State Public Charter School Commission
2013 Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation Overview

The Evaluation Criteria are the essential tools for application evaluators, used in both their individual and team assessments of each application. The evaluators present both ratings on a scale and narrative analysis of each section of the application as compared to the Evaluation Criteria. Throughout the evaluation process, evaluators will update their analysis to include additional information (due diligence, capacity interview, etc.) as it is presented. Within each section and subsection, specific criteria define the expectations for a response that "Meets the Standard." In addition to meeting the criteria that are specific to that section, each part of the proposal should align with the other sections of the application. Capitalized terms not defined herein are used as defined in the State Public Charter School Commission 2013 Request for Applications. In general, the following definitions guide evaluator ratings:

Rating	Characteristics
Meets the Standard	The response reflects a thorough understanding of key issues. It addresses the topic with specific and accurate information that shows thorough preparation; presents a clear, realistic picture of how the school expects to operate; and inspires confidence in the applicant's capacity to carry out the plan effectively.
Does Not Meet the Standard	The response meets the criteria in some respects but has substantial gaps, lacks detail and/or requires additional information in one or more areas.
Falls Far Below the Standard	The response is wholly undeveloped or significantly incomplete; demonstrates lack of preparation; or otherwise raises substantial concerns about the viability of the plan or the applicant's ability to carry it out.

Opening a successful, high-performing charter school depends on having a complete, coherent plan. It is not an endeavor for which strength in one area can compensate for material weakness in another. Therefore, in order to receive a recommendation for approval, the application must demonstrate evidence of capacity and must meet the criteria for all main sections of the application (Academic Plan, Organizational Plan, Financial Plan), and any applicable addenda.

Evidence of Capacity

Throughout the application, evaluators will assess the evidence that the applicant team has the capacity to execute the plan as presented. In total, a high quality application will demonstrate evidence that the team has the capacity needed in all key areas in order to open and operate a charter school that improves academic outcomes for students. This evidence will include:

- Individual and collective qualifications (documented, for example, by resumes and biographies for all members) to implement the Academic Plan successfully, including capacities in areas such as school leadership, administration, and governance; curriculum, instruction, and assessment; performance management; and parent and community engagement.
- Individual and collective qualifications for implementing the Organizational Plan successfully, including capacity in areas such as staffing, professional development, performance management, school start-up, general operations, and facilities management.
- Individual and collective qualifications for implementing the Financial Plan successfully, including capacity in areas such as financial management, fundraising and development, accounting, and internal controls.

Evaluation Criteria

I. School Overview

The School Overview section is not separately rated by evaluators. However, the Evaluation Team will consider each section of the application to assess its alignment with the statements in the School Overview section. The proposed school's mission and vision and Essential Terms sections are not separately rated by the evaluators, but the mission and vision statements and Essential Terms, taken together, provide the foundation for the entire application.

II. Academic Plan

A strong Academic Plan is coherent overall and aligned internally with the proposed school's mission and vision; Organizational Plan; and Financial Plan.

Section II.A: Academic Plan Overview and Academic Philosophy
This section is not separately rated by the evaluators. However, a strong Academic Plan will demonstrate consistent alignment with the Academic Plan Overview and Academic Philosophy.

Section II.B: Curriculum and Instructional Design
A strong response will have the following characteristics:
- Comprehensive curriculum overview which presents the framework for rigorous, quality instructional design that reflects the needs of the proposed school's target population and is aligned with the Common Core State Standards. Includes a brief description of how the proposed framework will ensure continued student achievement as measured by Strive HI.
- Clear description of the proposed school's structure and learning environment.
- **If the curriculum is developed/selected:** Sound curricular choices, by subject and grade level, including reasonable evidence the curriculum will be appropriate and effective for the targeted students. Rationale for curriculum and instructional design as presented, including evidence that the proposed academic program has been or is likely to be rigorous, engaging, and effective for the anticipated student population. If there is a virtual or hybrid online component, a clear description of the online curriculum and the role of the parent in such curriculum.
- **If the curriculum is not fully developed:** Realistic timeline and allocation of personnel and resources for curriculum development during the pre-opening year.
- Sound instructional strategies and explanation of why they are well suited for the targeted student population, including effective methods and systems for providing differentiated instruction to meet the needs of all students.
- If there is a virtual or hybrid online component, a clear description of how attendance will be taken; how any online attendance policy adheres to state and federal reporting requirements; how DOE-mandated assessments will be proctored; the proposed school's plan to uphold the academic integrity of the virtual or hybrid online academic plan.

