

PENN MANOR SCHOOL DISTRICT

ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATION

APPROVED: March 18, 2011

REVISED:

140-AR. CHARTER SCHOOL REVIEW PROCESS

The review process for a charter school application consists of four (4) steps:

1. First step is the initial screening of the proposal by a Review Team, using the criteria the Board has established for charter school applications.
2. Second step is an interview with the applicant by the Review Team.
3. Third step is a public hearing called by the Board within forty-five (45) days after the deadline for the receipt of the application to determine the extent to which parental and community support exists for the proposed charter school.
4. Fourth step is a decision by the Board to approve or deny an applicant's request for a charter school within seventy-five (75) days of the date of the public hearing.

Applications received by mail by November 15 of a given year will be reviewed. These applications will be for charter schools to be implemented in the following school year.

Applications should be sent to the district Superintendent.

Step One: Initial Screening

Each application will be assessed by a Review Team, using the criteria the Board has established for charter school applications contained in the district's Charter School Application Review Form. The criterion sections include:

1. Description of Applicant.
2. Mission of the Charter School.
3. Marketing Data.
4. Admissions Policy and Criteria.
5. Governance Structure.
6. Staff, Parent/Guardian and Community Involvement.

7. Educational Program.
8. Accountability, Student Assessment and Evaluation.
9. Fiscal Operations.
10. Facilities and Transportation.
11. Liability, Insurance and Risk Management.
12. Staff Conditions and Work.
13. Management.
14. Student Discipline Policy and Expulsion Criteria.
15. At-Risk Students, Bilingual Students and Students with Disabilities.
16. Legal Issues.

The Review Team will consist of five (5) to eight (8) members who have expertise in:

1. Curriculum, instruction and assessment.
2. School program administration and management.
3. Accountability systems.
4. School business operations.
5. Parent/Guardian involvement.
6. Community involvement.

The member with expertise in parent/guardian involvement will be a parent/guardian with a child enrolled in a school district public school. The member with expertise in community involvement will be an individual who is not an employee of the school district. All other members will be employees of the school district. Each Review Team will be responsible for no more than two (2) applications per review cycle.

The Review Team will be supported by staff from the Office of the Superintendent and provided with technical assistance from other district staff, including but not limited to the following areas as necessary:

1. Legal issues.
2. Special education.

3. Human resources.
4. Facilities and transportation.
5. Finance.

For each application, a member of the Review Team will be appointed to serve as chair, who will serve as the district contact person for the applicant. The responsibility of the chair is to lead the group through the process to:

1. Assess the application.
2. Conduct the interview with the applicant.
3. Write a summary report containing the Review Team's recommendations.
4. Brief the Board on the findings of the Review Team after the interview with the applicant and the public hearing is held, and before the Board votes to determine the status of the application.

Each reviewer will be responsible for:

1. Reading all the assigned applications.
2. Assessing each application, using the Board's evaluation criterion.
3. Attending Review Team sessions to assess the application, the interview with the applicant, and the public hearing.
4. Providing written comments on the strength of the application.
5. Recommending whether or not the application should be approved or denied.

Step Two: Applicant Interview

Following the initial screening of the application, the Review Team will schedule an interview with the applicant. The meeting shall take place at a site named by the applicant, which, if at all possible, shall be at the physical plant identified for the applicant's school. The interview will provide the Review Team members an opportunity to:

1. Ask questions they have about information in the application.
2. Raise questions about information missing from the application.
3. Probe for understanding of the vision, mission, program and operations of the proposed school.

The applicant should have the members of their planning team who will be responsible for operating the proposed school as well as others who are able to answer questions about the school attend the interview. Review Team members will factor the information they acquire during the interview into their evaluation of the application.

Step Three: Public Hearing

The Board will hold at least one (1) public hearing on each application within forty-five (45) days of the deadline for the receipt of the application. The public hearing will be announced seven (7) days prior to the date of the proposed hearing.

The announcement of the public hearing will be made in print and electronic media. At the hearing, every person desiring to give testimony will be provided an opportunity to do so. Each individual presenting testimony will be given a three (3) minute period to state his/her case. Board members may ask questions of the presenters after each testimony.

The hearing will be conducted to determine the extent to which parent/guardian, student and community support exists for the proposed charter school. It will be attended by the members of the Review Team, as well as Board members. Both the Review Team and the Board will use information from the public hearing to assess the quality of the application.

Step Four: Board Review And Action

The Board will review applicant information obtained from these sources:

1. Application.
2. Public hearing.
3. Written comments of individual reviewers.
4. Review Team's summary reports.
5. Oral briefings by the Review Team chair.
6. Memoranda from technical assistance staff pertaining to aspects of the application.

The Board will vote on the application at a legislative meeting to be held no more than seventy-five (75) days following the date on which the public hearing for the application took place. Applications receiving at least five (5) Board member votes in favor will be approved; those receiving no less than five (5) Board member votes opposed will be denied.

Written notice of the Board's decision will be sent to the applicant within one (1) week of the Board's decision on the application. In cases where the Board has voted to deny the application, the notice will set forth the reasons why approval was not granted.

Staff from charter schools approved by the Board will work with district staff and others designated by the Board as necessary to develop a written charter containing the provisions of the agreement between the Board and the school. The written charter will be signed by the Board of Trustees of the charter school, and the members of the School Board. The document will serve as legal authorization for a period of between three (3) to five (5) years, and could be renewed for five-year periods, upon reauthorization by the Board.

Organizations whose applications have been denied by the Board may resubmit a revised application the following year. The applicant will submit the application within thirty (30) days of the denial directly to the State Charter Appeal Board.