



# **2021 Resource Guide**

**to the Request for Proposals to Establish New Charter  
or Contract Schools**

**Tier I - IV Applications**

**Chicago Public Schools  
Office of Innovation and Incubation (I&I)  
42 W. Madison, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Chicago, IL 60602  
(773) 553-1530  
(773) 553-1559 (fax)**



The Resource Guide contains specific technical guidance, legal interpretation, and additional information regarding what should be included in RFP proposals. Applicants submitting a proposal in response to the 2021 Request for Proposals (RFP) should use this Resource Guide as support when developing their response.

CPS recommends that applicants read through this document in its entirety. Evaluators will consider all elements of the guidance when assessing the quality of proposals. As questions arise, please feel free to reach out to the Office of Innovation and Incubation (I&I) staff at [iandiauthorization@cps.edu](mailto:iandiauthorization@cps.edu) or 773-553-1530.

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## Introduction and Overview

### Overview & Purpose

At Chicago Public Schools (CPS), our vision is that every student in every neighborhood will be engaged in a rigorous, well-rounded instructional program and will graduate prepared for success in college, career, and life. The 2021 Request for Proposals (RFP) seeks to identify high quality school options that accelerate academic outcomes for their targeted CPS student population.

### Authorization in Chicago

Under the School Code, the Chicago Board of Education has authority to open a limited number of charter and contract schools to serve students of the District. CPS conducts an annual process to accept and review proposals for new charter schools (105 ILCS 5/27A-8) and contract schools.

CPS, as the local school district in Chicago, serves as the charter authorizer for the city. Illinois Schools Law requires the review of all charter school proposals submitted to Illinois school districts. CPS releases an annual request for proposals designed to review new school applications, provides recommendation to the Chicago Board of Education on new school proposals, and provides oversight to authorized charter schools. CPS uses this RFP as its mechanism to accept proposals and meet the Illinois statutory requirement. The Office of Innovation and Incubation (I&I) is the office within CPS that oversees charter school authorization and oversight for the district.

CPS is the nation's third largest school district and a national leading charter authorizer, implementing all essential practices established by the National Association of Charter School Authorizers critical to fostering high-performing charter schools. Currently, I&I oversees a portfolio of 137 charter, contract, and options schools and programs, and serves over 55,000 students citywide.

### Differentiating Applicants

In response to the 2021 RFP, CPS will consider proposals from development teams and existing operators who seek to open a charter school. CPS will also consider proposals from existing contract school operators who seek a contract school expansion (multi-grade) or replication through the 2021 RFP process.

### Charter and Contract School Structure

Charter schools are public schools that are governed by a not-for-profit entity that is independent of, but accountable to, the local school district. They operate under a performance contract, or "charter," with a school authorizer (in Illinois, either the local school board or the State), and have flexibility and autonomy over academic programming and other key operational areas. The charter outlines the rights and duties of the school and its authorizer, and provides the legal, academic, and financial benchmarks that the charter school is expected to meet during its charter term. Charters are typically set for five-year terms. Charter schools will receive funding based on a model that is equitable and aligned with student needs.

While many charter school operators provide their academic and student services directly, some operators elect to hire a management organization (MO) to provide broad educational or school management services to the school. Charter schools choosing to engage an MO enter into separate management agreements, but remain directly accountable to their authorizer for the school’s performance. An MO may be an Educational Management Organization (EMO), which is usually a for-profit entity, or a Charter Management Organization (CMO), which is usually a not-for-profit entity.

Contract schools are District schools managed by external operators who provide instructional and other student services. Contract schools must adhere to all student-related CPS policies. Contract schools are governed by school-selected boards of directors and operate under contractual agreements with the District, for up to five-year term.

### Table Overview of Charter and Contract School Differences

TOPIC	CHARTER	CONTRACT
<b>Curriculum</b>	Must meet district standards as specified in the Charter School Agreement and may have the option of participating in CPS initiatives.	Must meet district standards as specified in the Contract School Agreement and may have the option of participating in CPS initiatives.
<b>School Calendar and Schedule</b>	Must meet applicable Illinois State minimums: 300 instructional minutes (5 hours) per day and 185 days per year to ensure 176 days of actual pupil attendance.	Must meet applicable Illinois State minimums: 300 instructional minutes (5 hours) per day and 185 days per year to ensure 176 days of actual pupil attendance.
<b>Illinois Teacher Licensure</b>	75% of teachers must be licensed; all special education and English learner teachers must be licensed <sup>1</sup> . All instructional staff must meet the qualifications set forth in 105 ILCS 5/27A-10.	100% of teachers must be licensed.
<b>Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)</b>	All teachers and administrators in Title I schools must comply with ESSA requirements.	All teachers and administrators must comply with ESSA requirements.
<b>Principal Requirements</b>	None.	Must have a Professional Educator License with an Administrative Endorsement.

<sup>1</sup> Please note that in accordance with the Illinois Charter Schools Law (105 ILCS 5/27A-10), at least 50% of the instructional staff at a charter school must be licensed when the school begins serving students, and at least 75% of the instructional staff at a charter school must be licensed by the beginning of the fourth year of the school’s operation.

TOPIC	CHARTER	CONTRACT
<b>Special Education</b>	Must follow IDEA, Illinois Special Education Statutes and Regulations, and ISBE and CPS Special Education Policies and Procedures.	Must follow IDEA, Illinois Special Education Statutes and Regulations, and ISBE and CPS Special Education Policies and Procedures.
<b>Policies for Student Conduct</b>	Policies must comply with Illinois Charter Schools Law and other applicable laws.	Must follow CPS Student Code of Conduct.
<b>Chicago Teachers Union</b>	School is not subject to CTU collective bargaining agreement.	School is not subject to CTU collective bargaining agreement.
<b>Teacher Pension Fund</b>	Licensed teachers in pension fund; others covered by Social Security.	All teachers covered by Social Security.
<b>Principals, Teachers and Staff Employed by:</b>	Charter school board or sub-contracted management organization.	Contract school board or sub-contracted management organization.
<b>Employee Compensation</b>	Determined by school operator.	Determined by school operator.
<b>Governance</b>	Governing board.	Governing board. <sup>2</sup>
<b>Admissions</b>	Open admissions and will need to hold a lottery if over-subscribed; preference may be given to students who live within an attendance boundary, if assigned.	Open admissions like a Charter school, unless approved by the Chicago Board of Education to align its admission process with the educational model (e.g. an arts focused school may require an audition or portfolio for admission).

## Differentiating Operators New to Chicago and Existing Chicago Operators

This application contains instructions at the beginning of each Domain for questions relevant to each type of applicant.

All applicants must complete “Proposed School Overview” in its entirety.

If you are an applicant who does not currently operate or manage a school in Chicago, you must complete all of Domains 1-4. In addition, if you currently operate a school outside of Chicago, you must complete Domain 5. Lastly, if you intend to contract with a management organization, you must complete Domain 6.

All Existing Chicago Operators must complete Domains 1, 2, 3, and 5 in their entirety. Existing Chicago Operators must also complete at least parts of Domain 4 and should refer to the

<sup>2</sup> Please note that contract schools are authorized through the Chicago Board of Education via Illinois School Code, 105 ILCS 5/34-18(30); the Chicago Board of Education has authority over school policies.

instructions in Domain 4 for specifics. If you are an Existing Chicago Operator who intends to or already contracts with a management organization, you must compete Domain 6.

If you have any questions about which RFP Domains and Sections are applicable to you, please direct them to the Office of Innovation and Incubation at 773-553-1530 or [iandiauthorization@cps.edu](mailto:iandiauthorization@cps.edu).

## RFP Process & Timeline

### Submission Parts

The RFP requires applicants to submit proposal materials in four stages, to provide time for a thorough review and a timeframe that will allow any approved schools a full year of planning time.

- The Tier I Application must be submitted to Epicenter by March 10, 2021 at 5:00 p.m.
- The Tier II Application must be submitted to Epicenter by May 17, 2021 at 5:00 p.m.
- The Tier III Application must be submitted to Epicenter by July 30, 2021 at 5:00 p.m.
- The Tier IV Application must be submitted to Epicenter by October 5, 2021 at 5:00 p.m.

Follow all directions in each tier to submit complete application materials by each due date listed. Materials submitted outside of the submission process, or materials submitted extraneous to the questions and criteria provided in the RFP, RFP Resource Guide, and the RFP Evaluation Form (available at [www.cps.edu/2021RFP](http://www.cps.edu/2021RFP)) will only be considered at the sole discretion of CPS. In addition, proposals missing responses or required attachments will not be considered for further review. Applicants are responsible to ensure their application is complete on or before each Tier due date. In addition to all required documents, applicants are required to complete and sign a completeness checklist to be submitted with each Tier of the application. The checklists can be found at [www.cps.edu/2021RFP](http://www.cps.edu/2021RFP).

