INTRODUCTION

The Alabama Public Charter School Commission ("The Commission") as an approved charter school authorizer is pleased to seek proposals for a high-quality start-up public charter school in the Alabama state boundaries seeking to open in the 2027-2028 or 2028-2029 school years. The Commission is charged with authorizing high quality charter proposals that meet specified education needs in Alabama. The application is based on all key components required by the *Alabama School Choice and Student Opportunity Act (see Ala. Code. § 16-6F-7(a)(8));* therefore, the Commission requires all start-up public charter school applicants seeking authorization through the Commission to use this online application form.

Applicant Type

This request for proposal is used for a **start-up public charter school,** defined as a school which did not exist as a non-charter **public or non-public** school prior to becoming a public charter school. If the school existed as a public school prior to becoming a charter school, then by law the school is a **conversion charter school** that must seek authorization at the local level. By law, the Commission cannot authorize conversion charter schools.

A start-up public charter school must seek authorization at the local level if located in a school district that has the authority to authorize charter schools. If the local authorizer denies the application, the denied applicant may appeal to the Commission for authorization. It is recommended that the denied applicant complete this application for submission in order to align the application to the Commission's standards; however, the denied applicant may choose to use the original submission to the local authorizer. The Commission's rubric will be used in the review. The Commission cannot consider the appeal until the local authorizer has submitted all original documents to the Alabama State Department of Education and transferred to the Commission. By law, the Commission cannot authorize a school located within the boundaries of a local authorizer until that authorizer has had an opportunity to approve the school. Please see the attachment - *Administrative Information and Requirements* – for more information.

Operators will be defined in two categories as follows:

- **New Operators** are nonprofit organizations which:
    - Have never operated a charter school OR currently operate a charter school that has been open for less than one school year (regardless of location); and

    - Do not intend to employ an educational service provider OR intend to employ an educational service provider that has not operated a school for more than one year (regardless of location).
- **Existing Operators** are nonprofit organizations which currently:
    - Have one or more schools in operation nationwide which have been in operation for more than one full school year; or
    - Intend to employ an educational service provider with one or more schools in operation for more than one full school year.

By law, there are different application requirements for each category of applicants. *Ala. Code § 16-6F-7(a)(10)* and *Ala. Code § 16-6F-7(a)(11).*

There are several eligibility requirements which are given in the attachment - *Administrative Information and Requirements.* Applicants are encouraged to check all eligibility requirements before proceeding with an application or a letter of intent.

Evaluation Process

The public charter school proposal evaluation process includes the following steps of review and are summarized as follows:

1. **Notice of Intent to Apply:** Prior to application, it is recommended to submit a notice of intent to apply (NOI). The purpose of the NOI is to aid in planning for the Commission, as well as inform the public of the location of the proposed charter school. The NOI triggers conversations between staff of the Commission and the applicant to help ensure a complete application in a timely manner. The NOI is nonbinding, and applicants may choose not to pursue a full application. Please note that after the submission of the NOI, the Commission, as a courtesy, will notify the school district of the proposed location of the school. Notice of intent to apply is not required.

2. **Submission of Charter Application:** The formal application to the Commission is a comprehensive description of the school's educational, organizational, and financial plans. It consists of a narrative and multiple attachments as described further in this application. The submission deadline of the application initiates the 60-day clock for Commission action required by law. This year's submission deadline is March 13th.

3. **Initial Review of Charter Application:** The Executive Director or the Executive Director's designee will complete an initial review of the charter application to determine if the applicant has met all the requirements to be considered a complete application for full review. If the Executive Director or designee determines that the application is complete, the charter applicant will work with the Executive Director or the Executive Director's designee to schedule the capacity interview and the public forum. (which can be done in either order). If the application is not complete, the Executive Director will contact the applicant for revision or withdrawal. An applicant will be given 24 hours to revise the proposal.

4. **Public Forum:** The Commission will hold a public forum in the location of the proposed school. Prior to this public forum, the Commission will notify the school system in which the proposed charter school resides with notice of at least 15 days. The public, as well as representatives from the local school system, will have an opportunity to speak. The applicant is expected to attend the public forum and give a brief overview. This is an opportunity for the Commission to receive feedback from the community and should not be regarded as a time for the applicant to answer questions concerning

the proposed school from the community. The applicant should solicit community members through community engagement activities to publicly support the school at the public forum.

5. **Capacity Interview:** Applicants who submit a completed proposal will be invited to a capacity interview conducted by Commission staff members and possibly commissioners. The capacity interview is an opportunity for the applicant to demonstrate their team's capacity to open a high-quality charter school, as well as answer specific questions about their proposal.

6. **Staff Evaluation:** Using feedback from the written application, public forum and applicant interview, Commission staff will author an evaluation report to the full Commission for their review. Standardized rubrics will be used to complete the review and inform the staff evaluation, please see the attachment - *Application Evaluation Rubric*. The finalized staff evaluation will be available to the applicant and the applicant may choose to respond in writing to the evaluation prior to the date of the Commission's consideration.

7. **Commission Review as Authorizer:** The Commission may, pursuant to Alabama Act 2015-03 as amended by Alabama Act 2023-HB363, approve or deny the application. This action will take place within 60 days of the submission of a complete charter application in an announced public meeting, and the decision will be affirmed through a resolution adopted at an announced public meeting of the Commission. The Commission's decision will be based on the application, public forum, capacity interview and staff evaluation. Commission members will have access to all documents and artifacts submitted. If the Commission approves the application, the applicant must work with the Executive Director and legal representation to execute an agreed upon charter contract and performance framework within the required time limit as set forth in the Commission resolution. In the case of denial, the resolution will provide a rationale for the outcome.

8. **Optional Applicant Debriefing Conference:** Applicants whose applications were not approved may request an optional debriefing conference with the Commission staff to discuss the application evaluation. The request must be made in writing to the Executive Director. The purpose is to discuss the factors considered in the evaluation of the application and address questions and concerns the applicant may have to improve the application for the next round of proposals. This conference will not include any discussion of, or comparison to, applications from any other past or current applicant, nor will it be an opportunity to challenge the evaluation ratings or argue the merits of the application.

Final Matters

All new start up public charter schools approved by the Commission through this process will be subject to the legal requirements set forth in Alabama School Choice and Student Opportunity *Act, Ala. Code §16-6F-1, et seg, Act 2015-3*, as amended. As such an applicant should become familiar with that act. Additional context and information can be found on the Commission's website, the National Association of Charter School Authorizers' ("NACSA") website and on the Alabama State Department of Education's ("ALSDE") website.

It should be understood that opening and maintaining a successful, high-performing charter school depends on having a complete, coherent plan and identifying highly capable individuals to execute that plan. It is not an endeavor for which strengths in some areas can compensate for material weaknesses in others. Operating a quality public charter school requires expertise in educational, organizational, and financial areas; hence, the applicant must demonstrate sufficient capacity in all three of these areas to obtain a positive staff evaluation.

In the interest of full transparency, the rubrics used to evaluate the application, and all subsequent aspects of the process, are available to the applicant. It is **highly recommended** that the applicant review the Application Evaluation Rubric before submission.

Provided Files:

- **Attachment –** ***Administrative Information and Requirements***
- **Attachment –** ***Application Evaluation Rubric***
- **Attachment –** ***Application Checklist***

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

Please provide the following information to support the processing of this application. By signing and submitting this application you are giving permission for Commission staff to review the application and contact you for further information and clarification. Any item in this section marked with an * is required.