Section II.C: Pupil Performance Standards
A strong response will have the following characteristics:
- Clear, rigorous academic standards for each grade the proposed school will serve and a description of the skills and knowledge students will be expected to attain by the end of such grade. A thoughtful explanation of the policies and standards for promoting students from one

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grade to the next and a description of an appropriate and effective method for communicating promotion and graduation criteria to parents and students.

- If applicable, a thoughtful identification of and plan for development and adoption of any additional academic standards beyond Strive HI and Academic Performance Framework that the proposed school would adopt or develop, including descriptions of content areas and grade levels and a meaningful example of the standards by which a particular project or portfolio would be measured.
- Clear and rigorous exit policies and standards for the last grade of each division the proposed school will serve.

Section II.D: High School Graduation Requirements
A strong response will have the following characteristics:
- Sound plan for meeting BOE graduation requirements and compelling explanation of any additional requirements beyond BOE requirements or deviation from BOE graduation requirements.
- Clear, persuasive explanation of how the proposed school's graduation requirements will ensure student readiness for college or other post-secondary opportunities (trade school, military service, or entering the workforce).
- Effective systems and structures for students at risk of dropping out or not meeting graduation requirements.

Section II.E: School Structure: Calendar and Schedule
A strong response will have the following characteristics:
- School calendar and daily and weekly schedules that meet or exceed any requirements, align with the Academic Plan, and are conducive to significantly improving student learning.
- Clearly describe the structure of the proposed school's day and week, including all of the required elements.

Section II.F: School Culture
A strong response will have the following characteristics:
- Vision for school culture or ethos that will promote high expectations, positive academic environment, and intellectual and social development for all students, including those with special needs.
- Coherent plan for creating, implementing, and maintaining the intended culture for students, teachers, administrators, and parents from the first day of operation, and for enculturating students who enter the school mid-year.
- Well-designed plan to take into account and incorporate students with special needs into the proposed school's general population. This answer is distinct from applicant's answer to Section II.H, which should focus on how the proposed school plans to provide services to students with special needs.
- *The description of the typical school day for a student and teacher is not separately rated by the evaluators. However, the description should align with the proposed school's vision and plan for school culture.*

Section II.G: Supplemental Programming
A strong response will have the following characteristics:

- Sound plan, design, schedule, and funding for summer school that will meet anticipated student needs, if applicable.
- Well-designed plans and identified funding for extracurricular and co-curricular activities, programs, and services that will meet anticipated student needs and provide enrichment experiences.
- Thoughtful, well-supported description of programs or strategies to address student mental, emotional, and social development and health, and any other student-focused activities and programs that are integral to the proposed school's academic plans.

