

# Proposed Amended Public Charter School Application— Staff Recommendation



[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.”

Public charter school 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 decide whether the application satisfies its criteria. A decision by the Board that an application satisfies its criteria does not guarantee that the local school board will approve a request for a charter.

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. It is important to note that a local school board intending to open a new charter school or convert an existing charter school must 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.

Since the Commonwealth last utilized the Charter School Standing Committee (CSSC) and the Board of Education last reviewed the Charter School Evaluation Criteria and Application in 2016, there have been three gubernatorial administrations, multiple state superintendents, and multiple governing boards.

The proposed revisions to the public Charter School Application include several changes that reflect changes in technology, create strong alignment to the *Code of Virginia*, and reflect best practices from state authorizers’ operating high-quality charter school portfolios on what they look for in public charter school applications and how they evaluate them.

The staff recommendations for improving the 2016 public Charter School Application Process document are as follows:

1. The application maintains all the required application components outlined below. Still, it regroups them under the key review responsibilities of the Board, which are also outlined in the *Code of Virginia*: feasibility, curriculum, financial soundness, and other Board priorities. All the Roman numeral 2016 Board-approved criteria elements are also captured but with greater depth and clarity on how to meet the criteria outlined in the *Code of Virginia*.
  - a. Staff studied best practices from the leading state charter school authorizers and the questions and documentation required by those states operating high-quality public charter school portfolios.
  - b. In addition, staff heard from applicants and potential charter school applicants about wanting an application and evaluation process that would help them submit the highest-quality application and materials to their local governing board, which is responsible for approving and authorizing public charter schools in Virginia.
  - c. The additional documentation to demonstrate the completeness of the criteria mirrors the 2024 proposed public Charter School Application Evaluation Metric, ensuring applicants will receive more thoughtful comments, as required by the *Code of Virginia*.

- d. It also leads to greater transparency regarding the expectations of the CSSC member reviewers and Board of Education regarding the threshold to satisfy the Board criteria, as opposed to the current Application and Evaluation metric.
2. Page 2 updates the application instructions to align with the proposed 2024 amendments to the public Charter School Process document and moves over key components formerly in the 2016 public Charter School Process overview, including the website accessibility standards.
3. Part C was added to include the Assurances previously captured in the 2016 public Charter School Process document to be part of the application since it is a list of commitments the applicant must adhere to if approved to operate a public charter school.
4. A few modifications are made to the contact information collected to remove references to fax machines and specific individuals, increase user accessibility, and remove extraneous information. The application also now requires a second point of contact to ensure timely engagement by VDOE and the CSSC with the charter school applicant.
5. The proposed application process is accompanied by an enhanced VDOE charter school website that nicely compliments these new upgrades. The new site will outline new 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. Applicants will also be able to access support and technical expertise from staff with contact information that stays timely and up to date on the website rather than a Board document that is not regularly updated.

If approved by the Board of Education on July 25, the new approved public Charter School Application would be immediately posted to the VDOE website and utilized for future application submissions.



# Virginia Public Charter School Application

**Please provide the requested information below.**

**Charter School Name:**

**Date of Submission to Board of Education:**

**Proposed Date of Submission to local school board:**

**Name of authorized official:**

**Date:**

**Signature of authorized official:**

**Date:**

## Instructions

All applicants for a public charter school should read the [Public Charter School Application Process](#) before completing the application.

Please complete the cover page and insert the name of the public charter school into the footer before completing the application. Each section in the document must contain a response.

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 Board 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.

[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.

*Note:* 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.

## Part A: Applicant Information

**School Information: Please provide the information below:**

Charter School Name:

Local School Division:

Does the applicant presently have access to a facility suitable for a school?      Yes:    No:

If the answer to the question above is yes, insert address and information regarding ownership of the facility:

School Location (City/Town and Zip Code):

Ownership:

Proposed Date of Application Submission to Local School Board:

Proposed Open Date:

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

**Content Areas and Instructional Services Offered (Provide an X by all that apply below.)**

Early Childhood Education:

Gifted Education:

English/Language Arts:

Special Education:

Mathematics:

Computer Technology Science:

Agricultural Education:

History and Social Studies:

Business and Informational Technology:

Foreign Language:

Career Connections:

English as a Second Language:

Family and Consumer Sciences:

Health:

Marketing:

Physical Education:

Technology Education:

Driver Education:

Trade and Industrial Education:

Art:

Electives:

Others:

Music:

Drama:



## Part B: Narrative

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.