1) School Information

a) Proposed School Name*
b) School Type (Elementary, Elementary/Middle, Elementary/Middle/High, Middle, Middle/High, High)
c) Grade levels Served at Capacity (K, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12)*
d) School District Name*
e) Neighborhood/Community*
f) Physical Address
g) Phone Number
h) Web Site
i) Letter of Intent to Apply
Attachment – *Letter of Intent to Apply*

2) Primary Contact Person Information

a) First Name*
b) Middle Name
c) Last Name*
d) Title/Relation to School*
e) Mailing Address*
f) Primary Phone Number*
g) Email Address*
h) Preferred Method of Contact*: email or text

3) Operational Information

a) Opening date*: Fall 2027 or Fall 2028
b) Operator Type*: New or Existing
c) Out of State*?
d) Network (CMO, EMO, None)*?
e) School Calendar Type*
f) Instructional Days*

4) Acknowledgement

a) Signature*
b) Title*

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Executive Summary is required by law and should give an overview of how the proposed school will serve the needs of the community in which it resides. *Ala. Code § 16-6F-7(a)(8)a.* The Executive Summary should provide a foundation for the rest of the proposal and serve as a quick reference for interested parties wanting to learn more about the proposal. Proposed schools that are organized around a theme or concept that provide offerings beyond what is provided by the local public schools are of particular interest. There are several aspects to the Executive Summary as outlined below.

1) Mission Statement. The mission statement is a brief description of the fundamental purpose of the school and should include any organizing theme or concept if applicable. The statement is the expressed public purpose of the school defining its culture, goals and values.

Text Box

2) School Vision. Identify the community being served and provide a brief statement on how the proposed school would operate within that community. Include long-term goals for how the school would enhance and provide a service to the community. Define benchmarks for what a successful endeavor entails. Align with the stated goals of the Alabama School Choice and Student Opportunity *Act. Ala. Code § 16-6F-3.*

Text Box

3) Education Plan/School Design. Provide an overview of the education program of the proposed school, including major instructional methods and assessment strategies and non-negotiables of the school model. Describe the evidence that suggests the school model will be successful in improving academic achievement for the targeted student population. Summarize what the proposed school would do more effectively than the schools that are now serving the targeted population and how the school would measure its progress.

Text Box

4) Educational Need and Anticipated Student Population. Describe the anticipated student population, students anticipated educational needs, and non-academic challenges the school is likely to encounter. Describe the rationale for selecting the location and student body. Identify any enrollment priorities on which the program is based consistent with applicable restrictions on enrollment eligibility and selection. As an attachment, provide evidence of the educational need in the community.

Text Box
Attachment – *Educational Need*

5) Community Engagement. Describe the relationships within the community that have been established to generate community support for the proposed school. Briefly describe and provide evidence of these activities and summarize their results. Examples of community engagement evidence are documents such as community meeting sign in sheets, agendas, and survey results.

Text Box
Attachment – *Community Engagement Evidence*

6) Leadership and Governance. In an attachment list the members of the school's proposed leadership team and governing board, including their roles with the school and their current job title and employer.

Attachment – *Leadership Team and Governing Board*

7) Leadership Narrative. Provide a summary of how the leadership and board's collective experience and expertise is well suited to support the operation of a high-quality charter school.

Text Box

8) Revenue Sources. A brief description of the school's anticipated revenue sources. Distinguish between the pre-opening and after opening periods. This includes, but is not limited to: state funding, federal funding, federal grants, nonfederal grants and other large or small philanthropic funding. Indicate whether the funding has been secured, secured with charter authorization, applied for, or intent to apply.

Text Box

9) Enrollment Summary. Give the grades served and enrollment projections for both the first year of operation and when at full capacity

Provided Files: Attachment - *Enrollment Summary Spreadsheet*
Attachment - *Enrollment Summary Spreadsheet*

3. EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM DESIGN AND CAPACITY

The Educational Program Design and Capacity section demonstrates the school's readiness to provide a high-quality educational experience on opening day and throughout the charter contract period. This section emphasizes research-based instructional methods, assessment strategies, curriculum alignment with state standards, and the implementation of effective teaching practices. It aims to establish a strong foundation for academic excellence for all students. Applicants must present a well-rounded educational framework that meets the needs of the anticipated student population while adhering to state requirements.

1) Program Overview

Summarize the unifying theoretical educational framework of the school model, ensuring it is evidence-based and aligns with best practices.

Overarching Standard/Criteria: Compelling evidence of a unifying educational framework that will directly and consistently address the needs of the anticipated population and that clearly demonstrates the likelihood of all students meeting or exceeding the state standard.

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard:

a) Provide evidence of a theoretical educational framework that includes current best practices for high quality primary instructional methods, assessment strategies, and other elements of the school model. There must be evidence that it is research based, so it must be cited.

Text Box

b) Provide evidence for the success of this theoretical framework with the anticipated student population. Comprehensively summarize the essential design elements of the school model and provide at least three (no more than five) specific and measurable goals for the anticipated student population.

Text Box

2) Curriculum and Instructional Design

Propose an implementation of the educational framework as a curriculum that both reflects the needs of the anticipated population and ensures that all students will meet or exceed the state standard.

Overarching Standard/Criteria: Compelling evidence of a curriculum implementation of the unifying educational framework that will directly and consistently address the needs of the anticipated population and that clearly demonstrates the likelihood of all students meeting or exceeding the state standard.

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard:

a) Describe the proven methods employed to transform the unifying educational framework into a school curriculum. Describe how the mission, vision and framework inform the planning of the curriculum.

Text Box

b) Describe the basic learning environment (e.g., classroom-based, independent study), including class size and structure. Demonstrate alignment to the school's mission and vision.

Text Box

c) Provide an overview of the planned curriculum. Attach a sample course scope and sequence for one subject for each division (elementary, middle, high school) the school would serve. In addition, identify course outcomes and demonstrate alignment with applicable state standards.

Text Box
Attachment – *Sample Course Scope*

d) If the curriculum is fully developed, summarize curricular choices, such as textbook selection, by subject, and the rationale for each. Describe the evidence that these curricula will be appropriate and effective for the targeted students. Describe how the curriculum aligns with Alabama state standards.

Text Box

e) If the curriculum is not already developed, describe a timeline for how the curriculum will be developed between approval of the application and the opening of the school, including who will be responsible and when key stages will be completed.

Text Box

f) Describe the primary teaching methods and instructional strategies that the school will expect teachers to use and why they are well-suited for the anticipated student population. Describe the methods and systems teachers will have for providing differentiated instruction to meet the needs of all students.

Text Box

3) Student Performance Standards

Provide the anticipated student performance standards and demonstrate how those standards align or exceed the Alabama State standards.

Overarching Standard/Criteria: Compelling evidence of how the proposed school's student performance standards will directly and consistently meet or exceed Alabama standards.

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard:

~~a)~~ Describe the school-wide student performance standards. In addition, attach a proposed academic performance framework for evaluating the school's academic progress. The Commission approved performance framework template is attached for reference.

Text Box
Provided Files: Attachment – *Performance Framework Template*
Attachment - *Academic Performance Framework*

b) Attach a complete set of the school's proposed learning standards for one grade for each division the school will serve. Address the skills and knowledge each student will be expected to attain by the end of that grade. (Approved schools will be required to submit a full set of learning standards for all grades in the school before opening.)

