



State Public Charter School Commission 2014 Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation Overview

The Initial Proposal Evaluation Criteria are the essential tool used by academic performance staff evaluators to determine whether an Initial Proposal meets the minimum quality threshold. During the Initial Proposal review, evaluators only identify responses that do not meet the minimum threshold and are subsequently deemed Substantially Inadequate. A response is Substantially Inadequate if it:

1. Fails to address the RFP requirements or criteria for approval;
2. Presents unreasonable plans or ideas;
3. Lacks essential information; or
4. Raises significant concerns about the applicant’s capacity.

If an Initial Proposal does not receive a Substantially Inadequate rating, the academic performance staff evaluators will recommend to the Commission, who will then make a recommendation to the applicant, that the applicant proceed to completing and submitting a Final Application.

The Final Application Evaluation Criteria are the essential tools for the Evaluation Team, used in both their individual and team assessments of each Final Application. The Evaluation Team presents both ratings on a scale and narrative analysis of each section of the Final Application (including the Initial Proposal) as compared to the Final Application Evaluation Criteria. Throughout the Final Application 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 Final Application should align with the other sections of the application. 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 proposed 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 and does not reflect a thorough understanding of key issues. It does not provide enough accurate, specific information to show thorough preparation; fails to present a clear, realistic picture of how the school expects to operate; and does not inspire confidence in the applicant’s capacity to carry out the plan effectively.
Falls Far Below the Standard	The response does not meet the criteria in most respects, is undeveloped or significantly incomplete; demonstrates lack of preparation; raises substantial concerns about the viability of the plan; or the applicant’s capacity 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, and Financial Plan).

Evidence of Capacity

Throughout the evaluation of the Final Application, the Evaluation Team will assess the evidence that the applicant group has the capacity to execute the plan as presented. In total, a high-quality application will demonstrate evidence that the applicant 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 (which may include, but is not limited to, documented and relevant credentials and experience contained in the resumes of all members and an understanding, as demonstrated by the application responses, of challenges, issues, and requirements associated with running a charter school) 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 or guardian 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.

Initial Proposal Evaluation Thresholds

Threshold 1: Curriculum and Instructional Design

A response is Substantially Inadequate if it:

- Clearly does not present a 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.
- Clearly lacks a cohesive plan for educating the proposed school's target population, including appropriate curriculum, instructional strategies, assessments, and methods for identifying and addressing student needs.
- Presents unreasonable plans or ideas, lacks essential information, or raises significant concerns about the applicant's understanding of and/or commitment to rigorous academic standards, promotion and graduation criteria, and exit policies and criteria.

Threshold 2: School Calendar, Schedule, and Staff Structure

A response is Substantially Inadequate if it:

- Presents unreasonable plans or ideas, lacks essential information, or raises significant concerns about the school calendar and daily and weekly schedule reflecting the needs of the academic plan.
- Presents unreasonable plans or ideas, lacks essential information, or raises significant concerns about the applicant's understanding of and/or commitment to collective bargaining agreements and their impacts on the proposed school's calendar, schedule, and staffing.

Threshold 3: School Culture

A response is Substantially Inadequate if it:

- Raises significant concerns about the applicant's understanding of and/or commitment to school culture or ethos that will promote high expectations, a positive academic environment, and intellectual and social development for all students, including those with special needs.
- Presents unreasonable plans or ideas, lacks essential information, or raises significant concerns about the applicant's understanding of and/or commitment to legally sound policies for student discipline, suspension, dismissal, and crisis removal.

Threshold 4: Special Populations and At-Risk Students

A response is Substantially Inadequate if it:

- Presents unreasonable plans or ideas, lacks essential information, or raises significant concerns about the applicant's understanding of and/or commitment to identifying and meeting the needs of all special populations, including students with an IEP or Section 504 plan, ELL students, students performing below grade level, students who are intellectually gifted, homeless students, and students at risk of academic failure or dropping out.

