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The Colorado Charter School Handbook:

A Guide for Starting and Operating a
Charter School



**Colorado Department
of Education**

201 E Colfax, Denver, CO 80203
http://www.cde.state.co.us/index_charter.htm
303-866-6771

Part
1

Getting Started

1. Introduction

A. What is a charter school?

In Colorado, a charter school is a public school operated by a group of parents, teachers, and/or community members as a semi-autonomous school of choice, operating under a contract or “charter” contract between the members of the charter school community and the authorizer. The school must be nonsectarian and non-home-based, but may be web based under certain circumstances. Applications may not be submitted to convert an existing private school or non-public home-based educational program into a charter school that is authorized by the local school district. In Colorado, charter schools may be authorized by either a local Board of Education or the state Charter School Institute, under certain circumstances.

For a complete listing of school districts with exclusive chartering authority go to:
<http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdechart/download/DispositionofRes.pdf>

The Charter Schools Institute website is at: <http://www.csi.state.co.us/>

In a charter school, each student, parent and teacher chooses the school. The “charter,” as defined in the Charter Schools Act, Colorado Revised Statute (C.R.S.) 22-30.5-101 et. seq., describes the school’s goals, standards, education design, governance and operations. The degree of autonomy to be exercised by the charter school on such issues as personnel, curriculum and facilities is negotiated between the charter applicants and the authorizer and reflected in the charter. School-centered governance, autonomy, and a clear design for how and what students will learn are the essential characteristics of a charter school. Under Colorado law, a charter school is not a separate legal entity independent of the authorizer, but rather is a public school defined uniquely by a charter, and partially autonomous, while remaining under the auspices of the authorizer. The approved charter application and accompanying agreements are the charter applicant, which serves as the basis for a contract (or charter), between the charter school and the authorizer.

B. Purpose of Charter Schools

In authorizing charter schools, the General Assembly created an avenue for parents, teachers and community members “to implement new and innovative methods of educating children that are proven to be effective and to take responsible risks and create new and innovative, research-based ways of educating all children within the public education system.”

A charter school's program must be consistent with the purposes set forth in C.R.S. 22-30.5-102(2):

- (a) To improve pupil learning by creating schools with high, rigorous standards for pupil performance;
- (b) To increase learning opportunities for all pupils, with special emphasis on expanded learning experiences for pupils who are identified as academically low-achieving;
- (c) To encourage diverse approaches to learning and education, and the use of different, innovative, research-based, or proven teaching methods;
- (d) To promote the development of longitudinal analysis of student progress, in addition to participation in the Colorado student assessment program, to measure pupil learning and achievement;
- (e) To create new employment options and professional opportunities for teachers and principals, including the opportunity to be responsible for the achievement results of students at the school site;
- (f) To provide parents and pupils with expanded choices in the types of education opportunities that are available within the public school system;
- (g) To encourage parental and community involvement with public schools;
- (g.5) To address the formation of research-based charter schools that use programs that are proven to be effective;
- (h) To hold charter schools accountable for meeting state content standards, as measured in part by the Colorado student assessment program and by longitudinal analysis of student progress, through state accreditation, and by adequate yearly progress as defined by federal law;
- (i) To provide an avenue for citizens to participate in the educational process and environment; and
- (j) To provide citizens with multiple avenues by which they can obtain authorization for a charter school.

C. The History of Charter Schools in Colorado

In 1993, state Senator Bill Owens (R) and state Representative Peggy Kerns (D) introduced the original Charter Schools Act, which received bi-partisan support and was signed into law. The original Act created Part One (C.R.S. 22-30.5-101 et. seq.). The original philosophy of the Act was that charter schools would be smaller environments to experiment with educational programs and develop innovative ways to educate at-risk students. A small number of large, urban school districts were reticent to the idea of charter schools and so many of the first charter schools started in suburban areas where parents had the capacity to develop a charter school.

The legislature, in 1996, appointed an advisory committee to develop recommendations for improving the Charter Schools Act. Subsequent revisions were made to the Act in 1997 and 1998. One of the changes was amending the legislative intent of the Act to include proven-to-be-effective educational programs as a reason for charter schools to operate.

In 1997 the General Assembly passed the Charter School District law, Part Two of the Charter Schools Act, which provided an opportunity for school districts to become "charter districts." The law was enacted as a pilot program, never used and was repealed in 2003.

The original Charter Schools Act carried a sunset date of June 30, 1998. That year the General Assembly eliminated the sunset and recognized the success of charter schools in the state. In the fall of 1998, 60 charter schools were operating, enrolling about 14, 495 students. Almost half of the operating charter schools were open due to the appeal provision in the Act.

A major issue of concern to charter schools in 1998 was the financing of facilities. The Act was amended that year to allow charter schools to seek bonds through the Colorado Educational and Cultural Facilities Authority (S.B. 98-82). The bond offerings were rated by Standards & Poors Corporation, thus becoming the first charter schools in the nation to ever be rated by a national rating agency.¹

Originally the Charter Schools Act funded charter schools at 80% of the Per Pupil Operating Revenue (PPOR) if the school was in a district-owned facility and 85% PPOR if it was leasing or purchasing a facility. After passing a bill in 1998 that then-Governor Roy Romer vetoed, the General Assembly passed a new funding formula for charter schools in 1999. Beginning with the 2000-01 budget year, charter schools were funded at 95% Per Pupil Revenue (PPR), with school districts being able to withhold an additional up to five percent for central administrative expenses. In subsequent years, amendments to the law clarified what a school district could charge for administrative expenses. Further, the new funding formula gave charter schools 100% of the Per Pupil Revenues. PPR includes capital and insurance reserve.

As a part of a broader school reform package in 2000, Governor Bill Owens led the effort to adopt an accountability law that would require the mandatory conversion of failing public schools to charter status. S.B. 00-186 created Part Three of the Charter Schools Act, "Independent Charter Schools." The law stipulated that after receiving three consecutive "Unsatisfactory" scores on the School Accountability Report (a.k.a. school report card) a school would be put up for bid to become a charter school. The first school to face such a conversion was Cole Middle School in Denver, converting to KIPP: Cole College Prep Charter School in 2005.

