

Audubon Center of the North Woods

Transfer Authorizer Application Guide

- **Guide**
- **Application**
- **Rubric**
- **Checklist**
- **Reader Assessment**

2010 - 2011

Acknowledgements

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Statement of Public Domain

Audubon Center of the North Woods (ACNW) places this document in the public domain for the charter school community. The public is free to adopt and utilize this document provided ACNW is acknowledged.

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Introduction

The “ACNW Charter Guide, Application, Checklist and Review Rubric” was developed to provide guidance in the writing and review of transfer charter school applications. The target audience for this document is the board of directors of an existing charter school as they develop a charter transfer application.

This standard application is divided into six application components. The components appear in this document in the same order that they appear in the Minnesota Statutes (124D.10 Subd 3, Paragraph (d)(3)).

(3) a description of the application and review process the authorizer will use to make decisions regarding the granting of charters, which will include at least the following:

- (i) how the statutory purposes defined in subdivision 1 are addressed;**
- (ii) the mission, goals, program model, and student performance expectations;**
- (iii) an evaluation plan for the school that includes criteria for evaluating educational, organizational, and fiscal plans;**
- (iv) the school's governance plan;**
- (v) the financial management plan; and**
- (vi) the administration and operations plan;**

Each component is divided into three sections:

- A Component Description,
- A Checklist for Completion, and
- An Evaluation Criterion.
- A Rubric

The Component Description is a narrative designed to give the applicant's background information, reference to statute, and general explanation of the component. The Checklist for Completion should be used by both the applicant and the authorizer to monitor the completeness of the application. The Evaluation Criteria provides the authorizer with means of determining the quality of the application component, but may also be used by the applicant for transfer when seeking to improve the quality of its program.

Audubon Center of the North Woods

Intent to Apply for Transfer of Authorizer Form

Please submit this Intent to Apply form 150 to 180 days before filing your application. Add space as needed to fill out this Form, but do not exceed 3 pages (excluding resume attachments).

1. Name of School: _____

Address: _____

Street and/or PO Box

City

State

Zip Code

2. Lead Administrator: _____

Phone: (day) _____ (evening) _____

E-mail Address: _____

3. Board Chair: _____

Phone: (day) _____ (evening) _____

E-mail Address: _____

4. Current Authorizer: _____

Address: _____

Street and/or PO Box

City

State

Zip Code

Authorizer Contact: _____

Phone: (day) _____ (evening) _____

E-mail Address: _____

5. Does the school currently or expect to contract with a charter management organization or company for school management or operation? Yes No

If yes, identify the charter management organization:

6. **Date Of Incorporation:** _____
7. **Date When Charter Was First Granted:** _____
8. **Expiration Date Of Current Contract:** _____
9. **What Grades is the Charter School Approved For?** _____
10. **What Grades does the Charter School Currently Serve?** _____
11. **Number of Students Currently Served:** _____
12. **Percentage of Free or Reduced Lunch:** _____
13. **Percentage of ELL/ESL Students:** _____
14. **Percentage of Special Education Students:** _____
15. **Why do you want to change your authorizer?** . Please note: ACNW will also contact your current authorizer.
16. **Name of each individual in the board of directors and the management team (if the charter school has one – could include assistant directors, program managers, lead teachers, etc.) management team:**
 - A. Names, roles, and current employment of all persons on the board and management team:
 - B. Does any person listed above currently operate or are employed in any other schools?
 Yes No Describe.
17. **Identify any organizations, agencies, consultants or institutions of higher education that are partners of this charter school, along with a brief description of their role and any resources they have contributed to contribute to the school.**

Include the following attachments:

- a) Resumes for lead administrator and board members each individual on the team.
- b) Articles of incorporation
- c) Bylaws

- d)** Current Authorizer contract
- e)** Audited financial statements for the last 3 years
- f)** Annual report for the last 3 years
- g)** Standardized student test results for the last 3 years, if not included in annual reports
- h)** The most recent data on stakeholder satisfaction and perceptions of safety (e.g. surveys, focus groups, etc), if not included in annual reports

ACNW Charter School Application

General Instructions and Format

- **Deadline:**
 - February 1, 201__ (5 months prior to expiration of current contract)
 - 3:00 PM. Applications received after this time will not be considered even if postmarked before the due date

- **Format:**
 - 8 ½” x 11” paper, 1” margins on all sides, 12-point font, Single Spaced.
 - Page numbers and name of school in footer on each page

- **Page Limits:**
 - Number of pages is specified in each Component Section
 - Page Limits do not apply to required attachments.
 - Please limit attachments to those that are requested.

- **Evaluation Criteria:**
 - ACNW will only accept applications that score between 2 and 3 in every rubric area.
 - When feasible ACNW will discuss deficiencies in the application and allow the school to strengthen the application to become a 2+ in all rubric areas.
 - ACNW will only accept schools whose application and interview sessions indicate that the founders have the capacity to continue to operate a highly successful school.
 - The decision of ACNW Board of Directors is final.