Section II.H: Special Populations and At-Risk Students

A strong response will have the following characteristics:
- Demonstrated understanding of, and capacity to fulfill, state and federal obligations and requirements pertaining to students with special needs, including students with an IEP or Section 504 plan, ELL students, students performing below grade level, students identified as intellectually gifted, homeless students, and students at risk of academic failure or dropping out.
- For **each** of the aforementioned groups (and any other groups the applicant identifies), a comprehensive and compelling plan or explanation for:
  - How the evidence from which the projection of anticipated special needs populations was derived.
  - Curriculum, daily schedule, staffing plans, support strategies, and resources that will be adjusted for the diverse needs of students.
  - Methods for appropriate identification and avoidance of misidentification.
  - Specific instructional programs, practices, and strategies the proposed school will employ to do things like provide a continuum of services; ensure students' access to general education curriculum; ensure academic success and equitable access; and opportunities to the proposed school will employ or provide to enhance students' abilities.
  - Monitoring and evaluating the progress and success of special needs students. For students with special education needs the plan should ensure the attainment of each student's IEP goals. For ELL students, plans should include how to exit students from ELL services.
  - Promoting graduation (for proposed schools that will have a high school division).
  - If the proposed school's plan contains a virtual or hybrid online component, a clear description of how the virtual component addresses students with special needs.
- Comprehensive plan to ensure that students with disabilities receive required and appropriate support services as outlined in their IEP and 504 plans, and participate in standardized testing.
- Descriptions for the aforementioned plans of evidence-based instructional programs and practices; effective design or adaptation of the academic program; and support strategies and resources.

Section II.I: Student Recruitment, Admission and Enrollment

A strong response will have the following characteristics:
- Sound, thoughtful, and comprehensive plan for outreach to families in poverty, academically low-achieving students, students with disabilities, and other youth at risk of academic failure and for achieving socioeconomic and/or demographic diversity.
- Identification of enrollment priorities that are in compliance with federal, state and Commission requirements.

- Admission and enrollment policy that complies with applicable law, ensures the proposed school will be open to all eligible students, and includes:
    o A reasonable timeline for the application period and deadlines and process for the receipt and process of applications.
    o A reasonable timeline and comprehensive plan for student recruitment or engagement and enrollment.
    o Effective procedures for waiting lists, withdrawals, re-enrollment, and transfers in accordance with state and Commission requirements.
    o Reasonable pre-admission activities for students or parents.

Section II.J: Discipline
A strong response will have the following characteristics:
- Student discipline policy that provides for appropriate, effective strategies to support a safe, orderly school climate and fulfillment of academic goals, promoting a strong school culture while respecting student rights.
- Legally sound policies for student discipline and suspension, including proper processes for students with disabilities.
- Legally sound policies for student dismissals, in compliance with law.
- Appropriate plan for disseminating the discipline policy to teachers, parents and students.

Section II.K: Parent and Community Involvement
A strong response will have the following characteristics:
- Sound pre- and post-opening parent engagement plan, including family-school partnerships, that is welcoming and accessible to all parents.
- Effective strategies for informing and engaging parents and the community about the proposed school's development.
- Community resources and partnerships that will benefit students and parents and that include:
    o Description of the nature, purposes, terms, and scope of services of any such partnerships; and
    o Evidence of commitment from identified community partners.

Section II.L: Non-Profit Involvement
A strong response will have the following characteristics:

- A reasonable plan and timeline for obtaining tax exempt status, if applicable.
- Comprehensive description of ways the non-profit can support the proposed school and identified funding sources, if applicable.
- Evidence that the non-profit has the experience necessary to support the proposed school or has a comprehensive plan to identify and recruit individuals with the necessary experience, if applicable.

Section II.M: Geographic Location
A strong response will have the following characteristics:
- Description, with reasonable specificity, of the geographic area the proposed school plans to serve.

- A reasonable rationale for selecting the area and a comprehensive description of any research done to support that rationale, if applicable.

