



Charter School Applicant Information Form

School Information			
Starting School Year of Proposed Charter School			
Name of Proposed Charter School			
Proposed School Address			
Neighborhood Location of Proposed Charter School			
Legal Name of Group Applying for Charter (e.g. a non-profit Board of Trustees)			
Applicant Mailing Address			
Primary Contact Name			
Primary Phone Number		Fax	
Email Address			
Website Address (if known)			
Name of External Management Company (if any)			

Proposed Grade Levels and Total Student Enrollment

School Year	Grade Levels	Total Student Enrollment
Year One		
Year Two		
Year Three		
Year Four		
Year Five		

I certify that I have the authority to submit this application and that all information contained herein is complete and accurate. I understand that only complete applications, submitted by the November 15, 2024 deadline will be considered for evaluation and that the Pittsburgh Public Schools will not accept addendums, additional exhibits or other substantive materials after submission of the application. However, I recognize that the Pittsburgh Public Schools reserves the right to request additional information. Additionally, I further acknowledge that applications not submitted to the proper location will be deemed "Incorrectly Filed" and will not be considered. Finally, I acknowledge that any material misrepresentations within the application could result in disqualification from the application process or revocation of charter, if granted.

Applicant Signature

Title

Date

Printed Name

Pittsburgh Public Schools 2024-2025 Charter School Application Review Process

The charter school application review process has five (5) parts:

1. The Pittsburgh Public Schools application review team screens the charter school application. The team evaluates the application using criteria established by the School District of Pittsburgh (the "District").
2. The District holds a public hearing on the provisions of the charter school application. (held **within 45 days** of application submission deadline)
3. The District's application review team conducts an applicant interview.
4. The District's review team presents its findings to the District's Board of Directors.
5. The District's Board of Directors votes to grant or deny the charter school application. (held **within 75 days** of first public hearing on application).

Applications must be received by 5:00 p.m. on November 15, 2024, for charter applicants wishing to open a charter school in the 2025-2026 school year. Only complete applications will be considered for review and evaluation. Incomplete applications will be rejected. The District will not accept addendums, additional exhibits, or other substantive materials from charter applicants after the submission of the application. However, the District reserves the right to request additional information. All applications must be submitted to the office designated by these materials; any application not submitted to the proper location will be deemed "Incorrectly Filed" and will not be considered.

Send 10 hard copies and 1 UDB Flash Drive of the completed application to the address below. Electronic submissions of the application will not be accepted.

Lisa Augustin, Director of Charter Accountability
Pittsburgh Public Schools
Data, Research, Evaluation and Assessment
341 South Bellefield Avenue – Room 340
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15213
(412) 529-7334

Pittsburgh Public Schools

2024-2025 Charter School Application Review Process

Part One: Initial Screening

Charter school applications will be evaluated against criteria that include:

- The extent to which the application considers the information requested in Section 1719-A of Pennsylvania Charter School Law, as amended, and conforms to the legislative intent, which states that charter schools are designed to:
 - Improve pupil learning,
 - Increase learning opportunities for all students,
 - Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods,
 - Create new professional development opportunities for teachers, including the opportunity to be responsible for the learning program at the school site,
 - Provide parents and pupils with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities that are available within the public school system,
 - Hold the schools established under this act accountable for meeting measurable academic standards and provide the schools with a method to establish accountability systems
- The demonstrated, sustainable support for the charter school plan by prospective teachers, parents, other community members, and students;
- The extent to which the charter school will provide the school District with expanded choices in educational opportunities currently being offered by the school system;
- The capabilities of the charter school applicant, in terms of support and planning), to provide comprehensive learning experiences to students pursuant to the adopted charter (i.e. complete curriculum, full scope and sequence, pacing guides and learning objectives for each subject; professional development plan, teacher induction plan, special education plan, English Language Learner (ELL) plan and student assessment/accountability plan)
- The extent to which the charter school may serve as a model for other public schools in the school system;
- The charter school's stated intent and demonstrated plans to comply with all local, state, and federal requirements for public education not specifically waived by charter law, including IDEIA and ESSA requirements and compliance with all federal, state, and local regulations pertaining to the health, safety, civil rights, and education of students;
- The charter school's stated intent and demonstrated plans to meet the needs of students with disabilities, bilingual and at-risk students;
- The charter school's intent and assurance to be a nonsectarian and nonprofit entity and;

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2024-2025 Charter School Application Review Process

- The assurance and enrollment plan provided by the charter school articulating its agreement to enroll all students who wish to attend, conduct a lottery if the school is oversubscribed, and only give preference to students whose parents have been involved in the process to plan the school.

Each application will be assessed by a review team using the foregoing criteria via the review process the Board of Education has established for charter school applications contained in the District's Charter School Application Development Guidelines. The detailed criterion sections include:

- Description of applicant
- Mission of the charter school
- Marketing data
- Strategic Plan
- Staff conditions and work
- Management
- Student discipline policy and expulsion criteria
- Admissions policy and criteria
- Governance structure
- Staff, Parent and Community involvement
- Education Program
- Accountability, student assessment evaluation
- At-risk students, bilingual students and students with disabilities
- Fiscal operations
- Facilities and transportation
- Liability, insurance and risk management
- Legal issues

Application review teams typically include District personnel with expertise in:

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| 1. Curriculum, instruction and assessment | 5. Parent involvement |
| 2. School administration and management | 6. Community involvement |
| 3. Accountability systems | 7. Special Education |
| 4. School business operations | |

Teams may also include a parent with a child enrolled in a Pittsburgh Public School and a member with expertise in community involvement that is not an employee of the Pittsburgh Public Schools.

