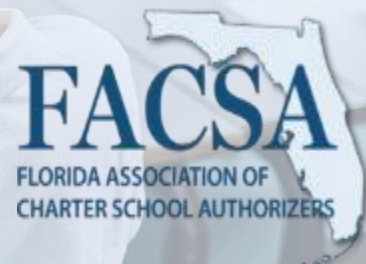


Capacity Interview Toolkit for Florida Authorizers: Exceptional Student Education

Developed by the Florida Special Education Collaborative in association
with the Florida Association of Charter School Authorizers

Updated April 2024



Introduction

What is the background and purpose of this technical assistance guide?

The Florida Association of Charter School Authorizers (FACSA) and the Florida Special Education Collaborative (FLSpEC) conducted a needs assessment during the 2019-20 school year related to issues impacting services to students with disabilities in charter schools. The needs assessment focused on students with disabilities only and did not incorporate services for gifted learners, or students receiving accommodations and services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. As a result of the needs assessment, an action plan was designed to address specific barriers impacting services to students with disabilities in charter schools.

The needs assessment led to a recommendation for the development of a guidance tool for authorizer (district) use during capacity interviews. The guiding information contained herein is intended to be utilized as a supplemental resource to design interview probes related to the provision of exceptional student education services (ESE) and programming to ensure academic success will be met. However, Florida’s charter application evaluation tool should serve as the fundamental basis for critiquing charter applications. All information within the charter application and gleaned during the capacity interviews should serve as a comprehensive picture of a charter applicant’s understanding of the requirement for schools to offer robust services and special education programming.

During the Spring of 2024, the Florida Association of Charter School Authorizers (FACSA) and the Florida Special Education Collaborative (FLSpEC) collaboratively examined and amended the technical assistance guide. This involved incorporating fresh or revised language relevant to the current Model Florida Evaluation Instrument. Additionally, prior segments of the Evaluation Instrument underwent careful analysis and were adjusted where necessary.

What are the applicable states laws related to Florida’s charter application review process?

Section 1002.33, Florida Statutes (F.S.) is the primary state requirement that governs the establishment and operation of Florida’s charter schools. This requirement also contains duties of the sponsor (i.e., district or authorizer) including elements related to the charter application review and approval process. While Florida’s required charter application template and related evaluation instrument are uniquely specific, requirements for conducting capacity interviews are less detailed.

Florida’s application evaluation instrument states that, “Applicants may have the opportunity to present their plan and demonstrate the team’s capacity to open and maintain a high-quality charter school as well as to answer questions about their proposal. Any information or evidence from the capacity interview that is used by the sponsor as a basis for denial of the application must be properly documented by means of a recording or transcript.”

Districts are not required to offer a capacity interview. When offered, the intended purpose

should be to probe for clarification of the applicant’s responses within the application template and/or for a deeper understanding of the applicant’s knowledge and understanding of their duties required to establish and operate a charter school. Applicants must demonstrate their capacity to serve all students effectively and equitably.

What are the applicable federal and state laws pertaining to charter school’s obligations for serving students with disabilities?

In conjunction with Florida Statutes, charter schools are obligated to follow [Title 34, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 300](#) (IDEA, Part B 2004); State Board of Education Rules; and their respective district ESE Policies and Procedures (SP&P) document.

Charter Application and Evaluation Criterion – Exceptional Student Education – Related Discussion

When completing the charter application, it is important from an applicant and district standpoint to keep in mind that certain application elements overlap from section to section. It is important for a reviewer to have access to the entire charter application when considering how the applicant proposes to serve students with disabilities. When completing an application, due to the strict 110-page limitation, applicants may be more direct in their responses across sections. However, applicants will incorporate discussion of students with disabilities in any relevant section describing services to all students. (e.g., curriculum, budget, staffing, etc.) Likewise, when reviewing charter applications, due to the volume of information, many districts divide the sections based upon the respective disciplines or areas of expertise of district staff. To assist in facilitating a more fluid review process and meaningful capacity interview, being mindful of these issues may be mutually beneficial for the reviewer and applicant.

