# Commonwealth Charter Final Application Criteria for Current Charter School Boards of Trustees

## I. How will the school demonstrate faithfulness to charter?

### A. Mission

The mission and application should address the following criteria provided to applicants in the charter application instructions.

* The mission defines the purpose and specialized focus of the school to its stakeholders and the public.
* The mission speaks to the value of the school, based on its own merit, and communicates the applicant group’s core beliefs and values about education.
* The mission indicates the key design elements proposed to achieve outcomes.
* The mission is consistent with high academic standards and student success.
* The mission is succinct and comprehensible.
* The mission is reflected throughout all sections of the application.
* The application indicates whether the proposed mission is different from the existing school’s mission and how it differs. Describe the reasoning behind any modifications.

### B. key design elements

When describing the key design elements, the application should address the following criteria provided to applicants in the charter application instructions.

* The application briefly describes the educational philosophy of the applicant group and their core beliefs and values about education which aligns with the school’s mission and key design elements.
* The application describes the key design elements of the proposed school, such as length of school year and day, and aspects of school design, that make the school unique and distinct from other public school options.
* The key design elements align with the mission statement, and are reflected throughout all sections of the application.
* The application indicates whether the proposed key design elements are different from the existing school’s key design elements and how they differ. The application describes the reasoning behind any modifications.
* The application describes the key academic and nonacademic goals for students that are consistent with the stated mission, key design elements of the academic program, and educational philosophy of the school. Goals should be specific; measurable; action oriented; rigorous, realistic, and results focused objectives that are time-bound and tracked.
* The application describes how this school will enhance or expand the educational options available to the targeted student population, including whether the innovative methods to be used by the proposed school differ from the district or districts from which the charter school is expected to enroll students.
* The application illustrates a compelling image of the school’s future and what the school will look like in five years if it is achieving its mission.
* The application explicitly references key pieces of evidence to demonstrate how the school’s success will be measured, including the ways in which the school will positively impact all stakeholders in the school.

### C. Description of the Community(ies) to Be Served

When describing the community(ies) the school plans to serve, the application should address the following criteria provided to applicants in the charter application instructions.

* The application describes the student population that the proposed charter school would serve and the needs of that population.
* The application discusses the reason for the selection of the community(ies) and the applicant’s ability to serve this particular area and current connections to the community.
* The application describes how the educational option provided by the charter school will address the needs of the student population, including the proposed mission, curriculum, instruction, and services.
* The application describes how the applicant group has assessed parental support within the proposed sending district(s)/region for the proposed school.
* The application describes supporting evidence for the projected student enrollment at the proposed Commonwealth charter school, such as an analysis of eligible potential students in the community(ies) to be served, analysis of documented demand from families with eligible potential students, and/or an analysis of enrollment at schools currently operating in the community(ies) to be served.
* The application describes how the school will publicize and market its program to a broad cross-section of prospective students throughout the district(s) that the school plans to serve, including families that may be less informed about options. The application discusses specific strategies of how the proposed school will ensure adequate enrollment and full access to the school and its proposed educational program for all eligible students.
* The application describes the school’s plan to provide families and community members opportunities to support the success of the school.
* The application explains why a Commonwealthis necessary in order for this school to exist or succeed.
* The application discusses specific ways in which the Commonwealth charter school will collaborate with school districts from which it draws students to provide educational models, including programs, curriculum, and teaching methods that can be replicated by other public schools.

### D. Enrollment and Recruitment

When describing the enrollment and recruitment for the proposed school, the application should address the following criteria provided to applicants in the charter application instructions.

