

Evaluation Form for the
Nevada State Public
Charter School Authority
Call for Quality Charter
Schools
Winter Cycle—All Tracks



Reviewer Name:	
Application Reviewed:	
Date:	

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Evaluation Overview and Timeline

The Evaluation Form is the essential tool for application evaluators and will be completed individually by each evaluator. It contains criteria for each section of the proposal. The evaluators present both ratings on a scale and narrative analysis of each subsection of the application. Throughout the process, evaluators will update their Forms to include additional information (due diligence, capacity interview) as it is presented. Within each section and subsection, specific criteria define the expectations for a response that “Meets the Standard.” An applicant must “Meet the Standard” in all four main portions (Meeting the Need, Finance Plan, etc.) by the end of the evaluation process to be recommended for authorization. In general, the following definitions guide evaluator ratings:

Rating	Characteristics
Meets the Standard	The response reflects a thorough understanding of key issues. It addresses the topic with specific and accurate information that shows thorough preparation; presents a clear, realistic picture of how the school expects to operate; and inspires confidence in the applicant’s capacity to carry out the plan effectively in a way which will result in a 4- or 5-star school.
Approaches the Standard	The response meets the criteria in many respects but lacks detail and/or requires additional information in one or more areas.
Does Not Meet the Standard	The response is undeveloped or incomplete; demonstrates lack of preparation; or otherwise raises substantial concerns about the viability of the plan or the applicant’s ability to carry it out.

In addition to meeting the criteria that are specific to that section, each part of the proposal should align with the overall mission, academic program, budget, and other sections of the application.

Instructions for Evaluators

1. Fill in your name, the name of the applicant group, and the name of the proposed school. Click once on the grey boxes to begin typing.
2. Complete the summary page LAST. Type a summary of your analysis of each section into the box provided, it will expand as needed. This should be a paragraph outlining the overall strengths or weaknesses of the application section as a whole. It should summarize your findings, and should not be simply cut and pasted from your subsection analysis.
3. For each subsection of the application, you should do the following during your initial individual analysis of the proposal:
 - a. Select a rating for that subsection. Click once on the gray box to select. If you are not able to check the box, please **HIGHLIGHT your selection.**
 - b. Use the “Strengths” area to identify notable positive aspects of the response. Be sure to include page references where applicable.
 - c. Use the “Weaknesses” area to identify weaknesses. Again, reference relevant page numbers.
 - d. Use the “Clarifying Questions” area to present key questions which need to be addressed and areas that need to be clarified or confirmed in writing.
4. Save the document (as a PDF) using this naming convention: SPCSA Eval_School Name_YOUR LAST NAME.pdf (For example, for the request for Sagebrush Charter Schools by Patrick, the file name would be: SPCSA Eval_Sagebrush_GAVIN.doc.) Upload your document to Dropbox using the instructions provided.
5. Following the capacity interview you should do the following:
 - a. Select a final rating for that section. Click once on the gray box to select. If you are not able to check the box, please **HIGHLIGHT your selection.**
 - b. Use the “Interview Notes” area to present key information discovered or confirmed during the capacity interview. You are not required to type directly into the form during the interview but may do so if you prefer.
 - c. Use the “Revised Analysis” area to provide your final evaluation of that subsection based on the complete application record (proposal, due diligence if applicable, followup questions and clarifications, capacity interview). This analysis should support the final rating you select.
 - d. Revise your summary page as needed.
6. Save the revised document (as a PDF) using this naming convention: SPCSA Eval FINAL_School Name_YOUR LAST NAME.pdf (For example, for the evaluation of Sagebrush Charter Schools by Danny, the file name would be: SPCSA Eval FINAL_Sagebrush_PELTIER.doc.) Upload your document to Dropbox using the “Individual Evaluation Form: Final” task that is provided.
7. **Please ensure that all feedback and commentary are in complete sentences. Page numbers and location on the page must be cited in the text, e.g., “In the third paragraph on page 35...”**

Meeting the Need

Targeted Plan

A strong response will have the following characteristics:

- Specifically identifies a target community within the district by geography (e.g. school zones) and/or educationally disadvantaged status, as that term is described in federal law
- Clear and compelling rationale for the selected community based on academic need
- Demonstrated commitment to serving the target population, i.e. a cross section of the local zoned school population or specific educationally disadvantaged populations
- Articulate explanation of how the proposed model meets community academic needs
- Clear explanation of how the model and commitment to serve align with the mission and vision of the SPCSA.

The Applicant’s Response:

Meets the Standard	Approaches the Standard	Does Not Meet the Standard
Strengths of the Applicant’s Response: •		
Weaknesses of the Applicant’s Response: •		
Clarifying Questions: •		

Parent and Community Involvement

A strong response will have the following characteristics:

- Demonstrates clear evidence of the involvement of parents, neighborhood, and/or community members representative of target population in the development of the plan
- Outlines plan to effectively engage parents, community members, and other neighborhood partners from the time that the operator is approved (e.g., conducting home visits, community meetings, etc.)
- Incorporates a feedback loop to surface the priorities and concerns of parents and the broader school community
- Includes plan to incorporate parents into the life of the school, once open (e.g., parent advisory council, student placement, trainings, communications, volunteers, etc.)
- Includes plan to incorporate community into the life of the school (e.g., providing resources, programs, volunteers, etc.)
- Identifies specific partnerships which are clearly relevant to the needs of the target population. Partnerships are evidenced by specific letters of commitment outlining the accountabilities of both parties and clear, measurable, time-specific deliverables from the partner which are clearly relevant to the needs of the target population.

