

Indiana Charter School Board Charter School Pre-Opening Checklist

The Indiana Charter School Board (“ICSB”) provides newly approved charter school organizer this pre-opening checklist as a guide to ensure all required activities are completed prior to the first day of classes. This document, in conjunction with ICSB’s Start-Up Manual, includes the required action items, deliverables, and due dates for all pre-opening activities. This checklist provides a step-by-step list of the required pre-opening tasks while the Start-Up Manual provides further details and resources for completing the tasks. The Start-Up Manual can be found [here](#).

Pursuant to Section 9.3(a) of the Charter Agreement, ICSB reserves the right to terminate the charter at the time of the pre-opening site visit if it is clear that significant deficiencies exist which lead ICSB to question the viability of the school. Such revocation is subject to the notice and cure provisions set forth under Section 9.4 of the Charter Agreement.

Pursuant to Section 1.5 of the Charter Agreement, an organizer may not provide instruction to any student attending the school until and unless: (a) the organizer issues a written statement to the Executive Director, attesting to the organizer's completion, in a timely manner, of all of the items in the pre-opening checklist, and (b) the Executive Director confirms in writing that all items have, in fact, been completed.

Pre-Opening Process

Both the organizer and ICSB staff shall assign an individual to coordinate pre-opening requirements and duties. The ICSB staff member will be responsible for monitoring the completion of pre-opening tasks and to answer any questions. The organizer shall provide the name of their representative, as well as contact information within thirty (30) days of notice of charter approval. The ICSB staff member and organizer representative will set up phone conversations as needed, but no fewer than monthly, to discuss progress on checklist items. No later than week prior to the first day of classes, the ICSB staff member will visit the physical school location to ensure the school is prepared to open.

Pre-Opening Site Visit

A charter school's ability to successfully fulfill the terms of its charter agreement depends a great deal upon what happens before the doors of the school ever open. Some of the most complicated tasks and critical timelines occur during a charter school's pre-operational year(s). In accordance with Attachment B of the Charter Agreement, Pre-Opening Checklist, ICSB staff members will visit the charter school facility for an inspection and review prior to the time that the charter school is scheduled to commence instruction. Progress toward completion of Pre-Opening Checklist items will be regularly assessed by ICSB staff.

The pre-opening site visit allows the school to demonstrate the work that has been done to prepare for a successful school opening and will also serve as a check-point to ensure that all Prior Actions have been completed.

Approximately seven (7) months prior to the first day of school, the ICSB will hold an in-person meeting or conference call with the school's board chair, school leader (if identified), start-up coordinator, and Education Service Provider ("ESP") representative (if applicable). During the call, ICSB staff will walk through the Pre-Opening Checklist and describe the specific requirements for completing each item. In addition, ICSB staff will ask the board chair or start-up coordinator to provide a status update on the school's facility, insurance coverage, and start-up funding. During this call, the date of the pre-opening site visit will be scheduled. The pre-opening site visit may occur, at the latest, fifteen (15) days prior to the opening of the school, although they are generally conducted in the summer prior to the start of the school's first year.

ICSB will hold a conference call with the school's board chair, school leader, start-up coordinator and ESP representative (if applicable) approximately one (1) month in advance of the pre-opening site visit to provide detailed guidance for the site visit and to address any questions or concerns that the school might have. During the call, ICSB staff will ask the school to provide a status update on the completion of each item listed in the Pre-Opening Checklist. In addition, ICSB staff will confirm the date, time and location for the Pre-Opening site visit. This will enable ICSB staff to better prepare for the Pre-Opening site visit and will reduce the time needed for the visit.

The following persons must be present for all or part of the Pre-Opening site visit:

- Board Chair
- School Leader
- Financial Manager
- Operations/Business Manager or Start-up Coordinator
- Representatives from the ESP (If applicable)
- ICSB representatives

Additional school board members are welcome to attend parts of the site visit; however, the members should refrain from discussing official board business, particularly if a quorum is present.

The pre-opening site visit will be held at the school site and will commence with a tour of the school facility followed by an opportunity for the school to demonstrate how the Pre-Opening Checklist items have been met. The final portion of the meeting will be reserved for discussion of the school's progress. A pre-opening site visit typically takes two hours.