- **Submission:**
 - The application should be electronically submitted by email in MS-Word and MS-Excel format on 8.5x11 pages to: dess@audubon-center.org;
 - The Document and all attachments should be electronically submitted by “Thumb Drive” in MS-Word, MS-Excel or PDF format to ACNW.
 - One original paper copy with all required signatures (in blue or black ink) including: Intent to Apply, New Charter School Application, and all requested/required attachments.
 - Three reproduction copies of: Intent to Apply, Transfer Charter School Application, and all requested/required attachments.
 - Submit to:

Steve Dess, Charter School Coordinator
ACNW, Suite # 238
43 Main Street SE
Minneapolis, MN 55414

School Summary

Component Description

The school summary serves as a concise description of the charter school. It could come from a school brochure or other description of the program. This section should be one to two pages long and should include a short description of the key programmatic features of the school. Describe how the school compares to other schools currently serving the targeted student population. Explain any unique features, such as a non-traditional school year, longer school day, key partner organizations, multiple campuses, school culture, etc. and how (if at all) this school departs from traditional education in the proposed area.

In addition to the 8 items you have included with your “Intent to Apply” form, include the following attachments:

- a) All board policies
- b) Enrollment policies/procedures if not included in the above
- c) Staff Handbook, Parent Handbook, and Student Handbook
- d) Documentation of the school’s federal tax-exempt status
- e) Daily Schedule
- f) Annual Calendar
- g) Student retention data for the past three years
- h) Job descriptions for lead administrator, teachers, and other key employees
- i) Staff development plan for last 3 years
- j) Analysis of student test data and any other data evidencing student success
- k) STAR Report for the last three years
- l) Summary of any awards and recognitions received (include MDE Financial Awards if received)
- m) Renewal report from authorizer if contract was previously renewed
- n) Copies of reports to the authorizer if these have been done
- o) Strategic plan if the school has one
- p) Current School Improvement Plan if the school has one
- q) Statutory Operating Debt plan if the school is in SOD
- r) Minutes of board meetings for the past twelve months
- s) Budgets for the current and previous two school years; projected budget for next year if available
- t) Enrollment projections for the next two years
- u) Lease agreement
- v) Documentation of liability insurance
- w) Documentation of any litigation the school has been involved with the past 2 years to the extent data practices law permits sharing such

Note: the School Summary is required but is not scored.

School Summary Evaluation Rubric

Reviewer Score	0 Failed to Provide	0 Inadequate	0 Adequate	0 Excellent
	Failed to Provide or was unclear and/or little evidence of understanding of criteria for starting a high-quality charter school	Most information provided and somewhat clear and/or minimal understanding of criteria for starting a high-quality charter school	All information provided and mostly clear and /or general understanding of criteria for starting a high-quality charter school	All information is very clearly presented and demonstrates exceptional understanding of criteria for starting and operating a high-quality charter school.
Strengths				
Concerns				
Additional Information or Conditions Needed				

(1) Statutory Purposes

Component Description

Under Minnesota law, charter schools must be designed to meet at least one of the purposes for which the law was created. Identify which of the following six purposes the charter school meets and for each purpose identified, provide a paragraph or two describing how the school's educational program meets those purposes. The six purposes defined in law are:

- (1) improve pupil learning and student achievement;
- (2) increase learning opportunities for pupils;
- (3) encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods;
- (4) measure learning outcomes and create different and innovative forms of measuring outcomes;
- (5) establish new forms of accountability for schools; and
- (6) create new professional opportunities for teachers, including the opportunity to be responsible for the learning program at the school site.

Checklist for Comprehensive Application

- Identify all of the six statutory purposes the charter school currently is serving. ACNW prefers (but does not require) a school to select at least two statutory purposes.
- Provide a narrative description of how the charter school has fulfilled and will continue to fulfill these purpose(s).
- This section is not to exceed one half page for each statutory purpose selected.

Evaluation Criteria

Excellent Statutory Purposes will have the following characteristics:

Cite research and/or best practices that will continue to support the selected purposes for closing the achievement gap with students in your school and schools of similar demographics

(1) Statutory Purposes Evaluation Rubric

Reviewer Score	0 Failed to Provide	1 Inadequate	2 Adequate	3 Excellent
	Failed to Provide or was unclear and/or little evidence of understanding of criteria for continuing to operate a high-quality charter school	Most information provided and somewhat clear and/or minimal understanding of criteria for continuing to operate a high-quality charter school	All information provided and mostly clear and /or general understanding of criteria for continuing to operate a high-quality charter school	All information is very clearly presented and demonstrates exceptional understanding of criteria for continuing to operate a high-quality charter school
Strengths				
Concerns				
Additional Information or Conditions Needed				

(2A) Vision and Mission Statements

Component Description

A charter school transfer application must have a mission statement for the proposed school. Many schools have both a vision and a mission statement. The vision statement is a statement of how the charter school looks once it is operating (the big picture view). The mission statement is how the school intends to make that vision a reality.

