

# Cover Page: Amended Public Charter School Application Process



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[Section 22.1-212.9.H](#) requires all applications for public charter schools to be submitted to the Virginia Board of Education (Board) for review prior to the submission of the application to the local school board. Charter school applications must address a list of elements required by [Section 22.1-212.8](#). **The Board is required to review, comment, and make a determination as to whether the application satisfies the criteria developed by the Board.**

- However, charter school applications initiated by one or more local school boards are **not** subject to review by the Board of Education. The division would submit a charter school application for each of the new or conversion schools to its local school board for approval.
- A local school board intending to open a new charter school or convert an existing charter school is still required to adhere to [Article 1.2](#) and must address all application elements required in the charter school law, including the provisions specifically for conversions of existing public schools.

Applications must adhere to the format prescribed by the Board and address the application elements stated in [Section 22.1-212.8](#). The Board is required to render a decision on whether the application satisfies its criteria. A decision by the Board that an application meets its approval criteria does not guarantee that the local school board will approve a request for a charter.

Virginia currently has seven public charter schools, all of which were approved by their local governing boards between 2002 and 2015. The last charter school model to open was in 2016 in Loudoun County Public Schools. There have been three gubernatorial administrations, multiple state superintendents, and multiple governing boards since the Commonwealth last utilized the Charter School Standing Committee (CSSC) and since the Board of Education last reviewed the Charter School Evaluation Criteria. Moreover, there has been a rapidly changing technological landscape with more efficient and transparent ways to operate and learn from other states on best practices.

The proposed revisions to the public Charter School Application Process encapsulate these changes in technology, better align and reflect what is outlined in the *Code of Virginia*, account for an additional eight years of lessons learned when it comes to reviewing, commenting, and supporting new charter school applicants as well as using committees of technical experts with charter school expertise, and reflect best practices from state authorizers’ operating high-quality charter school portfolios on what they look for in the evaluation process.

The staff recommendations for improving the 2018 Charter School Application Process document are as follows:

1. Removes the Table of Contents (pg. 2) due to the consolidation of materials.
2. Removes the Virginia Board of Education Responsibilities (pg. 3), which will now appear in a clear handout and PDF on an enhanced VDOE public charter school website.
3. Section II: General Instructions staff recommends consolidating the section on page 4 as the 2018 Website Accessibility Standards are now common practice and are available on the VDOE website and in past presentations to the Board of Education. This also pertains to the application and applicant more

than the technical review process by the CSSC and Board so it has been moved to the proposed 2024 public Charter School Application.

4. Eliminates the charter school application process timeline noted on page 4, as this will vary by applicant. An 18-month review process is exceedingly long for thorough, high-quality applicants, especially given that the Board of Education's duties are only to "review, comment, and decide whether the application satisfies the criteria." Other applicants may need additional support and technical assistance. The process document and proposed amended application make clear to applicants that they should backward plan from when they would like to open their public charter school to account for the local governing board approval process, as well as when they should submit their proposed charter school application.
5. In Part A, the submission process beginning on page 4 has been updated based on best practices learned from the College Partnership Lab School process. Rather than mandate hard copies delivered to the Department of Education P.O. Box, electronic copies are now permitted and encouraged to account for modern technology. A new e-mail has been set up for all public charter school applications to be submitted, along with proper alerts so that regardless of VDOE staff turnover, the Department will always be able to provide a timely response to applicants to confirm receipt and begin the process for review.
6. Unlike other Board standing committees with regular meeting schedules, the CSSC exists to provide technical expertise and feedback to public charter school applicants on behalf of the Board. Since it meets on an ad hoc basis contingent on applications to review, the timing for the chair being notified and the CSSC's first substantive review meeting being scheduled have been more clearly identified under Part A.
7. The role of the CSSC has been clarified on pages 2 and 3 to better align with the Board of Education's responsibilities as outlined in the *Code of Virginia* to review and provide comments to public charter school applicants and to ensure the applicant has a better understanding of the timing for each phase of review.
8. On page 8, because the "Second Meeting with Charter School Committee" does not apply to all public Charter School Applicants, it has been moved down in the process document to clarify the order of operations for review. This second meeting is for applicants who need substantive modifications or technical support on their application to satisfy the Board's evaluation criteria.
9. Page 4 provides greater clarity on the role of the local school division evaluation. In Virginia, local school divisions approve and authorize public charter schools.
10. Page 10 the technical assistance paragraph has been removed as the listed director no longer works for the Department. VDOE is in the process of overhauling the public charter school webpage to make it more user-friendly for applicants to navigate the process and get support. For example, should the Board of Education approve the proposed changes to the application and evaluation metric on July 25, materials will promptly be updated on the VDOE website. VDOE will also start hosting office hours for applicants to troubleshoot questions about the process or application questions for individual technical assistance needs. Those office hours and other ways to get support will be clearly displayed on the website, along with additional resources, where helpful. Materials and training for local school divisions on what a public charter school is and best practices for evaluating a charter school applicant will also be made available since the last governing board to review and approve a public charter school was eight years ago.
11. The website's contact information for staff will also be enhanced, making it clear to applicants who to contact with questions. It is struck from page 11 of the process document to ensure the accuracy of the proper VDOE staff leads.
12. The application and evaluation criteria have been updated to reflect Section III on pages 11-14 in the proposed documents for the Board of Education on July 25 and are no longer necessary to include in the Public Charter School Application Process documentation.
13. The Assurances outlined on pages 15-17 have been moved to the back of the amended proposed public Charter School Application. It is critical that the applicant knows what they are committing to if approved.
14. Section IV, which outlines Virginia's charter school laws (pp. 18-30), has been removed and will appear in a new handout for applicants on the VDOE public charter school webpage. While important, this

information is not required for the public Charter School Application Process documentation and should be its own resource to review ahead of completing and submitting the application.

In addition to this amended process documentation and VDOE's improved website, staff are committed to supporting new and existing public schools and designing additional wraparound services for public charter school applicants to create high-quality models that will best serve the Commonwealth's students and families.



# Virginia Public Charter School Application Process

(2016 Approved; Revised for Accessibility February 2018)

Director for Board Relations  
Virginia Department of Education  
P.O. Box 2120  
Richmond, Virginia 23218-2120  
Phone: (804) 225-2924  
E-mail: [BOE@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:BOE@doe.virginia.gov)

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## Virginia Public Charter School Application Process Virginia Board of Education

### SECTION I: BACKGROUND

[Article 1.2](#) in Title 22.1, Chapter 13 of the *Code of Virginia* (Sections 22.1-212.5 through 22.1-212.16) provides for the authorization and oversight of public charter schools in Virginia.

[Section 22.1-212.5](#) defines a public charter school as “a public, nonreligious, or non-home-based alternative school located within a public school division. A public charter school may be created as a new public school or through the conversion of all or part of an existing public school; however, no public charter school shall be established through the conversion of a private school or a nonpublic home-based educational program. A charter school for at-risk pupils may be established as a residential school.”

[Section 22.1-212.9.H](#) requires all applications for public charter schools to be submitted to the Virginia Board of Education (Board) for review prior to the submission of the application to the local school board. Charter school applications must address a list of elements required by [Section 22.1-212.8](#). The Board is required to review, comment, and make a determination as to whether the application meets approval criteria developed by the Board.

