

Request for Proposal (RFP) for Public Charter Schools

INFORMATIONAL MEETING - JUNE 18, 2014 – NOTES FOR WEBSITE

Key:

Yellow – section/topic

Cranberry – change in RFP

Question from Guest

➤ Arrow - the answer.

Note on RFP Time Table

Please follow the schedule in its entirety; critical dates referenced:

June 25, 2014: Letter of Intent to Apply signed original received or postmarked by 5:00 p.m.

August 25, 2014: Application to be delivered by 5:00 p.m.

September 29 – October 3, 2014: Review Team Interviews with Applicants (Public Meetings)
(Date, Time, Place TBD)

October 27 – October 31, 2014: In-person Interviews/Public Hearings (Date, Time, Place TBD)

November 13, 2014, 9:30 a.m.: Maine Charter School Commission Business Meeting final vote on each pending application.

TABS

Please note Corrected Information:

Department of Education, Special Services Department has removed the requirement of the following tabbed policies and procedure:

Tab 3. Individual Education Programs Policy (IHBA)

Tab 12. Disciplinary Removal of Students with Disabilities Policy (JKF)

Tab 13. Disciplinary Removal of Students with Disabilities Administrative Procedure

All other Tab Numbers remain the same Title as listed on the Tab Sheet Page 5.
In the application, TABS are numbered – not the title of the document.
Please include the Blank Tabs in your document (3, 12, 13).

Tab 6. Child Find Policy (IHBAC) is required.

Format Requirements

- **Single-sided is no longer a requirement.**
- **Bound copies can be two-sided pages.**
- **Unbound copy will be one-sided pages with Tabs for each section.**

Executive Summary

- Name of Entity that will hold the charter: Is the name of the charter school.
- Signed Original by the Chair of the Board with name printed.

OVERALL INSTRUCTIONS

- After this meeting, you can ask questions – limited to the Executive Director by email: mcsc@maine.gov.
- All questions and responses received will be posted on the MCSC website as soon as possible.
- Applicant instructions are mirrored in the evaluation criteria.
- Please read application instructions carefully.
- The evaluation criteria should mirror the criteria you are given.
- Answer the question; make no assumptions.
- Look at the law that creates the charter schools (20-A Chapter 112), the rule from the Department (05-071 Chapter 140) that describes charter schools, Rule 2 of the Charter School Commission – application processing, etc.
- It is your responsibility to be knowledgeable and clear on the laws and adhering to them in the application and if approved, in your conduct moving forward.
- The funds received from the resident district are never enough to run the school. You have to do fundraising. You do not receive facilities money from the state and there are other things you don't get as well. Be aware you have to build in more into your budget.
- Performance Template – available MCSC website. In addition to referencing academic performance, it is also performance dealing with parent, community, finances, food service, transportation – goals, measure and a metric, established in that performance template for each section of the document.
- Application should always be available to the public and the Governing Board to review.

A. 1 Education Plan

Uniqueness of your proposal; education philosophy, method of instruction, place of instruction;

What will kids be able to achieve? How will they achieve it?

How are you going to evaluate all of that?

Where is the community we want to be practicing in and what do we want to attract?

You are inviting all students in; you cannot select; how are you going to include all.

Provide documentation and evidence to assert what the community or regional needs are.

- Information available on the Dept. of Education website that will describe graduation rates, special ed. students, drop-out rates, truancy rates, incidences of prohibitive practices, free & reduced lunch rates, – details about what is going on in those communities that your school would meet the needs.

Community surveys, meetings to let people know what your idea looks like and is there interest.

Community can be greater than one city/town. With a wide catchment area you are going to have to have this information for each of the communities that you wish to be serving.

For catchment area of the entire state, pick a few areas to set up meetings where access is easy and attendance is promoted.

- Other sources of information: Health & Human Services, Dept. of Corrections, Dept. of Labor.

Build a case with this information and reference the sources used.

NOTE: Some **virtual charter school application** pieces are a little different or worded a little differently.

There are specific expectations of synchronous contact; as well as, how to provide for kids and teachers knowing each other.

One day per week with face-to-face contact with the teacher.

Education plan, philosophy, curriculum, etc. should be demonstrated throughout the document within the academic program, assessment, staffing, budget, facilities.

The catchment area identifies where you are going to have the school and responsible for providing transportation within the catchment area.

It defines the school's business plan with community need and demand for the school.

Can students from outside the catchment area enroll?

- Students can attend from outside the catchment area. They are equally eligible to attend as those within the catchment area.