The review team will be supported by the Director of Charter Accountability and provided with technical assistance from other District staff including, but not limited to, the following areas as necessary:

1. Legal issues
2. Human resources
3. Facilities and transportation
4. Finance

Pittsburgh Public Schools 2024-2025 Charter School Application Review Process

The Director of Charter Accountability will serve as the District contact person for the applicant and facilitate the review of the application. Each application review team member will be responsible for:

1. Reading all assigned applications
2. Assessing each application using the board's evaluation criteria
3. Attending review team meetings, the applicant interview, and the Board presentation
4. Providing written comments on the strength of the application; and
5. Determining whether the application meets the criteria under the CSL for a school.

Part Two: The Public Hearing

The Board of Education will hold at least one public hearing (public comment) on each application within 45 days of the application submission. The hearing will be conducted by the School Board to determine the extent to which parental, student and community support exists for the proposed charter school. Review team members will attend the hearing. The public hearing (comment) will be announced at least 7 days prior to the date of the proposed hearing and will be held in the Board of Education's Administration Building at 341 South Bellefield Avenue, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 15213. The hearing will be advertised in accordance with the Sunshine Law. During the hearing, the applicant will be given ten (7) minutes to make a presentation to the Board of Directors, prior to public comment. After the applicant's presentation, all individuals who have signed up to speak will be given three (3) minutes each to present testimony. Both the review team and the Board will use information from the public hearing (comment) to assess the level of parent, community and student support for the application. Please note that the Board may hold additional hearings prior to considering the application for a final vote.

Part Three: Applicant Team Interview

Following the initial screening of the application, the Director of Charter Accountability may schedule an interview with the applicant. The meeting shall take place at a site named by the applicant, which, if possible, shall be at the location identified for the applicant's school. The applicant should have members of their planning team responsible for operating the proposed school, as well as others who are able to answer questions about the school, attend the interview.

Part Four: Presentation of Review Team's Findings to Board

The Board of Education receives the Review Team's findings through a presentation done at a special public hearing. At this hearing, the applicant, or designated representative, is allotted twenty (20) minutes to make their case to the Board for approving the charter school application. The applicant may choose to reserve up to five (5) minutes of their allotted time for rebuttal. The Review Team's findings will be presented following the applicant's presentation. Following both presentations, the Board may ask additional questions.

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2024-2025 Charter School Application Review Process

Part Five: Board Review and Action

The Board will review applicant information obtained from these sources:

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Charter application | 4. The applicant's presentation at the hearing |
| 2. Testimony from the public hearing | 5. Oral briefings by review team members |
| 3. Written comments of individual application reviewers and the team's summary report | 6. Information provided by technical assistance staff pertaining to aspects of the application |

A Board vote on the charter application will be held no more than 75 days following the date on which the first public hearing for the application took place. Written notice of the Board's decision will be sent to the applicant within one week of the decision. In cases where the Board has voted to deny the application, the notice will include the reasons why approval was not granted.

If the charter school application is approved, staff from the charter school will work with the Director of Charter Accountability and the Legal Department, and other designated District staff as necessary, to develop a written charter containing the provisions of the agreement between the Board and the school. The written charter will be signed by the Board of Trustees of the charter school and the Board of Education. The document will serve as a legal authorization for a period of three to five years.

2024-2025 CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

APPLICATION SUBMISSION DEADLINE

Deadline: Friday, November 15, 2024 at 5:00 pm

All applications must include:

1. Charter School Applicant Information form
2. Application developed based on Pittsburgh Public School's application guidelines (Include a timeline of projected steps and completion dates leading to the opening of the charter school).
3. Federal Grant Application addendum to the Commonwealth of PA Charter School Application (Can be obtained from the PA Dept of Education website www.pde.state.pa.us)
4. Pennsylvania Department of Education form PDE-2028 (www.pde.state.pa.us)
5. Charter School Assurances Form

Please deliver 10 hard copies and 1 USB flash drive of your application to:

Lisa Augustin, Director of Charter Accountability
Pittsburgh Public Schools
Data, Research, Evaluation and Assessment
341 S. Bellefield Avenue, Room 340
Pittsburgh, PA 15213
412-529-7334

All applications submitted will be date/time stamped.

APPLICATION DEVELOPMENT INFORMATION

NOTE: Applications must be filed by 5:00 pm on November 15, 2024 for applicants wishing to open a charter school during the 2025-2026 school year. Only complete applications developed based on Pittsburgh Public School's charter school proposal guidelines will be considered for review and evaluation. Incomplete applications will be presented to the Board of Education as incomplete. The District will not accept addendums, additional exhibits, or other substantive materials from charter applicants after submission of the application. However, the District reserves the right to request additional information. All applications must be submitted to the office listed above; any application not submitted to the proper location will be deemed "Incorrectly Filed" and will not be considered.

Develop your application using the guiding questions on the following pages. Applications must *clearly* state how the charter will provide innovative, expanded choices in educational opportunities for students beyond what the School District of Pittsburgh currently offers. All applications will be evaluated pursuant to the enclosed rubric and section 1717-A (e)(2) of the Pennsylvania Charter School Law, as amended.

2024-2025 CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

Application Guidelines

All charter school applications should include the following six sections:

- Part I: Mission, Purpose and Needs, Marketing Data
- Part II: Strategic Planning
- Part III: Management Plan
- Part IV: Education Program
- Part V: Operations
- Part VI: Personnel/Leaders

Use the guiding questions/statements below to develop each section.