* The application indicates in a table the projected number of students to be enrolled by grade each year over the five year term of the charter, as well as up to the year of operation when the overall maximum enrollment requested will be reached. The application explains in detail the rationale for selecting the particular enrollment size for the school as well as the growth strategy you have developed. In their projection, the applicant group indicates clearly the potential for variation in enrollment year-to-year that reflects an understanding of potential student retention and attrition within the growth plan. The application considers projected maximum and minimum annual levels of student enrollment to safeguard against the need for a future amendment to the growth plan, if chartered. The application includes a draft of the proposed recruitment and retention plan as an attachment. The plan should clearly incorporate strategies that will attract, enroll, and retain a student population that has a comparable academic and demographic profile when compared to students in similar grades in schools from which the charter school is expected to enroll students.
* The application describes the grade levels at which students will be admitted to the school and the required age for kindergarten admission, if applicable.
* The application contains a complete draft enrollment policy and application for admission as an attachment and indicates dates for the application period, including application and lottery deadlines.

## II. How will the school demonstrate academic success?

### A. overview of program delivery

When describing the school’s program delivery, the application should address the following criteria provided to applicants in the charter application instructions.

* The application demonstrates that the proposed educational program will serve the diverse needs of individual students by providing evidence, including **explicit research citations**, that demonstrates their educational program and its associated educational practices may result in high academic achievement and the attainment of the knowledge, skills, and experiences that ensures college and career readiness for the anticipated student population. Evidence should include the specific subgroups of students listed in the recruitment and retention plan consistent with requirements of M.G.L. c. 71, § 89, such as students with disabilities, English language learners, and students participating in the federal free/reduced lunch nutrition program.
* The application describes the school calendar including the number of days school will be in session; and the daily hours of operation, including the length of the school day with start and dismissal times. The application describes these items and pays attention to the state requirements on minimum number of school days and instructional hours as described in 603 CMR 27.00, which is available online at http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr27.html.
* The application provides an annual calendar for the first year of operation as an attachment to the application. Draft calendar should reflect the required inclusion of five days within the school year for unanticipated school closures pursuant to 603 CMR 27.03.
* The application provides a sample weekly schedule for one grade in each grade level grouping at which the school intends to serve (e.g., elementary, middle, high school, or early, primary, upper elementary, etc.). The schedules should clearly describe any variation across the grades proposed that are related to the educational programming and school design. Schedule is provided as an attachment.
* The application provides a description of the mechanics of the educational program in terms of the daily or weekly organization of students and faculty (e.g., multi-grade, tracking, team-teaching, etc.) to explain the sample schedule.
* The application indicates if mandatory or optional programming will be offered to students outside of the typical school day such during weekends and summer months. The application describes the goals of such programming if offered. Such programming should be reflected in other areas of application.
* The application describes the extra or co-curricular activities or programming that the school will offer, how often they will occur, and the goals of such programming if offered.
* The application illustrates a typical day from the perspective of a student in a grade level of their choice.
* The application illustrates a typical day from the perspective of a teacher of any subject or grade of their choice.

### B. Curriculum and Instruction

When describing the school’s curriculum and instruction, the application should address the following criteria provided to applicants in the charter application instructions.

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| **Use of Existing School’s Curriculum** | * The application indicates if the school will implement curriculum currently used by the existing charter school or if modifications will be made. * The application describes the process that is used to ensure alignment of the curriculum to the MCF and identifies the individual(s) on the school’s organizational chart who will be responsible for alignment to the MCF. * If modifications to the curriculum will be required, the application explains the process utilized to identify areas for revision and to make adjustments. Indicate the individual(s) that will be responsible for the process. * If proposing to establish a school in a different municipality or targeting a different student population than served by the current school, the application describes the curriculum planning and preparations for meeting the needs of the anticipated student population. Indicate the individual(s) that will be responsible for the process. |
| **New Curriculum Required** | * The application indicates if the school will implement commercially available and/or new curriculum that will be internally developed. * If intending to use developed curriculum, the application explains the process utilized to identify the curriculum that will be used by the school and provide reasons why the curriculum was chosen for the school. Identify which individual(s) in the school’s organizational chart will be responsible for identifying and selecting curriculum. * If intending to develop curriculum, the application explains the process that will be used by the school to develop curriculum. The application identifies which individual(s) will be responsible for developing curriculum and who will participate in the process. * The application describes the process that is used to ensure alignment of the curriculum to the MCF and identifies the individual(s) who will be responsible for curriculum alignment to the MCF. |