Attachment – *Detailed Learning Standards for a grade*

c) If the school plans to adopt or develop additional academic standards beyond Alabama State standards, explain the types of standards (content areas, grade levels). Describe the adoption or development process that has taken place or will take place. Select one grade level and subject area as an example and explain how these additional standards exceed the Alabama State standards and how they differ from a traditional school model.

Text Box

4) Unique/Innovative Program Offering & Mission Specific Academic Outcomes

Describe unique or innovative academic programming and/or initiatives that are central to the mission and vision of the school which may not be supported at the same level in the local school system.

Preference: The Commission prefers applications that employ unique programs or characteristics that may not be found in the traditional school model.

Overarching Standard/Criteria: Compelling evidence of how the school will offer unique or innovative programs or characteristics that are otherwise not offered by the local school system or not offered to the same extent.

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard:

a) Describe the unique/innovative academic program(s) or characteristic(s) offered and explain how they differ from what is offered by the local school system. If applicable, connect to the mission or vision statements. Include identified funding sources.

Text Box

b) Explain how the unique/innovative program(s) and characteristic(s) are integral to the educational and student-development plans, the instructional design and/or the planning of curriculum.

Text Box

c) Identify student learning outcomes tied to these initiatives and how these outcomes will be measured by the school. Indicate if these outcomes will be included as Mission Specific outcomes in the performance framework included in the charter school contract.

Text Box

d) Explain how the unique/innovative program(s) and characteristic(s) integrate with and/or support state initiatives. (ARI, AMSTI, etc.)

Text Box

5) Grade-Level Promotion

All schools need criteria for grade level promotion which is clear and communicated to students and parents. Criteria may include academic, social, emotional or maturity readiness. This may include special cases of accelerated grade level promotion.

Overarching Standard/Criteria: Evidence of how the proposed school will promote students to the next grade level which may include meeting academic or social standards. If applicable, criteria for accelerated or double promotion (skipping a grade level). Include instances where parental involvement is required.

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard:

a) Describe how students will be evaluated for promotion in grade, and what factors the school will use in that decision. Include information involving parental involvement or approval. Attached proposed promotion policy if available.

Text Box
Attachment – *Promotion Policy*

b) Describe the system used to identify students at risk of being retained in grade level, the time of year that student will be identified, and the support in place to help that student succeed and remain on track. Include the timing of parental notification and involvement.

Text Box

6) High School Graduation Requirements

High schools will be expected to meet the state graduation standards as established by the Alabama State Board of Education (ALSDE).

Overarching Standard/Criteria: Compelling evidence of how the proposed high school's standards will directly and consistently meet or exceed Alabama State standards.

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard:

a) Describe how students will earn credits, what the school's course offerings will consist of, and what electives will be offered.

Text Box

b) Explain how the graduation requirements for the school will meet or exceed Alabama State Standards. If graduation requirements for the school exceed Alabama State Standards, explain the additional requirements.

Text Box

c) Explain what systems and structures the school will implement for students at risk of dropping out and/or not meeting the proposed graduation requirements.

Text Box

d) Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) has guidelines for official transcripts for all schools; describe any changes or differences proposed.

Text Box

7) School Calendar and Schedule

Provide information on the typical school day schedule and the academic calendar.

Overarching Standard/Criteria: Compelling evidence of how the school day schedule and academic calendar will directly and consistently meet the needs of the educational program and how it will optimize student learning.

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard:

a) Discuss the annual academic calendar for the school. Explain how the calendar reflects the needs of the educational program. Attach the school's proposed calendar for the first year of operation, including total number of days/hours of instruction, holidays, make-up days and state assessment days.

Text Box
Attachment – *Academic Calendar*

b) Describe the structure of a typical school day and week. Include the number of instructional hours/ minutes in a day for core subjects such as language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Note the length of the school day, including start and dismissal times. Explain why the school's daily and weekly schedule will be optimal for student learning. Provide the minimum number of hours/minutes per day and week that the school will devote to academic instruction in each grade. Attach a sample daily and weekly schedule for each division of the school.

Text Box
Attachment – *School Day and Week*

8) School Culture

Provide details on the overall school culture planned for the school, how this culture aligns with the mission and vision statements, and how the culture will promote academic growth and achievement.

Overarching Standard/Criteria: Compelling evidence of how the school culture or ethos will directly and consistently promote a positive academic environment and abundantly reinforce student intellectual and social development.

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard:

a) Give a brief description of the planned culture, how it aligns with the mission statement and vision of the school, and how it will support students and staff.

Text Box

b) Explain how the school will create and implement this culture for students, teachers, administrators, and parents starting from the first day of school. Describe the plan for enculturating students who enter the school mid-year. Provide specific events which support the culture.

Text Box

c) Explain how the school culture will take account of and serve students with special needs, including students receiving special education services, English Language Learners, gifted, and any students at risk of academic failure.

Text Box

d) Describe a typical school day from the perspective of a student in a grade that will be served in the first year of operations.

Text Box

e) Describe a typical day for a teacher in a grade that will be served in the first year of operation.

Text Box

9) Supplemental Programming

Provide details on planned supplemental programming that will augment the academic program for students and support intellectual growth and academic achievement. These include clubs and sports teams supported by the school, as well as non-academic support for students.

Overarching Standard/Criteria: Compelling evidence of how supplemental programming will directly and consistently enrich a positive, high-quality academic program and overall school program.

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard:

a) Describe the extra- or co-curricular activities or programming the school will deliver, including the funding sources and the frequency. Include any policies concerning students from special populations. Include details on all after-school programming.

Text Box

b) Describe the programs or strategies to address students' mental, emotional, and social development and health. Please include funding sources for these programs if known.

Text Box

c) If applicable, describe any other student-focused activities and programs that are integral to the educational and student-development plans. Please include information on funding sources if known.

Text Box

d) If summer school will be offered, describe the program(s). Explain the schedule and length of the program including the number of hours and weeks. Discuss the anticipated participants, including number of students and the methods used to identify them. What are the anticipated resources and staffing needs for these programs?

Text Box

10) Special Populations and At-Risk Students

Describe programming that specifically addresses and supports special populations, including efforts to hire personnel with relevant expertise. Identified populations include students with special needs, English Language Learners, students identified as intellectually gifted, and students at risk of withdrawal.

Preference: Preference will be given to applications that employ proven methods for educating at-risk students or students with special needs.

Overarching Standard/Criteria: Compelling evidence of how the school will directly and consistently ensure that it hires licensed, endorsed, experienced, and well-qualified special educators pursuant to law and how it will ensure compliance with applicable laws and regulations for programming requirements of these populations.

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard:

a) Identify the anticipated size of the various special populations and/or at-risk groups that the school expects to serve. Justify the estimates using data from a specifically targeted school, neighborhood, or more generalized analysis of the population to be served. Discuss how the course scope and sequence, daily schedule, staffing plans, and support strategies and resources will meet or be adjusted for the expected size of the groupings and the diverse needs of these students. Identified groups include Students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) or Section 504 plans (504s); English Language Learners (ELL); students identified as intellectually gifted (Gifted); and students at risk of academic failure or dropping out (At-Risk).

   Text Box

b) Describe the overall academic and organizational framework that will serve students in these groupings. Specifically address how the plans for individual groupings interrelate.

   Text Box

c) Explain how the school will provide equitable access for all students to all programming supported by the school, including supplemental programming like clubs or sports teams.

