

CONNECTICUT STATE  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



# Charter School Bidders' Conference

## April 20, 2022

# WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

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Turnaround Office**

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# Today's Agenda

**Welcome and Introductions**

**CT Charter Landscape**

**Application Logistics**

**Eligibility and Preferences**

**Application Outline:**

- School Vision and Design*
- Strength of Organizational Effort*
- Student Composition, Services, and Policies*
- School Viability*

**Application Review, Expectations, and Standards**

**Fiscal**

**CSDE Contact List**

**Questions and Answers**

# CSDE Team

Robert Kelly, Charter School Program Manager

Felicia Canty, Charter School Liaison

Shakira Jacobs-Vazquez, Education Services Specialist

Kathy Demsey, Chief Financial Officer

Ajit Gopalakrishnan, Chief Performance Officer

Bryan Klimkiewicz, Division Director, Bureau of Special Education

Michael McKeon, Director of Legal and Governmental Affairs

Dr. Megan Alubicki-Flick, English Learner Consultant

# Connecticut Charter Schools Statewide

<b>Amistad Academy</b> New Haven, CT	<b>Elm City Montessori School<sup>1</sup></b> New Haven, CT	<b>Odyssey Community</b> Manchester, CT
<b>Achievement First Bridgeport Academy</b> Bridgeport, CT	<b>Explorations Charter School</b> Winsted, CT	<b>Park City Prep Charter School</b> Bridgeport, CT
<b>Achievement First Elm City College Preparatory School</b> New Haven, CT	<b>Great Oaks Charter School</b> Bridgeport, CT	<b>Side By Side Charter School</b> Norwalk, CT
<b>Achievement First Hartford Academy</b> Hartford, CT	<b>Highville Charter School</b> New Haven, CT	<b>Stamford Charter School for Excellence</b> Stamford, CT
<b>Booker T. Washington Academy</b> New Haven, CT	<b>Integrated Day Charter School</b> Norwich, CT	<b>The Bridge Academy</b> Bridgeport, CT
<b>Brass City Charter School</b> Waterbury, CT	<b>Interdistrict School for Arts and Communication</b> New London, CT	
<b>Capital Preparatory Harbor Charter School</b> Bridgeport, CT	<b>Jumoke Academy</b> Hartford, CT	
<b>Common Ground High School</b> New Haven, CT	<b>New Beginnings Family Academy</b> Bridgeport, CT	

<sup>1</sup>Local charter school

# RFP OVERVIEW

# State Charter School Applications

- Applications for the 2022 cycle must be submitted on or before December 1, 2022 by 4 p.m.
- An original hard copy, including an e-copy in an Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF), must be submitted to the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE).
- A copy of the application must be filed at the local or regional board of education in the school district in which the proposed school would be located.
- The State Board of Education (SBE) must vote on the complete application within 90 days of receipt of such application.

# Local Charter School Applications

- Applications for the 2022 cycle must be submitted on or before December 1, 2022 by 4 p.m.
- An original hard copy, including an e-copy in an Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF), must be submitted to the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE).
- A copy of the application must be filed at the local or regional board of education in the school district in which the local charter is to be located.
- The local board must vote on the complete application within 75 days of receipt of such application.
- If approved, the local board shall forward the application to the SBE immediately upon passage.
- The SBE must vote on the complete application within 60 days of receipt of such application.

# Charter School Eligibility

**Charter schools must be located in the following authorized districts.**

Please note: This list of authorized school districts is subject to change during the 2022 legislative session.

Ansonia	Bloomfield
Bridgeport	Bristol
Danbury	Derby
East Hartford	East Haven
East Windsor	Hamden
Hartford	Killingly
Manchester	Meriden
Middletown	Naugatuck
New Britain	New Haven
New London	Norwalk
Norwich	Putnam
Stamford	Vernon
Waterbury	West Haven
Winchester	Windham
Windsor	Windsor Locks

# Preferences

The SBE will give preference to certain factors when considering applications for charter schools.

The factors are:

- Serving high-need student populations and demonstrating the ability to attract, enroll, and retain students from among these populations.
- Turning around an existing school.
- Opening in a Priority School District.
- Opening in a district with at least 75% students of color,
- Applicant is a higher education institution or locating at a worksite.

