy? What interventions will you develop in response to students who fall short of these expectations?

- (K) The applicant has clear expectations for student participation that differentiates between what it means for a student to be engaged in learning, in attendance, and truant in the virtual setting.
- (L) The applicant has a plan for clearly communicating expectations regarding student participation in the virtual setting to teachers, students, and their families.
- (M) The applicant has a plan in place for measuring, monitoring, and reporting student participation in the virtual setting. This plan includes, at a minimum, monitoring how often students are logging on, how long students are staying logged on, and what amount of time logged on is spent actively engaging in the curriculum and instruction.
- (N) The applicant has an actionable intervention plan for students who are not meeting the school's expectations for engaging and participating in the virtual setting. The intervention plan involves teachers, students, and parents in increasing engaging and preventing truancy.

Question 3: How will you ensure that students and families have adequate access to all of the technology necessary to actively engage with the online curriculum? How will you provide technical assistance to students and families? Additionally, how will you ensure that the loss of instructional time will be minimized in the event of unforeseen technical difficulties?

- (O) The applicant has a plan to ensure that all enrolled students have access to the online learning environment within a reasonable amount of time once they enroll at the virtual school.

- (P) The applicant has a logical plan for how they will provide timely support in the event of technical difficulties that minimizes the loss of instructional time.

Question 4: What kinds of in-person services will your school offer? When and under what circumstances will students be able to access in-person instruction and services? When and under what circumstances will parents be able to speak in-person to a teacher or staff member?

- (Q) The applicant provides a plan that outlines the nature, frequency, and location of all required and optional in-person meetings and interactions between parents and school staff, including but not limited to parent/teacher conferences, open houses, and school community meetings.
- (R) The applicant has a plan for complying with Title 28, Charter 11, §1119, Health Screening as part of enrollment and the ongoing functioning of the school.

School Leader & Board Member Performance Tasks

School Leader Performance Tasks

In addition to the standards listed below, the school leader's responses to performance tasks presented on the interview day may be assessed using the vision, academic, special student populations, school staff, culture, and school leadership team capacity standards.

- (E) The applicant builds investment in their school by presenting a coherent vision for an engaging, rigorous, and inclusive school.
- (F) The applicant demonstrates that they are able to apply the plans outlined in their application to real world scenarios related to instructional oversight and teacher development.
- (G) The applicant uses questioning, analysis, and reflection to develop well-reasoned and creative ideas, conclusions, and solutions to common challenges faced by new charter schools.
- (H) The applicant strives for continuous improvement, is receptive to feedback, and takes ownership of school outcomes.

Board Member Performance Tasks

In addition to the standards listed below, the board members' responses to performance tasks presented on the interview day may be assessed using the school staff, mission-critical partners, and board readiness standards.

- (C) The applicant uses questioning, analysis, and reflection to develop well-reasoned and creative ideas, conclusions, and solutions to common challenges faced by new charter schools.
- (D) The applicant demonstrates that they are able to apply the plans outlined in their application to real world scenarios related to school leader accountability, financial oversight, and equity issues.