The Applicant’s Response:

Meets the Standard	Approaches the Standard	Does Not Meet the Standard
Strengths of the Applicant’s Response:		
•		
Weaknesses of the Applicant’s Response:		
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Clarifying Questions:		
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Academic Plan

Mission and Vision

A strong response will have the following characteristics:

- The mission is clear, concise, compelling, and measurable
- The mission statement defines the purpose and specialized focus of the school to its stakeholders and the public.
- The mission speaks to the value of the school, based on its own merit, and communicates the applicant group’s core beliefs and values about education.
- The mission indicates the key design elements proposed to achieve outcomes.
- The mission is consistent with high academic standards and student success.
- The mission is reflected throughout all sections of the application.
- The mission encompasses the whole student (e.g., personal, social, emotional, intellectual, life skills, safety and security)
- The vision provides a coherent description of what the school will look like when it is achieving its mission
- The vision is aligned to the mission and critical to the school’s success
- Explicitly identifies at least one and ideally all statutory purposes, demonstrates how they clearly aligned to the mission and vision and explains how the school fulfills each selected purpose:
 - Improving the academic achievement of pupils;
 - Encouraging the use of effective and innovative methods of teaching;
 - Providing an accurate measurement of the educational achievement of pupils;
 - Establishing accountability and transparency of public schools;
 - Providing a method for public schools to measure achievement based upon the performance of the schools; and
 - Creating new professional opportunities for teachers.

The Applicant’s Response:

Meets the Standard	Approaches the Standard	Does Not Meet the Standard
Strengths of the Applicant’s Response: •		
Weaknesses of the Applicant’s Response: •		
Clarifying Questions: •		

Transformational Change

A strong response will have the following characteristics:

- Compelling, well-articulated theory of change and clear educational strategy aligned to the mission and critical to the schools’ success
- Alignment with the mission of the SPCSA to ensure a quality public school choice for every child by sponsoring schools that achieve double digit gains and are on track to be in the top 25% of Nevada schools
- Educational model designed to drive significant academic improvement for all students, in line with SPCSA’s goal of double-digit gains annually across all subgroups
- Supported by valid research and compelling evidence of success in schools implementing similar programs serving a similar target population
- Clear and specific description of methodology for faithfully implementing the program in a manner likely to result in replication of previous success in other schools
- Specificity over generalities and laundry lists of programs, activities, and interventions.
- Articulation of clear and specific strategies and activities that explicitly identify the responsible parties, target population, actions, timelines, context, delivery methods, and rationale (who/what/where/when/how/why).

The Applicant’s Response:

Meets the Standard	Approaches the Standard	Does Not Meet the Standard
Strengths of the Applicant’s Response:		
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Weaknesses of the Applicant’s Response:		
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Clarifying Questions:		
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Curriculum and Instructional Design

A strong response will have the following characteristics:

- A clear explanation, supported by evidence, demonstrating how the school’s academic program aligns to the Nevada Academic Content Standards, including both the Common Core Academic Standards and the Next Generation Science Standards and the school teaches all required subjects at each grade level:
- English, including reading, composition and writing;
- Mathematics;
- Science; and
- Social studies, including history, geography, economics and government;
- High school programs must also include
 - Four units of credit in English;
 - Four units of credit in mathematics, including, without limitation, Algebra I and geometry, or an equivalent course of study that integrates Algebra I and geometry;
 - Three units of credit in science, including two laboratory courses; and
 - Three units of credit in social studies, including, without limitation:
 - American government;
 - American history; and
 - World history or geography
 - The arts;
 - Computer education and technology;
 - Health; and
 - Physical education
- Strategies well suited to the student population
- Instructional programs are rigorous
- Instructional programs offer a continuum of services to students through a tiered system of interventions, ensuring that all students are able to build the knowledge base necessary to access rigorous instruction
- Instructional programs identify and consider personal/social and other life skills for personalized planning, instructional delivery, and support services for all students, as well as utilization of student’s Individualized Learning Plans.
- Remediation for students in need of additional support
- Acceleration of gifted learners are built into the academic program
- Requirements for matriculation are clearly defined and plans to inform all stakeholders are clear

The Applicant's Response:

Meets the Standard	Approaches the Standard	Does Not Meet the Standard
Strengths of the Applicant's Response: <ul style="list-style-type: none">•		
Weaknesses of the Applicant's Response: <ul style="list-style-type: none">•		
Clarifying Questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">•		

Distance Education Requirements (Proposals Including Distance Education Only)

A strong response will have the following characteristics:

- An acknowledgement that a charter school that wishes to provide distance education (online, virtual, cyber, etc.) courses and/or programs (NRS 388.820- 388.874 and NAC 388.800-388.860) must submit a distance education application to the Nevada Department of Education prior to or simultaneous with submission of the charter application.
- An acknowledgement that the distance education application must also be approved by the SPCSA through the pre-opening requirements.
- A detailed plan on how student coursework will be monitored
- A detailed plan on how the school will ensure student participation in assessments
- A plan that shows how the school will communicate with students and parents about the how's and when's of the tests
- A specific plan for where the school will administer state and Authority-mandated assessments in a proctored environment outside of the home and how it will ensure student access and participation
- A plan for ongoing communication with parents, parent -teacher conferences, daily/weekly emails with regards to coursework, etc.

The Applicant's Response:

Meets the Standard	Approaches the Standard	Does Not Meet the Standard
Strengths of the Applicant's Response:		
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Weaknesses of the Applicant's Response:		
•		
Clarifying Questions:		
•		

Pre-K Requirements (Proposals Including Pre-K Only)

A strong response will have the following characteristics:

- Whether the school plans to offer Pre-K in it's opening year or any other year
- How the program will be marketed and funded, including:
 - An acknowledgement that a charter school that wishes to offer a federal pre-K expansion grant-funded Pre-K program must research the program, request and eligibility determination, and receive approval prior to marketing the program to families. Applicants must acknowledge that funding is limited and competitive and there is no guarantee of availability or award for the school or the target community.
 - Identification of the federal Pre-K expansion grant criteria and how the school plans to meet them
 - An acknowledgement that a charter school that wishes to offer a state-funded Pre-K program must independently research the program and apply to and receive approval from the Nevada Department of Education prior to marketing the program to families.
 - Identification of state Pre-K funding criteria and how the school plans to meet them
 - An acknowledgement that a charter school that wishes to offer a tuition-funded Pre-K program cannot give admissions preference to students who have paid tuition to the school or an affiliated Pre-K program prior to applying for admission.
- An explanation of how the school plans to communicate with parents about enrollment preference restrictions
- A clear discussion of how the school plans to incorporate its mission and vision within the Pre-K program and how it will reconcile any conflicts of tensions between its Kindergarten and elementary school programs and any licensure or program requirements associated with a particular revenue stream.