However, charter school applications initiated by one or more local school boards are *not* subject to review by the Board of Education. The division would submit a charter school application for each of the new or conversion schools to its local school board for approval. A local school board intending to open a new charter school or convert an existing charter school is still required to adhere to [Article 1.2](#) and must address all application elements required in the charter school law, including the provisions specifically for conversions of existing public schools.

Applications must adhere to the format prescribed by the Board and address the application elements stated in [Section 22.1-212.8](#). The Board is required to render a decision on whether the application meets its approval criteria. A decision by the Board that an application meets its approval criteria does not guarantee that the local school board will approve a request for a charter.

Requirements of the law for applications subject to review by the Board of Education are mirrored in the Board's [Virginia Public Charter School Application](#).

For additional information on public charter schools in Virginia, please visit the Virginia Department of Education's (VDOE) [Charter Schools](#) web page.

## **SECTION II: GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS**

Applications for public charter schools should be submitted to the Board within a timeframe that is adequate to ensure that the public charter school application will also be submitted to the local school board in accordance with the application policies of said local school board.

[New Website Accessibility Standards and Presentations to the Board of Education](#) have been established. Charter School applications submitted to the Board of Education must be WEB accessible as of January 18, 2018. This requirement includes charter school applications, materials, appendices, and documents presented to the Board of Education either online, as attachments, or as meeting materials. The [Accessibility section of the VDOE](#) website as stated in Memo 316-17 includes guidance, tools, checklists and step-by-step instructions on how to create accessible Word documents, accessible PowerPoint presentations, accessible Excel files, accessible PDF documents and accessible videos that meet the new WCAG 2.0 Level AA standard. Please take full advantage of these resources in preparing the charter school application and appendices.

The application process for Board review takes approximately six months but may extend longer if additional time is required to address application deficiencies. Unless otherwise addressed by the local school board policies, an applicant should consider allowing at least 18 months after state Board review and subsequent submission to the local school board to the proposed opening date for the public charter school.

Prospective charter school applicants are encouraged to contact a local school division for assistance in advance of submitting an application to the Board or the school division, and school division leadership may communicate with any applicant or potential applicant. Working with the local school division prior to submission of the application can help to ensure a smooth transition for any charter school that may be approved by the local school board and then established within the local school division.

### **Part A: Submission to Virginia Department of Education**

Two hard copies of the completed application with the original signature of the authorized official on the cover page and on the certification page must be submitted to:

Director for Board Relations  
Virginia Department of Education  
P.O. Box 2120  
Richmond, Virginia 23218-2120

In addition, a PDF and WORD version of the completed application document should be sent to the following address: [BOE@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:BOE@doe.virginia.gov). Applicants may also submit a PDF and Word version of the completed application document on a portable storage device, mailed to the address above.

## **Part B: Schedule for Review**

### Initial Receipt of Application

When the Board receives an application, Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) staff, on behalf of the Board, will send an acknowledgement to the applicant. VDOE will determine, on behalf of the Board, that an application is complete when all of the required application elements have been submitted in the required format.

If the application is deemed incomplete, VDOE will notify the applicant within 15 business days of the receipt of the application and request that the outstanding information be submitted within 30 business days of such notification to the applicant that additional information is needed.

If an applicant fails to respond to the initial request for additional information within the 30 business days, VDOE will contact the applicant and will make a second request for the outstanding information. In this communication, VDOE will indicate that the application will not be considered for review by the Board's Charter School Committee until all required information is received. The applicant may submit the additional information within 10 business days from the receipt of the second request or withdraw the application and resubmit it at a later date.

### Virginia Board of Education's Charter School Committee

The Board has appointed a charter school committee to examine applications to ensure they are consistent with existing state law and the Board's approval criteria. After the application is deemed to include all of the application elements in the required format, it is sent to the Board's Charter School Committee members and posted on the [Board's Standing Committee](#) web page. The committee begins their review and selected VDOE staff review and comment on each criteria (component).

### Initial Meeting with the Charter School Committee

An initial meeting will be scheduled with the Board's Charter School Committee based on the meeting schedule and consultation with the applicant. All meetings of the Board's Charter School Committee are publicly noticed at:

[http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/committees\\_standing/index.shtml#lab](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/committees_standing/index.shtml#lab).

Although every effort is taken to ensure that the initial committee meeting will be held not later than 60 business days after the completed application is received, exceptions to scheduling may occur.

At the initial meeting of the committee, the applicant and members of the charter school's management team or a representative of the organization submitting the application for a public charter school must attend and should be prepared to discuss the contents of the application and address the committee members' questions. VDOE staff, on behalf of the Board, may also invite representatives of the applicable local school board to attend the meeting or request public comment on the application to provide appropriate opportunity for input from parents, teachers,



and other interested parties and to obtain information to assist the Board in its evaluation of a public charter school application.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the committee will discuss the extent to which the application meets the Board's approval criteria and take a consensus vote on each of the criterion and on the application as a whole.

- If the committee agrees by overall consensus that the criteria are met, the application will be presented to the Board; or
- If the committee decides that not all criteria are met, the applicant will be provided time to address those criteria and will be given the opportunity to meet with the committee at a second meeting.

Within ten business days following the meeting, VDOE staff, on behalf of the committee, will prepare a report that summarizes the committee's determination.

#### *Second Meeting with the Charter School Committee (if necessary)*

When the applicant has addressed the criteria that are not met, the applicant will notify the VDOE six weeks in advance to schedule a second meeting with the committee.

- A revised application will be sent to VDOE no later than six weeks before the scheduled meeting.
- The application will be submitted in its entirety.
  - Criteria that were deemed met at the initial meeting will remain intact with no changes required by the applicant.
  - Criteria that were not met at the initial committee meeting will be addressed by the committee with the applicant.
- At the conclusion of the meeting, the committee will discuss if the application meets the Board's approval criteria on those criterion that were not previously met.
  - A count will be taken of the criteria met from the initial and from the second meeting.
  - The committee will take a consensus vote on the overall application and recommend presenting the application to the Board for review, or provide an additional opportunity for the applicant to address remaining deficiencies.

Within ten business days following the second meeting, VDOE staff, on behalf of the committee, will prepare a report that summarizes the committee's determination. Any plans for further review by the committee will be discussed with the applicant.

#### *Action by the Virginia Board of Education*

For applications proceeding to the Board for review, the Charter School Committee report will be presented for first and final review. The report will generally be presented at the Board's next scheduled business meeting, but exceptions may occur. The applicant will be requested to attend these meetings to answer questions or make comments on the application.

At the meeting for final review, the Board will take one of the following actions:

*Action 1:* The Board will render a decision that the application meets the Board's approval criteria; or

*Action 2:* The Board will render a decision that the application does not meet the Board's approval criteria. The Board will provide the applicant with an opportunity to address any deficiencies in the application within a mutually agreed upon time frame with the applicant. If the applicant cannot address the deficiencies within the agreed upon date, the applicant may withdraw the application.

Following either action by the Board, the applicant will be formally notified by VDOE of the Board's decision within ten business days. Concurrent with its notification to the applicant, the applicable local school board will also receive a formal notification of the Board's action.