* The application contains the curriculum scope and sequence that will be used by the school, including the content and skills to be taught in the core content areas at each g**r**ade level. Content is what students should know; skills are what students should be able to do; and the core content areas include English, reading/language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography. All grade levels must be included. The curriculum scope and sequence should be clearly aligned with MCF as well as aligned across the grades proposed for implementation.
* If applicable, the application describes how the existing school’s resources, both protocols and personnel, will be used to support the development of the curriculum and instruction of the proposed educational program.
* The application describes the processes for the ongoing development, improvement, and refinement of the curriculum. The description should include incorporation of the curricular structures that are used by the school, e.g. scope and sequence, unit and lesson plans, etc. The application identifies which individual(s) on the school’s organizational chart will be responsible for, and participate in the development, improvement, and refinement of the curriculum.
* The application describes the process and procedures used to evaluate whether the curriculum is effective and successfully implemented. The application identifies which individual(s) on the school’s organizational chart will be responsible for curriculum evaluation.
* The application describes the learning environment(s) used to deliver the proposed curriculum model, including the use of technology, and class size and structure.
* The application describes the pedagogy or instructional methods that will be used to deliver the curriculum model(s).
* The application contains a detailed plan for a responsive general education classroom that would support the needs of all students. The plan should describe:
  + how the proposed curriculum and instructional methods will support high standards of achievement for students with a wide range of needs, and be accessible and appropriate for all students at all levels, including students with diverse learning styles; English language learners; students with disabilities; students who enter below grade level, or students identified as at risk; and advanced students who perform significantly above grade level.
  + the strategies the school will implement to ensure academic success for all students, including students struggling to meet performance standards.
* The application demonstrates that the proposed curriculum and instruction will serve the diverse needs of individual students by providing evidence or relevant experience, including **explicit research citations**, that demonstrates the proposed curriculum and instruction may result in high academic achievement and the attainment of the knowledge, skills, and experiences that ensures college and career readiness for the anticipated student population. Evidence should include the specific subgroups of students listed in the recruitment and retention plan consistent with requirements of M.G.L. c. 71, § 89, such as students with disabilities, English language learners, and students participating in the federal free/reduced lunch nutrition program.
* The application describes the proposed structures for regular, frequent collaboration and professional development to improve implementation of the curriculum and instructional practice. Include a description of how the school plans to train and support teachers to address the unique needs of all students, including students with disabilities and English language learners.
* The application describes how the school will determine the professional development needs of the staff, including administrators and teachers, on an on-going basis and how these opportunities will be delivered during and outside of the scheduled school year.
* The application explains the process and frequency of teacher performance evaluations, including the key elements of the evaluation and who will conduct the evaluations.

### C. Student performance, Assessment, and Program Evaluation

When describing student performance, assessment, and program evaluation, the application should address the following criteriaprovided to applicants in the charter application instructions.

