

Virginia Public Charter School

Application Evaluation Tool

Effective July 2024



As is outlined in the *Code of Virginia* § 22.1-212.9, the Virginia Board of Education is responsible for the review, comment, and determination as to whether a public charter school application satisfies the criteria developed by the Board.

This document sets out specific elements that a public charter school application should address. Each section presents the Board criteria for charter school applications under the *Code of Virginia* core areas of Feasibility, Curriculum, Financial Soundness, and Other Objective Criteria as determined by the Board. The Strengths and Suggestions boxes provide space for the reviewer to provide comments and feedback for the applicant.

The Charter School Standing Committee will discuss the extent to which the application satisfies the Board's established criteria and ultimately take a consensus vote on each of the criterion and application. If the Committee agrees by consensus that the criteria are satisfied, the application will be presented to the Board. If the Committee decides that not all criteria are satisfied, the applicant may be provided time to address those criteria.

Within ten business days following the Charter School Standing Committee, VDOE Staff and the Chairman of the Committee will prepare a report summarizing the Committee's final determination.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT – COMPLETE THIS SECTION LAST

Does the charter school application satisfy the Board's approved evaluation criteria?

OVERALL SATISFIES BOARD CRITERIA	OVERALL DOES NOT SATISFY BOARD CRITERIA
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Name of Person Completing Evaluation:

Date:

Title:

Signature

I. Feasibility

One of the primary *Code of Virginia* requirements for the Board of Education to review and comment on is feasibility. To satisfy the Board criteria for “feasibility” means a public charter school applicant demonstrates clear sustainability, thorough analysis and forethought over enrollment, strong structures for hiring, management, and staff retention, and an ability to serve the maximum number of students with self-sustaining practices and systems.

1. Location

The location or geographic area proposed for the public charter school.

i. Code of Virginia and Board Reference(s)

Code of Virginia § 22.1-212.8 B(4)

2016 Board Approved Charter School Criteria IV

ii. Board Review Criteria

1. Describe the anticipated student population to be served and how that aligns with the school’s mission. Alignment of the targeted student body with the overall mission of the school.
2. If a facility has not been identified in this application, state the geographic area which the applicant intends to serve.

For reviewer’s use only:

Strengths
Suggestions

2. Student Enrollment

Projections for student enrollment, capacity to serve students, and recruitment.

i. Code of Virginia and Board Reference(s)

Code of Virginia § 22.1-212.8 B(5)

Code of Virginia § 22.1-212.8 B(6)

Code of Virginia § 22.1-212.8 B(14)

2016 Board Approved Charter School Criteria VI

ii. Board Review Criteria

The grades to be served each year for the full term of the charter school.

1. Provide enrollment projections for each year of proposed operation. These projections are not enrollment caps.
2. Provide a brief explanation of how the enrollment projections were developed.
3. Briefly explain the rationale for the number of students and grade levels served in year one and the basis for the growth plan in subsequent years as illustrated in the table above.
4. Evidence-based rationale for students enrolling in the proposed charter school.
5. Minimum, planned, and maximum enrollment per grade level per year for the term of the charter contract.
6. Plans and timelines for student recruitment and enrollment, including lottery procedures.
7. Provide a viable and adequate time frame for recruiting students consistent with the start-up date of the proposed school.
8. Provide a detailed plan to recruit, hire, and train instructional staff consistent with the start-up of the school. Outline expectations of teachers, staff and school leadership that may be different than other schools within their proposed partner school division.
9. Describe the school's proposed enrollment policies and procedures, including an explanation of the enrollment timeline, any preferences for enrollment and lottery process. Provide proposed enrollment application.

For reviewer's use only:

Strengths
Suggestions

3. Executive Summary

i. Code of Virginia and Board Reference(s)

Code of Virginia § 22.1-212.8 B(1)

2016 Approved Criteria I

ii. Evaluation Criteria

The executive summary addresses the need for the public charter school and any discussions to date with the local public school division or local school board on the establishment of the charter school. If there have been no discussions to date, the applicant has indicated the reason.

