



New School Application

Ohio Council of Community Schools

Contract Effective Date: July 1, 2020

School Opening Date: Fall 2020

OVERVIEW OF COUNCIL SPONSORSHIP

Dear Prospective Partner:

Thank you for your interest in developing a new community school to serve Ohio's students. The Ohio Council of Community Schools (Council) seeks to develop long-lasting partnerships with groups who share our high standards for quality. Our chartering priority is to develop a robust portfolio of innovative, high-performing schools throughout the state. Our 2020-2021 new school development priority is to target and potentially open high schools with a career technical focus. We envision partnerships with organizations that effectively implement a variety of academic programs critical for meeting the needs of Ohio's diverse student population.

Ohio's charter school movement began in 1998 with a small school in Toledo that served fewer than 200 at-risk students. Since then, the movement has evolved into one of the strongest and largest school choice communities in the country. Nationwide, over 6,400 charter schools operate in 42 states and the District of Columbia, serving 2.5 million students. In Ohio, there are over 300 charter schools serving approximately 120,000 students. The Council traces its history as one of two original sponsors borne out of Ohio's community school law.

The Council strives to be a leader in the national charter school movement, sponsoring 48 schools across Ohio. Additionally, the Council seeks opportunities to work with partners offering unique choices to students and families. This is why the Council is a proud sponsor of schools implementing a range of educational programs, including those with an emphasis on fitness, environmental studies, college preparatory academics, and project-based learning. The models are implemented through traditional bricks-and-mortar facilities, three statewide virtual schools, and dropout recovery and prevention programs intended to reach Ohio's most at-risk youth.

Our application and contracting processes are firmly rooted in the Principles and Standards for Quality Charter School Authorizing established by the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA), and you will find them to be rigorous, clear, and student-focused. As a charter authorizer, we cultivate relationships with sponsored schools based on a balance of autonomy and accountability. We provide meaningful technical assistance to our sponsored schools to help them provide a high-quality education to the students they serve.

If you have further questions, please visit our website at www.ohioschools.org, or contact our Vice President of Policy, Jason Wall, at (614) 545-8592 or jason@ohioschools.org.

Yours in education choice,

Lenny Schafer, M.Ed., PCC-S
Executive Director

OVERVIEW OF NEW SCHOOL APPLICATION PROCESS

Applicants seeking a charter contract from the Ohio Council of Community Schools must go through our New School Application process. Throughout the process, the Council will communicate important information to the lead contact listed in the Proposal. Please promptly notify the Council of any changes to the lead contact. The application steps for new school sponsorship are listed briefly below. The application timeline is found on page 4 and the instructions are on page 5.

1. Submit New School Proposal (www.ohioschools.org/schools/futureschools)
2. Submit New School Application
3. Participate in a New School Interview
4. Adoption and Execution of a Preliminary Agreement
5. Adoption of a Charter Contract
6. Execution of the Charter Contract

The breadth of the application allows it to serve as the business plan for the school. Please note, this New School Application is to be used by any entity hoping to open a new charter school in the fall 2020. This includes any school currently in operation looking to replicate their success.

Any information submitted through the application may constitute a public record, subject to disclosure under the Ohio Public Records Act.

As the Council's lead contact for charter applications, please feel free to contact me through email at jason@ohioschools.org or by phone at (614) 545-8592. Thank you in advance for your time and interest in sponsorship with the Council. We look forward learning more about your proposed school!

Best regards,

Jason Wall
Vice President of Policy

Ohio Council of Community Schools
3131 Executive Parkway, Suite 306
Toledo, OH 43606

