

CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION
REVIEW TEAM CRITERIA

Applications will be rated by the review team according to the following criteria:

Overall: Do all elements of the proposal fit together? Is the proposal complete and feasible? Is the proposal clear and specific? Does the proposed school offer something different from existing schools within the School Division?

Applicant Information: Do the applicants have the knowledge, skills, qualifications, and ability to implement the proposal? Do the applicants have expertise or access to expertise in the areas of finance, fundraising, educational development, human resource management, and community organizing? Do the applicants have the ability for further recruitment of founders and organizers if necessary?

Mission Statement: Is there a clearly articulated vision? Does it meet one or more of the objectives enumerated in the charter school law (*Code of Virginia*) and established by the School Board? Is it consistent or compatible with the strategic plan of the School Board? Is it consistent with the Standards of Quality and, by reference, the Standards of Accreditation and Standards of Learning? Do other elements of the application support the stated mission? Are the targeted student populations and specific area(s) of concentration designated? Does the proposed school intend to increase the educational opportunities of at-risk students?

Goals and Educational Objectives: Do they meet or exceed the requirements of the Standards of Learning? What is the likelihood that the school will meet the goals and objectives and improve educational results for students? Are they clear, measurable, and sound goals for building an educational program? Do they promote high student expectations and achievement? Do research and experience indicate that the goals and objectives are appropriate for the target population?

Evidence of Support: Is there tangible evidence of sufficient support to open and maintain the charter school? Do fifty percent of the school's teachers and fifty percent of the parents of the school's students support the conversion of an existing school to a charter school? Do the parents of the existing school's students understand the charter school's admissions process? Is the extent of community support sufficient? (There should be demonstrated and sufficient evidence of support from teachers, parents, and community.)

Statement of Need: Is the need realistic? Is the need based on accurate information? Is there a demand among the target population?

Description of Education, Pupil Performance Standards, and Curriculum: Does the description meet or exceed the requirements of the applicable Standards of Quality and, by reference, the Standards of Accreditation and Standards of Learning? Is the educational program based on a sound educational model or approach? Do the education, curriculum and standards reflect the mission, goals, and objectives? Do the curriculum and education offer an alternative to what is offered currently? Has the applicant demonstrated how student achievement will be improved? Are the standards measurable and attainable?

Pupil Evaluation: Assessments, Timeline, and Corrective Action: Will the proposed assessments accurately measure pupil progress and achievement toward the stated standards and goals? Are the assessments well developed and comprehensive for assessing achievement? Is the time line for achievement realistic? Will the proposed corrective action yield results?

Admissions Process: Does it comply with state and federal charter school laws? Does it comply with state and federal laws, regulations, and constitutional provisions regarding discrimination and any court-ordered desegregation plan? Is it consistent with the mission? Does the proposal demonstrate a solid plan to attract sufficient students to open and maintain the school? Does the process foster an ethnic and socio-economic diverse student body? Is there a timely and realistic procedure for admitting students? Is the plan for the transfer of students the same or better than the plan the school division uses for transfers

from private and home schools? Will the charter school's enrollment be high enough to ensure the viability of the school and low enough to limit the school division's financial obligation?

Financial Plan: Evidence of Economical Soundness, Proposed Budget, and Annual Audit: Is the budget reasonable and viable? Will the establishment of the charter school have a negative fiscal impact on the school division? (Note: Funding and service agreements shall not constitute a financial incentive or disincentive to the establishment of a charter school). Is the budget for one, two, or three years? Are projected costs realistic in light of the proposal? Does the budget account for realistic planning and start-up costs? Does the budget provide for services required by special needs students? Are revenues accurately estimated? Is reliance on anticipated grants and private funding realistic? Does the financial plan provide for contingencies? Are proposed student fees acceptable? Is the plan for the annual audit sound and based on generally accepted accounting principles? Does the plan provide for monthly reporting of financial information to the School Board? Is the manner of audit and reporting clear and understandable?

Displacement Plan: Is the plan realistic? Does the plan provide adequate time to transfer employees and implement due process for licensed employees who will be laid off or not renewed? Does the plan provide enough time for students to be placed in appropriate schools? Will employees and students be treated fairly and equitably?

Management and Operation: Is the management structure consistent with the mission, goals and objectives? Does it help fulfill the mission? Are roles and responsibilities clearly defined? Is the method of management workable and realistic? Is parent, teacher, and student involvement in decision-making addressed? Is there a clear description of how the committee will be chosen, what the term limits will be, and the committee's relationship to teachers and administrators?

Employee Relations: Does the proposal contain high professional standards for teachers and staff? Is there a commitment to professional development? Has the applicant demonstrated that quality staff will be attracted to the school? Has the applicant developed an adequate human resources plan, including appropriate policies that are in compliance with state and federal law? Does the proposal provide for state and federal, if applicable, social services and criminal background checks of employees and how those will be conducted? Is there an appropriate evaluation process for all employees? Have affected employees been notified of the terms and conditions of employment? Can the proposed staff meet the employment standards of the parent division, including salaries and benefits?

Legal Liability and Insurance Coverage: Are the School Board and the School Division sufficiently protected from legal liability? Will the charter school be insured through the School Division or obtain its own coverage? Is the charter school insurable? Has the charter school planned for adequate insurance coverage?

Transportation: Does the proposal provide equal access for all students? Is the proposal a workable, fair, non-discriminatory, and cost-effective arrangement for safely transporting students to and from school?

Assurances: Is the applicant committed to establishing a non-sectarian school? Does the applicant agree not to charge tuition?