For reviewer's use only:

Strengths
Suggestions

4. Management and Operation

A detailed public charter start-up plan that identifies tasks, timelines, and responsible individuals (with contact information for the same).

i. Code of Virginia and Board Reference(s)

Code of Virginia § 22.1-212.8 B(25)

2016 Board Approved Charter School Criteria X

ii. Board Review Criteria

Information should be provided on the management and operation of the public charter school. The following components must be addressed to the extent the applicant is able, pending negotiations with the local school board:

1. Identify key members of the founding group, highlighting what experience they will bring to the school.
2. Provide job descriptions for all key personnel and how they will help the school in fulfilling its goals and missions.
3. Provide a calendar of activities that the school will undertake from charter approval to opening day, specifying who will be responsible for each task with specific attention to milestones such as:
 - Hiring key personnel who were not a part of the founding team and instructional personnel.
 - Creating and/or finalizing curriculum including purchasing assessments, materials, completing curriculum maps, and lesson plans.
 - Creating discipline, attendance, promotion, and grading policies.
 - Identifying, purchasing, and renovating a facility (if necessary)
 - Engaging the community and recruiting students.

For reviewer's use only:

Strengths
Suggestions

5. Staffing

A staffing chart for the public charter school's first year and a staffing plan for the term of the charter contract.

i. Code of Virginia and Board Reference(s)

Code of Virginia § 22.1-212.8 B(18)

Code of Virginia § 22.1-212.8 B(19)

2016 Board Approved Criteria X, XI

ii. Board Review Criteria

1. Hiring and Retention
2. Outline how the charter applicant will enhance the teacher evaluation process based on the specific instructional program of the charter school, beyond the requirements of the proposed local partner school division.
3. A sound plan for recruiting and retaining highly qualified and appropriately certified instructional staff includes:
 - Selection criteria
 - Salary ranges and benefit
 - Professional development
 - Teacher evaluation
4. What quantitative and qualitative data will be used?
 - Explanation of methods for determining appropriate staffing levels based on student need and enrollment growth plan.
 - All job descriptions must be mission-aligned and specific to the charter schools' instructional program. Provide job descriptions and the anticipated number of each position for academic staff, nonacademic staff, qualified/specialized staff (special education teachers, evaluators, etc.), and mission specific staff (internship coordinators, residential staff, etc.).
5. Plans for recruiting and developing the public charter school's leadership and staff.
6. Describe the governance structure of the proposed school, including the primary roles, powers, and duties of the governing board; committee structure (if applicable); and how the board will interact with the principal/head of school and any advisory bodies.
7. State the frequency of board meetings and describe how the board will comply with open meetings and records laws.
8. Describe the current and desired size and composition of the governing board. Identify key skills, areas of expertise, and constituencies that are or will be represented on the governing board.

9. Describe how board members have been and will be selected including term limits and selection of officers.
10. Explain how this structure and composition will ensure that the school will be an academic, operational, and financial success.
11. Describe the plans for board member recruitment and development, including the orientation process for new members and ongoing professional development to increase the capacity of the board.
12. Describe the board's ethical standards and procedures for identifying and addressing conflicts of interest.
13. Describe, if applicable, any school advisory bodies or councils that are in place or will be formed, including the roles and duties of each and the reporting structure of such entity relative to the school's governing board and leadership.
14. Briefly explain the process that the school will follow should a parent or student have an objection to a governing board policy or decision, administrative procedure, or practice at the school. The entire process or policy does not have to be developed; however, applicants should be able to articulate the primary steps.

For reviewer's use only:

Strengths
Suggestions

6. Leadership and Teacher Employment

The public charter school's leadership and teacher employment policies.

i. Code of Virginia and Board Reference(s)

Code of Virginia § 22.1-212.8 B(20)

Code of Virginia § 22.1-212.8 C

ii. Board Review Criteria

Describe the board's process for hiring and evaluating school leadership and teachers.

For reviewer's use only:

Strengths
Suggestions

7. Plan for Displacement*

**If applicable – for conversion models only*

i. Code of Virginia and Board Reference(s)

Code of Virginia § 22.1-212.8 B(3)

ii. Board Review Criteria

A plan for the displacement of pupils, teachers, and other employees who will not attend or be employed in the public charter school, in instances of the conversion of an existing public school to a public charter school, and for the placement of public charter school pupils, teachers, and employees upon termination or revocation of the charter.

