



New Charter School Application Process

Revised December 2024

Submit To:
Stephanie Olsen, Manager
Charter Schools Program
Volunteers of America-Minnesota
9220 Bass Lake Rd, Ste 255
New Hope, MN 55428
solsen@voamn.org

New Charter School Application Process

The Volunteers of America-Minnesota (VOA-MN) Charter School Authorizing Program provides Minnesota students with high quality choices in public education through our portfolio of high-performing charter schools and is a model of excellence in authorizing throughout the state and nation.

- *Authorizing Program Vision: Volunteers of America-Minnesota (VOA-MN) Charter School Authorizing Program will authorize high quality charter schools that improve all pupil learning, all student achievement, and promote service to others.*
- *Authorizing Program Mission: Volunteers of America-Minnesota (VOA-MN) Charter School Authorizing Program will improve all pupil learning and all student achievement with service to others as its core.*

Minnesota Charter Schools

Charter schools are independent public schools of choice for parents and students. The first charter school in the nation opened in Minnesota in 1992 and charter schools continue to be a popular choice for students seeking an alternative to traditional public schools. Teachers, parents and others begin charter schools when they see an educational need and want to design a school to meet that need. The primary purpose of a charter school is to improve all pupil learning and all student achievement. Additional purposes include: (1) increase learning opportunities for all pupils; (2) encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods; (3) measure learning outcomes and create different and innovative forms of measuring outcomes; (4) establish new forms of accountability for schools; or (5) create new professional opportunities for teachers, including the opportunity to be responsible for the learning program at the school site. Charter schools employ Minnesota licensed teachers, offer services to special needs students and require students to take state and national tests to assure academic accountability and improvement. Charter schools are open to all, do not charge tuition and have no admission requirements to enroll.

Eligible New Charter School Applicants: An individual or group of individuals interested in starting a charter school are invited to apply to VOA-MN for authorization per state charter school statute. To apply to VOA-MN, applications **must**:

- Have Certificates of Attendance at the required VOA-MN Pre-Application Meeting, which will occur in July/August and may also be offered during the Annual Charter School Leadership Conference in June (dates determined annually). The required meeting will be a half day and a minimum of three board members listed on the application must participate.
- Have submitted a “Letter of Intent to Apply” by **September 1** and received a positive determination to be invited to apply by VOA-MN.
- Include a minimum of five founding board members, including at least one Minnesota licensed teacher, one parent of a student anticipating enrolling in the school and strong grassroots ties to the anticipated geographical location.
- Demonstrate alignment to the VOA-MN Charter Authorizing Program mission and vision.
- Intend to serve at least four grade levels K-12 and not be a stand-alone middle school. Preference is given to K-12 proposals.
- Contain a well-defined service-learning component.

PROCESS PHASE ONE – LETTER OF INTENT

Developers must submit an “Intent to Apply” letter to VOA-MN by **September 1** to qualify for the **December 1** application deadline. Letter of Intent content requirements include:

- The proposed name of the school and grades to be served (must include at least four grades K-12 and not be a stand-alone middle school).
- The enrollment targets by grade for the initial 5 years.
- The anticipated year the developers would like the school to open.
- The proposed location of the school with **justification** for that location.

- The names of a founding board, of a minimum of five members, that is intentionally diverse, with corresponding explanation demonstrating that founding board members have **strong grassroots ties to the anticipated geographical** location of school development. Directory information and explanation must be included for each member. A majority of founding board members must live in the proposed geographic location and include **at least** one MN licensed teacher and one parent both of which must reside in the proposed school geographic service area.
- A brief explanation of how the school would be intentionally diverse and not cater to one or two ethnic groups.
- A thorough description of program highlights and learning philosophy with a corresponding explanation of how this school will meet student needs that are **not** currently being met in the target geographic location.
- A brief explanation of why the developers are interested in VOA-MN as an authorizer and brief plan to incorporate service-learning (mission-fit).
- The developers must disclose if a consulting firm is participating in the development of the proposed charter school in any way and potential conflict of interests must be identified and addressed.
- The developers must disclose if a charter management organization or an educational management organization is participating in the development of the proposed charter school and include any contracts/agreements.
- The letter of intent should be no more than ten pages.

The Letter of Intent will be reviewed by a minimum of one CSAP member, one peer from the School Leadership Team, and the Program Manager. Developers are strongly encouraged to use the reviewer rubric to guide the development of their LOI submission. Within four weeks of receiving a Letter of Intent, the VOA-MN Authorizing Program Manager will notify developers in writing as to whether, or not, the LOI received a positive review and developers are invited to submit a full New School Application to VOA-MN.



Letter of Intent Evaluation Rubric

- **Satisfactory:** Strengths outweigh weaknesses. This rating applies to a response that contains a number of strengths. There are weaknesses, but, neither singly or collectively, are they likely to adversely impact the development and operation of a high-performing charter school.
- **Approaching Satisfactory:** Section contains strengths, but clarification / additional work is needed.
- **Unsatisfactory:** Major weaknesses outweigh any strengths. This rating applies to a response that contains a number of weaknesses that are likely to adversely impact the development and operation of a high-performing charter school.

Note: Incomplete letters will not be reviewed. Candidates must receive a minimum score of 10/12. A rating of “unsatisfactory” in any section may render the application ineligible for an invitation to apply.