   Text Box

d) Explain more specifically how the school will identify and meet the learning needs of students with mild, moderate, and severe disabilities in the least restrictive environment possible. Specify the programs, strategies, and support the school will provide, including the following:
   i) Methods for identifying students with special education needs (and avoiding misidentification), including use of school personnel to participate in developing Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), identify and refer students for assessment of special education needs, maintain records, and cooperate in the delivery of special education instruction and services, as appropriate.
   ii) Specific instructional programs, practices, and strategies the school will employ to provide a continuum of services; ensure students' access to the general education curriculum; and ensure academic success for students with special education needs;
   iii) Plans for monitoring and evaluating the progress and success of special education students with mild, moderate, and severe needs to ensure the attainment of each student's goals as set forth in the Individualized Education Program (IEP);

iv) Plans for promoting graduation for students with special education needs (high school only);
v) Plans to have qualified staff adequate for the anticipated special needs population.

Text Box

e) Explain how the school will meet the needs of English Language Learner (ELL) students, including the following:
   i) Methods for identifying ELL students (and avoiding misidentification);
   ii) Specific instructional programs, practices, and strategies the school will employ to ensure academic success and equitable access to the core academic program for these students;
   iii) Plans for monitoring and evaluating the progress and success of ELL students, including exiting students from ELL services;
   iv) Means for providing qualified staff for ELL students.

Text Box

f) Explain how the school will identify and meet the needs of highly capable students, including the following:
   i) Methods for identifying highly capable students (and avoiding misidentification);
   ii) Specific research-based instructional programs, practices, strategies, and opportunities the school will employ or provide to enhance their abilities;
   iii) Plans for monitoring and evaluating the progress and success of highly capable students;
   iv) Means of providing qualified staff for intellectually gifted students.

Text Box

g) Explain how the school will identify and meet the needs of students who are at-risk of dropping out. At-risk indicators include students with declining grades, high absenteeism or tardiness, students who lack engagement, and students who do not complete assignments. Include the following:
   i) Methods for identifying students at-risk of dropping out;
   ii) Specific programs, strategies, and support provided to these students. Include any personnel resources specifically targeting this population;
   iii) Plans for monitoring and tracking students at risk of dropping out.
   iv) Interventions designed to keep these students engaged and enrolled, including triggers for the intervention.

Text Box

11) Student Recruitment and Enrollment

Describe the recruitment efforts, including the marketing campaign, and measures to ensure fair enrollment opportunities for all interested students in the community.

Overarching Standard/Criteria: Compelling evidence of how the school will directly and consistently recruit students and market the school in such a way as to adequately ensure equal access to interested students and families. In addition, provide ample evidence of the target plan for recruiting at-risk students.

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard:

a) Complete the attached enrollment projection spreadsheet that provides information on anticipated enrollments, with maximum and minimum bounds, for each grade served over the contract period.

Provided Files: Attachment – *Complete Enrollment Projections*
Attachment – *Complete Enrollment Projections*

b) Describe the school's plans for recruitment, including activities to inform the public of the school and encourage families to enroll. Provide a timeline with targets for number of applications. Include information on planned enrollment materials with target completion dates (brochures, websites, etc.). Include any known or planned recruitment activities within the community.

Text Box

c) Describe the general enrollment policy and attach any preliminary materials on the school's enrollment policy. The policy should include the following:
   i) Tentative dates for application period, enrollment deadlines, and procedures;
   ii) Policies and procedures for student waiting lists, withdrawals, re-enrollment, and transfers;
   iii) Explanation of the purpose of any pre-admission activities for students or parents;
   iv) Policies and procedures if demand outweigh identified enrollment targets approved by the Commission in the charter contract. Please note a lottery system is required by law.

Text Box
Attachment – *Enrollment Policy*

d) Describe the school's proposed onboarding process for students and families. This process would apply to students who have secured a spot in the school but are new to the school. How is this process different or enhanced from what a continuing student would experience?

Text Box

e) If there are more students interested in a school than spaces are available, State law requires admission to be based on a lottery. Please provide more details on the school's lottery process and explain how the school will ensure a fair and equitable process for students and families. This process must be consistent with *Ala. Code § 16-6F-5(a)*.

Text Box

f) Specifically describe the plan for outreach to families in poverty; academically low-achieving students; students with disabilities; and other youth at risk of academic failure.

Text Box

12) Student Discipline Policy and Plan

Describe the policies and procedures for handling students' behavior problems, including measures to afford a student's right to due process.

Overarching Standard/Criteria: Compelling evidence of an approach to student discipline that will directly and consistently address compliance with applicable laws and school district and the school culture.

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard:

a) Describe the practices the school will use to promote good discipline, including both penalties for infractions and incentives for positive behavior.

Text Box

b) Give a list and definitions of the offenses for which students in the school must (where non-discretionary) and may (where discretionary) be suspended or expelled, respectively.

Text Box

c) Provide an explanation of how the school will consider the rights of special education students and students with disabilities in disciplinary actions and proceedings.

Text Box

d) Discuss the procedures for due process when a student is suspended or expelled as a result of a code of conduct violation, including a description of the appeal process that the school will employ for students facing expulsion and a plan for providing services to students who are expelled or out of school for more than ten days.

Text Box

e) Provide the school's proposed discipline policy. Discuss how students and parents will be informed of the school's policies.

Text Box
Attachment – *Discipline Policy*

13) Family and Community Involvement

Provide evidence of significant engagement efforts with the community in which the proposed school will reside.

Overarching Standard/Criteria: Compelling evidence of how parents and community members will directly, consistently and appropriately be involved in the development of the proposed school.

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard:

a) Describe and provide evidence of the role to date of any parents and community members involved in developing the proposed school. Evidence may include sign-in sheets, surveys, photos, and direct feedback by community members.

Text Box
Attachment – *Community Involvement Information*

b) Describe and provide evidence of initiatives to assess and build parent and community demand for the school. Describe planned engagement efforts with parents and community members from the time that the school is approved through opening.

Text Box

c) Describe planned efforts to engage and provide opportunities for parents in the life of the school beyond the role of a parent advocate on the governing board. Explain the plan for building family-school partnerships that strengthen support for learning and encourage parental involvement. Describe any commitments or volunteer activities the school will seek from, offer to, or require of parents.

Text Box

d) Please describe any expectations for parents that are part of the school's educational plan or model. Explain clearly how parents' expectations will support the educational plan. Reflect upon alternatives if parents are unwilling or unable to participate.

Text Box

14) Partnerships or Contractual Relationships

Provide information on any anticipated partnerships or contractual relationships with local community organizations or other groups that will enhance the curricular or co-curricular aspects of the student experience. The next section covers partnerships with Education Service Providers (ESP), Charter Management Organizations (CMO), Education Management Organizations (EMO) and other such partnerships.

Preference: Preference is given to applications that pursue unique connections with community partners (e.g. facilities, fundraising) including those that enhance the student experience (e.g. mission specific programming) Applicants are encouraged to engage such groups early in the process to allow a more meaningful and productive partnership.

Overarching Standard/Criteria: Compelling evidence of high-quality partnerships and connections with community organizations, business, or other educational institutions that enhance or support the academic plan.

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard:

a) Discuss the community resources that will be available to students and parents. Describe any partnerships the school will have with community organizations, businesses, or other educational institutions that enhance the student experience. Specify the nature, purposes, terms, and scope of services of any such partnerships including any fee-based or in-kind commitments from community organizations or individuals that will enrich student learning opportunities. Attach existing evidence of support from intended community partners such as letters of intent/commitment, memoranda of understanding, and/or contracts.

