



# **Request for Proposals (RFP) Application Package**

**APPLICATION**

**October 30, 2020**

**Due On or Before Close of Business Day at 4:00pm on  
November 30, 2020**

## Introduction

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The Athens City Board of Education as Charter Authorizer (ACBE) is pleased to invite proposals for a high-quality public charter school seeking to open in the 2022-2023 school year or thereafter. The ACBE is charged with approving quality charter proposals that meet identified educational needs and promote a diversity of educational choices, and declining to approve weak or inadequate charter proposals.

Specifically, the Board seeks proposals for a startup public charter school with priority given to startup public charters which will:

1. focus on providing students with learning disabilities (with focus on students in the autistic spectrum) with specialized, individualized, innovative, and high-quality educational services;
2. ensure faculty and staff that have outstanding special training and experience in administering state and federal laws related to special needs students, such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.
3. handle all related logistical services in an experienced manner, such as school transportation for any students whose disability precluded or limited transportation, or in-home educational services where required by the individual needs of the particular student.
4. provide related services (such as speech therapy and occupational therapy) where needed by a student's individualized education program.
5. would be central to the district as a whole, to facilitate ease of travel and access for the parents and guardians of the students that it serves.
6. operate within the existing financial structure for public school funding set forth in Act No. 2015-3, and existing state and federal law;
7. demonstrate competence and success in managing such funding efficiently and within reasonable budgets;
8. increase educational opportunities for at-risk students economically or academically disadvantaged;
9. allow teachers and school administrators to have a direct voice in the operation of the school;
10. encourage the use of high-quality models of teaching, governing and scheduling;
11. provide for exceptional levels of results-driven accountability;
12. create expanded opportunities for involvement in the education system by students, parents and community members; and
13. accept and fully commit to serving all students who may attend or are enrolled (i.e., students with and without disabilities).

All new public charter schools approved through this process will be subject to the legal requirements set forth in Alabama School Choice and Student Opportunity Act, Ala. Code §16-6F-1, et seq, Act 2015-3.

## Applicant Types

In this RFP cycle, only **start-up public charter school** applicants will only be considered. By definition, a **start-up public charter school** did not exist as a non-charter **public or non-public** school prior to becoming a public charter school.

Operators are defined as:

New Operators are nonprofit organizations which:

- Have never operated a charter school OR currently operate a charter school that has been open for less than one school year (regardless of location)
- Do not intend to employ an educational service provider OR intend to employ an educational service provider that has not operated a school for more than one year (regardless of location)

Existing Operators are nonprofit organizations which currently:

- Have one or more schools in operation nationwide which have been in operation for more than one full school year
- Intend to employ an educational service provider with one or more schools in operation for more than one full school year

## Evaluation Process

The public charter school proposal evaluation process includes four steps for review, summarized below.

### Step 1: Initial Review of Charter Application.

The Superintendent or Superintendent's designee will first review the charter application to determine if the applicant has met all the requirements to be considered for full review. If the application is complete the charter application will move on to step 2.

### Step 2: Academic Review of Charter Application and Operational Review of Charter Application.

This review will be completed by a contracted independent external review team from the National Association of Charter School Authorizers ("NACSA"), the Alabama Public School Charter Commission ("ALPCSC"), and/or Alabama State Department of Education ("ALSDE") when available.

### Step 3: Full Team Review.

Once each area has been reviewed by external/internal review team(s) members specific to each area, the external/internal review team(s) will conduct interviews. Following interviews, the external review team(s) will submit the application(s) and details of discussions from the full review and interview to the Athens City Board of Education for final review and approval or denial.

#### **Step 4: Board Review as Authorizer.**

The Board may, pursuant to Alabama Act 2015-03, approve or deny the application within 60 days of the submission of a complete application, by a resolution adopted at a public meeting of the Board. If the Board approves the application, it may include reasonable and appropriate conditions that the applicant must satisfy prior to the execution of a charter contract. If the Board denies the application, it will provide an explanation for the reasons for the denial.

- *In addition, at least with respect to the first few charter applications received by the Board, the Board may retain a consultant with knowledge in the area of charter authorizations in order to ensure that the Board is properly handling the charter authorization process (including a focus on the core principles of quality charter authorizers). With respect to each evaluator of the charter application, the Superintendent will review the potential for any conflict of interest, to ensure that no evaluator would be employed by or receive financial gain from the charter applicant or the proposed education service provider, or would otherwise profit from the results of the evaluation.*

## 2022 Request for Proposals Timeline

Milestone	Date
<b>Launch of Request for Proposals</b>	<b>October 30, 2020</b>
<b>Prospective Applicant Informational Session or Webinar</b> This informational session will provide those interested in applying for a charter in this cycle with an overview of the process; high-level walkthrough of the application; and a detailed walkthrough of the application timeline and requirements.	<b>November 2020</b> <i>(exact date(s) TBD)</i>
<b>Deadline for Complete Proposals</b> All proposals must be submitted in complete/final form by this date.	<b>November 30, 2020 by 4:00pm</b> <b>(close of business day)</b>
<b>Evaluation Team Proposal Review</b> Evaluation teams will review each written proposal.	<b>December 1, 2020 –</b> <b>January 27, 2020</b>
<b>In-Person Interviews (Mandatory)</b>	<b>Week of January 11, 2021</b> <i>(exact date(s) TBD)</i>
<b>Public forum for residents to learn about and provide input on each application</b>	<b>Week of January 11, 2021</b> <i>(exact date(s) TBD)</i>
<b>ACBE Application Decisions</b> An approval decision may include reasonable conditions which the charter applicant must meet before the charter contract may be executed.	<b>By January 27, 2021</b>
<b>ACBE Reports Approval/Denial to ALSDE</b>  ACBE reports decision(s) to the Alabama State Department of Education, Public Charter Schools	<b>By February 26, 2021</b>
<b>Charter School Contract Execution</b> ACBE will execute a public charter school contract for all approved public charter school applications.	<b>By March 26, 2021</b>
<b>Contracted Charter School Opens</b>	<b>On or before August 2021</b>

# PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

This application is based on all key public charter school application components required by the Alabama School Choice and Student Opportunity Act, Ala. Code §16-6F-1, et seq, Act 2015-3. Therefore, the Athens City Board of Education requires all start-up and conversion public charter school or program applicants to use this application form.

**1. At a minimum, read and become familiar with the following documents:**

- Alabama School Choice and Student Opportunity Act (Act 2015-3)
- Public Charter School Rules and Regulations
- \*Principles & Standards for Quality Charter School Authorizing (2012 Edition)  
\*Taken from National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA)
- Other Alabama State Department of Education Public Charter Schools resources and links found at www.alsde.edu
- Applicable federal laws

**NOTE: The content of this application must rely significantly on the information shown above.**

**2. Complete all information in each section of the application in the order in which it is listed:**

**I. Formal cover letter to the Athens City Board of Education signed and dated by the appropriate applicant governing board member and/or key school leader.**

- **Acknowledgement and Attribution**
  - The cover letter must include a statement of acknowledgement and attribution, as discussed in the introduction of this document, if applicable.
  - Likewise, the charter authorizer's public charter school application must also require that the public charter school applicant acknowledge and attribute professional entities' permission to use their resource, if applicable.

**II. Cover Sheet and Enrollment Projections**

**III. Executive Summary**

**IV. Section 1. Educational Program Design and Capacity**

- Program Overview
- Curriculum and Instructional Design
- Student Performance Standards
- High School Graduation Requirements
- School Calendar and Schedule
- School Culture
- Supplemental Programming
- Special Populations and At-Risk Students
- Student Recruitment and Enrollment
- Student Discipline
- Parent and Community Involvement
- Educational Program Capacity

## **V. Section 2. Operations Plan and Capacity**

### **Governance**

- Legal Status and Governing Documents
- Organizational Chart
- Governing Board
- Advisory Bodies

### **Staffing**

- Staffing Structure
- Staffing Plans, Hiring, Management, and Evaluation
- Professional Development
- Performance Management

### **Facilities**

- Part A. Existing Public Facilities (If available)
- Part B. Independent Facilities
- Start-Up and Ongoing Operations
- Operations Capacity

## **VI. Section 3. Financial Plan and Capacity**

- Financial Plan
- Financial Management Capacity

**NOTE: Each section of this application must be accurately completed and submitted before the Athens City Board of Education will review the application to become a public charter school in the proposed local school board jurisdiction. The application must be fully executed (signed and dated) in all pertinent sections where indicated for it to be deemed under submission and ready for review.**

3. Use a legible font and point size throughout the application.
4. The original hard copy of the application must be received by the Athens City Board of Education in sufficient time for Board review and approval and to allow for a successful opening of school OR no later than November 1st by close of the business day, 4:00pm.
5. Scan and electronically mail the completed application to [rick.carter@acs-k12.org](mailto:rick.carter@acs-k12.org). Mail or hand-deliver the completed hard copy with original signatures to:

Athens City Board of Education  
ATTN: Dr. Rick Carter  
Athens City Schools  
455 US HWY 31 North  
Athens, AL 35611

6. The Athens City Board of Education will notify the public charter school applicant contact person regarding the school's application status upon completion of a review of the application.
7. For technical assistance, contact Kimi Riggins or Logan Searcy at [pcs@alsde.edu](mailto:pcs@alsde.edu) or 334-353-1815.
8. For specific information related to current staffing, enrollment numbers, or various programs offered through Athens City Schools (ACS), contact Executive Director, Dr. Rick Carter, at [rick.carter@acs-k12.org](mailto:rick.carter@acs-k12.org) before the application close date of November 30<sup>th</sup>.



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### **ATTACHMENTS REFERENCED IN APPLICATION**

**Attachment 1**—Overview of Planned Curriculum

**Attachment 2**—School’s Curriculum

**Attachment 3**—Complete Set of the School’s Proposed Learning Standards for Each Grade the School Will Serve

**Attachment 4**—School’s Exit Standards for Graduating Students

**Attachment 5**—Annual Academic Schedule, Including Proposed Calendar for the First Year of Operation, and Including Total Number of Days/Hours of Instruction

**Attachment 6**—Structure of the School Day and Week, Including Number of Instructional Hours/Minutes for Subjects, Length of School Day, Start and Dismissal Times, Reason Schedule is Optimal for Student Learning, Minimum Time Per Day/Week Devoted to Academic Instruction By Grade, and Sample Daily and Weekly Schedule

**Attachment 7**—School Enrollment Plan

**Attachment 8**—School’s Approach to Student Discipline

**Attachment 9**—Plan to Inform Students and Parents of School Discipline Policy

**Attachment 10**—Qualifications, Resume, and Professional Biography of Principal/Head of School Candidate

**Attachment 11**—Job Description or Qualifications, Timeline, Criteria, and Recruitment/Selection Process for Principal/Head of School Candidate (if not hired)

**Attachment 12**—Qualifications, Resumes, Professional Biographies of School’s Leadership/Management Team Members

**Attachment 13**—Proof of 501(c)3 Non-Profit Status and Federal Tax-Exempt Status (or copies of filings for such)

**Attachment 14**—School Governing Documents Already Adopted (such as Board Policies)

**Attachment 15**—School Organizational Chart

**Attachment 16**—Governing Board Bylaws

**Attachment 17**—Complete Staffing Chart

**Attachment 18**—Personnel Policies or Employee Manual (if developed)

**Attachment 19**—Leadership Evaluation Tool(s)

**Attachment 20**—Educator Evaluation Tool(s)

**Attachment 21**—Facility Memorandum of Understanding or Proof of Intent to Secure Facility and Brief Description of Location, Size, Amenities

**Attachment 22**—Supporting Documents Providing Details of Facility

**Attachment 23**—Detailed Plan for School

**Attachment 24**—School Transportation Plan

**Attachment 25**—School Insurance Coverage Including Description and Levels of Coverage

**Attachment 26**—Budget Narrative Including Detailed Description of Assumptions and Revenue and Expense Estimates, Etc.

## INTRODUCTION

### PURPOSE

Applications for a public charter school must be submitted to the Athens City Board of Education. If the application for a start-up public charter school is denied by the ACBE, the applicant may appeal to the commission. If a conversion public charter school is denied by the Athens City Board of Education, then the application will be denied and the applicant may not appeal to the Alabama Public Charter School Commission. The Athens City Board of Education will evaluate the application and approve or deny the application for a public charter school based on the educational needs identified by the Athens City Board of Education. The Athens City Board of Education cannot approve a public charter school application that includes a parochial or religious theme or includes admission requirements for students, such as financial means, academic proficiency, or particular skills or competencies. If the applicant intends to contract with an education service provider for substantial education or management services, this relationship must be articulated in the public charter school application. **NOTE:** *This application form addresses all required components of Requests for Proposals stipulated in Act 2015-3, Section 7. (a)(8).*

### TAILORING TO SPECIFIC NEEDS

All of the information contained in the public charter school application must reflect the original work of the applicant. No portion of the application content may be appropriated as original product.

### ATTRIBUTION

Some professional entities allow non-commercial reuse of content when proper attribution is provided. If a charter applicant elects to use another professional entity's content or work product, the applicant must seek the entity's permission for reuse and then meet its requirements for reusing, acknowledging, and attributing the work back to the entity.

### ATHEN CITY BOARD'S ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND ATTRIBUTION

The Athens City Board of Education appreciates and acknowledges the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE), Public Charter Schools Section and the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) at <http://www.qualitycharters.org/> for granting permission to review, modify, and use their application forms to create this public charter school application for use by the Athens City Board of Education. By combining components of the NACSA and the ALSDE Commission's documents, the ACBE was able to tailor this application to meet the needs of Alabama's public charter schools pursuant to Alabama law.

## Cover Sheet & Enrollment Projection

Name of proposed school: \_\_\_\_\_

Primary contact person(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_

Street/ PO Box

City

State

Zip

Phone: (day) \_\_\_\_\_ (evening) \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Primary contact for facilities planning: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of entity or interest group applying: \_\_\_\_\_

Names, roles, and current employment of all persons materially involved in the preparation of this application or the organization or governance of the proposed school *(you may add lines as needed)*:

Full Name	Current Job Title and Employer	Position with Proposed School

Does this applicant entity or interest group have charter school applications under consideration by any other authorizer(s) in the United States? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

If yes, complete the table below, adding lines as needed.

State	Authorizer	Proposed School Name	Application Due Date	Decision Date

Provide school opening information.

Opening Year	*Geographic Area	Opening Grades	Grade Levels at Full Enrollment

\*Identification of geographic area may be as specific as a school zone or as general as the school district targeted for school location but it must include the name of the local education agency (LEA) with authority over the area of the proposed school. Additionally, it may also include a specific neighborhood or school with the LEA.

Model or focus of proposed school (e.g., arts, college preparation, dual-language, and/or other):

Does the school intend to contract with a third-party education service provider (ESP) to manage the educational program and operations of the school?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes      \_\_\_\_\_ No

If Yes, identify the ESP or other partner organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Does the school intend to partner or be affiliated with an organization through which a single governing board governs or will govern multiple schools?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes      \_\_\_\_\_ No

If Yes, identify the organization:

**Proposed Principal/Head of School Information (if identified):**

Name of proposed principal candidate: \_\_\_\_\_

Current employment: \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

## Executive Summary

The executive summary should provide a concise statement/synopsis of the following:

- The proposed plan for the school.
  - The geographic and population considerations of the school environment.
  - The challenges particular to those considerations.
  - The applicant team's capacity to successfully open and operate a high-quality school given the above considerations.
- 1. Mission and Vision.** State the mission and vision of the proposed school. The mission statement describes the fundamental purpose of the school, relating why it will exist. The vision statement outlines how the school will operate and what it aims to achieve in the long term. The mission and vision statements provide the foundation for the entire proposal.  
  
The mission and vision statements, when combined, should:
    - Identify the students and community to be served.
    - Illustrate what success will look like.
    - Align with the purposes of the *Alabama School Choice and Student Opportunity Act* (Act 2015-3) and the authorizer's stated priorities for schools.
  - 2. Educational Need and Anticipated Student Population.** Describe the anticipated student population, the students anticipated educational needs, and non-academic challenges the school is likely to encounter. Describe the rationale for selecting the location and student body. Identify any enrollment priorities on which the program is based consistent with student enrollment eligibility and selection criteria.
  - 3. Education Plan/School Design.** Provide an overview of the education program of the proposed school, including major instructional methods, assessment strategies, and non-negotiables of the school model. Describe evidence that demonstrates the school model will be successful in improving academic achievement for the targeted student population. Summarize what the proposed school is projected to do more effectively than the schools that are now serving the targeted population and how the school plans to achieve its goals.
  - 4. Community Engagement.** Describe the relationships that have been established to generate community engagement in and support for the proposed school and how needs and/or solicited support for the school have been assessed. Briefly describe these activities and summarize the results.
  - 5. Leadership and Governance.** As an attachment, list the members of the school's proposed leadership team and governing board, including their roles with the school, their current job titles and employers, and full resumes (including contact information and professional biographies for each individual listed).

- 6. Enrollment Summary.** Complete the following table, removing any rows for grades the school will not serve.

Grade Level	Number of Students					
	Year 1 20____	Year 2 20____	Year 3 20____	Year 4 20____	Year 5 20____	At Capacity 20-____
Pre-K						
K						
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						
10						
11						
12						

Describe the rationale for the number of students and grade levels served in year one and the basis for the growth plan illustrated above.

## Section 1. Educational Program Design & Capacity

### Education Program Overview

Summarize the education program, including primary instructional methods and assessment strategies, and any non-negotiable elements of the school model. Briefly describe the research-based evidence that has demonstrated success for this education program with the anticipated student population.

### Curriculum and Instructional Design

Propose a framework for instructional design that both reflects the needs of the anticipated population and ensures all students will meet or exceed applicable standards of academic proficiency.

1. Describe the basic learning environment (e.g., classroom-based, independent study), including class size and structure.

2. Provide an overview of the planned curriculum, including, as an **attachment (Attachment 1)**, a sample course scope and sequence for one subject for each division (elementary, middle, high school) the school would serve. In an **attachment (Attachment 2)** explain the school's curriculum; its correlation to the Alabama standards; the specific instructional materials to be used to implement the curriculum; and the process your school will follow to evaluate, review, and revise its curriculum on an annual basis.

3. Describe the primary instructional strategies that the school will expect educators to use and why they are well suited for the anticipated student population. Describe the methods and systems that educators will utilize to provide differentiated instruction to meet the needs of all students.

### Student Performance Standards

Responses to the following items regarding the proposed school's student performance standards must be consistent with applicable state and Athens City Board of Education standards.

1. Describe the student performance standards for the school as a whole.

2. Provide, in an **attachment (Attachment 3)**, a complete set of the school’s proposed learning standards for each grade the school will serve. Address the skills and knowledge each student will be expected to attain by the end of each grade. Approved schools will be required to submit a full set of learning standards for all grades in the school before opening.

3. If you plan to adopt or develop additional academic standards beyond the applicable state and Athens City Board of Education standards, explain the types of standards (e.g., content areas, grade levels, and/or others). Describe the adoption or development process that has taken place or will take place. Select one grade level and subject area as an example and explain how these additional standards exceed applicable state and Athens City Board of Education standards.

4. Explain the policies and standards for promoting students from one grade to the next. Discuss how and when promotion and graduation criteria will be communicated to parents and students.

5. Provide, in an **attachment (Attachment 4)**, the school’s exit standards for graduating students. These should clearly set forth what students in the last grade served will know and be able to do.

## High School Graduation Requirements

High schools will be expected to meet the applicable state and Athens City Board of Education graduation requirements.

1. Describe how the school will meet these requirements. Explain how students will earn credit hours, how grade point averages will be calculated, what information will be on transcripts, and what elective courses will be offered. If graduation requirements for the school will exceed applicable state and Athens City Board of Education standards, explain the additional requirements.

2. Explain how the graduation requirements will ensure students’ college or career readiness, and/or both, or other postsecondary opportunities (e.g., postsecondary education, career/technical training, military service, or workplace readiness).

3. Explain what systems and structures the school will implement for students at risk of dropping out and/or not meeting the proposed graduation requirements.



## School Calendar and Schedule

1. Discuss the annual academic schedule for the school. Explain how the calendar reflects the needs of the educational program. In an **attachment (Attachment 5)**, provide the school's proposed calendar for the first year of operation, including total number of days/hours of instruction.

2. Describe the structure of the school day and week. Include the number of instructional hours/minutes in a day for subjects such as English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Note the length of the school day, including start and dismissal times. Explain why the school's daily and weekly schedule will be optimal for student learning. Provide the minimum number of hours/minutes per day and week that the school will devote to academic instruction in each grade. This response should include, in an **attachment (Attachment 6)**, a sample daily and weekly schedule.

## School Culture

1. Describe the culture of the proposed school. Explain how it will promote a positive academic environment and reinforce student intellectual and social development.

2. Explain plans for creating and implementing this culture for students, educators, instructional leaders, and parents starting with the first day of school. Describe the plan for transitioning students who enter school mid-year into the school's culture.

3. Explain how the school culture will take account of and serve students with disabilities, students who are English learners (EL), and any students who are academically below grade level.

## Supplemental Programming

1. If summer school will be offered, describe the program(s). Explain the schedule and length of the program, including the number of hours and weeks. Discuss the anticipated participants, including number of students and the methods used to identify them. Describe the anticipated resource and staffing needs for summer programs.

2. Describe the extra- and/or co-curricular activities or programming the school will offer; how often they will occur; and how they will be funded and delivered.

3. Describe the programs or strategies that will be used to address students' mental, emotional, and social development and health.

4. If applicable, describe any other student-focused activities and programs that are integral to the educational and student-development plans.

## **Special Populations and At-Risk Students**

1. Describe the overall plan to serve students with special needs, including, but not limited to, students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) or Section 504 plans; English Learners (EL); students identified as intellectually gifted; and students at risk of academic failure or dropping out. Identify the special populations and at-risk groups that the school expects to serve, whether through data related to a specifically targeted school or neighborhood or more generalized analysis of the population to be served. Discuss how the course scope and sequence, daily schedule, staffing plans, and support strategies and resources will meet or be adjusted for the diverse needs of students.