# Application Outline

## I. School Vision and Design

### 1. Mission, Purpose, and Specialized Focus

- Speaks to the core purpose and key values of the school.
- Communicates high academic standards for student success.
- Illustrates a compelling vision for the school community.
- Describes the ways in which the school will positively impact stakeholders in the school and community.
- Describes the specialized focus of the charter school.
- States the ages of students or grades to be taught and total estimated enrollment.

### 2. Educational Philosophy

- Describes the founding group's core beliefs and values.
- Demonstrates the willingness to embrace and serve the diverse needs of individual students.
- Provides a compelling argument that the approach is likely to improve students' academic performance.

### 3. Curriculum

- Explains the process to identify or develop curriculum to be used by the school and provides a rationale for the process.
- Provides evidence of alignment to the Connecticut Core Standards for English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics and Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) for science. Provides evidence demonstrating that the curriculum is likely to improve students' academic performance.
- Provides evidence demonstrating that the curriculum is likely to improve students' academic performance.
- Demonstrates accessibility and appropriateness for students at all levels, including ELs, students with disabilities, etc.
- Describes a clear plan for the ongoing development, improvement, and refinement of the curriculum.
- Describes a process for monitoring and assessing the implementation and effectiveness of the curriculum.

# Application Outline

## School Vision and Design (continued)

### 4. Instruction

- Describes the instructional methods or techniques that will be used to facilitate high-quality teaching and learning.
- Demonstrates how instructional methods support high standards and are accessible and appropriate for all students.
- Explains how the school will create a data-driven culture to meet a wide range of student needs.
- Describes how the school will determine and provide for the professional development needs of the staff.

### 5. Student Assessment

- Presents a comprehensive approach to assessment. Demonstrates that assessments and assessment practices are valid for their intended purposes.
- Shows clear alignment of assessments to the curriculum and the state standards.
- Indicates how the assessment system ensures the participation of all students on both the state mandated testing and other alternative assessments.
- Explains the ways in which student progress will be monitored using a combination of the state standardized assessments, the state-provided interim blocks assessments, and other standardized/non-standardized measures as appropriate, while minimizing testing.
- Demonstrates a high-quality plan to show how data from progress monitoring can be used to implement appropriate and timely student interventions and support.
- Describes how they will train and support educators to employ formative assessment practices in their classrooms.

# Application Outline

## II. Strength of Organizational Effort

### 1. Experience and Expertise of Founders

- Demonstrates clear expertise and relevant experiences and/or qualifications of the founders.
- Specifies the role of the founding group in the development and launch of the proposed school.
- Identifies any organizations, individuals, or consultants that are partners in designing and launching the proposed school and provide evidence of the partner's ability to operate a high-quality school.

### 2. School Governance and Management

- Provides a viable governance structure and organizational chart showing proper oversight of various functions of the school.
- Presents a clear picture of the officers and members, terms, election/appointment processes, and committees. Please note no member or employee of the governing council may have a personal or financial interest in the assets, real or personal.
- Specifies the criteria and procedures for selecting officers and members of the governing council, including teachers, parents/guardians and local school board chair or superintendent or designee.
- Describes how the governing council will exercise its responsibility to oversee the operation of the school including, but not limited to, educational programs, governance and fiscal management, personnel, facility maintenance, and community outreach. Indicates how the governing council will hold the school accountable to stakeholders.
- Provides resumes of initial council membership, showing a wide range of expertise and experiences.
- Defines the roles, responsibilities, and interaction between council membership, committees, and school administration.
- Presents the process by which the governing council will hire and evaluate the school administrator.
- If applicable, provides evidence indicating the CMO's ability to serve the intended student population; strong student outcomes and success at managing nonacademic school functions.

# Application Outline

## Strength of Organizational Effort (continued)

### 3. School Leader

- **For applicants with an identified school leader:** Provides the name, qualifications, experiences, certifications, and education of the proposed lead administrator; offers evidence to demonstrate whether the individual has a record of leading a high-quality school.
- **For applicants without an identified school leader:** Presents a plan for recruiting and hiring a proven school leader and clearly articulates the characteristics and skills that the proposed school will evaluate in selecting a leader.

### 4. Evidence of Support

- Provides evidence that the proposed school is welcomed by the local community.