For reviewer's use only:

Strengths
Suggestions

8. Prior Board Review

The charter applicant shall include in the proposed agreement the results of any Board review of the public charter school application that may have been conducted as provided in subsection C of the Code of Virginia § 22.1-212.9.

- i. Includes any denial from the Virginia Charter School Standing Committee and documentation of reasoning.

For reviewer's use only:

Strengths
Suggestions

One of the primary *Code of Virginia* requirements for the Board of Education to review and comment on is feasibility. To satisfy the Board criteria for “feasibility” means a public charter school applicant demonstrates clear sustainability, thorough analysis and forethought over enrollment, strong structures for hiring, management, and staff retention, and an ability to serve the maximum number of students with self-sustaining practices and systems.

SECTION I FEASIBILITY – OVERALL EVALUATION	
---	--

SATISFIES THE BOARD CRITERIA	DOES NOT SATISFY THE BOARD CRITERIA
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Overall Strengths
Overall Suggestions

II. CURRICULUM

One of the primary *Code of Virginia* requirements for the Board of Education to review and comment on is curriculum. To satisfy the Board criteria for “curriculum” means a public charter school applicant has strong curriculum that will enhance all students’ learning and offers a strong foundation for continued growth and demonstrated mastery through each year of a student’s education.

1. Code of Virginia and Board Reference(s)

Code of Virginia § 22.1-212.8 B(2)

Code of Virginia § 22.1-212.8 B(9)

Code of Virginia § 22.1-212.8 B(10)

Code of Virginia § 22.1-212.8 B(11)

2016 Board Approved Criteria V

2. Board Review Criteria

- i. Mission statement of the public charter school that is consistent with the principles of the Standards of Quality, including identification of the targeted academic program of study.
 1. Indicates the target population, the educational philosophy, the general aims, and the educational needs the school will fill.
 2. A clear and compelling mission and vision statement that defines the guiding principles and values of the school.
- ii. The public charter school’s proposed calendar and a sample daily schedule.
 1. Provide the length of the school day (approximate start and dismissal times) and how many minutes per day will be designated for each core academic subject that clearly demonstrate compliance with hours/minutes of instruction for each grade level served, for the proposed school calendar.
 2. Provide a draft of the proposed school’s calendar, specifying: The number of days the school will be in session; the daily hours of operation; the average instructional minutes per day overall and for core content; before- and after-care options, if any; extra- or cocurricular activities; non- instructional days, such as those devoted to assessment, independent or work study, professional development, and parent- teacher conferences.
- iii. A description of the academic program that is aligned with the Standards of Learning.
 1. Describe the curriculum being considered for the core academic content areas. The response must clearly demonstrate a process to ensure alignment to the Educational Philosophy and Virginia Standards.
- iv. A description of the public charter school’s instructional design, including the type of learning environment, such as classroom-based or independent study; class size and structure; curriculum overview; and teaching methods.
- v. Describe the teaching and learning strategies that will be employed.
- vi. An educational program design that:
 1. Is clear and coherent.

- 2. Is based on effective, experience or research-based educational practices and teaching methods, and high standards for student learning.
- 3. Aligns with the school’s mission and responds to the needs of the school’s target population, and
- 4. Is likely lead to improved student performance for the school’s target population.
- vii. A proposed daily school schedule and annual calendar that complies with statutory requirements for annual number of instructional minutes/days and aligns with priorities and practices described in the educational program design.
- viii. What resources/instructional materials will be used? For what reason were they selected and how do they align with the mission statement and educational philosophy?
- ix. Describe what assessments will be used and how student understanding and mastery will be ensured and measured.

One of the primary *Code of Virginia* requirements for the Board of Education to review and comment on is curriculum. To satisfy the Board criteria for “curriculum” means a public charter school applicant has strong curriculum that will enhance all students’ learning and offers a strong foundation for continued growth and demonstrated mastery through each year of a student’s education.