Threshold 5: Academic Plan Capacity

A response is Substantially Inadequate if it:

- Presents unreasonable plans or ideas, lacks essential information, or raises significant concerns about the collective qualifications of the leadership and management team to implement the

school's Academic Plan successfully, especially as it relates to the areas of school leadership, administration, governance, curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

Final Application Evaluation Criteria

II. 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, as it provides the foundation for the entire application.

III. Academic Plan Design & Capacity

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

Section III.A: Academic Plan Overview, Academic Philosophy and Student Population

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 III.B: Curriculum and Instructional Design

A strong response will have the following characteristics:

- Comprehensive framework for rigorous, high-quality instructional design that reflects both the needs of the proposed school's anticipated population and its alignment to academic standards. Includes a brief description of how the proposed framework will ensure continued student achievement as measured by Strive HI and the Academic Performance Framework.
- If applicable, clear, rigorous academic standards beyond those specified in Strive HI and the Academic Performance Framework. Includes clear descriptions of the adoption or development process, the source of the additional standards and a reasonable rationale for their inclusion.
- Clear academic, non-academic, and mission-specific goals and metrics for the proposed school that details the school's goals and the metrics that will be used to measure the success in achieving these goals.
- Clear and comprehensive plan for how the proposed school assesses the progress of individual students, student cohorts, and the school as a whole on the identified metrics. Clearly explains the rationale for selecting or developing each of the identified assessments; includes a clear description each assessments' purpose, design, and format; and adequately demonstrates the validity and reliability of any non-standardized assessments.
- Clear and comprehensive plan for how instructional leaders and teachers will administer, collect, and analyze the results of diagnostic, formative, benchmark/interim, and summative assessments to inform programmatic and instructional planning decisions and make adjustments to curricula, professional development, and other school components. Clearly explains the roles and responsibilities of the instructional leadership team in overseeing teachers' progress toward helping students meet their identified goals and clearly describes the formalized process and supports that will enable teachers to reflect on student progress and adjust their instruction accordingly.
- Comprehensive course scope and sequence and curriculum map and/or pacing plan that clearly identifies course outcomes, demonstrates an alignment with appropriate standards, and illustrates alignment from grade to grade.
- **If the curriculum is developed/selected:** Sound curricular choices, by subject and grade level, which include research-based evidence the curricula will be appropriate, effective, and improve

academic achievement for the anticipated student population. A clear description of how the curricula will keep students on track for college and career readiness, highlighting any backwards-planning efforts, if relevant. If there is a virtual or blended learning program, a clear description of the online learning curriculum and a reasonable rationale for the selection of the curriculum.

- **If the curriculum is not already developed:** Clear and comprehensive curriculum development plan and realistic timeline, which identifies individuals responsible and aligns with teacher hiring and professional development calendars.
- Sound, research-based instructional strategies that will clearly support the academic plan. Includes a clear explanation of how these instructional strategies support the mission, vision, and academic philosophy of the proposed school and why the strategies are well-suited to the anticipated student population. A clear explanation of how the teachers will use different instructional methods to meet the needs of all students, highlighting assessing student needs, remediation, accelerated learning, and specialized instruction. If the proposed school's academic plan contains a virtual or blended learning program, includes a comprehensive description of how the proposed instructional strategies will work with the online learning components to result in a coherent instructional program.
- Clear description of graduation course and credit requirements and how GPA will be calculated.
- Sound plan for meeting BOE graduation requirements and compelling reasons and justification of any additional requirements beyond BOE requirements or deviation from BOE graduation requirements.
- If there is a virtual or blended learning program, a clear overview of the online learning program, including a description of the level of instruction that uses online learning methods, the general organization of the online learning schedule, a description of the impact of the program on classroom instruction (for blended learning programs), the teacher, student, and parent or guardian role, the degree of support provided to students and the student to teacher ratio in an online learning program. A video demonstration of the proposed online learning curriculum that adequately portrays student and teacher experience with the online learning curriculum. Comprehensive plans for and clear descriptions of how classroom instruction will work with the online learning components to result in a coherent instructional program; how attendance, student participation, credit accrual, and course completion will be defined, monitored, verified, and reported; how any online attendance policy adheres to state and federal reporting requirements; how federally-mandated assessments will be administered and proctored; how the proposed school plans to uphold the academic integrity of the virtual or blended learning program; the systems and procedures that will validate the authenticity of student work; how student safety is ensured and in compliance with federal privacy laws; how the proposed school will ensure minimal interruptions to learning, including a plan for technical support and troubleshooting for students, teachers, parents or guardians, and administrators; and how the proposed technology selections support the platform dependencies for the proposed curricular materials and instructional strategies.

Section III.C: School Calendar, Schedule, and Staff Structure

A strong response will have the following characteristics:

- School calendar and daily and weekly schedules that, align with and clearly reflect the needs of the Academic Plan, and are conducive to significantly improving student learning.
- Clearly describes the structure of the proposed school's day and week, including all of the required elements listed in Section III.C.2.a.-f.