Criteria	Points	Satisfactory	Approaching Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Comments:
Information contains the proposed name of the school and grades to be served (must include at least four grades K- 12 and not be a stand-alone middle school).	Required, but not scored.				
		2 points	1 point	0 points	
Information includes the enrollment targets by grade for the initial 5 years.	(0-2 possible)				
Information includes the anticipated year the developers would like the school to open.	Required, but not scored.				
		2 points	1 point	0 points	
Information includes the proposed location of the school with justification for that location.	(0-2 possible)				
		2 points	1 point	0 points	
Information includes the names of a founding board – a minimum of five members, that is intentionally diverse, and has strong grassroot ties to the anticipated geographical location of school development. Directory information is included for each member. <i>The majority of founding board members live in the proposed</i>	(0-2 possible)				

<i>geographic location and include at least one MN licensed teacher and one parent residing in the proposed school geographic service area.</i>					
		2 points	1 point	0 points	
Information includes a brief explanation of how the school would be intentionally diverse and not cater to one or two ethnic groups.	(0-2 possible)				
		2 points	1 point	0 points	
Information includes program highlights, learning philosophy and how this school will meet student needs that are currently not being met in the target geographic location.	(0-2 possible)				
		2 points	1 point	0 points	
Information explains why the developers are interested in VOA-MN as an authorizer and brief plan to incorporate service-learning (mission-fit).	(0-2 possible)				
The developers have disclosed if a consulting firm is participating in the development of the proposed charter school in any way and potential conflict of interests must be identified and addressed.	Required, but not scored.				
The developers have disclosed if a charter management organization or an educational management organization is participating in the development of the proposed charter school and include any contracts/agreements.	Required, but not scored.				
The letter of intent is no more than ten pages.	Required, but not scored.				
	Points possible	10-12	11-9	0	
OVERALL RATING / SCORE					

PROCESS PHASE TWO

New School Application Instructions

Application Deadline: Developers must submit an application to VOA-MN by **December 1 of each calendar year**. The following is an estimated timeline upon receipt of the school’s application:

- Approximately five business days for technical review and distribution of applications to peer reviewers
- Approximately 5-10 business days for peer desk review process
- Approximately 5-10 business days for applicant to provide additional clarification / information based on concerns expressed in desk review.
- Approximately five business days after the peer reviewers receive supplemental information from applicant, applicant interview occurs.
- Approximately 5-10 business days, final determination is issued from VOA-MN to applicant.
- Total estimated time span: 6-8 weeks.

Application Submission: Applicants must submit two electronic copies (one in the form of a PDF and one as a Word document) to solsen@voamn.org. The authorizing program will send a confirmation of receipt email within 48 hours.

Application Review and Interview – VOA-MN utilizes peer reviewers from high quality charter schools in the VOA-MN Network to review the application materials guided by the Application Review Rubric. No peer reviewer will be selected that may have a real or perceived conflict of interest regarding the review of the application (e.g., employee of an existing school that is reasonably close geographical proximity to the applying school). Once the initial peer desk review is completed, applicants and peer reviewers will participate in the interview process. The applicant interview focuses on school alignment with the charter school authorizing program’s vision and mission, the educational and financial viability of the proposal and the developing group’s capacity to implement an idea into a reality. VOA-MN may request follow-up materials prior to the interview process to further assess the quality of the application and developing team.

Application preference will be given to:

Applicant has board members with grassroots community ties to the anticipated location of school development.	5 pts
Applicant intends to replicate a successful charter school model and board representation from the school being replicated. Application content is evidence of replication.	10 pts
Applicant plans to serve students grades K-12.	5 pts

Rating Scale:

Satisfactory: Strengths outweigh weaknesses. This rating applies to a response that contains a number of strengths. There are weaknesses, but, neither singly or collectively, are they likely to adversely impact the development and operation of a high-performing charter school.

Approaching Satisfactory: Section contains strengths, but clarification / additional work is needed.

Unsatisfactory: Major weaknesses outweigh any strengths. This rating applies to a response that contains a number of weaknesses that are likely to adversely impact the development and operation of a high-performing charter school.

Note: A rating of “unsatisfactory” in any section may render the application ineligible for approval.

Point System: Applicants must earn a base score of no less than 95/100 points (satisfactory rating in all categories). In a competitive process with multiple applicants, the applicant receiving the highest score will be approved, which is when receiving “preference points” will come into play. Example, two applicants receive 95

points, but only one applicant qualified for preference points (higher score), so that applicant is granted approval over the other. Refer to reviewer rubric for points available for each section.

Final Determination – After the interview process the application peer reviewers make a recommendation to VOA-MN Authorizing Program leadership to approve or deny each charter school application. The VOA-MN Authorizing Program will communicate in writing the determination to the developers. Regardless of the determination, VOA-MN will provide the developing team with feedback from the application review process.

APPLICATION FORMAT

Directions for completion of the application materials should be carefully read and followed. Incomplete applications or those not following the required outline below will **NOT** be reviewed by VOA-MN. The completed forms below must be included in the application.

REQUIRED APPLICATION FORMS & ELEMENTS	
FORM/ELEMENT	# OF PAGES COUNTED AS:
Cover Sheet	Does not count toward page limit
Founder Contact List	Does not count toward page limit
Table of Contents	Does not count toward page limit
Narrative/Work Plan & Financial Plan:	Suggested category page limits:
• Executive Summary	1 page (may be single-spaced)
• School Foundation	43 pages approximately
• Educational Program Design	31 pages approximately
• Founders and Organizational Structure	10 pages approximately
• Program Implementation	15 pages approximately
• Five Year Financial Plan Including Pre-Operational Year(s) in Summary Form	6 pages approximately (may be single-spaced)
• Early Learning Programs (optional)	Optional section, not included in page limit
• Founder Résumés	Does not count toward page limit
Application Interview Process	Not applicable
Public School Conversion Information (if applicable, see New School Application Cover Sheet).	Does not count toward page limit

APPLICATION SUBMISSION

The charter school application is to be the original work of the applicants. If a source is used, the materials that are paraphrased or copied must be cited appropriately. If a template is used, the application is to be customized so that it clearly describes and meets the needs of the applicant as well as the application requirements.



APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Each application must contain the following elements.

COVER SHEET

Provide all requested information. Type information in the form fields on the attached form.

