



Charter Creation Application Evaluation Guidance and Review Tool

Evaluation of Applications to Start a Public Charter
School in the 2026-27 School Year

Tennessee Department of Education | October 2024

Overview

[T.C.A. § 49-13-116](#) and [State Board of Education \(SBE\) Rule 0520-14-01-.01\(1\)](#) require the Tennessee Department of Education (department) to provide a standard application format and scoring criteria addressing the elements of the charter school application. In addition to state law and SBE rule, the SBE has adopted [Quality Charter Authorizing Standards](#) which establish how charter authorizers should approach the charter application review and evaluation process.

Evaluation Team

Charter school authorizers should assemble evaluation teams of highly competent internal and external evaluators with expertise in academics, organizational governance and management, finance, and legal matters. Evaluators should also have a thorough understanding of charter school autonomy and accountability principles. Additionally, authorizers should provide orientation and training to evaluators and capacity interviewers to ensure consistent evaluation practices and fair, unbiased treatment of all applicants.

Evaluation Ratings

This evaluation guide includes an [Application Review Tool](#) that is divided into subsections that correspond to the sections of the charter creation application. Each subsection identifies indicators of a strong response that authorizers should use to evaluate the sponsor’s narrative responses. Evaluators will apply evaluation ratings to each subsection and overall section using the qualitative ratings listed in the following table.

Meets or Exceeds Standard	Partially Meets Standard	Does Not Meet Standard
The applicant’s response reflects a thorough understanding of key issues. It clearly aligns with the mission and goals of the school. The response includes specific and accurate information that shows thorough preparation.	The applicant’s response meets the criteria in some respects but lacks sufficient detail and/or requires additional information in one or more areas.	The applicant’s response is incomplete, demonstrates lack of preparation, does not align with the mission and goals of the school, or otherwise raises significant concerns about the viability of the plan or the applicant’s ability to carry it out.

Approval Criteria

[SBE Policy 6.111](#) outlines Quality Charter Authorizing Standards that authorizers should adopt. Specifically, standard 2 section 4 of this policy establishes that authorizers should use rigorous decision-making criteria. Authorizers should base their recommendations for approval or denial on the written application (including narrative and attachments), independent due diligence, and, if applicable, applicant capacity interviews organized by the authorizer.

Evaluation

Reviewers must use the evaluation guidance provided in this document to evaluate each section of a sponsor's charter creation application. Evaluation ratings for each subsection should be considered collectively to determine the overall evaluation rating for the entire section.

Sections within the Application Review Tool

- [Section 1: Academic Plan and Design](#)
- [Section 2: Operational Plan and Capacity](#)
- [Section 3: Financial Plan and Capacity](#)
- [Section 4: Portfolio Review & Performance Record](#) *(if applicable)*

Overall Application Evaluation Rating

To be eligible for approval, an application must receive a "Meets or Exceeds Standard" rating for all applicable sections within the [Application Review Tool](#). Reviewers should consider the totality of evidence when determining the [Overall Application Evaluation Rating](#). Therefore, a single qualitative rating of "Does Not Meet Standard" or "Partially Meets Standard" on a subsection does not necessarily prevent an entire section from earning a "Meets or Exceeds Standard" rating overall.

Guidance for Reviewers

Reviewers should use objective language and complete sentences in their comments throughout each subsection and section of the review tool. Furthermore, reviewers should provide specific evidence and page numbers for concerns or questions they identify within each section and subsection. Remember, all documents, including a reviewer’s individual review, may be available to the public.

Example Responses

Academic Plan and Design	
Section Strengths	Concerns and Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "The academic plan is comprehensive, well-aligned with Tennessee’s academic standards, and aligns with the school’s mission and goals." • "The proposed curriculum is well-suited to the target population and reflects a deep commitment to improving student performance." • "The school’s proposed use of Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTI²) aligns with Tennessee guidelines and demonstrates the school’s dedication to addressing academic underperformance through data-driven interventions." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "The academic plan lacks sufficient detail on how Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTI²) will be implemented effectively. While the plan references RTI², it does not outline clear processes for identifying students in need of intervention or how progress will be monitored (p. 12)." • "The proposed curriculum does not provide adequate strategies for addressing the academic needs of diverse student populations, such as Economically Disadvantaged students and English Language Learner. The plan references general instructional practices but lacks specificity on differentiated instruction techniques tailored to these groups (p. 17)."

Operations Plan and Capacity	
Section Strengths	Concerns and Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "The governance structure outlined is thorough and clearly defines the composition and size of the board and its committees. This plan demonstrates a strong focus on active stakeholder representation and the board’s responsibility for monitoring school and leader performance." • "The facilities plan is well-justified, with clear explanations of space requirements based on projected enrollment and academic needs. The timeline for facility acquisition is well-defined, and the leadership team’s relevant experience adds credibility to the proposed plan." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "The recruitment strategy for key personnel, beyond the school leader, lacks sufficient detail. The plan does not fully address how the leadership team will reflect the diversity of the student body and community (p. 51)." • "The governance structure is outlined, but the plan for board development and addressing potential attrition is insufficient. Specific strategies to ensure the board adapts to the school’s growth are unclear (p. 56)."

Financial Plan and Capacity	
Section Strengths	Concerns and Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "The financial projections provided are realistic and well-supported, with detailed revenue assumptions based on per-pupil funding and secured grants. The plan ensures the school’s financial viability during the critical start-up phase and accounts for future growth." • "The budget narrative offers clear explanations for major expenditures, including staffing, facilities, and instructional materials. The contingency plan is robust, outlining specific actions to mitigate financial risks if revenue projections fall short." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "The budget fails to adequately address potential cost overruns related to facilities renovations. There is little explanation of how unexpected expenses in this area will be managed (p. 75)." • "The financial plan does not fully account for the needs of high-needs students, particularly those with disabilities. The lack of detail regarding how these additional costs will be absorbed raises concerns about the sufficiency of the overall budget (p. 80)."

Instructions for Reviewers

Reviewers should follow these steps to ensure a thorough evaluation of each charter application.

1. Complete the general information section.

Enter your name, the proposed school's name, and select the appropriate application category and type. Ensure all necessary fields are filled out before beginning your evaluation.