All RFP submissions, including all required appendices to the application, must be uploaded to Epicenter. Epicenter is an online web-based system that I&I uses to streamline processes for submissions and reporting for its current charter and contract school portfolio. RFP applicants must email I&I at [iandiauthorization@cps.edu](mailto:iandiauthorization@cps.edu) with the contact information of the lead applicant (full name, email address, phone number) and the proposed school name no later than 5pm Central Time on March 3, 2021 in order to request an Epicenter account for RFP submissions. Applicants are encouraged to request an Epicenter account at least two weeks prior to the Tier I due date. Applicants from prior years who already have Epicenter accounts should similarly email I&I to ensure that their account has the requisite credentials to submit this year's RFP materials.

Proposals will not be considered final until the Tier IV Application is submitted. Please note that I&I reserves the right to request additional information and documentation from applicants as it deems necessary for its review and to determine when an application is complete.

## Process Timeline

Each stage of the proposal submission and evaluation process is included in the timeline below, followed by descriptions of key RFP events. This is a projected timeline and is subject to change.

Due to the large number of proposals that the District receives, I&I will not accept applications that are submitted after the stated deadline for each Tier of the Application.

Activity	Date	Information
RFP Released	December 30, 2020	
Office Hours with Applicants	February- March 2021	We encourage prospective applicants to email <a href="mailto:iandiauthorization@cps.edu">iandiauthorization@cps.edu</a> to schedule one-on-one appointments with us to discuss any questions.
Epicenter Account Information Due	March 3, 2021	Due by email to <a href="mailto:iandiauthorization@cps.edu">iandiauthorization@cps.edu</a> by 5 p.m.
Tier I Application Due	March 10, 2021	Due by 5 p.m. to Epicenter
Applicant Meeting	Late March 2021	I&I staff will meet individually with lead applicants to discuss their proposal and the RFP process.
Tier II Application Due	May 17, 2021	Due by 5 p.m. to Epicenter
Tier I and II Publicly Posted	Summer 2021	Submitted applications will be posted on CPS.edu
Tier III Application Due	July 30, 2021	Due by 5 p.m. to Epicenter
Tier IV Application Due	October 5, 2021	Due by 5 p.m. to Epicenter
Applicant Capacity Interviews	October 2021	
Public Hearing	November 2021	
CPS Board Meeting	December 2021	

*I&I reserves the right to request additional information and documentation from applicants, as deemed necessary for review, and to amend this timeline as needed.*

## Description of Key Timeline Events

### Office Hours with Applicants

If prospective applicants have specific questions about the RFP process and their proposal, they may sign up to attend office hours with CPS staff. Applicants must send an email to [iandiauthorization@cps.edu](mailto:iandiauthorization@cps.edu) expressing their interest in a virtual appointment. The email should include an agenda with specific questions to help I&I ensure that staff members with relevant expertise can attend the meeting.

## Epicenter Account Information Due

All applicant groups must designate a lead contact/applicant who will complete the required application tiers in Epicenter, the online document management, compliance, and performance platform used by I&I. To designate a lead applicant for an Epicenter account, all applicants must submit the following information by email to [iauthorization@cps.edu](mailto:iauthorization@cps.edu) by March 3, 2021 at 5pm.

- Lead Applicant Name, Email, Phone Number;
- Proposed School Name; and
- If applicable, the name of the proposed management organization.

The lead applicant will then be provided an Epicenter account (if they do not already have one) and will be provided access to the RFP Tiers in accordance with the stated deadline for each Tier.

## Application Tiers Due

Application Tiers must be submitted by the stated deadline. For details about submitting the Application (for all Tiers), please see the section on Completion and Submission of a Proposal below.

## Applicant Meeting

I&I staff will meet individually with lead applicants (after their Tier I submission) to discuss their proposal and the RFP process.

## Applicant Capacity Interview

Applicants that submit complete applications will be invited to participate in an in-person capacity interview with members of the comprehensive evaluation team. These interviews are an essential part of the application process and provide evaluators with a chance to gather clarifying information to support final recommendations for approval or denial; they are not, however, a guarantee of authorization.

Design teams attending applicant interviews must bring a representative group of fewer than eight people to participate. Design teams should select their attendees to ensure that those present are able to collectively speak to every aspect of the school design and proposal. Interviews will generally be two hours. At minimum, all identified board members who will serve in officer positions should attend the capacity interview. If an applicant is proposing to open a new school (i.e. does not currently operate other schools with the same educational model), the proposed academic school leader must be present at the capacity interview.

## CPS Public Hearing

I&I will hold a public hearing as mandated by the Illinois Charter Schools Law to receive public comment on all submitted proposals in advance of the Chicago Board of Education's vote to approve or deny proposals. The purpose of the hearing is for the public to enter comments into

the official record prior to the Board's decision. Applicants will have the opportunity to make a brief statement to enter into the public record, followed by a public comment period for attendees.

## CPS Board Decision

The Chicago Board of Education makes all final decisions regarding the proposal submitted in response to this RFP. The Board will take all presented information into account when reviewing a recommendation for approval or denial, including the recommendations from the Comprehensive Evaluation Team (CET). If a design team would like to speak at the Board meeting on behalf of their proposal, they may sign up to do so in advance of the meeting at the following link: <http://www.cpsboe.org/meetings>.

## Beyond Approval, Readiness to Open

If a school proposal is approved by the Chicago Board of Education, the Board may still require the design team/incubating school to meet additional benchmarks related to viable facility plans and timelines, and execution of the school agreement (or charter) with the school. In addition, CPS works with the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) to certify new charter schools at the state level. Contract Schools do not require ISBE certification.

## Completion and Submission of a Proposal

### RFP Sections

The 2021 New Schools RFP seeks to answer the following questions about each proposal across the following key domains:

- I. **Community Engagement and Support:** Has the applicant garnered authentic parent and community support and demonstrated true demand for the proposed school?
- II. **Academic Plan:** Does the applicant have the capacity, leadership skills, and experience to open and operate a high-quality school that achieves the school's mission and prepares students for long-term success?
- III. **Financial Plan:** Do the proposal and budget present a sound fiscal plan and sound policies to ensure responsible management of public funds?
- IV. **Organizational Plan:** Does the applicant have the operational and governance systems in place to ensure that planning, spending, and oversight decisions are responsible and prioritize student success?
- V. **Growth Plan (if applicable):** Does the organization have a strategic growth plan and the academic, financial, and operational capacity to successfully open, operate, and oversee the proposed new school(s)? *Note: Existing national operators or applicants proposing to partner with an existing management organization (MO) must respond to the questions in this Domain. New operators (who do not currently operate any schools) that are not proposing to partner with an existing MO are not required to complete this Domain.*

- VI. Management Organization (if applicable):** Does the proposal provide a plan and evidence for how the MO will contribute to the overall success of the school? Are there appropriate oversight structures in place? *Note: Only applicants proposing to enter into a contract with an MO must respond to the questions in this section.*

## Structuring Section Responses

When responding to a specific section of the proposal, applicants should copy and paste the evaluation criteria from the 2021 Evaluation Form that the response is intended to meet. Applicants should ensure that their response to each section addresses all evaluation criteria included in the Evaluation Form.

If a specific question does not apply to the proposed school, please respond “Not Applicable.”

Please note that generally, complete and thorough applications have been approximately 120 pages long. If your application is significantly longer or shorter, please consider whether your application contains the appropriate amount of material.

## Format for Proposals

Proposals should include:

- Page numbers;
- A table of contents noting the page number for each section and appendix;
- 1-inch margins and at least 11-point font;
- Definitions or complete names for any acronyms or other abbreviations in the proposal;
- Brief descriptions, either in the text or in a footnote, of all referenced organizations, programs, service providers, curricula, etc.; and
- Full citations, either in a footnote or a separate references section, for any research, studies, or articles cited.

Please note that I&I reserves the right to check all proposals for plagiarism. Any proposals deemed plagiarized will not be considered for further review.

## Submission Instructions – Epicenter

Following an applicant’s submission of their lead contact’s information, the applicant will receive access to Tier I of the RFP in Epicenter, the online document management, compliance, and performance platform used by I&I. Applicants who have not received Epicenter logins by March 5, 2021 should call the Office of Innovation & Incubation at (773) 553-1530. Applicants must submit electronic versions of all proposal materials through Epicenter by the stated submission deadline. We recommend that teams begin uploading materials in the week prior to the submission deadline to provide time to troubleshoot potential technical issues.

## Illinois Freedom of Information Act

**PLEASE NOTE: All documents submitted to CPS are a matter of public record and are subject to the Illinois Freedom of Information Act (5 ILCS 140/1-11). CPS intends to post**

**all applicant proposal materials in due course after each Tier of the application is due. Applicants should be mindful of the public nature of these applications and should avoid listing design team and proposed board member home addresses and home telephone numbers. In order to protect the identity of proposed school leaders or teacher candidates whose current job may be jeopardized if released publicly, applicants may provide a supplemental submission redacting those individuals' names and identifying information. Applicants cannot redact the names or contact information of design team members or proposed board members.**

#### **Redacted and Unredacted Personal Information of Children and Members of the Public.**

As described in the RFP, a successful application must demonstrate significant community support. As part of that support, interaction with members of the public is essential. Evidence of that support at times requires listing the names, addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses of members of the public, and sometimes the ages or current grade level of school age children. In order to protect the members of the public, and especially information of school age children, all applicants must separately submit to Epicenter both a redacted and unredacted version of all materials containing personal information of members of the public. Redacted versions will be posted publicly on our website with the rest of applicants' proposals.