For the purpose of full disclosure and to benefit the local school board, the application package submitted to the Board must be included as part of the application made to the local school board. A decision by the Board that an application meets its approval criteria does not guarantee that a local school board will approve a request for a charter.

#### Withdrawal of an Application

An applicant may withdraw an application at any time during the review process and resubmit it at a later date. An application that is withdrawn and subsequently resubmitted is considered as a new charter school application.

### **Part C: Technical Assistance Following Submission to the Local School Board**

If an applicant submits its application to a local school board and the application is not approved, or if the charter of a current school is revoked or not renewed, the applicant or charter school operator may petition the local school board for reconsideration. Prior to such petition, the applicant or charter school operator may seek technical assistance from VDOE as stated in [Section 22.1-212.10, Code of Virginia](#). Requests, describing in detail the technical assistance needs, should be addressed to Diane Jay, associate director, office of program administration and accountability, at [Diane.Jay@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:Diane.Jay@doe.virginia.gov) or (804) 225-2905. VDOE staff will work with each applicant or charter school operator on a case-by-case basis to address individual technical assistance needs.

### **Part D: Additional Information**

Visit the VDOE's [Charter Schools](#) web page for additional information. Inquiries regarding charter schools can be made to:

Diane Jay  
Associate Director  
Office of Program Administration and Accountability  
Virginia Department of Education  
P.O. Box 2120  
Richmond, Virginia 23218-2120  
Phone: (804) 225-2905  
E-mail: [Diane.Jay@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:Diane.Jay@doe.virginia.gov)

The Virginia Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), Sections [2.2-3700](#) et seq. of the *Code of Virginia*, guarantees citizens of the Commonwealth and representatives of the media access to public records held by public bodies, public officials, and public employees. Please be advised that documents submitted to the Virginia Department of Education are subject to FOIA and must be released in response to a FOIA request unless the records are exempt as specifically provided by law.

### **SECTION III: APPLICATION COMPONENTS**

Listed below are the required components of a complete application. The application is available on the Virginia Department of Education's (VDOE) [Charter Schools](#) webpage.

The application narrative must contain all of the elements listed below as required by [Section 22.1-212.8](#) of the *Code of Virginia*.

#### **Executive Summary I**

- I. Provide an executive summary that addresses the need for the public charter school and any discussions to date with the local public school division or local school board on the establishment of the charter school. If there have been no discussions to date, please indicate the reason. (The suggested length is two pages.)

#### **Education Components II-V**

- II. **Mission Statement:** Provide a mission statement that is consistent with the principles of the Standards of Quality (SOQ) ([Section 22.1-253.13:1](#), *Code of Virginia*), including identification of the targeted academic program of study.
- III. **Evidence of Support:** Provide evidence of need and community support for the proposed public charter school.
- IV. **Statement of Need:** Describe the need for a public charter school in a school division or relevant school divisions or in a geographic area within a school division or relevant school divisions, including the location or geographic area proposed for the public charter school and the grades to be served each year for the full term of the charter contract.

V. ***Educational Program:*** Describe the public charter school's educational program. The following components must be addressed:

1. A description of the academic program that is aligned with the Standards of Learning.
2. A description of the public charter school's instructional design, including the type of learning environment, such as classroom-based or independent study; class size and structure; curriculum overview; and teaching methods.
3. Information regarding the minimum planned, and maximum enrollment per grade level for the term of the charter contract.
4. A description of plans for identifying and successfully serving: a) students with disabilities; b) English Learners (ELs); students who lag behind academically; and d) gifted students, including compliance with applicable laws and regulations.
5. A description of co-curricular or extracurricular programs to be offered and how they will be funded and delivered.
6. The public charter school's student discipline policies, including discipline policies for special education students.
7. A statement of opportunities and expectations for parental involvement.

#### **Logistical Components VI-VIII**

VI. ***Enrollment Process:*** Describe plans and timelines for student recruitment and enrollment, including lottery procedures.

VII. ***Displacement:*** Describe the plan for the displacement of pupils, teachers, and other employees who will not attend or be employed in the public charter school, in instances of the conversion of an existing public school to a public charter school, and for the placement of public charter school pupils, teachers, and employees upon termination or revocation of the charter.

VIII. ***Transportation, Food Service, and Operational and Ancillary Services:*** Describe the public charter school's plans for providing transportation, food service, and all other significant operational and ancillary services.

#### **Business Components IX-XII**

IX. ***Economic Soundness:*** Evidence that the plan for the public charter school is economically sound for both the public charter school and the school division or relevant school divisions. The following components should be addressed:

1. A description of the public charter school's financial plan, including financial controls and audit requirements.
2. Start-up and five-year budgets with clearly stated assumptions.
3. Start-up and first-year cash flow projections with clearly stated assumptions.
4. Evidence of anticipated fundraising contributions, if claimed in this application.
5. A sound facilities plan, including backup or contingency plans, if appropriate.

**X. *Management and Operation:*** Provide information on the management and operation of the public charter school. The following components must be addressed to the extent the applicant is able, pending negotiations with the local school board:

1. Background on proposed founding management committee members and, if identified, the proposed public charter school leadership and management team.
2. An organization chart that clearly presents the public charter school's organization structure, including lines of authority and reporting between the management committee; staff; any related bodies, such as advisory bodies or parent and teacher councils; and any external organizations that will play a role in managing the public charter school.
3. A clear description of the roles and responsibilities for the management committee, the public charter school's leadership and management team, and any other entities shown in the organizational chart.
4. The proposed governing bylaws.
5. An explanation of any partnerships or contractual relationships central to the school's operations or mission.
6. A detailed public charter school start-up plan, identifying tasks, timelines, and responsible individuals.
7. The public charter school's proposed calendar and a sample daily schedule.

**XI. *Employment Terms and Conditions:*** At the discretion of the local school board, charter school personnel may be employees of the local school board, or boards, granting the charter. Any personnel not employed by the local school board shall remain subject to the provisions of Sections [22.1-296.1](#), [22.1-296.2](#), and [22.1-296.4](#). The following components must be addressed:

1. The public charter school's leadership and teacher employment policies.

2. Plans for recruiting and developing the public charter school's leadership and staff.
3. A staffing chart for the school's first year and a staffing plan for the term of the contract.