- Provides a reasonable teacher-student and adult-student ratio that aligns with the Academic Plan.
- A staffing chart that clearly indicates all positions, is aligned with the Academic Plan, and proposes a salary structure that is in alignment with the proposed school's budget.
- Provides a reasonable rationale for the staffing plan and clearly explains how the relationship between the proposed school's leadership or management team and the rest of the staff will be managed.
- If the proposed school has a virtual or blended learning program, the staffing plan clearly ensures sufficient capacity for deploying and managing technology inventory and network needs with minimal interruptions to teaching and learning, including troubleshooting support for school staff and students.

Section III.D: School Culture

A strong response will have the following characteristics:

- Clear and coherent description of the shared beliefs, attitudes, traditions, and behaviors of the proposed school, students, teachers, parents or guardians, and administrators and how these shared beliefs, attitudes, customs, and behaviors create a school culture that will promote high expectations and a positive academic and social environment that fosters intellectual, social, and emotional development for all students.
- Coherent plan for creating, implementing, and maintaining the intended culture for students, teachers, parents or guardians, and administrators. Includes a clear description of the roles of students, teachers, parents or guardians, and administrators in creating, implementing, and maintaining this culture and how these roles are aligned.
- A coherent plan for enculturating students who enter the proposed school mid-year or in later grades.
- Clear description of how the proposed school culture is conducive to a safe learning environment for all students and how the proposed school will identify, assess, and monitor the social, emotional, behavioral, and physical health needs of all students on an ongoing basis.
- A clear description of how the school culture and staff will intentionally expose students to post-secondary educational and career opportunities at all grade levels. Clear descriptions of curricular or extracurricular programs that will provide students with access to college or career preparation and explanations of how these programs will reinforce a culture of high expectations. If any, citations to structured programs or supports, tracking systems, and individuals responsible for helping promote and monitor college and career readiness among students.
- 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, suspension, dismissal, and crisis removal, including procedural due process for all students, including students afforded additional due process measures under IDEA.
- Appropriate plan for including teachers, parents or guardians, and students in the development and/or modification of the proposed school's policies for discipline, suspension, dismissal, and crisis removal.
- Legally sound list and definition of offenses for which students may or must be suspended or dismissed.

- Sound plan for the creation, implementation, and maintenance of a professional culture and clear explanation of how the professional culture will contribute to staff retention, how faculty and staff will be involved in school level decisions and in developing new initiatives, and how success will be assessed.
- 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.
- If a high proportion of economically disadvantaged students is a part of the anticipated student population, a clear description of how the proposed school will address the anticipated academic challenges posed by the lack of socioeconomic diversity and the concentration of poverty among its students.
- *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 III.E: Supplemental Programs

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 that are in alignment with the Academic Plan.

Section III.F: 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, instructional strategies, and resources that will be designed to meet the diverse needs of all students.
 - Methods for appropriate identification and avoidance of misidentification and how these methods will be funded.
 - Specific instructional programs, practices, and strategies the proposed school will employ to do things like provide a continuum of services; ensure students' equitable access to general education curriculum; ensure academic success; and opportunities the proposed school will employ or provide to enhance students' abilities.
 - Monitoring, assessing, and evaluating the progress and success of students.
 - For proposed schools with a high school division, a plan to promote graduation .
 - Plans to have qualified staff adequate for the anticipated special needs population.
 - If the proposed school's plan contains a virtual or blending learning program, a clear description of how the virtual component addresses students with special needs.

- Clear illustration of how the proposed curriculum and academic plan will accommodate the academic needs of students performing below grade level and a clear description of the supports and instructional strategies that will support students in meeting and exceeding standards.
- Clear description of how proposed school will identify students that would benefit from accelerated learning opportunities, illustration of how the proposed curriculum will accommodate those performing above grade level, and a comprehensive description of the supports that will ensure the students are challenged and able to access the level of rigor that aligns with the students' individualized needs.

