# **Maine Charter School Commission**

**Category**

# **Start-Up Plan and Pre-Opening Requirements**

SCHOOL:

DATE OF CHARTER APPROVAL:

TARGET SCHOOL OPENING DATE:

## WHAT ARE START-UP AND PRE-OPENING REQUIREMENTS?

Start-Up and Pre-Opening Requirements are a set of primarily compliance-based actions that a school must complete prior to opening its doors and starting instruction. Schools must demonstrate sufficient demand (enrolled students) to warrant school opening. In addition, schools must demonstrate that the physical building and staff are ready to receive students for instruction. Start-Up and Pre-Opening Requirements consist of a combination of paper screening of compliance documents and an on-site visit to the school site to verify school leadership is prepared to begin the school year ready to educate students in alignment with the approved mission of the school, and that the facility and site logistics are on track for the first day of class.

## WHAT CONSTITUTES A START-UP OR PRE-OPENING REQUIREMENT?

Start-Up and Pre-Opening Requirements are the set of tasks that, once completed, will facilitate effective and responsible management of school operations, as well as assist charter schools in coming into general compliance with applicable laws and regulations. Although charter school operators will likely identify additional tasks to complete during the critical time between charter authorization and the opening of the school, the tasks included in the Start-Up and Pre-Opening Requirements alert school founders to those tasks that are essential to school start-up and operations. The Maine Charter School Commission may also identify Start-Up and Pre-Opening Requirements specific to individual schools that are beyond those included here. Start-Up and Pre-Opening requirements will be formally established, as part of the initial charter contract, to ensure their transparency and enforceability.

## HOW ARE START-UP AND PRE-OPENING REQUIREMENTS ORGANIZED?

Start-Up and Pre-Opening Requirements are organized by general categories, including: students, enrollment, and admissions; governance; budget; and transportation, among others. Each requirement has a due date. The “Documentation” column indicates for school operators the specific documentation required to fulfill particular terms. Finally, the template includes a column for authorizers to verify whether schools have met each requirement.

## HOW WILL THE COMMISSION MONITOR SCHOOLS’ COMPLETION OF START-UP AND PRE-OPENING REQUIREMENTS?

The Commission monitors the completion of Start-Up and Pre-Opening Requirements through each school’s timely and complete submission of appropriate documentation, as indicated within the template. In addition, the Commission will conduct a site visit to the school facility prior to each school’s first day of instruction. The initial visit is typically six to eight weeks before the first day, with potential follow-up visits scheduled closer to the start date if necessary. It is critical to determine whether a school is prepared to open as early as possible in the process, in case there is a delay and the school and/or authorizer need to notify enrolling students. Regular contact with charter school operators can also inform the Commission about the progress each charter school is making toward completing the Start-Up and Pre-Opening Requirements. Ultimately, the Commission will provide written affirmation to schools that have met all Pre-Opening Requirements.

Failure to submit required documentation in a sufficient and timely manner may result in the Commission taking action to postpone the opening of the school or revoke its charter. Additional documentation may be required prior to the start of the school year. The authorizer will provide written notice and a reasonable timeline for response to any additional requirements and/or changes to the following list. ALL DOCUMENTATION AND NOTIFICATION MUST BE SUBMITTED VIA EPICENTER.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Category** | **Benchmark** | **Due Date** | **Documentation** | **Approved by Authorizer** |
| Students, Enrollment, and Admissions |  |  |  |  |
|  | Enrollment and admissions policies are approved by school board, *if different from materials approved by the authorizer in the original application* | Prior to recruiting or enrolling students | Enrollment and admissions policy and procedures  Enrollment form | ☐ Yes  ☐ No  Comments: |
| Board-approved student code of conduct is on file and provided to students and families in a Student and Family Handbook. | Prior to enrolling students | Board-approved code of conduct  Copy of Student and Family Handbook | ☐ Yes  ☐ No  Comments: |
| School has procedures in place for creating, storing, securing, and using student academic, attendance, and discipline records | Within 30 days prior to opening | Evidence of protocols/systems for student records | ☐ Yes  ☐ No  Comments:  **Approved by**  **Authorizer** |
| Student admissions lottery conducted according to rules and regulations and waitlist maintained appropriately *(if applicable)*  **Due Date**  **Category**  **Benchmark** | Prior to recruiting or enrolling students  **Documentation** | Lottery date and copy of lottery procedures.  Wait list numbers by grade. | ☐ Yes  ☐ No  Comments: |
| Student Recruitment |  | Dates and locations of enrollment events/ meetings with number of attendees at each event.  Copies of mailings, publications, and flyers with description of use/purpose. | ☐ Yes  ☐ No  Comments: |
| 50% of student enrollment target met | Within 90 days prior to school opening | Number of enrolled students by grade. | ☐ Yes  ☐ No  Comments: |
| 80% of student enrollment target met | Within 60 days prior to school opening | Number of enrolled students by grade. | ☐ Yes  ☐ No  Comments: |
| 90% of student enrollment target met | Within 30 days prior to school opening | Number of enrolled students by grade.  If a school does not reach 90% of planned enrollment well in advance of school opening, the school must submit a revised budget *(see “Budget” section)* and may be at risk of not opening. | ☐ Yes  ☐ No  Comments: |
| **Category** | **Benchmark** | **Due Date** | **Documentation** | **Approved by Authorizer** |
| Governance |  |  |  |  |
|  | Charter contract executed by Board |  | Board-executed charter contract | ☐ Yes  ☐ No  Comments: |
| Organization is incorporated as a not-for-profit | Upon signing of contract | Copy of charter holder’s certificate of incorporation or similar documentation | ☐ Yes  ☐ No  Comments: |
| Organization has secured federal tax-exempt status | Upon signing of contract | Copy of tax exempt letter and federal tax id number from IRS | ☐ Yes  ☐ No  Comments: |
| Bylaws are executed by the board, *if different from materials approved by the authorizer in the original application.* | Within 90 days prior to school opening | Copy of executed bylaws | ☐ Yes  ☐ No  Comments: |
| Updated board roster (with officer designations) and organizational chart updated | Within 2 weeks prior to school opening | Board roster, new board member forms and organizational chart | ☐ Yes  ☐ No  Comments: |
| Board meeting (s) conducted |  | Meeting dates and copy of board meeting minutes | ☐ Yes  ☐ No  Comments: |
|  | Adoption of all required policies | Within 30 days prior to school opening | Copy of policies | ☐ Yes  ☐ No  Comments: |
|  | Board Training completed | Within 60 days prior to school opening | Date and agenda of training | ☐ Yes  ☐ No  Comments: |
| **Category** | **Benchmark** | **Due Date** | **Documentation** | **Approved by Authorizer** |
| Educational Program |  |  |  |  |
|  | School calendar is final | Within 90 days prior to school opening | School calendar including all key dates | ☐ Yes  ☐ No  Comments: |
| Administration and Staff |  |  |  |  |
|  | Qualified school administrator hired | Within 10 days of hiring and no later than six weeks prior to school opening | Name, resume, and copies of administrator license(s) and Criminal History Record Check Approval from Maine Department of Education. | ☐ Yes  ☐ No  Comments: |
| All key administrative/leadership roles filled (ex. Dean of Students, CFO, Special Education Director, etc.) | Within 10 days of hiring and no later than three weeks prior to school opening | Updated organizational or staffing chart with names filled in for all administrative/leadership roles. | ☐ Yes  ☐ No  Comments: |
| All positions filled including: paraprofessional, clerical, janitorial, support staff, substitute teachers, Nurse, Doctor/NP, etc. | Within 2 weeks prior to school opening | Copy of staff roster | ☐ Yes  ☐ No  Comments: |
| Criminal History Record Check Approval completed through MDOE for all school staff and volunteers. | Within 1 week prior to school opening | Staff information entered into MDOE portal  *Note: Staff may not work without CHRC approval* | ☐ Yes  ☐ No  Comments: |
| Employees meet certification requirements  **Category**  **Benchmark** | At the time of employee hire  **Due Date**  **Documentation** | Copies of valid teaching and ed. tech. certification and a list of those obtaining certification within 3 years of hire and those meeting criteria for unique qualifications as applicable.  **Approved by**  **Authorizer**  *Note: Special Education teachers must hold valid certification and are not eligible for 3 year certification or unique qualifications.* | ☐ Yes  ☐ No  Comments: |