2. Check the application and submission completeness.

Use the requirements checklist to verify that the sponsor has completed all sections of the application, submitted required attachments, and followed all submission guidelines. Confirm each requirement before proceeding to evaluation.

3. Assess each subsection using the review tool.

Review each subsection and assign one of the three ratings: "Meets or Exceeds Standard," "Partially Meets Standard," or "Does Not Meet Standard." Base your rating on the quality of the sponsor's narrative and adherence to the evaluation criteria.

4. Provide detailed comments.

In each subsection, provide clear and objective comments regarding the strengths and areas of concern related to the applicant's response. Reference specific page numbers or sections to support your comments and ensure all concerns are well-documented.

5. Summarize section findings.

After completing all subsections within a section, assign one of the three ratings: "Meets or Exceeds Standard," "Partially Meets Standard," or "Does Not Meet Standard" to the overall section. Base your rating on the quality of the sponsor's narrative and adherence to the evaluation criteria. Summarize the strengths and areas of concern for the entire section. Use your summary to support the final evaluation rating for that section.

6. Complete the final evaluation.

Once all sections have been evaluated, assign an overall evaluation rating to the application based on the cumulative ratings of each section. To be eligible for approval, an application must earn a rating of "Meets or Exceeds Standard" for each applicable section and on the [Overall Application Evaluation Rating](#).

Application Review Tool

Comments and supporting evidence are equally as important as the evaluation rating, and all documents, including individual reviews, may be made publicly accessible in the future.

General Information

Reviewer's Name				Date Review Completed	
Proposed School Name				Proposed Opening School Year	
Choose the Application Category and Type	<input type="checkbox"/> Category 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Category 2		<input type="checkbox"/> Initial Application	<input type="checkbox"/> Amended Application

Requirements Checklist

Reviewers must ensure that the requirements outlined in [T.C.A. §49-13-107](#) are met to confirm that an initial application is complete. The following table will help reviewers verify that all necessary components of the application have been properly addressed:

Requirements	Was the requirement met?	
	Yes	No
The application was submitted on the department's state charter application form for that application cycle.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The sponsor has completed all required sections of the application aligned to the category indicated by the sponsor in its letter of intent and the application contains all required attachments and signatures.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The application is submitted to the authorizer on or before 11:59 p.m. Central Time on February 1 of the year preceding the year in which the proposed public charter school plans to begin operation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The application fee, if required by the authorizer, is submitted with the application.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Completeness Checklists

To verify that a sponsor has completed all required sections of the application, reviewers should review the sponsor's responses to each history and intent question within their submitted application. Reviewers should utilize the tables in this section to confirm that the application fulfills all narrative and attachment requirements.

Sponsor History and Intent Questions	Sponsor's Response to Question		Was the Question Answered Appropriately?		Reviewer's Notes/Questions/Concerns
	Yes	No	Yes	No	
Question 1: Has the sponsor or proposed charter management organization ever operated, opened, or managed a charter school?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Question 2: Does this sponsor have any pending charter school applications currently under consideration by any authorizer in the United States?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Question 3: Does the sponsor or proposed charter management organization currently operate a charter school?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Question 4: Will the sponsor replicate a currently authorized charter school in Tennessee?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Question 5: Is this sponsor submitting an application to more than one Tennessee authorizer or proposing to open more than one charter school during this application cycle?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Question 6: Will the sponsor contract or partner with a charter management organization (CMO) to manage or operate the proposed school?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Question 7: Is the sponsor proposing a new charter school with a change in academic focus or grade structure from an existing Tennessee charter school they operate?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Question 8: Is the sponsor proposing an Opportunity Public Charter School?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Question 9: If proposing an Opportunity Public Charter School, will the school provide a residential program for enrolled students pursuant to Chapter 1066 of the Public Acts of 2024?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Question 10: Will the proposed school serve any combination of elementary grades of kindergarten through grade five (K-5)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Question 11: Will the proposed school serve any combination of high school grades nine through twelve (9-12)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Question 12: Will the sponsor convert a non-charter public school to a charter school?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Items Required for All Sponsors

General Information	Completed?	
Cover Sheet	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Sponsor History and Intent	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Assurances	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

1.1 – Academic Plan and Design	Completed?	
Narrative	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

1.2 – Academic Focus and Performance Standards	Completed?	
Narrative	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

1.3 - Assessments	Completed?	
Narrative	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

1.4 – School Calendar and Schedule	Completed?	
Narrative	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Attachment A	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Attachment B	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

1.5 – Recruitment and Enrollment	Completed?	
Narrative	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Table 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Table 2	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Attachment C	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

1.6 – Parent and Community Engagement and Support	Completed?	
Narrative	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Attachment D	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

1.7 – School Culture and Discipline	Completed?	
Narrative	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Attachment E	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Attachment F	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

1.8 – Special Populations	Completed?	
Narrative	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

2.1 – Governance	Completed?	
Narrative	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Table 4	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Attachment G	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Attachment H	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Attachment I	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Attachment J	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Attachment K	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Attachment L	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Attachment M	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

2.2 – Facilities	Completed?	
Narrative	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

2.3 – Start Up Plan	Completed?	
Narrative	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

2.4 – Personnel / Human Capital	Completed?	
Narrative	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Attachment N	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Attachment O	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Attachment P	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Table 5	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

2.5 – Professional Development	Completed?	
Narrative	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

2.6 – Transportation	Completed?	
Narrative	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

2.7 – Additional Operations	Completed?	
Narrative	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Attachment Q	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

3.1 – Operating Budget	Completed?	
Attachment W	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

3.2 – Operating Budget Narrative	Completed?	
Narrative	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Attachment X	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

Additional Requirements for Sponsors That Answered “Yes” to Specific Sponsor History and Intent Questions

Answered “Yes” to Question 1	Section Complete?		
1.5 - Recruitment and Enrollment			
Supplementary Narrative	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
2.9 – Network Vision, Growth Plan & Capacity			
Supplementary Narrative	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Attachment S	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
4.1 – School Portfolio Summary			
Attachment Z	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
4.2 – Academic Performance Record			
Supplementary Narrative	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Attachment Z	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
4.3 – Fiscal and Operational Performance Record			
Supplementary Narrative	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Attachment AA	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Attachment BB	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Attachment CC	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Attachment DD	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Attachment EE	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A

