Charter School Application Procedures

PROGRAM CONTACT

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Division of Curriculum and Instruction
Baltimore County Public Schools
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INTRODUCTION

THE MARYLAND PUBLIC CHARTER PROGRAM

During the 2003 General Assembly session, the Maryland Public Charter School Act was passed and signed into law creating an opportunity for the creation of new, performance-based public schools through the charter process. With the enactment of the law, Maryland joined a growing number of states that encourage the development and operation of public charter schools. Maryland’s law defines a “public charter school” as a “public school” that is nonsectarian, is chosen by parents for their children, and is open to all students on a space available basis. A charter school can be either a newly created school or a conversion of an already operating public school. A public charter school operates with the approval of a local board of education in accordance with a written charter executed between the local board of education and the administrative entity operating the public charter school. Just as any other public school, a public charter school is subject to federal, state, and local laws prohibiting discrimination and must comply with all applicable health and safety laws.

The Maryland Public Charter School Law is codified in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article, Title 9, Maryland Public Charter School Program.

The Maryland State Department of Education’s experience has shown that successful charter schools tend to have a number of common characteristics:

- A clear, focused, results-oriented mission statement that aligns all parts of the proposal and is furthered by specific, strategic and measurable goals and objectives;
- Demonstrated understanding of the population that the school is likely to serve;
- An educational program with research based components that have proven to be effective for the target population to be served;
- Strong and diverse leadership and governance; and
- Strong financial planning and management.

Historically, there have been two key principles that guide charter schools. The first is that they are provided an opportunity to operate autonomously in exchange for school innovation; and, second, that they are held accountable for student achievement and school performance as a condition of their charter. Charter Schools are public schools that are granted a specific amount of autonomy, determined by State law and the specific charter, to make decisions concerning the organizational structure, curriculum, and educational emphasis of the school. Charter schools are granted waivers from certain regulations (including school system policies and processes) that typically bind public schools. In return for this additional autonomy, charter schools are held accountable for:

- Meeting or exceeding state and district academic achievement targets.
- Success in meeting contract performance goals.
- Responsibility in the use of public funds.
- Compliance with all applicable laws and regulations not waived for charter schools.
CHARTERING AUTHORITY AND ELIGIBILITY IN MARYLAND

A “charter” is a formal agreement or contract entered into by a chartering authority and a statutorily authorized applicant. This guidance document provides assistance to those interested in sponsoring a public charter school. Baltimore County Public Schools will help applicants understand the application process, consult with applicants concerning all requirements, and provide guidance throughout the application process. The Board of Education of Baltimore County is the chartering authority and is responsible for final approval of all applications.

As a charter school authorizer, the Board of Education of Baltimore County invites proposals to establish public charter schools that are likely to achieve strong educational outcomes beyond what is currently offered in Baltimore County Public Schools.

This application packet will guide applicants through the steps of developing a charter school proposal. Each step requests information about specific aspects of the proposed plan and presents the evaluation criteria that reviewers will use to determine whether the section meets the standard for approval.

If you have any questions regarding this application or the evaluation process, please contact:

Director, Social Sciences
Attn: Charter School Liaison
Baltimore County Public Schools
105 W. Chesapeake Ave.
Towson, Maryland 21204
410-887-4029
REQUIREMENTS

BALTIMORE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS REQUIREMENTS

BLUEPRINT 2.0: OUR WAY FORWARD

Baltimore County Public Schools is dedicated to providing a quality, comprehensive educational program designed to address the needs of a diverse student population. **Blueprint 2.0: Our Way Forward** is a strategic plan which serves as the framework for the Baltimore County Public Schools and sets forth four goals and specific strategic initiatives for each goal. These goals and indicators are the concrete, measurable statements of the expectations for all students in the Baltimore County Public Schools and are the standards to which all schools, including public charter schools, are held. Blueprint 2.0, is built around the following goals:

**Goal One: Academics**

*Every student will experience high academic achievement and continuous growth by participating in a rigorous instructional program designed to raise the academic bar and close achievement gaps so that every student will become a globally competitive citizen in a culturally diverse world.*

