

Thomas B. Fordham Foundation Charter School Application Evaluation Rubric

Expectations

Reviewers are tasked with reviewing the entirety of an application and providing the Fordham Foundation with a comprehensive analysis of the application. Reviewers are also tasked with raising questions and noting areas of concern, as necessary. Feedback is submitted via the evaluation rubric contained in the Foundation’s online application management system, EpiCenter. Reviewers must attend training on the review process annually. After completing the training, reviewers will read the application and provide written feedback. Additional information (due diligence) will be provided to the team prior to a debrief conference.

Preliminary Review Process Schools Wishing to Change Sponsors

Schools go through a preliminary review before submitting their application and must meet minimum criteria. Schools will be given a contact/general information sheet and request for information. We will use the submission and ODE data to verify they meet:

- 1. A majority of the primary indicators per our Academic, and Operations/Governance, and financial measures of success in our Accountability Plan for the two most recent school years. See scoring table below.**

The additional information is to include:

- a. Academic Data: Local Report Card
- b. Sponsor Compliance Reports. These must include any deficiencies cited by the current sponsor, along with any corrective action plans or remedies.
- c. Annual Budget to Actual Results (last 2 years)
- d. Two most recent audit reports
- e. LEA Special Education Performance Determination

- 2. The conditions allowing a school to enter a contract with a new sponsor, per 3314.034 (A).**

Scoring Table

Each standard where the score is “Exceeds the standard” or “Meets the standard” counts as one point; each standard where the score is “Does not meet the standard” or “Falls far below the standard” counts as zero points and any item in the accountability plan that does not apply will not be scored or counted in the calculation. If the school is in compliance with their contract and meeting any corrective action plan requirements, it receives one point; otherwise, it receives zero points.

Primary academic indicators	Exceeds the standard	Meets the standard	Does not meet the standard	Falls far below the standard	Points
PI ¹	80% or higher	50%–79%	30%–49%	29% and below	
VA ²	Greater or equal to +2	Greater or equal to -2 but less than +1	-Greater or equal to -2 but less than -3	Greater or equal to to -3	
Graduation rate	89% - 100%	79% - 88.9%	69% - 78.9%%	Below 69%	

¹ The PI percentage is calculated as follows: school’s PI score divided by 120 (the highest possible PI score).

² A VA score is a statistical estimate intended to convey how much a school has contributed to student learning. A higher VA score conveys greater confidence that, on average, the school has contributed more than one standard year of academic growth; a lower VA score conveys greater confidence that the school has, on average, not contributed more than one standard year of academic growth.

(four years)					
Graduation rate (five years)	90%–100%	80%–89.9%	60%–79%	Below 69%	
Improving At-Risk K-3 Readers	56.6% - 78.2%	13.2% - 56.5%	5% - 13.1%	Below 5%	
Performance versus local market: ³ PI	Ranked in top 20th percentile in PI score	Ranked in 70th–79th percentile in PI score	Ranked in 50th–69th percentile in PI score	Ranked in bottom 49th percentile in PI score	
Performance versus local market: VA	Ranked in top 20th percentile in VA score	Ranked in 70th–79th percentile in VA score	Ranked in 50th–69th percentile in VA score	Ranked in bottom 49th percentile in VA score	
Performance versus statewide charters: PI	Ranked in top 20th percentile in PI score	Ranked in 70th–79th percentile in PI score	Ranked in 50th–69th percentile in PI score	Ranked in bottom 49th percentile in PI score	
Performance versus statewide charters: VA	Ranked in top 20th percentile in VA score	Ranked in 70th–79th percentile in VA score	Ranked in 50th–69th percentile in VA score	Ranked in bottom 49th percentile in VA score	
Financial measures of success (current year)	Exceeds the standard	Meets the standard	Does not meet the standard	Falls far below the standard	Points
Current ratio of assets to liabilities	Ratio is greater than or equal to 1.1	Ratio is between 1.0 and 1.1; AND one-year trend is positive (current year's ratio is higher than last year's)	Ratio is between 0.9 and 1.0 or equals 1.0; OR ratio is between 1.0 and 1.1 AND one-year trend is negative	Ratio is less than or equal to 0.9	
Days' cash	60 or more days' cash	Between 30 and 60 days' cash	Between 15 and 30 days; OR between 30 and 60 days' cash AND one-year trend is negative	Fewer than 15 days' cash	

Current-year enrollment variance ⁴	Actual enrollment equals or is within 95% of	Actual enrollment is 90%–95% of budgeted	Actual enrollment is 80%–90% of budgeted	Actual enrollment is less than 80% of budgeted	
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³ “Local market” includes other charter schools (excluding virtual and dropout-recovery charter schools, as designated by the ODE) in the county in which a school is located as well as comparable district schools in the charter school’s serving district, as designated by the ODE.

⁴ The enrollment variance depicts actual enrollment divided by enrollment projection in the charter school’s board-approved budget.

	budgeted enrollment in most recent year	enrollment in most recent year	enrollment in most recent year	enrollment in most recent year	
Financial measures of success (prior years)	Exceeds the standard	Meets the standard	Does not meet the standard	Falls far below the standard	Points
Multiyear ratio of assets to liabilities ⁵	Ratio is greater than or equal to 1.1 for at least the 2 most recent years	Ratio is between 1.0 and 1.1 for at least the most recent year	Ratio is below 1.0 for the most recent year; OR below 1.0 in the 2 most previous years out of 3 years	Ratio is 0.9 or less for the most recent year; OR is 0.9 or less in the 2 most previous years out of 3 years	
Cash flow	Cash flow is positive for at least the 2 most recent years	Cash flow is positive for at least 1 of the most recent 2 years	Cash flow is not positive for at least 1 of the most recent 2 years	Cash flow is negative for any 2 consecutive years	
Operations & governance primary indicators	Exceeds the standard	Meets the standard	Does not meet the standard	Falls far below the standard	Points
Records compliance ⁶	90% or higher	79%–89%	60%–78%	59% or below	
On-time records submission rate	90% or higher	79%–89%	60%–78%	59% or below	
Financial records submitted monthly	90% or higher	79%–89%	60%–78%	59% or below	
Annual audit	Two consecutive years of no findings, findings for recovery, noncompliance citations, questioned costs, or material weaknesses, as set forth in the audit	No findings, findings for recovery, noncompliance citations, questioned costs, or material weaknesses, as set forth in the audit	Audit contains fewer than three of the following: findings, noncompliance citations, questioned costs, or material weaknesses, or findings for recovery (less than \$5,000 combined), as set forth in the audit	Audit contains three or more of the following: findings, noncompliance citations, questioned costs, or material weaknesses, or findings for recovery (in excess of \$5,000 combined), as set forth in the audit	
LEA special-education	Meets	Needs	Needs	Needs	

⁵ This ratio depicts the relationship between a school's annual assets and liabilities, covering the last three years, based on the most recently audited financial statements.

⁶ Represents the percentage of records reviewed that were accurate and complete during the school year.

performance determination (most recent annual) ⁷	requirements	assistance	intervention	substantial intervention	
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Summary Scoring Table			
Points Area	Possible points*	Points achieved	Total points percentage
Academic including multiple measures of student achievement	26 points		_____ percent
Financial measures	5 points		_____ percent
Operations and governance measures including Financial Audits and Special Education Performance	5 points		_____ percent
Site visit/Sponsor compliance reports	1 point		_____ percent
Total	37 points		_____ percent

Preliminary Review Process Replicators

We will use the most recent performance against contractual indicators in Exhibit IV of the contract to determine if the school is on track for renewal. Only schools who meet 67% or more of their contractual and accountability indicators are eligible to submit an application to replicate.

The information considered in the most recent performance against contractual indicators is included in the governing authority annual report.

- a. Academic Data (Exhibit IV) over the term of the current contract.
- b. Sponsor Site Visit/Compliance Reports. These will include any corrective action plans and progress.
- c. Financial Data (Exhibit IV) including recent audit reports over the term of the current contract.
- d. Audit reports over the term of the contract.

Application Process

A team of evaluators will review applications and interview applicants. Interviews will take place in the Fordham Dayton office and will include the school developer and/or school leadership, governing authority and financial representative. If the school is applying to change sponsors, the current sponsor will be interviewed separately. Evaluation Teams are comprised of evaluators with experience and expertise in a variety of fields,

⁷ The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) requires that state education agencies make annual determinations regarding the performance of special-education programs operated by local education agencies (LEAs) that receive federal IDEA Part-B funding. In Ohio, individual charter schools are considered LEAs.

including but not limited to curriculum and instruction, special student populations, law, governance, management, leadership, finance, school start-up, accountability and policy. If an application includes an area of specialization (e.g., career technical program or dropout prevention and recovery program), at least one reviewer will have expertise in that area.

The review consists of the following tasks:

- Reviewer training conference call
- Read and provide written feedback in EpiCenter for each application submitted
- Due diligence information provided to team
- Team lead reviews all individual rubrics and prepares outline for debrief conferences
- Team debrief conferences on each evaluation (via teleconference)
- Interview agendas developed
- Applicants notified of interview dates, agenda (including time, location, attendees, subject matter) forwarded to applicants
- Interviews
- Team lead drafts final analysis and submits to EpiCenter
- Fordham staff provides a recommendation to the board
- Fordham boards makes approval or non-approval decision
- Applicants are notified of the decision by Fordham

Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Statement

All reviewers, internal and external, must complete the Fordham Foundation's Conflict of Interest Disclosure and Confidentiality Statement. Fill out the disclosure accordingly, and submit by email to Theda. Please notify Theda as soon as possible if you believe there is a conflict or the appearance of a conflict.

Public Records

Please note that any notes, communication, etc., related to the application review may constitute a public document and may be subject to Ohio's open records laws.

Questions

Reviewers are always welcome to contact Theda at any time with any questions or concerns about the application, review process, or related issues.

Instructions

Evaluators will use the following Evaluation Rubric to rate applicant responses to the questions in the Request for Application for each standard. Within each section, specific criteria define the expectations for an excellent response that 'Meets the Standard.' There are a total of 22 standards, and applicants must receive a cut score of 49.5 points, meeting 75% of the total possible score of 66, and consensus of the review team to recommend the application move forward. Reviewers should complete the summary scoring table and narrative at the end of the evaluation rubric.

Rating Characteristics

Meets the Standard:

The response reflects a thorough understanding of key issues. It addresses the topic with specific and accurate information that shows thorough preparation; presents a clear, realistic picture of how the school expects to

operate; and inspires confidence in the applicant's capacity to carry out the plan effectively. This translates to meeting 75 to 100% of the application standards. An applicant who meets this standard receives 3 points.

Approaches the Standard:

The response meets the criteria in many respects, but lacks detail and/or requires additional information in one or more areas. This translates to meeting 50 to 74% of the application standards. An applicant who meets this standard receives 2 points.

Partially Meets the Standard:

The response meets the criteria in some respects but has substantial gaps in a number of areas. This translates to meeting 25 to 50% of the application standards. An applicant who meets this standard receives 1 point.

Does Not Meet the Standard:

The response is wholly undeveloped or significantly incomplete; demonstrates lack of preparation; or otherwise raises substantial concerns about the viability of the plan or the applicant's ability to carry it out. This translates to meeting less than 25% of the application standards. An applicant who meets this standard receives 0 points.

Mission and Vision

Education Plan: A.1.

A.1. Mission, Vision, and Educational Philosophy

A strong application will include:

1. The school’s mission and vision for how the school operates including the school’s educational foundation and the culture or ethos
2. Include an overview of the instructional methods and any research, data or experience that indicates why they use this approach with their student population.

Concerns	Page
Strengths	
Interview Questions	
Individual Section Rating/Points: Meets, Approaches, Partially Meets, Does Not Meet	

Education Plan: A.2.

A.2. Geographic Boundaries

A strong application will include:

1. A description of which of the following options the school will choose.
 - (a) Prohibit the enrollment of students who reside outside the district in which the school is located;
 - (b) Permit the enrollment of students who reside in districts adjacent to the district in which the school is located;
 - (c) Permit the enrollment of students who reside in any other district in the state.

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Individual Section Rating/Points: Meets, Approaches, Partially Meets, Does Not Meet	

Education Plan: A.3.

A.3. Curriculum and Instruction

A strong application will include:

1. A description of the curriculum used by the school, including measurable objectives and subject area content and skills for each grade level.
2. Explanation on how the chosen curriculum aligns with the Ohio content standards.
3. The specific instructional strategies employed to insure implementation of the curriculum, such as classroom-based or independent study, class size, class structure, and teaching methods.
4. How the program meets the needs of the at-risk students to be served.
5. Evidence that the proposed curriculum is evidence-based and has been effective with the student population you serve.
6. Describes the process the school will follow to evaluate, review and revise its curriculum.
7. All Attachments. For core subjects, sample lessons from two different grade levels (**Attachment A**) that illustrate strategies for implementation of the curriculum consistent with the mission and educational philosophy of the school.

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Strengths	
Interview Questions	
Individual Section Rating/Points: Meets, Approaches, Partially Meets, Does Not Meet	

Market Research

Education Plan: A.4.

A.4. Target Population

A strong application will include:

1. Description of the population of the school and how the proposed mission, curriculum, teaching methods and services align with the educational needs of that population.
2. Leadership team’s experience serving similar student populations.
3. Needs assessment of the target neighborhood and student populations, including demographics and academic performance of other schools in the market area.

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Individual Section Rating/Points: Meets, Approaches, Partially Meets, Does Not Meet	

Education Plan: A.5.

A.5. School Calendar and Daily Schedule

A strong application will include:

1. Attachment B: School’s current calendar showing the number of days the school will be in session
2. Attachment C: Two sample daily class schedules showing daily hours of operation and allocation of time for core instruction, supplemental instruction, extra-curricular activities, and after-school activities, as applicable.
3. Completed table detailing instruction time, staff development aligned to the education plan and budget.

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Strengths	
Interview Questions	
Individual Section Rating/Points: Meets, Approaches, Partially Meets, Does Not Meet	

Education Plan: A.6.

A.6. Special Student Populations

A strong application will include:

1. The school’s philosophy regarding educating special student populations, including but not limited to strategies for student recruitment, retention, and support.
2. The school’s plans for identifying and successfully serving the following students in order to comply with

applicable laws and regulations: students with disabilities, students with Limited English Proficiency (LEP), homeless students, gifted and talented students

3. The school’s curriculum and approach to instruction and how it will be designed or adapted to serve those students.

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Interview Questions	
Individual Section Rating/Points: Meets, Approaches, Partially Meets, Does Not Meet	

Education Plan: A.7.

A.7. School-Specific Goals and Objectives

A strong application will include:

1. Key academic goals and key non-academic goals for which the school plans to hold itself accountable. Well-Developed goals will be SMART (i.e., specific, measurable, ambitious, attainable, relevant, time-bound).
2. Mission specific goals.
3. How performance standards align with the school’s mission and proposed educational program.
4. The school’s policy and plan for reporting performance goals to parents and the public.

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Strengths	

Education Plan: A.10.

New Schools and Schools Seeking a Change in Sponsor: A.10 Prior Success in Raising Student Achievement

A strong application will include:

- 1. Documentation of prior success in improving student achievement
- 2. Includes supporting data

Replicators: Growth Plan

A strong application will include:

- 1. A growth plan
- 2. The impact on current school(s) and management and/or organizational structure.

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Individual Section Rating/Points: Meets, Approaches, Partially Meets, Does Not Meet	

Section B: Financial Plan

Interview Questions	
Individual Section Rating/Points: Meets, Approaches, Partially Meets, Does Not Meet	

TYPE YOUR RESPONSE TO B.3 BELOW:

B.4 Insurance

A strong application will include:

1. A quotation/letter that describes the level of insurance coverage that will be obtained.

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Individual Section Rating/Points: Meets, Approaches, Partially Meets, Does Not Meet	

Capacity to Execute the Plan

B.5 Pre-Opening Plan

A strong application will include:

1. A pre-opening plan that documents key tasks to be completed between approval of the application and opening of the school, including but not limited activities associated with finance, leadership, facilities, state obligations, students, parents and community.
2. Timelines and schedules for pre-opening.

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Individual Section Rating/Points: Meets, Approaches, Partially Meets, Does Not Meet	

Governance Plan:

Governance and Management Structures

C.1. Governing Body

A strong application will include:

1. A description of the current governing board members.
2. The governing board's view of the relationship between itself and the school leader and management entity (if any) and how conflicts of interest would be handled.
3. Training the board plans to obtain which include a timetable, topics to be addressed and requirements for participation.

Strengths	
Interview Questions	
Individual Section Rating/Points: Meets, Approaches, Partially Meets, Does Not Meet	

Staffing Plan

C.4 Staffing and Human Resources

A strong application will include:

1. Plans for recruitment, selection, and evaluation for all staff – including leadership and operations positions – of the proposed charter school.
2. Job descriptions for all staff members, employment benefits offered, and estimated salary ranges.
3. How the non-profit governing board and school administration will handle unsatisfactory staff performance, as well as staff turnover and leadership succession.
4. A staffing chart for the school’s first year, and a staffing plan for the term of the charter (budget period).
5. A copy of the proposed school personnel policies or staff handbook.

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Individual Section Rating/Points: Meets, Approaches, Partially Meets, Does Not Meet	

C.5 Professional Development

A strong application will include:

Applicant Instructions:

1. The professional development opportunities that will be offered to teachers and staff.
2. The lead person responsible for developing, implementing and evaluating professional development plans.
3. How professional development will include and support both general and special education teachers.
4. How the professional development program is aligned with the school’s pedagogy and curriculum.
5. How the professional development program will be evaluated to assess its effectiveness and success, and how the program will be modified to support identified teacher needs.

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C.6 Student Recruitment and Enrollment

A strong application will include:

1. The plan for recruitment and enrollment of students.
2. How the school will be publicized and marketed throughout the community to a broad cross-section of families and prospective students.
3. The school’s plans and timelines for the school's recruitment, enrollment, and admission process (including lottery).
4. Documents related to student enrollment (e.g., enrollment forms).
5. Enrollment Policy that is in alignment with law and does not discriminate.

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Individual Section Rating/Points: Meets, Approaches, Partially Meets, Does Not Meet	

C.7 Community Partnerships

A strong application will include:

1. A list of community partners and how they support the school.
2. The impact of the school on the community and students and what process was used to assess local need and provided evidence of community support.

Individual Section Rating/Points: Meets, Approaches, Partially Meets, Does Not Meet	

APPLICATION REVIEW SCORING

List the number of standards that meet, approach, partially meet or do not meet the standard.

Meets the Standard	Approaches the Standard	Partially Meets the Standard	Does Not Meet the Standard
Number of standards X 3 =	Number of standards X 2 =	Number of standards X 1 =	0

Total points =

Summary Narrative