FOUNDER CONTACT LIST

Provide information for ALL individuals directly involved with the development of this new charter public school including people such as founders, board members, developers, grant writers, and consultants. Type all information in the form fields on the attached form.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Provide a clearly labeled list of application elements with corresponding page numbers.

Application Outline:

Below are the elements that must be included in the Narrative/Work Plan and Budget. Follow instructions carefully. Please use section and sub-section outline headings throughout the application.

- **APPLICATION COVER SHEET**
- **SCHOOL FOUNDERS CONTACT SHEET**
- **CERTIFICATES OF ATTENDANCE AT VOA-MN PRE-APPLICATION MEETING**

NARRATIVE/WORK PLAN & FINANCIAL PLAN

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Provides a one-page overview of the school that is planned.

Include: program highlights/learning philosophy, grade levels to be served, anticipated location, and how this school will meet student needs that are currently not being met in the community in which the school will be located.

II. SCHOOL FOUNDATION

A. Vision & Mission

Provides vision and mission statements that reflect the school's goals and purpose.

- Vision: Provide a vision statement that outlines what the school wants to be (something to be pursued).
- Mission: Provide a mission statement that outlines what the school is now (something to be accomplished).

B. Market Need and Demand

Application must thoroughly explain the compelling need for establishing the new charter school in the targeted location.

- Provide a description and location market-based research as evidence of the need for a new charter school in the anticipated location identified, including evidence and outcomes of a "Market Need and Demand Study."

"Market Need and Demand Study" means a study that includes the following for the proposed locations of the school or additional site:

- (1) current and projected demographic information;
- (2) student enrollment patterns;
- (3) information on existing schools and types of educational programs currently available. Application should identify the nearby districts, charter or private schools and the education programs already offered. Include student performance data and analysis based on the state assessment system when available (public schools).
- (4) characteristics of proposed students and families;
- (5) availability of properly zoned and classified facilities; and
- (6) quantification of existing demand for the school or site. “Demand” means the desire of prospective families to enroll their children in the proposed school’s education program. Demand can be evidenced by, for example, feedback from listening sessions or survey results from prospective families.

- Thoroughly explain community support and community ties the applicant will utilize to develop a new charter school in the anticipated location (ex. petitions, letters of support from community leaders, educators, medical community, community organizations, parents). Describe the school’s operational plan for parent and community involvement.

C. Statutory Purpose(s)

Application must:

- Describe the new and unique characteristics this school will provide to students that distinguish it from other education options available to students.
- Describe how the proposed school will meet the primary statutory purpose of a charter school, “to improve all pupil learning and all student achievement.”
- Identify one ~~or more~~ of the additional five statutory purposes for charter schools the school intends to meet (see Minn. Stat. 124E.01, Subd.1), and provide a comprehensive explanation of how the school will meet that additional purpose [VOA-MN suggests purpose (1) *increase learning opportunities for all pupils.*]

III. EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM DESIGN & HOW THE PROGRAM WILL IMPROVE STUDENT LEARNING, SUCCESS, AND ACHIEVEMENT. Presents a high-quality educational program with accountability for student achievement. Provides a description of the school’s educational program based on the market need and demand study in the geographic community to be served.

A. Educational Philosophy, Curricula, Tools, Methods and Instructional Techniques

- Describe the guiding educational philosophy of this school.
- Provide an overview of the proposed curricula, tools, methods and instructional techniques that support the educational philosophy.
- Describe the process the school will use to ensure the curricula will align with Minnesota State Academic Standards.
- Cite and explain research evidence demonstrating these curricula, tools, techniques and methods supporting student achievement (if applicable, identify schools involved).
- Identify the contribution this charter school will make to help close the achievement gap and assist educationally and economically disadvantaged and other students to succeed academically.
- Section must include how the proposed school design will meet or exceed the outcome expectations adopted by the commissioner for public school students (ie. World’s Best Workforce goals).
- Section should clearly indicate if the new charter school is planning to incorporate: digital, online, hybrid or blended learning; and/or project-based learning; and/or work-based learning.
- Section includes two SMART goals aligned to the VOA-MN Academic Standards (one for math and one for reading) and one SMART goal aligned to the VOA-MN Management and Operational Standard 2 pertaining to service learning (M/O Standard 2 - The school has a plan for Service Learning that connects classroom learning with real life lessons that come through service).

- B. Social Emotional Learning and Student Support Services.**
- Describe the school’s plan for providing research-based student support services. Explain how the school’s plan will address the social and emotional learning needs of students. Be sure to incorporate three components to promote overall student well-being: 1) mental health: social - how we relate to others; 2) emotional - how we feel; and 3) behavioral - how we act.
- C. Special Education**
- Describe how this school will provide services to students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment.
 - Include a description of the proposed Child Find process that will be used at this school.
 - Describe the school’s plan to provide special education management and services.
- D. Students with Limited English Proficiency**
- Describe how this school will provide services to students with limited English language skills.
- E. Assessment and Accountability:** VOA-MN requires that the schools we authorize be held to a high academic standard. We develop a charter contract accountability/program plan with the school that includes goals based on state standardized test scores as well as an authorizer-school agreed upon formative assessment(s) (e.g. NWEA, IBST, state OLPA). In addition to describing the justification that the applicant has for the interim assessment they propose to use, and goals aligned to that assessment, we request the following information about the school’s commitment to assessment and accountability.
- Identify the anticipated interim standardized assessment that will be used and why that assessment was chosen.
 - Describe how the school will use assessment data to drive decisions about the learning program and strategic direction of the school.
 - Include specific academic and nonacademic outcomes that students must achieve.
- F. Alignment with VOA-MN’s Authorizing Program Mission, Vision, & Service Learning.**
- Explain how the school being proposed to be authorized by VOA-MN aligns with the VOA-MN Authorizing Program mission and vision.
 - Explain how the school will incorporate meaningful student service learning into their school program requirements (e.g., food drives, reading to senior citizens).
- G. Learning Model Applicable Statutes and Rules:** If the school plans to use one or more of the learning models below, indicate how incorporation will adhere to statutes and rules:
- § Digital, online, hybrid or blended learning (Minnesota Statute § 124D.094); and/or
 - § Project-based learning (Minn. Stat. § 126C.05, subd. 20; and/or
 - § Work-based learning (Minn. R. Chapter 3505).