**Goal Two: Safety**

*Every school and office will be safe and secure, promote individual wellbeing, and provide positive, respectful, and caring environments for teaching, learning, and working.*

**Goal Three: Communication**

*Every stakeholder will experience clear, timely, honest, transparent, and widely available communication about system initiatives and activities that engages them in building a culture of trust through action and establishes BCPS as a world-class school system.*

**Goal Four: Organizational Effectiveness**

*Baltimore County Public Schools will maximize organizational efficiency and effectiveness by engaging in strategic efforts that employ rigorous, relevant, and reasonable performance standards that provide for all employees’ professional growth and shared accountability for student, school, and organizational performance.*
**SPECIAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS**

Charter Schools are public schools and, as such, are required to comply with federal and state special education laws and regulations. A local board of education shall ensure that the authorizing process for a public charter school and the application addresses the roles and responsibilities of the local school system and the operators of the public charter school consistent with federal and state laws and regulations, including, but not limited to: *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA) 20 U.S.C. 1400, et seq., as amended; *Americans with Disabilities Act*, 42. U.S.C. 12101, et seq., as amended; 34 CFR 300, *Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973*, 29 U.S.C. § 794 (Section 504), as amended; *Annotated Code of Maryland*, Education Article, Title 8, Subtitle 4, *Children With Disabilities*; *Code of Maryland Regulations* (COMAR) 13A.05.01, * Provision of a Free Appropriate Public Education*; and COMAR 13A.05.02, *Administration of Services for Students with Disabilities*.

The State Board of Education will provide technical assistance to the operators of a public charter school to help the school meet requirements of federal and state laws and regulations.

**Note:** As required by the *Maryland Public Charter School Act*, the Board of Education of Baltimore County will not grant a charter to a public school whose operation would be inconsistent with any public policy initiative, court order, or federal improvement plan governing the provision of special education and related services.

**PROGRAMS FOR NON-ENGLISH AND LIMITED-ENGLISH PROFICIENT STUDENTS REQUIREMENTS**

Charter Schools are public schools and are required to comply with federal and state laws and regulations pertaining to programs for non-English and limited-English proficient students. A local board of education shall ensure that the authorizing process for a public charter school and the application addresses the roles and responsibilities of the local school system and the operators of the public charter school consistent with federal and state laws and regulations, included, but not limited to: *Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964*, 42 U.S.C. § 2000d et seq.; the *Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974*, 20 U.S.C. 1701, et seq.; and the *Code of Maryland Regulations* (COMAR) 13A.05.07, * Programs for Non-English and Limited-English Proficient Students*.

The State Board of Education will provide technical assistance to the operators of a public charter school to help the school meet requirements of federal and state laws.
MARYLAND STATE REQUIREMENTS

The State of Maryland determines requirements for enrollment, attendance, discipline, high school graduation, and student records maintenance. MSDE requires annual reporting of student data from all local education systems. The charter school, as a part of the BCPS school system, will be expected to use BCPS reporting systems and comply with and participate in all reporting requirements as required by the following: Maryland Student Records Manual, MSDE departmental reports and all other MSDE reports, as required.

BOARD OF EDUCATION OF BALTIMORE COUNTY REQUIREMENTS

A public charter school operates under the authority of the Board of Education of Baltimore County. Except as provided in §9-104 of the Education Article, the public charter school must abide by the provisions of Board of Education policies, Superintendent’s rules, and established procedures of the school system. The Board’s policies and Superintendent’s rules may be accessed on the school system’s Web site.

The Board of Education’s Public Charter School policy is outlined in Policy 1600 and Superintendent’s Rule 1600, Public Charter Schools

The public charter school applicant should also familiarize itself with existing negotiated agreements for school system employees. The Board’s negotiated Master Agreements and supplements, if applicable, may be accessed on the school system’s Web site.
Baltimore County Public Schools’
Four-Step Public Charter School Application Process

Step 1: Submission of a Letter of Intent

This Letter of Intent is the first step in the public charter school application process. Persons interested in operating a public charter school shall first submit a Letter of Intent for the proposed public charter school. An approved Letter of Intent is required in order to submit an application for a public charter school in Baltimore County.

