

Charter School Compliance Processes

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Introduction

School District of Manatee County

- Heather Jenkins, Chief Financial Officer
- Dr. Frank Pistella, Director of District Support

Purpose of Training

- To become familiar with the charter school compliance processes.

Authorizer's Responsibilities

A quality authorizer sets high standards for approving charter applications.

A quality authorizer only approves charter applications that demonstrate:

- High probability of academic success
- Sound fiscal management
- Effective governance and oversight

Authorizer's Responsibilities

Three Core Principles for Authorizers:

- Maintain high expectations for student achievement and school performance
- Support school independence and creativity
- Protect student and public interests

Charter School Authorizers

As Charter Authorizers, districts oversee three areas:

- ❖ I. New Charter Applications
- ❖ II. Renewal of Current Charter Schools
- ❖ III. General Monitoring for Current Charters

❖ I. New Charter Applications

Applicant Timeline

- **February 1** – Final application due by 4:00 pm
 - 7 days after receipt- technical/non-substantive corrections permitted
 - Only one final application per application cycle
- **Approve or deny the application by majority vote**
 - 90 days after receipt – unless mutually agreed
- **70 days** after approval for final contract
(30 days for a proposed contract /40 days for a final contract)

Essential Documents

- Florida State Statute 1002.33
- State model application
- Florida Charter School Application Evaluation Instrument

Charter Application Process

Review Committee

- Instruction/Curriculum
- Performance, Assessment, and Evaluation
- ESE
- ESOL
- Human Resources
- Budget and Finance
- Facilities
- Transportation
- Food Service

Charter Application Process

Review Committee's Functions

- Reads individually and then collectively the application, highlighting, taking notes (i.e. strengths, concerns, questions).
- Utilizes the state evaluation instrument.
- What each section should include and/or explain
- Evaluation criteria assists the reviewers to determine when the responses meet the standard.
- Meets as a group to review the application
- Recommend whether or not to conduct a capacity interview.

Charter Application Process

Recommendations

- Committee finalizes the evaluation instrument and the recommendation is submitted to the Superintendent.
- Superintendent makes recommendation to the School Board.
- School Board votes on the Superintendent's recommendation.

State Model Application and Evaluation Instrument



Evaluation Instrument

<p>Meets the Standard</p>	<p>The response reflects a thorough understanding of key issues and demonstrates capacity to open and operate a quality charter school. It addresses the topic with specific and accurate information that shows thorough preparation and presents a clear, realistic picture of how the school expects to operate.</p>
<p>Partially Meets the Standard</p>	<p>The response addresses most of the criteria, but the responses lack meaningful detail and required important additional information.</p>
<p>Does Not Meet the Standard</p>	<p>The response lacks meaningful detail, demonstrates lack of preparation, or otherwise raises substantial concerns about the applicant's understanding of the issue in concept and/or ability to meet the requirement in practice.</p>

I. Educational Plan

- **The Educational Plan should define:**
 - what students will achieve,
 - how they will achieve it, and
 - how the school will evaluate performance.
 - It should provide a clear picture of what a student will experience in terms of educational climate, structure, curriculum, instruction, assessment and outcomes.

I. Educational Plan

1. Mission, Guiding Principals and Purpose

What the school intends to do, for whom and to what degree

2. The Target Population and Student Body

describes the anticipated target population, how the school will be organized by grade structure, class size and total student enrollment.

3. Educational Program Design is research-based.

I. Educational Plan

4. **The Curriculum Plan** area should explain not only *what* the school will teach but also *how* and *why*.
- *Reading plan must meet criteria in the Model Florida Charter School application*

I. Educational Plan

5. The Student Performance, Assessment and Evaluation area should define the following:

- what students attending the school should know and be able to do.
- reflect how the academic progress of individual students, cohorts over time.
- how the school as a whole will be measured.

I. Educational Plan

6. The Exceptional Students area should demonstrate an understanding of the requirements of the school to serve all students and provide a concrete plan for meeting the broad spectrum of educational needs and providing all students with a quality education.