The vision and mission statements should be succinct, easy to understand, inspiring and memorable. The school should provide evidence that it posts their vision/mission statement throughout their building and use it in their printed materials (e.g. Parent/Student Handbook and Employee Handbook). The school's mission defines your school for students, parents, community and staff.

Checklist for A Completed Application

- The vision and mission statements describe the purpose for the charter school with a focus on impact rather than inputs.
- The vision and mission statements are the driving force and rationale behind all other components of the application. The school's goals, educational program, operations, etc., align with and support the fulfillment of the vision and mission statements.
- The vision and mission statements express the ideal, long-term impact, scope and scale of the school. The vision articulates what the school hopes to be. The mission statement explains how the school will attain the vision.
- This section should not exceed one page.

Evaluation Criteria

Excellent Vision and Mission Statements will have the following characteristics:

- Are clear, focused and compelling.
- Have produced high quality education outcomes.
- Express clear guiding purposes and there is evidence that it posts their vision/mission statement throughout their building and use it in their printed materials
- Link to program features throughout the application.

(2A) Vision and Mission Statements Evaluation Rubric

Reviewer Score	0 Failed to Provide	1 Inadequate	2 Adequate	3 Excellent
	Failed to Provide or was unclear and/or little evidence of understanding of criteria for continuing to operate a high-quality charter school	Most information provided and somewhat clear and/or minimal understanding of criteria for continuing to operate a high-quality charter school	All information provided and mostly clear and /or general understanding of criteria for for continuing to operate a high-quality charter school	All information is very clearly presented and demonstrates exceptional understanding of criteria for for continuing to operate a high-quality charter school
Strengths				
Concerns				
Additional Information or Conditions Needed				

(2B) Goals and Student Performance Expectations

Component Description

The transfer application should reflect an understanding of the requirements of the law with a clear plan for how goals will be measured, how ongoing progress toward goals will be measured throughout the year, how data will be obtained and stored, and how that data will be used for program improvement and provided to the authorizer. It is understood that there are not actual baseline test scores, attendance rates or other data before the school is established. In addition to goals required by state law, a charter school may choose to have other measures for which they wish to be held accountable. Be sure to only include measures that the charter school is willing to be held accountable for over time, as these additional indicators become a part of the school's accountability plan.

Checklist for A Completed Application

- Specified student achievement goals for achieving the school's mission and meeting the Minnesota Academic Standards including mathematics, reading, and any other content areas applicable to the school's program focus.
- Specified student performance goals for achieving other accountability measures such as attendance, graduation, and appropriate aspects of school's proposed program.
- Specified goals for student growth over time in content areas, especially mathematics and reading, where appropriate.
- Goals are written using the "SMART" framework (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Reflective of the school's mission and Time-phased) which includes objectives and benchmarks.
- Explanation of how the school's assessment system has provided baseline data and appropriate ongoing data throughout the years to continuously monitor student achievement/performance toward your goals and made adjustments to teaching and learning to do a better job of closing the achievement gap.
- Outline how data was obtained and stored.
- Outline how data will be provided to the new authorizer.
- Reflects basic understanding of state achievement and reporting requirements.
- This section should not exceed two pages.

Evaluation Criteria

An excellent Goals and Student Performance Expectations description will have the following characteristics:

- Goals are clear, specific, measurable, attainable, results-based, reflective of the school's mission, and time-bound.
- Goals are based on valid and reliable measures of student performance appropriate to content or accountability measure being measured.
- Goals measure school-wide status, student growth, and other accountability measures of student performance.
- Appropriate strategies are identified for measuring progress toward goals throughout the academic year.
- Clear, realistic strategies for improving student achievement and closing achievement gaps for all groups of students including the school's educational philosophy.

- Data gathering, maintenance, and storage capacity appear to be adequate for school's immediate and future decision-making needs as well as reporting to authorizer, students, parents, and other stakeholders. Evidence of research of Student Information Systems exists.

(2B) Goals and Student Performance Expectations Evaluation Rubric				
Reviewer Score	0 Failed to Provide	1 Inadequate	2 Adequate	3 Excellent
	Failed to Provide or was unclear and/or little evidence of understanding of criteria for continuing to operate a high-quality charter school	Most information provided and somewhat clear and/or minimal understanding of criteria for continuing to operate a high-quality charter school	All information provided and mostly clear and /or general understanding of criteria for continuing to operate a high-quality charter school	All information is very clearly presented and demonstrates exceptional understanding of criteria for continuing to operate a high-quality charter school
Strengths				
Concerns				
Additional Information or Conditions Needed				

(2C) Educational Program Model

Component Description

A charter school transfer application must include a clear description of the school's educational program model (or philosophy) with rationale and the supporting research evidence for the current program. This component section will define your school's quality and provide evidence of your understanding of the criteria need to continue to operate a high quality charter school and that you have the capacity to close the achievement gap that may exist in your school, When certain characteristics of the school culture are critical to the overall educational program (i.e., small school size, character education and high expectations), the research and best practices must support the current educational program design.