Part I: Mission, Purpose and Needs, Marketing Data

A. Mission

- What is the mission of the school?
- How does the mission align with the preliminary assessment and rationale? (see Part III)

B. Purpose and Needs

- What is the school's purpose? Include your target audience and grade levels.
- Why is there a need for this school? Include a preliminary assessment that articulates the strengths and needs of the students and community the school developers wish to serve. This item should reference data provided and include demographics of the community and student achievement data. Data sources should be reputable and reliable.
- Why is your proposed charter school model an appropriate vehicle to address identified needs? This section should establish a rationale for the need of a charter school in a particular community.
- How does your proposed charter school provide expanded, innovative educational opportunities beyond those currently provided by the Pittsburgh Public Schools? Specifically reference details of current education opportunities and services available to students.

C. Marketing Data

- Describe the scope of backing for the proposed charter school and its founding coalition. Include a brief description of each founding member's background and expertise and their current role within the charter planning team (e.g., parent, etc.)
- Describe the scope of community support extending beyond the core group of founders.
- Provide evidence (e.g. via letters of support, signed petitions, testimony given at the public hearing, pre-enrollment forms) that the school has strong support from stakeholders (parents, teachers, students, residents, businesses/corporations) in the community where the proposed charter wishes to locate.
- Describe your marketing plan for the school. Include both short-term and long-term processes.

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Part II: Strategic Planning

A. Annual Measurable Goals & Strategies:

- List the annual measurable goals for the school. Include strategies to meet these goals, performance indicators to monitor progress, and targeted results you wish to attain.
- Describe the tools you will use to measure your progress. Qualitative and quantitative methods of measurement are encouraged. Refer to guidance on the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) as stated on the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) website.

B. Best Practices and Habits of Practice:

The Pennsylvania Department of Education is committed to supporting strategies and innovation that focus on three key areas:

1. **Increased Achievement:** All students will achieve at the proficient or advance levels in core subject areas;
2. **Equitable Outcomes:** There will not be an achievement gap between student subgroups; and
3. **Student Preparedness:** All high school students will graduate prepared for post-secondary education or high skill employment.

Describe how you plan to incorporate the best practices and habits of practice identified by the Commonwealth of PA listed below:

Best Practices

- 1) Rigorous and engaging curriculum:
 - Supports students in meeting content standards as well as acquiring crosscutting skills.
 - Promotes in-depth courses of study and a variety of teaching and learning experiences.
 - Expands the traditional classroom walls so that learning takes place in many venues.
 - Implements various materials that meet individual learning needs of students and facilitate questioning, critical thinking and scholarly dialogue.
 - Is aligned across grade levels.
 - Connects classroom learning to the real world and the future aspirations of students.
- 2) Innovative, unique, and effective instruction:
 - Promotes a school-wide focus on student achievement.
 - Incorporates various instructional strategies to meet the learning needs of students.
 - Builds on students' past learning and knowledge with an eye for achieving standards in the current and future grade levels.
 - Expands the traditional classroom walls so that teaching and learning takes place in many venues and can be facilitated by others in addition to the classroom teacher (i.e., guest instructors, teams of teachers, etc.).
 - Promotes questioning, critical thinking, and scholarly dialogue.
 - Includes effective collaboration among school leaders, teachers, parents, students, and partners in the community.

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- 3) Artful use of infrastructure:
 - Is strategic in making decisions to support teaching and learning by using a variety of data on students, teachers, the community, and others.
 - Effectively maximizes and leverages resources, including human and fiscal resources.
 - Places student learning and achievement at the center of decisions in how the school day (instructional time, class size, length of day/school year) and daily work is structured.
 - Organizes to create a school culture that fosters relationships between students and school staff; among teachers; between teachers and administrators; between parents and school staff; and among school staff and stakeholders. Examples here include the recent success of small schools' initiatives at the secondary level.
- 4) Deep partnerships with community organizations, universities, businesses, and/or regional and national organizations:
 - Includes partner collaboration in planning, operating, and supporting the charter school.
 - Partners' assets and strengths are strategically aligned with the needs of the school and students.
 - The partnerships are integrated into the school, enhance, and support the teaching and learning environments.
 - There is support for the students, their families, and the school community in ensuring student development, academic success, and graduation.
- 5) Intensive teacher and leadership training:
 - Includes accessing internal and external expertise in identified areas of need.
 - Demonstrates collaboration through teacher- and partner-driven opportunities for continuous assessment, reflection, and improvement of teaching and learning.
 - Intensive, high-quality teacher and leadership training yields ongoing improvements in student learning; and is results-driven, standards-based, and embedded in the daily work of the school.
- 6) Meaningful continuous assessment that is aligned with standards:
 - Provides a variety of opportunities, including diagnostic and mandated tests, for students to demonstrate that they have met standards and can apply their learning.
 - Teachers, principals, and staff use assessments as diagnostic tools to identify individual student needs and use school/class data to assess the progress of the cohort, evaluate the effectiveness of the academic program, and improve instruction.

Habits of Practice

- Serve students who have traditionally been underserved by the public schools, are considered hard to reach, and/or are underrepresented in future career fields;
- Focus on building relationships and trust between students and school staff; school staff and parents; among teachers; between teachers and administrators; and among school staff and stakeholders;
- Build upon nationally successful, research-based education practices. At the secondary level, describe any national replication models you will implement;
- Foster positive partnerships with their local school district in order to inform each other's practice, share knowledge and leverage resources; and
- Commit to participating in networks with colleagues at other Pennsylvania charter schools and charter schools in other states.

