



## **Request for Proposals**

**To open in 2019 - 20 or thereafter**

### **Our Mission**

*The Education reEnvisioned BOCES will develop and deliver services to BOCES, districts and authorized schools to expand availability and access to quality, innovative public education programs Colorado parents and students seek.*

### **Our Vision**

*We believe that better education methods and formats continue to emerge, and so resolve that the Education reEnvisioned BOCES will be a welcoming host to innovative, exceptional programs and schools and a wellspring of better education models, encouraging proliferation through partnerships with other BOCES and districts.*

### **Process managed by**

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## **A Letter from the Education reEnvisioned BOCES**

Jan 15, 2019

Dear New School Applicant,

Education reEnvisioned believes that every child should have the right to high-quality educational options. With this in mind, we are releasing this Request for Proposals for high quality schools. Our BOCES is seeking motivated and talented teams of educators, parents, teachers, and community leaders with the commitment to implement effective and innovative methods of educating children. Because we understand that not every student learns the same way, the BOCES desires to authorize and oversee a robust portfolio of schools where programs are designed to fit the needs of individual students, while focusing on priority needs identified for new school development.

The Education reEnvisioned BOCES is committed to working collaboratively with potential leaders, new school developers, and community stakeholders to expand high-quality options that will meet the needs of our community. It is our hope that through this process we build upon the success of our current schools and programs while providing outstanding new educational opportunities for every student.

Our commitment to high-quality public-school options is the top priority for the Board of Directors. One goal of our BOCES mission is to be a welcoming host to innovative educational programs and schools, which means we will provide flexibility and the supports our schools need to create and deliver outstanding educational opportunities for every student.

In this RFP, we specifically highlight the desire for a homeschooling enrichment program in our BOCES. Our community has identified this need and so we will strive to authorize such a program to support the substantial number of highly mobile and other homeschooling families living within our BOCES boundaries.

On behalf of Education reEnvisioned BOCES students and families, thank you for joining us in this important work. We strive to ensure every student achieves the success that student and family seek.

Sincerely,

Dr. Don Griffin/President Board of Directors  
Ken Witt, Executive Director

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## Request for Proposals Overview

Education reEnvisioned BOCES publishes this Request for Proposals (RFP) to provide context and information for those interested in launching new public schools in the BOCES. This RFP highlights identified areas of greatest need both from a programmatic and geographic perspective. The BOCES invites contract school applications that have designed programs aligned with the BOCES mission, as well the BOCES identified priority needs at this time. While applicants are strongly encouraged to consider the areas with the highest evidence of need in developing their application, Education reEnvisioned BOCES also welcomes all applicants that demonstrate a high-quality school design and strong community support.

The Education reEnvisioned BOCES Board of Directors formally authorizes schools only after a rigorous review process highly similar the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) *Principles and Standards for Quality Charter School Authorizing*. The BOCES contracts the operation of our authorized public schools, giving the school operators a high degree of freedom to deliver high-quality education programs, while holding those operators accountable to academic performance in keeping with the CDE expectations for public school performance per the School Performance Framework. The BOCES has defined its current new school priorities as articulated in the following section.

### **Education reEnvisioned BOCES Commitment for Contract Schools and Programs:**

*Education reEnvisioned BOCES authorizes high quality, innovative and effective public contract school options that are autonomous and accountable for improved academic outcomes for a diverse student population. Through our policies, practices and procedures as a quality educational provider, the BOCES will provide high standards for all schools which will protect student and public interests.*

Colorado state law allows a BOCES to operate schools as another avenue for parents, teachers, and community members to implement new and innovative methods of educating children that are proven to be effective and to take responsible risks creating new and innovative, research-based ways of educating all children within the public education system. Education reEnvisioned BOCES believes that it has the duty to create and partner with educational programs that reflect high educational expectations and to create conditions where these expectations can be met. The BOCES believes strongly that one size does not fit all regarding education, that different pupils learn differently, and public-school programs should be designed to fit the needs of individual pupils. To these ends, Education reEnvisioned BOCES operates and contracts for the operation of schools in such a manner that reflects three core principles:

1. ***Education reEnvisioned BOCES maintains high standards for schools.*** This includes setting high standards for approving contract school applicants; maintaining high standards for the schools the BOCES operates and/or oversees; effectively cultivating quality Contract schools that meet identified educational needs of students; overseeing Contract schools that, over time, meet the performance standards and targets set forth in their school contracts through established measures and metrics; and closing schools that fail to meet standards and targets set forth in law and by contract.
2. ***Education reEnvisioned BOCES upholds school autonomy.*** This includes honoring and preserving core autonomies crucial to school success, including independent governance and management, personnel, school vision and culture, instructional programming, and budgeting, holding schools accountable for their performance; minimizing administrative and compliance burdens on schools; and focusing on holding schools accountable for outcomes rather than processes.
3. ***Education reEnvisioned BOCES protects student and public interests.*** This includes making the well-being and interests of students the fundamental value informing all actions and decisions; holding schools accountable for fulfilling fundamental public education obligations to all students; holding schools accountable for fulfilling fundamental public education obligations to the public; and ensuring in its own work ethical conduct, focus on the mission of operating high-quality schools, transparency, effective and efficient public stewardship, and compliance with applicable laws and regulations; and supporting parents and students in being well-informed about the quality of education provided by our schools.

The BOCES recommends that any applicants familiarize themselves with the NACSA Principles and Standards (<http://www.qualitycharters.org/for-authorizers/principles-and-standards/>) which are the source of these principles.

Additionally, because contract schools are in many ways similar to charter schools, the BOCES strongly recommends new applicants avail themselves of the information resources offered by the Colorado League of Charter schools (<https://coloradoleague.org/page/nsdsupport>) prior to submitting an application to the BOCES to authorize a contract school. Applicants that have reviewed their application in light of League recommendations for charter applications are more likely to have a successful evaluation in the BOCES.

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## **The Case for More High-Performing Schools**

Education reEnvisioned recognizes the need for more high-performing schools for a number of reasons that are identified in this section.

### ***Demand Exceeds Capacity in Existing Schools of Choice***

While some of the traditional schools in the region have excess capacity, most of the choice enrollment schools in the region have waitlists, indicating that parents seek more seats than are available. These are families that seek some of our region's innovative education choices but cannot get their children in the schools they prefer.

In addition, a community member district survey administered in early 2012 found that 70% of families value having a school located in their neighborhood. This underscores the need to strategically open new schools that will be easily accessible to families in neighborhoods where existing schools are full.

As contract school applicants consider various locations within the Colorado Springs area, they are strongly encouraged to contact the BOCES to discuss various site options and understand how a new school might fit in with the areas of greater need for new facilities.

### ***Choice and Competition Make for a Healthy School System***

Introduction of free market principles has greatly influenced public school systems over the past twenty years. As noted by Harvard University Associate Professor of Economics, Dr. Caroline Hoxby, competition within our public school has or could have three major effects: 1) improvement in the efficiency of schools (i.e. more achievement for the same amount of money); 2) more innovative schools or schools that are better aligned with individual students' needs; and 3) the potential to impact how students are sorted among schools, potentially leading, for example, to greater racial integration.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> PBS Frontline: The Battle Over School Choice. <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/vouchers/choice/choice.html>

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## **Priority Needs for New School Development**

In order to inform applicants of this Request for Proposals process, Education reEnvisioned has reviewed student achievement data in existing schools and interviewed leaders of member districts. The BOCES has identified the following priorities for new school development.

- ***Schools that offer a different educational model than is currently available in the BOCES membership region.*** Education reEnvisioned BOCES strives to have a variety of educational options designed for students' different learning styles and interests available through BOCES-authorized contract public schools. There are many other models that may be of interest to the community. In alignment with our Vision and Mission

outlined above, the BOCES encourages applicants to consider what is currently available and what may be missing when developing a proposal for a new school.

