

Minnesota Guild • Existing/Transfer School Application

Rev. 2.1 • 2015

Submission Instructions

- Page size: 8.5x11
- Margins: 1"/all sides
- Page numbers: Bottom, labeled as 1/n
- Footer: School name
- Text Font: 12 points single-spaced.
- Length: Follow section limits (excluding attachments)
- Submit the application and all attachments (each labeled as: filename.pdf, e.g., Bylaws.pdf, file to: buddy.ferrari@guildschools.org)

Note: In addition to information pertinent to the school, please include specific references to the previous contract, as well as the current authorizer's report. If the school has any outstanding issues (e.g. with the current authorizer, Minnesota Department of Education, complaints), include that information in this application.

School Summary

Provide a 1-2 page summary of the charter school that includes:

- School's name
- Purpose (linked to defined need)
- Mission & vision
- Student population, age levels served & total population
- Educational philosophy, methodology & instructional approach
- Professional organizational structure
- Key design elements
- Comparison to current schools serving the targeted population
- Student learning & achievement goals
- Unique features

Statutory Purpose(s)

Provide a 1-2 page description, articulating which Minnesota statutory purpose(s) will be fulfilled as defined in law (124D.10):

Purposes. (a) The primary purpose of this section is to improve all pupil learning and all student achievement. Additional purposes include to:

1. Increase learning opportunities for all pupils;
2. Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods;
3. Measure learning outcomes and create different and innovative forms of measuring outcomes;
4. Establish new forms of accountability for schools; or
5. Create new professional opportunities for teachers, including the opportunity to be responsible for the learning program at the school site.

Describe:

- How the vision & mission of the school are connected to the purpose(s)
- The rationale for selecting the educational program used to fulfill the purpose(s)
- How the school's design differentiates it from other educational offerings
- How the school has fulfilled & will continue to fulfill the selected purpose(s)

Need, Mission & Vision

Provide a 2-3 page description of the vision and mission statements of the proposed school, beginning with a statement of need. Statement of Need:

- Describe evidence of the need for the school

- Describe demand for the school in the location where it operates
- Describe evidence of community support for a school in this area
- Describe existing school offerings in the intended community

Vision:

- Describe clearly and succinctly what the school plans to be (its purpose)
- State characteristics that can be measured/tested for fulfillment
- Select aspirations that are compelling

Mission:

- Describe what the school will do to achieve its vision
- Identify the target stakeholder(s)
- Identify to what degree the school will achieve its goals and purpose
- Reference how the school will achieve its goals

Goals & Student Performance Expectations

Provide a 5-6 page description of the school's goals and metrics, how progress toward goals will be measured throughout the year, how data will be obtained and stored, and how that data will be used for program improvement and provided to the authorizer.

Additional goals beyond state requirements may be identified for which the school will be held accountable over time.

- Describe specific student achievement goals for achieving the school's mission and the Minnesota Academic Standards, including mathematics, reading, and any other content areas applicable to the school's program focus
- Explain how the goals are linked to closing achievement gaps and setting high expectations for all students
- Describe the rationale for determining that selected goals are reliable, measurable and attainable
- Identify student performance goals for achieving other accountability measures such as attendance, graduation, and appropriate aspects of school's proposed program
- Describe goals for student growth over time in content areas, especially mathematics and reading
- Describe how the school's assessment system will provide baseline data and appropriate ongoing data throughout the year to continuously monitor student achievement/performance against annual goals
- Explain how this data will be used to modify teaching and learning strategies to enhance performance
- Identify how data will be obtained and stored
- Identify how data will be provided to the authorizer
- Explain how state achievement and reporting requirements will be met

Teaching/Learning Program Model

Provide a 5-6 page description of the school's teaching/learning program model (or philosophy) that includes the supporting rationale and research-based evidence.

- Describe the educational program model with supporting research evidence showing how it will improve student achievement for the proposed student population in a way that supports the vision/mission
- Identify how the school will help disadvantaged students succeed academically
- Describe the school leadership model
- Describe the professional organizational & development models/initiatives
- Describe other key elements of the program to demonstrate how they will increase student academic performance or meet the social/emotional needs of students
- Describe the relationship between the teaching/learning program model, the instructional and assessment system and the supporting research evidence
- If specific approaches are identified to meet the needs of students at risk of academic failure, describe the methodologies for addressing the challenges, including diagnostic methods to identify students performing below expectations & approaches to provide remedial instruction
- Explain how the school's assessment system will provide baseline data gathering, short- and long-term types of assessments, and how the school will use this information to revise professional development and instruction
- Describe core learning areas, including the curriculum and how it will be aligned to the Minnesota Academic Standards

- Detail tools, methods & instructional techniques identified for target populations, citing relevant evidence regarding their value in supporting student achievement
- Describe supplemental curricula for Special Education, electives or “special” courses and its linkage to Minnesota Academic Standards as available (e.g. modified standards)
- Describe the teaching skills and experiences needed to efficiently and effectively carry out teaching/learning program model
- Provide the daily schedule and calendar and describe how it supports the school’s mission
- Show that the schedule exceeds the minimum number of hours required by state statute, include:
 - Total instructional time per week/length of student instructional day
 - Minimum number of hours devoted to core academic subjects in each grade
 - Length of the school day
 - Total number of teacher contract days
 - Planned holidays
 - First/last day of classes

Evaluation Plan

Provide a 4-5 page description of how the school gathers, organizes and analyzes data for the education program including instruction/assessment system, curricula, and other identified critical aspects of the model.

- Describe roles and responsibilities for analyzing the relationship between student achievement/performance data and education program data to identify areas of gaps or deficits in student achievement connected to Minnesota Academic Standards, especially in mathematics and reading
- Identify the rationale for frequency of evaluation to effectively monitor and adjust strategies
- Describe the school’s procedures for taking corrective action if student achievement results fall below the goals approved by the authorizer in the charter contract
- Briefly describe the teacher evaluation plan (and include the Teacher Evaluation Plan as an attachment)
- Describe how the school gathers and organizes implementation data for the a) governance plan; b) management plan; and c) operation plan and uses results for continuous improvement as well as adaptation to changing market & fiscal realities
- Describe how the school’s financial plan clearly fulfills compliance with fiscal policies and procedures required by MDE and the authorizer
- Explain how data on implementation of the financial plan is used to show compliance to state and authorizer requirements when reporting to stakeholders
- Explain how the financial audit data is used to make adjustments in fiscal policies and procedures to improve the financial health of the school
- Identify the timeline and persons responsible for each of the evaluation components
- If relevant, identify all evaluation elements managed by an external contractor, including contractor selection criteria, financial commitments for evaluation and process for determining evaluation methodology.

Governance Plan

Provide a 4-6 page description of the proposed school’s governance plan. Including the following:

- Describe the governance structure of the school
- Describe the governance operating procedures of the school
- Describe school board elections and procedures
- Describe the types of experience and expertise (such as education, management, finance and law) represented on the board
- Describe the role of parent and community involvement in school governance & engagement strategies
- Describe the amount of authority the governing board conveys to the school’s leaders, along with a clear delineation of their respective roles (board & leaders) & the means by which leaders are evaluated
- Explain how training for new board members as required by statute is provided
- Explain how compliance with Open Meetings and Open Records laws occurs and who is accountable

Administration Plan

Provide a 3-4 page explanation of the school's proposed management structure.

- Include an organization chart as an attachment - show the relationship between school leadership, teaching & support staff
- Provide a narrative description clearly delineating employee roles, showing who is responsible for oversight of the educational program & operations at each level of the organizational chart
- Describe who holds responsibility for employee hiring, supporting evaluation & termination
- Include job descriptions for school leaders, teachers & key employees, including accountabilities for alignment with mission & vision
- Provide documentation that staff meet all licensure requirements
- Describe key employee policies including employment practices, benefits, leave policies, grievance policy, conflict of interest policy, harassment, drug-free workplace, classroom practices & evaluation practices
- Describe how the school staff development & evaluation plan is aligned to the school improvement plan & individual professional development plans, consistent with NSDC Standards (National Staff Development Council)
- Describe how adequate time for collaboration is implemented

Operations Plan

Provide a 4-6 page operations plan.

- Describe how the school attracts and enrolls students/families
- Describe the role of parent partnership, volunteer requirements & opportunities
- Describe community partnerships and practices
- Describe enrollment processes as consistent with Minnesota law, addressing wait list or lottery process, post-enrollment testing and any admissions preferences given in the lottery
- Explain the process used to transfer student records to or from the charter school
- Describe the policy for student discipline, suspension, or expulsion that provides due process rights under the Minnesota Pupil Fair Dismissal act
- Explain how the school's "Child Find" process addresses needs for adaptations or special education assessments & staffing
- Indicate how the school meets the needs of IEPs and ELLs & complies with the requirements of IDEA and 504 plans. Include certified personnel, documentation, assessments, adaptations & modifications
- Describe how the school provides staff to meet the needs of these students including a licensed special education teacher
- Describe the school's transportation program
- Describe the school's food service program
- Describe the school's facility
- Provide assurance the facility has a commercial occupancy permit and is in compliance with applicable building codes, health and safety laws and with the requirements of the American with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Financial Management Plan

Provide a 3-4 page financial management plan (excluding attachments).

- Describe who is responsible for financial management at the school
- Describe how spending priorities align with the school's mission, educational plan, plans for management, operations & growth
- Describe the school's financial policies & procedures including checks & balances of cash disbursement
- Provide budgets for the current and previous 2 years:
 - Identify assumptions and their basis
 - UFARS Chart of Accounts
 - Direct student instructional expenses, PERA/TRA contributions & other benefits
 - Accounting for state funding holdbacks
 - Separation of general fund & food service fund
 - Emergency/long-term reserve fund
 - Minimum enrollment needed for solvency & assumptions for enrollment
 - Adequate staffing aligned with the narrative in other application sections
 - Any services contracted to outside providers
- Describe the school's process to contract with an audit firm to conduct an annual, independent financial audit including how

results are disseminated to MDE and the authorizer

- Explain how the school will remain fiscally solvent, adhere to generally acceptable accounting practices, have no material breaches, & will address any concerns from the independent financial audit
- Describe the school's plan to ensure that STAR, MARSS, UFARS, EDRS, CLICS, SERVS reports & data uploads are ~~comem~~-pleted

Attachments

Please furnish the following:

- Organization Chart
- All board policies
- Handbooks for staff/parents/students
- Enrollment policies/procedures
- Federal tax-exempt status documentation
- Daily schedule/annual calendar
- Student retention data/past 3 years
- Job descriptions for school leaders/key staff
- Professional development plans/past 3 years
- Teacher Evaluation Plan
- Student test data/other data
- STAR report/past 3 years
- Summary of rewards/recognition (MDE Financial Awards)
- Authorizer renewal report if contract renewed
- Copies of reports to authorizer
- Strategic plan (if available)
- Current School Improvement Plan (if exists)
- Statutory Operating Debt Plan if in SOD
- Board meeting minutes/past 12 months
- Budgets/current & previous 2 years
- Projected budget/next year (if available)
- Enrollment projections/next 2 years
- Lease agreement
- Documentation of liability insurance
- Documentation of any litigation during past 2 years to the extent data practices law permits sharing information

Final Assessment - Approve or Deny

The Guild Advisory Board will review applications individually, rating each element of the application as Inadequate, Satisfactory or Excellent. After reviewers complete their independent ratings, they meet as a group within 30 days of receiving the application to determine if a satisfactory rating has been achieved on all components of the application or if additional information or actions are necessary to bring each component to the satisfactory level. If the Advisory Board determines that all components of the application merit a satisfactory rating, they will forward a summary of their ratings and a recommendation to approve to the Executive Board by the end of the initial application review period (30 days).

If additional information or actions are requested, applicants will have 30 days to respond. During this period the Advisory Board may ask for a presentation from or interview with the applicant. At the end of the 30 days, they will review any inputs received and finalize their recommendation to approve or deny to the Executive Board.

The Executive Board of Directors will act on the recommendation within 30 days of receiving an application & is accountable for all final decisions. The Executive Board also has the authority to request additional information or to ask for a meeting with applicants.

Any request from the Executive Board would have a response period of 15 business days. If an application is declined due to failure to achieve a satisfactory rating on any of the components during the initial review and remedy process, an applicant may initiate the process again by starting with the Intent to Apply letter.