| Adequate Special Education and English Learner (EL) staffing in place to serve enrolled students | Within 2 weeks prior to school opening | Documentation of number of students identified as requiring Special Education or EL services and indication of how staffing will meet student needs in accordance with law and IEPs | ☐ Yes  ☐ No  Comments: |
| Initial Orientation and Professional Development scheduled to occur prior to the start of school year | Scheduled to occur before the first day of school | Orientation and PD calendar and agenda(s) | ☐ Yes  ☐ No  Comments: |
| Board-approved personnel policies are provided to all staff in an Employee Handbook | Within 60 days prior to the first day of school | Board-approved personnel policies  Copy of Employee Handbook | ☐ Yes  ☐ No  Comments: |
| **Category** | **Benchmark** | **Due Date** | **Documentation** | **Approved by Authorizer** |
| Management Contract (if applicable) |  |  |  |  |
|  | Management contract executed |  | Copy of executed agreement and signed by representatives of the management company and the school’s board | ☐ Yes  ☐ No  Comments: |
| Budget |  |  |  |  |
|  | Board-approved budget for first fiscal year | On or before July 1, 2020 | Copy of board-approved budget with detailed assumptions for all key revenues and expenditures | ☐ Yes  ☐ No  Comments: |
| Board-approved five-year budget | On or before August 1, 2020 | Copy of board-approved five-year budget aligned to provisions of approved charter application | ☐ Yes  ☐ No  Comments: |
| Detailed monthly cash-flow projection for first year of operation | Within 30 days prior to school opening | Copy of monthly cash flow projections | ☐ Yes  ☐ No  Comments: |
| Revised budget if enrollment is below 90% of student enrollment target included in board-approved budget.  If revised budget does not demonstrate viability, the authorizer will delay or stop school opening. | Within 20 days prior to school opening | Revised budget that demonstrates fiscal viability of school and ability to fulfill material terms of the approved educational program with reduced enrollment. | ☐ Yes  ☐ No  Comments: |
| **Category** | **Benchmark** | **Due Date** | **Documentation** | **Approved by Authorizer** |
| Financial Management |  |  |  |  |
|  | Completed necessary state documents and requirements to generate payments | July 1, 2020 | Certification that documents and requirements are complete | ☐ Yes  ☐ No  Comments: |
| Board-approved fiscal controls policies and procedures | July 1, 2020 | Copy of board-approved internal controls policies | ☐ Yes  ☐ No  Comments: |
| Accounting system in place | July 1, 2020 | Evidence of employment of or contract with accountant, bookkeeper, or person who will handle such duties | ☐ Yes  ☐ No  Comments: |
| Facility |  |  |  |  |
|  | Viable facility secured | Within 120 days prior to school opening | Executed lease or copy of deed with physical address of viable facility | ☐ Yes  ☐ No  Comments: |
| Certificate of Occupancy | Within 30 days prior to school opening | Certificate of Occupancy | ☐ Yes  ☐ No  Comments: |
| Emergency Plan finalized | Within 2 weeks prior to school opening | Copy of emergency plan | ☐ Yes  ☐ No  Comments: |
| * Testing of drinking and cooking water fixtures * Testing of interior water lines * Testing of exterior water lines   Based on: <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/environmental-health/dwp/cet/documents/samplingProtocolForLeadSchools.pdf> | Within 3 weeks prior to school opening | Documentation and results of each test | ☐ Yes  ☐ No  Comments |
| Fire and Asbestos Inspections, Lead Paint and PCBs Assessment | Within 3 weeks prior to school opening | Documentation of inspections and assessments | ☐ Yes  ☐ No  Comments |
| Office and classroom equipment, furnishings and fixtures and installations complete | Within 2 weeks prior to school opening | Inspection during pre-opening visit | ☐ Yes  ☐ No  Comments |
| Space meets program requirements to execute material elements of the education program (classrooms, technology, special purpose space, and restrooms meet requirements of program and number of students enrolled) | Within 2 weeks prior to school opening | Floor plan  Inspection during pre-opening visit | ☐ Yes  ☐ No  Comments: |
| Space is accessible to all students and complies with anticipated IEP requirements | Within 2 weeks prior to school opening | Inspection during pre-opening visit | ☐ Yes  ☐ No  Comments: |
| Transportation |  |  |  |  |
|  | Contract with transportation provider *(as applicable)* | Within 30 days prior to school opening | Copy of agreement with transportation provider *(as applicable)* | ☐ Yes  ☐ No  Comments: |
| Final transportation plan documentation *(if applicable)* including related health and safety certificates | Within 2 weeks prior to school opening | Copy of health and safety certificates  Copies of criminal background checks for provider | ☐ Yes  ☐ No  Comments: |
| **Category** | **Benchmark** | **Due Date** | **Documentation** | **Approved by Authorizer** |
| Food Service |  |  |  |  |
|  | Food service plan *(if applicable)* | Within 30 days prior to school opening | Copy of food or vendor services contract  Evidence of appropriate state and local health department inspections and licenses | ☐ Yes  ☐ No  Comments: |
| Insurance |  |  |  |  |
|  | Appropriate and required coverage obtained | July 1, 2020 | Proof of appropriate coverage from insurance provider that meets local and statutory requirements | ☐ Yes  ☐ No  Comments: |

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