- ***Schools that offer (a) homeschooling enrichment program(s).***

The BOCES believes the existence of a learning center that provides one or more enrichment programs for homeschooled students would be of great benefit to the community.

Enrichment areas of interest include:

- advanced math
- health careers (including biology and physiology)
- science (chemistry, physics)
- coding (software development)
- vocational / trade instruction and internships

Such programs should consider a course portfolio with local providers (music conservatory, sports center, community theater, etc.) as appropriate for the focus area. All such programs must include explanation of how education time (online and direct) will be logged to the satisfaction of CDE seat time record requirements and licensed teacher oversight of educational programs.

- ***Schools that offer a leadership development focus (K-12)***

Elementary, middle and high school based on a highly-structured environment, where daily activities center on academics, leadership, and character development is needed to address an under-served segment of our community. Not a reform school or boot camp for at-risk youth, this program would help prepare aspiring leaders, including military, corporate, legislative and other public service leaders.

Such a school will focus to produce graduates who are academically prepared for college, the workforce and life. The graduates will possess sound decision-making and problem-solving skills, appreciate lifelong learning, accept accountability for their actions and decisions, respect others and appreciate diversity, be leaders of character and honorable individuals, and aspire to be patriotic and productive citizens in their community.

Examples of potential elements of such a proposal:

- Junior ROTC
- Leadership certificate program that leads to internships
- Student legislature that provides realistic legislative experience
- Robust concurrent enrollment program
- Principal(s) with significant military, business, or legislative background

- ***Schools that offer a particular STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) focus.***

The need for schools with a specific, strong STEM focus is supported by academic data in the areas of math and science, as well as by the results of community surveys. When parents and community members of a member school district were asked to choose in which programs, they have a high level of interest, "Science and Technology" was the top choice at both the middle and high school level, and the second most popular choice at the elementary level.

Regardless of the type of school program being proposed, applicants must provide strong evidence the school will offer a successful math program. Analysis of student achievement data shows one of the areas in which students state-wide are struggling the most is math. In particular, at the middle and high school levels, most students are not meeting adequate median growth percentiles, which means that they are not growing fast enough to reach proficiency within three years or by 10<sup>th</sup> grade, whichever comes first. The gap between the median growth percentile and adequate median growth percentile increases from middle school to high school, indicating students are falling farther and farther behind as they progress through school, making it nearly impossible for them to make adequate growth by the time they reach high school.

**Health Careers High School**

- Pre-med courses including biology, physiology
- Med support areas such as nursing, nutrition, EMT, etc.
- Surgical and dental labs
- Ideally located on or near a medical center
- Some instruction provided by MDs, DOs, PAs (perhaps labs and Friday symposia)
- Robust concurrent enrollment programs to accelerate students into the field

**Final Frontier High School**

- Focus on space, robotics, software (including coding and information security)
- Courses including advanced math, physics, engineering, materials science
- Maker spaces / labs and clubs supporting robotics, coding, other engineering
- Guest/part-time Instructors from Lockheed, United Launch Alliance, etc.
- Field trips to Lockheed, ULA, etc.
- Robust concurrent enrollment programs to accelerate students into the field

**● Schools for aspiring educators**

Teacher demand grows, but fewer students are entering the teaching field. Education reEnvisioned welcomes school proposals to better and earlier equip a next generation of educators. Such a proposal might include:

- Possibly a teacher lab school, with some instruction provided by teacher interns in cooperation with a Colorado teacher certification program
- Potentially co-located on a [community] college campus with education curriculum
- Courses including special education instruction and counseling, as well as general education
- Robust concurrent enrollment programs to accelerate students into the field, possibly amplified by near or co-location with a college which has education curriculum

In addition to the priority areas identified above, the BOCES is strongly committed to using technology and tools for student-centered learning, as well as increasing post-secondary readiness as demonstrated primarily by SAT performance, graduation rates, and post-secondary success.

**Contract School Application Timeline**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Task</b>
February 15, 2019	<i>Intent to Apply Form due to Kindra Whitmyre at kindra@cdboces.org</i>
February Board Meeting	<i>The BOCES Board of Directors will be notified of the intent to submit an application.</i>
March 1, 2019	<i>Application due to Kindra Whitmyre at kindra@cdboces.org</i>
March Board Meeting	<i>The BOCES Board of Directors is presented with the first reading of the application. The BOCES may also request that the applicant present to the Board of Directors.</i>
March 1-15, 2019	<i>BOCES review of submitted applications for completeness. *By March 15, the applicant(s) are notified of the application section scores and the sections that are missing information in order to provide the applicant with an opportunity to respond to the initial application. If the application sections are complete, the applicant will receive written documentation verifying the completeness.</i>

March 15-30, 2019	<p><i>Applicant response to the initial application review.</i></p> <p><i>*By March 30, the applicant(s) will send back the response to the low scoring section(s) by providing the missing information in a response to the initial application review. The response will be sent back to Kindra Whitmyre at the BOCES.</i></p>
March 30-April 15, 2019	<p><i>BOCES review of applicant response and team interview, if the review team deems it necessary.</i></p> <p><i>*By April 15, the applicant will be notified of the results of the review of the applicant(s) response. There is no other time for the applicant to provide new information for the application, and all review scores at this time are final.</i></p>
April Board Meeting	<p><i>The Board of Directors is presented with the second reading of the application, along with the staff recommendation of approval or denial of the school application. The BOCES may also request that the applicant present to the Board of Directors.</i></p>
May Board Meeting	<p><i>The Board of Directors vote on an approval, approval with conditions or a denial of the application.</i></p> <p><i>*The applicant(s) may also be asked to present their school design to the Board of Directors and address any questions the Board of Directors may have before the final vote.</i></p>
June Board Meeting	<p><i>The June Board Meeting is 'To be Determined,' as depending on the Board of Directors final vote, the applicant(s) may or may not be asked to attend the Board Meeting.</i></p>



**Intent to Apply Form**

**Instructions:** All BOCES contract school applicants must file this intent to apply form with the BOCES by the close of day on February 15, 2019. This provides formal notice to the BOCES regarding the applicant’s intent to submit a new school proposal to open in the 2020-2021 school year.

The deadline for applications is by the close of day on March 1, 2019; the Intent to Apply form did notify the BOCES staff of the intent to submit an application, so BOCES staff will be watching for the application on the due date. The BOCES will not consider late submittals.

The intent to apply form must be returned by email to [kindra@cdboces.org](mailto:kindra@cdboces.org). This form should also be the first document included in the contract school application.

*The information presented in this Intent to Apply is non-binding.*

Date:	
Name of Proposed School:	
Grade Configuration:	
Model or Focus:	
Primary Contact Person:	
Phone:	
Email:	
Geographic Region:	
Proposed Leader (if known):	
Replication:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
ESP/EMO Name:	
Applicant(s) has filed/will file an application to open this school or a substantially similar school with other authorizers:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If yes, identify the other authorizers:
Applicant(s) submitting this form: <i>Double-click the appropriate box to check it.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Is incorporated in Colorado as a nonprofit <input type="checkbox"/> Has filed application to become a Colorado nonprofit <input type="checkbox"/> Other - identify type of entity: _____
The proposed contract school will be located within the boundaries of the BOCES member districts:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If no, identify the district in which the proposed school would be located:

**Enrollment Projections:** *Provide additional rows and columns if necessary.*

GRADE	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
ECE							
K							
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							
8							
9							
10							
11							
12							
<b>Total # students</b>							

	FRL %	SPED %	ELL %
Proposed Demographics			

Mission of School:	
Provide a brief overview of the education program of the proposed school:	

Complete the following table to list Board members for the school currently.

