

# **Technical Assistance Guide for**

## **School District of Clay County Charter School Applicants**

Please use the information included in this packet to help you answer the application questions as thoroughly and clearly as possible in the sequence in which they appear. Included in this packet are copies of the required timelines, forms and worksheets.

### **Helpful Hints**

- Answer all questions, making sure that all parts of the question are answered. If the question asks you to describe, do so in detail.
- Use Times New Roman font, size 12 with 1-inch margins on all sides.
- Proofread your responses. Check for grammar, spelling, punctuation, etc.
- Have someone who is not as close to it read the application to see if what you said is understood and that your vision is clear. Don't assume the reader knows your "proposed school." Paint a clear picture of your vision and what you are trying to achieve.
- Organize the application in the order requested.
- Number the pages.
- Use dividers to label the various sections or attachments.
- Recheck your figures for mathematical errors. Finances must be balanced.
- All types of source revenues and expenditures will be expected in order to implement the academic programs presented within this application. Therefore, estimated source revenues and expenditures must be recognized and provided within the presentation of the Four-year Business/Balanced Budget plans.
- Within the presentation of the four-year Business/Balance Budget plans, an explanation is required of how all types of source revenues and expenditures are used to support and conform to the academic programs presented within this application.

## A. Guiding Principles, Purpose and Mission

1. State the school's mission statement.
  - State the school's mission statement as printed on all applicable school documents.
  - Be concise and to the point.
  
3. Describe how the school will infuse the Guiding Principles found in F.S. 1002.33 (2) (a) into every aspect of the school's program. *(Use Form A in this packet as needed.)*
  - Identify the need for this particular proposed charter school using specific data. Use data and data sources from various community agencies/organizations to assist you in gaining this information.
  - Show the connection between the need for the school and the underlying philosophy of the school.
  - Refer to the results of any needs assessments or surveys you might have conducted.
  - All outcomes should be specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound (SMART).
  - Outcomes should measure changes in knowledge, attitude and/or behaviors and be benchmarks to achieving the long-term goals.
  - Process outcomes may be included as a means to attain an outcome, but are not considered outcomes. Examples: # of students participating, # of teachers attending.
  - Measurable outcomes should include the following elements: date of completion, target population, direction of proposed change, amount of proposed change, data element, data source, and baseline statistic. **EXAMPLE:** *By December 30, 2007, to decrease by 5% the number of fighting incidents per 1000 for students, grades PK-12, as measured by the 2006-2007 School Environmental Safety Incident Report (SESIR) data. According to the 2005-06 SESIR data, the number of fighting incidents per 1000 for students, grades PK-12 is 26.43.*
  
4. Describe how the school will meet the Prescribed Purposes of a charter school found in F.S. 1002.33 (2) (b). *(Use Form A in this packet as needed.)*
  - Goals should be general statements of specific overall outcomes for the length of the contract term.
  - All goals should be specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound (SMART).
  - Outcomes should measure changes in knowledge, attitudes and/or behaviors.

- Measurable goals should include the following elements: date of completion, target population, direction of proposed change, amount of proposed change, data element, data source, and baseline statistic. **EXAMPLE:** *By June 30, 2008, to decrease by 5% the number of fighting incidents per 1000 for students, grades PK-12, as measured by the 2006-2007 School Environmental Safety Incident Report (SESIR) data. According to the 2005-06 SESIR data, the number of fighting incidents per 1000 for students, grades PK-12 is 26.43.*
5. Describe the target student population to be served, including student ages and grade levels at the school. If applicable, define any target populations permitted in F.S. 1002.33 (10) (d). (Use Form B in this packet as needed.)
- Provide an overview of the anticipated student population demographics including free/reduced lunch, ethnicity, mobility rate, truancy rate, area of town, etc.
  - On Form B, the following refer to:
    - # of Students – Total number of students per grade level per year
    - EE/SS – Exceptional Education/Student Services
    - LEP – Limited English Proficient Student
    - DO – A student enrolled in a dropout prevention program
  - Provide demographic information on the targeted student population. Use data and data sources from various community agencies/organizations to gain this information.
  - If you are addressing the “at-risk” population, explain how they are at-risk and what you are using to determine that they are at-risk.