The purpose of a quality charter school in Baltimore County is to establish an alternative means within the existing school system for innovative learning opportunities and creative educational approaches to improve the education of students. Providing a pre-application Letter of Intent gives the applicant an opportunity to informally share information and receive feedback from the school system. This is also an opportunity for the applicant to describe the education program goals and objectives, as well as the vision, mission, and focus of the school. By completing the Letter of Intent the applicant acknowledges and accepts the requirements and expectations therein.

The submission of a Letter of Intent implies no further obligation on either party. The filing of a Letter of Intent may not be used by the applicant for promotion or advertising.

Required Criteria and Forms

In order for the school system to respond meaningfully, the following components must be included with the Letter of Intent submission:

A. Letter of Intent (Sample provided at Appendix A)

1. The Letter of Intent shall include:
   a. A brief explanation of the mission of the proposed charter school.
   b. The proposed location of the charter school.
   c. The name of the organizing group and primary contact person.

2. Appendix A is provided as a resource in submitting the Letter of Intent.

B. Contact Information (Complete and submit Appendix A1)

The name and location of the proposed school and information regarding the founding group (members, including background and education; officers; tax status of organization, etc.)
C. **Prospectus** (See, **APPENDIX A2** for guidelines and format requirements)

The Prospectus should be a five to ten page summary of the charter proposal consisting of:

1. The name and the location of the proposed public charter school. (The name of the school must include the words “Public Charter School” in the title.)

2. The applicant’s mission statement and identified focus of the school. The primary mission must remain focused on student academic achievement.

3. The applicant’s vision for what the school intends to do, for whom, and to what degree.

4. Specific plans and strategies for developing and delivering educational programs, including the proposed educational program’s goals and objectives and the applicant’s plan for meeting the proposed goals.
   a. How the school would improve the academic performance of BCPS.
   b. How the school would enhance the curricular and instructional programs of BCPS.
   c. How the school would address improved student performance on accountability measures.

5. Specific educational results, including student academic outcomes and how they will be measured.

6. Student recruitment and admission procedures, including population to be served (geographic area; grade levels; number of students initially, when at full capacity; number of students currently BCPS students, etc.)

7. A brief description of the business plan, including financial management capabilities, potential partners, access to financial resources, and legal accountability for the operation of the public charter school.

8. A description of the founding team’s capacity to implement the educational plan and business plan.

9. General governance structure, including leadership information for the applicant’s authorized school leader(s) and governing board members.

D. **Pre-Operational Budget** (Complete and submit **APPENDIX A3**)

The public charter school is likely to incur considerable costs before it receives its first distribution. The pre-operational budget is used to verify fiscal support for the proposed public charter school.
DEADLINE

Letter of Intent, Contact Information (Appendix A1), Prospectus, and Pre-Operational Budget (Appendix A3) shall be submitted by May 1, two years preceding the proposed starting date of the charter school. (e.g., for a school to open in 2016-17, the Letter of Intent shall be submitted on May 1, 2014.)

SUBMIT THE LETTER OF INTENT AND REQUISITE FORMS TO:

    Director, Social Sciences
    Attn: Charter School Liaison
    Division of Curriculum and Instruction
    Baltimore County Public Schools
    105 W. Chesapeake Ave.
    Towson, Maryland 21204

REVIEW/APPROVAL

The Charter School Liaison will review the Letter of Intent and notify the applicant in writing whether the information submitted is sufficient to support the development of a formal application and that the application process may proceed.

Applications will only be accepted from applicants who have received written approval of the Letter of Intent.

Submitted shall be defined as hand-delivered to the Office of the Director, Social Sciences or postmarked on or before May 1. Proof of date of mailing is required.
APPLICATION TIMELINE

Notify BCPS of Interest in creating a public charter school by submitting a Letter of Intent, Contact Information, Prospectus, and Pre-Operational Budget Due May 1

The Charter School Liaison will review the Letter of Intent and notify the applicant in writing whether the information is sufficient to support the development of a formal application. If approved, the applicant may submit an application.

