

PCSC Petition Committee Meeting 5-14-2018

In 2017 and 2018, Idaho statute and administrative rule were amended to streamline the charter petitioning process and update the required elements of new charter petitions. As a result, the PCSC needs an updated petition feedback tool to replace the Petition Evaluation Rubric (PER) that has been in use for many years.

In February 2018, the Petition Committee considered a variety of sample feedback models used by authorizers in other states. Staff was asked to develop a sample section of a feedback tool based on one of these models, and has since expanded the sample into a complete draft.

The draft Petition Evaluation Report and associated Standards of Quality are included with these materials for the committee's review.

Supporting documents are also included in the materials. While these will not be a matter for discussion at this meeting, they will be referenced as connected materials.

Committee Task

- Provide feedback to staff regarding the draft Petition Evaluation Report and Standards of Quality

Materials

- Petition Evaluation Report and Standards of Quality
- Supporting Documents – copies of existing tools that are related to the New Petition Process (Budget Template, New Petitioner Guidance, and Facilities Template)



IDAHO PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION

PETITION EVALUATION REPORT



Idaho Public Charter School
Commission
304 North 8th Street, Room 242
Boise, Idaho 83702

Phone: (208) 332-1561
chartercommission.idaho.gov

Alan Reed, Chairman
Tamara Baysinger, Director

Petition Review Summary

Summary

Add specific notes in this text box.

Summary of Section Ratings

Section 1: Educational Program ↓↓

MEETS STANDARD

Section 3: Board Capacity and Governance Structure ↓↓

EXCEEDS STANDARD

Section 5: School Leadership and Management ↓↓

MEETS STANDARD

Section 2: Financial and Facilities Plan ↓↓

DOES NOT MEET STANDARD

Section 4: Student Demand & Primary Attendance Area ↓↓

FALLS FAR BELOW STANDARD

Section 6: Virtual Schools ↓↓

NOT APPLICABLE

Section I: Educational Program

MEETS STANDARD

READ MORE: [Standards of Quality](#)

Summary

Detail

Strengths:

- Strength
- Strength

Concerns:

- Concern
- Concern

Section II: Financial and Facilities Plan

MEETS STANDARD

READ MORE: [Standards of Quality](#)

Summary

Detail

Strengths:

- Strength
- Strength

Concerns:

- Concern
- Concern

Section III: Board Capacity and Governance Structure

MEETS STANDARD

READ MORE: [Standards of Quality](#)

Summary

Detail

Strengths:

- Strength
- Strength

Concerns:

- Concern
- Concern

Section IV: Student Demand and Primary Attendance Area

MEETS STANDARD

READ MORE: [Standards of Quality](#)

Summary

Detail

Strengths:

- Strength
- Strength

Concerns:

- Concern
- Concern

Section V: School Leadership and Management

MEETS STANDARD

READ MORE: [Standards of Quality](#)

Summary

Detail

Strengths:

- Strength
- Strength

Concerns:

- Concern
- Concern

Section VI: Virtual Schools

MEETS STANDARD

READ MORE: [Standards of Quality](#)

Summary

Detail

Strengths:

- Strength
- Strength

Concerns:

- Concern
- Concern



NEW CHARTER PETITION

STANDARDS OF QUALITY



Introduction Checklist

1. Formatting

- All pages are legible in the final PDF (i.e. font size, quality of copy, etc.)
- Petition is continuously paginated
- Section headings and references to appendices are bookmarked and/or hyperlinked

2. Cover Page Requirements

- Name of the school
- Year the school intends to open
- General location of the school (such as school district, county, city, etc.)
- Contact information for the primary representative of the petitioning group (including name, address, phone number, and e-mail address)

3. Table of Contents

- Organized in alignment with the New Charter Petitioner Guidance document
- Page numbers are accurate
- Section titles are hyperlinked to the corresponding page of the petition

4. Executive Summary

- One page maximum
- Introduces the school's organizational structure
- Introduces the school's educational program
- Provides an overview of the community need for such a program
- Summarizes student outcome expectations

5. Mission Statement

- Succinctly relays the purpose and educational philosophy of the school

Section I: Educational Program

1. General Standards of Quality

- a. **Thorough and Compliant** - The petition provides a thorough explanation of the intended educational program.
- b. **Supported and Credible** - The petition includes references to relevant research and documentation of the success of the proposed model. Alternatively, if the model is new and research is unavailable, the petition describes the reasoning behind the approach.
- c. **Connected and Cohesive** - The petition presents an overall educational program that is aligned to the mission and vision and is cohesive with other sections of the petition.

2. Educational Philosophy (New Charter Petitioner Guidance, Pg. 6)

- a. The educational philosophy clearly relates to the school's mission and instructional model.
- b. Research and widely accepted best practices support the educational philosophy.

3. Student Academic Achievement Standards (New Charter Petitioner Guidance, Pg. 7)

- a. Academic and programmatic goals convey the educational program's anticipated achievement outcomes.
- b. Academic and programmatic goals reflect high standards for the target population.
- c. The goals are logically connected to the school's mission.

3. Key Educational Design Elements, Curricula, Tools, & Instructional Methods

(New Charter Petitioner Guidance, Pg. 7)

- a. Key design elements are thorough and directly relate to the educational program as well as the mission and vision of the proposed school.
- b. Explanations and examples of instructional practices, types of curricula, and tools are detailed, realistic, and consistent with the proposed educational program.

4. Strategies for Serving Special Populations (New Charter Petitioner Guidance, Pg. 8)

- a. The special services plan is complete and addresses the needs of special populations, including, but not limited to: special education, at-risk, gifted, and English Language Learners.
- b. The special populations plan appears feasible within the constraints of the proposed academic program.
- c. The plan demonstrates an understanding of the unique needs of the special populations in the proposed target market.

5. Professional Development Plan (New Charter Petitioner Guidance, Pg.8)

- a. The professional development plan addresses new teacher orientation and onboarding.
- b. The professional development plan includes training specific to the proposed educational model as well as the systems and structures for efficient school operations.
- c. The plan aligns with the school calendar and provides learning opportunities for both groups and individuals as well as varied delivery formats such as guest professionals, off-site trainings, and professional learning communities.

Section I: Related Appendices

Appendix F: Optional Supporting Documents

- a. No appendices are required for Section I. Optional appendices support the educational program's credibility.
- b. Each document is numbered within this section (i.e. F1, F2, F3, etc.).

Section II: Financial and Facilities Plan

1. General Standards of Quality

- a. **Thorough and Compliant** - The financial plan and budget template evidence a thorough understanding of federal and state funding mechanisms and distributions as well as the costs associated with school operations. Revenue estimates include realistic variables and restricted funds are used appropriately.
- b. **Supported and Credible** - The petition includes sufficient documentation, assumptions, and details to demonstrate the validity of revenue and expenditure estimates.
- c. **Connected and Cohesive** - The petition's financial and facilities plan meets the stated needs of the academic program and the intended student body. The financial narrative and the budget template are aligned.

2. Fiscal Philosophy and Spending Priorities (New Charter Petitioner Guidance, Pg.9)

- a. The fiscal philosophy and spending priorities align to the mission and vision of the school.
- b. The spending priorities provide for effective school operations.
- c. The spending priorities present appropriate use of taxpayer dollars.

3. Transportation and Food Service Plans (New Charter Petitioner Guidance, Pg.9-10)

- a. The transportation plan (if provided) is compliant and meets the needs of the intended student population.
- b. The nutrition plan (if provided) is compliant and meets the needs of the intended student population.
- c. Cost estimates are credible and supported.
- d. The facility design and staffing plan appropriately support the stated plans for transportation and nutrition.

4. Financial Management and Monitoring Plan (New Charter Petitioner Guidance, Pg.9)

- a. The financial management and monitoring plan identifies the board's fiscal governance role.
- b. The organizational structure insures appropriate accounting expertise either by including a business manager in the staffing plan or by contracting out services to an experienced organization. (If contracting out for services, the petition outlines the specific duties to be contracted and includes any contracts or MOUs executed to date.)
- c. The plan evidences an understanding of financial policy including accounting practices, internal controls, and related internal procedures.

5. Facilities plan (New Charter Petitioner Guidance, Pg.10, 15-16)

- a. The two facility options are detailed, realistic, and meet the school's programmatic needs.
- b. The proposed school location(s) is easily accessible to the intended student population and lies within the primary attendance area.
- c. The square footage, outdoor space, and specialty features meet the needs of the educational model.

Section II: Related Appendices

Appendix A1: Financial Summary (Financial Summary tab)

- a. See New Charter Petitioner Guidance, pg. 15, for more information.
- b. The financial summary, which automatically populates, provides a one-page overview of the school's plan.

Appendix A2: Pre-Opening Budget (Pre-Opening tab)

- a. See New Charter Petitioner Guidance, pg. 15, for more information.
- b. The pre-opening budget is aligned to the school's start-up plan (as described throughout the narrative) through June 30th of the pre-operational year. Revenues and expenditures are supported and credible.

Appendix A3: Three-Year Operating Budget and Break-Even Year 1 Scenario (Operational Budgets tab)

- a. See New Charter Petitioner Guidance, pg. 15, for more information.
- b. The three-year budget provides appropriate detail for the first few years of the school's operation based on realistic enrollment expectations.
- c. The budget includes a functional break-even, or "plan B" budget for the first year of operation that shows how the school can survive if it does not meet anticipated enrollment numbers. Revenues and expenditures are supported and credible.

Appendix A4: Cash Flow Projection for Initial Operating Year (Cash Flow tab)

- a. See New Charter Petitioner Guidance, pg. 15, for more information.
- b. The cash flow aligns to the "full enrollment year 1 budget" column on the Operational Budgets tab. The presented budget appropriately accounts for the staggered timing of state distributions of funds and the appropriate timing of various expenditures.

Appendix A5: Facility Options

- a. See New Charter Petitioner Guidance, pg. 15, for more information.
- b. The two or more facility options, outlined on the PCSC facilities template, are realistic.
- c. Cost estimates are realistic and consider soft and hard costs of the proposed facility.

Appendix F: Optional Supporting Documents

- a. Additional appendices to support the Financial and Facilities Plan Section may be included in Appendix F.
- b. Each document is numbered within this section (i.e. F2, F3, F4, etc.).

Section III: Board Capacity and Governance Structure

1. General Standards of Quality

- a. **Thorough and Compliant** - The articles and of incorporation and bylaws are legally compliant and address all necessary content. The petition demonstrates an understanding of the charter school board's legal responsibilities. The narrative and attachments effectively communicate the board's capacity to govern.
- b. **Supported and Credible** - The petition includes documentation of executed bylaws and filed articles of incorporation.
- c. **Connected and Cohesive** - The board membership and structure match the needs of the educational program and the oversight of school operations.

1. Governance Structure (New Charter Petitioner Guidance, Pg.10)

- a. The governance structure includes detailed descriptions of the roles that officers and board committees will play.
- b. The division of duties between governance and management are clear and appropriate.
- c. The governance structure grants the board direct oversight over school leadership and the evaluation of school leaders.
- d. The articles of incorporation and bylaws are consistent with the petition narrative.

2. Board Member Qualifications (New Charter Petitioner Guidance, Pg.10)

- a. The board member qualifications section includes a list of directors currently serving, states each director's term of service, and establishes each director's capacity to govern (qualifications, experience, etc.).
- b. Board membership reflects diverse experience and skills (such as education, law, real estate, management, financial planning, and community outreach).

3. Transition Plan (New Charter Petitioner Guidance, Pg.10)

- a. The board's transition plan from founding to the work of governance is clear and likely to be effective.
- b. The transition plan addresses concrete ways to avoid the pitfalls of "founders' syndrome."
- c. The plan includes a list of the current board members who intend to resign in order to apply for a paid position, if the school is approved.
- d. The transition plan accounts for the consistent stewardship of the school's mission and vision.

4. Board Member Recruitment and Training (New Charter Petitioner Guidance, Pg.11)

- a. A comprehensive board training plan for sustaining high-quality governance includes an identification of the scope of skills the board desires to maintain, strategies for recruitment, and processes for grooming, selecting, and onboarding new directors.
- b. Board training is detailed, specific, and comprehensive, and addresses the needs of the initial board as well as future board members.
- c. The board training plan allows for self-reflection and opportunities for stakeholders to provide feedback.

Section III: Related Appendices

Appendix B: Articles of Incorporation and Corporate Bylaws (New Charter Petitioner Guidance, Pg. 16-17)

- a. Articles of incorporation are filed with the secretary of state prior to submitting the petition for review by the PCSC. The petition includes a signed copy of the articles.
- b. Included bylaws outline a clear process for selection of members of the school's board of directors, including: number and designation of seats, board member terms, elections vs. appointments, nomination and voting procedures, eligible voters, applicable definitions, etc.

Appendix C: Board members' professional resumes

- a. Resumes establish each board member's credibility with regard to their service on the board.

Appendix F: Optional Supporting Documents

- a. Additional appendices to support the Board Capacity and Governance Structure Section may be included in Appendix F.
- b. Each document is numbered within this section (i.e. F2, F3, F4, etc.).

Standards of Quality

Section IV: Student Demand and Primary Attendance Area

1. General Standards of Quality

- a. **Thorough and Compliant** - The petition's proposed educational program reflects the needs and demands of the local community.
- b. **Supported and Credible** - The petition includes evidence of research to document demographics and student demand.
- c. **Connected and Cohesive** - The information presented in this section aligns with the structure and intent of the educational program and facility plans.

2. Primary Attendance Area (New Charter Petitioner Guidance, Pg.11-12)

- a. The primary attendance area is clearly described and appears appropriate.

3. Student Demand (New Charter Petitioner Guidance, Pg.12)

- a. The student demand section describes and documents the need for the academic program in the identified area and provides evidence of student interest/demand for the school.
- b. The student demand section describes the demographics (documented with credible source data) of the intended neighborhood in which the school will be located.

4. Student Population (New Charter Petitioner Guidance, Pg.TBD)

- a. The intended student population is clear.
- b. The intended student population can be supported by community and district demographics.
- c. The estimate of the anticipated number of students the school expects to serve who will require special services is supported and credible.
- d. The staffing and educational plan is likely to support adequate special services, especially for FRL, special needs, and/or ELL students.

5. Enrollment Capacity (New Charter Petitioner Guidance, Pg.13)

- a. The enrollment capacity includes total school capacity as well as grade-level capacity.
- b. The growth plan is clear and complete from year one through year five or to final expansion.
- c. The enrollment goals for each year and for the school at capacity are reasonable and supported by credible data.
- d. The detailed marketing and recruitment plan allocates adequate staff support and funds to the effort and the plan will likely result in the school meeting its enrollment goals.

6. Community Partnerships and Local Support (New Charter Petitioner Guidance, Pg.12)

- a. The level of community engagement with the proposed model is appropriate and adequate.
- b. Documented partnerships and local support align to the mission of the school.

7. Enrolling Underserved Families (New Charter Petitioner Guidance, Pg.12-13)

- a. Strategies for reaching at-risk, diverse, and underserved families, as well as families that might not be aware of the school, are well developed.
- b. Strategies for initial recruitment, as well as ongoing family and community engagement, appear reasonable and likely to be successful.

BACK TO REPORT: [Section IV](#)

Section IV: Related Appendices

Appendix F1: District Notification Letter (New Charter Petitioner Guidance, Pg. 18)

- a. Appendix F1 includes a dated and signed letter to the district that meets the requirements outlined in I.C. §33-5205.

Appendix F: Optional Supporting Documents

- c. Additional appendices to support the Student Demand and Primary Attendance Area Section may be included in Appendix F.
- d. Each document is numbered within this section (i.e. F2, F3, F4, etc.).

Section V: School Leadership and Management

1. General Standards of Quality

- a. **Thorough and Compliant** - The petition describes the leadership structure including a description of the experience, qualities, and/or management style of the “right” leader for this school and details regarding the division of duties if a co-director structure is proposed. The petition also evidences clear understanding of [the Idaho Standards for Effective Principals](#).
- b. **Supported and Credible** - The petition includes documentation to support the likely success of the proposed leadership and/or management plan.
- c. **Connected and Cohesive** - The leadership and management plan is aligned to other sections of the petition, including the educational program, organizational chart, and budget.

2. Educational Services Provider (if applicable)

- a. If the school has chosen to work with an EMO, CMO, or ESP to provide leadership and/or management services:
 - i. This section includes the contact information for a representative from the organization or provider and other pertinent information such as other locations where the organization or provider operates, any available achievement data, and any DBAs.
 - ii. This section details the nature and extent of the entity’s participation in the management and operation of the school.
 - iii. This section describes how the school’s board will regularly evaluate the performance of the EMO, CMO, or ESP.

Section V: Related Appendices

Appendix D: School Administration (New Charter Petitioner Guidance, Pg. 18)

- a. The organizational chart includes board of directors, administration, business management, contractors (including EMO/CMO, if applicable), and support staff.
- b. If the lead administrator has been identified, Appendix D includes his/her resume and additional pertinent information, including real or potential conflicts of interest.
- c. If the lead administrator has not been identified, Appendix D includes job descriptions and/or description of responsibilities for key leadership positions.

Appendix E: Education Service Provider (if applicable)

- a. A thorough term sheet provides the term length and termination agreement.
- b. If applicable, Appendix E includes the two most recent contracts that the ESP has executed with operating charter schools.
- c. The detailed description of the ESP's relationship to the school's board includes any conflicts of interest.
- d. If applicable, the detailed description of how and why the management organization or educational service provider was selected provides evidence that the organization provides high-quality service to similar schools.

Appendix F: Optional Supporting Documents

- a. Additional appendices to support the School Leadership and Management Section may be included in Appendix F.
- b. Each document is numbered within this section (i.e. F2, F3, F4, etc.).

Section VI: Virtual and Blended Schools

1. General Standards of Quality

- a. **Thorough and Compliant** - The petition provides a detailed description of the proposal, and establishes the need for such a program.
- b. **Supported and Credible** - The petition includes documentation to evidence the validity of the chosen Learning Management system (LMS), curriculum, and instructional structure.
- c. **Connected and Cohesive** - The design of the program is aligned to other sections of the petition including, but not limited to, the budget, staffing plan, and mission.

2. Learning Management System (New Charter Petitioner Guidance, Pg. 14)

- a. The description of the chosen LMS addresses the technology platform, curriculum, and rationale for the structure of the program.
- b. The LMS appears adequate to fulfill the mission and meet identified goals.
- c. All students can be served via the identified LMS.

3. Educational Program-Virtual and Blended (New Charter Petitioner Guidance, Pg. 13 - 15)

- a. There is a strong rationale for use of a virtual program, rather than a brick-and-mortar program, to fulfill the mission and meet stated goals.
- b. The plan to ensure all students have access to the virtual educational program is complete and demonstrates thoughtfulness and planning of petitioners to market to and address educational needs of all students.
- c. The expectations for online teachers include required availability and the role that he/she plays in individualizing and providing guidance on course material.
- d. The student work assessment plan includes the level of teacher involvement required in evaluating and responding to student performance.
- e. The described means by which student will interact with teachers includes timely and frequent feedback about student progress.
- f. The opportunities for student-to-student interaction are practical, diverse, and likely to cultivate school community.
- g. The educational program offers new opportunities for families.

4. Technology (New Charter Petitioner Guidance, Pg. 15)

- a. A plan for ensuring equal access to all students includes the provision of necessary hardware, software, and internet connectivity required for participation in online coursework.
- b. The plan for provision of technical support relevant to the delivery of online courses is cost-effective, timely, and supported by adequate staff.
- c. The plan for training students and parents in the use of hardware and software is practicable.

5. Professional Development (New Charter Petitioner Guidance, Pg. 14)

- a. The strategies for professional development specific to education in the virtual environment address both initial and ongoing training.
- b. The teacher evaluation plan includes strategies specific to virtual education.

6. Data Collection/Attendance and Course Credit (New Charter Petitioner Guidance, Pg. 14)

- a. The means of verifying student attendance demonstrate that attendance will focus primarily on coursework and activities correlated to the thoroughness standards.
- b. The proposed means of awarding course credit are adequate.
- c. The strategies for administering standardized testing to all students are practicable and affordable.

BACK TO REPORT: [Section VI](#)

Section VI: Related Appendices

Appendix F: Optional Supporting Documents

- c. No appendices are required to support Section VI. Optional appendices support the virtual educational program's credibility.
- d. Each document is numbered within this section (i.e. F2, F3, F4, etc.).

Financial Summary					
Worksheet Instructions: This page will auto-populate as you complete the Pre-Operational and Operational Budget tabs.					
Revenue					
Anticipated Enrollment for Each Scenario:		0	0	0	0
	Pre-Operational Budget	Break-Even Year 1 Budget	Full Enrollment Year 1 Budget	Year 2 Budget	Year 3 Budget
Contributions/ Donations	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Loans	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Grants	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Base Support	NA	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Salary and Benefit Apportionment	NA	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Special Distributions	NA	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
REVENUE TOTAL	-	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00

Expenditures					
	Pre-Operational Budget	Break-Even Year 1 Budget	Full Enrollment Year 1 Budget	Year 2 Budget	Year 3 Budget
Staff and Benefit Totals	-	-	-	-	-
Educational Program Totals	\$0.00	-	-	-	-
Technology Totals	\$0.00	-	-	-	-
Capital Outlay Totals	\$0.00	-	-	-	-
Board of Directors Totals	\$0.00	-	-	-	-
Facilities Totals	\$0.00	-	-	-	-
Transportation Totals	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Nutrition Totals	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-
EXPENSE TOTAL	-	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00

OPERATING INCOME (LOSS)	-	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
PREVIOUS YEAR CARRYOVER		-	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
NET INCOME (LOSS)	-	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00

New Charter Petition Facility Option 1						
Location Address						
Facility Information	Anticipate Move-In Date	Click or tap to enter a date.	Facility Type	Choose an item.	Facility Status	Choose an item.
Budget Location	Please indicate if this option is reflected in the Budget Template (Attachment A1-A4)			Choose an item.		
Vendor/ Developer/ Contractor Information (if applicable)	Company Name:					
	Physical Address of Home Office:					
	Website Address:					
	Company Contact:					
	Company Contact Phone Number:					

Additional Information - Facility Option 1
<p>Please include any information pertinent to Facility Option 1 that is not already included in Section II (Finance and Facilities Plan) of the petition. Include attachments referenced here or throughout the petition in Attachment F. Links in the final PDF are appreciated.</p>

Facility Option 1 - Details		
Please describe the costs involved with this option and the structure of any arrangements the school has made (or intends to make) in order to secure and sustain this facility option. Adjust descriptions and add columns as necessary.		
Description of Start-Up Costs	Cost Estimate (Refer to appropriate documentation in Attachments)	Responsible Party (Board or Name of Contractor)
Land Purchase (if applicable)		
Land Development (include grading, utilities, etc.)		
Parking, Curb, Lighting (if applicable)		
Permits and Applicable Studies (as applicable)		
Delivery and Set up of Modular Units (if applicable)		
Remodel Estimate (if applicable)		
Other		
Total One-Time Costs		
Description of Lease/Rent/Purchase Plan	Details (Refer to appropriate documentation in Attachments)	
Annual Lease / Rent / Mortgage Payment		
Term of Lease		
Interest Rate		
Rate Escalator (if applicable, please describe)		
In Which Operating Year Does the School Intend to Purchase (if option to purchase is applicable)	Choose an item.	
Capitalization Rate at Purchase (if applicable)		
Other		
Please include any additional narrative here.		

New Charter Petition Facility Option 2

Location Address						
Facility Information	Anticipate Move-In Date	Click or tap to enter a date.	Facility Type	Choose an item.	Facility Status	Choose an item.
Budget Location	Please indicate if this option is reflected in the Budget Template (Attachment A1-A4)			Choose an item.		
Vendor/ Developer/ Contractor Information (if applicable)	Company Name:					
	Physical Address of Home Office:					
	Website Address:					
	Company Contact:					
	Company Contact Phone Number:					

Additional Information - Facility Option 2

Please include any information pertinent to Facility Option 2 that is not already included in Section II (Finance and Facilities Plan) of the petition. Include attachments referenced here or throughout the petition in Attachment F. Links in the final PDF are appreciated.

Facility Option 2 - Details		
Please describe the costs involved with this option and the structure of any arrangements the school has made (or intends to make) in order to secure and sustain this facility option. Adjust descriptions and add columns as necessary.		
Description of Start-Up Costs	Cost Estimate (Refer to appropriate documentation in Attachments)	Responsible Party (Board or Name of Contractor)
Land Purchase (if applicable)		
Land Development (include grading, utilities, etc.)		
Parking, Curb, Lighting (if applicable)		
Permits and Applicable Studies (as applicable)		
Delivery and Set up of Modular Units (if applicable)		
Remodel Estimate (if applicable)		
Other		
Total One-Time Costs		
Description of Lease/Rent/Purchase Plan	Details (Refer to appropriate documentation in Attachments)	
Annual Lease / Rent / Mortgage Payment		
Term of Lease		
Interest Rate		
Rate Escalator (if applicable, please describe)		
In Which Operating Year Does the School Intend to Purchase (if option to purchase is applicable)	Choose an item.	
Capitalization Rate at Purchase (if applicable)		
Other		
Please include any additional narrative here.		



IDAHO PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION

NEW CHARTER PETITIONER GUIDANCE



Idaho Public Charter School Commission
304 North 8th Street, Room 242
Boise, Idaho 83702

Phone: (208) 332-1561
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Alan Reed, Chairman
Tamara Baysinger, Director

Welcome

Welcome to Idaho’s public charter school sector. This guide is intended to give you tools for successful navigation of the charter petitioning process. We’ll provide some basic information about public charter schools and an outline of the petitioning process, then focus primarily on recommendations for drafting your petition.

As you may be aware, public charter schools operate under a grant of authority from an authorized chartering entity, or authorizer. The majority of Idaho’s public charter schools are authorized by the Public Charter School Commission (PCSC). Although this document reflects the priorities of the PCSC, it may also be used to support the efforts of petitioners seeking authorization by local school district boards or institutions of higher learning. However, you should be sure to check with your potential authorizer regarding any policies, processes, or requirements that may apply.

The PCSC’s office, located in Boise, has a full-time staff that stands ready to assist you, should you choose to petition to the PCSC. We appreciate your interest in taking on this challenge and invite you to contact us anytime with questions or concerns.

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History & Structure

Idaho's original charter school legislation passed in 1998. At that time, only local school district boards could authorize public charter schools. This worked well for many schools, but in other cases, sufficient difficulty arose that the legislature identified a need for an alternative, independent authorizer. The Public Charter School Commission (PCSC) was created in 2004 to fulfill this role. The PCSC currently authorizes the majority of Idaho's public charter schools.

The PCSC's seven members hail from all around the state. Commissioners are appointed by the Governor (3 members), Senate Pro Tempore (2 members), or Speaker of the House (2 members). They serve four-year terms, and officers are elected every two years in the spring.

The PCSC is staffed by the Office of the State Board of Education.

The Authorizer's Role

The PCSC's statutory role is one of oversight. We seek to fulfill this role with an attitude of service and look forward to working with you toward a mutual goal of providing Idaho's students with many diverse, high-quality schools of choice.

The Public Charter School Commission's mission is to ensure PCSC-authorized public charter schools' compliance with Idaho statute, protecting student and public interests by balancing high standards of accountability with respect for the autonomy of public charter schools and implementing best authorizing practices to ensure the excellence of public charter school options available to Idaho families.

In accordance with Idaho statute, the PCSC sets expectations for performance and holds schools accountable for results. We support schools' autonomy by refraining from dictating their inputs or controlling their processes. Instead, we establish a consistent standard for performance outcomes while freeing schools to manage their operations as needed, within the bounds of the law, to meet or exceed that standard. We believe in the foundational concept that public charter schools exchange increased autonomy for increased accountability, and strive to uphold both sides of that equation.

The PCSC is responsible for prudent evaluation of new charter petitions, as well as the oversight of existing public charter schools' academic, operational, and financial statuses. The bulk of our focus is on academic outcomes, but schools' operational compliance and financial health are also important to ensure the protection of student and public interests.

During the petitioning phase, we will focus on your proposed school's likelihood of success. This process involves thoughtful consideration of factors such as community need, market interest, financial resources, viability of the academic program, access to appropriate staffing, and capacity of your board of directors. The following sections provide guidance for presenting this information effectively in order to increase your opportunity for success.

Petitioning Process

Idaho statute describes the process through which the PCSC may consider new charter petitions. We strongly advise that you take an hour or two to familiarize yourself with Idaho's entire [charter school statute](#). The petitioning process is addressed specifically in [§33-5205](#), Idaho Code. Administrative rule and PCSC policy provide additional structure.

The next page offers a summary of the petitioning process. Be sure to take note of all timelines and deadlines so that you don't encounter unnecessary delays.

Deadline	Task	Notes
None	Write your petition	Statute provides a list of four areas that petitions must address (more for proposed virtual schools). Administrative rule providing additional direction is under development. This guide is designed to offer additional assistance.
None	Submit your completed petition and letter(s) to the local school district superintendent(s)	Your letter(s) should notify the school district(s) overlapped by your proposed attendance area that you are seeking an authorizer. The district(s) cannot deny or delay your petition, but they may ask you to attend a meeting to discuss the matter.
30 days after submission of letter & petition to district AND By September 1	Submit your petition to the PCSC office	It is possible, by mutual agreement with the district superintendent(s), to submit your petition to the PCSC before 30 days have passed. Statute allows authorizers to receive petitions later than September 1 by mutual agreement, but missing this deadline may make it difficult to meet the non-negotiable January 1 deadline below, so exceptions to the deadline are rare.
Within 12 weeks	The PCSC office will notify you of your petition hearing date and recommendation to the PCSC	During this 12 weeks, PCSC staff will provide an initial review of your petition and offer you an opportunity to make revisions. Revisions must be received at least 30 days prior to the end of the 12-week review period. They must also be received at least 30 days prior to the regular PCSC meeting at which your petition will be considered. Exact timelines are unique to each petition, but don't worry - we'll walk you through it. After any requested revisions are received, we will notify you of your hearing date. We will also advise you of PCSC staff's recommendation (deny, approve, or conditionally approve) so you may best prepare for your hearing.
None	PCSC hearing	Your petition will be heard at the earliest regular PCSC meeting that allows time for appropriate review and revision of the petition. At the hearing, the PCSC may approve, conditionally approve, or deny your petition. There is no option for delaying a decision, so you'll want to be sure the PCSC sees your very best work at this time.
By January 1	Petition must be approved in order to open the following fall	The PCSC typically holds its last regular meeting of the year on the second Thursday in December, so be sure your petition is prepared in time for inclusion on that agenda in order to meet the January 1 approval cutoff.

Formatting & Submission

Your petition will be submitted in two sections: the petition narrative plus a set of appendices. The petition narrative should be submitted either in Microsoft Word or Adobe PDF. The appendices, which will comprise a variety of documents initiated in various formats, are best submitted in Adobe PDF.

Bear in mind that your petition represents a request for a grant of authority to manage large sums of taxpayer funds and children's educational futures. Take care to present yourself professionally through clear writing, accurate budgets, and thorough proofreading.

Before submitting your documents, check for any pages where information may have accidentally been cut off. (This is especially common when Excel files are converted to PDF.) Also ensure that your table of contents is accurate, page numbers are visible, and any hyperlinks are functional. In PDF documents, bookmarks are extremely helpful for navigation.

Your petition, and particularly the appendices, may be large enough that emailing the documents is impractical. Feel free to deliver them to our office on a flash drive or send them via the free, online file sharing system Dropbox.

If you aren't familiar with hyperlinking, bookmarking, or use of Dropbox, you are welcome to contact the PCSC office for a quick tutorial.

Petition Narrative

New charter petitioners often want to know what information should be included in their petitions, and to what level of detail. While every petition is unique, the guidance that follows is designed to help you understand what the PCSC will need to know in order to make a well-informed authorizing decision.

Statute requires that you describe the following in your charter petition:

1. Educational program, including academic proficiency and growth standards and measurement methods and any mission-specific standards that may be unique to the school.
2. Financial and facilities plan.
3. Board capacity and governance structure.
4. Student demand and primary attendance area.
5. For virtual schools, additional elements are required. The PCSC also requires that these elements be included in proposals for blended programs.

Administrative rule elaborates on these categories, providing additional detail regarding the required contents of your charter petition. Each of these requirements, along with some PCSC recommendations and lists of required supporting documentation, is detailed in the following pages.

We encourage you to spend plenty of time thinking through each section of your developing petition. Hold discussions with your founding group. Do the necessary research and tap experts as needed for advice. Gather documentation to support your financial and facilities plans. Write and edit carefully, then wrap up with a final check to be sure you have addressed all the suggestions and requirements provided below.

Introduction

Cover Page

Please include the following on the first page of your petition, for easy reference:

- Name of Proposed School
- Proposed Opening Year
- General Location (This may be a school district, city, or county rather than a specific address.)
- Contact Information (For primary liaison between PCSC staff and your petitioning group. If this is employee or contractor, please include contact information for your board chair as well. Name, mailing address, daytime phone, and email are important.)

Table of Contents

Please verify that you have included accurate page numbers. Hyperlinks or bookmarks are especially helpful.

Executive Summary

Take one page to introduce your proposed school to the PCSC. Provide a succinct description of your proposed organizational structure, educational program and the community need it is intended to meet, and the academic outcomes you expect it to achieve. Remember to keep it brief and to the point; you'll flesh out the details later.

Mission Statement

Good mission statements are easy to read, but often challenging to write, so plan on putting some careful thought into this section. Ultimately, your mission statement should convey, in just a sentence or two, the following:

- What your school does (example: *Provides an exceptional academic foundation to students in grades 9-12*),
- How your school does it (example: *through the implementation of a research-based, experiential learning STEM program*),
- And why (example: *in order to expand future career options for demographically diverse students in our low-income community*).

Educational Program

Statute requires that your petition provide a description of your educational program, including academic proficiency and growth standards, measurement methods, and any mission-specific standards that may be unique to the school. This section represents the bulk of your petition narrative and should clearly describe how education will take place at your school, and what outcomes you expect as a result.

Many petitioners struggle to find the right balance between thoroughness and concision. It is important to explain your ideas so that they may be understood by individuals who are unfamiliar with your proposal, but avoid being too verbose or repetitive. It often helps to recruit a skilled editor (ideally, one who is not well-versed in your educational program) to review your draft and offer suggestions.

Description of Educational Philosophy, Instructional Practices and Curriculum

Here's your chance to describe the heart of your school: its academic program. What do you, as a founding board, believe is critical to a successful education? How does that philosophical underpinning look when applied in the classroom? Is it based on, or enhanced by, a particular set of curricular materials? What are the key design elements of your educational program, without which your school wouldn't be true to your founding vision?

Some charter petitioners wish to implement an established model, such as Expeditionary Learning, Montessori, or Classical Education. If this is the case for you, consider spending a page or two describing the model. Provide some references supporting its validity. Then, focus primarily on how you will implement the model with fidelity. Consider also how you will ensure that the model meets state and federal requirements, such as Common Core.

If your model includes the use of an Education Service Provider (ESP) – also known as a Charter Management Organization (CMO) or Educational Management Organization (EMO) – be sure to address your rationale for selecting the particular ESP. What makes it the best solution for an identified need? Describe your expectations and plan for regular evaluation of the ESP.

It is not uncommon for petitioners to propose an educational model that is “based on” or “similar to” an established model. In such cases, it is critical that you explain in exactly what ways your school will adhere to, and differ from, the established model. Why is your variation preferable to the established model? Will you have access to tools (ranging from professional development to curriculum) specific to the model? While it may seem easier or cheaper to imitate or approximate an established model rather than implementing it fully, the reality is that schools taking this route often struggle with low academic outcomes or mission drift down the road. Proceed with caution and expect a lot of questions from the PCSC.

Some petitioners wish to propose new educational models, perhaps based on various studies or their own observations. If you fall into this category, be sure to explain your model thoroughly, bearing in mind that your reader won’t have any prior information around which to build a mental image of your proposal. Consider instructional style, classroom organization, school culture, behavioral expectations, subject-area focus, and any other relevant factors. Explain what you want to do and why you believe it will work, citing as much research and/or experiential evidence as possible.

When citing research, it is best to offer hyperlinks or refer readers to the appendices, rather than copying and pasting at length. Speaking of copying and pasting, be sure to avoid plagiarism. We want to hear about your academic program in your own words.

Some petitioning groups have already identified the curricular materials they plan to purchase. Others prefer to wait on these selections until they have hired an administrator. If you fall into the latter category, include a description of specific characteristics you’ll be looking for in your curriculum choices.

Expected Student Outcomes

This is where the rubber meets the road. The most well-defined educational model is only worthwhile if students actually learn. That said, success can look very different from one school to another, depending on the goals identified and students served.

Think about your anticipated student demographic and how your proposed educational program will serve them. What academic proficiency level do you expect your students to achieve? How much academic growth should they show? Do you have any student outcome goals that are specific to your school’s mission? What measurement tools will you use to evaluate proficiency, growth, and any mission-specific data?

Create a bullet-point list to describe, in concrete terms, the outcomes you expect to result from your program. Perhaps you expect 90% of your young readers, most of whom came to you with a history of low achievement, to be proficient in reading by the end of third grade. Maybe you anticipate that the students at your STEM school will show 20% more year-over-year growth in math than a comparison group. Or maybe you plan to ensure an 80% graduation rate among your alternative population, even if some kids take an extra year or two to earn their required credits.

In addition to specific, measurable academic outcomes, it is also appropriate to include some “soft” targets (such as decreased bullying or increased student engagement) in this section.

Strategies for Effectively Serving All Students

Public charter schools are exactly that: public. While the number of students enrolled may be limited, students cannot be selected based on factors such as academic prowess, athletic ability, socioeconomic status, or special needs. Public charter schools must serve any student who wishes to attend, up to the enrollment capacity of the school, and provide services just like any other public school.

Rather than simply citing or quoting your legal obligations, really think through how your program will offer a continuum of services for all students, including those who have special needs, are at-risk, are gifted and talented, or are English language learners. If your school specifically targets a certain demographic, be sure to explain how your support system is particularly well designed to meet their needs.

Use this section to describe specific strategies your school will employ to ensure that all students feel welcome, supported, and fully served by your program. Be sure that the narrative and the budget are aligned. Here are some questions to consider while you draft this section:

- How will student identification programs such as Child Find and Response to Intervention work within the scope of your educational program?
- How will your facilities meet the needs of students receiving special services. Have you planned for provision of pull-out rooms, group instruction space, computer/science labs, sensory control space, storage for files and materials, etc.?
- What purchases are necessary for successful implementation of your educational model for all students? Consider modified curriculum, accommodated seating options, special software, and adaptive technology.
- How will you staff programs such as 504, special education, ELL, and gifted and talented? Particularly if your proposed school is small or rural, it may prove challenging to recruit personnel. Can you find individuals who are able to wear multiple hats?
- How will you develop and maintain a culture of high expectations, emphasizing every student’s personal growth?
- How will you engage families in the process of their child’s learning? Be sure to consider families’ work schedules and comfort level in the education environment.
- How will you ensure that your communication systems and policies meet the needs of all families? Think about potential obstacles such as language barriers and limited access to technology.
- How will you address the specific needs of low-income students, such as transportation and nutrition?

If you need specifics about your legal obligations, the State Department of Education (SDE) has experts who can assist. Furthermore, several departments at the SDE, provide program manuals regarding various special services. PCSC staff or the SDE’s School Choice Coordinator can point you in the right direction to learn more.

Professional Development Plan

Most public charter schools offer a program that is different from those available at other area schools. You may be hiring numerous teachers, and possibly even an administrator, with little or no training in your educational model. As you might imagine, a cohesive professional development plan is critical to success.

Consider what resources will be important for your educators, and how they can be affordably accessed in a constructive and meaningful way. Can your teachers shadow colleagues at similar schools? Are workshops available? Will experts be brought in before school opens, and for follow-up seminars thereafter? Could web-based courses be used as a basis for regular training throughout the year? How can application of your model be built into regular teacher and administrator evaluations? What professional development options will be most effective and affordable? Describe your plan - including specific training tools whenever possible - in a few paragraphs, including hyperlinks as appropriate.

Financial and Facilities Plan

Public charter schools offer different opportunities than traditional public schools. Arguably, they do so on a tighter budget. It follows that most public charter schools must choose their spending priorities carefully, and make wise financial decisions, in order to fulfill both their missions and their legal obligations.

Before you write this section, set aside some time for your board to talk about money. (We know, it's not as scintillating as discussing the educational program. But if you can't stay afloat financially, you won't have an educational program, so bite the bullet and have those hard conversations.)

How do you, as a board, think about your financial obligations, particularly since charters rely primarily on taxpayer dollars? What level of understanding do you believe is important to maintain regarding the school's finances? How will you ensure you have access to the appropriate expertise for preparation (by staff) and interpretation (by your board) of financial records? How confident are you in your budget projections? Are they conservative or optimistic in nature? What are your fixed costs, and what expenditures could be adjusted if enrollment numbers come in lower than anticipated? What are your must-haves for successful implementation of your educational program, and what can you live without? Do you have a clear understanding of how public schools are funded? (If not, be sure to ask PCSC and SDE staff for help.)

It isn't necessary to answer all of the questions above in your petition, but you should use them as a starting place for discussion. Boil down your board's collective thoughts to a paragraph describing your fiscal philosophy and spending priorities.

Next, be sure to address the following, required information:

Financial Management and Monitoring Plan

It is important to have clarity regarding the different roles of the school's board and its employees with regard to financial management. In a few paragraphs, explain the nuts and bolts of how your school's finances will be managed.

Describe what tasks will be performed by staff and specify what those staff positions will be. (Most schools employ a full- or part-time business manager.)

Note which fiscal reports your board expects to review monthly, quarterly, and annually. Identify the key status indicators your board will examine on a regular basis. Explain how you will ensure that board members have the necessary knowledge to oversee the school's finances.

Transportation and Food Service Plan

While Idaho statute does not absolutely require public charter schools to provide transportation and nutritional services to students, many choose to do so in order to ensure their programs are available to all students. This can both promote diversity and reduce attrition.

Your petition should clearly state whether you intend to provide student transportation and/or nutrition. If you will offer these services, describe your plans for doing so. Be sure the details are supported by your budget and relevant documentation in your appendices.

Description of Facility Needs

Ideally, a charter school's facility is both affordable and reflective of the nature of the educational program. This section of your petition should describe a realistic vision for your facility.

Consider your proposed enrollment and growth plan, class sizes and course offerings, and the nature of your educational program. How much square footage will you need? Will any special features, such as a dance studio or garden space, be required? Does it need to be in a particular area of town in order to ensure access by your target demographic? How much can you afford to spend on a facility, and will that amount cover the necessities you've identified?

The financial details of your facility plan, complete with documentation demonstrating that they are realistic, will be covered in your appendices. Here, simply take a paragraph or two to describe the type of facility that your proposed school will need and can afford.

Board Capacity and Governance Structure

It is difficult to overstate how important a competent, trained governing board is to the success of a public charter school. This section of your petition should provide a clear picture of your founding board, as well as your plans for ensuring that your school maintains an effective governing board in years to come.

Description of Governance Structure

A strong governing board is one that understands its own role and responsibilities, and can clearly differentiate these from the roles and responsibilities of other school leaders. Take some time to clarify your thoughts regarding your school's governance and management structure. Educate yourself on the difference between governance and management. (It's a great way to shut down power struggles before they start.) Describe your proposed structure in a few paragraphs.

In your appendices, you'll include a chart that defines the roles and responsibilities of the board, administrator(s), and other key figures, such as ESP personnel. You'll be able to refer back to this when crafting job descriptions, refining management contracts, making hiring decisions, and performing evaluations.

Founding Board Qualifications

Starting a new school is no small feat. Take a paragraph or two to summarize the capacity of your founding board to accomplish the task. What skill sets are represented, and how are you leveraging them toward your petition's success? Are all your board members engaged, or is one person bearing most of the load? Can you identify any skills gaps that should be filled by additional members, or perhaps by acquiring training in specific areas?

Transition Plan

The ongoing work of your governing board will differ substantially from that of your founding board. It is possible that some of your most dynamic founders are better suited to the startup role than to ongoing governance. ("Founders Syndrome" is a common phenomenon at new charter schools. It occurs when a founder can't let go of the day-to-day work of operating the school, and instead causes damage by attempting to micromanage the administrator, or even teachers. Don't let this happen to you!) On the other hand, founders can be critical to ensuring faithful implementation of the stated mission during the early life of the school.

As a board, have a frank discussion about which members plan to move on and which will stay after the school is operating. In your petition, include a paragraph that describes your board's plan for a smooth transition from founding to governing. Consider whether any skills sets will need to be added or changed. If some members of the founding board are likely to resign from the board in order to seek employment at the school, be sure to note how you will ensure that the remaining membership reflects a strong capacity to govern. Identify potential pitfalls and strategize to avoid them.

Board Training and Recruitment

Effective board membership is a skill in and of itself. The best boards are comprised of individuals who understand the board's role and operate within that role. They are clear-eyed about which responsibilities to take on and which to delegate. Additionally, they perform regular self-evaluations that help them identify areas for self-improvement, and they access quality training in order to improve.

In your petition, describe your plan for ensuring that all your board members participate in ongoing board training. PCSC staff can help guide you to opportunities for in-person training; you may also look into books or web-based resources. Consider developing a new member onboarding protocol, and be sure you don't neglect the continued learning of longtime members. Identify specific areas in which all board members should have competency (such as reviewing financial statements) and discuss what tools you will employ to build your board's knowledge base. Be sure any relevant expenses are reflected in your budget.

Additionally, bear in mind that many charter schools struggle to recruit new board members. You'll want to start early - months or years ahead of time - in grooming potential candidates. Include a paragraph describing your recruitment plan.

Student Demand and Primary Attendance Area

It's especially important to be realistic when drafting this section of your petition. Many new charter schools, especially those located in rural areas and/or serving grades 6 and up, struggle to enroll as many students as they anticipated. Because your school's financial survival will depend upon adequate enrollment, the level of market interest in your idea should be clearly established. Additionally, your primary attendance area will impact a variety of factors, such as your student demographic, transportation expenses, and perhaps your relationship with local school districts.

Primary Attendance Area

Statute requires that public charter schools define a primary attendance area, the main purpose of which is to identify students who are eligible for the relevant preference in your enrollment lottery. Students who live outside your primary attendance area may still request enrollment, but they'll receive a lower lottery preference than students who live inside the primary attendance area.

By law, your primary attendance area must be "compact and contiguous." Basically, this means that you can't pick and choose certain neighborhoods in order to influence your student demographic. To the contrary, you should make every effort to ensure that enrollment at your school is demographically representative of its surrounding population.

Many public charter schools have primary attendance areas whose borders match those of the surrounding school district. Some encompass two or more complete districts, and others include parts of multiple districts. Be sure to list in your petition all districts that overlap your primary attendance area, and remember that you must notify them of your intentions before submitting your petition to the PCSC.

As you select your primary attendance area, bear the following in mind:

- It is best to plan on providing transportation to students who reside within your primary attendance area, but the state will only reimburse you for transportation within a certain radius of your school. This could make a large primary attendance area too expensive to manage.
- Your school facility must be located within the primary attendance area, so make sure that appropriate real estate is available and affordable.
- Most families want their children to attend school fairly close to home, so select a primary attendance area whose student population is large enough - and sufficiently interested in your educational program - to support adequate enrollment.
- If you select a primary attendance area whose borders are not pre-defined (such as by a school district), you'll need to be extremely specific in defining the area. Plan to use language such as "the west side of First Street" in order to avoid future disputes about enrollment preferences. Avoid simply using a "five mile radius around the school" definition, as this has a way of cutting properties in half and causing confusion.

Once you have defined your primary attendance area boundaries, do some additional research on the area. Demographics (including socioeconomic and racial diversity), school choices currently available, population trends, and similar information should be included.

Community Need, Demand, and Market Interest

This section represents an opportunity for you to explain the benefits your proposed school will bring to your community. Describe why your area needs and demands this particular public charter school. Although only a few paragraphs are necessary, they should represent extensive research on your part.

In administrative rule, "need" is defined as the reasons(s) existing schools are insufficient or inadequate. Be sure to include student academic performance data in your discussion. "Demand" is defined as evidence of desire from prospective families to attend the school. Explain why you believe enough families will be interested in enrollment to sustain the school financially.

Do your homework and provide as much concrete data as possible. It is critical that you demonstrate to the PCSC that your proposed enrollment numbers (and the budget that relies upon them) are realistic. You don't want to struggle financially, or even close your doors, due to under enrollment down the road. This is the time to let your inner skeptic have a voice. Estimate conservatively. Network with community members and survey their interests. Shoot for having at least twice as many interested students as you'll actually have classroom seats to enroll.

Community Partnerships and Local Support

Many public charter schools enjoy symbiotic relationships with other entities in their communities. Have you developed relationships with the Boys and Girls Club, YMCA, cultural organizations, science or athletic clubs, or other groups? Do you have supportive connections within the local school district or local government? In your petition, describe any community partnerships or other local support for your proposed school.

Strategies for Enrolling Underserved Families

Demographic diversity is a weak point in Idaho's public charter school sector, and one that the PCSC is excited to work with new charter petitioners to improve. We are looking for petitions

that contain strong plans intended to ensure that the resulting schools enroll diverse student populations.

As a board, spend some time discussing how you can make your entire community aware of enrollment opportunities at your school. Think about racial, cultural, and socioeconomic diversity, at-risk students, English language learners, and students with special needs. Reach out to community groups who can help you strategize about how best to reach different markets. Plan to have enrollment materials published in languages reflective of the demographics of your primary attendance area. Be sure you can share with families how you'll meet diverse student needs. Consider the practical aspects of access to your school, such as transportation and nutrition programs.

In your petition, include a few paragraphs that describe your strategies for ensuring all families are not only aware of enrollment opportunities, but also feel welcome and confident that quality services will be provided.

Enrollment Capacity

Your petition should clearly describe the enrollment capacity of your school, both overall and by grade level. This section does not need to be long, but it should cover the following:

- Grade levels you intend to serve.
- Total enrollment capacity of the school.
- Exact, per-grade enrollment capacity. (This is necessary for purposes of the enrollment lottery, even if you intend to offer mixed-age classrooms.)
- Growth projection for at least five years, if applicable.

If you plan to expand over time, that information may be best provided in chart form. For example, this hypothetical school plans to increase both the number of classrooms per grade and the range of grades served over its initial ten years of operation:

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10
K	25	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50
Grade 1	25	25	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50
Grade 2	25	25	25	50	50	50	50	50	50	50
Grade 3	25	25	25	25	50	50	50	50	50	50
Grade 4	25	25	25	25	25	50	50	50	50	50
Grade 5	25	25	25	25	25	25	50	50	50	50
Grade 6	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	50	50	50
Grade 7		25	25	25	25	25	25	25	50	50
Grade 8			25	25	25	25	25	25	25	50
Total	175	225	275	300	325	350	375	400	425	450

Virtual and Blended Programs

Technology provides interesting, new opportunities for educational programs. If your proposed school will be virtual (also known as online or cyber) or blended (incorporating substantial use of internet-based learning in combination with on-site instruction), you'll need to include a section of your petition that provides additional detail in the following areas:

Rationale

Describe how your school will offer a new, high-quality opportunity for families. Bear in mind that Idaho already has a variety of virtual education options for both full-and part-time

enrollment, and overall enrollment in virtual charter schools has been on a gradual decline. Additionally, research at the national level raises questions about the academic effectiveness of virtual schools; less is known about the long-term impact of blended programs.

Consider the following: Why does a virtual or blended program represent the best way to fulfill your mission? What student demographic do you anticipate enrolling? What opportunity does your school offer that existing virtual or blended options do not? How will you ensure that students achieve better results at your school than they likely would have if enrolled in a more traditional option?

Learning Management System

This section should explain, on a practical level, how you will deliver educational materials via the internet. What technology platform and curricular materials will you use?

Will you engage a management company whose role is broader than curriculum provision, or perhaps develop your own platform in-house? If the former, clearly define the role of the management company. If the latter, describe your capacity to build and maintain the necessary technology.

Be sure to investigate the track record of any curriculum or management company you are considering using. How are students who have been through their courses performing on normed assessments? Are other schools that use their programs getting good results relative to the demographics they serve? Do they retain students over the long term, or is enrollment turnover high?

Attendance and Course Credit

Virtual schools must meet the same attendance requirements as other public schools, but they face unique challenges regarding the verification of student attendance. Consider how you will report Average Daily Attendance (ADA) and award course credit. Additionally, address how you will ensure that student work is being completed by the student himself or herself, and that he or she is actively engaged with the material while logged in.

Also, be sure to discuss your practical plan for ensuring student participation in state-mandated tests. What facilities will be used, and how will the necessary technology be provided? Related expenses should appear in your budget.

Professional Development

Many teachers enjoy providing online instruction, but doing so may represent a skill set they have not had an opportunity to develop through prior experience. Describe your plan for ensuring that your teachers are well-prepared for both the practical and interpersonal aspects of providing a virtual education. Additionally, address how teacher evaluations will reflect implementation of strategies specific to the virtual environment.

Student-Teacher Interaction

Explain how your teachers will interact with students through the learning management system and any other means. What is the role of an online teacher? How will your teachers deliver course material and individualize instruction for particular students? How will they assess student work and provide timely, frequent feedback regarding student progress?

Consider who will do most of the teaching at your school: Is it the teacher, the parent, or the technology? How can you leverage your teachers' expertise to maximize student learning?

Student-Student Interaction

Many virtual school students report rich social lives despite the fact that they don't attend school in a brick-and-mortar classroom. Explain how you will encourage this experience within your school community. Include a plan for providing school-sponsored opportunities for students to interact with one another.

Technical Support

We all love technology...when it works. Unfortunately, the opportunity for technical difficulties to arise is amplified at virtual and blended schools. Describe your plan for providing technical support for teachers, students, and families. Be sure to consider how new enrollees will be introduced to the online learning platform and correspondence pathways.

Additionally, discuss how you will ensure that your school is accessible to all students, including those with special needs and English language learners. How will special services, such as speech therapy, be delivered? How will you provide the necessary hardware, software, and internet connectivity required for participation in online coursework?

Appendices

Your appendices should comprise a set of documents that support and expand upon the information in your petition narrative. Be sure to submit the appendices in a single PDF document, with electronic bookmarks to facilitate easy navigation. Please label each appendix as it is listed below. If you need to include additional appendices, feel free to add them to the end. (Just bear in mind that the document will already be quite long, so you should be judicious in your selections.)

Appendix A: Budgets and Facilities Options

Your budgets will be one of the most carefully examined elements of your petition. We recommend that you spend extensive time on their development. Enlist the help of qualified individuals who understand Idaho public school funding. Consider asking the business manager of a financially stable charter school to weigh in, and seek support from the SDE or Idaho Charter School Network. PCSC staff will provide feedback upon our initial review of the petition in order to guide you toward any necessary improvements.

The PCSC provides templates to help you develop thorough budgets. You may access these online [here](#) (click on "PCSC Petition Budget Template" to download the Excel file). Before you begin, be sure to read the guidelines provided [here](#).

Facility plans are closely related to budgets, and securing an appropriate, affordable facility is often one of the most challenging steps toward opening a public charter school. Negotiating, permitting, and building or remodeling can be time-consuming and expensive. Even for portable classrooms, site preparation and installation can represent a significant practical and financial hurdle. Additionally, facility deals sometimes fall through, leaving nascent schools in the lurch as opening day looms. For these reasons, the PCSC requires most petitioners to provide at least two, realistic facility options. (Exceptions may be made when the group has a guaranteed facility already secured.)

The PCSC provides a template to help you identify, organize, and present information about your facility option(s). The template is available online [here](#) (click on Facility Options to download the Word file). Use the narrative section of the template to describe the facility plan and provide contextual details explaining the supporting documentation that you will include in Appendix F.

In this appendix, be sure to provide the following:

- Appendix A1: Financial Summary (Use Financial Summary tab in template provided by PCSC)
- Appendix A2: Pre-Opening Budget (Use Pre-Opening tab in template provided by PCSC)
- Appendix A3: Three-Year Operating Budget and Bread-Even Year 1 Scenario (Use Operational Budgets tab in template provided by PCSC)
- Appendix A4: Cash Flow Projection for Initial Operating Year (Use Cash Flow tab in the template provided by PCSC)
- Appendix A5: Narrative and Attachments List (use Narrative and Attachments tab in template provided by PCSC)
- Appendix A6: Facility Options (Include a completed copy of the template for each of your facility options. Remember that most petitioners must provide two or more options.)

Be sure to fill out the templates completely. Ensure that the information they contain is consistent with both your petition narrative and the estimates, contracts, and other supporting documentation in Appendix F.

Appendix B: Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws

As you know from reading Idaho's charter school statute (you did read it, didn't you?), public charter schools are organized and managed as non-profit corporations. This means that you should have filed Articles of Incorporation with the Secretary of State's office. Include a copy of those Articles (and any amendments thereto) with your petition. Before you do, take note of the following:

- Check how your Articles describe the purpose of your corporation, which should exist for "educational purposes."
- In the section regarding disposal of assets, make sure your language is compliant with §33-5212(2), Idaho Code. It's different from the boilerplate language common in Articles for nonprofits. Note that assets purchased using federal funds needs to be disposed of differently than other assets.
- If your school will have a different name than the corporation, you'll need to file a Certificate of Assumed Business Name.
- Make sure your non-profit corporation exists only to operate the public charter school (or schools). Statute prohibits the operation of other enterprises under the same corporation.
- Be sure your Articles, and any amendments thereto, are signed by your board chair and stamped by the Secretary of State's office.

Note that the list above does not comprise a complete description of Articles contents; it only addresses some of the most common errors made by charter petitioners. Work with your attorney to ensure that your Articles are thorough and appropriate.

Writing the Bylaws for your corporation may not be exciting, but doing it well can save you a lot of hassle down the road, especially if disputes arise. Before adopting your Bylaws and including a signed copy in your petition, enlist the help of an attorney and think through the following:

- Check the items under “Articles of Incorporation” above, and make sure your Bylaws match up.
- Clearly establish these details regarding your board of directors:
 - Minimum and maximum number of members.
 - Length of membership terms. In the beginning, it is wise to stagger term lengths so you don’t run the risk of all your board members turning over at once. Name the seats “Seat A,” “Seat B,” etc. and assign term lengths to them. Keep track of which member fills which seat in order to avoid confusion as turnover occurs.
 - Term limits, if any.
 - Selection of board members. Is your board self-appointing, voted upon by stakeholders, or a combination of the two? How will nominations be taken? Who can vote, and through what method? When will elections be held? How will mid-term vacancies be filled?
 - Removal of board members. Consider resignation, incapacitation, death, and removal by the board and/or stakeholders.
 - Identification and duties of officers.

Note that the list above does not comprise a complete description of Bylaws contents; it only addresses some of the most common errors made by charter petitioners. Work with your attorney to ensure that your Bylaws are thorough and appropriate.

Finally, avoid copying and pasting from other charter schools’ Articles and Bylaws. Many of them contain errors that you could unwittingly replicate. While you may benefit from viewing various examples, take the time to ensure that your own documents are thorough and in compliance with Idaho law.

Appendix C: Board of Directors and Petitioning Group

The expertise of your founding board is very important to the PCSC. Please include professional resumes for all board members. Think of it as applying for the “job” of managing student lives and taxpayer funds.

It is likely that there are individuals involved with your petitioning group in ways other than board membership. Please include a list of all persons who are significantly involved with the petition. Include brief descriptions of each individual’s role in this pre-opening phase, as well as any intended role over the longer term. This list may include both volunteers and employed or contracted parties.

As you work on this appendix, you should also think about whether the listed individuals meet your definition of “founder,” as this will impact their children’s eligibility for an enrollment lottery preference. It is advisable to put the definition in writing to minimize future disputes.

Appendix D: School Administration and Organizational Chart

Having the right leader (whose job title is usually Administrator or Principal) is critical to the success of your school. If you have already identified this individual, list his or her name, contact information, and qualifications here. Include his or her resume.

If you have not yet identified a particular individual, provide a description of your ideal school leader and your plan for successful hiring. Be sure to consider the realities of attracting a qualified professional to a unique program or rural area.

Note that while your administrator does not need to be certified as a superintendent, she or he will likely need a skill set extending beyond that of a typical public school principal. This is because, as a Local Education Agency, your school will be responsible for both school-level and district-level functions and reports.

This appendix must also include an organizational chart illustrating your school's leadership structure and indicating how school leaders will report to the board.

Appendix E: Education Service Provider

If you plan to engage an ESP, administrative rule requires that you provide details including the company name, a contact within the company, and the intended extent of the ESP's participation in the management and operations of the school. Please include the following:

- A term sheet indicating the fees to be paid by the proposed school to the ESP, the length of the proposed contract, the terms for the contract's renewal, and provisions for termination.
- Copies of the two, most recent contracts that the ESP has executed with operating charter schools.
- A detailed description of the ESP's relationship to the school's board of directors.
- A detailed description of how and why the ESP was selected.
- Evidence that the ESP provides high-quality services to similarly situated schools, if applicable.

Appendix F: Supporting Documentation

This appendix (which may be divided into F1, F2, etc. as appropriate) is the best place to provide supporting documentation for claims made in your petition narrative, budgets, and facility plans.

Be sure to include the following:

- A copy of the letter sent to the superintendent of each district that overlaps the proposed public charter school's primary attendance area pursuant to I.C. 33-5205 (3)(b).
- Any contracts or draft contracts, purchase and sale agreements, etc.
- Any leases or draft leases. These may be for anything from your facility to your printer.
- Any other real estate agreements, including documentation of purchase agreements or donations.
- Any cost estimates, such as for transportation services, facility remodeling, utilities hookups, curricular materials, etc.
- Any facility development proposals, such as for remodeling, new construction, or installation of portables and supporting infrastructure. Be sure to include timelines on which the work will be completed.

In Appendix F, you may also choose to include additional documents that you feel are important to the PCSC's understanding of your proposal.

Resources

Are you feeling overwhelmed? Take a deep breath. Developing a new charter petition is a daunting task, but you don't need to face it alone. Pull together a quality board and other volunteers to help. Seek out professionals at successful charter schools, many of whom are willing to offer advice. The Idaho Charter School Network, State Department of Education, and our Public Charter School Commission office all stand ready to assist you.

Resist the temptation to hurry through petition development. Take the time to develop a quality proposal that represents the outstanding educational option you hope to provide. Balance optimism with realism. Research your educational program, explain it clearly, and present it alongside a strong business plan that optimizes your likelihood of success.

We appreciate your willingness to take on this challenge. Let us know how we can help.

[Idaho Public Charter School Commission](#)

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