Answered “Yes” to Question 3	Section Complete?		
2.9 – Network Vision, Growth Plan & Capacity			
Supplementary Narrative	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
2.10 - Network Governance			
Supplementary Narrative	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
2.11 - Network Management and Personnel			
Supplementary Narrative	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Attachment T	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Attachment U	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Table 6	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Table 7	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Table 8	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Table 9	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
3.3 – Network Financial Plan			
Supplementary Narrative	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Attachment Y	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A

Answered “Yes” to Question 4	Section Complete?		
2.12 – School Replication			
Supplementary Narrative	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Attachment V	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Answered “Yes” to Question 5			
2.9 – Network Vision, Growth Plan & Capacity			
Supplementary Narrative	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A

Answered “Yes” to Question 6	Section Complete?		
2.8 - Charter Management Organization			
Supplementary Narrative	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Attachment R	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A

Answered “Yes” to Question 7	Section Complete?		
1.2 - Academic Focus and Performance Standards			
Supplementary Narrative	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A

Answered “Yes” to Question 8	Section Complete?		
1.2 – Academic Focus and Performance Standards			
Supplementary Narrative	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
1.5 - Recruitment and Enrollment			
Supplementary Narrative	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Supplementary Table 3	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A

Answered “Yes” to Question 9	Section Complete?		
2.2 – Facilities			
Supplementary Narrative	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A

Answered “Yes” to Question 10	Section Complete?		
1.2 - Academic Focus and Performance Standards			
Supplementary Narrative	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
1.3 – Assessments			
Supplementary Narrative	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A

Answered “Yes” to Question 11	Section Complete?		
1.2 - Academic Focus and Performance Standards			
Supplementary Narrative	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A

Answered “Yes” to Question 12	Section Complete?		
1.9 – Conversion Charter School Planning			
Narrative	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A

Section 1: Academic Plan and Design Evaluation

<i>Subsections</i>	<i>Meets or Exceeds Standard</i>	<i>Partially Meets Standard</i>	<i>Does Not Meet Standard</i>
Section 1.1 - School Mission and Goals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Section 1.2 - Academic Focus and Performance Standards	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Section 1.3 - Assessments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Section 1.4 - School Calendar and Schedule	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Section 1.5 - Recruitment and Enrollment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Section 1.6 - Parent and Community Engagement and Support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Section 1.7 - School Culture and Discipline	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Section 1.8 - Special Populations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Section 1.9 - Conversion Charter School Planning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Section Evaluation Rating: Section 1 – Academic Plan and Design	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Section 1: Academic Plan and Design Review Notes	
Section Strengths	Concerns / Questions

Subsection 1.1 - School Mission and Goals

Indicators of a Strong Response
Items Relevant to All Sponsors
The mission statement provides a clear, measurable description of what the school will achieve. It aligns with the educational needs of the target student population and outlines specific outcomes.
The goals reflect alignment with state accountability systems and the authorizer's performance framework. They define specific, measurable outcomes related to the school's academic, organizational, and financial success.
The response outlines a process for setting, monitoring, and revising goals based on evidence-based evaluations. It demonstrates how school leadership evaluates progress and adjusts strategies to achieve set targets.
Innovations or unique features described within this section align with the school's mission and directly address the needs of the target student population.

Subsection Evaluation Rating		
<input type="checkbox"/> Meets or Exceeds Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet Standard
Subsection Strengths		
Reference	Page	
Concerns / Questions		
Reference	Page	

Subsection 1.2 - Academic Focus and Performance Standards

Indicators of a Strong Response	
Items Relevant to All Sponsors	
The response clearly defines the school's academic focus, highlighting how it aligns with the school's mission and goals.	
The response provides a comprehensive academic plan that integrates the school's mission and goals. It includes the educational philosophy, instructional methods, and teaching approaches that support academic achievement and align with Tennessee's academic standards.	
The response presents data and research supporting the academic plan's effectiveness for the target population. It details strategies for closing achievement gaps and addresses underperformance.	
The response outlines a well-suited curriculum for the targeted student population, ensuring alignment with Tennessee Academic Standards. It identifies potential gaps within the proposed curriculum and provides solutions for addressing them.	
Item Relevant for Sponsors Who Answered "Yes" to Sponsor History and Intent Question 7	
The response identifies specific changes to the academic plan or grade structure from the existing school's original application, explains the rationale for each modification, and details any additional resources needed. If there are no changes, the response clearly states "N/A."	
Item Relevant for Sponsors Who Answered "Yes" to Sponsor History and Intent Question 8	
The response details a structured, evidence-based literacy program with targeted interventions and regular progress monitoring for students enrolled in an Opportunity Public Charter School.	
Items Relevant for Sponsors Who Answered "Yes" to Sponsor History and Intent Question 10	
The response outlines a plan for tutoring, remediation, and summer school that is aligned with T.C.A. § 49-6-3115, the plan ensures that all eligible students receive required support.	
The response describes how the school integrates foundational literacy instruction per T.C.A. § 49-1-905, using evidence-based practices and approved materials.	
Items Relevant for Sponsors Who Answered "Yes" to Sponsor History and Intent Question 11	
The response details how the school will meet Tennessee graduation requirements, including credit earning, GPA calculation, and transcript information. It describes elective offerings and any additional requirements that enhance college or career readiness. It identifies all types of diplomas offered.	
The response outlines targeted interventions and support systems to help at-risk students stay on track for graduation.	
The response describes the school's plan for offering EPSO and WBL opportunities, including funding sources and physical locations.	

