

Request for Proposals (RFP) For Public Charter Schools



October 31, 2024

Conecuh County Board of Education

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www.conecuhk12.al.us

Making It Happen

Conecuh County Schools Mission

MISSION: Our mission is to create a culture of confident, diverse, and innovative learners in high-quality educational settings. We will advance forward and move higher toward a climate that encourages continuous growth and prepares learners to reach their fullest potential to excel in college, career, and life.

VISION: Conecuh County strives to inspire a community of learners by unlocking their unlimited potential to discover, grow, and lead the future.

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 local board is required to ensure that a locally approved charter school is subject to all applicable federal, state, and local rules, regulations, court orders, and statutes as well as meets the performance objectives identified in the contract.

This RFP from Conecuh County Schools, an approved charter school authorizer, seeks proposals for a high-quality public charter school that would operate in this school district.

All public charter schools approved in Conecuh 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

Conecuh County Board of Education (CCBOE) 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. 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.

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. Conecuh County Schools 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

1. Decrease the identified achievement gaps in both proficiency and growth between student subgroups.
2. Demonstrate a measurable increase in the satisfaction level of parents and guardians whose at-risk students are served by the charter school.
3. 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 2025 - 2026 must be submitted online through <https://charter.tools/> no later than 4:00 pm on Monday, November 30, 2023. 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 which 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 2025-2026 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 and Operational Review of Charter Application

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

If determined necessary, additional persons with particular expertise may be invited to review specific areas of the application to assist in creating a thorough application process review.

3. Capacity Interview and Public Hearing

A Capacity 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 of face-to-face members to no more than ten, if possible. In addition to a capacity interview, a public hearing will be scheduled in the community where the school is to be located.

Please be mindful that during the course of the review process, there may be requests to provide clarifying information via email, virtual, or face-to-face meetings.

4. 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 Superintendent for final review. The Superintendent will then present the application to the Conecuh County 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 Conecuh County 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 Conecuh County Board of Education member that is prohibited by the Code of Governmental Ethics;
2. Direct any communications, including application documents, to the superintendent or the CCBOE Authorizer's Charter Liaison and team members at any point during the application submission and evaluation process.

It is the responsibility of the charter applicant to ensure proper citation and acknowledgment 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 CCBOE are considered public records and are subject to public release. Redaction of personal information is an applicant's 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

<p>November 1, 2024</p>	<p>RFP to be issued and broadly publicized by the local school board.</p>
<p>August 22, 2024</p>	<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 Dr. Nettles (334-223-7894) for an appointment.</p>
<p>November 30, 2024</p>	<p>Application due to Authorizer via https://charter.tools/ online</p>
	<p>Applications must be submitted by 4:00 pm Monday, November 30, 2022</p>

	<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, 2024 – January 26, 2025	Review window for authorizers to consider applications
January 26, 2025	Decisions from the authorizer are due.