2. Explain how the school will identify and meet the learning needs of students who are performing below grade level and monitor their progress. Specify the programs, strategies, and supports the school will provide for these students.

3. Explain more specifically how the school will identify and meet the learning needs of students with mild, moderate, and severe disabilities. Specify the programs, strategies, and supports the school will provide, including the following:

- a. Methods for “identifying, locating, and evaluating” students with disabilities who are in need of special education and related services; (and avoiding misidentification).
- b. Plans for hiring and evaluating certified special education teachers and licensed related service providers, including projecting adequate staffing for the anticipated population of students.
- c. Specific instructional programs, practices, and strategies the school will employ to ensure students with disabilities are provided a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment.
- d. Plans regarding continuum of placements, access to the general education curriculum, and the opportunity for students with disabilities to be educated with non-disabled peers to the greatest extent appropriate.
- e. Plans for monitoring and evaluating the progress and success of students with disabilities.
- f. Plans for promoting college- and career-readiness for students with disabilities, including high school graduation and post-school indicators.
- g. Plans regarding self-monitoring of disproportionality in the areas of identification, least restrictive environment, and disciplinary actions, including suspension/expulsion of students with disabilities. Self-monitoring of disproportionality should include an understanding of the coordinated early intervening services (CEIS) requirements when significant disproportionality has been determined by the Alabama State Department of Education/Special Education Services.

- h. Self-monitoring methods to evaluate procedural and substantive compliance with special education rules and regulations.

- 4. Explain how the school will identify and meet the needs of intellectually gifted learners, including the following:
  - a. Approach to defining gifted, methods for ensuring equity and comparability in identification of students in need of gifted services, and methods for monitoring and ensuring racial equity in the gifted program.
  - b. Certification requirements for gifted specialists and professional development targets for general education teachers who teach gifted learners.
  - c. Methods for ensuring the needs of gifted learners are met and continuum of service delivery options that will be offered (e.g., pull-out classes, advanced classes, interest clusters, cluster grouping with differentiated curriculum for gifted learner, acceleration procedures, field studies, mentors, all of the above).
  - d. Methods for determining cognitive and affective growth among gifted learners.
  - e. Procedures related to the monitoring of achievement data for gifted learners, including plans for disaggregation and distribution of results to parents.
  - f. Self-monitoring methods for the gifted program, including what, when, and by whom.

- 5. Explain how the school will meet the needs of English Learner (EL) students, including the following:
  - a. Methods for notifying parents/caregivers in a language they understand about the procedures that the school will use to identify EL students for possible language acquisition support.
  - b. Methods for identifying and evaluating EL students with disabilities in a timely manner by administering special education evaluations in the child's native language, unless it is clearly not feasible to do so (ensuring that a student's language needs can be distinguished from a student's disability related needs).
  - c. Specific instructional programs, practices, and strategies the school will employ to ensure academic success and equitable access to the core academic program for these students.
  - d. Plans for monitoring and periodic evaluation of the progress and success of EL students, including using a reliable English language proficiency (ELP) assessment that tests in the four language domains, identifying benchmarks for exiting students from EL services, and defining plans for providing follow-up support for at least two years after students exit the program;
  - e. Means for providing qualified staffing for EL students.

## Student Recruitment and Enrollment

1. Explain the plan for student recruitment and marketing that will provide equal access to interested students and parents. Specifically describe the plan for outreach to students and families who have an economic or academic disadvantage that requires special services and assistance to succeed in educational programs. Those students include, but are not limited to, students who are members of economically disadvantaged families, students who are identified as having special needs, students who are limited in English proficiency, students who are at risk of dropping out of high school, and students who do not meet minimum standards of academic proficiency.

2. Explain the plan for admitting students based on a random selection process if more students apply for admission than can be accommodated.

3. Explain the school's policy regarding enrollment preferences with respect to students who reside within the former attendance area; students within the local school system; students outside of the local school system; previously enrolled students; siblings of students; and children of founders, governing board members, and full-time employees.

4. Provide, as an **attachment (Attachment 7)**, the school's enrollment plan, which should include the school's plan for maintaining records on all enrolled students utilizing the state-adopted Alabama Student Information System (ASIM).

## Student Discipline

Describe in detail the school's approach to student discipline. Provide, as an **attachment (Attachment 8)**, the school's proposed discipline policy. The proposed policy must comply with any applicable state and federal laws and Athens City Board of Education policies. The description of the school's approach and the proposed policy should address each of the following:

1. Practices the school will use to promote good choices, including both penalties for infractions and incentives for positive behavior.
2. A list and definitions of the offenses for which students in the school must (where non-discretionary) and may (where discretionary) be suspended or expelled, respectively.
3. An explanation of how the school will take into account the rights of students with disabilities in disciplinary actions and proceedings.
4. Procedures for due process when a student is suspended or expelled as a result of a code of conduct violation or disciplinary rules or regulations, including a description of the appeal process that the school will employ for students facing expulsion and a plan for providing services to students with disabilities who are expelled or out of school for more than ten days.

5. Provide, as an **attachment (Attachment 9)**, how students and parents will be informed of the school's discipline policy.

## Parent and Community Involvement

1. Describe the role of any parents and community members involved to date in developing the proposed school.

2. Describe what you have done to assess and build parent and community support for your school and how you will engage parents and community members from the time that the school is approved through opening.

3. Describe how you will engage parents in the life of the school (including any proposed governance roles described in Act 2015-3). Explain the plan for building family-school partnerships that strengthen support for learning and encourage parental involvement. Describe any commitments or volunteer activities the school will seek from, offer to, or require of parents.