SECTION II CURRICULUM – OVERALL EVALUATION

SATISFIES THE BOARD CRITERIA	DOES NOT SATISFY THE BOARD CRITERIA
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Overall Strengths
Overall Suggestions

III. FINANCIAL SOUNDNESS

One of the primary *Code of Virginia* requirements for the Board of Education to review and comment on is financial soundness. To satisfy the Board criteria for “financial soundness” means a public charter school applicant demonstrates fiscal prudence through accurate and researched financial planning, purposeful spending uses, and diversified funding sources.

1. Financial Plan and Policies

A description of the public charter school’s financial plan and policies, including financial controls and audit requirements.

i. Code of Virginia and Board Reference(s)

Code of Virginia § 22.1-212.8 B(26)
2016 Board Approved Criteria IX

ii. Board Review Criteria

1. Budgetary projections should be consistent with and support all key aspects of the application, including the school’s mission, educational program, staffing plan, and facility.
2. Include an assessment of projected sources of revenue and expenses that ensure the financial viability of the school.
3. Describe a plan to adjust the budget should revenues not materialize as planned.
4. Describe any plan for philanthropic support of school’s mission as well as any current or future capital improvements. If the budget is contingent upon sources of funding beyond those typically provided by local, state, and federal governments (such as funding from foundations, donors, grants), provide evidence of such funding (e.g. MOU, letters).

For reviewer’s use only:

Strengths
Suggestions

2. Insurance Coverage

A description of the insurance coverage that the public charter school will obtain.

i. Code of Virginia and Board Reference(s)

Code of Virginia § 22.1-212.8 B(27)

ii. Board Review Criteria

1. Describe who will manage the school's finances and how the school will ensure strong internal controls over financial management and compliance with all financial reporting requirements.
2. Explain the mechanisms the governing board will use to monitor the school's financial health and compliance.
3. Describe the school's plans and procedures for conducting an annual audit of the financial operations of the school.
4. Describe the method by which accounting records will be maintained.
5. Describe how the school will ensure financial transparency to the authorizer and the public, including its plans for public adoption of its budget and public dissemination of its annual audit and financial report.
6. Describe any key back-office services to be outsourced via contract, such as business services, payroll, and auditing services. Include the anticipated costs of such services and criteria for selecting such services.
7. Describe how the school will store financial records.
8. Describe the insurance coverage the school will obtain, including applicable health, workers compensation, general liability, property insurance, and directors' and officers' liability coverage.

For reviewer's use only:

Strengths
Suggestions

3. Start-Up Finances and Budget

Start-up and five-year budgets with clearly stated assumptions, start-up and first-year cash- flow projections with clearly stated assumptions, evidence of anticipated fundraising contributions, if claimed in the application, and a sound facilities plan, including backup or contingency plans, if appropriate.

i. Code of Virginia Reference(s)

Code of Virginia § 22.1-212.8 B(28)

Code of Virginia § 22.1-212.8 B(29)

Code of Virginia § 22.1-212.8 B(30)

Code of Virginia § 22.1-212.8 B(31)

ii. Board Review Criteria

1. If the site is acquired:

- Describe the proposed facility, including location, size, and layout of space.
- Describe the actions that will be taken to ensure the facility follows applicable laws, regulations, and policies and is ready for the school’s opening.
- Describe how the facility aligns with the proposed educational program and other requirements such as mandated class sizes.
- Document the anticipated costs for the facility, including renovation, rent, utilities, and maintenance. Identify, if applicable, any funding sources (other than state and local funding) that will be applied to facilities-related costs and include evidence of such (e.g. letter, MOU). If renting an existing facility, provide draft lease agreement.
- Describe the back-up facilities plan. What is the alternate plan for facilities if the proposed facility is not available or is determined to be inappropriate for the school’s opening?

2. If the site is not yet acquired:

- Explain the school’s facility needs, including desired location, size, and layout of space.
- Provide an estimate of the costs of the anticipated facility needs and describe how such estimates have been derived. Identify, if applicable, any funding sources (other than state and local funding) that will be applied to facilities-related costs and include evidence of such (e.g. letter, MOU)
- Explain the strategy and schedule that will be employed to secure an adequate facility.
- Describe the back-up facilities plan.

