

OVERVIEW OF THE ORANGE COUNTY CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION PROCESS

APPLICATION PROCESS GENERAL EXPECTATIONS

OCPS uses a multi-stage process to evaluate applications for proposed charter schools. The process is rigorous and thereby enables the sponsor to thoroughly evaluate:

- The quality of the applicant's plan for establishing and operating a quality charter school, and
- The capacity of the applicant to implement that plan.

The following describes each phase in the application process.

STEP 1: SUBMISSION OF A LETTER OF INTENT

Each applicant should submit a letter of intent to OCPS that includes the following information:

- The name of the proposed charter school
- The mission of the proposed charter school
- Contact information for the main contact person for the proposed school
- The year the school seeks to open
- The proposed general location of the school

This information should be submitted no later than 60 days (e.g. June 1st) prior to the August 1st application submission deadline.

STEP 2: APPLICATION SUBMISSION

An applicant group seeking approval to establish and operate a charter school shall submit to OCPS a written application that responds to each request for required information. Draft submittals will be accepted by the School Choice Services Department prior to June 1. General feedback will be given to the applicant within a two week period.

The applicant must use the required template and submit 20 copies along with the original copy and one CD version. For the 2010 submittal, the application will be the one developed by the Florida Department of Education per the recent legislative action. OCPS will have addendum items that must be completed and included as part of the application.

Applications must be received by **4:30 p.m. EST on August 1st (August 2, 2010 since August 1 is a Sunday)** to be considered during the current application evaluation cycle. No changes to the application or submission of new information may be made after that time.

OCPS will act on all applications received within 60 days of the application deadline unless otherwise agreed upon by the applicant and the sponsor per s.1002.33(6)(b)3.

STEP 3: WRITTEN APPLICATION EVALUATION

Each application will be reviewed by evaluation team of individual(s) with education, business, non-profit, financial, legal and organizational expertise. The evaluation team will

include sponsor staff and/or external experts such as current and former school administrators and principals, charter school founders, and school, business, non-profit, and public policy leaders.

Each reviewer will evaluate the written application and assess the degree to which the responses to each information requirement meet the stated criteria.

While evaluating the written application, reviewers will identify deficiencies in the written application and/or areas that require further clarity to fully evaluate the quality of the application or the capacity of the group to fully implement the proposed plan. These issues will serve as the basis of inquiry for the applicant interview.

STEP 4: APPLICANT INTERVIEW

The evaluation team will interview the Board of Directors to:

- Assess overall capacity of the Board members to establish and implement the charter school plan;
- Clarify any components of the written application for which reviewers had questions or require additional information to fully evaluate, and
- Corroborate information provided in the written application.

If an Educational Management Company is being considered, they will not be involved in the interview process since a charter contract will only exist between OCPS and the charter school's Board of Directors. OCPS will not have a legal relationship with the management company.

STEP 5: BOARD INTERVIEW

The Board of Directors will meet with the members of the School Board of Orange County in a general work session. The purpose of this session is for the Board of Directors to present the concept they have for the charter school and answer any questions the board may have for clarification. No new information may be submitted.

If an Educational Management Company is being considered, they will not be involved in the board interview process.

STEP 6: RECOMMENDATIONS

The OCPS staff will determine, based on the information gathered throughout the application evaluation process and reviewer recommendations, whether an applicant has met the standard for approval. The staff will make recommendations to the school board on whether to grant or deny charter status and the board, in turn, will act on those recommendations.

The school board will only approve applicants for charter approval that demonstrate quality in all components of the application process. An application cannot have significant weaknesses in any components of the application and still be judged to have met the standard for approval.

An applicant that is denied charter school status shall have the right to appeal the board's decision as stipulated in s. 1002.33(6)(c).