



## New Mexico Public Education Commission

### 2018 New Charter School Application Kit Part A. Introduction and Instructions



## Part A. Introduction and Instructions

### Introduction

#### The Charter Schools Act

The *New Mexico Charter School Application Kit* was developed to provide guidance in the writing and review of new charter school submissions. The target audience for this document is both the founding group (the applicants), as they develop a charter school application, and the potential Authorizer—the Public Education Commission (PEC), Authorizer’s designee(s), or Authorizer’s legal counsel (collectively referred to as “Authorizer”), as they review and evaluate the quality and completeness of the application.

The New Mexico Charter Schools Act provides the following policy statement:

The Charter Schools Act ... is enacted to enable individual schools to structure their educational curriculum to encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods that are based on reliable research and effective practices or have been replicated successfully in schools with diverse characteristics; to allow the development of different and innovative forms of measuring student learning and achievement; to address the needs of all students, including those determined to be at risk; to create new professional opportunities for teachers, including the opportunity to be responsible for the learning program at the school site; to improve student achievement; to provide parents and students with an educational alternative to create new, innovative and more flexible ways of educating children within the public school system; to encourage parental and community involvement in the public school system; to develop and use site-based budgeting; and to hold charter schools accountable for meeting the department's educational standards and fiscal requirements. (22-8B-3 NMSA 1978 *et seq*).

Starting a new charter school in New Mexico requires proposals from committed individuals who have the capacity to achieve strong, educational outcomes. Through charter schools, the PEC, as Authorizer, and the Charter Schools Division (CSD) in the New Mexico Public Education Department (PED) seek to provide families with effective, quality educational options. The CSD serves as staff to the PEC and will review your application. The PEC makes the final determination regarding the application after reading the application, hearing from the applicants and the local community, and considering the information provided by the CSD.

The CSD Vision is as follows:

*Driving student success in New Mexico by supporting excellent authorizing practices and charter schools that provide quality, innovative education*

## An Overview of the Review Process

Each year, the PEC approves and makes available—in writing at its office and online at its web site—an application for a new charter for a specified fiscal year. On February 9, 2018, the PEC approved the application for a new charter for the 2017 application cycle, which includes templates and attachments designated by the PEC. Templates and attachments must not be altered from the approved content, format, and sequence. An application package submitted for a new charter may be deemed incomplete if it contains modifications to the content, format, or sequence of the application, templates, or attachments or if it contains templates or attachments that were approved for use in a prior fiscal year.

**Technical Review**—CSD staff will confirm whether the applicant team has met all requirements and whether the application package contains all components required by statute, rule, and application instructions. An application package will pass the technical review if

1. the applicant team timely submitted a Notice of Intent to the PEC and the district;
2. the application package contains complete information for each application component, including:
  - a. Executive Summary (Information must be consistent with the contents of the application package),
  - b. School Size (Information must be consistent with the contents of the application package),
  - c. All narrative sections, required exhibits, and attachments;
3. the application package contains all required appendices; and
4. the application package contains all required documents submitted on the application attachment and/or templates approved for the 2018 application cycle, including the 910B5 SEG Worksheet and a five-year Budget Plan.

Failure to meet the criteria above will result in the application package being deemed Incomplete. The application will be evaluated based on the information that is included in the application package when it is submitted.

Templates and attachments must not be altered from the approved content, format, and sequence. An application package submitted for a new charter will be deemed incomplete if it contains modifications to the content, format, or sequence of the application, templates or attachments or if it contains templates or attachments that were approved for use in a prior fiscal year.

Applicants will receive written notification of the deficiencies not more than 10 business days after the submission of the application package. If the application is deemed incomplete, the Applicant's file will be closed. The applicants may, within five business days of receiving the notice of an incomplete application, request a review by the PEC at its next regularly scheduled meeting. No new information and no additional submissions will be accepted or reviewed by the PEC or CSD. If such a request is received and the PEC finds that the application was complete, the application processing timelines will be adjusted.

**Scoring**—Applications will be evaluated and scored using the Evaluation Rubric, which is embedded in the application. The review team for your application consists of outside experts who are overseen by the CSD. Each team member will review your application independently and thoroughly. Once

complete, the team will come together to discuss your application and provide a consensus score and analysis. This preliminary analysis will be provided to the applicant team and the PEC.