After the Site Visit, the Executive Director will issue a Pre-Opening Checklist Completion Letter if the school meets all of the criteria specified within the Pre-Opening Checklist. Schools that have not completed all Pre-Opening Checklist items may be required to delay opening, potentially to the following school year.

Document Submission

All required documents must be submitted to ICSB through Epicenter, the ICSB content management system. Training documents for Epicenter will be provided to the organizer representative.

Understanding the Checklist

The checklist below is divided into seven (7) categories, with a total of thirty-two (32) “action” items. The “Acceptable Documentation” column lists typical methods of verification of completion of the specific action item. Alternative documentation or proof of completion may be accepted at the discretion of ICSB staff.

Pre-Opening Checklist

I. Governance and Management

Item	Action Item	Acceptable Documentation	Notes & Verification	Date Completed
1	Board of Directors is actively governing the school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting minutes from the most recent two school Board meetings. 		
2	Names of Board of Directors have been listed on school website.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A link to school's webpage listing Board members. 		
3	Expanded criminal history and child protection index checks for all Board members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Signed assurance that the organizer has completed the required expanded criminal history and child protection index checks for Board members, members of any subcommittee to which the organizer has delegated some authority regarding the charter school, and school leadership. 		
4	Leadership roles in the school have been filled.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated organizational chart with names of individuals occupying key leadership roles, with a detailed description of the roles and responsibilities for each. 		
5	Management contract with Educational Management Organization (if applicable) has been executed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft management contract must be submitted to the ICSB Executive Director for approval. Once contract has been approved, a copy of executed management contract. 		
6	Organizer has been determined to be tax-exempt by the IRS.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Copy of IRS Determination Letter (not needed if provided with Charter Application). 		

II. Staffing

Item	Action Item	Acceptable Documentation	Notes & Verification	Date Completed
7	Staff hired in accordance with application staffing plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated staffing plan or teacher roster with names of specific individuals occupying instructional positions, including licensing information for each individual. 		

8	Special education and/or ELL personnel have been hired or contracted out.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If special education or ELL services will be contracted out, a copy of the signed contract(s). 		
9	Employment policies (including the dispute/complaint resolution process and expanded criminal history and child protection index policy) have been established and made available to staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employee Handbook and evidence of distribution to staff. Expanded criminal history and child protection index policy. 		
10	Expanded criminal history and child protection index checks for all staff members and volunteers (including parents) who are likely to have direct, ongoing contact with children within the scope of the individuals' employment/duties.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Signed assurance that the organizer has completed the required expanded criminal history and child protection index checks for all staff members and volunteers. 		
11	Orientation has been held to familiarize staff with mission and program of school and to clarify their roles and responsibilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documentation that orientation has been held for staff (agendas, sign-in sheets, etc.). 		
12	Each employee has a job description which he or she has read and agreed to, and signed contract on file for each teacher.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Job descriptions. 		

III. Curriculum and Instruction

Item	Action Item	Acceptable Documentation	Notes & Verification	Date Completed
13	Instructional materials and supplies have been distributed to classrooms at every grade level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instructional materials and supplies are evident at time of pre-opening site visit, or evidence that they will be in school in time for opening. 		
14	School calendar and class schedules have been made available to every student and family.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of distribution to family and students. 		
15	Student records are available to teachers for planning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence that a student roster and student records are on file and accessible to teachers for planning. 		

IV. Students and Parents

Item	Action Item	Acceptable Documentation	Notes & Verification	Date Completed
16	Student admissions (including lottery procedures), enrollment, and intake procedures have been identified, including transfer of student records, and the procedures used to identify students with disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Admissions/Enrollment Policy (if different from Policy submitted with Charter Application). 		
17	Families and students have been, or will be, provided with relevant information about the school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student and Family Handbook, which includes, at a minimum: 1) the school's discipline policy; 2) notice of parental rights under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA"); 3) school health record procedures; 4) dispute/complaint resolution process; and 5) the right of individuals to attend Board meetings. 		
18	Procedures are in place for creating, storing, securing and using student academic, attendance, discipline, and test records.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence that a suitable electronic data system is in place (e.g., PowerSchool). Evidence of locked and/or secured electronic storage. 		
19	Student health records are separate from academic records and are in locked storage in the office of the school nurse or other appropriate location.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of separation in locked and/or secured electronic storage. 		