Section II.N: Academic Plan Capacity

A strong response will have the following characteristics:

- Evidence that the school leadership and management team have the collective qualifications to implement the school's Academic Plan successfully, including capacities in areas such as school leadership, administration, and governance; curriculum, instruction, and assessment; performance management; and parent and community engagement.
- Evidence that any organizations, agencies, or consultants that are essential to successful implementation of the plan are committed to an ongoing role with the proposed school, if applicable.
- **If the school director is identified**: Evidence of the school director's experience in and ability to design, launch, and lead a charter school that will effectively serve the target population, as well as evidence that the proposed leader is well qualified to implement the Academic Plan being proposed and any identified leadership training that is appropriate for and aligned with the Academic Plan.
- **If the school director is not yet identified**: An appropriate description of the qualifications desired and a comprehensive plan for recruiting and retaining a school director with the ability to effectively serve the target population and implement the Academic Plan.
- Appropriate responsibilities and qualifications for the school's leadership or management team beyond the school director.
- **If members of the proposed school's leadership team or management team are identified**: Evidence that the individuals demonstrate the qualifications, capacities, and commitment to carry out their designated roles to ensure the success of the proposed school.
- **If the proposed school's leadership team or management team is not yet identified**: Sound timeline, criteria, and process for recruiting and hiring the leadership team.
- Sound plan for leading the development of the school during its pre-opening phase, including identification of a capable individual or team to lead planning and start-up, as well as a viable plan for compensating this individual or team that is aligned with the budget.

Section II.O: Third-Party Education Service Providers and Charter Management Organizations

A strong response will have the following characteristics:

- Service Provider Selection
  - A reasonable explanation of why the applicant is seeking to contract with a Service Provider.
  - A reasonable and comprehensive description of the process for selecting the Service Provider.
  - Evidence that the Service Provider's references were checked.
- Service Provider's Track Record
  - Evidence that the Service Provider has successfully served similar student populations and successfully managed non-academic functions.
  - An explanation of management contract terminations, charter revocations, non-renewals or withdrawals or non-openings that does not indicate that the Service

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Provider lacks the necessary capacity or displays irregularities in its management of non-academic functions.

- Legal Relationships
  - o Evidence that the proposed school governing board is independent and self-governing.
  - o Satisfactory explanation of existing or potential conflicts of interest between the proposed school governing board, employees, Service Provider, and any affiliated business entities.
  - o An explanation of whether the proposed school will have any relationship with any entities that are subsidiaries of or entities that are related to the Service Provider.
  - o Description of the supervision of the proposed school employees by the Service Provider that is reasonable and gives the proposed school governing board oversight over the Service Provider's supervisory responsibilities.
  - o Evidence that any facility or financing relationships with the Service Provider are not a part of or incorporated into the Service Provider's management contract.
  - o Documentation of any loans, grants or investments made between the Service Provider and the proposed school.
- Service Provider's Organizational Structure
  - o A description of the roles and responsibilities of the Service Provider that adequately and accurately captures the Service Provider's organizational structure and how such structure relates to the governance and operation of the proposed school.
  - o A client list that displays a successful track record for similar clients.
  - o A clear and well-defined scope of services and costs of all resources.
  - o A clear compensation structure and payment schedule that identifies all fees, bonuses, and other compensation that will be paid to the Service Provider.
  - o An effective and comprehensive oversight and evaluation method for overseeing the Service Provider and intervention conditions, standards, and procedures for the Service Provider's unsatisfactory performance.
  - o A comprehensive description of the financial responsibilities of the proposed school governing board and Service Provider that allows for reasonable proposed school governing board financial controls and includes details relating to ownership of property, responsibility for expenditures, board approval requirements, reports, and financial oversights.
  - o A management agreement that is generally reasonable, including reasonable renewal, termination, and indemnification provisions.
  - o A comprehensive plan for the operation of the proposed school in the event the Service Provider's management agreement is terminated.

III. Organizational Plan

A strong Organizational Plan is coherent overall and aligned internally with the school's mission and vision, Academic Plan, and Financial Plan.

Section III.A: Governance

The governing board's mission, vision, and philosophy are not separately rated by the evaluators. However, these mission and vision statements should align with the proposed school's mission and vision and other parts of the application.