A specific example may be when discussing pedagogical decisions in Section 4 pertaining to Curriculum and Instructional Design, information pertaining to core curricular decisions and materials, supplemental, and specially designed instruction will relate back to the applicant’s proposal for how instruction will be delivered to all students, which includes students with disabilities. For the purpose of this technical assistance guide however, the primary focus will be on Section 6 of the application pertaining to Exceptional Students, and what clarification and evidence through discussion may be useful for districts when determining the capacity of charter applicants through a structured interview process.

The evaluation tool indicates that within Section 6, applicants “should demonstrate an understanding of the requirements of the school to serve all students and provide a concrete plan for meeting the broad spectrum of educational needs and providing all students with a quality education”. The evaluation criterion prompts authorizers to “look for” the following:

- “A clear description of the programs, strategies and supports the school will provide students with disabilities that will ensure appropriate access for students with disabilities and that the school will not discriminate based on disability.
- A clear description of how the school will ensure students with disabilities will have an equal opportunity of being selected for enrollment.

- A comprehensive and compelling plan for appropriate identification of students with special needs to ensure they are served in the least restrictive environment possible, have appropriate access to the general education curriculum and schoolwide educational, extra-curricular, and culture-building activities in the same manner as non-disabled students, receive required and appropriate support services as outlined in their Individual Education Plans and 504 plans, and participate in standardized testing.
- An understanding and commitment to collaborating with the sponsor to ensure that placement decisions for students with disabilities will be made based on each student's unique needs through the IEP process.
- An appropriate plan for evaluating the school's effectiveness in serving exceptional students, including gifted.
- A realistic enrollment projection (SWD) and a staffing plan that aligns with the projections."
- A plan to serve gifted and talented students.

Applicants are required to *propose a plan that clearly defines the school's target population, proposed percentage of students with disabilities, and the manner in which students with disabilities will be served when the school opens.*

Although it's not explicitly stated, applicants are expected to demonstrate that they will adhere to 34 CFR §300.209(b)(1)(i) and how the school will serve children with disabilities "in the same manner as the LEA services children with disabilities in its other schools, including providing supplementary and related services on site at the charter school to the same extent that the LEA has a policy or practice of providing such services on the site to its other public schools."

Charter Application & Evaluation Criterion – Section 6 Application Prompts – Exceptional Students

The exceptional student’s section should demonstrate an understanding of the requirements of the school to serve all students and provide a concrete plan for meeting the broad spectrum of educational needs and providing all students with a quality education.¹

A. Projected Population

A. The applicant is required to provide the school’s projected population of students with disabilities and describe how the projection was made.

Discussion





How should a school with no actual student enrollment project the population of students it will serve while demonstrating the intent to serve all students?

An applicant should sufficiently be able to describe a realistic proposal of the number of students with disabilities based on their review and analysis of data within the State, district, and proposed location. Their projection should reflect actual data based on available public reports. If a district has an unusually high incident rate of students with disabilities in comparison to the State average, it would not be reasonable to expect the applicant to have a high rate as well, as there may be systematic issues that exist within that specific district that warrants further exploration.


Specific indicators that should be reflected in the capacity interview are the applicant’s understanding of how they derived at their proposed calculation and an understanding of the district and surrounding area’s population. If the school does not serve prekindergarten students, this could be a rationale for serving a relatively smaller percentage of students with disabilities if surrounding schools offer prekindergarten ESE programming to students with disabilities.

Indicators or “red flags” that may warrant further discussion include:

The applicant conveys their low number of students is due to the level of service they plan to provide. Examples of concerning statements are as follows:

-  We only plan to provide speech services.
-  The school only offers general education classes.
-  Teachers only serve “251” students.
-  The applicant’s projection is significantly lower than district and/or State averages.

¹ [Florida Charter School Application Evaluation Instrument](#)

 The projected population is unusually high and/or includes gifted learners or students who receive accommodations and services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.²

Standard Model Charter School Application Evaluation Instrument

A realistic enrollment projection (SWD) and a staffing plan that aligns with the projection.

B. Equitable Enrollment of Students with Disabilities


B. The applicant must describe how the school will ensure that students with disabilities will have an equal opportunity of being selected for enrollment in the charter school.

Discussion

What does equal opportunity for enrollment mean in the context of student applications and random lotteries?

During the capacity interview, it is imperative to determine whether the applicant intends to follow nondiscriminatory policies and practices as it pertains to any subgroup or population of students. The applicant should be expected to convey how its application and lottery process will be systematic and transparent. When discussing the applicant’s recruiting and marketing plan or strategies, the school should demonstrate a level of willingness and understanding of the importance of reaching all subgroups and demographics of students. By setting the tone that “all means all”, and the school has a defined willingness to include students with disabilities on the front end of their student recruitment and application process, parents of students with disabilities may be more inclined to apply to the school.³ The school ought to ensure stakeholders are aware of the breadth of services available at the school, which will in turn, ensure the community has the confidence that the services students with disabilities need will be available.

Indicators or “red flags” that may warrant further discussion include:

-  In reviewing Attachment S., the applicant’s proposed enrollment application, the parent/guardian is asked to indicate any of the following:
- whether their child has a disability or an individual educational plan (IEP),
 - whether or not their child is currently taking medication, or
 - whether their child has ever been suspended out of school.
- and/or

² At this time public reports do not include specific data for students served under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

³ The applicant may include related information in Section 2: Target Population and Student Body and/or Section 14: Student Recruitment and Enrollment.

- ✎ When describing the school’s lottery system, it is evident that there may be room for human bias in the process, and no plan to mitigate the issue or ensure overall transparency.
- ✎ The applicant’s recruitment plans exclude students with disabilities or harder to reach populations of students.

While the administration of medication and issues related to out of school suspension can be useful when engaging in educational planning for a student, they are irrelevant at the time a student application is completed. Furthermore, in some cases, they can be indicators of a disabling condition and are not purposeful when shared without any other context, or with individuals who may not have special expertise regarding all the related variables. Less automated lottery systems run by individual staff out of public view may be cause for further discussion and possible concern.

Standard Model Charter School Application Evaluation Instrument

A clear description of how the school will ensure students with disabilities will have an equal opportunity of being selected for enrollment.

[Click here to access the Model Florida School Charter Application.](#)

C. Sponsor Collaboration to Ensure the Provision of a Free Appropriate Public Education

C. The applicant is asked to describe how the school will work with the sponsor and through the IEP process when necessary to ensure students with disabilities receive a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment.

Discussion

What does this collaboration “look like” between the district and the applicant?

The discussion between the district and the applicant regarding their respective roles and what collaboration may “look like” is vital to developing a collaborative partnership between both parties geared toward student-centered decision-making. At the time of the capacity interview, both parties should have a basic level of understanding as to the contractual relationship that exists upon approval of a charter application and subsequent charter contract. Within the charter contract, the level of support from district exceptional student education (ESE) staff is typically defined further. At a basic level, during the capacity interview, the district may wish to inform an applicant of the type of relationship that is typically negotiated or has been negotiated in the past for the sake of discussion.

Some districts wish to serve as the local educational agency representative at many charter IEP meetings, while others may wish to serve in initial eligibility meetings and more complex IEP meetings. During the capacity interview, the applicant should be able to communicate their level of understanding of any language in existing charter policies regarding the role of district ESE staff in IEP meetings convened at charter schools. Thereby, the applicant can further share

their understanding of collaboration between both parties and how their roles will be represented in circumstances that commonly arise in IEP meetings.

What circumstances may warrant more collaboration than others?

Sample circumstances or capacity interview probes may include, but are not limited to the following:

- If a student is accepted through the school’s application and lottery system that has previously been served in a very supportive environment with a small adult-to-student ratio most of the school day, through intensive ESE services, how would the school address the needs of this student?
- How would the school proceed if it was possible that a student with disabilities’ needs could not be met at the charter school? How would this decision be made? (i.e., placement at the charter school may not constitute a free appropriate public education)
- How would you ensure the provision of services for students who require related services such as physical therapy, occupational therapy, or counseling?

