

Clay Charter Academy

Florida Charter Educational Foundation, Inc

Comments from Sandra Emery
Community Representative for Charter School Applications
School District of Clay County
August 2014

After completing a comprehensive review of the application for the Clay Charter Academy, I found it to be a sound application worthy of consideration for approval by the School District of Clay County. According to the application, the Clay Charter Academy is designed to provide another avenue of school choice for families in the community with a focus on high academic achievement and community involvement. Clay Charter Academy will be open to all students in grades K-6 during the first year of operation. A grade level will be added each year to eventually provide for a K-8 educational choice. It is the intent of the applicant to build a facility in central Clay County.

The Clay Charter Academy will use Charter School USA (CSUSA) as its educational service provider. According to the application, CSUSA is the educational service provider for 58 schools in the United States. The charter school will be utilizing the Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum. The application states that this curriculum is researched based, data driven, and aligned with the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards and Florida Standards. Twenty one charter schools in the state of Florida currently use the applicant's educational model. The application reports that the preliminary school grades for 2013 were seven A's, eight B's, five C's and one D.

The Clay Charter Academy is offering some noteworthy initiatives to parents and students. These include:

- A five day "specials" rotation for Spanish, music, art, technology, and physical education.

- “Bell to Bell Instruction” where teachers will be held to an efficient use of instructional time by mapping out lesson plans minute by minute to engage students in the learning process for the entire instructional period. Minutes are posted in the classroom for all students and visitors to see.
- Parental access to a student information system that provides real time information about their child’s class work, test grades and weekly progress reports towards meeting educational standards. This access will lead to the collaborative development of a “student personal learning plan” with the parent, school staff and student as stakeholders.
- A required 20 hours of parent volunteering.
- Free tutoring to students in need of additional academic interventions before and after schools and on Saturdays. Tutoring will be provided by the instructional staff and will utilize different instructional strategies than were originally used.

As the community representative to the charter school application process, I recommend the school board consider approval of the application.

Florida Charter School Application Evaluation Instrument

Each section presents criteria for a response that meets the standard, and these criteria should guide the overall rating for the section. The Strengths and Weaknesses boxes provide space to identify data and other evidence that supports the rating. The rationale for each rating is important, especially if some of the data or evidence does not fit neatly into the criteria provided.

The following definitions should guide the ratings:

Meets the Standard: The response reflects a thorough understanding of key issues and demonstrates capacity to open and operate a quality charter school. It addresses the topic with specific and accurate information that shows thorough preparation and presents a clear, realistic picture of how the school expects to operate.

Partially Meets the Standard: The response addresses most of the criteria, but the Responses lack meaningful detail and require important additional information.

Does Not Meet the Standard: The response lacks meaningful detail; demonstrates lack of preparation; or otherwise raises substantial concerns about the applicant's understanding of the issue in concept and/or ability to meet the requirement in practice.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT – COMPLETE THIS SECTION LAST

Would you recommend approval of this application for a public charter school? Explain your recommendation in the Summary Comments section, below.

| | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| DENY | APPROVE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

Clay County Charter School Review Committee

Name and title of person completing assessment: Frances Y. Celis

Signature of person completing assessment: *F Y Celis*

Date: 6/13/14

The committee has voted unanimously to recommend approval of this application.

I. Educational Plan

The education plan should define what students will achieve, how they will achieve it, and how the school will evaluate performance. It should provide a clear picture of what a student who attends the school will experience in terms of educational climate, structure, assessment and outcomes.

1. Mission, Guiding Principles and Purpose.

The Mission, Guiding Principles and Purpose section should indicate what the school intends to do, for whom and to what degree.

Statutory Reference(s): s.1002.33(2)(a); s.1002.33(2)(b); s.1002.33(2)(c); s.1002.33(6)(a)(1); s.1002.33(7)(a)(1)

Evaluation Criteria:

A response that meets the standard will present:

- A compelling mission statement that defines the purpose and values of the school.
- A set of priorities that are meaningful, manageable and measurable, and focused on improving student outcomes.

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Meets the Standard | Partially Meets the Standard | Does Not Meet the Standard |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| Strengths | Reference |
|---|-----------|
| Aligns to CSB initiatives focusing on student engagement. | |

| Concerns and Additional Questions | Reference |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| | |

2. Target Population and Student Body

The Target Population and Student Body section should describe the anticipated target population of the school and explain how the school will be organized by grade structure, class size and total student enrollment over the term of the school's charter.