A strong response will have the following characteristics:

- An organization chart that clearly indicates all positions, delineating board and management roles and lines of authority.
- Effective governance structure, including board size, current and desired composition (including diverse expertise and effective representation), powers, and duties that will foster the proposed school's success. If the proposed school has a virtual or hybrid online component, a clear description of the role the governing board will play in such component.
- Proposed board members who demonstrate (as documented by resumes, bios, and Board Member Information Sheets) the will, capacity, and commitment to govern the proposed school effectively; and a shared vision, purpose, and expectations for the proposed school or evidence of a plan for identifying and recruiting governing board members with the necessary skills.
- Evidence that the proposed governing board members will contribute the wide range of knowledge, skills, and commitment needed to oversee a successful charter school including academic, financial, legal, and community experience and expertise.
- If applicant is an existing nonprofit organization other than a charter school governing board, a description of the current and future governance structure and a sound plan for transforming the existing board to assume its new duties or for forming a new board.
- Effective governance procedures, including planned frequency of meetings, standing committee structure, and selection of governing board members and committee chairs.
- Governing bylaws, policies, and procedures that are comprehensive and sound.
- Appropriate Code of Ethics and Conflict of Interest policy or procedures that will minimize real or perceived conflicts.
- Sound plan and timeline for board recruitment, expansion, orientation of new members, and ongoing training for members, including thoughtful identification of desired experience and capacities.

Section III.B: Advisory Bodies
A strong response will have the following characteristics:
- Clear roles, duties, and composition of any advisory bodies or councils, and effective relationship to the proposed school governing board and the school's leadership team or management team.

Section III.C: Complaints Procedures
A strong response will have the following characteristics:
- A fair and accessible grievance process for parents and students.

Section III.D: Staff Structure
A strong response will have the following characteristics:
- A staffing chart that clearly indicates all positions and a sensible staffing rollout plan for the proposed school model aligned with the Academic Plan and conducive to the proposed school's success.
- Effective structure and strategies for managing the relationship between the proposed school's leadership team or management team and staff.

Section III.E: Staffing Plans, Hiring, Management, and Evaluation
A strong response will have the following characteristics:
- Compensation packages and strategies that are likely to attract and retain high quality staff.

- Recruitment and hiring strategy, criteria, timeline, and procedures that are likely to result in a strong staff that meet ESEA requirements for being "Highly Qualified" and are well suited to the proposed school.
- Plan for supporting, developing, and annually evaluating school leadership and teachers that is likely to produce and retain a successful staff.
- Proposed leadership and teacher evaluation tools are likely to be effective and are in alignment with the criteria outlined in BOE Policy 2055, Master Collective Bargaining Agreement and any applicable law. Reasonable description of what amendments to the Master Collective Bargaining Agreement would be necessary, if needed, and a plan for contingencies if the amendments cannot be negotiated under a supplemental agreement.
- Effective planning for unsatisfactory leadership and teacher performance and turnover.
- An explanation for deviations from the Master Collective Bargaining Agreement and identification of amendments that would be needed in a supplemental agreement.

Section III.F: Professional Development
A strong response will have the following characteristics:
- Professional development standards, opportunities, leadership, and scheduling that effectively support the Academic Plan and are likely to maximize success in improving student achievement, including an induction program that will prepare teachers to deliver any unique or particularly challenging aspects of the curriculum and instructional methods.
- Sensible allocation of responsibilities for professional development, including demonstrated understanding of and preparation for professional development needs.
- Reasonable means of identifying professional development needs.
- Identification of funding dedicated to and staff responsible for coordination of professional development.
- Identification of ways professional development scheduling conflicts with the Master Collective Bargaining Agreement, amendments necessary and contingency plan in the event amendments cannot be negotiated.
- Identification of supplementary professional development.

