



## Charter School Expansion Application

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**MN Stat., 124D.10, Subd. 4 (j):**

*A charter school may apply to the authorizer to amend the school charter to expand the operation of the school to additional grades or sites that would be students' primary enrollment site beyond those defined in the original affidavit approved by the commissioner. After approving the school's application, the authorizer shall submit a supplementary affidavit in the form and manner prescribed by the commissioner. The authorizer must file a supplement affidavit by October 1 to be eligible to expand in the next school year. The supplementary affidavit must document that the school has demonstrated to the satisfaction of the authorizer the following:*

- 1) the need for the expansion with supporting long-range enrollment projections;*
- (2) a longitudinal record of demonstrated student academic performance and growth on statewide assessments under chapter 120B or on other academic assessments that measure longitudinal student performance and growth approved by the charter school's board of directors and agreed upon with the authorizer;*
- (3) a history of sound school finances and a finance plan to implement the expansion in a manner to promote the school's financial sustainability; and*
- (4) board capacity and an administrative and management plan to implement its expansion.*

*The commissioner shall have 30 business days to review and comment on the supplemental affidavit. The commissioner shall notify the authorizer in writing of any deficiencies in the supplemental affidavit and the authorizer then has 20 business days to address, to the commissioner's satisfaction, any deficiencies in the supplemental affidavit. The commissioner must notify the authorizer of final approval or disapproval within 15 business days after receiving the authorizer's response to the deficiencies in the affidavit. The school may not expand grades or add sites until the commissioner has approved the supplemental affidavit. The commissioner's approval or disapproval of a supplemental affidavit is final.*

The purpose of the Volunteers of America-Minnesota (VOA-MN) Charter School Expansion Application is to provide VOA-MN with adequate information to make a decision regarding a potential expansion and to assist in the process of crafting a strong affidavit for the Commissioner's approval if expansion is merited.

The application follows the format of the criteria a charter school is required to meet in statute and must address the items contained in the outline below. VOA-MN will accept applications on a rolling basis; however, adequate time should be allotted for review of the proposal prior to submission of a supplemental affidavit to the Commissioner.

### **Application Submission & Deadline**

Schools applying to expand should submit an application to VOA-MN by **July 15<sup>th</sup>** of the year prior to the anticipated expansion. Please send one complete electronic copy of the application to [solsen@voamn.org](mailto:solsen@voamn.org). Incomplete applications will not be reviewed.

### **To be eligible to apply:**

- Schools must be meeting the terms and conditions of their charter contract, including their primary statutory purpose of improving all pupil learning and all student achievement.
- Schools must not be in authorizer intervention status.
- Schools must have completed at least four years of school operation.
- Schools must be able to provide a minimum of three consecutive years of student data that reflects a positive trend and student growth based on the state assessments.

**Application Preference:** Application preference will be given to schools that are in state “Reward” status and schools replicating their existing high performing program.

### **Review Process and Final Determination**

The application will be peer reviewed. No peer reviewer will be selected that may have a real or perceived conflict of interest with regard to the review of the expansion application (e.g., reasonably close geographical proximity to the applying school). After the initial peer desk review of an application, the applicant / school representatives and peer reviewers will participate in an interview. The applicant interview focuses on expansions alignment with the charter school’s mission and vision, applicant’s knowledge of the proposed expansion plan and the applicant’s capacity to implement the expansion. VOA-MN may request follow-up materials prior to the interview process in order to further assess the quality of the application and expansion implementation team. After the interview, peer reviewers will make a recommendation to the Charter School Division leadership to approve or deny the charter school expansion application. The Charter School Division will communicate the determination in writing to the applicant after a final decision has been rendered by leadership. VOA-MN will provide the school with feedback from the application review process regardless of the determination.

If VOA-MN approves a charter school expansion application, the Charter School Division will work with the developing team to prepare and submit its affidavit to MDE for authorization.

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| <b>Reward School (10 pts)</b>       |                |                    |
| <b>Replication (10 pts)</b>         |                |                    |
| <b>Total Points Possible</b>        |                | 100-120            |

## APPLICATION OUTLINE

### I. Executive Summary

The application should commence with a one-page executive summary which provides a rationale for the desired grade expansion, alignment to the school's mission and vision, and touches on the school's most compelling arguments for each of the requirements listed in *Minnesota Statutes*, 124D.10, subd. 4(j).

