



2024 Charter School Application Guidance

For Charter Schools Seeking to Open in School Year 2025-2026

**APPLICANT NOTE: AS A RESULT OF *COUNCIL v GLASS (2023)*
THERE IS NO LONGER A FUNDING MECHANISM FOR
CHARTER SCHOOLS. APPLICANTS ARE REQUIRED TO
DEMONSTRATE ABILITY TO SELF-FUND.**

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PURPOSE

As a charter school authorizer, the most important role in ensuring a high-quality charter sector is a rigorous application process that includes high standards, transparent processes, and data-driven decision making.

The 2024 *Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS) Charter School Application Guide* is intended to provide potential charter school applicants with a clear roadmap for the application submission and review process. This Application Guide is intended to solicit and guide the development of high-quality public charter school applications for review by JCPS. Applications in response to this Application Guidance are for consideration by the Jefferson County Board of Education (Board) only. This guide will walk a potential applicant through the steps of submitting a public charter school proposal. Each section of the Charter School Application requests information about a specific aspect of the proposal and presents the evaluative criteria that reviewers will use to determine whether the application demonstrates the applicant's competence against each element of the published rubric and demonstrates that the applicant is ready to open and operate a viable, sustainable, and successful public charter school.

BACKGROUND

Jefferson County Public Schools serves more than 100,000 students, about 80 percent of all school-aged children who live in Louisville/Jefferson County.

The school district is led by the Jefferson County Board of Education (Board)—a seven-member elected board—and a superintendent appointed by the Board. The Board provides leadership and policy direction to JCPS. The Board is committed to a world-class school system that supports educational excellence regardless of age, color, disability, marital or parental status, national origin, race, sex, sexual orientation, political opinion or affiliation or religion. Equitable academic programs and services that respond to the needs of a diverse student population and prepare all students for a changing workplace within a global economy are essential. JCPS students speak more than 120 languages.

Parents can choose the school and the programs that best meet their child’s needs and match his or her learning style. From preschool to adult education, JCPS is known for educational innovation, dedication to students, and highly qualified teachers and administrators. The district comprises over 160 schools with over 50 magnet schools and programs.

During the 2017 Legislative Session, the Kentucky General Assembly passed House Bill 520, and Kentucky became the forty-fourth state, including Washington, D.C., to permit charter schools. The legislation made all local boards, including the Board, automatic charter school authorizers. In 2022, the General Assembly amended the charter school statutory provisions to create a funding mechanism. In 2023, as a result of litigation, the funding mechanism was deemed unconstitutional in Franklin Circuit Court (see [*Council for Better Education v. Glass*, 2023](#)). **As a result, there is no longer a funding mechanism for charter schools in the Commonwealth of Kentucky.**

JCPS was the first to launch a charter school application cycle in Kentucky, and the processes in place in Jefferson County are the first of its kind in the commonwealth.

BOARD MISSION AND VISION FOR AUTHORIZING

In compliance with 701 KAR 8:020, the Jefferson County Board of Education approved the following Mission and Vision for Authorizing in Policy 01.91:

BOARD MISSION AND VISION FOR AUTHORIZING CHARTER SCHOOLS

The Board seeks to authorize high quality charter schools with innovative, unique, and effective academic programs that are in alignment with the strategic priorities of the Board as set forth in the District's strategic plan.

The Board expects charter school applicants to:

- Demonstrate the capacity of such academic programs to close achievement gaps for low-performing groups of public school students; and

- Increase high-quality educational outcomes for exceptional children and youth as defined by [KRS 157.200](#) or students at-risk of academic failure as defined in 701 KAR Chapter 8; and

- Close such achievement gaps and increase such educational outcomes at an accelerated pace so as to exceed the student and school performance and achievement of the non-charter schools in the District.

The Board will enforce the foregoing high expectations for the charter schools it authorizes and will hold them accountable to the terms of their charter contracts.¹

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

The Kentucky Charter School Application is designed for use by all charter schools (initial or conversion) proposed for authorization by the Board. A separate application shall be submitted for each proposed school. Applicants shall complete the questions provided in the Kentucky Charter School Application and the JCPS Addendum in the format provided within this Application Guidance.

Before Starting a Charter School Application

- Review all elements of [Kentucky Charter School Law](#)
- Review the materials available on the [JCPS Charter School webpage](#)
- Contact JCPS to find out any local guidelines for applicants:
AskAboutCharters@jefferson.kyschools.us

Application Deadline

Applications shall **only** be accepted on **March 11, 2024**. Applications shall be accepted between **12:01 am until NOON, Eastern Time**, that day. Applications shall not be accepted before 12 midnight, March 10, 2024.

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Format of the Application

Submission Instructions for Applicants	
Format	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applications must be 1.5 typed spacing with at least 1-inch page margins and no smaller than 11-point font (suggested fonts are Times New Roman, Arial, or Calibri). • The school's name (abbreviation is fine) and the page number must appear in the footer of each page. • Pages must be numbered consecutively with the JCPS Addendum included in the numbering sequence. • Applicants may include graphics and colors but are asked to ensure that all text colors and graphics are easily readable in color and black and white.
Cover	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronic and hard copies of applications must include a cover page with the name of the proposed school, the lead applicant's name and contact information, and the names and contact information of all members of the board of directors and school leadership, if known.
Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronic and hard copies of applications must include a table of contents noting the page number on which each section and each appendix begins. • Hard copies of applications must have each section, subsection, attachment, and the response to the JCPS Addendum tabbed and inserted into a three-ring binder in accordance with the table of contents layout provided below. Loose or disorganized applications shall negatively impact assessment of the applicant's capacity. • Each hard copy must be printed one-sided only to prevent ink bleed. • Applications must include appropriate references to sections and numbering that align with and correspond to each section of questions found on the application and addendums. • Applicants must copy each question as posed on the application at the beginning of each section and subsections with the appropriate answer below each question. • If a specific question does not apply to the proposed school, please respond "Not Applicable," with a rationale explaining why that question does not apply to your organization. • Spell out all acronyms the first time they appear in the application. Also, do not assume that reviewers are familiar with all the organizations, programs, service providers, curricula, vendors, etc., referenced in your application. Please provide brief descriptions either in the text or in a footnote. • Attachments and Appendices must be clearly labeled, citing the title and the section of the application to which it corresponds. • For electronic and hard copies, the applicant must include all applicable Attachments and Appendices and at the end of the main application document and before the JCPS Addendum response. • As required in the application, each member of the applicant's board of directors must include a resume that shall be labeled with the individual's affiliation with the proposed school (e.g. design team,

	<p>founding board member, treasurer). Each résumé shall be similarly formatted and labeled so that they are easily read.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When citing research studies or articles, please include full citations in a footnote. This includes websites and links, if applicable. See also the Bibliography requirement and instructions below.
Submission	<p>On March 11, 2024, at NOON EST, the deadline for submission, applicants must submit:</p> <p><u>An electronic (PDF) application</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit seven hard copies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Physically deliver - do not mail. Office of School Choice LAM Building 4309 Bishop Ln Louisville, KY 40218 • Submit an electronic copy via email to AskAboutCharters@jefferson.kyschools.us <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ An Electronic copy with attachments/appendices should be saved as PDF file and use the following naming convention for the file: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “NAME OF SCHOOL.2024” <p>Both versions (PDF and Hard Copies) <u>MUST</u> be submitted by the deadline. An application is not complete until both versions are submitted.</p>

Plagiarism

As each school and community is unique in its needs and challenges, the reproduction of content from other charter applications or sources where an original narrative is required (e.g., information about Jefferson County student specific needs) will immediately disqualify the application from consideration, evaluation, or recommendation to the Board. Please process your application through a plagiarism screener before submission.

Completeness

Applicants are expected to submit applications that meet completeness expectations. Applicants should consider the completion of the application with the seriousness of a federal or state grant submission. Failure to abide by technical requirements is one element of the capacity review.

An answer is expected for all questions required on the Kentucky Charter School Application and Addendum. If a specific question does not apply to the proposed school, please respond “Not Applicable,” with a rationale explaining why that question does not apply to your organization.

APPLICATION CONTENTS

Each application is expected to be completed in full, with no questions unanswered, and easy to read with few, if any, grammatical, spelling, or syntax errors. All references and sources must be clearly cited. Applications will be checked for completeness to ensure that all components of the application have been thoroughly addressed and all required attachments have been provided. Applications missing components or otherwise demonstrating a lack of organizational coherence may not be considered for further review.

Initial Application Charter Schools

An initial Charter School is a new school that is proposed by an applicant. The Application requires the following documentation:

- [Notice of Intent to File a Charter School Application](#) (by **March 4, 2024, at NOON**)
- Complete [Kentucky Charter School Application and Addendum](#) with [JCPS Charter School Addendum](#) (by **March 11, 2024, at NOON**)

Conversion Charter Schools

A Conversion Charter School is a school that existed as a traditional public school prior to becoming a charter school. A complete application for the creation of a conversion charter school shall include both a valid petition and a complete application submitted to the JCPS Executive Administrator of School Choice. **Both processes require attention to detail. Please read the Conversion Charter School Guidance carefully.**

The Conversion Charter School process requires the following documentation:

- [Notice of Intent to Convert an Existing Public School](#) (submitted before circulation of the conversion petition)
- Completed petition with the required number of signatures to be verified by the district

After the petition is completed, verified, and filed with the Executive Administrator of School Choice, the following documents are required:

- Notice of Intent to File a Charter School Application (by **March 4, 2024 at NOON**)
- Complete [Kentucky Charter School Application and Addendum](#) with [JCPS Charter School Addendum](#) (by **March 11, 2024, at NOON**)

Executive Summary

Each applicant is asked to provide an Executive Summary that will be used to introduce the application to the community on the JCPS Charter Schools webpage.

In no more than one page, single-spaced, provide a descriptive narrative summary of the key features of the charter school application. The applicant may use graphics, but it may not exceed the one-page limit. This will be used as a one-pager for the Community Forum scheduled during the review period.

Finance

As a result of *Council v Glass (2023)* there is no longer a funding mechanism for charter schools. Applicants must now demonstrate the ability to self-fund their proposed school with the ability to project funding to demonstrate sustainability.

Budget and Cash Flow Templates

In order to assist applicants with the requirements of the Charter Application Budget Form (in **Attachment 25**) and Budget Narrative (**Attachment 27**), JCPS requests all applicants incorporate the Cash Flow and Budget Templates into the appropriate Attachment.

Cash Flow Template

The [Cash Flow Template](#) should be completed as part of the requirements of **Attachment 27**. In an effort to streamline the process, this template will give applicants a reference point for their description of the revenue estimates and dates of availability. This document is the starting point and foundation for the Budget Template described below.

Budget Template

The [Charter Application Budget Form](#) should be completed for each of the five years of the charter school contract and incorporated into **Attachment 25**, the Financial Plan.

Enrollment Template

The [Enrollment Template](#) should be utilized in conjunction with Section II: School Overview, Subsection G: Enrollment Summary and Section V: Financial Plan and Capacity. Please include this template with **Attachment 25** and **Attachment 27**

Bibliography

A bibliography is a list of all of the sources you have used (whether referenced in the application or not) in the process of creating the charter application. MLA, APA, or Chicago styles are preferred.

Signature Page

In addition to the signature page in the Kentucky Charter School Application, and much like the process for state and federal grant applications, JCPS requires the inclusion of a notarized letter with a signature indicating the following:

“As confirmed by the signature(s) below, I/we confirm that the attached application was reviewed and approved for submission by authorized representatives of all individuals and organizations connected with the submission of this application, including any members of the proposed board of directors of the public charter school proposed in this application.”

Table of Contents

Applications shall conform to the following table of contents:

Cover

Table of Contents

Executive Summary

I. Cover Sheet and Enrollment Projection

II. School Overview

III. Educational Program Design and Capacity

IV. Operations Plan and Capacity Governance

V. Financial Plan and Capacity

VI. Closure or Dissolution

VII. Optional Information

VIII. Application Addendum (if applicable)

Required Attachments (Cash Flow, Budget Template, and Enrollment Template should be included with appropriate Attachments)

JCPS Addendum Response

Bibliography

Signature Page

Complete Application

The following constitutes a complete application submission:

- A completed Kentucky Charter School Application and Addendum with all necessary attachments have been included.
- Attached JCPS Addendum response has been included.
- Required formatting and content as described in this application guidance.
- Appropriate digital copies have been provided.
- Appropriate number of physical copies have been delivered as indicated above.

APPLICATION REVIEW

Note—This process is **not** first-come, first-served. All applications shall be reviewed based on merit.