**Redacted submissions must be provided by the relevant Tier application deadlines.**

#### **Ethics Policy for Applicants**

Pursuant to the Board's Code of Ethics, school operators that hold charter or contract agreements with the Board are in a unique relationship with the Board. Membership on a charter or contract school operator's governing board creates an inherent conflict of interest for CPS Officials and Employees. Officials and Employees and their Spouses, Domestic Partners, Partners to a Civil Union, or other Members of their Household are therefore prohibited from sitting on the governing board of either: (1) A Charter School operator that holds a charter issued by the Board; or (2) A Contract School operator that holds a contract school agreement issued by the Board.

In addition, several other provisions in the Board's Code of Ethics impact Board employees' involvement with charter and contract school development depending on certain circumstances. These circumstances include conflicts from secondary employment and representing other persons or entities in proceedings before the Board. If you are a current Board employee and wish to serve on a proposed charter or contract school's design team or governing board, please contact I&I at 773-553-1530, and we will put you in contact with the CPS Ethics Advisor.

#### **Community Outreach Process and Notice Requirement**

Community engagement requires that an applicant demonstrate community support for the new school and its education model. Substantial community outreach is an essential component of successful community engagement. To assist the District with understanding each applicant's community outreach efforts, each applicant must inform the Office of Innovation and Incubation of planned community events in advance of the event. Please provide email notice of each community event to be held to [iandiauthorization@cps.edu](mailto:iandiauthorization@cps.edu). A member of CPS may attend community meetings held in each applicant's community of interest throughout this process.

## Technology and the Proposed School

Applicants seeking to implement any technology-driven school design, such as blended learning or virtual learning, must ensure that the model is reflected in each of the proposal domains completely. The full scope of the school design and digital technology usage must be clearly demonstrated across all domains of the application. Applicants proposing virtual school models may also be asked to provide supplemental information related to the proposed school.

Illinois School Law (105 ILCS 5/27A-5 (b-5)) defines "Virtual-schooling" as a cyber school where students engage in online curriculum and instruction via the Internet and electronic communication with their teachers at remote locations and with students participating at different times.

Beyond these approaches and models, all RFP applicants should be able to articulate the role and scope of digital technologies in the proposed school model.

## Charter School Quality Policy

Please note that CPS has adopted a Charter School Quality Policy that sets out academic performance standards that CPS considers when evaluating a charter school's performance, including criteria for replication, expansion, non-renewal, and revocation of a charter. Applicants are encouraged to review the Charter School Quality Policy and the corresponding CPS School Quality Rating Policy prior to submitting their application. Both are linked on the RFP website, [www.cps.edu/2021RFP](http://www.cps.edu/2021RFP). Note: While the Charter School Quality Policy does not directly apply to contract schools, CPS views the criteria established in the Policy as guidance for considering the performance of contract schools.

## Scope of Growth

Applicants may only apply to open one school through this RFP. Applicants interested in opening multiple schools must submit multiple applications.

## Proposal Evaluation

For over 20 years, CPS has managed a rigorous process to evaluate new school proposals. The 2021 RFP process is designed to identify new, or replicate and expand existing, high-quality school options based on national best practices and standards for quality authorizing. CPS has the authority under the Illinois Charter Schools Law to approve quality charter applications that meet identified educational needs (105 ILCS 5/27A-7.10). The Office of Innovation and Incubation (I&I) within CPS oversees the RFP evaluation process.

## Comprehensive Evaluation Teams Review

A Comprehensive Evaluation Team (CET) of internal and external experts will review all proposals received in response to the RFP. The CETs will use the evaluation criteria included in the 2021 RFP Evaluation Form to evaluate the application. The criteria included in the Evaluation Form target attributes that have been shown to be key indicators of success for new schools. The CET will also conduct due diligence on the operator, school leaders, board members, and affiliated organizations of the proposed new school.



Based on their comprehensive review, CETs will identify the strengths and weaknesses of each proposal. CETs will make recommendations to I&I to approve or deny proposals for new schools supported by concrete rationale. I&I will make its recommendations to the CEO based on the CET evaluation and due diligence done by I&I staff, and the CEO will then make a recommendation to the Chicago Board of Education, which renders a final determination on the application.

### **Facility Plan Review**

Applicants proposing to open new schools must identify at least two viable independent non-CPS facility options, as required by law (105 ILCS 5/27A-7(a)(3)).

Before the Chicago Board of Education approves a proposal, the proposal will be reviewed by the CPS Facilities Department to ensure that proposed facilities plans are viable in the presented timeframe and adequately meet the stated needs of the proposed school, and they ensure that the building will be brought into compliance with applicable health, safety, and accessibility laws. Applicants with identified facilities that are not currently compliant with the ADA should include a plan and timeline for how they can achieve ADA compliance.

### **Please Note**

**Chicago Public Schools reserves the right to make changes affecting policies, requirements, funding, and any other matter discussed in the RFP materials. Further, Chicago Public Schools reserves the right to request additional information and documentation from applicants, as it deems necessary for its review, and to determine when an application is complete. Applicants shall bear all costs of responding to the RFP.**

## Tier I Application and Addendum Questions

*The Tier I application includes maximum response lengths for several questions. While these maximum page lengths may serve as a guide, applicants should focus on providing a clear and concise response to each question, not on meeting the prescribed maximum page lengths. CPS recognizes that a strong response may be achieved in a shorter narrative.*

### Proposed School Overview

#### Section 0.1: Proposed School Information

A fillable form, that includes the required tables for Section 0.1 School Information, is provided on the RFP website [www.cps.edu/2021RFP](http://www.cps.edu/2021RFP).

#### Section 0.2: Executive Summary

The Executive Summary should be a standalone document that the reader can understand without referring to other parts of the proposal.

A mission statement should:

- Describe who the school will serve, what the school will accomplish in measurable terms, and what methods it will use;
- Be attainable and consistent with high academic standards;
- Reflect the key values that teachers, administrators, and students know and support;
- Be concise and clearly describe in just a few sentences the school's purpose for the entire school community, external stakeholders, and individuals who may not be familiar with the school; and
- Be able to be operationalized and guide the work and culture of staff and students on a day-to-day basis.

Please note that 105 ILCS 5/27A-7(a)(4) states that the charter school applicant need not "demonstrate unequivocally that the charter school will be able to meet each of those declared purposes," but must "aspire to attain" them. In other words, a mission statement should be aspirational.

### Domain 1: Community Engagement and Support

Illinois Charter Schools Law (105 ILCS 5/27A-8) states that the local school board must give preference to proposals that demonstrate a high level of local pupil, parental, community, business, and school personnel support when evaluating any charter school proposal.

Design teams should have established connections with prospective parents and community members by the time of the Application submission and should conduct outreach and engagement throughout the process.

## Section 1.1: Community Overview

### 1.1.1 Targeted Community(ies)

The applicant must identify the possible locations of the proposed school and the recruitment area and targeted community(ies) within it. “Recruitment area” refers to the geographic area(s) from which the applicant intends to recruit students, or the neighborhoods from which the school expects to draw the majority of its students.

Please note that charter schools must accept applications from students who reside in any part of the city unless the District decides to authorize an attendance overlay boundary to prioritize student admissions (105 ILCS 5/27A-4(d)). As a result, applicants should not cite the city boundaries or create recruitment boundaries.

The interactive [CPS School Locator map](#) outlines the 77 Chicago community areas. CPS encourages applicants to refer to these community area names when listing the targeted community(ies) to help facilitate a common understanding of the proposed area.

### 1.1.2 Community Characteristics

In the response to this section of the RFP, the applicant is expected to demonstrate a thorough understanding of the landscape in the community(ies) they propose to serve. The applicant’s understanding of the community(ies) as demonstrated in Section 1.1.2 should be reflected throughout the proposal and proposed school model.

Applicants should be mindful of the accuracy and quality of sources used to obtain community information. Applicants must use reputable sources such as federal, state and local government agencies, non-profit organizations, and universities when compiling community-level data. Some recommended sources include:

- Chicago Data Portal: <https://data.cityofchicago.org/>
- United States Census Bureau: <https://data.census.gov/>
- Illinois Department of Public Health: <https://dph.illinois.gov/data-statistics>

The below is an example of a community characteristics and demographic data table. Applicants should include critical social, economic, housing, and demographic data relevant to all communities (number of school-age children, population and population trends, socio-economic and poverty rates, etc.) and any additional data points that are particularly relevant to their targeted community(ies) and their proposed school model. If applicants are targeting multiple community areas, provide a table for each area or clearly specify the geographic area (community name, zip code) that corresponds to the data.

