

# **MODEL FLORIDA CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION**

## APPLICATION COVER SHEET

Provide the name of the person who will serve as **the primary contact** for this Application. **One person** should serve as the contact for follow-up, interviews and notices regarding this Application.

**NAME OF CHARTER SCHOOL:** \_\_\_\_\_

**NAME OF FLORIDA NONPROFIT CORPORATION THAT WILL HOLD THE CHARTER:**  
\_\_\_\_\_

Has the Corporation applied for 501-C3 non-profit status? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

**NAME OF CONTACT PERSON:** \_\_\_\_\_

**TITLE/RELATIONSHIP TO NONPROFIT:** \_\_\_\_\_

**MAILING ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**TELEPHONE (day):** ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ **CELL PHONE:** ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

**EMAIL ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**NAME OF EDUCATION SERVICE PROVIDER (if any):** \_\_\_\_\_

**NAME OF PARTNER ORGANIZATION (if any):** \_\_\_\_\_

**The proposed school will open in the fall of school year:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Term of Charter Requested** \_\_\_\_\_

School Year	Grade Levels	Total Student Enrollment
First Year		
Second Year		
Third Year		
Fourth Year		
Fifth Year		

I certify that I have the authority to submit this application and that all information contained herein is complete and accurate, realizing that any misrepresentation could result in disqualification from the application process or revocations after award. I understand that incomplete applications will not be considered. The person named as the contact person for the application is so authorized to serve as the primary contact for this application on behalf of the organization.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Printed Name*

# I. EDUCATIONAL PLAN

## 1. Mission, Guiding Principles and Purpose

- ◆ Provide the mission statement for the proposed charter school.  
*The mission statement should, in a few concise sentences, indicate what the school intends to do, for whom and to what degree. A school's mission statement provides the foundation for the entire application.*
- ◆ Describe how the school will utilize the Guiding Principles found in s. 1002.33(2)(a).  
*In accordance with the law, charter schools shall be guided by the following principles:*
  - *Meet high standards of student achievement while providing parents flexibility to choose among diverse educational opportunities within the state's public school system.*
  - *Promote enhanced academic success and financial efficiency by aligning responsibility and accountability.*
  - *Provide parents with sufficient information on whether their child is reading at grade level and whether the child gains at least a year's worth learning for every year spent in the charter school.*
- ◆ Describe how the school will meet the Prescribed Purposes for charter schools found in s. 1002.33(2)(b).  
*In accordance with the law, charter schools shall fulfill the following purposes:*
  - *Improve student learning and academic achievement.*
  - *Increase learning opportunities for all students, with a special emphasis on low-performing students and reading.*
  - *Encourage the use of innovative learning methods.*
  - *Require the measurement of learning outcomes.*
- ◆ Describe how the charter school will fulfill, if applicable, the Optional Purposes of charter schools found in s. 1002.33(2)(c).  
*In accordance with the law, charter schools may fulfill the following optional purposes:*
  - *Create innovative measurement tools.*
  - *Provide rigorous competition within the public school district to stimulate continual improvement in all public schools.*
  - *Expand the capacity of the public school system.*
  - *Mitigate the education impact created by the development of new residential dwelling units.*
  - *Create new professional opportunities for teachers, including ownership of the learning program at the school site.*

### Evaluation Criteria: Mission, Guiding Principles and Purpose

Reviewers will look for:

- A compelling mission statement that defines the purpose and values of the school.
- A set of priorities that are meaningful, manageable and measurable, and focus on improving student outcomes.