The PEC and the CSD have determined that answers that score in the “Meets the Criteria” category are satisfactory and those that fall into the “Approaches the Criteria” and “Falls Far Below the Criteria” are unsatisfactory. The CSD has the ability to review scores for uniformity between applications assessed at the same time and review teams reviewing applications at the same time.

**Capacity Interview**—CSD staff and the review team will interview the applicant team. The interview questions are designed to determine the applicant team’s capacity to implement the charter school proposed in the application package and provide an opportunity for the applicant team to provide clarifying information regarding weaknesses identified in the preliminary review. Your responses are scored and analyzed and may inform the analysis of the written application. The Application score and analysis, along with a score and analysis of the Capacity Interview, will form the basis for the CSD’s recommendation to the PEC. (See Part D below.)

**Community Input Hearing**—The PEC holds a public hearing at which the applicant team has an opportunity to answer the PEC’s questions. During the hearing, the PEC also has a chance to hear from the community and to learn about the positives and negatives for potentially opening a school like the one proposed.

Please note that the PEC will ask the applicants to respond to questions on the application during the Community Input Hearing. The applicants may have the personnel with the technical expertise with them at the table (and *should* have these people with them, if these people were primarily responsible for drafting a section). However, the applicants themselves should demonstrate knowledge and understanding in all areas of the application.

**CSD Recommendation**—The CSD utilizes information from the external team consensus score and preliminary analysis, capacity interview, and community input hearing to prepare a recommendation. The recommendation is presented to the applicants and PEC at least two weeks prior to the PEC meeting. The CSD may refer to parts of the Community Input Hearing in the recommendation if relevant to the analysis presented in the recommendation and/or in the preliminary analysis.

**PEC Consideration**—The **PEC will make the final decision** to deny, approve, or approve with conditions charter school applications. The PEC reads and evaluates all applications. The PEC makes its decision based on, but not limited to

- 1) the application;
- 2) the review team preliminary scoring rubric and analysis;
- 3) the community input hearing;
- 4) the capacity interview;
- 5) the review team final scoring rubric and analysis;
- 6) the CSD’s recommendation;
- 7) all clarifying information and statements provided by announced deadlines; and
- 6) the applicants’ statements at the PEC meeting.

If you have further questions regarding this process, please do not hesitate to call the Charter Schools Division at (505) 827-6909.

## The 2018 New Charter School Application Kit

The kit is made up of the following four parts:

1. Part A—Introduction and Instructions
2. Part B—Executive Summary
3. Part C—Application and Rubric
4. Part D—Capacity Interview Questions and Rubric

The kit differs from prior years' applications in format and expectations and reflects our work to conform this application to the law. Please be sure that you use the most current form. The kit is intended to guide you through the steps of developing a charter school proposal. While the new kit comes in four parts, you will only be submitting **Part B, Executive Summary and Part C, Application and Rubric**. All parts of the kit comply with the amended Charter School Act, which requires charter schools' performance to be measured according to a framework of specific criteria. You will note that the application itself is organized by frameworks.

The **Part A, Introduction and Instructions** provides you with information regarding expectations, application timelines, contact information, an application glossary of terms, and logistical information. Although you are not scored based on this section, the overall ability to create a clear, cohesive, comprehensive, reasonable, and innovative charter school application depends in large part on following the instructions in this guide.

The **Part B, Executive Summary** requires you to provide a summary or overview of the work of your proposed school. This offers the reviewers a general understanding of what will be explained and described in detail within the application itself. In addition, this summary will be posted on the CSD website so that the public knows who is applying for a state-funded public charter school. This section is not evaluated for points. However, your summary should adequately reflect what is found in the rest of the application. For instance, if your school has a STEM focus, then this should be mentioned in the Executive Summary. **This section should be submitted to the CSD along with the Part C, Application between May 1<sup>st</sup> and June 1<sup>st</sup> of the current year (11:59 PM MST).**

The **Part C, Application and Rubric** contains a series of requests for information that should be responded to as completely as you deem appropriate. Please use the rubrics to guide your responses and note that some questions are weighted more heavily than others. For example, the question on mission is an important one and is weighted more heavily than the question regarding transportation. In addition, it is important not to compartmentalize your responses but rather to use the prompts to assist you in presenting a clear, comprehensive, cohesive, reasonable, and innovative educational, organizational, and financial framework for a public charter school. The evaluators will be looking for a consistent narrative that presents evidence of a thorough and thoughtful plan, formulated by a capable team, deserving of being entrusted with millions of dollars of public funds, which will offer a vibrant and innovative educational option for New Mexican children and their families. Your mission should be reflected throughout the Application in all proposed programs, budgets, and resource allocations. **Note: Simply following the prompts does not guarantee approval by your selected Authorizer.**

The **Part D, Capacity Interview Questions and Rubric** does not require any written information from you. Instead, you are strongly encouraged to use the questions in Part D to better assess your own capacity to implement the framework for the charter school that you have outlined in your application and to prepare answers in advance to the interview questions. All applicants receive the same

questions and individualized questions, which are created by your application reviewers in response to their review of your written application. Additional information will be provided at a later date.

## Summary

Experience has shown that successful charter schools tend to have a number of common characteristics such as:

- A clear, focused, results-oriented mission statement that aligns to all parts of the proposal
- Demonstrated understanding of the charter school's projected students, based on the local community or the school district in whose geographic boundaries the charter school applies to operate
- An educational program that is likely to be effective for the school's projected students, based on the local community or the school district in whose geographic boundaries the charter school applies to operate
- Strong goals to assist the school in meeting its mission and educational programming
- Strong, experienced, and diverse leadership and governance that aligns the mission of the school with results-oriented practice
- A Governing Body that provides strong, professional functions in financial oversight, Board functions, and supporting the leadership of the school
- Strong financial planning and management
- A school that demonstrates support and ownership of the school by the local community, not just the applicant team

Authorizers want thoughtful, well-developed applications from capable school developers who are committed to enhancing education in New Mexico. Please note that all successful applicants shall enter into a planning year, complete a planning year checklist, and negotiate a contract with their Authorizer prior to receiving approval from the Authorizer to commence operations. The templates used in the negotiations are available on CSD's website.

## Instructions and Timeframe

*(The following dates are for applicants who intend to submit an application to the PEC. All applications must be submitted between May 1 and June 1, 2018.)*

<b>Form and Point of Contact</b>	All submissions should be prepared utilizing the <i>2018 New Charter School Application Kit</i> . The Executive Summary, the Application, and all appendices must be complete when submitted. Any questions regarding the Application and the review process must be directed to <a href="mailto:charter.schools@state.nm.us">charter.schools@state.nm.us</a>
<b>Notice</b>	Be sure that the CSD has the most current e-mail address and phone number for you <i>at all times</i> . Due to the limited number of CSD staff and heavy work load, the CSD will NOT send any notices or other information by hard copy unless required to do so by law.
<b>Deadline: Charter Application</b>	Charter Applications may be submitted between May 1 <sup>st</sup> and June 1 <sup>st</sup> . However, the <b>deadline</b> for submission of all materials to the PED's CSD is <b>June 1<sup>st</sup>, by no later than the end of the day (11:59 p.m. Mountain Time)</b> .
<b>Deadline: Public School Facilities Authority (PSFA) Master Facilities Plan/ Ed. Spec. Checklist</b>	Charter applications must include evidence that the founders have completed and submitted a Facilities Master Plan/Ed. Spec. Checklist. The completed form must be submitted to the PSFA by <b>Friday, April 20, 2018</b> . Please contact PSFA for more information.  Find the Facilities Master Plan/Ed. Spec. Checklist form on the PSFA website.
<b>Manner of Submission of the completed Charter Application</b>	<b>Only electronic copies will be accepted.</b> All applicants <u>must submit an electronic version</u> of their new application on Sharepoint. Submission accounts will be created and training will provided during the new application training. If you have questions about submission via SharePoint, contact <a href="mailto:charter.schools@state.nm.us">charter.schools@state.nm.us</a> .
<b>Technical Assistance Workshops</b> (February 5, March 5, March 26, April 27, May 3, 2018)	At least five Technical Assistance Workshops will be provided by the CSD. Applicant teams that submit a timely NOI will be notified of the details, dates, times, and locations for all trainings via email. Please be diligent about checking your emails and the CSD website for information regarding the Technical Assistance Workshops ( <a href="http://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/charter-schools/training-opportunities/">http://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/charter-schools/training-opportunities/</a> ). To RSVP, please send participant's name, school affiliation, position, and email address to <a href="mailto:charter.schools@state.nm.us">charter.schools@state.nm.us</a> .
<b>Applications Provided to the PED</b> (June 5)	Copies of all received applications will be transmitted to the PEC on or before June 5.
<b>Substantive Review Period</b> (June 1 – July 2)	A review team of outside charter school experts will read and analyze the applications. Each team is overseen by CSD staff.

