

# *Maine Charter School Commission*

## ***NEW CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION***

**For Schools Opening in the 2020-2021 School Year**

Issue Date: Monday, January 28, 2019

Due Date: Friday, June 21, 2019 5:00 pm EDT

Maine Charter School Commission Vote: September 3, 2019

## Maine Charter School Commission

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For more information about the contents of this document, please contact:

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Maine Charter School Commission  
Attn: Executive Director  
182 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333-0182

# CONTENTS

|                                                          |    |
|----------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Introduction.....                                        | 5  |
| Eligibility.....                                         | 6  |
| Administrative Requirements.....                         | 7  |
| Reservation of Rights.....                               | 7  |
| Proper Communication.....                                | 7  |
| Applicant Questions and Complaints.....                  | 7  |
| Delivery of Applications.....                            | 8  |
| Application Contents.....                                | 8  |
| Application Format and Organization.....                 | 8  |
| Cost of Application Preparation.....                     | 9  |
| Completeness Review.....                                 | 9  |
| Waiver of Minor Administrative Irregularities.....       | 9  |
| Errors in Application.....                               | 9  |
| Misrepresentations on Application.....                   | 9  |
| Plagiarism.....                                          | 10 |
| Due Diligence.....                                       | 10 |
| Amendments and Revisions.....                            | 10 |
| No Obligation to Contract.....                           | 11 |
| Withdrawal of Application.....                           | 11 |
| Electronic Availability.....                             | 11 |
| Revisions to the New Charter School Application.....     | 11 |
| Terms and Provision of the Sample Contract.....          | 11 |
| Instructions and Guidelines.....                         | 12 |
| Learning Opportunities.....                              | 12 |
| Components of the Application & Application Process..... | 13 |
| Narrative Application.....                               | 13 |
| Attachments.....                                         | 13 |
| Capacity Interview.....                                  | 13 |

|                                                                                      |    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Public Hearing .....                                                                 | 14 |
| Commission Meeting September 3, 2019.....                                            | 14 |
| Electronic Submission Instructions .....                                             | 14 |
| Specifications .....                                                                 | 15 |
| Category 1: General Information .....                                                | 15 |
| Category 1: General Information .....                                                | 19 |
| Section A: School Information .....                                                  | 19 |
| Section B: Primary Contact Person .....                                              | 19 |
| Section C: Enrollment Projections .....                                              | 20 |
| Section D: Current and Prospective Board Member Roster .....                         | 20 |
| Section E: Start-Up Team .....                                                       | 20 |
| Category 2: Executive Summary .....                                                  | 21 |
| Section 1: Executive Summary (Not to exceed 1500 words) .....                        | 21 |
| Category 3: Educational Program Design and Capacity.....                             | 23 |
| Section 2: Program Overview (Not to exceed 1500 words).....                          | 23 |
| Section 3: Curriculum and Instructional Design (Not to exceed 2700 words).....       | 24 |
| Section 4: Student Performance Standards (Not to exceed 1300 words) .....            | 25 |
| Section 5: High School Graduation Requirements (High Schools Only) .....             | 25 |
| (Not to exceed 700 Words).....                                                       | 25 |
| Section 6: School Calendar and Schedule (Not to exceed 400 words) .....              | 26 |
| Section 7: School Culture (Not to exceed 2000 words) .....                           | 26 |
| Section 8: Supplemental Programming (Not to exceed 700 words) .....                  | 27 |
| Section 9: Special Populations and At-Risk Students (Not to exceed 5000 words) ..... | 28 |
| Section 10: Student Recruitment and Enrollment (Not to exceed 600 words) .....       | 30 |
| Section 11: Student Discipline Policy and Plan (Not to exceed 1200 words) .....      | 31 |
| Section 12: Family and Community Involvement (Not to exceed 1300 words) .....        | 31 |
| Section 13: Educational Program Capacity (Not to exceed 1200 words) .....            | 32 |
| Category 4: Operations Plan and Capacity .....                                       | 34 |
| Section 14: Legal Status and Governing Documents (Not to exceed 750 words) .....     | 34 |
| Section 15: Organization Structure and Partnerships (Not to exceed 500 -words) ..... | 34 |

|                                                                             |    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Section 16: Governing Board (Not to exceed 2200 words) .....                | 35 |
| Section 17: Advisory Bodies (Not to exceed 300 words) .....                 | 37 |
| Section 18: Grievance/Complaint Process (Not to exceed 750 words) .....     | 37 |
| Section 19: District Partnerships (Not to exceed 300 words) .....           | 37 |
| Section 20: Education Service Providers (ESP) and Other Partnerships .....  | 38 |
| (Not to exceed 300 words) .....                                             | 38 |
| Section 21: Staffing Plans, Hiring, Management, and Evaluation.....         | 39 |
| (Not to exceed 2500 words) .....                                            | 39 |
| Section 22: Professional Development (Not to exceed 1200 words) .....       | 40 |
| Section 23: Academic Achievement (not to exceed 1000 words) .....           | 40 |
| Section 24: Facilities (Not to exceed 800 words).....                       | 41 |
| Section 25: Start-Up and Ongoing Operations (Not to exceed 1400 words)..... | 42 |
| Section 26: Operations Capacity (Not to exceed 800 words) .....             | 43 |
| Category 5: Financial Plan and Capacity .....                               | 44 |
| Section 27: Financial Plan (Not to exceed 2600 words).....                  | 44 |
| Section 28: Financial Management Capacity (Not to exceed 500 words) .....   | 45 |
| Category 6: Existing Operators .....                                        | 46 |
| Section 29: Existing Operators (Not to exceed 2700 words) .....             | 46 |
| Category 7: Virtual Schools .....                                           | 47 |
| Section 30: Virtual Schools .....                                           | 47 |

# INTRODUCTION

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This Request for Proposal (RFP) is intended to solicit, encourage and guide the development of high-quality public charter school applications throughout the State of Maine. This RFP format is for brick-and-mortar, blended learning, and virtual public schools.

Applications in response to this RFP are for consideration by the Maine Charter School Commission (the “Commission”) only. Applications to other authorizers must use the application forms and follow the procedures developed by those authorizers.

This RFP/Application packet will guide you through the steps of developing a public charter school proposal. Each section requests information about a specific aspect of your plan and presents the evaluative criteria that reviewers will use to determine whether the application demonstrates the applicant’s competence in each element of the Commission’s published approval criteria and demonstrates that the applicant is ready to open and operate a successful public charter school.

The Commission requires that successful applicants demonstrate a number of common characteristics:

- A clear, focused, results-oriented mission statement that aligns all parts of the proposal;
- A vision of how the program will improve educational and social opportunities for the charter school’s student population and how the program will meet a community need and affect the community. (Note: the term “community” refers to the catchment area, *i.e.*, the individual school administrative units and towns/cities that are within that catchment area);
- A demonstrated understanding of the population that the school intends to serve;
- An educational program that is likely to be effective for that population;
- A commitment to continuing professional education for faculty and staff;
- Facilities and a facilities maintenance plan that support the program;
- A commitment to inviting the participation of stake-holders in the operation of the school, including parents, students, staff and the community at large;
- Strong, experienced school and board leadership; and
- Strong financial planning and management.

Specifically, the Commission is seeking proposals that include innovative curriculum design, scheduling that supports that design, and a school calendar that reflects the mission and vision of the school. The Commission is especially interested in schools that address student populations whose needs are not well served by existing public schools.

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The Commission is eager to receive well-developed applications from capable school developers who are committed to educating their students well and improving the lives of children and families in Maine's communities.

The Commission will announce one or more sessions where potential applicants may meet as a group with the Commission to discuss the application and the application process and any directions regarding the application or the application evaluation process.

The entire public charter school application and all documents associated with the application are public records and will be posted on the Maine Charter School Commission website.

In the meantime, if you have any questions regarding this application or the application process, please contact us at [mcsc@maine.gov](mailto:mcsc@maine.gov).

## Eligibility

This New Charter School Application process seeks applications for schools that plan to open and serve students in the 2020-2021 school year. If an applicant submits an application for the 2021-2022 school year, it will be reviewed for the same readiness standards as the schools intending to open in the designated solicitation year (2020-2021). Applicants for the 2021-2022 school year must *also* provide good cause for delaying the proposed school's opening for one year beyond the designated solicitation year.

By law, only nonprofit organizations may operate charter schools in the state of Maine. Documentation that the applicant is a Maine nonprofit corporation, has filed an application for exemption (Form 1023) with the Internal Revenue Service, or has a notice of exemption satisfies this requirement.

Applications will be reviewed for satisfaction of the eligibility requirements (see Completeness Review). If these eligibility requirements are not met, the application will be summarily rejected.

# ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS

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## Reservation of Rights

The Commission reserves the right to reissue the New Charter School Application, or cancel the New Charter School Application, as deemed appropriate by the Commission. **Applicants are expected to review this New Charter School Application closely; revisions have been made to process and content.**

## Proper Communication

Upon release of this New Charter School Application, all applicant communications must be directed to the Executive Director of the Maine Charter School Commission. Unauthorized contact with other state or Commission employees or representatives may result in disqualification. All oral communications will be considered unofficial and non-binding. Applicants should rely only on written statements issued by the Executive Director.