IV. FOUNDERS AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

A. School Founders

Describes the primary school founders and how they are well-positioned to develop and plan a new high-quality charter school.

For each person identified on the Charter Public School Founder Contact List (see form attached to this application packet), include the following information:

- Describe her/his experience and/or involvement in K-12 education;
- Describe his/her experience with the design and operation of a charter school;

Year 3																			
Year 4																			
Year 5																			
Year 6																			
Year 7																			
Year 8																			
Year 9																			
Year 10																			
																			Total

- Describe the school’s marketing strategy for recruiting and retaining the school’s target population.
- Describe how the school will conduct an open admissions process including the use of a lottery to provide equal access to all students who apply.
- Describe the school’s plan for ongoing outreach and dissemination of information about the school’s offerings and enrollment procedures to families that reflect the diversity of Minnesota’s population and targeted groups under section 124E.17, subdivision 1, paragraph (a).

[124E.17 DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION. Subdivision 1(a). Charter schools must disseminate information about how to use the charter school offerings to targeted groups, among others. *Targeted groups include low-income families and communities, students of color, ~~and~~ students who ~~are~~ are at risk of academic failure, and students underrepresented in the school’s student body relative to Minnesota’s population.*]

- If the new charter school includes an instructional preschool or prekindergarten program, describe the school’s plans to fund the program. Indicate whether the program is free to all participants or fee-based. If fee-based, include the fee structure that will be used. If applicable, describe the school’s intent to pursue a Minnesota Parent Aware rating through the Accelerated Pathway for the early learning program and other possible funding sources to sustain the program if available, such as Early Learning Scholarships, Voluntary Prekindergarten or School Readiness Plus, and Title I.

B. School Management and Staffing

Describes a plan to ensure effective and transparent management of the school’s operations.

- Provide an organizational chart for the proposed charter school, distinguishing between governance (board), management (school leader) and other proposed school employees. Include key responsibilities for each position.
- Include a staffing plan and timeline for the first contract period (pre-operational through the first three years of school operation). How will the school build its leadership, operations, and teaching staff?
- Describe the school’s plan for staffing the school with appropriately qualified and licensed personnel.
- Explain how this organizational structure is consistent with the mission and vision of the proposed charter school.
- Describe the fair and open process the interim board will use for recruiting and hiring the school leader, including:
 - The timeline for developing a job description for the school leader and then recruiting and hiring the school leader;
 - How the board will recruit potential candidates who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age or disability; and
 - Whether the board plans to hire a temporary start-up coordinator and, if so, how this person will be identified.

- Describe the school’s strategy and process for recruiting and hiring other school employees that are qualified to effectively serve the unique needs of the projected student population.
- Describe how the school will provide employees with initial and ongoing orientation and professional development about the mission, vision and outcomes of the school.

C. School Calendar

Application contains a calendar and corresponding explanation that reflects the school’s program model, proposed learning program, and transportation plan.

1. Describe the calendar the school plans to use:
 - Identify the unique characteristics of the school’s proposed calendar.
 - Describe how this proposed calendar lends itself to the school’s mission and vision.
 - Provide total number of teacher contract days.
 - Indicate the total number of student instructional days.
 - Provide the planned length of the student instructional day (excluding meals).
 - Provide a description or outline of a “typical day” at the new school.

D. Facility Plan

Describes a plan to secure a suitable facility that meets the unique needs of the school and complies with health and safety and building code requirements.

1. Facility Needs Planning Process:
 - Describe the school’s plan, including the timeline and process, for determining space needs appropriate to the program and enrollment.
 - Describe results of a preliminary facility needs assessment.
2. Facility Selection Process:
 - Describe the school’s plan, including the timeline, process and milestones to be met in locating and evaluating potential facilities and selecting a building for lease that is affordable, provides adequate space and meets all health and safety and public building code requirements.
 - Provide a description of any potential facility or facilities that have been identified.

E. Food Service Plan

Describes the school’s operational plan for providing food service to students that meets the needs of the school and complies with applicable state and federal laws.

[SCHOOL BREAKFAST AND LUNCH - Minn. Statute, section 124D.111-118]

F. Transportation Plan

Describes a plan to provide transportation that meets the needs of the school and complies with Minnesota law.

1. Transportation Options:
 - If the school will provide its own transportation, describe the school’s plan, including the timeline, process and milestones to be met in locating and evaluating potential transportation providers.
 - If the resident school district will provide transportation for the school, describe any potential impacts on the school’s learning program and school calendar.
1. Transportation Policies:
 - Describe the school’s policy for providing transportation to special populations
 - Describe the school’s policy for providing transportation to students that live outside the resident district.

VI. FIVE-YEAR FINANCIAL PLAN INCLUDING PRE-OPERATIONAL YEAR(S)

- Present a five-year financial plan including preoperational year(s), with an understanding of the proposed plan that is needed to guide and control the use of public funds for the benefit of students at the new charter school.