<b>Written Application Preliminary Analysis</b> (June 25–July 2)	The review team’s preliminary analysis of the written application is provided to the applicant and the PEC no fewer than four days prior to the applicant team’s scheduled Capacity Interview date.
<b>Capacity Interviews</b> (June 29–July 6)	The Capacity Interview will be held in Albuquerque. <b>The Capacity Interview is a critical component of the review process, and the founders’ key spokesperson must be available. In addition, if a particular person drafted a section in its entirety, that person should also be available to answer questions.</b> This interview will be designed to demonstrate the founding group’s capacity to implement the school as planned in the Application.
<b>Capacity Interview Preliminary Analysis</b> (July 9–July 13)	The review team’s preliminary analysis of the capacity interview is provided to the applicant and the PEC no fewer than seven days prior to the applicant team’s scheduled Community Input Hearing date.
<b>Public Hearing to Obtain Community Input</b> (July 16–20)**	As provided by the New Mexico Charter Schools Act, the PEC will hold Community Input Hearings to allow the local community, including the local school district, the opportunity to provide comments on the application. In addition, the PEC will use this opportunity to <b>obtain information from the applicants that may inform the commissioners, prior to taking an actual vote. Please note, the PEC expects that founders have a knowledge and understanding of all parts of their submitted application, including budget.</b>
<b>CSD Recommendation</b> (August 6)**	The CSD will send its recommendations to the PEC and the applicant by close of business on August 6, 2018. <b>The recommendation will be sent by email.</b> This recommendation will be one of three possible recommendations: a) to approve, b) approve with conditions, or c) deny the Application.
<b>PEC Decision-Making Meeting</b> (August 23–24)**	The PEC will hold a public decision-making meeting to: a) approve, b) approve with conditions, or c) deny the Application. At this meeting, the applicants will have an additional opportunity, prior to the decision, to address the PEC and to answer questions from the PEC members.

\*\*These dates are subject to change based on conflicts beyond the control of the CSD and the PEC. The number of charter applications submitted to the PEC for consideration may influence these dates as well.

## Glossary of Terms Relevant to the Application

**Alignment of Curriculum:** The curriculum of all public schools must be aligned with the New Mexico Common Core State Standards, Content Standards, Benchmarks, and Performance Standards. An alignment document—by subject and grade level—lists each of the performance standards, cross-referenced with the instructional materials, and a timeline for when they are addressed.

**Assessment:** A valid and reliable method(s), tool(s) or system(s) to evaluate and demonstrate progress toward—or mastery of—the academic and non-academic performance goals stated in the application.

**Charter School Act:** The Charter Schools Act, 22-8B-1 et. seq. NMSA 1978, allows the authorization of charter schools that are independent public schools. Charter Schools operate under charters granted for up to five years by the Public Education Commission (PEC) or local school districts, known as Authorizers. Once an Authorizer has awarded a charter, the new charter school organizes around the core mission, curriculum, theme, and/or teaching method described in its application. Charter schools are allowed autonomy, including control of their own budget, hiring their own employees, and other functions that the charter school is required to perform in order to carry out the educational program described in its charter. A charter school, on an annual basis, must demonstrate academic improvement, fiscal responsibility, and sound organizational operations that comply with the law.

