



Charter School Application
For
New School Operators

Revised August 2021

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Introduction

Thank you for your interest in applying to the Indiana Charter School Board (“ICSB”) for a new charter school. ICSB’s work is guided by five core principles:

- 1) Students First. When performing its duties, ICSB always assesses whether its actions will further the best interests of students.
- 2) High Expectations. ICSB expects the charter schools it authorizes to set high academic achievement expectations, develop strong plans for family and community engagement, and adhere to high ethical standards for students, staff, and board members. Similarly, ICSB establishes high performance expectations and ethical standards for itself.
- 3) Excellence in Leadership. Operating a high-performing charter school requires leadership from both the school board and administrative staff. ICSB authorizes schools that can demonstrate strong leadership at both the school governance and administrative levels.
- 4) Commitment to Innovation. ICSB is particularly interested in operators that show strong potential to accelerate student success through different school models, instructional strategies, uses of technology, staffing models, governance arrangements, family and community engagement strategies, and other approaches.
- 5) Rigorous and Transparent Accountability. ICSB holds schools accountable for performance through rigorous and transparent accountability mechanisms that uphold schools’ autonomy, foster excellence, and protect student and public interests.

Each application will be carefully evaluated for its alignment with ICSB’s core principles and compliance with applicable law. Only those applicants who can demonstrate the capacity to operate high-performing charter schools will receive charters from ICSB. The final decision on all charter school applications will be made by ICSB’s governing board in a public meeting.

Application Description

An applicant group should file an Application for New School Operators if the group has not previously operated a charter school and is not planning to contract with an education service provider (“ESP”) for comprehensive education management services. An ESP is defined as a “for profit education management organization, nonprofit charter management organization, school design provider, or any other partner entity with which a charter school intends to contract for educational design, implementation, or comprehensive management.”

If you have any questions about the application or are unsure which application to submit, please send an email to: charter-applications@icsb.in.gov. Additional information and application resources can be found on ICSB's website: <http://www.in.gov/icsb/>.

Virtual and Blended Model Charter Schools

ICSB welcomes all proposed school designs, including blended and virtual models.

A “virtual charter school” is defined by Indiana Code as any charter school in which more than fifty percent (50%) of instruction is provided in an interactive learning environment created through technology in which students are separated from their teacher by time or space, or both. A virtual charter school may only be authorized by a statewide charter authorizer and may only enroll students who are residents of Indiana.

There is no separate definition for a “blended” or “hybrid” school. The school either meets the definition of a virtual charter school or it does not. If it does not, it is treated like a traditional brick and mortar school and is not subject to the additional virtual charter school requirements.

While Indiana changed the way that it funds virtual instruction that places less emphasis on whether a school qualifies as a “virtual charter school,” virtual charter schools are subject to additional requirements, including student onboarding, student engagement and attendance (including the methodology used to determine attendance), tracking and monitoring student participation, and teacher training.

These requirements can be found in Indiana Code (“IC”) §§ [20-24-5-4.5](#) & [20-24-7-13](#). Virtual charter schools are responsible, in partnership with ICSB, in ensuring compliance with these requirements.

Funding for Virtual Instruction

Prior to the 2019 SY, a charter school that met the definition of a “virtual charter school” (any charter school providing more than fifty percent (50%) of its instruction virtually) received eighty-five percent (85%) of the foundation amount for all students receiving instruction at the school.

Beginning with the 2019-20 SY, virtual instruction is now determined and funded on a per-student rather than per-school basis. Any student at any public school, including a charter school, for whom at least fifty percent (50%) of the instructional services received from the school is virtual instruction is considered a “virtual student” and the school receives eighty-five percent (85%) of the foundation amount for that student.

Application and Submission Instructions

Application Process

ICSB's Application Timeline for 2021 may be found here: <https://www.in.gov/icsb/apply-for-a-charter/application-timeline/>. Beginning in 2022, ICSB will be moving towards a more flexible submission process. Please refer to the "Apply for a Charter" section of ICSB's website for the most up to date information.

Letter of Intent

An applicant group who wishes to submit a Charter Application may start the process by submitting a non-binding [Letter of Intent](#) to the following email address: charter-applications@icsb.in.gov.

Application

All charter applications and associated documents (including the letter of intent) may be found under "Application Documents" on ICSB's website: <https://www.in.gov/icsb/apply-for-a-charter/application-documents/>.

Capacity Interview and Public Hearing

After submission and acceptance of a completed Charter Application, ICSB will reach out to the applicant group's designated representative to schedule a capacity interview. Only those individuals who are designated as part of the applicant group or as proposed or existing members of the governing board will be permitted to participate in the capacity interview. ICSB staff will use the capacity interview to address specific questions and concerns raised by the Charter Application, and to assess the capacity of the group to implement the proposed program effectively. The capacity interview is ninety (90) minutes long. ICSB staff reserves the right to ask for additional information to clarify and/or support specific answers given in the capacity interview. The requested information must be submitted within five (5) business days of the time of the request.

As required by Indiana law, a public hearing will be held to allow for comments from community members about the school. ICSB hosts public hearings within the school corporation where the charter school is located which are attended by ICSB staff and Board members. The purpose of the public hearing is for ICSB representatives to receive comments from community members about the potential impact of the proposed school on the community. The hearing is not a question-and-answer session between the public attendees and the applicant group or ICSB.

In addition to, or in lieu of, attending public hearings, community members may submit public comments via email to the following address: charter-applications@icsb.in.gov. Please note that all emails are subject to Indiana's public access laws including the Access to Public Records Act ("APRA"), which may be found at [IC § 5-14-3](#). Those submitting a public comment are asked to provide their name and the name of the charter school along with their comment.