The Applicant's Response:

Meets the Standard	Approaches the Standard	Does Not Meet the Standard
Strengths of the Applicant's Response: •		
Weaknesses of the Applicant's Response: •		
Clarifying Questions: •		

High School Graduation Requirements (Proposals Including Grades 9 – 12 Only)

A strong response will have the following characteristics:

- School plans explicitly demonstrate clear evidence of alignment with Nevada Graduation Requirements and ensure college and career readiness
- Structures are in place to support students at risk of dropping out, including those who are overage for grade, those needing to access credit recovery options, and those performing significantly below grade level
- Exit standards for students are clearly defined and measurable, demonstrating high expectations for all students

The Applicant’s Response:

Meets the Standard	Approaches the Standard	Does Not Meet the Standard
Strengths of the Applicant’s Response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 		
Weaknesses of the Applicant’s Response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 		
Clarifying Questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 		

Driving for Results

A strong response will have the following characteristics:

- There is a clear understanding of the obligation to participate in the statewide and Authority systems of assessment and accountability and an explicit commitment to full participation in all federal, state, and Authority mandated assessments and measurements which are currently in effect or may be adopted in the future, including any updates to the NSPF or the SPCSA Performance Framework (e.g. state-mandated High School End of Course Examinations; SPCSA parallel assessments such as ACT Aspire, etc.)
- There is an explicit commitment to and detailed plan for investing parents and students in full participation in all federal, state, Authority, and school-mandated assessments at all stages of the school’s development, including sharing information on the school’s assessment program on the school website and marketing materials to educate future governing body members, leadership, faculty, staff, parents, students, and the community about the school’s dedication to measurement, transparency, and accountability
- There is a clear delineation between assessments utilized for internal monitoring by the governing body, staff, and leadership and those which are sufficiently rigorous, valid, and reliable to be presented to the Authority, the state, parents, and the general public
- Mission-specific goals explicitly complement or supplement, but do not replace, the SPCSA’s performance standards with school-specific, mission- driven academic, financial, or organizational goals.
 - All such indicators, measures, and metrics are rigorous, valid, and reliable.
 - All proposed data sources are objectively verifiable and there is an explicit commitment to school-funded external validation and analysis by an Authority-selected vendor for any assessment not supported by the Authority.
- The school’s internal, leading indicator goals clearly align to the Nevada School Performance Framework and the Authority Performance Framework,
- Internal goals allow for the evaluation of mission attainment, framework for teaching and learning, program design evaluation
- Internal and mission-specific framework goals are SMART: goals and objectives are specific, measurable, ambitious and attainable, relevant, and time bound
- There is a clear process for setting, monitoring and/or revising internal leading indicator academic goals
- Internal and mission-specific academic goals set high standards for student learning and demonstrate alignment with Nevada Standards
- Internal assessment selections will provide sufficiently rich data for evaluation of the education program AND fully align with State assessments, State Standards, and the curriculum as presented
- The assessment plan is sufficiently detailed to demonstrate collection and analysis of individual student, student cohorts, school level, and network- level performance over time (interim, annual, year over year), including a clear process for setting and monitoring ambitious academic goals
- Demonstrates the validity and reliability of any internal non-standardized assessments, as well as how these assessments are aligned with the school design and high expectations
- Articulates process for utilizing data to support instruction and providing adequate training to teachers and school leaders
- Sound plan for measuring and reporting academic performance and progress of students for both individual schools and the network (if applicable)

- Explains how both individual schools and the network staff will use assessment data to drive key decisions aimed at improving academic outcomes (if applicable)
- Commitment to using state/ Authority assessments to track progress on state-mandated school improvement plans and Federal programs to ensure alignment between improvement efforts, federal resources, and the charter contract.

The Applicant's Response:

Meets the Standard	Approaches the Standard	Does Not Meet the Standard
Strengths of the Applicant's Response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 		
Weaknesses of the Applicant's Response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 		
Clarifying Questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 		

At-Risk Students and Special Populations

A strong response will have the following characteristics:

- Clear process for identifying at-risk students, including those with academic and behavioral needs
- Provides clear and appropriate delineation within the state-mandated Response to Intervention model
- Team/operator has a demonstrated track record of success serving a wide range of students with disabilities (mild, moderate, and severe)
- Processes for identifying students with disabilities are well-defined, including administration of placement assessments and communications to parents and teachers
- Special education staffing aligns with qualifications and student-teacher ratios required in statute:
 - For example 22:1 for students with severe disabilities
 - Full Nevada licensure for all special education teachers/coordinators (no waivers or substitutes)
- Processes for identifying English Language Learners are well-defined, including administration of placement assessments and communications to parents and teachers
- ELL staffing aligns with qualifications required in statute:
 - Full Nevada licensure for all ELL teachers/coordinators (no waivers or substitutes)
- Processes for identifying homeless students are well-defined, including administration of placement assessments and communications to parents and teachers
- Describes the specific services that will be provided for students within and outside the classroom, including curriculum and instruction and exposure to co-teaching
- Devotes adequate resources and staff to meeting the needs of all students
- Provides a detailed plan for appropriate professional development to teachers and staff to ensure they can support and accelerate the learning of at-risk and special population students which is aligned to the budget and overall PD plan
- Clearly demonstrates deep understanding of Nevada and federal laws and regulations governing services for students with disabilities
- Ensures that the rights of students with disabilities are protected with regard to discipline
- Articulates requirements and processes for monitoring services to students in need and plans to exit students who attain sufficient progress
- Outlines plans to promote parent participation among parents of students with disabilities and English Language Learners
- Plan to provide timely support for homeless students and families is sufficient and aligned with SPCSA policies and state law and regulation for students in transition