I. Educational Plan

7. The English Language Learners area should demonstrate an understanding of the requirements of the school to serve English Language Learner students and provide a concrete plan for meeting the broad spectrum of educational needs and providing all students with a quality education.

I. Educational Plan

8. **The School Climate and Discipline** area should describe the learning environment of the school and provide evidence that the school will ensure a safe environment conducive to learning.
9. **Supplemental Programming** the school will offer

II. Organizational Plan

The Organizational Plan should provide

- an understanding of how the school will be governed and managed.
- present a clear picture of the school's governance and management priorities
- what responsibilities various groups and people will have,
- how those groups will relate to one another.

II. Organizational Plan

- 10. The Governance** area should describe how the policy-making and oversight function of the school will be structured and operate.
- 11. The Management and Staffing** area should describe how the day-to-day administration of the school's operations will be structured and fulfilled.

II. Organizational Plan

12. The Employment area should define the policies and procedures that frame the school's relationship with its staff.

13. Professional Development area should clearly describe the proposed expectations and opportunities for administrators, teachers, and other relevant personnel.

II. Organizational Plan

14. Student Recruitment and Enrollment

should describe how the school will attract and enroll students.

15. Parent and Community Involvement

should provide a broad overview of the school's plans to encourage and support involvement.

III. Business Plan

The Business Plan should provide an understanding of how the charter operators intend to **manage the school's finances**. It should present a **clear picture of the school's financial viability** including the soundness of **revenue projections; expenditure requirements;** and how well the **school's budget aligns with and supports effective implementation of the educational program.**

III. Business Plan

Annual Financial Plan

- Anticipated fund balances based on revenue projections
- A spending plan based on projected revenues and expenses
- A description of controls that will safeguard finances and projected enrollment trends

III. Business Plan

To ensure fiscal responsibility, an application should include the following:

- Full accounting of expected assets
- A projection of expected sources and amounts of income including income derived from projected student enrollment and from community support
- An expense projection that includes full accounting of the costs of the operation, including start up costs.

III. Business Plan

- 16. The Facilities** area should provide an understanding of the school's anticipated facilities needs and how the school plans to meet those needs.
- 17. The Transportation** area should describe how the school will address these services for its student body.
- 18. The Food Service** area should describe how the school will address these services for its student body.
- 19. School Safety and Security** plan

III. Business Plan

20. The Budget area should provide financial projections for the school over the term of its charter.

- Operating budget for each year
- Start-up budget
- Evidence of any funding beyond what is typically provided by local, state and federal governments
- Narrative of line item revenue and expenditure assumptions
- Contingency plans
- Cash flow projections

III. Business Plan

21. The Financial Management and Oversight area should describe how the school's finances will be managed and who will be responsible for the protection of student and financial records.

- Clear description how finances will be managed, including who will manage the finances. Such a plan should contain strong internal controls to ensure appropriate fiscal management, and ability to comply with all financial reporting requirements.
- Governing board plan to regularly exercise oversight over and take accountability for all financial operations of the school.
- Provisions of an annual financial audit.
- Appropriate public transparency of school financial health
- Appropriate plan to securely store financial records.
- Plan to obtain appropriate and reasonable insurance coverage.

III. Business Plan

22. The Start-Up Plan should provide a clear roadmap of the steps and strategies that will be employed to prepare the school to be ready to serve its students well on the first day of operation.

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

One Cause for Nonrenewal or Termination of Charter

Failure to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management.

Upon Approval of the Charter Contract , Provide the Sponsor with

- A concise, uniform monthly financial statement summary sheet
 - A balance sheet and statement of revenue, expenditures, and changes in fund balance (in the format prescribed by the GASB).

Charter Governing Board Fiscal Responsibilities

- Annually adopt and maintain an operating budget.
- Ensure that the services of a certified public accountant or auditor for the annual financial audit is retained.
- Review and approve the audit report, including audit findings and recommendations for a financial recovery plan.
- Participate in governance training that includes financial responsibility.
- Report its progress annually to its Sponsor.