Schools seeking ACNW authorization should have curriculum design that is research-based, supported by best practices and aligned with the Minnesota State Standards. If the schools have not already done so, schools should consider replicating highly successful charter schools with similar student demographics.

Instruction and assessment for all core content areas plus supplemental or elective areas should be described in this section. Evidence should be provided evidence that indicates instruction and assessment are aligned and incorporate critical components of the overall education program. Instruction should reflect the needs of your student body as well as carry out the focus of the program model. The supporting assessment system should include diagnostic and formative tools as well as the summative assessments described in the previous section. Evidence also needs to be provided to assure that the school's curriculum is aligned to the Minnesota Academic Standards and support the instructional strategies as well as the needs of the students.

In addition, the school is encouraged to (if they are currently) provide special emphasis to each of the following as a characteristic of the educational program of their school:

- Provide a higher quality education than surrounding schools.
- Supports Smaller School Concept.
- Supports Family and Community Engagement.

Additionally, the school requesting transfer is strongly encouraged provide opportunities for children to instill a connection and commitment to the environment through experiential learning.

Checklist for A Completed Application

- Chart that shows student enrollment by grade for the past five years.
- As statement outlining student demographics including percent on free and reduced lunch, ELL percentage, Special Education percentage and anticipated ethnic group breakdown by percentage.
- Description of the educational program model with supporting research evidence showing how it has and will continue to improve student achievement for the student body.
- Description of other vital aspects of the program with the supporting research evidence to demonstrate how they have increased student academic performance and meet the social/emotional needs of students in proposed student body.

- Description of relationship between education program model and aligned instruction/ assessment system including how they are connected to the cited research evidence.
- Explanation of how the school’s assessment system has provided baseline data gathering, short- and long-term types of assessments, and how the school has used this information to revise professional development and instruction.
- Description of core learning areas, including the curriculum and how it has been aligned to the Minnesota Academic Standards and supplemental materials (if needed) have been developed during the last three years of operation
- Description of supplemental curricula for:
 - Special Education, electives or “special” courses is thoroughly described and based on Minnesota Academic Standards as available (e.g. modified standards).
 - Serving economically and educationally disadvantaged students.
 - Serving students with Limited English Proficiency.
 - Serving Gifted and Talented, High Achieving students.
- Description of the role of school leadership staff as instructional leaders including school principal/director and other teacher leaders.
- Description of the relationships and separation of duties between the Board of Directors and the School Leadership.
- Description of teaching skills and experiences needed by educational staff to efficiently and effectively carry out educational program model.
- Daily schedule and calendar for the last year of operation are provided. The calendar and daily schedule meet the minimum number of hours required by state statute. Schools that are applying for transfer may want to consider a longer school day and school year.

This section should not exceed eight pages.

Evaluation Criteria

An excellent proposal will demonstrate the following qualities related to the Educational Program:

- The program model is clearly described and supported by appropriate research evidence for the proposed student body.
- Student current enrollments and enrollment projections by grade are included.
- Chart of student demographics is included.
- The program model reflects the mission and vision statement for the school
- The instruction and assessment are aligned from diagnosis of student achievement through the formative assessment process to the summative assessments used for accountability.
- The instruction and assessment system clearly support the current program model.
- The core curriculum is identified and a plan for alignment to the Minnesota Academic Standards is clearly described.
- The supplemental curricula is identified and aligned to the Minnesota Academic Standards.
- School leadership team is clearly involved in the implementation of the school’s educational program model.
- The school day and school calendar are structured in ways that align with the educational program.
- The school has a plan for ongoing curriculum development and professional development that is data-driven.

(2C) Educational Program Model Evaluation Rubric

Reviewer Score	0 Failed to Provide	1 Inadequate	2 Adequate	3 Excellent
	Failed to Provide or was unclear and/or little evidence of understanding of criteria for continuing to operate a high-quality charter school	Most information provided and somewhat clear and/or minimal understanding of criteria for continuing to operate a high-quality charter school	All information provided and mostly clear and /or general understanding of criteria for continuing to operate a high-quality charter school	All information is very clearly presented and demonstrates exceptional understanding of criteria for continuing to operate a high-quality charter school
Strengths				
Concerns				
Additional Information or Conditions Needed				

(3) Evaluation Plan for the school that includes criteria for evaluating:

- **Educational Plans**
- **Organizational Plans**
- **Fiscal Plans**
- **and collectively the organization's capacity to develop such a plan**

Component Description

A charter school transfer application should include a clear plan for evaluating the effectiveness and degree of implementation of the education program model, the organizational plan, and the financial plan. The application should reflect a comprehensive ongoing evaluation process using data to continually monitor and adjust instruction, curricula, school climate, school management, and fiscal spending.