4. Discuss the community resources that will be available to students and parents. Describe any partnerships the school will have with community organizations, businesses, or other educational institutions. Specify the nature, purposes, terms, and scope of services of any such partnerships, including any fee-based or in-kind commitments.

## Educational Program Capacity

1. Identify the key members of the school's leadership team. Identify *only* individuals who will play a substantial and ongoing role in school development, governance, and/or management and will thus share responsibility for the school's educational success. These may include current or proposed governing board members, school instructional leadership/management, and any essential partners who will play an important ongoing role in the school's development and operation.

Describe the team's individual and collective qualifications for successfully implementing the school design, including capacity in areas such as:

- School leadership, administration, and governance.
- Curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
- Performance management.
- Parent and community engagement.

Describe the team's ties to and/or knowledge of the target community.

2. Identify any organizations, agencies, or consultants that are partners in planning and establishing the school, along with a brief description of their current and planned roles and any resources they have contributed or plan to contribute to the school's development.

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3. Identify the principal/head of school candidate and explain why this individual is well qualified to lead the proposed school in achieving its mission. Summarize the proposed leader's academic and organizational leadership record. Provide specific evidence that demonstrates capacity to design, launch, and manage a high-performing public charter school. If the proposed leader has never managed a school, describe any previous leadership roles or leadership training programs that (s)he is currently participating in or has completed. Also provide, as an **attachment (Attachment 10)**, the qualifications, resume, and professional biography for this individual. Discuss the evidence of the leader's ability to effectively serve the anticipated population.

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If no candidate has been identified, provide, as an **attachment (Attachment 11)**, the job description or qualifications, and discuss the timeline, criteria, and recruiting and selection process for hiring the school instructional leader/administrator.

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4. Describe the responsibilities and qualifications of the school's leadership/management team beyond the principal/head of school. If known, identify the individuals who will fill these positions and provide, as an **attachment (Attachment 12)**, the qualifications, resumes, and professional biographies for these individuals. If these positions are not yet filled, explain the timeline, criteria, and process for recruitment and hiring.

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## Section 2. Operations Plan & Capacity

### Governance

#### Legal Status and Governing Documents

Describe the proposed school's legal status, including 501(c)3 non-profit status and federal tax-exempt status. In an **attachment (Attachment 13)**, provide proof of 501(c)3 non-profit status and federal tax-exempt status (or copies of filings for the preceding items). Also, include as an **attachment (Attachment 14)** any governing documents already adopted, such as board policies.

#### Organizational Chart

Submit, as an **attachment (Attachment 15)**, an organizational chart that clearly presents the school's organizational structure, including lines of authority and reporting between the governing board, staff, and any related bodies (such as advisory bodies or parent/educator councils) and any external organizations that will play a role in managing the school.

The organizational chart should clearly delineate the roles and responsibilities of – and lines of authority and reporting among – the governing board, staff, any related bodies (such as advisory bodies or parent/educator councils), and any external organizations that will play a role in managing the school. The organizational chart should also document clear lines of authority and reporting within the school.

#### Governing Board

1. Explain the governance bylaws that will guide the board, including the nature and extent of involvement by key stakeholder groups. Provide the governing board's bylaws as an **attachment (Attachment 16)**.

2. Describe the governance structure of the proposed school, including the primary roles of the governing board and how it will interact with the principal/head of school and any advisory bodies. Describe the governing board's size, current composition, and desired composition; powers; and duties. Identify key skills, areas of expertise, and constituencies that will be represented on the governing board. Explain how this governance structure and composition will help ensure that (a) the school will be an educational and operational success; (b) the board will evaluate the success of the school and school leader(s); and (c) there will be active and effective representation of key stakeholders, including parents.

3. List all current and identified board members and their intended roles. Summarize members' interests in and qualifications for serving on the school's governing board. Provide full resumes regarding the expertise and background of the proposed founding governing members.

4. If the current applicant entity or interest group does not include the initial governing board, explain how and when the transition to the formal governing board will take place.

If this application is being submitted by an existing non-profit organization, respond to the following:

- a. Will the existing non-profit board govern the new school, or has the school formed a new non-profit corporation governed by a separate board?
- b. If the non-profit's current board will govern the charter school, what steps have been taken to transform its board membership, mission, and bylaws to assume its new duties? Describe the plan and timeline for completing the transition and orienting the board to its new duties.
- c. If a new board has been formed, describe what, if anything, its ongoing relationship to the existing non-profit's board will be.

5. Explain the procedure by which governing board members have been and will be selected. How often will the board meet? Discuss the plans for any committee structure.

6. Describe how the governing board will provide evidence of its compliance and adherence to the Alabama State Ethics Law, Open Meetings Act, Public Records law, and all other specific state laws referenced in Act 2015-3, if applicable.

7. Identify any existing relationships that could pose actual or perceived conflicts of interest if the application is approved. Discuss specific steps that the governing board will take to avoid any actual conflicts and to mitigate perceived conflicts.

8. Describe plans for increasing the capacity of the governing board. How will the board expand and develop over time? How and on what timeline will new members be recruited and added? How will vacancies be filled? What are the priorities for recruitment of additional board members? What types of orientation or training will new board members receive, and what type of ongoing development will existing board members receive? The plan for training and development should include a timetable, specific topics to be addressed, and requirements for participation. If there will be a network-level board, identify any board development requirements relative to the organization's proposed growth and governance needs.

## Advisory Bodies

Describe any advisory bodies or councils (e.g., parent and educator councils) to be formed, and include the roles and duties of any such body. Describe the planned composition of each advisory body; the strategy for achieving that composition; the role of parents, students, and educators (if applicable); and the reporting structure as it relates to the school's governing body and leadership.



## Staffing

### Staff Structure

Provide, as an **attachment (Attachment 17)**, a complete staffing chart for the school. The staffing chart and accompanying notes or roster should identify the following:

- a. Year 1 positions as well as positions to be added in future years.
- b. Administrative, instructional, and non-instructional personnel.
- c. The number of classroom educators, paraprofessionals, and specialty educators.
- d. Operational and support staff.

Explain how the relationship between the school's leadership/administrative team and the rest of the staff will be managed.

### Staffing Plans, Hiring, Management, and Evaluation

1. Explain the relationship that will exist between the proposed school and its employees, including whether the employees will be at-will and whether the school will use employment contracts. If the school will use contracts, explain the nature and purpose of the contracts. Provide, as an **attachment (Attachment 18)**, any personnel policies or an employee manual if developed.

2. Outline the proposed school's salary ranges and employment benefits for all employees, as well as any incentives or reward structures that may be part of the compensation system. Explain the school's strategy for retaining high-performing educators.

3. Describe the proposed school's strategy, plans, and timeline for recruiting and hiring the teaching staff. Explain other key selection criteria and any special considerations relevant to your school design.

4. Act 2015-3, Section 9. (e)(1).

Provide an assurance that public charter schools shall comply with applicable federal laws, rules, and regulations regarding the qualification of teachers and other instructional staff. In accordance with subsection (a), teachers in public charter schools shall be exempt from state teacher certification requirements.

- Approaches to earning Alabama Educator and/or Leadership Certification for individuals working in conversion public charter schools or start-up public charter schools are the same as those for individuals in the public local education agencies of Alabama.
- After approval of a public charter school, a certification specialist at the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) will be available to help the school's human resource department to provide assistance with certification approaches and/or questions just as they do with local education agencies and registered private schools in Alabama.

5. Outline the school's procedures for hiring and dismissing school personnel.

6. Include a statement acknowledging the school's understanding of the ALSDE, Educator Certification Section, criminal history background check process and, if approved, the school's plan to comply with this process. Information can be found at [www.alsde.edu/EdCert](http://www.alsde.edu/EdCert) (Background Clearance).

**Act 2015-3, Section 9(d)(1).**

Public charter schools shall be subject to the same civil rights, health, and safety requirements, including, but not limited to, state and local public health and building codes, employee fingerprinting, and criminal background checks applicable to other public schools in the state except as otherwise specifically provided in this Act.

7. Explain how the school instructional leader(s)/administrator(s) will be supported, developed, and evaluated each school year. Provide, as an **attachment (Attachment 19)**, any leadership evaluation tool(s) that already exist(s) for the school.

8. Explain how educators will be supported, developed, and evaluated each school year. Provide, as an **attachment (Attachment 20)**, any educator evaluation tool(s) that already exist(s) for the school.

9. Explain how the school intends to handle unsatisfactory instructional leadership/administrator or educator performance, as well as instructional leadership, administrator, and/or educator changes and turnover.

## Professional Development

Describe the school's professional development expectations and opportunities, including the following:

1. Identify the person or position responsible for professional development.

2. Discuss the components of professional development and how these components will support effective implementation of the educational program. Discuss the extent to which professional development will be conducted internally or externally and will be individualized or uniform.

3. Provide a schedule and explanation of professional development that will take place prior to school opening. Explain what will be covered during this induction period and how educators will be prepared to deliver any unique or particularly challenging aspects of the curriculum and instructional methods.

4. Describe the expected number of days/hours for professional development throughout the school year, and explain how the school’s calendar, daily schedule, and staffing structure accommodate this plan. Include time scheduled for common planning or collaboration and describe how such time will typically be used.

## Performance Management

The Athens City Board of Education will evaluate the performance of every school annually and for renewal and revocation purposes according to a set of academic, financial, and organizational performance standards that will be incorporated into the charter contract. The academic performance standards will consider status, growth, and comparative performance based on applicable state, federal, and school-specific measures. The financial performance standards will be based on generally accepted accounting principles for sound financial operation. Additionally, the school shall annually engage an independent certified public accountant to do an independent audit of the school’s finances. The organizational performance standards will be based primarily on compliance with legal obligations, including fulfillment of the governing board’s fiduciary obligations related to sound governance.

Applicants may propose to supplement the authorizer’s performance standards with school-specific academic or organizational goals.

1. Describe the school’s mission-specific educational goals and targets. State goals clearly in terms of the measures or assessments the school plans to use.

2. Describe any mission-specific organizational goals and internal and external measures and assessments the school plans to use. State goals clearly in terms of the measures or assessments the school plans to use.

3. In addition to all applicable mandatory state assessments, identify the primary interim assessments the school will use to assess student learning needs and progress throughout the year. Explain how these interim assessments align with the school’s curriculum, performance goals, and applicable state standards.

4. Explain how the school will measure and evaluate academic progress of individual students, student cohorts, and the school as a whole throughout the school year, at the end of each academic year, and for the term of the charter contract. Explain how the school will collect and analyze student academic achievement data, use the data to refine and improve instruction, and report the data to the school community. Identify the person(s), position(s), and/or entities that will be responsible and involved in the collection and analysis of assessment data.

5. Identify who will be responsible for managing the data, interpreting it for classroom educators, and leading or coordinating professional development to improve student achievement.

6. Explain the training and support that school leadership and educators will receive in analyzing, interpreting, and using performance data to improve student learning.

7. Describe the corrective actions the school will take if it falls short of student academic achievement expectations or goals at the school wide, classroom, or individual student level. Explain what would trigger such corrective actions and who would be responsible for implementing them.

## **Facilities**

If the school is seeking to utilize an existing public school facility made available by the charter authorizer, complete Part A and Part B. If the school intends to identify and operate in an independent facility, complete only Part B.

