



**MONTGOMERY
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Request for Proposals (RFP) For Public Charter Schools

October 5, 2020

Montgomery County Board of Education

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Engage, Educate, Inspire

Montgomery Public Schools Purpose and Direction:

We will engage, educate, and inspire our students to succeed in college, career, and beyond!

Montgomery Public Schools Vision

MPS is a place where every student develops a love of learning, cultivates intellectual curiosity and dreams of a future full of amazing possibilities.

Introduction

With the passage of the *Alabama School Choice and Opportunity Act*, Act 2015-3, on March 19, 2015, public charter schools may be established in Alabama in accordance with the Act. Under this law, a charter school is a public school that operates according to the terms of a charter, or contract, that has been approved by a local board of education and the State Board of Education or the Alabama Charter Schools Commission. Locally approved charter schools operate under the control and management of the local board of education. The Montgomery Public Schools (MPS), as an approved charter schools authorizer, is pleased to seek proposals for a high quality public charter school in the Montgomery Public Schools district.

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

Characteristics of the Schools the District is Most Interested in Authorizing

Montgomery Public Schools (MPS) is committed to receiving applications for charter schools for any and all ideas. We encourage new and innovative approaches to help us reach our mission and strategic goals. In order to assist you in your application, we are providing you with specific information about the types of charter applications we are most interested in receiving. This information was gathered through gap-analysis and research.

Through our research of the needs of the district, there are a couple of categories of charter schools that we are most interested in authorizing. MPS is seeking proposals for charter schools that will significantly improve student performance outcomes, particularly in the areas of foundational principals of reading and mathematics; specifically for at-risk students.

An “at-risk” student is defined as a student who has an economic or academic disadvantage that requires special services and assistance to succeed in educational programs. The term includes, but is not limited to, students who are members of economically disadvantaged families, students who are identified as having special education needs, students who are limited in English proficiency, students who are at risk of dropping out of high school, and students who do not meet minimum standards of academic proficiency.

We are seeking a charter school that will, first, decrease the identified achievement gaps on both proficiency and growth between student subgroups. Secondly, we anticipate a measurable increase in the satisfaction level of parents and guardians whose at-risk students are served by the charter school. Thirdly, we anticipate that the charter school will demonstrate that the expectations set forth can be met in a financially sound and responsible manner, within the financial resources allocated to the charter school under Act No. 2015-3.

Evaluation Process

Complete petitions for charter schools proposing to open for 2022-2023 must be submitted online through <https://charter.tools/> no later than 4:00 pm on Monday, November 30, 2020. All requested content must be included and all formatting guidelines must be followed in order for an application to be considered complete. The evaluation process will include four steps of review and are summarized as follows:

1. Initial Review of Charter Application

The Superintendent and/or Superintendent's designee will complete the initial review of the charter application to determine if the applicant has met all the requirements to be considered for full review. Incomplete petitions will not be considered for 2022-2023 and must be resubmitted in a subsequent annual application round. If the application is determined to be complete, the charter application will move on to Step 2. If the application is not complete, the review process will terminate, and the applicant will be issued a denial letter with the reason and area of incompleteness noted.

2. Academic Review of Charter Application and Operational Review of Charter Application

This review will be completed by review team members specific to each area of the application using the <https://charter.tools/>. The applications will be reviewed for program innovation, a demonstrably effective curriculum and academic plan, solid financial planning, depth and breadth of community support, evidence of strong academic leadership and an effective board, and carefully designed accountability measures.

3. Full External Team Review

Once each area has been reviewed by team members specific to each area, an external review team will review the application(s). Once the full review team has scored each application using the application rubric, applicants who have submitted a complete petition will be scheduled for an applicant interview.

4. Capacity Interview and Public Hearing

An interview will be scheduled for each applicant where the review team will ask clarifying questions. The number of people to be interviewed and to be present at the capacity interview is determined by the applicant group. Please limit the number to no more than ten, if possible. In addition to a capacity interview, a public hearing will be held in the community where the school is to be located.

5. Board Review as Authorizer

The team will then submit the application(s), completed scored rubric, and details of the discussions from the full review to the MPS Superintendent for final review. The Superintendent will then present the application to the Montgomery Public Schools Board of Education for final review and approval or denial.

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

Applicant Code of Conduct

The Superintendent and members of the MPS Board of Education are obligated by state law to make decisions in the best interests of children, free from personal or political influences. Similarly, charter school applicants have the responsibility of respecting and upholding the integrity of the charter school application process.

Specifically, charter school applicants *shall not*

1. Initiate, or attempt to initiate, any activity with the Superintendent or MPS Board of Education member that is prohibited by the Code of Governmental Ethics;
2. Direct any communications, including application documents, to the superintendent or an MPS Board of Education member at any point during the application submission and evaluation process.

It is the responsibility of the charter applicant to ensure proper citation and acknowledgement of any sources included within the application. Any charter application that is found to be plagiarized will be submitted for disqualification. Charter school applicants in violation of these requirements may be deemed ineligible for consideration of charter school approval.

Public Disclosure

All charter school proposals submitted to MPS are considered public records and are subject to public release. Redaction of personal information is an applicant responsibility. Applicants are requested to provide redacted submissions of any file that includes personal information.

In addition, applicants are advised that neither School Board members, the Superintendent, nor district staff will comment on the contents of any application submission during the review and evaluation period, outside of the established public processes for this purpose (School Board meetings, Public Hearing); in the event of media inquiries, the district will refer individuals to an applicant's primary contact using the information included in this application.

Timeline

| October 5, 2020 | RFP to be issued and broadly publicized by local school board. |
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| TBD | <p>Applicant Workshop</p> <p>This session will provide current charter public school applicants with an overview of the process; walkthrough of the application; and a walkthrough of the timeline and expectations.</p> <p>Contact Vernet Nettles (251-463-6450) for an appointment.</p> |
| November 30, 2020 | Application due to Authorizer via https://charter.tools/ online |
| | Applications must be submitted by 4:00 pm Monday, November 30, 2020 |
| | <i>**Applications submitted prior to November 30 will not be considered received until November 30, so that all applications can be reviewed simultaneously.</i> |
| November 30, 2020 – January 27, 2021 | Review window for authorizers to consider applications |
| January 27, 2021 | Decisions from authorizer due |