Name	Current Professional Title and Organization	Board Role	Focus/Expertise

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## ***Application Requirements***

The contract school application is a comprehensive document outlining the plan for the proposed school. An e-mail copy of the school application should be provided to the BOCES by the application submission deadline above for consideration for the following school year. The electronic copy of the complete application must include all appendices and attachments.

The application should be delivered to:

**Kindra Whitmyre, [kindra@cdboces.org](mailto:kindra@cdboces.org)**

**Please note that late submissions will *not* be accepted.**

Our application requirements for contract school authorization are based on the Colorado Charter School Standard Application, Checklist, and Review Rubric developed by the Colorado Department of Education Schools of Choice Unit, the Charter School Institute, and the Colorado League of Contract schools. This standard application is divided into 19 application components. The components appear in this document in the same order that they appear in the Colorado Revised Statutes (C.R.S. § 22- 30.5-106.1).

Each component is divided into three sections: a **Component Description**, a **Checklist for a High-Quality Application**, and an **Evaluation Criteria**. The Component Description is a narrative designed to give the applicant background information, reference to statute, and general explanation of the component. The Checklist for a High-Quality Application may be used by the applicant and the BOCES to monitor the completeness of the application. The Evaluation Criteria provides the BOCES with means of determining the quality of the application component but may also be used by the applicant when targeting a high-quality school program. An Evaluation Rubric accompanies this document.

The format for the standard application is necessarily compartmentalized into the different application components. However, it is important to remember that each of the components relate to one another. Curriculum is not complete without consideration of assessment. Facilities cannot be sufficiently addressed in isolation from budgetary decisions. The completed application should tell a story that relates the application components into one comprehensive package. The vision and mission should be evident throughout the application, and all program elements and resource allocations should be in alignment with the proposed budget and school program. It is important to also consider that online school applications, or other unique programs, may not conform precisely to all components of this standard application. In these cases, communication with the potential authorizer is imperative.

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## **Application Components**

A completed application must include the following three primary components:

- 1) **Proposal Narrative:** Just as described in the Charter Schools Act, C.R.S. § 22-30.5-106, the narrative section herein seeks information about all major aspects of the proposed school. Although this will be an application for a contract school, we have determined that processes and requirements suitable for a charter school are well-suited to contract school applications. A complete application must include each section outlined in this application document (e.g., Executive Summary, Section I Culture, etc.). Within the narrative of each section, please use the outline headings we have provided. If a section appears to be irrelevant to your proposal, please indicate as such.
- 2) **Budget Forms:** All proposals must be accompanied by completed budget forms using the template created by Falcon 49, which can be found on the BOCES website. Submit only electronic copies of the budget (no paper-based copy is necessary).
- 3) **Appendices:** Submit only those appendices that are referenced in this application. Additional material beyond the narrative and appendices referenced in the application will not be considered.

**Subsequent Information:** Within fifteen days of receiving a contract school application, the BOCES will review materials for completeness. If the BOCES determines that an applicant has failed to submit any relevant sections or materials, the applicant will be notified in writing (email) and will have up to fifteen days to submit the requested materials. After that time, the BOCES will not accept any additional materials. This includes email explanations or alterations to your plans. The contract school application submitted is considered final.

### **Formatting and Submission Requirements**

- The proposal must be typed with 1-inch page margins and 12-point font, single-spaced.
- The proposal must be supplied both in paper format (5 copies in 3-ring binders - up to 10 copies may be requested) and in electronic format (one PDF for the body of the application, one (or two) PDF for the collection of appendices and one Excel file for the budget).
- Each major section (e.g. Executive Summary, Vision/Mission, etc.) identified in the application requirements must be separated by a labeled tab and begin on a separate page.
- Number all pages within each section and observe page limits whenever they are specified.
- All appendices must be clearly labeled with the assigned appendix letter (e.g., A, B, C, etc.), separated by a labeled tab, and included in order.

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## ***Application Review Process***

When a contract school application is filed with the BOCES by the appropriate deadline, the first thing BOCES staff does is ensure the application is complete. The BOCES does not have to evaluate an incomplete application. If the application is deemed complete, the applicant will receive written notification that it is complete and will be evaluated. If the application is not complete, the BOCES will note the areas that are lacking information and provide the applicant with fifteen days to submit additional information. If the applicant does not submit additional information or that additional information is not sufficient for the application to be complete, the applicant is notified, in writing, that the application is incomplete and therefore will not be evaluated.

A complete contract school application is evaluated by a wide variety of individuals. The Application Review Team (ART) includes BOCES staff and external contractors. Everyone uses the evaluation rubric included in this RFP. This wide variety of individuals evaluating all or portions of the application ensures a broad spectrum of expertise is considering the quality of the proposed contract school and that clarifying questions are asked of the applicant before the final decision is posed to the Board of Directors.

The in-person interview of applicants is designed to determine the capacity of the founding team to open and manage a successful public contract school. The entire applicant team is invited to participate. This includes the founding committee, governing board members or anyone involved in the development of the contract school application. At the completion of the interview, the ART will provide the applicant team with a list of written questions for which a written response is required by a specific deadline. It is important to note that these written responses should not be new information, but rather clarification for what has already been provided. These written responses will be added to the application as a supplement and does not constitute a change to the initial application.

The BOCES anticipates the application review process to be cordial with a great deal of back-and-forth communication. Applicants should not hesitate to communicate with the designated contact person with questions or clarification. The application process is meant to be a rigorous evaluation of the proposed contract school to ensure a high-quality contract school will open in the BOCES, if approved. It is also a time when relationships are established between the contract school and the BOCES. Therefore, transparency and clear communication are desired by both parties.

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## ***Contract Application Components and Guidelines***

### **A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (3-page limit)**

The Executive Summary serves as a concise explanation of the proposed school and identifies who is submitting the application for school authorization.

This section should be two to three pages long and include:

- The proposed school's name, grade levels to be served, proposed opening date (month and year), grade levels upon opening and growth plan (if the school does not plan to initially open with all grade levels).
- The size of the school at build-out, including the number of classes per grade level and the number of students per class.
- Vision and mission statements including a brief explanation of how they were created.
- A short explanation of the key programmatic features the school will implement in order to accomplish its vision and mission.
- How the proposed school will be more effective than the schools currently serving the targeted student population.
- Any other unique features, such as a non-traditional school year, longer school day, key partner organizations, multiple campuses, school culture, etc.
- Student body to be served, such as key demographic data, targeted geographical area, etc.
- Evidence of a community need for a school of this nature.

### **B. VISION AND MISSION STATEMENTS (3-page limit)**

#### **1. Component Description**

A contract school application should have a mission statement for the proposed school. Many schools have both a vision and a mission statement. The vision statement is a statement of how the contract school will look once it is operating (the big picture view). The mission statement is how the school intends to make that vision a reality.

The vision and mission statements should be succinct, easy to understand and easy to remember. Many schools post their vision/mission statement throughout their building and use it in their printed materials (e.g. Parent/Student Handbook and Employee Handbook). Resist the temptation to please everyone with these statements. Instead, define your school for potential students, parents and staff. Be as clear as possible and don't use education "jargon." Again, be clear to lend clarity to those who will ultimately implement the vision over the life of the contract school.

#### **2. Checklist for a High-Quality Application**

- ✓ The vision and mission statements describe the purpose for the contract school with a focus on outputs rather than inputs.
- ✓ The vision and mission statements are the driving force and rationale behind all other components of the application. It's obvious that the school's goals, educational program, operations, etc., align with and support the fulfillment of the vision and mission statements.
- ✓ The vision and mission statements express the ideal, long-term impact, scope and scale of the school. The vision articulates what the school hopes to be. The mission statement explains how the school will reach that goal.