## Part C: 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 language 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. Sign and provide title and date below.

Name of Authorized Official:

Title:

Signature of Authorized Official:

Date:



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# **Proposed Virginia Public Charter School Application**

**Please provide the requested information below.**

**Proposed Charter School Name:**

**Date of Submission:**

**Proposed Date of Submission to local school board:**

**Name of authorized official:**

**Date:**

**Signature of authorized official:**

**Date:**

## Instructions

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Please complete the cover page and insert the name of the public charter school into the footer before completing the application. Each section in the document must contain a response.

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 on a regular basis and must forward receipt of a new public charter school application within 24 hours to the Charter School Standing Committee Chairman. A Charter School Standing Committee (CSSC) Substantive Review meeting must be scheduled no later than 60 days after receipt of a new charter application.

[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. This requirement includes public 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.

*Note:* 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.

## Part A: Applicant Information

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

**Please provide the information below:**

### I. FEASIBILITY

To satisfy the Board of Education criteria for “feasibility” means a public charter school applicant demonstrates clear sustainability, thorough analysis and forethought over enrollment, strong structures for hiring, management, and staff retention, and an ability to serve the maximum number of students with self-sustaining practices and systems.

**Application should include:**

#### 1. Location

- a. The location or geographic area proposed for the public charter school is identified.
- b. Describe the anticipated student population to be served and how that aligns with the school’s mission. Alignment of the targeted student body with the overall mission of the school.
- c. If a facility has not been identified in this application, state the geographic area which the applicant intends to serve accompanied by a visual.

#### 2. Student Enrollment

- a. The grades to be served each year for the full term of the charter school.
  - i. Provide enrollment projections for each year of proposed operation. These projections are not enrollment caps.
  - ii. Provide a brief explanation of how the enrollment projections were developed.
  - iii. Briefly explain the rationale for the number of students and grade levels served in year one and the basis for the growth plan in subsequent years as illustrated in the table above.
  - iv. Evidence-based rationale for students enrolling in the proposed charter school.
  - v. Minimum, planned, and maximum enrollment per grade level per year for the term of the charter contract.

- b. Plans and timelines for student recruitment and enrollment, including

lottery procedures.

- i. Provide a viable and adequate time frame for recruiting students consistent with the start-up date of the proposed school.
- ii. Provide a detailed plan to recruit, hire, and train instructional staff consistent with the start-up of the school. Outline expectations of teachers, staff and school leadership that may be different than other schools within their proposed partner school division.
- iii. Describe the school's proposed enrollment policies and procedures, including an explanation of the enrollment timeline, any preferences for enrollment and lottery process. Provide proposed enrollment application.

### 3. Executive Summary

- a. The executive summary 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, the applicant has indicated the reason.

### 4. Management and Operation

- a. Information should be provided 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:
  - i. Identify key members of the founding group (including contact information), highlighting what experience they will bring to the school.
  - ii. Provide job descriptions for all key personnel and how they will help the school in fulfilling its goals and missions.
  - iii. Provide a calendar of activities that the school will undertake from charter approval to opening day, specifying who will be responsible for each task with specific attention to milestones such as:
    - Hiring key personnel who were not a part of the founding team and instructional personnel.
    - Creating and/or finalizing curriculum including purchasing assessments, materials, completing curriculum maps, and lesson plans.
    - Creating discipline, attendance, promotion, and grading policies.

- Identifying, purchasing, and renovating a facility (if necessary)
- Engaging the community and recruiting students.

## 5. Staffing

### a. Hiring and Retention

- Outline how the charter applicant will enhance the teacher evaluation process based on the specific instructional program of the charter school, beyond the requirements of the proposed local partner school division.
- A sound plan for recruiting and retaining highly qualified and appropriately certified instructional staff includes:
  - Selection criteria
  - Salary ranges and benefits
  - Professional development
  - Teacher evaluation
- What quantitative and qualitative data will be used
  - Explanation of methods for determining appropriate staffing levels based on student need and enrollment growth plan.
  - All job descriptions must be mission-aligned and specific to the charter schools' instructional program. Provide job descriptions and the anticipated number of each position for academic staff, nonacademic staff, qualified/specialized staff (special education teachers, evaluators, etc.), and mission specific staff (internship coordinators, residential staff, etc.).