Section III.G: Academic Plan Capacity

A strong response will have the following characteristics:

- Evidence that the key members of the proposed school's academic team have the collective qualifications (which may include, but is not limited to, documented and relevant credentials and experience reflected in the resumes of all members and an understanding, as demonstrated by the application responses, of challenges, issues, and requirements associated with running a charter school) 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 or guardian and community engagement.
- Clear ties to and/or knowledge of the community in the area where the facility is or will be located and/or areas where the anticipated student population will come from.
- Evidence that any organizations, agencies, or consultants that are essential to successful planning, establishing, and 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 anticipated student population, as well as evidence that the proposed leader is well qualified to implement the Academic Plan being proposed. A thorough recruiting and selection process where candidates were screened using rigorous criteria and selected based on experience and ability to design, launch, and lead a charter school.
- **If the school director is not yet identified:** An appropriate job description or qualifications and criteria that is designed to recruit a school director with the experience in and ability to design, launch, and lead a charter school that will effectively serve the anticipated student population and implement the Academic Plan. A clear and appropriate timeline that aligns with the proposed school's start up plan and a comprehensive plan for a thorough recruiting and selection process where candidates will be screened using rigorous criteria.
- Appropriate responsibilities and qualifications for the school's leadership or management team beyond the school director.
- **If there are any members of the proposed school's leadership team or management team beyond the school director who 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 there are any members of the proposed school's leadership team or management team beyond the school director who are not yet identified:** Sound job description or qualification, timeline, criteria, and process for recruiting and hiring the leadership team.

VI. Organizational Plan & Capacity

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

Section VI.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:

- A clear description of a governance philosophy that is aligned with the proposed school's mission and vision.
- 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 blended learning program, a clear description of the role the governing board will play in the online learning program and a clear and realistic description of the knowledge of online learning that the proposed governing board currently possess or will endeavor to possess.
- Current and proposed board members who demonstrate (as documented by resumes 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 if not all members have been identified, evidence of a comprehensive 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 as described in HRS §302D-12, including academic, financial, legal, and community experience and expertise.
- If applicant is a nonprofit organization, 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. Adequately explains how the public will have meaningful access to governing board meetings.
- 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.
- 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 VI.B: Complaints Procedures

A strong response will have the following characteristics:

- A fair and accessible grievance process for parents or guardians and students.

Section VI.C: Staffing Plans, Hiring, Management, and Evaluation

A strong response will have the following characteristics:

- Recruitment and hiring strategy, criteria, timeline, and procedures that are likely to result in a strong teaching staff that meet ESEA requirements for being “Highly Qualified” and are well suited to the proposed school. If the proposed school offers a virtual or blended learning program, recruitment and hiring strategy, criteria, timeline, and procedures that are likely to result in hiring online learning teaching staff that have the requisite subject-matter knowledge, technological proficiency, communication skills and other necessary capabilities.
- Compensation packages and strategies that are likely to attract and retain high-performing teachers.
- Clear, realistic, and legally sound procedures for hiring and dismissing school personnel.
- Thoughtful plan for supporting, developing, and annually evaluating school leadership and teachers that is likely to produce and retain a successful staff.
- Proposed school director, school management, and teacher evaluation tools that 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 school director, management team, and teacher performance and turnover.
- An explanation for deviations from the Master Collective Bargaining Agreement as relating to staffing plans and salaries and identification of amendments that would be needed in a supplemental agreement and a plan for contingencies if the amendments cannot be negotiated under a supplemental agreement.
- Reasonable and legally sound personnel policies or employee manual

Section VI.D: Professional Development

A strong response will have the following characteristics:

- Appropriate goals and data-driven strategy for ongoing professional development, including the process for evaluating the efficacy of the professional development.
- Professional development opportunities, leadership, and scheduling that effectively support the Academic Plan and are likely to maximize success in improving student achievement, including an adequate induction program.
- Identification of ways professional development scheduling conflicts with the Master Collective Bargaining Agreement, amendments needed in a supplemental agreement, and a contingency plan in the event the amendments cannot be negotiated.
- Identification of a person or position that has the time and capacity to coordinate professional development and a reasonable plan for identifying professional development needs and sufficient funds for implementing the plan.

Section VI.E: Performance Management

A strong response will have the following characteristics:

- A comprehensive and effective plan for evaluating and monitoring academic, financial, and organizational performance.
- Comprehensive, effective plan (including qualified personnel) and system for collecting, measuring, 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.

- Comprehensive, effective plan (including qualified personnel) and system for maintaining, managing, compiling and interpreting financial data.
- Comprehensive, effective plan (including qualified personnel) and system for maintaining, managing, compiling and interpreting organizational data.
- Thoughtful, appropriate corrective actions the proposed school will take if it falls short of: (1) student academic achievement expectations or goals at any level, including explanation of what would trigger such actions and who would implement them; (2) financial performance standards and an explanation of what actions would be taken if the school is issued Notices of Concern or Deficiencies under the terms of the Charter Contract, if the independent auditor issues findings, or if the proposed school encounters financial difficulties: (3) organizational performance standards and an explanation of what actions would be taken if the school is issued Notices of Concern or Deficiencies under the terms of the Charter Contract, or if the school has a corrective action plan approved by the Commission.
- If any, school-specific measures that propose reasonable assessments that are aligned with the Academic Plan.