The Applicant's Response:

Meets the Standard	Approaches the Standard	Does Not Meet the Standard
Strengths of the Applicant's Response: <ul style="list-style-type: none">•		
Weaknesses of the Applicant's Response: <ul style="list-style-type: none">•		
Clarifying Questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">•		

School Structure: Culture

A strong response will have the following characteristics:

- Appropriate and effective strategies to support a school climate that will allow for fulfillment of educational goals
- Describes a concrete plan for norming social/cultural expectations at the start of each semester as well as for students who enter mid-semester
- Plan to establish a culture of high expectations with students/families and teachers/staff and promote positive behavior
- Well-defined goals around school culture and plans to monitor progress
- Research-based strategies to support students' social and emotional needs
- Age-appropriate strategies to support students' social and emotional needs

The Applicant's Response:

Meets the Standard	Approaches the Standard	Does Not Meet the Standard
Strengths of the Applicant's Response:		
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Weaknesses of the Applicant's Response:		
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Clarifying Questions:		
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School Structure: Student Discipline

A strong response will have the following characteristics:

- Presents sound policies for student discipline, suspension, and expulsion including procedures for due process—policies that contain artifacts or information from other states, districts, or other charter schools without will be deemed unresponsive
- Presents sound policies for student attendance and truancy including procedures for due process that comply with state law and regulation and are customized to the charter school—policies that contain artifacts or information from other states, districts, or other charter schools without will be deemed unresponsive
- Clear designation of staff responsible for implementing the discipline plan, including maintenance of student records and data
- A plan to ensure that vulnerable student populations are not disproportionately impacted by discipline policies
- Goals for student behavior are clear and measurable; there is a plan, and designated personnel, for monitoring and reporting related to behavior goals as well as ongoing maintenance of discipline records

The Applicant’s Response:

Meets the Standard	Approaches the Standard	Does Not Meet the Standard
Strengths of the Applicant’s Response:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 		
Weaknesses of the Applicant’s Response:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 		
Clarifying Questions:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 		

School Structure: Calendar and Schedule

A strong response will have the following characteristics:

- Calendar meets or exceeds the minimum of 180 (or equivalent) days of instruction
 - 43,200 minutes of classroom instruction/year for grades K-2 or 54,000 minutes of classroom instruction /year for grades 3-6 or 59,400 minutes of classroom instruction /year for grades 7-12
 - Calendar and schedule support implementation of the academic program
 - Alignment between teacher and student schedules
- Outlines goals for student attendance and plans to monitor and adjust as needed

The Applicant's Response:

Meets the Standard	Approaches the Standard	Does Not Meet the Standard
Strengths of the Applicant's Response:		
•		
Weaknesses of the Applicant's Response:		
•		
Clarifying Questions:		
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A Day in the Life and Scenarios

A strong response will have the following characteristics:

- Scenarios aligned with the key priorities and principles shared in the Academic Plan and overall mission and vision for the school
- Understanding of enrollment processes, including those for students with disabilities
- Well-defined plan to support Ruby in accordance with her IEP and in support of the mission of the organization
- Well-defined plan to support Alejandra in accordance with Federal law and state policy and in support of the mission of the organization
- Demonstrated capacity to utilize data to drive decision making and rapid turnaround

The Applicant’s Response:

Meets the Standard	Approaches the Standard	Does Not Meet the Standard
Strengths of the Applicant’s Response:		
•		
Weaknesses of the Applicant’s Response:		
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Clarifying Questions:		
•		

Operations Plan

Leadership Team

A strong response will have the following characteristics:

- Sensible organizational chart that clearly indicates all positions delineating board and management roles and lines of authority
- Structure demonstrates effective assignment of management roles and distribution of responsibilities for instructional leadership, curriculum, personnel, budgeting, financial management, management of state categorical revenue streams, special education and ELL programming, legal compliance, state reporting, external relations, and any unique, school-specific staffing needs
- Leadership job descriptions present a realistic allocation of duties based on NDE and general state reporting and compliance requirements, including but not limited to student information system management and the duties contained in the Reporting Requirements manual and current NAC and NRS
- Identifies qualifications and competencies of the lead person that align with the school's mission and program and demonstrate capacity to successfully manage the school
- Demonstrates that leaders meet necessary qualifications and competencies
- If identified, school leadership team resumes demonstrate a range of experience including leadership at a high-performing school with management responsibilities, experience establishing a high-performing culture with students and staff, and responsibility for significant student achievement gains with target demographics
 - If the identified school leadership team does not collectively demonstrate the experience and capacity required above, this will be reflected in the recommendation report
- Provides adequate coaching and support for school leadership
- The board can provide evidence that it has built a relationship with one or more stakeholder(s) who contribute(s) in a material, strategic way to ensuring that the school opens and stays open.
- The board articulates a clear, ambitious, data-driven set of standards and criteria that the school leader must satisfy in order to keep the school on track to achieve its vision.
- The board provides logical evidence that the school will achieve its target student outcomes pursuant to the NSPF and the SPCSA Performance Framework outcomes pursuant to the NSPF and the SPCSA Performance Framework if the school leader satisfies the standards set forth by the board.