## 2. Target Population and Student Body

- ◆ Describe the anticipated target population to be served.  
*If applicable, applicants should describe if they will target, in accordance with the law, certain populations defined in s. 1002.33(10)(e).*
- ◆ Provide the following for each year of proposed operation: the grades that the school will serve, the number of students to be served in each grade, the number of students expected in each class, and the total number of students enrolled.
- ◆ Describe the plan and methods the school will employ to comply with Florida’s constitutional class size requirements.  
*“The Quality Education Act” establishes limits on the number of students in core curriculum classes by grade level. Annually, compliance with the Act’s standards progressively ratchet up through 2010-11 when full compliance is mandated. All school districts have been notified of how they will be expected to ensure compliance, and as student subscription rates vary from district to district, charter school applicants should consult with their respective district officials regarding how best to design their plan for compliance with the Act.*

### Evaluation Criteria: Target Population and Student Body

Reviewers will look for:

- An understanding of the students the charter school intends to serve.
- A manageable plan tied to enrollment projections that will allow the school to meet its constitutional class size obligations.

## 3. Educational Program Design

- ◆ Describe the educational philosophy and/or approach of the proposed school, including a description of the instructional methods to be used.
- ◆ Describe the research base on the educational philosophy and/or approach.
- ◆ Describe how the educational philosophy and/or approach align with the school’s mission.
- ◆ Explain why the educational philosophy and/or approach are appropriate for and likely to result in improved educational performance for the school’s target population.

If the school intends to replicate an existing school design<sup>1</sup>:

- ◆ Provide evidence that the existing design has been effective and successful in raising student achievement.  
*The effectiveness of an existing school design can be demonstrated by providing evidence of organizational viability and the success of the academic program, including compliance with legal requirements, as well as a direct relationship between program elements and student achievement.*

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<sup>1</sup> An applicant is considered to be replicating an “existing school design” if:

- The proposed school is substantially similar *overall* to at least one school, and
- The individuals and/or organization involved in the established and operation of the proposed school are deeply involved in the operation of the similar school(s).

For example, a plan to implement a specific program, such as a widely-used curriculum, would not be categorized as the replication of an existing school design.

- ◆ Describe the applicant’s capacity to replicate an existing school design.  
*Capacity to replicate can be demonstrated by providing credible and well-defined strategies for replication, including the financial and human resources necessary to replicate the design.*

**Evaluation Criteria: Educational Program Design**

Reviewers will look for an educational program design:

- Is clear and coherent;
- Is based on effective, research-based educational practices and teaching methods, and high standards for student learning;
- Aligns with the school’s mission and responds to the needs of the school’s target population, and
- Presents evidence that the proposed approach will lead to improved student performance for the school’s target population.

#### 4. Curriculum Plan

If the curriculum is already developed:

- ◆ Describe the school’s curriculum in the core academic areas, illustrating how it will prepare students to achieve Sunshine State Standards.  
*For schools that intend to serve high school students, the proposed curriculum must describe the “areas of interest for majors” as required by Florida Statutes..*
- ◆ Describe the school’s reading curriculum, providing evidence that reading is a primary focus and that there is a curriculum and set of strategies for students reading at grade level or higher and a separate curriculum and strategy set for students who are reading below grade level.  
*The reading curriculum must be consistent with effective teaching strategies and be grounded in scientifically-based reading research. Information on reading requirements may be accessed at: [www.justreadflorida.com/docs/reading\\_programs.pdf](http://www.justreadflorida.com/docs/reading_programs.pdf)*
- ◆ Explain how exceptional students and students who enter the school below grade level will be engaged in and benefit from the curriculum.
- ◆ Describe how the effectiveness of the curriculum will be evaluated.

If the curriculum is to be developed:

- ◆ Describe the plan for development of the school’s curriculum in the core academic areas, illustrating how it will prepare students to achieve Sunshine State Standards.
- ◆ Describe the school’s reading curriculum, providing evidence that reading is a primary focus and that there is a curriculum and set of strategies for students reading at grade level or higher and a separate curriculum and strategy set for students who are reading below grade level.  
*The reading curriculum must be consistent with effective teaching strategies and be grounded in scientifically-based reading research. Information on reading requirements may be accessed at: [www.justreadflorida.com/docs/reading\\_programs.pdf](http://www.justreadflorida.com/docs/reading_programs.pdf)*
- ◆ Identify the research base and foundation materials that will be used to develop the school’s curriculum.