V. Operations

Item	Action Item	Acceptable Documentation	Notes & Verification	Date Completed
20	Arrangements have been made for food service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food or vendor services contract compliant with IDOE vendor selection and contracting requirements. Appropriate state and local health department inspections and licenses. 		

21	Appropriate provisions have been made for transportation in compliance with federal law, including homeless students and students whose IEP requires transportation as a related service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transportation Plan. • Agreement with provider of supplemental transportation services. 		
22	Written plans for safety procedures, including fire drills and emergency evacuation, consistent with Indiana's Health and Safety Standards (IC 20-34).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific, detailed plan for preparing and responding to emergencies are posted in the school at the time of the pre-opening site visit. • Evidence that the Department of Public Works has been contacted and a request has been made for the installation of school zone/speed limit signs. 		
23	Provisions have been made for required health services and screenings, including immunization records.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence that health services are available (e.g., school nurse on staff or contract, contract with health care clinic). • Medication administration policy. • Written plan for providing required health services (e.g., student hearing and vision). • Immunization records or proper exemption forms. 		
24	Individual(s) have been assigned, and a system is in place for gathering and reporting information required by IDOE and other state agencies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written assurance that updated school administration contact information has been provided to the IDOE Charter School Specialist and Director of the Office of School Finance for IDOE for communications related to: PSCP grant reporting, per-pupil funding, state financial reporting (i.e., Form 9). • Written assurance that updated school administration contact information has been provided to IDOE for all other state reporting requirements to include Corporation Test Coordinator (CTC) for the Office of Student Assessment. • Written assurance that updated school administration contact information has been provided to and individual trained on other state 		

		agency reporting to include CHIRP and Medicaid Reimbursement.		
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VI. Finance

Item	Action Item	Acceptable Documentation	Notes & Verification	Date Completed
25	School leader has submitted Projected Enrollment numbers to the IDOE.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit the Project Enrollment Report to the IDOE/LSA. Upload the approved Projected Enrollment number received by Legislative Services Agency. 		
25	School has established fiscal management and oversight policies and an accounting system with internal controls.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By July 1st, Initial Statement as adopted by the Board as well as evidence that the school has contracted with a Certified Public Accounting firm or Accountant to complete an Independent Accountants' Report, per Section 6.4 of the Charter Agreement. Independent Accountants' Report no later than forty-five (45) days of engagement of CPA. Evidence of employment of or contract with accountant, bookkeeper or other person to handle such duties. 		
26	A payroll system has been established.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contract with payroll company or evidence of employment of or contract with persons to handle payroll; and copy of deduction policy. 		

VII. Facilities, Fixtures & Equipment

Item	Action Item	Acceptable Documentation	Notes & Verification	Date Completed
27	School location identified and facility secured and/or in development. An organizer operating a virtual charter school may seek an exemption from	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Copy of lease or deed with the physical address of the facility clearly indicated. 		

	this section by obtaining prior written consent from the Executive Director.			
28	Evidence of insurance coverage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certificates of Insurance for all required insurance coverage from an insurance company that is licensed to do business in Indiana or in another state, if applicable, and is rated an A or better by A.M. BEST rating service. 		
29	Available space (including classrooms, restrooms, and special purpose space) meets the requirements of the program and the number of students enrolled. Space is accessible to all students (including handicapped students), clean, and well-lit. If building is not required to be handicap accessible, procedures for reasonable accommodation of such persons are in place.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written procedures for accommodation of handicapped persons in compliance with ADA. • Certification (or re-certification of an existing structure) from an engineer or architect that the building complies as an E occupancy under the rules of the Fire Prevention and Building Safety commission. • Inspection at time of Pre-Opening Site Visit. 		
30	A certificate of occupancy (or statement of substantial completion) is on file, as well as any other appropriate certificates of inspection, or permits.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certificate of occupancy or statement of substantial completion. • Zoning, land use, and building use permits and/or certification. • State construction design release (if applicable). • Documentation from Indiana Department of Homeland Security. • Documentation from the county or relevant local Health Department. • Documentation from the State Fire Marshall or local Building Inspector. • If applicable, documentation from the local Fire Department. 		
31	Systems are in place for student drop-off and pick-up.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan detailing times and locations for student drop-off and pick-up before, during, and after school. 		
32	Space is safe and secure; entrance and egress from the school's space is adequately controlled.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspection at time of Pre-Opening Site Visit to ensure safety and evacuation plans in each classroom and school signage are posted. 		