Indicators or “red flags” that may warrant further discussion include:

- ✎ In addressing the more complex needs of students with disabilities, the school communicates that a decision-making process occurs outside of the scope of an IEP team meeting.
- ✎ The school conveys that the level of support, and ESE services are based largely on administrative convenience issues: scheduling, staffing, or budgetary constraints.
- ✎ The school is unable to share a sufficient level of understanding regarding the contractual relationship with the district and the related ESE administrative services contained within the contract. The role of the LEA in an IEP meeting is of particular importance in this case.
- ✎ The school conveys that they can only service students that require support facilitation.

Standard Model Charter School Application Evaluation Instrument

An understanding and commitment to collaborating with the sponsor to ensure that placement decisions for students with disabilities will be made based on each student’s unique needs through the IEP process.

D. Identification of Students with Disabilities

D. The applicant must describe the methods the school will use to identify students with disabilities that have not yet been identified.

Discussion

The applicant is expected to be able to effectively speak to the basic requirements contained within 34 CFR §300.111 and Section 6A-6.0331, Florida Statutes. These requirements support district and school activities related to locating and identifying students with disabilities, (i.e., Child find) conducting general education intervention procedures, and initiating and conducting initial evaluations. It is imperative for an applicant to effectively describe their understanding of how they plan to systematically implement a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS). As part of the school's problem-solving framework, the establishment of student-centered problem-solving teams and a problem solving/response to intervention processes (MTSS/RtI) should be inherent. In addition, the applicant should convey how the MTSS/RtI process is implemented to effectively support the provision of general education interventions for students.

The applicant's understanding of their role in intervention development, implementation, and monitoring of student interventions is essential. In addition, the applicant must have a basis of knowledge regarding their role in initiating initial evaluations, and the district's role in conducting initial evaluations. It is anticipated that an applicant will understand the relationship between the MTSS/RtI process and the circumstances which warrant the initiation of an initial evaluation, the required timelines for obtaining parental consent, and the completion of the initial evaluation. The capacity interviewer may wish to probe for the applicant's understanding of the persons responsible for engaging in MTSS/RtI meetings and the initial eligibility for a child. The concept of the district's contractual relationship may surface as it relates to the district's responsibility for conducting initial evaluations and who may serve in the role of the LEA during the process.

Indicators or “red flags” that may warrant further discussion include:

- ✎ The applicant is not able to articulate their role in the identification process of students with disabilities or indicate that they only identify specific categories of students.
- ✎ The applicant does not link general education interventions or evaluations to the social, emotional, behavioral needs of students, and only focuses on academics.
- ✎ The applicant views general education intervention processes as the “gateway” to accessing ESE services.
- ✎ The applicant is unable to convey their responsibilities in the MTSS/RtI process or their obligation to initiate an evaluation for students with suspected disabilities.
- ✎ The application’s initial and reevaluation procedures do not align to statutory requirements per [F.A.C. 6A-6.0331\(3\)\(g\)](#) and circumstances that require collaboration and involvement of the sponsor in the IEP planning process.

Standard Model Charter School Application Evaluation Instrument

A comprehensive and compelling plan for appropriate identification of students with special needs to ensure they are served in the least restrictive environment possible, have appropriate access to the general education curriculum and schoolwide educational, extra-curricular, and culture-building activities in the same manner as non-disabled students, receive required and appropriate support services as outlined in their Individual Education Plans and 504 plans, and participate in standardized testing.

E. ESE Services for Students in a General Education Environment 80% or More of the School Day

E. The applicant must describe the programs, strategies, and supports the school will provide – including supplemental supports, services, modifications, and accommodations to ensure the academic success of students whose education needs can be met in a regular classroom environment with at least 80% of instruction occurring in a class with non-disabled peers.

Discussion

The applicant should demonstrate a solid foundation of ESE service provision to include related services for students who spend most of their school day in the general education environment. It is important for the applicant to expressly communicate how these services will be carried out by indicating the specific service delivery models that may be implemented at the school, and who will be delivering the various services. (e.g., types of credentialed teachers and services providers and how they will ensure a reasonable level of proposed staff) The applicant’s understanding of specially designed instruction and how staff will provide access for students with disabilities to the general education curriculum is extremely important when considering the overall proposal.

In addition to the details within the above narrative, indicators of proposed success or areas for discussion during the capacity interview may include, but are not limited to the following:

- an understanding of related professional development needs of the school (may also relate to Section 13 of the application);
- evidence of the need for collaboration between general education and ESE teachers, as well as other ESE service providers;
- a healthy focus on meeting the needs of students in the general education environment to the maximum extent possible; and
- an awareness of how universal design for learning and how effective school-wide or school supports can help support the needs of all learners.

Indicators or “red flags” that may warrant further discussion include:

- ☞ The applicant indicates that only specific students can be served in the general education setting. (e.g., certain eligibility categories – speech only, or no students with emotional behavioral disabilities, etc.)
- ☞ The applicant is unable to thoroughly articulate the role of general education teachers in serving students with disabilities.
- ☞ There is evident confusion regarding the service delivery models and/or the continuum of available services.
- ☞ There appears to be a “one size fits all” approach to the proposed ESE services or a lack of a logical and compliant continuum.
- ☞ The applicant conveys their reliance on paraprofessionals as it relates to the provision of ESE services.

- ✎ The school’s proposed staffing model does not support a robust continuum of services.
- ✎ The applicant believes that support facilitation is the only delivery model the school is required to have available.

Standard Model Charter School Application Evaluation Instrument

A comprehensive and compelling plan for appropriate identification of students with special needs to ensure they are served in the least restrictive environment possible, have appropriate access to the general education curriculum and schoolwide educational, extra-curricular, and culture-building activities in the same manner as non-disabled students, receive required and appropriate support services as outlined in their Individual Education Plans and 504 plans, and participate in standardized testing.

F. Students Served in a General Education and ESE Environment

F. The applicant must describe how it will work with the district and through the IEP process to determine whether a student with a disability whose needs require a regular classroom and resource room combination can be provided a free appropriate public education by the school. (between 40-80% of instruction occurring with nondisabled peers)

Discussion

During related capacity discussions, it is important for both parties to have a clear understanding of their interpretations of 34 CFR §300.209(b)(1)(i) and the applicant’s plan for effectively offering services to a comparable district extent. One consideration during a capacity interview is the manner in which ESE programming is structured districtwide. Since no school (traditional or charter) is required to offer all ESE services and placement options to all students, most districts streamline ESE programs through various “cluster,” “feeder patterns,” or specialized sites. The level of comparability that is determined can be linked to this issue when probing an applicant during a capacity discussion.

For example, if the applicant is a proposed elementary school (K-5), and the surrounding comparable traditional schools serve students with disabilities in general education classrooms most of the school day with some pullout ESE occurring, the applicant should be expected to propose a plan to implement a comparable level of ESE service and support. Their proposal should align with a similar continuum and is not expected to be held to a higher standard. State and district data must also act as the basis of the district’s discussion related to this issue.

According to Florida’s most recent 2019 SEA Profile⁴, in 2018-19, 76 percent of Florida’s students with disabilities were served in regular class placements. Seven percent were served in resource placements, and fourteen percent were served in separate class settings. The percentage of students served in general education has gradually increased in recent years. It is reasonable for a charter applicant to communicate their intent and overall plan to serve the

⁴<http://www.fldoe.org/academics/exceptional-student-edu/data/>

majority of students with disabilities in the general education setting. However, the school must have a plan for ensuring that individual needs of students are considered through the IEP meeting process, and that options for students who require service delivery in a smaller environment are made available and effectively implemented. The concept that services and standards are setting neutral may play a role in the discussion between district ESE staff and the charter applicant.