Applicant submits completed application and documents to BCPS
Due January 2

Is the application complete?
BCPS staff reviews application for technical completion within 30 calendar days

Yes

Application Reviewed for Approval or Denial
The Board of Education of Baltimore County will render a decision within 120 calendar days of receipt of the technically complete application

APPROVED
Charter Agreement is drafted

Designated staff and the charter applicants will finalize a Charter Agreement within 60 calendar days of approval

Begin the process to open a public charter school based on the timelines set between the Board and the Public Charter School Agreement

DENIED
Appeal rights provided to Charter School

No

Returned to Applicant; Application Disqualified

NOTE: Activities within shaded area of chart must occur within 120 days
STEP 2: THE APPLICATION DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The next step is the application development and submission process. The application development and submission process provides opportunities for the prospective public charter school organizing body to thoroughly describe all aspects of the proposed educational program and to clearly delineate various administrative functions that will need to be fulfilled during the planning, opening, and operation of the public charter school. The application development process culminates in the submission of a completed application to the local board of education for its review and subsequent approval or denial. APPENDIX B: Charter School Application Cover Sheet; APPENDIX C1: Application Requirements Checklist; and APPENDIX D: Components of a Charter School Application.

DEADLINE

The Application and requisite forms shall be submitted by January 2\(^2\), one year preceding the proposed starting date of the charter school. (e.g., for a school to open in 2016-17, the Application shall be submitted on January 2, 2015.)

SUBMIT THE APPLICATION AND REQUISITE FORMS TO:

Director, Social Sciences
Attn: Charter School Liaison
Division of Curriculum and Instruction
Baltimore County Public Schools
105 W. Chesapeake Ave.
Towson, Maryland 21204

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\(^2\) Submitted shall be defined as hand-delivered to the Office of the Director, Social Sciences or postmarked on or before January 2. Proof of date of mailing is required.
PART A: Overview (REFER TO APPENDIX D FOR SECTIONS A1–A3)

A1. Executive Summary

The executive summary should be an overall summary of the proposed public charter school’s purpose, mission, and goals. It should give school system officials a broad idea of your vision for the school, and be focused enough to describe the specific mission that would make this school unique.

The public charter school’s mission statement should be clear, concise, and articulate the school’s central purpose and goals. It should state the school’s reason for existence and communicate the school’s uniqueness. The mission will guide your school’s instructional and non-instructional program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public charter schools must provide as much instruction time during a school year as required by other public schools.</th>
<th>Note:</th>
<th>Section 7-103 of the Education Article states that each public school under the jurisdiction of a county board shall be open for pupil attendance for at least 180 actual school days and a minimum of 1,080 hours for elementary and middle schools or 1,170 hours for high school hours during a 10-month period in each school year. Schools may not be open on Saturdays, Sundays, or holidays in order to meet the 180 day or 1,080 hour requirement. Schools must remain open 3 hours in order to meet the full day requirement under State law.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public charter schools must comply with the following COMAR mandated holidays:</td>
<td>i. Labor Day</td>
<td>ii. Thanksgiving Day and the Friday after Thanksgiving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii. Christmas Eve through New Year’s Day</td>
<td>iv. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day</td>
<td>v. Good Friday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vi. Easter Monday</td>
<td>vii. Memorial Day</td>
<td>viii. Primary and General Election days</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A2. Profile of Founding Group

Describe the composition of the group or partnership that is working together to apply for a charter, which demonstrates a track record of success in developing a program which will assist students in meeting rigorous academic standards.

A3. Background Information

Please provide the following information on the key players currently involved with the development of the charter school, the authorized agent, principal, and any individuals
responsible for the day to day operation of the school. A resume for each individual is also required.

A. References
B. Employment History
C. Education History
D. Statement of Intent

(Note: The information and resume provided will be subject to verification by the Board of Education.)