### b. Plans for recruiting and developing the public charter school's leadership and staff.

- Describe the governance structure of the proposed school, including the primary roles, powers, and duties of the governing board; committee structure (if applicable); and how the board will interact with the principal/head of school and any advisory bodies.
- State the frequency of board meetings and describe how the board will comply with open meetings and records laws.
- Describe the current and desired size and composition of the governing board. Identify key skills, areas of expertise, and constituencies that are or will be represented on the governing board.
- Describe how board members have been and will be selected including term limits and selection of officers.
- Explain how this structure and composition will ensure that the school will be an academic, operational, and financial success.
- Describe the plans for board member recruitment and development, including the orientation process for new members and ongoing professional development to increase the capacity of the board.
- Describe the board's ethical standards and procedures for identifying and addressing conflicts of interest.
- Describe, if applicable, any school advisory bodies or councils that are in place or will be formed, including the roles and duties of each and

the reporting structure of such entity relative to the school's governing board and leadership.

- ix. Briefly explain the process that the school will follow should a parent or student have an objection to a governing board policy or decision, administrative procedure, or practice at the school. The entire process or policy does not have to be developed; however, applicants should be able to articulate the primary steps.

6. Leadership and Teacher Employment

- a. Process for hiring and evaluating school leadership and teachers

7. Plan for Displacement\*

*\*if applicable- for conversion models only*

- a. 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.

8. Prior Board Review

- a. 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 the Code of Virginia § 22.1-212.9.
  - i. Includes any denial from the Virginia Charter School Standing Committee and documentation of reasoning.

## II. CURRICULUM

One of the primary *Code of Virginia* requirements for the Board of Education to review and comment on is curriculum. To satisfy the Board criteria for "curriculum" means a public charter school applicant has strong curriculum that will enhance all students' learning and offers a strong foundation for continued growth and demonstrated mastery through each year of a student's education.

### **Application should include:**

1. 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.
  - a. Indicates the target population, the educational philosophy, the general aims, and the educational needs the school will fill.
  - b. A clear and compelling mission and vision statement that defines the guiding principles and values of the school.

2. The public charter school's proposed calendar and a sample daily schedule.
  - a. Provide the length of the school day (approximate start and dismissal times) and how many minutes per day will be designated for each core academic subject that clearly demonstrate compliance with hours/minutes of instruction for each grade level served, for the proposed school calendar.
  - b. Provide a draft of the proposed school's calendar, specifying: The number of days the school will be in session; the daily hours of operation; the average instructional minutes per day overall and for core content and whether the charter school will be utilizing flexibilities granted for seat time flexibility; before- and after-care options, if any; extra- or cocurricular activities; non- instructional days, such as those devoted to assessment, independent or work study, professional development, and parent- teacher conferences.
3. A description of the academic program that is aligned with the Standards of Learning.
  - a. Describe the curriculum being considered for the core academic content areas. The response must clearly demonstrate a process to ensure alignment to the Educational Philosophy and Virginia Standards.
4. 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.
5. Describe the teaching and learning strategies that will be employed.
6. An educational program design that:
  - a. Is clear and coherent.
  - b. Is based on effective, experience or research-based educational practices and teaching methods, and high standards for student learning.
  - c. Aligns with the school's mission and responds to the needs of the school's target population, and
  - d. Is likely lead to improved student performance for the school's target population.
7. A proposed daily school schedule and annual calendar that complies with statutory requirements for annual number of instructional minutes/days and aligns with priorities and practices described in the educational program design.
8. What resources/instructional materials will be used? For what reason were they selected and how do they align with the mission statement and educational philosophy?
9. Describe what assessments will be used and how student understanding and mastery will be ensured and measured.

### **III. FINANCIAL SOUNDNESS**

One of the primary *Code of Virginia* requirements for the Board of Education to review and comment on is financial soundness. To satisfy the Board criteria for “financial soundness” means a public charter school applicant demonstrates fiscal prudence through accurate and researched financial planning, purposeful spending uses, and diversified funding sources.

**Application should include:**

1. Financial Plan and Policies

- a. Budgetary projections should be consistent with and support all key aspects of the application, including the school’s mission, educational program, staffing plan, and facility.
- b. Include an assessment of projected sources of revenue and expenses that ensure the financial viability of the school.
- c. Describe a plan to adjust the budget should revenues not materialize as planned.
- d. Describe any plan for philanthropic support of school’s mission as well as any current or future capital improvements. If the budget is contingent upon sources of funding beyond those typically provided by local, state, and federal governments (such as funding from foundations, donors, grants), provide evidence of such funding (e.g. MOU, letters of support).

