



# Charter Schools: 2015 Round 2 Application Process

New York State Board of Regents  
P-12 Education Committee  
November 16, 2015

# Summary of the Charter School Application Review Process

The charter school application process is designed to ensure that any charter school application presented to the Board of Regents for consideration demonstrates that:

- \* The applicant group possesses a clear understanding of the New York State Charter Schools Act as well as all other applicable laws, rules and regulations;
- \* Granting the application is likely to improve student learning and achievement, and provide a significant educational benefit to the students expected to attend;
- \* The proposed school reflects a coherent and practical design that the applicant group can operate in an educationally and fiscally sound manner; and
- \* Members of the applicant group and the proposed board of trustees demonstrate the necessary experience, skill, will and capacity to open and operate a high-quality public charter school.

# Summary of the Charter School Application Review Process

Three major phases<sup>1</sup> of the charter school application review process:

- 1) Letter of Intent to Apply,
- 2) Full Application, and
- 3) Capacity Interview.

- \* In addition, the Department invites and considers public comments regarding the potential fiscal and programmatic impact the proposed school would have on the district of location. Public comments are also received through public hearings conducted by the school district of location.
- \* At the conclusion of the process, the Department prepares a formal recommendation to the Board of Regents.

<sup>1</sup>Each of the 3 major phases are rated using a rubric

# Summary of Phase I: Letter of Intent to Apply

**Applicant Groups** are required to submit a Letter of Intent designed to solicit basic school design information including:

- \* A brief description of the mission and school design;
- \* A description of the proposed student population (including enrollment and retention goals for target groups);
- \* Proposed grade levels and number of students to be enrolled;
- \* Initial evidence of community outreach efforts and support;
- \* A proposed location and/or proposed facility; and
- \* Background information about the applicant group and anticipated members of the Board of Trustees.

**Department staff** screen all submitted Letters of Intent to determine that:

- \* Each requested component is included;
- \* The narrative is complete (especially in the areas of enrollment and retention of special populations, and public outreach and community support); and,

Applicant groups that meet this criteria are invited to submit Full Applications.

# Summary of Phase II: Full Application

**Applicant Groups** that are invited to this phase must fully address a set of questions that:

- \* directly align to all of the requirements and priorities stated in the Charter Schools Act, and
- \* allow the Department to assess the will, skill and capacity of the proposed board to launch and sustain a quality public school in New York State.

Applications are reviewed by a five-person expert panel comprised of national consultants, current educators in public schools or universities in NYS, and SED staff.

**Peer-Review Panel Members** are asked to:

- \* review and rate each application using a rubric that identifies the criteria in each section of the application; and
- \* develop a summary rating for each section and for the application as a whole.

Successful applicants are invited to a Capacity Interview that provides an opportunity for the proposed board of trustees to meet with Department staff.

# Summary of Phase III: Capacity Interview

**Applicant Groups** invited to a Capacity Interview have an opportunity for their proposed board of trustees to:

- \* present and elaborate on the information provided in the Full Application; and
- \* respond to any technical questions that may have been generated by peer reviewers during the application review process, and any other questions that may have emerged during the public hearing and public comment process.

**Department staff conduct the capacity interview** to evaluate the applicant's proposed board of trustees:

- \* understanding of academic and operational accountability as well as the community in which the proposed school will be located; and
- \* capacity to effectively launch and oversee the school's academic program, organizational viability, and finances.

# Department Recommendation to Approve or Deny the Application

The Department will recommend that the Board of Regents approve and issue a charter upon determining that:

- (1) the proposed charter school meets the requirements set out in Article 56 of the Education Law, and all other applicable laws, rules and regulations;
- (2) the applicant can demonstrate the ability to operate the school in an educationally and fiscally sound manner;
- (3) granting the application is likely to improve student learning and achievement and materially further the purposes set out in subdivision two of section twenty-eight hundred fifty of Article 56 of the Education Law; and
- (4) granting the application will have a significant educational benefit to the students expected to attend the charter school.

# Required Steps Following the Department's Decision

**If recommended for approval,** the proposed board members review and sign the initial charter agreement (contract) between the proposed school and the Board of Regents.

**If not recommended for approval,** the Department provides the applicant group with a summary of the areas in which the application is considered to be inadequate, and provides an opportunity to withdraw the application from the application cycle. Applicant groups are encouraged to use the summary to improve upon the written application for resubmission at a future date.



# 2015 Request For Proposal – Round 2

- \* 51 Letters of Intent submitted to the Department (due date June 23, 2015)
- \* 17 applicants invited to submit full applications; 11 chosen to submit applications
- \* 4 applicants invited to the Capacity Interview
- \* 3 applicants recommended to the Board of Regents for Approval:
  - \* School in the Square Public Charter (New York City CSD 9 or CSD 10; grades 6 - 8)
  - \* South Bronx Community Charter High School (New York City CSD 7; grades 9 – 12)
  - \* Exploration Elementary Charter School for Science and Technology (Rochester City School District; K – grade 6)