The Applicant's Response:

Meets the Standard	Approaches the Standard	Does Not Meet the Standard
Strengths of the Applicant's Response: <ul style="list-style-type: none">•		
Weaknesses of the Applicant's Response: <ul style="list-style-type: none">•		
Clarifying Questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">•		

Leadership for Expansion (Experienced Operators Only)

A strong response will have the following characteristics:

- Structure demonstrates effective assignment of management roles and distribution of responsibilities for instructional leadership, curriculum, personnel, budgeting, financial management, management of state categorical revenue streams, special education and ELL programming, legal compliance, state reporting, external relations, and any unique, school-specific staffing needs
- Leadership job descriptions present a realistic allocation of duties based on NDE and general state reporting and compliance requirements, including but not limited to student information system management and the duties contained in the Reporting Requirements manual and current NAC and NRS
- Network-level plan for sourcing and training potential school leaders, including qualifications and competencies aligned with the mission and programs
- Comprehensive leadership recruitment and development plan for sourcing new leadership from outside existing district pipeline; little if any use of passive methods such as internet job boards
- Demonstrates that any identified school leaders meet the qualifications and competencies outlined
- If identified, regional leader candidate meets the qualifications and competencies outlined above and demonstrates experience as a highly effective leader of programs serving similar populations both academically and organizationally
- The board articulates a clear, ambitious, data-driven set of standards and criteria that the regional leader must satisfy in order to keep the network and each school on track to achieve its vision.
- The board provides logical evidence that the network and each school will achieve its target student outcomes pursuant to the NSPF and the SPCSA Performance Framework if the regional leader satisfies the standards set forth by the board.
- If no regional leader candidate is identified, provides job description, including desired competencies, and timeline for selection
 - *If a regional leader is not identified for CMOs holding fewer than 2 charters this will be reflected in the recommendation report*

The Applicant’s Response:

Meets the Standard	Approaches the Standard	Does Not Meet the Standard
Strengths of the Applicant’s Response:		
•		
Weaknesses of the Applicant’s Response:		
•		
Clarifying Questions:		
•		

Staffing

A strong response will have the following characteristics:

- Staffing aligned to the mission, vision, and academic program described
- Appropriately staffed to serve the intended student population
- Staffing plan matches the proposed budget and is explicitly aligned to both budget narrative assumptions and to budget calculations
- Staffing plan aligns with student-teacher ratios specified in application and those required in statute:
 - 21:1 for mandated full-day Kindergarten
 - For example: 22:1 for students with severe disabilities (see NAC 388.150)
- Sound understanding of staffing needs necessary for the new-school(s) proposed

The Applicant's Response:

Meets the Standard	Approaches the Standard	Does Not Meet the Standard
Strengths of the Applicant's Response: <ul style="list-style-type: none">•		
Weaknesses of the Applicant's Response: <ul style="list-style-type: none">•		
Clarifying Questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">•		

Human Resources

A strong response will have the following characteristics:

- Articulates process for recruiting and hiring high quality teachers and leaders
- School staffing structure that ensures high-quality teacher support/development, student/family support, effective school operations, and compliance with all applicable policies and procedures
- School performance management system is likely to retain and promote talented staff, allows for re-structuring and removal of staff as needed, creates opportunities for leadership development, and sets clear expectations
- School performance management system is likely to identify unsatisfactory teacher or leader performance, provides opportunities for improvement, and clearly explains consequences for poor performance
- Essential functions and processes, including background checks, payroll, benefits, and employee relations, are accounted for.

The Applicant’s Response:

Meets the Standard	Approaches the Standard	Does Not Meet the Standard
Strengths of the Applicant’s Response:		
•		
Weaknesses of the Applicant’s Response:		
•		
Clarifying Questions:		
•		

Scale Strategy (Experienced Operators Only)

A strong response will have the following characteristics:

- Adequately developed and staffed appropriately
- Previous scale-up endeavors have been thoughtful and successful (if applicable)
- Includes plan to infuse NV schools with the essential elements of the organization’s model
- Organization has sufficient infrastructure (or plan to develop same) to support the proposed network of schools, including shared services and the costs associated with them
- Clear, appropriate delineation of roles and responsibilities between the management organization and the school sites
- Sensible organization charts clearly indicate lines of authority between the board, network, and schools

The Applicant’s Response:

Meets the Standard	Approaches the Standard	Does Not Meet the Standard
Strengths of the Applicant’s Response:		
•		
Weaknesses of the Applicant’s Response:		
•		
Clarifying Questions:		
•		

Student Recruitment and Enrollment

A strong response will have the following characteristics:

- The enrollment plan reflects an understanding of the Nevada context
- The enrollment plan, including annual growth, is reasonable and supported by a clear rationale
- The enrollment plan addresses lotteries, weighted lotteries, enrollment preferences, student attrition and mandatory backfilling
- The enrollment plan is aligned with the staffing plan and budget
- Articulates aggressive plan for recruiting eligible students to the school and describes specific actionable steps for ensuring the school is fully enrolled
- Includes outreach and recruitment strategies that demonstrates an understanding of the community likely to be served and is likely to allow the school to enroll sufficient numbers of students who are representative of either the surrounding zoned schools or a mission-specific educationally disadvantaged population
 - Mailers sent to all households with children within a 2-mile radius of each facility
 - Minimum 45-day notification period followed by 45-day enrollment period OR a combined 90 day notification and enrollment period
 - Campaign leverages grassroots, data-driven outreach and recruitment strategies versus the internet, social media, or other passive tactics which disproportionately benefit more advantaged populations
- Startup staffing plan and/or recruitment budget assumptions in budget narrative and the budget calculations align with recruitment expenses

The Applicant’s Response:

Meets the Standard	Approaches the Standard	Does Not Meet the Standard
Strengths of the Applicant’s Response:		
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Weaknesses of the Applicant’s Response:		
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Clarifying Questions:		
•		

Board Governance

Strong understanding of the roles and responsibilities of a governing body that is aligned to the school's mission