For reviewer’s use only:

Strengths
Suggestions

--

One of the primary *Code of Virginia* requirements for the Board of Education to review and comment on is financial soundness. To satisfy the Board criteria for “financial soundness” means a public charter school applicant demonstrates fiscal prudence through accurate and researched financial planning, purposeful spending uses, and diversified funding sources.

SECTION III FINANCIAL SOUNDNESS – OVERALL EVALUATION

SATISFIES THE BOARD CRITERIA	DOES NOT SATISFY THE BOARD CRITERIA
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Overall Strengths
Overall Suggestions

IV. OTHER OBJECTIVE CRITERIA (AS DETERMINED BY THE BOARD)

One of the primary *Code of Virginia* requirements for the Board of Education to review and comment on is “other objective criteria as determined by the Board”. To satisfy the Board criteria for “other objective criteria” means a public charter school applicant demonstrates a clear ability to serve all students with high-quality services and programs, has strong governance practices and policies, and creates an environment where every student is set up for success.

1. Governance

i. Virginia Code and Board Reference(s)

Code of Virginia § 22.1-212.8 B(8)

Code of Virginia § 22.1-212.8 B(17)

Code of Virginia § 22.1-212.8 B(16)

Code of Virginia § 22.1-212.8 B(21)

Code of Virginia § 22.1-212.8 B(15)

Code of Virginia § 22.1-212.8 B(32)

Code of Virginia § 22.1-212.8 B(33)

2016 Board Approved Criteria X

ii. Board Review Criteria

1. Provide background information on the proposed founding management committee members and, if identified, the proposed public charter school leadership and management team.
2. Include a clear description of the roles and responsibilities of the management committee, the public charter school’s leadership and management team, and any other entities shown in the organization chart.
3. Include an organization chart that clearly presents the public charter school’s organizational structure; staff; any related bodies, such as advisory bodies or parent and teacher councils; and any external organizations that will play a role in managing the public charter school.
4. Provide an organizational chart and clearly delineate the roles and responsibilities of each position on the chart as it pertains to administering the day-to-day activities of the school.
5. Present a comprehensive viable and adequate operational plan that includes oversight responsibilities related to instruction and operational services. Plan must identify the number of administrative personnel (each year for the first three years) and their oversight responsibilities related to the following areas:
 - i. Instruction
 - ii. Curriculum and Assessment (mandated State testing),
 - iii. Staff Development,
 - iv. Financial Management,
 - v. Contracted Services,
 - vi. Personnel,
 - vii. Grants Management,
 - and viii. Student Information System (SIS).
6. Identify critical skills or experience that will indicate the minimum qualification for fulfillment of those responsibilities.

7. Include policies and procedures:

- Proposed governing bylaws;
- The public charter school student’s discipline policies, including discipline policies for special education student;
- A planned school culture that is consistent with the school’s mission and congruent with the student discipline policy;
- An approach to classroom management and student discipline that is consistent with the overall school culture and philosophy;
- Recognition of legal obligations and children’s rights related to enforcing student discipline, suspension, and recommended expulsion, including the school’s code of conduct, if available;
- Consideration of how the code of conduct will apply to students with special needs; and
- Appropriate and clear roles of school administrators, teachers, staff, and the governing board regarding discipline policy implementation.

- iii. **Provide assurances that the public charter school (i) is nonreligious in its programs, admissions policies, employment practices, and all other operations and (ii) does not charge tuition.**
- iv. **Disclose any ownership or financial interest in the public charter school, by the charter applicant and the governing body, administrators, and other personnel of the proposed charter school, and a requirement that the successful applicant and the governing body, administrators, and other personnel of the public charter school shall have a continuing duty to disclose such interests during the term of any charter.**

For reviewer’s use only:

Strengths
Suggestions

2. Family and Community Engagement

- i. **Virginia Code and Board Reference(s)**
Code of Virginia § 22.1-212.8 B(24)
Code of Virginia § 22.1-212.8 B(7)
2016 Board Approved Criteria III

ii. **Board Review Criteria**

1. Include a statement of opportunities and expectations for parent involvement.
2. Describe the proposed school's philosophy around family engagement, and how it plans to promote this philosophy.
3. How do family engagement efforts support the school's broader goals and vision?
 - What are your goals for family engagement?
 - Are there plans to implement a parent/teacher association or organization?
4. Provide evidence of need and community support for the proposed public charter school.
5. Identify the target population. The response should demonstrate a clear understanding of the students and community the school intends to serve, including current levels of academic performance of the surrounding schools.
6. Present an explanation of how the implementation of the program of instruction meets the identified needs of the target population including improving pupil achievement and providing educational choice.