- Provide a comprehensive financial plan narrative that includes assumptions guiding the projections and provides rationales and substantive documentation for the projections.
- Include the ~~three~~ five-year financial plan and corresponding narrative in the application.
 - Provide a comprehensive ~~budget~~ financial plan narrative that includes assumptions guiding the projections and provides rationales and substantive documentation for the projections. Start-up funds are not included in the budget.
 - If the school intends to apply for the federal Charter Schools Program (CSP) grant funds, the financial plan should include appropriate CSP funding levels based on projected enrollment and contingencies if CSP funds are not awarded or available.
 - If the new charter school includes an instructional preschool or prekindergarten program, describe the school's plans to fund the program. Indicate whether the program is free to all participants or fee-based. If fee-based, include the fee structure that will be used. If applicable, describe the school's intent to pursue a Minnesota Parent Aware rating through the Accelerated Pathway for the early learning program, as well as other possible funding sources to sustain the program if available, such as Early Learning Scholarships, Voluntary Prekindergarten or School Readiness Plus, and Title I.

FIVE-YEAR FINANCIAL PLAN SPREADSHEET GUIDANCE

- General revenue estimates are using the current fiscal year levels issued by the legislature.
- If local revenues including grants and donations are placed in the budget, they must be off-set by an equal number of expenditures so that the financial plan is not artificially inflated.
- Complete all needed expenditure categories, as all expenditures must be included in the five-year financial plan. This should be completely explained in the narrative section of the financial plan.
- Special education expenditures are assumed for the sake of brevity in the budget. Special education revenues are figured at 95% of those expenditures. You need to calculate the special education director costs.
- The lunch program assumes a 10% loss and a transfer for that loss is built into the General Fund.
- Note that the financial plan must balance and show growth for the five-years. Any year that shows a negative balance will disqualify the application.

Note: Applicant should use the MDE “what-if” budget model available at:
<https://public.education.mn.gov/MDEAnalytics/DataTopic.jsp?TOPICID=35>

Evaluative Criteria:

The five-year operational financial plan will be evaluated against the following criteria:

1. Qualities of sound financial management are present.

Assumptions guiding the financial plan development process are defensible.

 - Enrollment estimates are based upon sound interest surveys and marketing data.
 - A valid data source for assumptions about student characteristic data is described.
 - Current and historical data assist in shaping revenue and expenditure increases and inflation assumptions.
 - Financial management strategies reflect abilities to adapt to changing fiscal conditions.
 - Financial plan balancing and cost-containment strategies address potential enrollment changes.
 - Costs for technology, capital and supplies are adequately addressed.
 - If the school intends to apply for federal Charter Schools Program (CSP) grant funds, the financial plan should include contingencies if CSP funds are not awarded.
2. Qualities of a healthy financial plan are present.

There is a positive general fund balance in each of the five-years.

 - The budget financial plan for each year increases the general fund balance.

- A General Fund balance exists even if inaccuracies are corrected.
 - The financial plan reflects only general fund items with Food Service and Community Service attached as they are critical to the operation of the school.
 - Enrollment and staffing projections are consistently used throughout all sections of the application.
3. The financial plan supports a quality school plan.
- The financial plan contains a justification for each service option listed in the application.
 - The narrative elements of the application are completed for each option.
 - Each option requiring financial plan data is consistently described throughout the application.
 - Some expenditures support the uniqueness of the school mission.
 - Special curricular expenditures are clearly supported in the narrative.
 - The financial plan contains unique and realistic staffing patterns.

** SECTION SEVEN MUST ONLY TO BE COMPLETED IF THE SCHOOL IS APPLYING FOR A PRESCHOOL EXPANSION.

VII. EARLY LEARNING PROGRAMS (Prekindergarten and Preschool Instructional Programs - *if applicable*). Section will be rated Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory, but not scored. *Schools seeking official recognition of their preschool programs must also complete the following application items A-ÆI.*

A. Comprehensive Child Assessment: Assessing each child's cognitive skills with a comprehensive child assessment instrument when the child enters and again before the child leaves the program to inform program planning and promote kindergarten readiness.

- Describe the assessment process used to measure individual child progress in all the prekindergarten and preschool instructional classes that includes the use of a standardized child assessment instrument, such as High Scope Child Observation Record (COR), Teaching Strategies Gold, or Work Sampling System.
 - The assessment must be used at least at program entrance and program exit.
 - At a minimum, the comprehensive assessment should measure children's progress in the domains of language, literacy, and mathematical thinking. Other domains may include approaches to learning, general cognitive development, physical and motor development, social and emotional development, creativity, and the arts.
 - The child assessment should be one approved by Minnesota Parent Aware. It must be a valid and reliable child assessment instrument that is developmentally appropriate and comprehensive.
 - The comprehensive child assessment must align with Minnesota's Early Childhood Indicators of Progress–Minnesota's Early Learning Standards, Revised 2017.
- Describe how the child assessment results are used to inform curricula and instruction throughout the school year.
- Describe how families are involved in the assessment process throughout the year.
- Describe how assessment results are shared between the early learning and kindergarten staff in order to maximize the building of a coherent system between early learning and kindergarten.
- Describe how the child assessment process is responsive to the cultural and linguistic needs of children in the school's early learning program.

B. Intentional Instructional Practice: Provide intentional instructional practice aligned with Minnesota's Early Childhood Indicators of Progress (ECIPs) – Minnesota's Early Learning Standards and Minnesota's Kindergarten Academic Standards. Instructional practices must be based on early childhood research and professional practice focused on children's cognitive, social, emotional, and physical skills and development that prepare children for the transition to kindergarten, including early literacy skills.

- Describe how program content and intentional instructional practices are aligned with Minnesota's ECIPs. The school should consider using a Minnesota Parent Aware aligned curricula.
- Briefly describe the curriculum used in the early learning program, such as High Scope Preschool Curriculum or Opening the World of Learning (OWL).

- Indicate how the ECIPs are incorporated into the program based on the age of children participating in the early learning program.
- Provide an overview of instructional practice to support children’s early literacy skills development.
- Describe a balance of child-initiated learning and teacher-directed pedagogies appropriate for young children’s development and interests.
- Provide a brief overview of the program’s early learning approaches (such as use of project-based learning, inquiry-based learning, learning centers, interactive learning, and play-based learning).