Statutory Reference(s): s.1002.33(10)(e); s.1002.33(6)(b)(2); s.1002.33(7)(a)(1); s.1003.03

Evaluation Criteria:

A response that meets the standard will present:

- An understanding of the students the charter school intends to serve.
- If the applicant proposes to target certain populations, the projected student body should align with the overall mission of the school.

| Meets the Standard | Partially Meets the Standard | Does Not Meet the Standard |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| Strengths | Reference |
|------------------------------------|-----------|
| Clear definition school structure. | |

| Concerns and Additional Questions | Reference |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| | |

3. Educational Program Design

The Educational Program Design section should describe the educational foundation of the school and the teaching and learning strategies that will be employed.

Statutory Reference(s): s.1002.33(7)(a)(2)

Evaluation Criteria:

A response that meets the standard will present an educational program design that:

- Is clear and coherent;
- Is based on effective, research-based educational practices, teaching methods and high standards for student learning
- Aligns with the school's mission and responds to the needs of the school's target population; and
- Presents evidence that the proposed approach will lead to improved student performance for the school's target population.

| Meets the Standard | Partially Meets the Standard | Does Not Meet the Standard |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| Strengths | Reference |
|--|-----------|
| Design is built around the use of data to make instructional decisions. Includes a plan for determining student needs and related interventions. | |

| Concerns and Additional Questions | Reference |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| | |

4. Curriculum Plan

The Curriculum Plan section should explain not only **what** the school will teach but also **how** and **why**.

Statutory Reference(s): s. 1002.33(6)(a)(2); s.1002.33(6)(a)(4); s.1002.33(7)(a)(2); s.1002.33(7)(a)(4)

Evaluation Criteria:

A response that meets the standard will present a curriculum plan that:

- Provides a clear and coherent framework for teaching and learning;
- Is research-based;
- Is consistent with the school's mission, educational philosophy and instructional approach;
- Will enable students to attain Sunshine State Standards and receive a year's worth of learning for each year enrolled; and
- Will be appropriate for all students at all levels.

| Meets the Standard | Partially Meets the Standard | Does Not Meet the Standard |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| Strengths | Reference |
|--|-----------|
| Plan supports implementation of new standards. | |

| Concerns and Additional Questions | Reference |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| | |

5. Student Performance, Assessment and Evaluation

The Student Performance, Assessment and Evaluation section should define what students attending the school should know and be able to do and reflect how the academic progress of individual students, cohorts over time, and the school as a whole will be measured.

Statutory Reference(s): s.1002.33(6)(a)(3); s.1002.33(7)(a)(3); s.1002.33(7)(a)(4); s.1002.33(7)(a)(5)

Evaluation Criteria:

A response that meets the standard will present:

- Measurable educational goals and objectives that set high standards for student performance.
- Promotion standards that are based on high expectations and provide clear criteria for promotion from one level to the next, and for graduation (if applicable).
- Evidence that a range of valid and reliable assessments will be used to measure student performance.
- Assessment activities that are sufficiently frequent and a detailed plan to determine whether students are making adequate progress.
- Evidence that data will inform decisions about adjustments to the educational program.
- Plans for sharing student performance information that will keep students and parents well informed of academic progress.

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Meets the Standard | Partially Meets the Standard | Does Not Meet the Standard |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| | |
|------------------------|------------------|
| Strengths | Reference |
| Solid assessment plan. | |

| | |
|--|------------------|
| Concerns and Additional Questions | Reference |
| | |

6. Exceptional Students

The Exceptional Students section should demonstrate an understanding of the requirements of the school to serve all students and provide a concrete plan for meeting the broad spectrum of educational needs and providing all students with a quality education.

Statutory Reference(s): s.1002.33(16)(a)(3)

Evaluation Criteria:

A response that meets the standard will present:

- Clear description of the levels of service the school will provide to students with disabilities.
- A clear description of how the school will ensure that students with disabilities (SWD) will have an equal opportunity of being selected for enrollment.
- An understanding and commitment to collaborating with the sponsor to ensure that placement decisions for students with disabilities will be made based on each student's unique needs.
- An appropriate plan for evaluating the school's effectiveness in serving exceptional students, including gifted.
- A realistic enrollment projection (SWD) and staffing plan that aligns with the projection.

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Meets the Standard | Partially Meets the Standard | Does Not Meet the Standard |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| Strengths | Reference |
|---|-----------|
| Clear plan for serving SWD, including students on a 504 plan. | |

| Concerns and Additional Questions | Reference |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| | |

7. English Language Learners

The English Language Learners section should demonstrate an understanding of the requirements of the school to serve English Language Learner students and provide a concrete plan for meeting the broad spectrum of educational needs and providing all students with a quality education.