Table 1.1.2.1 Sample of Community Characteristics	Community Data
Community (Community Name or Zip Code)	
Number of School-Age Children	
% of Residents by Age Cohorts	
Median Family Income	
% of Single Parent Households	
% of Residents Living in Poverty	

% of Residents that Speak a Language Other than English at Home	
Households with a Computer and Internet Access	
Education Attainment Rates	
Unemployment Rate	
Employment Rates	
Major Employment Industry Rates	
Race/ Ethnicity (i.e. - % by Race/Ethnicity)	
Estimated # of Total Residents	
Recent Population Trends (% of increase/decrease by years)	
<i>Applicants should add rows to include additional characteristics critical to understanding the community.</i>	

The below provides an example of a table to highlight community assets. Community assets may include but are not limited to: community-based institutions, public and private services, community leaders, faith-based institutions, cultural institutions, non-profit organizations, businesses, neighborhood councils, and transportation options.

<b>Table 1.1.2.2 Sample of Community Assets</b>	
Major Employers	
Community and Public Services (Transportation, Libraries, Post Offices, Fire, Police, Government Agencies)	
Local Businesses	
Nonprofits	
Faith-based Organizations	
Cultural Institutions (Museums, Arts)	
Community Newspapers	
Community Organizations, Councils, Neighborhood Associations	
Education Institutions	
Community Leaders	
<i>Applicants should add rows to include additional assets critical to understanding the community.</i>	

**Appendix 1.1:** The following data sources will provide characteristics of public schools in the proposed recruitment area. Use the latest data available, citing in your references the applicable school year of the data.

- CPS School Locator: <https://schoolinfo.cps.edu/schoollocator/index.html#>
- CPS Annual Regional Analysis: <https://ara.cps.edu/>
- CPS Space Utilization and Enrollment Data: <https://www.cps.edu/services-and-supports/school-facilities/facility-standards/>
- Illinois Report Card: <https://www.illinoisreportcard.com/>

Note: The Annual Regional Analysis (ARA) is a comprehensive set of data released by CPS that ensures that the district and its stakeholders are all working from the same set of information.

## Section 1.2: Community Outreach and Engagement

### 1.2.2 Community Outreach and Engagement

**CPS understands the challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic presents with community outreach and engagement efforts. Applicants are encouraged to follow all applicable public health rules and guidance, and to consider ways they can creatively and meaningfully engage with communities virtually as appropriate and needed during the RFP process.**

This section should chronicle all community engagement and outreach efforts through submission of the Tier I proposal as well as the design team's plan for ongoing community engagement. The response should detail the work that the applicant has done to share information about the proposed school with the community and describe how community feedback has been, and will be, incorporated into the proposed model. Community members, institutions and organizations should be invited to help shape the proposed school, which if approved will become a key institution in their community. Parent and community engagement should be conducted in the entire recruitment area, not just the community in which the facility will be located.

In thinking about meaningfully engaging with the community, applicants should review the following resources related to community outreach and engagement:

- [Elevated Chicago Community Principles & Recommendations](#)
- [CPS Office of Equity's Spectrum of Inclusive Partnership Framework](#)

Within Domain 1 of the RFP, applicants will be asked to consider how their engagement efforts align to the spectrum of public participation provided in these materials.

Community outreach and engagement should focus on listening to stakeholders, informing the greatest number of community residents on the proposal, soliciting and incorporating community input and feedback, and meaningfully incorporating members of the community into the proposal development process. Community engagement should lay the groundwork to build a group of individuals to support the proposal and ultimately the school, if approved to open.

While applicants are not limited to the following, design teams may choose to use the following methods of notifying and engaging parents/guardians and community residents regarding the proposed school:

- On the ground outreach (e.g. canvassing, stop and chats, attending Block Club meetings or events, etc.);
- Hosting community meetings (alone or in partnership with local community or faith-based organizations or leaders);
- Attending community meetings, Alderman Ward nights, and neighborhood council meetings;

- Meeting with groups of local parents;
- Facilitating workshops, town halls, and/or focus groups;
- Distributing flyers, brochures, surveys, or other marketing materials to residents, community organizations, and/or businesses;
- Establishing steering committees and community resident advisory panels;
- Online messaging through social media, website, or email campaigns;
- Placing advertisements in neighborhood newsletters or other media outlets; and
- Collecting petitions and/or Intent to Enroll forms.

**Appendix 1.2.2 Ongoing Community Outreach and Engagement Plan:** Applicants are required to provide a detailed community outreach and engagement plan within their Tier I proposal. The community outreach and engagement plan is a detailed roadmap of an applicant's strategy to conduct authentic and collaborative community engagement in an effort to shape the vision for the proposed school and to garner strong community support.

As part of the plan, applicant teams will need to establish goals for community engagement and outreach. Applicants are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the RFP requirements in Tier II-IV in order to align goals to RFP requirements for Community Engagement and Support. For example, by Tier III, applicants are required to have secured signed intent-to-enroll forms to comprise at least half of the enrollment capacity in year one. It is encouraged that applicants consider requirements such as this when formulating goals and milestones.

#### 1.2.4: Community Need & Impact of the Proposed New School

This section of the proposal is also your opportunity to discuss how your proposal intends to address the issues facing students in the community you propose to serve. In connection with your community outreach, the RFP seeks an understanding of how data supports your proposal to fill an unmet need in the community you propose to serve. We recommend that you review the Annual Regional Analysis (ARA) and other publicly available information, to provide an answer that supports your proposal. You can find the ARA with a lot of other district-aggregated data here: [www.cps.edu/schooldata](http://www.cps.edu/schooldata).

Similarly, this section is to address the anticipated impact a new school would have on the targeted communit(ies) residents, families, students and institutions. Applicants should thoughtfully consider holistic impacts, using data and evidence to support their assessment.

#### 1.2.5: Advancing Equity

In 2019, CPS released a [five-year vision](#). Central to the District's five-year vision is equity, defined at CPS as championing the individual cultures, identities, talents, abilities, languages, and interests of each student by ensuring they receive the opportunities and resources that meet their unique needs and aspirations.

RFP applicants will need to familiarize themselves with CPS's Equity Framework as part of the RFP process. The below resources are central in learning more about CPS's equity vision, framework, and tools:

- [CPS's Equity Framework](#)

- [Spectrum of Inclusive Partnerships](#)
- [CPS Equity Framework Targeted Universalism](#)
- [CPS Equity Framework Resource Equity Tool](#)
- CPS Five-Year Vision: <https://www.cps.edu/about/vision/>

Additional tools and resources are available at: <https://equity.cps.edu/tools>.

## Tier II Application and Addendum Questions

### Domain 1: Community Engagement and Support

#### Section 1.3: Facilities Space Requirements

Applicants must identify at least two viable independent facility options, per Illinois Charter Schools Law (105 ILCS 5/27A-7(a)(3)), unless the applicant has fully secured an independent facility.

In addition to space requirements, applicants with unique facility requirements related to their proposed model should note so here. For example, applicants with specific technological requirements to implement the model (e.g. additional lab space, speed and availability of the Internet connection at the facility, etc.) should outline the requirements and why the proposed facilities are suitable options.

Additional facility information is required in the Tier III application. Applicants should refer to the Tier III application to familiarize themselves with the questions and submissions required in Tier III.

#### Section 1.4: Updated Community Outreach and Engagement

##### 1.4.2 Community Outreach and Engagement Plan

This section should further chronicle all community engagement and outreach efforts since your submission in Tier I. This is the place to further demonstrate authentic community engagement and organizing by executing on the proposed school's community engagement plan.

All materials and methods of notifying parents and community members of the proposed school should continue to include the following information:

- Notification that the school is proposed and has not yet been approved;
- Information regarding how individuals can submit questions or feedback for consideration (e.g. by listing a phone number, email, fax, or mailing address; citing a method for submitting comments or questions on the proposed school's website; or inviting individuals to a community meeting with a period for comment, etc.); and
- The following language regarding the opportunity to view new school proposals: "If you would like to view the application for our proposed new school, it will be publicly posted on [www.cps.edu/2021RFP](http://www.cps.edu/2021RFP)."

In Appendix 1.4, provide evidence of all community outreach and engagement by including agendas, relevant emails and/or notes. The Appendix should include concrete evidence of the strategies that the design team used to inform community members of the proposed school(s) and concrete evidence of community engagement/partnership opportunities (e.g., community meetings, one-on-one meetings, flyers or mailers, on-the-ground outreach, faith-based outreach, presence at community events, and attendance at Aldermanic ward nights). Evidence provided should align to outreach and engagement activities described in the narrative. Applicants are recommended to include an index or table summarizing the evidence provided.

Please refer to the sample below of acceptable evidence.