Waivers: Are the requested waivers (if any) necessary to fulfill the mission or achieve the goals and objectives of the school?

Discrimination: Does the applicant demonstrate a commitment and willingness not to discriminate and to accommodate the needs of special students? Does the applicant have the knowledge and resources to comply with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act?

Facility: *For applicants who have a facility, a site visit will be conducted to determine the following:* Is the space adequate for the proposed program and student population? Does the facility meet state building code and Americans with Disabilities Act requirements? Are the arrangements for facility maintenance appropriate? Has required documentation been submitted (certificate of occupancy,

certificate of health inspection, certificate of fire inspection, proof of compliance with federal, state, and local health and safety laws and regulations)? Is the lease or purchase contract legal? *For applicants who have not yet acquired a facility:* What is the status of the effort to find a facility? Does the applicant have a realistic estimate of the space needed? *For all applicants:* Does the applicant understand the legal requirements for a public school building? Does the applicant have the means to ensure the facility's compliance with local building codes and health and safety requirements? Will the facility and/or its location help fulfill the mission?

Health and Safety: Are adequate procedures proposed to ensure the health and safety of students and employees? Are there provisions for consistent supervision of students?

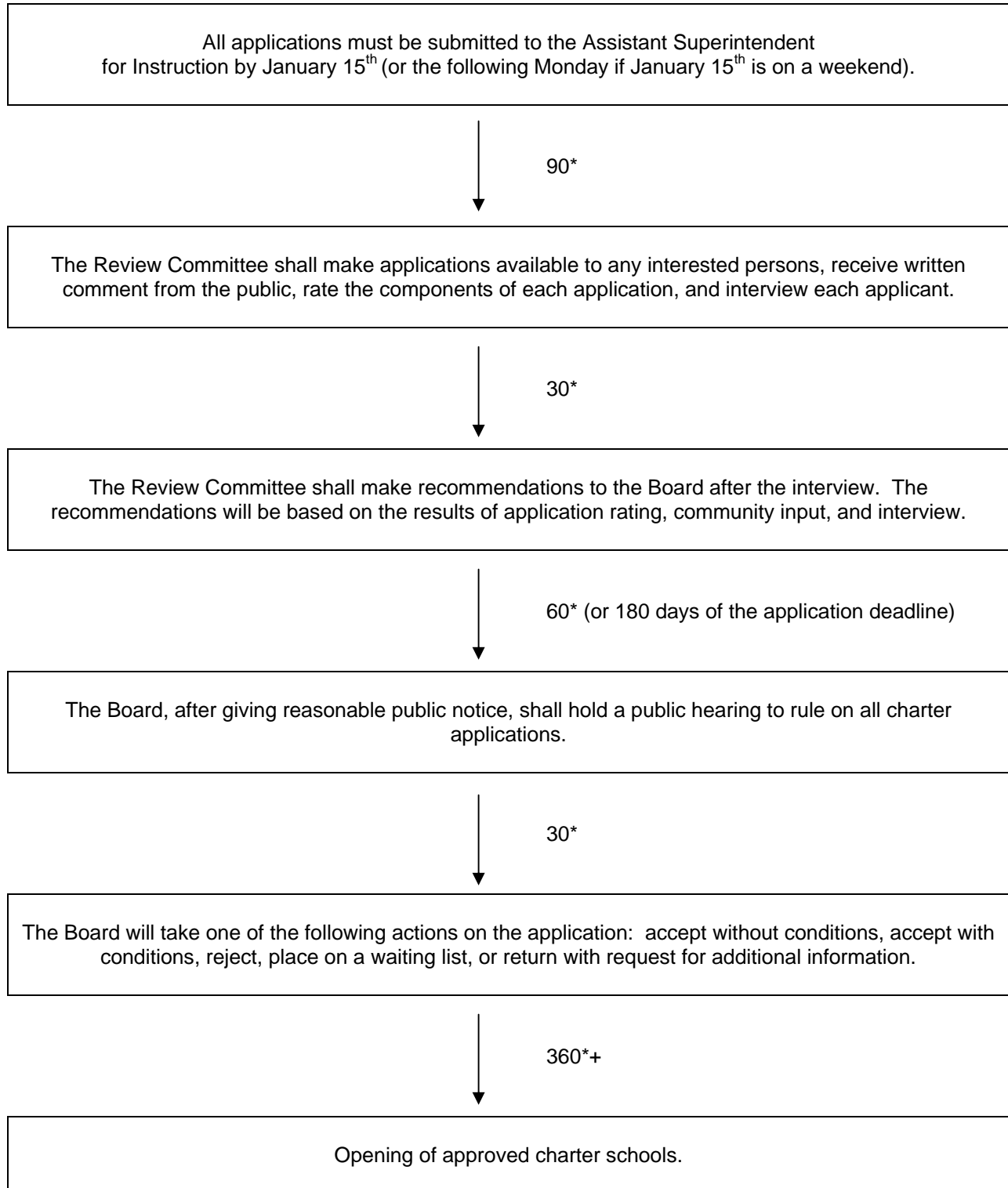
Indemnity: Is the applicant legally binding itself to defend, hold harmless, and indemnify the school division and the School Board?

Services: Has the applicant obtained appropriate services from reliable providers? Can the charter school afford to purchase necessary services from the school division?

Time Line: Is there a specific and feasible plan for starting a school? Are projected dates realistic? Does the timetable provide for unexpected contingencies? Is the timetable complete?

Renewal: Does the applicant understand when renewal is required?

TIME LINE FOR CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATIONS



* This refers to calendar days

DATE PUBLISHED:

April 13, 1999

Gloucester County School Board