Robert Kautz, Executive Director  
Maine Charter School Commission  
182 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333-0182

Telephone: (207) 592-8352  
Email: [mcsc@maine.gov](mailto:mcsc@maine.gov)

## Applicant Questions and Complaints

Applicant questions regarding this New Charter School Application will be allowed consistent with the *Timeline*. All questions must be submitted via email to the Executive Director at [mcsc@maine.gov](mailto:mcsc@maine.gov). Official written Commission responses will be provided for questions received by the deadlines, and will be posted at: [www.maine.gov/csc](http://www.maine.gov/csc)

Applicants submitting questions will not be identified in the Commission's response. Verbal responses to questions will be considered unofficial and non-binding. Only written responses posted to the Commission website listed above will be considered official and binding.

Applicants are expected to raise any questions they have concerning the New Charter School Application requirements early in the New Charter School Application process. The Commission may not be able to address questions that arise late in the process.

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## Delivery of Applications

The application, in its entirety, must be received by Commission no later than **5:00 pm EDT on June 21, 2019**. All applications must be submitted to the Maine Charter School Commission via the Epicenter online application platform, at [www.epicenternow.org](http://www.epicenternow.org). Submissions are time stamped when uploaded to Epicenter. **Submissions will not be accepted after the deadline.**

**Applicants should allow sufficient time to ensure timely receipt of the application by the Maine Charter School Commission. Late submissions will not be accepted and will be automatically disqualified from further consideration.**

The Commission assumes no responsibility for delays caused by applicant's technical difficulties, network problems, or any other party.

**All submitted documents become the property of the Commission and will not be returned.  
All submissions become public record.**

**Facsimile transmissions will not be accepted at any point in the process.**

## Application Contents

The application must contain information responding to all requirements in the New Charter School Application. The application and all documents that require a signature must be signed, or have an electronic verification, by an authorized representative of the applicant.

Failure to provide any information or required signatures may result in disqualification of the application.

## Application Format and Organization

Applications must be written in English and submitted using the Commission designated, online application platform, Epicenter. Applicants should develop their application narrative in Microsoft Word (MS Word) format using Calibri size 11 font, and must complete all required templates and attachments, and upload completed documents via Epicenter.

Documents requiring signatures must be signed by a representative authorized to bind the applicant to their application. Documents that require signatures should be properly signed, completed, and scanned into a separate file in PDF format. Submit the signed, scanned PDF as well as a Word converted to PDF format without the signature when possible.

## Cost of Application Preparation

Applicants are solely responsible for the costs associated with preparing and presenting an application, as well as any costs associated with participation in the application review process. The Commission will not reimburse applicants for any costs associated with this New Charter School Application.

## Completeness Review

All applications will be reviewed for completeness before they are accepted and distributed to the evaluation teams. If an application is found to be incomplete (*i.e.* missing responses to required application sections, certifications, assurances, attachments, signatures, etc.) or incorrectly formatted, the applicant will be notified of the specific errors or omissions and will have an opportunity to file corrections, as long as they are filed with the Commission via Epicenter within 5 business days after the applicant's receipt of the notice of errors or omissions. Applicants will be notified of an application's completeness 7 business days after the due date. An application is considered to be filed on the date on which the corrections are filed with the Commission. If the application is filed by an entity that is not eligible to apply or the application, after an opportunity to correct, does not contain all required information, the Commission shall reject the application. It should be noted that *findings of completion* are not indicative of the *quality* of the application.

## Waiver of Minor Administrative Irregularities

The Commission reserves the right to waive minor administrative irregularities contained in any application.

## Errors in Application

Applicants are liable for all errors or omissions contained in their applications. Applicants will not be allowed to alter application documents after notification of completeness. Applicants who become aware of a material error in their application documents must notify the Executive Director as soon as the error is discovered. The Commission is not liable for any such errors. The Commission reserves the right to contact the applicant for clarification of application contents, including through the Capacity Interview process.

## Misrepresentations on Application

An application containing a material misrepresentation in the information or documentation submitted may be denied. A material misrepresentation includes, but is not limited to, one that is inaccurate or misleading, or a representation that, if accurately reported, could impact the rating that an applicant would receive on any applicable criteria. If, after a school is authorized, it is learned that the application contained a material misrepresentation, the resulting charter contract may be deemed null and void by the Commission.

## Plagiarism

The content of an application must be a product of the applicant's own efforts and shall not be copied from other sources, with the exception of quotes that are properly attributed. For applications containing material whose original source is not their own, the applicant must properly and completely attribute the material to its primary source and show that it has permission to utilize the material. Plagiarism is strictly prohibited and will result in automatic disqualification of the application. If, after a school is authorized, it is learned that a portion of the application was plagiarized, the resulting charter contract may be deemed null and void by the Commission.

## Due Diligence

The decision to approve an application to open and operate a charter public school requires a thorough vetting of the applicant and the components of the application. The Commission may engage in due diligence to verify and evaluate the information submitted as part of the evaluation process. Due diligence may include, but is not limited to:

1. Contacting individuals who may have knowledge about the information submitted and/or individuals associated with the applicant organization to evaluate the accuracy and validity of the information provided in the application; and
2. Review of information and documentation obtained from external sources to evaluate the accuracy and validity of the information provided in the application.

Relevant information gleaned through this due diligence process will be reduced to writing in a due diligence report and provided to the evaluation team and the Commission for use in determining whether the application meets the criteria for approval.

## Amendments and Revisions

The Commission reserves the right to revise the *Timeline* or other portions of this New Charter School Application at any time. The Commission may correct errors in this document (identified either by the Commission or an applicant). Any changes or corrections will be by one or more written amendment(s), dated, and posted with this New Charter School Application at [www.maine.gov/csc](http://www.maine.gov/csc).

**Applicants are responsible for checking this site for changes and should do so frequently.** The Commission will not be responsible for notifying applicants of changes in any other manner. All changes must be authorized and issued in writing by the Executive Director. If there is any conflict between amendments, or between an amendment and the New Charter School Application, whichever document was issued last in time shall be controlling.

## No Obligation to Contract

The Commission may deny applications that fail to meet statutory or authorizer requirements. The Commission also reserves the right to refrain from selecting or contracting with any and all applicants. The Commission may not approve more than one new school application at this time.

## Withdrawal of Application

Applicants may withdraw an application that has been submitted by August 19, 2019. To accomplish application withdrawal, a written request signed by an authorized representative of the applicant must be submitted to the Executive Director. Withdrawn applications and related materials may remain on the Commission's website.

Failure to respond to the Commission according to the Timeline below, or failure to respond to an inquiry or communication from the Commission to the applicant's designated representative, shall be deemed a withdrawal.

## Electronic Availability

The contents of this New Charter School Application and any amendments or revisions and written answers to questions will be available at [www.maine.gov/csc](http://www.maine.gov/csc). Updates will be made to the online submission portal consistent with any amendments or revisions. **Applicants are responsible for checking this site for notices and changes and should do so frequently.**

## Revisions to the New Charter School Application

In the event it becomes necessary to revise any part of this New Charter School Application, addenda will be published at [www.maine.gov/csc](http://www.maine.gov/csc). Updates will be made to the online submission portal consistent with any amendments or revisions.

The Commission also reserves the right to cancel or reissue the New Charter School Application in whole, or in part, prior to execution of a contract.

## Terms and Provision of the Sample Contract

Submission of an Application constitutes acceptance of the solicitation contents and the sample charter contract constitutes acceptance of all terms and requirements stated therein. The sample charter contract is located on the Commission's website at [www.maine.gov/csc](http://www.maine.gov/csc)

# INSTRUCTIONS AND GUIDELINES

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Opening a new charter school that is prepared to be successful on day one requires investment in a thoughtful process to address the requirements to ensure a highly effective charter school. This New Charter School Application requires information that will allow the Commission to consider and determine if the application presents a school that is sufficiently well planned and researched, and that it not only has a compelling and rigorous academic model, but is fiscally and operationally sound as well. This New Charter School Application also seeks information that will allow the Commission to assess the capacity of the founding team to successfully implement the proposed plan.

In order for a thorough and rigorous review to occur, all applicants must respond to all questions and requests for information contained in this New Charter School Application. Failure to address all questions will result in the application being deemed incomplete.

Applicants are encouraged to reference the New Charter School Application Evaluation Rubric (for schools opening in 2020-2021) when preparing their applications to ensure that the responses not only answer the items below, but also address all of the evaluation rubric criteria. For information on how approved schools will be evaluated once they have opened, applicants should reference the Commission's performance framework, which is available on the Commission's website at [www.maine.gov/csc](http://www.maine.gov/csc).

All applicants must submit an Intent to Apply using Epicenter, the online submission portal, prepared using the template provided on Epicenter, no later than **5:00 pm EST on February 12, 2019**. Once the Commission receives an applicant's Intent to Apply, the applicant will receive access to the full RFP in Epicenter.

Applications must be submitted no later than **5:00 pm EDT on June 21, 2019**. Commission rules governing the application and approval process are incorporated by reference and available on the Commission's website. All applicants must submit their applications electronically via Epicenter. For the New Charter School Application for schools opening in 2020-2021, all electronic submissions must be uploaded to the Commission assigned Epicenter site by the deadline.

## Learning Opportunities

The Maine Charter School Commission will conduct a New Charter School Application Orientation designed to support prospective charter school applicants on February 5, 2019 at the Cross Office Building at Augusta, Maine. The purpose of this orientation is to deepen understanding of:

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1. The Commission's expectations as articulated in the New Charter School Application;
2. How to access Epicenter, the online submission portal;
3. How applications will be evaluated;
4. The purpose and format of the Capacity Interview and Public Forum; and
5. Changes that have occurred to the New Charter School Application since the last cycle.