ICSB Board Meeting

Approximately one (1) week prior to the ICSB application Board Meeting, ICSB staff will contact the designated representative for the applicant group to inform them of the staff recommendation for the school. At this time, the applicant group may choose to continue the application process and present to ICSB members or the applicant group may “withdraw” its application from consideration which means that, while ICSB members will be provided with a copy of the staff recommendation, no discussion or vote will occur with respect to the application. Applicants who withdraw because the staff recommendation is declination or who are declined by the ICSB board may amend its application and reapply to ICSB at a later date or may submit an application to another authorizer.

During the meeting, ICSB board members hear ICSB staff recommendations, conduct a question-and-answer session with the members of the applicant group, and hold a roll call vote to approve or decline the application. Following the meeting, all decisions of the ICSB board are posted on ICSB’s website. ICSB application meetings are open to the public and streamed live over the internet.

Submission Instructions

All submissions are final. Applicants are responsible for ensuring that the Application and all documents submitted as part of the Application are responsive and complete by the submission deadline. Applicants should carefully review the Application and all documents referenced therein, including ICSB’s Charter Application FAQ, and use the Application Checklist as a guide.

ICSB reserves the right to reject all untimely or incomplete Applications.

Once an applicant group has submitted a letter of intent, the applicant group’s designated representative will be provided with a specific timeline and email address to which the Charter Application and all attachments must be sent along with specific submission instructions. ICSB is currently in the process of transitioning from one submission platform to another and ICSB will notify applicants if these submission instructions change.

ICSB will stop accepting email submissions at 11:59 p.m. ET on the date specified in the timeline. The application must be complete and submitted before that time. For planning purposes, ICSB recommends that applicants begin emailing the Application and all required attachments at minimum one day prior to the deadline. Combining the Application Narrative and required attachments into one Portable Document (“PDF”) file may take some time, so this step in the application preparation process should commence well in advance of the deadline. No hard copy submission is required.

Specifications

The Application must be typed and single-spaced, on letter-sized paper, with 1-inch page margins

and a minimum of 11-point font. The Application Overview and Narrative must be in either Microsoft (“MS”) Word or PDF format. **PDF documents must be created electronically from the original document files and should not be scanned from hardcopy documents.** All Attachments must be numbered, clearly labeled, comply with the page limit requirements, and in the format specified in the Application Checklist attached hereto as Exhibit A. If a specific question does not apply to your application, please respond “Not Applicable.”

Do not exceed the listed page limits. ICSB will exclude information from its review that exceeds these limits.

Notice of Disclosure

All information submitted as part of an application (including financial information) is subject to APRA and may be subject to review and copying by the public, including the media, unless either: 1) the applicant specifically requests that certain information be withheld (and cites the appropriate exception to disclosure); or 2) ICSB independently determines that it must withhold from disclosure certain information in the application. In the event there is a dispute between ICSB and the applicant as to whether certain information is disclosable, the applicant must obtain an advisory opinion from the State of Indiana’s Public Access Counselor supporting the applicant’s position. The applicant and its representatives, employees, and agents acknowledge and agree that ICSB Board members and staff, and any official, agent, employee or representative of the State of Indiana shall not be held liable or legally responsible in any way for any such disclosure pursuant to APRA, and such parties hereby waive any rights to redress or claims of action pursuant to any such disclosure.

Charter School Application

ICSB is committed to authorizing high-performing charter schools. Only those applicants that can demonstrate strong academic performance, fiscal responsibility, and legal and organizational compliance are likely to receive approval. Respond to the following questions, limiting your narrative response (beginning with Section I) to sixty (60) total pages, excluding attachments.

Application Overview

Complete the Application Overview attached hereto as Exhibit B. As part of the Overview, each applicant must also complete an Enrollment Plan which, if an application is approved, becomes part of the applicant's charter. Enrollment Plans may be found here (complete Tab 1 only):

- [Enrollment Plan for K-12 Schools](#)
- [Enrollment Plan for Adult High Schools](#)

Executive Summary

In five (5) pages or less, provide an executive summary of your proposal, including a concise overview of the school's mission and vision, the educational needs and/or demand of the targeted community, community engagement and partnerships, the school's education plan or design, and the applicant's capacity (governance and leadership) to open and operate a successful school.

Section I: Evidence of Capacity

- 1) Provide, as **Attachment 1**, current resumes for each member of the governing board, the school leader, key staff members, and any third parties who are or will be involved in the school's development, governance and/or operation.
- 2) For each individual identified above, highlight the qualifications for or experience with establishing a high-quality charter public school in Indiana and assuming stewardship of public funds, including capacity in areas such as:
 - a) School leadership, administration, and governance.
 - b) Curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
 - c) Financial, business, and human resources.
 - d) Performance management.
 - e) Parent and community engagement.
 - f) Facilities management
 - g) Legal compliance.
- 3) Describe the governance structure of the proposed school, including description of meetings

to date, planned frequency of meetings, standing committees, and compliance with Indiana's Public Access Laws. Explain how the proposed governance structure and composition will help ensure that there will be active and effective oversight of the charter school. Describe the current and desired size and composition of the governing board. In **Attachment 2**, provide a completed and signed Statement of Economic Interest & Conflict of Interest Form, attached hereto as Exhibit C, for each governing board member.