Statutory Reference(s): s.1002.33(10)

Evaluation Criteria:

A response that meets the standard will present:

- Demonstrated understanding of state and federal requirements regarding the education of English language learner students.
- Sound plans for educating English language learner students that reflect the full range of programs and services required to provide all students with a high quality education.
- Demonstrated capacity to meet the school's obligations under state and federal law regarding the education of English language learner students.

| Meets the Standard | Partially Meets the Standard | Does Not Meet the Standard |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| Strengths | Reference |
|------------------------------------|-----------|
| Federal requirements are in place. | |

| Concerns and Additional Questions | Reference |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| | |

8. School Climate and Discipline

The School Climate and Discipline section should describe the learning environment of the school and provide evidence that the school will ensure a safe environment conducive to learning.

Statutory Reference(s): s.1002.33(7)(a)(7); s.1002.33(7)(a)(11); s.1002.33(9)

Evaluation Criteria:

A response that meets the standard will present:

- A sound approach to classroom management and student discipline.
- Legally sound policies for student discipline, suspension, dismissal.

| Meets the Standard | Partially Meets the Standard | Does Not Meet the Standard |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| Strengths | Reference |
|---|-----------|
| Will utilize the CCSSB Code of Student Conduct. | |

| Concerns and Additional Questions | Reference |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| | |

II. Organizational Plan

The Organizational Plan should provide an understanding of how the school will be governed and managed. It should present a clear picture of the school's governance and management priorities, what responsibilities various groups and people will have, and how those groups will relate to one another.

9. Governance

The Governance section should describe how the policy-making and oversight function of the school will be structured and operate.

Statutory Reference(s): s.1002.33(7)(a)(15); s.1002.33(9)

Evaluation Criteria:

A response that meets the standard will present:

- Documentation of proper legal structure of the governing board, or a plan to organize in conformity with the laws of Florida.
- A clear understanding and description of the governing board's responsibilities.
- Evidence that the proposed governing board will contribute to the wide range of knowledge and skill needed to oversee a charter school.
- A clear, sensible delineation of roles and responsibilities in relation to governance and school management.
- A sensible method for resolving disputes between parents and the school.

| Meets the Standard | Partially Meets the Standard | Does Not Meet the Standard |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| Strengths | Reference |
|---|-----------|
| <p style="font-family: cursive;">Governing board has extensive experience with governing charter schools.</p> | |

| Concerns and Additional Questions | Reference |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| | |

10. Management

The Management section should describe how the day-to-day administration of the school's operations will be structured and fulfilled.

Statutory Reference(s): s.1002.33(7)(a)(9); s.1002.33(7)(a)(14)

Evaluation Criteria:

A response that meets the standard will present:

- A management structure that includes clear delineation of the roles and responsibilities for administering the day-to-day activities of the school.
- A sound plan for the recruitment, selection and evaluation of the school leader.
- A viable and adequate staffing plan aligned with the projected student enrollment.
- A sound plan for recruiting and retaining qualified and capable staff.

| Meets the Standard | Partially Meets the Standard | Does Not Meet the Standard |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| Strengths | Reference |
|---|-----------|
| A detailed process for recruiting and hiring the school leadership is in place. | |

| Concerns and Additional Questions | Reference |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| | |

11. Education Service Providers

The term “education service provider” (ESP) refers to any number of organizations that contract with the governing board of a school to provide comprehensive services. The three major types of ESPs that serve charter schools are education management organizations, comprehensive school design providers, and virtual school management organizations. The Education Service Provider section should describe, if applicable, the contractual arrangement between the school’s governing board and such a provider.

Statutory Reference(s): s.1002.33(7)(a)(9)

Evaluation Criteria:

A response that meets the standard will present:

- A persuasive explanation of the reasons for contracting with an education service provider.
- A persuasive explanation that the proposed relationship with the ESP will further the school’s mission and program.
- A clear description of the services to be provided by the ESP.
- A clear delineation of the roles and responsibilities between the school’s governing board and the ESP.
- A clearly defined performance-based relationship between the school’s governing board and the ESP.

| Meets the Standard | Partially Meets the Standard | Does Not Meet the Standard |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| Strengths | Reference |
|--|-----------|
| Charter Schools USA has a successful track record in managing schools. | |

| Concerns and Additional Questions | Reference |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| | |

12. Employment

The Employment section should define the policies and procedures that frame the school's relationship with its staff.

Statutory Reference(s): s.1002.33(7)(a)(14); s.1002.33(12)

Evaluation Criteria:

A response that meets the standard will present:

- A compensation plan that will attract and retain quality staff.
- Policies and procedures that hold staff to high professional standards or a sound plan for development of policies and procedures.

| Meets the Standard | Partially Meets the Standard | Does Not Meet the Standard |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| Strengths | Reference |
|--|-----------|
| Comprehensive compensation plan to attract and retain quality teachers, as well as a complete professional development plan. | |

| Concerns and Additional Questions | Reference |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| | |

13. Student Recruitment and Enrollment

The Student Recruitment and Enrollment section should describe how the school will attract and enroll its student body.