In 2011, the Legislature amended sections of the Charter School Act to add and modify accountability requirements for charter schools and Authorizers. By using a Performance Contract and accompanying Performance Framework, charter schools have specific material terms they must meet. In addition, they are assessed by the indicators contained in the Performance Frameworks. The categories evaluated in the Performance Framework are Academic, Financial, and Organizational indicators. If the school is approved, the Authorizer negotiates terms of the Performance Contract with the charter school prior to the time that the school commences operations.

**Mission-Specific Indicators/Goals:** The Amended Charter School Act **requires schools to identify at least two mission-specific indicators/goals in the application** that set targets for the implementation of the school mission. Mission-specific indicators/goals **MUST BE** provided within the application. If the application is approved, these indicators/goals will be used as the initial draft indicators during the negotiations with the Authorizer.

For the purposes of this application, the indicators/goals will show the capacity of the applicant to identify appropriate indicators/goals aligned with the mission of the proposed school. During the later contracting process after approval, these indicators/goals—that are finally negotiated and put into the Performance Framework—allow the school to demonstrate its achievements related to the school mission. The Performance Framework is assessed on an annual basis and may be revised yearly.

Mission-specific indicators/goals put into the application should

- (1) demonstrate the school's ability to implement the school's mission;
- (2) be in the format set forth below that is a SMART goal format (specific, measureable, attainable, rigorous, and time-bound—see below); and finally,

(3) include metrics and measures using the following criteria: “Exceeds standards,” “Meets standards,” “Does not meet standards,” and “Falls far below standards.”

*SAMPLE.* The following is a sample of a strong mission-specific indicator. You do NOT need to copy it. It is intended to give you a sample of what a complete SMART, mission-specific indicator looks like.

**Sample Mission Specific Indicator:** Track and improve graduation rates for two distinct cohorts.

**Cohort 1:** Students who begin their 9<sup>th</sup> grade year enrolled at the school and remain for the entirety of their high school career.

**Cohort 2:** Students who enrolled for less than their full high school career but are defined as part of a graduation cohort established by their enrollment into 9<sup>th</sup> grade.

2.a Did the school meet its mission-specific indicator(s)?

**Exceeds Standard:**

The school surpasses the targets of this indicator if the following rates are met for each cohort:

**Cohort 1.** 95% or more of Cohort 1 students graduate AND

**Cohort 2.** 95% or more of Cohort 2 students graduate, OR if it is less than 95%, there is an increase of 5 percentage points from the average of the previous three years for Cohort 2 students.

**Meets Standard:**

The school surpasses the targets of this indicator if the following rates are met for each cohort:

**Cohort 1.** 90% or more of Cohort 1 students graduate AND

**Cohort 2.** 90% or more of Cohort 2 students graduate, OR if it is less than 90%, there is an increase of 5 percentage points from the average of the previous three years for Cohort 2 students.

**Does Not Meet Standard:**

The school does not surpass the targets of this indicator if the following rates are met for each cohort:

**Cohort 1.** 80% or more of Cohort 1 students graduate AND

**Cohort 2.** 80% or more of Cohort 2 students graduate, OR if it is less than 80%, there is an increase of 5 percentage points from the average of the previous three years for Cohort 2 students.

**Falls Far Below Standard:**

The school falls far below the standard if it fails to meet any of the standards set forth above.

**Instructional Hours:** Hours in which regular students are in school-directed instructional programs, exclusive of lunch and breaks

**Mission:** The mission of the school is a concise statement that describes the purpose of the school and how the school will achieve it. The mission should answer questions, such as: 1) what outcomes for students does your school seek to accomplish; 2) how will it accomplish that; and 3) what is unique about your school? The best mission statements are clear, focused, compelling, and have a focus on outputs rather than inputs. The statement should be the driving force and rationale behind all the other components of the application.

**New Mexico Common Core State Standards, Content Standards, Benchmarks, and Performance Standards:** The State of New Mexico has established the Content Standards with Benchmarks and Performance Standards to be used by all public schools, including charter schools, and state-supported educational institutions to develop, deliver, and assess curriculum. For English language arts and math, New Mexico has adopted the Common Core Standards <http://newmexicocommoncore.org/>. For all other subjects, the NM Standards may be accessed at <http://www.ped.state.nm.us/nmStandards.html>.

