Charter Application Review Process

Interview Guidance Document for Applicants

Introduction

As part of the new charter school review process, all applicants participate in an interview with members of the district’s application review team. The interview occurs after the initial review of the application. The purpose of the interview is to:

1. Clarify the district’s understanding of the application,
2. Provide applicants the opportunity to demonstrate a thorough understanding of the application and district expectations, and
3. Evaluate the capacity of the applicant to establish and operate a quality school, including implementation of the written application.

The following guidance explains the district’s approach to conducting interviews during the charter application review process. It also provides guidance for interviewees on how to prepare for the interview and includes sample questions.

Applicant Expectations

Applicant teams should be able to answer questions about the school’s governance structures, budget, operations, education program, leadership model, teaching strategies, and school culture. Furthermore, applicant teams are expected to discuss specific student populations, including but not limited to, multilingual learners, students with disabilities, and students in gifted and talented programming. For replicating providers, we expect the founding team to be able to discuss their capacity to expand and oversee multiple campuses.

Frequently Asked Questions about the Interview

1. **How will the interview be used?**
   1. We consider the interview aspect of the charter application review process as an extension of the application. Therefore, the founding team should be able to not only write coherently about the school plan, but also speak about the plan and how it would be implemented. We will use evidence from the interview in determining whether to approve or deny a new school application.
2. **What is the format for the interview?** 
   1. This year, the applicant interview will be held virtually. We allot 90 minutes for each interview, as members of the application review team and the District Accountability Committee (“DAC”) members will both interview you. Members from the application review team will use the first 60 minutes, and the DAC will use the remaining 30 minutes to interview you. All interviews are recorded and shared with the broader application review team.
3. **Who should attend the interview?**
   1. Applicants have discretion to determine both how many and which individuals should be present at the interview. The group attending the interview should represent the founding team, yet be small enough that each person can contribute substantively. We recommend bringing experts from your founding team to attend the interview, including the proposed school leader. For charter schools, the expectation is that members of the proposed governing board will also attend (board president and treasurer recommended). Please note, we will target certain interview questions to specific members of the founding team. The following individuals need not attend the interview, unless they will also play one of the roles already noted: application writers, other third-party service providers, community supporters, prospective school families.
4. **What types of questions will be asked during the interview?**
   1. Applicants should be prepared to respond to standard and school-specific questions about their application. Standard interview questions about key components of the application and applicant capacity are asked of all applicants, while school-specific questions are based in the specific content of each application. We will ask both clarifying questions and probing questions. Clarifying questions will focus on factual clarification of the application, and should only require a brief response (i.e. yes/no or short answer). Probing questions used to gain greater clarity around an aspect of the application that is unclear or needs further explanation.