2. Insurance Coverage

- a. Describe who will manage the school’s finances and how the school will ensure strong internal controls over financial management and compliance with all financial reporting requirements.
- b. Explain the mechanisms the governing board will use to monitor the school’s financial health and compliance.
- c. Describe the school’s plans and procedures for conducting an annual audit of the financial operations of the school.
- d. Describe the method by which accounting records will be maintained.
- e. Describe how the school will ensure financial transparency to the authorizer and the public, including its plans for public adoption of its budget and public dissemination of its annual audit and financial report.
- f. Describe any key back-office services to be outsourced via contract, such as business services, payroll, and auditing services. Include the anticipated costs of such services and criteria for selecting such services.
- g. Describe how the school will store financial records.
- h. Describe the insurance coverage the school will obtain, including applicable health, workers compensation, general liability, property insurance, and directors’ and officers’ liability coverage.

3. Start Up Finances and Budget

If the site is acquired:

- a. Describe the proposed facility, including location, size, and layout of space.

- b. Describe the actions that will be taken to ensure the facility follows applicable laws, regulations, and policies and is ready for the school’s opening.
- c. Describe how the facility aligns with the proposed educational program and other requirements such as mandated class sizes.
- d. Document the anticipated costs for the facility, including renovation, rent, utilities, and maintenance. Identify, if applicable, any funding sources (other than state and local funding) that will be applied to facilities-related costs and include evidence of such (e.g. letter, MOU). If renting an existing facility, provide draft lease agreement.
- e. Describe the back-up facilities plan. What is the alternate plan for facilities if the proposed facility is not available or is determined to be inappropriate for the school’s opening?

If the site is not yet acquired:

- a. Explain the school’s facility needs, including desired location, size, and layout of space.
- b. Provide an estimate of the costs of the anticipated facility needs and describe how such estimates have been derived. Identify, if applicable, any funding sources (other than state and local funding) that will be applied to facilities-related costs and include evidence of such (e.g. letter, MOU)
- c. Explain the strategy and schedule that will be employed to secure an adequate facility.
- d. Describe the back-up facilities plan.

**IV. OTHER OBJECTIVE CRITERIA (AS DETERMINED BY THE BOARD)**

One of the primary *Code of Virginia* requirements for the Board of Education to review and comment on is “other objective criteria as determined by the Board”. To satisfy the Board criteria for “other objective criteria” means a public charter school applicant demonstrates a clear ability to serve all students with high-quality services and programs, has strong governance practices and policies, and creates an environment where every student is set up for success.

**Application should include:**

- 1. Governance
  - a. Provide background information on the proposed founding management committee members and, if identified, the proposed public charter school leadership and management team.
  - b. Include a clear description of the roles and responsibilities of the management committee, the public charter school’s leadership and management team, and any other entities shown in the organization chart.
  - c. Include an organization chart that clearly presents the public charter school’s organizational structure; 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.

- i. Provide an organizational chart and clearly delineate the roles and responsibilities of each position on the chart as it pertains to administering the day-to-day activities of the school.
  - ii. Present a comprehensive viable and adequate operational plan that includes oversight responsibilities related to instruction and operational services. Plan must identify the number of administrative personnel (each year for the first three years) and their oversight responsibilities related to the following areas:
    - i. Instruction, ii. Curriculum and Assessment (mandated State testing), iii. Staff Development, iv. Financial Management, v. Contracted Services, vi. Personnel, vii. Grants Management, and viii. Student Information System (SIS).
  - iii. Identify critical skills or experience that will indicate the minimum qualification for fulfillment of those responsibilities.
- d. Include policies and procedures:
- i. Proposed governing bylaws;
  - ii. The public charter school student’s discipline policies, including discipline policies for special education students
  - iii. A planned school culture that is consistent with the school’s mission and congruent with the student discipline policy;
  - iv. An approach to classroom management and student discipline that is consistent with the overall school culture and philosophy;
  - v. Recognition of legal obligations and children’s rights related to enforcing student discipline, suspension, and recommended expulsion, including the school’s code of conduct, if available;
  - vi. Consideration of how the code of conduct will apply to students with special needs; and
  - vii. Appropriate and clear roles of school administrators, teachers, staff, and the governing board regarding discipline policy implementation.
- e. Provide assurances that the public charter school (i) is nonreligious in its programs, admissions policies, employment practices, and all other operations and (ii) does not charge tuition.
- f. Disclose 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 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.