### I. Demonstrate that expansion is supported by need and supporting long-range enrollment projections. Please include at least the following information in this section:

- Discussion of the need and rationale for expansion to the desired grade levels or additional site. Include evidence to support the school's assumptions (e.g., current school enrollment waiting lists, application interest lists, enrollment waiting lists of nearby schools).
- Projections of the number of students expected to enroll in each grade level and/or site, in the initial year of operation and beyond if a gradual addition of grades is anticipated (Also complete Appendix 4).
- Discussion of how projected figures were arrived at.
- Include an enrollment table with and without the expansion.

### III. Provide longitudinal evidence that students are experiencing high levels of academic performance and growth on statewide assessments under chapter 120B and that the school is meeting the school's primary statutory purpose of improving all pupil learning and all student achievement. Please include at least the following information in this section:

- Data from statewide assessments administered during the three most recent academic years (both growth and proficiency when available).
- Information on MMR growth during the three most recent academic years.
- Data from additional assessments (if desired).
- Discussion of how data presented demonstrates improved academic performance.

### IV. Demonstrate that the charter school has a history of sound school finances and a finance plan to implement the expansion in a manner to promote the school's financial sustainability.

Please include at least the following information in this section:

- Provide a detailed discussion of the school's present financial situation, including fund balance history.
- Provide an analysis of the school's fund balance history and discuss the school's multi-year cash flow projections to finance the proposed expansion.
- Provide a budget for the current year as well as the subsequent year, both with and without the proposed expansion. Also include a narrative explaining assumptions and critical changes.
- Discuss if / how the expansion will impact the school's transportation and/or health and safety plan.
- Discuss the school's ability to secure and manage the funding necessary for expansion.
- Discuss any audit findings from the previous fiscal year. Provide evidence that the school has appropriately corrected past findings or has corrective actions in place to address findings for the future.

### V. Provide a compelling argument that the school has the capacity to expand. Applicants must demonstrate school board and management capacity to oversee the expansion. Applications must contain a sound administrative and management plan to implement its expansion. Please include at least the following information in this section:

- Describe the school's current governance and management structures and discuss anticipated changes resulting from the proposed expansion.
- Describe the qualifications/credentials of the existing school board officers, including number of years at the school. Also complete Appendix 1-3.
- Describe the qualifications/credentials of the school administration and key faculty members involved in the expansion, including the number of years at the school; explain their ability to provide sound oversight of the expansion.
- Describe the expansion plan including outlining critical elements to complete, team members involved, and timelines for completion.

- Describe the impact the expansion would have on the school's current facility and how the school would provide adequate space for the increased number of students. In the case of an additional site, also provide 1) a timeline for acquiring the new facility space, 2) identify the anticipated location with justification, 3) explain any student safety measures (e.g. a cross walk will be needed between the two sites) and transportation plan.
- Describe the school faculty plan detailing the changes in staffing patterns necessary to accommodate the increase in students, including the projected number of new staff that will need to be hired and changes in roles (including lines of authority). The school's staffing plan should include and explanation of changes in staffing necessary to accommodate the increase in students (and facility space if applicable), including the projected number of new staff that will need to be hired and changes in roles and responsibilities (e.g., flow chart with all faculty, with and without the new space).

**SECTION SIX MUST ONLY TO BE COMPLETED IF THE SCHOOL IS APPLYING FOR A PRESCHOOL EXPANSION.**

## **VI. Early Learning Programs (Prekindergarten and Preschool Instructional Programs)**

*Schools seeking official recognition of their preschool programs must also complete the following application items A-F.*

### **A. Explain the school's plan for a comprehensive child assessment. Include at least the following information in this section:**

- Describe the schools existing and/or proposed plan for assessing each child's cognitive skills with a comprehensive child assessment instrument when the child enters and again before the child leaves the program to inform program planning and promote kindergarten readiness.
- Explain how the assessment process measures individual child progress in all the prekindergarten and preschool instructional classes that includes the use of a standardized child assessment instrument, such as High Scope Child Observation Record (COR), Teaching Strategies Gold or Work Sampling System. *(To measure child progress, the assessment must be used at program entrance and program exit. At a minimum, the comprehensive assessment should measure children's progress in the domains of language and literacy and mathematical thinking. Other domains may include approaches to learning, general cognitive development, physical and motor development, approaches to learning, social and emotional development, and creativity and the arts.)*

### **B. Explain the school's plan for intentional instructional practices. Include at least the following information in this section:**

- Describe your program's existing and/or proposed intentional instructional practice aligned with the state early childhood learning standards and kindergarten standards and that is based on early childhood research and professional practice focused on children's cognitive, social, emotional, and physical skills and development and prepares children for the transition to kindergarten, including early literacy skills.
- Describe how the program content and intentional instructional practices are aligned with the Early Childhood Indicators of Progress: Minnesota's Early Learning Standards (ECIPs) available on the MDE website and include a very brief description of the curriculum used in the early learning program, such as Teaching Strategies Gold, High Scope, Opening the World of Learning (OWL).
- Describe how the existing and/or proposed program incorporates the Minnesota's Early Learning Standards (ECIPs). Provide an explanation of how the existing and/or proposed instructional practice supports children's early literacy skills development.

### **C. Describe the school's plan for coordinating an appropriate kindergarten transition with parents and kindergarten teachers.**

- Explain how the school will coordinate and plan, along with kindergarten teachers, and engaging families in a variety of ways to support children's learning and successful transition to kindergarten.
- Include an explanation of the school plans to coordinate referrals to community programs based on child needs, such as local public health, social services, mental health services, early childhood

special education programs, or other early learning or child care programs. Include a brief description of how the program intends to generally coordinate/collaborate with community organizations.

**D. Provide an explanation of the existing and/or proposed staffing plan.**

- The plan must ensure staff-child ratios of one-to-ten and maximum group size of 20 children with the first staff required to be a licensed early childhood teacher. Include a description of how the prekindergarten or preschool instructional program is provided and how ratios and group size ensure a high-quality early learning program.
- For each prekindergarten and preschool instructional class, describe faculty licensure and other credentials, as appropriate (table format with teacher name and license number is preferred).

**E. Provide an explanation of teacher qualifications and professional development.**

- Describe how the school will ensure that the preschool teachers are qualified and have the necessary knowledge in early childhood curriculum content, assessment, and instruction.
- Include the school's plan for license faculty professional development on early learning curriculum and/or assessment that has been completed in the past five years. If it is a new program, describe the school's future plan.

**F. Describe the school's plan for early childhood screening.**

- Explain how the plan ensures that participating children have completed health and developmental screening within 90 days of program enrollment under Minnesota Statutes section 121A.16 to 121A.19.
- Include a description of how participating children will receive health and developmental screening through a traditional school district or comparable screening from health care provider. (It is not necessary for the charter school to provide the health and developmental screening, but must describe how children will receive the comprehensive health and developmental screening to identify possible problems that may interfere with children's learning.)

**VII. Applicant Interview.** Interview occurs after the peer desk review of the expansion application. Applicant (school representatives) and peer reviewers will participate in an interview process. Failure of the applicant to have a satisfactory interview could result in the automatic decline of the application.

## Expansion Appendix 1

### SCHOOL NAME SCHOOL BOARD OF DIRECTORS ROSTER

| Member Name<br>E-Mail   | Board Position &<br>Term | Group Represented<br>(teacher, parent, community<br>member) | Meeting<br>Participation Rate |
|---|--------------------------|---|-------------------------------|
| Jane Doe<br><a href="mailto:jdoe@gmail.com">jdoe@gmail.com</a>  | Position: Chair<br>Term: | Parent  | <b>Example</b><br><br>100% 😊  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GOVERNANCE TRAINING – DATE - VENDOR – LOCATION</li> <li>FINANCIAL MATTERS TRAINING – DATE – VENDOR - LOCATION</li> <li>EMPLOYMENT MATTERS TRAINING – DATE – VENDOR – LOCATION</li> </ul> |                          |   |                               |
| MEMBER BIO/EXPERIENCE:  |                          |   |                               |
| CONTRIBUTION THEY WILL MAKE TO THE EXPANSION:   |                          |   |                               |
| NAME  |                          |   |                               |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GOVERNANCE TRAINING – DATE - VENDOR – LOCATION</li> <li>FINANCIAL MATTERS TRAINING – DATE – VENDOR - LOCATION</li> <li>EMPLOYMENT MATTERS TRAINING – DATE – VENDOR - LOCATION</li> </ul> |                          |   |                               |
| MEMBER BIO/EXPERIENCE:  |                          |   |                               |
| CONTRIBUTION THEY WILL MAKE TO THE EXPANSION:   |                          |   |                               |
| NAME  |                          |   |                               |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GOVERNANCE TRAINING – DATE - VENDOR – LOCATION</li> <li>FINANCIAL MATTERS TRAINING – DATE – VENDOR - LOCATION</li> <li>EMPLOYMENT MATTERS TRAINING – DATE – VENDOR - LOCATION</li> </ul> |                          |   |                               |
| MEMBER BIO/EXPERIENCE:  |                          |   |                               |
| CONTRIBUTION THEY WILL MAKE TO THE EXPANSION:   |                          |   |                               |
| NAME  |                          |   |                               |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GOVERNANCE TRAINING – DATE - VENDOR – LOCATION</li> <li>FINANCIAL MATTERS TRAINING – DATE – VENDOR - LOCATION</li> <li>EMPLOYMENT MATTERS TRAINING – DATE – VENDOR - LOCATION</li> </ul> |                          |   |                               |
| MEMBER BIO/EXPERIENCE:  |                          |   |                               |
| CONTRIBUTION THEY WILL MAKE TO THE EXPANSION:   |                          |   |                               |