Method of Outreach/Engagement	Number of Individuals Notified/Reached	Evidence
Dated emails to existing listservs	“xyz” organization’s listserv includes 500 email addresses	Dated emails
Flyers or door hangers	Left 500 door hangers on homes between “x” avenue, “y” street, “z” boulevard, and “a” street	Copy of door hangers
Community meetings	Held community meeting on “x” date attended by 60 individuals	Sign-in Sheets, Agenda, Presentation Deck, Meeting Notes
Advertisement in local newsletter or other media outlets	Ad placed in “xyz” newspaper with 1,500 readership	Copy of Ad Placed
Appeared on local radio show	The segment had 1,000 listeners	Time and date of broadcast (Recording if available)
Social media	Information tweeted by “x” individual with 500 followers who live in “y” area	Twitter feed, Copy of Posts
Survey	The survey was sent to 60 “x” (parents, residents, etc.) and was completed by 30 individuals.	Copy of survey and survey respondents
Townhall	Held a Townhall to discuss “x” and 100 residents attended.	Sign-in Sheets, Agenda, and Notes
Petitions	Collected 1,500 signatures from individuals in the communit(ies)	Petitions
Block club event	Presented at a block club event with 60 residents	Sign-in Sheets, Presentation Deck
Community Advisory Committee Establishment & Meeting	Established a parent advisory committee of “x” parents, and the first meeting was attended by “x” members.	Committee-related Outreach and Recruitment Materials, List of Committee Members Names/Affiliations, Meeting Agenda, Notes, & Sign-in Sheet

If the outreach/engagement activity provided space for community members input, feedback, or other opportunities to collaborate and partner regarding the proposed school, include evidence that demonstrates as much. For example, if the applicant team met with a group of parents to obtain feedback on a specific aspect of the school’s design or model, provide not only sign-in sheets/attendance records but also copies of any prepared questions that were discussed, and notes from the meeting that includes the questions, thoughts and feedback from parents.

## Domain 2: Academic Plan

### Section 2.1: The School Model

#### 2.1.2: Key Design Elements

Key Design Elements are the defining features of your proposed school – the most critical aspects of the school model. Rather than including a comprehensive list of everything the school offers, this section should be a succinct overview of the most critical elements of the model that will be detailed in other parts of the proposal.

Key Design Elements will vary but may include some combination of the following:

- Specific subject focus or theme (e.g., STEM, the arts, health sciences, etc.);
- Partnerships (e.g., wrap-around services, relationships with other non-profits);
- Any targeted student populations (e.g., students with autism, gifted and talented, bilingual, or over-age and under-credited students, etc.), consistent with the requirement that charter and contract schools must maintain nonexclusive, nondiscriminatory admissions policies;
- Specific programs (e.g., college prep, vocational, International Baccalaureate, etc.);
- Unique calendar or schedule (e.g., extended day or year, extended literacy/numeracy blocks, etc.);
- Particular pedagogical approaches (e.g., direct instruction, team teaching, collaborative or project-based learning, etc.);
- Program features (e.g., skill grouping, inter-disciplinary classes, integrated curriculum, online or blended learning programs, etc.);
- School culture (e.g., behavioral expectations, core values, discipline system, character education program, etc.);
- Staffing (e.g., teachers with specific skills or experience, co-teaching models, mentoring or professional development models, and for charter school proposals how teacher licensure flexibilities will be used, etc.);
- Assessment systems (e.g., interim or benchmark assessments, data analysis programs, portfolios, data-driven action planning, progress monitoring, program evaluation, etc.);
- Student supports or interventions (e.g., targeted assistance program, academic intervention services, extracurricular activities or after school programs, tutoring, counseling or mentoring programs, Saturday or summer school, etc.); and
- Special education settings (e.g., collaborative team teaching, resource room, self-contained programs, etc.) and services.

The applicant should support the elements with citations from research or other evidence of effectiveness, if available, that suggests that the school's program is likely to lead to increased student learning and achievement with the school's anticipated student population.

CPS invites innovative school models; in such cases, the applicant should seek out and provide information on similar models where schools or programs have been successful.

## Section 2.2: Program of Instruction

### 2.2.2: Curriculum

The curriculum should support the identified mission of the proposed school. Applicants adopting an existing curriculum may include a link to the full curriculum instead of the minimum requirements listed in Appendix 2.2.2 of the RFP.

## Section 2.4: Educational Goals and Assessments

### 2.4.1: School Goals

Chicago Public Schools uses the School Quality Rating Policy (SQRP) to assess its schools and hold them accountable for educational success. Please review the SQRP at <http://cps.edu/Performance/Pages/PerformancePolicy.aspx>.

In addition, the Chicago Board of Education adopted a Charter School Quality Policy aligned to the SQRP that will be helpful to consult when setting goals for school performance. Please review this policy at [http://www.cpsboe.org/content/actions/2015\\_10/15-1028-PO1.pdf](http://www.cpsboe.org/content/actions/2015_10/15-1028-PO1.pdf).

The CPS Five-Year Vision can be found at <https://www.cps.edu/about/vision/>.

For virtual education settings, in addition to providing attendance goals, applicants must specify how they will track and report attendance.

## Section 2.5: School Calendar and Schedules

Complete the calendar template provided in the RFP resource materials.

### 2.5.1: Annual Calendar

Things to consider:

- State law requires a minimum of 300 instructional minutes (5 hours) per day and 185 days per year to ensure 176 days of actual pupil attendance. For additional guidance, your design team may find it helpful to consult [ISBE's Guidelines for School Calendar Preparation](#).
- If planning for additional school hours and days, design teams should make sure that programming and staffing for before- and after-school programs and summer school sessions are reflected in the proposed school's budget.
- Proposed school calendars and daily schedules should reflect an appropriate level of rigor with sufficient time allocated for core subjects and nonacademic programs.

### 2.5.2: Student Schedules

The student schedule should include:

- The proposed daily start and end times for students;
- The start and end times for all periods during the school day; and
- The division of instructional versus extracurricular minutes for students.

### 2.5.3: Teacher Schedules

The teacher schedule should include:

- The proposed daily start and end times for teachers;
- The start and end times for all periods during the school day;
- The division of instructional versus planning time for teachers; and
- Any designated teacher professional development times during the school day.

## **Section 2.6: Special Student Populations**

### 2.6.1: Students with Disabilities

All school proposals must comply with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Article 14 of the Illinois School Code, and 23 Illinois Administrative Code 226, and must explain how compliance will take place and be monitored.

In your response, explain how the school will ensure that all students with disabilities:

- Have access to the general education curriculum;
- Integrate (and reintegrate) with their non-disabled peers;
- Receive related services in settings that include non-disabled peers to the maximum extent appropriate;
- Participate in standardized testing with accommodations and modifications, as required; and
- Are included in educational and culture-building activities, including extracurricular activities.

In addition, strong responses will include descriptions of:

- How the school will engage the family as meaningful members of the IEP team;
- How often parents will be notified of their child's progress toward IEP goals;
- A description of the process the school will use for reintegration into the classroom;
- Who at the school will be responsible for coordinating special education evaluations and services; and
- How the school will monitor the implementation of the IEPs to ensure that all students are receiving all special education service minutes (including related services), accommodations, and modifications.

Things to consider:

- Charter and contract schools cannot discriminate against students with disabilities in the lottery, enrollment and admissions policies, and must serve students with disabilities to the same extent as any traditional District school. Schools should expect and plan to have a proportion of students with disabilities that is comparable to the District average.
- All schools must use the CPS Individualized Education Program (IEP) form and comply with all CPS policies, procedures, and guidelines relating to special education.

- CPS Office of Diverse Learner Supports and Services Resources are available at: <https://www.cps.edu/services-and-supports/special-education/understanding-special-education/cps-policies-and-procedures/>.

### 2.6.2: English Learners

All school proposals must comply with federal law governing the education of English learners (105 ILCS 5/14C-1 et. seq., 23 Ill. Admin. Code 228), and must explain how compliance will take place and be monitored. Please note:

- Any school with an enrollment of fewer than 20 ELs of the same language background must provide a Transitional Program of Instruction (TPI) for those students.
- Any school with an enrollment of 20 or more ELs of the same language background from Kindergarten to 12th grade must establish and provide a Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) program for those students.

When discussing services and supports for EL students, it is also important to consider how the school will ensure compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which ensures equal access to education for EL students. Discuss how the school will avoid violations of Title VI, such as excluding students from active participation in school due to their inability to speak and understand the language of instruction; inappropriately placing EL students in special education because of their lack of fluency in English; and implementing EL programs that do not teach English as soon as possible or delay students from entering into an English classroom.

### 2.6.3: Advanced Learners

Things to consider when developing your response to this question:

- How will the school integrate accelerated learning opportunities into instructional methods?
- Does the school intend to provide additional curricular and instructional resources to support accelerated learning activities?
- How will teachers approach the challenge of having both accelerated students and students in need of remediation in the same classroom?
- Has your team discussed AP offerings, dual enrollment and early college credentials, and other relevant curricular options to support student needs?

## **Section 2.7: Multi-Tiered Systems of Support**

Describe the core academic and behavioral/social emotional instruction, intervention and supports that all students will receive in the general education program. Further describe how the school will identify and meet the needs of students who require support or intervention beyond that provided in the general education program.

This section does not refer to services to support only students with Special Education needs or who are English Learners, but rather refers to all students (including special populations) and should be a system that is designed to improve outcomes for all students in the school.

Both within the written proposal and at a capacity interview, applicants should be well-versed with the specifics of the MTSS that they intend to implement in their proposed school.

Many new schools receive a high number of students who are several grades behind grade level and require significant remedial assistance. In this section, the applicant should detail the tiered academic support or intervention the school will provide for all students and for students who are struggling in the general education program but whose needs do not warrant an evaluation.

In your response, address how your school will identify student needs and account for remediation in your course scope and sequence, instructional strategies, daily schedule, staffing plan, professional development plans, extracurricular programming, and student supports offered.