Education Program Evaluation Plan

The evaluation of the education program model includes a discussion of the school's achievement of school academic achievement and overall school goals and student performance expectations in relationship to the degree of implementation of both the school's instruction/assessment system and identified curriculum scope and sequence. Student assessments are aligned to the Minnesota Academic Standards and closely aligned with instruction, assessment, and curriculum models. The process should include both:

- Formative evaluation to adjust teaching and learning as well as job-embedded professional development and
- Summative evaluation to judge the value added by the school's unique education program model.

Organizational Plan Evaluation

The evaluation of the organizational plan will focus on the degree of implementation of:

- The governance plan,
- The management plan, and
- The operations plan.

These are outlined in later parts of this application. Since all of these plans should be coordinated to provide a cohesive functioning structure for the school, the coordination of these plans should also be addressed in the organizational evaluation.

Fiscal Plan Evaluation

The evaluation of the financial plan will include:

- A discussion of the results of the yearly external financial audit and
- A description of the fiscal responsibility of the school in the management of public funds.

Emphasis of financial plan evaluation will be in compliance with spending and reporting requirements to MDE.

Checklist for A Completed Application

- Description of how the school has analyzed comparison data of student achievement and performance expectations to identify areas of gaps or deficits including comparisons to:
 - The state of Minnesota,
 - The region in which school is located, and
 - Schools with similar demographics.
- Description of how the school has provide strategies to self-monitor student achievement and performance expectation trends to identify areas of gaps or deficits needing attention including school trends of accountability assessment data identified in both school and student achievement goals and the ongoing assessment data used to measure progress throughout the year.
- Description of how the school has gathered and organized implementation data for the education program model including instruction/assessment system, curricula, and other identified critical aspects of model identified in section 2A, B and C of this application.
- Description of the school's procedures for taking corrective action in the event student achievement results fall below the academic and student goals approved by the authorizer in the charter contract.
- Description of how the school has gathered and organized implementation data of each of its organization components: a) governance plan; b) management plan; and c) operation plan.
- School's financial plan clearly describes the school's compliance with fiscal policies and procedures required by MDE and the authorizer.
- Explanation of how the data on implementation of the financial plan has been used to show compliance to state and authorizer requirements when reporting to stakeholders.
- Identification of the timeline and person responsible for each of the evaluation components.
- If the school has contracted with an external service provider for evaluation services, describe evaluation components to be completed by external contractor; describe how contractor was selected, financial commitments for the evaluation, and level of external evaluator's flexibility in determining evaluation methods.
- This section should not exceed eight pages.

**(3) Educational, Organizational and Fiscal Performance Evaluation Plan
Evaluation Rubric**

Reviewer Score	0 Failed to Provide	1 Inadequate	2 Adequate	3 Excellent
	Failed to Provide or was unclear and/or little evidence of understanding of criteria for starting a high-quality charter school	Most information provided and somewhat clear and/or minimal understanding of criteria for starting a high-quality charter school	All information provided and mostly clear and /or general understanding of criteria for starting a high-quality charter school	All information is very clearly presented and demonstrates exceptional understanding of criteria for starting a high-quality charter school
Strengths				
Concerns				
Additional Information or Conditions Needed				

Evaluation Criteria

An excellent Educational, Organizational and Fiscal Performance Evaluation Plan will include the following characteristics:

- Evaluation of the education program model makes appropriate use of all available student achievement and performance expectation data
- Description of how the school has analyzed the relationship between student achievement/performance data and degree of implementation of education program data to identify areas of gaps or deficits in student achievement connected to Minnesota Academic Standards, especially in mathematics and reading.
- Evaluation of the school's organization plan adequately measures the effectiveness and efficiency of the school's governance process, administration plan, and operations plan and establishes a logical structure to use the results for continuous improvement of the organization.
- Explanation of how the financial audit data that has been used to make adjustments in fiscal policies and procedures to improve the financial health of the school.
- Appropriate data was collected and organized in a format to easily facilitate evaluation process for all components.
- Planned evaluation was sufficiently frequent to effectively monitor and adjust behaviors or structures within the school.
- Clearly outlines roles and responsibilities for implementing the school's comprehensive evaluation plan.

(4) Governance and Management Plan

Component Description

Charter school governance is extremely important to the success of a charter school. The charter school transfer application should describe the individual expertise represented on the school's governing board; the governance structure for the school; the nature and/or extent of parental and/or community involvement in governance; and the amount of authority the governing board delegates to the school's administrator, along with a clear delineation of their respective roles and the means by which the administrator is evaluated.

While some existing Minnesota charter schools have a teacher majority on the governing board, others do not. Under Minnesota law, the chief administrator and chief financial officer are ex-officio, non-voting board members. If staff members have voting privileges, there should be clear policies to explain when that board member should recuse him/herself. Any potential conflict of interest by any board member should be disclosed and addressed.