C. Kindergarten Transition: Coordinate appropriate kindergarten transition with parents and kindergarten teachers.

- Briefly describe the program plan for transition to kindergarten that includes meaningful coordination and planning with kindergarten teachers and engages families in a variety of ways to support children’s learning and successful transition to kindergarten. The transition plan should be responsive to the cultural and linguistic diversity of children and their families participating in the early learning program and school.
- Describe how the curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices between the early learning program and kindergarten program are aligned.
- Describe strategies to engage families in meaningful ways to support their children’s learning throughout the transition into the kindergarten year beyond one-time events.
- Describe a plan for providing guidance to families not enrolling their child in the charter school kindergarten program.

D. Community-Based Services: Coordinate relevant services and programs with community organizations.

- Provide a brief description of how the program coordinates with community organizations and how those resources are shared with families.
 - Coordination may include referrals to community programs based on child needs, such as local public health organizations, social services, mental health services, or other early learning or child care programs.
 - The coordination with community-based services should reflect the needs of the children participating in the early learning program.
 - The community-based services utilized should be responsive to the cultural and linguistic diversity of children and their families participating in the early learning program and school.
- Describe how information about community-based services can be made available to families using a variety of strategies, such as family advocates, school-home liaisons, parenting educators, social media, and informal school events.

E. Staff Ratios and Licensure: Ensure staff-child ratios of one-to-ten and maximum group size of 20 children with the staff being supervised by a licensed early childhood teacher.

- Describe how the early learning program is provided and how ratios and group size are provided to ensure a high-quality early learning program.
- For each prekindergarten and preschool instructional class, describe staff licensure area and MN teaching license file folder number and other credentials, as appropriate. If this information is not available at the time of submission, please indicate anticipated staffing licensure areas. MDE may require the school to submit staff licensure areas and MN teaching license folder numbers and other credentials when staff is hired.

F. Teacher Content Knowledge: Ensure teachers are knowledgeable in early childhood curriculum content, assessment, and instruction.

- Describe licensed staff training/professional development specific to early learning curriculum, instructional practices and assessment that has been completed in the past five years. If this information is not available at the time of submission, please indicate anticipated teacher knowledge in early childhood curriculum content, assessment, and instruction. MDE may require the school to submit evidence of teacher knowledge in early childhood curriculum content, assessment, and instruction when staff is hired.

G. Completion of Early Childhood Screening: Ensure participating children have completed health and developmental screening within 90 days of program enrollment under Minnesota Statute §§ 121A.16 to 121A.19.

- Provide a description of how and where participating children receive health and developmental screening either through a traditional school district or comparable screening from a health care provider (such as Child and Teen Checkups through local public health organizations) if the charter school is not providing the early childhood health and developmental screening program.

(Please note: It is not necessary for the charter school to provide early childhood health and developmental screening but must describe how children receive the comprehensive health and developmental screening to identify possible problems that may interfere with children’s learning.)

- Provide a plan for those children who do not successfully complete early childhood screening including how referrals will be made.

H. Plan for Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE): Ensure enrolled children receive ECSE services.

- Describe how the school ensures children enrolled in the school’s early learning program are receiving ECSE services through the children’s resident district(s). If the charter school intends to apply to MDE to offer a state-approved voluntary prekindergarten (VPK) or providing the services and supports identified in the IEPs for students enrolled in the charter school’s VPK/SRP program.

H I. Early Childhood Health and Developmental Screening (if applicable)

- Describe the school’s plan and capacity to provide the early childhood screening program in accordance with Minnesota Statute §§ 121A.16 to 121A.19 and Minnesota Rules 3530.3000, 3530.3300, and 3530.3400.
 - In discussing the school’s plan and capacity to provide an early childhood screening program, describe how the school will meet MDE accountability requirements for data submission in accordance with Minnesota Statute § 121A.17. This includes the establishment of the MARSS Preschool Screening (PS) Record and the annual data submission to MDE Early Learning Services for children receiving the early childhood screening program directly from the school or through a contracted service provider with a comparable screening program, such as a local public health organization.

VIII. FOUNDERS RESUMES - Attach a **current** (brief) résumé for each person identified on the Founder Contact List to the application.

APPLICATION INTERVIEW PROCESS – Occurs after the application desk review.

PUBLIC SCHOOL CONVERSION INFORMATION (if applicable)

Included in New School Application Cover Sheet.



**NEW SCHOOL APPLICATION COVER SHEET
CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION FOR AUTHORIZATION**

Proposed Name of New Charter Public School	
Contact Information (School mailing address, phone number, fax number, and e-mail)	
Name of Primary Contact	Primary Contact Information (If different from above) (Mailing address, phone number, fax number, and e-mail)
Grade Levels Served When Fully Enrolled	Number of Students When Fully Enrolled
Proposed Opening Date	Where Will the School be Located?
<p>Is this charter public school a conversion of an existing district public school (see Minn. Stat. § 124E.06, subd.6)?</p> <p>If “yes”, attach a separate sheet with an explanation. Yes No</p> <p><i>A conversion request is considered only with evidence of both:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>A petition from at least 60% of a school’s full-time teachers seeking conversion; and</i> - <i>Approved public school district board minutes recognizing the petition.</i> 	
<p>Is this charter public school an expansion of an existing education program in any form (public, private, or otherwise)? Yes No</p> <p>If “yes”, attach a separate sheet with an explanation.</p>	
<p>Is this charter public school planning to offer any online coursework? Yes No</p>	
<p>Has the new charter public school been approved by the State of Minnesota as a nonprofit corporation or cooperative? Yes No</p> <p>If no, provide a specific date by which the new charter public school plans to be approved as a Minnesota nonprofit corporation or cooperative. Date:</p>	

Application Preference: (check “yes” or “no”)	YES	NO
Applicant has board members with grassroots community ties to the anticipated location of school development.		
Applicant intends to replicate a successful charter school model and board representation from the school being replicated. Application content is evidence of replication.		
Applicant plans to serve students grades K-12.		