- ◆ Explain how exceptional students and students who enter the school below grade level will be engaged in and benefit from the curriculum.
- ◆ Describe how the effectiveness of the curriculum will be evaluated.

#### **Evaluation Criteria: Curriculum Plan**

Reviewers will look for a curriculum plan that:

- Provides a clear and coherent framework for teaching and learning;
- Is research-based;
- Is consistent with the school's mission, educational philosophy and instructional approach;
- Will enable students to attain Sunshine State Standards and receive a year's worth of learning for each year enrolled, and
- Will be appropriate for all students at all levels.

### **5. Student Performance, Assessment and Evaluation**

- ◆ State the school's educational goals and objectives indicating how much academic improvement students are expected to show each year, how success will be evaluated, and the specific results to be attained.  
*The school's educational goals and objectives must ensure that students receive a year's worth of learning for each year enrolled.*
- ◆ Identify the school's promotion standards.
- ◆ If the school will serve secondary students, describe the methods that will be used to determine if a student has satisfied the requirements for graduation in accordance with s. 1003.43.
- ◆ Identify the range of assessments that the school will use to measure and monitor student performance.  
*At a minimum, charter schools must participate in the statewide assessment program created under s. 1003.43.*
- ◆ Describe how baseline achievement data will be collected and used.
- ◆ Describe how student assessment and performance data will be used to evaluate and inform instruction.
- ◆ Describe how student assessment and performance information will be shared with students and parents.

#### **Evaluation Criteria: Student Performance, Assessment and Evaluation**

Reviewers will look for:

- Measurable educational goals and objectives that set high standards for student performance.
- Promotion and graduation standards that are based on high expectations and provide clear criteria for promotion from one level to the next, and for graduation.
- Evidence that a range of valid and reliable assessments will be used to measure student performance.
- An assessment plan that is sufficiently frequent and detailed to determine whether students are making adequate progress.
- Evidence that data will inform decisions about adjustments to the educational program.
- Plans for sharing student performance information that will keep students and parents well informed of academic progress.

## 6. Exceptional Students

- ◆ Describe how the school will comply with state and federal requirements for serving students with disabilities, including the procedures that will be utilized for identifying students with special needs, developing Individualized Education Plans and 504 plans, and providing a full range of services.
- ◆ Identify the staffing plan for the school's special education program, including the number and qualifications of staff.
- ◆ Describe how the school's effectiveness in serving special education students will be evaluated.

Gifted and Talented Students:

- ◆ Describe how the school will serve gifted and talented students.
- ◆ Describe the school's effectiveness in serving gifted and talented students will be evaluated.

### **Evaluation Criteria: Exceptional Students**

Reviewers will look for:

- Demonstrated understanding of state and federal requirements regarding the education of exceptional students.
- A commitment to serving the full range of needs of exceptional students.
- Sound plans for educating exceptional students that reflect the full range of programs and services required to provide all students with a high quality education.
- Demonstrated capacity to meet the school's obligations under state and federal law regarding the education of exceptional students.

## 7. English Language Learners

- ◆ Describe how the school will comply with state and federal requirements for serving English language learners, including the procedures that will be utilized for identifying such students and providing support services.
- ◆ Identify the staffing plan for the school's English language learner program, including the number and qualifications of staff.

### **Evaluation Criteria: English Language Learners**

Reviewers will look for:

- Demonstrated understanding of state and federal requirements regarding the education of English language learners.
- A commitment to serving the full range of needs of English language learners.
- Sound plans for educating English language learner students that reflect the full range of programs and services required to provide all students with a high quality education.
- Demonstrated capacity to meet the school's obligations under state and federal law regarding the education of English language learners.