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C. School Improvement Planning:

- Describe the school improvement process and how it will serve as the foundation for the development of the school's strategic plan. Discuss how your stated goals and objectives will be evaluated, including the frequency of evaluation, in order to determine the progress the school is making and to identify cost-effective strategies for improving organizational and student performance strategies that will be incorporated into the strategic plan accordingly. Describe how your board will be informed of your progress and findings.
- Describe how you will involve key stakeholders (as defined by PA Chapter 4) in your planning processes.
- Describe your plans for parent engagement. Include a description of how you will communicate timely information to parents in multiple languages, as appropriate. Include your plans for annual parent/teacher conferences, parent teacher associations, parent faculty organizations, parent volunteerism in the classroom, or any other parent engagement components the school proposes.
- Describe your plans for involving business partners, community organizations, and local institutions of higher education.
- Provide the following assurances related to charter school's ESSA Future Ready Index status. The assurance statements should read as follows:

Assurance #1

_____ Charter recognizes the school district's responsibility for monitoring the student performance progress of charters authorized by the District as indicated by the federal and state regulations. Therefore, _____ Charter agrees that, should the school fail meet performance requirements, the charter will develop a School Improvement Plan in accordance with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The charter further agrees to submit a copy of the improvement plan to the District at the time of the PDE deadline for the submission of school improvement plans.

Assurance #2

_____ charter school recognizes that in the event that the charter school fails to meet performance requirements, the District may revoke the charter in accordance with the processes and procedures as per section 1729-A of the Pennsylvania Charter School Law, as amended. In the event of a decision to revoke the charter due to failure to close the achievement gap, the charter further agrees to work with the District on the process of returning students to their home schools, other charter schools or private schools, pursuant to parent/student choice.

- Provide an assurance of your intent to comply with the following regarding grounds for non-renewal or immediate revocation of the charter. The assurance statement should read as follows:

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Assurance #3

In addition to the content of Assurance #2, _____ Charter fully understands that the District has the right to revoke or not renew _____ Charter's agreement at any time for reasons such as the following:

- failure to adhere to the original charter agreement, (i.e., one or more material violations of any of the conditions, standards, or procedures contained in the written charter signed pursuant to section 1720-A);
- failure to comply with any aspect of charter law;
- failure to meet the requirements for student performance set forth in 22 Pa. Code Chapter 4 or subsequent regulations relating to Curriculum or Academic Standards and Assessment;
- failure to meet any academic performance standard in the written charter signed pursuant to section 1720-A;
- failure to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management or audit requirements;
- failure to comply with and uphold any public or private law pertaining to public education from which the charter school has not been exempted, including Federal laws such as ESSA and IDEIA, and regulations governing children with disabilities;
- failure to file timely annual financial and programmatic reports, and;
- the charter has been convicted of fraud;
- the health or safety of the school's pupils, staff, or both is at serious risk.

Part III: Management Plan

A. Admissions Policy and Criteria:

- Describe your minimum and maximum student capacity. Provide information on how many students per grade level you anticipate will be enrolled in the school and by when. Provide information on anticipated teacher/student ratios.
- Describe the timetable to be used for admitting students, including a plan for the admission lottery for students from within and outside of the school district.
- Describe how you will assure the admission process remains non-discriminatory. Include your understanding of Chapter 711 – Charter School Services and Programs for Children with Disabilities.
- Describe how the school will publicize and elicit student enrollment.
- Describe your application procedure and provide a copy of the application form and any other application materials you intend to use.

B. Student Discipline Policy and Expulsion Criteria:

- Throughout this section, demonstrate knowledge of Chapter 711 – Charter School Services and Programs for Children with Disabilities.
- Describe what procedures will be used to suspend or expel students.
- Describe compulsory attendance policy.
- Describe other discipline policies in the school. Include description of suspension and expulsion procedures for students with disabilities. Include description of policy regarding drug and alcohol, weapons, and criminal violations occurring on school grounds. Provide assurance that students and parents will not be counseled out of the school without having received appropriate due process.

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- Describe alternative placement procedures for students. Include a description of alternative placement procedure for special needs students.
- Describe your due process procedures for students at all levels of infraction. Clearly define your intent to provide due process as a primary right to the student that must be delivered prior to any and all consequences or choice of actions being provided to the student.

C. Governance (board):

- Describe how the charter school will be governed, specifically:
 - How will board members be appointed/elected?
 - How will parents and community members be involved in school governance?
 - What will the policy-setting role be for the board
 - How will the board supply direction for the CEO in general and also specifically in terms of ESSA requirements? Is the process an open and democratic process involving cross-stakeholders in the school community?
- Describe how and who will evaluate the CEO. List all criteria for the evaluation, which must include student achievement data.
- Describe the board's meeting schedule and meeting processes.
- Describe the board's policies and procedures and how these will be shared with students, staff, and parents. Include a statement on ethics and conflicts of interest.
- Describe your policy to govern the acceptance of gifts and gratuities by staff and board members.
- Provide a complete description of your bylaws, including financial oversight and administrative/staff supervision.
- Describe the board members' individual personal and professional skills, including parents of potential students in the school.
- Describe how the management organization and governance structure of the school will be consistent with the mission and purpose of the school, its aims and goals.
- If the school intends to utilize an external management agency, describe in detail the roles and responsibilities of that company and its relationship to board governance. Specifically describe to what extent and how the board will have oversight of the management company. Provide at least five years of detailed performance and student achievement data on the other schools currently run by the external management agency. Fiscal and facilities performance information is required, as well as staff performance (including staff turnover rate and highly qualified status of teachers), student attendance, dropout and graduation rates, parent engagement satisfaction levels, student discipline rates for all students (expulsions and suspensions, weapons/violence, drug & alcohol referrals, truancy) – including information on student discipline rates among students with special needs. Sources of sustainable support—including fiscal revenues—must also be provided.
- If the school intends to utilize an external management agency, describe what your board would do if it lost the services of the management agency through a termination of the agreement by either side.
- Describe your process for ensuring productive relationships between administrators and teachers.

