



New Jersey Charter School Application March 2016 Round

**Office of Charter Schools
January 2016**



March 2016 Charter School Application

NJDOE Overview

- Mission
- Core Functions
- Core Values

March Application

- Key Criteria
- Timeline
- Instructions
- Definitions
- Phase One Sections
- Phase Two

Common Mistakes

Resources

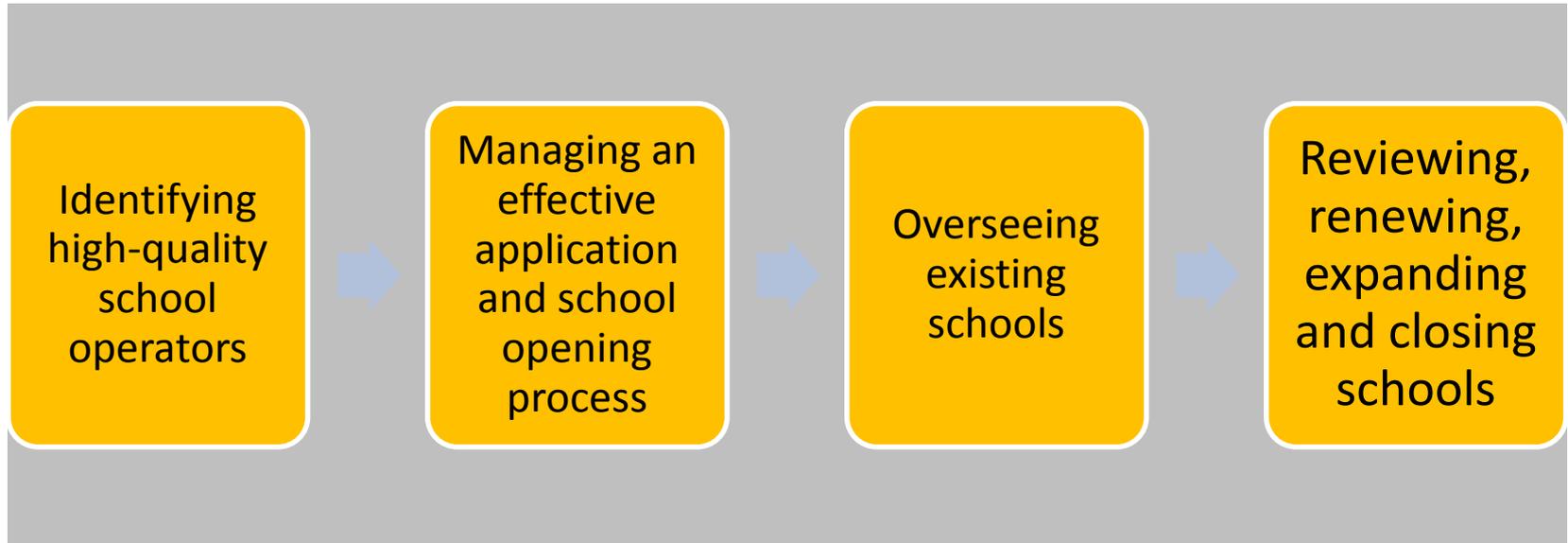
Mission

The Office of Charter Schools (OCS) provides New Jersey families with quality schools. OCS authorizes charter schools consistent with national best practice in charter school authorizing*, offering school operators autonomy and opportunities for innovation in exchange for accountability for student outcomes.

* NACSA Principles and Standards



OCS Core Functions



The performance framework provides a consistent definition of school success, from recruitment and application through renewal, that is aligned with DOE goals for all schools.

Core Values

Focus on student outcomes:

- We use the OCS performance framework to focus everyone’s attention on student achievement; all other considerations are secondary.

High expectations:

- We are committed to ensuring that New Jersey families have access to charter schools that will “raise the bar” and “close the gap.” We are also committed to conducting our authorizing work consistent with NACSA principles and standards.