- 4) If applicable, describe any advisory bodies or councils, including the planned composition, roles and duties, and the reporting structure with respect to the governing board and school leadership.
- 5) If a school leader has been identified, explain why this individual is qualified to lead the school in achieving its mission. Summarize the proposed leader's academic and organizational leadership record, including specific evidence that demonstrates the leader's capacity to oversee a high-performing charter school. If no candidate has yet been identified, provide your timeline, criteria, and process for recruiting and hiring a school leader. Describe the responsibilities of the school's leadership/management team.
- 6) If the proposed school leader has been involved in the founding of the school, describe how the board will hold the candidate accountable despite the individual's personal connection to the development of the school. Provide a description of the process the governing board will use to replace the school leader should the candidate choose to leave or is terminated.
- 7) If key members of the school's administrative/management team (beyond the school leader) have been identified in the answer to question 2, describe their responsibilities and qualifications. If these positions have not yet been filled, explain your timeline, criteria, and process for recruitment and hiring.
- 8) Describe the decision-making authority of the governing board, school leader, and ESP (if applicable) as it relates to key functions, including curriculum, culture, performance goals, school policies, recruitment and hiring, community relations, facilities management, contracting and procurement, budget, finance, and accounting. Indicate where primary authority for each function resides.

Section II: School Design

Innovation

ICSB is particularly interested in applications that propose school models with strong potential to accelerate student success through different school designs, curriculum, instructional strategies, uses of technology, staffing models, governance arrangements, family and community engagement

strategies, and other approaches. In your answers to Section II, summarize any innovation(s) embodied in the proposed school design and/or implementation plan, including:

- 1) An explanation of how the proposed model is different from traditional school models.
- 2) Any available evidentiary basis for the efficacy of the model or for the ideas underlying the model.
- 3) An explanation of how the model will still permit ICSB to hold the operator to the same high accountability standards to which it holds all authorized schools.

Curriculum and Instructional Design

- 1) Provide a framework for the proposed instructional design that reflects the needs of the school's target population and will ensure all students meet or exceed the Indiana College and Career Ready Academic Standards adopted by the Indiana State Board of Education. More information about each content area and the Indiana Academic Standards can be found on the Indiana Department of Education ("IDOE") website: <https://www.in.gov/doe/students/indiana-academic-standards/>. At a minimum, the description should include:
 - a) The basic learning environment (e.g., classroom-based, independent study, virtual),
 - b) Class size and structure,
 - c) An overview of the curriculum,
 - d) The use of technology in delivering instruction (if applicable),
 - e) Plans for ensuring the school is staffed with highly effective teachers, and
 - f) Any relevant evidence-based support.
- 2) Specify instructional strategies that the school will implement to support the education plan and why they are well-suited for your targeted student population. Describe the methods and systems that teachers will use to provide differentiated instruction, remediation, and intervention to meet the needs of all students. This description must provide a clear and cohesive vision for the school.
- 3) Provide, as **Attachment 3**, a core curriculum scope and sequence by subject, for each grade level proposed, that demonstrates clear alignment with Indiana's Academic Standards. The scope and sequence should clearly reflect how the school's curriculum is integrated across subjects and grade levels served, and how it will result in proficiency. If the curriculum is not yet fully developed, provide a timeline outlining the curriculum development process (including individuals and/or consultants responsible for this task) during the school's pre-opening year.
- 4) Provide, as **Attachment 4**, the school's proposed calendar for the first year of operation, as well as the weekly schedule of classes. Provide an overview of academic and non-academic programs, as well as the total number of instructional days in an academic year. Note the

length of the school day, including start and dismissal times. Detail the number of instructional hours/minutes in the day for core subjects such as language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies.

- 5) *For schools planning to provide virtual instruction:* Describe the number of hours per day that instruction at your proposed school will be delivered through virtual distance learning, online technologies, and/or computer-based instruction. Does your proposed education model meet the definition of a virtual charter school as defined under Indiana law?

Pupil Performance Standards

Provide the proposed school model's pupil performance standards, consistent with Indiana's Academic Standards. In particular:

- 1) Provide, as **Attachment 5**, the school's Academic and, if applicable, Exit, Standards for students *for each division of the school* as applicable (elementary, middle and/or high school). Exit standards should clearly set forth what students in the last grade in each division will know and be able to do.
- 2) Explain the school's policies and standards for promoting students from one grade to the next. How and when will promotion and graduation criteria be communicated to parents and students?
- 3) Graduation Requirements (High Schools Only)
 - a) High schools approved by ICSB will be expected to meet Indiana graduation requirements, as described in [IC § 20-32-4](#) and explained in more detail here: <https://www.in.gov/doi/students/graduation-pathways/>.
 - b) Explain how the school will meet these requirements. Explain how students will earn credit hours, how grade-point averages will be calculated, what information will be on transcripts, and what elective courses will be offered. If graduation requirements for the school will exceed those required by the State of Indiana, explain any additional requirements.
 - c) Explain how your graduation requirements will ensure student readiness for college or other postsecondary opportunities (trade school, military service, or entering the workforce).
 - d) Explain what systems and structures the school will implement for students at risk of dropping out of high school and/or not meeting the proposed graduation requirements.

Special Populations and At-Risk Students

<p>As public schools, charter schools are responsible for meeting the needs of all students enrolled at the school, including those identified with special needs. School personnel are</p>
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required to participate in developing Individualized Education Programs (“IEPs”), to identify and refer students for assessment of special education needs, to maintain records, and to cooperate in the delivery of special education instruction and services, as appropriate.

Indiana’s special education regulations may be found in [Article 7](#) of Title 511 of the Indiana Administrative Code (“IAC”). More practical information can be found on IDOE’s website: <https://www.in.gov/doe/students/special-education/>, including IDOE’s special education handbook: [Navigating the Course: Finding Your Way through Indiana’s Special Education Rules](#).

