

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

CHARTER APPLICATION - NEW OPERATOR

Release Date: May 1, 2016

Submissions Due: August 31, 2016

(for consideration for 2017-18 school Opening)

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 achievementsschools@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 who 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 is to create a simple and efficient process for applicants. Applications should include only the information requested below in a single PDF file. **Applications should not exceed fifty 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 ● Academic Model: describe the key components of your academic and programmatic model ● Goals: summarize the specific, measurable, 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
Purpose	<p>(1) Why do you want to start a school? What is the problem that you are trying to address?</p> <p>(2) Provide the mission of your school.</p> <p>(3) Describe a vision for your school that clearly illustrates how your school will benefit your students and Nevada.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ articulate a clear and specific mission and vision ✓ make a credible case for the importance of the problem they are seeking to solve
Student Population	<p>(1) What do you know or believe about the students in Nevada’s underperforming schools?</p> <p>(2) What are your performance goals for all students? Start with existing baseline data for all performance goals. Include the 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 the schools identified by the Department as underperforming and reflects the communities where they are located ✓ include specific, measurable, 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 academic plan and structure. What are the key principles, systems, and routines that underpin your model?</p> <p>(2) What will a typical day be like for a student in your school? Please provide a sample weekly student schedule.</p> <p>(3) How will your instruction 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 are the tools, systems, and routines you intend to use to track student and school-level progress? How will you use the information gained by formative and summative assessments to adapt instruction for students?</p> <p>(5) 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>(6) How will you transition students from existing systems and routines (e.g., curricula, disciplinary systems) to those of your proposed school?</p> <p>(7) Describe in detail at least two relevant examples of successful implementation of your proposed academic and programmatic model by other organizations. Identify differences and similarities, and explain how you will adapt the model for the local circumstances.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ clearly describe components of the proposed model (e.g. school culture, assessments, scheduling, etc.) with sufficient detail ✓ propose a model in which the components fit together coherently ✓ root the justification for their academic and programmatic model in evidence (e.g., other schools where the model has worked) ✓ describe in detail a day in the life of a student ✓ present a thoughtful, detailed plan for using data to measure and improve student achievement ✓ write a thoughtful, detailed, and legally compliant plan for serving special populations

Categories and Key Questions	Strong applicants will...
<p>Founding Leadership Team</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) What is the governance philosophy that will guide your board? What are the key expectations for board members and for the board as a whole? (2) How will the board evaluate the school leader? Against what goals will the board measure the school leader's success, and what will the board do if the school leader fails to achieve those goals? (3) Provide an organizational chart that includes job descriptions for all staff on the school leadership team and the board. (4) For each identified member of your founding team, describe their background, current professional role, and proposed roles and responsibilities for the proposed school. (5) For each of the following individuals, describe in detail at least two examples of how they have achieved results in their professional lives that are relevant to their performance in their intended role: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) School Leader; (b) Board President; (c) Lead Applicant, if neither School Leader nor Board President; (1) Please note and explain any of the following: <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. (6) If anyone on your founding team has previously served in their proposed role at a school, please provide academic and financial performance information for that school. (7) If you do not have a principal identified, please describe the profile of the individual

	<p>you are seeking and the process by which you will recruit them.</p> <p>(8) If you intend to work with an Educational Management Organization or a Charter Management Organization, describe the contractual terms, goals, and systems by which you will manage the relationship and oversee their work. (If available, submit the management organization contract as an appendix.) Explain what steps you will take to ensure a smooth transition if the management organization or your board chooses not to renew its contract.</p> <p>(9) Submit school leadership team and board members' resumes as part of the appendix.</p>	
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Categories and Key Questions		Strong applicants will...
Human Capital	<p>(1) Describe your teacher recruitment strategy. How will you take into account teachers who may have been employed at the turnaround school site?</p> <p>(2) How will you retain your high-performing teachers?</p> <p>(3) What are your expectations for teachers and for all partner organizations? How will you clearly communicate these expectations and ensure that teachers and partners stay on track towards meeting expectations?</p> <p>(4) How will your organization coach and develop staff? What will be the critical elements to coaching and development?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ identify appropriate and realistic pipelines for attracting high-quality teachers ✓ describe credible strategies for retaining high-performing teachers; ✓ articulate specific, rigorous expectations for teachers and a clear plan for ensuring that teachers are supported in meeting expectations
Parent and Community Support	<p>(1) 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>(2) Who are the key constituents, partners, and supporters for your new school? What role(s) have they played in developing or influencing the charter application/plan? What role(s) will they play in shaping the future work of the school?</p> <p>(3) What are your school's plans for building family-school partnership that build a connection to for families to the school program? How will you promote parents' engagement with student learning?</p> <p>(4) What specific strategies will be implemented to establish investment in your school and to learn parent priorities and concerns pre- and post- opening?</p> <p>(5) How will your school leader and board</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ provide evidence of local support for their proposed school ✓ offer a specific, coherent approach to building and maintaining strong relationships with external stakeholders ✓ include specific, evidence-based parent involvement programming in their plans for community engagement