Indicators or “red flags” that may warrant further discussion include:

- ✎ The applicant indicates that they have an established policy for all students to be served in the general education setting.
- ✎ The applicant indicates that most students with disabilities receive speech only, and/or do not share plans for offering a robust continuum of services.
- ✎ The applicant defines placement of students with disabilities based on eligibility category. (e.g., “We don’t serve students with emotional behavioral disabilities or autism spectrum disorder; they are served in separate classes within the district.”)
- ✎ The school’s proposed staffing model does not support a robust continuum of services.
- ✎ The applicant demonstrates a limited understanding of the district's [Special Programs and Procedures \(SP&P\)](#) and fundamental infrastructure for Exceptional Student Education (ESE), along with an understanding of the Sponsor's policies and procedures.

Standard Model Charter School Application Evaluation Instrument

A comprehensive and compelling plan for appropriate identification of students with special needs to ensure they are served in the least restrictive environment possible, have appropriate access to the general education curriculum and schoolwide educational, extra-curricular, and culture-building activities in the same manner as non-disabled students, receive required and appropriate support services as outlined in their Individual Education Plans and 504 plans, and participate in standardized testing.





G. Students Served in a Separate ESE Environment the Majority of the School Day

G. The applicant must describe how it will work with the district and through the IEP process to determine whether a student with a disability whose education needs require a separate classroom (less than 40% of instruction occurring with nondisabled peers) can be provided a free appropriate public education (FAPE).

Discussion

Discussion regarding item F. is applicable in this context as it relates to ensuring a comparable level of services, placement options for students with disabilities, the neutrality of Florida standards as it relates to placement, and the concept that ESE eligibility categories do not drive student placement decisions. In this context, the capacity interviewer can probe the applicant related to their understanding of how an IEP meeting is the basis for all decision-making. The applicant would be expected to convey an understanding of who should participate in related IEP meetings and the rationale for why certain students' needs can only be met in a separate class placement. The role of the LEA, contractual language, and the role of the district ESE staff in this process is a mutually beneficial discussion during the capacity interview process.

Indicators or "red flags" that may warrant further discussion include:

-  The applicant does not convey an accurate understanding of the range of ESE services along a continuum that may be available and or needed for particular students.
-  The plan to address this item appears to be based upon the availability of resources only in lieu of student need.
-  The applicant refers to decision-making occurring outside of the IEP meeting process.
-  The applicant implies that certain eligibility categories "drive" placements in separate class settings instead of correlating decision-making processes to student need.

Standard Model Charter School Application Evaluation Instrument

A comprehensive and compelling plan for appropriate identification of students with special needs to ensure they are served in the least restrictive environment possible, have appropriate access to the general education curriculum and schoolwide educational, extra-curricular, and culture-building activities in the same manner as non-disabled students, receive required and appropriate support services as outlined in their Individual Education Plans and 504 plans, and participate in standardized testing.





H. Monitoring and Evaluating Progress and Success of Students with Disabilities

H. *The applicant must describe a plan for monitoring and evaluating the progress and success of students with disabilities to ensure the attainment of each student’s goals as detailed in their IEP or 504 plan, including promotion of graduation for students in high school.*

Discussion

At a minimum, the applicant is expected to indicate how often reports of progress for students with disabilities are required. This reporting element should be based on students’ progress toward IEP annual goals and/or short-term objectives. As it relates to promotion of graduation, the interviewer may wish to probe applicable applicants to describe their level of conceptual knowledge related to postsecondary planning for students with disabilities, as well as other services and school supports that are available for all students to support attaining graduation requirements. The applicant should also be able to clearly communicate plans to monitor the implementation of services through data collection measures and ensure outcome data are considered by the school with an equitable perspective when compared to all students.

Indicators or “red flags” that may warrant further discussion include:

-  The applicant is not aware of progress reporting requirements for students with disabilities and/or how this relates to the effectiveness of overall service implementation and meaningful ESE service delivery.
-  The applicant demonstrates limited knowledge of who will provide oversight when monitoring implementation of ESE services with fidelity.
-  A high school applicant does not hold equally rigorous expectations for promoting the timely graduation of students with disabilities when compared to those set forth for nondisabled students.
-  The application does not specifically identify a plan as to how the charter school will monitor progress of Students with Disabilities in reading and mathematics.