**XII. Insurance:** Describe the insurance coverage that the public charter school will obtain.

## Assurances

### Assurances in the Code of Virginia:

The assurances in the *Code of Virginia* represent the policies and procedures that must be developed by the public charter school to carry out the provisions of the law. By signing and submitting this application for a public charter school, the applicant expressly assures the Board that:

1. No tuition will be charged to students attending the public charter school.
2. Public charter schools are subject to the same civil rights, health, and safety requirements applicable to other public schools in the Commonwealth.
3. No public charter school shall discriminate against any individual on the basis of disability, race, creed, color, gender, national origin, religion, ancestry, or need for special education services or any other unlawful basis, and each public charter school shall be subject to any court-ordered desegregation plan in effect for the school division.
4. No public charter school shall discriminate against any student on the basis of limited proficiency in English, and each public charter school shall provide students who have limited proficiency in English with appropriate services designed to teach such students English and the general curriculum, consistent with federal civil rights laws.
5. No public charter school shall engage in any sectarian practices in its educational program, admissions or employment policies, or operations.
6. The public charter school policies and procedures will comply with the federal *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act* (FERPA) and the records retention schedules for public schools, and that such policies and schedules will be acceptable to the local education agency.
7. The public charter school programs, services, and activities will operate in accordance with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations, including the federal *Americans with Disabilities Act* (ADA), the federal *Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act* (IDEA), Section 504 of the federal *Rehabilitation Act of 1973*, and the *Virginia Freedom of Information Act*.
8. Management committees of public charter schools are subject to and shall comply with the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (§ **2.2-3700** et seq.).
9. The applicant has knowledge of and will comply with the *Virginia Conflict of Interest Act*.
10. Transportation will be provided consistent with state law and regulation. ([Sections 22.1-176](#), [22.1-182](#), [22.1-186](#), [22.1-191](#), [22.1-221](#), [22.1-216](#), [22.1-218](#), *Code of Virginia* and the Virginia Board of Education's *Regulation Governing Pupil Transportation*)
11. The applicant will provide information regarding the proposed term of its contract with a local school board and notification of closure, should the charter be revoked or fail to be renewed. ([Section 22.1-212.12](#), *Code of Virginia*)
12. Public charter schools are subject to all federal laws and authorities as set forth in the charter contract with the local school board.
13. Public charter schools are subject to the student assessment and accountability requirements applicable to other public schools in the Commonwealth, but nothing in this article precludes a public charter school from establishing additional student assessment measures that go beyond state requirements if the school's authorizer approves such measures.

Assurances approved by the Virginia Board of Education:

By signing and submitting this application for a public charter school, the applicant expressly assures the Board that:

1. Within 90 days of approval of a charter application, the local school board and the management committee of the approved public charter school shall execute a charter contract that clearly sets forth (i) the academic and operational performance expectations and measures by which the public charter school will be judged and (ii) the administrative relationship between the local school board and public charter school, including each party's rights and duties. Such 90-day period may be extended by a period not to exceed 30 days by mutual agreement of the parties. Such performance expectations and measures shall include applicable federal and state accountability requirements and may be refined or amended by mutual agreement after the public charter school has collected baseline achievement data for its enrolled students.
2. The academic and operational performance expectations and measures in the charter contract shall be based on a performance framework that clearly sets forth the academic and operational performance indicators, measures, and metrics that will guide the local school board's evaluations of each public charter school. The performance framework shall include indicators, measures, and metrics for:
  - a. Student academic proficiency;
  - b. Student academic growth;
  - c. Achievement gaps in both proficiency and growth between the major student subgroups based on gender, race, poverty status, special education status, English learner status, and gifted status;
  - d. Attendance;
  - e. Recurrent annual enrollment;
  - f. Postsecondary education readiness of high school students;
  - g. Financial performance and sustainability; and
  - h. The performance and stewardship of the management committee, including compliance with all applicable laws, regulations, and terms of the charter contract.
3. The performance framework shall allow the inclusion of additional rigorous, valid, and reliable indicators proposed by a public charter school to augment external evaluations of its performance, provided that the local school board approves the quality and rigor of such indicators and such indicators are consistent with the purposes of this article.
4. The performance framework shall require the disaggregation of all student performance data by major student subgroups based on gender, race, poverty status, special education status, English learner status, and gifted status.
5. Annual performance targets shall be set by each public charter school and the local school board and shall be designed to help each school meet applicable federal, state, and local school board expectations.
6. The charter contract shall be signed by the chair of the local school board and the president or chair of the public charter school's management committee.
7. Within ten days of executing a charter contract, the local school board shall submit to the Board written notification of the charter contract execution, including a copy of the executed charter contract and any attachments.



8. No public charter school shall commence operations without a charter contract executed in accordance with this section and approved in an open meeting of the local school board.
9. If the charter application proposes a program to increase the educational opportunities for at-risk students, including those proposals for residential charter schools for at-risk students, the local school board or relevant school boards, as the case may be, on behalf of the public charter school, shall also request that the Board approve an Individual School Accreditation Plan for the evaluation of the performance of the school as authorized by the Standards of Accreditation pursuant to 8 VAC 20-131-280 C of the Virginia Administrative Code.
10. Any material revision of the terms of the contract may be made only with the approval of the local school board or relevant school boards and the management committee of the public charter school.
11. If the application is approved by a local school board, all requests for waivers from the Virginia Board of Education will be made by the local school board, on behalf of the applicant, no later than six months prior to the opening date of the school. (This does not preclude a public charter school from working with the local school board to request additional waivers once the school is operational.)
12. The public charter school will comply with all provisions of the Virginia Board of Education's [Regulations Governing Special Education Programs For Children With Disabilities in Virginia](#).

Pursuant to the requirements, I hereby certify that to the best of my knowledge the information in this application is correct, and that the applicant has addressed all application elements that pertain to the proposed public charter school, and that the applicant understands and will comply with the assurances listed above. The application and appendices are WEB accessible.

Name of Authorized Official:

Title:

Signature of Authorized Official:

Date:

## SECTION IV: VIRGINIA'S CHARTER SCHOOL LAWS

*Code of Virginia (July 1, 2016)*

### **§ 22.1-212.5. Objectives; definitions.**

A. In order to (i) stimulate the development of innovative programs within public education; (ii) provide opportunities for innovative instruction and assessment; (iii) provide parents and students with more options within their school divisions; (iv) provide teachers with a vehicle for establishing schools with alternative innovative instruction and school scheduling, management and structure; (v) encourage the use of performance-based educational programs; (vi) establish high standards for both teachers and administrators; and (vii) develop models for replication in other public schools, public charter schools may be established in Virginia as provided in this article.

B. As used in this article:

"At-risk pupil" means a student having a physical, emotional, intellectual, socioeconomic, or cultural risk factor, as defined in Board of Education criteria, which research indicates may negatively influence educational success.

"Public charter school" means a public, nonreligious, or non-home-based alternative school located within a public school division. A public charter school may be created as a new public school or through the conversion of all or part of an existing public school; however, no public charter school shall be established through the conversion of a private school or a nonpublic home-based educational program. A charter school for at-risk pupils may be established as a residential school.

"Regional public charter school" means a public charter school operated by two or more school boards and chartered directly by the participating school boards.

1998, cc. [748](#), [890](#); 2000, cc. [631](#), [712](#), [1028](#); 2004, c. [530](#); 2005, c. [928](#).

### **§ 22.1-212.5:1. Public Charter School Fund established.**

There is hereby created in the state treasury a special nonreverting fund to be known as the Public Charter School Fund, hereafter referred to as "the Fund." The Fund shall be established on the books of the Comptroller. Any gifts, grants, bequests, or donations from public or private sources shall be paid into the state treasury and credited to the Fund. Interest earned on moneys in the Fund shall remain in the Fund and be credited to the Fund. Any moneys remaining in the Fund, including interest thereon, at the end of each fiscal year shall not revert to the general fund but shall remain in the Fund. Moneys in the Fund shall be used solely for the purposes of establishing or supporting public charter schools in the Commonwealth that stimulate the development of alternative public education programs. Expenditures and disbursements from the

Fund shall be made by the State Treasurer on warrants issued by the Comptroller upon written request signed by the Superintendent of Public Instruction. The Board of Education shall establish criteria for making distributions from the Fund to a public charter school requesting moneys from the Fund and may issue guidelines governing the Fund as it deems necessary and appropriate.

2007, c. 118.

**§ 22.1-212.6. Establishment and operation of public charter schools; requirements.**

A. Enrollment in a public charter school shall be open to any child who is deemed to reside within the relevant school division or, in the case of a regional public charter school, within any of the relevant school divisions, as set forth in § 22.1-3, through a lottery process on a space-available basis, except that in the case of the conversion of an existing public school, students who attend the school and the siblings of such students shall be given the opportunity to enroll in advance of the lottery process. A waiting list shall be established if adequate space is not available to accommodate all students whose parents have requested to be entered in the lottery process. Such waiting list shall also be prioritized through a lottery process and parents shall be informed of their student's position on the list.

B. A public charter school shall be administered and managed by a management committee, composed of parents of students enrolled in the school, teachers and administrators working in the school, and representatives of any community sponsors, in a manner agreed to by the public charter school applicant and the local school board. Pursuant to a charter contract, a public charter school may operate free from specified school division policies and state regulations, and, as public schools, shall be subject to the requirements of the Standards of Quality, including the Standards of Learning and the Standards of Accreditation.

C. Pursuant to a charter agreement, a public charter school shall be responsible for its own operations, including, but not limited to, such budget preparation, contracts for services, and personnel matters as are specified in the charter agreement. A public charter school may negotiate and contract with a school division, the governing body of a public institution of higher education, or any third party for the use of a school building and grounds, the operation and maintenance thereof, and the provision of any service, activity, or undertaking which the public charter school is required to perform in order to carry out the educational program described in its charter. Any services for which a public charter school contracts with a school division shall not exceed the division's costs to provide such services.

D. As negotiated by contract, the local school board or the relevant school boards, in the case of regional public charter schools, may allow a public charter school to use vacant or unused

properties or real estate owned by the school board. In no event shall a public charter school be required to pay rent for space which is deemed available, as negotiated by contract, in school division facilities. All other costs for the operation and maintenance of the facilities used by the public charter school shall be subject to negotiation between the public charter school and the school division or, in the case of a regional public charter school, between the regional public charter school and the relevant school divisions.

E. A public charter school shall not charge tuition.

1998, cc. [748](#), [890](#); 2000, cc. [631](#), [1028](#); 2002, c. [851](#); 2004, c. [530](#); 2012, cc. [702](#), [720](#); 2014, cc. [645](#), [693](#); 2016, c. [770](#).

**§ 22.1-212.6:1. Applicability of other laws, regulations, policies, and procedures.**

A. Public charter schools are subject to all federal laws and authorities as set forth in this article and the charter contract with the local school board.

B. Public charter schools are subject to the same civil rights, health, and safety requirements applicable to other public schools in the Commonwealth, except as otherwise provided in this article.

C. Public charter schools are subject to the student assessment and accountability requirements applicable to other public schools in the Commonwealth, but nothing in this article precludes a public charter school from establishing additional student assessment measures that go beyond state requirements if the school's authorizer approves such measures.

D. Management committees of public charter schools are subject to and shall comply with the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (§ [2.2-3700](#) et seq.).

E. No public charter school shall discriminate against any individual on the basis of disability, race, creed, color, gender, national origin, religion, ancestry, or need for special education services or any other unlawful basis, and each public charter school shall be subject to any court-ordered desegregation plan in effect for the school division.

F. No public charter school shall discriminate against any student on the basis of limited proficiency in English, and each public charter school shall provide students who have limited proficiency in English with appropriate services designed to teach such students English and the general curriculum, consistent with federal civil rights laws.

G. No public charter school shall engage in any sectarian practices in its educational program, admissions or employment policies, or operations.

2016, c. 770.

**§ 22.1-212.7. Contracts for public charter schools.**

A. Within 90 days of approval of a charter application, the local school board and the management committee of the approved public charter school shall execute a charter contract that clearly sets forth (i) the academic and operational performance expectations and measures by which the public charter school will be judged and (ii) the administrative relationship between the local school board and public charter school, including each party's rights and duties. Such 90-day period may be extended by a period not to exceed 30 days by mutual agreement of the parties. Such performance expectations and measures shall include applicable federal and state accountability requirements and may be refined or amended by mutual agreement after the public charter school has collected baseline achievement data for its enrolled students.

B. The academic and operational performance expectations and measures in the charter contract shall be based on a performance framework that clearly sets forth the academic and operational performance indicators, measures, and metrics that will guide the local school board's evaluations of each public charter school. The performance framework shall include indicators, measures, and metrics for:

1. Student academic proficiency;
2. Student academic growth;
3. Achievement gaps in both proficiency and growth between the major student subgroups based on gender, race, poverty status, special education status, English language learner status, and gifted status;
4. Attendance;
5. Recurrent annual enrollment;
6. Postsecondary education readiness of high school students;
7. Financial performance and sustainability; and
8. The performance and stewardship of the management committee, including compliance with all applicable laws, regulations, and terms of the charter contract.

C. The performance framework shall allow the inclusion of additional rigorous, valid, and reliable indicators proposed by a public charter school to augment external evaluations of its performance, provided that the local school board approves the quality and rigor of such indicators and such indicators are consistent with the purposes of this article.

D. The performance framework shall require the disaggregation of all student performance data by major student subgroups based on gender, race, poverty status, special education status, English language learner status, and gifted status.

E. Annual performance targets shall be set by each public charter school and the local school board and shall be designed to help each school meet applicable federal, state, and local school board expectations.

F. The charter contract shall be signed by the chairman of the local school board and the president or chairman of the public charter school's management committee. Within 10 days of executing a charter contract, the local school board shall submit to the Board written notification of the charter contract execution, including a copy of the executed charter contract and any attachments.

G. No public charter school shall commence operations without a charter contract executed in accordance with this section and approved in an open meeting of the local school board.

H. If the charter application proposes a program to increase the educational opportunities for at-risk students, including those proposals for residential charter schools for at-risk students, the local school board or relevant school boards, as the case may be, on behalf of the public charter school, shall also request that the Board approve an Individual School Accreditation Plan for the evaluation of the performance of the school as authorized by the Standards of Accreditation pursuant to [8VAC20-131-280 C](#) of the Virginia Administrative Code.

I. Any material revision of the terms of the contract may be made only with the approval of the local school board or relevant school boards and the management committee of the public charter school.

1998, cc. [748](#), [890](#); 2000, cc. [631](#), [712](#), [1028](#); 2002, c. [851](#); 2012, cc. [702](#), [720](#); 2016, c. [770](#).

#### **§ 22.1-212.8. Charter application.**

A. Any person, group, or organization, including any institution of higher education, may submit an application for the formation of a public charter school.

B. The public charter school application shall be a proposed agreement and shall include:

1. An executive summary.

2. A mission statement of the public charter school that is consistent with the principles of the Standards of Quality, including identification of the targeted academic program of study.