PART B: Educational Plan (Refer to Appendix D for Sections B1–B8)

The theory behind a public charter school is that the public charter school programs will provide educational options to students that are not available within the traditional public school system. The educational plan is a clearly articulated vision for an innovative public school, which will lead to improved educational outcomes and greater community ownership of the local school.

The educational plan should define what students will achieve; how they will achieve it; and how the school will evaluate performance. It should provide a clear picture of what a student who attends the school will experience with respect to educational climate, structure, assessment and outcomes.

B1. Educational Design and Student Information

Describe the proposed charter school’s educational design. The educational design is made up of those elements in the proposed school that will be implemented to create programs, systems and processes to ensure that the school’s mission and vision are accomplished successfully. Elements of a school design can be such things as: school size, special programs that will be offered, how professional development is designed, instructional frameworks, the use and infusion of technology, the use of partnerships, performance, promotion, and graduation standards and how resources (time, space and human capital) are allocated, etc.

B2. Curriculum and Instruction

Innovative teaching methods and curricular approaches; substantive overview of curriculum; consistency between the mission, curriculum, and student population to be served is important when establishing a public charter school. Compliance with applicable regulations to meet the needs of limited English proficient and special needs students in the school program is also to be taken into consideration when completing the application to open a public charter school.

B3. Special Student Populations

Non-English Speaking Students
Students with Disabilities

B4. **Student Recruitment, Admission, and Enrollment**

As required by law, admissions preference is granted to students who are eligible to attend BCPS. Enrolled students should be guaranteed admission the following year provided the appropriate grade is available. Outline the procedures developed to determine eligibility for students in accord with the above. Application forms should request at a minimum: the student’s name; date of birth; grade level; address; names, addresses, and telephone numbers of parents/guardians; names of siblings also applying; and a signature verifying that the information is correct and that the parents/guardians are choosing education at the public charter school for their child. Application forms cannot contain any information regarding previous grade reports, IEPs, LEPs, FARMS, previous school, health, discipline, attendance, etc.

*(Refer to APPENDIX N for Age of Entry Chart).*

B5. **Code of Student Conduct**

It is expected that discipline procedures will be aligned with those outlined in the BCPS Code of Student Conduct, unless modified in the Charter Agreement.

B6. **Student Health and Safety**

An emergency is by definition an unplanned event. It does not follow, however, that school officials have no responsibility for planning for emergencies. The numerous statutory references related to conduct codes, school safety, and student violence demonstrates a heightened awareness of the need to plan for emergencies, so that school personnel can implement the plan immediately. Failure to do what reasonable persons would do creates the risk of negligence claims and resultant legal liability.

B7. **School Calendar and Daily Schedule**

Public schools under the jurisdiction of a county board shall be open for pupil attendance for at least 180 actual school days and a minimum of 1,080 school hours for Grades 1–8 and 1,170 hours for Grades 9–12 during a 10-month period in each school year. Schools may not be open on Saturdays, Sundays, or state recognized holidays in order to meet the 180 day or 1,080 hour requirement. Schools must remain open 3 hours in order to meet the full-day requirement under State Law. More information on the school calendar can be found in *Section 7-103, Education Article, Annotated Code of Maryland*.

B8. **Assessment**

Student assessment is an essential component of the public charter school’s educational plan. Assessment confirms student progress, identifies areas of low and high achievement, and improves the accountability of the school. An integrated assessment system uses the Maryland Common Core Education Standards as a foundation and serves
as a structure for how teachers and administrators will measure what students know and are able to do as a result of the delivery of curriculum and instruction.

Components of the assessment system can also be used to establish and monitor goals in the school’s required Accountability Plan. Information from assessments serves to help determine what areas of instruction need additional time, the needs of individual students, the quality of instruction, decisions on improvement strategies, and the school’s overall progress in meeting accountability plan goals. While choosing which data to collect and setting up the systems to track data in a reliable and consistent manner can be a challenging and time intensive activity, it can also be a truly valuable one. Ultimately, the assessment system provides information to all stakeholders on whether the school is an academic success.