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D. Plan for Staff, Parent and Community Involvement and the General Public Life of the School:

- Describe the relationship between the school and the surrounding community.
- Describe how you will meet or exceed compliance for ESSA meaningful parental involvement opportunity requirements. Include both short-term and long-term processes.
- Describe how the school is accountable to parents. Include a description of your parent complaint review process and parent dispute resolution process.
- Describe how student achievement information (including the Future Ready Index, student report card information, standardized student test scores, and graduation requirements) will be shared with parents. Include descriptions of how parents will receive technical support and/or training on interpreting performance information.
- Describe your process for ensuring that staff members have meaningful opportunities to participate in school governance and decision-making. Include both short-term and long-term processes.
- Describe your process for ensuring parents and the community-at-large is afforded meaningful opportunities to participate in school governance and decision-making. Include both short-term and long-term processes.
- Provide a description of your school's volunteerism policy, including provisions for obtaining criminal and child abuse clearances for all volunteers working directly with children.

E. Description of how the charter will manage and administer the school:

- Describe how the school will be managed and administered and by whom.
- Provide an organizational chart that clearly defines lines of authority to deliver services effectively and efficiently.
- Describe the responsibilities of each organizational unit.
- Describe the accountability plan and reporting mechanisms for each unit.
- Describe how you will periodically assess the effectiveness of the organizational structure, including staffing levels. What appropriate measures will you use? Will you involve stakeholders? Will you consider compliance requirements?

F. Descriptions of staff conditions, work, and professional development:

- Describe criminal clearance procedures for staff. Describe how the school plans to fulfill highly qualified teacher requirements as stated under ESSA.
- Describe your policies and procedures for recruiting, hiring, retaining, and dismissing qualified personnel.
- Describe your comprehensive staff development plan for all staff (not just professional development for teachers).
- Describe your system for evaluating employee performance.
- Define who will have oversight of the human resource function within your organization.
- Provide an assurance that the charter will maintain personnel and confidential records in accordance with applicable statutes, regulations, and standards.
- Describe your employment/labor relations program. If a labor contract is involved, include a copy of the contract.
- List the proposed positions and names of staff if already identified. Include job descriptions of key staff positions. Include resumes of key staff persons if these individuals have been identified.

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Part IV: Education Plan

A. Education Program:

- Describe in detail the innovative aspects of your program and explain specifically how and why it provides an expanded choice for students beyond what is currently offered in the Pittsburgh Public Schools.
- Describe the curriculum. Include a full description with appropriate scope and sequence—i.e., a concise identification of the skills and content to be mastered at each grade level and a seamless sequence of how each grade level builds upon the knowledge and skills mastered at the previous level. Provide copies of the following: complete curriculum, full scope and sequence for each subject area, pacing guides, and learning objectives. Please note that the curriculum model must be grounded in best pedagogical practices and validated research concerning how children learn.
- Cite your research examples and provide an annotated bibliography of your research. The curriculum must be tied to formative and summative student assessments; these ties must be explained and the assessments described. The description of the assessments must include a testing schedule and a rationale for why the assessment is appropriate and how information from the assessment will be used to improve teaching and learning. Include all subject areas required by the PA Department of Education for your proposed grade levels.
- Demonstrate how the curriculum is aligned to PA Core and School District Standards.
- Clearly define your pedagogy and teaching methods. Describe the extent to which these are innovative.
- Explain the extent to which these methods are grounded in best pedagogical practices and validated research concerning how children learn. Cite your research examples and provide an annotated bibliography of your research. Articulate in full your theory of action.
- Describe how teacher professional development will be aligned to the curriculum and to assessed student needs. Professional development must be representative of best practices regarding professional development; i.e., content specific, ongoing, and in-class coaching support. The plan must include strategies to provide additional skills to charter teaching staff in order to offer children unique learning opportunities that are not currently utilized in the public schools and targeted professional development trainings that are aligned to the scoped and sequenced curriculum in order to ensure the teachers will deliver instruction that results in students mastering the required content and skills at each grade level. List and describe the additional skills training you will provide for teachers.
- Describe how the charter plans to increase learning opportunities for every student of diverse background, including, but not limited to students with disabilities and English Language Learners.
- Describe how your school will accommodate students with special needs and how you will account for students by disability category in accordance with Chapter 711 – Charter School Services and Programs for Children with Disabilities.
- Describe your extra-curricular program and activities. Provide a school calendar for these activities.
- Describe your plans (if any) to participate in the Educational Assistance Program (EAP), Supplemental Education Services (SES), or Classroom Plus.
- Provide a copy of the proposed school calendar. Include the length of the school day and school year.
- Describe your athletic program. Provide a school calendar for these activities.
- Describe your requirements for student participation in extra-curricular activities and athletic activities.
- Describe how you will ensure an adequate supply of current instructional materials is consistently available to your students and your teachers.
- Describe how you will use instructional technology in the classroom as appropriate to enhance the curriculum and to improve teaching and learning. What is your technology plan? How is it aligned with your proposed budget? Include a description of how you will provide technical support and training that

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- enables educators and charter school staff to implement technology in the workplace. Include a copy of your acceptable use policy for technology.
- Describe your procedure for developing a plan to address specific instructional issues that cause students to fall behind. Include strategies for closing the achievement gap, and discuss how you will benchmark student progress with formative assessments that you will use to inform instruction and make mid-course corrections during the year.