Reviewers will look for the following:

- Does the mission statement define the nature and purpose of the school and is it based on a philosophy of education or a theory about teaching and learning?
- Does the school's mission provide the foundation for the entire charter application? Is the mission statement clear, focused, free of jargon, and consistent with high academic standards and student success?
- Does the stated purpose of the school adequately inform the public about who the charter school intends to reach and how the charter school seeks to make a difference in public education and in its community?
- Is the mission statement reflected throughout all sections of the application?
- Does the application adequately address the required integration of the Guiding Principles?
- Does the application speak clearly to the purposes Charter Schools are required to fulfill?
- Is there a clearly articulated vision for an innovative public school that will lead to improved educational outcomes?

- Are there clear indicators that the proposed educational program will aid in accomplishing the mission of the charter school?

## **B. Educational Program**

1. Describe the educational program of the school, providing an overview of curriculum objectives and content of the main subject areas. The curriculum plan must be detailed and clearly illustrate how students will be provided those education services necessary for them to meet the Sunshine State Standards.
  - Discuss the format of the school and how it will address the needs of the student population.
  - Provide information on the various types of programs the school will offer.
2. Describe the school's reading curriculum.
  - Cite articles in peer-reviewed journals to document whether a strategy has been effective with particular populations.
  - List the instructional methods and strategies. Show how they connect to student learning and discuss how they will be used in your particular situation.
3. List the Goals and Objectives to be used for improving student learning.
  - Curricula must be aligned with the Sunshine State Standards.
  - Note that not all of the packaged curricula are aligned with the Sunshine State Standards. You may need to do the alignment.
  - Do not include just the publisher's scope and sequence.
4. How will the proposed education program of the school address the educational needs of the targeted student population?
  - Discuss the format of the school and how it will address the needs of the student population.
  - Provide information on the various types of programs the school will offer.
  - Provide the number of students per teacher at your school.

5. A charter school is charged with the directive to be innovative and creative; to do something different than a traditional school. Describe how your school will be innovative and creative.
  - Charter schools are required to be innovative and creative.
  - Think about what makes this school different from other schools within the district.
  - Identify the characteristics which make this school unique.
  - Be true to the mission of the school and the needs of the targeted students.
6. Describe specific instructional methods and strategies your school will use to enhance student learning and which are part of what will make your school innovative and unique.
  - Cite articles in peer-reviewed journals to document that a program or resource has been effective with particular populations.
  - Access other reputable sources, such as the U.S. Department of Education, for listings of "model programs" or "exemplary programs", which have been research validated.
  - Include the specific name of the program or resource and, if necessary, note the publisher.
7. Submit a copy of the Student Progression Plan that sets forth the criteria for students being placed, promoted, or retained, and graduation requirements. Provide a detailed description of any specific differences between the charter school's Student Progression Plan and the Student Progression Plan approved by the Clay County School Board. Submit the Student Progression Plan as Attachment #05.
  - A copy of your school's approved Student Progression Plan.
  - If the Clay County Public Schools' Student Progression Plan is used, make all the necessary changes to reflect the name of the school.
  - If the Clay County Public Schools' Student Progression Plan is used, change those sections that are not applicable to the school.
8. For secondary charter schools, identify the courses that will be offered by the charter school. Explain how the school will address the secondary Florida Course Descriptions, including laboratory investigations for science courses.
  - List by grade level, the required and elective courses which will be offered by the school.
9. Describe how members of your school's instructional staff will comply with F.S. 1003.42 (2) with respect to required areas of study.
  - Explain how the school will teach the required areas of study identified in this statute, e.g., character education, Declaration of Independence, United States Constitution, and Holocaust.
10. Identify how the school will provide expanded learning opportunities for students requiring remedial assistance. Include opportunities that occur before, during and after school, as well as on non-school days. Methods to determine the effectiveness of these opportunities must be included in the assessment and budget sections of this application.