Text Box
Attachment – *Community Support Documentation*

b) Provide details of all curricular or co-curricular needs that the applicant seeks to fulfill with either an unidentified community partner or an identified partner that has yet to commit.

Text Box

c) Identify any other partnerships or contractual relationships given above that are critical to the school's operations or mission, i.e. identify partnerships whose dissolution fundamentally changes the culture or nature of the proposed school.

Text Box

d) Disclose and explain any existing or potential conflicts of interest between the charter school board, the charter school administration, and the proposed service provider or any affiliated business entities.

Text Box

15) Educational Service Providers (ESP), Charter Management Organizations (CMO), Education Management Organizations (EMO) and Other Such Partnerships

Provide details on the anticipated use of Education Service Providers (ESP), Charter Management Organizations (CMO), Education Management Organizations (EMO) or similar partnerships. This includes details on the selection process.

Overarching Standard/Criteria: Compelling evidence of how any ESP, CMO, EMO, or other partnerships will be used and how these partnerships will directly and consistently enhance the school program. Evidence that the organization used proper procedures for a public school in entering into the agreement.

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard:

a) Provide the details of the selection process, including evaluation criteria used to pick the provider and provide the Request for Proposal (RFP) used to solicit applicants.

Text Box
Attachment - *RFP*

b) Provide evidence of the provider's or organization's success in serving student populations that are similar to the targeted population, including demonstrated academic achievement as well as successful management of nonacademic school functions, if applicable. Attach a complete Portfolio Summary for the partner organization.

Text Box
Attachment – *Portfolio Summary*

c) Provide a term sheet that includes:
   i) Proposed duration of the service contract
   ii) Roles and responsibilities of the governing board, school staff, and ESP
   iii) Scope of services and resources to be provided by the ESP
   iv) Performance evaluations measures and timelines
   v) Compensations structure, including clear identification of all fees to be paid to the ESP
   vi) Methods of contract oversight and enforcement
   vii) Investment disclosure
   viii) Conditions for renewal and termination of the contract

Attachment – *Term Sheet*

d) Disclose and explain any existing or potential conflicts of interest between the charter school board, the charter school administration, and the proposed service provider or any affiliated business entities.

Text Box

16) Educational Program Capacity

Name the people who have been identified for key positions in the proposed school, their collective capacity for operating the school, and disclose any potential conflicts of interest.

Overarching Standard/Criteria: Compelling evidence of how the school will open and continue to operate a high-quality educational program with high capacity in the following areas: school leadership, administration, governance, curriculum, instruction, assessment, performance management, parent involvement, and community engagement.

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard:

a) Identify the key members of the school's transitional team up to opening. Identify *only* individuals who will play a substantial and ongoing role in school development, governance and/or management, and thus share responsibility for the school's educational success. These may include current or proposed governing board members, school leadership/management, and any essential partners who will play an important ongoing role in the school's development and operation. Attach resumes for these individuals.

Text Box
Attachment – *Key Personnel Resumes*

b) Describe the team's collective qualifications for implementing the school design successfully, including capacity in areas such as:
   i) School leadership, administration, and governance;
   ii) Curriculum, instruction, and assessment;
   iii) Financial management;
   iv) Performance management; and
   v) Parent and community engagement.

Text Box

c) Describe the group's ties to and/or knowledge of the target community.

Text Box

d) Identify any organizations, agencies, or consultants that are partners in planning and establishing the school, along with a brief description of their current and planned role and any resources they have contributed or plan to contribute to the school's development.

Text Box

e) Identify the principal/head of school candidate and explain why this individual is well-qualified to lead the proposed school in achieving its mission. Summarize the proposed leader's academic and organizational leadership record. Provide specific evidence that demonstrates capacity to design, launch, and manage a high-performing charter school. If the proposed leader has never run a

school, describe any leadership training programs that (s)he has completed or is currently participating in. Also provide, as an attachment, the qualifications, resume, and professional biography for this individual. Discuss evidence of the leader's ability to effectively serve the anticipated population.

If no candidate has been identified, attach the job description or qualifications, and discuss the timeline, criteria, recruiting and selection process for hiring the school leader.

Text Box
Attachment – *Head of School Information*

f) Describe the responsibilities and qualifications of the school's leadership/management team beyond the principal/head of school. If known, identify the individuals who will fill these positions. Provide the qualifications, resumes, and professional biographies for these individuals if not so provided above. If these positions are not yet filled, explain the timeline, criteria, and process for recruitment and hiring.

Text Box
Attachment – *Management Team Information*

g) Explain who will work on a full-time or nearly full-time basis on the development of the academic model during the pre-opening phase. This includes developing the curriculum, training materials, policies and procedures, on-boarding of teaching staff, etc. Include the plan to compensate these individuals.

Text Box

h) Disclose any potential conflict of interest for individuals named in this section. Consult the Alabama Ethics Law. *Ala Code §* 36-25-1 through 36-25-30 (1975).

Text Box

4. OPERATIONS PLAN AND CAPACITY

Effective management, including oversight by a governing board, is critical for long term and sustainable school success. This section outlines the organizational aspects necessary for effective management of a high-quality public charter school.

1) Organization Structure and Relationships

The organization charts should clearly delineate the roles and responsibilities of – and lines of authority and reporting among – the governing board, school leadership, any related bodies (such as advisory bodies or parent/teacher councils), and any external organizations that will play a role in managing the school. The organization charts should also document clear lines of authority and reporting within the school.

Overarching Standard/Criteria: Evidence of organizational charts for governance and management.

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard:

a) Attach an organization chart that shows the school governance structure that includes the school governing board, school leadership positions who report to the governing board, and all related advisory bodies. Include an attachment outlining the major responsibilities of each body identified in the organizational charter.

Attachment – *Organizational Chart*
Attachment – *Responsibilities of Major Positions*

2) Governing Board

The governing board holds the charter contract and should be an active participant in overseeing the school in partnership with the school administration. The board is responsible for the success of the school and should be responsive to the various stakeholders. The board should periodically evaluate the leadership team and hold the team responsible for school performance.

Overarching Standard/Criteria: Evidence of an effective and ethical governing philosophy and structure that directly and consistently guides the board toward educational, operation, and fiscal success including effective representation of key stakeholders, specifically parents.

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard:

a) Explain the governance philosophy that will guide the board, including the nature and extent of involvement by key stakeholder groups. Include how the board will interact with the principal/head of school and any advisory bodies. Attach the governing bylaws for the proposed school.

Text Box
Attachment – *Proposed Governing Board Bylaws*

b) Describe clearly the governance structure of the proposed school, including the primary roles of the governing board members. In this explanation, please include the following:
   i) Describe the size, current and desired composition, powers, and responsibilities of the governing board;

ii) Identify key skills and areas of expertise desired among board members;
iii) Identify key constituencies/stakeholders that will be represented on the governing board.
iv) Include specifically which school employees report directly to the board and how the board will evaluate these employees.
v) Describe how the board will hear from key stakeholders, including parents and community members.

Text Box

c) Explain how this governance structure and composition will help ensure that the school will be an educational, operational, and financial success.

Text Box

d) List all current and identified board members and their intended roles. Provide the qualifications, interest for serving on the board, full resume, and professional biographies for these individuals. If these positions are not yet filled, explain the timeline, criteria, and process for recruitment.

Text Box
Attachment - *Board Resumes*

e) Disclose any potential conflict of interest for identified board members and their association with the school. Consult the Alabama Ethics Law. *Ala Code §* 36-25-1 through 36-25-30 (1975) and *Ala Code § 16-6F-4(16)b*.

Text Box

f) If the current applicant team does not include the initial governing board, explain how and when the transition to the formal governing board will take place.

Text Box

g) If this application is submitted by an existing nonprofit organization respond to the following:
i) Will the existing nonprofit board govern the new school, or has the school formed a new nonprofit corporation governed by a separate board?
ii) If the nonprofit's current board will govern the charter school, what steps have been taken to transform its board membership, mission, and bylaws to assume its new duties? Describe the plan and timeline for completing the transition and orienting the board to its new duties.
iii) If a new board has been formed, describe what, if anything, its ongoing relationship to the existing nonprofit board will be.
iv) If a new board has been formed, does the new board have 501(c)3 status or has it applied for 501(c)3 status? Only organizations that have secured 501(c)3 status are eligible to hold a charter contract.

Text Box

3) Legal Status and Governing Documents

Only organizations that have a 501(c)(3) nonprofit federal tax-exempt status may hold a charter school contact in the State of Alabama *Ala Code § 16-6F-4(16)b.*

Overarching Standard/Criteria: Evidence of non-profit and federal tax-exempt status.

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard:

a) Describe the proposed school's legal status, including nonprofit status and federal tax-exempt status. Attach Articles of Incorporation, proof of nonprofit status and tax-exempt status (or copies of the filings for the preceding items),

Text Box
Attachment – *Nonprofit Status*

b) Attach the completed and signed Statement of Assurances (template provided).

Provided Files: Attachment – *Statement of Assurances*
Attachment - *Statement of Assurance*

4) Performance Management & Mission Specific Goals

Applicants may propose supplementing the authorizer's performance standards with mission specific organizational goals.

Note: The authorizer will evaluate the performance of every charter school annually and for renewal purposes according to a set of academic, financial, and organizational performance standards that will be incorporated into the charter agreement. The academic performance standards will consider status, growth, and comparative performance based on federal, state, and school-specific measures. The financial performance standards will be based on standard accounting and industry standards for sounds financial operation, including fulfillment of the governing board's fiduciary obligations related to sound financial management. The organizational performance standards will be based primarily on compliance with legal obligations required by state and federal laws.

Overarching Standard/Criteria: Compelling evidence of high quality and sustainable performance standards and evidence of direct and consistent performance monitoring over time, which considers status, growth, comparative performance, and fulfillment of legal standards.

a) Describe any mission specific organizational performance goals that indicate the success of the school from an organizational perspective. Meeting these goals should enhance the educational experience of students but not be directly tied to academic achievement (such goals are in the academic section). Organizational performance goals may include supplementary programing that provide students with experiences that inform their academic experience. These organizational performance goals are in addition to the Commission established indicators and metrics given in the organizational section of the performance framework provided.

Provided Files: Attachment – *Performance Framework Template*
Text Box

b) How does the school measure success in meeting its organizational goals? Give specific, quantitative or qualitative, measures of success with benchmarks. Describe what success looks like for the school relating to the organizational aspects of the school's mission and vision.

Text Box

5) Staff Structure

Provide a staffing chart that identifies all key personnel necessary to operate a high-quality public charter school.

Overarching Standard/Criteria: Evidence of a staffing chart that identifies all personnel.

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard:

a) Attach a completed staffing chart for the school that includes
   i) Year 1 positions, as well as positions to be added in future years;
   ii) Administrative, instructional, and non-instructional personnel;
   iii) The number of classroom teachers, paraprofessionals, and specialty teachers; and
   iv) Operational and support staff.

   Attachment – *Staffing Chart*

b) Identify key responsibilities of personnel on the staffing chart including, but not limited to:
   i) Child Nutrition;
   ii) Federal Programs;
   iii) Special Education;
   iv) Health Services;
   v) Standardized Testing;
   vi) Transportation (if applicable); and
   vii) Financial Reporting.

   Text Box

c) Explain how the relationship between the school's senior administrative team and the rest of the staff will be managed. Note the teacher-student ratio, as well as the ratio of total adults to students for the school.

   Text Box

6) Staffing Plans, Hiring, Management, and Evaluation

Provide details on the hiring and management of school staff that provide opportunities for meaningful staff contributions and give staff rights suitable to their position.

Overarching Standard/Criteria: Evidence of appropriate contractual relationships with staff.

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard:

a) Explain the relationship that will exist between the proposed charter school and its employees, including whether the employees will be at-will and whether the school will use employment contracts. If the school uses contracts, explain the nature and purpose of the contracts. Attach any personnel policies or an employee manual, if developed.

   Text Box
   Attachment – *Employee Manual*

b) Outline the proposed school's salary ranges and employment benefits for all employees, as well as any incentives or reward structures that may be part of the compensation system. Explain the school's strategy for retaining high-performing teachers. If available, include a salary chart based on years of experience.

Text Box
Attachment – *Salary Chart*

c) Describe the school's strategy, plans, and timeline for recruiting and hiring the teaching staff, including the school's plan for hiring "Highly Qualified" staff in accordance with the state accountability plan. Explain other key selection criteria and any special considerations relevant to the school's design. Identify which school positions will be funded via federal funds and what certifications are required to allocate federal funds in this way.

Text Box

d) Outline the school's procedures for the hiring of personnel, including conducting criminal background checks.

Text Box

e) Explain how the school leader will be supported, developed, and evaluated each school year. Attach any leadership evaluation tool(s) that have been developed.

Text Box
Attachment – *School Leader Evaluation*

f) Explain how teachers will be supported, developed, and evaluated each school year. Attach any teacher evaluation tool(s) that already exists for the school.

Text Box
Attachment – *Teacher Evaluation*

g) Outline the school's procedures for the dismissal of personnel, including measures taken to correct performance.

Text Box

h) Explain how the school intends to retain quality personnel, and handle turnover after a dismissal or resignation.

Text Box

7) Facilities

Provide evidence towards securing a safe, up to code, facility to house the school.

Overarching Standard/Criteria: High quality facilities plan that provides for the procurement of a suitable independent facility.

Note: Alabama charter schools may be able to utilize existing public-school buildings for charter schools if they are located on the unused facility list.

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard:

a) Describe the process used to identify and secure a facility including any brokers or consultants employed to navigate the real estate market, plan for renovations, timelines, financing, etc.

Text Box

b) If a facility has been purchased or an MOU or other proof of intent to secure a specific facility, please provide proof of the commitment as an attachment**.** Briefly describe the facility including location, size, and amenities. Provide, as an attachment, supporting documents providing details about the facility. Charter school facilities must comply with applicable state, local and authorizer health and safety requirements. In addition, charter school applicants must be prepared to follow applicable city planning review procedures.

Text Box
Attachment – *Facility Documentation*

8) Advisory Bodies

Advisory bodies, including professional organizations, can provide valuable insight to enhance the effectiveness of the governing board and school administration. Applicants are encouraged to consult with these outside bodies, and secure their participation, to strengthen the application. New advisory bodies tied to the school become stakeholders in the success of the institution and should be included in the decision-making process.

Overarching Standard/Criteria: Compelling evidence of the use of advisory bodies to directly and consistently enhance the successful operation of the school.

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard:

a) List any existing professional organization or body that will be joined or consulted by the governing board to inform their work.