In response to a school district that refused to open a charter school after it was ordered to do so after a second appeal to the State Board of Education, the General Assembly in 2004 passed the Institute Charter Schools law, Part 5 of the Charter Schools Act. The Institute law created a "virtual" statewide school district that could authorize charter schools in a patchwork of school districts that were not granted exclusive chartering authority by the State Board of Education. The law outlined "good authorizer" criteria that a district must meet in order to be granted exclusive chartering authority. In the first year, eleven school districts over 3,000 students did not retain exclusive chartering authority. The Institute received eleven charter school applications in its first year and approved two for opening in the fall of 2005.

Frequently Asked Questions: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdechart/faq.htm>

¹ Arrington, Barry and Caldwell, Russell B. Colorado Charter Schools Capital Finance Study: Challenges and Opportunities for the Future; p. 21. 2000. Colorado Department of Education.

2. Starting a Charter School

A. First Steps

Successful charter schools fill a niche in the community. What is the need that your charter school will fill? Identifying the niche will drive the school's marketing plan and ensure that enough students enroll to make the financial plan viable.

Then decide what type of charter school you would like to create to fill the niche. The focus could be the educational program or the school culture. In conjunction with that, a small steering committee should be organized, considering the variety of expertise and strengths individuals bring to the committee. The steering committee writes and submits the charter application to the potential authorizer.

Once the steering committee is established, the first task is to write a vision and mission statement for the charter school. A vision statement defines the "big picture" and the mission statement states how you're going to accomplish that "big picture." Some charter schools have only a mission statement. To begin the development of a vision/mission statement, start by listing "belief statements," or phrases describing the school of your dreams. Talk about what will make your school unique and what will attract people to it. During that discussion, phrases or words will become predominant and the group should gain consensus on what will be included in the vision and mission statements. These statements should be concise and clearly communicate what the charter school will look like once it's operational. Don't use education "jargon" or buzz words.

The vision and mission statements should clearly communicate a message. The statements should clearly tell administrators, teachers, parents and the community what the school will look like in operational terms. Having clear vision and mission statements will help ensure that the charter school develops into school intended by the founders and remains the same type of school over time.

Next, the steering committee needs to organize its workload. The sample work plan [Attachment A] is based on the contents of the charter school application. Minimally, subcommittees of the steering committee should include: 1. data/research/phone tree, 2. facilities/finance, and 3. application writing. Use whatever structure best suits steering committee members' expertise. Working backwards from statutorily imposed deadlines, such as the application submission deadline, should create deadlines in the work plan.

Some ideas to discuss when planning a charter school:

- Educational philosophy
- School environment
- Discipline/character education
- Methodology (how the curriculum will be delivered)
- Size of school

- School location
- A typical student
- A parent's role in their child's education
- Research-based, proven-to-work programs

B. Contact your Potential Authorizer

In Colorado, both the local school district and the state Charter School Institute can authorize charter schools. All applicants can apply to their local school district. Charter applicants can only apply for an Institute charter school if their school will be located in a district that does not have exclusive chartering authority. <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdechart/download/DispositionofRes.pdf>

Schedule a meeting with the staff member designated by your potential authorizer. Introduce your steering committee members, your vision for your school and find out if there is any information you need to be aware of in the process of applying to your authorizer. Obtain a copy of the school district's policy for accepting and processing charter school applications. If applying to the Charter School Institute, obtain their Request for Proposals.

C. Contact the Colorado Department of Education (CDE)

The Schools of Choice Unit at CDE provides technical assistance to charter schools and charter school authorizers. The unit maintains an email listserv that is required for all operating charter schools and encouraged for developing charter schools. Information and notices are distributed through that listserv. To sign up for the listserv, email Denise Mund at: Mund_D@cde.state.co.us

Learn everything you can about charter schools:

1. Read the federal No Child Left Behind Act [<http://www.ed.gov/index.jhtml>]
2. Read the Charter Schools Act [<http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdechart/csact.htm>]
3. Visit websites. Read everything on the CDE Charter Schools website and visit each of the links for more information from other websites.
4. Read reports and studies about charter schools. Learn which factors influence success or failure.
5. Visit other charter schools and non-charter schools with the same or similar educational programs.
6. Network with other charter school administrators, board members and parents.

7. Make sure your charter school will rely on research-based, proven-to-be-effective programs and/or strategies.

D. The Charter Application Process

I. Share your Dream

Hold meetings for prospective parents to learn about your school. These meetings could be held at an existing public school, public library, city council meeting room or in someone's home. At the meetings, distribute information about your school, contact information, Letters of Intent to Enroll forms, website addresses or any other related material. Have samples available of the curriculum you plan to use. Make sure steering committee members meet each of the prospective parents and are available to answer any questions.

At the meeting, provide a handout with information on the school, including the vision and mission statements, grade levels to be served, a description of the educational program and contact information. This document should look professional as it will give a first impression of your school.

Contact key members of your community to talk about your developing charter school. Talk to business leaders, neighbors of the proposed facility location, civic organizations and legislators. Provide them written information about your school and how to contact one or two steering committee members. As often as possible, meet face to face with people rather than relying on email or the telephone.

II. Creating and Sustaining Interest in the Proposed Charter School

The charter school application requires evidence of support for the application. The primary method for collecting information on prospective students is a Letter of Intent to Enroll form. Letter of Intent to Enroll forms may also be posted on the developing charter school's website. Before writing an enrollment policy, read the section on enrollment in Part 2.2.

From the Letter of Intent forms, create a database to use in creating grade level wait lists and a telephone tree. If email addresses are included, create a mass email distribution list for the school. Use the telephone tree, email and/or the website to keep interested parents informed on the progress of the charter school application. Several developing charter schools have periodically released a school newsletter to keep interested parents and staff members apprised of the charter school's progress.

Sending out media releases is an inexpensive way to disseminate information about a proposed charter school. Send out a media release for every parent information meeting that is scheduled. Include information about the proposed school, the grade levels it will serve and provide contact information for interested parents. Be concise and succinct in writing the media release. Write it so that prospective parents can capture the vision for the proposed school and can easily understand the educational program and values of the school.

The parent information meeting should not be longer than one hour. Explain your vision for the school, introduce the steering committee and answer questions. Be extremely wary of providing too much detail about your proposed school. It may be a very clear dream in your mind, but sometimes the difference between the initial dream and reality never take place. For example, instead of saying that a student caught cheating on a test will receive detention, simply state that the steering committee will make every effort to hire a skilled and experienced Principal that will fulfill the governing board's values for a school committed to student's attaining their highest academic and character potential.

III. Critical Dates for Applicants and New Charter Schools

August: CDE conducts a grant writer's seminar that is required for startup applicants submitting in tier one of the grant program. For more detail on which schools apply in either tier one or tier two, read the Request for Proposals at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdechart/cchgrn00.htm>. A shortened version of the seminar is repeated in January for tier two startup grant applicants. CDE prefers attendance at the August training.

August 15 to October 1: Timeframe in which school districts or the Charter School Institute accept charter school applications. Check with the authorizer for the exact date. Once an application has been received, the Charter School Institute has 60 days to make a decision and local school boards have 75 days to make a decision.

October 1: The official student count date in Colorado. The count determines per pupil funding for schools.

October: Tier One Startup Grant Applications are due to CDE. Check the CDE website for more details. <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdechart/cchgrn00.htm>

December 1: The official Special Education count date. The count determines the Special Education funding received from federal and state categorical funding.

January: CDE conducts a grant writer's seminar for startup grant applicants submitting in tier two of the grant program.

March: Tier Two Startup Grant Applications are due to CDE.

IV. Appeal Process for Denied Applicants

Charter school applicants that are denied by the local board of education or the state Charter School Institute may appeal that decision to the State Board of Education under a process defined in 22-30.5-108 and 511, C.R.S.

Part 2

Application Components

1. Introduction

A. Planning for the Charter Application

At the heart of the charter is a clear statement of mission, goals, philosophy, values and principles that serve to guide the creation and operation of the learning environment and the school community. A charter school must have a clear purpose. The charter should be developed as the result of effective, research-based methods and strategies. The charter school should implement innovative strategies and proven methods for improving student achievement, which are developed in association with state model content standards. Assessments need to be incorporated into the school's program.

State model content standards [http://www.cde.state.co.us/index_stnd.htm]

Teaching methodologies, school management, and governance should be based on reliable research and effective practices. The charter school should embody a comprehensive design for effective school functioning, including data-driven instruction, assessment, classroom management, professional development, parental involvement, and school management, that aligns with the school's curriculum, technology, faculty and finances into an implementation plan.

A charter application also contains elements similar to a business plan. The application describes the school's design regarding such issues as: budget, employment, contracted services, governance, facilities, special education, content standards, curriculum and assessment of students.

The application process should consist of a series of meetings, dialogues and negotiations between the applicants and appropriate authorizer staff and authorizer board members. The open sharing of information and ideas between all parties is essential to the process and the development of a successful charter school. Early, informal discussions between the applicant and the authorizer are highly encouraged before the official application is submitted. This may help in the development of a quality and successful application. In the best case scenario, most issues can be informally resolved before the official application is submitted to the authorizer and the statutory review process and timeline begin.

Tips:

- Note the differences in application requirements for a local school district and the Charter School Institute. The format and contents differ, so contact your potential authorizer before writing an application.
- Refine and bring definition to your dream.
- Ensure that your academic program will be a success by using research-based, proven-to-be-effective programs and strategies pertaining to your targeted student population.
- Ensure that your application meets state and federal laws. For example, school goals must conform to the federal requirement for meeting Adequate Yearly Progress by the year 2014.

2. Components

I. Guidelines

Every charter school application is essentially an explanation of how the proposed school will look once it's open. The application should be specific. If the authorizer provides a Request for Applications, such as is provided by the Charter School Institute, follow the instructions completely. Explain information in your narrative rather than directing the reader to an attachment. An authorizer does not need to accept, nor act on, an incomplete charter school application.

For the purposes of this publication, the application components being used are those listed in the Charter School Institute's Request for Applications. This is done because there are more components than most school districts use, therefore providing more information.

A. Mission Statement

A charter school application must have a mission statement for the proposed school. Many schools have both a vision and a mission statement. The vision statement is a statement of how the charter school will look once it is operating (the big picture view). The mission statement is how the school intends to make that vision a reality.

The mission statement should be succinct, easy to understand and remember. Many schools post their vision/mission statement throughout their building and use it in their printed materials (e.g. Parent/Student Handbook). Resist the temptation to please everyone with the mission statement. Instead define your school for potential students, parents and staff. Be as clear as possible and don't use education "jargon." Again, be clear so as to lend clarity to those who will ultimately implement the vision over the life of the charter school.

B. Goals, Objectives and Pupil Performance Standards

This section should be based on the state Accreditation Indicators, which can be found at: http://www.cde.state.co.us/index_accredit.htm. It is understood that there are not actual baseline test scores, attendance rates or other data before the school is established. A charter applicant can either use the district average as a baseline

and/or state that a baseline will be established in the first year of operation. The authorizer may use this section of the charter school application as a basis for the Accreditation plan it creates with the approved charter school.

In Colorado, there are multiple forms of accountability on which public schools, including public charter schools, are measured. The State Board of Education has approved Accreditation contracts with each of the school districts and the Charter School Institute. School districts and the Institute, in turn, accredit each of their public schools. The process for individual public schools to be accredited oftentimes mirrors the authorizer's Accreditation plan. Reviewing the authorizer's Accreditation plan would be helpful before writing this section.

In addition to Accreditation Indicators required by state law, a charter school may choose to have other measures for which they wish to be held accountable. Those indicators may include school climate or affective measures. Be sure to only include measures that the charter school is willing to be held accountable to over time as these additional indicators would become a part of the school's accountability plan.

C. Evidence of Support

A charter school application should include the aggregate number of students interested in the charter school at the different grade levels. Individual student and/or family information should NOT be included in the charter school application. Do NOT include copies of the Letters of Intent completed by prospective parents. Instead include a table with the different grade levels and the total number of students interested in that grade level. After the charter school is approved, the founders will go through an enrollment process and verify which students will be attending the charter school. See 22-30.5-106(3), C.R.S. for more information.

It may also be helpful to include letters of support from community leaders, business people, or elected officials in your charter application. These letters should state why the individual believes a new charter school would best serve the community,

D. Educational Program

A charter school application should include a description of the school's educational program, pupil performance standards, and curriculum, which must meet or exceed content standards and must be designed to enable each pupil to achieve such standards. Content standards are specific statements of what a student should know or be able to do relative to a particular academic area or areas. Instruction and assessment, in a standards based system, should be aligned with Colorado's content standards. Colorado model content standards and suggested grade level expectations are online at: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/>

There should be a research basis for selecting a particular curriculum. In addition to obtaining information from the publisher, research is available online at ERIC [<http://www.eric.ed.gov>] and the What Works Clearinghouse [<http://www.whatworks.ed.gov/>]. Make sure that the research supports using the curriculum with the student body your school will likely attract.

E. Plan for Evaluating Pupil Performance

A charter school application should include a clear plan for evaluating pupil performance across the curriculum. This plan should align to state performance standards as well as the school's pupil performance goals, and should be presented along with a clear timeline for achieving these standards/goals. A clear explanation of the types of assessments and frequency of administration should be included reflecting thoughtfulness given to tracking student progress while still preserving as much class learning time as possible. A plan for the use of data gathered through assessments should include procedures for taking corrective action (both individually and collectively) if pupil performance falls below expected standards.

A quality assessment plan will include summative (end-of-year) assessments as well as formative (more frequent, end of unit assessments) to track student skill and knowledge development. The plan will include how this data will be used to guide professional development of teachers as well as how this data will be used to guide refinement of the curriculum.

When developing the assessment plan, consideration should be given to: the appropriateness of your assessments to your curriculum; what will serve as your baseline for student progress comparisons; the inclusion of state and federal assessments to demonstrate appropriate student growth (Ex: CSAP, AYP, CBLA); the ability of your assessment plan to allow early detection of students struggling with curriculum content; and, the ability of assessments to reflect the use of basic skills at grade-appropriate levels (Ex: reading, writing, problem-solving, etc.).

Please be aware that all Colorado public schools, including charter schools, are subject to the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP), which is aligned with the model state content standards. Contact the Colorado Department of Education's Assessment office at 303-866-6664 or use the CDE website, www.cde.state.co.us/index_assess.htm, for detailed information regarding this program. In addition, all Colorado public schools, including charter schools, are subject to the Colorado Basic Literacy Act (CBLA) which mandates that all students will be reading on the third grade level by the end of the third grade before they can move on to a fourth grade reading class. This law requires that the reading growth of all students be monitored carefully from kindergarten through third grade. Students not reading on that grade level must be placed on Individual Literacy Plans (ILP). CSAP is an integral part of this process and all third graders are required to participate in the state reading program and test, which is a part of CSAP. Further information about CBLA is also available on the CDE website at: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/action/CBLA/>. Lastly, Colorado public schools are also held responsible for demonstrating Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Under the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), all states, schools districts, schools and subgroups of 30 or more students within each school are required to make AYP. It represents the annual academic performance targets in reading and math that the State, school districts, and schools must reach to be considered on track for 100% proficiency by school year 2013-14. To make AYP, a school must (a) assess 95% of its students; (b) reach targets for either proficiency or reduce non-proficiency and (c) reach targets for one other indicator - advanced level of performance for elementary and middle schools and graduation rate for high schools. Additional information on AYP can be found at: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/ayp/index.asp>

Finally, if your charter includes high school, you will need to include graduation requirements and how those requirements meet standards put forth by the Colorado Commission on Higher Education for college preparation or how your requirements prepare students to enter the workforce.

F. Budget and Finance

The budget and financial plan for the charter school must include a plan for revenues and expenditures and a plan for compliance with State and Federal accounting and reporting requirements.

The proposed budget should be based on reasonable estimates that reflect choices made throughout the rest of the charter application. For example, enrollment projections used elsewhere in the application need to be the same enrollment projections used in the development of the budget. Similarly, facility, insurance, and employment plans discussed in other sections of the application should be reflected in the budget.

The budget should demonstrate an ability to understand the sources of funding available to the charter school and the types of expenditures required to operate the charter school. The primary source of revenue is Per Pupil Revenue (PPR). There are several other sources of revenue, some of which are temporary or restricted and some of which are dependent on market factors other than enrollment. However, PPR is the guaranteed stream of revenue which makes up most of the funding the school receives. When developing the budget, all ongoing expenditures required to operate the school should be supported by PPR.

The amount of PPR varies by school district. A charter school receives 100% of the PPR for the district in which the charter school resides. The charter school authorizer, whether a school district or the Charter Schools Institute, may retain up to 5% of PPR to cover the charter school's portion of the authorizer's central administration costs. In cases where the maximum is withheld, the charter school effectively receives 95% of its school district's PPR. When projecting revenue numbers, the single most important factor to understand is enrollment. Enrollment projections must be accurate and it is best to project conservatively for budget purposes.

Other sources of revenue can be very helpful in funding specific programs or in helping with start up costs for new charter schools. These sources include Federal grants, private grants, and more. CDE (www.cde.state.co.us) and the Colorado League of Charter Schools (www.coloradoleague.org) are good resources for finding information about current sources of funding.

When planning expenditures, it is important to understand how choices affect different areas of the budget. For example, the smaller the class size the less revenue there is to spend. Also, the more staff there is in the school the less money per staff member there is to spend. Finally, as another example, the more money spent on facility costs the less money there is for salaries and other discretionary items.

In nearly all cases, the combination of facility costs and salaries and benefits represents close to 75% of spending in charter schools. As such, close attention should be paid to these two areas. In addition to these two areas, other items that

need to be planned for financially include special education, various professional services, classroom supplies and materials, general supplies and materials, liability insurance, and more. Existing Colorado charter schools that have a similar mission/philosophy are a good resource for assistance with planning expenditures.

In addition to budget projections, the charter school must comply with various requirements. In summary, the charter school needs to set up proper accounting procedures to safeguard its assets and to ensure accurate financial reporting. At the same time, it is important to be able to provide financial information in a clear, understandable format that allows board members and administration to make sound financial decisions.

The CDE requirements for financial management and reporting are available in the Financial Policies and Procedures manual at www.cde.state.co.us/cdefinance/sfFPP.htm. An additional resource with general information is the Colorado Charter School Financial Management Guide at www.cde.state.co.us/cdechart/guidebook/fin/pdf/FinGuide.pdf.

G. Governance

Charter school governance is extremely important to the success of a charter school. Oftentimes a proposed charter school's steering committee transitions to a governing board. The charter school application should describe the process involved in developing the steering committee and the individual expertise represented on the steering committee, the process to appoint or elect the initial governing board, how and when bylaws will be adopted by the board, the governance structure for the school, the nature and extent of parental and/or involvement in governance, and the amount of authority the governing board will convey to the school's administrator.

While some existing Colorado charter schools have staff members on the governing board, others do not. Administrators may be an ex-officio, non-voting board member. If staff members have voting privileges there should be clear policies to delineate when that board member should recuse him/herself. Any potential conflict of interest, by any board member, should be disclosed and addressed.

A good way to mitigate any potential issues with board members is to have the governing board adopt and use a Board Member Agreement. These agreements stipulate the qualifications, responsibilities, and expected behaviors of individual board members and the governance structure. If the steering committee intends for the approved charter school's governing board to use a Board Member Agreement, it could be an appendix to the charter school application.

The charter school application should also describe the school's legal status. Many charter schools file Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws with the Secretary of State in order to have their school recognized as a corporation. About half of the existing charter schools have organized as a membership corporation. The Articles and Bylaws define the authority that rests in the charter school governing board and in essence, "who holds the charter." These legal issues should be discussed with a charter school attorney before decisions are made. Additionally, the charter school can apply for its own tax-exempt status with the Internal Revenue Service. Charter schools can either use their own tax-exempt status or use their authorizer's. Check with the potential authorizer for more information.

The charter school governing board must be in compliance with the Colorado Open Meetings Law (24-6-401, C.R.S.) and Public Records Act (24-72-201, C.R.S.) as well as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act [need Public Law citation]. See <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdechart/guidebook/gov/pdf/OpenMeetings-RecordsMemo.pdf> for more information on the Open Meetings and Open Records laws.

Every charter school governing board should have a set of board policies. Much of what is included in the charter school application will become board policy. For instance, the school's vision/mission statement, legal status, enrollment policy, discipline policy and nondiscrimination policy will all be in the board policy book. These board policies should be made available to school staff and families. Generally schools put these policies on their website and have them available in the school office.

Many sample best practice documents for charter school governing boards are available online at: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdechart/guidebook/gov/index.htm>

H. Employees

A charter school must provide an explanation of the relationship that will exist between the charter school and its employees. This must include evidence that the terms and conditions of employment are addressed with affected employees and their recognized representative, if any. Also, proposed employment policies must be included.

As charter schools are, by statute, public schools, employees of charter schools are public employees. Charter schools and their employees must participate in Colorado's Public Employees' Retirement Association (PERA) or in the Denver Public Schools retirement fund. This is in lieu of participation in social security, which makes up the majority of the FICA payroll tax. However, the Medicare portion of FICA is still paid by the employees and matched by the employer. This is currently 1.45% of gross salary.

With the growing presence of private educational management organizations, questions are arising about the nature of employees in some charter schools. This is a result of some educational management companies treating employees as employees of the private company, as opposed to employees of the public school. These determinations need to be made with legal counsel, but the nature of employees should be clearly outlined in the charter application.

There are several resources that provide more information about employment issues. Tax information is available at www.irs.gov and through the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment at www.coworkforce.com. Additional information about PERA can be found at www.copera.org. Finally, a human resources manual developed through CDE can be found at www.cde.state.co.us/cdechart/download/HREmploymentManual.pdf.

I. Insurance Coverage

Charter schools must have appropriate insurance coverage. This includes workers compensation, liability insurance, and insurance for the building and its contents.

Charter schools are public entities and liability is limited by the Colorado Governmental Immunity Act, C.R.S. 24-10-101 et seq.

The risk management office in your local school district is a very good resource for finding information about your particular insurance needs. Also, the Colorado School District Self Insurance Pool is the insurance provider for many charter schools and can provide information. Once insurance needs are understood, costs need to be estimated and incorporated into the proposed budget.

J. At-risk and Community Involvement

One of the most distinctive characteristics of charter schools is that they are a choice school. Due to this, many charter schools have a small school atmosphere and a culture of everyone belonging to the community.

It is important for charter school developers to provide adequate notice to the community about the possibility of their charter school. Some parts of the community may take additional outreach. For example, fliers may need to be published in a second language. Many charter developers have delivered fliers to individual homes in a community.

Be clear about what the new charter school will look like and the process for getting the school approved. Establish early the school's value for meaningful parental involvement. Explain to parents their role in the charter school through volunteering, monitoring their child's education and holding the school accountable. Designate an individual on the steering committee to follow up with parents that are interested in getting involved with the development of the charter school.

Network with established civic and community organizations in the community your school will serve. Whenever possible, arrange to have Parent Information Meetings in that community. Be sure to reach out to a broad cross-section of the community.

K. Enrollment Policy

The Charter Schools Act allows the authorizer and the charter applicant the flexibility to use any enrollment policy, such as a wait list or lottery. The federal sub grant, administered by CDE, requires the use of a lottery. Many charter schools have elected to use a lottery in order to access these startup and implementation grant funds. More information on lottery requirements can be found in the grant's Request for Proposals at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdechart/cchgrm00.htm>

State law does require a public charter school to not discriminate on the basis of disability, race, creed, color, gender, national origin, religion, ancestry, or need for special education services.

Charter School Lottery Policies Should Address:

- The date of the annual lottery
- The definition of a "founding family"
- How the community will receive adequate notice about the formation of a new charter school

- Any requirement for parents to reaffirm their intent to enroll on an annual basis
- What happens to names not drawn in the lottery
- How siblings of enrolled students are handled in the process
- How long parents have to make a decision on whether or not their child will attend the school

L. Transportation

A charter school may choose not to provide any transportation services or may choose to negotiate with a school district, BOCES, or private provider to provide transportation services for its students.

If a charter school chooses to provide transportation services, a plan must be included in the application. The plan should include provisions for transporting students to and from the charter school and their homes and to and from the charter school and any extracurricular activities. Also, a description of how the charter school plans to meet the needs specifically of low-income and academically low-achieving pupils should be included.

The provision of transportation services has several implications. First of all, the cost must be included in the charter school's budget. Secondly, insurance and liability issues must be addressed when assessing the charter school's overall insurance needs. Finally, many federal and state rules and regulations relate to the provision of transportation services. One specific rule to be aware of is that any small vehicles or school buses owned and operated by a charter school or under contract must meet the safety and operating standards as prescribed in State Board Rules 1 CCR 301-25, 301-26 and 301-29.

For more information, the School Transportation Unit at CDE can be reached at 303-866-6661. This information is also available on the CDE website at www.cde.state.co.us/index_nutri_transpo.htm.

M. Facilities

One of the greatest challenges to opening a new school is finding a suitable facility. The most important thing during the application process is to plan as much as possible and to clearly articulate those plans. It can be difficult to negotiate for facility space without having an approved charter. It is not necessary to have a signed formal agreement for a facility during the application process, but any viable options should be explained and should include reasonable space requirements, a reasonable plan for space utilization, a discussion of how the facility will be ready for use when the school opens, and, most importantly, reasonable costs of that facility which must be reflected in the proposed budget.

Charter schools may rent, lease, own, or otherwise finance facility space. In some cases, a school district may have an unused facility, and in some cases a charter school may share space with another tenant. Many charter schools have been able to finance their own facilities with tax-exempt bond financing through the Colorado Educational and Cultural Facilities Authority (CECFA). These are typically schools

that are established, but information can be found by calling CECFA at 303-297-2538.

With any facility, building permits and inspections are required. Life and safety requirements (including asbestos regulations) apply to rented or contributed facilities as well. The State is responsible for issuing certificates of occupancy for public schools and information can be obtained by calling Wayne Horn, in the Department of Labor at 303-572-2919. In addition, contact your community's planning and zoning department, as well as the facilities director for your school district for further information.

N. Amendment 23 One-percent Increase

Amendment 23 guarantees a minimum increase in base per pupil funding of the rate of inflation plus one percent each year through 2011. As part of that guarantee, school districts, including charter schools, must state how they plan to use the one percent increase in the ensuing fiscal year. As part of the application process, charter schools should state how they plan to use that one percent increase in its future years. These statements are typically broad and may include purposes such as raising student achievement, reducing class size, or other purposes.

O. Waivers

The technical means by which charter schools operate is via waiver from certain state laws, state rules and/or school district policies. Information on applying for waivers from the state is on the CDE Charter Schools website at: http://www.cde.state.co.us/index_charter.htm under Technical Assistance. Charter schools applying for waiver of school district policies, should contact their charter school liaison if those policies are not listed on the school district's website. An example of a waiver application can be found in the CDE Charter Schools Electronic Guidebook of Best Practices at: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdechart/guidebook/gov/index.htm>

The Colorado State Board of Education has determined that 13 statutes may be automatically waived for charter schools. Charter schools may request waivers from statutes in addition to those automatic waivers, but the process for approval is different.

There are two philosophies on charter schools obtaining waivers. Some believe that authority is given to the charter school via the charter contract, making some waivers unnecessary. In particular, the Board Powers (22-32-109 and 110, C.R.S.) are considered "delegatory" rather than "substantive." In other words, the charter school governing board is delegated the authority that otherwise would belong to the school district board of education. Others believe that obtaining a waiver is an assurance against charter contracts that may be renegotiated and therefore, less secure for the charter school. A charter school developer should obtain legal counsel for which waivers are sought from either the state or the authorizer.

P. Student Discipline, Expulsion, or Suspension

Although all charter schools must meet the minimum standards for student discipline, expulsion and suspension, they don't have to fit into the traditional "box." Charter schools can have their own policies as long as the statutory minimums are met. Many charter schools have sought and obtained waivers from related laws that provide for flexibility and a unique approach to student discipline.

Refer to 22-33.106 et. seq., C.R.S. is the Suspension, Expulsion and Denial of Admission law, for more detailed information.

Most charter school contracts stipulate which party (the authorizer or the charter school) has the authority to suspend or expel students. 22-33-105(7), C.R.S. states that either a charter school authorized by the Charter School Institute, or the Institute itself, may expel, suspend or deny admission of students. During contract negotiations this issue must be decided. Therefore, the charter application should detail how the charter school proposes to handle student discipline, expulsion and suspension. Many applications include policies that the potential charter school would use. Samples are online at: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdechart/guidebook/fam/index.htm>

Q. Academic Achievement and Accreditation

A charter school application should include a thorough plan for tracking academic achievement which satisfies the accreditation requirements of the chartering authority. The chartering authority will seek accreditation through the Colorado Department of Education through the Colorado Accreditation Program. Information about this program may be obtained through the CDE website at www.cde.state.co.us/index.accredit.htm.

The charter school application should reflect an understanding of the accreditation requirements of their chartering authority with a clear plan from the charter school outlining how they will obtain the data required by the chartering authority and how they will provide that data to their chartering authority for their use in applying to the CDE for accreditation.

R. Serving Students with Special Needs

As public schools, charter schools must open their enrollment to any student and must provide appropriate special education services as needed for students with disabilities. The charter school developer should consider the general philosophy of the school when developing the philosophy for delivery of special education services. For instance, a charter school may have an experiential delivery model making the needs of a student with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) more unique. Further, a charter school with a philosophy that no student "falls through the cracks" may have an aggressive remediation program for students that are not attaining their full academic potential and yet do not qualify for special education services.

While charter schools can obtain waivers from teacher licensure, Special Education licensure cannot be waived.

There are many CDE resources available for charter school applicants to consider when writing this section. Those resources are at:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdechart/guidebook/sped/index.htm> After reading the overview, read the resource on special education funding for direction on the impact to the charter school's operating budget. The sample compliance plan describes how all special education services could be delivered at a charter school. Charter applications should not contain that much detail, however, as legally the charter school application becomes the basis for the charter school contract. By writing that level of detail in the application, the charter school developer would be committing to how exactly particular services would be delivered rather than allowing for flexibility between the authorizer's Special Education Director and the charter school. It is good for the charter school developer to fully understand the scope and depth of services that the charter school will be responsible for, however.

There is a statewide Charter Schools and Special Education Advisory Committee that meets on a regular basis. More information on that committee is at: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdechart/sped/index.htm>

1. Federal Laws

Age Discrimination - in Employment Act generally prohibits employers from discriminating on the basis of age in the hiring, termination, benefits, or other terms and conditions of employment of individuals over 40 years of age. This act applies to public schools and employers who employ 20 or more employees. 29 U.S.C. §§621-634. Information: Equal Employment Opportunity Commission 202-663-4900.

Americans with Disabilities Act: prohibits discrimination by an employer who employs 15 or more workers against a qualified individual with a disability. 42 U.S.C. § 12101-12213. www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/index.html?src=mr

Bilingual Education Act prohibits federally assisted education programs from excluding a student on the basis of a surname or language minority status. 20 U.S.C. §7401 *et. seq.* Information: U.S. Department of Education 202-205-5576.

Boy Scouts of America Equal Access Act no public school that provides an opportunity for one or more outside youth or community groups to meet on school premises or in school facilities before or after school hours shall deny equal access or a fair opportunity to meet to, or discriminate against, any group official affiliated with the Boy Scouts of America, or any other youth group listed in Title 36 of the United States Code as a patriotic society. <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OCR/boyscouts.html>.

Charter School Expansion Act of 1998 requires school districts to ensure that every charter school receives the Federal funding for which it is eligible not later than five months after the charter school first opens. 20 U.S.C. § 10306. Information: Charter Schools Unit, Colorado Department of Education 303-866-6771. http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeunified/qa_Charter.htm

Equal Pay Act prohibits employers from paying wages to employees of one sex at rates of pay less than the rates they pay employees of the opposite sex for work requiring equal skill, effort, and responsibility, and which is performed under similar working conditions. 29 U.S.C. §206(d). Information: Wage and Hour Administrator of the U.S. Department of Labor 1-866-4USWAGE. (Request referral to regional office.)

Fair Labor Standards Act establishes minimum wage, overtime pay, equal pay, record keeping, and child labor standards for employees who are within the coverage of the FLSA and who are not exempt from specific provisions. 29 U.S.C. §201 *et seq.* (1988). Information: Wage and Hour Administrator of the U.S. Department of Labor 1-866-4USWAGE. (Request referral to regional office.)

Family and Medical Leave Act: requires employers with 50 or more workers in a 75-mile radius to provide eligible employees up to 12 work weeks of leave in a 12 month period when the leave is required for (1) birth, adoption or foster care placement, (2) care for a sick spouse or parent, or (3) a personal serious health condition. 29 U.S.C. § 2611 *et. seq.* www.dol.gov

Family Educational and Privacy Rights Act confers upon students (and their parents) rights of notice, access, amendment and confidentiality with regard to their educational records maintained by a school that received federal financial assistance. 20 U.S.C. § 1232g. Information: Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education 202-260-3887. <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/SDFS/actguid/infshare.html>.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act requires school receiving federal financial assistance to provide a free and appropriate education to children with disabilities. 20 U.S.C. §1400, *et. seq.* Information: Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education 202-205-9056.

Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 creates civil and criminal sanctions for employers who fail to properly verify the employment eligibility of all workers hired after November 6, 1986. 8 U.S.C. §§1324a and 1324b (1988). Information: contact local Immigration & Naturalization Service. (Request information regarding Form I-9.)

No Child Left Behind Act: the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which contains provisions for defining a "highly qualified" teacher, testing and reporting requirements for states, and all of the federal education programs. www.ed.gov

Occupational Health and Safety Act of 1970 regulates health and safety in the workplace, including handling and disposal of materials that may contain blood-borne pathogens. 29 U.S.C. §651 *et. seq.* (1993). Information: Occupational Health and Safety Administration, U.S. Department of Labor 1-800-321-6742.

Omnibus Transportation Employee Testing Act of 1991 requires to conduct pre-employment/pre-duty, reasonable suspicion, random and post-accident alcohol and controlled substances testing of each applicant for employment or employee who is required to obtain a commercial driver's license. 49 U.S.C. §2717. Information: Department of Transportation Office of Drug Enforcement and Program Compliance 202-366-3784.

Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) prohibits recipients of federal funds from discriminating against an individual on the basis of disability. 29 U.S.C. §§700 *et. seq.* (1994). Information: Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education 202-2059056.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as interpreted by the U.S. Supreme Court in *Lau v. Nichols*, 414 U.S. 563 (1974) and the United States Court of Appeals for the 5th Circuit in *Castaneda v. Pickard*, 648 F.2d 989 (5th Cir. 1981), requires public schools to provide any alternative language programs necessary to ensure that national origin minority students with limited-English proficiency have meaningful access to education programs. 42 U.S.C. §2000d *et. seq.* (1993). Information: Office of Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education 202-205-5413.

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 forbids employers who have 15 or more employees to discriminate against individuals in all areas of the employment

relationship if the action is based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. 42 U.S.C. §2000e *et. seq.* (1993). Information: Equal Employment Opportunity Commission 202-663-4900.

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits gender-based discrimination by an educational institution that receives federal financial assistance. 20 U.S.C. 1681 Information: Office of Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education 202-205-5413.

2. State Laws

The majority of state laws affecting education are in Title 22 of the Colorado Revised Statutes (C.R.S.). CDE has books containing the education statutes. Contact the Schools of Choice Unit at 303-866-6771 to obtain a law book. Additionally, the statutes are online at: <http://198.187.128.12/colorado/lpext.dll?f=templates&fn=fs-main.htm&2.0> Below is a list of the most common laws affecting charter schools.

Accreditation, 22-11-101, C.R.S.

Charter Schools Act, 22-30.5-101, C.R.S.

Child Abuse, 19-3-304, C.R.S.

Colorado Basic Literacy Act (CBLA), 22-7-501. C.R.S.

Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) & ACT, 22-7-604, C.R.S.

Expulsions & Suspensions, 22-33-105 & 106, C.R.S.

Fees, 22-32-117, C.R.S.

Finance Act, 22-54-101, C.R.S.

Hours of Instruction, 22-32-109 (1)(n)(l), C.R.S.

Open Meetings, 24-6-401, C.R.S.

Open Records, 24-72-201, C.R.S.

School Accountability Reports (SARs), 22-7-601 C.R.S.

Teacher Employment, Compensation & Dismissal Act, 22-63, C.R.S.