Standard Model Charter School Application Evaluation Instrument

A comprehensive and compelling plan for appropriate identification of students with special needs to ensure they are served in the least restrictive environment possible, have appropriate access to the general education curriculum and schoolwide educational, extra-curricular, and culture-building activities in the same manner as non-disabled students, receive required and appropriate support services as outlined in their Individual Education Plans and 504 plans, and participate in standardized testing.






I. Projected Staffing Plan and Staff Qualifications

I. The applicant must provide a staffing plan based on the proposed projections, for the school's special education program, including the number and qualification of staff.

Discussion

The staffing plan in this section should accurately align with the target population in Section 2, the Staffing Plan included in Section 11, and the budget attachments contained within the application. The ratio of staff to students should be deemed a reasonably manageable caseload and/or comparable to those maintained at traditional district schools. The applicant should clearly define their intent for ensuring other services providers are available to fulfill the school's obligation to provide related services. The applicant's proposal should incorporate an understanding of the unique requirements for staff responsible for delivering ESE services, including position descriptions within the application's required attachments.

Indicators or "red flags" that may warrant further discussion include:

-  The applicant conveys a reliance on paraprofessionals/and or substitute teachers to deliver ESE services.
-  The proposed staffing plan does not include a reasonable adult-to-student ratio for meeting the needs of the proposed student population.
-  The applicant has limited knowledge of how to access service providers who may be needed who are not direct employees of the school.
-  The applicant fails to show a level of understanding related to the need to ensure ESE teachers and service providers are appropriately credentialed.
-  The number of full-time Exceptional Student Education (ESE) teachers do not appear to be enough to provide students with disabilities and gifted learners support as well as be in compliance with the Individual Education Plan (IEP), Educational Plans (EP), and legal documents.

Standard Model Charter School Application Evaluation Instrument

A plan to develop realistic enrollment projections and staffing plan that aligns with the projected student population, ensuring that resources allocated effectively meet the needs of students and staff.




J. The Evaluation of ESE Services and Programs

J. *The applicant must describe how its overall effectiveness in serving exceptional education students will be evaluated.*

Discussion

In conjunction with a student’s IEP goals and/or short-term objectives, the applicant should be expected to incorporate students with disabilities in its assessment system, review of outcome measures, and data sources used to progress monitor all students. In essence, a student with a disability is compared to students without disabilities when considering overall performance, as all students except a small percentage with significant cognitive impairments, are working toward the same Florida Standards. However, all students are provided access to the general education curriculum. The applicant may choose to highlight outreach to parents of students with disabilities through school surveys or other means to obtain their perspective of the overall ESE programming for their child. Similarly, the applicant may propose to survey staff and related stakeholders regarding ESE programs and services.

Indicators or “red flags” that may warrant further discussion include:

-  The applicant proposes to solely base student progress of students with disabilities on a single source of data or progress toward annual goals.
-  The applicant does not show evidence of a proposed plan to incorporate students with disabilities when measuring student outcomes or as part of their regular MTSS data review processes and determination of adequate accommodations including instruction and assessments.
-  The applicant does not show good faith in their approach to hold students with disabilities to high expectations or equally rigorous outcomes.

Standard Model Charter School Application Evaluation Instrument

An appropriate plan for evaluating the school’s effectiveness in serving exceptional students, including gifted.

K. Services for Gifted and Talented Students



K. The applicant must describe how the school will serve gifted and talented students.

Discussion

The applicant must be able to describe how the school will offer an enriched and supportive environment for gifted and talented students to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. The applicant should provide a multifaceted approach that encompasses various strategies and resources tailored to meet the unique needs of these students.

It is essential that the school implements academic challenges, social support, and enrichment opportunities to gifted and talented students so they may reach their full potential and thrive both inside and outside the classroom.

Indicators or “red flags” that may warrant further discussion include:

-  The applicant does not identify gifted teachers in the staffing plan.
-  The application does not identify a model or plan as to how the charter school will serve gifted and talented students.

Standard Model Charter School Application Evaluation Instrument

An appropriate plan for evaluating the school’s effectiveness in serving exceptional students, including gifted.