## **Section 2.8 School Culture and Social Emotional Learning**

### **2.8.1: School Culture**

In this section, applicants should provide a description of how the school will look and feel to students and teachers. Any responsibilities assigned to staff members in regard to promoting and monitoring school culture should be cited in the attached organizational chart and job descriptions.

When developing a response to this question, consider the following questions:

- What is the role of administrators, teachers, students, and families in establishing and maintaining school culture?
- What are the systems, traditions, policies, and symbols that give the school its identity?
- Does the proposed school culture reinforce positive student behavior and promote student learning?
- Does the proposed school have a plan to develop a school culture that is reflective of the identities of students and families?

### **2.8.2: Social Emotional Learning (SEL)**

ISBE's Social/Emotional Learning Standards are available here:  
<https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Social-Emotional-Learning-Standards.aspx>.

Applicants are recommended to consider resources provided from Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) (<https://casel.org/>) while developing their SEL plan and selecting a SEL framework/curriculum. Applicants choosing to use another SEL framework should provide evidence of its effectiveness with the target student population.

Applicants are asked to detail their behavioral/social emotional MTSS in Section 2.7.2. There should be a clear tie between the SEL information provided and the behavioral MTSS.

## **Section 2.9: Discipline, Behavioral Intervention, and Classroom Management**

Charter schools can adopt the CPS Student Code of Conduct (SCC) in full or submit an alternative discipline policy. Contract schools must adopt the CPS SCC. The CPS SCC is available at <https://www.cps.edu/about/policies/student-code-of-conduct-policy/>. If the applicant is not using the CPS Code of Conduct, it must provide a draft version of the proposed school's discipline policy, along with any supporting documents in Appendix 2.9.

The [United States Department of Education provides guidance](#) on how schools can meet their obligations under federal law to administer student discipline without discriminating on the basis of race, color, or national origin.

All schools, including charter schools, must comply with amendments to the School Code set forth in Public Act 0456 (also referred to as Senate Bill (SB) 100). This law provides limitations on how and when schools may use punitive school discipline practices, and requires that schools exhaust “appropriate and available behavioral and disciplinary interventions” before resorting to suspensions and expulsions. Information regarding this law is prevalent, and the law itself can be found here: <http://ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/99/PDF/099-0456.pdf>.

Charter schools must also comply with CPS disciplinary policies and procedures for students with disabilities and impairments. When a school’s charter is issued by a local board of education pursuant to Section 27A-8 of the Illinois School Code (105 ILCS 5/27A-8) (as is the case with charters issued by the Chicago Board of Education), that charter school is considered a school within the district’s jurisdiction, and is thus part of the CPS Local Education Agency (23 Ill. Admin. Code 226.60). This means that the charter schools must comply with CPS policies and procedures implemented for students with disabilities and impairments, which can be found here: <https://cps.edu/diverselearners/Pages/home.aspx>.

Things to consider regarding student discipline:

- Are systems in place to ensure that the school will protect the rights of students with disabilities in disciplinary actions and proceeding? Note: You may reference information provided in your ISBE Special Education form, however, please expand to provide a complete description of the discipline plan for students with disabilities.
- Does the school’s discipline plan present a clear and fair system that complies with students’ due process rights?
- Does the discipline policy have a schedule for communication to parents/students that is timely and allows for due process by providing sufficient notice?
- Are there systems in place to ensure that behavior policies are equitable and that no student subgroups are disproportionately impacted by behavior policies?
- Are the expectations and roles for school leaders and staff in implementing the behavior policies clearly articulated?
- How will expectations for behavior be clearly communicated to and modeled by teachers?
- Is the school’s system of discipline strength-based?
- Are discipline policies and practices designed to teach appropriate behaviors, restore relationships, and repair harm?
- Do disciplinary procedures address the cause of misbehavior?

## **Section 2.10: Post-Secondary and Graduation Support**

When developing your plan for post-secondary and graduation support for your students, you should be familiar with what Chicago and CPS offers to students. The [Learn.Plan.Succeed.](#) initiative is CPS’s system to provide pathways for students after graduating from high school. It

may be helpful to think about how your own school's post-secondary plan might align to Learn.Plan.Succeed. Things to consider when developing your response to this section:

- Who is responsible for overseeing the implementation of college readiness supports?
- Which staff members will support these efforts?
- How will your post-secondary and graduation supports align to the [CPS Vision](#)?

## Section 2.11: Human Capital

### 2.11.1: Recruitment and Selection

Staffing plans should reflect the school's proposed growth model (enrollment and grades year one through year five) and associated staffing needs. The staffing plan and narrative should clearly identify which staff member is responsible for overseeing all of the key design elements of the proposed school model. For example, if the school has a focus on service learning, the staffing plan and narrative should clearly identify which staff member is responsible for overseeing the program, establishing and maintaining relationships with external partners, assigning students to organizations, etc. The staffing plan should also align with the budget.

Things to consider:

- For charter schools, all staff working in instructional positions must meet the criteria detailed in 105 ILCS 5/27A-10(c).
- Special education and English learner teachers in all schools must be appropriately licensed.
- Teacher and administrator qualification requirements are identified above in the Charter and Contract School Structure table in the Resource Guide introduction.

Applicants proposing remote learning must additionally provide a clear outline of when each staff is expected to report to the school facility as opposed to working remotely. Describe how the virtual model impacts teaching and non-teaching staff (such as those who work in office, maintenance, transportation, etc.) Further describe any requirements or expectations for remote-based staff as opposed to school-based staff, and vice versa.

### 2.11.2: Professional Development

The professional development section should reflect any training or development related to unique or innovative curricular or instructional methods, as described in other parts of the proposal. Teams should consider how the school's PD plan will prepare teachers to embrace and execute the many unique aspects of the proposed school model (e.g. project-based learning, technology focus, performing arts, etc.).

If the proposed professional development program is active and working in another school or network, please cite the school and its results.

## Section 2.12: Design Team Experience and Capacity

### 2.12.3: Evidence of Success

This section should detail the team members' experience and expertise in areas that are aligned to the needs of a start-up school. A diversity of experiences and skills is important. The applicant should provide a detailed summary of the team's capacity to support the myriad needs of a new charter school.

The evaluation team realizes that not all members of every high-potential applicant team have direct experience running successful schools in the past. Because of this, the evaluation team is open to applicants describing how their team members' experiences and achievements outside of running a school would be relevant and transferable to the successful management of a new charter school.

If the applicant is a national operator or is proposing to partner with a management organization, the applicant should include a table or attached Excel spreadsheet in Appendix 2.12 that provides demographic data on student populations served at each existing school in the network, including the following (%):

- Free- and reduced-price lunch (FRL);
- African American, Hispanic, Caucasian, Asian American, and other;
- English Language Learners;
- Students with Individual Education Plans (IEPs); and
- Students in Temporary Living Situations.

Applicants may either submit state or district report cards, vendor reports, or other school performance reports to demonstrate historical performance. Academic data, including (1) student academic growth, (2) student academic attainment, and (3) student behavior metrics should be included in the report(s). Refer to the National Operator Replication Table available on the RFP Website, [www.cps.edu/2021RFP](http://www.cps.edu/2021RFP), and provide an explanation on how you meet these criteria. Identify any metrics that the applicant is unable to provide this information for and why.

Please note that any submitted data that is unverifiable (i.e. not from a third-party source) will not be considered.

**Because CPS does not have access to student-level data for schools outside of Chicago, the applicant is responsible for providing comprehensive data for each of its schools and for making the case for its network track record of driving academic achievement with similar student populations. If verifiable student demographic and academic data from third-party organizations or vendors (e.g. district or state performance reports, assessment data directly from external assessment vendors) is not provided by the operator for every school or campus for each student metric (I: Academic Growth, II: Academic Attainment, III: Behavior Metrics), evaluators will be unable to determine whether the existing schools in the network meet the benchmark standard. In the absence of the required data, evaluators will rate the school or campus as “does not meet” the standard.**

## Section 2.13: Parent and Community Engagement

In addressing the questions under this section, consider providing a parent handbook in Appendix 2.13.

Illinois Charter Schools Law (105 ILCS 5/27A-7(a)(10)) requires that a proposal describe the nature and extent of parent and community involvement in the governance and operation of the charter school. Boards tend to be most effective when they have close ties to the community and are knowledgeable about local priorities and politics. There are myriad ways that a school may allow parents and community members to play a role in the governance and operation of the charter school. Some examples follow:

- Include parent and community members on the school board;
- Develop parent surveys to receive regular parent feedback (e.g. on enrichment activities that they value for themselves and their students, requests for transportation services, feelings about school facilities, their sense of their child's progress in school, etc.);
- Establish a parent advisory council in which parents can provide suggestions to the school, cite complaints, organize volunteer activities, etc.; and
- Allow parents to participate in faculty hiring panels.

Things to additionally consider when developing your response to this section:

- How you will inform parents and the community about any programs you offer?
- How you will engage parents and community members to support students in programs you offer?

## Domain 3: Financial Plan

### Section 3.1: School Budget

Ensure the completed budget aligns to the full scope and model of the proposed school.

If applicable, include costs associated with unique elements of the school model. For example, if the school has a technology focus, include the costs of ongoing implementation of technology-based learning, such as any device set-up and support, device repair and replacement, infrastructure, IT support fees, vendor costs, licenses and software fees, and home Internet access expenses.

### Section 3.2: Financial Controls and Monitoring

As part of the 2021 RFP process, I&I will review the proposed school's fiscal policies/handbooks. This review process will assess, but is not limited to, the following categories:

- Comprehensive Reporting: Timely and regular production of three standard monthly financial statements: the statement of activities (including budget-to-actuals), statement of financial position (balance sheet), and statement of cash flows.
- Review of Financial Statements: Monthly financial statements reviewed by a member or committee of the board of directors; budgets and audits are reviewed annually.

- Meeting Schedule: Board of directors meet, at a minimum, on a quarterly basis; ideally, meetings would occur monthly or bi-monthly.
- Committees: Appropriate committee structures in place with clearly defined roles and responsibilities as well as regularly scheduled meetings.
- Financial Systems: Adequate internal controls in place, including without limitation, proper checks and balances, appropriate separation of duties as well as qualified persons for the generation and review of monthly financial statements.
- Qualified Personnel: Persons involved in the generation and review of financial reports ideally have backgrounds in finance and/or accounting, an MBA/CPA, and/or extensive financial experience, preferably in the nonprofit sector.

## Domain 4: Operational Plan

### Section 4.2: Student Recruitment and Enrollment

#### 4.2.1: Student Enrollment

The applicant should demonstrate that plans for student recruitment, school start-up, and operational supports ensure that the school serves a diverse student population.

Applicants proposing a charter school must ensure that their policies comply with the Illinois Charter Schools Law and the Illinois School Code. Illinois Charter Schools Law requires that charter schools have open enrollment. Specifically, the law provides that:

- “Enrollment in a charter school shall be open to any pupil who resides within the geographic boundaries of the area served by the local school board” (105 ILCS 5/27A-4(d)).
- “If there are more eligible applicants for enrollment in a charter school than there are spaces available, successful applicants shall be selected by lottery” (105 ILCS 5/27A 4(h)).
- Preference in the lottery must go to (1) siblings of pupils enrolled in the charter school, and (2) pupils enrolled in the charter school the previous school year, and may go to (3) pupils who reside within an applicable attendance boundary, if one has been designated.

No other enrollment preferences, other than the above, are allowed for charter schools. Consistent with the open enrollment requirements in the law, an admission form should in general be limited to:

- Contact information;
- Age/grade level information; and
- Information related to permissible enrollment priorities.

An admission form filled out prior to the lottery may NOT request social security numbers under any circumstances.

Post-lottery registration forms, which are filled out after the student has been guaranteed a spot at the school, may request the following information:

- Special education status;

- English language proficiency;
- Other information related to the student's academic aptitude; and
- Proof of immunization status.

If race/ethnicity demographic information is requested, the form should be clear that such information is optional and is used only for statistical purposes. Applicants are advised to include a non-discrimination statement on their forms.

Illinois Charter Schools Law includes requirements for how charter schools should conduct their application, lottery, and enrollment processes (105 ILCS 5/27A-4(h)). Applicants should review the legislative section in its entirety.

Charter schools may conduct additional intake activities after a lottery is held (e.g. student essays, school-parent compacts, open houses, etc.), but these activities cannot be required as a condition of student enrollment in the school.

#### 4.2.2: Student Recruitment

Charter and contract schools must comply with the [CPS policy regarding Students in Temporary Living Situations](#). This policy codifies a Consent Decree entered into the Settlement Agreement in *Salazar v. Edwards*, 92 CH 5703. As such, proposals must state how the school will protect the rights of children who are homeless in compliance with the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. § 11431 et seq., the Illinois Education for Homeless Children Act, 105 ILCS 45/1-5 et seq., and all other laws and administrative rules that protect the rights of children who are homeless. Pursuant to the CPS policy and the Consent Decree in *Salazar*, proposals should describe the steps the school will take to be responsive to the needs and concerns of students who are homeless, the services that are offered by the school and by outside providers, and the school's efforts to ensure that children who are homeless are not deprived of their rights. School proposals should consider:

- The school's plan to identify two appropriately-skilled staff persons who participate in training from CPS' Support for Students in Temporary Living Situations (STLS) to carry out duties related to the STLS program;
- How the school will provide notification of McKinney-Vento student rights to the entire student population and identify McKinney-Vento eligible students;
- How the school will document compliance with fee waivers for all McKinney-Vento students;
- The kind of training staff will receive regarding the needs and rights of students in temporary living situations; and
- How the school will include students in temporary living situations in all proposed school programs and activities.

## Section 4.3: Operational Compliance

### 4.3.1: Transportation

Illinois Charter Schools Law mandates that charter schools describe how they will meet the transportation needs of all pupils and provide a transportation plan for addressing the transportation needs of low-income and at-risk students.

Please note that transportation supports and services provided by the school may – but are not required to – include bus service. A transportation plan may include (but is not limited to) bus service, subsidized public transportation, coordinated parent or volunteer carools, and/or participation in the state’s Parental Transportation Reimbursement program.

Here are a few things to consider when developing a response to this section:

- A charter school’s budget should adequately support the proposed transportation plan.
- A statement that most students will live within walking distance of the school is not sufficient to satisfy this requirement.
- The school may be required to provide transportation for students with disabilities and students who are homeless, in accordance with applicable state and federal law.

### 4.3.2: ADA Compliance

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability and require accessibility in all aspects of school operations, including employment, buildings, programs and activities, communications, and information technology.

The ADA compliance plan should clearly articulate how the proposed school will ensure compliance with requirements under the ADA.

## Section 4.4: Governance

### 4.4.1: Governance Start-up

All charter schools must be governed by a not-for-profit governing body pursuant to the Illinois Charter Schools Law (105 ILCS 5/27A-5), and each school’s Charter School Agreement. A school’s ability to fulfill its mission is largely determined by the governance structure and the recruitment of a capable and engaged board. Proposals should specifically identify the board’s ongoing responsibilities, above and outside of fiduciary responsibilities, to ensure a real and meaningful impact on school decision making.

At least three directors are required to apply for Not-for-Profit status in Illinois ([http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/publications/pdf\\_publications/c165.pdf](http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/publications/pdf_publications/c165.pdf)), so at least three board members should be identified at the time of Application submission. Please note that CPS requires that at least the proposed founding board chair be present at the capacity interview. CPS reserves the right to request additional meetings with board members.

Please note that the Illinois Charter Schools Law requires that charter school proposals submitted to the local school board include a description of the “nature and extent of parental, professional educator, and community involvement in the governance and operation of the

charter school” (105 ILCS 5/27A-7(10)). A strong governance plan will account for and ensure initial and ongoing involvement of local stakeholders and parents. The school oversight structure should also provide adequate, appropriate, and meaningful opportunities to maximize parent, teacher, staff, and community involvement in the mission and operation of the school.

#### 4.4.2: Governance Structure and Ongoing Oversight

Board bylaws should include the following elements:

- Number (or range) of board members;
- Qualifications of board members;
- Board member selection process;
- Procedures for filling vacancies on the board;
- Guidelines for board member removal and resignation;
- Term limits;
- General powers;
- Fees and compensation;
- Officer selection process;
- Job description for officers;
- Procedures for filling officer vacancies;
- Term limits for officers;
- Location and number of meetings to be held each year;
- Policy on special meetings;
- Compliance with the Open Meetings Act and the Freedom of Information Act;
- Quorum and voting rules;
- Number and purpose of board committees;
- Job description for each committee;
- Procedure for creating a committee or task force;
- Rules of order; and
- Amendments.

Effective governing boards provide comprehensive academic, financial, and operational oversight of the school to ensure viability and stability. The governing board is responsible for ensuring that the school is in compliance with all applicable state and federal laws.

Things to consider:

- Effective boards develop annual, strategic organizational plans with concrete, measurable goals, metrics, and rubrics to monitor and evaluate the school’s progress throughout the school year that are consistent with the charter school agreement and accountability plan. The plan should examine academic, financial, fundraising,

operational, and organizational progress. Dashboards are one method of ensuring that the board is able to track progress on school goals.

- Efficient boards distribute materials ahead of the meeting and set the expectation that board members will review materials prior to the meeting at which they are discussed. When setting the agenda for a meeting, every agenda item should be linked to an annual goal.
- Board packets, which are sent to board members in advance of a meeting, may include a wide range of materials for board members, such as:
  - The previous meeting's minutes;
  - Reports from committees and/or the CEO;
  - Financial statements;
  - Academic achievement data; and
  - Copies of any documents requiring board approval.
- Effective boards acknowledge a clear distinction between the roles of governance and management. Boards should focus on governance; school leader(s) are responsible for management decisions.
- Best practices of successful charter schools suggest that boards are most effective when they have close ties to the community and are knowledgeable about local priorities and politics. There are many ways that a school can allow parents and community members to play a role in the governance and operation of the charter school. It is critical that the design team talk with community leaders and prospective parents about methods for involving these constituencies in the governance of the school with community leaders and prospective parents.

This section should include information on the selection, transition and ongoing training of the board to ensure rigorous academic, operational, and financial oversight of the proposed school.

The evaluation of a school leader is a critical area of responsibility for the charter school board. Applicants are encouraged to review research-based frameworks on effective school leader evaluation when developing policies and procedures to evaluate the proposed school leader.

#### 4.4.3: Board Legal, Compliance, and Ethics Policies

As stated in the Illinois Charter Schools Law (105 ILCS 5/27A-5(c)), the governing boards of charter schools are subject to the [Illinois Open Meetings Act](#) and the [Freedom of Information Act](#). Training for the general public on both laws can be found on the [Illinois Attorney General's website](#).

Charter schools are required to submit an updated ethics policy to CPS on an annual basis, per the Charter School Agreement. Charter schools are able to develop their own ethics policy and are encouraged to tailor the policy to the school and its unique needs. When developing the ethics policy, it may be useful to reference the [CPS Code of Ethics Policy](#) as a guide.

Charter schools are required to submit an updated conflict of interest policy to CPS on an annual basis, per the Charter School Agreement. Charter schools are able to develop their own conflicts of interest policy. When developing the conflicts of interest policy, it may be useful to reference the CPS Code of Ethics Policy as a guide (linked in the paragraph above).

CPS recommends that a conflict of interest policy be submitted separately from the board bylaws. All charter school bylaws have to be filed with the State of Illinois and must be re-filed any time changes are made. Bylaws are generally a more static document, whereas conflict of interest policies are more frequently updated.

The Illinois Charter Schools Law has been amended to include the following language: “All authorizers shall ensure that any charter school established on or after the effective date of this amendatory Act of the 98th General Assembly has a governing body that is separate and distinct from the governing body of any CMO or EMO. In reviewing charter applications and charter renewal applications, authorizers shall review the governance model proposed by the applicant to ensure that there are no conflicts of interest.” - 105 ILCS 5/27A-10.5

## **Domain 5: Growth Plan**

### **Section 5.2: Academic Capacity**

#### 5.2.2: Oversight of Academic Performance

As announced in September 2020, the district has determined to suspend the School Quality Rating Policy (SQRP), which is the district’s policy for measuring annual school performance, for the 2020-2021 school year. With no new school accountability scores for each school, each school’s current accountability status, which was last updated in fall 2019, will carry over through the 2020-21 school year. Charter schools authorized by CPS are in a unique position as a result of this decision, because issues concerning expansion, replication, non-renewal, revocation, and status on the Academic Warning List are tied expressly to SQRP through the Charter School Quality Policy (302.10).

For the 2021 New Schools RFP, existing operators applying to expand or replicate through the New Charter RFP process will be held harmless for their 2020 SQRP, but will be evaluated in part on the past performance and demonstrated academic success in years prior to SY2020.

In the absence of updated SQRP data, CPS reserves the right to request additional academic data from Operators as it deems necessary for its review.

Any questions regarding SQRP and the 2021 New Schools RFP can be directed to [iandiauthorization@cps.edu](mailto:iandiauthorization@cps.edu).

## **Domain 6: Management Organizations (MOs)**

### **Section 6.1: MO Contract**

If applicable, additionally identify decision-making authority between the Board of Directors and MO concerning any key technology-based learning components, including who will select and interact with vendors and who will bear the costs of implementing these components of the educational model.

### **Section 6.3: MO’s Past Organizational and Financial Performance**

CPS will conduct due diligence on all MOs. Applicants should transparently provide all of the information requested about the MO’s financial, legal, and academic track record. If the due



diligence process reveals information pertinent to this question that was not shared by the applicant, the lack of good faith will be taken into consideration when determining whether to recommend the applicant for approval.

## Tier III Application and Addendum Questions

### Domain 1: Community Engagement and Support

#### Section 1.5: Ongoing Community Outreach and Engagement

This section should further chronicle all community outreach and engagement efforts since your submission in Tier II.

All materials and methods of notifying parents and community members of the proposed school should continue to include the following information:

- Notification that the school is proposed and has not yet been approved;
- Information regarding how individuals can submit questions or feedback for consideration (e.g. by listing a phone number, email, fax, or mailing address; citing a method for submitting comments or questions on the proposed school's website; or inviting individuals to a community meeting with a period for comment, etc.); and
- The following language regarding the opportunity to view new school proposals: "If you would like to view the application for our proposed new school, it will be publicly posted on [www.cps.edu/2021RFP](http://www.cps.edu/2021RFP)."

If an applicant faces opposition to the proposed school, the applicant should understand the source of the opposition and seek to determine the degree to which the opposition reflects the sentiments of community members and parents.

Appendix 1.5: The Appendix should include concrete evidence of the outreach and engagement strategies and activities discussed in the proposal narrative. Applicants must include evidence of having continued to notify residents of the proposed school community, and of having continued to offer engagement and partnership opportunities to community residents, constituents, and stakeholders. Please refer to the sample of acceptable evidence provided in Section 1.4 Community Outreach and Engagement Plan of the RFP Resource Guide. Applicants are recommended to include an index or table summarizing the evidence provided. Include only evidence collected after the submission of the Tier II proposal.

#### Section 1.6: Community and Family Support

In Section 1.6, the applicant should detail the support that the new school proposal has secured from each core community constituency:

- Families (Student Demand);
- Community members, leaders, and community-based organizations; and
- Elected officials.

The interactive CPS School Locator map has overlays for Aldermanic wards, Illinois House District boundaries, and Illinois Senate District boundaries. Applicants should notify all elected officials whose ward or district touches a part of the proposed recruitment boundary, regardless of how small the area may be. The applicant must provide evidence of having notified elected officials by all three methods of outreach. The applicant should submit evidence of notification in

Appendix 1.6. If applicable, applicants should also include any letters of support received from elected officials in Appendix 1.6.

The response to this section of the proposal should provide insight into how specific community members acted as champions for the proposed new school, perhaps by connecting the design team with organizations, institutions, and individuals in the neighborhood.

To demonstrate support from families and the communi(ties) the school seeks to serve, applicants must provide concrete evidence such as letters of intent-to-enroll and letters of support from parents and constituents. Applicants may consider asking parents to write a personal letter explaining why they support the proposed school and are potentially interested in sending their student(s) to the proposed school. Please note that signatures provided as part of a petition only constitute evidence of notifying community members, not of having obtained individual support from petition signatories. Only personalized letters constitute evidence of support for the proposed school.

Applicants should also provide evidence, obtained through community outreach or otherwise, that demonstrates the described need for the proposed school. Evidence of need may include, but is not limited to, community assessment data, student-focused data, and letters from constituents.

Finally, if services or resources provided through a partnership are integral to the implementation of the school model (e.g. providing services or support as part of the school day or after-school hours), please provide evidence of the partner organization's commitment in a memorandum of understanding, letter of intent or commitment, or draft contract.

This document should:

- Describe the purpose of the organization independent of the school;
- Outline the nature of the relationship with the school;
- Define expectations for roles and responsibilities in the partnership;
- Clearly identify if services or resources will be provided for a fee or free of charge; and
- Be signed by a representative of the partner organization with his or her contact information provided.

The proposal should also explain how the design team conducted necessary due diligence when selecting the partner.

## **Section 1.7: Updated Facilities**

### **1.7.1: Overview of Proposed Site**

Applicants must identify at least two viable independent facility options, per Illinois Charter Schools Law (105 ILCS 5/27A-7(a)(3)), unless the applicant has fully secured an independent facility. The law requires that applicants provide “a description of and address for the physical plant in which the charter school will be located (provided that...the facility need not be rented or acquired at the time of proposal approval...) so long as the proposal or submission identifies and names at least 2 sites that are potentially available as a charter school facility by the time the charter school is to open.” Any independent facility to be approved must be in compliance

with applicable zoning, building codes, health and safety laws, and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 requirements. Guidelines for federal ADA and Rehabilitation Act facility requirements are available on the RFP website.

Things to consider:

- A list of CPS-approved architects can be found on the RFP website: [www.cps.edu/2021RFP](http://www.cps.edu/2021RFP).
- In some circumstances, CPS may require additional information or an ADA inspection conducted by CPS experts during the proposal review process.
- Proposed, back-up, and temporary facilities must also be in compliance with applicable building codes, health and safety laws, and requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- When researching facilities, please ensure that proposed facilities will be in compliance with Fire Prevention Bureau requirements listed in Chicago Building Code Section 3(13-84-030) - Frontage Requirements.

CPS acknowledges that operators may find it necessary to locate a new school in a temporary facility for a defined period of time. However, in this scenario, applicants are required to identify a viable “permanent” facility option in addition to a viable temporary option if the planned move falls within the five-year contract. The CET will consider a lack of a viable permanent and temporary facility options when forming recommendations for approval or denial of the proposed new school.



## **Tier IV Application and Addendum Questions**

### **Domain 1: Community Engagement and Support**

#### **Section 1.8 Continued Community Outreach & Support Materials**

This section should not only detail applicants ongoing community engagement, and any additional support received, since the Tier III submission, but also discuss how the school will continue to build on the foundation of community engagement and support, if approved to open.