



Technical Assistance Session New Charter School Applicants November 19, 2020



DDOE Mission

To empower every learner with the highest quality education through shared leadership, innovative practices and exemplary services.



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Welcome and Introductions

Provide a brief statement on why you believe your proposed school will improve student learning and provide a different, innovative or proven school environment.



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Agenda

- I. Welcome and Introductions
- II. Technical Assistance Session Goals
- III. Review Critical Areas of Charter School Development
- IV. Questions
- V. Resources



Session Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will:

1. Understand critical refinements to enhance their draft applications.
2. Receive answers to specific questions about the application and the review process.



What Delaware Needs



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What Delaware Needs Vision & Mission Alignment

“To be effective stewards of the sector, our top priority must be to ensure that charter schools are high-performing, fiscally-responsible options accessible to all families.”

Missouri Charter Public School Association



What Delaware Needs Vision & Mission Alignment

Legislative Intent

Delaware's Charter Schools were created to **improve student learning**; encourage use of different and **innovative or proven school environments** and **teaching and learning methods**; provide parents and students with improved measures of school performance and greater opportunities in choosing public schools within and outside their school districts; and to provide for a well-educated community. – 14 Del. Code, § 501



What Delaware Needs

- Most education systems are not preparing all students for the future demands of college, career, and the global economy.
- The system is particularly broken for low-income students, providing them fewer opportunities and producing weaker results.



Is your plan innovative enough?



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What Delaware Needs Innovation

Innovation

- Does your team understand the needs of your target community?
- Is your proposed educational program truly innovative?
- What will your proposed school offer to students that the current system does not provide currently?
- Does your team have the capacity to structure a high performing organization that others can learn from?



Needs Assessment

Due Diligence Process- is there a documented need for the proposed school in the proposed location?

A needs assessment is “a comprehensive evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of targeted student populations, with the expressed goal of determining how best to build on strengths and improve areas of weakness in order to enhance student learning.” -New York Charter School Center



Roadmap for Charter School Development

Planning Phase: 2 years

1. Exploration Process

- State laws, policy environment
- Assessing the need
- Visit charter schools
- Conduct research
- Community Engagement
- Target community

2. Initial Design Process (3-6 months)

- Engage with community
- Form Core Design Team
- Articulate Initial Vision
- Nonprofit and tax-exempt status
- Initial Plan: Major design areas
- Prospectus for community
- Identify possible facilities
- Identify start-up funding sources



Roadmap for Charter School Development

Planning Phase: 2 years

3. Major Design Areas (6-12 mos)

- Education Plan (Curriculum, Assessment, etc.)
- Organization Plan (Governing Body, Board Composition, etc.)
- Business Plan (Budget, Financial Management, etc.)

4. Applying for the Charter

- Draft
- Review, Review, Review



Roadmap for High Quality Charter School Development

5. DOE Review Process (4 months)

- Charter School Accountability Committee Meetings
- Public Hearings

6. Pre-Operations/Start-up (18 Months)

- Student Recruitment
Recruit & hire staff
- Transition Founding Board to Governing Board
- Board Governance Training
- Facility



Critical Areas of the Application



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Innovative Educational Program

What is the innovation?

*An **Innovative School** is a public **school** that approaches education from a new perspective. Although there are many types of **Innovative Schools**, they all share a set of common characteristics: **Bold, creative and innovative** educational ideas. ... High level of educational experimentation.*

– Washington State



Governance Plan

What is the innovation?

- Principles of board effectiveness (board training)
- Board recruitment (expertise and diversity)
- Beacons of uncompromising **Integrity**
- Policy making and oversight (e.g. bylaws)



Staffing Plan

What is the innovation?

- Leadership
- Staff recruitment and selection
- Teacher certification and qualifications
- Professional Development
- Staff evaluations



Raising Student Achievement

What is the innovation?

- Improved Performance Measures
- Do you understand the State Assessment and Accountability system?
- What best practices have worked elsewhere? (research)



Special Education Plan

What is the innovation?

- Meeting the needs of special populations (at-risk, English Learners, etc.)
- Exceed compliance and minimum requirements
- Hire a strong special education staff
- Charters cannot exclude or discriminate against students in need of special education services.



Student Recruitment

What is the innovation?

- Marketing/Advertising – what will attract families to your school?
- Understand the needs of your target population



School Culture & Climate

What is the innovation?

- A positive, focused school culture will shape your charter school and provide a foundation upon which learning can occur.
- Parents want safety first.
- Schools are sometimes located in ill-communities



Operations and Systems

What is the innovation?

- Facilities
- Transportation
- Food Service
- Security



Budget and Finance

What is the innovation?

- Unit Count System
- Delaware systems (e.g. First State Financials, Pension system, etc.)
- Start-up funding



Community Engagement

What is the innovation?

- The needs of today's students are beyond the capacities of many schools (opioid crisis, poverty, trauma)
- Build and demonstrate community support (social media presence)



Charter School Review Process

The review process is designed to assess:

- **Need – knowledge of target community**
- **Capacity**
- **Readiness**
- **Benefits to students, families, and community**



Questions



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Application Resources



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Resources

- Highly Effective Charter School Leaders
- Delaware Charter School Network
- National Charter School Resource Center
- National Alliance for Public Charter Schools
- Community Partners (Library, Health, Colleges, DHSS, DPH, etc.)
- Charter School Office



Resources

Charter School Office
Delaware Department of Education

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