Subsection Evaluation Rating		
<input type="checkbox"/> Meets or Exceeds Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet Standard
Subsection Strengths		
Reference		Page
Concerns / Questions		
Reference		Page

Subsection 1.3 - Assessments

Indicators of a Strong Response
Items Relevant to All Sponsors
The response provides a detailed explanation of the formative and/or summative assessments the school will utilize to assess individual student academic needs and sub-group progress. These assessments are clearly aligned with the school's academic plan and state standards. The response specifies the frequency and cadence of these assessments and identifies the faculty and staff responsible for administering them.
The response outlines a clear plan for collecting and analyzing academic data throughout the year. It explains how the data will be used to ensure students make academic progress and how the analysis will inform ongoing professional development for faculty and staff.
The response provides a detailed description of the training and support school leadership and teachers will receive to analyze, interpret, and utilize performance data effectively to improve instruction and drive student achievement.
Item Relevant for Sponsors Who Answered "Yes" to Sponsor History and Intent Question 10
The response clearly identifies the universal reading screener selected from the approved list of nationally normed screeners, in accordance with T.C.A. § 49-1-905, and demonstrates alignment with foundational literacy requirements.

Subsection Evaluation Rating	
<input type="checkbox"/> Meets or Exceeds Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets Standard
<input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet Standard	
Subsection Strengths	
Reference	Page
Concerns / Questions	
Reference	Page

Subsection 1.4 – School Calendar and Schedule

Indicators of a Strong Response
Items Relevant to All Sponsors
The school's annual academic calendar (Attachment A) and student daily schedules (Attachment B) meet Tennessee's minimum statutory requirements of 200 days, with at least 180 days of classroom instruction, and align with T.C.A. § 49-6-3004 and SBE Rule 0520-01-02-.31
The response explains why the proposed academic calendar and daily schedule will optimize student learning. It includes the number of instructional hours/minutes for core subjects (language arts, mathematics, science, social studies) and shows how time for tiered interventions, enrichment, tutoring, and other academic activities is integrated into the schedule.
The response provides details on any proposed extra-curricular or co-curricular activities, including their start date, frequency, and funding sources.
The proposal for additional academic programs such as Saturday school, summer school, remediation, or acceleration programs is reasonable, and the response includes the duration, hours per week, student identification methods, mandatory participation requirements (if applicable), and the resources and staffing needed for these programs.

Subsection Evaluation Rating		
<input type="checkbox"/> Meets or Exceeds Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet Standard
Subsection Strengths		
Reference	Page	
Concerns / Questions		
Reference	Page	

Subsection 1.5 – Recruitment and Enrollment

Indicators of a Strong Response

Items Relevant to All Sponsors

The response describes the community's demand and need for the proposed school, detailing how this demand was identified. It explains how the educational options offered by the proposed school differ from those available in the geographic region.

The response provides completed templates for the Enrollment Summary (Table 1) and Anticipated Demographics (Table 2). It describes the data, factors, and methodology used to determine initial enrollment projections, ensuring alignment with the operating budget template.

The response includes the proposed school's Enrollment Policy (Attachment C) which includes the following: tentative application period dates, enrollment deadlines, non-discriminatory admission policies, articulation agreements, and policies for waitlists, withdrawals, re-enrollment, and transfers.

The response explains how the school will receive and process enrollment applications and outlines the school's plan to conduct an enrollment lottery if applications exceed capacity. It ensures compliance with T.C.A. § 49-13-113, T.C.A. § 49-13-106, and SBE Rule 0520-14-01-.04.

The response describes the plan to recruit students in the year prior to opening. It identifies the staff position responsible for overseeing recruitment, along with marketing strategies, community organizations, activities, events, responsible parties, and timelines that will drive student recruitment.

The response details student recruitment after the school has opened and explains how ongoing recruitment efforts will differ from pre-opening strategies.

The response describes how the school will ensure equal opportunity for all students to attend, with specific outreach plans for economically disadvantaged families, academically low-achieving students, students with disabilities, English learners, and other students at risk of academic failure.

Item Relevant for Sponsors Who Answered "Yes" to Sponsor History and Intent Question 1

The response identifies key differences between student recruitment and enrollment practices of the proposed school and other charter schools operated by the sponsor.

The response notes similarities and differences between the target community of the proposed school and those served by other charter schools operated by the sponsor.

Item Relevant for Sponsors Who Answered "Yes" to Sponsor History and Intent Question 8

The response provides a detailed plan to ensure that at-risk students constitute at least 75 percent of the enrolled student population. It includes clear methods for verifying students' at-risk status upon enrollment.

Subsection Evaluation Rating



Meets or Exceeds Standard



Partially Meets Standard



Does Not Meet Standard

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Subsection 1.6 – Parent and Community Engagement and Support

Indicators of a Strong Response
Items Relevant to All Sponsors
The response provides clear evidence of community feedback and parental interest in the proposed school. It explains how feedback was collected, validates its relevance, and demonstrates how the feedback shaped the application.
The response includes sufficient statements of support from community members, parents, and local organizations, indicating strong commitment and likely success in meeting enrollment goals. These statements go beyond generic statements, showing measurable support such as enrollment intent or financial backing.
The response outlines a sound plan for engaging parents and community members, both prior to the school's opening and throughout its operation. It details strategies to generate buy-in and maintain strong partnerships with the community.
The response provides a well-defined plan for partnerships with community organizations, businesses, or educational institutions. It specifies the nature and scope of each partnership and how these collaborations will enrich student learning opportunities.
The response outlines a clear plan for informing and educating parents about school policies, including any commitments or volunteer opportunities for parents.

Subsection Evaluation Rating		
<input type="checkbox"/> Meets or Exceeds Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet Standard
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Subsection 1.7 – School Culture and Discipline

Indicators of a Strong Response
Items Relevant to All Sponsors
The response outlines a clear vision for the school culture or ethos, which promotes a positive academic environment aligned with the school's mission, goals, and objectives. The culture reflects high academic expectations and robust student support.
The response provides a coherent plan for creating, implementing, and sustaining the intended school culture for all students, teachers, administrators, and parents, beginning on the first day of school. It also includes a plan for integrating mid-year enrollees.
The response explains how the school culture will embrace special populations such as students with disabilities, English Learners, and those at risk of academic failure or dropping out.
The Student Handbook (Attachment E) includes comprehensive and legally sound policies for students and families.
The response includes a student discipline policy (Attachment F) and/or philosophy for student discipline that outlines both penalties for infractions and incentives for positive behavior. The response provides effective procedures to maintain a safe and orderly school climate, and clearly respects student rights, particularly for students with disabilities.
The response includes definitions of offenses leading to suspension or expulsion, outlines due process procedures, explains protections for students with disabilities, and identifies the staff position responsible for enforcing discipline policies, along with a plan for informing students and parents.
The response details goals for student attendance and presents a plan for collaborating with families and the community to address and reduce chronic absenteeism.

