CORE RESOURCE

REPLICATION
APPLICATION

EVALUATION CRITERIA ADDENDUM

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NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORIZERS

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REPLICATION APPLICATION EVALUATION CRITERIA

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RATINGS AND CRITERIA OVERVIEW

Evaluators will use the following criteria to rate applicant responses to the Request for Qualifications. Within each section, specific criteria define the expectations for a strong response that "Meets the Standard." Evaluators will rate responses by applying the following guidance:

RATING	CHARACTERISTICS
Meets or Exceed the Standard	The response reflects a thorough understanding of key issues. It addresses the topic with specific and accurate information that shows thorough preparation; presents a clear, realistic picture of how the school expects to operate; and inspires confidence in the applicant's capacity to carry out the plan effectively.
Partially Meets the Standard	The response meets the criteria in some respects, but lacks detail and/or requires additional information in one or more areas.
Does Not Meet the Standard	The response is wholly undeveloped or significantly incomplete; demonstrates lack of preparation; is unsuited to the mission of the authorizer or otherwise raises substantial concerns about the viability of the plan or the applicant's ability to carry it out.

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Recommendations from the Evaluation Team will be based on evaluation of the written application (narrative and attachments), independent due diligence, and the applicant interview.

In addition to meeting the criteria that are specific to that section, each part of the proposal should align with the overall mission and vision, educational program, and operations and financial plans.

NOTE: The term "organization" as used throughout the replication addendum applies to any applicant or partnership among groups applying to replicate a school model. Thus, it may include an existing school or group of schools proposing to replicate; an existing school network or charter management organization (CMO) applying directly for a charter; a governing board proposing to contract with a CMO or other education service provider (ESP); or other entities and arrangements. *In the case of an applicant proposing to contract or partner with a service provider, applicants should provide requested information for both entities if applicable.*

SECTION 1. CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN SUPPLEMENT

NOTE: *This addendum section is required of ALL applicants seeking approval for multiple schools, replication of existing schools or school models, or governance of multiple schools by a single board of directors, including applicants intending to contract with a third-party ESP.*

A strong Curriculum and Instructional Design Supplement will have the following characteristics:

- Clear and compelling description of the organization's approach to replicating and implementing the school mode, including curriculum and instructional design among multiple schools.
- Sensible rationale and identified resources for any key educational features that would differ from the organization's current model.

SECTION 2. APPLICATIONS FOR MULTIPLE SCHOOLS AND APPLICATIONS FROM CHARTER MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATIONS OR NETWORKS

NOTE: *This section is required of all applicants seeking approval for multiple schools, replication of existing schools or school models, and governance of multiple schools by a single board of directors, including applicants seeking approval of multiple schools who are intending to contract with a third-party ESP. If an applicant believes that a particular question in this section is not applicable to their proposal, the applicant should so state and provide an explanation as to why the applicant believes the question does not apply.*

Network Vision, Growth Plan & Capacity

A strong description of the Network Vision, Growth Plan, and Capacity for quality school replication will have the following characteristics:

- Well-defined, thoughtful strategic vision and five-year growth plan for developing new schools locally and elsewhere, if applicable. This should include: years of opening; number and types of schools; all currently targeted markets/communities and criteria for selecting them; and projected numbers of students.
- *(If the organization's growth plan includes areas outside of the authorizer's jurisdiction)* Meaningful focus on the authorizer's locale and commitment of organizational resources to support quality school replication as proposed.
- Demonstrated financial, organizational, and management capacity to execute the school replication plan successfully – and to support and ensure the quality and long-term success of all proposed schools – as evidenced by:
    1. The organization's annual report for the last two years;
    2. A sound, well-developed business plan;
    3. Sound description of tasks and timelines for building or deploying organizational capacity to support the proposed schools; and
    4. Successful school development, management, and replication experience.
- Demonstrated ability to learn from past school management/replication challenges, including thoughtful discussion of specific challenges and mitigation strategies.
- Thoughtful consideration of risks and challenges to achieving desired outcomes in the authorizer's locale over the next five years and realistic, effective strategies for addressing them.