B9. WAIVERS for Educational Plan (Refer to APPENDIX H)

PART C: Organizational Plan (REFER TO APPENDIX D FOR SECTIONS C1-C8)

C1. School Governance

C2. Management and Operation

a. Organizational Structure

b. Education Service Providers: The term “education service provider” refers to any number of organizations that contract with the governing board of a school to provide comprehensive services. The major types of ESPs that serve charter schools are education management organizations (EMOs), charter management organizations (CMOs), and comprehensive school design providers. The services agreement as executed between the school and the ESP (or template version if not yet executed) shall be attached to the application.

c. Resource Management

d. Resource Management Evaluation

e. Student Records and Record Management

f. **Charter School Procedures**

The public charter school must abide by the provisions of Board of Education policies, Superintendent’s rules, and established procedures of the school system.

The charter school’s procedures help define rules, regulations, and protocols for the charter school. All of these are necessary to help a school run smoothly and safely and ensure that students receive a quality education. Schools have procedures for several reasons. Procedures guide acceptable behavior and ensure that the school environment is safe for students, teachers, and school staff. School procedures also help create a productive learning environment. (Refer to APPENDIX D)

C3. **Staffing and Human Resources**

The Maryland Public Charter School Program Act defines all employees of the public charter school as public school employees in the county in which the public charter school is located with rights afforded them under Maryland law. Therefore, Charter Schools must comply with requirements and processes established by BCPS regarding recruiting, hiring, new employee processing, payroll, compensation, benefits, maintenance of certification, record keeping, legal costs, investigations and background checks, evaluations, negotiated agreements, and employee leave.

| All employees of the public charter school are BCPS employees. There are no exceptions. |

C4. **Recruitment, Employment, Retention (Refer to Appendix D)**

C5. **Payroll**

C6. **Certification**

C7. **Records Management**

C8. **Affiliations and Partnerships**

Present a vision and strategy for community involvement that is reasonably likely to further the school’s mission and program. Describe the scope of community support for the proposed charter school and its organizers.

C9. **Waivers for Organizational Plan (Refer to APPENDIX H)**
Charter schools may request to waive certain state laws or school district policies in order to operate differently or to be exempt from certain requirements. These exemptions,
PART D: Business Plan (REFER TO APPENDIX D FOR SECTIONS D1–D5)

D1. Budget

Provide a detailed narrative regarding the school’s estimated revenues and expenditures for the proposed term of the charter including the preoperational startup year. Provide a cash flow analysis for the first fiscal year of operation (July 1–June 30). Include explanation and discussion of key budget assumptions underlying the budget projections and explain how the budget aligns with and supports implementation of the educational program. If the school anticipates incurring debt for any reason, such as for acquisition of its facility, the budget must address the schedule for debt repayment and the budget discussion should elaborate on the repayment assumptions and plan. Discuss the school’s contingency plans for cash flow challenges, a budget shortfall, lower than expected student enrollment or other financial challenges in the early years of operation.

Provide an operating budget covering each year of the requested charter term that contains revenue projections, expenses and anticipated fund balances. The budget should be based on the projected student enrollment indicated on the cover page of the application. (See APPENDIX A2)

Describe the school’s fundraising plan. Report on the current status of any fundraising efforts, including verification of any fundraising monies reported in the school’s start-up or operating budgets.

D2. Financial Management

The financial plan should provide an understanding of how the applicants intend to develop and manage the school’s infrastructure and finances. It should present a clear picture of the school’s revenue projections; expenditure requirements; facility needs; transportation, food service plans; and pre-opening plan. Overall, the financial plan should reflect the commitment to maintaining the financial viability of the school.

D3. Facility (REFER TO APPENDICES D, J, K, L)

The Maryland Public Charter Schools Act states “a Public Charter School means a public school that is in compliance with all applicable health and safety laws.” Such requirements are a function of state and local building codes and are administered by the
state and local inspection agencies. In addition, all public school facilities must meet the procedures and guidelines of MSDE

A Certificate of Occupancy issued by Baltimore County Government must be presented to BCPS prior to receiving any funds and within seven days before the first day of school.