Subsection Evaluation Rating		
<input type="checkbox"/> Meets or Exceeds Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet Standard
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Subsection 1.8 – Special Populations

Indicators of a Strong Response	
Items Relevant to All Sponsors	
The response clearly outlines the leadership team's experience supporting students with disabilities, English learners (EL), at-risk students, and intellectually gifted students, and provides a detailed staffing plan to meet these students' needs.	
The response describes a clear process for identifying students with disabilities and offers a continuum of services that ensure access to general education and support academic success, with integration of these services into the daily schedule.	
The response provides a clear plan for monitoring and evaluating the progress of students with disabilities and aligns the plan with the authorizer's evaluation and monitoring systems.	
The response explains how the school will determine the appropriate diploma type for students with disabilities and ensures that students are not precluded from earning a traditional high school diploma.	
The response describes the process for identifying English learners in compliance with SBE Rule 0520-01-19-.03 and outlines a staffing plan that ensures the school maintains appropriate ratios of ESL-licensed staff to students.	
The response details a plan to provide supports for EL students as outlined in their ILPs, integrating those supports into the daily schedule, and explains how the school will monitor and evaluate EL students' progress toward program completion.	
The response explains the process for identifying at-risk students using academic and behavioral data and provides a plan to monitor academic progress and implement programs and strategies to meet their needs.	
The response provides a clear plan for identifying intellectually gifted students and explains how the school will use research-based instructional programs to meet their academic needs, including a system for monitoring their progress and success.	

Subsection Evaluation Rating		
<input type="checkbox"/> Meets or Exceeds Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet Standard
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Subsection 1.9 – Conversion Charter School Planning

Indicators of a Strong Response
Item Relevant for Sponsors Who Answered “Yes” to Sponsor History and Intent Question 12
The response demonstrates the sponsor’s strong prior experience in turning around or converting underperforming schools, including documented student outcomes and challenges faced. If lacking prior experience, the sponsor provides a clear rationale and evidence of its capacity to successfully transform a struggling school.
The response outlines a detailed plan for engaging the local neighborhood, community, and student population prior to the school’s conversion.
The response provides specific strategies for transforming the existing school culture while respecting its history and community role. The plan outlines how decisions will be made on which aspects of the current culture to retain, modify, or add, while establishing a new identity.
The response clearly describes how the school will share physical space, resources, and services with the existing school in a phase-in approach. It includes essential elements for successful co-location and outlines strategies to minimize disruption in case of an accelerated transition by the LEA.
The response provides a realistic transition plan for a full school take-over, including a detailed communication strategy with existing staff. It identifies the additional teaching and non-teaching personnel required to ensure student success from the first year of the conversion.

Subsection Evaluation Rating		
<input type="checkbox"/> Meets or Exceeds Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet Standard
Subsection Strengths		
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Section 2: Operations Plan and Capacity Evaluation

<i>Subsections</i>	<i>Meets or Exceeds Standard</i>	<i>Partially Meets Standard</i>	<i>Does Not Meet Standard</i>
2.1 – Governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.2 – Facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.3 – Start-Up Plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.4 – Personnel / Human Capital	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.5 – Professional Development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.6 – Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.7 – Additional Operations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.8 – Charter Management Organizations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.9 – Network Vision, Growth Plan & Capacity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.10 – Network Governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.11 – Network Management and Personnel	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.12 – School Replication	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Section Evaluation Rating: Section 2 – Operations Plans and Capacity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Section 2: Operations Plan and Capacity Review Notes	
Section Strengths	Concerns / Questions

Subsection 2.1 – Governance

Indicators of a Strong Response
Items Relevant to All Sponsors
The proposed governance structure and board composition ensure active representation of key stakeholders and effective oversight of the school's educational, operational, and financial performance.
The response demonstrates that the proposed board members bring a diverse range of expertise, including educational, financial, legal, and community knowledge, necessary to oversee a successful charter school.
The response includes a clear plan for initial and ongoing board training in compliance with T.C.A. § 49-13-111(o), ensuring all training is approved by the State Board of Education. Plans for board member recruitment and addressing attrition are well-detailed.
The response outlines a transparent, fair process for hearing and resolving complaints brought to the board, ensuring accountability.
The governance documents (Attachments G-M) are complete and align with state laws and district policies, including Articles of Incorporation, tax-exempt status, by-laws, Code of Conduct, Conflict of Interest Policy, board member resumes, and board policies regarding meetings and open records.

Subsection Evaluation Rating		
<input type="checkbox"/> Meets or Exceeds Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet Standard
Subsection Strengths		
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Subsection 2.2 – Facilities

Indicators of a Strong Response
Items Relevant to All Sponsors
The response describes the facility needs based on the academic focus, academic plan, and projected enrollment. It provides details on specific requirements for classrooms, common areas, specialized spaces, and overall square footage. The explanation covers how the facility and tenant improvement costs were determined and incorporated into the operating budget.
The response outlines the school leadership team’s experience in facility acquisition, management, and renovation. It identifies key members responsible for managing the facility acquisition process.
The response outlines a sound plan and timeline for identifying, securing, and ensuring compliance with all regulatory and safety requirements, including ADA compliance, health and safety regulations, and city planning reviews. The plan includes all associated costs in the operating budget.
The response addresses compliance with county and municipal building codes, including storm shelter requirements. It presents a realistic timeline for facility selection, renovation, inspections, and occupation.
The response lists properties considered for the school or describes steps taken to confirm suitable facilities if no property has been identified.
Item Relevant for Sponsors Who Answered “Yes” to Sponsor History and Intent Question 9
The response includes a detailed plan for the construction, development, or purchase of residential facilities. It provides copies of all required permits, certificates, and other relevant documentation to support this process.
The response provides a detailed plan for ensuring the health and safety of students in residential facilities, including safety protocols, staffing for supervision, and emergency response plans.