Statutory Reference(s): s.1002.33(7)(a)(7); s.1002.33(7)(a)(8); s.1002.33(10)

Evaluation Criteria:

A response that meets the standard will present:

- A student recruitment plan that will enable the school to attract its targeted population.
- An enrollment and admissions process that is open, fair, and in accordance with applicable law.

| Meets the Standard | Partially Meets the Standard | Does Not Meet the Standard |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| Strengths | Reference |
|--|-----------|
| A detailed, three part plan for recruitment is outlined. | |

| Concerns and Additional Questions | Reference |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| | |

III. Business Plan

The Business Plan should provide an understanding of how the charter operators intend to manage the school's finances. It should present a clear picture of the school's financial viability including the soundness of revenue projections; expenditure requirements; and how well the school's budget aligns with and supports effective implementation of the educational program.

14. Facilities

The Facilities section should provide an understanding of the school's anticipated facilities needs and how the school plans to meet those needs.

Statutory Reference(s): s.1002.33(7)(a)(13); s.1002.33(18)

Evaluation Criteria:

A response that meets the standard will present:

- A realistic plan for securing a facility that is appropriate and adequate for the school's program and targeted population.
- Evidence that the school has access to the necessary resources to fund the facilities plan.

| Meets the Standard | Partially Meets the Standard | Does Not Meet the Standard |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| Strengths | Reference |
|--|-----------|
| A site has yet to be identified, however a clear plan for providing an appropriate facility is in place. | |

| Concerns and Additional Questions | Reference |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| | |

15. Transportation

The Transportation section should describe how the school will address these services for its student body.

Statutory Reference(s): s.1002.33(20)

Evaluation Criteria:

A response that meets the standard will present:

- A transportation plan that will serve all eligible students.

| Meets the Standard | Partially Meets the Standard | Does Not Meet the Standard |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| Strengths | Reference |
|--|-----------|
| A plan is in place to contract the necessary transportation. | |

| Concerns and Additional Questions | Reference |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| | |

16. Food Service

The Food Service section should describe how the school will address these services for its student body.

Statutory Reference(s): s.1002.33(20)(a)(1)

Evaluation Criteria:

A response that meets the standard will present:

- A food service plan that will serve all students.

| Meets the Standard | Partially Meets the Standard | Does Not Meet the Standard |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| Strengths | Reference |
|--|-----------|
| A food service plan is in place to serve all students. | |

| Concerns and Additional Questions | Reference |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| | |

17. **Budget**

The Budget section should provide financial projections for the school over the term of its charter.

Statutory Reference(s): s.1002.33(6)(a)(5); s.1002.33(6)(b)(2)

Evaluation Criteria:

A response that meets the standard will present:

- Budgetary projections which are consistent with all parts of the application, including the school's mission, educational program, staffing plan and facility.
- A realistic assessment of the projected sources of revenue and expenses that ensure the financial viability of the school.
- A sound plan to monitor the budget and make adjustments as necessary.

| Meets the Standard | Partially Meets the Standard | Does Not Meet the Standard |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| Strengths | Reference |
|---|-----------|
| All areas are covered and concur with the proposal of the school. | |

| Concerns and Additional Questions | Reference |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| | |

18. Financial Management and Oversight

The Financial Management and Oversight section should describe how the school's finances will be managed and who will be responsible for the protection of student and financial records.

Statutory Reference(s): s.1002.33(6)(a)(5); s.1002.33(7)(a)(9); s.1002.33(7)(a)(11)

Evaluation Criteria:

A response that meets the standard will present:

- A clear description of how the school's finances will be managed. The description must include assurances that the governing board retains ultimate control over the school's finances.
- A clear description of strong internal controls. The system of internal controls must be sufficient to safeguard finances.

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Meets the Standard | Partially Meets the Standard | Does Not Meet the Standard |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| Strengths | Reference |
|---|-----------|
| A three part process is defined to oversee the budget and make necessary adjustments. | |

| Concerns and Additional Questions | Reference |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| | |

19. Action Plan

The Action Plan should provide a clear roadmap of the steps and strategies that will be employed to prepare the school to be ready to serve its students well on the first day of operation.

Statutory Reference(s): s.1002.33(7)(a)(16)

Evaluation Criteria:

A response that meets the standard will present an action plan that:

- Provides a thoughtful and realistic implementation plan that covers major operational items and provides flexibility for addressing unanticipated events.

| Meets the Standard | Partially Meets the Standard | Does Not Meet the Standard |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| Strengths | Reference |
|------------------------------------|-----------|
| Action plan timeline is realistic. | |

| Concerns and Additional Questions | Reference |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| | |