# Application Outline

## III. Student Composition, Services, and Policies

### 1. School Demographics

- Describes the needs and demographics of the community and student population to be served by the proposed school.
- Explains how the proposed school model meets the needs of students and will likely increase student achievement.
- Provides a sound enrollment plan, including a clear rationale for grades served, enrollment, and growth.
- Describes sound procedures for encouraging involvement by parents and guardians of enrolled students in student learning, school activities and school decision-making.

### 2. Special Education

- Includes a comprehensive plan for educating students with disabilities.
- Plans for adequate staffing to address the needs of students with disabilities and Section 504 Plans, including properly state-certified special education teachers(s).
- Articulates a clear system to monitor student data and consider a student's eligibility for Section 504 services.
- Presents a plan to engage the parents of students with disabilities.

### 3. English Learners (EL)/Multilingual Learners (ML)

- Provides a plan to identify and meet the learning needs of all EL/ ML students (e.g., screenings, assessments, exit criteria).
- Describes how the school will provide EL/ML students with access to the general education curriculum.
- Describes how the school will involve the parents of EL/ML students in the school, including through translation services.
- Plans for adequate staffing to address the needs of EL/ML students, including properly state-certified staff.

# Application Outline

## Student Composition, Services, and Polices (continued)

### 4. Admission Policy and Criteria

- Provides a clear and coherent admissions policy including student admission criteria and procedures and plan that complies with C.G.S. § 10-66bb(d)(8).
- Provides a viable plan to attract students and families, form a diverse student body and avoid discrimination.
- Shows a commitment to reduce racial, ethnic, and/or economic isolation.
- Describes a student recruitment and retention plan that includes, but is not limited to, the capacity of the school to attract, enroll, and retain students from the following populations: students with a history of low academic performance, students who receive free or reduced-priced lunches pursuant to federal law and regulations; students with a history of behavioral and social difficulties; students identified as requiring special education; and students who are English learners (ELs)/Multilingual learners (MLs).

### 5. Student Discipline Policies

- Provides a clear behavior management system that encourages positive behaviors and applies consistent sanctions and interventions in response to infractions.
- Offers educational alternatives for students who are expelled or suspended.
- Provides due process safeguards for all students, including those with disabilities.

# Application Outline

## Student Composition, Services, and Policies (continued)

### 6. Human Resources Policies

- Defines competencies and professional standards necessary for hiring teachers, administrators, and all other school staff.
- Creates processes for dismissing staff for conduct and performance issues.
- Provides a sample job description that clearly articulates necessary staff competencies, expectations, and qualifications.
- Provides clear and effective procedures to document efforts to increase the racial and ethnic diversity of staff.
- Describes a targeted staff size and plans for staff recruitment and retention.
- Describes the number and qualifications of teachers and administrators to be employed in the school.
- Presents a system to evaluate and develop teachers and administrators.
- Provides human resource policies around salaries, benefits, hiring, personnel contract, and affirmative action that align to the school mission, educational philosophy, students served, and budget.

# Application Outline

## IV. School Viability

### 1. Building Options

- Provides a plan for identifying and acquiring a suitable facility to support the proposed school.

### 2. Financial Plan

- Provides a thorough budget that reflects all commitments outlined in the application through the proposed school's fifth year of operation and shows sound financial planning and the fiscal viability of the school.
- Includes financial projections that account for all sources of revenue (e.g., state per-pupil grant; other federal, state, and private grants; donations and fundraising).
- Provides a detailed budget narrative that explains budget line items and short- and long-term projections, offering a clear rationale for calculations and assumptions.
- Presents a pre-opening budget statement detailing and explaining estimated start-up activities.
- Provides a cash flow projection for each of the three years of operation that shows a sophisticated understanding of expenditures mapped against available revenue during the year.
- Presents a financial management system and processes aligned to Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) with adequate internal controls, including a description of the fiscal staff positions, qualifications, and duties.
- Describes how the school will track finances in its daily operations, and how the governing council will provide oversight.

## School Viability (continued)

### 3. Self-Evaluation and Accountability

- Identifies clear and operational goals at all levels (e.g., school-wide, grade-level, classroom, staff, and student).
- Provides clear systems of accountability for all stakeholders.
- Identifies robust data systems and processes to regularly track leading and lagging indicators of student achievement, student enrollment, and organizational operations and effectiveness.
- Present a clear plan to share student learning practices and experiences with the local or regional board of education of the town in which the proposed school is located.