The application review consists of an evaluation of the charter school application; an interview with the prospective applicant, the school leader (if known), and the proposed governing board; and a community forum. The Board has sixty (60) calendar days to review and vote to approve or deny the application.

Each applicant, upon receipt of the electronic application by the Executive Administrator of School Choice, shall be provided a notice of receipt email. Hard copies will be signed and date stamped upon receipt. The earliest of the submissions (hard copy or emailed) on the day of the deadline shall be the time recorded.

Public Disclosure

JCPS is statutorily required to disclose information about charter school applications and takes this duty seriously. JCPS shall release to the public via the charter school webpage the PDF copy of the submitted application and all corresponding materials. Each application shall be assigned a specific application number.

Application Reviewers

Application reviewers will consist of district staff and community volunteers. The team will review each application and score against the provided rubric.

A list of the reviewers shall be posted on the [charter schools webpage](#).

Identification of Deficiencies

The applicant shall be provided identified deficiencies and a deadline by which the applicant is expected to remedy any deficiency.

Per statute, the applicant may request an additional sixty (60) days to remedy identified deficiencies and seek technical assistance from the Kentucky Department of Education in doing so. The remedying materials provided by the applicant shall not be in excess of what was identified as deficient, nor shall the remedy result in substantive changes to the content of the application. Doing so will result in a determination that the application is incomplete, not in compliance with statutory requirements for a charter school application, and shall be returned to the applicant.

The applicant shall either submit the remedied material OR request an extension of sixty (60) days on **March 22, 2024**. Submit the remedied material OR the request for an extension to AskAboutCharters@jefferson.kyschools.us

Failure to assert this right by the deadline established here shall be considered forfeiture of it.

Application Three-Phase Review Process

Each application shall be reviewed in its entirety, not only for the standards of each section to be met but also to demonstrate the capacity of the applicant group to implement the plan. Based on information gathered throughout the application review process, the application will be considered for approval or denial.

KRS 160.1594 states that the Jefferson County Board of Education, as an authorizer, shall “grant charters only to applicants that possess competence in all elements of the application requirements” as provided in KRS 160.1563 and 160.1594.

Phase 1

Evaluation of Application

Each application shall be reviewed initially for completeness. Incomplete applications shall be denied. Where an application is determined to have a deficiency, the applicant shall be afforded time to supplement or remedy the deficiency. Failure to remedy the deficiency results in a review of the application as is. The applicant at this time may request an additional sixty (60) days.

Each application shall be posted for public comment. Public comment shall be collected via email and Google Forms. Public comment shall end after the Community Forum takes place.

Application reviewers shall review each application and score based on the application rubric.

Phase 2

Interview and Community Forum

Interview

Prior to the interview process, each applicant shall be provided with guidance as to the interview process. The guidance shall include such information as logistics, participation, and the process for the interview. Interview questions shall be specific to the application and be based on concerns identified in the review of the application. In addition, a performance task shall be incorporated in the interview process. All interviews shall be recorded.

Applicants shall determine who will attend the interview but, at a minimum, will ensure the following people attend, if known:

- (1) School leader(s)
- (2) Individual(s) who submitted the application
- (3) All proposed governing board members

Community Forum

The community forum provides members of the public an opportunity to voice their opinions on proposed charter schools and to present information for the Board to consider.

Following the community forum and after compiling and reviewing public feedback, the application reviewers shall make a final recommendation of applications to the Board for approval. These applicants shall be informed of their finalist status and invited to present to the Board.

Phase 3

Final Recommendation

Each finalist applicant shall be scheduled to present his or her application during a work session of the Board. The Board shall be provided a summary of the evidence provided throughout the application review process as well as a recommendation to approve or deny the application based on that review.

The invited applicants shall present to the Board and answer any questions raised. The applicants shall provide no new information, documentation (unless used as a means to present already reported information), or data at this time.

Board Consideration and Adoption or Denial

The Board will consider each application during the work session and then during a subsequent business meeting adopt, by resolution, those schools deemed fit for approval.

Withdrawal of Applications

Applications that do not demonstrate a clear plan and compelling capacity to launch a viable and sustainable charter school program will not be recommended to the Board. Prior to a recommendation to the Board, applicants may choose to withdraw an application at any time for any reason. There is no penalty for doing so, and the decision to withdraw will not affect consideration of subsequent applications.

2024 CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION TIMELINE