* The application describes the proposed school’s policies and standards for promoting students to the next grade, achievement level, or grouping level in alignment with the educational program.
* The application describes the graduation requirements or “exit standards” for the school’s grade groupings as applicable (e.g., elementary, middle, high school, or primary, upper elementary, etc.). These exit standards should be aligned with the school’s mission and provide a clear sense of expected student achievement at the end of the last grade of each school level and/or upon graduation. If the proposed educational program includes a high school, the application explains how the graduation requirements will ensure student readiness for college and career opportunities.
* The application describes a thorough, clear, measurable, externally credible, and conceptually sound design for measuring and reporting the performance and progress of the school as a whole, student cohorts over time, and the academic and social development of each student to all relevant stakeholders. Selected assessments are both research based and consistent with the school’s mission, broad academic and nonacademic student goals, educational program, and high expectations of students. Descriptions should include, but are not limited to, the following information:
  + The types of internal/school-developed assessments that will be administered to measure and report student progress. The application explains why these particular assessments were selected for the targeted student population and how the data will be used to support the goal of improved student learning and outcomes.
  + The school’s philosophy and plans for student homework.
  + A meaningful and practical approach for measuring and supporting student progress toward attaining non-academic goals in alignment with the proposed school’s mission and vision as well as students’ needs.
  + Evidence of multiple measures of student performance outcomes that may include reports of absolute scores, within-year student gains/losses, and year-to-year student gains/losses.
  + A plan to use student data, including MCAS/PARCC performance, to facilitate decision-making about necessary adjustments to the educational program and the staff development plan that will support the goal of improved student learning and outcomes.
  + If any additional standardized assessment tools will be used to determine and report student progress. If so, the application explains why those tools were selected for the targeted population and how the data will be used.
  + The roles of school leadership and faculty in the collection, analysis, and use of student data, and the individual(s) responsible for oversight of the system.
  + The system for reporting the performance and progress of the school, grades, individual classes, and students, including the frequency of the different forms of assessment, the types of stakeholders who will receive assessment information, and the types of metrics reported.
* The application describes the processes that will ensure the assessment system is linked to curriculum and instruction, and is used to facilitate timely adjustments that will support the goal of improved student learning and outcomes.
* The application describes how each of the following stakeholder groups will participate in the review and response to student achievement data:
  + Board of trustees
  + School administrators
  + Teachers
  + Students
  + Parents
* The application briefly describes the process to create an effective accountability plan during the first year of operation. The application identifies who will be primarily responsible for defining and overseeing this process, as well as for collecting and analyzing the data to evaluate the school’s progress towards accountability plan objectives and measures.
* The application contains draft objectives and measures related to mission and key design elements as an attachment.

### D. SUPPORTS FOR DIVERSE LEARNERS

When describing the school’s plan for special student populations and student services, the application should address the following criteria provided to applicants in the charter application instructions.

* The application describes the processes and procedures that the proposed school will employ to **identify, assess, and serve students** who are English language learners. Descriptions will be considered incomplete if they do not include:
  + - a description of the English language development program and support services to be offered, including the curriculum and strategies that will be used;
    - how student identification and assessment will be conducted;
    - the settings in which required services will be implemented;
    - how services will be delivered within the school’s daily schedule;
    - the plan to support core academic teachers in obtaining SEI endorsement;
    - the titles, salaries, and qualifications of the individuals delivering the services; and
    - how the program will be evaluated by the school and/or network.
* The application describes the English language development program staffing levels the school intends to provide by year for each of the school’s first five years. Includes qualified individuals who will work with the school, administrators, teachers, and other staff, as well as the number of staff you propose to hire each year and their qualifications, salary, and the percentage of their time that will be devoted to English language learner education.
* The application describes the processes and procedures that the proposed school will employ to **identify, assess, and provide specialized instruction** to each student in need of special education services. Descriptions will be considered incomplete if they do not include:
  + - a description of support services to be offered and some of the methods that will be used to provide a continuum of services;
    - how student identification and assessment will be conducted;
    - the development of individualized education programs;
    - the settings in which required services will be delivered;
    - how services for students in need of special education services will be delivered within the school’s daily schedule;
    - the qualifications of individuals who will be recruited to deliver services;
    - the titles, salaries, and qualifications of each position proposed; and
    - how the program will be evaluated by the school and/or network.
* The application describes the special education staffing levels the school intends to provide by year for each of the school’s first five years. Includes the special education administrator who will work with the school, teachers, aides, and other staff, as well as the number of staff you propose to hire each year and their qualifications, salary, and the percentage of their time that will be devoted to special education. The application specifies the amounts of time the administrator will allocate to administrative duties and to service delivery. Indicates if the applicant group anticipates outsourcing services such as occupational therapy, physical therapy, or speech therapy and if possible, with whom the applicant group anticipates contracting for the provision of services.

### E. CULTURE AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

When describing the school’s plan for school culture and parent engagement, the application should address the following criteria provided to applicants in the charter application instructions.

* The application describes the culture of the school consistent with the school’s mission, educational philosophy, and educational program from the first day of the school’s operation.
* The application describes a clear plan for establishing school culture and norms which includes specific strategies the school will implement to develop and maintain a safe school environment conducive to learning and consistent with the school’s mission and educational philosophy.
* The application describes how school culture and climate will be fostered for and by school leadership, teachers, students, and parents.
* The application describes the school’s programs or strategies to address the physical, social, emotional, and health needs of the anticipated student population.
* The application describes the school’s philosophy and plans regarding student behavior and discipline for the general student population and students with special needs. The application describes proposed policies regarding student discipline, including suspension and expulsion, or a reasonable plan for the development of the required discipline policies. Student discipline should be consistent with requirements and the school’s mission and educational philosophy.
* The application describes how the school’s discipline policy will be implemented for teachers, students, and parents starting from the first day of the school’s operation to ensure a safe environment conducive to learning with consistent and transparent implementation.
* The application describes how the school plans to involve parents/guardians as partners in the education of their children and to build and maintain family-school partnerships that support students’ academic progress and social-emotional well-being. The application describes any commitments or volunteer activities the school will offer to parents.
* The application describes how stakeholder satisfaction will be gauged and the process for collecting and publicizing results. Stakeholders include parents, faculty, and students.
* The application describes the relationships the applicant group has established or intends to establish with community agencies and organizations that will support the school’s educational program and serve the youth who attend the school. The application explains the nature of the proposed partnership/relationship(s) and how it will support the school’s mission and vision. Letters of support or commitment should be included as attachments.
* The application explains how the school plans to deliver nutrition program services to students, including what meals and/or snacks will be served and when. The application describes how you plan to administer the free and reduced lunch program. All public schools in the Commonwealth are required to make a school lunch available to students, including a free or reduced price lunch for students who meet income eligibility requirements. Regardless of a school’s participation in the National School Lunch Program, school lunches must be made available and under certain circumstances, breakfast as well.
* The application describes any ancillary and support services you expect to offer students and families, for example counseling, family outreach, and/or relationships with community organizations or service agencies. Any wrap-around services described by the school should indicate committed partners and provide letters of commitment as attachments.
* The application describes the plan to hire a school nurse and his/her role in the school.

## III. How will the school demonstrate organizational viability?

### A. Capacity

When describing the capacity of the existing board of trustees, the application should address the following criteria provided to applicants in the charter application instructions.

* The application summarizes briefly within the text of the document each founder’s and/or board member’s experience and qualifications. The combination of individuals’ experience and qualifications should demonstrate that the founders and/or board members:
  + have the experience and qualifications necessary to implement the proposal;
  + demonstrate the capacity to found and sustain an excellent charter school network;
  + can manage public funds effectively and responsibly;
  + include a diverse board of trustees with members who possess skills and experience in areas such as education, management, finance, development and law; and
  + have tangible ties to, and broad and diverse representation from the community(ies) the school currently and/or propose to serve.
* Each member of the applicant group must submit a resume as an attachment to the final application, including current board members, present or proposed network leadership, and the proposed school leader, if identified.
* The application identifies any organizations that are supporting the development of the proposed school and charter school network, as applicable. The application describes the organization’s current and proposed role and any resources the organization has contributed or intends to contribute to the school’s development and implementation.

### B. Governance

When describing current and proposed governance structures and systems, the application should address the following criteria provided to applicants in the charter application instructions.

#### Current and Proposed Charter School Network (as applicable)

* The application describes briefly how the board came to decide to submit a charter application for the proposed school and why the board is united to establish the proposed charter school in addition to the current charter school(s).
* The application describes the desired outcomes as a board governing multiple schools.
* The application describes the primary anticipated challenges to achieving the board’s desired outcomes over the next 5 years and how these challenges were identified.
* The application describes the existing capacity of the board to address these identified challenges and the governance areas that require further development.
* The application describes the board of trustees’ willingness and the school/network’s viability if faced with limitations to the implementation of the proposed network plan.

#### Governance Structure

* The application explains the proposed and/or current reporting structure and relationship between the board of trustees and the individual(s) reporting directly to the board.
* The application includes a brief job description for each officer of the board of trustees.
* The application explains any proposed changes in the board’s organizational structure, decision-making processes, and/or modifications of the existing board’s membership to help oversee and support the organization’s plans to manage more than one school and/or build a network.
* The application describes any committees, advisory groups, and/or task forces and their contributions to the board’s effectiveness as a governing body over the past five years.
* The application includes a copy of the current bylaws in the attachments.

#### Roles and Responsibilities

* The application provides examples of the board’s actions governing the current school during its current charter term that accurately reflect an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the board of trustees, consistent with public accountability, such as open meeting law, state ethics law, and charter school law.
* The application describes the processes related to the board’s oversight of the school, including setting priorities and goals; monitoring progress towards priorities and goals; evaluating the school leader(s); developing the annual budget; monitoring the school’s finances; and conducting long-term financial and strategic planning. The application provides examples of corrective action in response to identified challenges.
* The application describes the systems in place to ensure clear decision-making and communication processes that facilitate and ensure public accountability, including board meetings that are designed to foster open, deliberate, and thorough discussions.
* The application describes the process and procedure for handling complaints made to the board.
* The application describes the annual process the board uses to evaluate its own performance, and describe the steps taken to guide its development as an effective governing board. The application provides specific examples whenever possible.

#### Policy Development

* The application describes the process by which the board of trustees develops policies and makes decisions. The application provides specific examples whenever possible.
* The application describes the process for seeking feedback from the school staff, parents, and the larger community when setting policy. The application provides specific examples whenever possible.

#### Board Sustainability

* The application describes the recruitment, and selection processes for new board members.
* The application describes specific plans for the recruitment of additional board members with the skills and expertise that will ensure the sustainability of the proposed charter school network, and the targeted qualifications sought in new board members, if applicable.
* The application describes the orientation and development process for new board members.
* The application describes the board’s experience over the past five years in recruiting and retaining qualified and effective new board members.
* The application describes the succession planning for board officers.

### C. Management

School management is fundamental to creating an environment that can support a successful charter school. When describing (1) school and network management structure; (2) school leadership roles and responsibilities; (3) network leadership roles and responsibilities; and (4) human resources, the application should address the following criteria provided to applicants in the charter application instructions.

#### School and Network Management Structure

* The application includes a school organizational chart for year one of operation and at full student enrollment that encompasses all employees of the proposed school. The application describes how the applicant group determined the structure shown in the organizational chart and explains any changes in this organizational chart from the existing school.
* The application includes a narrative that clearly explains the reporting structure and relationship between the school’s leader and administration regarding teachers, specialists, and other staff members.
* The application includes a network organizational chart that encompasses all existing and proposed schools and employees providing services to multiple schools (a ‘central office’ configuration, if applicable).The application provides a comprehensive narrative that describes the board’s plans to develop and manage a network of charter schools through the proposed organizational structure.
* The application describes the lines of authority and communication among school leadership (e.g. chief executive officer, executive director, principal, instructional leader, operational leaders, and other key leaders and administrators) and staff at each individual school and among schools.

#### School Leadership Roles and Responsibilities

* The application describes the plan for how the school will make key organizational decisions about curriculum and instruction, student achievement, professional development, culture, staffing, fiscal planning, and operations.
* The application describes the roles and primary responsibilities of the school’s leader and other administrative staff. The application articulates key role distinctions with regard to curriculum development and implementation, instructional leadership, student achievement, personnel decisions, financial management, and operations.
* If the applicant group includes the proposed school leader (or any other position at the school), the application describes the process and criteria used to determine that the individual is the best candidate for the position. The application identifies the skills and experience of the selected individual(s) and describes how their professional background supports their capacity to be successful in founding a high quality charter school and achieving the school’s mission as the school leader or a member of the leadership team. If the proposed school leader has never led a school, the application describes any training programs that s/he has completed or is currently participating in.
* If the applicant group does not include the proposed school leader, the application describes the desired skills and experience of the ideal individual and the plans for the recruitment and selection of the school leader.
* If the educational/instructional leader is different from the school leader, the application describes the desired skills and experience of the ideal individual and the plans for the recruitment and selection of the instructional leader.
* The application describes how administrators will be evaluated and by whom. For more information about educator evaluation in Massachusetts see: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/>.