Additional orientations will be planned after the submission deadline for the letter of intent to apply. These sessions are intended to address questions of clarification about the application. They are not to evaluate the content of your proposal. They will be scheduled and the dates and times will be on the Commission website. Access to these sessions will be both in-person and virtual. They will be recorded and available on the Commission website.

## **Components of the Application & Application Process**

### **Narrative Application**

The application is the formal application to the Commission and is a comprehensive description of the school's educational, organizational, and financial plans.

### **Attachments**

Throughout the application, specific documents are requested in addition to narrative answers. A comprehensive list of the attachments is provided on pages 15-17.

### **Capacity Interview**

Applicants will be expected to participate in an interview to demonstrate the team's capacity to open and maintain a high-quality charter school, as well as to answer specific questions about their application.

### **Commission Meeting August 6, 2019**

The Commission will receive the review team recommendation as to whether the applicant has thus far demonstrated the capacity to open a successful school and should continue to the next interview and public hearing. This will be followed by a discussion and vote of the Commission.

### **Commission Interview**

Applicants approved by vote at the August 6, 2019 Commission meeting to continue in the application process will be expected to participate in an interview with the Commission regarding the application. Applicants will be given at least five business days' notice prior to the Commission interview date.

### **Public Hearing**

The public hearing will provide an opportunity for the applicant and the Commission to hear the input from the public on the expected impact of the proposed charter school on students, parents, the community to be served by the school, and public education in the State as well as for the public to learn more about the application. While the public forum is not evaluated, information gleaned from this process may be used to evaluate the applicant. Applicants will be given at least five business days' notice prior to the scheduled public interview date.

### **Commission Meeting September 3, 2019**

Applicants are invited to attend the Commission's September 3, 2019 meeting where they will be allowed to provide a short presentation (no longer than 5 minutes) regarding their application. At this meeting the Commission shall vote to approve, conditionally approve, or deny the application.

## **Electronic Submission Instructions**

- 1. Applicants may begin writing their application narrative and completing the associated attachments and templates as MS Word documents.** Each section of the RFP has a corresponding "task" in Epicenter, the online document submission portal, where it must be uploaded. The applicant must populate the required templates, as well as upload associated attachments of the application to Epicenter by the deadline.
- 2. Applicants should populate each template and upload each section attachment to its corresponding Epicenter "task." Applicants must ensure that documents are uploaded in the file format specified.** An overview of how to use Epicenter will be included in the training sessions referenced in the section titled *Learning Opportunities*.
- 3. Applicants are responsible for ensuring that only their FINAL application narrative, attachments and required templates are uploaded to Epicenter by the noted deadline.** The application will be both submitted and locked at 5:00 pm EDT June 21, 2019. If the applicant has uploaded its application prior to the application deadline and desires to make additional revisions prior to the application deadline, the applicant may do so.
- 4. The Commission will automatically lock access to all applicant Epicenter files and applications at 5:00 pm EDT June 21, 2019.** Applications not uploaded, including applications that are partially uploaded, will not be accepted after this point.

## Specifications

1. Applicants **MUST** submit applications electronically through Epicenter with the access granted by the Commission, and must use the following templates (available on Epicenter):
  - a. Cover Sheet Template (Sections A-E);
  - b. Staffing Chart Template (Section 21: Attachment 18);
  - c. Board Member Initial Background Check Certification Template (Section 16: Attachment 14);
  - d. Charter School Board Member Information and Disclosure Form Template (Section 16: Attachment 13);
  - e. Start-up plan Template (Section 25: Attachment 23);
  - f. Financial Plan Workbook (Section 27: Attachment 25);
  - g. Portfolio Summary Template (Section 29: Attachment 31) – EXISTING OPERATORS ONLY.
  
2. **All word limits must be followed. Applications exceeding the stated word limits will be rejected.**
  
3. If a particular section or question does not apply to the applicant team or application, respond “Not Applicable” AND state the rationale.
  
4. All required attachments should be uploaded in the file format specified (PDF, unless otherwise indicated).
  
5. Any footnotes made *within a section* of the application will be added into that section’s word count. To avoid exceeding section word limits, applicants should attach a section’s footnotes as a separate document to the section to which they pertain. Please title the attachment: **Section Number.Footnotes**.
  
6. The following is a table of attachments to accompany the application and their associated category and section. Note that not all attachments will be applicable to all applicants. Attachments must be labeled by Section and Attachment number. As examples, Section 3: Attachment 1, Section 6: Attachment 4. All Attachments must be uploaded directly to the applicant’s Epicenter site. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure they submit all relevant attachments.

| Category 1: General Information   |                               |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Section A: School Information     | No Attachments (use template) |
| Section B: Primary Contact Person | No Attachments (use template) |
| Section C: Enrollment Projections | No Attachments (use template) |



|                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Section D: Current and Prospective Board Member Roster             | No Attachments (use template)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Section E: Start-Up Team                                           | No Attachments (use template)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Category 2: Executive Summary</b>                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Section 1: Executive Summary                                       | No Attachments                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Category 3: Educational Program Design and Capacity</b>         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Section 2: Program Overview                                        | No Attachments                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Section 3: Curriculum and Instructional Design                     | <u>Attachment 1</u> : Course scope and sequence<br><u>Attachment 2</u> : Curriculum development plan (if applicable)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Section 4: Student Performance Standards                           | <u>Attachment 3</u> : Exit standards for graduating students or students completing the last grade in that school.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Section 5: High School Graduation Requirements (High Schools Only) | No Attachments                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Section 6: School Calendar and Schedule                            | <u>Attachment 4</u> :<br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Year 1 of operation school calendar;</li> <li>▪ Daily schedule; and</li> <li>▪ Daily and weekly schedule</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Section 7: School Culture                                          | No Attachments                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Section 8: Supplemental Programming                                | No Attachments                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Section 9: Special Populations and At-Risk Students                | No Attachments                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Section 10: Student Recruitment and Enrollment                     | <u>Attachment 5</u> : Enrollment policy                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Section 11: Student Discipline Policy and Plan                     | <u>Attachment 6</u> : Discipline policy                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Section 12: Family and Community Engagement                        | <u>Attachment 7</u> : Evidence of community support/engagement in the application process                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Section 13: Educational Program Capacity                           | <u>Attachment 8</u> :<br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ School leader resume and/or job description; and</li> <li>▪ Plan for recruiting and hiring strong and capable school leader</li> </ul> <u>Attachment 9</u> : Leadership team job descriptions and/or resumes                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Category 4: Operations Plan and Capacity</b>                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Section 14: Legal Status and Governing Documents                   | <u>Attachment 10</u> : Governance documents:<br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Articles of Incorporation;</li> <li>▪ Bylaws;</li> <li>▪ Proof of nonprofit status; and</li> <li>▪ Other governing documents</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Section 15: Organization Structure and Partnerships                | <u>Attachment 11</u> : Organizational charts<br><u>Attachment 12</u> : Copies of Proposed Contracts                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Section 16: Governing Board                                        | <u>Attachment 13</u> : Board member documents:<br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Completed and signed board member Information and Disclosure Forms (use template); and</li> <li>▪ Board member Resumes</li> </ul> <u>Attachment 14</u> : Initial Background Certification for each board member and school leader (use template)<br><u>Attachment 15</u> :<br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Code of Ethics Policy; and</li> <li>▪ Conflict of Interest Policy</li> </ul> |

|                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Section 17: Advisory Bodies                                    | No Attachments                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Section 18: Grievance/Complaint Process                        | No Attachments                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Section 19: District Partnerships                              | <a href="#">Attachment 16</a> : If available, MOU or other partnership documentation (i.e. letters of support/partnership, etc.)                                                                                                                                 |
| Section 20: Educational Service Providers (ESP)                | <a href="#">Attachment 17</a> : ESP contract term sheet                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Section 21: Staffing Plans, Hiring, Management, and Evaluation | <a href="#">Attachment 18</a> : Staffing chart (use template)<br><a href="#">Attachment 19</a> : Leadership evaluation tools<br><a href="#">Attachment 20</a> : Teacher evaluation tools                                                                         |
| Section 22: Professional Development                           | <a href="#">Attachment 21</a> : Professional development schedule                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Section 23: Academic Achievement                               | No Attachments                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Section 24: Facilities                                         | <a href="#">Attachment 22</a> : Facility documents                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Section 25: Start-up and Ongoing Operations                    | <a href="#">Attachment 23</a> : Start-up plan<br><a href="#">Attachment 24</a> : Insurance coverage                                                                                                                                                              |
| Section 26: Operations Capacity                                | No Attachments                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Category 5: Financial Plan and Capacity</b>                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Section 27: Financial Plan                                     | <a href="#">Attachment 25</a> : Financial plan workbook<br><a href="#">Attachment 26</a> : Budget narrative<br><a href="#">Attachment 27</a> : Evidence of philanthropic funding commitments noted in budget<br><a href="#">Attachment 28</a> : Fundraising plan |
| Section 28: Financial Management Capacity                      | <a href="#">Attachment 29</a> : Recent internal financial statements, if applicable<br><a href="#">Attachment 30</a> : Independent financial audit reports and management letters, if applicable (use template)                                                  |
| <b>Category 6: Existing Operators</b>                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Section 29: Existing Operators                                 | <a href="#">Attachment 31</a> : Portfolio Summary Template                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

7. When submitting resumes, label each document with the individual’s affiliation with the proposed school (Board member, School Leader, teacher, etc.).
8. Review all elements of the application for completeness before submitting.
9. Late or incorrectly formatted applications will not be accepted.