The charter school application should also describe the school's legal status. Schools authorized by ACNW are required to obtain a nonprofit corporation status and apply for tax-exempt status with the IRS. The charter school governing board must operate in compliance with the Minnesota Open Meetings Law and Minnesota Government Data Practices Act.

Every charter school governing board must have a complete set of updated board policies.

Checklist for A Completed Application

- Description of:
 - The governance structure for the school
 - The nature and extent of parental and/or community involvement in governance
 - The amount of authority the governing board has conveyed to the school's administrator, along with a clear delineation of their respective roles and the means by which the administrator has been evaluated
- Description of how a lead administrator's will be hired and the transition of leadership will happen.
- Explanation of how training for new board members as required by statute will be provided.
- Explanation of the proposed board meeting frequency and focus; the role of any standing committees is included.
- Explanation of compliance with Open Meetings and Open Records laws.
- Copy of the adopted, updated Board Policies.
- Attach the following documents:
 - An Organizational Chart which depicts relationships of MDE, Authorizer, Families, Board of Directors, School Leadership and Licensed and Non-licensed Staff.
 - Articles of incorporation and bylaws indicating legal status.
 - Resumes of board members.
 - Updated board policies including Conflict of Interest and Grievance Process policies

- This section should not exceed four pages, excluding requested attachments.

Evaluation Criteria:

An excellent application will demonstrate the following characteristics related to the Governance and Management Plan:

- Explanation of meaningful parent and community involvement in the governance of the school.
- Clear distinction between the roles/responsibilities of board members and administration.
- Sufficient plan with timeline for ongoing board training and capacity building .
- Appropriate responsibility for legal compliance evident throughout governance plan.
- Bylaws that explain powers and duties, size, terms, composition, qualifications, term limits, officer positions and duties, election procedure, vacancy replacement, minimum number on the board, quorum and decision making process, how board members are elected or appointed, and when this takes place.
- Proposed board members will contribute a wide range of experience and expertise (such as education, management, finances, law, and community outreach) that will be needed to oversee a successful charter school.
- Conflict of Interest policy delineates potential conflicts and how they will be addressed.
- Grievance process is clear and follows an appropriate route for resolution of concerns raised by students or parents.

(4) Governance and Management Plan Evaluation Rubric

Reviewer Score	0 Failed to Provide	1 Inadequate	2 Adequate	3 Excellent
	Failed to Provide or was unclear and/or little evidence of understanding of criteria for continuing to operate a high-quality charter school	Most information provided and somewhat clear and/or minimal understanding of criteria for continuing to operate a high-quality charter school	All information provided and mostly clear and /or general understanding of criteria for continuing to operate a high-quality charter school	All information is very clearly presented and demonstrates exceptional understanding of criteria for continuing to operate a high-quality charter school
Strengths				
Concerns				
Additional Information or Conditions Needed				

(5) Financial Management Plan

Component Description

The budget and financial plan for the charter school applying for transfer demonstrate diligent financial practices, clear alignment to the other components in the transfer application, and strong oversight. The budget should reflect choices made throughout the rest of the charter transfer application. Optionally, applicants may draft a brief narrative to address anything that needs to be explained or clarified in the budgets.

Describe other sources of revenue in funding specific programs.

Checklist for A Completed Application

- The plan includes realistic cash flow assumptions, adequate enrollment to ensure continuing solvency, and adequate staffing that supports the educational program.
- State who is responsible for financial management at the school.
- Description of financial policies and procedures including checks and balances of cash disbursement and ways the school ensures alignment with mission and vision.
- Budgets for the current and previous two school years are balanced and include:
 - realistic assumptions and their basis;
 - use of UFARS Chart of Accounts;
 - direct student instructional expenses, PERA/TRA contributions, and other benefits;
 - accounting for state funding holdbacks;
 - separation of general fund and food service fund;
 - establishment of an emergency/long-term reserve fund;
 - minimum enrollment needed for solvency;
 - adequate staffing aligned with the school's mission and education model; and
 - list of any planned services contracted to outside providers.
- Description of the school's process to contract with an Audit Firm to conduct an annual, independent financial audit including how results are disseminated to MDE and the authorizer.
- Explanation of how the school will remain fiscally solvent, adhere to generally acceptable accounting practices, have no material breaches, and will address any concerns from the independent financial audit.
- Description of the charter school's plan to ensure that STARS, MARSS, UFARS, EDRS, CLICS, SERVS reports and data uploads are completed.
- This section should not exceed four pages (excluding attachments).

Evaluation Criteria

An excellent proposal will present a financial plan with the following characteristics:

- Budgets have balanced each of the past two years, and current-year budget is projected to balance.
- Spending priorities that align with the school’s mission and curriculum, and support professional development and growth.
- There is a description of how the school reviews and seeks to improve the financial and administrative operations of the school.
-

Attach a three-year budget which includes current year and projections for the next two operational years.