B. Accountability, Student Assessment and Evaluation:

- What methods will be used to ensure that the school is meeting its stated mission and objectives?
- Provide a full description of the measurable methods you will use for assessing whether students are meeting rigorous academic goals and improvement toward closing the achievement gap as required by ESSA. Show how these methods of assessment are aligned with the charter school's overall learning goals and objectives and instructional strategies, as well as how they align with State and District Standards.
- Provide an assessment schedule. Include dates for your curriculum-based formative assessments, Pennsylvania System of School Assessments (PSSA) and/or Keystone Exams required testing dates and testing dates for any additional formative and/or summative assessments you plan to use. Describe your testing protocols and test security procedures. Include a description of how staff are trained and monitored as proctors.
- Describe your standards for teacher and staff performance.
- How do you plan to hold your school accountable to parents of the children attending your school?
- Describe how the charter will be accountable for student achievement, student assessments, meeting the requirements of the PA Accountability System (Future Ready Index), students with special needs, and safe schools data.
- Describe your understanding of the various reporting requirements public schools, including charter schools, have to the PA Department of Education. This description should not be limited to only student assessment, but should also address the 105 additional reports the state requires of public schools. Describe your plan for meeting these reporting requirements.
- Describe any non-academic data you will use to guide decision-making about improving teaching and learning. Explain how it will be used.
- Describe how you will provide assessments to students in alternative placement settings.
- Provide an assurance that, if approved, the charter agrees to use the PSSA and/or Keystone Exams and implement a formative assessment system aligned to the charter's curriculum. The assurance should read as follows:

Assurance #4

_____Charter agrees to participate in the PSSA and/or Keystone Exams, provide the District with both preliminary and final PSSA and/or Keystone data files in the format provided by the State/(DRC) within two weeks of their release and implement a formative assessment system aligned to the charter's curriculum. The charter also agrees to provide the District with an annual assessment calendar that includes the dates and testing windows of the PSSA and/or Keystone Exams, all formative assessments aligned to the charter's curriculum and any other summative assessments the charter intends to administer.

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NOTE: Pittsburgh Public Schools agrees to abide by all FERPA/HIPPA regulations on student and family privacy and provides an assurance to the charter school that this agreement also pertains to all charter school data.

NOTE: Assurances for participation in the PSSA and/or Keystone Exams is a material condition for the granting of the charter. In the event the charter is granted, failure to perform pursuant to this assurance shall be deemed a material violation of the charter agreement.

C. Meeting the needs of at-risk students, bilingual students, and students with disabilities:

- Describe how the charter school will meet the needs of students with disabilities, bilingual, and at-risk students as stipulated by the requirements of ESSA.
- Describe how the charter school will meet the needs of at-risk students. Include potential alternative placements, alternative tutoring arrangements, electronic support, and any other means by which at-risk students, bilingual, and students with disabilities' needs will be met. Include a description of how students will be assessed.

Part V: Operations

A. Budget and Fiscal Operations:

- In addition to the PDE – 2028, include a detailed, five year line item budget.
- Include a five year financial plan for the charter school. This plan should be based on realistic assumptions for revenue, the number of students, class size, employee compensation, and other expenditures. The plan must also provide for all items required in the charter school legislation. Other revenue sources—including grant resources—must be included. Specifically, the financial plan should include the following:
 - Equity Position: A comprehensive list of all assets and liabilities assembled to show the school's current equity position. Cash flow trends must be estimated for each year.
 - Cash Flow for Essential Operations: Monthly cash flow projections for year one (1) aligned between the school's recurring revenue sources and the cost of essential operations.
 - Cash Flow for Non-essential Operations: Monthly cash flow projections for year one (1) aligned between the school's non-recurring revenue for non-core school functions. A board policy must be described requiring a long-term financial plan be put into place to assure non-essential expenditures are not incurred until funds are secured.
 - Establishing a Financial Management History/Record Template: The financial management plan should address the following aspects: resource allocation, budgeting, cash management, and long term financial planning. The financial management plan should discuss how often financial reports are updated and compared budget-to-actual and how the reports are used to guide priority setting and strategic planning in the school.
 - Operating Efficiency: The financial management plan should articulate how costs were set in terms of operating efficiency by comparing core activities to the cost and performance in other comparable schools
 - Contract to Revenue Alignment: The financial plan should provide a contract to revenue alignment assurance that all contracts with personnel, property owners, service firms and other

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individuals/organizations will be evaluated to determine alignment between contractual obligations for the school and the level of secured revenue streams.

