Arkansas Department of Education
Instructions for Completing the
2015 District Conversion Public Charter School Application

Arkansas Department of Education
Charter School Office
Four Capitol Mall
Little Rock, AR 72201
501.683.5313

Timeline

Thursday, June 2, 2015

District conversion public charter school letters of intent must be filed with the Arkansas Department of Education by 4:00 p.m.

Thursday, June 11, 2015

A district conversion public charter school applicant technical assistance conference call will be held.

APPLICANT PARTICIPATION IS MANDATORY.

Dates to Be Determined by the Applicant

The applicant publishes notice of a public hearing about the proposed district conversion charter in a newspaper having general circulation district at least three weeks before the hearing.

The notice of the public hearing must be distributed to the community, certified school personnel, and parents of all students enrolled at the public school for which the school district is initiating the application.

Wednesday, September 9, 2015

District conversion public charter school applications must be filed with the Arkansas Department of Education by 4:00 p.m.

September/October 2015

The Arkansas Department of Education Charter Internal Review Committee reviews each application and documents questions and concerns.

The applicant responds to Charter Internal Review Committee comments.

The Charter Internal Review Committee reviews the responses and notes remaining concerns, if any.

November 2015

District conversion charter applicant hearings are conducted by the Charter Authorizing Panel.

December 2015

The State Board of Education decides whether to review the panel's decisions.

Date to Be Determined by the State Board of Education

If the State Board of Education decides to review a charter applicant decision made by the Charter Authorizing Panel, the State Board conducts an applicant hearing.

*Note - All information must be received in the Charter School Office of the Arkansas Department of Education no later than 4:00 p.m. on the date of the deadline. Information received in the Charter School Office after 4:00 p.m. on the established date will not be processed. It is the responsibility of the applicant to adhere to all charter application deadlines. **Please take under consideration the length of the time that may be required for electronic submissions to reach the Charter School Office.**

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS ON COMPLETING THE APPLICATION

The application must be completed using the fillable form and the templates provided. Note the following:

- There are a limited number of characters allowed for each response.
  It is advisable to ensure that each response fits into the space allowed. Text that does not fit in the text boxes cannot be reviewed.
- Use the font and font size that are set for responses. If you type responses in another program, make certain that Arial font, size 10 is used and copied into the text boxes.
- Include a response in every text box.
- A complete application includes the fillable form with all other required documents attached at the end.
- When the fillable form is complete, create a flattened PDF by using a 'print to PDF' function, or by printing the completed fillable form and scanning it as a new PDF.
- The following documents must be scanned; signed as required; and attached, **in the order listed**, to the PDF after the completed application form:

  REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS
  APPLICANTS MUST USE ALL TEMPLATES THAT ARE PROVIDED.
  - Documentation showing that all requirements pertaining to the public hearing were met;
  - Evidence of parental and community support (five-page limit);
  - The proposed school's 2016-2017 calendar;
  - The proposed school's 2016-2017 daily schedule; and
  - The signed Statement of Assurances template.

  ATTACHMENTS TO BE INCLUDED ONLY IF APPROPRIATE
  - If an applicant believes that a weighted admissions lottery is required by federal court or administrative order, a copy of the order; and
  - A Prior Charter Involvement template for each individual associated with the charter who has prior charter experience.

Save the PDF as "*Proposed Charter School's Name (District Name)* 2015 Application."

In order for the application to be considered by the authorizer during the 2015 application cycle, submit the named PDF, via email, to the Arkansas Department of Education at the following email address so that it is received no later than **4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, July 28, 2015**:

ade.charterschools@arkansas.gov

It is imperative that the email transmission time is considered as the application must be received at the Arkansas Department of Education by the deadline.

Any application that is substantially incomplete will not be reviewed by Arkansas Department of Education staff or forwarded to the authorizer for consideration. An application will be considered substantially incomplete if it does not provide enough information to enable staff at the Arkansas Department of Education to provide a meaningful review.

NOTES ON SELECTED SECTIONS OF THE APPLICATION

Cover Page

Include the name of the proposed charter school in the text box.

Section B - Executive Summary

The mission statement will populate the response for Prompt #2. Include the key programmatic features that are considered the most important for anyone to know about the charter school and make certain that the features listed in the executive summary are discussed in other sections of the application.

Section C - Narrative Description

When responding to the prompts, refer to the Arkansas Department of Education District Conversion Public Charter School Application 2015 Scoring Rubric found at the end of this document. This is a valuable tool as it includes criteria for each section of the application.

Prompt 2

The mission statement from the executive summary will populate as the response to this prompt.

Prompt 3

2014 ESEA reports and 2014 Report Cards are located at the following:

https://adedata.arkansas.gov/arc/.

Prompt 8

Explain why it is critical for the district to have a charter school rather than implementing the plan outlined in the application on an existing traditional campus.

Prompt 12 D

In accordance with federal guidelines, students with disabilities shall be provided specific services and all aspects of IDEA apply. The public charter school cannot waive the responsibility of providing services for students with disabilities.

Prompt 15

Be certain that a Prior Charter Involvement template is completed for each individual listed.

NOTES ON SELECTED ATTACHMENTS REQUIRED TO BE ADDED TO THE END OF THE FILLABLE FORM

Evidence of parental and community support

Limit the response to five pages.
If petitions in support of the proposed charter school have been signed and or letters in support of the proposed charter school have been received, include documents, but do not exceed the five-page limit. If the support documents received by the applicant exceed five pages, include no more than four pages and include a fifth page that includes the following:

- The number of individuals who signed petitions supporting the proposed school; and/or
- The name, title, and affiliation of others who wrote letters of support for the proposed school.

Copies of these documents will be requested at a later date.

Statement of Assurances Template

This form must be completed, signed, and included as part of the application.

Check points for the charter application

- All sections of the fillable form are complete.
- Each complete response is visible in the text box.
- Each response has been prepared considering the evaluation criteria of the corresponding section of the rubric.
- Documentation that all requirements pertaining to the public hearing were met is included.
- Evidence of parental and community support is included.
- A copy of the proposed school's 2016-2017 calendar is included.
- A copy of the proposed school's daily schedule is included.
- The signed Statement of Assurances Form is included.
- A Prior Charter Involvement template is included for each individual with prior charter experience.
- If an applicant believes that a weighted admissions lottery is required by federal court or administrative order, a copy of the order is included.

Submit the application, via email, to the Arkansas Department of Education so that it is received no later than **4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, July 28, 2015.**

It is the applicant's responsibility to comply with all aspects of Arkansas Code Annotated § 6-23-101 et seq., the Arkansas Department of Education Rules Governing Charter Schools, and the requirements outlined in the application for a district conversion public charter school. Contact the Arkansas Department of Education Charter School Office with questions and for assistance in developing the application.

Arkansas Department of Education Charter School Office 501.683.5313

Arkansas Department of Education
2015 District Conversion Public Charter School Application Review

The charter application should reflect a thorough understanding of key issues and demonstrate capacity to open and operate a quality charter school. Each response should address the topic with specific and accurate information that shows thorough preparation and presents a clear, realistic picture of the ways in which the school will operate.

With that in mind the initial review of district conversion charter applications will be conducted by Arkansas Department of Education staff from various divisions that routinely interact with charter school personnel. This group, known as the Internal Charter Review Committee, will assess the application for complete and clear responses and provide technical assistance to the applicants. While the committee will request additional information or clarification, identify concerns with the applications, and review the applicant revisions based on this technical assistance, the goal of the committee is to determine if each response is fully responsive, partially responsive; or not responsive. It is the Charter Authorizing Panel tasked with judging the quality of each application and determining what applicants are likely to open and operate high quality charter schools.

A rubric that identifies the criteria for each section of the application follows. These criteria should be carefully considered when writing the application and each applicant should self-assess the draft application based on the criteria and revise the application based on the self-assessment prior to submitting it.

Arkansas Department of Education

District Conversion Charter School
2015 Application

SCORING RUBRIC

PRE-APPLICATION MATERIALS

The Arkansas Department of Education requires that all applicants submit a Letter of Intent, outlining a general description of the proposed charter school.

Evaluation Criteria:

- A Letter of Intent was filed with Arkansas Department of Education on time and included all the necessary information

Fully Responsive **Partially Responsive** **Not Responsive**

Concerns and Additional Questions

PART B EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Arkansas Department of Education requires all applicants to include an executive summary.

Evaluation Criteria:

- A mission statement (with content to be evaluated for Prompt #2 of Part C); and
- The key programmatic features of the proposed charter school

Fully Responsive **Partially Responsive** **Not Responsive**

Concerns and Additional Questions

PART C NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED CHARTER

C1: PUBLIC HEARING RESULTS

All districts must conduct a public hearing before applying for a district conversion or limited charter school to assess support for the school's establishment. Applicants are asked both to document the logistics of the hearing and to include a narrative of the hearing results.

Evaluation Criteria:

- A thorough description of the results of the public hearing;
- Evidence of public support exhibited at the hearing;
- Documentation of required notice published to garner public attention to the hearing; and
- Documentation of required notices about the hearing being sent to the community, certified school personnel, and parents of all students enrolled at the public school for which the school district initiated the application

Fully Responsive **Partially Responsive** **Not Responsive**

Concerns and Additional Questions

C2: MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission Statement should be meaningful and indicate what the school intends to do, for whom, and to what degree.

Evaluation Criteria:

- A mission statement that is clear and succinct

Fully Responsive **Partially Responsive** **Not Responsive**

Concerns and Additional Questions

C3: EDUCATIONAL NEED

The Educational Need section should explain the need for a charter school in the proposed location and the innovative educational option offered by the charter school.

Evaluation Criteria:

- Valid, reliable, and verifiable data substantiate an educational need for the charter; and
- Innovations that would distinguish the charter from other schools

Fully Responsive **Partially Responsive** **Not Responsive**

Concerns and Additional Questions

C4: ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT GOALS

The Academic Achievement Goals section should define the performance expectations for students and the school as whole and support the charter's mission.

Evaluation Criteria:

- Specific goals in reading and mathematics that are clear, measurable, and attainable;
- Valid and reliable assessment tools to be used to measure the goals; and
- Attainment of the goals demonstrate that the charter is meeting the identified educational need for the school and fulfilling its mission

Fully Responsive **Partially Responsive** **Not Responsive**

Concerns and Additional Questions

C5: SCHEDULE OF COURSES OFFERED

The Schedule of Courses Offered section should describe the schedules for a week at the elementary level and courses offered at each grade at the secondary level.

Evaluation Criteria:

- Evidence that the charter school meets minimum state requirements of courses offered at appropriate grade levels

Fully Responsive **Partially Responsive** **Not Responsive**

Concerns and Additional Questions

C6: PROGRAMS AND METHODS TO SUPPORT CORE CLASSES

The Programs and Methods to Support Core Classes section should describe the curriculum for core classes.

Evaluation Criteria:

- A clear description of curriculum, including programs and instructional methods to be used in core classes; and
- An explanation of how the district will pay for all costs associate with the curriculum

Fully Responsive **Partially Responsive** **Not Responsive**

Concerns and Additional Questions

C7: EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

The Educational Program section should describe the educational foundation of the school and the teaching and learning strategies that will be employed.

Evaluation Criteria:

- A clear description of the proposed educational program, including but not limited to the foundational educational philosophy and curricular and instructional strategies to be employed;
- An educational program with ample resources to ensure that students achieve academic goals and excel; and
- A description of the grade levels and maximum enrollment, by year, if the charter plans to grow over time.

Fully Responsive **Partially Responsive** **Not Responsive**

Concerns and Additional Questions

C8: CHARTER MODEL

Evaluation Criteria:

- Specific reasons why it is critical for the district to have a charter school rather than implementing the plan outlined in the application on an existing traditional campus

Fully Responsive **Partially Responsive** **Not Responsive**

Concerns and Additional Questions

C9: AUTONOMY

Evaluation Criteria:

- A clear description of all the ways in which the charter school will have more autonomy than traditional schools in the district, specifically pertaining to personnel, budget, day-to-day operations, and the school calendar

Fully Responsive **Partially Responsive** **Not Responsive**

Concerns and Additional Questions

C10: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Evaluation Criteria:

- Meaningful and realistic ways to involve licensed employees and parents in developing and implementing the school improvement plan, identifying performance criteria, and evaluating the effectiveness of the improvement plan
- A plan that addresses how the charter school will improve student learning and meet the state education goals

Fully Responsive **Partially Responsive** **Not Responsive**

Concerns and Additional Questions

C11: CURRICULUM ALIGNMENT

The Curriculum Alignment section should define the process by which the charter will ensure that the curriculum aligns with Arkansas Curriculum Frameworks and state standards.

Evaluation Criteria:

- Evidence that the applicant has a process to ensure all curriculum materials, used in the educational program, align with the Arkansas Department of Education's curriculum frameworks and the Common Core State Standards

Fully Responsive **Partially Responsive** **Not Responsive**

Concerns and Additional Questions

C12: STUDENT SERVICES

The Student Services section should describe how the school will address specific services for its student body.

Evaluation Criteria:
A description of the ways in which the following services will be provided to students **even in each area for which a waiver is requested**:

- A guidance program that will serve all students;
- A health services program that will serve all students;
- A plan for a media center for use by all students;
- Sound plans for educating special education students that reflect the full range of programs and services required to provide such students with a high quality education;
- A transportation plan that will serve all **eligible** students;
- An alternative education plan for eligible students, including those determined to be at-risk and to offer access to one or more approved Alternative Learning Environments;
- A plan to serve students who are English language learners; and
- Plans for a gifted and talented program for eligible students

Fully Responsive **Partially Responsive** **Not Responsive**

Concerns and Additional Questions

C13: ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORTS

The Annual Progress Reports section should define how the academic progress of individual students and the school as a whole will be measured, analyzed, and reported.

Evaluation Criteria:

- A timeline for data compilation and completion of an annual report to parents, the community and the authorizer, **separate from the district's annual report to the public**, that outlines the school's progress;
- A plan for dissemination of the annual report to appropriate stakeholders

Fully Responsive **Partially Responsive** **Not Responsive**

Concerns and Additional Questions

C14: ENROLLMENT CRITERIA AND PROCEDURES

The Enrollment Criteria and Procedures section should describe how the school will attract and enroll its student body, including any criteria for admission and enrollment. Applicants must also provide assurances for a random, anonymous lottery selection process.

Evaluation Criteria:

- A student recruitment plan that will provide equal opportunity for all parents and students to learn about and apply to the school
- An enrollment and admissions process that is open, fair, and in accordance with applicable law
- A process for, and a guarantee of, a random, anonymous lottery process should there be more student applications than can be accommodated under the terms of the charter

Fully Responsive **Partially Responsive** **Not Responsive**

Concerns and Additional Questions

C15: PRIOR CHARTER INVOLVEMENT

Evaluation Criteria:

- A complete Prior Charter Involvement Template for each individual connected with the proposed charter;
- Accurate data in each Prior Charter Involvement Template, including active links to assessment data

Fully Responsive **Partially Responsive** **Not Responsive**

Concerns and Additional Questions

C16: STAFFING PLAN

The Staffing Plan section should describe the job duties of the school administrator(s) and other key personnel. This section should also describe the professional qualifications which will be required of employees.

Evaluation Criteria:

- A job description for the school administrators and other key personnel, including but not limited to counselors and teachers;
- An outline of the professional qualifications required for administrators, teachers, counselors, and others; and
- A staffing plan that clearly outlines both the types and numbers of positions to be filled at the school and salary scales for such positions

Fully Responsive **Partially Responsive** **Not Responsive**

Concerns and Additional Questions

C17: ARKANSAS PUBLIC SCHOOL COM PUTER NETWORK ASSURANCES

The Arkansas Public School Computer Network (APSCN) Assurances section should provide documentation of the applicant's understanding of and participation in the required state finance and educational data reporting system.

Evaluation Criteria:

- Assurance that the charter school will participate in APSCN and will comply with all state statutory requirements regarding the APSCN finance and educational data reporting system

Fully Responsive **Not Responsive**

Concerns and Additional Questions

C18: FACILITIES

The Facilities section should identify and describe the facilities to be used by the school and any changes to be made to the facilities.

Evaluation Criteria:

- An identified facility appropriate to meet the needs of the school over the term of its charter
- A realistic plan for remodeling or adapting a facility, if necessary, to ensure that it is appropriate and adequate for the school's program, the school's targeted population, and the public
- Evidence that the school understands the costs of securing and improving a facility and has access to the necessary resources to fund the facility plan
- A sound plan for continued operation, maintenance, and repair of the facility

Fully Responsive **Partially Responsive** **Not Responsive**

Concerns and Additional Questions

C19: FOOD SERVICES

This section should describe how the school will address food services for its student body.

Evaluation Criteria:

- A food service plan that will serve all eligible students
- A management plan that reflects a clear understanding of federal law and requirements if the charter school plans to participate in the National School Lunch program

Fully Responsive **Partially Responsive** **Not Responsive**

Concerns and Additional Questions

C20: PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

The Parental Involvement section should describe how parents or guardians of enrolled students, the school employees, and other members of the community will make a positive impact on the school and its educational program.

Evaluation Criteria:

- A plan for involving parents and guardians in the school's education programs
- A proposal that involves the parents of students, employees and the broader community in carrying out the terms of the charter

Fully Responsive **Partially Responsive** **Not Responsive**

Concerns and Additional Questions

C21: DESEGREGATION ASSURANCES

The Desegregation Assurances section should describe the applicant's understanding of applicable statutory and regulatory obligations to create and maintain a unitary system of desegregated public schools.

Evaluation Criteria:

- Assurance that the charter school will comply with all applicable federal and state statutory and regulatory requirements regarding the creation and maintenance of desegregated public schools
- An outline of the potential impact of the proposed charter school on those desegregation efforts already in place in affected public school districts

Fully Responsive **Partially Responsive** **Not Responsive**

Concerns and Additional Questions

C22: SUSTAINABILITY OF THE PROGRAM

The Sustainability section should describe the applicant's plan to ensure continued success of the charter school over time.

Evaluation Criteria:

- The plan to ensure the sustainability of the charter in the future

Fully Responsive **Partially Responsive** **Not Responsive**

Concerns and Additional Questions

C23: WAIVERS

The Waivers section should discuss all waivers requested from local or state law.

Evaluation Criteria:

- Each law, rule, and standard by title, number, and description for which a waiver is requested
- A rationale for each waiver request
- An explanation of the way that each waiver would assist in implementing the educational program of the charter and/or fulfilling the charter's mission

Fully Responsive **Partially Responsive** **Not Responsive**

Concerns and Additional Questions