❖ II. Renewing Current Charters

Charter Renewal Process

- Letter of intent to renew charter
- Charter school updates its charter, and completes an application for renewal
- District renewal committee
 - Reviews charter update, student achievement data, financial status, etc.
 - Site visit by departments
 - Interview
- Committee recommendation to the Superintendent for board approval
- Provide feedback to charter school
- Draft charter contract
- Final contract to board for approval

Upon Initial Notification of nonrenewal or Closure

- May not expend more than \$10,000 per expenditure without prior written approval from the sponsor (exceptions).
- An independent audit within 30 days.
- May not enter into a contract that exceeds the term of the charter's contract.
- Acceleration clause in contract is void and unenforceable.
- A violation triggers a reversion or clawback power by the Sponsor allowing for collection of funds that exceed normal expenditures.

Funding

- Shall be funded the same as students enrolled in other public schools in the school district.
- Shall comply with the FDOE's guidelines for electronic data formats.
- The basis for the agreement for funding shall be the sum of the district's operating funds from the FEFP, including gross state and local funds, discretionary lottery funds and funds from the district's current operating discretionary millage levy; divided by total funded weighted full-time equivalent students in the district; multiplied by the weighted full-time equivalent students for the charter schools.

Funding – Categorical

- Charter schools whose students or programs meet the eligibility criteria in law – entitled to their proportionate share categorical program funds, including transportation, research-based reading allocation, and the Florida digital classrooms allocation.

Federal Funding

- Any eligible students enrolled in charter schools shall be provided federal funds for the same level of service provided students in schools operated by the district school board, including Title I funding.
- Sponsor shall reimburse the charter school on a monthly basis for all appropriate invoices submitted for federal funds available to the Sponsor, including Title I, Title II, and IDEA funds.

Payment and Reimbursement

- District school boards shall make timely and efficient payment and reimbursement to charter schools, including processing paperwork required to access special state and federal funding for which they may be eligible.
- Payments shall be made monthly or twice a month beginning with the start of the district's fiscal year.
- Each payment shall be one-twelfth, or one twenty-fourth.

❖ III. General Monitoring

OPENING OF SCHOOL VISITS for Current Charters: Documents due August 1

- Insurances – General Liability, Property, Auto, Professional, Athletic
- Assurances Checklist
- Federal Flow Through
- Annual Updated Reading Remediation Plan
- Health Services
 - Written Policies on Care of Ill /Injured students
 - Proof of First Aid Training for at least 2 staff members
- Facilities
 - Copy of Lease/Mortgage, CO, Fire/Safety Inspection

❖ III. General Monitoring

- MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS PUBLIC SCHOOL SAFETY ACT
 - Name of safety officer hired (w/ provision of accompanying equipment compliance SB 7026)
 - Copy of the members of the school level THREAT ASSESSMENT TEAM
 - Copy of emergency plans coordinated with public safety agencies
 - Copy of schedule for Active Shooter drill conducted each year
 - Name of the person designated to input the threat assessment to the Florida Safe School Assessment Tool (FSSAT) by August 1 (www.fldoeschoolsafety.org)

❖ III. General Monitoring

- Emergency Drills Schedule
- Safe Schools
 - Policy
 - How safe school funds were expended for the previous school year
- Website Requirements
- **Finance** – submitted directly to Finance
 - Annual unaudited Financial Report
 - Updated Budget
 - Annual Cost Accounting Report

Ongoing General Monitoring

Documents due on specified dates during school year.

- Insurance Coverage Changes
- Governance Documentation
- Annual Report
- Student Health Services and Records
- Facilities
 - Maintain property
 - Purchases over \$1000

Ongoing General Monitoring

- Finance

- Monthly financial statements with signed certification
- Annual Audited Financial Report
- Memo with estimated FTE
- Capital Outlay plan
- Fixed Asset/Inventory report Items over \$1000

Ongoing General Monitoring

- Computer Access Plan
- Human Resources
 - Updated list of Staff/Personnel rosters
 - Out of Field Letters
 - Verification of Finger prints of employees
 - Notification of staff resignation, leave, or dismissal

Questions