TABLE OF CONTENTS / REQUIRED APPLICATION OUTLINE	Page Number
I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	
II. SCHOOL FOUNDATION	
A. Vision & Mission	
B. Market Need and Demand	
C. Statutory Purpose(s)	
III. EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM DESIGN	
A. Educational Philosophy, Curricula, Methods and Instructional Technique.	
B. Social Emotional Learning and Student Support Services.	
C. Special Education	
D. Students with Limited English Proficiency	
E. Assessment and Accountability	
F. Alignment to VOA-MN's Authorizing Program Mission, Vision, and Service Learning	
G. Learning Model Applicable Statutes and Rules (if applicable)	
IV. FOUNDERS AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE 15 pts	
A. School Founders	
B. Governance	
V. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION	
A. Marketing, Outreach, Enrollment and Admissions.	
B. School Management and Staffing Plans	
C. School Calendar	
D. Facility Plan	
E. Food Service Plan	
F. Transportation Plan	
VI. SCHOOL FIVE-YEAR FINANCIAL PLAN INCLUDING PREOPERATIONAL YEAR(S)	
VII. EARLY LEARNING PROGRAM (if applicable)	
VIII. FOUNDERS RESUMES	



New Charter School Application Review Rubric

Applicant Name:

Reviewer Name:

Rating Scale:

- **Satisfactory:** Strengths outweigh weaknesses. This rating applies to a response that contains a number of strengths. There are weaknesses, but, neither singly or collectively, are they likely to adversely impact the development and operation of a high-performing charter school.
- **Approaching Satisfactory:** Section contains strengths, but clarification / additional work is needed.
- **Unsatisfactory:** Major weaknesses outweigh any strengths. This rating applies to a response that contains a number of weaknesses that are likely to adversely impact the development and operation of a high-performing charter school.

Note: A rating of “unsatisfactory” in any section may render the application ineligible for approval.

Point System: Applicants must earn a base score of no less than 95/100 points (satisfactory rating in all categories). In a competitive process with multiple applicants, the applicant receiving the highest score will be approved, which is when receiving “preference points” will come into play. Example, two applicants receive 95 points, but only one applicant qualified for preference points (higher score), so that applicant is granted approval over the other.

Application Preference Points (bonus points):	YES		NO
Applicants has board members that have grassroots community ties to the anticipated location of school development.		5 pts	
Applicant intends to replicate a successful charter school model <u>and</u> there is board representation from the school being replicated. Application content is evidence of replication.		10 pts	
Applicant plans to serve students grades K-12.		5 pts	

Part I: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (not scored)	
<i>Rating (mark with an “X”)</i>	<i>Comments:</i>
<i>Satisfactory</i>	
<i>Unsatisfactory</i>	
Part II – SCHOOL FOUNDATION (10 pts)	
II.A. SCHOOL VISION AND MISSION. (not scored)	
<i>Vision: statement outlines what the school wants to be (something to be pursued).</i>	
<i>Mission: statement outlines what the school is now (something to be accomplished).</i>	
<i>Rating (mark with an “X”)</i>	<i>Comments:</i>
<i>Satisfactory</i>	
<i>Unsatisfactory</i>	
II.B. MARKET NEED AND DEMAND. (5 pts.)	
<i>Rating (assign points)</i>	<i>Comments:</i>
<i>Satisfactory (5 pts)</i>	

<i>Approaching Satisfactory (4 pts)</i>		
<i>Unsatisfactory (0 pts)</i>		
II. C. STATUTORY PURPOSE (5 pts)		
<i>Rating (assign points)</i>		<i>Comments:</i>
<i>Satisfactory (5 pts)</i>		
<i>Approaching Satisfactory (4 pts)</i>		
<i>Unsatisfactory (0 pts)</i>		
Part III. EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM DESIGN & HOW THE PROGRAM WILL IMPROVE STUDENT LEARNING, SUCCESS, AND ACHIEVMENT (30 pts)		
III.A. EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY, CURRICULA, TOOLS, METHODS, AND INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNIQUES (5 pts)		
<i>Rating (assign points)</i>		<i>Comments:</i>
<i>Satisfactory (5 pts)</i>		
<i>Approaching Satisfactory (4 pts)</i>		
<i>Unsatisfactory (0 pts)</i>		
III.B. SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING AND STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES (5 pts)		
<i>Rating (assign points)</i>		<i>Comments:</i>
<i>Satisfactory (5 pts)</i>		
<i>Approaching Satisfactory (4 pts)</i>		
<i>Unsatisfactory (0 pts)</i>		
III.C. SPECIAL EDUCATION (5 pts)		
<i>Rating (mark with a "X")</i>		<i>Comments:</i>
<i>Satisfactory (5 pts)</i>		
<i>Approaching Satisfactory (4 pts)</i>		
<i>Unsatisfactory (0 pts)</i>		
III.D. STUDENTS WITH LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY (5 pts)		
<i>Rating (insert score)</i>		<i>Comments:</i>
<i>Satisfactory (5 pts)</i>		
<i>Approaching Satisfactory (4 pts)</i>		
<i>Unsatisfactory (0 pts)</i>		
III.E. ASSESMENT & ACCOUNTABILTY (5 pts)		
<i>Rating (assign score)</i>		<i>Comments:</i>
<i>Satisfactory (5 pts)</i>		
<i>Approaching Satisfactory (4 pts.)</i>		
<i>Unsatisfactory (0 pts)</i>		
III.F. ALIGNMENT TO VOA-MN AUTHORIZING PROGRAM & SERVICE LEARNING (5 pts)		
<i>Rating (assign score)</i>		<i>Comments:</i>
<i>Satisfactory (5 pts)</i>		
<i>Approaching Satisfactory (4 pts.)</i>		
<i>Unsatisfactory (0 pts)</i>		
III.G. LEARNING MODEL APPLICABLE STATUTES & RULES (not scored)		
<i>Rating (mark with an "X")</i>		
<i>Satisfactory</i>		<i>Comments:</i>
<i>Unsatisfactory</i>		