DETAILED TIMELINE AND DESCRIPTION APPLICATION PROCESS

Deadline Deliverables and Deadlines – Opening Fall 2020

<p>Step One: Submit New School Proposal</p>	<p>July 31, 2019</p>	<p>Submit New School Proposal</p> <p>Applicants interested in sponsorship must submit a New School Proposal. Applicants that demonstrate academic and financial capacity will be invited to fill out the New School Application.</p> <p>Interested applicants should fill out and submit a proposal (available on our website) and may contact Jason Wall at jason@ohioschools.org.</p>
<p>Step Two: Submit New School Application</p>	<p>September 13, 2019</p>	<p>Submit New School Application</p> <p>The New School Application will describe the elements of the applicant’s plan for the charter school. It will be reviewed and evaluated against criteria described in the application packet.</p> <p>Upon submission, the Council’s New School Development Team will review the application and decide if the applicant is invited to the New School Interview. In the case of a rejected New School Application, the Council will provide the applicant with a written explanation. The New School Development Team will provide written feedback to all applicants by October 1, 2019.</p>
<p>Step Three: Participate in a New School Interview</p>	<p>October 2019</p>	<p>New School Interview</p> <p>Following the review of the New School Application, the Council’s New School Development Team will conduct an applicant interview, which will include governing authority members, school leaders, corporate management, and other key stakeholders.</p>
<p>Step Four: Preliminary Agreement – Adoption and Execution</p>	<p>November 2019</p>	<p>Adoption of a Preliminary Agreement</p> <p>The New School Development Team will make recommendations to the Council’s Board to adopt and issue a Preliminary Agreement. The Governing Authority then needs to meet to approve, execute, and return the Preliminary Agreement to the Council.</p> <p>Though this step is crucial in the new school development process, it is important to note that the adoption of a charter contract happens at a later date and is subject to the continuing work of the governing authority.</p>
<p>Step Five: Adoption of a Charter Contract</p>	<p>February 2020</p>	<p>Adoption of a Charter Contract</p> <p>No later than February 2020, the Council and governing authority must adopt a charter contract. The Council will continue to evaluate the progress of the school when it considers its adoption of the charter contract resolution.</p>
<p>Step Six: Negotiate and Execute a Contract</p>	<p>April 2020</p>	<p>Negotiate and Execute a Contract – Effective Date July 1, 2020</p> <p>Once a contract has been adopted, the entities will finalize the terms and execute the contract. The contract should be executed in April 2020, but the deadline is May 15, 2020.</p>

NEW SCHOOL APPLICATION OVERVIEW

Instructions

1. Carefully review the entire New School Application and note the required information and documents for the application.
2. To determine what constitutes a compelling, high-quality application, consult the New School Application Evaluation Rubric (pages 14-15) and Evaluation Criteria listed under each component.
3. If you have any questions regarding the New School Application, please feel free to contact Jason Wall.
4. Complete the New School Application by the deadline listed above and send an electronic copy to Jason Wall (jason@ohioschools.org).

Contents of the New School Application

- Cover page, including name and location of the proposed school.
- Executive Summary of the proposed school and application (not to exceed two pages)
- A narrative, not to exceed 40 pages (attachments are not included in the page limit).
- Attachments, which provide additional information to support the narrative. All attachments should be numbered and clearly referenced in the New School Application. Choice of attachments is at the discretion of the applicant. Examples of attachments include curriculum samples, letters of support, financial statements/audits, local report card data for existing schools, or any additional information that you feel will help us better understand your application.

New School Application Scoring

- Applications must receive at least 75% of possible points to continue through the Council's New School Development Process. Please refer to the scoring rubric on pages 14-15.

NEW SCHOOL APPLICATION NARRATIVE OUTLINE

Needs Assessment

A. Need

Provide a needs assessment which identifies the target neighborhood and student population. A quality needs assessment examines relevant market research of the community including the performance of surrounding schools, reviews specific neighborhood and student demographics, and makes a compelling case as to the need for the proposed school at this particular time in this specific location.

Evaluation Criteria: Reviewers will look for solid market research and a compelling description of the unique needs of the community and target student population that the school intends to serve. Presented research should answer the question, "why this school, and why this location?"

School's Mission, Vision, and Values

A. Mission

A mission statement is a succinct expression of an institution's purpose, what it seeks to accomplish, and for whom. Please explain what makes the mission unique for the target community and how will the mission be measured – how will the school know if it is meeting its intended purpose? Additionally, please describe the characteristics of students the school is hoping to attract (including ages and grades), and, if applicable, a notation if the Governing Authority is seeking designation as a STEM school equivalent under Section 3326.032 of the Ohio Revised Code, or, if the School is operating using the blended learning model as defined in Section 3301.079 of the Ohio Revised Code.

Evaluation Criteria: Reviewers will look for a clear and compelling mission statement that is meaningful, manageable, and measurable.

B. Vision

A vision statement articulates the future of the school and the community served. A school's vision differs from its mission by integrating and discussing expectations, not outcomes.

Evaluation Criteria: Reviewers will evaluate how the school's mission and vision are aligned.

C. Core Values

Core values of an organization are those practices which are foundational to how an organization conducts its business. The values lay the groundwork for the school's climate, culture and community. Briefly detail organizational beliefs which reinforce high expectations for all and which outline a path to success. Describe how they are supported by the mission and vision.

Evaluation Criteria: *Reviewers will consider how the school's core values are supported by the mission and vision. Reviewers will seek to understand how the core values influence the school's proposed program.*

Educational Plan and School Culture Outline

A. Curricular Elements

Provide an overview of how the research-based curriculum aligns with Ohio's Learning Standards and Ohio Department of Education achievement testing. Discuss the curricular tools that will comprise the school's academic program, focusing on technology, manipulatives, and curricular aids (e.g., textbooks, web-based applications, and curricular programs). Describe how the proposed horizontally- and vertically-aligned plan will result in student mastery of grade-level academic content standards and close achievement gaps between relevant student subgroups. Demonstrate how the proposed curricular elements are responsive to the needs of the students being served by the school.

Evaluation Criteria: *Reviewers will look for a curricular plan that implements the mission as described in the application and responds to the needs of the target student population. Reviewers will look for a plan which will demonstrate how curricular tools and content are based in recent research and meet the diverse needs of individual students. Reviewers will look for evidence that the curricular plan is founded in an understanding of effective educational practices and differentiates learning for all students.*

B. Instructional Practices

Detail the school's instructional practices (e.g., project-based learning, direct instruction, classroom- and non-classroom-based learning opportunities). Discuss the specific instructional strategies and practices that are necessary for successful implementation of the curriculum. Please detail the research-based teaching pedagogies being used in the school. What methods will be used to monitor and support classroom teachers as they implement this programming? What data have led the leadership team to conclude that the proposed educational practices will be successful with the student population? How will the school make learning and instruction relevant to students in a manner which results in students becoming stakeholders in their own education? Describe the general school calendar, including the number of days and hours the school is in session and the way the school day will be organized for instruction, independent study, and extra- or co-curricular activities. For Virtual Schools, pursuant to ORC 3314.21, please describe your school's plan for teacher visitation and interaction with students.

Evaluation Criteria: *Reviewers will look for instructional practices which are engaging and consistent with the mission, vision, and values of the school. Reviewers will look for instructional practices that are research-based and will lead to successful implementation of the curriculum, as well as how staff will be supported in endeavors to grow professionally. Reviewers will seek to identify opportunities for students to take ownership of and be authentically engaged in active/experiential learning which provides critical and higher-order thinking skill instruction.*

C. Assessment

Describe the school's approach to assessment, including which assessment tools will be administered. Discuss the use of diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments, including how they are used to evaluate academic progress of individuals and cohorts of students. Explain the use of these assessments toward meeting goals pertaining to student growth, achievement, and college and career readiness. Describe how the school uses assessment results to make instructional adjustments. Please also provide information about the data collection and monitoring systems used at the school and how the use of data is monitored.

Evaluation Criteria: Reviewers will look for an assessment approach that describes the process of administering and analyzing diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments. Reviewers will expect to see how the school integrates multiple measures of assessment data to inform key decisions aimed at improving instructional decision making and increased academic outcomes.

D. Special Student Populations

Describe the implementation of the school's programs and services for special student populations, including: 1) students with disabilities; 2) students who are English Language Learners; 3) students who are at-risk of academic failure; and, 4) students who are academically advanced or gifted. Please discuss programs and services separately for each special student population. Information for each group of students should demonstrate how these special student populations will be provided with full and meaningful access to participate and progress in the general educational curriculum, and how the classroom environment and instructional approach will be responsive to the needs of these groups of students.

Describe the process the school uses to identify students with potential disabilities. The school may wish to provide examples of strategies aligned with each of the three levels within Response to Intervention (RTI). The school should discuss how RTI (or a research-based equivalent) efforts will be implemented and monitored. Include information about the school's planned methods and strategies for serving students with disabilities in compliance with all federal laws and regulations in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

Evaluation Criteria: Reviewers will look for processes and procedures that the proposed school will employ to identify, assess, and serve each special student populations. Reviewers will look for a general education classroom environment which is responsive to unique needs and how the proposed school will provide all students with meaningful access to participate and progress in the general education curriculum. Reviewers will look for demonstrated capacity for the education of special student populations, a commitment to serving the needs of special populations, and knowledge of the school's obligations under state and federal law. Reviewers will also evaluate the school's understanding of and ability to implement efforts within the identified intervention construct and will look for specific methods that will be used to monitor and effectively implement this process.

E. School Culture and Climate

Describe the strategies the school employs to develop and sustain a safe and orderly school climate that supports the achievement of the proposed outcomes. Explain the school's approach to student behavior management and discipline for both the general student population and for students with special needs. Explain how the school encourages family involvement and communication to support student learning, and how it measures satisfaction with the school's climate. Explain the extra-curricular activities (e.g., intramurals, student council, and clubs) within the school. Describe the school's suspension/expulsion policy.

Evaluation Criteria: Reviewers will look at the methods by which the school will evaluate that the environment is safe and conducive to learning. Reviewers will look for means by which parents are incorporated into the school culture and the extra-curricular activities that promote a healthy culture. Reviewers will look to ensure that the school can adequately handle student discipline.

F. Proposed Outcomes

The proposed outcomes in this section should be derived directly from the needs assessment and plans outlined in the sections above. Community school accountability is based largely on academic outcomes but also on unique goals developed by each school that are tied to its mission, vision, and values. What mission-specific metrics do you believe effectively evaluate the achievement of the school's mission? What data will the school report to the sponsor and governing authority to prove that the needs of the students are being met? This information will provide the Council with an understanding of what standards the school believes best supports the evaluation of the school's proposed educational plan. Information in this section should also discuss how the governing authority and management team will monitor these goals.

Evaluation Criteria: Reviewers will look for a commitment to accountability for results and evidence of the competence to achieve those results. Reviewers will also look for goals that are clear, measurable, and data-driven as well as goals that are implemented through the school's educational program. For existing models, please feel free to attach evidence of successful outcomes within your existing portfolio of schools. Reviewers will look to ensure that the school consistently monitors and reports data to the sponsor and governing authority.

G. Outcome Support Teams

Successful school leadership often involves the use of multiple school-based teams and processes (e.g., the Ohio Improvement Process encourages the use of Community School Leadership Teams; multiple best practices include the use of Response to Intervention Teams, Student Behavior Intervention Teams, and Transformation Teams). Define which teams will be used by the proposed school and what role they will play in the implementation of the Educational Plan and the achievement of goals defined in the above "Proposed Outcomes." (You may choose to focus on how proposed teams will function, including frequency of meetings, methods used to support classroom instruction and ways in which data will be used to guide classroom instruction and ensure mastery of academic content standards.)

Evaluation Criteria: *Reviewers will seek research-based team implementation correlated with proposed outcomes, school culture, instructional practices, and the mission and vision. Reviewers will look for evidence of self-monitoring teams with a checks-and-balances system of schoolwide accountability and growth-mindset for students and staff. Reviewers will also look for how these teams will report out and maintain accountability to the sponsor, governing authority, and management organization regarding the proposed outcomes.*

School Governing Authority

A. Governance

Please provide a copy of the school's articles of incorporation as a public benefit corporation, along with corresponding bylaws as filed with the Ohio Secretary of State's office. Applicants are required to have at least three governing authority members when submitting the application. If a Preliminary Agreement is issued, five governing authority members are required prior to the adoption of the charter contract. In addition to providing a resume and Ohio and Federal background checks for each member of the school's governing authority, please outline the role the governing authority sees for itself as it relates to the governance of the school.

Evaluation Criteria: *Reviewers will look for by-laws which describe a governance structure that is distinct from the management of the school. Being incorporated as a public benefit corporation is required and reviewers will look for resumes and background checks for at least three individuals serving on the governing authority.*

Organizational Capacity

A. Operations

Describe the organizational structure of the proposed school and provide an organizational chart. Provide the staffing plan for the school, including the recruitment, selection, training, and retention of the school leader, teachers, and other key personnel. Please expand on any considerations based on need, capacity, and financial and human resources. Describe the roles and responsibilities of the school leader and other key personnel. If the school leader is not yet selected, discuss the criteria for selection of a high-quality leader and time frame for hiring. Describe what role an Operator (Education Management Organization) (if appropriate) will play in the ongoing support of school leadership and operations of the school. Describe in detail the services the Operator will provide to the school (e.g., curriculum, special education services, start-up capital, staffing and teachers).

Evaluation Criteria: *Reviewers will look for an operator that has capacity and provides support, services and tools to the school staff and teachers. Reviewers will look for an organizational plan for the school, including a clear delineation of management and governance.*

B. Enrollment and Marketing

Summarize the recruitment process and marketing plan. If you are hiring a vendor or outsourcing recruitment efforts, please provide details as to how this will be implemented, along with a timeline of proposed events. Explain the school's admission policy.

Indicate the number of students projected to be enrolled the first year, as well as during years 2-5, and the proposed grade levels to be served each year. Explain in detail your rationale for selecting this particular school size and provide specific evidence that the demand for your school is sufficient to sustain projected enrollment figures. If a survey is conducted to assess the demand for the school, please include a summary of survey results, the survey itself, and response rate figures.

Evaluation Criteria: Reviewers will look for an enrollment and marketing plan that targets the identified community and is time sensitive and realistic. A description of the school's admission policy will also be reviewed.

Financial Viability

A. Budget

Provide the school's estimated costs and revenues from the school's pre-operational start-up phase through the first year of operation, including assumptions behind revenue and expenditure projections. Budget assumptions should be detailed and explain the rationale for each line item within the budget (e.g., details regarding the number and average teacher and staff salary, costs for materials and supplies, lease and/or construction costs, technology). Provide the name of your school's fiscal officer. If a fiscal officer has not been secured, list candidates being considered and a deadline date for hiring. Also, if an EMO or third party are providing a loan to cover up-front costs, please describe how these costs will be charged back to (and paid by) the school. How much debt is anticipated for the school and what are the payment terms? What is the management fee? Please describe any fundraising efforts that have been completed or are anticipated in support of the school.

The proposed budget should include only those grants or in-kind donations which have already been firmly committed. A letter of commitment from funders must be included in the attachments for any fundraising revenue. If you are planning to pursue certain grants or donations, but have not yet received a commitment for these contributions, do not include them in your budget – instead, provide a description of these potential contributions in your narrative (including the source, estimated amount of contribution and expected date of receipt, if known). The budget should align with the overall application including the staffing plan.

Evaluation Criteria: Reviewers will look for a budget plan that utilizes the current school funding model and state per-pupil allocation formula, strategies to ensure the school's financial viability, and detail regarding supplemental revenue. Reviewers will also look for a budget plan that makes the most of limited funds and ensures that public funds will be used effectively and responsibly. Reviewers will look to see that the school will be fiscally sustainable by year four.

Existing Design Applicants (not applicable if you have never opened a school)

An existing design applicant is one that is proposing to a) contract with an Operator (Educational Management Organization), or b) replicate an existing high-quality school model.

In the case of existing design applicants, the Council will conduct due diligence to review and evaluate the effectiveness of the Operator or of the high-quality model in existing schools and the capacity of the applicant and its partners to replicate the design as indicated in the application. The review and evaluation, which may include research, interviews and visits to existing schools, will examine a range of factors, such as whether the existing school has been proven effective. The applicant must provide evidence that the existing design has been successful and demonstrates a direct relationship between program elements and student achievement. The applicant must also demonstrate that the proposed Operator has a track record of success.

Include detailed answers to the following questions as an attachment to the New School Application. As a reminder, this attachment will not count toward the page limit. All answers must include information for replication schools in your organization and should reflect the last three consecutive years of data.

A. Academic Program

- Provide evidence that the schools implementing the program are making academic achievement and growth progress as measured by their states' systems of accountability.
- How are the schools that have implemented the proposed design meeting the mission-related goals they have established?
- What are attendance and graduation rates of the schools?

B. Organizational Capacity and Compliance

- What are the student and staff retention rates for each school?
- What is the name and contact information of your current authorizer/sponsor?
- Please submit compliance reports from your current authorizer/sponsor for the last three school years.
- Do any schools have existing issues related to legal compliance? (For example, corrective action, probation, or suspension of operations (or threatened) by the authorizer/sponsor for deficiencies or noncompliance. If so, please explain and note how it was remedied.)
- Have any charter contracts been terminated, revoked, or non-renewed? If yes, please detail the reasons.
- Have any management agreements been terminated or non-renewed? Please list reasons for any positive answers under this section.
- What is the school's (or Operator's) process for attracting and retaining high quality employees?
- What are the frequency and results of parent satisfaction surveys?

C. Financial Viability

- Are any schools on financial probation, or have they filed for bankruptcy?
- What are the ending fiscal year net assets of all schools for the past three years?
- What are the schools' student enrollment targets for the past three years?
- For the last three school years, please submit all monthly and year-end financial statements and audit reports.

D. Capacity to Replicate

- What are your plans to replicate this model for the upcoming school year?
- What resources exist which will support replication?
- Please provide contact information for at least two of your existing sponsors/authorizers.

E. Management Partnerships

- Provide a copy of the proposed or a current management agreement.

Evaluation Criteria: Reviewers will look for an existing design applicant that has a track record of academic, organizational, and financial success as evidenced by data from the operator's report card, financial documents, sponsor interviews, compliance, parent satisfaction, and student/staff retention.

NEW SCHOOL APPLICATION EVALUATION RUBRIC

Responses provided by the applicant, along with the corresponding documentation or attachments, are evaluated by the New School Development Team according to the scoring rubric outlined below. The New School Development Team will issue a score for each of the eligible sections based on the quality of the information provided by the applicant. The scores from each section will be weighted equally; however, any application where an entire section “Falls Far Below Standards” or any application receiving two or more “Falls Far Below Standards” in any two criteria will be rejected.

The scoring rubric is as follows:

Exceeds Standards (3 Points): Meeting the targets for this rating category implies that the application exceeds expectations and has clearly demonstrated the capacity for developing and operating a successful community school. Schools repeatedly receiving this rating warrant consideration for the New School Development Team to encourage approval of the application. Schools repeatedly receiving this rating have clearly outlined expectations of the component questions and have exceeded review criteria established for the standard.

Meets Standards (2 Points): The targets for this rating category set the minimum expectations for a community school that is likely to be successful. Schools repeatedly earning this rating or higher are likely to perform well and are on solid ground for the New School Development Team to consider approval of the application. Schools repeatedly receiving this rating or higher have outlined expectations of the component questions and have met review criteria established for the standard.

Does Not Meet Standards (1 Point): Schools in this rating category have failed to adequately address the component questions and/or meet the established review criteria. Schools repeatedly achieving this rating are more likely to fail to meet minimum expectations for performance. Schools that fall into this category have failed to answer the component questions sufficiently and will not be approved.

Falls Far Below Standards (0 Points): Schools that fall into this rating category are evaluated as highly likely to perform well below the sponsor’s expectations and will not be approved. Schools that fall into this category have not addressed the component questions sufficiently and have failed to meet minimum expectations set by the review criteria.



NEW SCHOOL APPLICATION SCORING SUMMARY

School Name

Needs Assessment

A. Need _____

Mission, Vision, and Core Values

A. Mission _____

B. Vision _____

C. Core Values _____

Educational Plan

A. Curricular Elements _____

B. Instructional Practices _____

C. Assessment _____

D. Special Student Populations _____

E. School Culture and Climate _____

F. Proposed Outcomes _____

G. Outcome Support Teams _____

School Governing Authority

A. Governance _____

Organizational Viability and Effectiveness

A. Operations _____

B. Enrollment and Marketing _____

Financial Viability

A. Budget _____

Existing Design Applicant Data (if applicable)

A. All Data _____

GRAND TOTAL

Did the application receive at least 75% of possible points?

Yes, continue to interview and possible
_____ recommendation to Committee

No, do not continue or recommend partnership