- Describe how financial staff will be selected—their required qualifications—and how they will receive appropriate training and professional development.
- Describe the financial software you will use in order to support your financial accounting system.
- Describe your current and future budget planning process and timeline and how that process will tie to the goals and objectives in your strategic plan.
- Describe your process for amending your budget.
- Describe your plan for maintaining an appropriate level of unreserved fund balance.
- Describe your policies and procedures for cash management, including your deposit procedures and cash forecasting processes.
- Provide an assurance that, if approved, the charter agrees to submit to periodic financial management reviews and enrollment auditing. The assurance should read as follows:

Assurance #5

_____ Charter recognizes the District is to have ongoing reasonable access to records and facilities of the charter school to ensure that the charter school complies with its Charter and the law, and that the requirements for testing, civil rights and student health and safety are being met. The charter school understands that the School District will conduct periodic site visits. Ongoing reasonable access to a charter school's records means that the District shall have access to records including, but not limited to, financial reports, financial audits, aggregate standardized test scores without student identifying information, and teacher certification and personnel records. Written requests for access to the specific items on this list are to be answered by the charter school within five (5) calendar days of the request. When the District believes it needs other records and documents to meet its oversight responsibilities, the District will submit a written request to the charter school, and the charter will provide access to, or copies of, such records within fifteen (15) calendar days. Financial management reviews will be performed periodically to ensure that the charter school is meeting generally accepted standards of fiscal management and audit requirements. In addition, _____ Charter agrees to participate in periodic enrollment audits and furthermore agrees to provide all enrollment and withdrawal forms to the District within 15 days of a student's enrollment and/or withdrawal. The charter fully understands that enrollment audits will be performed to ensure the accuracy of subsidy payments to the charter school based on child accounting data as reported by the charter school.

- Describe your policies and procedures for student activity accounts.
- Describe your policies and procedures for investment of public funds.
- Describe your policies and procedures for effective management of capital assets.
- Describe your policies and procedures for effective debt management.
- Describe your policies and procedures regarding competitive bidding, volume discounts, and special pricing agreements.
- Describe your policies and procedures for the effective management of inventories.
- Describe your policies and procedures for accounting for grants—private, state, and federal, individual donations and other supplemental funding.

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- Provide evidence that provisions are in place for annual auditing of the school by a certified public accounting firm.

B. Facilities, Transportation, and Food Service:

- If a physical site has been identified, briefly describe the existing facility (building type, construction, building systems, number of floors, former use, etc.). Describe the ownership and leasing arrangements of the physical site identified. Explain how this site would be a suitable facility for the proposed Charter School. Include evidence that minimum health and safety standards required of public schools have been met.
- Provide an assurance of your intent to comply with the following regarding grounds for non-renewal or immediate revocation of the charter. The assurance statement should read as follows:

Assurance #6

_____ Charter fully understands that in cases where the health or safety of the school's pupils, staff, or both is at serious risk, the charter shall be revoked immediately pursuant to the processes and procedures outlined in Pennsylvania's Charter School Law, as amended.

- Discuss the plan for maintaining the facility on a day-to-day basis (custodial) and extended basis (facility management.).
- Provide sufficient evidence the facility will have a valid certificate of occupancy for the charter school's opening in August/September of 2020. If the proposed facility has a current occupancy permit, provide a copy with the application.
- Describe your long-range facilities planning process.
- Describe your plans for communicating with the community regarding construction and facilities issues.
- Describe your plans to ensure facilities are brought up to various required educational building codes and maintained. If physical improvements to the facility have already been contemplated or are required, provide a synopsis of the work required to make the facility operational. If professional consultants have been retained for design and oversight of site improvements, identify the consultants and provide any relevant design or construction documents describing the work. Provide an outline schedule for undertaking any proposed repairs or renovations necessary for accommodating this proposed use.
- Is the proposed facility compliant with accessibility standards as established under local municipal codes and The Americans with Disability Act (ADA)? If not, provide a schedule for completing renovations necessary to achieve compliance.
- Does the proposed facility have an operable fire alarm and/or fire suppression system? If so, provide the last municipal inspection report or permit.
- Describe your contracting procedures and construction management processes.
- Describe your facilities maintenance and operations plan. Include staff performance standards and any required professional development or training of staff.
- Describe how you will plan your annual operations, maintenance, and capital expenditures budgets.
- Describe any plans you have if any for implementing energy management strategies to contain energy costs.
- Describe your transportation plan. Include a description of how you will maintain accurate transportation data and how you will maintain safe transportation for students. Describe how you will review and

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update routes, stops and staffing to provide effective, efficient and safe transportation services for eligible students.

- Specifically describe your policies and procedures for ensuring appropriate student behavior is maintained on buses, with students being held accountable for misbehavior during transportation. Include in your description your procedure for responding to parent complaints. Include in your description how you will communicate your policies and procedures to your drivers so that they may follow them accordingly.
- Describe your transportation plan for implementing extended day or extended school year programs if this is what you intend to do.
- Describe your food services program and explain how it is aligned with your school's strategic plan. Align the food services program with the requirements of the Child Health and Nutrition Act and its emphasis on wellness and obesity prevention. Explain your policies and procedures for ensuring the food services program complies with federal, state, and local nutrition requirements.
- Describe how you will ensure health and safety is maintained with regard to all food handling procedures.
- Describe your meal-pricing plan and your cash management plan with respect to the purchase of meals. Describe your staffing levels and number of serving periods.

C. Liabilities, Insurance, and Risk Management:

- Describe your policies and procedures for effective risk management, including identification of risk exposures and insurance plans. Specifically describe provisions for insurance, i.e., health, retirement, automobile, general liability, property, trustee and employee liability, performance surety, and tort liability.
- Provide an assurance the applicant understands and intends to abide by the requirements of the Sunshine Law and Public Officials Act.
- Demonstrate knowledge of overall due process requirements, criminal record and child abuse clearances.
- Provide a specific written procedure demonstrating knowledge of due process requirements pertaining to students with disabilities.