	<p>members engage with the neighborhood and the broader community on an ongoing basis? How will you resolve any disputes that may arise?</p> <p>(6) If available, include letters of support from key constituents, partners, and supporters as part of the appendix.</p>	
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Categories and Key Questions		Strong applicants will...
Financial Readiness	<p>(1) What are the processes and systems that you will use to manage the critical financial functions of your school? If you will contract out for any financial services, identify the group with which you will contract and explain their relevant background and the specifics of your contractual relationship.</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 a three-year budget model as part of the appendix. <i>(Note: The budget model is a simplified version of reporting requirements for charter schools by the Nevada Department of Education. It includes revenues only from one year of the state's regular funding formula. Please make sure that you complete the model for three fiscal years.)</i></p> <p>(4) How will you adjust your budget if you are unable to attract the number of students reflected in your submitted budget model?</p> <p>(5) If your proposal involves a for-profit education management organization, please provide their most recent audited financial statements from the corporate level.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ create a budget that is financially sound, realistic, and aligned to the staffing, programming, and goals of the proposed school ✓ present a detailed and complete set of proposed systems, routines, and processes for back-office operations ✓ offer a clear, specific, and credible plan for the division of financial responsibilities across all team members, including the board ✓ describe realistic and responsible plans for addressing financial shortfalls or other difficulties

Categories and Key Questions		Strong applicants will...
<p>School Sustainability</p>	<p>(1) What do you see as the greatest risks to the successful operation of your school in its first year? What critical steps can you take now to mitigate these risks?</p> <p>(2) What do you see as the greatest risks to the successful operation of your school fifteen years from now? What are the critical steps you can take in your first five years of operation to mitigate these risks?</p> <p>(3) What systems will you put in place to ensure the development of a school leadership pipeline, including a potential successor for your founding school leader?</p>	<p>✓ thoughtfully and realistically assess short-term and long-term risks to school sustainability and success</p> <p>✓ offer detailed and coherent plans to mitigate risks to school sustainability in the short-term and long-term</p> <p>✓ describe a realistic approach to the development of a school leadership pipeline</p>
<p>Fresh Start Charter School Program (Only respond to these questions if you selected: Opening a new school that will provide a quality school option within the zone of a consistently underperforming school)</p>	<p>(1) How will your school directly address the needs of students who are currently zoned to a school on the State Underperforming School List?</p> <p>(2) Indication of preference</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you have a preferred zone or location—identify the location (be as specific as possible) you prefer and articulate a rationale for the alignment between your educational philosophy and the needs of that specific community. <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If there is no preference, provide a detailed explanation of how you will determine which zone to serve and how you will confirm alignment between your academic plan. 	<p>✓ demonstrate commitment to serving students currently served by the State’s underperforming schools</p> <p>✓ describe a practical approach to ensuring that students in underperforming schools are prioritized</p>

	<p><i>Note: location and placement is not guaranteed through articulation of a preference.</i></p> <p>(3) Articulate how your lottery and registration processes will concretely reflect your commitment to serving students currently zoned to Underperforming Schools.</p> <p>(4) As an Achievement Charter School, how will you partner with other schools serving students in the same zone to demonstrate commitment to all students in that zone?</p>	
<p>Fresh Start Charter School Facility (Only respond to these questions if you selected: Opening a <i>new</i> school that will provide a quality school option within the zone of a consistently underperforming school)</p>	<p>(1) Describe the process for identifying and securing a facility, including any brokers or consultants you are employing to navigate the real estate market, plans for renovations, timelines, financing, etc.</p> <p>(2) If a facility is not yet identified, please describe the organization’s approach to finding a suitable facility. Please include the organization’s plans to finance the facility, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total project cost • Financing and financing assumptions • Total facility costs that the financial model can handle – debt service + lease + maintenance + utilities + etc. <p>(3) Describe the organization’s capacity and experience in facilities acquisition and management, including managing build-out and/or renovations, as applicable.</p> <p><i>Note: Charter school facilities must comply with health and safety requirements. In</i></p>	<p>✓ demonstrate experience and plan to ensure a viable facility to serve students in the neighborhood(s) where the State’s underperforming schools are located</p>

	<p><i>addition, charter school applicants must be prepared to follow applicable county and municipal review procedures which vary significantly between jurisdictions.</i></p>	
<p>Appendices (no page limit)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Board member and school leadership team resumes (add to end of Full Application) (2) Management organization contract (if applicable) (add to end of Full Application) (3) Letters of support (if available) (add to end of Full Application) (4) Budget model (upload as separate attachment) (5) Audited corporate level financial statements for your management organization (if applicable) (5) Other information you believe is relevant to your application 	<p>✓ provide the review team with thorough, accurate information as requested</p>

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.”