## 2. Family and Community Engagement

- a. Include a statement of opportunities and expectations for parent involvement.

- b. Describe the proposed school’s philosophy around family engagement, and how it plans to promote this philosophy. How do family engagement efforts support the school’s broader goals and vision? What are your goals for family engagement? Are there plans to implement a parent/teacher association or organization?
- c. Provide evidence of need and community support for the proposed public charter school.
  - i. Identify the target population. The response should demonstrate a clear understanding of the students and community the school intends to serve, including current levels of academic performance of the surrounding schools.
  - ii. Present an explanation of how the implementation of the program of instruction meets the identified needs of the target population including improving pupil achievement and providing educational choice.

### 3. Student Services

#### A. Learning Resources

- i. Describe 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.

#### ii. English Language Learners

- Who was not born in the United States or whose native language is a language other than English;
- Who is a Native American or Alaska Native, or a native resident of outlying areas; and (b) who comes from an environment where a language other than English has had a significant impact on the individual’s level of English language proficiency; or
- Who is migratory, whose native language is a language other than English, and who comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant; and whose difficulties speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language may be sufficient to deny the individual – the ability to meet the challenging state academic standards; the ability to achieve successfully in classrooms where the language of instruction is English; or the opportunity to participate fully in society.

#### iii. Disability

- A clear description of the programs, strategies and supports the school will provide to students with disabilities that will ensure appropriate access for students with disabilities and that the school will not discriminate based on disability.
- A clear description of how the school will ensure students with disabilities will have an equal opportunity of being selected for enrollment.

- A comprehensive and compelling plan for appropriate identification of students with special needs to ensure they are served in the least restrictive environment possible, have appropriate access to the general education curriculum and schoolwide educational, extra-curricular, and culture- building activities in the same manner as non-disabled students, receive required and appropriate support services as outlined in their Individual Education Plans and participate in standardized testing.

iv. Include a description of cocurricular or extracurricular programs and how such programs will be funded and delivered.

v. Explain any partnerships or contractual relationships central to the public charter school's operations or mission.

vi. Describe any partnerships the school will have with community organizations, businesses, or other educational institutions to provide key academic or nonacademic services, support systems, or opportunities. For each of these partnerships, describe:

- The nature, purposes, terms, and scope of services; how the partnership will further the school's mission and goals; the organization's purpose, mission, and history, if relevant; and who at the school will be responsible for managing the partnership.

#### B. *Transportation*

i. Describe the public charter school's plans for providing transportation, food service, and all other significant operational and ancillary services, including:

- Outlines a transportation plan that serves all eligible students and will not be a barrier to access for students residing within a reasonable distance of the school.
- Describes how the transportation policy of the school is reflective of transportation expectations.
- Outlines how the charter school will show transportation options in a transparent way on recruitment and application materials to ensure families know what's available or not to their household.

#### C. *Food and health services*

i. Describe the public charter school's plans for providing transportation, food service, and all other significant operational and ancillary services, including:

- Outlines a food service plan that will serve all students and makes provisions for those students who may qualify for free or reduced-price lunch.
- Outlines whether the food service plan that places an emphasis on quality, healthy foods.
- Outlines how the charter school will show food service options in a transparent way on recruitment and application materials to ensure families know what's available or not to their household.

- Provides a food service plan that meets the guidelines of USDA and the requirements of the school division as it relates to food service and in compliance with state and federal law.

### **Contact Information**

Name of Individual/Organization Submitting Application:

Name of Contact Person for Application:

Title/Affiliation with Individual/Organization Submitting Application:

Mobile Telephone:

Email Address:

### **Secondary Contact Information**

Name of Individual/Organization:

Name of Secondary Contact Person for Application:

Title/Affiliation with Individual/Organization Submitting Application:

Mobile Telephone:

Email Address:

### **Prior Experience**

1. Has the applicant had any prior experience operating a public charter school or similar school?  
Provide an X by one of the following:      Yes:      No:
2. If the response to the question above is “yes,” please describe any prior experience with establishing and operating charter schools and/or similar schools. Please provide information such as the name of the school, the state where it is located, years of operation, and contact information. If the school is no longer operating, provide the reason(s) for closure:

## Part C: 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, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, 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) ([as well as Section 22.1-287.1 Code of Virginia](#)) 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 language 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. Sign and provide title and date below.

Name of Authorized Official:

Title:

Signature of Authorized Official:

Date: