

Preliminary Report to the North Carolina General Assembly

No Cap on the Number of Charter Schools SL 2011-164 (SB 8), sec. 6

Date Due: **May 10, 2012 Report #70**

DPI Chronological Schedule, 2011-2012

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Introduction

Senate Bill 8, Session Law 2011-164, made several changes to existing charter school laws. It removed the cap of 100 charter schools that has existed since the first charter school law was enacted. With the removal of the cap, the State Board of Education may grant charters to applicants that meet requirements set by the General Assembly and the State Board of Education. It further changed the amount a charter school can grow in student population without obtaining State Board of Education approval from ten to twenty percent of previous enrollment. It also added a more specific student performance standard and a process if a charter school does not meet the standard. Finally, it aligned charter schools with other public schools by allowing the charter school to charge any fees that are charged by the local school administrative unit in which the charter school is located.

Senate Bill 8 further requires the State Board of Education to submit to the General Assembly a preliminary report by May 10, 2012, and a final report by June 11, 2012, on the implementation of this legislation, including the following:

- (1) the creation, composition, and function of an advisory committee;
- (2) the charter school application process;
- (3) a profile of applicants and the basis for acceptance or rejection; and
- resources required at the State level for implementation of the Charter school laws in North Carolina General Statutes, Chapter 115C, Article 16, Part 6A.

This preliminary report provides the required information that is currently available. The final report will provide updated information, including the status of applications.

I. Creation, Composition, and Function of the Charter School Advisory Council

Senate Bill 8 does not set any parameters for an advisory council. The State Board of Education created the new North Carolina Public Charter School Advisory Council ("Council") and passed policy TCS-B-006 in August, 2011, that describes the Council, its membership, and responsibilities. A copy of this State Board of Education policy is provided in Appendix 1.

The fifteen-member Council is comprised of recommended appointees with eight from the Governor, three from the Speaker of the House, three from the Senate Pro Tempore, and one from the State Superintendent. The State Board of Education policy identifies that it seeks recommendations that will provide a balanced membership, both geographically and in regard to educational experience in the charter school and traditional public school communities. Council members serve for four years, except the initial appointments have varying terms in order to provide for a staggered appointment in the future. A list of the current members and their backgrounds is provided in Appendix 2.

The State Board of Education has charged this Council with responsibilities in offering policy recommendations related to all aspects of charter school operations as well as in making recommendations to the State Board of Education regarding charter applications and decisions related to existing charters.

The Council's first meeting was held in October, 2011. Since then, it has set its bylaws, elected officers, and established committees. The Council also received training on topics critical for carrying out its responsibilities, including law, finance, ethics/conflicts of interest, exceptional children requirements, accountability, renewals, and monitoring. In carrying out the charge of the State Board of Education, it has established and implemented its processes for reviewing charter school applications. The Council has met on October 19, 2011, November 9, 2011, December 13 and 14, 2011, January 10 and 11, 2012, February 27, 2012, and April 24 and 25, 2012.

II. Charter School Application Process

"Fast Track" Charter Application Process

Because of the cap, the State Board of Education has not been able to authorize more than 100 charters until now. With the legislated flexibility to open additional quality charter schools and in immediate response to legislated intent, the State Board of Education implemented a one-time "fast-track" charter school application process for school year 2012-13. For this one-time process, the State Board of Education temporarily suspended Policy TCS-U-013 which requires a mandatory planning year for any new charter schools. This mandatory planning year has improved the quality of new charter schools by providing the required time for thorough planning and training in successful school critical areas. Because the planning period is important to the success of a charter school, the fast-track process was intended only for applicants that could demonstrate readiness to open by August 2012.

The fast-track application process had the following steps.

- The State Board of Education adopted a fast-track application process.
- Applications were due November 10, 2011 at 12 noon. A total of twenty-seven (27) applications were submitted by the deadline. Two applicants were incomplete and were notified in writing. Late applications were not accepted.
- The twenty-five (25) complete applications were initially reviewed by the Public Charter School Advisory Council that convened in three subcommittees. These subcommittees reviewed each complete application and offered a recommendation to the full Council regarding applicants to interview.
- The Council deliberated upon the subcommittees' work and voted to bring eleven (11) of the twenty-five (25) applicants back for an interview. Prior to the interview stage, one applicant withdrew from consideration. Each applicant, whether recommended for an interview or not, received a copy of the subcommittee rubric for its particular charter application.
- The full Council then interviewed the remaining ten (10) applicants and recommended nine (9) to the State Board of Education for approval.

- In February 2012, the State Board of Education received the Council's recommendation from the Chair of the Public Charter School Advisory Council and the Office of Charter Schools.
- In March 2012, the State Board of Education voted to approve the Council's recommendations. In doing so, the State Board of Education was clear that these applicants were fast track and voted to require that each applicant must be ready to open by August 15, 2012, or reapply in future application rounds in order to be considered for a charter.

The rubric used for the fast track is provided in Appendix 3.

Regular Application Process – schools opening in August 2013

While the "fast-track "applications were being processed, the Office of Charter Schools held an information meeting for groups interested in the regular round of applications. Charter schools approved during the regular round will open during the 2013-14 school year following a planning year. The demand for this January meeting was so large that the Office of Charter Schools had to schedule a second training to accommodate everyone interested.

As of the regular submission date of this report, the regular application process is currently processing as follows:

- Applications were due at noon on April 13, 2012. A total of sixty-three (63) applications were submitted before the deadline, one of the highest number of proposals at one time in state history. Late applications were not accepted. Appendix 5 provides a list of all timely applications.
- Among the sixty-three (63) applications, nine (9) were incomplete in a double screening process. Those applicants were rejected and notified of application deficiencies.
- On April 24 and 25, 2012, the Council met in subcommittees to conduct the initial review of the fifty-four (54) applications. After spending two full days in deliberations, the subcommittees finished reviewing just over half of these applications. They will reconvene during May to continue this initial review process.

The initial review process begins the deliberations of the full Council to identify those applicants that will be interviewed in person. After interviews are completed, the Council will follow a process similar to that of the fast track round in making recommendations to the State Board of Education.

The rubric for the regular round process is provided in Appendix 4. The rubric for the regular round is slightly different than the fast-track process due to the State Board of Education receiving a comprehensive authorizer evaluation from the National Association of Charter School Authorizers. They suggested that the rubric and the application perfectly align, and the modifications to the rubric were made accordingly.

III. Profile of Applicants and Basis for Acceptance or Rejection

Appendix 5 provides a list of all fast-track applications received prior to the deadline and the status of their application.

Appendix 6 provides an explanation for all fast-track applications not approved and a list of those approved by the State Board of Education. Appendix 7 provides a list of applications for the regular round and their application status.

IV. Cost of Operations

Senate Bill 8 requires the State Board of Education to provide in its preliminary and final report an explanation of the resources required at the State level for implementation of the charter school laws. Currently, 45,000 students are served in charter schools. With the removal of the cap, there will be more charter schools and more charter school students; the costs for properly managing the application process and monitoring the operational charters will obviously rise. These reasonable and foreseeable cost factors are described below for the functions of staffing and administration (the Office of Charter Schools) and advisory (the newly formed Council).

Office of Charter Schools

The demands placed on the Office of Charter Schools have increased significantly since its inception in 1996 and, in particular, with the passage of Senate Bill 8: it has been integral to the process of establishing the Council, setting up the application process, providing training on the application process, reviewing applications and providing assistance to the Council in its work. Demands will increase further with the State Board of Education's approval of charter schools as the new schools will have extensive needs during the planning period and will the become a part of the on-going monitoring and assistance. The Office of Charter Schools also reviews enrollment and grade expansion requests, conducts site visits, manages the process for renewal and five-year review protocols, provides training for new administrators, responds to parent complaints, provides requested information to charter schools, and works with the Council on closing procedures for revoked or non-renewed charter schools.

Senate Bill 8 reflects the increased emphasis on ensuring educational standards are met by charter schools and that swift action occurs when standards are not met. The Office of Charter Schools has a key role in this process through its training, performance monitoring, and assisting the Council in recommending actions when education quality concerns are identified. When charter schools are in danger of being deemed academically inadequate, they are notified in writing of that status and additional site visits occur to monitor their progress. While charter schools have autonomy over their daily operations, the Office provides a data overview of their current standing.

As recently as January 2012, the Office of Charter Schools consisted of one consultant, the director, and an administrative assistant. This small staff reflected budget cuts and vacancies. The 2011 budget of the General Assembly did not provide for any additional staff. The State Board of Education and State Superintendent recognized the importance of attaining a more realistic staffing situation and acted to fill several vacancies. The

Office of Charter Schools now has a director, an administrative assistant, and four (4) consultant positions. This level is still not the staffing level of several years ago.

Current staffing also lags behind national averages. The National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) publishes annually a report entitled *The State of Charter School Authorizing*. The 2010 report said the following: "Some large authorizers have very little or no staff, which brings into question their ability to perform many of the practices NACSA recommends." Further, the 2009 version of this report tabulated averages for full-time equivalent (FTE) staff working only in charter authorization. The national average is 1 FTE for every 5.4 schools but the average for State Education Agency authorizers, like North Carolina, is 1 FTE for every 9.1 schools.² Clearly, as the number of charter schools continue to grow, additional staff will be needed for ongoing monitoring and oversight to ensure that public charter schools are high quality organizations.

In addition to a need for additional staff, the budget to cover administrative expenses also must increase in order to provide the kind of training and monitoring essential for charter school success. Without increased funds, it will be difficult, for example, for the staff of the Office of Charter Schools to make site visits to new schools and to maintain a schedule of regular monitoring of existing schools. To help address those funding needs, the State Board of Education included in its Supplemental Budget Request in February 2012 the amount of \$200,000 to cover the need for additional staff and administrative funds related to lifting the cap. This request is shared below.

Requested Amount	Rationale
\$200,000	"Charter Schools - Senate Bill 8 short titled 'No Cap on Number of Charter Schools' provides an opportunity for an indefinite number of additional charter schools to be established in an academic year. To ensure that the Department of Public Instruction can continue to effectively provide guidance and technical assistance to the existing Charter Schools as well as newly established charter schools (G.S. 115C-238.29J), two additional staff positions will be needed. Additional staff needs are based upon the anticipated number of schools established each year. Nine (9) new schools have been approved with a possible 30 to be reviewed and evaluated."

Public Charter School Advisory Council

¹ National Association of Charter School Authorizers. *2010: The State of Charter School Authorizing.* Chicago, January 2011. Page 50. This full report can be accessed online at the following link: http://www.qualitycharters.org/images/stories/publications/2010_facts_report.pdf

² National Association of Charter School Authorizers. *2009: The State of Charter School Authorizing*. Chicago, May 2010. Pages 29-30. This full report can be accessed online at the following link: http://www.qualitycharters.org/images/stories/2009 Facts Report.pdf

The 2011 budget of the General Assembly did not provide any funds for the operation of a Council. In prior years, the General Assembly appropriated approximately \$50,000 annually for the operation of the Charter School Advisory Committee.

While the Council has made use of technology to conduct some of its business, it is essential that the Council meet in person to perform some its responsibilities. This is especially true in the review of charter school applicants. The face-to-face interviews are crucial to determine whether proposed boards understand and demonstrate the ability to operate successful charter schools consistent with the law. With minimal meetings to reduce travel and cost, this fifteen-member Council has nearly exhausted the \$20,000 budget provided from the State Board of Education. The funds have been used to pay travel, lodging, meals, and duplicating costs that are necessary for the Council's operation. More meetings need to be held this year in order to complete the application review and other responsibilities of the Council.

In order for the Council to serve effectively, the State Board of Education recommends that the General Assembly restore funding to the Council.

APPENDIX 1

NORTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION Policy Manual

Policy Identification

Priority: Twenty-First Century Systems

Category: Advisory Committees **Policy ID Number:** TCS-B-006

Policy Title: Policy establishing the North Carolina Charter School Advisory Council

Current Policy Date: 08/04/2011

Other Historical Information:

Statutory Reference:

Administrative Procedures Act (APA) Reference Number and Category:

- (a) There is established the North Carolina Public Charter School Advisory Council approved by the State Board of Education. The Public Charter School Council shall be comprised as follows:
 - (1) Eight persons recommended by the Governor; and
 - (2) Three persons recommended by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate; and
 - (3) Three persons recommended by the Speaker of the House of Representatives; and
 - (4) One person recommended by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction.
- (b) All appointees shall be residents of North Carolina with a demonstrated commitment to public education. In appointments made pursuant to (1) above, the Governor shall seek to achieve a balanced membership representing, to the maximum extent possible, the State as a whole, geographically as well as educationally, including representatives of the charter school and traditional public school communities. In each of the appointments made pursuant to (2) and (3) above, to the maximum extent possible, one appointment shall be a representative of the charter school community, either a board member or an employee; one appointment shall be a representative of the traditional public schools, either an employee or local board of education member; and one appointment shall represent other constituent communities such as parents, businesses, and institutions of higher education.
- (c) Terms of membership on the Council shall be for four years, provided that for each of the initial appointments made pursuant to (1), above, one shall be for an initial term of 2 years, and one shall be for an initial term of three years. Provided further that for each appointment made pursuant to (2) above, one shall be for an initial term of two years and one shall be for

an initial term of three years; and provided further that for each appointment made pursuant to (3) above, one shall be for an initial term of two years and one shall be for an initial term of three years. After the initial term, all subsequent appointments shall be for four year terms. An appointee may serve more than one term.

- (d) Terms shall expire on June 30th of the applicable year.
- (e) The Council shall select a Chair and Vice Chair from one of the members appointed in subsection- (a).
- (f) In the event a vacancy occurs for any reason, the vacancy shall be filled by appointment by the entity that made the appointment. The new appointee shall serve for the remainder of the unexpired term.

Responsibilities of the Council

- (a) The Council shall have the responsibilities subject to the direction and control of the State Board of Education:
 - 1. To recommend policies for adoption by the State Board of Education regarding all aspects of charter school operation, including timelines, standards, and criteria for acceptance and approval of applications, monitoring of charter schools, and grounds for revocation of charters;
 - 2. To undertake any of the duties and responsibilities consistent with the duties and incident thereto, or as directed by the State Board of Education.

APPENDIX 2

NC PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS				
Name	Background Summary			
Aaron Means	Businessman Former charter school board member			
Alan Hawkes	Charter school board member Previous member of the Charter School Advisory Committee			
Alfred Dillon	US Army Colonel (retired) Former city manager and charter school board member			
Baker Mitchell, Jr.	Co-founder of the Roger Bacon Academy Bioengineering and health computing business founder			
Cheryl Turner	Current charter school principal			
Jenny Adams	Retired public school teacher			
Joe Maimone	Current charter school principal Inductee into the NC Charter School Hall of Fame			
John Betterton (CHAIR)	Former LEA principal and current charter school principal			
Kate Alice Dunaway	Former charter school principal Previous member of the Charter School Advisory Committee			
Kwan Graham	Parent Parents for Educational Freedom in NC parent liaison leader			
Paul Norcross	Co-founder and board member of the Phoenix Academy			
Rebecca Shore	Professor at UNC-Charlotte Former public school teacher and administrator			
Richard Hooker	Local business owner School board member			
Robert Landry	Former public school teacher, principal, and superintendent President, NC Alliance of Public Charter Schools			
Tim Markley (VICE CHAIR)	Superintendent of New Hanover County Schools			

APPENDIX 3



Application Evaluation Packet for New Charter Schools

For each section, please rate the response then explain your rating by specifying strengths and weaknesses in the space provided. Where applicable, you should elaborate on concerns by specifying additional information you would request or follow-up questions that you have.

Each section presents key characteristics of an "excellent" response. In general, the following definitions should guide your ratings.

Inadequate: The response either fails to entirely address the selection criteria or addresses

some of the criteria; yet the responses lack adequate detail and/or raise

substantial concerns about the applicant's preparation for and ability to start or

operate a charter school successfully.

• Average: The response indicates solid preparation and grasp of key issues. It contains

some of the characteristics of an excellent response although additional support

or information may be needed in places.

■ Excellent: The response demonstrates a thorough understanding of key issues and the

ability to start a charter school successfully. It addresses the topic with clear,

specific and accurate information that reflects thorough preparation.

Subcommittee Members:

Date:

A. Mission Statement

An excellent mission statement will have the following characteristics:

- Clear, focused and compellingLikely to improve education outcomes
- Expressing clear guiding purposes
- Identifying priorities that meet the six legislated purposes of the NC charter school law

	Inadequate	Average	Excellent
Mission Statement:		Referenc	<u> </u>
Strengths			
Concerns and Additional Questions		Referenc	•
Concerns and Additional Questions		Kelelelic	<u> </u>
B. Governance	. Callanda a abana danda		
An excellent application will demonstrate the	e following characteris	tics related to the C	overnance and
Management plan:Proposed board members will contribute	the wide range of ex	nerience and eyner	tise that will he
needed to oversee a successful charter			
law, and community outreach (including			
 Clear description of selection and remov 			
and duties of board members (including		.,	
 Clear distinction between the roles and it 	responsibilities of the	board members, sc	hool administrators,
and EMO staff (if applicable)	1.6.6		
 Copy of the EMO management agreeme directors will retain ultimate responsibilit 		now the charter scr	1001 board of
 Plan for meaningful involvement of pare 		embers in the gove	ernance of the school
 Organizational plan, with a chart, that cl 			
school program successfully as well as a			
 Inclusion of the organizational by-laws t 			
	Inadequate	Average	Excellent
Governance and Operation:		Page Ref	orence
Strengths		Page Ref	CI CIICE
ou ouguio			
Concerns and Additional Questions		Page Ref	erence

C. Education Program

An excellent proposal will demonstrate the following qualities related to the Educational Program:

- Alignment between the school's mission and its goals, objectives and standards
- Goals that are clear, specific, measurable, ambitious and attainable
- Objectives that follow clearly from the goals
- Performance standards aligned with the goals as well as state and federal requirements
- The curriculum framework is clearly presented, aligned with the school's mission, and provides an appropriate level of detail for the objectives, content, and skills for each subject and for all grades the school will serve.
- Details about the type of learning environment , class size, and teaching methods
- The curriculum is supported by research, by applicant experience, and/or by sound reasoning behind its selection.
- A clear outline of how the school will monitor the implementation of the curriculum. The plan identifies a timeline, a lead contact, action steps, and how this information will be used in facilitating professional development.
- The school day and school calendar are structured in ways that align with the educational program.
- A convincing plan for ongoing curriculum development (e.g., revision of standards and benchmarks, improvement of curriculum alignment, and assessment development) is included.
- A plan for the development, mentorship, retention, and regular evaluation of staff that is manageable and is clearly linked to the school's mission and educational program, including a timeline, a lead contact, and specific action steps.
- Listing of any co-curricular or extra-curricular programs that are planned and how the applicant proposes to fund and deliver them.
- Evidence that school staff will be held to high professional standards.
- With schools using an EMO, provide evidence that the EMO has a history of academic successes.

	Inadequate	Average	Excellent
Education Plan: Strengths		Page Ref	ference
Concerns and Additional Questions		Page Ref	ference

D. Special Education

An excellent application will have the following characteristics regarding the plan for Serving Students with Special Needs:

 Realistic plan to identify and meet the learning needs of at-risk students, students with disabilities, gifted/talented students, and English language learners

- Timeline, lead contact, and intervention process with specific action steps for meeting learning needs of students with special needs
- Plans for serving special populations align with the overall curriculum, instructional approaches, and the school mission

	Inadequate	Ave	rage	Excellent
<u>Serving Students with Special Needs</u> : Strengths			Page Refe	erence
Concerns and Additional Questions			Page Refe	erence

E. Admissions Policy

An excellent Admissions Policy will have the following characteristics:

- Clear description of the enrollment policy including which, if any, statutorily allowed enrollment preferences the school proposes to offer
- Explanation of criteria for enrollment decisions and the lottery process to be used
- Clear procedures for withdrawals and transfers from the school that will support an orderly transition for exiting students or a clear plan for developing such procedures
- Definitive policies and procedures for recruiting, registering, and admitting students that reflect the racial composition of the school district or targeted school population.

Inadequate

Average

Excellent

Admissions Policy: Strengths	Page Reference
Concerns and Additional Questions	Page Reference

F. Student Conduct and Discipline

An excellent application will include:

Policies for addressing expulsion, suspension and education of expelled or suspended students that
provide adequately for the safety of students and staff; provide due process for students; serve the
best interests of the school's students; and create a positive environment for learning.

	Inadequate	Average	Excellent
Student Conduct and Discipline: Strengths		Page Ref	erence
Concerns and Additional Questions		Page Ref	erence
 G. Projected Staff An excellent application will include: A description of the process that will be instructional staff, and other employees An explanation of the relationship that partnering with an EMO, a clear descriptions and job descriptions are of the content of t	s. will exist between the option of their role, if an clearly explained; and s	charter school and y, in the hiring/firin should the applican ed for review.	its employees. If g process. t have already
identified individuals for specific positio An collection of employment policies Of Details on how the charter school will e	R clear plan for timely	development of suc	ch policies
identified individuals for specific positio An collection of employment policies Of	R clear plan for timely evaluate its employees.		
identified individuals for specific positio An collection of employment policies Of	R clear plan for timely	development of suc	Excellent

H. Business Plan

Concerns and Additional Questions

An excellent proposal will present a Business Plan with the following characteristics:

 Budget assumptions and financial planning based on realistic revenue and expenditure projections for five years based on minimum enrollment needed for solvency as well as at 100% enrollment

Page Reference

- Spending priorities that align with the school's mission, curriculum, and plans for management, professional development, and growth
- Maintenance of a small, contingency reserve
- Budget format as prescribed by the application that reveals realistic cash flow projection for the first year of operation including a plan for funding cash flow shortfalls
- Sound financial management systems
- Adequate and reasonable plan to manage start-up costs
- Description of how the school will conduct an annual audit of the financial (including the name and contact information for auditing firm) and programmatic operations
- Information on how the school will adhere to the requirements of the health and safety laws
- Details on how the school plans to market itself to ensure equal access by all students
- Results of any surveys or demographic studies performed by the applicant to create this proposal.
- Dates, times, or locations of meetings held to talk about this proposal with members of the public to ascertain the level of public interest in the proposed charter school
- An evaluation of the impact this charter school would have on nearby public schools
- Provided information about how the school proposes to comply with the statute to mirror the diversity of the local education agency after its first year of operation.

	Inadequate	Average	Excellent
Business Plan:		Page Refe	erence
Strengths			
Concerns and Additional Questions		Page Refe	erence

I. Insurance

An excellent application will provide adequate assurance that the school will meet applicable insurance requirements.

Inadequate	Average	Excellent

<u>Insurance</u> : Strengths		Page Ref	erence
Concerns and Additional Questions		Page Ref	erence
 J. Transportation An excellent Transportation plan will have the Statement regarding whether the school and, if so, Clear description of how the school plans Viable plan specifically addressing transpachieving students that is also reflected Provisions to ensure that no child is deni 	plans to provide tra s to meet the transportation needs of lo in the proposed bud	nsportation for its properties of its or its w-income and acade get	pupils emically low-
<u>Transportation</u> : Strengths		Page Ref	erence
Concerns and Additional Questions		Page Ref	erence

K. Facilities and EquipmentAn excellent Facility plan will have the following characteristics:If a facility has been identified --

- Designation of the proposed facility
 Evidence that the facility will be appropriate for the educational program of the school and adequate for the projected student enrollment

- Adequate reflection of the costs associated with the proposed facility in the budget, including rent, utilities, and maintenance
- Assurance that the proposed facility will be in compliance with applicable building codes, health and safety laws, and with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- A sound plan to identify needed renovations as well as the funds and a timeline for the completion of those renovations
- Contingency plans should this facility not be completed in time for the school to open as planned.

If a facility has not yet been identified -

- Description of anticipated facilities needs including evidence that the facility will be appropriate for the educational program of the school and adequate for the projected student enrollment
- Inclusion of costs associated with the anticipated facilities needs in the budget, including rent, utilities, and maintenance
- Evidence to indicate that facilities-related budget assumptions are realistic based on anticipated location, size, etc.
- Assurance that the proposed location will be in compliance with applicable building codes, health and safety laws, and with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Plan for finding a location, including a proposed schedule for doing so
- Contingency plans should this facility not be completed in time for the school to open as planned

	Inadequate	Average	Excellent
Facility: Strengths		Page Re	ference
Concerns and Additional Questions		Page Re	ference

OVERALL ASSESSMENT

Would you recommend preliminary approval of this application? Explain your recommendation in the Summary Comments section, below.

	No	Yes
--	----	-----

SUMMARY COMMENTS (attach not more than two sheets)

Educationally, [SUMMARY COMMENTS ON EDUCATION PLAN]

Organizationally, [SUMMARY COMMENTS ON ORGANIZATIONAL PLAN]

Financially, [SUMMARY COMMENTS ON FINANCIAL PLAN]

Overall, [EXPLAIN RATIONALE FOR FINAL RECOMMENDATION]

APPENDIX 4



Application Evaluation Packet for New Charter Schools

For each section, please rate the response then explain your rating by specifying strengths and weaknesses in the space provided. Where applicable, you should elaborate on concerns by specifying additional information you would request or follow-up questions that you have.

Each section presents key characteristics of an "excellent" response. In general, the following definitions should guide your ratings.

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some of the criteria; yet the responses lack adequate detail and/or raise

substantial concerns about the applicant's preparation for and ability to start or operate a charter school successfully.

Average: The response indicates solid preparation and grasp of key issues. It contains

some of the characteristics of an excellent response although additional support

or information may be needed in places.

■ Excellent: The response demonstrates a thorough understanding of key issues and the

ability to start a charter school successfully. It addresses the topic with clear,

specific and accurate information that reflects thorough preparation.

Reviewer's Name	(print)
Reviewer's Signature	Date

A. Mission Statement

An excellent mission statement will have the following characteristics:

- Clear, focused and compellingLikely to improve education outcomes
- Expressing clear guiding purposes
- Identifying priorities that meet the six legislated purposes of the NC charter school law

				
	Inadequate	Ave	rage	Excellent
		l		
Mission Statement:			Referen	 ce
Strengths				
Concerns and Additional Questions			Referen	
Concerns and Additional Questions			1010101	<u> </u>
B. Governance				
An excellent application will demonstrate the	e following characteris	stics relat	ed to the	Governance and
Management plan:				
 Proposed board members will contribute 				
needed to oversee a successful charter s law, and community outreach (including				
 Clear description of selection and remove 				
and duties of board members (including			cening serie	adics, and powers
 Clear distinction between the roles and r 			embers, s	chool administrators,
and EMO staff (if applicable)	1 416 11 11 1 1			
 Copy of the EMO management agreeme directors will retain ultimate responsibilit 		now the	cnarter so	nool board of
 Plan for meaningful involvement of pare 		nembers i	n the gov	ernance of the school
 Organizational plan, with a chart, that cl 				
school program successfully as well as a				
 Inclusion of the organizational by-laws the 	hat reveal clear unde	rstanding	of charte	r school governance
	Inadequate	Avo	rage	Excellent
		AVE		Excellent
Governance and Operation:			Page Re	ference
Strengths				
Concerns and Additional Questions			Page Re	ference
			-	

C. Education Program

An excellent proposal will demonstrate the following qualities related to the Educational Program:

- Alignment between the school's mission and its goals, objectives and standards
- Goals that are clear, specific, measurable, ambitious and attainable
- Objectives that follow clearly from the goals
- Performance standards aligned with the goals as well as state and federal requirements
- The curriculum framework is clearly presented, aligned with the school's mission, and provides an appropriate level of detail for the objectives, content, and skills for each subject and for all grades the school will serve.
- Details about the type of learning environment, class size, and teaching methods
- The curriculum is supported by research, by applicant experience, and/or by sound reasoning behind its selection.
- A clear outline of how the school will monitor the implementation of the curriculum. The plan identifies a timeline, a lead contact, action steps, and how this information will be used in facilitating professional development.
- The school day and school calendar are structured in ways that align with the educational program.
- A convincing plan for ongoing curriculum development (e.g., revision of standards and benchmarks, improvement of curriculum alignment, and assessment development) is included.
- A plan for the development, mentorship, retention, and regular evaluation of staff that is manageable and is clearly linked to the school's mission and educational program, including a timeline, a lead contact, and specific action steps.
- Listing of any co-curricular or extra-curricular programs that are planned and how the applicant proposes to fund and deliver them.
- Evidence that school staff will be held to high professional standards.
- With schools using an EMO, provide evidence that the EMO has a history of academic successes.

	Inadequate	Average	Excellent
Education Plan: Strengths		Page Ref	ference
Concerns and Additional Questions		Page Re	ference

D. Special Education

An excellent application will have the following characteristics regarding the plan for Serving Students with Special Needs:

 Realistic plan to identify and meet the learning needs of at-risk students, students with disabilities, gifted/talented students, and English language learners

- Timeline, lead contact, and intervention process with specific action steps for meeting learning needs of students with special needs
- Plans for serving special populations align with the overall curriculum, instructional approaches, and the school mission

	Inadequate	Av	erage	Excellent	
Songing Students with Special Needs			Dago Bot	foronco	
<u>Serving Students with Special Needs</u> : Strengths	<u>speciai needs</u> :		raye ke	Page Reference	
-					
			1		
Concerns and Additional Questions			Page Re	ference	

E. Admissions Policy

An excellent Admissions Policy will have the following characteristics:

- Clear description of the enrollment policy including which, if any, statutorily allowed enrollment preferences the school proposes to offer
- Explanation of criteria for enrollment decisions and the lottery process to be used
- Clear procedures for withdrawals and transfers from the school that will support an orderly transition for exiting students or a clear plan for developing such procedures
- Definitive policies and procedures for recruiting, registering, and admitting students that reflect the racial composition of the school district or targeted school population.

	inadequate	Average	excellent
Admissions Policy: Strengths		Page Ref	erence
Concerns and Additional Questions		Page Ref	erence

F. Student Conduct and Discipline

An excellent application will include:

Policies for addressing expulsion, suspension and education of expelled or suspended students that
provide adequately for the safety of students and staff; provide due process for students; serve the
best interests of the school's students; and create a positive environment for learning.

	Inadequate	Average	Excellent
Student Conduct and Discipline: Strengths		Page Re	ference
Concerns and Additional Questions		Page Ref	forence
G. Projected Staff			
 An excellent application will include: A description of the process that will be instructional staff, and other employees. An explanation of the relationship that w partnering with an EMO, a clear descript Qualifications and job descriptions are clidentified individuals for specific positions An collection of employment policies OR Details on how the charter school will ev 	rill exist between the ion of their role, if ar early explained; and s, resumes are providuler plan for timely	charter school and ny, in the hiring/firir should the applicar ded for review. development of su	its employees. If ng process. It have already
2 5 5 5 1 1 1 5 1 1 5 1 5 1 5 1 5 1 5 1			
	Inadequate	Average	Excellent
	Inadequate	Average	Excellent

	Inadequate	Average	Excellent
Projected Staff: Strengths		Page Ref	ference
		·	
Concerns and Additional Questions		Page Ref	ference

H. Business Plan

An excellent proposal will present a Business Plan with the following characteristics:

 Budget assumptions and financial planning based on realistic revenue and expenditure projections for five years based on minimum enrollment needed for solvency as well as at 100% enrollment

- Spending priorities that align with the school's mission, curriculum, and plans for management, professional development, and growth
- Maintenance of a small, contingency reserve
- Budget format as prescribed by the application that reveals realistic cash flow projection for the first year of operation including a plan for funding cash flow shortfalls
- Sound financial management systems
- Adequate and reasonable plan to manage start-up costs
- Description of how the school will conduct an annual audit of the financial (including the name and contact information for auditing firm) and programmatic operations
- Information on how the school will adhere to the requirements of the health and safety laws
- Details on how the school plans to market itself to ensure equal access by all students
- Results of any surveys or demographic studies performed by the applicant to create this proposal.
- Dates, times, or locations of meetings held to talk about this proposal with members of the public to ascertain the level of public interest in the proposed charter school
- An evaluation of the impact this charter school would have on nearby public schools
- Provided information about how the school proposes to comply with the statute to mirror the diversity of the local education agency after its first year of operation.

	Inadequate	Average	Excellent
Business Plan:		Page Refe	erence
Strengths			
Concerns and Additional Questions		Page Refe	erence

I. Insurance

An excellent application will provide adequate assurance that the school will meet applicable insurance requirements.

Inadequate	Average	Excellent

Insurance: Strengths		Page Ref	erence
Concerns and Additional Questions		Page Ref	erence
 J. Transportation An excellent Transportation plan will have the Statement regarding whether the school and, if so, Clear description of how the school plans Viable plan specifically addressing transpachieving students that is also reflected Provisions to ensure that no child is deni 	I plans to provide tra s to meet the transportation needs of love in the proposed budgets	nsportation for its propertation needs of its wincome and acade get	pupils emically low-
Transportation		Dage Def	ionon co
Transportation: Strengths		Page Ref	erence
Concerns and Additional Questions		Page Ref	erence
Concerns and Additional Questions		i uge Kei	C. CileC

K. Facilities and EquipmentAn excellent Facility plan will have the following characteristics:If a facility has been identified --

- Designation of the proposed facility
 Evidence that the facility will be appropriate for the educational program of the school and adequate for the projected student enrollment

- Adequate reflection of the costs associated with the proposed facility in the budget, including rent, utilities, and maintenance
- Assurance that the proposed facility will be in compliance with applicable building codes, health and safety laws, and with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- A sound plan to identify needed renovations as well as the funds and a timeline for the completion of those renovations
- Contingency plans should this facility not be completed in time for the school to open as planned.

If a facility has not yet been identified -

- Description of anticipated facilities needs including evidence that the facility will be appropriate for the educational program of the school and adequate for the projected student enrollment
- Inclusion of costs associated with the anticipated facilities needs in the budget, including rent, utilities, and maintenance
- Evidence to indicate that facilities-related budget assumptions are realistic based on anticipated location, size, etc.
- Assurance that the proposed location will be in compliance with applicable building codes, health and safety laws, and with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Plan for finding a location, including a proposed schedule for doing so
- Contingency plans should this facility not be completed in time for the school to open as planned

T	A	F II
Inadequate	Average	Excellent
	Page Ref	ference
	Page Ref	ference
	Inadequate	

OVERALL ASSESSMENT

Would you recommend preliminary approval of this application? Explain your recommendation in the Summary Comments section, below.

	No	Yes
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SUMMARY COMMENTS (attach not more than two sheets)

Educationally, [SUMMARY COMMENTS ON EDUCATION PLAN]

Organizationally, [SUMMARY COMMENTS ON ORGANIZATIONAL PLAN]

Financially, [SUMMARY COMMENTS ON FINANCIAL PLAN]

Overall, [EXPLAIN RATIONALE FOR FINAL RECOMMENDATION]



APPENDIX 5

Fast Track Applications Received Prior to the Deadline	Application Status	Reviewed by PCSAC subcommittees	Interviewed by the entire PCSAC	Recommended to the SBE to receive a charter	Approved by the SBE
Bear Grass Charter School, Inc	Complete	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Charlotte Learning Academy	Complete	Yes			
Cornerstone Charter Academy	Complete	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Corvian Community School	Complete	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
D.C Virgo Urban Prep. Charter	Complete	Yes			
Generations	Incomplete missing enrollment and budget information				
Global Leadership Entrepreneurial Academy College Preparatory and Leadership Academy	Complete	Yes			
of High Point	Complete	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Jefferson Preparatory School	Complete	Yes			
Leadership Learning Academy	Complete	Yes			
McKinney Academy Charter School	Complete	Yes			
Mendenhall Country Day School	Complete	Yes	Yes		
New Bern International Academy	Complete	Yes			
North East Carolina Preparatory	Complete	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Piedmont IT Academy	Complete	Yes			
Pinnacle Classical Academy	Complete	Yes	Yes		
Quality Education Academy of Durham	Complete	Yes			
Research Triangle High School	Complete	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Southeastern Academy	Complete	Yes			
The Howard & Lillian Lee Scholars Charter					
School	Complete Incomplete missing the	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
The Montessori Academy of Cornelius	required electronic and six hard copies				
Thunderbird Preparatory Academy	Complete	Yes			
Triangle Math and Science Academy	Complete	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Tri-County Academy of STEM	Complete	Yes			
Uwharrie Green School	Complete	Yes			
Water's Edge Village School	Complete	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Widsom Academy	Complete	Yes			

APPENDIX 6

Fast Track Charter Application Progress

Incomplete Applications

Twenty-seven charter applications were submitted ahead of the November 10, 2011 deadline at 12 noon. The Office of Charter Schools screened every applicant to determine its completeness, and the two applicants below were deemed incomplete.

Applicant Name	Rationale for Halting Progress
Generations	Student enrollment and budgetary information for two academic years was not supplied within the application copies
The Montessori School of Cornelius	The required six copies and electronic copy were not submitted as part of the application package.

Not Receiving an Interview from the Council

Each of the applications listed below were reviewed by one of the three Public Charter School Advisory Council subcommittees on December 13, 2011. The following day, December 14, 2011, each subcommittee reported their findings to the full Council who voted to deny these applicants an interview.

Applicant Name	Rationale for Halting Progress
Charlotte Learning Academy	The full Council heard that the subcommittee deemed almost every category as inadequate. The largest concern involved conflict of interest in that a wife, the wife's husband, and best friends were the proposed school's leadership and governance.
D.C. Virgo Urban Preparatory	The full Council deemed this application incomplete due to a lack of specificity with names of the governing board and adopted bylaws.
Global Leadership Entrepreneurial Academy	The full Council deemed this application incomplete due to missing resumes, bylaws, and board member names.
Jefferson Preparatory	The full Council noted that this application and the Thunderbird application were nearly identical but located in different locations with separate boards. The same educational consultant drafted both applications, and this individual's relationship with both schools, if opened, was not explained. The concern rested with the sweat equity put into the applications by both boards because they were identical. Was this application the vision of the board or just the hired consultant?

Leadership Learning Academy	The full Council had questions about the proposed educational plan and innovation compared to the area high schools. Also, the mission statement and proposed education program did not correlate. The business plan
	budgeted well below the market rate for facilities in the Charlotte area. Finally, the application utilized multiple leadership terms without clarifying their roles and responsibilities.
McKinney Academy Charter	The full Council had concerns with the governance section: annual meeting only, lack of clarity with the presumption of assent, terms of office and elections, inconsistency of titles. The concern is public accountability for these public schools. The admission made sense; however, enrollment grew significantly in one year while the remainder of the plan was steady growth. In the financial section, a question arose about the number of administrative staff for teachers. The business plan also lacked clarity in funding because it did not match the projected staff. For two areas, they were deemed inadequate and the Council gave considerable weight to those sections.
New Bern International	The full Council noted concerns with the terms and experience of the proposed governance structure. Most of the rubric sections were marked average but could have been listed as inadequate. The largest concern was the proposed growth plan into high school. Whereas each grade level would contain 100 students, that figure dropped to 50 for 9 th grade. The application did not provide an explanation. Finally, the budget lacked accounting or audit costs and the reserve would not cover these.
Piedmont IT Academy	The full Council noted the mission of the school (IT) did not match the education plan which omitted a focus on instructional technology. Further, the application proposed a K-12 school but lacked any details on a K-5 curriculum.
Quality Education Academy of Durham	The full Council noticed concerns about the name due to its similarity with another, existing charter school. Further, the school proposed a principal breaking the tie of a board vote which crosses the line of governance and management. A pre-employment exam is required, but there was not any type of explanation. The transportation section was lacking. Additional concerns were raised about the lack of compelling evidence and the high concentration of charters in that area. The LEA impact statement was discussed in that many of their buildings are vacant due to the concentration of charter schools.
Southeastern Academy	The full Council saw this as a conversion school but governance concerns were identified: admission based upon past character, bylaws needed to be clarified, executive session language did not comply with Open Meetings law, and informal action without a meeting cannot be taken. The educational program was considered average due to some wording concerns regarding sibling language. Further, the applicant required an interview prior to admission and that must be removed. The budget had problems with the staff adding up to the appropriate numbers and the organizational chart was mismatched.

Thunderbird Preparatory	See the comments above regarding Jefferson Preparatory.
Tri-County Academy of STEM	The full Council noted that the school proposed jumping significantly to 300 students. In the first year, the applicant only asked for 55 students. It was unclear if this was an error because the statutory minimum is 65, and the applicant did not ask for a waiver. Within the application, the group changed its meaning of STEM; because in some place, the "E" was engineering but in others it was English. The budget did not set aside funding for before or after school even though these were stated as services within the application. There were also questions about the nonprofit's entity and who was going to run the charter school. The budget lacked specificity for certain items mentioned within the application and the business plan was deemed inadequate. They specified entrance requirements and that should have been clarified because the appearance was selection of students.
Uwharrie Green School	The full Council noted that the education plan was inadequate and seemed to focus on academically-gifted students. As an example, students were required to implement Physics at 9 th grade and only Honors or AP classes were utilized. The school's plan to meet the needs of all students was differentiation by putting regular, Honors, and AP students in the same room. The business plan was rated as inadequate due to the reliance on fundraising to balance the budget. The Council had no assurance that the rural area could support the budgeted \$100,000 in philanthropy. Also within the budget, the applicant did not include any costs to retrofit the building which would require additional fundraising to cover the budgeted shortfall.
Wisdom Academy	The full Council could not locate the management company website even though the company claimed to oversee 70 schools. The management company would charge 12%, but all the details were lacking. For instance, would that cover facility or curriculum costs or everything? The education plan did not appear to match the mission because multiple educational models are proposed. The evaluation plan did not seem to allow a teacher to convert from an initial to a permanent license. Other questions emerged regarding the proposed school's relationship with the church landlord and the mentioned Tennis Association.

Not Receiving a Recommendation from the Council

The Public Charter School Advisory Council invited 11 applicants back for interviews on January 10 and 11, 2012. The two applications below were not advanced to the State Board of Education for consideration as a fast-track applicant.

Applicant Name	Rationale for Halting Progress
Pinnacle Classical Academy	Prior to the Council interview, the lead contact for the applicant group sent an email to the Chair of the Council stating the following: "it would better serve the families of Cleveland County if the organizing group was able to take advantage of a full-year of planning, rather than continuing to pursue the "Fast Track" application process. To that end, PCA: CFA is withdrawing its application for consideration with the expectation that it will re-submit an application in April with a hopeful opening date of August 2013."
Mendenhall Country Day School	The full Council discussed the application at length and noted issues around the applicant's readiness due to lack of specificity in the educational program and potential conflicts of interest in the governance structure. Information provided at the meeting did not appear to match that of the written application. The management company to oversee the school was yet to be formed leading to concerns related to budget and successful oversight. During the interview, additional questions came to light that led the Council to not recommend the application to the SBE.

Fast Track Application Approval

The State Board of Education, on March 1, 2012, approved nine new charter schools to open through its "fast track process. These schools will receive four months of planning time, instead of the mandatory 12 months that schools in the regular application process must take, and are slated to open in August 2012. The approved schools are:

- Bear Grass Charter School (Martin County)
- Cornerstone Charter Academy (Guilford County)
- Corvian Community School (Mecklenburg County)
- North East Carolina Preparatory (Edgecombe County)
- Research Triangle High School (Durham County)
- The Howard and Lillian Lee Scholars Charter Academy (Orange County)
- The College Preparatory and Leadership Academy of High Point (Guilford County)
- Triangle Math and Science Academy (Wake County)
- Water's Edge Village School (Currituck County)

APPENDIX 7

Application Status	Reviewed by PCSAC		Recommended to the SBE
7 - p p n c a n c n c a a a a	subcommittees	PCSAC	to receive a charter
Complete			
Incomplete and facility			
-			
_			
Incomplete audit and facility			
_			
Complete			
Incomplete missing resumes			
· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·			
·			
Incomplete LEA not named in			
budget, number of EC students			
missing, no audit firm identified			
clearly			
Complete			
Complete			
Complete			
Incomplete - missing school			
· · ·			
1			
·			
	Incomplete audit and facility info missing, LEA not listed in budget, signature and electronic copies missing Incomplete audit and facility info missing, LEA not listed in budget, signature and electronic copies missing Complete Incomplete missing resumes, hard copy after deadline, missing health/safety plans, qualifications of staff, etc. Complete Incomplete LEA not named in budget, number of EC students missing, no audit firm identified clearly Complete Complete Complete Complete Complete Complete Complete Complete	Incomplete audit and facility info missing, LEA not listed in budget, signature and electronic copies missing Incomplete audit and facility info missing, LEA not listed in budget, signature and electronic copies missing Complete audit and facility info missing, LEA not listed in budget, signature and electronic copies missing Complete Complete Complete Complete Complete Incomplete missing resumes, hard copy after deadline, missing health/safety plans, qualifications of staff, etc. Complete Complete Complete Complete Complete Complete Complete Incomplete LEA not named in budget, number of EC students missing, no audit firm identified clearly Complete Complete Incomplete - missing school calendar and parts of instructional and assessment programs, no audit firm identified, and lacks	Application Status subcommittees Complete Incomplete audit and facility info missing, LEA not listed in budget, signature and electronic copies missing Incomplete audit and facility info missing, LEA not listed in budget, signature and electronic copies missing Complete Complete Complete Complete Complete Complete Complete Incomplete missing resumes, hard copy after deadline, missing health/safety plans, qualifications of staff, etc. Complete Incomplete LEA not named in budget, number of EC students missing, no audit firm identified clearly Complete Com

Regular Applications Received Prior to the Deadline	Application Status	Reviewed by PCSAC subcommittees	Interviewed by the entire PCSAC	Recommended to the SBE to receive a charter
Flemington Academy	Complete			
Fort Bragg Regional High School	Complete			
Greensboro Progressive	Complete			
Heritage Collegiate Leadership Academy	Complete			
High Point Academy	Complete			
Howard & Lillian Lee Scholars	Complete			
Invest Collegiate	Complete			
Island Montessori Charter	Complete			
Jefferson Preparatory Academy	Complete			
Langtree Charter Academy	Complete			
Leadership Learning Academy	Complete			
Lindley Learning Academy	Complete			
Longleaf School of the Arts	Complete			
Minds Engaged Academy	Incomplete organizational chart missing, different copies provided			
New Bern International	Complete			
New Hope Charter	Complete			
Our Neighborhood Charter	Complete			
Oxford Preparatory High School	Complete			
Parents & Their Children Academy	Complete			
Paul Brown Leadership	Complete			
Piedmont IT Academy	Complete			
Pinnacle Classical Academy	Complete			
Reaching All Minds Academy	Complete			
	Incomplete qualifications missing, no electronic version, curriculum section incomplete, missing insurance and LEA budget			
Robert J. Brown Leadership Academy	projections			
Southeastern Academy	Complete			
Springs Academy Charter	Complete			
STEM Education for a Global Society Academy	Comp. L.			
(SEGS)	Complete			
StudentFirst Academy	Complete			

Regular Applications Received Prior	or Application Status	Reviewed by PCSAC	Interviewed by the entire	Recommended to the SBE
to the Deadline		subcommittees	PCSAC	to receive a charter
Successful Start Academy	Complete			
Summerfield Charter Academy	Complete			
The Achievement School	Complete			
The Capitol Encore Academy	Complete			
The Expedition School	Complete			
The Institute for the Development of Young				
Leaders	Complete			
The Montessori Academy of Cornelius (MAC)	Incomplete no audit firm identified, Articles and nonprofit undescribed			
The North Carolina Leadership Academy	Complete			
Thunderbird Preparatory Academy	Complete			
Uwharrie Charter Academy	Complete			
Vance County Learning Center	Complete			
Waddell Elementary International	Complete			
Willow Oak Montessori	Complete			
Wilson Preparatory	Complete			
Winston-Salem Middle College	Complete			
Winterville Academy	Incomplete no facility information, missing a complete hard copy and revenue per LEA, multiple versions			
Wisdom Academy	Complete			
Z.E.C.A School of Arts and Technology	Complete			