



*Existing Schools*  
*Change of Authorizer*  
**Charter School Application & Evaluation Rubric**

Friends of Education, a charitable organization which meets the requirements as an authorizer under Minnesota statute section 124E.05, invites Minnesota charter schools interested in changing authorizers to submit an application to Friends of Education.

*NOTE:* Friends of Education has learning program requirements. Grade schools must implement a program which emphasizes foundational skills, such as that typified by the Core Knowledge sequence developed by E.D. Hirsch, Jr. and the Core Knowledge Foundation or the Classical Trivium (these are examples). Middle schools must implement a curriculum which prepares students for high school success. High schools must implement a curriculum which prepares students for post-secondary success. Friends of Education also requires a phonics-based reading program rich in literature and a sequential math program such as Saxon or Singapore (these are examples).

Existing charter schools interested in applying for authorization must submit an application, thirty-page maximum, which identifies:

- 1) Name of School
- 2) Mission & Vision
- 3) School History
- 4) Grade ranges currently served by the school (and grades for which the school is chartered, if different)
- 5) Academic Focus, Program Model, and specific information about the school's curriculum and instructional methods
- 6) Enrollment demographics for previous 5 years
- 7) Brief profiles of school board members, including skill sets/relevant experience
- 8) Family or personal relationships of any board members to board members and/or staff; family or personal relationships of staff to staff
- 9) School leader resume
- 10) A summary of the facility and building capacity
- 11) The school's greatest successes
- 12) The greatest challenges the school faces and the school's plan to address these challenges successfully
- 13) Why the school seeks to be authorized by Friends of Education
- 14) Whether and to whom the school is additionally applying for authorization
- 15) A specific statement that the school will accept the terms of the Charter School Contract, without modification
- 16) Other information the school believes is relevant

Attachments not included in the thirty-page limit:

- 17) Description of how the school is:
  - (a) improving the learning, achievement, and success of all students
  - (b) fulfilling other statutory purposes
  - (c) meeting the Commissioner's expectations for all public schools.
- 18) The school's current charter contract.
- 19) Written communications from the school's authorizer in the immediately preceding twelve months, and the school's most recent written review from its current authorizer detailing the school's fiscal, operational, and student performance. If the review contains any unresolved issues or outstanding obligations, the school's application must include a detailed plan as to how it will resolve those issues and obligations. *NOTE:* If the report from the current authorizer does not indicate any outstanding obligations or unresolved issues, a signed statement from the current authorizer stating that no unresolved issues or outstanding obligations exist under its current charter contract must be provided; Friends of Education will not make a final application decision before this statement is received.
- 20) The three most recent external audits
- 21) Current year's budget, including projected fund balance as of June 30<sup>th</sup>
- 22) Current continuous improvement plan including:
  - a) the school's goals
  - b) student performance expectations
  - c) governance plan
  - d) administration and operations plan
  - e) financial management plan
- 23) Description of how the school evaluates its:
  - a) educational performance
  - b) fiscal performance
  - c) organizational performance
- 24) Current strategic plan
- 25) Academic Results – Provide results **other than** state assessment tests. Friends of Education will obtain state assessment results from the MDE website

**Format Requirements:**

8 1/2" x 11" paper, 1" margin all sides

Minimum 12 point font

May be single-spaced

Page #s bottom of each page

Citations must be embedded in the text

No tabs / dividers

Electronic applications (must be Microsoft word and excel compatible, no PDFs other than attachments identified in #17-25: If you do not receive confirmation of receipt within two business days, call Friends of Education at 952.745.2717.

Mail/Courier: 1 paper copy and 1 electronic (Microsoft word and excel compatible; attachments in #17-25 may be PDFs) on flash drive

**Where to Submit:** Interested schools should submit application and attachments, including phone and e-mail contact information, to:

Electronic Submission: [beth.e.topoluk@huntington.com](mailto:beth.e.topoluk@huntington.com)

Mail/Courier Submission: Friends of Education, 11100 Wayzata Blvd, Suite 800, Minnetonka, MN 55305.

**Decision Date:** Site visits will be scheduled or notices of noninterest will be mailed within sixty days. If a site visit scheduled, decisions are generally provided within thirty days of site visit.

**Deadline:** None. Applications from Existing Charter Schools are accepted continuously. Applicants are advised to consider the statutorily-established submission deadline to the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) contained in Minn. Stat. 124E.10 subd. 5 and recognize that, for approved applicants, the entire Friends of Education process (application, evaluation, and approval) must be completed before submission to the MDE. Friends of Education’s application review, evaluation, and approval process generally takes 90 calendar days. The then-current MDE submission requirements may require additional information not addressed herein, and in completing its review, the MDE may similarly request additional information.

**Evaluation:** Complete applications will be comprehensively evaluated based on the school’s historical academic, fiscal, and operational performance. Friends of Education evaluates whether the school has demonstrated academic, fiscal, and operational success as follows:

<b>FISCAL SOUNDNESS</b>	<b>Primary Consideration</b>	<b>Evaluation Standard</b>
External Audits	Existence of material weaknesses and significant deficiencies	No deficiencies or evidence that deficiencies are recognized and addressed through reduction and/or elimination
Fund Balance	Current % of historical expenditures and trend	Years of school operation are considered. Generally: Excellent: 20%+ ; Good: 15-20%; Generally Satisfactory: 10-14%; Less than 10%: generally reflects inadequate fiscal soundness but will be considered with satisfactory explanation
<b>ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE</b>		
State Assessments	<b>Proficiency rates</b> and <b>Growth</b> are each compared with: (a) resident district schools with comparable demographics, (b) resident district, -(c) state average, and (d) state-average student groups.  NorthStar Ratings	Evidence that the school is increasing student achievement when compared with its traditional counterparts for the same grades served. <i>If the school is serving nontraditional populations, standards appropriate for the school population are utilized.</i>  Current NorthStar improvement designations may reflect inadequate student achievement.
Local Assessments (provided by School)	Determined by assessment	
<b>OPERATIONS</b>		
Board Capacity	Skill sets, experience, actual governance (e.g. board material review)	Evidence of a variety of skill sets and experience; Evidence that the board adequately governs, critically evaluates, and strategically leads the school
Compliance	Reporting and state law requirements	Significant and/or multiple and/or repeated compliance deficiencies, without satisfactory explanation, generally reflect inadequate operational compliance.