## 8. School Climate and Discipline

- ◆ Describe the school's daily schedule and annual calendar, including the annual number of days and hours of instructional time.
- ◆ Describe the school's philosophy regarding student behavior.
- ◆ Describe the school's Code of Conduct, including the school's policies for discipline, suspension, dismissal and recommendation for expulsion.

### **Evaluation Criteria: School Climate and Discipline**

Reviewers will look for:

- A school calendar and schedule that supports the mission and program requirements, including minimum statutory requirements.
- An approach to student discipline that creates and sustains a safe and orderly learning environment.
- Legally sound policies for student discipline, suspension, dismissal and recommendation for expulsion.

## II. ORGANIZATIONAL PLAN

### 9. Governance

- ◆ Describe how the school will be governed, including documentation of legal structure (i.e. Certificate of Incorporation).
- ◆ Provide an organizational chart for the school and a narrative description of the chart. Clearly describe the proposed reporting structure to the governing board and the relationship of the Board to the school's leader and administration.
- ◆ Provide a description of the responsibilities and obligations of the governing board as a whole, individual members, and officers of the board.
- ◆ Describe the policies and procedures by which the governing board will operate, including board powers and duties; board member selection, removal procedures and term limits; code of ethics, conflict of interest, and meeting schedule.  
*Charter school governing boards must be guided by a set of by-laws that define how the board will operate. Applicants may include their proposed by-laws.*
- ◆ Explain how the founding group for the school intends to transition to a governing board.
- ◆ Describe the plans for board member recruitment and development, including the orientation process for new members and ongoing professional development.
- ◆ List each of the proposed members of the school's governing board, indicating any ex-officio members and vacant seats to be filled. For each proposed member, provide a brief description of the person's background that illuminates the contribution he/she intends to make through service as a governing board member and any office of the board that individual holds.
- ◆ Explain how parents and the community will be involved in the governance of the school.

If the school is filing the application in conjunction with a college, university, museum, educational institution, another nonprofit organization or any other partner, provide the following information:

- ◆ Name of the partner organization.
- ◆ Name of the contact person at the partner organization and that person's full contact information.
- ◆ A description of the nature and purpose of the school's partnership with the organization.
- ◆ An explanation of how the partner organization will be involved in the governance of the school.

#### **Evaluation Criteria: Governance**

Reviewers will look for:

- Documentation of proper legal structure of the governing board.
- Adequate policies and procedures for board operation.
- Evidence that the proposed governing board will contribute to the wide range of knowledge and skill needed to oversee a charter school.
- A clear, sensible delineation of roles and responsibilities in relation to governance and school management.
- A plan for meaningful involvement of parents and the community in the governance of the school.

## 10. Management

- ◆ Describe the management structure of the school. Include job descriptions for each administrative position and teacher that identify key roles, responsibilities and accountability.
- ◆ Outline the criteria and process that will be used to select the school's leader and the process by which the school leader will be evaluated.
- ◆ Provide a staffing plan for each year of the charter term.
- ◆ Explain the school's plan for recruitment, selection, development and evaluation of staff.

### Evaluation Criteria: Management

Reviewers will look for:

- A management structure that includes clear delineation of roles and responsibilities for administering the day-to-day activities of the school.
- A sound plan for the recruitment, selection and evaluation of the school leader.
- A viable and adequate staffing plan.
- A sound plan for recruiting and retaining qualified and capable staff.

## 11. Education Service Providers

If the school intends to enter into a contract with an Education Service Provider<sup>2</sup>:

- ◆ Describe the services to be provided by the ESP.
- ◆ Provide a draft of the proposed contract between the school and the ESP including, at a minimum, proposed services, performance evaluation measures, fee structure, renewal and termination provision, and terms of property ownership (real, intellectual and personal).
- ◆ Explain why the ESP was selected, including what due diligence efforts were conducted to inform the selection.
- ◆ Explain the ESP's roles and responsibilities for the financial management of the proposed charter school, if applicable, and the internal controls that will be in place to guide this relationship.
- ◆ Explain how the governing board will ensure that an "arm's length," performance-based relationship exists between the governing board and the ESP.
- ◆ Provide a summary of the ESP's history, including its educational philosophy and background and experience of senior management.
- ◆ Provide a list of other schools with which the ESP has contracts, including contact information and student and financial performance data of such schools.