### **Part A. Existing Public Facilities (if available)**

1. Describe the basic facilities requirements for accommodating the school plan, including number of classrooms, square footage per classroom, common areas, overall square footage, and amenities.

2. List anticipated specialty classroom needs, including the number of each type and the number of students to be accommodated at one time. Specialty needs may include, but are not limited to, the following:

<b>Type of Anticipated Specialty Classrooms</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Number of Students to be Accommodated at One Time</b>
a. Science lab		
b. Art room (with or without kiln)		
c. Computer lab		
d. Library/media center		
e. Performance/dance room		
f. Auditorium		
g. Other (please list)		

3. List anticipated administrative/support space needs, including the anticipated number of the following:

<b>Anticipated Administrative/Support Space Needs</b>	<b>Number</b>
a. Main office	
b. Satellite office	
c. Work room/copy room	

d. Supplies/storage rooms	
e. Educator work rooms	
f. Other (please list)	

4. List which, if any, of the following are essential to fulfillment of the school's athletic program:

Type	Check if Essential
a. Gymnasium	
b. Locker rooms	
c. Weight rooms	
d. Field(s) (football, soccer, multi-purpose)	
e. Baseball/softball field	
f. Other (please list)	

5. Identify any other significant facilities needs not already specified, including:

a. Playground
b. Large common space for assemblies and other large-group meetings
c. Other special considerations (identify and explain)

6. Does the applicant have specific desired location(s) different from those being made available by the authorizer? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If Yes and the applicant has a specific facility under consideration, identify by current school name and/or neighborhood (you may add rows to the table as needed).

Desired Location(s):	
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7. Is the applicant willing to share a facility with another school? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
If so, identify by school name and/or neighborhood (you may add rows to the table as needed)

Desired School Name and/or Neighborhood:	
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8. Please identify funding sources to be used for facility upgrades and/or new construction.

Funding Source(s) for Facility Upgrades and/or New Construction:	
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9. Discuss contingency plans in the event you do not receive a facility from the authorizer.

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## Part B. Independent Facilities

If you intend to operate in an independent facility, 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, and financing. If you currently hold a facility or have a Memorandum of Understanding or other proof of intent to secure a specific facility, please provide proof of the commitment as an **attachment (Attachment 21)**. Briefly describe the facility including location, size, and amenities. Provide, as an **attachment (Attachment 22)**, supporting documents providing details about the facility, as needed. Public charter school facilities must comply with applicable state, local and Athens City Board of Education health and safety requirements. In addition, applicants must be prepared to follow applicable city planning review procedures. **NOTE:** Public charter school facilities shall comply with Act 2015-3, Section 11. (a), regarding access to Alabama Public School and College Authority (PSCA) funds.

## Start-Up & Ongoing Operations

1. Provide, as an **attachment (Attachment 23)**, a detailed start-up plan for the school, specifying tasks, timelines, and responsible individuals.

2. Provide, as an **attachment (Attachment 24)**, the school's plan for all transportation (including field trips, extra-curricular and co-curricular activities, food services, and all other significant operational and auxiliary services).

3. Provide the school's plan for safety and security for students, staff, facility, and property. Explain the types of security personnel, technology, equipment, and policies that the school will employ.

4. Provide, as an **attachment (Attachment 25)**, a list of the types of insurance coverage the school will secure, including a description of the levels of coverage.

## Operations Capacity

1. Describe the applicant team's individual and collective qualifications for implementing the Operations Plan successfully, including capacity in areas such as the following:

- Staffing.
- Professional development.
- Performance management.
- General operations.
- Facilities management.

2. Describe the organization's capacity and experience in facilities acquisition and management, including managing build-out and/or renovations, as applicable.

## Section 3. Financial Plan & Capacity

### Financial Plan

1. Describe the systems, policies, and processes the school will use for financial planning, accounting, purchasing, and payroll, including a description of how it will establish and maintain strong internal controls and ensure compliance with all financial reporting requirements.
2. Describe the roles and responsibilities of the school's administration and governing board for the school finances and distinguish between each party.
3. Describe the school's plans and procedures for conducting an annual audit of the financial and administrative operations of the school.
4. Describe how the school will ensure financial transparency to the Athens City Board of Education and the public, including its plans for public adoption of its budget and public dissemination of its annual audit, annual financial report, monthly check register, and monthly financial reports.
5. Describe any services to be contracted, such as business services, payroll, and auditing services, including the anticipated costs and criteria for selecting such services.
6. Describe the school's plans for obtaining liability insurance to indemnify the school, its board, staff, and educators against tort claims.
7. **Budget Narrative:** As an **attachment (Attachment 26)**, present a detailed description of assumptions and revenue and expense estimates, including, but not limited to, the basis for revenue projections, staffing levels, and costs. The narrative should specifically address the degree to which the school budget will rely on variable income (e.g., grants, donations, fundraising).
  - a. Per-Student State Revenue. Use the figures below in developing your budget assumptions.
  - b. Anticipated Funding Sources. Indicate the amount and sources of funds, property, or other resources expected to be available through banks, lending institutions, corporations, foundations, grants, etc. Note which are secured and which are anticipated, and include evidence of commitment for any funds on which the school's operation depends.
  - c. Discuss the school's contingency plan to meet financial needs if anticipated revenues are not received or are lower than estimated.
  - d. Year 1 cash flow contingency in the event that revenue projections are not met in advance of opening.
  - e. Start-up and five-year budgets with clearly stated assumptions.

## Financial Management Capacity

Describe the applicant team's individual and collective qualifications for implementing the Financial Plan successfully, including capacity in areas such as the following:

- Financial management.
- Fundraising and development.
- Accounting and internal controls.

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