## New School Application Timeline\*

The table below represents the timeline for the 2020 New Charter School Application process. The deadlines and due dates are mandatory and nonnegotiable for applicants. Failure to meet the New Charter School Application submission deadline will result in disqualification from participation. All times are Eastern Time (ET). The Commission reserves the right to revise the timeline; in the event of a change, this Timeline will be posted on the Commission’s website at [www.maine.gov/csc](http://www.maine.gov/csc). All Applicants will receive email notification.

| Date                             | Activity                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| January 28, 2019                 | New Charter School RFP Release                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| February 5, 2019 (Augusta)       | New Charter School Application Orientation: An orientation designed to support prospective charter school applicants. The purpose of this orientation is to deepen understanding of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) The Commission’s expectations as articulated in the New Charter School Application;</li> <li>2) How to access Epicenter, the online submission portal</li> <li>3) How applications will be evaluated;</li> <li>4) The purpose and format of Public Forums; and</li> <li>5) Changes that have occurred to the RFP since last cycle.</li> </ol> |
| February 12, 2019 by 5:00 pm EST | Intent to Apply due via Epicenter, the online submission portal                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| February 13, 2019                | Online submission portal, Epicenter, opens to entities that submitted the Intent to Apply by the deadline. Proposals will only be accepted via Epicenter.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| June 21, 2019 5:00 pm EDT        | Proposal deadline                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| July 2, 2019                     | Completeness findings debriefs/notifications                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| July 10, 2019 5:00 pm EDT        | Deadline for eligible Applicants to submit Corrections to Proposals                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| July 29, 30, 31 2019             | Capacity Interviews. Interviews will ONLY be held on these days; applicants are requested to keep the dates entirely open in their calendars. Applicants will be notified of their assigned interview date and time as soon as possible. Due to significant logistical challenges, it is unlikely that any changes to assigned interview times will be possible.                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| August 6, 2019                   | Commission Meeting. Commission will receive review team recommendation as to whether the applicant has thus far demonstrated the capacity to open a successful school and should continue to the next interview and public hearing. This will be followed by a discussion and vote of the Commission.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| August 7, 8, 9, 2019             | Public Hearings and Commission Interviews. These will ONLY be held on these days; applicants are requested to keep the dates entirely open in their calendars. Applicants will be notified of their assigned hearing date and time as soon as possible. Due to significant logistical challenges, it is unlikely that any changes to assigned interview times will be possible.                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| August 19, 2019 5:00 pm EDT      | Deadline for application withdrawal                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| September 3, 2019                | Commission Meeting. Commission will approve or deny charter school applications. Applicants are invited to attend the Commission Meeting where they will be allowed to provide a short presentation regarding their application.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| December 31, 2019                | Deadline for final contracts to be signed                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

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\*Dates, times, locations, and activities subject to change.

# CATEGORY 1: GENERAL INFORMATION

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## Section A: School Information

1. School Name;
2. School Type (Elementary, Elementary/Middle, Middle, Junior High, Middle/High, High);
3. Grade Levels Served (pre-K, K, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12);
4. School District;
5. Community;
6. Phone;
7. Fax;
8. Website Address;
9. Street Address;
10. Sponsoring Entity (Nonprofit Organization)\*\*
11. Open Date;
12. Contracted Educational Service Provider (ESP), if applicable;
13. Calendar Type (Standard or Extended School Year); and
14. Number of Instructional Days.

## Section B: Primary Contact Person

1. Name;
2. Position;
3. Address;
4. Mobile Phone;
5. Alternate Phone;
6. Email address; and
7. Current Employer.

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\*\*In Maine, a “charter school applicant” must be “a nonprofit, nonreligious organization. If the organizers of a start-up public charter school have been affiliated with a previous school or education program, they must form a separate nonprofit organization in this State to be eligible for state and federal grants.” (20-A M.R.S.A. § 2407(3))

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### **Section C: Enrollment Projections**

Complete the template provided. This table is derived from the applicant's School Information in Section A regarding grades served. The number of students must include the minimum and maximum planned enrollment per grade per year.

### **Section D: Current and Prospective Board Member Roster**

1. Name;
2. Title on Board;
3. Contact (Phone & Email Address);
4. Mailing Address; and
5. Current Employer.

### **Section E: Start-Up Team**

1. Name;
2. Title/Position on Start-up Team;
3. Contact (Phone & Email Address);
4. Mailing Address; and
5. Current Employer.

## CATEGORY 2: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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### Section 1: Executive Summary (Not to exceed 1500 words)

The Executive Summary should provide a concise summary of the following:

- 1. Educational Need, Anticipated Student Population, and Challenges:** Describe the proposed student population and the educational needs of the anticipated student population and non-academic challenges the school is likely to encounter. Explain how the school will increase opportunity and/or access to students who have been identified as at-risk as defined in 20-A M.R.S.A. § 2401(1). Provide the rationale for the number of students and grade levels served in year one of the attendance projection and the basis for the growth plan in the enrollment attendance projection (Section C of Category 1: General Information of the online application portal). Describe how the applicant team has assessed demand and/or need for the school. This should include information on discussions with school administrative unit(s) and communities in the proposed school's catchment area concerning recruitment and operations of the proposed public charter school, and possible collaboration with nearby school administrative units. Include, in detail, any objective market research, surveys, other measures of local demand (documentation of community or family demand such as letters of interest to enroll), public meetings about the proposed school, and community /stakeholders' feedback for the proposed educational program.
- 2. Geographic Location:** Describe the geographic location of the school and the rationale for selecting the school location, grade levels served, and student body. Be explicit in the rationale for the location and its alignment to the evidence of educational need, anticipated student population and challenges. (20-A M.R.S.A. § 2404).
- 3. Plan, Mission, Vision, Objectives, and Goals:** Describe the school plan and state the mission, vision, objectives and goals of the proposed school.
  - a.** The **mission** is a statement of the fundamental purpose of the school, describing why it exists; the **vision** statement outlines how the school will operate and what it will achieve long term. The mission and vision statements provide the foundation for the entire application. The mission and vision statements, taken together, should:
    - i)** Identify the students and community to be served;
    - ii)** Articulate the objectives and goals for the school;
    - iii)** Illustrate what success will look like; and



## CATEGORY 3: EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM DESIGN AND CAPACITY

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### Section 2: Program Overview (Not to exceed 1500 words)

The Program Overview should:

- Describe how the applicant will provide a program of basic education that meets the goals in the state's expectations of learning as stated in Maine's system of Learning Results, 20-A, M.R.S.A. § 6209, including instruction in the essential academic learning requirements and participates in the statewide student assessment system;
- Provide the Educational Program Terms, including the essential design elements of the school model;
- Provide evidence that the educational program or essential design elements of the program are based on proven methods. Provide evidence that the proposed educational program has a sound base in research, theory, and/or experience, and has been or is likely to be rigorous, engaging, and effective for the anticipated student population; and
- Highlight the culturally responsive aspects of the program.

The Educational Program Terms identify the characteristics of the essential components of the educational program that the applicant considers critical to the school's success *and* for which the applicant is prepared to be held accountable to the Commission and the public. The Commission's oversight and evaluation of the proposed school's educational program will focus on successful implementation of the program's design elements and educational program terms. **Applicants should identify no fewer than three and no more than five Educational Program Terms.**

The Educational Program Terms should be *minimum* expectations. Applicants need not – and should not – include all of the things that they want the school to be. Rather, applicants should include a set of minimum measurable programmatic components that will enable the Commission to objectively validate that the program the proposed school is offering is fundamentally consistent with what the school is advertised to be.

Articulate the Educational Program Terms in a way that indicates the objective measurable evidence that can be used to determine whether the proposed school has met the expectations. Avoid general statements about the school culture or learning environment. **Focus on specific, measurable components** that will establish that culture or learning environment.

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The Educational Program Terms will become an attachment to the charter contract. It will not replace the Commission's ultimate focus on performance standards set out in the Academic Performance Framework.

**Note:** The Educational Program Terms focus on *process* rather than student *outcomes*. Educational Program Terms should capture the essentials of what students will *experience*. See the Commission's website for examples of Educational Program Terms. Refer to the document titled Sample Educational Program Terms.

### **Section 3: Curriculum and Instructional Design (Not to exceed 2700 words)**

Propose a framework for instructional design that both reflects the needs of the anticipated population and ensures that all students will meet or exceed the state standards.

1. Describe the basic learning environment (e.g., classroom-based, independent study) and essential design elements, including class size and structure. Demonstrate alignment to the school's mission and vision. Include in your description how the learning environment is culturally responsive.
2. Give an overview of the planned curriculum. Identify course outcomes and demonstrate alignment with applicable state standards. Provide, as **Attachment 1**, a sample course scope and sequence for one subject in one grade of each division (elementary, middle, high school) the school will serve.
3. If the curriculum is fully developed, summarize curricular choices such as textbook selection, by subject, and the rationale for each. Describe the evidence that these curricula will be appropriate and effective for the anticipated student population. Describe how the curriculum is vertically and horizontally aligned for all grades the school will serve. Include a description of how the school developed a curriculum that is culturally responsive and free of bias (i.e. racial, gender, etc.).

**-OR-**

If the curriculum is not already developed, provide, as **Attachment 2**, a plan for how the curriculum will be developed between approval of the application and the opening of the school, including who will be responsible and when key stages will be completed. Describe how the curriculum will be vertically and horizontally aligned for all grades the school will serve; and how the curriculum will be appropriate and effective for the anticipated student population. Include a description of how the school will develop a curriculum that is culturally responsive and free of bias (i.e. racial, gender, etc.).