**NM Standards:** Refers to New Mexico Content Standards, Benchmarks, and Performance Standards

**Partnership for Assessments for Readiness of College and Career (PARCC):** New Mexico has adopted the PARCC assessments along with 19 other states. PARCC is a consortium of 19 states working together to develop a common set of K–12 assessments in English and math, anchored in what it takes to be ready for college and careers. These new K–12 assessments will build a pathway to college and career readiness by the end of high school, mark students’ progress toward this goal from 3rd grade up, and provide teachers with timely information to inform instruction and provide student support.

**Partnership:** A partner organization is essential to the existence of the charter school and, without which, the school’s mission cannot be accomplished. A “partnership” contemplates a formal relationship, rather than an informal or tangential agreement to provide ancillary support to particular school programs. A partner organization will be an entity that is committing funds or other resources to support the school’s operation and long term existence. If the school’s plan contemplates reliance on a partner, the applicant should provide evidence (draft contract, memorandum of understanding, or other document that evidences the commitment) that the proposed partner is willing to commit to that relationship on the condition the charter school is approved. A partner is **not** a major curriculum provider or other vendor who may be key but replaceable through a substitute entity.

**Plan:** A plan, for purposes of this application, is a detailed statement of how an outcome will be achieved. A plan must include clear expectations, criteria, actions steps, timelines, benchmarks, and responsible parties.

**Policy:** A policy, for purposes of this application, is a guiding statement that reflects the principles, rules, or guidelines to be adopted by the school’s governing body once the charter contract is formally executed. Policy statements contain clear expectations, criteria, timelines, and responsible parties to be implemented on behalf of the governing body.

**Procedure:** A procedure, for purposes of this application, is a statement of the specific methods to be used or course of action that will be taken to implement a policy in the day-to-day operation of the school. A procedure identifies actions steps, timelines, benchmarks, and responsible parties.

**Remediation for students not achieving standards:** Remediation, for purposes of this application, refers to a process, procedure, plan, or a variety of instructional support opportunities to assist individual students who are not achieving proficiency in the NM standards or other student performance expectations.

**Scope and Sequence:** A scope and sequence should include the following components:

- Grade levels, grade spans, age spans, or other sequence

- The knowledge, content standards/areas or organizing themes within the grades levels, grade spans, age spans, or other sequence.
- The time/number of lessons/etc. spent to address specific knowledge, content standards/areas or organizing themes.
- Sufficient coverage of all grade level content standards/areas required by the state.

**SMART Format:** Indicators/goals must be written in SMART format according to the format set forth in **Mission-Specific Indicators/Goals** description above. The criteria for SMART format is as follows:

- **Specific.** A well-defined goal must be specific, clearly and concisely stated, and easily understood. Educational goals should be tied to learning standards that specify what students should know and be able to do for each subject or content area and for each grade, age, or other grouping level.
- **Measurable.** A goal should be tied to measurable results to be achieved. Measurement is then simply an assessment of success or failure in achieving the goal.
- **Attainable.** A goal should be attainable and realistic.
- **Rigorous.** A goal should be challenging, based on current or expected performance.
- **Time-Specific with Target Dates.** A well-conceived goal should specify a timeframe or target date for achievement.

**Special Populations:** Special populations may include students who have been identified with special needs that require an Individualized Education Program (IEP), a Section 504 Accommodations plan, English language learner (ELL) instruction, or those who require access to ancillary services including, but not limited to, health, speech/language services, social work services, physical therapy, occupational therapy, etc.

**State and Federal Accountability System Academic Performance Indicator:** The School Grading Accountability System is the first part of the academic framework that is used to evaluate all public schools, including charter schools, in the state of New Mexico. Annually, each school receives a grade of A through F that reflects the school's performance on a School Grading Report. The School Grading Report includes criteria components such as Current Standing, School Growth for its top 75 percent of students, School Growth for its lowest 25 percentage of students, Opportunity to Learn, Graduation, College and Career Readiness (the latter two being appropriate for high school only). *More information regarding the New Mexico A–F grading system may be accessed at <http://webapp2.ped.state.nm.us/SchoolData/SchoolGrading.aspx>.*

Understanding the State's A–F Grading System is critical in the development of your school, as it is a major component of your school's annual evaluation.