Text Box

b) Describe any advisory bodies or councils to be formed, including the roles and duties of that body. Describe the planned composition of the advisory body; the strategy for achieving that composition; the role of parents, students, and teachers (if applicable); and the reporting structure as it relates to the governing board and leadership.

Text Box

9) Grievance / Complaint Process

Provide documentation for a grievance policy that gives students and parents due process rights.

Overarching Standard/Criteria: Evidence of a useful grievance process for use by parents and students.

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard:

a) Explain the process the school will follow should a parent or student have an objection to a governing board policy or decision, administrative procedure, or practice at the school. Attach any adopted policies or procedures.

Text Box
Attachment – *Grievance Policies and Procedures*

10) Professional Development

Provide details on known professional development policies and procedures, including the position or person responsible for implementing these policies.

Overarching Standard/Criteria: Compelling evidence of a high-quality professional development program for staff.

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard:

a) Identify the person or position responsible for professional development.

Name and/or Title

b) Discuss the anticipated core components of professional development and how these components will support effective implementation of the educational program. Discuss the extent to which professional development will be conducted internally or externally and will be individualized or uniform.

Text Box

c) Provide a schedule and explanation of professional development that will take place prior to school opening. Explain what will be covered during this induction period and how teachers will be prepared to deliver any unique or particularly challenging aspects of the curriculum and instructional methods.

Text Box
Attachment – *PD Schedule*

d) Describe the expected number of days/hours for professional development throughout the school year, and explain how the school's calendar, daily schedule, and staffing structure accommodate this plan. Include time scheduled for common planning or collaboration and how such time will typically be used.

Text Box

11) Start-Up and Ongoing Operations

Provide a timeline of the major tasks needed to open the school with an identification of the responsible individuals.

Overarching Standard/Criteria: Compelling evidence of an effective, high-quality start-up plan that specifies detailed tasks, timelines, and responsible individuals.

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard:

a) Provide, as an attachment, a detailed start-up plan for the school, specifying tasks, timelines, and responsible individuals.

Attachment – *Start up plan*

b) If the school plans to provide transportation, describe the transportation arrangements for prospective students. In addition to daily transportation needs, describe how the school plans to meet transportation needs for field trips and athletic events.

Text Box

c) Provide the school plan for safety and security for students, the facility, and property. Explain the types of security personnel, technology, equipment, and policies that the school will employ.

Text Box

d) Provide, as an attachment, a list of the types of insurance coverage the school will secure, including a description of the levels of coverage. Types of insurance should include workers' compensation, general liability, commercial property, indemnity, directors and officers, commercial auto (if the school has buses), umbrella liability, and possibly others.

Attachment – *Insurance Coverage*

e) Provide, as attachment, the meal delivery plan that includes a wellness plan.

Attachment – *Meal plan*
Attachment – *Wellness Plan*

f) All other significant operational or ancillary services

Attachment - *Ancillary Services*

12) Operations Capacity

Provide details on the implementation team and their expertise to successfully complete the tasks needed to open a high-quality charter school.

Overarching Standard/Criteria: Compelling evidence of an effective capacity to implement the school's operations plan in a quality and effective manner.

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard:

a) Describe the applicant team's individual and collective qualifications for implementing the operations plan successfully, including capacity in areas such as the following:
   i) Staffing;
   ii) Fund-raising;
   iii) Financial;
   iv) Marketing and Recruitment;
   v) General operations; and
   vi) Facilities management.

Text Box

b) Describe the organization's capacity and experience in facilities acquisition and management, including managing build-out and/or renovations, as applicable.

Text Box

5. FINANCIAL PLAN AND CAPACITY

Founding a high-quality public charter school in the State of Alabama is complicated by the fact that state and federal funding sources are not available until after the school is open with students attending. Even at this point, certain funding sources require specific conditions to be met for access, meaning a potential delay in funding and/or not being eligible for funding through part of the opening year. This section evaluates the financial resources available to the applicant for successfully navigating the pre-opening period and launching a public charter school. By law, a draft budget for the first five years of operations is required. *Act. Ala. Code § 16-6F-7(a)(8)bb.*

1) Pre-opening Phase Funding Sources

Provide evidence of revenue streams during the pre-opening period.

Overarching Standard/Criteria: Compelling evidence of revenue sources sufficient to carry the organization through the pre-opening phase until school opening when state and federal funding sources become available.

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard

a) Describe the fundraising goals and timeline for the pre-opening phase. Include funding raised for specific purposes (ongoing costs, facility, etc.)

Text Box

b) Describe the type and amounts of funds that are already secured to be utilized for **ongoing costs** during the pre-opening phase. These may be grants/loans. Please attach evidence of sufficient liquid assets.

Text Box
Attachments – *Pre-opening Phase Ongoing Costs Secured Funds*

c) Describe all grants/loans the school will apply for to fund **ongoing costs** during the pre-opening phase. Attach supporting documentation if available.

Text Box
Attachments – *Pre-opening Phase Ongoing Costs Funding Leads*

d) Describe all grants/loans applied for and/or awarded to fund the **construction and/or renovation of the school building(s)**. Please attach evidence of any funds secured.

Text Box
Attachments – *Pre-opening Phase Facility Secured Funds*

e) Describe the fund-raising capacity of the organization during the pre-opening phase. Include information on the personnel involved.

Text Box

f) What relationships have been established with local entities who may be able to fund special needs or programs? Describe and provide evidence of any pledges made to the school by community members / businesses / organizations. Include in-kind contributions that may reduce costs.

Text Box

g) What relationships have been established with state or national organizations / businesses who may be able to help fund the pre-opening stage?

Text Box

h) Please disclose all donations of private funding, if any, including, but not limited to, gifts received from foreign governments, foreign legal entities, and, when reasonably known, domestic entities affiliated with either foreign governments or foreign legal entities. Attach supporting documentation if available.

Text Box
Attachment – *Funding from Foreign Sources*

2) Pre-opening Phase Cost Estimates

Give details of the anticipated costs during the pre-opening phase.

Overarching Standard/Criteria: Compelling evidence of financial consideration of all major start-up expenses occurring during the pre-opening phase.

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard:

a) Provide a cost estimate and support documentation for leasing/buying a facility to house the school. Attach any contingent agreement if available.

Text Box
Attachments – *Facility Costs*

b) Estimate the cost to renovate the identified facility up to code to open a school. Provide evidence to support the analysis.

Text Box
Attachments - *Renovations*

c) Describe the staff positions and estimated salaries and benefits of personnel hired during the pre-opening phase to assist in opening the school

Text Box
Attachments – *Pre-opening Phase Personnel*

d) Estimate the start-up costs of the following
   i) Curriculum
   ii) Furnishings
   iii) Instructional Technology
   iv) Insurance
   v) Community Outreach Programs
   vi) Student Recruitment
   vii) School Safety Requirements (i.e. nSides, storm shelter, if applicable)
   viii) Student Information System (PowerSchool)
   ix) School Compliance Platforms (Cognia, Anvilar)
   x) Child Nutrition Requirements
   xi) Transportation, if applicable
   xii) All other applicable costs

Text Box
Attachment – *Ongoing Cost Estimates*

3) Pre-opening Financial Management

Provide guidance on how the revenue sources are sufficient to meet the anticipated costs, including verification of timeliness and financial safeguards.

Overarching Standard/Criteria: Compelling evidence that the revenue streams are sufficient to meet the necessary outlays during the pre-opening phase. Compelling evidence of financial systems and processes with strong internal controls used during the pre-opening phase.

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard:

a) Given the funding streams and estimated costs described above, rectify and balance the funding streams and cost estimates to ensure that the school enters opening day with a positive balance sheet. Please attach supporting calculations.

   Text Box
   Attachment - *Pre-opening Cashflow Management*

b) Provide the names of all individuals who will be able to enter into financial agreements for the organization (i.e. spend or receive funds on behalf of the organization), and their relationship with the school.

   Text Box

c) Describe the internal controls used to ensure no unauthorized use of funds. This may include surety bonds, two signature rules, etc.

   Text Box

d) Attach any financial plan and policies, including financial controls and audit requirements, adopted during the pre-opening phase.

   Attachment – *Pre-opening Financial Policies and Procedures*

4) Pre-Opening Financial Capacity

Provide evidence that the individuals tasked with opening the school have the relevant financial expertise and no conflict of interest.

Overarching Standard/Criteria: Compelling evidence of individual and collective qualifications and capacity for implementing all aspects of the financial plan successfully.

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard:

a) Identify organizational members with expertise in financial management, fundraising and development, and/or accounting and internal controls and describe the level of knowledge.

Text Box

b) Disclose any relevant conflict of interest. Consult the Alabama Ethics Law. *Ala Code §* 36-25-1 through 36-25-30 (1975) and *Ala Code § 16-6F-4(16)b*.

Text Box

5) Financial Management Upon Opening

The financial policies and procedures must adhere to those followed by traditional public schools once the school is receiving state and/or federal funds. Please provide evidence of the preparation for this known change in expectations.

Overarching Standard/Criteria: Compelling evidence of effective, high-quality systems, policies and processes for financial planning, accounting, purchasing, and payroll, including establishment and maintenance of strong internal controls and competence for complying with all financial reporting requirements.

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard:

a) Describe the systems, policies and processes the school will use for financial planning, accounting, purchasing, and payroll, including a description of how it will establish and maintain strong internal controls and ensure compliance with all financial reporting requirements. Attach any adopted policies or procedures.

Text Box
Attachment – *Financial Policies and Procedures*

b) Describe the roles and responsibilities of the school's administration and governing board for school finances and distinguish between each.

Text Box

c) Describe the school's plans and procedures for conducting an annual audit of the financial and administrative operations of the school.

Text Box

d) Describe how the school will ensure financial transparency to the authorizer and the public, including its plans for public adoption of its budget and public dissemination of its annual audit and an annual financial report.

Text Box

e) Describe any financial services to be contracted, such as business services, payroll, and auditing services, including the anticipated costs and criteria for selecting such services.

Text Box

f) Describe the school's plans for liability insurance to indemnify the school, its board, staff and teachers against tort claims.

Text Box

6) Budgeting in Opening Year and Beyond

By law, a start-up and five-year budget plan with clearly stated assumptions is required. *Ala. Code § 16-6F-7(a)(8)bb*

Overarching Standard/Criteria: Compelling evidence of balanced revenue streams and cost estimates during the first year of operation with projections into the first five years of operations

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard:

a) Submit the Comprehensive Five-Year Budget Summaries for minimum, target, and maximum enrollment levels included in the attached Budget Workbook. In developing the budget, please use the per-student revenue projections provided by ALSDE and include the anticipated carryover from the pre-opening year. Applicants may substitute another budgeting spreadsheet in place of the one provided here as long as all information is included.

Provided Files: Attachment - *Budget Workbook*
Attachment - *Budget Workbook*

b) As an attachment, present a clearly stated budget narrative of assumptions and revenue estimates. Include the basis for revenue projections, staffing levels, and costs. The narrative should specifically address the degree to which the school budget will rely on variable income (e.g., grants, donations, fundraising). The narrative should include, but is not limited to, the following sections:
   i) **Anticipated Governmental Funding Sources:** Use the figures provided by ALSDE in developing assumptions for per-student revenue. Include any governmental grants. Include site-based/fixed governmental funds.
   ii) **Anticipated Non-governmental Funding Sources:** Indicate the amount and sources of funds, property or other resources expected upon opening to be available through banks, lending institutions, corporations, foundations, grants, etc. Note which are secured and which are anticipated and include evidence of commitment for any funds on which the school's core operation depends.
   iii) **Anticipated Major Expenses:** Describe the expected major expenses, which should include facility costs and personnel, and how to limit these expenses if revenue does not meet projections.
   iv) **Debt Service:** If any loans are anticipated during the pre-opening phase or the first few years of operations, describe the plans for repaying this debt including a description of the payment schedule.

v) **Contingency Plan:** Discuss the school's contingency plan to meet financial needs if anticipated revenues are not received or are lower than estimated.

Attachment – *Budget Narrative*

c) Please describe the school's five-year cash flow plan. This includes all major anticipated expenses and revenue as the school goes through the growth phase. Use the anticipated enrollment for years subsequent to the opening year.

Text Box
Attachment – *Five-year Cashflow Plan*

7) Financial Management Capacity Upon Opening

Provide evidence that the individuals, if known, tasked with handling the financial aspects of an open school have the relevant expertise.

Overarching Standard/Criteria: Compelling evidence of individual and collective qualifications and capacity for implementing all aspects of the financial plan successfully.

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard:

a) Identify anticipated school administration members with expertise in financial management, fundraising and development, and/or accounting and internal controls and describe the level of knowledge.

Text Box

b) Identify anticipated school board members with expertise in financial management, fundraising and development, and/or accounting and internal controls and describe the level of knowledge

Text Box

6. EXISTING OPERATORS

By law, additional expectations and evidence are required for those applicants who are **existing operators**, defined as representing a nonprofit organization which currently:

- Have one or more schools in operation nationwide which have been in operation for more than one full school year; or
- Intend to employ an educational service provider with one or more schools in operation for more than one full school year.

For applicants meeting this definition please provide the following supplementary information regarding the performance of the existing schools in the portfolio. *Ala. Code § 16-6F-7(a)(10)* and *Ala. Code § 16-6F-7(a)(11).*

All Charter Management Organizations (CMOs) and Educational Management Organizations (EMOs) are considered existing operators.

1) Growth Plans

Provide details on the organization's growth plans for Alabama including the organization's capacity to do so. Include any changes to the school model relevant to Alabama.

Overarching Standard/Criteria: Compelling evidence of how the organization's growth will directly and consistently support high-quality academic programs for Alabama students.

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard:

a) Provide a detailed description of the organization's growth plans and capacity to successfully support and execute that plan including business plans to support anticipated growth.

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b) Provide any details on changes made to the school model to adjust to Alabama's educational environment and state laws.

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2) Portfolio Summary

Provide details on the organization's portfolio of schools and history of proven success.

Overarching Standard/Criteria: Compelling evidence of how the organization's past performance will translate to success in Alabama.

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard:

a) Provide, as an attachment, evidence of a track record of success serving similar student populations through a summary of academic, financial and organizational success for the organization's portfolio of schools. Discuss portfolio performance on the whole, relative to performance on the relevant authorizer, district, or state accountability plan(s) and/or state assessments. Performance on State Test or ACT/SAT is also acceptable. Include all currently open and operating schools in the portfolio.

Attachment – *Portfolio Summary*

3) Revocation History

Provide details on the organization's history of which have closed.

Overarching Standard/Criteria: Compelling evidence of how the organization's past performance will translate to success in Alabama.

Evidence needed for addressing the overarching standard:

a) Disclose information on any of the organization's portfolio of schools that have been closed or non-renewed or have had charters that were revoked.

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