- Name the various learning opportunities offered at the school. Examples may include, but are not limited to, mentoring, before-school tutoring, after-school tutoring, and Saturday school.
  - Name and discuss the various avenues through which remediation will take place.
  - Discuss how these learning opportunities will increase student academic achievement.
  - Do not include only process information. You must include outcomes that show the impact of the opportunity on student achievement.
  - Include letters of support from any agencies or organizations which are providing services to the school.
11. Provide a professional development plan and timeline that shows how teachers and staff will be trained in the identified curriculum, resources and strategies. Professional development costs, including travel, consultants, stipends, substitutes, resources, etc. must be identified in the budget.
- Include in this plan the following: topic, vendor/consultant, target population, resources, stipends and/or substitutes, travel, and costs.
  - Securing quotes from various vendors or consultants will be helpful in planning the timeline and budget.
  - Contracts may need to be secured if using specific resources.
12. Describe the Technology Plan to be implemented. Submit a copy of the Technology Plan as Attachment #06.
13. Exceptional Education/Student Services (EE/SS)
- Remember to include a range of services.
  - Every child does not fit one delivery model. The delivery model(s) should depend on the individual needs of each child.
  - Explain in detail the instructional strategies that will be used for students who may be following special standards.
  - Explain your understanding of accommodations and modifications and the difference between them.
  - Provide examples of how they apply to students following regular and special needs.
  - Be sure to include IEP Team members that would be required by law.
  - Distinguish between teams that would be required for a general school intake and an IEP review.
  - Refer to the district admissions process.
14. Limited English Proficient (LEP)
- Attach a sample LEP Committee form.

- Attach a copy of your school's Home Language Survey.
- Attach a form that reflects language assessment data, current student schedule, and post monitoring.

Reviewers will look for the following:

- Are the innovative teaching methods and curriculum approaches based on high academic standards?
- Is the overview of curriculum substantive and clear?
- Is the proposed educational program coherent? Is it founded on an understanding of research-based education theories (particularly in reading), teaching methods, and core academic subjects and curricula sources?
- Is there consistency between the mission, curriculum, and student population to be served?
- Is the proposed educational program in compliance with applicable regulations designed to meet the needs of limited English proficient and special needs students?
- Is there a detailed description of the school's curriculum highlighting the Goals and Objectives to be used to ensure each child received a year's worth of learning for each year spent in school?
- Is there information of the differentiated reading curricula required by law?
- Please Note: Sponsors are required to deny a charter if the school proposes a reading curriculum that is not consistent with effective teaching strategies that are grounded in significantly based reading research.
- Is there identification of appropriate technologies needed to improve educational and administrative performance, including a means for promoting safe, ethical, and appropriate uses of technology which comply with legal and professional standards?

## C. Student Assessment

### NOTE:

- **Use of School District of Clay County (SDCC) assessment instruments and scoring services are subject to a fee and must be reflected in the charter school applicant's budget.**
- **All students are required to participate in state assessments as scheduled in the District's testing /survey schedule.**
- **All schools must designate a testing liaison or Test Coordinator (who is required to attend all training sessions).**
- **The Charter School Coordinator and the Testing Office Director must be notified immediately about changes.**

Reviewers will look for the following:

- Is there a commitment to high standards, which are linked to the school's mission?
- Is there a commitment to aligning the Florida Sunshine State Standards with school's curriculum?
- Is there an explanation of well-developed and varied diagnostic, formative and summative assessment mechanisms for all students, including alternate assessments for Exceptional Education students?
- Does the application demonstrate understanding of state assessment requirements, academic achievement requirements, and graduation requirements?
- Is there evidence of a well-developed methodology for ensuring accountability to stakeholders?
- Are there well-developed assessment mechanisms that relate directly to the stated Goals and Objectives?

Part  
**2**

# Governance Plan

## A. Profile of the Founding Board and/or Initial Incorporators, Members (if any), Directors, and Officers

- Ensure the corporate documents clearly identify the members; provide for their role and purpose; provide for their resignation and removal; and appointment or election of new members.
- Ensure that the corporate documents identify the directors and officers. Identify their respective roles and purpose; describe the process for resignation and removal; and appointment or election of new directors and officers.
- Attach any documents or letters from such sponsors or partners confirming such agreement and third-party support.

Reviewers will look for the following:

- Is the founding group well-balanced? Does it bring together people with a range of professional skills capable of the organizational, financial, pedagogical, legal, and other tasks required to open a functioning public school?
- Is the founding group representative of the school's locale?
- Is there evidence of continuity between the founding group and the eventual members of the governing board and operating officers of the school?
- Are the resumes of key management personnel present, and are permissions given to perform financial background checks on them?
- Is there evidence presented relating to the financial standing and business experience of members of the founding group?

## B. School Governance

Reviewers will look for the following:

- Is there evidence of a stable, effective, and comprehensive governance model that is consistent with school's mission?
- Are there clearly defined roles and responsibilities of the board and its interaction with staff?
- Are there clear processes for policy development and a strong plan for ongoing Board development?
- Are there present mechanisms for teacher and parent input in school decision-making?
- Is there evidence that the school leader will be able to provide high quality leadership for the new school and that the Board has established clear criteria for the selection of a leader?
- Does the application reflect knowledge of and a willingness to comply with Florida public information and government in the sunshine laws?

## C. Length of Contract & Implementation Timetable

Reviewers will look for the following:

- Does the application reflect a thoughtful and realistic implementation strategy that covers operational items and that provides flexibility for addressing unanticipated events?
- Is there an action plan that is specific and consistent with the school's mission and objectives?

## D. Evidence of Support

Reviewers will look for the following:

- Evidence that the controlling or principal persons of the corporation inspire the confidence of their target community
- Evidence that the program provides an attractive educational alternative for students and parents
- Breadth of community support extends well beyond the core group of such controlling or principal persons of the corporation

Part

# 3

# Facilities/Location

## A. Facilities

Reviewers will look for the following:

- Does the application include a presentation of possible options for securing an adequate school facility?
- Are the financing options/proposals sound?

# 4 Financial Operations

## A. and B. Business and Budget

What reviewers will look for:

- Presentation of a Four-year Comprehensive Strategic Business Plan
- Four years of balanced budget plans
- Demonstration of sound financial planning and fiscal viability of the school, which conforms to the academic programs that have been referenced within the application
- Evidence, in the form of sufficient details, descriptions, and explanations, that demonstrate an understanding of generally accepted accounting principles and procedures, internal control structures, the budgeting process, financial management, and best practices for both on-going expenses and capital assets
- If the applicant does NOT provide any one of the following items, the applicant WILL FAIL this section:

- Four-year Comprehensive Strategic Business Plan
- Four years of balanced budgets
- Charter School Policies and Procedures Manual
- Information required and requested in each section including the handouts and worksheets provided.

- Included in application packet:

- Financial and Program Cost Accounting and Reporting for Florida Schools (Provided by the Department of Education)
- <http://www.fldoe.org/fefp/redtoc.asp>
- Rules of the Auditor General (Available from the Auditor General's Office)
- [http://www.myflorida.com/audgen/pages/pdf\\_files/10\\_550.pdf](http://www.myflorida.com/audgen/pages/pdf_files/10_550.pdf)
- Estimated Revenues and Expenditures spreadsheet

- Charter School Guidelines for Capital Outlay Funds
- <http://www.fldoe.org/edfacil/oei/chartsuub.asp>
- GASB Statement #14 / #39 – Analysis to determine whether a component unit or not of Clay County School District
- <http://www.gasb.org/>

- Recommended Reference Materials

- Government Accounting, Auditing and Financial Reporting, (GAAFR) (Available from the Government Finance Officers Assn.)
- Governmental Accounting Standards Series – Basic Financial Statements – and Management Discussion and Analysis – for State and Local Governments (Available from Governmental Accounting Standards Board)
- Guide to Implementation of GASB Statements on Basic Financial Statements – and Management Discussions and Analysis – for State and Local Governments (Available from the Governmental Accounting Standards Board)
- <http://www.gasb.org/>
- Florida School Laws – Most recent edition (Available from Matthew Bender & Company, Inc.)

## A. Recruiting and Marketing Plan

Reviewers will look for the following:

- Is the proposed enrollment and growth of school sensible and is it consistent with the school's mission and educational program?
- Is there a solid plan to attract students?
- Are the recruitment and retention strategies outlined in the application aggressive, nondiscriminatory and do they seem adequate to attract a broad array of student within the school's target population?
- Does the application contain a plan for a workable effort to publicize the school to a broad audience in order to foster enrollment of a student body that is representative of the local community?
- Does the recruitment strategy in the application seek to ensure a match between the school's educational program and the potential students' educational and personal needs?