Network Management

A strong description of Network Management for quality school replication will have the following characteristics:

- Highly capable network leadership team with sensibly defined roles and responsibilities and demonstrated capacity to lead the short- and long-term success of the school(s) as part of the growing network.
- Sound plan and structure for any shared or centralized support services, including description of services, network staffing, costs (amount and allocation aligned with budget), and specific service goals.
- Clear, effective assignment of school- and organization-level decision-making responsibility for key functions such as curriculum, culture, staffing, etc. *(using table provided)*.
- Clear, sensible, complete organization charts depicting the governance and management structure for (a) the _network_ as a whole (including both network management and schools within the network) in _Years 1, 3, and 5_; and (b) the _school model_ (one school) in _Year 1_ and at _full expansion_. The charts should delineate sound assignment of roles and responsibilities – and clear lines of authority among – (as applicable) the board, all management staff, any related bodies or councils, and any external organizations that will play a management role. The charts should also present clear lines of authority and reporting within the school.
- Sound, clear plan for managing the relationship between the governing board and school administration.

Network Governance and Legal Status

A strong description of the plan and capacity for Network Governance and Legal Status will have the following characteristics:

- Proposed school's legal status and structure are in compliance with state law.
- Governing bylaws, policies, and procedures are comprehensive and sound.
- Clear description of an effective governance structure at both the network and individual school levels, including an explanation of whether each school/campus will have an independent governing board, whether there will be a single network-level board governing multiple schools, or both a network-level board and boards at individual schools.
- *(If applicable)* Clear description of the organizational relationship between the network-level board and boards at each school, including the legal status of each board, and the scope of authority of each.
- *(If applicable)* Clear description of an effective governance structure in the absence of a network-level board.
- *(If applicable)* Clear, appropriate plans for the board(s) to evaluate the success of the school(s) and school leader(s).
- Proposed board members who demonstrate *(as documented by resumes, bios, and Board Information sheets for all currently-identified proposed members)*: (a) will, capacity and commitment to govern the school(s)/network effectively; and (b) shared vision, purposes and expectations for the school(s)/network.
- Evidence that the proposed governing board members will contribute the wide range of knowledge, skills, and commitment needed to oversee a successful charter school including educational, financial, legal, and community experience and expertise.
- *(If applicable)* Sound, timely plan for enlarging or otherwise changing the governing board to govern multiple schools, including a sound plan and timeline for board recruitment, expansion, orientation of new members, and ongoing training for members. Plan should include a thoughtful identification of desired experience and capacities beyond what the board already possesses and necessary for the governance of multiple schools.
- *(If applicable) If there will be a network-level board*, plan for clear identification and plan for addressing board development needs relative to growth.

Human Capital

A strong description of the Human Capital plan will have the following characteristics:

Network Leadership
- Sound plans for sourcing and training potential leaders for future campuses and for developing a pipeline of potential leaders for the network. Existing leadership pipeline is adequate to meet growth projections and includes strong candidates for future schools.

Network-wide Staffing
- Sensible five-year network staffing that will support high-quality replication at the scale proposed,

while continuing success in existing schools.

School Staff Structure
- Sensible staffing rollout plan for the school model(s) aligned with the educational program and conducive to school success.
- Effective structure and strategies for managing the administration-staff relationship.
- Sensible allocation of school vs. network responsibilities for staffing.

Professional Development
- Sensible allocation of school vs. network responsibilities for professional development, including demonstrated understanding of and preparation for professional development needs that are common to all schools in the network.