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<sup>2</sup> An Education Service Provider (ESP) is an organization that provides comprehensive services to a school. Organized as non-profit or for-profit companies, ESPs generally fall into two categories:

- *Educational Management Organizations* (EMOs) that provide comprehensive school management services and may provide school designs and/or educational programming as well and
- *Comprehensive School Design Providers* that offer a replicable school model or common pedagogical, instructional and governance approach .

### **Evaluation Criteria: Education Service Providers**

Reviewers will look for:

- A persuasive explanation of the reasons for contracting with an education service provider.
- A persuasive explanation that the proposed relationship with the ESP will further the school's mission and program.
- A clear description of the services to be provided by the ESP.
- A clear delineation of the roles and responsibilities between the school's governing board and the ESP.
- A clearly defined performance-based relationship between the school's board and ESP.

## **12. Employment**

- ◆ Explain the school's compensation plan, including whether staff will be publicly or privately employed.
- ◆ Describe the personnel policies and procedures to which staff will be required to adhere, including expectations for participation in the school's professional development program.

### **Evaluation Criteria: Human Resources and Employment**

Reviewers will look for:

- A compensation plan that will attract and retain quality staff.
- Policies and procedures that hold staff to high professional standards.

## **13. Parent and Community Support and Partnerships**

- ◆ Describe how the school will involve parents in its operations.
- ◆ Describe any community partnerships.
- ◆ Outline the methods that will be used for resolving disputes between parents and the school.

### **Evaluation Criteria: Community Support and Partnerships**

Reviewers will look for:

- Meaningful partnerships with parents and the community that further the school's mission and programs.

## **14. Student Recruitment and Enrollment**

- ◆ Describe the plan for recruiting students, including strategies for reaching the school's targeted populations and those that might otherwise not have easy access to information on available educational options.
- ◆ Explain how the school will achieve a racial/ethnic balance reflective of the community it serves or with the racial/ethnic range of other local public schools.

- ◆ Describe the school's enrollment policies and procedures, including an explanation of the enrollment timeline, criteria and/or any preferences for enrollment, and lottery process.
- ◆ Explain any student and/or family contracts that will be used as a requisite for initial and continued enrollment in the school. Describe if and how the school will enforce such contracts.

**Evaluation Criteria: Student Recruitment and Enrollment**

Reviewers will look for:

- A student recruitment plan that will enable the school to attract its targeted population.
- An enrollment and admissions process that is open, fair, and in accordance with applicable law.

### III. BUSINESS PLAN

#### 15. Facilities

If the site is secured:

- ◆ Describe the proposed facility, including location, size and layout of space.
- ◆ Describe the actions that will be taken to ensure the facility is in compliance with applicable laws, regulations and policies and is ready for the school's opening.
- ◆ Explain the anticipated costs for the facility, including renovation, rent, utilities and maintenance and identify, if applicable, any funding sources (other than state and local funding) that will be applied to facilities-related costs.  
*The financial plan for the proposed school should align with the facilities-related costs described.*
- ◆ Describe the back-up facilities plan.

If the site is not secured:

- ◆ Explain the school's facility needs, including desired location, size, and layout of space.
- ◆ Provide an estimate of the costs of the anticipated facility needs and describe how such estimates have been derived.  
*The financial plan for the proposed school should align with the facilities-related costs described.*
- ◆ Explain the strategy and schedule that will be employed to secure an adequate facility.
- ◆ Describe the back-up facilities plan.

#### Evaluation Criteria: Facilities

Reviewers will look for:

- A realistic plan for securing a facility that is appropriate and adequate for the school's program and targeted population.
- Evidence that the school has the necessary resources to fund the facilities plan.

#### 16. Transportation and Food Service

- ◆ Describe the school's plan for transportation, including any plans for contracting services.
- ◆ Describe the school's plan for food services, including any plans for contracting services.

#### Evaluation Criteria: Transportation and Food Service

Reviewers will look for:

- A transportation plan that will serve all eligible students.
- A food service plan that will serve all eligible students.

## 17. Budget

- ◆ Provide an operating budget covering each year of the requested charter term that contains revenue projections, expenses and anticipated fund balances.
- ◆ Provide a start-up budget (i.e. from the date on which the application is approved to the beginning of the first fiscal year of operation) that contains revenue projections, expenses and anticipated fund balance.
- ◆ Provide a detailed narrative description of the revenue and expenditure assumptions on which the operating and start-up budget are based.  
*The budget narrative should provide sufficient information to fully understand how budgetary figures were determined.*
- ◆ Explain the school's spending priorities.
- ◆ Provide monthly cash flow projections for the school's start-up period (i.e. from the date on which the application is approved to the beginning of the first fiscal year of operation) and each year of the requested charter term.
- ◆ Describe the school's fundraising plan. Report on the current status of any fundraising efforts, including verification of any fundraising monies reported in the school's start-up or operating budgets.

### Evaluation Criteria: Budget

Reviewers will look for:

- Budgetary projections which are consistent with all parts of the application, including the school's mission, educational program, staffing plan and facility.
- A realistic assessment of projected sources of revenue and expenses that ensure the financial viability of the school.

## 18. Financial Management and Oversight

- ◆ Describe who will manage the school's finances and how the school will ensure financial resources are properly managed.
- ◆ Describe the financial controls, including an annual audit and regular board review of financial statements, which will be employed to safeguard finances and projected enrollment trends.
- ◆ Describe the method by which accounting records will be maintained.
- ◆ Describe how the school will store student and financial records.
- ◆ Describe the insurance coverage the school will obtain, including applicable health, worker's compensation, general liability, property insurance and director's and officer's liability coverage.

### Evaluation Criteria: Financial Management and Oversight

Reviewers will look for:

- A fiscal management system that is appropriate, follows generally accepted accounting principles and properly safeguards assets.
- Evidence of proper insurance coverage.

## 19. Action Plan

- ◆ Present a timetable for the school's start-up.

### **Evaluation Criteria: Action Plan**

Reviewers will look for an action plan that:

- Provides a thoughtful and realistic implementation plan that covers major operational items and provides flexibility for addressing unanticipated events.

#### IV. STATEMENT OF ASSURANCES

This form must be signed by a duly authorized representative of the applicant group and submitted with the application for a charter school.

As the authorized representative of the applicant group, I hereby certify under the penalties of perjury that the information submitted in this application for a charter for \_\_\_\_\_ is true to the best of my knowledge and belief; and further, I certify that, if awarded a charter, the school:

- Will be nonsectarian in its programs, admission policies, employment practices and operations.
- Will enroll any eligible student who submits a timely application, unless the school receives a greater number of applications than there are spaces for students, in which case students will be admitted through a random selection process.
- Will adhere to the antidiscrimination provisions of s. 1000.05.
- Will adhere to all applicable provision of State and Federal law relating to the education of students with disabilities, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1974; and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.
- Will adhere to all applicable provisions of Federal law relating to students who are limited English proficient, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974.
- Will participate in the statewide assessment program created under s. 1003.43.
- Will comply with Florida statutes relating to public records and public meetings, including Chapter 119, Florida Statutes and s. 286.011, Florida Statutes, which are applicable to applicants even prior to being granted a charter.
- Will obtain and keep current all necessary permits, licenses and certifications related to fire, health and safety within the building and on school property.
- Will provide for an annual financial audit in accordance with s. 218.39.

The governing board, at its discretion, allows \_\_\_\_\_ (name), \_\_\_\_\_(title) to sign as the legal correspondent for the school.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Printed Name*