Safeguard public interests:

- We base our decisions on applicable laws and regulations with a focus on whether or not schools are spending public funds responsibly, practicing sound governance and adhering to relevant laws and charter requirements.

Transparency:

- Using rigorous and transparent processes, and the best data available, we provide stakeholders with clear, relevant and timely information about charter schools, charter school authorizing and charter school performance.

Continuous improvement:

- We expect to learn from our authorizing work and get better at it over time. We encourage input from stakeholders and reflect on our practice to identify opportunities for improvement.



Key Criteria

- NJDOE seeks to approve schools that are likely to produce strong educational outcomes for students.
- The OCS expects that applications in this round will demonstrate:
 - A clear, focused, results-oriented mission statement that aligns with all parts of the application;
 - Demonstrated understanding of the population that the school is likely to serve;
 - An educational program that has evidence of being effective for the student population;
 - Strong and diverse leadership; and
 - Strong financial planning and management.



Application Timeline

Date	Activity
January 25, 2016	Phase One Application and Webinar published on the Department of Education, Office of Charter School website at http://www.nj.gov/education/chartsch/
March 31, 2016, 4:15PM	Phase One Application Due (NJDOE and District(s) of Residence)
May 17, 2016	Applicants notified of qualified applicant status and eligibility to move on to Phase Two full application
July 8, 2016, 4:15 PM	Phase Two Application Due (NJDOE and District(s) of Residence)
August 22, 2016 to September 5, 2016	Applicant Interviews (Tentative)
September 30, 2016	Charter Application Initial Approval
June 30, 2017	School Preparedness Process Completed
July 14, 2017	Final Granting of Charter



Application Content and Format

Follow **ALL DIRECTIONS** in the Application related to Content and Format:

- Paper Application Along with Flash Drive to NJDOE
(Epicenter will not be utilized for this application cycle)
- Paper Application Only to District(s) of Residence
- 20 Page Limit for Phase 1
- Respond to each statement in the text of the application and not in the attachments, unless an attachment is explicitly requested
- Edit document for spelling, grammar, formatting and completeness



Application Submission

- Applications are due at **4:15 PM** on March 31, 2016
- Applications **MUST** be submitted **to NJDOE and each respective district or districts** in your region of residence by 4:15 PM on March 31, 2016
- Applications not submitted **to all** districts of residence by the due date are subject to immediate disqualification and **will not** be reviewed by the NJDOE.



Definitions

For the purposes of this application the following terms have the following meanings:

- **“Contiguous district boards of education”** means school districts that comprise a region of residence that all share a common border.
- **“Founding Team”** means a group of individuals applying to open a charter school in New Jersey. Founding team members may transition to Board of Trustees members or employees of the school.
- **“Qualified founder”** means an individual who can establish a charter school pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:36A-4: *A charter school may be established by teaching staff members, parents with children attending the schools of the district, or a combination of teaching staff members and parents.*
- **“Mission”** means a succinct, compelling statement of the school’s goals and values.
- **“District of residence”** means the school district in which a charter school facility is physically located; if a charter school is approved with a region of residence comprised of contiguous school districts, that region is the charter school's district of residence.
- **“Vision”** describes how the school will fulfill its mission.



Application Sections

Application Cover
Sheet

Applicant Team
Information
Summary

Mission, Vision &
Education
Program

Demonstration of
Need &
Community
Engagement

Enrollment &
Admissions
Summary

Applicant &
Founder
Information

Experienced
Operator
Information

Exhibits



Mission, Vision & Education Program Criteria

- The mission is succinct, comprehensible, outcome-focused, measurable and consistent with high academic standards and student success.
- The mission is reflected throughout all sections of the application.
- The vision provides a clear description of how the proposed school will fulfill its mission.
- The application provides a summary of the education program that includes key components and the unique elements of the education program.
- The application provides a description of how the key components and unique elements coalesce into a proposed school model.
- The application provides a summary of the research base and performance record, including specific citations, demonstrating success of the proposed program with the proposed target population.
- The education program aligns to the school's mission and vision.