**TIP:** Friends of Education believes that one of the best indicators of future performance is past performance and, consequently, places great emphasis on and comprehensively evaluates a school’s historical performance. In that spirit, a successful application generally reflects:

For Academic Performance, an historical record clearly demonstrating consistently strong student achievement or consistently increasing student achievement  
*TIP: include a matrix showing achievement over time*

For Financial Performance, an historical record clearly demonstrating:

- (1) multiple external audits with no material or significant deficiencies, or attention to deficiencies
- (2) consistently solid fund balance or a consistently increasing fund balance.

*TIP: include a matrix showing audit results / fund balance over time*

For Operational Performance, an historical record clearly demonstrating:

- (1) consistent substantial compliance or consistently improving compliance
- (2) board record demonstration of active governance and oversight.

*TIP: Include matrices showing compliance record over time, and board skill sets by board member, and board meeting attendance by board member*

Reviewer \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Existing Schools Change of Authorizer Application Evaluation

Schools are evaluated based on fiscal, academic, and operational performance.

	Meets Expectations	Does Not Meet Expectations
The academic program complies with Friends of Education's learning program requirements.		
<i>A quality application provides evidence of:</i>		
<b>FISCAL SOUNDNESS</b> External Audits: No deficiencies or deficiencies are addressed through reduction and/or elimination.		
<i>Qualitative: Describe the degree to which the external audits persuasively demonstrate adequate fiscal management through reduction and/or elimination of deficiencies.</i>		
Fund Balance: Current and trending fund balance.		
<i>Qualitative: Describe the degree to which the trend persuasively demonstrates fiscal soundness.</i>		
Fund Balance %: 10% minimum		
<b>ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE</b> MCA Results:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Proficiency Rates</u></li> </ul> The school is increasing student achievement at a rate greater than its traditional counterparts for same grades.		
Resident district schools (w comp demographics)		
Resident district		
State average		
State average student groups		

<i>Qualitative: Describe the degree to which the school's proficiency results persuasively demonstrate that the school is improving the learning, achievement, and success of all students.</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Growth Rates</b></li> </ul> <p>The school is increasing student achievement at a rate greater than its traditional counterparts for same grades.</p>		
Resident district schools (w comp demographics)		
Resident district		
State Average		
State average student groups		
<i>Qualitative: Describe the degree to which the school's growth results persuasively demonstrate that the school is improving the learning, achievement, and success of all students.</i>		
<b>NorthStar Ratings</b>		
The school's current MDE designation(s), if any:		
<i>Qualitative: Describe the degree to which the NorthStar ratings demonstrate that the school is improving the learning, achievement, and success of all students</i>		
School Administered (Local) Assessments: The academic program is contributing to improved student learning, achievement, and success.		
<i>Qualitative: Describe the degree to which the school's results persuasively demonstrate that the school is improving the learning, achievement, and success of all students.</i>		
<b>OPERATIONS</b>		
Board Capacity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Board comprised of a variety of skill sets and experiences.</li> </ul>		
<i>Qualitative: Describe the degree to which the board has adequate experience: to what degree is the board comprised of experience in accounting/finance, business, charter schools, community organization, data analysis, education, legal, project management, real estate.</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Board adequately governs, critically evaluates, and strategically leads the school.</li> </ul>		
<i>Qualitative: Describes the degree to which the application and review of board minutes persuasively demonstrate that the board adequately governs the school.</i>		
<i>Describe the degree to which the application and review of board minutes persuasively demonstrate that the board critically evaluates</i>		

<i>the school.</i>		
<i>Describe the degree to which the application and review of board minutes persuasively demonstrate that the board strategically leads the school.</i>		
Compliance: The School complies with reporting and state and federal law requirements		
<i>Qualitative: Describe the degree to which the school persuasively demonstrates that it complies with reporting and legal requirements.</i>		
<b>APPLICATION</b> All Required Items (1-16) provided		
<b>Application ATTACHMENTS</b> Description re: fulfilling statutory purposes		
Current Charter Contract		
Most recent review from current authorizer		
Outstanding/Unresolved Issues Y N		
If Y, plan to resolve		
<i>Qualitative: Describe the degree to which the plan adequately address all deficiencies.</i>		
If N, signed statement from authorizer stating no unresolved issues.		
Three most recent external audits		
Current year's budget with projected fund balance as of June 30 <sup>th</sup>		
Continuous improvement plan (with school's goals, student performance expectations, governance plan, administration and operations plan, financial management plan)		
<i>Qualitative: Describe the degree to which the school describes a comprehensive continuous improvement plan and process.</i>		
How the school evaluates educational, fiscal, and operational performance		
<i>Qualitative: Describe the degree to which the school describe a comprehensive evaluation process. Describe how the evaluation process relates to its continuous improvement process and plan.</i>		
Current Strategic Plan		
<i>Qualitative: Describe the degree to which the strategic plan reflects comprehensive strategic planning.</i>		

**ADDITIONAL REVIEWER COMMENTS:**

**REVIEWER RECOMMENDATION:**