## **C. GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND PUPIL PERFORMANCE STANDARDS (10-page limit)**

### **1. Component Description**

Accreditation is the process by which school districts, BOCES and public schools receive certification from the State Board of Directors. Accreditation rules are established to foster greater accountability from public schools and school BOCES for the betterment of public education. This section should be based on the state Accreditation Indicators, which can be found at the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) website at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/requeststoreconsider>. The authorizer may use this section of the contract school application as a basis for the accreditation plan it creates with the approved contract school. The application should reflect an understanding of the accreditation requirements of the BOCES with a clear plan from the contract school applicants outlining how data will be obtained, and how that data will be provided to the contracting authority for their accreditation requirements with CDE.

It is understood that there are not actual baseline test scores, attendance rates or other data before the school is established. A contract school applicant can either use the average of the intended geography as a baseline and/or state that a baseline will be established in the first year of operation.

In addition to Accreditation Indicators required by state law, a contract school may choose to have other measures for which they wish to be held accountable. Those indicators may include school climate or culture. Be sure to only include measures that the contract school is willing to be held accountable for over time, as these additional indicators would become a part of the school's accountability plan.

### **2. Checklist for a High-Quality Application**

- ✓ Provide goals that align with BOCES Accreditation Indicators.
- ✓ Goals are written "SMART" (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Reflective of the school's mission and Time-phased) which includes objectives and benchmarks (or state that a baseline will be established and how/when).
- ✓ Goals, in addition to Accreditation Indicators, match the proposed school's mission and are based on valid and reliable methods to measure progress in non-Accreditation Indicator areas of school performance.
- ✓ Outline of how data will be obtained and how that data will be provided to the authorizer and CDE.

## **D. EVIDENCE OF SUPPORT (10-page limit)**

### **1. Component Description**

A contract school application should include the aggregate number of students interested in the contract school at the different grade levels. Individual student and/or family information should NOT be included. Do NOT include copies of the Letters of Intent completed by prospective parents. Reference the figures used in the Intent to Submit Form and update the numbers if necessary. If appropriate to further demonstrate support, disaggregate the number of prospective students by zip code, school of attendance, gender or type of current school (home, private, public). After the contract school is approved, the founders will go through an enrollment process and verify which students will be attending the contract school.

Explain your team's ties to and knowledge of the community. If the applicant team has established any partnerships or networking relationships, describe them and any resources or agreements that are planned, and include a Letter of Support or Intent. Specifically address what type of outreach activities have been made to at-risk populations.

## 2. Checklist for a High-Quality Application

- ✓ Information about the proposed contract school's student body including the intended students' educational needs and demographics (racial/cultural, socioeconomic, special needs, and ELL). The application, in its entirety, reflects an understanding of the intended student population.
- ✓ A description of the type of broad outreach the founders conducted to make the student population and their families aware of the proposed contract school. This should include future plans if the contract school is approved.
- ✓ A summary of the number of students expressing an interest in the proposed school. This information should be disaggregated in a manner showing additional information about the prospective students.
- ✓ Information on community members and leaders who publicly support the proposed school and their role in the development of the school and application, if the proposed school is not being developed by parents.
- ✓ If there are any partnerships or networking relationships, provide an explanation of the planned resources or agreements that have been discussed.

## E. EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM (30-page limit)

### 1. Component Description

A contract school application should include a description of the school's educational program, pupil performance standards and curriculum, which must meet or exceed content standards and must be designed to enable each pupil to achieve such standards. Content standards are specific statements of what a student should know or be able to do relative to a particular academic area or areas. Instruction and assessment, in a standards-based system, should be aligned with Colorado's content standards. At the time of publication of this document, the Colorado model content standards and suggested grade level expectations are online at the Colorado Department of Education website at [www.cde.state.co.us](http://www.cde.state.co.us).

In addition to obtaining information from the publisher, research is available online at ERIC ([www.eric.ed.gov](http://www.eric.ed.gov)) and the What Works Clearinghouse ([www.whatworks.ed.gov](http://www.whatworks.ed.gov)). The research should support using the curriculum with the student body the proposed school will likely attract, and benchmark assessments should be chosen to align with the chosen curriculum.

All core content areas plus supplemental or elective areas should be described. If certain characteristics of the school culture are critical to the overall educational program (i.e., small school size, character education and high expectations), the research basis should thoroughly support the unique educational program design.

### 2. Checklist for a High-Quality Application

- ✓ Core content areas are described and supported by research matching the probable student population for the proposed school.
- ✓ Description of the educational program provides an explanation of how the curriculum is either already aligned to state model content standards or will be aligned within the first year of school operation including a timeline and process for monitoring the success of the program.
- ✓ Description explains why the selected curriculum was chosen for the anticipated population of students.
- ✓ Supplemental curricula for electives or "special" courses are thoroughly described and based on state model content standards when available.
- ✓ Other vital aspects of the educational program design are thoroughly described and supported by research findings.



## **F. PLAN FOR EVALUATING PUPIL PERFORMANCE (8-page limit)**

### **1. Component Description**

A contract school application should include a clear plan for evaluating pupil performance across the curriculum. This plan should align with state performance standards as well as with the school's pupil performance goals and should be presented along with a clear timeline for achieving these standards/goals. A clear explanation of the types of assessments and frequency of administration should be included reflecting thoughtfulness given to tracking student progress, while still preserving as much class learning time as possible. A plan for the use of data gathered through assessments should include procedures for taking corrective action (both individually and collectively) if pupil performance falls below expected standards.

A quality assessment plan will include summative (end-of-year) assessments as well as formative (more frequent, end of unit assessments) to track student skill and knowledge development. The plan will include how this data will be used to guide professional development of teachers as well as how this data will be used to guide refinement of the curriculum. Plans for evaluating and reporting student performance must comply with published requirements of the Colorado Department of Education for assessment and graduation requirements.

### **2. Checklist for a High-Quality Application**

- ✓ A plan is in place explaining the use of internal assessments to include baseline data gathering, short- and long-term goals, types of assessments, and how the school will use this information to revise professional development and instruction.
- ✓ The application describes what formal assessments will be used in addition to Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS) that align with the school's goals and meet BOCES, state, and federal requirements.
- ✓ The application describes which assessments will be used for literacy testing, and the process used to bring students up to grade level in reading, as required by the Colorado Read Act.
- ✓ The application explains how the school will collect, analyze, triangulate and manage data on an ongoing basis. The school has created a data management plan to include a Student Information System, baseline, formative and summative assessments, a data warehouse, an academic data use summary and timeline of the plan. It identifies what other tools and resources will be used for data management purposes, such as an internal database, data management service, etc. This section also explains how budget resources have been allocated to support these staffing and resource decisions.
- ✓ The application explains how student assessment and progress will be appropriately communicated to parents, the authorizer and the broader community.
- ✓ Clear information of requirements for promotion to the next grade level or for graduation requirements aligned with CCHE and BOCES requirements as they pertain to a high school are included.
- ✓ In compliance with BOCES Policy, the application provides a description of the contract school's procedures for taking corrective action in the event that pupil performance at the contract school falls below the achievement goals approved by the authorizer in the contract school contract, including a timeline, responsible person and staffing changes as appropriate.

## **G. BUDGET AND FINANCE (10-page limit)**

### **1. Component Description**

The budget and financial plan for the contract school must include a plan for revenues and expenditures and a plan for compliance with state and federal accounting and reporting requirements. The plan should demonstrate diligent financial practices, clear alignment to the other components in the application, and strong oversight. Particular attention should be given to facility and salary costs, as these often represent a large portion of the school's budget.

The proposed budget should be based on reasonable estimates that reflect choices made throughout the rest of the contract application. For example, enrollment projections used elsewhere in the application need to be the same enrollment projections used in the development of the budget. Similarly, facility, insurance and employment plans discussed in other sections of the application should be reflected in the budget, along with the basis for given assumptions.

The budget should demonstrate an ability to understand the sources of funding available to the contract school and the types of expenditures required to operate the contract school. The primary source of revenue is Per Pupil Revenue (PPR). There are several other sources of revenue, some of which are temporary or restricted and some of which are dependent on market factors other than enrollment. However, PPR is the guaranteed stream of revenue, which makes up most of the funding the school receives. When developing the budget all ongoing expenditures required to operate the school should be supported by PPR.

A contract school receives 100% of the PPR for Education reEnvisioned BOCES, after the BOCES retains 5-10% of PPR to cover the contract school's portion of the BOCES' administration costs. When projecting revenue numbers, the single most important factor to understand is enrollment. Enrollment projections must be accurate, and it is best to project conservatively for budget purposes.

When planning expenditures, it is important to understand how choices affect different areas of the budget. For example, the smaller the class size the less revenue there is to spend. Also, the more staff there is in the school the less money per staff member there is to spend. Finally, as another example, the more money spent on facility costs the less money there is for salaries and other discretionary items.

In nearly all cases, the combination of facility costs and staff salaries/benefits represents close to 75% of spending in Contract schools. As such, close attention should be paid to these two areas. In addition to these two areas, other items that need to be planned for financially include special education, various professional services, classroom supplies and materials, general supplies and materials, liability insurance, and more. Existing Colorado contract and charter schools that have a similar mission/philosophy are a good resource for assistance with planning expenditures.

In addition to budget projections, the school must comply with various requirements. In summary, the school needs to set up proper accounting procedures to safeguard its assets and to ensure accurate financial reporting. At the same time, it is important to be able to provide financial information in a clear, understandable format that allows board members and administration to make sound financial decisions. Note that online schools may have special considerations with respect to budgeting and financial reporting.

The CDE requirements for financial management and reporting are available in the Financial Policies and Procedures manual at [www.cde.state.co.us/cdefinance/sfFPP.htm](http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdefinance/sfFPP.htm). An additional resource with general information is the Colorado Charter School Financial Management Guide at: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/sites/default/files/documents/cdechart/guidebook/fin/pdf/financeguide.pdf>

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/sites/default/files/documents/cdechart/guidebook/fin/pdf/financeguide.pdf>

## 2. Checklist for a High-Quality Application

- ✓ The plan includes a five-year budget, realistic assumptions and their basis, a cash flow projection for the first year of operation, minimum enrollment needed for solvency, and adequate staffing that fits with the narrative in educational and other related application sections.

- ✓ The budget reflects an understanding of specific statutory requirements including separation of the general fund and Title funds and grants, Public Employees' Retirement Association (PERA) contributions, as well as a three percent TABOR reserve (Colo. Const. Art. X, Sect. 20) each year.
- ✓ The budget narrative reflects the financial policies and procedures plan, anticipated management plan that will ensure checks and balances in cash disbursement and alignment with the mission and goals.
- ✓ The budget narrative includes a basic startup plan (facilities funding and FFE acquisition), the curriculum and professional development plan, and the school growth plan to include needed staff along with adequate financial allocations and anticipated timelines.
- ✓ The budget is set up in such a way that it reflects an understanding of the CDE 's Chart of Accounts and any financial reporting requirements of the BOCES.
- ✓ The budget does not include any "soft funds," such as grant money or donations; it includes only grants or donations that have already been received or for which commitments have been received.
- ✓ Evidence is provided for anticipated fundraising and grants, if cited in the application.
- ✓ The proposed budget balances each year and includes a five-year plan to reach at least a five percent reserve (in addition to the TABOR reserve) that the school can use for emergency purposes or as a long-term reserve.
- ✓ The application describes the process the school will follow to contract with a Certified Public Accountant to conduct an annual, independent financial audit. It explains how the school will remain fiscally solvent, adhere to generally acceptable accounting practices, have no material breaches, will address any concerns, and will disseminate the results from the audit to the school BOCES and required state agencies.
- ✓ The application includes a list of planned services to be contracted to outside providers.

## H. GOVERNANCE (8-page limit)

### 1. Component Description

School governance is extremely important to the success of a BOCES-authorized school. The BOCES prefers that applicants be nonprofit corporations governed by a board of directors. This section contemplates that structure. In the event an applicant wishes to propose an alternative structure, we request that we conduct a meeting prior to submission of the application for consideration of such structure.

Oftentimes, a proposed school's applicant team transitions to become the school's founding governing board. The contract school application should describe the process involved in developing the applicant team and the individual expertise represented on the steering committee; the process to appoint or elect the initial governing board; how and when bylaws will be adopted by the board; the governance structure for the school; the nature and/or extent of parental and/or community involvement in governance; and the amount of authority the governing board will convey to the school's administrator, along with a clear delineation of their respective roles and the means by which the administrator will be evaluated.

While some existing Colorado schools, particularly charter schools, have staff members on the governing board, others do not. Administrators may be ex officio, nonvoting board members. If staff members have voting privileges, there should be clear policies to explain when that board member should recuse him/herself. Any potential conflict of interest by any board member should be disclosed and addressed.

The number of directors on a contract school board should not be less than five and it is generally considered a best practice to have no more than nine directors.

A good way to mitigate any potential issues with board members is to have the governing board adopt and use a Board Member Agreement. These agreements stipulate the qualifications, responsibilities and expected behaviors of individual board members and the governance structure. If the applicant team intends for the approved contract school's governing board to use a Board Member Agreement, it could be an attachment to the contract school application.

The contract school application should also describe the school's legal status. Many Contract schools file articles of incorporation and bylaws with the Secretary of State in order to have their school recognized as a corporation. The articles and bylaws define the authority that rests in the contract school governing board and, in essence, "who holds the contract." These legal issues should be discussed with a contract school attorney before decisions are made. Additionally, the contract school can apply for its own tax-exempt status with the IRS. Contract schools can either use their own tax-exempt status or use the status of the school BOCES.

The contract school governing board must operate in compliance with the Colorado Open Meetings Law (C.R.S. 24-6-401) and Public Records Act (C.R.S. 24-72-204) as well as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (20 U.S.C. Sect. 1232). For more information, please visit: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdechart/guidebook/fin/index>.

If the school will be contracting with an Educational Service Provider (ESP), a full description of the relationship should be provided.

Every contract school governing board should have a set of board policies. Much of what is included in the contract school application will become board policy. For instance, the school's vision/mission statement, legal status, enrollment policy, discipline policy and nondiscrimination policy will all be in the board policy book. These board policies should be made available to school staff and families. Generally, schools put these policies on their website and have them available in the school office.

Extensive training resources are available at [www.boardtrainingmodules.org](http://www.boardtrainingmodules.org). Sample best practice documents for charter school governing boards are available online at [www.cde.state.co.us/cdechart/guidebook/gov/index.htm](http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdechart/guidebook/gov/index.htm).

Attach:

- Governing board bylaws.
- Articles of Incorporation (optional).
- Organizational chart explaining the relationship between the board, the lead administrator, subcommittees and/or advisory committees.
- Resumes of applicant team members and/or founding board members.
- Draft of initial board policies (optional).
- Draft of the Board Member Agreement (optional).
- Draft of Conflicts of Interest and Grievance Process board policies.

## 2. Checklist for a High-Quality Application

- ✓ The proposed bylaws explain powers and duties, size, terms, composition, qualifications, term limits, officer positions and duties, election procedure, vacancy replacement, minimum number on the board, quorum and decision-making process, how board members are elected or appointed, and when this takes place.
- ✓ An explanation of the proposed transition from an applicant team to the founding governing board including the identification of individuals making the transition. This description of the transition process should explain when the governing board will be seated and assume responsibility for school governance. Further, how the transition plan

will provide for a smooth shift of responsibilities and how the founder’s original vision and mission will be brought to fruition.

- ✓ A plan is included for how a lead administrator will be hired and how the transition of leadership will happen.
- ✓ Resumes for applicant team and/or founding governing board members are attached.
- ✓ A plan for ongoing board training and capacity building is included in a board calendar.
- ✓ An explanation of the proposed board meeting frequency and focus, the role of any standing subcommittees (e.g. School Accountability Committee) is included.
- ✓ A detailed description of the responsibilities of the school’s advisory council and its role in relation to the school’s board of directors and administration is included. This section demonstrates that the applicant thoroughly understands statutory guidance on School Accountability Committees (SAC) and commits to forming such a committee or has requested a waiver with a complete replacement plan. (See C.R.S. 22-11-401-402 for additional information).
- ✓ An explanation of compliance with the Open Meetings Act and Open Records laws is included.
- ✓ A description of how the founding governing board will create and adopt board policies (an initial draft may be attached to the application) is included.
- ✓ Draft policies for Conflicts of Interest and the Grievance Process are included.
- ✓ A description of the relationship between the governing board and the school administrator, which includes the amount of authority the governing board will convey to the school administrator.

## I. EMPLOYEES (8-page limit)

### 1. Component Description

A contract school must provide an explanation of the relationship that will exist between the school and its employees. This must include evidence that the terms and conditions of employment are addressed with affected employees and their recognized representative, if any. In addition, proposed employment policies should be included. Guidance can be found in the Administrator’s Guide to Leading a Colorado Charter School at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdechart/chact>.

As BOCES-authorized schools are, by statute, public schools, it may be the case that employees of our contract schools are public employees unless such employees are employed by a private employer. Thus, in some cases, contract schools and their employees must participate in Colorado’s Public Employees’ Retirement Association (PERA) retirement fund. This is in lieu of participation in Social Security, which makes up the majority of the Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA) payroll tax. However, the Medicare portion of FICA is still paid by the employees and matched by the employer.

With the growing presence of private educational management organizations in Colorado, questions are arising about the nature of employees in some Contract schools. This is a result of some educational management companies treating employees as employees of the private company, as opposed to employees of the public school. These determinations need to be made with legal counsel, but the nature of employees should be clearly outlined in the contract school application.

There are several resources that provide more information about employment issues. Tax information is available at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) and through the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment at [www.coworkforce.com](http://www.coworkforce.com). Additional information about PERA can be found at [www.copera.org](http://www.copera.org). Finally, a human resources manual developed through CDE can be found at: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdechart/chact>.

## 2. Checklist for a High-Quality Application

- ✓ An organizational chart is included as an attachment, which explains administrative, teaching and support staff.
- ✓ A narrative description gives clear delineation of employee classification and who is responsible for employment decisions and oversight at each level of the organizational chart.
- ✓ Job descriptions for administrator, teachers (to include qualifications to meet ESEA standards as well as what certification is required by the school), and key employees are included. (See Highly Qualified Teachers Brochure on the CDE website.
- ✓ Descriptions of key employee policies to include employment practices, benefits, leave policies, complaint policy, conflict of interest policy, harassment, drug-free workplace, classroom practices, evaluation practices, etc., are attached.
- ✓ A clear plan of support for staff development and funding is included.

## J. INSURANCE COVERAGE (2-page limit)

### 1. Component Description

Contract schools must have appropriate insurance coverage. This includes workers compensation, liability insurance, and insurance for the building and its contents. BOCES-authorized schools are public entities and liability is limited by the Colorado Governmental Immunity Act, C.R.S. 24-10-101 et seq.

Once insurance needs are understood, costs need to be estimated and incorporated into the proposed budget that includes reasonable assumptions or quotes. The selected or intended insurance coverage should be commensurate with the overall school program and risk factors.

### 2. Checklist for a High-Quality Application

- ✓ A list of the types of insurance for which the school will contract.
- ✓ Fiscal impact of appropriate insurance coverage is evident in the budget.

## K. PARENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT (5-page limit)

### 1. Component Description

One of the most distinctive characteristics of BOCES-authorized schools is that they are choice schools. Due to this characteristic, many BOCES-authorized schools have a small school atmosphere and a culture of “everyone belongs to the community.” The application should demonstrate the expectations and plans for ongoing parent and community involvement and the support of volunteers through specific volunteer networks.

It is important for contract school developers to provide adequate notice to the community about the possibility of the new contract school. Some parts of the community may need additional outreach. For example, fliers may need to be published in a second language. Many contract developers have delivered fliers to individual homes in a community.

Be clear about what the new contract school will look like and the process for getting the school approved. Establish early the school’s value for meaningful parental involvement. Explain to parents their role in the contract school through volunteering, monitoring their child’s education and holding the school accountable. Designate an individual on the steering committee to follow up with parents who are interested in getting involved with the development of the contract school.

Network with established civic and organizations in the community your school will serve. Whenever possible, arrange to have Parent Information Meetings in that community. Be sure to reach out to a broad cross-section of the community.

## 2. Checklist for a High-Quality Application

- ✓ A sound plan and timeline are in place to reach a diverse student population.
- ✓ Parent involvement in the development of the school is clearly stated along with volunteer requirements and opportunities after the school is open.
- ✓ Partnerships or plans for community involvement are clearly defined in the application along with the purpose and expectation. Adequate evidence demonstrates assurance of these partnerships.

## L. ENROLLMENT POLICY (5-page limit)

### 1. Component Description

The plan for enrollment should demonstrate how the school plans to enroll the intended student population. State law does require a public contract school to not discriminate on the basis of disability, race, creed, color, gender, national origin, religion, ancestry, or need for special education services. It is important to distinguish between admission decisions and academic placement decisions. Discrimination based on academic ability is prohibited. Diagnostic or placement exams may be given to students after they have been officially enrolled.

If an enrollment lottery is chosen, school lottery policies should address:

- The date of the annual lottery.
- The definition of “founding family” and “teacher” children not to exceed 20% of the lottery.
- How the community will receive adequate notice about the formation of a new charter school.
- Any requirement for parents to reaffirm their intent to enroll on an annual basis.
- What happens to names not drawn in the lottery.
- How siblings of enrolled students are handled in the process.
- How long parents must make a decision on whether or not their child will attend the school.

### 2. Checklist for a High-Quality Application

- ✓ A proposed policy or description detailing how the school intends to select students for enrollment including the proposed timeline, description of wait list or lottery process, any enrollment criteria, or pre- or post-enrollment testing.
- ✓ An explanation of the process that will be used to transfer student records to or from the school or a plan to develop such procedures.
- ✓ An explanation of how the community will receive information about the formation of a new school and any upcoming lottery or enrollment deadline.
- ✓ An explanation of the notification of placement and how long parents must make the decision to accept or not accept. Contents of enrollment packet should be explained, along with an ongoing data information and communication plan.
- ✓ An explanation of the requirements of parents to reaffirm intent to enroll on an annual basis.
- ✓ A clear definition is provided for “founding family” and “teacher” and any preferences given them in the lottery, not to exceed 20%.

## M. TRANSPORTATION AND FOOD SERVICE (4-page limit)

### 1. Component Description

A contract school may choose not to provide any transportation or food services or may choose to negotiate with a private provider to provide transportation services, or with a BOCES or private provider for food services for its students. Colorado law does not require a contract school to provide transportation or food services.

If a contract school chooses to provide transportation or food services, a plan for each area must be included in the application. The transportation plan should include provisions for transporting students to and from the contract school and their homes, and to and from the contract school and any extracurricular activities. For food services, the plan should include a description about how this service will be offered either initially or at a later time. In addition, a description of how the contract school plans to meet the needs specifically of low-income and academically low-achieving pupils should be included for both.

The provision of transportation services has several implications. First of all, the cost must be included in the contract school's budget. Secondly, insurance and liability issues must be addressed when assessing the contract school's overall insurance needs. Insurance coverage should meet required thresholds for liability whether the school uses public or private vehicles.

Finally, many federal and state rules and regulations relate to the provision of transportation services. One specific rule to be aware of is that any small vehicles or school buses owned and operated by a contract school or under contract must meet the safety and operating standards as prescribed in State Board Rules 1 CCR 301-25, 301-26 and 301-29.

For more information, see <http://www.cde.state.co.us/transportation>.

Schools with a significant number of students who could qualify for the Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL) program are strongly encouraged to offer some sort of lunch program. The school must collect FRL qualifying information from students and that process should be included in the food services plan. (Schools not providing a lunch program will still collect this information, but using a different form).

The plan should include whether the school intends to use a private district food services provider, how the Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL) qualification forms will be distributed, collected and recorded, and how the facility will be brought into compliance or be built to meet any federal requirements for food warming or preparation, if needed to meet FRL regulations. The contract school can only be reimbursed for its FRL program through an authorized "school food authority." If the school will not be using an approved FRL program, or provide any lunch program, this section should include how students who would qualify for a Free or Reduced price lunch and how students who forget their lunch will be accommodated.

For more information, go to: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/nutrition>.

### 2. Checklist for a High-Quality Application

- ✓ A description of the contract school's transportation plan including the transportation of low-income and academically low-achieving students.
- ✓ A description of daily route and extracurricular transportation needs is included and there is an adequate plan for addressing these needs.
- ✓ A plan is in place for adequate safety measures and insurance coverage for the transportation of students to and from school events using private or school vehicles.



- ✓ If the school does plan to offer an FRL –qualifying hot lunch program, details should be included about how this service will be provided, reimbursed through an authorized “school food authority” and any other applicable state or federal regulations.
- ✓ If the school does not plan to offer a lunch program, this section addresses how the school will address the needs of students who forget or cannot provide a lunch.

## **N. FACILITIES (5-page limit)**

### **1. Component Description**

One of the greatest challenges to opening a new school is finding a suitable facility. The most important thing during the application process is to plan as much as possible and to clearly articulate those plans. It can be difficult to negotiate for facility space without having an approved contract. It is not necessary to have a signed formal agreement for a facility during the application process, but any viable options should be explained and should include reasonable space requirements, a reasonable plan for space utilization, a discussion of how the facility will be ready for use when the school opens and, most importantly, reasonable costs of that facility which must be reflected in the proposed budget.

Contract schools may rent, lease, own, or otherwise finance facility space. A school may contract to share space with another tenant. BOCES-authorized schools may be able to finance their own facilities with tax-exempt bond financing through the Colorado Educational and Cultural Facilities Authority (CECFA). These are typically schools that are established, but information can be found by calling CECFA at 303-297-2538.

With any facility, building permits and inspections are required. Life and safety requirements (including asbestos regulations) apply to rented or contributed facilities as well. The state is responsible for issuing certificates of occupancy for public schools, and information can be obtained by calling the Department of Labor at 303-572-2919. In addition, contact your community’s planning and zoning department, as well as the facilities director for your school BOCES for further information concerning the permit, life and safety and inspection requirements of local entities.

### **2. Checklist for a High-Quality Application**

- ✓ A facility needs assessment including how many classrooms are needed, how many specials rooms are needed (art, music, gym), minimum size of each classroom, library space needed, number of bathrooms needed, number of offices needed, amount of common space needed, outdoor space needed, overall size, cost per square foot, zoning and occupancy requirements, and how each facility aligns with the facility needs assessment is included in the narrative.
- ✓ If additional funds or financing will be needed to bring a facility online, the application narrative and attached budget identify potential grants and/or lending sources. If real estate consultants are involved, a brief description of the relationship and budget impacts is included.
- ✓ A target location (and prospective sites if not affected by confidentiality issues) is given based on school design and intended population with an explanation of prospective school sites and assistance to find them.
- ✓ An explanation of fund allocation is included based on estimated renovation costs, square foot needs per pupil and cost per square foot, average square foot costs in the intended location, and the percentage of budget designated for facility needs.

## O. **WAIVERS (no page limit)**

### 1. **Component Description**

The technical means by which charter schools operate is via waiver from certain state laws, state rules and/or school district policies. As a BOCES-authorized school, no automatic waivers exist. If a school applicant wishes to discuss waivers through the BOCES, the BOCES should be contacted after filing the intent to submit and prior to application submission if possible. For context, information on how charter schools apply for waivers from the state is on the CDE Charter schools website at [www.cde.state.co.us/cdechart/index.htm](http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdechart/index.htm) under Technical Assistance. An example of a waiver application can be found in the CDE Charter schools Electronic Guidebook of Best Practices at [www.cde.state.co.us/cdechart/guidebook/gov/index.htm](http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdechart/guidebook/gov/index.htm).

Although the Colorado State Board of Directors has determined that certain statutes may be automatically waived, upon request by charter schools, no automatic waivers exist for BOCES-authorized schools. BOCES-authorized schools may request waivers from statutes, but the process for approval is different and the BOCES must be contacted for information after the filing of an intent to submit.

A BOCES-authorized school applicant should obtain legal counsel when seeking waivers from either the state or the authorizer.

Attach:

- Waivers requested from the state.
- Waivers requested from the BOCES.

### 2. **Checklist for a High-Quality Application**

- ✓ The request for waiver from state statute by citation, state Board of Directors rules or regulations and authorizer policies by policy number are included as attachments. Request includes rationale for requesting the waiver, replacement policy or explanation of intent, expected financial and implementation impact, and how the waiver will be evaluated.

## P. **STUDENT DISCIPLINE, EXPULSION, OR SUSPENSION (12-page limit)**

### 1. **Component Description**

Although all Contract schools must meet the minimum standards for student discipline, expulsion and suspension, they don't have to fit into the traditional "box." Contract schools can have their own policies as long as the statutory minimums are met. Many Contract schools have sought and obtained waivers from related laws that provide for flexibility and a unique approach to student discipline.

Refer to C.R.S. 22-33-106 et seq., the Suspension, Expulsion and Denial of Admission law, for more detailed information. Further detail is provided in a publication prepared by the Attorney General's office at [www.coloradoattorneygeneral.gov/sites/default/files/uploads/violence\\_prevention/svpm2008.pdf](http://www.coloradoattorneygeneral.gov/sites/default/files/uploads/violence_prevention/svpm2008.pdf).

Most contract school contracts stipulate which party (the BOCES or the contract school) has the authority to suspend or expel students. During contract negotiations this issue must be decided. Therefore, the contract application should detail how the contract school proposes to handle student discipline, expulsion and suspension. Many applications include policies that the potential contract school would use. The education of expelled students is the responsibility of the

public school that expelled them. Include an explanation of how the contract school will provide for an alternative education, if applicable.

## 2. Checklist for a High-Quality Application

- ✓ A proposed policy for student discipline, expulsion or suspension that meets state law and BOCES policy (unless waived), is included.
- ✓ An explanation of how the student recommended for expulsion will be afforded due process rights, including manifestation hearings and the implementation of behavior plans.
- ✓ A description of the schools an expelled student will be prohibited from attending.
- ✓ An explanation of how the contract school will provide the expelled student with an alternative education, if applicable.

## Q. SERVING STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS (15-page limit)

### 1. Component Description

As public schools, BOCES-authorized schools must open their enrollment to any student and must provide appropriate special education services as needed for students with disabilities. The contract school developer should consider the general philosophy of the school when developing the philosophy for delivery of special education services. For instance, a contract school may have an experiential delivery model making the needs of a student with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) more unique. Further, a contract school with a philosophy that no student “falls through the cracks” may have an aggressive remediation program for students who are not attaining their full academic potential and yet do not qualify for special education services.