D4. Food Services

Describe the food services that the charter school will provide to students, including whether the school will provide breakfast and/or snack in addition to lunch. Indicate whether the charter school will participate in the Federal school lunch or school breakfast programs. Further indicate whether the charter school will participate in the local school district’s food service programs and whether food will be prepared on or off site. Describe the plan to administer the free and reduced lunch program. Demonstrate well thought-out plans for food service facilities and equipment that will meet local and state requirements.

Every school must meet the National School Lunch Requirements:
Refer to the Food Service Requirements at:
http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Governance/Legislation/nationalstandards.htm

D5. Transportation

Charter proposals should include a plan that addresses the transportation needs of low-income and at-risk pupils. Funds for student transportation are included in the per pupil allotment amount and school planners may choose to spend these funds in a variety of ways. It is advisable to seek legal counsel on the proposed transportation plan regarding liability issues before submitting the final charter school proposal.

Additional Consideration:
• Service agreements: How will these be funded?
• Bus routes: pickup and drop-off plans.
• Number of required buses.

D6. Insurance

Indicate the types of insurance and the levels of coverage sought.
See information provided in Appendix M for insurance requirements in Maryland.

Step 3: Application Review for Approval or Denial

Application Technical Review
Within 30-calendar days of receipt of an application, BCPS staff will review the application for technical completion. If the technical elements of the application are found to be incomplete or do not meet the required components, the applicant will be notified that they are disqualified to enter the next stage of the approval process. Due to the time-bound nature of the process, the authorizer will not extend an opportunity for the applicant to address deficiencies at any stage of the process once the application cycle has officially begun. It is therefore important to cross check the application carefully against the guidelines in the document before it is submitted.

**Application Evaluation**

If the technical review is complete and the application has met the requirements, BCPS staff will evaluate the specific components of the application using an Application Scoring Rubric based on Appendix D.

**Applicant Interview**

Once the application has been evaluated, applicants may be invited, along with their founding group and/or proposed board of trustees, to participate in a final phase of the application process. The primary purpose of the interview is to assess the capacity of the board to effectively oversee the school’s academic program, organizational viability, and finances. The interview is designed to determine the founding group’s understanding of academic and operational accountability as well as the demographics and other characteristics of the district where the proposed school will be located. In addition, the interview will provide opportunities to address questions generated by reviewers during the application review process, provide further verbal clarification, or elaborate on responses within the written application. Results of those reviews will be presented to the Superintendent and Board of Education. The Board’s decision to approve or deny an application will occur within 120 calendar days of their receipt of the complete application and evaluation results.

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**Step 4: The Charter Agreement**

Upon the approval of the application, by the Board of Education, a Charter Agreement shall be developed within 60 calendar days. Much of the information found in the application will be incorporated into the Charter Agreement.

The Charter Agreement is a contract that is binding by law and explains in detail the responsibilities of all of the parties involved in the implementation of the public charter school. This legally enforceable document describes all aspects of the new public charter school and identifies the education program to be offered to students as well as the administrative activities that will be undertaken in the establishment and operation of the public charter school. It also specifies that the local school system or public charter school operator will be responsible to fulfill the various elements, both programmatic and administrative, within the new program and the process and basis for terminating a Charter Agreement. The thoroughness of the application process can pave the way for the conversion of the approved application into the main...
component of the formal Charter Agreement. Additional negotiations may be limited depending on the thoroughness of the application process.

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**Summary**

In summary, there is much to consider when a community contemplates establishing a public charter school. A prospective applicant should review the responsibilities and administrative functions that are required to operate a public charter school in order to maintain an informed application development process and assist in identifying the specific areas that will need consideration and inclusion within the Charter Agreement between the applicant and the Board of Education of Baltimore County.

It is important that the applicant(s) and the chartering authority establish open and effective communications. The understanding that the creation of a high quality public charter school should be a rich opportunity to assist students to achieve high standards is a fundamental principle that must guide all aspects of the application development, review, and program implementation.