A.2 Academic Program

Describe curriculum with examples in a couple of lessons; instructional design, learning environment, classroom-based program, project-based program, class size, structure of classroom, teaching methods and research basis that says it is an appropriate program;

Traits in staff for that program;

Evaluation of that program.

Program should be included in the mission and vision and the financial pieces of the application.

Virtual Schools provide "A day in the life of a virtual student" – what does it look like.

Be aware of the shifting sands of change:

from **Maine Learning Results-Common Core to Common Core- Smarter Balance.**

Teacher with training in common core who could develop what you are doing with your application.

Rather than seat count/credit count, it will be a proficiency-based system.

Maine's Learning Standards incorporate what is in common core.

Teachers and Learning Coaches to be on-top of what they need to be doing and knowing - to create student success requires a strong professional development piece.

BUDGET - Professional development.

Virtual Class – teacher needs to meet with that student once a week.

For a virtual class, does it have to be meeting with the teacher or can it be their academic team?

- Whoever is assessing the student should be the person to do the once a week meeting for discussion; meeting can be synchronously done.

Extracurricular and Interscholastic Activities: 20-A MRSA § 2415 as amended by LD 906 May 1, 2014.

High school level regulated by the Maine Principals' Association.

Students are able to go back to their resident district. *“For each public charter school student who participates in an extracurricular or co-curricular activity at a non-charter public school, the public charter school must pay a reasonable share of the non-charter public school’s costs for the activity, as determined through negotiations between the schools involved.” 20-A MRSA §2415*

Should be in the budget for extracurricular activities.... \$400-600 per student ... depending on numbers of students who will want to participate.

Schools are beginning to think about negotiating services for extracurricular participation of their students.

Individual Application for Participation on a Cooperative Team – Individual Coop:

The Student practices with the receiving school’s team/coach/facility and represents their sending school (charter school).

Application for the Establishment of a Cooperative Team – Team Coop:

Combined Enrollment of both schools may equal the Competing Class of the coop team.

If a school is charging all students a fee for participation, a charter school student would be responsible for paying the same amount.

Middle school level would be a different game.

Is Music an extracurricular activity?

- Music is considered an extracurricular activity. To offer a class for a “Messalonski” student in barter, MCSC would look at if you have the space and how does it affect your full-time students.

Is it OK to work with a private school?

- Sharing teachers, collaborating on professional development; no different than any other public school – can share and experience and both profit from it.

Graduation Requirement for high school level: Fulfill Maine’s graduation requirements – make sure you are up-to-date on exactly what that is going to require.

What creates “at-risk .ness” for students and how are you going to be able to support and have them meet the proposed graduation requirements as well.

Show us that all students will get to the State average for Graduation

A.3 Special Student Populations

Special Student Populations includes: Special Education, English Language Learners, At-risk Youth, Gifted and Talented Students, 504 identified Students. Be knowledgeable and respond to each one of the classifications involved.

NOTE: Recent ruling in South Carolina – 504 Compliance – a federal action: Virtual Schools - Access on line to provide for non-English reading students/parents; students who have different kinds of special educational handicaps that create a challenge to access information for enrollment, the curriculum, etc.

The Department of Education, Special Services staff read the proposals so they understand what they are looking for and are very specific.

Show a solid understanding of what the law is requiring.

Will there be a resource in Special Services to answer questions?

- Peg.Armstrong@maine.gov.

Experience, with currently operating public charter schools, is that the percentage of special education students is averaging at approximately 30%.

A. 4 Assessment

State of Maine is NECAP moving to Smarter Balance.

Think about:

- Formal and informal assessments,
- What kind of information you need to share,
- Due to unique settings – what is the unique assessment of proficiency – for example: Art/music – how you are going to assess students may look different than if you are a STEM school.
- What are the broad-based, eight content areas assessment that all students need to be able to show and be able to do?
- Line up the multiple assessments with your school's mission and your education priorities, and then demonstrate how they are doing in comparison to any other school in the State.

Precedent is the charter schools are using NWEA, a common tool used as a diagnostic tool and many different ways.

In the contract stage, will be setting some benchmark performance percentages with the performance framework. This is where kids are now; this is what we expect for growth; this is how we are going to get them to that growth with identified sub-groups that also need to be able to make their marks in terms of percentage.

- What is the academic success as well as the projected growth – over 5 years, where do you see yourself being?
- Present a clear, credible sense of what are we measuring and how do we report it and how will we know if we are being successful. How will we adjust if we find we are not being successful?

“Describe how the school will use assessment information to modify the education program and improve instruction, student learning and staff development.”

BUDGET – Determine what methods you are going to use for assessment and what they cost.

A.5 School Climate and Discipline

Are things working here? Are they not working here? What are the social/emotional factors?
Do we have bullying/harassment?

Intentional approach to how do we sustain a safe and supportive school climate - supportive of the educational goals.

- What does the discipline program look like and how does that tie in?

In development, include students, parents, staff, community, community partners.

Who is going to be responsible for the social/emotional services that you expect will be needed by your students?

Student/Staff/Emergency Handbook - Personalized using Maine requirements. Can use anyone else's information that is public as a template to develop your own, but think about what is in there. Emergency Handbook is based on where the school is located.

How to accomplish the Emergency Handbook for an unknown facility?

- Elements of your plan that you have to have in place no matter where you are. Although, it may not be building specific, it can be: "We are going to take these records with us. We are going to make sure the kids get downstairs." There are available – guiding emergency school handbooks that are produced so you don't have to invent them.

Emergencies of fire, water, threats coming in and the Virtual schools have to think about what are some of the disruptions that can happen to student learning – i.e. Viruses – how would that be handled.

BUDGET - impact by choice of site.

B. Organizational and Operational Plan

You have an idea for your charter school – What is it going to look like?

B. 1 School Calendar and Daily Schedule.

For the Non-Traditional – provide a rationale for unique schedules; i.e. a longer school day or a project day each week, other.

Show us how that relates to your mission and vision.

B. 2 Student Recruitment and Enrollment

MRS Title 20-A, Chapter 112 Public Charter Schools § 2404

Department of Education 05-071 Chapter 140 SECTION 3. CHARTER SCHOOL OPERATIONS

How are you going to reach out to families and students?

Casting a wide net to all economic and interest levels – demonstrate how you have reached families in poverty situations, where are you going to post signs, talk to people, non-English speaking families.

The more you reach out into the community , the more you are going to be able to tap into those people to come on board to help you; maybe become Board Members with specific areas of expertise; advisory board, volunteers for the school.

Encourage communication to the local school district - could be opening the door --- in terms of bartering with a music program, on-line program or special education and transportation options --- opening of conversations. It is a means of establishing community need and demographics.
Go in person for this meeting with the school district.

Public charter schools are not in a competition with other public schools. It is another public educational choice that is available for the students and the parents; providing a choice so that all students succeed.

Homeschool students – Budget implication is the student previously had not been enrolled in the district so in the first year in the charter school, the resident district does not benefit from the count of that student when the general purpose aid for that district had been computed.

The per-pupil amount is a combination of the local dollars and the state dollars.

The resident district is compelled by law to pay the combined amount computed for that student.

B. 3 Staffing and Human Resources

What is the staffing ratio? What is the staffing chart look like? Who is responsible for what?

How will we recruit and develop good school leadership and good staff?

How do we keep working with the personnel to make sure they appropriately have professional opportunities that best support them?

Learning Coaches – how are they supported; what are the professional development opportunities for them to understand what it takes for them to do the work they are going to need to do with that student on a day-to-day basis?

School Leadership and Staff:

*The school's chief executive officer must be employed by the governing board of the proposed charter School.
The chief financial officer must be an employee of the school and must manage all public revenues received by the school.*

Certification of Staff: certified as a teacher, teacher certified within three years, expertise in their field.

Benefits – your Board chooses the benefits you are going to give to your employees. That is strictly up to you what you do. It is not up to us to decide whether or not you give health insurance to your workers.

B.4 Pre-Opening Plan

BUDGET – for Pre-Opening requirements.

Work your way through the Pre-Opening Plan Document – will take you step-by-step - a calendar for you.

List of key items and who is responsible.

Some items are accomplished after the contract for a charter school is signed.

B.5 Management and Operations

Day-to-Day operations of the school –

Who is going to be responsible?

What are the critical skills that are going to be needed to carry out the role that is going to be assigned?

What qualifications wanted for school leader? What are they going to be doing for the organization?

BUDGET - Day-to-day operation of the school.

Provide Organizational Chart – showing the staffing and structure.

Explain partnerships and contractual relationships central to the school's operation and mission.

Is it ok to contract for special education services; and contract to share the facility, maintenance/janitorial services?

- Make sure absolutely clear who is doing what. It is what is in your application that will make a difference.

B. 6 Parent and Community Involvement

How will everyone feel a part of your opportunity?

How is there going to be a flow between the parents, the community and the school?

How to engage and develop these partnerships?

How will you know if your parents are satisfied?

- *Present a statement of any current and projected relationships with the School Administrative Unit where the school is located or nearby SAUs.*
- Provide documentation of public meetings held in the catchment area, including location held, agenda, reasonable public notice, involvement of the local stakeholders, synopsis-summary of the results of that meeting.
- To document positive community involvement, include in your application any letters of support, commitment to provide or share resources, organizations that are going to be working with you-have it in writing.

C. Governance

C. 1 Governing Body

Charter school must be a non-profit corporation.

Documentation provided that a section 501 (c)(3) has been filed.

Governing Board has to be totally independent and has total fiduciary responsibility.

Governing Board is responsible for hiring, firing, paying of staff - albeit, can hire out someone who does the payroll.

The Governing Board has to be the one approving everything – makes the final decisions.

Governing Boards - make sure you have covered as many areas as possible with expertise that can bring what you need to that school and then you must document that with their background.

The Governing Board's organizational chart – what is their particular job – specific responsibility with the member understanding what their function is on the Board.

The role of the Board is oversight – not to do the job that you hire staff to do.

You want people who have the background to know when the job is being done well or not so well.

If you can have someone on your Board who is an accountant or who is incredibly knowledgeable on finance, it will save you a lot of heartache.

Fundraising – People on the Board with capacity to do Fundraising – a must.

The school will be successful if there is good leadership of the school. The leadership of the school is going to come from the CEO of the school.

The Board is going to help that leader be more effective by providing solid, real oversight.

Contract is with the Governing Board.

If you are selected to be the leader of the school, you are now reporting to and accountable to that Governing Board.

If you are the director of the school, you cannot sit on the Board, you must be an ex-officio member – a non-voting member of the Board.

Governing Board Member Information Sheet is available on the website.

Provide a summary of how the Board has been intimately involved with the preparation in the planning and delivery of the application.

Advisory Boards can become the Governing Board.

Once you are a Governing Board of the charter school, you are a public body. You have to observe all right-to-know obligations that are in the law. Public meetings, agendas posted and available to all public and meeting minutes posted once they have been approved by the Board.

Tabs:

29. Governing Board Resumes

30. Board Profile

31. List of officers and committee chairs – what are the roles those people are going to play.

Does any of this have to be done prior to Letter of Intent submitted?

➤ No

D. Business and Financial Services

D.1 Budget

The budget must have a sound plan and a sound financial infrastructure to support the plan.

BUDGET - Pre-Opening of School

Provide enough money for the Pre-Opening period; there are all kinds of pre-opening expenses.

No funds from the resident district until after you open.

Document an available line of credit from a bank or individual or any fundraising already done or in process providing for a Budget for the school prior to opening.

September 1 is the first payment from the resident district, predicated on the resident district receiving the invoice from the charter school by August 1.

- Submit a completed Charter School Budget Template Tab 32 – available on the MCSC website. In developing your budget, please use the per-pupil revenue projections that you can be obtain from the Maine Department of Education.

NOTE:

You will receive 96% of the total funds. Three percent comes to the Charter Commission and one percent stays with the resident district. This should be clear in your budget.

Addition to the Budget Template:

Give us the total amount – have another item for the 3% and 1% under a liability and then take it off. You could put it under Other and make a list so we know what it is.

BUDGET - Special Education

A student newly identified for services or a previously identified SPED Student with additional services required, you will have to pay the full amount. You may be faced with this cost in any year.

If a child is MaineCare Qualified, are we able to access MaineCare services for that child to support them staying in the school?

- No different than any other public school; you are a public school.

Are we able to figure in the dollars that you would get if you have a special education population? If the child is identified, your per-pupil amount includes the identification as child receiving special education. That amount doesn't change because the cost to provide that special education might increase. It is approximately, \$8,000 in addition to the EPS Basic Rate. If it costs \$32,000, you are not going to see the other \$24,000; it is a fixed amount that you will receive for any identified student.

- Consider the percentage in the catchment area and use that as a basis to calculate the potential SPED enrollment in the charter school.
You can budget by the anticipated number of students and the fixed amount provided for Special Education.

Demonstrate that you will have a cash reserve by the end of Year 3, sufficient to cover expenses for 2 months or more.

Make sure you are showing how that budget is paying for what is important for you – academic program, staff, and everything else that goes with it.

D. 2 Financial Management

Description of accounting software that connects seamlessly to DOE system, Maine Education Data Management System (MEDMS).

Both accounting software and the student information have to be compatible. Please check with the Department of Education. MEDMS HELP DESK: 624-6896

Please contact the Department of Education for: billing questions, budgeting questions, demographics, etc. You should affirm with them that what you are planning for your software and programs for record keeping, etc. is compatible with MEDMS or you can adapt it to make it compatible.