- 1) Summarize the school’s plan to serve students with special needs, including but not limited to those with IEPs, students with Section 504 plans, English Learners (“EL”), students identified as intellectually gifted, and students at risk of academic failure or dropping out. Identify the special populations and at-risk groups that the school expects to serve, whether through deliberate targeting or otherwise.
- 2) Explain how the school will identify and meet the learning needs of students with mild, moderate, and severe disabilities in the least restrictive environment. Specify the programs, strategies and supports you will provide for students with mild, moderate, and severe disabilities, including:
 - a) How the school will identify students with special education needs.
 - b) The specific, evidence-based instructional programs, practices, and strategies the school will employ to provide a continuum of services, ensure students’ access to the general education curriculum, and ensure academic success for students with special education needs.
 - c) How the school will regularly evaluate and monitor the progress and success of special education students with mild, moderate, and severe needs to ensure the attainment of each student’s goals set forth in the IEP.
 - d) If applicable, the school’s plan for promoting graduation for students with special education needs.
 - e) How the school will provide qualified staffing for students with special education needs.
- 3) Explain how the school will meet the needs of EL students, including:
 - a) How the school will identify EL students.
 - b) The specific instructional programs, practices, and strategies the school will employ to ensure academic success and equitable access to the core academic program for these students.
 - c) How the school will assess and monitor the progress and success of EL students, including exiting students from EL services.
 - d) How the school will provide qualified staffing for EL students.

- 4) Explain how the school will identify and meet the learning needs of students who are performing below grade level and monitor their progress. Specify the programs, strategies and supports you will provide for these students.
- 5) Explain how the school will identify and meet the needs of intellectually gifted students, including:
 - a) The specific evidence-based instructional programs, practices, strategies, and opportunities the school will employ or provide to enhance their abilities.
 - b) How the school will provide qualified staffing for intellectually gifted students.
 - c) How the school will assess and monitor the progress and success of intellectually gifted students.
- 6) *For schools planning to provide virtual instruction:* Describe the unique challenges presented when serving special populations in a partially or wholly virtual environment. What steps will you take to ensure that your students are being provided the services required by law? Provide specific examples.

Performance Management

ICSB evaluates each charter school's performance according to a set of academic, financial, and organizational compliance performance standards that are incorporated into the charter agreement. The academic performance standards will consider proficiency, growth, and comparative performance based on state standards and ICSB policies. A complete description of ICSB's Accountability System, including the required Accountability Plan performance indicators incorporated into each school's charter agreement, is available here: <https://www.in.gov/icsb/school-performance/icsb-accountability-system/>.

- 1) In addition to the indicators and measures described above, what other student performance goals does the governing board expect the school to achieve by the end of the first five-year charter term? Goals must be specific and measurable and must include a timeline by which the governing board will determine whether the school has achieved those student performance goals. Note: Goals may include both academic proficiency goals as well as non-academic measures, e.g. attendance, discipline, retention, participation in extra-curricular activities.
- 2) In addition to mandatory state assessment and testing requirements (e.g., ILEARN, IREAD-3, IAM, GQE, etc.), identify the primary interim assessments the school will use to assess student learning needs and progress throughout the year (e.g., DIBELS, Acuity, TABE). More information and guidelines about formative/interim assessments and the formative assessment grant can be found here: <https://www.in.gov/doe/students/assessment/>.

- 3) Explain how the school will collect and analyze student academic achievement data, use the data to refine and improve instruction, and report the data to the school community. If known, identify the person(s), position(s), and/or entities that will be responsible and involved in the collection and analysis of assessment data.
- 4) Describe the information system the school will use to manage student performance data. Identify the staff member(s) who will be responsible for warehousing the data, interpreting the data for classroom teachers, and leading or coordinating professional development to improve student achievement.
- 5) Explain the training and support that school leadership and teachers will receive in analyzing, interpreting, and using performance data to improve student learning.
- 6) Describe the actions the governing board or school will take if the school falls short of student academic achievement expectations or goals as established by ICSB. Explain what would trigger such actions and who would be responsible for implementing them.

Staffing

- 1) Provide, as **Attachment 6**, an organizational chart for the proposed school at Year 1 and at full capacity. The chart should identify all administrative, operational, instructional, and non-instructional personnel, as well as any paraprofessionals or specialty teachers and clearly delineate the roles and responsibilities of the governing board and staff.
- 2) Describe your strategy and timeline for recruiting and hiring teachers in accordance with [IC § 20-24-6-5](#) (charter school teacher qualifications). Explain key selection criteria and any special considerations relevant to your school design. What key partnerships will support staff hiring? Identify known sources from which you will recruit teachers. Explain how you will secure teachers in historically hard to find subjects, such as science and math, and certified teachers for EL and special education.
- 3) Describe the staffing plan (e.g., leadership, instructional, and support roles) your school will use to ensure that every student has access to excellent teaching. Will the staffing model incorporate technologies, new roles for teachers and other staff, or innovative instructional techniques toward that end? If yes, how?
- 4) Explain how – and with what frequency – the school will evaluate the performance of the school leader and teachers. What key elements will drive evaluations, and who will conduct them?
- 5) Explain how the school will handle unsatisfactory leadership or teacher performance, as well as leadership/teacher changes and turnover. How will the school identify and address development needs or concerns?

- 6) Provide an overview of the school's compensation system (including benefits) and how this aligns with the performance evaluation process. For legislative requirements regarding employee benefits, see, for example: [IC § 20-24-6-7](#).

Professional Development

- 1) Describe the professional development that will be offered to school leadership and teaching staff. If your school will be providing virtual instruction in whole or in part, describe how the professional development will be tailored to fit this method of instruction.
- 2) Describe how school leaders will be supported and developed throughout the year.
- 3) Explain how professional development for the faculty will support the education program and build capacity to improve student achievement.
- 4) Provide a schedule and explanation of professional development that will take place prior to school opening. Explain what will be covered during this induction period and how teachers will be prepared to deliver any unique or particularly challenging aspects of the curriculum and instructional methods. If known, describe the individuals or organizations who will provide professional development services.
- 5) Include the expected number of days/hours for professional development throughout the school year and explain how the school's calendar, weekly schedule, and staffing plan will be structured to accommodate this plan. Explain how professional development will be aligned with the interim assessment process and adjusted during the year to address areas of need that are identified.
- 6) Explain how the professional development program will be evaluated to assess its effectiveness and success.