3. A plan for the displacement of pupils, teachers, and other employees who will not attend or be employed in the public charter school, in instances of the conversion of an existing public school to a public charter school, and for the placement of public charter school pupils, teachers, and employees upon termination or revocation of the charter.
4. The location or geographic area proposed for the public charter school.
5. The grades to be served each year for the full term of the charter contract.
6. Minimum, planned, and maximum enrollment per grade level per year for the term of the charter contract.
7. Evidence of need and community support for the proposed public charter school.
8. Background information on the proposed founding management committee members and, if identified, the proposed public charter school leadership and management team.
9. The public charter school's proposed calendar and a sample daily schedule.
10. A description of the academic program that is aligned with the Standards of Learning.
11. A description of the public charter school's instructional design, including the type of learning environment, such as classroom-based or independent study; class size and structure; curriculum overview; and teaching methods.
12. The public charter school's plans for identifying and successfully serving students with disabilities, students who are English language learners, students who lag behind academically, and gifted students, including compliance with applicable laws and regulations.
13. A description of cocurricular or extracurricular programs and how such programs will be funded and delivered.
14. Plans and timelines for student recruitment and enrollment, including lottery procedures.
15. The public charter school's student discipline policies, including discipline policies for special education students.
16. An organization chart that clearly presents the public charter school's organizational structure, including lines of authority and reporting between the management committee; staff; any related bodies, such as advisory bodies or parent and teacher councils; and any external organizations that will play a role in managing the public charter school.

17. A clear description of the roles and responsibilities for the management committee, the public charter school's leadership and management team, and any other entities shown in the organization chart.
18. A staffing chart for the public charter school's first year and a staffing plan for the term of the charter contract.
19. Plans for recruiting and developing the public charter school's leadership and staff.
20. The public charter school's leadership and teacher employment policies.
21. Proposed governing bylaws.
22. Explanations of any partnerships or contractual relationships central to the public charter school's operations or mission.
23. The public charter school's plans for providing transportation, food service, and all other significant operational and ancillary services.
24. A statement of opportunities and expectations for parent involvement.
25. A detailed public charter school start-up plan that identifies tasks, timelines, and responsible individuals.
26. A description of the public charter school's financial plan and policies, including financial controls and audit requirements.
27. A description of the insurance coverage that the public charter school will obtain.
28. Start-up and five-year budgets with clearly stated assumptions.
29. Start-up and first-year cash-flow projections with clearly stated assumptions.
30. Evidence of anticipated fundraising contributions, if claimed in the application.
31. A sound facilities plan, including backup or contingency plans, if appropriate.
32. Assurances that the public charter school (i) is nonreligious in its programs, admission policies, employment practices, and all other operations and (ii) does not charge tuition.
33. Disclosure of any ownership or financial interest in the public charter school, by the charter applicant and the governing body, administrators, and other personnel of the proposed public charter school, and a requirement that the successful applicant and the governing body,



administrators, and other personnel of the public charter school shall have a continuing duty to disclose such interests during the term of any charter.

C. The charter applicant shall include in the proposed agreement the results of any Board review of the public charter school application that may have been conducted as provided in subsection C of § 22.1-212.9.

1998, cc. 748, 890; 2000, cc. 631, 712, 1028; 2002, cc. 851, 874; 2004, c. 530; 2005, c. 928; 2009, c. 441; 2014, cc. 645, 693; 2016, c. 770.

**§ 22.1-212.8:1. Innovation Technical Advisory Group.**

The Department of Education may establish an Innovation Technical Advisory Group, comprised of individuals with experience in the establishment and operation of charter schools, college partnership laboratory schools, and virtual school programs, or it may retain the services of individuals with such experience to provide technical assistance and advice to the Board in carrying out its duties relating to charter schools, college partnership laboratory schools, and virtual school programs.

2012, c. 381.

**§ 22.1-212.9. Review of public charter school applications.**

A. Public charter school applications shall be received and reviewed by the Board of Education and local school boards or, in the case of a regional public charter school, by all of the relevant school boards, as provided in subsection C. However, no charter school application that is initiated by one or more local school boards shall be subject to the provisions of subsection C.

The Board of Education and each local school board shall establish procedures for receiving, reviewing, and, in the case of local school boards, ruling upon applications. The Board of Education and local school boards shall post their procedures on their websites and make a copy of the procedures available to all interested parties upon request. If any such board finds the public charter school application is incomplete, the board shall request the necessary information from the charter applicant.

B. To provide appropriate opportunity for input from parents, teachers, citizens, and other interested parties and to obtain information to assist local school boards in their decisions to grant or deny a public charter school application, local school boards shall establish a procedure for public notice and to receive comment on public charter school applications. A local school board shall give at least 14 days' notice of its intent to receive public comment on an application.

C. Prior to submission of an application to a local school board for review, the public charter school applicant shall submit its proposed charter application to the Board of Education for its review, comment, and a determination as to whether the application meets the approval criteria developed by the Board. The Board's review shall examine such applications for feasibility, curriculum, financial soundness, and other objective criteria as the Board may establish, consistent with existing state law. The Board's review and comment shall be for the purpose of ensuring that the application conforms with such criteria, and the Board shall make a determination as to whether the application meets the approval criteria developed by the Board. Nothing in this section shall prevent a local school division from working with a charter school applicant before the application is submitted to the Board of Education for review and recommendation.

1998, cc. 748, 890; 2000, cc. 631, 1028; 2001, cc. 438, 469; 2002, c. 851; 2004, c. 530; 2010, cc. 393, 650; 2013, cc. 52, 225.

**§ 22.1-212.10. Reconsideration and technical assistance; decision of local board final.**

A. If a local school board denies a public charter school application, or revokes or fails to renew a charter agreement, it shall provide to the applicant or grantee its reasons, in writing, for such decision, and it shall post such reasons on its website. A public charter school applicant whose application was denied, or a grantee whose charter was revoked or not renewed, shall be entitled to petition the local school board for reconsideration. The petition for reconsideration shall be filed no later than 60 days from the date the public charter school application is denied, revoked, or not renewed. Such reconsideration shall be decided within 60 days of the filing of the petition.

B. Each local school board shall establish a process for reviewing petitions of reconsideration, which shall include an opportunity for public comment. The petition of reconsideration may include an amended application based on the reasons given by the local school board for such decision.

C. Prior to seeking reconsideration, an applicant or grantee may seek technical assistance from the Superintendent of Public Instruction to address the reasons for denial, revocation, or non-renewal.

D. Upon reconsideration, the decision of a local school board to grant or deny a public charter school application or to revoke or fail to renew a charter agreement shall be final and not subject to appeal. Following a local school board decision to deny a public charter school application or to revoke or fail to renew a charter agreement, the local school board shall submit documentation to the Board of Education as to the rationale for the local school board's denial or revocation of the charter school application.

The Board of Education shall have no authority to grant or deny a public charter school application or to revoke or fail to renew a charter agreement.

E. Nothing in this section shall prohibit an applicant whose application has been denied or a grantee whose charter has been revoked or not renewed from submitting a new application, pursuant to § 22.1-212.9.

1998, cc. 748, 890; 2000, cc. 631, 1028; 2010, cc. 393, 650; 2012, cc. 702, 720.

**§ 22.1-212.11. Public charter school restrictions.**

A. Local school boards may establish public charter schools within the school division. Priority shall be given to public charter school applications designed to increase the educational opportunities of at-risk students, and at least one-half of the public charter schools per division shall be designed for at-risk students; however, the one-half requirement shall not apply in cases in which an existing public school is converted into a public charter school that serves the same community as the existing public school, nor shall such public charter school conversions be counted in the determination of school division compliance with the one-half requirement.