## B. Admissions and Registration Plan

Reviewers will look for the following:

- Is the admissions and registration plan consistent with the mission of the school?
- Is the admission plan non-discriminatory?
- Is there a timely and realistic procedure for admitting students?
- Is there a process for dismissing students that reflects an understanding that only the District School Board is responsible for providing students with due process for expulsions?
- Are the admissions and registration plans in compliance with charter school law?
- If the application is for a conversion school is there a clear plan for alternative placement for current students who choose not to attend the charter school?
- Are the eligibility standards for students consistent with applicable law?

## C. Student Records Management

Reviewers will look for the following:

- Is the student records management compliance information reflective of a workable?

## D. Class Size Requirements

Reviewers will look for the following:

- Is the class size compliance information reflective of a workable plan that is tied to enrollment projections that will allow the school to meet its constitutional class size obligations while remaining financially viable?

## E. Behavior/Discipline

1. Describe in detail how the school will maintain a safe learning environment at all times.
  - This includes the school facility as well as the school climate.
  - Explain the school's behavior/discipline plan.
  - Explain how the school will administer the School Climate Survey and use the data.
2. Submit the school's Safety Preparedness Plan as Attachment #11.
  - Make sure that all aspects of the school are included within the Safety Preparedness Plan, i.e., physical plant and mental health.
  - Demonstrate how the school will connect with community agencies, organizations and services to provide a comprehensive safety preparedness plan, i.e., fire, police, rescue, transportation, Red Cross, and parents.
  - Discuss the roles and responsibilities of staff in a crisis situation.
3. Submit the school's Student Code of Conduct as Attachment #12. Point out how it differs from the district's Student Code of Conduct by including a side-by-side chart of differences.
  - If the Clay County Public School's Student Code of Conduct is used, make all the necessary changes to reflect the name of your school.
  - If the Clay County Public School's Student Code of Conduct is used, change those sections that are not applicable to your school.

Reviewers will look for the following:

- Is there evidence that the Student Code of Conduct created by the charter school, or adopted from the District School Board, is consistent with school's mission and program and does it adequately outline the charter school's commitment to safety for all its community members?

## F. Unitary Status

What reviewers will look for:

- Compliance with the requirement of law; deviations, if any, from the District's post-unitary status policies; compliance with charter school legislation.

## G. Human Resources

Reviewers will look for the following:

- Is there a strong staffing plan, clear hiring criteria, evaluation procedures and a workable professional development plan?
- Does the human resources plan make provision for high professional standards which are consistent with school's mission and educational program?
- Will the planned staffing patterns contribute to the achievement of the school's goal?
- Are the working conditions and compensations packages such that they will attract and work to retain high quality staff?
- Are there provisions in the human resources plan to fully comply with labor laws, fingerprinting and background checks?
- Does the application reflect a clear commitment to professional development and training of staff?

## H. Transportation

Reviewers will look for the following:

- Is the transportation plan a workable, fair, non-discriminatory and cost-effective arrangement for safely transporting students to and from school, and is it in keeping with the law?

## I. Information Management System (IMS)

Reviewers will look for the following:

- A workable, fair, non-discriminatory and cost-effective arrangement for reporting students information to parents and the Department of Education
- An approach that will interface effectively with the existing information management system
- Up-to-date data on the mainframe

## J. Food Service

### 1. Option #1

- Explain how the school will provide meals to students who cannot afford full-priced meals.
- Explain how the school will use outside sources (i.e., procure food and supplies).
- Explain how the school will prepare meals on site.

### 2. Option #2

- If using another provider for the NSLP (National School Lunch Program) are they currently approved and if not explain who will apply for the program with DOE.
- If no one has been approved prior to school opening, your budget must reflect funds to purchase food.
- If your school is going to be self-operative and not use a provider, your budget must reflect the cost of equipment, supplies and staff that will be needed to open your school in the food service area.
- Who will be responsible for filing and claiming reimbursable meals?

Reviewers will look for the following:

- Choice of one of the two options
- A plan that complies with all state, federal, and health department regulations

## **K. Custodial and Maintenance Service**

- Explain whether the school will hire a custodial staff or opt for contracted services, and the standards by which the facility will be maintained. If the facility is leased, then identify what responsibilities the landlord will have for maintenance and what the school's responsibilities will be for maintenance.

## **L. Legal Services**

Reviewers will look for the following:

- Identification of school's legal counsel
- Process to ensure compliance with applicable laws, (i.e., statutes, codes, and regulations)