### 4. Timetable

- Provides a thorough action plan, outlining activities leading up to the successful launch of the proposed school (e.g., projects, staff responsible, deadlines, status, and resource alignment).
- Demonstrates strong forethought and project management, showing the team's ability to coordinate, manage, track, and execute multiple work streams simultaneously.

# Application Review and Expectations

- Complete applications will be evaluated by a team of Connecticut State Department of Education representatives with educational expertise and knowledge of charter school operations and finance.
- Applications will be scored by reviewers using the criteria beginning on page 70 of the RFP, **Appendix G: Application Rubric**.
- Reviewers will evaluate and rate how well the applicant's responses address the review criteria articulated in each section of the Application Rubric.
- Each applicant must produce a complete charter application that addresses **all** elements required by law in order to be reviewed by the screening committee. Any incomplete applications will be returned to the applicant and eliminated from the review process.
- The applicant's proposal for a charter school must present a powerful vision as well as functional details that provide a blueprint for the school's operation. Overall, the application should demonstrate that the applicant can open and operate a high-quality public school in Connecticut.

# Application Review Standards

Complete applications will be scored using the following standards:

- **Does Not Meet:** The response lacks meaningful detail, demonstrates a lack of preparation, or otherwise raises substantial concerns about the applicant's understanding of the issues in concept and/or ability to meet the requirement in practice.
- **Partially Meets:** The response lacks critical details in certain areas. The response requires additional information in order to be considered reasonably comprehensive and demonstrate a clear vision of how the school will operate.
- **Meets:** The response indicates solid preparation and grasp of the key issues, as demonstrated by a reasonable and comprehensive response. It addresses the review criteria with information showing preparation and a clear, realistic picture of how the school will operate. The response demonstrates the readiness of the applicant to execute the vision described in the response.
- **Exceeds:** The response reflects a thorough understanding of key issues. The response indicates thorough preparation, expertise, and a clear and compelling picture of how the school will operate. The response demonstrates the readiness of the applicant to successfully execute the vision described in the response.

# Fiscal Overview

\*A cash-flow projection statement for each of the first three years of operation to show movement of funds, must include a plan for cashflow shortfalls.

Pursuant to changes in the law for the 2021 legislative session, effective July 1, 2021, state charter schools received a per-pupil base grant of \$11,525 for each student enrolled in the school per approved enrollment and additional support provided depending on student eligibility for free or reduced-priced meals and students identified as English learners.

The SBE may approve, within available appropriations, a per-student grant not to exceed \$3,000 for each student enrolled in a local charter school. Local charters may receive grants of up to \$500,000 to assist in start-up costs.

Within available appropriations, the state may provide a grant in an amount not to exceed \$75,000 to any newly approved state charter school that assists the state in meeting its obligations pursuant to the decision in Sheff v. O'Neill, 238 Conn. 1 (1996), or any related stipulation or order in effect, as determined by the Commissioner of Education, for start-up costs associated with the new charter school program.

# State Agency Contacts for Charter School Technical Assistance

Topic	Contact Person	Email Address
Academic/Curriculum	Irene Parisi	irene.parisi@ct.gov
Charter School Waivers	Robert Kelly	robert.kelly@ct.gov
Child Nutrition	Therese Dandeneau	teri.dandeneau@ct.gov
Collective Bargaining	Laura Anastasio	laura.anastasio@ct.gov
English Learners (EL)/Multilingual Learners (ML)	Megan Alubicki Flick	megan.alubicki@ct.gov
Establishing a Nonprofit	Office of the Secretary of State	860-509-6000
Parent Engagement	Judith Carson	judy.carson@ct.gov
Per-pupil Expenditures	Kevin Chambers	kevin.chambers@ct.gov
Pupil Transportation, Discipline	Mike McKeon	mike.mckeon@ct.gov
School Governance and Management	Robert Kelly	robert.kelly@ct.gov
School Health	Chlo-Anne Bobrowski	chlo-anne.bobrowski@ct.gov
Special Education	Bryan Klimkiewicz	bryan.klimkiewicz@ct.gov
Student Admissions	Robert Kelly	robert.kelly@ct.gov
State Assessment	Abe Krisst	abe.krisst@ct.gov
Teacher Certification	Sharon Fuller	sharon.fuller@ct.gov

# QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS