

ADDENDUM ITEM X:

**NEO READY TO OPEN
STANDARDS**

Charter School Ready-to-Open Standards for Approval to Open NEO-Authorized Schools

Name of School:
Start-up coordinator:
Phone number and email address:
Checklist filled out by:
Date:

Purpose	Item	Status
	The program model is developed and is being implemented consistent with the affidavit and contract with the authorizer.	

Learning Program, Student Achievement and Accountability

Special Education Director is hired and all special education requirements completed including submitting the "Application for Special Education Funds- Statement of Assurances" by June 1	
A scope and sequence has been developed for the school's academic program (aligned to state academic standards)	
An assessment system is in place that aligns with the curriculum	
Student graduation/grade progression criteria have been identified	
A Special Education and EL program have been developed	
Job-embedded professional development plans and teacher evaluation system have been developed for the school's professional staff	
Textbooks, materials, computers, supplies, etc. have been ordered and received	
Capital equipment has been ordered and received	
A plan is in place to meet World's Best Workforce (WBWF) requirements	

4. Governance – Composition of the Board

At least five members are on the Board and all required roles/positions are filled (including licensed teacher and at least one community member from Minnesota) per school's bylaws	
At least one board member has expertise regarding the school mission and program concepts	
A board member with a finance background or expertise is designated as Treasurer	
A criminal background check has been conducted on each board member	
Board members are not independent contractors for the school to ensure no conflict of interest (board is in compliance with all statutory Conflict of Interest and board composition requirements)	
All board members disclose if they have potential plans to apply for a position at the school	

Charter School Ready-to-Open Criteria

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5. Governance – Foundational Documents

The school has filed with the I.R.S. for Section 501(c)3 status and a Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN)	
Direct deposit (EFT Authorization) has been established with the Minnesota Department of Finance after registering with SWIFT using Federal Employer Identification Number from IRS and Minnesota Tax ID Number from Minnesota Dept of Revenue	
The school address entered into SWIFT matches the official school address listed in the MDE Organization Reference Glossary See http://w20.education.state.mn.us/MdeOrgView/	
The school has filed with the MN Attorney General and Secretary of State	

6. Governance – Policy

Sign all charter assurances and submit to NEO/MDE ("Assurances for Charter Schools and Authorizers" and related policies are due June 1 and "Assurance of State and Fed Law Prohibiting Discrimination" is due November 15)	
The school has approved a conflict of interest and nepotism policy that is in compliance with applicable Minnesota statutes	
The Board members begin required training within 6 months of being seated	
The Board has received training for and is carrying out fair employment practices that are in compliance with applicable Minnesota and federal statutes	
The school has in place an admission and lottery process and policy that provides equal access to all students and is in compliance with Minnesota statute	
The Board has a clear plan for developing and reviewing policies	
The Board has approved a Calendar for the school year by April 30th (the calendar must be turned in to MDE with the school's enrollment projection report by June 10)	

7. Governance – Financial

The school's start up grant application (CSP) has been submitted and/or approved by the Board and MDE	
The school has established a checking account with duplicate signature/internal controls	
The Board carries out monthly review of a Treasurer's Report with fiscal reports and approval of the payment of bills	
The Board submits monthly Treasurer's Report to the authorizer	
The Board has secured a bank line of credit	
The Board has adopted the annual budget and budget amendments by June 30th	
The Board has approved a preliminary 5-year budget with plans for sustaining the program after start up grant funding ends. The budget includes major revenue and expenditure assumptions	

Charter School Ready-to-Open Criteria

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Governance – Financial (continued)

The school's budget is updated as more accurate information about enrolled students is available: Special Education, Transportation, and Food Service	
The Board provides financial oversight: Attends appropriate training on financial management and establishes policies/procedures for internal control, contract approval, purchasing and financial reporting	

8. Governance – Operations

A school website is developed that meets all state requirements	
The Board hears monthly reports on school readiness to open/development progress to assure school is being developed consistent with the charter's mission and contract with authorizer	
Board includes an agenda item for "board/authorizer discussion" in board meeting agenda	
Meetings are held regularly and comply with Open Meeting Law	
A written agenda for each meeting is published for public inspection and provided to the authorizer	
School board meeting minutes are recorded, approved, and available for public inspection; an updated board roster is also available for public inspection (posted at the school's website)	
The Board allocates the budget/approves the hiring of all employees	
If the board chooses not to employ staff but rather contract with another entity for professional services, this contract is developed and approved by the board	
The board has secured legal counsel	
Criminal background checks are conducted on all staff	
The Board has means in place to evaluate the director and if applicable, the management organization/service provider	
9. Budget and Financial	
An accurate enrollment verification form is submitted to MDE by June 10 th (as early as possible to generate the first state aid payment)	
The board has identified expenditures that will remain uncommitted until enrollment projections are met (prioritized budget items)	
The school has contracted for or hired a Business Manager and established effective business practices, including developed a Business Administration Policy/Procedures Manual: Staff has attended appropriate training on UFARS, MARSS, STARS & year end financial reporting and established business processes to meet board policies & financial reporting needs	
Revenue budget is periodically updated to reflect current data for: Enrollment, Legislative changes, and other changes	
Expenditure budget is periodically updated to reflect current data for: Staffing needs, Salaries, Benefits, and Lease & other costs	

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Budget and Financial (continued)

Approved MARSS software has been obtained	
Special Education and, if applicable, Federal Title 1 Program staff are entered into the MDE's EDRS system	
The school's staff provide appropriate, regular, and timely financial information to board, including: Detailed cash disbursements data, Detailed revenue & expenditure budgets, and Cash flow projections	
The school has submitted its Federal CSP Implementation Grant continuation request (if applicable)	
The school has contracted with an auditor for the start-up fiscal year if the school had made any expenditure.	
10. Facility	
The school has secured (signed a lease) a facility with an Occupancy Rating appropriate for educational use by 150 days prior to opening date.	
The space is adequate for the program model	
If applicable, any significant build-out of the school facility has begun no later than 120 days prior to opening date (city permissions have been obtained for construction and any inspections are scheduled)	
The facility meets accessibility requirements (ADA)	
The facility has been inspected by the city Fire Marshall, and the inspector's report is free of issues	
The board ensures that the lease is affordable and includes appropriate lease termination and renewal language	
Prior to signing the lease, there is evidence that an adequate student marketing plan is implemented and recruitment results indicate a sufficient enrollment will result thereby. Also prior to signing, the lease should be reviewed by the school's legal counsel who has expertise in charter school lease language.	
The school has applied for lease aid to MDE (should be submitted as soon as possible, but no later than June 1st to be included in their metered payment in July)	
The school has developed a transportation plan, independently or with another entity	
If the school district is to transport students, notice must be given to that district not later than July 1 (sooner is preferable)- The Transportation Survey Form is submitted to MDE no later than July 1 st .	
The school has purchased appropriate insurance prior to hiring any employees and/or lease start date	

Charter School Ready-to-Open Criteria

Item	Status
11. Marketing, Student Recruitment and Outreach	
Projected enrollment and budget are conservative	
The school has put in place and implemented an outreach plan for informing a diverse student population of the school	
The school provides opportunities for discussion with the parents, students if applicable and the public	
Enrollment packet including home language questionnaire, free/reduced meal eligibility, accommodation requests, permission to get records, health and Special Ed information, media waiver requirements are fulfilled	
Enrollment updates are submitted regularly to the authorizer	
The school's recruitment plan is being implemented: Registrations are being submitted and 75% of budgeted enrollment is registered & verified (packeted) by 90 days prior to school's opening day	
125% of budgeted enrollment is registered and verified (packeted) by 60 days prior to school's opening day	
12. Leadership, Staffing and Management	
A position description for the school leader has been approved by the Board and posted (board follows a fair and transparent recruitment and hiring process)	
The school leader has been hired at least 150 days prior to the school's opening date	
School leaders complete training provided by MDE	
All MDE requirements for creating an account and reporting in MARSS are complete	
A Data Assessment Coordinator (DAC) is designated/All necessary DAC requirements and trainings are completed	
MARSS coordinator's name is sent to mars@state.mn.us as soon as designated	
A site verification form is submitted to MDE by July 1st	
The Board has ensured that compensation plans for all staff are reasonable	
Staff reduction provisions are included in contracts for lack of enrollment/funding to maintain expenditures as projected	
All teaching positions have been posted	
All teachers have been hired by 60 days prior to school opening, in order to begin employment 30 days in advance of opening day	
All teachers are appropriately licensed and correctly identified on the school's website if posted, are approved community experts or a variance has been obtained from the commissioner	
An unemployment compensation option is set up with the State	
TRA and PERA are set up with the State	
A working account with SERVS is created and registered	
Register for a DUNS number	
Register for Central Contractor Registration (CCR) at System for Award Management (SAM), the payment processing system the Federal Government uses to approve and disperse Federal Funds	

Charter School Ready-to-Open Criteria

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Leadership, Staffing and Management (continued)

Sign up for appropriate MDE Listservs	
Identify/designate an EDRS coordinator	
Complete all Title applications as applicable by appropriate deadlines	

13. Food Service	
Appropriate school leaders attended food service training at MDE	
A food service facility license is obtained	
Bids are requested for a catering service and service is selected	
A Contract For Vended Meals and School Nutrition Application Procedure is completed and submitted	
Six cent menu certification is completed and submitted as applicable	
How To Participate documentation is submitted	

Important Notes:

The Ready to Open Criteria may be revised based on changes in statute and unique school circumstances.

If a school is not meeting readiness to open requirements, NEO may extend deadlines upon submission of a plan from the school for how the requirement will be met within the extension. However at all times, NEO reserves the right to make the decision that the school is not ready to open if deadlines and requirements are not met.

New schools are required to complete the enrollment report and provide it to NEO weekly beginning in April in the year that the school plans to open. The form for the enrollment report is included on the following page.

ENROLLMENT REPORT FOR _____

(school)

Date: _____

Grade	Grade Capacity	Applied/ Interested	Enrolled/ Packeted	Goal Enrolled/ Packeted	Gap Enrolled/ Packeted	Records Received	W-list
Total							

Terms

Grade Capacity: Number of seats available in each grade

Applied/Interested: Have completed pre-enrollment interest/contact form

Enrolled/Packeted: Completed enrollment packet (packet typically includes forms for need for English language services, financial assistance, special education, health related services, media permission, permission to obtain student records from prior school, and any accommodations)

Goal Enrolled/Packeted: It is often the experience of charter schools that only about 75% of students enrolled actually attend the school so the goal for enrolled/packeted students should be at least 125% of budgeted enrollment

Gap Enrolled/Packeted: Gap between goal enrolled/packeted and packeted enrollees

Packeted: Enrollees who have completed the full enrollment packet

Records Received: Records from previous school requested and received

W-list: Once the goal for the Enrolled/Packeted is met, Applied are placed on Wait list