Acronyms

504	Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973—a civil rights statute that prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability
ACT	American College Test
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act—federal law governing access to public buildings
ADD	Attention Deficit Disorder
ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
AYP	Adequate Yearly Progress
AERA	American Education Research Association
BOCES	Board of Cooperative Educational Services (Small schools and small districts that have pooled their resources together. A BOCES can include 15-25 school districts. The important question to ask is what BOCES does a district belong to and for what projects. Some districts may be in a BOCES only for Title I funds.)
BOD	Board of Directors
BOE	Board of Education
CASB	Colorado Association of School Boards (membership organization of the state's school district Boards of Education)
CASE	Colorado Association of School Executives (professional organization for administrators)
CBLA	Colorado Basic Literacy Act—state law that ensures students are reading at grade level by third grade
CDE	Colorado Department of Education
CEA	Colorado Education Association—the state teachers union
CECFA	Colorado Educational and Cultural Facilities Authority—issues bonds for charter schools
CK	Core Knowledge
CLCS	Colorado League of Charter Schools
CREA	Colorado Reading Excellence Act
CRS	Colorado Revised Statutes
CSAP	Colorado Student Assessment Program
CSAP-A	CSAP-Alternate. The assessment for a small percentage (less than 1%) of students with IEP's that need significant support in order to progress in their learning.
CSR	Comprehensive School Reform—a federal grant for failing schools, formerly known as Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration
CSR	Class Size Reduction
CSRC	Colorado School Resource Center
CSSEAC	Charter Schools Special Education Advisory Committee
DI	Direct Instruction
ECS	Education Commission of the States
EDGAR	Education Department General Administrative Regulations
ELA	English Language Acquisition
ELL	English Language Learner
ESEA	Elementary and Secondary Education Act—federal education law replaced with the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001
ESL	English as a Secondary Language
FAPE	Free Appropriate Public Education

FERPA	Family Education Rights and Privacy Act—federal law governing privacy
FPP	Financial Policies & Procedures
FTE	Full Time Equivalent—one full-time salary
FY	Fiscal Year
GED	General Education Diploma
GT	Gifted & Talented
HB	House Bill in the Colorado Legislature
IASA	Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 (Federal Law)
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act—federal law regarding educating students with disabilities
IDEA-B	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act—Part B
IEP	Individual Education Plan—an official plan for students with disabilities that qualify for Special Education services
ILP	Individual Literacy Plan—state law requires an ILP for any student not reading at grade level by third grade (the state law is the Colorado Basic Literacy Act)
ITBS	Iowa Test of Basic Skills
LEA	Local Education Agency or official school district
LEP	Limited English Proficiency
LRE	Least Restrictive Environment—educating disabled students with non-disabled students
NACSA	National Association of Charter School Authorizers
NAEP	National Assessment of Educational Progress
OCR	Office of Civil Rights—federal law pertaining to Section 504 and disability regulations
OSEP	Office of Special Education Programs
PCD	Perceptual Communicative Disorder
PCSP	Public Charter School Program
PD	Professional Development
PL	Public Law (Federal Law)
PPOR	Per Pupil Operating Revenue
PPR	Per Pupil Revenue
PSAT	Pre-Stanford Achievement Test
R2A	Read to Achieve
RFP	Request for Proposal
SAR	School Accountability Report
SAT	Stanford Achievement Test
SB	Senate Bill in the Colorado Legislature
SBE	State Board of Education
SEA	State Education Agency—Colorado Department of Education
SIP	School Improvement Plan
SLIC	Significant Limited Intellectual Capacity
USDOE	United States Department of Education

Free Horizon Montessori Charter School

Work Plan

Draft: January 11, 2002

Task	Start	End	Lead Person	Notes/ Budget
Legal/Organizational/Board				
✓ File Articles of Incorporation & Bylaws		Done		
✓ File for tax exemption (state & federal)		IP		
✓ Develop board calendar	Jan.	Feb 15		
✓ Research & secure insurance	Apr	June 15		
✓ Develop SIP		Sept 15		
✓ Establish School Advisory Council	May	Sept		
✓ Finalize enrollment for Jeffco	Now			
✓ Conduct lottery				
✓ Recruit 2 more directors	Jan 28			
✓ Conduct director election				
✓ Finalize charter contract				
✓ Establish board committees	Ongoing			
✓ Develop board training				
Parent/Student				
✓ Publicize openings	IP	Ongoing		
✓ Develop P/S Handbook		Aug 1		
✓ Plan parent/student orientation		Apr 1		
✓ Implement communication tool (monthly newsletter)	Jan 20	Feb 15		
✓ Develop information packets for pre-school		?		
✓ Develop information packets for elementary program		?		
✓ Facilitate PTO creation		Apr		
✓ Designate parent volunteer coordinator		Mar 1		

Finance & Operations				
✓ Develop financial cash flow plan (Jan-July 1)	Jan 12	Feb 15		
✓ Submit yearly budget to Jeffco		Feb 28		
✓ Negotiate Jeffco loan	Feb 12			
✓ Develop fundraising plan		March		
✓ Submit CDE grant application	Now	Feb ?		
✓ Establish budget development & oversight system		July 1		
✓ Establish accounting system		July 1		
✓ Develop internal controls & fiscal policies		July 1		
✓ Establish fiscal linkages with Jeffco		July 1		
✓ Pursue entitlement program monies		May 30		
✓ Establish food services		Aug 1		
✓ Establish payroll system		June 1		
✓ Establish staff benefits & policies		Feb 28		
✓ Finalize personnel contracts		Feb 28		
✓ Designate grant manager		July 30		
Facilities				
✓ Arrange Dept of Labor inspection for C.O.	IP	Aug 1		
✓ Negotiate final terms of lease	IP	Feb 1		
✓ Plan & conduct necessary renovations	IP	Aug 1		
✓ Plan technology lab and install		Aug 15		
✓ Purchase furnishings	March	July 30		
✓ Make custodial arrangements		Aug 1		
✓ Designate facility coordinator				
✓ Arrange & prepare classrooms		Aug 1		

✓ Secure property insurance				
Staffing				
✓ Establish Principal hiring plan		Feb 1		
✓ Develop job description for Principal	IP	Feb 1		
✓ Post Principal job opening		Feb 10		
✓ Develop Principal evaluation instrument		Feb 15		
✓ Conduct interviews for Prin.		Mar 1		
✓ Develop job descriptions for all open positions		Mar		
✓ Attend teacher job fairs	Feb	Mar		
✓ Identify plan for teacher recruitment & selection		Mar 1		
✓ Develop staff contracts	IP	Feb 28		
Instruction & Assessment				
✓ Identify & secure instructional materials		July 30		
✓ Develop tech plan	IP	Feb 10		
✓ Adopt school calendar & schedule	Feb	May 1		
✓ Develop Special Ed plan		Apr 1		