Section III.G: Performance Management
A strong response will have the following characteristics:
- Meaningful and mission-specific, school-specific measures, which are measurable or demonstrable by externally credible measures or assessments, if applicable.
- Quality interim assessments that are aligned with the proposed school's curriculum, performance goals, and state standards. These interim assessments can be of student learning or assessment of progress with DOE assessment.
- An effective plan (including qualified personnel) and systems for measuring and evaluating academic progress – of individual students, student cohorts, and the proposed school as a whole – throughout the school year, at the end of each academic year, and for the term of the Charter Contract.
- Comprehensive, effective plan (including qualified personnel) and system for collecting and analyzing student academic achievement data, using the data to refine and improve instruction – including providing training and support to school leadership and teachers – and reporting the data to the school community. This should include identification of the student data system to be used, as well as qualified personnel who will be responsible for managing and interpreting the data for teachers and leading or coordinating data-driven professional development.

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- Thoughtful, appropriate corrective actions the proposed school will take if it falls short of student academic achievement expectations or goals at any level, including explanation of what would trigger such actions and who would implement them.

Section III.H: Facility
A strong response will have the following characteristics:
- Sound plan and timeline for identifying, financing, renovating, and ensuring code compliance for a facility that will meet the requirements of the Academic Plan and anticipated student population, including a growth plan for the first five (5) years of operations.
- Evidence of intent to secure a facility, if applicable.

Section III.I: Startup Period
A strong response will have the following characteristics:
- Detailed start-up plan specifying tasks, timelines, and responsible individuals, aligned with the start-up budget for each major area (facility, funding, student recruitment and outreach, faculty and staff, and proposed school governing board).

Section III.J: Ongoing Operations
A strong response will have the following characteristics:
- Sound plan for student transportation, including both daily transportation and special event transportation, if applicable.
- Sound plans for school and student safety and security, including security personnel, technology, equipment, and policies.
- A sound plan for food service, including plans for a certified kitchen, transportation of food or other means of providing food service in compliance with applicable laws, if applicable.

Section III.K: Operations Capacity
A strong response will have the following characteristics:

- Evidence that the organization team has the collective qualifications to implement the Organizational Plan successfully, including capacities in areas such as staffing, professional development, performance management, general operations, facilities acquisition, development (such as build-out or renovations), and management.
- Evidence of the individual or team's experience in and ability to implement the Organizational Plan being proposed.

IV. Financial Plan

A strong Financial Plan is coherent overall and aligned internally with the proposed school's mission and vision, Academic Plan, and Organization Plan.

Section IV.A: Financial Plan
A strong response will have the following characteristics:
- Draft financial procedures, policy, or other reasonable assurance that the proposed school will have sound systems, policies, and processes for financial planning, accounting, purchasing, and

payroll, including a description of how the proposed school will establish and maintain strong internal controls, ensure compliance with all financial reporting requirements, and conduct independent annual financial and administrative audits.

- Evidence that the proposed school's leadership has a strong understanding of the appropriate delineation of roles and responsibilities among the school leadership team or management team and proposed school governing board regarding school finance.
- Evidence that the school has developed a plan for conducting and paying for an annual financial audit, in accordance with state law.
- Sound criteria and procedures for selecting contractors for any administrative services.
- Complete, realistic, and viable start-up and three-year operating budgets.
- Detailed budget narrative that clearly explains reasonable, well-supported revenue and cost assumptions (especially for grant or fundraising assumptions) identifying the amount and sources of all anticipated funds, property, or other resources (and noting which are secured vs. anticipated, including evidence of firm commitments where applicable, and noting any restrictions on the funds).
- Sound contingency plan to meet financial needs if anticipated revenues are not received or are lower than estimated.
- If the proposed school has a virtual or hybrid online component, a clear and comprehensive description of the necessary costs for delivery of such component.

Section IV.B: Financial Management Capacity

A strong response will have the following characteristics:

- Evidence that the financial team has the collective qualifications to implement the Organizational Plan successfully, including capacities in areas such as financial management, fundraising and development, accounting and internal controls.
- Evidence of the individual or team's experience in and ability to implement the Financial Plan being proposed.