Demonstration of Need & Community Engagement Criteria

- The application provides a coherent rationale for the decision to serve this population.
- The application provides a compelling explanation of how the proposed school will meet the perceived needs and offer the greatest educational benefit to students.
- The application provides information regarding educational options that are available to students and the track record of those options (traditional, charter, private, etc.)
- The application demonstrates knowledge of and connections within the community.
- The application includes evidence of having engaged parents and families in the application process including surveys and parent involvement activities.
- The application provides specific letters of support from community organizations and how they will partner with the proposed school to fulfill the mission of the school.
- The application provides evidence of ongoing engagement with the community/families.



Enrollment and Admissions Summary Criteria

- The enrollment chart is complete and allows for a natural progression of students year to year. (Schools in NJ cannot account for attrition in the maximum enrollment charts).
- The enrollment summary aligns with the mission and educational plan.
- The application provides clear and compelling rationale and evidence of capacity to open at identified grade levels/grade spans.
- The application provides clear evidence that student recruitment and admissions policies will provide equal access to all interested students and families.
- The recruitment plan demonstrates that it is likely to lead to the school serving a cross-section of the community's school-age population, including at-risk, special education, and English language learning students.



Applicant and Founder Information Criteria

- Founders represent the interests of multiple stakeholders (parents, teachers, community members) and demonstrate capacity, and commitment to found the school effectively.
- Founders exhibit a shared vision, purpose, and expectations for the school.
- Founders demonstrate evidence of individual and collective qualifications as listed in the question.
- Founders demonstrate a clear understanding of charter school governance.
- All founders complete Exhibits 1a.



Experienced Operator Information Criteria

- The organization's vision includes key strategies for implementation and identifies possible constraints.
- The application provides clear evidence of the operator's capacity to operate new schools successfully while maintaining the quality in existing schools.
- The organization demonstrates past success in replicating its school model and a stable history of financial viability.



Exhibits

- Exhibit 1a: Statement of Assurances Form
- Exhibit 2a: Application Notification to Districts
- Exhibit 3a: Education Service Provider/Replicating Entity Information Sheet
- Exhibit 4a: 2016 New Jersey Department of Education District Receipt of Application



Phase Two

- All applicants will be notified of their status on May 17, 2016.
- For those applicants deemed 'Qualified Applicants', the Phase Two application will be due on July 8, 2016.
- The Phase Two application is limited to 75 total pages, excluding additional required attachments.
- The Phase Two application will ask more in detail questions regarding the Educational, Organization, Financial and Overall capacity.
- A separate webinar will be conducted for the Phase Two application.



Common Mistakes

- Choose a name that is unique to your school. The following words are used in many charter schools in the state:
 - ✓ University
 - ✓ Community
 - ✓ Liberty
 - ✓ Academy
 - ✓ School of Excellence
 - ✓ International
- You must include the words “Charter School” in the name of the school.
- Do not use the name of a private entity in the name of the charter school.
- Carefully choose your founders and ensure they will be available in to complete Phase 2 application and will be available for potential in-depth interviews.
- Identify at least one viable facility.
- ***Proofread.***



Resources

Contact Name	Email
Harold Lee, Director	harold.lee@doe.state.nj.us
Allie Cobb, New Schools	allie.cobb@doe.state.nj.us

Additional Resources:

NJDOE, Office of Charter Schools' Website

<http://www.nj.gov/education/chartsch/>

Performance Frameworks

<http://www.nj.gov/education/chartsch/PerformanceFramework.pdf>

http://www.nj.gov/education/chartsch/accountability/OrganizationalPerformanceFramework_NJDOE_08132015.pdf

NJDOE Data and Reports

<http://www.state.nj.us/education/data/>

Access and Equity Guidance

<http://www.nj.gov/education/chartsch/equity/guidelines.pdf>