Public Charter Schools

I. Purpose

To establish guidelines for the establishment, evaluation, renewal, and/or closing of a public charter school under the supervision of the Board of Education of Baltimore County (Board).

II. Roles and Responsibilities

A. The Superintendent designates the Director, Social Sciences, Division of Curriculum and Instruction, as the Charter School Liaison in Baltimore County Public Schools (BCPS).

B. The Charter School Liaison shall develop public charter school application procedures and make those procedures available on the school system’s Web site.

C. The charter school applicant is solely responsible for meeting the criteria for establishing a public charter school and completing all requirements of the application process.

III. Application Process

Eligible persons or entities interested in applying to operate a public charter school in BCPS may submit an application in accordance with Board policy 1600, the following guidelines, and any additional procedures promulgated by the charter school liaison.

A. Letter of Intent

1. Persons interested in operating a public charter school shall first submit to the Charter School Liaison a Letter of Intent for the proposed public charter school.

2. The Letter of Intent shall be submitted by no later than May 1, two years preceding the starting date of the proposed public charter school.

3. The Letter of Intent shall include:
   a. A prospectus and contact information (See, Charter School Application Procedures, Appendix A1); and
RULE 1600

b. A pre-operational budget (See, Charter School Application Procedures, Appendix A2).

4. 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.

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

B. Application

Those eligible applicants who have obtained the requisite written approval of the Letter of Intent may apply to operate a public charter school by submitting an application to the Charter School Liaison by January 2 of the year preceding the school’s proposed starting date.

1. The applicant shall submit twenty (20) copies of the application to the Charter School Liaison for distribution to the Superintendent and staff members with appropriate permissions acknowledged for photocopying any material that is identified by the applicant as proprietary. An electronic copy of the application and all supporting documentation shall accompany the application submission.

2. The application shall include, but not be limited to, each of the components identified in Appendix D of the Charter School Application Procedures.

3. Incomplete applications will not be processed and the application will not be considered.

IV. Application Review

A. The Charter School Liaison will review completed applications submitted in accordance with established criteria and deadlines and forward those applications, with appropriate recommendations, to the Superintendent, who will in turn make a final recommendation to the Board for consideration.

B. Upon receipt of a completed application, the Board shall render a decision within 120 calendar days and provide a detailed written recommendation with rationale for its decision for approval or denial of the application.

V. Charter School Agreement

A. Upon approval of a public charter school application, the Board-approved components of the application shall become part of a contractual charter between the public charter school and the Board.
B. A charter will be granted for no longer than four (4) school years.

VI. Reporting Requirements

A. Each public charter school shall provide a written annual report to the appropriate assistant superintendent of schools by September 30. The report shall include:
   1. Fiscal accountability
   2. Student performance
   3. Any other matter required by the charter agreement

B. The public charter school shall comply with and provide information required to comply with financial, programmatic, or compliance audits consistent with federal, state, and local laws and procedures.

C. The public charter school shall be prepared to respond to all requests for written/oral reports.

D. The public charter school’s annual report will be made available on the school system’s Web site.

VII. Evaluation

A. The public charter school shall be evaluated annually based on student achievement, established goals/objectives, fiscal management, and other criteria outlined in the approved application and the terms and conditions of the contractual charter.

B. For a public charter school to remain in operation, it must be able to meet the needs of its students, maintain student enrollment levels, and remain accountable under the terms of the charter agreement.

C. The annual evaluation for each public charter school shall be posted on the school system’s public charter school Web site in order to keep parents apprised of the school’s performance.

VIII. Provisions for Renewal

A. The public charter school may request renewal of the existing charter agreement if done so by no later than September 30 of the year prior to the expiration of the charter agreement.
B. A charter school may be renewed provided that a program review demonstrates that the school has successfully fulfilled the terms of its contract.

C. The following criteria will be analyzed to review the charter school’s performance:
   1. Educational performance
   2. Financial performance
   3. Organizational performance

D. Specific indicators and standards will be analyzed and evaluated within these three categories.

E. BCPS will also collect information from the charter school principal about his/her plans over the term of its subsequent contract; specifically, any modifications, adjustments, and amendments proposed to be made to its current contract that would take effect over the subsequent contract.

IX. Probation/Revocation

In accordance with policy 1600, if a charter school is being recommended for probation/revocation of its charter, the following procedures shall apply:

A. The Superintendent or designee shall provide the charter school governing board with:
   1. Written notification and description of the basis for probation/revocation.
   2. Instructions for correcting the deficiency or failure that is the basis for probation/revocation, which may include a request for a corrective action plan.
   3. A specified reasonable time not to exceed ninety (90) calendar days during which the charter school governing board may remedy the problem to avoid the revocation action.

B. If the charter school principal fails to remedy the problem within the specified time frame, the Superintendent may recommend in writing to the Board that it revoke the charter, with a copy provided to the charter school’s governing board.

C. The decision to revoke a public charter school’s charter agreement will be made at a public meeting of the Board. Notice of public hearings
concerning revocation of a charter agreement will be published on the school system’s Web site as well as notice provided to parents of students enrolled in the public charter school.

D. Upon revocation, personnel and students shall be reassigned pursuant to Board policy, Superintendent’s rules, and established school system procedures and negotiated agreements.

E. Upon revocation, all resources purchased with federal, state, and BCPS funds remain the property of BCPS.

F. The Board reserves the right to implement control and operation of the public charter school on an immediate basis upon revocation.

X. Appeals

If the Board denies an application to establish a public charter school, the applicant may appeal the decision to the Maryland State Board of Education in accordance with §4-205(c) of the Education Article.

Legal References: Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article, Title 9, Maryland Public Charter School Program

Related Policy: Board of Education Policy 5150, Residents and Nonresidents