For reviewer's use only:

Strengths
Suggestions

3. Student Services

i. Virginia Code and Board Reference(s)

Code of Virginia § 22.1-212.8 B(12)

Code of Virginia § 22.1-212.8 B(13)

Code of Virginia § 22.1-212.8 B(22)

Code of Virginia § 22.1-212.8 B(23)

2016 Board Approved Criteria V, VIII

ii. Board Review Criteria

1. Learning Resources

Describe the public charter school's plans for identifying and successfully serving students with disabilities, students who are English language learners, students who lag behind academically, and gifted students, including compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

2. English Language Learners

- Who was not born in the United States or whose native language is a language other than English;
- Who is a Native American or Alaska Native, or a native resident of outlying areas; and (b) who comes from an environment where a language other than English has had a significant impact on the individual's level of English language proficiency; or
- Who is migratory, whose native language is a language other than English, and who comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant; and whose difficulties speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language may be sufficient to deny the individual – the ability to meet the challenging state academic standards; the ability to achieve successfully in classrooms where the language of instruction is English; or the opportunity to participate fully in society.

3. Disability

- A clear description of the programs, strategies and supports the school will provide to students with disabilities that will ensure appropriate access for students with disabilities and that the school will not discriminate based on disability.
- A clear description of how the school will ensure students with disabilities will have an equal opportunity of being selected for enrollment.
- A comprehensive and compelling plan for appropriate identification of students with special needs to ensure they are served in the least restrictive environment possible, have
- appropriate access to the general education curriculum and schoolwide educational, extra-curricular, and culture- building activities in the same manner as non-disabled students, receive required and appropriate support services as outlined in their Individual Education Plans and participate in standardized testing.

4. Include a description of cocurricular or extracurricular programs and how such programs will be funded and delivered.
5. Explain any partnerships or contractual relationships central to the public charter school’s operations or mission.
6. Describe any partnerships the school will have with community organizations, businesses, or other educational institutions to provide key academic or nonacademic services, support systems, or opportunities. For each of these partnerships, describe:
 - The nature, purposes, terms, and scope of services; how the partnership will further the school’s mission and goals; the organization’s purpose, mission, and history, if relevant; and who at the school will be responsible for managing the partnership.
7. Transportation
Describe the public charter school’s plans for providing transportation, food service, and all other significant operational and ancillary services, including:
 - Outlines a transportation plan that serves all eligible students and will not be a barrier to access for students residing within a reasonable distance of the school.
 - Describes how the transportation policy of the school is reflective of transportation expectations.
 - Outlines how the charter school will show transportation options in a transparent way on recruitment and application materials to ensure families know what’s available or not to their household.
8. Food and health services
Describe the public charter school’s plans for providing transportation, food service, and all other significant operational and ancillary services, including:
 - Outlines a food service plan that will serve all students and makes provisions for those students who may qualify for free or reduced-price lunch.
 - Outlines whether the food service plan that places an emphasis on quality, healthy foods.
 - Outlines how the charter school will show food service options in a transparent way on recruitment and application materials to ensure families know what’s available or not to their household.
 - Provides a food service plan that meets the guidelines of USDA and the requirements of the school division as it relates to food service and in compliance with state and federal law.

For reviewer’s use only:

Strengths
Suggestions

One of the primary *Code of Virginia* requirements for the Board of Education to review and comment on is “other objective criteria as determined by the Board”. To satisfy the Board criteria for “other objective criteria” means a public charter school applicant demonstrates a clear ability to serve all students with high-quality services and programs, has strong governance practices and policies, and creates an environment where every student is set up for success.

SECTION IV OTHER OBJECTIVE CRITERIA – OVERALL EVALUATION

SATISFIES THE BOARD CRITERIA	DOES NOT SATISFY THE BOARD CRITERIA
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Overall Strengths
Overall Suggestions