B. Local school boards shall report the grant or denial of public charter school applications to the Board and shall specify the maximum number of charters that may be authorized, if any; the number of charters granted or denied; and whether a public charter school is designed to increase the educational opportunities of at-risk students.

C. Nothing in this article shall be construed to prevent a school that is the only school in the division from applying to become a public charter school.

1998, cc. 748, 890; 2000, cc. 631, 1028; 2002, cc. 851, 874; 2004, c. 530; 2009, c. 441; 2014, cc. 645, 693.

**§ 22.1-212.12. Public charter school term; renewals and revocations.**

A. A charter may be approved or renewed for a period not to exceed five school years. A public charter school renewal application submitted to the local school board or, in the case of a regional public charter school, to the relevant school boards shall contain:

1. A report on the progress of the public charter school in achieving the goals, objectives, program and performance standards for students, and such other conditions and terms as the school board or boards may require upon granting initial approval of the charter application.

2. A financial statement, on forms prescribed by the Board, that discloses the costs of administration, instruction, and other spending categories for the public charter school and that

has been concisely and clearly written to enable the school board or boards and the public to compare such costs to those of other schools or comparable organizations.

B. Local school boards may revoke a charter if the public charter school:

1. Violates the conditions, standards, or procedures established in the public charter school application;
2. Fails to meet or make reasonable progress toward achievement of the content standards or student performance standards identified in the charter application;
3. Fails to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management; or
4. Violates any provision of law from which the public charter school was not specifically exempted.

C. Nothing in this section shall be construed to restrict the authority of local school boards to decline to renew a charter agreement.

1998, cc. [748](#), [890](#); 2000, cc. [631](#), [1028](#); 2002, c. [851](#); 2004, c. [530](#); 2012, cc. [702](#), [720](#).

**§ 22.1-212.13. Employment of professional, licensed personnel.**

A. At the discretion of the local school board, charter school personnel may be employees of the local school board, or boards, granting the charter. Any personnel not employed by the local school board shall remain subject to the provisions of §§ [22.1-296.1](#), [22.1-296.2](#), and [22.1-296.4](#).

B. Professional, licensed education personnel may volunteer for assignment to a public charter school. Assignment in a public charter school shall be for one contract year. Upon request of the employee and the recommendation of the management committee of the public charter school, reassignment to the public charter school shall occur on an annual basis.

C. At the completion of each contract year, professional, licensed education personnel who request assignment to a public noncharter school in the relevant school division or who are not recommended for reassignment in the public charter school, other than for the grounds cited in § [22.1-307](#), shall be guaranteed an involuntary transfer to a public noncharter school in the school division according to the employment policies of the school division.

D. Professional, licensed personnel of a public charter school shall be granted the same employment benefits given to professional, licensed personnel in public noncharter schools in accordance with the policies of the relevant school board or boards.

E. School boards may employ such health, mental health, social services, and other related personnel to serve in residential charter schools for at-risk pupils as set forth in the charter agreement between such school board and the charter school; however, nothing herein shall require a school board to fund the residential or other services provided by a residential charter school.

1998, cc. 748, 890; 2000, cc. 631, 712, 1028; 2012, cc. 702, 720; 2016, c. 770.

**§ 22.1-212.14. Funding of public charter schools; services provided.**

A. For the purposes of this article, students enrolled in a public charter school shall be included in the average daily membership of the relevant school division and shall be reported in fall membership for purposes of calculating the state and local shares required to fund the Standards of Quality.

B. Insofar as constitutionally valid, a local school board or, in the case of a regional public charter school, the relevant school boards may establish by contract an agreement stating the conditions for funding the public charter school, including funding for the educational program to be provided by a residential charter school for at-risk students. In accordance with subsection D, the per pupil funding provided to the charter school by the local school board or, in the case of a regional public charter school, the relevant school boards, shall be negotiated in the charter agreement and shall be commensurate with the average school-based costs of educating the students in the existing schools in the division or divisions unless the cost of operating the charter school is less than that average school-based cost.

C. Services provided the public charter school by the local school board or the relevant school boards, in the case of regional public charter schools, may include food services; custodial and maintenance services; curriculum, media, and library services; warehousing and merchandising; and such other services not prohibited by the provisions of this article or state and federal laws.

D. Funding and service agreements between local school boards and public charter schools shall not provide a financial incentive or constitute a financial disincentive to the establishment of a public charter school, including any regional public charter school.

E. Any educational and related fees collected from students enrolled at a public charter school shall be credited to the account of such public charter school established by the relevant local school board.

F. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the proportionate share of state and federal resources allocated for students with disabilities and school personnel assigned to special education programs shall be directed to public charter schools enrolling such students. The

proportionate share of moneys allocated under other federal or state categorical aid programs shall be directed to public charter schools serving students eligible for such aid.

G. The management committee of a public charter school is authorized to accept gifts, donations, or grants of any kind made to the public charter school and to spend such funds in accordance with the conditions prescribed by the donor. However, no gift, donation, or grant shall be accepted by the management committee of a public charter school if the conditions for such funds are contrary to law or the terms of the agreement between the local school board and the public charter school or, in the case of a regional public charter school, the relevant school boards and the regional public charter school.

H. The Department of Education shall provide technical assistance to local school boards relating to receipt, review, and ruling upon applications for public charter schools.

1998, cc. [748](#), [890](#); 2000, cc. [631](#), [712](#), [1028](#); 2002, c. [851](#); 2012, cc. [702](#), [720](#).

**§ 22.1-212.15. Report of public charter schools.**

The Board shall report the number of public charter schools established in the Commonwealth, as well as the number of charters denied, in its annual report to the Governor and the General Assembly pursuant to § [22.1-18](#).

1998, cc. [748](#), [890](#); 2000, cc. [631](#), [1028](#); 2002, cc. [851](#), [874](#); 2010, c. [61](#).

**§ 22.1-212.16. Immunity.**

Public charter schools shall be immune from liability to the same extent as all other public schools in the Commonwealth, and the employees and volunteers in a public charter school are immune from liability to the same extent as the employees and volunteers in a public school.

2002, c. [874](#).

# Proposed Virginia Public Charter School Application Process

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## **Virginia Public Charter School Application Process**

### **Virginia Board of Education Responsibilities**

#### **SECTION I: BACKGROUND**

Applications must adhere to the format prescribed by the Board and address the application elements stated in [Section 22.1-212.8](#). The Board is required to render a decision on whether the application satisfies its approval criteria. A decision by the Board that an application satisfies its approval criteria does not guarantee that the local school board will approve a request for a charter.

Requirements of the law for applications subject to review by the Board of Education are mirrored in the Board's Virginia Public Charter School Application.

For additional information on public charter schools in Virginia, please visit the Virginia Department of Education's (VDOE) [Charter Schools](#) web page.

**Virginia Department of Education**

**Phone:(804) 750-8723**

**E-mail: [charters@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:charters@doe.virginia.gov)**



## **SECTION II: GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS**

Applications for public charter schools should be submitted to the Board within a timeframe that is adequate to ensure that the public charter school application will also be submitted to the local school board in accordance with the application policies of said local school board.