While our schools can obtain waivers from teacher licensure, Special Education licensure cannot be waived.

There are many CDE resources available for charter school applicants, which may be useful to consider when writing this section for a BOCES authorization application. Those resources are available at [www.cde.state.co.us/cdechart/guidebook/sped/index.htm](http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdechart/guidebook/sped/index.htm). After reading the overview, read the resource on special education funding for direction on the impact to the contract school’s operating budget. The sample compliance plan describes how all special education services could be delivered at a contract school. The application should contain sufficient detail about the delivery of special education services consistent with the school’s educational program while still allowing for flexibility between the authorizer and the school to best deliver services.

Authorizers are increasingly interested in ascertaining the capacity of the contract school to implement IDEA compliance services in order to limit potential liability issues for the authorizer.

### 2. Checklist for a High-Quality Application

- ✓ The school addresses a Response to Intervention (RtI), or child study process to address a need for adaptations or special education assessments and staffing.
- ✓ Clear indications are given that the school understands requirements to meet the needs of IEP’s, ELL, IDEA, 504 and plans to comply with the needs to include certified personnel, documentation, assessments, adaptations and modifications. The school may also want to address GT, and enrichment needs.
- ✓ Plan is in place to include needed staff, adequate funding, evaluation of programs’ success, flexibility to add contracted services, and specific services the BOCES is expected to provide.

**R. DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCESS (omit)**

Dispute Resolution should not be submitted with the application, and will be included in the contract negotiation process.

**S. SCHOOL MANAGEMENT CONTRACTS (5-page limit)**

**1. Component Description**

The school application must indicate with what entity it intends to contract for school management and operation. For an education service provider (ESP), education management organization (EMO/CMO), or any other type of school management provider, address the following issues:

- An explanation of how and why the ESP was selected.
- Detailed explanation of the ESP's success in serving student populations similar to the targeted student population, including demonstrated academic achievement as well as successful management of non-academic school functions (e.g., back-office services, school operations, extra-curricular programs).
- A term sheet setting forth the proposed duration of the management contract; roles and responsibilities; scope of services and resources to be provided by the ESP; performance evaluation measures and timelines; compensation structure including clear identification of all fees to be paid to the ESP; methods of contract oversight and enforcement; investment disclosure; and conditions for renewal and termination of the contract.
- A draft of the proposed management contract including all of the above terms.
- Explanation of the relationship between the school governing board and the ESP, specifying how the governing board will monitor and evaluate the performance of the service provider, the internal controls that will guide the relationship, and how the governing board will ensure fulfillment of performance expectations, or have a means for severing the contract.
- Explanation of which staff will report to or be paid by the ESP.
- Evidence that the corporate entity is authorized to do business in Colorado.

Attach:

- Term sheet (described above).
- Proposed management contract.
- Evidence that the service provider is authorized to do business in Colorado.

**2. Checklist for a High-Quality Application**

- ✓ Evidence is included that the service provider has successfully managed other schools.
- ✓ Evidence is included that the other schools managed by the proposed service provider have demonstrated academic achievement for similar targeted student populations.
- ✓ A term sheet for the proposed management of the contract school is included with clear performance measures and contract severance provision(s).
- ✓ A draft of the proposed management contract with a clear Conflict of Interest statement is included.
- ✓ An explanation of which staff will be hired and terminated by the ESP or report to or be paid by the ESP.
- ✓ Evidence that the ESP is authorized to conduct business in Colorado.
- ✓ Clear understanding of financial obligation to ESP and if it increases, decreases or stays the same for the duration of the relationship. This includes building ownership if the developers are making payments to the ESP.

**T. EXISTING SCHOOL OPERATORS OR REPLICATORS (10-page limit)**

(This section is to be completed only if the contract school applicant currently operates a school or is replicating an existing school.) It is the expectation of Education reEnvisioned BOCES that any applicants who are existing school operators will meet the guidelines of the Replication Readiness checklist developed by the Colorado League of Contract schools. These guidelines are included in Appendix D.

### 1. Component Description

If the proposed contract school is being developed by an existing school or is a replication of an existing school, address the following issues:

- An explanation of how and why the school has decided to replicate.
- Clear evidence of the existing school's capacity to operate a new school successfully while maintaining quality in existing school(s).
- Detailed explanation of the existing school's (or schools') success in serving student populations similar to the targeted student population, including demonstrated academic achievement as well as successful management of non-academic school functions (e.g., financial performance, back-office services, school operations, extra-curricular programs).
- Explain any never-opened, terminated, or non-renewed schools that were also part of replication efforts.
- Detailed explanation of the network's growth plan and the formal relationship between the existing school(s) and the proposed new school.
- If one board will oversee both or all schools, explain how the local community will be represented on either the board or another school-based oversight committee.

Attach:

- Business plan.
- Detailed academic results.
- Most recent financial audits.
- Parent satisfaction data.

### 2. Checklist for a High-Quality Application

Evidence is included that:

- ✓ the service provider has successfully managed other schools.
- ✓ the existing school has the capacity to operate a new school successfully through thoughtful staffing plans and realistic financial projections.
- ✓ the other school(s) have demonstrated high academic achievement for similar targeted student populations.
- ✓ the school has a strong financial track record, including making contributions to an annual unrestricted reserve.
- ✓ demonstrates a thoughtful relationship between the existing school(s) and the proposed new school.
- ✓ the applicant has a realistic long-term plan for growth.
- ✓ the school has a local board or local representation on the governing board or an oversight committee.

### U. VIRTUAL OR ONLINE SCHOOLS (10-page limit)

(This section is to be completed only if the proposed contract school has a substantial virtual or online component.)

#### 1. Component Description

If the proposed contract school has a substantial virtual or online component, provide the following:

- An explanation of why a virtual or online school will meet the needs of the identified student population.
- The proposed school's system of course credits.
- How the school will monitor and verify full-time student enrollment, student participation in a full course load, credit accrual, and course completion.
- System for monitoring and verifying student progress and performance in each course through regular, proctored assessments and submissions of coursework.
- How the school will provide appropriate services in the virtual learning environment to students with disabilities and English language learners.
- Plan for conducting parent-teacher conferences.
- Plan for administering state-required assessments to all students in a proctored setting.

## 2. Checklist for a High-Quality Application

- ✓ Evidence that the virtual or online model can effectively meet the identified student population's academic needs.
- ✓ Evidence is included that courses and credits align with BOCES graduation requirements and higher education admission requirements.
- ✓ Evidence the school will be able to effectively monitor student enrollment, course load, credit accrual and course completion.
- ✓ Evidence that the school will be able to conduct effective progress monitoring and provide responsive instruction when students are not making progress as expected.
- ✓ Evidence that the school will be able to legally and effectively meet the educational needs of students with disabilities and English language learners.
- ✓ Evidence that the school has a thoughtful plan for effectively engaging parents and communicating with parents about student progress and results.
- ✓ Evidence that the school will be able to meet all state requirements for administration of the annual state-mandated assessment.

## 3. Evaluation Criteria

An excellent Virtual or Online Schools section will have the following characteristics:

- A strong case for how this model was selected and why it is likely to be successful with the identified student population, including research or evidence of the success of this model with other similar student populations.
- A detailed description of course requirements and how they align with BOCES graduation requirements and higher education admission requirements.
- A detailed plan for how the school will track student course enrollment to ensure appropriate course loads, sufficient progress towards graduation requirements, and course completion rates.
- Specific protocol teachers will use to track student progress and provide interventions when progress is not meeting expectations.
- Specific effective strategies for meeting the needs of students with disabilities and English language learners.
- A thoughtful plan for holding parent-teacher conferences and generally engaging parents in the educational process.

A plan for state-mandated test administration that reflects an understanding of requirements that must be met in an online or virtual environment.