- Proposed governance structure is likely to ensure effective governance and meaningful oversight of school performance, operations, and financials
- Clear delineation of authority and working relationship between the governing body and school staff
- Demonstrates that the membership of the governing body will contribute the wide range of relevant knowledge, skills, and commitment needed to oversee a successful charter school, including but not limited to educational, financial, accounting, legal, and community experience and expertise, as well as special skill set to reflect school-specific programs, if applicable (e.g., STEM, fine arts, blended learning, alternative programs, etc.)
 - Qualifications and experience levels of governing body members with accounting and finance experience significantly exceeds the statutory minimum requirements and demonstrates proven track record of successful management or oversight of a multi-million-dollar entity
 - Qualifications and experience levels of governing body members with legal experience significantly exceeds the statutory minimum requirements and demonstrates proven track record of successful management or oversight of complex, high risk/high profile legal matters
 - Qualifications and experience levels of governing body members with human resources experience significantly exceeds the statutory minimum requirements and demonstrates proven track record of successful management or oversight of a human resource function or process in a mid- sized to large employer with staffing levels equivalent to those of the school at full capacity
 - Qualifications and experience levels of governing body members who are licensed Nevada educators significantly exceeds the statutory minimum requirements and demonstrates proven track record of significant academic gains in the classroom (for classroom teacher) or school level (for an administrator) in schools which serve populations similar to the target population
- For each of the following areas, at least one board member has the appropriate knowledge to recognize if the school is at risk of failing to achieve its mission because it is going astray – academics, finances, legal issues, management and operations, and community relations.
- Provides plans for meaningful training for board members
- Each board member's described role on the board matches their professional skill set.
- Board training costs are reflected in the budget narrative assumptions and the budget calculations
- Describes the process for resolving student/parent objections and the mechanism for removal of governing body members if needed
- Goals are clear and measurable, and contribute to improved academic outcomes for students and overall advancement of the organization
- The information that the board collects will enable the board to determine if the school leader and any EMO has satisfied each standard.
- The board puts into place a structure that enables it to collect the information it needs.

- There are no prohibited familial relationships between charter holder board members, charter holder board members and staff, or charter holder board members and EMO employees within the third degree of consanguinity or affinity nor any supervisory or business relationships.

The Applicant's Response:

Meets the Standard	Approaches the Standard	Does Not Meet the Standard
Strengths of the Applicant's Response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 		
Weaknesses of the Applicant's Response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 		
Clarifying Questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 		

Incubation Year Development

A strong response will have the following characteristics:

- Provides key planning year milestones for the planning year, as well as concrete actions and accountability, to ensure that the school is ready for a successful launch
- Describes leader development that includes training aligned with incubation year goals (may be either designed by or outsourced by the operator)
- Outlines the function of any employees in Year 0, as well as the funding source for associated compensation
- Startup expenses are reflected in the budget narrative assumptions and the budget calculations

The Applicant's Response:

Meets the Standard	Approaches the Standard	Does Not Meet the Standard
Strengths of the Applicant's Response:		
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Weaknesses of the Applicant's Response:		
•		
Clarifying Questions:		
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EMO Relationships and School Management Contracts (If Applicable)

A strong response will have the following characteristics:

- Clear rationale for selection of Educational Management Organization (EMO)
- Demonstrates capacity and commitment of the governing board to oversee the EMO effectively:
- Plan for board to monitor/evaluate the EMO's performance
- Appropriate internal controls guide the relationship
- Describes how the governing board will ensure fulfillment of performance expectations
- Discloses and addresses any potential conflicts of interest (real or perceived)
- Clearly defined contract terms including: contract duration; roles and responsibilities of the school governing board, school staff, and EMO-specific services and resources to be provided by the EMO; performance evaluation measures and mechanisms; compensation to be paid to the provider; financial controls and oversight; methods of contract oversight and enforcement; investment disclosure; and conditions for renewal and termination of the contract, and alignment of the key performance indicators for the EMO and the hierarchy of sanctions for poor performance with the SPCSA academic, financial, and organizational frameworks and intervention ladder. SB509 requires that a management relationship and a management contract may not jeopardize a school's eligibility to qualify for 501c3 status. The IRS has several criteria which are used by the Authority:
 - A charter school must show that contracts, especially comprehensive management contracts, have been negotiated at arm's length and are for the benefit of the school rather than the service provider. The IRS has determined that boilerplate contracts may be an indicator that the terms of the contract were not the subject of negotiations between independent parties; the applicant must provide clear and compelling evidence that the contract submitted is not a boilerplate contract.
 - Representation of both the school and the management by the same attorney or payment of the school's attorney by the EMO is also an indication of the absence of arm's length negotiations.
 - When reviewing a charter school contract for management services, determine whether the terms are consistent with fulfillment of the school's exempt purposes. Some contract terms may result in a finding that the school is operated for the benefit of the management and preclude exemption. Areas of concern include:
 - A management contract is subordinate to the charter contract. In the event of any conflict between the management contract and the charter contract or current law or regulation, the charter contract, law, or regulation governs.
 - Length of Contract -A contract's length can greatly influence the board's ability to monitor and evaluate the management's performance. There is a need to balance management company's interest in a long-term contract with the school's need for flexibility in changing companies and meeting its fiduciary responsibility and its responsibilities under the charter contract, law, and regulation. Nevada requires that all management contracts must initially be for two years and no management contract can have a term that extends beyond the charter term. A management contract must cease in the event that a school is reconstituted or restarted. Cancellation of a management contract may be a requirement for renewal.
 - Board Policies -The general policies concerning the operation and management of a charter school may not be contracted away. These broad policies help define the school's identity.

- Services - Comprehensive school contract packages place much of the control of the day-to-day operations in the hands of the management. Responsibilities of both the company and the school must be clearly stated in the contract.
- Personnel – Up to 30 percent of principals, teachers and staff may be employed directly by the school or may be employees of the management. However, the existence of an anti-compete clause that prevents a school from hiring the personnel that it has utilized in operating its school (principals, teachers, etc.) for a specific length of time after termination of the management contract is impermissible, as this practice serves the private interests of the management and limits the school's ability to terminate the contract.
- Compensation - management fees must be reasonable and commensurate with the services provided. A management fee structure should not be based on total income (i.e., all fees, grants, contributions, and unusual receipts). Compensation should not be above the market rate generally charged for the service provided. This can be established through evidence of comparative shopping for services. An applicant must provide clear and compelling evidence of due diligence related to the market rates for such services.
- Termination - A service contract should specify the provisions for termination and the procedure for evaluating when the terms of the contract are in default. Termination provisions that unreasonably restrict and limit the options of the school are evidence of private benefit to the service provider. No contract can have an automatic renewal provision. All contract evaluations must be aligned to the elements of the charter contract and performance framework (as amended) and current law and regulation for which the management organization provides supporting services.
- Consider name identification - In many cases, contractual provisions require a charter school to attach the management company's name to the school (i.e., Company X Charter School or Charter School, a Company X affiliate or Y Brand Charter School, where the brand is the property of Company X.) The IRS has determined that "Name branding" has no clear exempt purpose. It links management companies to exempt schools and allows the company to draw goodwill from the relationship. It allows the management companies to build name recognition without additional expense. It also places a contractual burden on the charter schools, making it more difficult for the school to terminate the relationship with the management company. A "name branding" requirement may be an indicator of private benefit depending upon the facts and circumstances. While "name branding" is not specifically forbidden by state law, it will be scrutinized heavily pursuant to SB509 due to the IRS concerns—both to ensure that 501c3 status is not delayed or jeopardized and to ensure that the school that is permitted to use a "name brand" can provide the IRS with evidence that this was scrutinized and determined to be appropriate by a public agency. "Name branding" is more likely to be allowed by the Authority in cases where the established brand name is associated with a proven school model with a lengthy track record of consistent achievement at the highest levels on the statewide accountability systems in each state where it is implemented. It is unlikely to be permitted in cases where the brand and associated model has a limited or mixed track record. A management contract must contain provisions regarding the change of school names which aligns with the charter contract, state law and regulation, and Authority expectations that the school name include the words "Public Charter School" or that the phrase "a public charter school" accompany the school's name on the school's website, signage, letterhead, and marketing materials in a prominent and consistent manner.

- Analyze ancillary services provided - Comprehensive school management companies may provide other services directly or through affiliates. These services may include cash advances for startup funds, capital loans, facility leasing, technology contracting, furnishings, fixtures, textbooks, and just about anything else a charter school may need. The IRS recognizes that such services can be essential for startup schools, but schools should maximize their use of other available funding mechanisms (including the Nevada revolving loan fund) with more competitive interest rates. However, the reviewer should scrutinize agreements and the narrative carefully for clear and compelling evidence to determine whether the terms were the result of arm's length negotiation with an independent charter school board or are, in effect, adhesion contracts with a captive school board.
- There is no provision permitting the EMO to appoint members to the governing body or approve members.
- If school leadership is employed by the EMO, there are provisions in the contract, bylaws, and organizational structure that ensure board approval, provides evidence of EMO's demonstrated track record of success in serving a similar population using the same academic model and its track record in managing financial and organizational outcomes to levels consistent authorizer financial and organizational frameworks expectations.
- There is no provision permitting the EMO to appoint members to the governing body or approve members.
- The contract does not allow for any form of leverage – including but not limited to severance fees and facilities ownership – by which the EMO can ensure renewal of their contract.
- There are no prohibited familial relationships between charter holder board members and EMO employees within the third degree of consanguinity or affinity nor any supervisory or business relationships between charter holder board members or relatives of such and relatives of EMO employees within the third degree of consanguinity or affinity.

The Applicant's Response:

Meets the Standard	Approaches the Standard	Does Not Meet the Standard
Strengths of the Applicant's Response: •		
Weaknesses of the Applicant's Response: •		
Clarifying Questions: •		

Services

A strong response will have the following characteristics:

- Operations plan includes all essential and program-specific non-academic services, including, but not limited to:
 - Supporting transportation, food service, facilities management, nursing, and purchasing processes, and school safety
 - Staff structure/plan is adequate for the proposed school and aligns with the educational program; lines of authority are clear and appropriate
- IT plans should include consideration of:
 - User access control policies, limitation of access rights and procedures for removing access from departing employees
 - Policies for data stored on personal and portable devices aimed at minimizing inadvertent disclosing of information, such as theft or misplaced equipment
 - Strategy for information backups and disaster recovery
 - Intruder prevention strategies, including physical and electronic intrusion
 - Malware and malicious software prevention and removal strategy
 - An effective plan for managing student information, including Infinite Campus, evidence of contact with the vendor to price and arrange for training, and the provision of appropriate on-site on contract staffing and support resources and an information security plan for staff, students, parents, and contractors.
- Alignment of services and staff with budget and academic program
 - Metrics and process for evaluating effectiveness of services

The Applicant’s Response:

Meets the Standard	Approaches the Standard	Does Not Meet the Standard
Strengths of the Applicant’s Response:		
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Weaknesses of the Applicant’s Response:		
•		
Clarifying Questions:		
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Facilities

A strong response will have the following characteristics:

