



The Thomas B. Fordham Foundation  
Charter School Sponsorship Application Guide  
For New, Start-up Charter Schools

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## Introduction

Thank you for your interest in charter school sponsorship with the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation. This application guide is designed to provide a structured means to set forth the educational, fiscal, operational, and governance plans for new, start-up charter schools.

We strongly recommend that applicants review Ohio Department of Education (ODE) guidance for new school developers at

<http://education.ohio.gov/GD/Templates/Pages/ODE/ODEDetail.aspx?page=3&TopicRelationID=662&ContentID=2321&Content=105534>.

Please note that prior to submitting an application, applicants are required to submit an Intent to Apply form. The Intent to Apply form is available at

<https://spreadsheets.google.com/a/edexcellence.net/viewform?hl=en&formkey=dEVJU3ICMHd6b2Zuc0RKLWdPc0VIWmc6MQ#gid=0>.

Applications that demonstrate the capacity to start and sustain a successful charter school share the following qualities:

- **Strong governance.** The governing board members of the school are ultimately responsible for the success or failure of the school, and:
  - Have varied professional backgrounds (e.g., law, finance, education, government, public service);
  - Have no conflicts of interest with employees, contractors or the school's management company;
  - Know the school's commitments pursuant to its charter; and
  - Know their role as a public school board member, responsible for the oversight of public funds to educate children.
- **Proven curriculum and instructional methods.** Application materials show:
  - A coherent instructional plan (i.e., curriculum that is mapped and aligned to applicable standards);
  - Evidence documenting that the materials (e.g., software, textbooks) and instructional methods have proven successful with the student population to be served;
  - The ability to source excellent leadership and staff.
- **Solid financial plan.** Budgets demonstrate:
  - Knowledge of state and federal funding (including state foundation dollars, federal entitlement and competitive grant funds, disbursement dates, etc.);
  - Contingency fund for the unexpected;
  - A market need for the school and realistic assumptions regarding student enrollment, revenues, and expenditures which align with the educational and staffing plans.

Specific details regarding the content of the application are included in each individual section. Each section also contains a content checklist so that applicants know what reviewers will be looking for while reviewing the application.

Following receipt of a school's application, a review panel made up of Fordham staff - and possibly external reviewers - will evaluate the content of the submission. After reviewing the application and additional information requested, if any, the Fordham Foundation will approve or deny the application. Applicants will receive written notification of Fordham's decision. Applicants whose submission was not approved will be notified of the rationale behind that decision.

Applicants whose submission was approved will then move on to the contract process, during which time the Fordham Foundation and the successful applicant will negotiate the particulars of the sponsorship contract and develop the key exhibits (Education Plan, Financial Plan, and Governance Plan).

As part of that process, Fordham and the successful applicant may enter into a Preliminary Agreement (PA). A PA is not a contract for sponsorship; rather, it is an agreement between the Fordham Foundation and the applicant that both will, in good faith, negotiate a contract for sponsorship. Entering into a PA is advantageous because it enables the applicant to

- (1) obtain an Information Retrieval Number (IRN) from the Ohio Department of Education, which allows the applicant to begin the process of setting itself up with the multitude of required state systems, and
- (2) apply for a federal planning grant of up to \$50,000.

The Thomas B. Fordham Foundation uses a standard Preliminary Agreement, "base" contract for sponsorship, and academic performance plan across all of its sponsored schools. We encourage applicants to review these documents (see <http://www.edexcellence.net/ohio-charter-authorization/fordham-sample-documents.html>), and note that they may be revised as necessary by the Fordham Foundation.

Additionally, copies of current Fordham sponsorship contracts are available at <http://www.edexcellence.net/ohio-charter-authorization/fordham-sponsored-schools.html>.

## Application Timeline\*

| <b>Event</b>   | <b>Date<br/>No Later Than</b> |
|--|-------------------------------|
| Complete online Intent to Apply form   | March 1, 2012                 |
| Deadline to submit sponsorship application to Fordham  | June 1, 2012                  |
| Review of application by Fordham   | June – September 2012         |
| Applicant interviews   | July – September 2012         |
| Site visit to applicant’s qualifying operator school   | August – September 2012       |
| Notification to applicant of the decision on the application   | By October 31, 2012           |
| Preliminary agreement signed with approved applicant   | November 2012                 |
| Sponsorship contracts drafted and finalized  | November 2012 – March 2013    |
| Notification of intent to adopt due to Ohio Department of Education  | March 15, 2013                |
| Final, fully executed contract documents due to Ohio Department of Education: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contract for sponsorship between school governing board and Fordham Foundation</li> <li>• Fordham Foundation resolution approving the contract</li> <li>• School governing board resolution approving the contract</li> <li>• Operator agreement between school governing board and operator</li> <li>• Operator supporting documentation</li> <li>• School governing board resolution approving the operator agreement</li> <li>• Ohio Department of Education contract checklist</li> </ul> | May 15, 2013                  |

*\*Timeline is for new, start-up charter schools seeking to open in the fall of 2013.*

## Application Submission Guidelines

Submission of a completed application with completed forms and attachments will allow us to closely examine the competencies and strengths of the school's education, governance, management, and financial structures.

**Order.** Completed applications must mirror the sequence of topics and attachments set forth in this application document:

- Application Transmittal Form
- Education Plan
- Financial Plan
- Governance Plan
- Parent and Community Engagement Plan
- Additional Strategies
- Market Assessment
- Facilities
- Summary of Strengths and Weaknesses

**Format.** Materials must adhere to the following format:

- school name in header or footer of each page
- include table of contents (including appendices/attachments)
- page numbers on each page (including appendices/attachments)
- prepared on white, 8.5" x 11" paper
- one-inch margins on all sides
- no font smaller than 11-point
- paragraph formatting may not be more compact than standard single space
- all forms – except the application transmittal form – should be included with the application as appendices/attachments.

**Submission.** Applications must be submitted in the following manner:

- One (1) hardcopy of the application materials, including the original, unstapled and unbound, with original signatures should be delivered or mailed to:  
Thomas B. Fordham Foundation  
Attn: Director of Charter School Sponsorship  
2600 Far Hills Avenue, Suite 216  
Dayton, OH 45419
- One (1) electronic version of the application in Microsoft Word, signature pages in PDF, and budget materials in Excel format, using the templates provided, via email to:  
Kathryn Mullen Upton, Director of Sponsorship  
[kmullenupton@edexcellence.net](mailto:kmullenupton@edexcellence.net)

The Thomas B. Fordham Foundation may reject applications that do not follow the procedures detailed above or that are determined to be incomplete.

# 1. Education Plan

## 1.1 Mission statement

Explain the mission of the school. Mission statements should be written for a general audience. Avoid educational and business jargon, and technical terminology—parents and members of the community who wish to know more about the school should be able to read the mission statement and get a clear sense of the school and its vision.

### Content Checklist:

Fordham reviewers will be looking for a mission statement that:

- is concise and provides a compelling statement of what the school hopes to achieve, for whom, and to what degree.

## 1.2 Philosophy

Describe the educational philosophy of the school. Explain how the educational philosophy aligns with the school's mission.

### Content Checklist:

Fordham reviewers will be looking for an educational philosophy that:

- demonstrates a commitment to educational excellence;
- aligns with the school's mission and responds to the needs of the student population;
- shows evidence that this approach will lead to improved student performance of all students; and,
- is founded on an understanding of effective, research-based educational practices, teaching methods, core academic subjects, and curricular sources.

## 1.3 School Characteristics

Detail the following:

- Enrollment plan for the school, by grade and year
- Age range of students to be served
- Target student population
- Draw area for the school (i.e., district-wide, home district and adjacent districts, or statewide)
- Unique aspects of the program (e.g., longer day or year, specific programmatic focus, etc)
- Classroom based learning opportunities available to students
- Non-classroom based learning opportunities available to students

Discuss the rationale for the rollout of the plan (e.g., growth by one grade per year, opening offering all grades at once, etc).

Attachments:

- Calendar for the academic year, including days of instruction, days of professional development, holidays, testing days, and anything else that is relevant. Note the number of instructional hours per day, and the total instructional hours for the year. (Note: do not count anything other than academic classes offered during the school week as instructional time.)

**Content Checklist:**

Fordham reviewers will be looking for school characteristics that:

- are consistent with the proposed school’s mission and educational program;
- illustrate an efficient and effective use of time;
- directly addresses enrollment, age range, target student population, draw area, unique programmatic components, and classroom and non-classroom based learning opportunities.

**1.4 Academic Standards**

Applicants are encouraged to adopt standards that meet or exceed the Ohio standards. Describe the adoption or development process for the school’s standards, indicate when it will take place, and who will oversee the process. Include the timeline for completion and implementation.

**Content Checklist:**

Fordham reviewers will be looking for academic standards that:

- meet or exceed the Ohio state standards;
- are specific, measurable, and ambitious but attainable; and,
- align with the school’s educational approach and state standards.

**1.5 Curriculum**

Describe in detail the curriculum materials that will be used by the school, including the objectives, content, skills taught, and instructional methods used in the main subject areas at each grade or performance level.

Provide specific citations to research that showing the curriculum and instructional methods have proved successful with the student population the school will serve.

Attach a map of the curricula, by grade and subject, so there is a clear understanding of what will be taught and when. If your school does not have a curriculum map, include a timeline for developing one that contains key dates and describes the process with specificity.

Describe the role of technology as it relates to curriculum and instruction. Describe how your



students use technology. Include a description of the hardware and software available to students. Provide evidence that any software being used to supplement instruction is effective with your school's students.

Demonstrate that the technology (including necessary upgrades) the school utilizes aligns with the budget.

**Content Checklist:**

Fordham reviewers will be looking for a curriculum that:

- is consistent with the mission of the school;
- demonstrates the capacity to lead to the accomplishment of the school's goals;
- offers learning objectives, content, and skills appropriate for the anticipated student populations; and,
- is aligned with Ohio standards and prepares students for Ohio state assessments.

**1.6 Academic Assessment**

Charter schools must participate in all state mandated assessments and are subject to all accountability measures under the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law. The contract between the charter school and the Fordham Foundation will contain additional measures of student performance assessments.

List the assessment tools will be used to determine and report student progress. For each assessment tool that the school will use, describe:

- how baseline data will be collected and used;
- the frequency with which the tool will be used;
- how the results of the assessments will be used to inform professional development;
- how the results of the assessments will be used to inform professional development; and
- how the results of assessments will be reported to parents, staff, the governing authority, and the sponsor.

**Content Checklist:**

Fordham reviewers will be looking for an assessment plan that:

- meets state requirements;
- offers multiple measures of student outcomes reported in terms of absolute scores, within-year student gains/losses, and year-to-year student gains/losses;
- furthers the school's mission and education program; and,
- will facilitate decision-making about adjustments to be made in the education program as it is implemented.

## 1.7 Student Performance Requirements

All schools sponsored by the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation must meet a set of common academic and organizational goals set forth Fordham’s standard contract academic performance plan. Examples of academic performance plans current Fordham-sponsored school contracts are available at <http://www.edexcellence.net/ohio-charter-authorization/fordham-sponsored-schools.html>. These goals, common across most Fordham-sponsored schools, however, may not fully capture the distinctive mission of your school. For example:

- Your school may focus on a curricular area that is not covered by the state assessment system.
- Your school may have aspirations for its students that are not measured well by standardized assessments (e.g., college attendance, charter service).
- Your school may focus on particular sub-populations of students whose performance you want to be sure to measure specifically.
- Your school may have non-academic goals (e.g., parent satisfaction, student turnover, teacher morale, character formation, physical fitness, artistic development) that are not measured in Fordham’s common goals.

Fordham requires the schools it sponsors to identify *school-specific goals* – goals that supplement the common academic goals in each school’s academic performance plan.

In this section of the application, summarize your most important *school-specific goals*. For each goal, include the following:

- **Goal Statement.** Example: The Charter School will have 100 percent of its eighth-grade graduates entering “high-quality academic high schools” that will prepare them for college entry.
- **Measurable Target.** Example: The Charter School will see an annual increase of, on average, five percent in the number of eighth-graders entering “high-quality academic high schools” until it achieves 100 percent.
- **Metric.** Example: The Charter School will track the schools where its graduating eighth-graders go. It will develop a rating system to determine which of these schools are “high-quality academic high schools.” This rating system will be based upon factors such as test scores, the proportion of students taking AP and IB courses, and college attendance by the school’s graduates.

### Content Checklist:

Fordham reviewers will be looking for goals that:

- show a genuine commitment to accountability for results;
- are clear, measurable, and data-driven;
- are consistent with the school’s mission and program; and,

- supplement and/or exceed the Ohio state standards in score or rigor.

### 1.8 Special Student Populations

For each of the following populations, (1) describe how the school will identify the students, develop plans for their education, and monitor their progress; (2) include the services that the school will make available for each population, and identify services that will be contracted; and (3) detail the professional development that the school will provide to staff regarding these populations:

- Students with disabilities
- Gifted students
- Limited English Proficient students
- Homeless students

#### Content Checklist:

Fordham reviewers will be looking for an educational program that is committed to serving the needs of special needs students, including:

- providing a plan that reflects an understanding of the services and costs associated with providing high-quality support for all students; and
- exhibits knowledge of the school's obligations under state and federal law when serving special education, Limited English Proficient, gifted, and homeless students.

### 1.9 Professional Development

Describe the professional development required of staff. Indicate how the school will decide what professional development is needed, and:

- describe the content and frequency of the professional development sessions;
- specify how professional development sessions will be evaluated for effectiveness by the school leadership; and
- specify how professional development sessions will improve teacher and student outcomes.

#### Content Checklist:

Fordham reviewers will be looking for a professional development program that:

- provides ongoing training in core areas central to the philosophy, mission, and instructional program of the school;
- is flexible and can adjust to focus on critical areas where staff is in need of additional and/or ongoing training;
- demonstrates that school leadership continually examines professional development to ensure that sessions are effective and result in improved teacher and student outcomes;
- provides a continuous and transparent method for evaluating instructional staff.

## 2. Financial Plan

### 2.1 Financial Management Plan

Explain how the school's finances are managed. Include the names, roles, and qualifications of employees or contractors that are involved in the financial management of the school.

Describe the fiscal controls and financial management policies used track finances in the school's daily business operations.

Describe all fundraising efforts and indicate who will lead these efforts.

#### Content Checklist:

Fordham reviewers will be looking for:

- a financial management plan that provides adequate financial controls (including annual audits), and generally accepted government accounting principles; and
- demonstrates knowledge of charter school funding in Ohio.

### 2.2 Budget

Construct a budget, using the template provided at <http://www.edexcellence.net/ohio-charter-authorization/applying-for-sponsorship.html>, that projects expenses and revenues over the next five years, and that aligns with the educational plan, enrollment, and staffing of the school. Also construct a budget, using the template provided at <http://www.edexcellence.net/ohio-charter-authorization/applying-for-sponsorship.html>, that shows cash flow in the first year of the school's operation. Define and give support for assumptions behind revenue and expenditure projections, and detail your contingency plans in the event of a budget shortfall, in the tabs provided in the template.

If you anticipate major renovations or the purchase of a facility, indicate how such will be funded and name potential partners. Your budget should take facilities maintenance, repair and/or renovations into account.

Describe any contributions of funds or in-kind donations of goods or services expected to be received by the charter school. Such funds/contributions should not be included in the budget unless they are firmly committed at the time the application is submitted. **Contributions of funds or in-kind donations of goods or services will be considered firm only if accompanied by a signed letter of commitment from the source of the contribution.** Signed letters must be included with the sponsorship application.

Attachments:

- Form 2-2-1 Budgets

**Content Checklist:**

Fordham reviewers will be looking for budgets that:

- demonstrate an understanding of state and federal charter school funding;
- makes the most of limited funds;
- ensures that public funds will be used effectively and responsibly; and,
- are aligned (i.e., provides realistic estimates of the revenues and costs of the charter school - including the costs of special education - to the school's planned programs and approaches);
- contain contingency plans, in the event a major funding source doesn't materialize as expected (e.g., student enrollment, grants).

### 3. Governance Plan

#### 3.1 Description of governing board entity

Describe the governing board entity and its role.

Attachments:

- Board articles of incorporation
- Board bylaws
- Confirmation of tax status from the Internal Revenue Service

**Content Checklist:**

Fordham reviewers will look for:

- a strong governing entity, with a demonstrated knowledge of the role of the board in the success or failure of the school, and as related to the school leadership and staff, sponsor, and any vendors (including management organizations).

#### 3.2 Governing Authority Membership, Structure, and Roles

Summarize each of the current board member's experience, qualifications, and relevant affiliations, and explain why he or she was chosen to participate in the governing authority.

If contracting with a management organization (EMO/CMO), describe why the management organization was selected, and clearly state how the management organization will be accountable to the governing board. Describe how such accountability will align with Fordham's academic performance plan for the school (see the standard plan at <http://www.edexcellence.net/ohio-charter-authorization/fordham-sample-documents.html>).

Attachments:

- Form 3-2-1 Criminal Background Check Affidavit
- Form 3-2-2 Conflict of Interest Affidavit

- Form 3-2-3 Understanding of Voluntary Acceptance
- Completed Ohio Department of Education Operator documentation
- Organizational chart which reflects the narrative and that depicts the board administration, staff and any CMO/EMO that may be involved
- Organizational chart for the management organization

**Content Checklist:**

Fordham reviewers will be looking for a governing authority that:

- understands its role as the governing entity;
- demonstrates the capacity to sustain an excellent school;
- can manage public funds effectively and responsibly;
- includes members who possess skills and experience in areas such as education, management, finance, and law;
- has broad, diverse representation from the local community; and
- has the organizational and contractual capacity to hold a CMO/EMO accountable for results and terminate the CMO/EMO if necessary.

**3.3 Risk Management**

State the board’s approach to minimizing liability of the charter school, its governing board members, and employees.

Fordham requires the schools that it sponsors to obtain at least the following coverage:

- The board’s Commercial General Liability policy expressly covers Corporal Punishment Liability and Athletic Participation Medical Liability;
- Commercial general liability insurance with limits of one million dollars (\$1,000,000) per occurrence and two million dollars (\$2,000,000) aggregate’
- Automobile liability insurance of one million dollars (\$1,000,000);
- Employee dishonesty insurance with limits of five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000);
- Educators legal liability insurance (which shall include coverage of trustees and officers of Community School) with limits of one million dollars (\$1,000,000) each claim and two million dollars (\$2,000,000) aggregate; and
- Fordham is listed as an additional named insured on each of these insurance policies.

List the providers from which the board will seek coverage.

**Content Checklist:**

Fordham reviewers will be looking for a risk management plan that:

- provides evidence being able to obtain adequate insurance; and,
- shows a risk management approach that will protect the short-term and long-term viability of the charter school.

### 3.4 School Leader

Describe the school leader’s experience, qualifications, and relevant affiliations and why he or she was chosen as school leader.

Describe how the school leader will be evaluated, including the factors upon which the school leader will be evaluated, the frequency of evaluations, the scope of evaluations, and how feedback is given to the school leader.

Describe your strategy to recruit a new school leader should that become necessary during the term of the contract. Include desired qualifications, experience, professional affiliations, and sourcing methods.

Attachments:

- School leader evaluation tool

#### **Content Checklist:**

Fordham reviewers will be looking for:

- a high-quality school leader with a clearly defined role in relation to the board and staff (and EMO/CMO if applicable).

### 3.5 School Staff

Describe the qualifications and attributes of an ideal teacher at the school and how these will support the mission and effective student learning.

Describe how the instructional staff will be evaluated, including the factors upon which the instructional staff will be evaluated, the frequency of evaluations, the scope of the evaluations, and how feedback is given to the staff. Provide your teacher recruitment and selection procedures, including how teachers will be sourced.

Indicate the compensation structure for teachers and staff. Describe the benefits that will be provided to them. Include information on whether the school will use a performance-based pay system and whether different teachers are compensated differently (i.e., years of experience, subject area).

Describe the school’s plan to staff positions that will serve the following populations: special needs, gifted, Limited English Proficient (LEP), and homeless students.

Attachment:

- Teacher evaluation tool

**Content Checklist:**

Fordham reviewers will be looking for a school staffing plan that:

- is manageable and consistent with the school's mission and educational program;
- will provide desirable working conditions and compensation packages that will attract and retain high-quality staff; and,
- demonstrates a clear understanding of staffing needs and requirements for special education; and
- aligns with the budget.

## 4. Parent and Community Engagement Plan

### 4.1 Parent Engagement

Detail how the school builds and maintains family-school partnerships that strengthen support for student learning. Set forth (1) the means and frequency of communication with parents, (2) the type and frequency of parent involvement opportunities, and (3) the method and frequency by which the school will gauge parent satisfaction.

**Content Checklist:**

Fordham reviewers will be looking for a parent engagement plan based on policies, practices, and programs that:

- create a welcoming environment to students' families;
- evidence a connection with families on a sustained and regular basis and elicit their involvement frequently; and
- is aligned to the mission of the school.

### 4.2 Community Partnerships

List the community partners that the school will utilize going forward, and describe how the school benefits from each relationship. Detail the school's plans to develop additional community partners.

**Content Checklist:**

Fordham reviewers will look for a plan that:

- demonstrates the capacity to garner support from local groups, businesses, and individuals; and,
- shows how these partnerships contribute to the school's fulfillment of its mission.

## 5. Additional Strategies

Please describe any other strategies for success that have not adequately been covered in the educational program description.



**Content Checklist:**

Fordham reviewers will be looking for strategies that:

- are engaging and consistent with the mission of the school; and,
- demonstrate the capacity to support the school's goals.

## 6. Market Assessment

### 6.1 Market Analysis/Evidence of Need

Describe the market analysis that has been completed showing an objective, evidence-based need for the school. Set forth the methodology utilized in the market analysis.

**Content Checklist:**

Fordham reviewers will be looking for a statement of need that:

- provides a compelling description of whom the charter school intends to reach and the target student population's unique needs;
- offers evidence, including data, that this school will meet the specific needs of the locale;
- provides a specific rationale for how the school will enhance or expand the educational options currently available to the target student population; and
- sound methodology, resulting in data that unequivocally evidences a need for the school.

## 7. Facilities

### 7.1 Description

If you have identified a facility, describe the proposed facility and its location, including the address, site plan, and floor plan (include the number and size of the classrooms, common areas, recreational space, any charter facilities, and any residential facilities that will also be used by the school). Indicate whether the property and/or facility will be leased or purchased.

If you have not identified a facility but are researching properties, please describe the locations you are targeting and the rationale for locating in those neighborhoods.

### 7.2 Purchase or Lease

If the facility has been or will be purchased, please provide the following information:

- Cost of the land and building
- The entity or individual that will own the property
- Whether the facility is a new construction or a retrofit
- How the new construction or retrofit will be financed
- Whether the owner is a party to this application

- Conflicts of interest
- A copy of the mortgage or deed

Attachments:

- Copy of the mortgage or deed
- Copy of the financing documents

If the facility will be leased, please provide the following information:

- Whether it is a permanent or temporary site
- The entity or individual that will be the lessee
- Whether any party to the lease is a party to this application
- Whether the development team will need to make leasehold improvements (if so, explain whether there will be any rent abatement for these improvements)
- Conflicts of interest
- A copy of the lease

Attachments:

- Copy of the lease

### 7.3 Improvements

Provide a detailed breakdown of any anticipated construction or renovation costs (these should be discussed in the text and reflected in your budget).

#### Content Checklist:

Fordham reviewers will be looking for a facility plan that:

- identifies a viable facility or a realistic plan for obtaining one;
- shows a sense of needs and options for growth;
- is based on sound financing options; and
- avoids conflicts of interest.

## 8. Summary of Strengths and Weaknesses

Summarize the strengths and weaknesses of the proposed school. Describe how you plan to address any weaknesses, and indicate which of your assumptions or plans most concern you.

Summarize why you believe your application will lead to educational excellence that effectively meets the educational needs of students in the charter you hope to serve. Summarize how your strengths will result in

- (1) high expectations for all students;
- (2) accountability for academic results;
- (3) transparency and openness; and,
- (4) organizational integrity and mutual respect.

**Content Checklist:**

Fordham reviewers will be looking for a summary that:

- shows an understanding of the challenges to your program;
- demonstrates the capacity to create an excellent charter school that meets the needs of students and their families; and,
- provides a convincing argument that the charter school is positioned to deliver the four key principles listed above.

## Appendices

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## **Appendix A: Required Forms**

Forms that are required to be completed and submitted with the sponsorship application are:

- Application Transmittal and Assurances Form
- Form 2-1-1 Budgets
- Form 3-2-1 Affidavit of Criminal Background Check
- Form 3-2-2 Affidavit of Conflict of Interest
- Form 3-2-3 Understanding of Voluntary Acceptance

## Application Transmittal Form

*This form must be completed in Microsoft Word, signed/dated and sent in PDF format as the coversheet for the application when it is submitted to Fordham.*

### School information

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| School name       |  |
| Proposed location |  |
| Expected open     |  |

### Applicant contact information

|         |  |
|---------|--|
| Name    |  |
| Title   |  |
| Address |  |
| Phone   |  |
| Fax     |  |
| Email   |  |

### Founding governing board information

| Name | Professional title | Role on board | Contact information |
|------|--------------------|---------------|---------------------|
|      |                    |               |                     |
|      |                    |               |                     |
|      |                    |               |                     |
|      |                    |               |                     |
|      |                    |               |                     |
|      |                    |               |                     |

### Grades offered and projected enrollment

| Grades | 2012-13 | 2013-14 | 2014-15 | 2015-16 | 2016-17 |
|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| K      |         |         |         |         |         |
| 1      |         |         |         |         |         |
| 2      |         |         |         |         |         |
| 3      |         |         |         |         |         |
| 4      |         |         |         |         |         |
| 5      |         |         |         |         |         |
| 6      |         |         |         |         |         |
| 7      |         |         |         |         |         |
| 8      |         |         |         |         |         |
| 9      |         |         |         |         |         |
| 10     |         |         |         |         |         |
| 11     |         |         |         |         |         |
| 12     |         |         |         |         |         |
| TOTAL  |         |         |         |         |         |

**Operator information**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Name of operator  |  |
| Operator contact name   |  |
| Operator contact address  |  |
| Operator contact phone  |  |
| Operator contact email  |  |
| Identify the operator's eligible school   |  |
| Describe in detail how the school meets the eligibility requirements of Ohio's operator provision |  |

**Assurances**

As the authorized representative of the applicant, I hereby certify that the information submitted in this application for sponsorship of

\_\_\_\_\_ charter school, is true to the best of my knowledge and belief. I agree to notify the Fordham Foundation within 14 business days, of any material updates to information contained in this application. Furthermore, I understand that, if awarded a sponsorship contract, the school:

1. will be firmly committed to high expectations for all our students;
2. will be firmly committed to accountability for academic results;
3. will be firmly committed to transparency and openness;
4. will be firmly committed to organizational integrity and mutual respect
5. will never discriminate against any student, staff member, or volunteer on the basis of race, religion, gender, or national origin. Furthermore, with regard to students, the school admits students of any race, religion, gender, color, national and ethnic origin, and disability to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school;
6. will not charge tuition or other mandatory payments for attendance at the charter school, or for participation in its programs, except for a preschool program;
7. will enroll any eligible student who submits a timely application, unless the school receives a greater number of applications than there are spaces for students, in which case each timely applicant will be given equal chance of admission;

8. will provide the number of students enrolled in the charter school, the name of each student and the school district in which each student resides'
9. will submit an annual report to the Ohio Department of Education in the form required thereby;
10. will submit attendance records, student performance data, financial information, any information necessary to comply with state and federal government requirements, and any other information specified in our contract with Thomas B. Fordham Foundation;
11. will maintain separate accountings of all funds received and disbursed by the school;
12. will employ individuals, who teach more than 12 hours a week, who hold a license to teach in a public school in Ohio;
13. will permit certified employees at the charter school the opportunity to organize and bargain collectively;
14. will operate in compliance with generally accepted government accounting principles;
15. will, at all times, maintain all necessary and appropriate insurance coverage;
16. will indemnify and hold harmless the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, State of Ohio, all organizations and individuals providing funds to the charter school, and any successors and assigns from any and all liability, cause of action, or other injury or damage in any way relating to the charter school or its operation;
17. will follow all federal and state laws and constitutional provisions that prohibit discrimination on the basis of the following: disability, race, color, gender, national origin, religion, and ancestry;
18. will adhere to all provisions of federal law relating to students with disabilities, including the IDEA, section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1974, and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, that are applicable to it;
19. will be non-religious in its programs, admissions policies, governance, employment practices, and all other operations, and its curriculum will be completely secular;
20. will adhere to all provisions of federal law relating to students who are Limited English Proficient (LEP), including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974, that are applicable to it;
21. will adhere to all provisions required of charter schools by the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB);
22. will follow any and all other federal, state, and local laws and regulations that pertain to the applicant or the operation of the charter school;
23. have created and will remain a tax-exempt entity under 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

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Governing Authority Chairperson

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Date



**Form 2-2-1 Budget**

Using the Excel file provided at <http://www.edexcellence.net/ohio-charter-authorization/applying-for-sponsorship.html>, complete and submit a Year 1 Cashflow budget and a 5 Year Projected Budget. List all assumptions in the tabs provided.

**Form 3-2-1 Affidavit of Criminal Background Check**

*Complete, sign and return this form, in the order specified in Fordham’s application document.*

**AFFIDAVIT OF CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK**

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The undersigned, a duly authorized member of the Governing Authority of \_\_\_\_\_ (the “Charter School”) and the Principal of such Charter School, both of whom attest that they have knowledge of the facts represented herein, hereby make the following representations to The Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, as potential Sponsor of the Charter School (the “Sponsor”), for the purpose of providing the Sponsor with certain assurances, as listed herein, upon which said Sponsor may legally rely.

1. Pursuant to the Ohio Revised Code Sections 3314.03(A)(11)(a) and 3319.39 and the terms of the Charter School Contract between the Sponsor and the Governing Authority of the Charter School, the Governing Authority hereby attests that:

A. The Governing Authority has requested, reviewed, and retains in a confidential file a criminal background check report, from the Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation (“BCI&I”) or the Federal Bureau of Investigation (“FBI”), as the circumstances require, for each and every member of the Charter School’s Governing Authority and there are no disqualifying offenses for any member thereof.

B. The Governing Authority has requested, reviewed and retains in a confidential file a criminal background check report, from the BCI&I and the FBI, for each and every Charter School job applicant, not just those whose job duties entail the care, custody, or control of children. In addition, criminal background checks have been conducted on the employees of private contractors hired by the Charter School, and there are no disqualifying offenses for any contractor employees.

C. In the event that the criminal background check reports were requested, reviewed, and retained in a confidential file by the Charter School Principal, or some other Charter School administrator with hiring authority, the Governing Authority and the Principal of the Charter School hereby attest that the Governing Authority has thoroughly reviewed such reports and the Governing Authority and the Principal further attest that there are no disqualifying offenses for any Charter School employee.

2. The Governing Authority and Principal of the Charter School, hereby further attest and pledge that it/they will continue to comply with the terms of Ohio Revised Code Sections 3314.03(A)(11)(a) and 3319.39 and the terms of the Charter School Contract between the Sponsor and the Governing Authority of the Charter School, as such terms require background criminal check reports.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Governing Authority and the Principal of the Charter School have executed this Affidavit as of the date written below.

CHARTER SCHOOL GOVERNING  
AUTHORITY

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Member and Authorized Representative  
signature

Print: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

CHARTER SCHOOL PRINCIPAL  
(For Purposes of Paragraph 1C, Herein)

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Principal signature

Print: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Form 3-2-2 Conflict of Interest**

*Complete, sign and return this form, in the order specified in this application guide.*

**AFFIDAVIT OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

\_\_\_\_\_

The undersigned, a duly authorized member of the Governing Authority of \_\_\_\_\_ (the "Charter School") attests that I have knowledge of the facts represented herein, hereby make the following representations to The Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, as potential Sponsor of the Charter School (the "Sponsor"), for the purpose of providing the Sponsor with certain assurances, as listed herein, upon which said Sponsor may legally rely.

1. That no member of the governing board is an employee or contractor of any operator, management company, or vendor of services utilized by the Charter School;
2. That in the event a governing board member is related to an employee of the school, that board member agrees to recuse themselves from any decision related to the employee and have the minutes of the meeting reflect the recusal;
3. That I understand that charter school governing boards are public boards, and that the laws governing conflict of interest, and rulings of the Ohio Ethics Commission, apply to the Charter School's governing board members; and,
4. That I understand that charter schools are public schools, that employees of the governing board are public employees, and that the laws governing conflict of interest, and the rulings of the Ohio Ethics Commission, apply to the Charter School's employees.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Governing Authority and the Principal of the Charter School have executed this Affidavit as of the date written below.

CHARTER SCHOOL GOVERNING  
AUTHORITY

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Member and Authorized Representative  
signature

Print: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Form 3-2-3 Understanding of Voluntary Acceptance**

*Complete, sign and return this form, in the order specified in this application guide.*

I and the governing authority of \_\_\_\_\_  
charter school recognize that the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation receives these materials  
voluntarily in its role as a charter school sponsor in the state of Ohio.

Receipt of these materials do not obligate nor should be construed to obligate the Thomas B.  
Fordham Foundation to sign a charter school contract with the board of directors of the school  
that is the subject of this application for sponsorship.

Further, the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation is not obligated to provide any reason, rationale,  
or evaluative metric related to any decisions related to the acceptance or denial of this  
application.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Governing Authority Chairperson*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

## **Appendix B: Checklist of Required Attachments**

*Attachments should be submitted in the order set forth in the application.*

- Application Transmittal Form
- School calendar
- Form 2-2-1 Budgets
- Governing board Articles of Incorporation
- Governing board bylaws
- Confirmation of tax status from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS)
- Form 3-2-1 Affidavit of Criminal Background Check
- Form 3-2-2 Affidavit of Conflict of Interest
- Form 3-2-3 Understanding of Voluntary Acceptance
- Completed Ohio Department of Education Operator documentation
- Organizational Chart (depicts the board, administration, staff and any EMO/CMO)
- Organizational Chart for the EMO/CMO
- School leader evaluation tool
- Teacher evaluation tool
- Copy of the mortgage or deed (if applicable)
- Copy of financing documents (if applicable)
- Copy of the lease (if applicable)

## Appendix C: Start-up Guide for New Charter Schools

*The following list of tasks is essential to the initial set-up of a new charter school in Ohio. This list is meant only to be a very general guide, as there are myriad other functions associated with the start-up phase of a new school.*

### 1. Obtaining an EIN

- What it is: An EIN (Employer Identification Number) aka Federal Tax Identification Number, is a number assigned by the Internal Revenue Service.
- Why you need it: It is used to identify a business entity to federal agencies responsible for the regulation of business. An EIN is required if you are a nonprofit organization or trust.
- Tip: For instructions on obtaining an EIN online - click [here](#).

### 2. Getting non-profit status

State business filing

- What it is: Recognition from the Secretary of State that the community school is established as a public benefit corporation in Ohio.
- Why you need it: By statute, community schools in Ohio, established after April 8, 2003, must be organized for a public or charitable purpose.
- Tip: You'll need to submit the initial articles of incorporation (Form 532 available [here](#)) to the Ohio Secretary of State. You need to do this, prior to applying for the federal tax exemption.

Federal letter of determination

- What it is: Letter from the IRS which verifies the organization tax ID number and recognizes the exemption from federal tax as a nonprofit organization.
- Why you need it: By statute, community schools in Ohio, established after April 8, 2003, must be recognized as exempt from federal income taxation.
- Tip: You'll need Package 1023 (application of exemption with official instructions), Form 8718 for fee submission, and Publication 557 as reference. They are all available at <http://www.irs.gov/>.

### 3. Submission of initial forms for IRN

- What it is: Internal Retrieval Number (IRN) is a number assigned to each school, by the Ohio Department of Education.
- Why you need it: To allow access to ODE systems. It is the way the department refers to individual schools, as a unique identifier.
- Tip: To obtain and utilize an IRN, the following forms need to be completed:  
[W-9](#) (Click on Vendor Forms)  
[Vendor Information and Form](#) (Click on Vendor Forms)  
[OEDS-R Administrator Form \(Word\)](#)

### 4. DUNS number

- What it is: A unique 9 digit identification number, for each physical location of a business organization provided by Dun & Bradstreet.
- Why you need it: All school districts receiving ARRA funds must register with the Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS).

- To verify or register for a DUNS number, go to the Dun & Bradstreet website at: <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform/displayHomePage.do>.
- Tip: You'll need: name of organization, organization address, name of CEO/organization owner, legal structure of the organization (corporation, partnership, proprietorship), year the organization started, primary type of business, total number of employees (full and part time).

#### 5. Register in the CCR (applies only for direct recipients of federal funds - you'll need the DUNS number first)

- What it is: the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) is the contractor database for the US Federal Government.
- Why you need it: If your school will be a direct recipient of federal funds and are responsible for reporting to [www.federalreporting.gov](http://www.federalreporting.gov), you will need to register with CCR and receive an identification number to use as a password for reporting.
- Tip: Registration can be done by phone (1-888-227-2423) or online at <http://www.ccr.gov>. The following information will be needed to register in CCR: DUNS number, tax identification number (TIN) and taxpayer name used in federal tax matters, statistical information about your organization, Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) information for payment of invoices.

#### 6. E-Rate application procedures and basics

- What it is: A program, also known as the Schools and Libraries Program of the Universal Service Fund, which provides discounts to assist schools and libraries to obtain affordable telecommunications and internet access.
- Why you need it: to save money on basic communication connection services. All schools are eligible, but need to have a technology plan with eTech Ohio (which provides additional support and assistance with the eRate application).
- You'll need to create a Hall Pass Account to have access to eTech Ohio and to create a technology plan. Go to eTech Ohio [here](http://www.etsch.com). Information is available for eRate at <http://www.universalservice.org/sl/>.

#### 7. SAFE Account: roles and functions

- What it is: Security Application For Enterprise (SAFE), is a web portal for multiple Ohio Department of Education applications.
- Why you need it: Different applications (see list below) that are critical to school operations are linked to roles in the Ohio Education Directory System (OEDS). The first step for access to any of the applications is to register for a SAFE account.
- Tip: Go [here](http://www.etsch.com) to sign-up. Then make certain someone has access to the roles noted below.
  - a. FLICS
    - What it is: Reporting for the Federal Low Income Count System.
    - Why you need it: This data impacts the allocation of federal economic disadvantaged funds.
    - Tip: Federal Low Income Identification Instructions, and how to report students, is available [here](http://www.etsch.com). The person who is the SOES data entry should be assigned this role.
  - b. OEDS-R Administrator
    - What it is: The person who can make changes and additions to the school's Ohio Education Directory System (OEDS) account.



- Why you need it: To add roles, change roles, and add information to the school's basic information. The directory determines who has access, and who will receive notifications from ODE and other agencies.
  - Tip: The administrator form is noted above. The superintendent is by default the administrator, but this can also be assigned to another person.
- c. CCIP
- What it is: The Comprehensive Continuous Improvement Plan (CCIP) contains application, budget, and reporting requirements for both non-competitive (allocated title funds) and competitive federally funded programs (e.g., Public Charter Schools Program) and No Child Left Behind.
  - Why you need it: It is the portal for the release of federal funds and the applications process.
  - Tip: You'll want to make certain roles are assigned in OEDS-R and also within the CCIP application to allow access and communication. Not having the right person listed can cause funding to be impacted.
- d. CORE
- What it is: Connected Ohio Records for Educators (CORE) contains licensure and application information for all certified Ohio teachers and administrators. There are two applications; one for educator profile information and one for educator conduct, reports, and entry year teachers.
  - Why you need it: To check the status of applications for licensure, review credential history and assignments, and to register for the Entry Year/Resident Educator Program. Teachers cannot be awarded permanent licensure without being registered, being assigned an approved mentor, and following the transition/resident educator mentor program.
  - Tip: Assign the person(s) responsible for HR in a role to access the programs. This role is currently the Entry Year Coordinator. The principal and superintendent will have access as well.
- e. Treasurer, Superintendent, and Principal
- What it is: These roles will allow access to various applications. All financial applications will be open to the person assigned treasurer.
  - Why you need it: To receive communication from ODE, and to give appropriate staff the ability to view, verify, and enter information.

## 8. Web systems outside SAFE

### EMAD

- What it is: Education Monetary Assistance Distribution (EMAD) is used to determine Poverty Based Assistance (PBA) funding. EMAD reporting is similar to FLICS, but it is accessed through Ohio Department of Job & Family Services.
- Why you need it: To claim students for PBA funding (weighted) funding.
- Tip: The Coordinator-EMAD role in OEDS-R should be given to this person. Although the system is not accessed through OEDS-R, but through a separate web site, notifications will be sent to the person noted in the Coordinator-EMAD role.

Setting up the school's CCIP (must be assigned in safe, but also has a separate contact list and roles)

- What it is: There are roles within the CCIP system that are used by the Office of Grants Management for communication. Since the application and fund release can be tied to deadlines, it is important the contact information is up to date.
- Why you need it: To give access to persons who may add or view data, allow for applications to be submitted, and to receive communication from the Office of Grants Management.

## 9. Starting and Completing the Federal Start Up Grant (PCSP)

- What it is: Federal grants administered through the Office of Community Schools. There are two grants: *start-up* for the first three years of operation and *dissemination* for schools who have been in operation more than three years and have met academic progress criteria. Both grants are competitive applications.
- Why you need it: Provides funds for initial start-up or disseminating practices, not operational or ongoing support. To cover significant costs associated with putting together school academic components such as curriculum, staff training, and necessary equipment.
- Tip: You'll need to make certain you have access to CCIP and have a preliminary agreement in place. Guidelines, Training information, and Guidance are available [here](#).

## 10. Finding an ITC and Data Reporting

- What it is: An Information Technology Center (ITC) provides internet connectivity, fiscal processing, state-required reporting, and additional services to support schools' operations. Personally identifiable student data cannot be submitted, so Ohio uses a Statewide Student Identification (SSID) number.
- Why you need it: You'll need an ITC site do fiscal operations, including payroll/invoice processing and payment, as well as reporting accountability data to the state, via the Educational Management System (EMIS). You'll need to have each student's SSID to enter information, or will need to apply for a SSID, if the student has never attended school in Ohio.
- Tip: You can contact individual sites to discuss service needs and agreements. Ohio ITC list is available [here](#). IBM maintains the SSID website used to search for an existing, or to apply for a new SSID.

## 11. EMIS basic information

- What it is: The data collection system for Ohio schools including demographic and student, attendance, financial data, and test results.
- Why you need it: You need it to meet various academic, reporting, and funding requirements by statute.
- Tip: You are required to have trained EMIS personnel. EMIS updates and reporting information is available via the EMIS Newsflash. Recent issues are posted [here](#).

## 12. SOES access and profile information

- What it is: The School Options and Enrollment System (SOES) determines funding for students in community schools. School personnel enter data and traditional public school personnel have the opportunity to either verify or challenge the data.
- Why you need it: To meet reporting requirements (it is an EMIS subsystem) and release flow of funds from the state foundation payment system.
- Tip: The manual, giving specifics of SOES, is posted [here](#). Your treasurer is the default administrator and can assign roles and access. SOES is independent of SAFE account access roles.

### 13. Pupil transportation

- What it is: Community school students are transported by the resident district, with limited exceptions, following the same policies as students who attend district public school, as long as the community school is no further than 30 minutes (by bus) from the resident district public school.
- Why you need it: To arrange for transportation of your students.
- Tip: You'll need to contact the resident district transportation department, and find out the forms and timelines to set up routes for your students. Pupil transportation operation and safety rules are found [here](#). The pupil transportation financial system, SFPS, can be accessed by the role of Transportation Director or Coordinator, in OEDS-R. Driving records for bus drivers must be obtained through the system. The process to obtain driving records through the SFPS is [here](#).

### 14. School Environmental Health and Safety Inspections

- What it is: a health and safety inspection of your facility conducted by the local health district.
- Why you need it: ODE requires schools to have an environmental health and safety inspection before students can occupy the building. The inspection routinely takes place twice a year and must occur prior to sponsor pre-opening assurances.
- Tip: In addition to obtaining required permits for occupancy of a facility, you'll need to make certain your facility has been given a school environmental health and safety inspection by the local health district. If you are moving into a new facility or remodeling your current facility, call the local health district to request and schedule an inspection. This typically can take two to four weeks advance notice. Most local health districts use the Ohio Department of Health template, located [here](#).

### 15. Federal school lunch reimbursement system (CRRS)

- What it is: Claims Reimbursement and Reporting System (CRRS) is used by schools enrolled in child nutrition programs.
- Why you need it: To submit required data and apply for meal reimbursements and to meet federal reporting and validation requirements of free and reduced meal claiming. CRRS is also used to meet economically disadvantaged criteria.
- Tip: This is operated independently of SAFE. Schools can purchase meals through another school (known as the school food authority, or SFA) who will handle the claims or schools may be their own SFA, and would be responsible for claims, reporting, and enrollment in the program. Training is required for new SFAs. The training schedule and how to become a SFA is available [here](#).

### 16. AOIS

- What it is: Authorizer Oversight Information System (AOIS) the Fordham Foundation's web-based compliance and document storage system.
- Why you need it: Requirement of the contract with Fordham. It is used to securely store and organize compliance documents required by Fordham, and some required under state and federal law.
- Tip: Your school should select a point of contact, known as the AOIS coordinator. Training is available for new schools and new coordinators, and can be scheduled through the Fordham Foundation.

## 17. Annual Assurances by Community School Sponsor

- What it is: Pre-opening assurances and an on-site visit by the sponsor is required annually.
- Why you need it: Required by ORC 3314.19.
- Tip: The assurances documentation must be evidenced and submitted by the sponsor to the Office of Community Schools, ten days prior to the first day of each new school year or use of a new facility. If the sponsor does not sign the assurances, the school cannot open. The current assurances, as listed in code, are [here](#).

## 18. List of required staff trainings

### Safety and Violence Prevention Training (SVP)

- What it is: Child abuse prevention training.
- Why you need it: Required by statute, for all school teachers, administrators, nurses, counselors, and school psychologists consisting of a minimum of 4 hours of training every 5 years.
- Tip: All schools must provide in-service training in child abuse prevention. The training should include the prevention of violence and substance abuse and the promotion of positive youth development. New employees must complete the training within two years of starting employment, and every five years thereafter. ODE has developed a curriculum, which can be used by school administrators, to complete SVP training; available [here](#). Training reimbursement funding is currently available through ODE.

### School Safety

- What it is: Annual training session for school employees regarding the conduct of school safety drills (including school lockdown drills).
- Why you need it: Required by statute.
- Tip: The school's principal can be fined \$1,000 for not following fire and tornado staff training and for not conducting required drills. ORC § 3737.73, 3737.99; ODE Advisory Letter [HB422 Safety Plans](#) (July 2006).

### Bloodborne Pathogen

- What it is: Training for certain staff that might come in contact with blood or other potentially infectious materials.
- Why you need it: Federal requirement of all employees in Title 29 of the Code of Federal Regulations 1910.1030.

### Heimlich

- What it is: Heimlich is a method to prevent choking while students are being served food in the school building.
- Why you need it: Statutory requirement.
- Tip: Each school building in a public school district or non-public school that operates a food service program is required to have at least one employee present who has received the above training, and can perform the maneuver, present while students are served food. ORC § 3313.815.

## Appendix D: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

### Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

#### ROLES

1. **What is a charter school?** A charter school (also called “community schools” in Ohio) is a public school. In Ohio, new, start-up charter schools are considered their own Local Education Agencies (LEAs), and are responsible for many of the functions typically associated with school districts (e.g., data and financial reporting, food service, grant writing and reporting, compliance with the IDEA, FERPA and NCLB).
2. **What is a governing authority?** The governing authority is a non-profit entity that governs the charter school. This governance role is the same as that of boards which govern school districts; however, charter school board members may be appointed, and aren’t required to be elected. Boards must be comprised of at least five individuals, and no individual may serve on more than two boards. All meetings of all charter school boards are open to the public.
3. **Do charter schools have to take any student that applies?** Yes. If a school has enrollment slots available it must enroll students in accordance with the terms of its charter.
4. **What is a sponsor?** Charter school governing authorities in Ohio are required to have contracts (also called “charters”) with a sponsor. Sponsors (also called an “authorizers”) are responsible for issuing charters, monitoring their charter schools, and taking action in the form of probation, suspension, termination, or non-renewal as necessary.
5. **Who can be a sponsor?** In Ohio, sponsors can be non-profits, education service centers (ESCs), any of 13 state universities,<sup>1</sup> and school districts.
6. **What is an operator?** An operator is an individual or organization that is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the charter school. All new Ohio charter schools are required to have operators.
7. **Who can be an operator?** Operators can be non-profit or for-profit. Minimum requirements for operators are available at <http://education.ohio.gov/GD/Templates/Pages/ODE/ODEDetail.aspx?page=3&TopicRelationID=662&ContentID=2321&Content=86698>.
8. **Who are the operators in Fordham’s sponsored schools?**

| School  | Operator                               |
|---|--|
| Columbus Collegiate Academy                         | Building Excellent Schools (2008-2009) |
| Dayton Leadership Academies – Dayton Liberty Campus | EdisonLearning, Inc. (1999-present)    |

<sup>1</sup> For a full list see <http://codes.ohio.gov/orc/3345.011>.

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Dayton Leadership Academies – Dayton View Campus | EdisonLearning, Inc. (2000-present)                     |
| KIPP: Journey Academy                            | Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP) (2008-present)        |
| Phoenix Community Learning Center                | None – school was founded prior to operator requirement |
| Sciotoville Community School                     | None – school was founded prior to operator requirement |
| Sciotoville Elementary Academy                   | Sciotoville Community School                            |
| Springfield Community Learning Center            | None – school was founded prior to operator requirement |

## FORDHAM AS A SPONSOR

9. **Does Fordham sell services to the schools it sponsors?** No. Fordham engages in monitoring and oversight of charter schools. We view the sale of additional services (e.g., professional development, data, etc) as an inherent conflict of interest.
10. **What does the sponsorship staff do?** Fordham’s sponsorship staff executes its sponsorship duties by conducting site visits, reviewing compliance documents, weekly (or more) contact with personnel in school buildings regarding outstanding issues, provision of information on a slew of issues relevant to schools, including but not limited to attendance, fiscal, food service, CCIP, new school start-up, transportation, special education, funding, governance. Fordham staff also provide customized support for each school (as each school is different) in the form of specific research requests about operational or policy issues that could affect the school.
11. **How long as the Fordham Foundation been an authorizer?** Fordham has authorized charter schools since 2005.
12. **How does the charter approval process work?** Fordham’s charter approval process is detailed in the application guide. Contracts for sponsorship (a.k.a. “charters”) executed by Fordham and the governing board of a school must also be approved by the Ohio Department of Education.
13. **What is Fordham’s site visit process like?** Twice yearly while classes are in session the site visit team from Fordham will conduct visits in all of its sponsored schools. Visits consist of classroom observation, records review, interviews with teachers and the school leader. Fordham staff then issues a report with findings to the school’s board. A third visit is conducted prior to the opening of school, as required under state law, to provide the Ohio Department of Education with information related to the school’s ability to open and operate for the year. Fordham staff is informally on site more often, as circumstances dictate.

14. **What is the term of the sponsorship contract?** Fordham typically commits to charters for anywhere from one- to five-year terms. Renewal terms are the same, and may include contingencies if performance during the most recent contract term was subpar.
15. **How much does Fordham charge for sponsorship?** Ohio law mandates that sponsors may charge up to 3 percent of the total amount of payments for operating expenses, which the school receives from the state, for oversight and monitoring.
16. **If a school encounters problems (e.g., academic underperformance, fiscal trouble, health/safety issues), what might happen?** All situations are of course different, but mechanisms available to authorizers in Ohio include placing the school on probation, suspending operations of the school, terminating the school’s contract prior to the end of the contract term, or non-renewal. Any of these routes could result in closure of the school.
17. **How does Fordham report on the state of its sponsored schools?** The Fordham Foundation publishes an annual report, as required by Ohio law, that covers the academic, fiscal, and governance components of each of its sponsored schools. The report is available in electronic (please see <http://www.edexcellence.net/template/page.cfm?id=358>) and hardcopy formats.

#### **OHIO CHARTER SCHOOL SPECIFICS**

18. **How are charter schools funded?** Charter schools are funded on Ohio’s “per pupil” allotment only – charter schools in Ohio *do not* get local tax monies. Charter schools are expected to sustain operations on per pupil funding, any available federal and state grants or other funding, and philanthropy.
19. **Do charter schools have to undergo audits?** Yes. Each charter school is audited annually by the office of the Ohio Auditor of State.
20. **How does transportation work?** With limited exceptions, districts are required to provide transportation services for charter and private schools. Districts are not required to transport high school students, but they are required to provide transportation to charter students if they provide that same transportation to the district students.
21. **Do the ethics rules apply to charter school boards and employees?** Yes. Charter school boards are public boards, therefore board members are public officials, and the ethics rules apply. Employees of the charter school are public employees – the ethics rules also apply to them.
22. **Can charter schools open anywhere in the state?** No. Charter schools can only open in “challenged school districts.” Challenged school districts are the following:
  - a. The former “pilot project area”- Lucas County, Ohio;
  - b. School districts rated “Academic Emergency” or “Academic Watch” by the state; or,

- c. A “Big Eight” school district.

## **OTHER RESOURCES**

The Thomas B. Fordham Foundation Charter School Authorizing/Sponsorship  
<http://www.edexcellence.net/ohio-charter-authorization/>

The Thomas B. Fordham Institute  
[www.edexcellence.net](http://www.edexcellence.net)

Ohio Department of Education  
<http://www.ode.state.oh.us>

Ohio Department of Education Office of Charter (Community) Schools  
<http://www.ode.state.oh.us/GD/Templates/Pages/ODE/ODEDetail.aspx?page=3&TopicRelationID=1168&ContentID=9546&Content=104964>

Ohio Statutes and Regulations  
<http://codes.ohio.gov/>

Ohio Legislation  
<http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/index.cfm>

United States Department of Education Office of Innovation and Improvement  
<http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oii/index.html>

National Alliance for Public Charter Schools  
<http://www.publiccharters.org/>

National Association of Charter School Authorizers  
<http://www.qualitycharters.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=1>

US Charter Schools  
[http://www.uscharterschools.org/pub/uscs\\_docs/r/index.htm](http://www.uscharterschools.org/pub/uscs_docs/r/index.htm)



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