#### Network Leadership Roles and Responsibilities (if applicable)

* The application describes the plan for how the network will make key organizational decisions about curriculum and instruction, student achievement, professional development, culture, staffing, fiscal planning, and operations.
* The application describes plans to build organizational capacity, and share resources and best practices in order to improve productivity across schools, while improving educational outcomes.
* The application describes how the board of trustees and school leadership will leverage current expertise within the existing school to successfully open and sustain the proposed school. The application describes the role of staff from the existing school in supporting the development of the new school.
* The application describes how the board of trustees will address potential human resource challenges as it grows to scale over the next five years. The application describes the actions that will be taken to attract, develop, and retain an effective leadership team to implement the proposed school and maintain current school(s).
* The application describes what activities the board and school leadership will undertake to ensure consistency of the school model in its implementation at different schools.
* If the current school leader will transition to a network role or a new hire will occupy the primary reporting role to the board, the application describes the criteria and process the board will use or has used to select the network leader, if applicable, and describes the anticipated changes to the criteria and process used by the board to evaluate the individual in the network leadership role.

#### Human Resources

* The application describes the qualifications and attributes of an ideal teacher for the proposed school.
* The application describes the school’s plan for staff recruitment, advancement, and retention. The plan should include specific strategies for recruiting and retaining effective teachers, and reflect the anticipated efficiencies provided by creation and/or growth of a charter school network.
* The application describes briefly the teaching program of typical teachers. The application indicates how many hours they will be performing instructional duties and other school-related responsibilities they will have outside the classroom (lunch duty, dismissal, advisory group, after-school program).
* The application explains the school’s working conditions and compensation package(s) that will attract highly qualified staff. The application is clear on the specific commitments expected of and made to school employees, including leadership, administrators, faculty, and non-instructional staff.
* The application explains how individual base salaries and increases will be determined for all employees, including leadership, administrators, teachers, and non-instructional staff.
* The application includes a staffing chart and narrative staffing plan, for each year of the proposed charter school within the five year term of the charter that is viable and adequate for the effective implementation of the proposed educational program. The application explains the process of determining job positions, roles, and responsibilities that provides evidence of knowledge of opening and operating a high quality charter school. Indicate the number of administrators by title, the number of faculty including classroom teachers by grade and/or subject, the number of aides or assistants, the number of special student service providers, and other specialists, clerical staff, and any other school employees. Include contractors or district resources as applicable. The application ensures the chart and plan are consistent with the submitted budget, the organizational chart(s), student enrollment planning, and staffing levels described in other sections of the application.

### D. Facilities and Student Transportation

When describing plans for school facilities and student transportation, the application should address the following criteria provided to applicants in the charter application instructions.

* The application describes the process for identifying viable options for a facility for this school and any sites already identified. The application explains why these sites were chosen as possibilities. If a specific facility has not been determined, the application describes the applicant group’s plan for identifying possible locations, choosing the final location, securing all necessary local building approvals for use of the facility as a charter school, and securing financing.
* If possible, the application includes a layout and description of the proposed charter school facility. Include the number and size of classrooms, common areas, and recreational space.
* If a facility has not been selected, the application includes potential locations that are under consideration and discusses the process and timeline for selecting, acquiring, renovating as applicable, and occupying a suitable facility.
* The application describes the financing plans and proposed budget for acquisition (purchase or lease) of a facility and any necessary renovations to meet the school’s needs, to meet all local building requirements for use of the facility as a charter school, and to meet accessibility requirements. Commonwealth charter schools may take out loans, but the loan may not extend beyond the term of the charter without approval of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education. Please see M.G.L. c. 71, § 89(k) (6).
* The application includes plans for student transportation and describes how transportation services will be provided to eligible students. The application states explicit intent to utilize district transportation services or to provide services independently of the district.
* The application explains how students who are physically challenged will be transported and how all students, staff, parents, and the general public who are physically challenged will have access to the school facility in accordance with state and federal law.

