



Montana Board of Public Education
Public Charter School Application Evaluation Criteria

The questions below are designed to help focus the inquiry but are not intended to limit review or feedback of the reviewer. Reviewers are encouraged to share all their comments and concerns.

**This Evaluation Criteria Contains
Five (5) Sections:**

- I. Academic Program**
- II. School Governance**
- III. Business Operations**
- IV. Community Support and Need**
- V. Overall Assessment**

SECTION I: ACADEMIC PROGRAM

1. Does the proposed public charter school present an academic curriculum that is aligned with the Montana's identified academic standards?
2. Does the proposed public charter school present an academic program (curriculum, learning model, etc.) that will enable the charter school to meet rigorous performance expectations?
3. Does the academic program of the proposed public charter school utilize innovation and flexibility (in lieu of variance to standards) from state law that will enable the charter school to meet rigorous performance expectations?
4. Does the applicant articulate a plan for identifying and addressing students' academic deficiencies and/or weaknesses so as to encourage constant student growth and achievement?
5. Is the academic program consistent with state and federal legal requirements, including those protecting students' rights, such as IDEA (special education), Indian Education for All, and programs for English language learners?
6. Is the mission of the proposed public charter school consistent with the goal of providing students with educational opportunities that they would not otherwise be afforded at the traditional school to which they are zoned?

Overall, the ACADEMIC PROGRAM of the proposed charter school is:

- Consistent with a high-quality public charter school.
- Partially consistent with high-quality public charter school.
- Inconsistent with a high-quality public charter school.

Additional Comments, Concerns, or Overall Impressions:

SECTION II: SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

1. Does the application clearly illustrate that school-level governance will be vested in the school's governing board (as opposed to the management organization or some other vendor, organization, or entity)?
2. Does the proposed governance board demonstrate the capacity to operate as a state charter? (This includes, but is not limited to, full knowledge of charter school requirements, capabilities, and legal obligations.)
3. Does the governing board illustrate its ability to assess the performance and capacity of the school leader?
4. Does the governing board have a realistic plan to identify and recruit a qualified school leader and/or business operations manager?
5. Does the governing board have a plan for succession?

Overall, the SCHOOL GOVERNANCE of the proposed charter school is:

- Consistent with a high-quality public charter school.
- Partially consistent with high-quality public charter school.
- Inconsistent with a high-quality public charter school.

Additional Comments, Concerns, or Overall Impressions:

SECTION III: BUSINESS OPERATIONS

1. Does the proposed charter school present a plan that will ensure the school will be fiscally sound? *(Note: In order to be fiscally sound, the proposed budget must A) demonstrate a school's ability to use state allocated funds to implement the instructional and operational plan outlined within the application, B) be based on a realistic student enrollment figure, and C) it must not be excessively reliant on fundraising revenue and/or infusions of cash from vendors, grants, or external sources.)*

2. Does the applicant exhibit an understanding of school finance? (Knowledge of internal controls, appropriate debt ratios, governmental accounting, etc.?)

3. Do the proposed staff and governing board demonstrate the knowledge and capacity to make difficult financial decisions to operate a charter school?

4. Does the school have a facility (or proposed facility) that is both reasonable and appropriate for the school?

5. Does the school rely too heavily on estimated or projected fundraising revenue, grant funds, or other fund sources external to state allocations to maintain a balanced budget?

6. Is the school partnering with an Education Management Organization or Charter Management Organization and if so, is that partnership structured in a responsible manner?

Overall, the BUSINESS OPERATIONS of the proposed charter school is:

- Consistent with a high-quality public charter school.
- Partially consistent with high-quality public charter school.
- Inconsistent with a high-quality public charter school.

Additional Comments, Concerns, or Overall Impressions:

SECTION IV: COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND NEED

1. Did the applicants establish a compelling need for the proposed public charter school?
2. Will the proposed public charter school meet the needs of its community?
3. Has the applicant provided evidence that the community will support the school with student enrollment?
4. Does the proposed public charter school leverage community partnerships, including building relationships with other schools, universities, or nonprofit entities?

Overall, the COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND NEED of the proposed charter school is:

- Consistent with a high-quality public charter school.
- Partially consistent with high-quality public charter school.
- Inconsistent with a high-quality public charter school.

Additional Comments, Concerns, or Overall Impressions:

SECTION V: OVERALL ASSESSMENT

1. Is there an established need for the proposed public charter school?
2. Will the proposed public charter school meet the needs of all its students?
3. Will the proposed public charter school be of the highest academic quality?
4. Will the proposed public charter school provide a healthy learning environment and positive school climate?
5. Does the proposed school's governing board demonstrate the capacity to implement the plan outlined in the application with fidelity?
6. Will the proposed public charter school provide an educational opportunity to students that they would not otherwise receive at the traditional school they are zoned to attend?

Overall, it is recommended that the Montana Board of Public Education:

- Authorize the proposed public charter school based on the current application.
- Authorize the proposed public charter school if the public charter school is able to clarify the aspects of its current application as identified below.
- Authorize the proposed public charter school if the public charter school is able to take the actions to make significant improvements detailed below, which are needed for a high-quality public charter school.
- Decline to authorize the proposed public charter school at this time.

Additional Comments, Concerns, or Overall Impressions: