

Executive Summary

Innovation Charter School, Inc. Innovation Charter School

Applicants seeking to open a charter school must complete the Model Florida Virtual Charter School Application from the Florida Department of Education School Choice website or the District's Charter School website. The application clearly specifies the statutorily required standards and supporting criteria that reviewers should expect to find. In order to demonstrate the quality of the proposed charter school, as well as the capacity of the applicant to meet the challenge of operating a quality charter school, applicants are asked to provide detailed plans in three areas critical to the success of the school:

- Educational Plan
- Organizational Plan
- Business Plan

Pursuant to Section 1002.33, Florida Statutes, charter school applications are due on or before August 1 of each calendar year for charter schools to be opened at the beginning of the school district's next academic year. Applications received in a timely manner are evaluated by the Superintendent's Charter School Review Committee, which is comprised of representatives from Instruction and Intervention, Budget, Facilities, District Administration, Student Transportation and Fleet Services, Exceptional Student Education and Support Services (ESE), English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), and other areas of the organization.

Staff Comments and Recommendations:

The Charter School application for Innovation Charter School, Inc., (Innovation Charter School), was reviewed by the Superintendent's Charter School Review Committee and is recommended for denial. It is recommended that the application of Innovation Charter School, Inc., (Innovation Charter School), be denied due to the following deficiencies:

- Failure to describe the educational foundation of the school and the teaching and learning strategies that will be employed. Section 1002.33(7)(a)(2), Florida Statutes, a required element of the Model Florida Charter School Application.
 - Section 1002.33(7)(a)(2)(a), Florida Statutes, states that, "the charter shall ensure that reading is a primary focus of the curriculum and that resources are provided to identify and provide specialized instruction for students who are reading below grade level. The curriculum and instructional strategies for reading must be consistent with the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards and grounded in scientifically based reading research." State Board Rule 6A-6.054, F.A.C., requires that FCAT Level 1 and 2 students with deficits in decoding & text reading efficiency must be placed in reading intervention instruction and may not be served through Content area reading intervention (CAR-PD/NGCAR-PD).
 - Application Deficiency: The application fails to provide evidence of intensive reading instructional time in the master schedule.

- Application Deficiency: The application fails to provide evidence of how students with deficits in decoding and text reading will be served, how much time will be devoted to intensive reading instruction, who will teach and monitor the intensive reading courses, and what research-based curriculum materials will be used for each grade level.
- Failure to explain not only what the school will teach but also how and why. Section 1002.33(6)(a)(2), Florida Statutes; Section 1002.33(6)(a)(4), Florida Statutes; Section 1002.33(7)(a)(2), Florida Statutes; Section 1002.33(7)(a)(4), Florida Statutes, a required element of the Model Florida Charter School Application.
 - Section 1002.33(7)(a)(2)(a), Florida Statutes, states that, “the charter shall ensure that reading is a primary focus of the curriculum and that resources are provided to identify and provide specialized instruction for students who are reading below grade level. The curriculum and instructional strategies for reading must be consistent with the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards and grounded in scientifically based reading research.” State Board Rule 6A-6.054, F.A.C., requires that FCAT Level 1 and 2 students with deficits in decoding & text reading efficiency must be placed in reading intervention instruction and may not be served through Content area reading intervention (CAR-PD/NGCAR-PD).
 - Application Deficiency: The application fails to provide evidence of appropriate curriculum frameworks.
 - Application Deficiency: The application fails to clearly identify a specific reading plan for struggling readers and how many minutes beyond the required 90-minute reading block will be designated for these students.
 - Section 1002.33(6)(a)(2), Florida Statutes, states that, “charter school applications are subject to the following requirements: Provides a detailed curriculum plan that illustrates how students will be provided services to attain the Sunshine State Standards.”
 - Application Deficiency: The application fails to identify current curriculum plan and materials that are based on current standards.
- Failure to demonstrate an understanding of the requirements of the school to serve exceptional students and provide a concrete plan for meeting the broad spectrum of educational needs and providing all enrolled students with a quality education. Section 1002.33(10), Florida Statutes, a required element of the Model Florida Charter School Application.
 - State Board Rule 6A-6.03028(11)(i)(3), F.A.C., Provision of Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) and Development of Individual Educational Plans for Students with Disabilities states that, “a continuum of alternative placements must be available to meet the needs of students with disabilities for special education and related services, including instruction in regular classes, special classes, special schools, home instruction, and instruction in hospitals and institutions and a school district must make provision for supplementary services (such as resource room or itinerant instruction) to be provided in conjunction with regular class placement.”
 - Application Deficiency: This application fails to provide a clear description of a continuum or levels of services to be provided to students with disabilities.

- Application Deficiency: The application fails to provide assurance that federal, state and local guidelines and rules will be followed in reference to student placement.
 - State Board Rule 6A-6.0331, F.A.C., states that, “the state’s goal is to provide full educational opportunity and a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) to all students with disabilities ages three (3) through twenty-one (21) and to school age students who are gifted. School districts have the responsibility to ensure that students suspected of having a disability are subject to general education intervention procedures. They must ensure that all students with disabilities or who are gifted and who are in need of specially designed instruction and related services are identified, located, and evaluated, and appropriate exceptional student education is made available to them if it is determined that the student meets the eligibility criteria specified in Rules 6A-6.03011 through 6A-6.0361, F.A.C.”
 - Application Deficiency: The application fails to address a system of interventions for struggling students before they reach the evaluation level of the Response to Intervention process.
- Failure to demonstrate an understanding of the requirements of the school to serve English Language Learner Students (ELLs) and to provide a concrete plan for meeting the broad spectrum of educational needs for all enrolled students as required in Section 1003.56, Florida Statutes, English Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient Students and Rules 6A-6.0900 to 6A-6.0909, F.A.C, Programs for Limited English Proficient Students and section 1002.33(10), Florida Statutes, a required element of the Florida Model Charter School Application.
 - State Board Rule 6A-6.0902, F.A.C., Requirements for Identification, Eligibility, and Programmatic Assessments of English Language Learners, and the state-approved District ELL Plan require that all students with limited English proficiency must be properly identified and assessed to ensure the provision of appropriate services.
 - Application Deficiency: The application fails to provide a clear understanding of district’s procedures for classifying ELL students.
 - Application Deficiency: The application fails to identify the assessments used for placement in the district.
 - Application Deficiency: The application fails to provide a clear understanding of the functions of ELL Committee.
 - Application Deficiency: The application fails to provide a clear understanding of district and state requirements for personnel serving English Language Learners.
 - State Board Rule 6A-6.0903, F.A.C., Requirement for Exiting English Language Learners from the English for Speakers of Other Languages Program and the state-approved District ELL Plan require that all students identified as limited English proficiency shall continue to receive appropriate instruction until the student meets standards for exiting the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Program.
 - Application Deficiency: The application fails to provide a clear understanding of district policies and procedures for exiting ELLs from the ESOL Program.

- State Board Rule 6A-6.0904, F.A.C., Equal Access to Appropriate Instruction for English Language Learners and the state-approved District ELL Plan require that each student identified as limited English proficiency shall have equal access to appropriate programs and instruction which is comprehensible, equal and comparable in amount, scope, and sequence and quality to that provided to English proficient students. In addition, ELLs shall have access to trained personnel proficient in the same language to assist in basic subject area instruction.
 - Application Deficiency: The application fails to provide a clear understanding of how the school will implement Equal Access for ELLs.
- State Board Rule 6A-6.09091, F.A.C., Accommodations of the Statewide Assessment Program Instruments and Procedures for English Language Learners and District ELL Plan require that all ELLs shall receive accommodations to enable them to fully participate in the statewide assessment program.
 - Application Deficiency: The application fails to identify implementation of allowable accommodations for state, district, and classroom assessments.
- State Board Rule 6A-6.0908 F.A.C., Equal Access for English Language Learners to Programs Other Than English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and the state-approved District ELL Plan require that all students identified as limited English proficiency shall be entitled to categorical programs and services in addition to ESOL. In addition, all written and oral communication between a school district's personnel and parents of current or former English Language Learners shall be in the parents' primary language or other mode of communication commonly used by the parents unless clearly not feasible.
 - Application Deficiency: The application fails to provide a clear understanding of the requirement to provide Home Language communication.
- Failure to describe how the policy-making and oversight function of the school will be structured and operate. Section 1002.33, Florida Statutes, a required element of the Model Florida Charter School Application.
 - Section 1002.33(7)(a)(15), Florida Statutes, states that “the charter school shall address and criteria for approval of the charter shall be based on (15) the governance structure of the school, including the status of the charter school as a public or private employer as required in paragraph (12)(i)” and section 1002.33(9), Florida Statutes identifies charter school requirements, specifically the responsibilities of the governing board.
 - Application Deficiencies: The application fails to identify the guidelines that will be followed for a sensible method of resolving disputes between parents and the school.
- Failure to define the policies and procedures that frame the school's relationship with its staff. Section 1002.33(7)(a)(14), Florida Statutes; Section 1002.33(12), Florida Statutes, a required element of the Model Florida Charter School Application.
 - Section 1002.33(7)(a)(14), Florida Statutes, states that the charter school shall address “The qualifications to be required of teachers and the potential strategies used to recruit, hire, train, and retain qualified staff to achieve best value.”

- Application Deficiency: The application fails to provide an understanding of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Highly Qualified Teacher requirements.
- Failure to provide an understanding of the school’s anticipated facilities needs and how the school plans to meet those needs. Section 1002.33(7)(a)(13), Florida Statutes; Section 1002.33(18), Florida Statutes, a required element of the Model Florida Charter School Application.
 - Section 1002.33, Florida Statutes, states that, “a startup charter school shall utilize facilities which comply with the Florida Building Code pursuant to chapter 553 except for the State Requirements for Educational Facilities...”
 - Application Deficiency: The application fails to identify the process for having the building inspected for asbestos.
 - Application Deficiency: The application fails to identify the process for having the building inspected for lead and radon.
 - Application Deficiency: The application fails to identify the process regarding health and sanitation inspections, specifically standards for food service, drinking water, and sewer/sanitary facilities.
 - Application Deficiency: The application fails to identify the process for providing a traffic plan to Broward County Traffic Engineering for approval.
- Failure to provide budgetary projections that are consistent with all parts of the application, including the school’s mission, education program, staffing plan and facility. Section 1002.33(6)(a)(5), Florida Statutes; Section 1002.33(6)(b)(2), Florida Statutes, a required element of the Model Florida Charter School Application.
 - Section 1002.33(6)(b)(2), Florida Statutes, states that, “in order to ensure fiscal responsibility, an application for a charter school shall include a full accounting of expected assets, a projection of expected sources and amounts of income, including income derived from projected student enrollments and from community support, and an expense projection that includes full accounting of the costs of operation, including start-up costs.”
 - Application Deficiency: The application fails to show the Teacher Salary Allocation as an expense item although it is included in the revenue. This will cause the budget to be in a deficit for Year 1.
- Failure to provide a clear roadmap of the steps and strategies that will be employed to prepare the school to be ready to serve its students well on the first day of operation.
 - Section 1002.33(7)(a)(16), Florida Statutes, requires “A timetable for implementing the charter which addresses the implementation of each element thereof and the date by which the charter shall be awarded in order to meet this timetable.”
 - Application Deficiency: The application fails to include a realistic implementation of a facility build out.

It is requested that The School Board of Broward County, Florida, authorize the Superintendent of Schools to notify Innovation Charter School, Inc., (Innovation Charter School), of the denial of the charter application. A draft letter notifying the applicant of the decision is attached (Exhibit 3).

The applicant for the Innovation Charter School, Inc., (Innovation Charter School), will be encouraged to resubmit an application for the 2015 Application Review Cycle after the foregoing application deficiencies have been remedied.