4. Describe the primary instructional strategies that the school will expect teachers to use, how these strategies are culturally responsive, and why they are well-suited for the anticipated student population.
5. Describe the processes, methods and systems teachers will have for providing differentiated instruction to meet the needs of all students.

#### **Section 4: Student Performance Standards (Not to exceed 1300 words)**

Responses to the following items regarding the proposed school's student performance standards must be consistent with Maine's system of Learning Results, Common Core State Standards.

1. Provide and describe the student performance standards for the school as a whole.
2. If the school plans to adopt or develop additional academic standards beyond the state standards, provide an explanation of the types of standards (content areas, grade levels). Be sure to highlight and describe how the proposed standards exceed the state standards.
3. Explain the school policies and standards for promoting students from one grade to the next. Describe how and when promotion and graduation criteria will be communicated in a culturally responsive manner to parents/guardians and students.
4. Provide, as **Attachment 3**, the school's exit standards for graduating students or students completing the last grade in that school. These exit standards should clearly set forth what students in the last grade served will know and be able to do, and meet or exceed all state grade level expectations.

#### **Section 5: High School Graduation Requirements (High Schools Only) (Not to exceed 700 Words)**

High schools will be expected to meet Maine's graduation standards, MRS Title 20-A section 4722 High School Diploma Standards, section 4723 Health and Physical Education, section 4724 Computer Instruction, and section 4722-A as amended.

1. Describe how the school will meet the requirements described in **Attachment 3**. Explain how students will earn credit hours, how grade-point averages will be calculated, what information will be on transcripts, how the student would meet standards and the requirements for a proficiency-based diploma and what elective courses will be offered. If graduation requirements for the school will exceed state standards, explain the additional requirements.

2. Explain how the graduation requirements will ensure student readiness for college or other postsecondary opportunities (e.g. technical school, industry certification, military service, or entering the workforce).
3. Explain the systems and structures the school will implement for students at risk of dropping out and/or not meeting the proposed graduation requirements.

## Section 6: School Calendar and Schedule (Not to exceed 400 words)

1. Describe the annual academic schedule for the school. Explain and demonstrate how the calendar reflects the needs of the educational program. In **Attachment 4**, provide the school's proposed calendar for the first year of operation, including the total number of instructional days and hours, holidays, make-up days in case of inclement weather, and state assessment days. The application must provide the formula or calculation for the total annual number of instructional hours/days and daily allocation of time for core instruction, supplemental instruction, extra-curricular and after school activities, as applicable. If the school will use a snow-day make-up program, describe how this program will work and be comparable to a normal school day.
2. Describe the structure of the school day and week. Include the number of instructional hours/minutes in a day for core subjects, such as language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Note the length of the school day, including start and dismissal times. Explain why the school's daily and weekly schedule will be optimal for student learning. Provide the minimum number of hours/minutes per day and week that the school will devote to academic instruction in each grade. Provide, also in **Attachment 4**, a sample daily and weekly schedule for each division of the school.

## Section 7: School Culture (Not to exceed 2000 words)

1. Describe the culture of the proposed school. Explain how it will promote a positive and culturally inclusive academic environment, reinforce student intellectual and social development, respond to and prevent bullying and harassment, including the strategies the school will employ to develop and sustain a safe and supportive school climate that supports fulfillment of the educational goals.
2. Describe how the school will create and implement this culture for students, teachers, administrators, and parents/guardians starting from the first day of school. Describe the plan for enculturating students who enter the school mid-year.

3. Describe and demonstrate how the school culture will be culturally responsive and take account of and serve students with special needs, including students receiving special education services, English Learners (ELs), and any students at risk of academic failure.
4. Describe a typical school day from the perspective of a student in a grade/age span that will be served in the school's first year of operation.
5. Describe a typical day for a teacher in a grade/age span that will be served in the school's first year of operation.

## **Section 8: Supplemental Programming (Not to exceed 700 words)**

1. If summer school will be offered, describe the program(s). Explain the schedule and length of the program, including the number of hours, days and weeks. Provide a description of the anticipated participants, including number of students and the methods used to identify them. Describe the anticipated resource and staffing needs for these programs and how they will be funded. Address the processes for determining attendance when student interest/need exceeds capacity.
2. Describe any extra- or co-curricular activities or programming the school will offer, including how often they will occur, how they will be culturally responsive, and how they will be delivered and funded. Address the process when student interest in the program exceeds capacity. Applicant must describe how the school will manage requests and pay for student participation in district sponsored interscholastic programs (20-A M.R.S.A. § 2415(2)).
3. Describe the specific programs or strategies the school will employ to address mental, emotional, and social development and health for all students, and describe how these strategies will be culturally responsive.
4. If applicable, describe any other student-focused activities and programs that are integral to the educational and student-development plans.
5. Describe the plan for outreach to parents to apprise them of supplemental programming opportunities. Describe how this plan will be culturally inclusive.

## Section 9: Special Populations and At-Risk Students (Not to exceed 5000 words)

Schools are responsible for hiring licensed and endorsed special educators pursuant to federal and state law. Schools must engage in Childfind activities; identify and refer students for assessment; convene Individual Education Program Teams (IEP Teams) to determine eligibility and develop Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) for eligible students; and provide the delivery of special education and related services in the least restrictive environment (LRE), as appropriate. All responses should indicate how the school will comply with applicable laws and regulations governing service to these student populations.

As public schools, charter schools may not discriminate on the basis of disability. Admissions and enrollment practices must be consistent with federal and state law requirements. Charter schools who engage in “counseling out,” or discouraging parents from applying to a charter school for their child by suggesting that their child would not receive the services they are entitled to by law if they attend the charter school, are violating the law. Maine Unified Special Education Regulations (MUSER) related notations can be found at: <http://www.maine.gov/doe/specialed/laws/chapter101.pdf> Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) notations can be found at: <http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?c=ecfr&tpl=%2Findex.tpl>.

1. Describe the plan to serve students with special needs, including, but not limited to, students with IEPs or Section 504 plans, ELs, students identified as intellectually gifted, and students at risk of academic failure or dropping out. The plan should address how the school will meet students’ needs in the least restrictive environment.
2. Identify the special populations and at-risk groups that the school expects to serve and explain the basis for these assumptions. Discuss how the course scope and sequence, daily schedule, staffing plans, and support strategies and resources will meet or be adjusted for the diverse needs of all students.
3. Specifically explain how the school will identify and meet the learning needs of students with mild, moderate, and severe disabilities in the least restrictive environment possible. Specify the programs, strategies, and supports the school will provide, including the following:
  - a. Methods for identifying students with special education needs and avoiding misidentification (Childfind);
  - b. Specific scientifically research based interventions the school will provide to support the identification of needs for students with disabilities;

- c. Specific instructional programs, practices, and strategies the school will employ to provide a continuum of services, ensure students' access to the general education curriculum, and ensure academic, social, emotional, and functional success for students with special education needs;
    - d. Plans for monitoring and evaluating the academic, social, emotional, and functional performance progress and success of special education students with mild, moderate, and severe needs to ensure the attainment of each student's goals as set forth in the IEP;
    - e. Plans for developing, monitoring, and evaluating the progress and success of supports and services for students with disabilities as set forth in 504 Plans;
    - f. Plans for promoting graduation for students with special education needs (high schools only); and
    - g. Plans to provide adequate qualified staffing for the anticipated special needs population that includes the services of a special education director or assistant director.
  4. Explain how the school will meet the needs of English Learners (EL), including the following:
    - a. The charter school will identify and place English learners in the English language development program ([ESEA Sec. 8101\(20\)](#));
    - b. The charter school will make available to all English learners a transitional bilingual instructional program or, if the use of two languages is not practicable, an alternative instructional program ([Letter #11](#) Maine Department of Education Legal Requirements to Provide English Language Acquisition Services to English Learners);
    - c. The charter school will monitor and evaluate the academic progress and success of English learners, including the exiting of students from EL services ([ESEA Sec. 3121\(a\)\(b\)\(c\)](#) ; and [Letter #11](#) Legal Requirements to Provide English Language Acquisition Services to English Learners);
    - d. The charter school will provide adequate, qualified staffing for English learners ([Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 34 CFR §100.3](#));
    - e. The charter school will meet the parent notification requirements for families of English learners ([Letter #11](#) Legal Requirements to Provide English Language Acquisition Services to English Learners);
  5. Explain how the school will meet the needs of homeless students and students in foster care. The Maine Department of Education and Maine schools follow the provisions of the federal [McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act](#), which aims to minimize the educational disruptions experienced by homeless students.
  6. Explain how the school will identify and meet the learning needs of at-risk students as defined 20-A M.R.S.A. §2401(1):
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“At-risk pupil” means a pupil who has an economic or academic disadvantage that requires special services and assistance to enable the student to succeed in educational programs. “At-risk pupil” includes, but is not limited to, pupils who are members of economically disadvantaged families, pupils who are identified as having special educational needs, pupils who are limited in English proficiency, pupils who are at risk of dropping out of high school and pupils who do not meet minimum standards of academic proficiency.”

7. Describe how the school will identify and meet the needs of gifted and talented students, including the following:
  - a. Specific research-based instructional programs, practices, strategies, and opportunities the school will employ or provide to enhance their abilities;
  - b. Plans for monitoring and evaluating the academic progress and success of intellectually gifted students; and
  - c. Plans for providing qualified staffing for intellectually gifted students.

## **Section 10: Student Recruitment and Enrollment (Not to exceed 600 words)**

1. Describe the school’s plan for student recruitment and marketing and how it is culturally inclusive and will provide equitable access to interested students and families. Specifically describe the school’s plan for outreach to families in poverty, academically low-achieving students, students with disabilities, English Learners, students of all income levels, and at-risk students. The plan must adhere to admissions and enrollment practices outlined in 20-A M.R.S.A. § 2404. Public charter school eligibility; enrollment.
2. Provide, as **Attachment 5**, the school’s enrollment policy, which should demonstrate cultural inclusiveness and include the following:
  - a. Tentative dates for application period and enrollment deadlines and procedures, including an explanation of how the school will receive and process Intent to Enroll forms;
  - b. A timeline and plan for student recruitment/engagement and enrollment;
  - c. The lottery procedures that will be used should student interest exceed capacity. These lottery procedures shall be publicly noticed and open to the public; however, the school must grant enrollment preference to siblings of already enrolled students, with any remaining enrollments allocated through the lottery;
  - d. If applicable, how the school will offer enrollment preference for-school’s founders, governing board members and children of full-time employees of the school; and
  - e. Policies and procedures for student waiting lists, withdrawals, reenrollment, and transfers.

## Section 11: Student Discipline Policy and Plan (Not to exceed 1200 words)

1. Describe in detail the school's approach to student discipline. Provide, as **Attachment 6**, the school's proposed discipline policy. The proposed policy must be culturally responsive and comply with any applicable state laws and Commission policies, including, but not limited to 20-A M.R.S.A. §1001(8-A), (9-A thru 9-D) (15), and (15-A). The plan should provide evidence that it is based on research, theory, experience, or best practice. The description of the school's approach and the proposed policy should address each of the following:
  - a. Equitable and fair practices the school will use to promote good discipline, including both penalties for infractions and incentives for positive behavior;
  - b. A list and definitions of the offenses for which students in the school must (where nondiscretionary) and may (where discretionary) be suspended or expelled, respectively;
  - c. An explanation of how the school will take into account the rights of students with disabilities in disciplinary actions and proceedings;
  - d. Highlight how the school will address potential disproportionate discipline rates based on race, ethnicity, gender, etc.; and
  - e. Procedures for due process when a student is suspended or expelled as a result of a code of conduct violation, including a description of the appeal process that the school will employ for students facing expulsion and a plan for providing services to students who are expelled or out of school for more than ten days.
  
2. Describe how students and parents/guardians will be informed of the school's discipline policy.

## Section 12: Family and Community Involvement (Not to exceed 1300 words)

1. Describe the specific role to date of the parents/guardians and community members involved in developing the proposed school. Describe and provide evidence of how the school has assessed and built parent/guardian and community demand for the proposed school. Include information on discussions with the school administrative unit(s) (SAU) where the public charter school will be located. These should include recruitment and operations of the public charter school and possible collaborations with the nearby SAUs.
  
2. Describe how the school will engage parents/guardians in the life of the school and share how this plan will be culturally inclusive. Explain the plan for building family-school partnerships that strengthen support for learning and encourage parental involvement. Describe in detail any commitments or volunteer activities the school will seek from or offer to parents/guardians.



3. Describe the community resources that will be available to students and families. Describe any existing and/or anticipated partnerships or contractual relationships the school has or will have with community-based organizations, including those that serve culturally-specific populations, businesses, or other educational institutions. Specify the nature, purposes, terms, and scope of services of any such partnerships, including any fee-based or in-kind commitments from community organizations or individuals that will enrich student learning opportunities. Include, as **Attachment 7**, existing evidence of support from intended students, families and/or community partners, such as letters of intent/commitment, memoranda of understanding, and/or contracts.

### **Section 13: Educational Program Capacity (Not to exceed 1200 words)**

1. Identify the key members of the school's leadership team. Identify only individuals who will play a substantial and ongoing role in school development, governance and/or management, and will thus share responsibility for the school's educational success. These individuals may include current or proposed governing board members, school leadership/management, and any essential partners who will play an important ongoing role in the school's development and operation.
2. Describe the team's individual and collective qualifications for implementing the school design successfully, including capacity in areas such as:
  - a. School leadership, administration, and governance;
  - b. Curriculum, instruction, and assessment;
  - c. Performance management;
  - d. Cultural competence/inclusiveness;
  - e. Family and community engagement;
  - f. Special populations; and
  - g. Finances.
3. Specifically describe the applicant's ties to and/or knowledge of the target community.
4. Identify any organizations, agencies, or consultants that are partners in planning and establishing the school, along with a brief description of their current and planned roles and any resources they have contributed or plan to contribute to the school's development.
5. Provide the job description for the principal/head of school.

6. Identify the principal/head of school candidate and explain why this individual is well qualified to lead the proposed school in achieving its mission. Summarize the proposed leader's academic and organizational leadership record. Discuss the evidence that demonstrates capacity to practice cultural competency and design, launch, and manage a high-performing charter school. If the proposed leader has never run a school, describe any leadership training programs or other relevant leadership roles in which they have served, completed or participated. Provide, as **Attachment 8**, the qualifications and resume for this individual. Provide specific evidence (i.e. track record) of the leader's ability to effectively serve the anticipated population.

—OR—

If no candidate has been identified, discuss the process and timeline for recruiting, selecting, and hiring the school leader. Describe the criteria to be used in selecting this leader, and provide, as **Attachment 8**, qualifications for the school leader and a plan for recruiting and hiring a strong and compatible leader.

7. Describe the responsibilities of the school's leadership/management team beyond the principal/head of school. This team should include a chief financial officer, Special education director or assistant special education director, and if known, identify the individuals who will fill these positions. For any positions not yet filled, provide a timeline, criteria, and process for recruitment and hiring. Please describe how this plan for recruitment and hiring will be culturally inclusive. Provide, as **Attachment 9**, the qualifications and resumes for the identified members of the leadership team, and for each position not yet filled, include job descriptions and qualifications.
8. Describe in detail who is currently working or who will work on a full-time or nearly full-time basis following approval of the charter to lead development of the school and the plan to compensate these individuals.

## CATEGORY 4: OPERATIONS PLAN AND CAPACITY

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### Section 14: Legal Status and Governing Documents (Not to exceed 750 words)

1. Describe the proposed school's legal status, including nonprofit status and federal tax-exempt status. Describe the entity that will hold the charter and be responsible for governing the school. To be eligible for a charter from the Commission, the entity must be a Maine non-profit corporation and must have filed for status as a charitable organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code or have received a notice of exemption. Provide documentation of the entity's legal status - including Articles of Incorporation, by-laws and documentation of incorporation as a Maine non-profit corporation status.
2. Submit, as **Attachment 10**:
  - a. Articles of Incorporation;
  - b. Proof of having status as a Maine nonprofit corporation and tax-exempt status (or copies of filings for the preceding items or other evidence);
  - c. Bylaws; and
  - d. Other governing documents already adopted.
3. Describe any subsidiaries owned or affiliated with the nonprofit submitting this charter school application. Describe any other organizational/business endeavors in which the nonprofit that is submitting this charter school application is involved.
4. If the applicant does not already operate one or more schools, including applicants proposing to contract with ESPs, please describe organization's five-to-ten-year growth plan regarding the total number of charter schools it hopes to operate in Maine. Include discussion of the organization's capacity to successfully support and execute that plan, including business plans to support anticipated growth.

### Section 15: Organization Structure and Partnerships (Not to exceed 500 - words)

1. Submit, as **Attachment 11**, organization charts that show the school governance, management, staffing plan, and structure in:
-

- a. The first year of school operations;
- b. At the end of the charter term; and
- c. When the school reaches full capacity, if in a year beyond the first charter term.

Each organization chart must clearly delineate the roles and responsibilities of and lines of authority and reporting among the governing board, school leader, management team, staff, any related bodies (such as advisory bodies or parent/teacher councils), and any external organizations that will play a role in managing the school. The organization charts should also document clear lines of authority and reporting within the school.

2. Describe any other proposed partnerships or contractual relationships that will be central to the school's operations or mission. Provide, as **Attachment 12**, copies of the proposed contract(s). Be sure to address and describe any services to be contracted, such as business services, payroll, auditing services, program management, and professional development, including the anticipated costs and criteria for selecting such service.

## Section 16: Governing Board (Not to exceed 2200 words)

- a. Governing board. "Governing board" means the independent board of a public charter school that is party to the charter contract with the authorizer and whose members have been elected or selected pursuant to the school's application.
- b. Public charter school. "Public charter school" means a public school formed pursuant to M.R.S.A Title 20-A, Chapter 112 that has autonomy over key decisions, including, but not limited to, decisions concerning finance, personnel, curriculum and instruction.
- c. The Governing Board must be independent having legal, fiduciary and oversight authority for the charter school with autonomy over key decisions, as referenced in MRS 20-A M.R.S.A. §2401 (6), (9A):
  1. Describe the governance philosophy that will guide the board, including the nature and extent of involvement by key stakeholder groups.
  2. Describe the governance structure of the proposed school, including the primary roles of the governing board and how it will interact with the principal/head of school and any advisory bodies. Describe the size, current and desired composition, powers, and duties of the governing board. Identify key skills, areas of expertise, and constituencies that will be represented on the governing board.

3. Explain how this governance structure and composition will help ensure that:
    - a. The school will be an educational, financial and operational success;
    - b. The board will evaluate the success of the school, school leader and itself;
    - c. There will be active and effective representation of key stakeholders, including parents; and
    - d. The school will be a culturally responsive education system.
  
  4. For each current and proposed board member identified in Category 1 Section D (Board Member Roster), summarize each member's interests in and qualifications for serving on the school's board. In **Attachment 13**, on the template provided, provide the following documents for each individual identified:
    - a. Completed and signed Board Member Information and Disclosure Form;
    - b. Board member resume.
  
  5. In **Attachment 14**, on the template provided, provide the signed Initial Background Certification for each board member and school leader has been initiated and will be completed within the timetables set forth in the Sample Contract: Start-up plan and Conditions.
  
  6. Explain the procedure by which board members have been and will be selected. Describe how often the board meets. Discuss the plans for any committee structure.
  
  7. Describe plans for increasing the capacity of the governing board. Discuss how the board will expand and develop over time. Describe how new members will be recruited and added, and how vacancies will be filled. Describe the orientation or training new board members will receive, and the kinds of ongoing development/training existing board members will receive. The plan for training and development should include:
    - a. A timetable/schedule;
    - b. Specific topics to be addressed;
    - c. Participation requirements; and
    - d. Development of cultural competence.
  
  8. If the current applicant team does not include the formal school governing board, explain how and when the transition to the formal governing board will take place.
  
  9. If this application is being submitted by an existing nonprofit organization whose core mission is NOT the operation of charter schools, respond to the following:
    - a. Indicate whether the existing nonprofit board governs the new school;
    - b. To what extent the school will be a new nonprofit corporation governed by a separate board;
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- c. If the current nonprofit's board will govern the charter school, describe the steps taken to transform its board membership, mission, and bylaws to assume its new duties. Describe the plan and timeline for completing the transition and orienting the board to its new duties; and
  - d. If a new board has been formed, describe what, if anything, its ongoing relationship to the existing nonprofit's board will be. This should also be represented on the applicant's organizational chart.
- 10.** Describe the board's ethical standards and procedures for identifying and addressing conflicts of interest. Provide, as **Attachment 15**, the board's proposed:
- a. Code of Ethics Policy; and
  - b. Conflict of Interest Policy.
- 11.** Identify any existing relationships that could pose actual or perceived conflicts if the application is approved. Discuss specific steps that the board will take to avoid any actual conflicts and to mitigate perceived conflicts.

### **Section 17: Advisory Bodies (Not to exceed 300 words)**

Describe any school advisory bodies or councils to be formed, including the role(s), duties, and authority of each. Describe the planned composition of the advisory body and the strategy/selection process for achieving that composition; the role of parents/guardians, students, and teachers (as applicable); and the reporting structure as it relates to the school's governing body and leadership.

### **Section 18: Grievance/Complaint Process (Not to exceed 750 words)**

Describe in detail the established school process for resolving public complaints, including complaints regarding curriculum and/or parent or student objections to a governing board policy or decision, administrative procedure, or practice at the school. The process should include how the final administrative appeal is handled by the governing board.

### **Section 19: District Partnerships (Not to exceed 300 words)**

Describe any district partnership activities and/or meetings during the application development process. If applicable, provide any proposed partnership agreement between the proposed charter school and the school administrative unit (SAU) where the school is proposed to be located. Include the terms of that agreement and/or partnership. As applicable provide, as **Attachment 16**, MOU or other partnership documentation (i.e. letters of support/partnership, etc.).

## Section 20: Education Service Providers (ESP) and Other Partnerships (Not to exceed 300 words)

All applicants are asked to declare whether they intend to contract with an education service provider (ESP). The term “education service provider” refers to any number of organizations that contract with the Governing Board of a school to provide limited services (Virtual providers also complete Category 7, Section 30 of this document.). The major types of ESPs that serve charter schools are education management organizations (EMOs), charter management organizations (CMOs), and comprehensive school design providers.

For the purposes of this RFP, the Maine Charter School Commission defines an EMO or a CMO as any for- or non-profit corporation or LLC that enters into contract with the entity holding the charter contract to provide significant managerial, technical or financial personnel or services in excess of \$25,000 per year. Similarly, any for- or non-profit corporation or LLC that enters into a contract with the charter school entity that provides instructional materials or services including personnel, in excess of \$25,000 per year shall be considered to be an ESP.

1. If the school intends to contract with an ESP for the management of the school for substantial educational services, address the following:
  - a. Provide evidence of the nonprofit ESP’s success in serving student populations that are similar to the anticipated population, including demonstrated academic achievement, as well as successful management of nonacademic school functions, if applicable;
  - b. As **Attachment 17**, provide a term sheet that includes:
    - i. Proposed duration of the service contract;
    - ii. Roles and responsibilities of the governing board, school staff, and ESP;
    - iii. Scope of services and resources to be provided by the ESP;
    - iv. Performance evaluations measures and timelines;
    - v. Compensations structure, including clear identification of all fees to be paid to the ESP;
    - vi. Methods of contract oversight and enforcement;
    - vii. Investment disclosure; and
    - viii. Conditions for renewal and termination of the contract.
2. Disclose and explain any existing or potential conflicts of interest between the charter school board and proposed service provider or any affiliated business entities.
3. Provide a copy of the service contract.

## Section 21: Staffing Plans, Hiring, Management, and Evaluation (Not to exceed 2500 words)

1. Describe the relationship that will exist between the proposed charter school and its employees, including whether the employees will be at-will and whether the school will use employment contracts. If the school will use contracts, explain the nature and purpose of the contracts.
2. Outline the proposed school's salary ranges and employment benefits for all employees, as well as any incentives or reward structures that may be part of the compensation system. Explain the school's strategy for retaining high-performing teachers.
3. Describe the school's strategy, plans, and timeline for recruiting and hiring the teaching staff, in accordance with the state rules and regulations regarding staff qualifications and accountability plan. Explain how this plan includes culturally inclusive hiring practices. Explain other key selection criteria and any special considerations relevant to the school's design.
4. Outline in detail the school's procedures for hiring and dismissing school personnel, including the process and timeline for conducting criminal background checks.
5. Provide, as **Attachment 18**, on the template provided, a completed staffing chart for the school, prepared using the template provided by the Commission. The staffing chart and accompanying notes or roster should identify the following:
  - a. Year one positions, as well as positions to be added during the five (5) year charter contract;
  - b. Administrative, instructional, and non-instructional personnel;
  - c. The number of classroom teachers, paraprofessionals, and specialty teachers; and
  - d. Operational and support staff.
6. Describe how the relationship between the school's senior administrative team and the rest of the staff will be managed. Note the teacher-student ratio, as well as the ratio of total adults to students for the school.
7. Explain how the school leader will be evaluated each school year. Provide, as **Attachment 19**, any leadership evaluation tool(s) that the applicant team has identified or developed already.
8. Explain how teachers and administrators will be evaluated each school year in accordance with the state accountability plan (Performance Evaluation and Professional Growth Systems (PEPG)). Provide, as **Attachment 20**, any teacher evaluation tool(s) that already exist for the school, or state if the school intends to follow the state teacher evaluation plan.



9. Explain how the school will meet the requirements of 20-A M.R.S.A. 2412(6)(B), including the method to be used to determine the qualifications of teachers who meet the advanced degree, professional certification, or unique expertise or experience in the curricular area in which they teach exception for certification.
  
10. Include a draft (or final copy) of a staff handbook or employment manual.

## **Section 22: Professional Development (Not to exceed 1200 words)**

Describe the school's teacher and staff professional development expectations and opportunities, including the following:

1. Identify the person, position, or organization responsible for professional development.
  
2. Describe in detail the core components of teacher and staff professional development and how these components will support effective implementation of the proposed educational program. Please describe how the professional development plan will include the development and practice of cultural competence for all staff, as well as staff capacity in the collection, analysis and use of performance data to improve student learning and evaluate the school's culture and climate. Discuss the extent to which the professional development will be conducted internally or externally and will be individualized or uniform.
  
3. Provide, as **Attachment 21**, a schedule and description of any specific professional development that will take place prior to school opening. Provide a detailed description of what will be addressed during this induction period and how teachers will be prepared to deliver any unique or particularly challenging aspects of the curriculum and instructional methods. Include safety and child abuse training.
  
4. Describe the expected number of days/hours for professional development throughout the school year, and explain how the school's calendar, daily schedule, and staffing structure accommodate this plan. Include time scheduled for common planning or collaboration in this discussion and specify how this time will typically be used.

## **Section 23: Academic Achievement (not to exceed 1000 words)**

The Commission will evaluate the performance of every charter school annually and for renewal purposes according to the Performance Framework. Per 20-A M.R.S.A. § 2409, the Performance Framework is a set of academic, financial, and organizational performance standards. The academic performance standards will consider proficiency status, growth, and comparative performance based on

federal and state measures. The financial performance standards will be based on standard accounting and industry standards for sound financial operation. The organizational performance standards will be based primarily on compliance with legal obligations, including fulfillment of the governing board's fiduciary obligations related to sound governance.

1. In addition to all mandatory state and Commission assessments (NWEA), identify the primary interim and/or formative assessments the school will use to assess student learning needs and progress throughout the year. Be sure to address how the school will participate in all state required assessments.
2. Describe in detail how the school will measure and evaluate academic progress (of individual students, student cohorts, and the school as a whole) throughout the school year, at the end of each academic year, and for the term of the charter contract.
3. Describe how the school will collect and analyze student academic achievement data, use the data to refine and improve instruction, and report the data to the school community. Identify the person(s), position(s), and/or entities that will be responsible and involved in the collection and analysis of assessment data.
4. Identify the person(s) or position(s) and/or entities responsible for managing the data, including collection, disaggregation, and analysis of all assessment data with and for classroom teachers.

## **Section 24: Facilities (Not to exceed 800 words)**

Charter school facilities must comply with applicable state and local health and safety requirements. In addition, charter school applicants must be prepared to follow applicable municipal planning review procedures.

1. Describe the basic facilities requirements for accommodating the school as proposed, including number of classrooms, square footage per classroom, common areas, overall square footage, and amenities.
2. Explain anticipated specialty classroom needs, including the number of each type and the number of students to be accommodated at one time. Specialty needs may include, but are not limited to, the following: science labs, art room, computer labs, library/media center, performance/dance room, auditorium, etc.
3. Describe anticipated administrative/support space needs, including anticipated number of each: main office, satellite office, work room/copy room, supplies/storage, teacher work rooms, etc.

4. Explain which, if any, of the following are essential to fulfillment of the core athletic program: gymnasium, locker rooms, weight rooms, field(s) (football, soccer, multipurpose), baseball/softball field, etc.
5. Identify any other significant facilities needs not already specified, for example: Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility requirements, playground, large common space, other special considerations (identify and explain).
6. Describe the steps already taken to identify prospective facilities, as well as the process for identifying and securing a facility, including any brokers or consultants the applicant is employing to navigate the real estate market, plans for renovations, timelines, financing, etc.
7. If the applicant currently holds a facility or has an MOU or other proof of intent to secure a specific facility, briefly describe the facility, including location, size, and amenities.
  - a. Provide proof of the commitment as **Attachment 22**;
  - b. **Attachment 22** may also include up to 10 (ten) pages of supporting documents providing details about the facility.

## Section 25: Start-Up and Ongoing Operations (Not to exceed 1400 words)

1. Provide, as **Attachment 23**, on the template provided by the Commission, a detailed start-up plan for the school, specifying tasks, and timelines. This plan should align with the start-up budget.
2. Describe the school transportation plan and arrangements for prospective students. In addition to daily transportation needs, describe how the school plans to meet transportation needs for field trips and athletic events.
3. Summarize the plan for safety and security for students, the facility, and property, and how that plan complies with all federal, state, county, and city health and safety laws. Explain the types of security personnel, technology, equipment, and policies that the school will employ.
4. Describe how student records will be maintained, managed and protected. Also, describe the software that will be used for student records.

5. Outline the plans for food service and other significant operational or ancillary services.
6. Provide, as **Attachment 24**, a list of the types of insurance coverage the school will secure, including a description of the levels of coverage. Types of insurance include, but are not limited to, workers' compensation, unemployment compensation, general liability, property, indemnity, directors and officers, motor vehicle, and errors and omissions. Applicants should ensure that they have the coverage identified in the sample contract (Exhibit B, Section 3.).

## **Section 26: Operations Capacity (Not to exceed 800 words)**

1. Describe the applicant team's individual and collective qualifications for implementing the Operations Plan successfully, including capacity in areas such as the following:
  - a. Staffing;
  - b. Professional development;
  - c. Performance management;
  - d. General operations;
  - e. Finances;
  - f. Facilities management; and
  - g. State and Federal compliance.
2. Describe the organization's capacity and experience in facilities acquisition and management, including managing build-out and/or renovations, as applicable.

## CATEGORY 5: FINANCIAL PLAN AND CAPACITY

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### Section 27: Financial Plan (Not to exceed 2600 words)

1. Describe the systems, policies, and processes the school will use for financial planning, accounting, purchasing, and payroll, including a description of how it will establish and maintain strong internal controls and ensure compliance with all financial reporting requirements. Describe the accounting software that will be used and assurances that it will connect directly to the Maine Department of Education system.
2. Describe the roles and responsibilities of the school's administration and governing board for school finances and distinguish between each.
3. Describe the school's plans and procedures for contracting for an annual independent audit of the financial operations of the school.
4. Describe how the school will ensure financial transparency to the Commission and the public, including its plans for public adoption of its budget and public dissemination of its annual audit and an annual financial report.
5. Submit a completed Financial Plan Workbook (Commission Template), as **Attachment 25**. Be sure to complete all sheets in the Workbook. In developing the budget, please use the per-pupil revenue guidance provided by the Commission.
6. As **Attachment 26**, present a detailed budget narrative, that describes how the budget aligns with and supports implementation of the educational program. The narrative should include a description of assumptions and revenue estimates that includes, but is not limited to, the basis and calculations for revenue projections, staffing levels, and expenditures. The narrative response should specifically address the degree to which the school/campus budget will rely on variable income (e.g., grants, donations, fundraising). The budget narrative should include the following:
  - a. Anticipated funding sources: Indicate the amount and sources of funds, property or other resources expected to be available through banks, lending institutions, corporations, foundations, grants, etc. Describe any restrictions on access to, or use of, any identified funding sources. Include evidence of commitment for any funds on which the school's core operation depends;

- b. Discuss the school's contingency plan to meet financial needs if anticipated revenues are not received or are lower than estimated;
  - c. Describe in detail the year one cash flow contingency, in the event that revenue projections are not met in advance of opening;
  - d. Provide, as **Attachment 27**, evidence of philanthropic funding commitments; and
  - e. Discuss how the charter school will be able to demonstrate a cash reserve by the end of Year 3, sufficient to cover expenses for two (2) months or more.
7. Provide, as **Attachment 28**, the school's long-term fundraising plan. Be sure to include specifics as to how the school will sustain any necessary fundraising, who will take the lead in implementing the plan, and how board members will be engaged in fundraising and plan implementation.

## Section 28: Financial Management Capacity (Not to exceed 500 words)

1. Describe the applicant team's individual and collective qualifications for implementing the Financial Plan successfully, including capacity in areas such as the following:
  - a. Financial management;
  - b. Fundraising and development; and
  - c. Accounting and internal controls.
2. Provide, as **Attachment 29**, the most recent internal financial statements, including balance sheets and income statements for the organization and any related business entities. Be sure that the school level and overall operations are distinctly represented.
3. For the organization as a whole and any related business entities, provide, as **Attachment 30**, the last three years of independent financial audit reports and management letters, if applicable.

## CATEGORY 6: EXISTING OPERATORS

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### Section 29: Existing Operators (Not to exceed 2700 words)

Applicants who already operate one or more schools must respond to the following:

1. Provide a detailed description of the organization's growth plans and capacity to successfully support and execute that plan, including business plans to support anticipated growth. The description must also include the organization's overall growth plan regarding the total number of charter schools it hopes to operate in Maine.
2. Using the Portfolio Summary Template provided, complete all requested information for each of the organization's schools and provide as **Attachment 31**.
3. For applicants authorized to open a school in the 2019-2020 school year and beyond, **whether by the Commission or another authorizer**, provide a status report regarding compliance with each preopening condition.
4. Disclose any schools that have been closed or non-renewed, or charters that have been revoked by any authorizer.

## CATEGORY 7: VIRTUAL SCHOOLS

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### Section 30: Virtual Schools (Not to Exceed 3000 words)

In addition to all the previous sections of this RFP, applicants for virtual public charter schools must also complete the items below.

*Note: Applicants for “brick and mortar” or “blended” models do not need to complete this section. Please indicate in the task narrative in Epicenter that this section is not applicable.*

1. Provide an explanation as to how the applicant will have the fiscal capacity to meet unanticipated expenses to meet program objectives and student needs.
2. Describe how any startup loan from the ESP will be liquidated such that there is no debt owed to the ESP after the end of year three, other than ordinary trade credit.
3. Provide assurance that ESP recruiters cannot be economically incented to recruit students, such as a capitation fee or bonus.
4. Provide a term sheet as **Attachment 17** that includes:
  - a. A no exclusivity provision;
  - b. A provision that the contract can be terminated at the sole discretion of the governing board for any or no reason with reasonable notice to the ESP;
  - c. A provision for a pro-rata refund to the school if a student withdraws prior to end of semester;
  - d. A provision that the program manager will work full-time in Maine and must dedicate substantially all their work to the Applicant-ESP contract;
  - e. Agreement that the ESP employees shall be removed from servicing the Applicant-ESP contract at the request of the governing board for any or no reason within sixty (60) days of the request.
5. Explain how teachers will engage with each student in weekly live (synchronous), interactive contact and provide evidence of such contact.
6. Describe the school’s plan to incorporate in-person academic and social interaction among students and school staff.



7. Provide a plan for the provision of schoolbooks and the necessary technology to support the program, including computer hardware and software, internet connection, etc. and provisions to assure access for all special populations.
8. Provide the plan for the maintenance and/or replacement of damaged or malfunctioning equipment or software.
9. Provide an explanation as to how teachers will differentiate the instruction and provide weekly, interactive contact with every student.
10. Present the school's plan for effective systems and procedures for validating the authenticity of student work and accurate attendance and enrollment reporting.
11. Provide evidence of a system for selecting and supporting learning coaches to meet student needs.
12. Present a plan to secure appropriate facilities for administering state assessments and a plan for conducting parent-teacher conferences.
13. Provide a plan for the provision of a centralized teaching and administration facility, accessible to parents/guardians, students, and the public, with details of the proposed facility (location, floor plan, etc.), where all staff will perform their daily services.
14. Explain how the virtual charter school will provide, or provide for, transportation services that meet at least the following student needs – transportation to and from a testing site for required state assessments, transportation required to participate in in-person meetings and activities required by the school, and transportation required by state or federal law or regulation relating to services to students with disabilities, including but not limited to transportation to evaluation appointments and transportation to receive related services under an IEP.