Part IV. FOUNDERS AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE (10 pts)**IV.A. SCHOOL FOUNDERS (5 pts)**

<i>Rating (assign score)</i>		<i>Comments:</i>
<i>Satisfactory (5 pts)</i>		
<i>Approaching Satisfactory (4 pts)</i>		
<i>Unsatisfactory (0 pts)</i>		

IV.B. GOVERNANCE (40 5 pts)

<i>Rating (insert score)</i>		<i>Comments:</i>
<i>Satisfactory (5 pts)</i>		
<i>Approaching Satisfactory (4 pts)</i>		
<i>Unsatisfactory (0 pts)</i>		

Part V. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION (20 pts)**V.A. MARKETING, OUTREACH, ENROLLMENT & ADMISSIONS (10 pts)**

<i>Rating (insert score)</i>		<i>Comments:</i>
<i>Satisfactory (9-10 pts.)</i>		
<i>Approaching Satisfactory (8 pts.)</i>		
<i>Unsatisfactory (0 pts.)</i>		

V.B. SCHOOL MANAGEMENT AND STAFFING (10 pts)

<i>Rating (insert score)</i>		<i>Comments:</i>
<i>Satisfactory (9-10 pts.)</i>		
<i>Approaching Satisfactory (8 pts.)</i>		
<i>Unsatisfactory (0 pts.)</i>		

V.C. SCHOOL CALENDAR (not scored)

<i>Rating (mark with a "X")</i>		<i>Comments:</i>
<i>Satisfactory</i>		
<i>Unsatisfactory</i>		

V.D. FACILITY PLAN (not scored)

<i>Rating (mark with a "X")</i>		<i>Comments:</i>
<i>Satisfactory</i>		
<i>Unsatisfactory</i>		

V.E. FOOD SERVICE PLAN (not scored)

<i>Rating (mark with a "X")</i>		<i>Comments:</i>
<i>Satisfactory</i>		
<i>Unsatisfactory</i>		

V.F. TRANSPORTATION PLAN (not scored)

<i>Rating (mark with a "X")</i>		<i>Comments:</i>
<i>Satisfactory</i>		
<i>Unsatisfactory</i>		

Part VI. FIVE - YEAR FINANCIAL PLAN INCLUDING PRE-OPERATIONAL YEARS(S) (10 pts)

<i>Rating (insert score)</i>		<i>Comments:</i>
<i>Satisfactory (9-10 pts)</i>		
<i>Approaching Satisfactory (8 pts)</i>		

<i>Unsatisfactory (0 pts)</i>		
Part VII: EARLY LEARNING PROGRAMS (Instructional Preschool or Prekindergarten - <i>if applicable</i>)		
Section will be rated Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory, but not scored.		
VII.A. COMPREHENSIVE CHILDHOOD ASSESSMENT		
<i>Rating (mark with a "X")</i>		<i>Comments:</i>
<i>Satisfactory</i>		
<i>Unsatisfactory</i>		
VII.B. – INTENTIONAL INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES		
<i>Rating (mark with a "X")</i>		<i>Comments:</i>
<i>Satisfactory</i>		
<i>Unsatisfactory</i>		
VII.C. KINDERGARTEN TRANSITION		
<i>Rating (mark with a "X")</i>		<i>Comments:</i>
<i>Satisfactory</i>		
<i>Unsatisfactory</i>		
VII.D. COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES		
<i>Rating (mark with a "X")</i>		<i>Comments:</i>
<i>Satisfactory</i>		
<i>Unsatisfactory</i>		
VII.E. EARLY LEARNING STAFFING RATIOS AND LICENSURE		
<i>Rating (mark with a "X")</i>		<i>Comments:</i>
<i>Satisfactory</i>		
<i>Unsatisfactory</i>		
VII.F. EARLY LEARNING TEACHER CONTENT KNOWLEDGE		
<i>Rating (mark with a "X")</i>		<i>Comments:</i>
<i>Satisfactory</i>		
<i>Unsatisfactory</i>		
VII.G. COMPLETION OF EARLY CHILDHOOD SCREENING		
<i>Rating (mark with a "X")</i>		<i>Comments:</i>
<i>Satisfactory</i>		
<i>Unsatisfactory</i>		
VII.H. PLAN FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD SPECIAL EDUCATION (ECSE)		
<i>Rating (mark with a "X")</i>		<i>Comments:</i>
<i>Satisfactory</i>		
<i>Unsatisfactory</i>		
VII.I. CONDUCTING EARLY CHILDHOOD HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT SCREENING (if applicable)		
<i>Rating (mark with a "X")</i>		<i>Comments:</i>
<i>Satisfactory</i>		
<i>Unsatisfactory</i>		
Part VIII: APPLICANT INTERVIEW (20 pts.)		
<i>Rating (insert score)</i>		<i>Comments:</i>
<i>Satisfactory (19-20 pts)</i>		

<i>Approaching Satisfactory (17-18 pts)</i>		
<i>Unsatisfactory (0 pts)</i>		
<i>Base Points</i>	<i>/100</i>	Recommendation: <input type="checkbox"/> Approve <input type="checkbox"/> Not Approve
<i>Preference Points</i>	<i>/ 20</i>	
<i>Final Score</i>	<i>/ 100-120</i>	