Section VI.F: Geographic Location and Facilities

A strong response will have the following characteristics:

- Description, with reasonable specificity, of the geographic location of the proposed school's facility.
- A reasonable rationale for selecting the location and a comprehensive description of any research done to support that rationale, if applicable.
- If the proposed school has obtained a facility, facility that is reasonably adequate for the intended purposes, a sound plan and timeline for renovating and ensuring code compliance for the facility and evidence that the facility will meet the requirements of the Academic Plan, anticipated student population, and sufficient support for any proposed technology. Evidence of intent to secure a facility, if applicable.
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- Sound and comprehensive plan and timeline for identifying, securing, financing, renovating, and ensuring code compliance for a facility within the geographic area selected that will meet the requirements of the Academic Plan and anticipated student population
- if grades will be added, a growth plan for the first five years of operations.

Section VI.G: Start-Up Period

A strong response will have the following characteristics:

- Detailed, comprehensive 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).
- 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 VI.H: 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. If there is a virtual or blended learning program, physical or virtual security features to deter theft.
- 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 VI.I: Student Recruitment, Admission and Enrollment

A strong response will have the following characteristics:

- Sound, thoughtful, and comprehensive plan for recruitment of 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.
- If applicable, identified enrollment preferences which are in compliance with federal and state law and any Commission policy or guidelines. Includes reasonable justification for the enrollment preference request.
- Admission and enrollment policy that complies with applicable law and any Commission policy or guideline, ensures the proposed school will be open to all eligible students, and includes:
 - A reasonable timeline for the application period and deadlines and process for the receipt and process of applications.
 - A reasonable timeline and comprehensive plan for student recruitment or engagement and enrollment.
 - Effective procedures for lotteries, waiting lists, withdrawals, re-enrollment, and transfers in accordance with state and Commission requirements.
 - Reasonable pre-admission activities for students, parents or guardians.

Section VI.J: Parent and Community Involvement

A strong response will have the following characteristics:

- Sound pre- and post-opening parent or guardian engagement plan, including family-school partnerships, that is welcoming and accessible to all parents and guardians.
- Effective strategies for informing and engaging parents or guardians and the community about the proposed school's development.
- Community resources and partnerships that will benefit students and parents or guardians and that include:
 - Description of the nature, purposes, terms, and scope of services of any such partnerships; and
 - Evidence of commitment from identified community partners.

Section VI.K: Nonprofit Involvement

A strong response will have the following characteristics:

- Comprehensive description of ways the nonprofit can support the proposed school and identified funding sources, if applicable.
- Evidence that the nonprofit board members have 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 VI.L: 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 Provider lacks the necessary capacity or displays irregularities in its management of non-academic functions.
- Legal Relationships
 - Evidence that the proposed school governing board is independent and self-governing.
 - Satisfactory explanation of existing or potential conflicts of interest between the proposed school governing board, employees, Service Provider, and any affiliated business entities.
 - 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.
 - 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.
 - 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.
 - Documentation of any loans, grants or investments made between the Service Provider and the proposed school's non-profit.
- Service Provider's Organizational Structure
 - 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.
 - A client list that displays a successful track record for similar clients.
 - A clear and well-defined scope of services and costs of all resources.
 - A clear compensation structure and payment schedule that identifies all fees, bonuses, and other compensation that will be paid to the Service Provider.
 - 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.

- 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.
- A management agreement that is generally reasonable, including reasonable renewal, termination, and indemnification provisions.
- A comprehensive plan for the operation of the proposed school in the event the Service Provider's management agreement is terminated.

Section VI.M: Organizational Plan Capacity

A strong response will have the following characteristics:

- Evidence that the organization team has the collective qualifications (which may include, but is not limited to, documented and relevant credentials and experience contained in the resumes of all members and an understanding, as demonstrated by the application responses, of challenges, issues, and requirements associated with running a charter school) 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.
- Evidence of a strong commitment from any essential partners in planning and establishing the Organizational Plan.

VII. Financial Plan & Capacity

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

Section VII.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 VII.B: Financial Management Capacity

A strong response will have the following characteristics:

- Evidence that the financial team has the collective qualifications (which may include, but is not limited to, documented and relevant credentials and experience contained in the resumes of all members and an understanding, as demonstrated by the application responses, of challenges, issues, and requirements associated with running a charter school) 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.