

Indiana Charter School Board

Application Evaluation Process

Evaluation Process

The Indiana Charter School Board staff utilizes the following process during each application cycle to evaluate charter school applications and provide Board members with merit-based recommendations regarding whether to approve or decline each proposal. The process consists of four stages of review:

- **Proposal Evaluation:** The evaluation team, consisting of Indiana Charter School Board staff, IDOE legal staff, and independent evaluators with expertise on the operation of successful charter schools, conducts assessments of the merits of the proposal based on the complete proposal submission. In the case of experienced operators, or applicants proposing to contract with Education Service Providers (ESPs), the application process includes due diligence to assess the applicant's or ESP's record of performance and financial and operational capacity to replicate or expand. Due diligence includes reference checks with other authorizers and state educational agencies, if appropriate.
- **Interview:** The Indiana Charter School Board staff conducts a comprehensive interview of each applicant group for the purpose of evaluating the applicants' capacity to implement the proposed educational model and school start-up plan effectively.
- **Public Hearing:** Regional public hearings are conducted to gather input from community members regarding each proposed school. Public comments are also accepted via email.
- **Staff Judgment:** Following the interview and public hearing, Indiana Charter School Board staff formulates an independent judgment regarding whether to recommend the proposal for approval or declination. A summary of the evaluation team's analysis, information collected during the interview, and public hearing comments, is prepared in a report format submitted to the Board in preparation for a Board meeting, during which Board members conduct Q&A with each applicant group and subsequently vote on each application.

Evaluation Report Contents

This Evaluation Report includes the following:

- **Proposal Overview:** basic information about the proposed school(s).
- **Recommendation:** an overall judgment regarding whether the proposal meets the criteria for approval.
- **Evaluation:** analysis of the proposal based on three primary areas of plan development.
 - A. Evidence of Capacity: evidence that the governing body of the proposed charter school – and the Education Service Provider, if applicable – has the requisite skills necessary to operate a high-performing school. Evidence must include a proven academic, financial and operational track record for experienced operators or ESPs, if applicable. In addition, the Governing Body must demonstrate readiness to fulfill its oversight and fiduciary obligations at the time of application submission.
 - B. Education Plan: evidence that the education plan, including the curriculum, instructional practices and use of student assessments, is rigorous, data-driven, and designed to meet or exceed Indiana standards and the Common Core. The school must also demonstrate its readiness to serve Special Student populations, and a strong understanding of the ICSB Accountability System.
 - C. Business Plan: evidence that the school will be able to secure the necessary resources (financial, human, and capital) to support school success, particularly during start-up.

Opening a successful, high-performing charter school depends on having a complete, coherent plan. It is not an endeavor for which strength in one area can compensate for material weakness in another. ***Therefore, in order to receive a recommendation for approval, the application must meet the criteria in all three areas.***