Prospective charter school applicants are encouraged to contact a local school division for assistance in advance of submitting an application to the Board or the school division, and school division leadership may communicate with any applicant or potential applicant. Working with the local school division prior to submission of the application can help to ensure a smooth transition for any charter school that may be approved by the local school board and then established within the local school division.

### *Part A: Submit Application to Virginia Department of Education*

A PDF and Word version of the completed public charter school application should be sent to the following address: [charters@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:charters@doe.virginia.gov). All e-mails are monitored by the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) on a regular basis. VDOE staff will forward receipt of a new charter school application within 24 hours to the Charter School Standing Committee Chairman. A Charter School Standing Committee (CSSC) review meeting must be scheduled no later than 60 days after receipt of a new charter application.

## **Part B: Substantive Review of Application**

### Initial Receipt of Application

VDOE staff, on behalf of the Board and CSSC, will send an acknowledgement of receipt to the applicant. VDOE will determine, on behalf of the Board, within 5 business days of receipt of a charter school application submission whether all the required application elements have been completed in the required format, making the application administratively complete.

An application is administratively complete when it addresses all 33 required elements of the application as outlined in Section [Section 22.1-212.8](#). This is not a determination of content or substance.

- If the application is deemed administratively incomplete, VDOE will promptly notify the applicant by phone and e-mail and request that the outstanding information be submitted within 30 business days of such notification to the applicant that additional information is needed.
- If an applicant fails to respond to the initial request for additional information within the 30 business days, VDOE will contact the applicant by phone and e-mail with a second request for the outstanding information. In this communication, VDOE will indicate that the application will not be considered for Substantive Review by the Board's CSSC until all required information is received.
- The applicant may submit the additional information within 10 business days from the receipt of the second request or withdraw the application and resubmit it at a later date.

After the application is deemed to be administratively complete, it is sent to the Board's CSSC members.

### Virginia Board of Education's Charter School Standing Committee

The Board President has appointed members with charter school experience and/or expertise to the CSSC to serve as a technical review panel to examine charter school applications to ensure they satisfy the Board's charter school criteria. Each member of the CSSC will review each application with the evaluation review form and provide comments.

A Substantive Review meeting will be scheduled with the Board's CSSC no later than 60 days after receipt of the public charter school application in consultation with the applicant and CSSC members' availability. All meetings of the Board's CSSC are publicly noticed at on the [Charter School Standing Committee Website](#) and as required by the Virginia Freedom of Information Act.

Although every effort is taken to ensure that the Substantive Review CSSC meeting will be held no later than 60 business days after the completed application is received, exceptions to scheduling may occur. The CSSC meeting cannot exceed 90 days from receipt of an administratively complete application.

At the Substantive Review CSSC meeting, the applicant and members of the charter school's management team or a representative of the organization submitting the application for a public charter school must attend and should be prepared to present on the public charter application's

feasibility, curriculum, financial soundness, and other Board criteria. CSSC members may ask questions with the purpose of evaluating the applicant's capacity to implement a plan to operate a high-quality public charter school in Virginia.

- An applicant's failure or refusal to attend the CSSC meeting and/or present will result in the CSSC not making a determination whether the application satisfies the Board's approval criteria.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the CSSC will discuss the extent to which the application satisfies the Board's charter school criteria and take a consensus vote on each of the abovementioned Board criterion and on the application as a whole.

- If the Committee agrees by overall consensus that the Board criteria are satisfied, the application will be recommended and presented to the Board.
- If the Committee decides that not all criteria are satisfied, the applicant will be provided time to address those criteria and given a future opportunity to meet with the committee at a second meeting.

All charter school applicants will receive written comments by CSSC members on strengths and suggestions for improving their overall charter proposal no more than 5 business days after the CSSC meeting. (*See Below Section "Second Meeting with Charter School Committee"*).

Within ten business days following the meeting, VDOE staff and CSSC Chairman, on behalf of the Committee, will prepare a report for the Board summarizing the Committee's determination whether the application satisfies the approval criteria.

*Request for Reconsideration:*

An applicant who believes its charter school application proposal was erroneously designated as administratively incomplete by the Department or a final recommendation by the CSSC that a proposal does not satisfy Board criteria may submit a written request for reconsideration to the Board within 10 days of the date of notice.

*Action by the Virginia Board of Education*

For applications proceeding to the Board for review, the CSSC Report will be presented for first and final review. The Report will be presented at the Board's next scheduled business meeting. In addition to the CSSC recommendation, Board members will be provided with the final comprehensive evaluation rubric completed by the CSSC, the charter school application, and an executive summary prepared by VDOE staff with a focus on Board approved criteria as outlined in the Code of Virginia on feasibility, curriculum, financial soundness, and other identified Board priorities.

At the business meeting, the Board will take one of the following actions:

*Action 1:* The Board will render a decision that the application satisfies the Board's approval criteria; or

*Action 2:* The Board will render a decision that the application does not satisfy the Board's approval criteria. The Board will provide the applicant with an opportunity to address any deficiencies in the application within a mutually agreed upon time frame

with the applicant. If the applicant cannot address the deficiencies within the agreed upon date, the applicant may withdraw the application.

Following either action by the Board, the applicant will be formally notified by VDOE of the Board's decision within ten business days. Concurrent with its notification to the applicant, the applicable identified local school board will also receive a formal notification of the Board's action.

### Local School Division Evaluation

**A decision by the Board that an application satisfies its approval criteria does not guarantee that a local school board will approve a request for a public charter.** The local school board review and approval process includes a 14-day public comment window and specific processes are determined by the local school division and outlined in the *Code of Virginia*. Final authority to authorize a new public charter school resides with local school division governing board(s).

Notably, pursuant to *Code of Virginia* Section 22.1-212.9.C., public charter school applications initiated by one or more local school boards are **not** subject to review by the Board of Education. The division would submit a charter school application for each of the new or conversion schools to its local school board for approval.

#### ➤ *Second Meeting with the Charter School Committee*

When the applicant has addressed the Board criteria that were not satisfied, the applicant must submit an amended application that contains an Appendix highlighting the requested changes pursuant to CSSC feedback to [charters@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:charters@doe.virginia.gov) and notify the Department at least four weeks in advance to schedule a second meeting with the CSSC.

- The application will be submitted in its entirety.
  - Criteria that were deemed satisfied at the initial meeting will remain intact with no changes required by the applicant.
  - Criteria that were not satisfied at the initial committee meeting will be addressed by the Committee with the applicant, and the Committee will make a recommendation on the revised portion(s) of the application.
- At the conclusion of the meeting, the CSSC will discuss whether the overall charter school application satisfies the Board's approval criteria, with a focus on those criterion that were not previously satisfied.
  - The CSSC will take a consensus vote on the overall public charter school application and whether to recommend presenting the application to the Board for review.

Within ten business days following the second meeting, VDOE staff and the CSSC Chairman, on behalf of the committee, will prepare a report that summarizes the committee's determination. Any plans for further review by the committee will be discussed with the applicant.

### Withdrawal of an Application

An applicant may withdraw an application at any time during the review process and resubmit it at a later date. An application that is withdrawn and subsequently resubmitted is considered as a new charter school application.

*Part D: Additional Information*

Visit the VDOE's [Charter Schools](#) web page for additional information.