Subsection Evaluation Rating	
<input type="checkbox"/> Meets or Exceeds Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets Standard
<input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet Standard	
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Subsection 2.3 – Start-up Plan

Indicators of a Strong Response
Items Relevant to All Sponsors
The response provides a detailed timeline outlining the specific tasks the school's governing body and leadership must complete to ensure the school opens on time. It includes key areas such as staffing, student recruitment, and facility changes, with deadlines and milestones for each task. The individuals responsible for each task are identified, along with their compensation amounts. The response ensures that revenues and expenditures for "Year 0" are appropriate and align with the Operating Budget Template in section 3.1.
The response identifies potential challenges in the start-up process and presents realistic, well-thought-out strategies to address these challenges, ensuring the school opens on time.

Subsection Evaluation Rating		
<input type="checkbox"/> Meets or Exceeds Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet Standard
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Subsection 2.4 – Personnel / Human Capital

Indicators of a Strong Response
Items Relevant to All Sponsors
The organizational charts (Attachments N and O) clearly delineate the roles and reporting structure of the board, staff, related bodies (such as advisory councils), and any external organizations involved in managing the school.
The response outlines a thorough recruitment and hiring strategy with clear timelines, selection criteria, and procedures designed to secure a highly qualified school leader and key staff. Identified leaders demonstrate the necessary qualifications and experience for their roles.
The individual responsible for academic programming has a proven track record of driving student achievement, supported by relevant student achievement data (Attachment P).
Recruitment and hiring practices ensure the leadership team and staff reflect the diversity of the student body and community. All staff will meet licensure and endorsement requirements as per state regulations, with a designated staff member overseeing compliance.
The response details compensation packages, benefits, and incentive structures that are competitive with local district salaries, designed to attract and retain high-performing teachers.
The response provides a comprehensive plan for supporting, developing, and annually evaluating school leadership and staff using a state-approved evaluation model in compliance with SBE rules.
The response includes a clear plan for addressing unsatisfactory leadership or teacher performance, including termination procedures and strategies for managing turnover.
Staffing projections are robust and aligned with the educational program, ensuring adequate staffing for the school's success.

Subsection Evaluation Rating		
<input type="checkbox"/> Meets or Exceeds Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet Standard
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Subsection 2.5 – Professional Development

Indicators of a Strong Response
Items Relevant to All Sponsors
The response details the number of days and hours set aside for professional development and explains how the school's calendar, daily schedule, and staffing structure fully support this plan. It also specifies how time for collaborative planning will be utilized.
The response describes the core components of the professional development plan, showing how they will enable effective implementation of the academic plan. It includes specific training on IEPs, ILPs, discipline for students with disabilities, and communication with EL families.
The response offers a thorough overview of the professional development scheduled before and during the first year of operation. It also explains how school leadership will determine ongoing professional development needs.
The response outlines a clear process for ensuring that mid-year hires receive orientation training that aligns with the charter school's academic plan.
The response presents a professional development plan for school leadership, ensuring access to the necessary knowledge and skills for effective management and leadership.

Subsection Evaluation Rating		
<input type="checkbox"/> Meets or Exceeds Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet Standard
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Subsection 2.6 - Transportation

Indicators of a Strong Response
Items Relevant to All Sponsors
The response provides a clear plan for daily student transportation (if applicable), including transportation for extracurricular activities, field trips, and other applicable events. It outlines budgetary assumptions and addresses the financial impact of transportation services on the overall budget.
The response includes a plan for transporting students with special needs as required by their IEPs, ensuring compliance with federal regulations (34 CFR §300.34(c)) and ensuring students receive a free and appropriate public education (FAPE).
The response presents a sound plan for selecting a transportation vendor or providing transportation services directly. It identifies the individual(s) responsible for daily oversight of transportation operations.
The response demonstrates familiarity with and outlines a plan for ensuring compliance with all relevant state and federal transportation regulations, including T.C.A. § 49-6-2101 – 2119 and SBE Rule 0520-01-05.
If the school will not provide daily transportation services, the response describes how students will access the school and details strategies to address any transportation barriers to ensure equity and access for all students.

Subsection Evaluation Rating		
<input type="checkbox"/> Meets or Exceeds Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet Standard
Subsection Strengths		
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Subsection 2.7 – Additional Operations

Indicators of a Strong Response
Items Relevant to All Sponsors
Insurance: The response outlines a plan to secure comprehensive insurance coverage, including workers' compensation, liability, surety bonds, and sexual abuse coverage, with confirmation from an insurance provider (Attachment Q). It also ensures notification of cancellation to the Tennessee Department of Education and includes additional liability coverage if the school will have athletics.
Food Service Plan: The response provides a clear plan for offering food service to all students, ensuring compliance with district, state, and federal guidelines, addresses the needs of low-income students for equitable access to nutritious meals, and outlines the selection of a food service vendor or in-house meal provision.
Technology: The response provides a detailed plan for the technology needed to meet academic and operational needs, ensures student access to technology for state-mandated assessments with infrastructure and costs outlined in the budget, and includes a robust plan for managing and protecting student data in compliance with privacy regulations.
School Health: The response outlines a clear plan for compliance with the Coordinated School Health Program, including hiring or contracting a registered nurse and identifying the individual responsible for supervising the nurse and ensuring compliance with health regulations.
Safety Plan: The response provides a comprehensive plan for ensuring the safety and security of students, staff, guests, and property, identifies the individual responsible for overseeing school safety operations, and includes a clear process and timeline for creating the school's emergency operations plan to ensure crisis preparedness.

Subsection Evaluation Rating		
<input type="checkbox"/> Meets or Exceeds Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet Standard
Subsection Strengths		
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Subsection 2.8 – Charter Management Organization

Indicators of a Strong Response	
Items Relevant for Sponsors Who Answered “Yes” to Sponsor History and Intent Question 6	
The response details the name of the CMO, if known, and provides evidence of its educational and management success, along with a clear rationale and selection process for choosing the CMO.	
The response outlines the division of roles and responsibilities between the board and the CMO, discloses any existing or potential conflicts of interest, and provides a viable plan for managing these conflicts.	
If available, the CMO agreement (Attachment R) includes key terms such as roles and responsibilities, services provided, performance evaluation measures, compensation, financial controls, and conditions for renewal or termination.	
The response explains how the CMO’s performance will be measured, including deliverables and benchmarks, and outlines conditions for renewing or terminating the CMO agreement.	

