

**AGENDA ITEM EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Revisions to the New Charter Application**

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**Issue**

Consideration of the proposed revisions to the New Charter Application for the 2020-2021 cycle (attached).

**Statutory Provisions**

A.R.S. §15-183 requires a charter school sponsor to post on the sponsor’s website the “application, application process, and application time frames”. The law further requires that the application adopted by the sponsor include a detailed educational, business, and operational plan and any other materials required by the sponsor. Additionally, Arizona Administrative Code R7-5-201 requires the Arizona State Board for Charter Schools (“Board”) to approve an application for a new charter for a specified annual application cycle by March 31 every year.

**Background**

As part of the new charter application process, staff updates the New Charter Application and instructions to reflect the upcoming cycle. The proposed revisions to the New Charter Application for the 2020-2021 cycle include:

- Technical changes to provide clarity and transparency to the instructions.
- All relevant due dates are updated to reflect the new calendar year.
- Removing the “Applicant Instructions” sections, and replacing each with a “Section Overview” stating the purpose of the section. Instead, the instructions are communicated through a “Narrative Prompts and Evaluation Criteria” component. Any information previously contained in the Application Instructions that was not already in the evaluation criteria has been added as a new criterion for evaluation.
- The Arizona standards required for section A.6 Instructional Analysis are replaced every year with a different set of standards for each grade level span.

The table below provides the proposed substantive changes to the New Charter Application and the rationale for the change.

<b>Overview of the Application Process</b>	<b>Proposed Change and Rationale</b>
Administrative Completeness	Added information about the requirement for an applicant to be in Good Standing with the Arizona Corporation Commission (“ACC”), as well as names of the Applicant and Charter Principals being in exact alignment with what is on file with the ACC. These components have previously been required for administrative completeness, but were not clearly explained in the application instructions. The addition of this information in the instructions increases transparency for applicants regarding Board staff’s process during the administrative review process.
<b>Educational, Operational, and Business Plans</b>	<b>Proposed Change and Rationale</b>

All Sections	Criteria have been weighted to place more emphasis on key application components, and less emphasis on more administrative components of the application. Weighting has been identified for each individual evaluation criteria throughout the application.
<b>Educational Plan</b>	<b>Proposed Change and Rationale</b>
A.2 Target Population	An evaluation criteria of “Ensure the target population provided on the Target Population Page in the online application wizard is consistent with the narrative in this section” has been added to clearly inform applicants of the importance of, and check for, consistency between these application components during the substantive review.
A.3 Program of Instruction	Instructions have been added for applicants intending to operate an online school or program to contact Board staff prior to submitting an application package. This will allow the applicant to work with Board staff to understand and complete the additional components required of an applicant wishing to operate such a school or program.
A.4 School Calendar and Weekly Schedule	Evaluation criteria have been added regarding meeting requirements of new statutes related to recess and Move on When Reading Requirements. This provides transparency to applicants regarding components that Board staff will check for compliance in their first year of operation. Adding this requirement to the application requires an applicant to demonstrate knowledge of, and compliance with these requirements prior to opening.
A.5 Academic Systems Plan Area 3: Monitoring Instruction	Criteria ii and iii have been combined for clarity. Previous year applicants and Technical Review Panel (“TRP”) members expressed confusion related to these two criteria being separated. They have been combined to decrease confusion in these areas and create one cohesive section regarding the evaluation of instructional practices.
A.6 Instructional Analysis	This area experienced the most significant difference due to the weighting of the evaluation criteria. In the previous year’s application, A.6 was worth only 21 of the total points if an applicant was serving grades K-2, and 105 of the total points if an applicant was serving grades K-12. This area is proposed to be worth a total of 10 points, regardless of the number of grades served, making it of equal importance for all applicants. The applicant will still be provided an evaluation and feedback on each individual analysis document. However, the score out of 10 will be determined as follows: Each instructional analysis document will be scored for a total of 5 points per instructional analysis document. Once each individual instructional analysis document has been assigned its point value, a total score will be assigned for all instructional analysis documents together. Then, a percentage of the possible points will

	<p>be calculated. The percentage will determine the number of points (out of 10) that an applicant will receive for this section.</p> <p>For example, if an applicant is applying to serve grades K-5, it will submit 7 instructional analysis documents worth a total of 35 points. If the document scores, when added together, total 30 points, the applicant’s percentage will be 85.7%. Therefore, the applicant would receive 8.57 out of 10 points for this component of the Educational Plan.</p>
<p><b>Business Plan</b></p>	<p><b>Proposed Change and Rationale</b></p>
<p>C.2 Marketing and Student Enrollment</p>	<p>A Required Exhibit has been added to this section. In addition to describing enrollment processes, the applicant will be required to provide the enrollment form that will be used at the school. This will allow the TRP and Board staff to evaluate the form that will be used for compliance.</p> <p>An additional evaluation criteria has been added, requiring an applicant to “Ensure all processes, procedures, and documentation used in the enrollment process are compliant with all applicable state and federal statutes, Rules, and policies.” This broadens the previous criteria, which only required compliance with A.R.S. §15-184, which is not consistent with the level of compliance required by the Board in the area of enrollment practices.</p>