D. Legal Issues:

- Provide an assurance that the charter school agrees to comply with all local, state and federal laws and regulations, including, but not limited to those pertaining to the health, safety, civil rights, insurance and education of children.
- Provide an assurance that the charter school agrees to comply with NCLB requirements and regulations.
- Provide evidence the charter is a non-profit, non-sectarian entity.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the Safe Schools Act (Act 26 of 1995).

Part VI: Personnel/Leaders

A. Information on Key Personnel:

- Provide resumes detailing key personnel and their organizations and their experience, expertise and background that will contribute to developing a charter school.

CHARTER SCHOOL ASSURANCES FORM

The applicant hereby assures and certifies compliance with Pennsylvania Charter School Law, as amended and Pittsburgh Public Schools' policies, guidelines and requirements. In addition, the applicant assures and certifies that:

NOTE: Assurances related to the health and safety of students and for participation in the PSSA and/or Keystone Exams and, RTI/MTSS are material conditions for the granting of the charter. In the event the charter is granted, failure to perform pursuant to the aforementioned assurances shall be deemed a material breach of the charter agreement.

Pittsburgh Public Schools agrees to abide by all FERPA/HIPPA regulations on student and family privacy and provides an assurance to the charter school that this agreement also pertain to all charter school data.

1. The charter recognizes the school District's responsibility for monitoring the progress of charters authorized by the District as indicated by the federal and state regulations. The charter further recognizes the requirements for improvement of the Future Ready Index. Therefore, the charter agrees that, should the school not show progress toward improving School Performance measures as defined by the Future Ready Index, the charter will develop a School Improvement Plan in accordance with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The charter further agrees to submit a copy of the improvement plan to the District at the time of the PDE deadline for the submission of school improvement plans.

2. The charter recognizes that in the event that the charter school continues to fail to meet performance requirements, the District may revoke the charter in accordance with the processes and procedures as per section 1729-A of the Pennsylvania Charter School Law, as amended. In the event of a decision to revoke the charter due to failure to meet performance requirements, the charter further agrees to work with the District on the process of returning students to their home schools, other charter schools or private schools, pursuant to parent/student choice.

3. In addition to the content of Assurance #2, the charter fully understands that the District has the right to revoke or not renew the charter agreement at any time for reasons such as the following:

- failure to adhere to the original charter agreement, (i.e., one or more material violations of any of the conditions, standards, or procedures contained in the written charter signed pursuant to section 1720-A);
- failure to comply with any aspect of charter law;
- failure to meet the requirements for student performance set forth in 22 Pa. Code Chapter 4 or subsequent regulations relating to Curriculum or Academic Standards and Assessment;
- failure to meet any academic performance standard in the written charter signed pursuant to section 1720-A;
- failure to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management or audit requirements;
- failure to comply with and uphold any public or private law pertaining to public education from which the charter school has not been exempted, including Federal laws such as ESSA and IDEIA, and regulations governing children with disabilities;
- failure to file timely annual financial and programmatic reports, and;
- the charter has been convicted of fraud;
- the health or safety of the school's pupils, staff, or both is at serious risk.

CHARTER SCHOOL ASSURANCES FORM

4. The charter agrees to participate in the PSSA and/or Keystone exams, provide the District with both preliminary and final PSSA and/or Keystone Exams data files in the format provided by the State/DRC within two weeks of their release and implement a formative assessment system aligned to the charter's curriculum. The charter also agrees to provide the District with an annual assessment calendar that includes the dates and testing windows of the PSSA and/or Keystone Exams, all formative assessments aligned to the charter's curriculum, and any other summative assessments the charter intends to administer.

5. The charter recognizes the District is to have ongoing reasonable access to records and facilities of the charter school to ensure that the charter school complies with its Charter and the law, and that the requirements for testing, civil rights and student health and safety are being met. The charter school understands that the School District will conduct periodic site visits. Ongoing reasonable access to a charter school's records means that the District shall have access to records including, but not limited to, financial reports, financial audits, aggregate standardized test scores without student identifying information, and teacher certification and personnel records. Written requests for access to the specific items on this list are to be answered by the charter school within five (5) calendar days of the request. When the District believes it needs other records and documents to meet its oversight responsibilities, the District will submit a written request to the charter school, and the charter will provide access to, or copies of, such records within fifteen (15) calendar days. Financial management reviews will be performed periodically to ensure that the charter school is meeting generally accepted standards of fiscal management and audit requirements. In addition, the charter agrees to participate in periodic enrollment audits and furthermore agrees to provide all enrollment and withdrawal forms to the District within 15 days of a student's enrollment and/or withdrawal. The charter fully understands that enrollment audits will be performed to ensure the accuracy of subsidy payments to the charter school based on child accounting data as reported by the charter school.

6. The charter school fully understands that in cases where the health or safety of the school's pupils, staff, or both is at serious risk, the charter shall be revoked immediately pursuant to the processes and procedures outlined in Pennsylvania's Charter School Law, as amended.

This form must be signed by a duly authorized representative of the applicant and submitted with the application. Your signature below signifies your intent to fully comply with the aforementioned assurances. **Applications not accompanied by an Assurances Form signed by an authorized representative will be presented to the Board as incomplete.**

Applicant Signature

Title

Printed Name

Date