Network Performance Management

A strong description of the Performance Management plan will have the following characteristics:

- *(Optional; may be network-level or school-level)* Meaningful mission-specific educational and/or organizational goals and targets, which are measurable or demonstrable by externally credible measures or assessments.
- Quality interim assessments that are aligned with (each) school's curriculum, performance goals, and state standards.
- Effective plan (including qualified personnel) and system for measuring and evaluating academic progress – of individual students, student cohorts, each school, and the network as a whole – throughout the school year, at the end of each academic year, and for the charter term.
- Comprehensive, effective plan (including qualified personnel) and system for collecting and analyzing student academic achievement data, using the data to refine and improve instruction – including providing training and support to school leadership and teachers – and reporting the data to the school community. This should include identification of the student data system to be used, as well as qualified personnel who will be responsible for managing and interpreting the data for teachers and leading or coordinating data-driven professional development.
- Thoughtful, appropriate corrective actions the school and network will take if either falls short of the authorizer's (or the operator's) goals at any level, including explanation of what would trigger such actions and who would implement them.
- Sound plan for monitoring performance of the portfolio as a whole and thoughtfully considering portfolio performance in decisions regarding continued growth and replication.

SECTION 3. PERFORMANCE EVALUATION INFORMATION

NOTE: *This section is required of any applicant intending to replicate an existing school or school model, including applicants that are part of a charter management organization or network or who intend to contract with a third-party education service provider. Authorizer staff will conduct additional due diligence on the performance and quality of the applicant organization and its existing schools, based on information*

provided by the applicant and other sources. A report on this due diligence will be provided to the reviewers for consideration as part of the evaluation process.

A strong description of the organization's performance will have the following characteristics:

- Complete information provided for all schools in the organization's portfolio as required by the Existing Schools Information Template.
- Strong academic, financial and organizational performance for school in the organization's portfolio, particularly for those schools using similar model and serving similar student populations to the proposed schools (based on due diligence).
- Thoughtful discussion of a high-performing school in the network, including the evidence basis for judging the school as high-performing; causes for success; challenges overcome; and how the school's effective practices have been implemented elsewhere in the network
- Thoughtful discussion of a less-than-satisfactory school in the network, including the evidence basis for judging the school unsatisfactory; causes of problems; and specific strategies and expectations (performance levels and timeframe) for improvement
- Strong academic, organizational, and financial performance of network schools operating in Tennessee, documented by the most recent performance/evaluation/renewal reports produced by the authorizer (or other evaluator, if applicable)
- Satisfactory performance record and demonstrated capacity to learn from past challenges/mistakes, demonstrated by the following: a) Record of any charter management contract terminations or non-renewals; charter terminations, non-renewals, shortened or conditional renewals, withdrawals or non-openings; performance deficiencies or violations that have led to formal authorizer intervention (past three years); or current or past litigation involving the organization or any of its schools; and b) Thoughtful, well-reasoned, and evidence-based discussion of any such experiences by the organization

SECTION 4. THIRD-PARTY EDUCATION SERVICE PROVIDERS

NOTE: *This addendum section is required of any applicant intending to contract with a third-party Education Service Provider (ESP). An ESP is defined as an entity that is providing primary education services for a school even though the entity providing the services is not the governing board that holds the charter. If the applicant intends to contract with an ESP provide the following additional information:*

ESP Selection

A strong description of the selection of a third-party ESP will have the following characteristics:

- Compelling justification for the decision to contract with an ESP rather than operate the school(s) directly.
- Compelling explanation of how and why the ESP was selected including when and how the applicant learned of the ESP, which other ESPs were considered, why the ESP was selected over other ESPs,

and what due diligence was conducted.

ESP Track-Record

A strong description of the ESP's track-record will have the following characteristics:

- Evidence of the ESP's success in serving populations similar to the population that the applicant intends to serve, including evidence of academic success and successful management of non-academic school functions (e.g., back- office services, school operations, extracurricular programs).
- Evidence that the applicant conducted reference checks on the ESP.
- Evidence of the financial health of the ESP as demonstrated through an independent financial audit report and its most recent annual report.
- No evidence of any management contract terminations or charter revocations, non-renewals, withdrawals, or failures to open.

Legal Relationships

A strong description of the applicants and ESP's legal relationships will have the following characteristics:

- Evidence that the board is independent from the ESP and self-governing, including separate legal representation of each and arms-length negotiating.
- No existing or potential conflicts of interest between the school's governing board and proposed ESP or any affiliated business entities.
- No unexplained or unjustified relationships between the school and any subsidiary or related entities of the ESP.
- Clear and detailed explanation of the supervisory responsibilities of the ESP (if any), including which school employees the ESP will supervise, how the ESP will supervise these employees, and how the charter school board will oversee the ESP supervisory responsibilities.
- Detailed explanation and compelling justification of any lease, promissory notes or other negotiable instruments, any lease-purchase agreements or other financing relationships with the ESP, including evidence that such agreements are separately documented and not part of or incorporated in the ESP agreement. Such agreements must be consistent with the school's authority to terminate the ESP agreement and continue operation of the school.
- Detailed explanation and compelling justification of any loans, grants, or investments made between the ESP and the school, including an explanation and justification of how any such loans, grants, or investments may be initiated, repaid, and refused by the school.

Organizational Structure

A strong description of the applicants and ESP's legal relationships will have the following characteristics:

- Detailed description of the roles and responsibilities of the ESP.
- Detailed explanation the scope of services and costs of all resources to be provided by the ESP.

- Detailed description of the oversight and evaluation methods that the board will use to oversee the ESP, including school-wide and student achievement results which the management organization is responsible for achieving, and a description of how often, and in what ways, the board will review
- and evaluate the ESP's progress toward achieving agreed-upon goals?
- Detailed explanation of the conditions, standards, and procedures for board intervention, if the management organization's performance is deemed unsatisfactory.
- Detailed explanation of the compensation structure, including clear identification of all fees to be paid to the ESP and the schedule on which the ESP will receive compensation.
- Detailed explanation of the financial responsibilities of the ESP, including the ownership of items purchased with public funds, including which operating and capital expenditures each party will be responsible for assuming, what types of spending decisions the ESP can make without obtaining board approval, and what reports ESP submit to the board on financial performance, and on what schedule.
- Detailed description of the duration, renewal and termination of the management agreement, including how often the management agreement may be renewed, the conditions that both the ESP and the school must satisfy for the management agreement to be renewed and the procedures for determining whether the management agreement will be renewed.
- Detailed description of the grounds for which the ESP or the school can terminate the management agreement for cause (including provisions for notice to the other party, and any conditions under which either party may terminate the management agreement without cause.
- Explanation and justification of any indemnification provisions in the event of default or breach by either party.
- A compelling plan for the operation of the school in the case that the management agreement is terminated.

Management Agreement

In addition to provisions that align with the descriptions and explanations evaluated under the Legal Relationships and Organizational Structure sections above, a sound management agreement will have the following characteristics:

- Clearly defined terms.
- Fairly and reasonably distributed rights and responsibilities.
- Evidence of equitable bargaining power and balanced contractual authority.

Reviewers should also review the agreement to ensure that it addresses the following key areas:

- Roles and Responsibilities
- Contract Duration, Renewal and Termination
- Performance Oversight and Evaluation
- Compensation and Finances
- Intellectual and Physical Property
- Contingency Planning for Terminated Contracts

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About NACSA

The National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) is dedicated to improving the quality of public education by improving the performance of charter school authorizers. NACSA is the oldest national organization devoted exclusively to strengthening charter schools by developing outstanding authorizers and is the trusted resource and innovative leader working with public officials and education leaders to increase the number of high-quality charter schools in cities and states across the nation. NACSA provides training, consulting, and policy guidance to authorizers and education leaders interested in increasing the number of high-quality schools and improving student outcomes.

About NACSA's Knowledge Core

NACSA's Knowledge Core is a new interactive web-based knowledge and learning portal designed to serve the professional needs of both novice and experienced charter school authorizers in carrying out their complex work. From the basics of authorizing to advanced topics, NACSA's Knowledge Core provides a rich array of core authorizing resources, training, guidance, practical tools, and professional networking opportunities to deepen NACSA members' knowledge and help them meet NACSA's *Principles & Standards for Quality Charter Authorizing*. NACSA's Knowledge Core includes short interactive courses and self-paced, multimedia learning modules; easy-to-customize templates, protocols, and policies; a dashboard to track individual learning progress; and a discussion forum and searchable peer network to facilitate knowledge sharing among members.