- Identifies a viable educational facility or facilities that meets the needs of the students and accommodates the programmatic and operational needs of the school(s) over the charter term as described throughout the application—OR—discusses in detail the plan and timeline to identify and secure facilities as needed
- Demonstrates knowledge of facilities costs including, as applicable, cost of purchasing, leasing, building, or renovating an educational facility that conforms to applicable health, safety, and occupancy requirements
- If a facility has been identified
 - Designation of the proposed facility and alternatives.
 - Evidence that facility will be appropriate for the educational program of the school and adequate for the projected student enrollment
 - Adequate reflection of the costs associated with the proposed facility in the budget including rent, utilities, insurance and maintenance.
 - Assurance that the proposed facility will be in compliance with applicable building codes, health and safety laws, and with the requirements of the American with Disabilities Act (ADA).
 - A sound plan to identify needed startup costs and renovations as well as the funds and a timeline for the completion of those renovations.
- If a facility has not yet been identified
 - Description of anticipated facilities needs including evidence that the facility will be appropriate for the educational program of the school and adequate for the projected student enrollment
 - Inclusion of costs associated with the anticipated facilities needs in the budget including renovation, rent, utilities, insurance and maintenance.
 - Evidence to indicate that facilities-related budget assumptions are realistic based on anticipated location, size, etc.
 - Assurance that the proposed location will be in compliance with applicable building codes, health and safety laws, and with the requirements of the American with Disabilities Act (ADA).
 - Plan for finding a location including a proposed schedule for doing so.

The Applicant's Response:

Meets the Standard	Approaches the Standard	Does Not Meet the Standard
Strengths of the Applicant's Response: <ul style="list-style-type: none">•		
Weaknesses of the Applicant's Response: <ul style="list-style-type: none">•		
Clarifying Questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">•		

Ongoing Operations

A strong response will have the following characteristics:

- Safety and security plans likely to ensure a safe environment for people and property
- The applicant demonstrates a strong understanding of the core elements of the state-mandated school safety plan and the requirements in statute and regulation
- The applicant does not provide plan details in the publicly available charter application which are considered confidential and exempt from public disclosure by law due to school safety and security considerations
- Provides for adequate insurance coverage that meets the mandatory minimums for each charter school and scales depending on the size the school and number of proposed campuses
 - general liability insurance with a minimum coverage of \$1,000,000
 - including coverage for molestation and sexual abuse
 - broad form policy, with the named insureds as follows:
 - The sponsor of the charter school;
 - All employees of the charter school, including, without limitation, former, present and future employees;
 - Volunteers at the charter school; and
 - Directors of the charter school, including, without limitation, executive directors.
 - Umbrella liability insurance with a minimum coverage of \$3,000,000.
 - Educators’ legal liability insurance with a minimum coverage of \$1,000,000.
 - Employment practices liability insurance with a minimum coverage of \$1,000,000.
 - Employment benefits liability insurance with a minimum coverage of \$1,000,000.
 - Insurance covering errors and omissions of the sponsor and governing body of the charter school with a minimum coverage of \$1,000,000.
 - If applicable, motor vehicle liability insurance with a minimum coverage of \$1,000,000.
 - If applicable, liability insurance for sports and athletic participation with a minimum coverage of \$1,000,000.

The Applicant’s Response:

Meets the Standard	Approaches the Standard	Does Not Meet the Standard
Strengths of the Applicant’s Response:		
•		
Weaknesses of the Applicant’s Response:		
•		
Clarifying Questions:		
•		

Financial Plan

Financial Plan

The SPCSA requires operators to demonstrate budgeting and financial management as well as fiscal responsibility and transparency at each the school and network level (if applicable). Therefore, a strong response will have the following characteristics:

- Budget priorities are aligned with school and expansion plan (if applicable)
- School level budget priorities are consistent with the operator’s model, including but not limited to: educational program, staffing, and facility
- Both school and network level budgets present balanced, realistic, evidence-based revenue and expenditure assumptions (including, if applicable, any plan to incur and repay allowable debt)
- Sufficient detail and specificity of assumptions for ALL budget line items to allow for the assessment of fiscal viability
- Commitment to maintaining the financial viability of each school individually and the network as a whole (if applicable)
- Clear understanding of monthly cash flow for both individual school sites and the network/region as a whole (if applicable)
- Demonstrates sufficient financial health of the network through audited financial documents (if applicable)
- Current ratio of at least 1.1 on a monthly basis for network (if applicable) and school
- The debt-to-asset ratio is less than 0.9.
- Sufficient cash reserves to cover operations for EACH school and for network or regional operations (if applicable), required minimum of 30-days in Year 1 and increasing each year
- Projections are based on accurate, conservative, and legally compliant assumptions.
- All funds from external sources are guaranteed with money in hand or letter of award and grant terms.
- No essential services are funded at amounts that would preclude the applicant group from implementing their plan.
- There is no evidence that the school ever will become insolvent or lack access to the necessary amount of liquidity.
- There are no material findings in the two most recent audited financial statements of CMO/EMO or any CMO and EMO schools (If applicable).
 - Current ratio of at least 1.1 on a monthly basis for network (if applicable) and school level for all first- and second-year EMO/CMO schools and all older schools are either 1.1 or better or is between 1.0 and 1.1 and trending positive from immediately prior year
 - The debt-to-asset ratio is less than 0.9 for all EMO/CMO schools
 - Sufficient cash reserves to cover operations for all EMO/CMO schools—all first- and second-year schools are 30 days + and all older schools are between 30- and 59-days cash on hand and one year trend is positive
- Assumptions about facilities in all financial statements correspond to a conservative facility plan and account for possible contingencies.
- The financial manager has the appropriate expertise to provide accurate and timely financial information to decision-makers.
- The charter applicant group protects mission-critical expenses when faced with budget cuts.

- There is appropriate segregation of financial duties which align to organizational chart and job descriptions.
- Control systems ensure that only allowable expenses will be made and that all expenses will be coded appropriately.
- Projections are based on accurate, conservative, and legally compliant assumptions.

The Applicant's Response:

Meets the Standard	Approaches the Standard	Does Not Meet the Standard
Strengths of the Applicant's Response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 		
Weaknesses of the Applicant's Response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 		
Clarifying Questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 		