(5) Fiscal Management Plan Evaluation Rubric				
Reviewer Score	0 Failed to Provide	1 Inadequate	2 Adequate	3 Excellent
	Failed to Provide or was unclear and/or little evidence of understanding of criteria for continuing to operate a high-quality charter school	Most information provided and somewhat clear and/or minimal understanding of criteria for continuing to operate a high-quality charter school	All information provided and mostly clear and /or general understanding of criteria for continuing to operate a high-quality charter school	All information is very clearly presented and demonstrates exceptional understanding of criteria for continuing to operate a high-quality charter school
Strengths				
Concerns				
Additional Information or Conditions Needed				

(6A) Administration Plan

Component Description

A charter school requesting transfer must provide an explanation of its management structure. An organizational chart may be used to provide a visual picture of the management structure. The narrative should give a clear delineation of employee classifications and who is responsible for

oversight of the educational program and of school operations at each level of the organization chart. It must describe the relationship that exists between the charter school and its employees. Hiring, evaluation processes, and termination processes are part of the relationship. Employment policies should be addressed.

If the school contracts with an education service provider (ESP), such as a charter management organization, cooperative, education management organization, or any other type of school management provider, describe how and why the ESP was selected and present evidence documenting how the school manages its relationship with the service provider for the benefit of the school.

Checklist for A Completed Application

- An organizational chart is included as an attachment; the chart shows the relationship between administrative, teaching and support staff positions. This was also requested in Governance and Management [5] component of this application.
- A narrative description gives clear delineation of employee classification and who is responsible for oversight of the educational program and of school operations at each level of the organizational chart.
- A clear definition of where the responsibility for employee hiring, evaluation and termination resides.
- Job descriptions for administrator, teachers, and key employees are included as attachments.
- Clear standards are in place for determining staff qualifications to meet NCLB and all licensure requirements.
- Descriptions of key employee policies including employment practices, benefits, leave policies, grievance policy, conflict of interest policy, harassment, drug-free workplace, classroom practices, and evaluation practices are attached.
- A clear plan of support for staff development and funding is included.
- This section should not exceed three pages.

Checklist for A Completed Application if contracting with ESP

- An explanation of how and why the ESP was selected.
- Evidence that the service provider is authorized to do business in Minnesota.
- Detailed explanation of the ESP's success in serving student populations similar to the targeted student population, including demonstrated academic achievement as well as successful management of non-academic school functions (e.g., back-office services, school operations, extra-curricular programs) if these are to be covered in the contract.
- A copy of the management contract setting forth the proposed duration of the management contract; roles and responsibilities; scope of services and resources to be provided by the ESP; performance evaluation measures and timelines; compensation structure including identification of all fees to be paid to the ESP; methods of contract oversight and enforcement; investment disclosure; and conditions for renewal and termination of the contract.
- Explanation of the relationship between the school governing board and the ESP, specifying how the governing board will monitor and evaluate the performance of the service provider,

the internal controls that has guided the relationship, and how the governing board has ensured fulfillment of performance expectations, or has a means for severing the contract.

- An explanation of which staff will be hired and terminated by the ESP or report to or be paid by the ESP.
- Evidence that the ESP is authorized to conduct business in Minnesota.
- Clear understanding of financial obligation to ESP if enrollment increases, decreases or stays the same for the duration of the relationship.
- Additional pages up to four can be added for this section if contracting with ESP.

Evaluation Criteria

An excellent application for transfer will address the following regarding the Administration Plan:

- Explanation of the relationship that exists between the charter school and its employees, with employee classification clearly defined.
- Explanation of responsibility for overseeing the educational program aligned with the school mission and vision.
- Employment policies of the school are fully developed.
- A manageable plan for job-embedded professional development, mentorship, retention and regular evaluation of staff is linked to the school's mission and educational program, including an ongoing timeline, lead contact, and specific actions.

Attachments required:

- Administrator's job description
- Teachers' job description
- Requested Employee Policies
- Organizational Chart (if not submitted in [5]).
- Required information if using an ESP.

In addition, if the school proposes to contract with an ESP, an excellent application will also address the following:

- Sufficient evidence to demonstrate the ESP has been successful in the academic and business operations aspects of other schools.
- Reasonable management contract terms and fees along with clear performance measures and contract severing provisions.
- Details sufficient to assure there are no potential conflicts of interest between the ESP and the governing board.
- A clear plan for monitoring and evaluating performance of the ESP and adequate internal controls are in place.
- A clear description provided for which staff members will be hired, evaluated and terminated by the ESP, and any relationship with the governing board on these decisions.