D.3 Facilities

- NOTE: Hope you are close to a site – We want to approve, but we don't know that you are going to have a site. How do we approve when there is no site and then it takes more and more time. We do not need a signed contract for a facility.

Tell us what you know about the options for facilities and what you know about each of them – renovations needed with approximate cost for occupying that particular building.

Tell us how you will maintain and keep facilities clean - has to be something more than the students are going to clean.

Is it ok to have a facility for 2 years, knowing that by Year 3 we will be moving?

- It would become what is known as a material change to your contract. But you certainly could do that – and you bring it back to us again for the board to approve the change.
You can have a discussion of that concept in your application.

Have you married your educational philosophy with the facility?

A diagram of what the facility will look like – room dimensions, etc.

Leases and contracts – we understand there are certain contracts you cannot get; it does not need to be signed at the time of the application.

Any completed contracts would have to be signed by the Board President.

BUDGET – for cost of furniture, fixtures, equipment, etc.

D.4 Transportation

Within the catchment area – if you are a high school, you do not have to provide transportation; you may choose to provide transportation. Check out the Law to do with Transportation and become familiar with it.

Plans for providing transportation for students with disabilities in the manner required to comply with IDEA. If you are in a situation where you don't have to, you do have to there if that is part of their IEP.

BUDGET - If you hire a bus service, ask for a ballpark amount: If we have children with disabilities that need to be transported, give us an approximate for the budget.

D.5 Insurance

A quote from an insurance agency for each category is required. It does not need to be signed at the time of the application.

D. 6 Food Service

You are not required to provide food for the children in your school.

You can; if you decide you want to go under the federal program, it takes a lot of work and has a lot of requirements. The requirements for the kitchen are very different than in your home.

If a child comes to school without breakfast or lunch, you should have something to provide for them.

Some schools are raising their own food – MeANS and Harpswell.

Present a clear statement of the school's rationale for not providing such services;

D. 7 Closure Protocol

You have to include in your application, but would be five years down the road. We hope it would never come before that.

Every year you will be evaluated.

You will receive a written response as to what we see at the time of your evaluation covering all the areas we have just gone through with you today.

Should there be any question of what you are doing, we will indicate it every single year.

And, if it doesn't improve within a certain period of time, then we would have to take other steps.

We will be on top of that – we don't want you to fail; we don't want to fail the children; we don't want to fail the parents.

- You do have to have a plan for transfer of assets. As a non-profit, there are specific laws about that. So you want to know what the State laws are about that.
- Who owns what things? Anything owned by the State, in a closure anything you have left you have to give to a non-profit within the State.
- Whose role and responsibility in your entity will it be to oversee a school closure?

E. Education Service Providers

This is in both the regular and the virtual application.

A regular charter school is not restricted from more of a blended approach, including some virtual learning opportunities in their regular school day. You might be providing a course on-line contracted from a provider.

There could be other opportunities, other contractual things that would require this section.

Rubrics for both Regular and Virtual Application are available on our website, which the review team will use to evaluate your application. These are equally informative to use as you are filling out the application.

NOTE: The Maine Charter School Commission is not the Department of Education. We are a separate state agency. We happen to be located in the same office area with the Dept. We work very closely together.

Department of Education Resources:

Special Education program approval for charter schools, alternate assessments

- Peg Armstrong (624-6654) or Peg.Armstrong@maine.gov

Federal ESEA/NCLB Programs

- For Title I (disadvantaged students): Rachelle Tome (624-6705) or Rachelle.Tome@maine.gov or Jackie Godbout (624-6705) or Jackie.Godbout@maine.gov
- Federal accountability and Title VI (rural education grants): Rachelle Tome (624-6705) or Rachelle.Tome@maine.gov
- For teacher effectiveness grants, Margaret (Meghan) Southworth (624-6705) or Margaret.Southworth@maine.gov
- For English learners: Nancy Mullins (624-6788) or Nancy.Mullins@maine.gov

State Assessment System

- Sue Fossett (624-6775) or Susan.Fossett@maine.gov

Funding – amounts transferable from resident school districts

- Suzan Beaudoin (624-6790) or Suzan.Beaudoin@maine.gov

Data system (MEDMS) including enrollment of students

- Call the MEDMS Help Desk at 624-6896. You'll probably talk to Ryan Cunningham or Rick Bergeron

1 to 1 computing (laptops)

- Jeff Mao (624-6634) or Jeff.Mao@maine.gov

Facilities standards

- Scott Brown (624-6883) or Scott.Brown@maine.gov
- Randy Kassa (624-6776) or Randy.Kassa@maine.gov