Subsection Evaluation Rating		
<input type="checkbox"/> Meets or Exceeds Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet Standard
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Subsection 2.9 – Network Vision, Growth Plan & Capacity

Indicators of a Strong Response	
Items Relevant for Sponsors Who Answered “Yes” to Sponsor History and Intent Questions 3 or 5	
The response provides a detailed five-year growth plan that includes proposed years of opening, number and types of schools, pending applications, targeted markets, criteria for selecting them, and projected enrollments. It explains how Tennessee fits into the overall growth plan, if applicable.	
The response presents strong evidence of the organization’s capacity to open and operate high-quality schools in Tennessee and elsewhere. It includes specific timelines for building or deploying capacity to support new schools.	
The response details past replication efforts, including successes, challenges faced, and how they were addressed. It lists any schools that failed to open or remain open and explains how the network will ensure the success of future schools.	
The response identifies anticipated challenges and risks over the next five years and provides a realistic plan to mitigate them and achieve the organization’s outcomes.	
Items Relevant for Sponsors Who Answered “Yes” to Sponsor History and Intent Question 1	
The response includes the network’s most recent annual report (Attachment S) to demonstrate transparency and accountability.	

Subsection Evaluation Rating		
<input type="checkbox"/> Meets or Exceeds Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet Standard
Subsection Strengths		
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Subsection 2.10 – Network Governance

Indicators of a Strong Response
Items Relevant for Sponsors Who Answered “Yes” to Sponsor History and Intent Questions 3
The response provides a clear description of the governance structure at the network level and how it relates to each individual school. It details whether a single network board governs multiple schools or if each school has an independent board.
The response outlines the size and composition of the governing board, ensuring it actively represents key stakeholders, including local/Tennessee representation, and includes a plan for meeting the statutory requirement of having a parent from one of the Tennessee schools on the board or an advisory council at each school.
The response clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of the board, identifying the key skills, areas of expertise, and constituencies represented.
The response includes a robust plan for evaluating the academic and operational success of each school and the school leader, ensuring the board can effectively oversee the school's progress.
If an existing board will govern the proposed schools, the response includes by-laws and an organizational chart, outlining any necessary changes to support the expansion plan. If a new board is formed, the response details its creation, responsibilities, and relationship with the existing board.

Subsection Evaluation Rating		
<input type="checkbox"/> Meets or Exceeds Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet Standard
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Subsection 2.11 – Network Management and Personnel

Indicators of a Strong Response	
Items Relevant for Sponsors Who Answered “Yes” to Sponsor History and Intent Question 3	
The response identifies the network’s leadership team, detailing their specific roles and responsibilities.	
The response includes organizational charts for Year 1 and Year 5 (Attachments T and U) that clearly delineate roles and reporting structures between the governing board, school leadership, staff, advisory bodies, and any external organizations, such as a CMO, if applicable.	
The response outlines any shared or centralized services provided by the network to schools in Tennessee, including costs, allocation methods, and specific service goals. It explains how the school will measure the successful delivery of these services.	
The response clearly allocates decision-making responsibilities between the school and network using Table 6, detailing how key functions will be handled at each level.	

Subsection Evaluation Rating		
<input type="checkbox"/> Meets or Exceeds Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet Standard
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Subsection 2.12 – School Replication

Indicators of a Strong Response

Items Relevant for Sponsors Who Answered “Yes” to Sponsor History and Intent Question 4

The response provides a clear written statement affirming compliance with all eligibility requirements for replication, including adherence to local, state, and federal laws, good standing with the charter agreement, operating for at least two years, and no material change in focus or grade structure.

The response includes the original application (Attachment V) of the school being replicated, ensuring that it contains all sections and addresses all questions in the current creation template.

The response demonstrates the sponsor’s capacity to open and operate high-quality schools in Tennessee, providing a detailed plan for resource allocation and timelines for supporting multiple schools.

If applicable, the response explains past replication efforts, lessons learned, and how challenges were addressed, along with a risk management plan for anticipated challenges in the next five years.

Subsection Evaluation Rating

Meets or Exceeds Standard

Partially Meets Standard

Does Not Meet Standard

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Section 3: Financial Plan and Capacity Evaluation

<i>Subsections</i>	<i>Meets or Exceeds Standard</i>	<i>Partially Meets Standard</i>	<i>Does Not Meet Standard</i>
3.1 – Operating Budget	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.2 – Operating Budget Narrative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.3 – Network Financial Plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Section Evaluation Rating: Section 3 – Financial Plan and Capacity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Section 3: Financial Plan and Capacity Review Notes	
Section Strengths	Concerns / Questions

Subsection 3.1 – Operating Budget

Indicators of a Strong Response	
Items Relevant to All Sponsors	
The operating budget (Attachment W) includes all anticipated revenues and expenditures for the first five years of operation, with reasonable assumptions that reflect start-up and operational costs, including staffing, enrollment, and facilities.	
The response explicitly details major assumptions, including student enrollment, anticipated funding sources, compensation, and key expenditures.	
The response includes a clear breakdown of relevant expenses, covering categories such as personal services, employee benefits, contracted services, supplies and materials, other charges, debt service, and capital outlay.	

Subsection Evaluation Rating		
<input type="checkbox"/> Meets or Exceeds Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet Standard
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Subsection 3.2 – Operating Budget Narrative

Indicators of a Strong Response
Items Relevant to All Sponsors
The response explains how the operating budget fully supports the school's model and academic plan. It specifies the minimum student enrollment needed for sustainable operation and details how this minimum affects the budget.
The response outlines all revenue assumptions, explaining the methodology for each. If the budget includes grants, fundraising, or philanthropic revenue, it provides details on how these funds were calculated, whether they are awarded or estimated, and offers a contingency plan if the funds are not realized. The response also lists donations of private funding, including those from foreign or domestic entities where applicable. Additionally, the response specifies amounts and sources of funds from banks, corporations, foundations, grants, and others, noting which funds are secured and which are anticipated, with evidence of firm commitments where applicable.
The response explains the methodology used to determine anticipated expenditures as outlined in Section 3.1. It also addresses how high-needs students with disabilities may impact the operating budget and outlines a plan to meet these needs without compromising financial stability.
The response describes the systems, processes, and policies for managing accounting, purchasing, payroll, and audits, including policies for financial controls. It also details how the school will conduct an independent annual audit and comply with federal and state accounting/reporting requirements. The response outlines the financial roles and responsibilities of the school's administration and governing board.
If applicable, the response explains the plan to outsource financial management areas such as payroll, benefits, audits, and fundraising, providing details on contractor selection and oversight. It also describes the financial expertise of the school's internal and external team members.
The response outlines contingency plans to meet financial needs if anticipated revenues are lower than expected. It includes a detailed cash flow contingency plan in case revenue projections are not met or expenditures exceed expectations, with explanations of financing sources, including loans or alternative funding sources.

Subsection Evaluation Rating		
<input type="checkbox"/> Meets or Exceeds Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet Standard
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Subsection 3.3 – Network Financial Plan

Indicators of a Strong Response
Items Relevant for Sponsors Who Answered “Yes” to Sponsor History and Intent Question 3
The response clearly describes the fiscal health of other schools in the network, disclosing any schools that have been subject to financial enforcement actions, including audits, fiscal probation, default, or bankruptcy. It provides an explanation of the circumstances surrounding these actions.
The response presents a clear plan for reaching the organization’s fundraising goals over the next five years, including a development plan with staffing needs.
The response provides a detailed network budget/plan (Attachment Y) that aligns with school-level budgets. The budget includes realistic revenue assumptions from all funding sources (state, local, federal, grants, philanthropy) and anticipated expenditures.
The response outlines all anticipated costs related to back-office services, facilities, employee compensation (including the portion allocated to the proposed school), management fees (if applicable), and other network expenditures.

Subsection Evaluation Rating		
<input type="checkbox"/> Meets or Exceeds Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet Standard
Subsection Strengths		
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Section 4: Portfolio Review & Performance Record Evaluation

<i>Subsections</i>	<i>Meets or Exceeds Standard</i>	<i>Partially Meets Standard</i>	<i>Does Not Meet Standard</i>
4.1 – School Portfolio Summary	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.2 – Academic Performance Record	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.3 – Fiscal and Operational Performance Record	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Section Evaluation Rating: Section 4 – Portfolio Review & Performance Record	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Section 4: Performance Review & Performance Record Review Notes	
Section Strengths	Concerns / Questions

Subsection 4.1 – School Portfolio Summary

Indicators of a Strong Response
Items Relevant for Sponsors Who Answered “Yes” to Sponsor History and Intent Question 1
The response includes a complete list of all schools currently or previously operated or managed by the sponsor, governing body, network, and/or charter management organization, with accurate information for each status (actively operating, pre-opening, pending authorization, withdrawals, voluntary or involuntary closures).
For each listed school, the response provides essential details including school name, status, operating years, address, grades served, total enrollment, and state or federal designations over the last five years.
The response includes relevant data on graduation rates for the prior year, student group percentages, and any other required performance metrics.

Subsection Evaluation Rating		
<input type="checkbox"/> Meets or Exceeds Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet Standard
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Subsection 4.2 – Academic Performance Record

Indicators of a Strong Response
Items Relevant for Sponsors Who Answered “Yes” to Sponsor History and Intent Question 1
The response provides clear evidence showing the sponsor’s or charter management organization’s success in improving student academic achievement and growth. It includes five years of data for ELA, Math, Algebra I/II, Geometry, Integrated Math I/II/III, and English I/II, with a breakdown by student groups (All Students, Black/Hispanic/Native American, Economically Disadvantaged, English Learners, Students with Disabilities, and Super Subgroup).
The response includes nationally normed internal assessment data for grades not covered by state assessments, disaggregated by student group, and covering the past five years.
The response details the successes and challenges faced by the sponsor’s or charter management organization’s schools, clearly identifying specific academic performance issues and successes.
The response selects one or more high-performing schools and provides specific academic outcomes and causes for success. It describes how successful practices or strategies were implemented in other schools within the network.
The response selects one or more underperforming schools and explains the causes of underperformance. It outlines strategies, interventions, and support systems in place to correct these issues, with specific goals and benchmarks for improvement.

Subsection Evaluation Rating		
<input type="checkbox"/> Meets or Exceeds Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet Standard
Subsection Strengths		
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Subsection 4.3 – Fiscal and Operational Performance Record

Indicators of a Strong Response
Items Relevant for Sponsors Who Answered “Yes” to Sponsor History and Intent Questions 1
The response includes official performance and/or evaluation reports, renewal/interim reports, and annual reports for the last two years (Attachments AA, BB, and CC). These documents demonstrate strong and favorable authorizer evaluations for each school operated by the sponsor and/or contracted charter management organization.
The response provides a clear list of any terminated contracts with charter schools, detailing the reasons for termination, especially in cases of material breach, and shows transparency in addressing any past contract issues.
The response details any instances of charter revocations, non-renewals, shortened/conditional renewals, or withdrawals/non-openings of schools. It explains the causes of these actions and demonstrates the sponsor’s capacity to address and resolve deficiencies or compliance violations.
The response identifies any current or past litigation, including arbitration proceedings, involving the network, governing body, charter management organization, sponsor, or any charter schools. It includes all necessary documents (Attachment DD) and demonstrates the organization’s ability to navigate legal challenges effectively.
The response provides two years of audited financial statements and the most recent internal financial statements for each school operated by the sponsor and/or charter management organization (Attachment EE). These documents show sound fiscal management and compliance with accounting standards.

Subsection Evaluation Rating		
<input type="checkbox"/> Meets or Exceeds Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet Standard
Subsection Strengths		
Reference	Page	
Concerns / Questions		
Reference	Page	

Overall Application Evaluation

<i>Sections</i>	<i>Meets or Exceeds Standard</i>	<i>Partially Meets Standard</i>	<i>Does Not Meet Standard</i>
<u>Section 1: Academic Plan and Design Evaluation</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Section 2: Operations Plan and Capacity Evaluation</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Section 3: Financial Plan and Capacity Evaluation</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Section 4: Portfolio Review & Performance Record Evaluation</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overall Application Evaluation Rating:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>