(6A) Administration Plan Evaluation Rubric

Reviewer Score	0 Failed to Provide	1 Inadequate	2 Adequate	3 Excellent
	Failed to Provide or was unclear and/or little evidence of understanding of criteria for continuing to operate a high-quality charter school	Most information provided and somewhat clear and/or minimal understanding of criteria for continuing to operate a high-quality charter school	All information provided and mostly clear and /or general understanding of criteria for continuing to operate a high-quality charter school	All information is very clearly presented and demonstrates exceptional understanding of criteria for continuing to operate a high-quality charter school
Strengths				
Concerns				
Additional Information or Conditions Needed				

(6B) Operations Plan

Component Description

The Operation Plans section of the application includes a number of different parts including but not limited to:

- A School Calendar and Schedule (See Component 2C) to structure the day-to-day functioning of the school,
- An outreach procedural plan to inform the community as a means of recruiting students. As public schools, charter schools must open their enrollment to any student and must provide free and appropriate education (FAPE) services as needed for students with disabilities.
- The application should demonstrate the expectations and plans for ongoing parent and community involvement and the support of volunteers.
- Student Discipline Policy,
- Parent Involvement Plan,
- Transportation Plan and Policies,
- Food Service Plan,
- Enrollment and recruitment plans, including a lottery system if needed, and
- An analysis of the adequacy of the facility for the school. The Charter Schools Law requires the charter school to admit by lottery if applications for enrollment exceed school capacity.

The lottery policies and plan for enrollment should demonstrate how the school enrolls students.

Checklist for Comprehensive Application

- Describe how the school attracts students.
- Parent involvement supporting the school is described along with any volunteer requirements or opportunities.
- Partnerships or community involvement practices are clearly defined.
- Enrollment policy/procedures consistent with Minnesota law. Addresses the wait list or lottery process, and post-enrollment testing; and defines any admissions preferences given in the lottery, e.g. siblings or children of teachers.
- An explanation of the process to transfer student records to or from the charter school.
- The school's policy for student discipline, suspension, or expulsion that provides due process rights under the Minnesota Pupil Fair Dismissal act
- Describe how the school's child find process addresses needs for adaptations or special education assessments and staffing.
- Describe how the school meets the needs of IEP's and ELL's; and complies with the requirements of IDEA and for 504 plans. Include certified personnel, documentation, assessments, adaptations and modifications
- The school provides adequate staff to meet the needs of these students including a licensed special education teacher.
- A brief description of the charter school's transportation arrangements
- A brief description of the charter school's food service program.
- A brief description of the charter school's facility.
- Assurance that the facility is in compliance with applicable building codes, health and safety laws, and with the requirements of the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and has a commercial occupancy permit.
- This section should not exceed six pages.

Evaluation Criteria

An excellent operations plan will have the following characteristics:

- A sound plan is in place to reach a diverse student population.
- In the school's enrollment process, explanation of placement criteria is clear and visible to all students and parents.
- Detail is given of volunteer requirements, if any, and opportunities that are available for the parents/guardians of the students and the larger community.
- Explanation of criteria for placement decisions.
- Clear procedures for withdrawals and transfers from the school that supports an orderly transition for exiting students.
- Policies for addressing expulsion or dismissal, suspension and education of expelled or suspended students provide adequately for the safety of students and staff; provide due process for students to include IDEA requirements; serve the best interests of the school's students; and help to create a positive environment for learning.
- Evidence the school is effective in identifying and meeting the learning needs of at-risk students, students with disabilities, gifted/talented students, and English language learners.

- Timeline, lead contact, and intervention process with specific action steps for meeting learning needs of students with special needs.
- Transportation and food service practices are appropriate for the student population served, and are affordable.
- The school’s facility is appropriate for the educational program of the school and adequate for the current and projected student enrollment.

(6B) Operations Plan Evaluation Rubric				
Reviewer Score	0 Failed to Provide	1 Inadequate	2 Adequate	3 Excellent
	Failed to Provide or was unclear and/or little evidence of understanding of criteria for continuing to operate a high-quality charter school	Most information provided and somewhat clear and/or minimal understanding of criteria for continuing to operate a high-quality charter school	All information provided and mostly clear and /or general understanding of criteria for continuing to operate a high-quality charter school	All information is very clearly presented and demonstrates exceptional understanding of criteria for continuing to operate a high-quality charter school
Strengths				
Concerns				
Additional Information or Conditions Needed				

ACNW

READER OVERALL ASSESSMENT & RECOMMENDATION

Would you recommend approval of this application?

No, incomplete application or does not meet minimum standards.

Yes, but only with additional information needed as listed below. I believe the school has the capacity for continuing to operate a high-quality charter school.

Yes, with conditions met as listed below. I believe the school has the capacity for continuing to operate a high-quality charter school.

Yes, I recommend unconditionally and I believe the founders have exceptional capacity to continue to operate a high-quality a charter school.

Overall Strengths of Application:	Component Reference #s
Overall Concerns and Additional Questions:	Component Reference #s
Information Needed or Concerns to be Met:	
Summary Comments:	

Signature of Reviewer: _____ **Date:** ____ __ 201__