School Culture

Describe the specific system or program that will be used to promote a positive culture within the proposed school and how this culture will promote a positive academic environment and reinforce student intellectual and social development. Explain how this culture will be implemented for students, teachers, administrators, and parents starting from the first day of school.

Student Discipline

- 1) Describe the philosophy of student discipline that supports your school model, including how it is appropriate for your target population, and how discipline practices and procedures will be monitored to ensure legal and policy compliance.

- 2) Provide, as **Attachment 7**, the school's Discipline Policy, which should include a summary of the following:
 - a) Practices the school will use to promote good discipline in the school, including both penalties for infractions and incentives for positive behavior.
 - b) A preliminary list of the offenses for which students in the school must (where non-discretionary) and may (where discretionary) be suspended or expelled, respectively.
 - c) An explanation of how the school will take into account the rights of students with disabilities in disciplinary actions and proceedings.
 - d) A description of the appeal process that the school will employ for students facing expulsion.
 - e) How students and parents will be informed of the school's discipline policy.

Supplemental Programming

- 1) Will summer school be offered? If so, describe the program(s) to be offered. How many students are expected to attend summer school, and how will they be selected for participation? How many hours and weeks of summer school will be provided, and how will it be funded?
- 2) Describe the extra- or co-curricular activities or programming the school will offer; how often they will occur; and how they will be funded.
- 3) Describe the school's programs or strategies to address student mental, emotional, and social development and health.
- 4) If applicable, describe any other student-focused activities and programs that are integral to your educational and student-development plans.

Section III: Need, Demand, and the Community

- 1) Explain the plan for student recruitment and marketing that will provide equal access to any family interested in the new school. Explain how this strategy will garner the targeted enrollment.
- 2) How have you determined that there will be sufficient demand from student and families for the school to meet enrollment projections? Provide, as **Attachment 8**, evidence of community engagement and support from community partners. This attachment may include documentation of public forums held, meetings with community leaders (e.g., mayors, council members, neighborhood leaders), letters of intent and/or memoranda of understanding, and should specify the resources to be committed or contributed from the partner, as applicable. Provide a detailed plan to accomplish successful community engagement during the school's pre-opening period and leading into the school's first year.

- 3) What other school options exist in the targeted location for your proposed school? As **Attachment 9**, in list or table format, list all other public schools, traditional and charter, in the immediate vicinity (within three (3) miles) with the same or a similar grade level configuration. In the list or table, include the following information for each school: the distance from your proposed location, the most recent enrollment figures by grade level, and school level performance data for the most recently completed school year. Some of this information may be found on IDOE's INview website: <https://inview.doe.in.gov/>. More specific school level academic data may be found in the school and corporation reports section of IDOE's website: <https://www.in.gov/doe/it/data-center-and-reports/>. The data used to compare schools should be as equivalent as possible: 1) grade levels should be identical or very similar; 2) subgroup comparisons should be identical or within a close (~5%) range; and 3) categories of comparison, including SY, grade levels, academic subjects or tests (e.g., Math, ELA, IREAD), methods of measurement (growth or proficiency), and data types (scores vs percentages) should be the same. Do not use ISTEP data for comparison in grades 3-8.

Parents and Community

- 1) Describe how you will engage parents in the school, starting from the time that the school is approved. How will the school build family-school partnerships to strengthen support for learning and encourage parental involvement? Describe any commitments or volunteer activities the school will seek or offer to parents.
- 2) What community resources will be available to students and parents? Describe any partnerships the school will have with community organizations, businesses, or other educational institutions. Describe any fee-based or in-kind commitments from community organizations or individuals that would enrich student learning opportunities.
- 3) Provide, as **Attachment 10**, a copy of the school's Grievance or Complaint policy. The policy must clearly describe the process the school will use to address complaints or concerns about school or school board policies, practices, or administrative procedures. See [ICSB's Charter School Grievance Policy](#) for more details.

Section IV: Startup Plan

The Organizer

A charter may only be granted to a nonprofit corporation either formed in, or registered to do business in, Indiana, and who has received, or has applied for, federal tax-exempt status from the Internal Revenue Service ("IRS"). The organization must receive a determination letter that it qualifies as a public charity as a school under section 170(b)(1)(A)(ii) of the Internal Revenue Code.

- 1) For the entity proposing to hold the charter (the organizer), provide, as **Attachment 11**, copies of the following governance documents:

- a) Either a 501(c)(3) IRS Determination Letter ([Letter 947](#)) or evidence that the applicant has applied for federal tax-exempt status, such as an IRS letter acknowledging receipt of the exemption application ([IRS Notice 3367](#));
 - b) Articles of Incorporation (filed with the Indiana Secretary of State);
 - c) Bylaws (formally approved by the governing board and signed by a board officer);
 - d) Code of Ethics policy; and
 - e) Conflict of Interest policy.
- 2) Pursuant to [IC § 20-24-3-3](#), the organizer’s Articles or Bylaws must contain a clause providing the following:

“Upon dissolution: (1) the remaining assets of the charter school shall be distributed first to satisfy outstanding payroll obligations for employees of the charter school, then to creditors of the charter school, then to any outstanding debt to the common school fund; and (2) remaining funds received from the department shall be returned to the department not more than thirty (30) days after dissolution. If the assets of the charter school are insufficient to pay all parties to whom the charter school owes compensation under subdivision (1), the priority of the distribution of assets may be determined by a court.”

- 3) As **Attachment 12**, provide a single complete Statement of Assurances form, attached hereto as Exhibit D, signed by an authorized representative of the applicant group.

Start-Up Plan

- 1) Provide, as **Attachment 13**, a detailed start-up plan for the period leading up to the first day of student attendance for the proposed school. The start-up plan must indicate the targeted first day (month, day, year) of student attendance and must specify planning tasks by month, and the individuals responsible for each task.
- 2) If the school will provide transportation, describe the transportation arrangements for prospective students. In addition to daily transportation needs, describe how the school plans to meet transportation needs for field trips and athletic events. Describe how the school will comply with the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, 42 USC 11431, for homeless students, as well as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and 511 IAC 7-43-1(u).
- 3) Provide a school plan for safety and security for students, the facility, and property. Explain the types of security personnel, technology, equipment, and policies that the school will employ.
- 4) Charter schools authorized by ICSB are required to indemnify ICSB, any related entities, and their respective members, officers, employees, officials, and agents. In addition, charter schools

must obtain liability insurance coverage naming ICSB as Additional Insured on a primary basis. Provide, as **Attachment 14**, an estimate from an insurance agent/broker for insurance coverage that aligns with [ICSB's Insurance Requirements](#).

Student Admissions and Enrollment

- 1) Provide, as **Attachment 15**, the school's Enrollment Policy, which should include the following:
 - a) Any admission requirements, including an explanation of the purpose of any pre-admission activities for students or parents.
 - b) Tentative dates for the application period, including enrollment deadlines and procedures, and an explanation of how the school will receive and process Intent to Enroll forms.
 - c) Tentative lottery dates and procedures.
 - d) Policies and procedures for student waiting lists, withdrawals, re-enrollment, and transfers.

- 2) For Indianapolis-based schools only: ICSB requires Indianapolis-based schools to participate in the City's unified enrollment system, Enroll Indy. More information about Enroll Indy, the OneMatch System and the School Finder may be found here: <https://enrollindy.org/>. Note that, other than providing access to the School Finder, Enroll Indy does not provide marketing or recruiting services- these remain the responsibility of the school.

- 3) For "virtual charter schools" only: A school that meets the definition of a "virtual charter school" is subject to additional requirements surrounding the enrollment process including establishing and implementing an annual "onboarding process and orientation" for virtual charter school students and parents. As part of this process, the school must provide to the parent of each student the student engagement and attendance requirements or policies of the school. Each student or parent must participate in the onboarding process or orientation before the student may enroll in the school. Describe, in detail:
 - a) The schools "annual onboarding process and orientation."
 - b) The school's student engagement and attendance requirements, including the methodology to be used to track and monitor student participation and attendance. A student who regularly fails to participate in courses may be withdrawn from enrollment; however, the policy must ensure that: (1) adequate notice of the withdrawal is provided to the parent and the student; and an opportunity is provided, before the withdrawal of the student by the virtual charter school, for the student or the parent to demonstrate that failure to participate in the course is due to an event that would be considered an excused absence. Note that a student who is withdrawn from enrollment for failure to participate in courses pursuant to the school's student engagement policy may not reenroll in that same virtual charter school for the school year in which the student is withdrawn.
 - c) The school's ongoing student engagement and counseling policies.

Section V: School Finance

Budget

- 1) Describe the systems and processes by which the school will manage accounting, purchasing, payroll, and the required annual audit. Specify any administrative services expected to be contracted for the school. Describe the school's financial/internal controls.
- 2) Provide, as **Attachment 16**, a detailed five-year pro-forma budget for the school, including the start-up year, by completing ICSB's [Budget Projections Workbook](#).

Charter schools must adopt and implement a single, unified accounting system as prescribed by the Indiana State Board of Accounts ("SBOA"). Annual financial statements must be prepared on the accrual basis of accounting in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles.

For organizers with more than one school, ICSB requires both network-level and individual school financial budgeting, reporting and annual audits. Each Indiana school's finances must be transparent and distinct from the network level. For more specific information, refer to SBOA's charter school webpage: <https://www.in.gov/sboa/political-subdivisions/charter-schools/>, including SBOA's [Guidelines for the Audits of Charter Schools Performed by Private Examiners](#), the Charter School Manual (available in chapter form on SBOA's website), and [ICSB's Audit Requirements](#).

Plan Conservatively. Budget Conservatively. Spend Conservatively.

The single most common flaw in initial Budget Projections is a significant over-estimation of enrollment for the school's initial years of operation. It is not uncommon for schools to fall short of enrollment expectations by thirty to fifty percent, particularly in saturated areas or in areas that already have many high-performing schools.

This can be particularly devastating for a new school, as new schools are funded based on estimated enrollment, and if those estimated enrollment numbers are higher than the school's actual enrollment numbers on the first Count Day in September, the overpayment for the first half of the year is directly withheld from tuition support payments for the second half of the year.

Our recommendation is to devise an aspirational target and then to reduce that target by at least thirty percent (30%). The contingency plan required by Subsection (3)(b) below should be used to discuss what adjustments the school will make if even the conservative enrollment target is not met.

- 3) Provide, as **Attachment 17**, a detailed budget narrative that provides a high-level summary of the budget and how the budget aligns with the five-year business plan. The budget narrative should clearly describe assumptions and revenue estimates, including but not limited to the basis for per-pupil revenue projections, staffing levels, facilities expenses, and technology costs. The narrative should specifically address:
 - a) The degree to which the school budget will rely on variable income (e.g., grants, donations, fundraising).
 - b) A contingency plan that addresses the specific adjustments to revenue and expenses that will be used to meet financial needs if anticipated revenues are not received or are lower than the estimated budget.
 - c) How the school will ensure it has sufficient funds to cover all anticipated expenses, including but not limited to: (a) start-up costs, (b) any special education costs incurred, (c) any transportation costs necessary to ensure the school will be accessible for all enrolled students, and (d) required retirement plan contributions.
- 4) If a pre-existing non-profit organization will be the charter holder, provide the following as **Attachment 18**: (a) the last three years of audited financial statements; and (b) the most recent internal financial statements including balance sheets and income statements.

Facility

- 1) If you are in the process of identifying a facility, describe with as much detail as possible the viable facility options that your team has identified. Include in this section how you selected a target location, any brokers or consultants you are employing to navigate the real estate market, plans for renovations, timelines, financing, etc. Describe the organization's capacity and experience in managing compliance with state and local health and safety requirements as required by the Indiana State Department of Health, Office of the State Fire Marshall, Department of Public Works, and the corresponding local agencies, including managing build-out and/or renovations. Detail the specific interactions the applicant group has had with state and local agencies to determine whether the identified facilities are suitable and affordable. Explain the inputs, including specific sources of information, the applicant group has used to project all facility related costs. These inputs should be reflected in the facility related expenses included in your five-year budget.
- 2) If you have already identified a facility, or plan to locate the new school within a facility currently owned or leased by the applicant, indicate the street address and the school district in which the building is located. Describe the facility, including whether it is new construction, part of an existing public or private school building, or part of another type of facility. Provide a detailed list of any anticipated construction or renovation costs (these should be described in the budget narrative and reflected in the budget). If possible, provide a layout and description of the proposed facility. Include the number and size of classrooms, common areas, recreational space,

any community facilities, and any residential facilities. Explain how the facility will meet the needs of any students who are physically challenged.

3) For Indianapolis-based Schools:

There are over one hundred (100) public school choices for students and families within Indianapolis Public School boundaries. Due to the high degree of competition, applicants proposing to locate in Indianapolis must identify at least one proposed location in a specific area of the city. Identification of a general location, e.g., east-side, north-side, zip code, is not sufficient to satisfy this requirement.

Submission of Full Application

Provide, as **Attachment 19**, one (1) PDF file that contains all application components, including the Application Overview, the Executive Summary, the Application Narrative, and all required Attachments. This PDF file will be posted on ICSB's website as required under Indiana law and in accordance with ICSB policy. Therefore, be certain that this attachment contains no confidential personal information. In addition, adhere with the guidelines provided under the Notice of Disclosure section on page 7 of this Application for any other information considered confidential.

Exhibit A

Application Checklist – New Operator

#	Document	Page Limit	Format	Completed
	Application Overview	Use Template in	PDF and MS Excel	
	Application (including Executive Summary)	60 pages	MS Word or PDF	
1	Applicant Group Resumes	None	MS Word or PDF	
2	Statement of Economic Interest & Conflict of Interest Form (completed by each board member)	Use Template in <u>Exhibit C</u>	PDF	
3	Course Scope and Sequence	30 pages	MS Word or PDF	
4	Calendar and Schedule	10 pages	MS Word or PDF	
5	Academic and Exit Standards	15 pages	MS Word or PDF	
6	Organizational Chart	5 pages	MS Word or PDF	
7	Student Discipline Policy	10 pages	MS Word or PDF	
8	Evidence of Support from Community Partners	None	MS Word or PDF	
9	Need and Demand Analysis	None	MS Word or MS	
10	Grievance Policy	10 pages	MS Word or PDF	
11	Governance Documents	None	MS Word or PDF	
12	Statement of Assurances (only one form required)	Use Template in	PDF	
13	Start-Up Plan	10 pages	MS Word, Excel, or	
14	Insurance Estimate	None	MS Word or PDF	
15	Enrollment Policy	5 pages	MS Word or PDF	

#	Document	Page Limit	Format	Completed
16	Budget Projections Workbook	Template	MS Excel	
17	Budget Narrative	5 pages	MS Word or PDF	
18	Existing Organizer Financials (if applicable)	None	MS Excel, Word, or	
19	Entire Application (including Attachments)	None	PDF	

Exhibit B

Charter Application Overview – New Operator

The applicant group’s **designated representative** will serve as the contact for all communications, interviews, and notices from ICSB regarding the submitted application.

Name of proposed Charter School: _____

Proposed Charter School location:* _____

**Indicate the city/ town and, if known, potential address or neighborhood of the school location. Virtual operators should indicate the relevant geographies the operator intends to serve.*

School district of proposed location: _____

Legal name of group applying for Charter: _____

Designated representative: _____

Contact Information (Phone & Email): _____

Planned opening year for the school: _____

Model or focus of proposed school:
(e.g., arts, college prep, dual-language, etc.) _____

Proposed Grade Levels and Student Enrollment

Complete Tab 1 of either the [Enrollment Plan for K-12 Schools](#) or the [Enrollment Plan for Adult High Schools](#), as applicable. Please ensure that you are completing the correct Enrollment Plan.

Target student population (if any): _____

Has or will an application for the same charter school be submitted to another authorizer either concurrently or in the near future?

Yes No

If yes, identify the authorizer(s): _____

Planned submission date(s): _____

List the number of previous submissions (including withdrawn submissions) for request to authorize any charter school(s) over the past five years, as required under IC § 20-24-3-4. Include the following information:

Authorizer(s): _____

Submission date(s): _____

Signature of Designated Representative	

Name	
_____	_____
Signature	Date

Exhibit C

Statement of Economic Interest & Conflict of Interest Form

(Must be completed individually by each Board member)

Background Information

1. Name of charter school on whose governing board you serve:

2. Your full name:

3. Your spouse's full name:

Employment History

4. Brief educational and employment history (no narrative response is required if your resume is attached to the charter application).

My resume is attached.

My resume is not attached. Please provide a narrative response:

5. List the name(s) of your current employer(s) and the nature of the business (an "employer" is defined as "any person from whom the board member or the board member's spouse receives more than thirty-three (33%) of their income"):

6. List the name(s) of your spouse's employer(s) and the nature of the business:

7. Do you and/or your spouse currently operate a sole proprietorship or professional practice?

No.

Yes. Please provide the name and describe the nature of the business:

8. Are you and/or your spouse a member of a partnership and/or limited liability company?

No.

Yes. Please provide the name and describe the nature of the business:

9. Are you and/or your spouse an officer or director of a corporation?

No.

Yes. Please provide the name and describe the nature of the business:

Conflict of Interest Disclosures

1. Do you or your spouse have a personal or business relationship with any other board member for the proposed school?

No.

Yes. Please identify the board member and indicate the nature of the relationship:

2. Do you or your spouse have a personal or business relationship with anyone who is conducting, or who plans to conduct, business with the charter school (whether as an individual or as a director, officer, employee or agent of another entity)?

No.

Yes. Please identify the business and indicate the nature of the relationship:

3. Do you, your spouse, or any immediate family members conduct, or anticipate conducting, any business with the school?

No.

Yes. Please describe the nature of the business that is being, or will be, conducted:

4. (If the school intends to contract with an Education Service Provider). Do you, your spouse, or any immediate family members have a personal or business relationship with any employees, officers, owners, directors or agents of the service provider?

Not applicable.

No.

Yes. Please describe the relationship:

5. (If the school intends to contract with an Education Service Provider). Do you, your spouse, or any immediate family members have a direct or indirect ownership, employment, contractual or management interest in the service provider?

Not applicable.

No.

Yes. Please provide a description of the interest:

6. (If the school intends to contract with an Education Service Provider). Do you, your spouse, or any immediate family members conduct, or anticipate conducting, any business with the provider?

Not applicable.

No.

Yes. Please describe the nature of the business:

7. Are you, your spouse, or any other immediate family members, a director, officer, employee, partner or member of, or are otherwise associated with, any other organization that is partnering, or plans to partner, with the charter school?

No.

Yes. Please describe the relationship and the nature of the partnership:

8. Are there any other potential ethical or legal conflicts of interests that would, or are likely to, exist should you serve on the school's board?

No.

Yes. Please describe the nature of the potential conflict(s):

9. Do you understand the obligations of a charter school's board of directors to comply with Indiana's Public Access laws, including the Open Door Law and the Access to Public Record Act?

Yes.

Don't Know/ Unsure.

I, certify to the best of my knowledge and ability that the information I am providing to the Indiana Charter School Board as a prospective board member for the above charter school is true and correct in every respect.

Name

Signature

Date

Exhibit D

Statement of Assurances

The charter school agrees to comply with all of the following provisions: *(Read and check)*

- 1. A resolution or motion has been adopted by the charter school applicant's governing body that authorizes the submission of this application, including all understanding and assurances contained herein, directing and authorizing the applicant's designated representative to act in connection with the application and to provide such additional information as required.
- 2. Recipients operate (or will operate if not yet open) a charter school in compliance with all federal and state laws, including Indiana Charter Schools Law as described in all relevant sections of Indiana Code ("IC") § 20-24.
- 3. Recipients will, for the life of the charter, participate in all data reporting and evaluation activities as required by the Indiana Charter School Board ("ICSB") and the Indiana Department of Education. See in particular IC § 20-20-8-3 and relevant sections of IC § 20-24.
- 4. Recipients will comply with all relevant federal laws including, but not limited to, the *Age Discrimination in Employment Act* of 1975, Title VI of the *Civil Rights Act* of 1964, Title IX of the *Education Amendments of 1972*, section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act* of 1973, Part B of the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*, and section 427 of the *General Education Provision Act*.
- 5. Recipients receiving federal Charter School Program Grant funds will comply with all provisions of the Non regulatory Guidance—Public Charter Schools Program of the U.S. Department of Education, which includes the use of a lottery for enrollment if the charter school is oversubscribed, as well as with applicable Indiana law. See also relevant sections of IC § 20-24.
- 6. Recipients shall ensure that a student's records, and, if applicable, a student's individualized education program as defined at 20 U.S.C. § 1401(14) of the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*, will follow the student, in accordance with applicable federal and state law.
- 7. Recipients will comply with all provisions of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015*, including but not limited to, provisions on school prayer, the Boy Scouts of America Equal Access Act, the Armed Forces Recruiter Access to Students and Student Recruiting Information, the Unsafe School Choice Option, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and assessments.
- 8. Recipients will operate with the organizer serving in the capacity of fiscal agent for the charter school and in compliance with generally accepted accounting principles.

- 9. Recipients will at all times maintain all necessary and appropriate insurance coverage.
- 10. Recipients will indemnify and hold harmless the ICSB, the State of Indiana, all school corporations providing funds to the charter school (if applicable), and their officers, directors, agents and employees, and any successors and assigns from any and all liability, cause of action, or other injury or damage in any way relating to the charter school or its operation.
- 11. Recipients understand that the ICSB may revoke the charter if the ICSB deems that the recipient is not fulfilling the academic goals, fiscal management, or legal and operational responsibilities outlined in the charter.

Signature from Authorized Representative of the Charter School Applicant

I, the undersigned, am an authorized representative of the charter school applicant and do hereby certify that the information submitted in this application is accurate and true to the best of my knowledge and belief. In addition, I do hereby certify to the assurances contained above.

Name

Title

Signature

Date