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STATE OF NEVADA



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REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

CHARTER APPLICATION - EXPERIENCED OPERATOR

Release Date: May 1, 2016

Submissions Due: August 31, 2016

Note: applications may be submitted on a rolling basis but must meet submission deadline to be considered for next school year.

Dear ASD Applicant,

On behalf of the citizens of Nevada, those of us at the Department of Education would like to thank you for your interest in applying to operate a high-performing school as part of the Nevada Achievement School District (Nevada ASD). Whether you are applying as a new or experienced operator, we understand the work and commitment required to operate a high-performing school and we appreciate your efforts on behalf of our communities and our children.

The Nevada Achievement School District exists to partner with communities to provide vibrant, high-quality, in-neighborhood alternatives for students in the State's underperforming schools in order to strengthen the educated, healthy citizenry across the State.

Our purpose is critical: to provide students in persistently struggling public schools with the opportunity to attain an education that will prepare them to be college, career and community ready. Currently, over 57,000 students in Nevada attend persistently struggling schools. We must reduce that number; and, we will work to do so by recruiting excellent educators and empowering them to partner with neighborhoods to transform the educational experiences of these students. Governor Sandoval and the Nevada Legislature have given us many new tools and financial resources to accomplish this work.

The development and release of this Request for Qualifications (RFQ) marks the inaugural year of the Nevada ASD's authorizing of charter schools. In its first year, the Nevada ASD has developed a charter authorizing process that has incorporated elements that represent our local needs as well as the experiences of similar districts in other states. We intend to authorize only high-quality and high-potential charter applicants to operate schools and serve the students in the Nevada ASD.

We are committed to running a transparent charter authorizing process that will respect both the applicants and the communities that they will serve. We believe that high-quality authorizing will lead to high-quality schools. For this reason, the charter authorizing process will closely analyze applicants' track records and commitment to students and families. For new applicants without an established track record, the ASD will focus on analyzing their plans and potential to achieve high results in the future. It is a crucial element of the authorization process that operators mirror the community commitment that the Nevada Achievement School District is rooted in.

As you complete your application, please feel free to contact us with any questions. You can email us at achievementschools@doe.nv.gov. Our team is committed to responding to your questions promptly.

Again, thank you for your interest in serving the students of Nevada.

Respectfully yours,



Steve Canavero
State Superintendent of Public Instruction

Nevada Achievement School District Eligibility

Before continuing with this application, please review this section to confirm your eligibility.

You are eligible to apply to operate as an Achievement Charter School through the Nevada Achievement School District if:

- The mission of your school or school organization is to serve students who are currently served by the lowest performing schools in the State (see: [Underperforming Schools List](#))

Your application is to operate a school within one of the following two categories:

- Transformation of a consistently underperforming school in accordance with the State Achievement School District policies and procedures as outlined in [AB448](#) that you will be matched with following a broad community outreach and diligence effort.
- Opening a new charter school that will provide a quality school option within the zone of a consistently underperforming school and including preferences to serve students currently in underperforming schools.

APPLICATION PROCESS

The purpose of this application is to determine the applicant's readiness to operate high-quality schools in Nevada. To this end, we seek to gain as much relevant information as possible through an application process that is clear and efficient. Our intent is to avoid asking for an excess of supporting documentation.

This application is specifically for [new operators](#), defined as all organizations or individuals that have not operated at least one school for three or more years, whether in or out of the state of Nevada. Organizations or individuals that have operated a charter school for three or more years should complete the [experienced operator application](#).

Whether applicants pursue a whole-school turnaround, phase-in turnaround, or other model, they will need to partner with neighborhoods that have had persistently underperforming school options to provide opportunities for students as quickly as possible.

There are five stages in the Nevada ASD charter application process, which will then be followed by a matching process for approved applicants. This application document includes the written narrative and supporting documentation for the Full Application stage.

The Nevada ASD asks that you submit this application and supporting documentation as a PDF via the Nevada ASD's website (www.doe.nv.gov/ASD) **by 5pm PST Wednesday, August 31, 2016. No applications submitted beyond this deadline will be considered for the 2017-18 school year.**

Stage	Documentation	Deadline
(1) Notice of Intent	Submit letter of intent and eligibility documentation via online Notice of Intent Form	July 31, 2016
(2) Full Application	Submit written application narrative and upload supporting documentation	August 31, 2016
(3) Supplemental Requests (if applicable)	Submit responses to any requests for clarification or additional information	September 30, 2016
(4) Interviews (if applicable)	N/A	October 2016-
(5) Final Applicant Approval	N/A	November 1, 2016

The Nevada Department of Education will conduct informational webinars and/or office hours throughout the application process. Please visit the Nevada ASD's website (<http://www.doe.nv.gov/ASD>) for regular updates about webinars. Office hours will be held every other Friday beginning May 27th through August 26th from 9am to 11am PST; you may call 702.668.4339. If you have any questions throughout the process, you can also email achievementschools@doe.nv.gov.

FULL APPLICATION

The aim of the Nevada ASD with respect to charter authorization is to create a simple and efficient process for charter applicants. Applications should include only the information requested below in a single PDF file. **Applications should not exceed thirty single-spaced pages excluding appendices.** There are no page limits for individual sections except for the Executive Summary.

Categories and Key Questions		Strong applicants will...
Executive Summary (4 pages)	<p>(1) Provide an overview of your proposed school, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mission & Vision: state what you seek to accomplish by creating a school and how your school community will change if you are successful in creating your school • Goals: summarize the specific, measureable, and attainable goals against which you will measure the success of your schools and organization • Capacity: explain how your team and experience prepare you for success in this venture • Risks: identify key risks ahead of you and how you will address them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ provide a compelling and coherent rationale for the creation of the proposed school ✓ include sufficient detail regarding the goals the school will achieve and why and how the team will be able to achieve them ✓ adequately address potential risks and mitigation plans
Student Population	<p>(1) Who are the students that you have experience serving?</p> <p>(2) What are your performance goals for students who live in poverty, may be English learners, or may belong to other minority subgroups? Include the types of goals that you will reach in the first three years of operation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ serve a student population that aligns with demographics in Clark County ✓ include specific, measureable, and realistic yet ambitious goals for student achievement as measured by state or national accountability standards and assessments

Categories and Key Questions		Strong applicants will...
Proposed School Model and Academic Plan	<p>(1) Describe your overall academic plan and structure. What are the key principles, systems, and routines that underpin your model? What are the non-negotiable characteristics of a school in your network?</p> <p>(2) What will a typical day be like for a student in your school? If possible, provide a sample weekly student schedule.</p> <p>(3) Describe how your instruction will be aligned to Nevada’s academic standards. What curriculum will you use for core content areas? Who will teach the material?</p> <p>(4) What systems and processes will you use to ensure you identify and meet the needs of all students? Provide detailed plans describing how you will ensure that all students with disabilities and all English Language Learners succeed academically and socially.</p> <p>(5) How will you transition students from existing systems and routines (e.g., curricula, disciplinary systems) to those of your proposed school?</p> <p>(6) Submit student demographic and performance data, broken out by subgroup, for every school you have operated over the last five years. You may submit these data in any format that you choose (e.g., state school report cards, an excel spreadsheet, ANET school summary reports, etc.).</p> <p>(7) Submit the most recent contractual/performance review(s) from your authorizer(s) for every school you have operated in the last five years. You may submit these reviews in any format that you choose (including sending a link if they are hosted online).</p>	<p>✓ clearly describe components of the proposed model (e.g. school culture, assessments, scheduling, etc.) with sufficient detail</p> <p>✓ describe in detail a day in the life of a student</p> <p>✓ propose a model in which the components fit together coherently</p> <p>✓ write a thoughtful, detailed, and legally compliant plan for serving special populations</p> <p>✓ share existing performance data that reflects substantial success with student populations similarly needy to those that will be served in Nevada</p>

Categories and Key Questions		Strong applicants will...
Founding Leadership Team	<p>(1) What is your organization’s governance philosophy? How will the local board, the national board, the school leadership team, and the CMO team hold each other accountable?</p> <p>(2) Provide an organizational chart that includes job descriptions for your local founding team and any members of your CMO team who will support your local founding team.</p> <p>(3) Articulate in detail the structures for decision rights and communication among the local board, the national board, the school leadership team, and the CMO team.</p> <p>(4) Who is responsible for hiring, firing, and evaluating the school leader? What specific goals will the leader be held accountable for achieving?</p> <p>(5) Please note and explain any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Litigation to which you or your schools are a party; b) Material audit findings; c) Corrective actions or similar from your authorizer; and d) Cases in which you surrendered a charter. <p>(6) Submit school leadership team, local CMO leadership, and local board members’ resumes as part of the appendix.</p>	<p>✓ describe a founding team comprised of individuals with demonstrated capacity and/or track records of success</p> <p>✓ present a coherent and reasonable governance structure, including the delineation of roles, responsibilities, and decision rights between the school leadership team, the CMO team, and the local and national boards</p> <p>✓ articulate a clear and specific plan for evaluating the school leader against specific, measurable, and realistic goals for student achievement and school sustainability</p> <p>✓ provide an adequate explanation and evidence of remediation for any past legal or financial problems</p>

Categories and Key Questions		Strong applicants will...
Parent and Community Support	<p>(1) What are your school's plans for parent involvement programming? How will you promote parents' engagement with student academics?</p> <p>(2) Describe the role to date of any parents, neighborhood, and/or community members who have been involved in the development of the proposed school program.</p> <p>(3) How will your school leader and board members engage parents and the broader community on an ongoing basis? How will you resolve disputes that may arise?</p> <p>(4) What specific strategies will be implemented to establish investment in your school and to learn parent priorities and concerns during the transition process, post- opening and beyond?</p> <p>(5) How will you address community engagement for your proposed school? What will you do to build and maintain support prior to the authorization of your charter and during the period between authorization and launch?</p> <p>(6) If available, include letters of support from key constituents, partners, and supporters as part of the appendix.</p>	<p>✓ offer a specific, coherent approach to building and maintaining strong relationships with external stakeholders</p> <p>✓ include specific, evidence-based parent involvement programming in their plans for community engagement</p>
Financial Readiness	<p>(1) What are the systems, routines, and processes that you will use to manage your financial functions, including purchasing, payroll, bookkeeping, and audit? If you will contract out for any financial services, identify the group with which you will contract and describe the financial arrangement as well as their relevant experience.</p> <p>(2) How will your staff and board share the responsibility of financial oversight for your school? What systems, routines, and processes will protect against fraud or theft?</p> <p>(3) Attach copies of your last three CMO audits and</p>	<p>✓ offer a clear, specific, and credible plan for the division of financial responsibilities across all team members, including the board</p> <p>✓ present past financial data that demonstrates strong fiscal stewardship for student achievement and long-term sustainability</p>

	<p>a copy of the most recent audit for each of your CMO's schools as part of the appendix.</p> <p>(4) If your proposal involves a for-profit education management organization, please provide their most recent audited financial statements from the corporate level.</p>	
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Categories and Key Questions	Strong applicants will...
<p>Nevada Launch Plan</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Why do you want to operate schools in Nevada? If you already operate schools in Nevada, why do you want to operate schools in the Nevada ASD? (2) Nevada's ASD law allows you to apply once to operate multiple schools in the future. If you are applying to operate multiple schools, how many schools do you propose to operate in Nevada? For which grade levels, in which geographies and in which years? If you have not yet decided, please explain your process and timeline for deciding. (3) What in your past results gives you confidence that you can successfully serve students in Nevada? What are the key changes you will need to make to your existing academic and/or operational approach to succeed in Nevada? (4) How will your CMO team expand or otherwise change in order to support schools in Nevada? Will you build a regional office in Nevada? (5) How will you adapt your existing teacher recruitment and retention strategies for the Nevada context? (6) How will you ensure that they key tenants of your academic plan are maintained given the current funding climate in the State of Nevada? What if any adjustments might you need to make and how will you make them?

Categories and Key Questions		Strong applicants will...
Appendices (no page limit)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Board member, CMO local leadership, and school leadership team resumes (2) Demographic and performance data for your existing/past schools (3) ESP contract (4) Letters of support (if available) (5) Copies of the most recent audits for each school in CMO network and copies of last three CMO audits (6) Audited corporate level financial statements for your ESP (if applicable) (7) Other information you believe is relevant to your application 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ provide the review team with thorough, accurate information as requested

GLOSSARY

<u>Budget Model</u>	A projected financial model, including assumed sources of revenue and expenses.
<u>Charter Management Organizations</u>	Organizations that contract with schools (typically charter schools only) on a fee-for-service to oversee day-to-day operations, including academics, often these organizations are incorporate as not-for-profit 501c3 entities
<u>Education Management Organizations</u>	Organizations that contract with schools on a fee-for-service basis to help manage day-to-day operations, including academics, often these organizations are incorporated as for-profit entities
<u>English Language Learners</u>	Students whose native language is a language other than English and whose difficulties in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding English may affect the student’s ability to successfully achieve in classrooms where English is the instructional language
<u>Experienced Operator</u>	A charter school organization that has run at least one charter school for three or more years
<u>Governance Philosophy</u>	The school board’s orientation to overseeing the school’s leadership team and school affairs
<u>Letters of Support</u>	Letter from a partner organization or other stakeholder that details a persuasive reason why the Nevada ASD should support the charter applicant
<u>Mission</u>	A succinct statement describing the reason your school will exist; for example, the New York Public Library’s mission statement is, “To inspire lifelong learning, advance knowledge, and strengthen our communities”
<u>New Operator</u>	A charter school organization that has not run a charter school for three or more years
<u>Special Education</u>	The practice of educating students with special needs in a way that addresses their individual differences and needs; the process generally involves systematic use of data to plan and monitor the delivery of individualized instruction and other supports
<u>Vision</u>	A succinct statement describing change your school hopes to achieve in the world. For example, the vision statement of Habitat for Humanity is, “A world where everyone has a decent place to live.”