### E. School Finances

When describing their fiscal policies and procedures, a five year operating budget, a cash flow projection for the first year of operation, the application should address the following criteria provided to applicants in the charter application instructions.

#### Fiscal Management

* The application explains the systems and procedures for managing the school’s finances, and indicates how the current practices will vary to support the proposed network of schools, including the level of site-based financial management the proposed school(s) will have. The application names the individual(s)/role(s) responsible for financial oversight and management of the school(s) and describes his/her qualifications.
* The application describes the board and school leadership’s prior track record of effective financial management over the past five years.
* The application describes how the board will increase efficiency related to the management and use of financial resources. The narrative should reflect the issues when developing a network within one municipality or multiple municipalities, as applicable.
* The application describes the fiscal controls and financial management policies the board of trustees employs to remain informed of the school’s financial position.
* The application describes how the school will track finances in its daily business operations in order to maintain needed cash-flow.
* The application describes contingency planning for potential challenges in cash flow or budget shortfalls due to lower than anticipated student enrollment or other financial challenges in the early years of operation, include specific strategies.

#### Operating Budget and Budget Narrative

* The application explains how the budget and cash flow projection were developed and the process used by the applicant group to ensure the accuracy and realistic nature of their final projections.
* The application summarizes financial forecasts from the school’s start-up phase through its fifth year of operation. Financial forecasts must include total expected realistic sources of revenue—including tuition and other grants (federal, state, and private), and fundraising—as well as all expenditures, the timeframe for a positive cash balance, and the anticipated growth of the school. The application defines and gives support for the assumptions behind projections.
* Applicants must submit a cash flow projection for the first year of operation, and a multi-year budget from the school’s start-up phase through its fifth year of operation. Cash flow projections are expected to reflect a similar level of detail to the budget template used for the annual budgets. All submitted financials must accurately reflect any financial arrangements across the proposed and/or current charter school network. Applicants were advised to provide an overall network budget that reflects the extent to which individual school budgets interact, as applicable.
* The cash flow projection and budget need to be realistic and reflect the expenses related to all commitments proposed in the application, through the proposed school’s fifth year of operation, including the school’s educational program, expected student population of students with disabilities and English language learners, human resources needs, and the acquiring and repayment of potential debt.
* The cash flow projection and budget narrative should discuss and explain the projected revenue and expense amounts, including descriptions of administrative and instructional staff and other operating expenses. The application provides detailed explanations for each of the five years of the draft budget and the cash flow projection for the first year of operation. The application defines and gives support for the assumptions behind projections.
* The application explains how the school will ensure it has sufficient funds to cover all anticipated expenses, including but not limited to start-up costs, and school operation.
* The application describes whether the applicant group expects the school to raise additional funds and why. The application briefly describes any planned fundraising efforts and who will lead and coordinate these efforts. The application briefly describes any financing, short-term or long-term, that the school anticipates securing during the period covered by this budget, including the planning and first year implementation period.

### F. Action Plan

After a charter is granted, but before the school opens is a time of great activity. The action plan outlines the steps that need to be taken within a clear timeline for opening the school.

The applicant group’s Action Plan should:

* Outline the strategies, steps, designated point person and provide a clear timeline for opening the school, dating from March 1st, in the year the charter is granted to the first day of school. The action plan should be specific and consistent with the proposal’s objectives, and outline the steps that need to be taken for a successful school launch. In a chart, the action plan describes the timeline; action(s) to be taken (specific to and consistent with the application’s objectives); designated point person; and start date and projected completion date.
* Outline the steps that have been and need to be taken to develop and implement both the governance oversight and management of multiple schools, and the school based elements that will support inter-school relationships and will ultimately build success.

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