## Expansion Appendix 2

SCHOOL NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

### ADMINISTRATIVE AND EXPANSION TEAM FACULTY INFORMATION

| NAME   | POSITION              | FILE NUMBER | NUMBER OF YEARS AT X SCHOOL |
|--|-----------------------|-------------|-----------------------------|
| Jane Doe                                       | e.g., School Director |             |                             |
| QUALIFICATIONS:                                |                       |             |                             |
| CONTRIBUTION THEY WILL MAKE TO THE EXPANSION:  |                       |             |                             |
| NAME   |                       |             |                             |
| QUALIFICATIONS:                                |                       |             |                             |
| CONTRIBUTION THEY WILL MAKE TO THE EXPANSION:  |                       |             |                             |
| NAME   |                       |             |                             |
| QUALIFICATIONS:                                |                       |             |                             |
| CONTRIBUTION THEY WILL MAKE TO THE EXPANSION:  |                       |             |                             |
| NAME   |                       |             |                             |
| QUALIFICATIONS:                                |                       |             |                             |
| CONTRIBUTIONS THEY WILL MAKE TO THE EXPANSION: |                       |             |                             |

**Expansion Appendix 3**

**SCHOOL NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**EXISTING TEACHING FACULTY INFORMATION TABLE**

(Teacher name should appear as it is found on the MDE Licensure Look-Up Page)

| Name | Subject Area | Folder # | Years at X School | Total Years Teaching |
|------|--------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------|
|      |              |          |                   |                      |
|      |              |          |                   |                      |
|      |              |          |                   |                      |
|      |              |          |                   |                      |
|      |              |          |                   |                      |

**Expansion Appendix 4**

**SCHOOL NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**STUDENT ENROLLMENT TABLE**

| GRADE | 2012-2013 | 2013-2014 | Est. 2014-15 | Est. 2015-16 w/out expansion | Est. 2015-16 w/expansion |
|-------|-----------|-----------|--------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|
|       |           |           |              |                              |                          |
|       |           |           |              |                              |                          |
|       |           |           |              |                              |                          |
|       |           |           |              |                              |                          |
|       |           |           |              |                              |                          |
|       |           |           |              |                              |                          |

**2014-2015  
STUDENT**

**DEMOGRAPHICS:**      \_\_\_% Caucasian *est.*

                                 \_\_\_% Black *est.*

                                 \_\_\_% Hispanic *est.*

                                 \_\_\_% Asian *est.*

                                 \_\_\_% American Indian *est.*

                                 \_\_\_% Special Education *est.*

                                 \_\_\_% Free/Reduced Priced Lunch *est.*

**2014-15 School Year Student Attendance Rate: \_\_\_%**



**EXPANSION APPLICATION REVIEW RUBRIC**

**Applicant Name:**

**Reviewer Name:**

**Satisfactory:** Strengths suggest that the possibility of a successful expansion.

**Approaching Satisfactory:** Strengths outweigh weaknesses. There are weaknesses which could adversely impact the potential for success of the expansion.

**Unsatisfactory:** Major weaknesses outweigh any strengths and suggest a lack of success of the expansion.

*A rating of “unsatisfactory” in any section may render the application ineligible for approval.*

| <b>Application Preference:</b>                          | <b>YES</b> |         | <b>NO</b> |
|---|------------|---------|-----------|
| School is a state “Reward” school.                      |            | 10 pts. |           |
| Application is to replicate the high performing school. |            | 10 pts. |           |

|   |                         |
|---|-------------------------|
| <p><b>Part I: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (not scored)</b><br/> <i>The executive summary provides a brief the rationale for the desired grade expansion and touches on the school’s most compelling arguments for each of the requirements listed in Minnesota Statutes, 124D.10, subd. 4(j).</i></p>   |                         |
| <p>Rating (mark with a "X")</p> <p><b>Satisfactory</b></p> <p><b>Unsatisfactory</b></p>   | <p><b>Comments:</b></p> |
| <p><b>Part II: NEED AND ENROLLMENT (20 pts.)</b><br/> <i>The application demonstrates that the expansion is supported by need and supporting long-range enrollment projections.</i></p>   |                         |
| <p>Rating (mark with a "X")</p> <p><b>Satisfactory</b> (18-20 pts.)</p> <p><b>Approaching Satisfactory</b> (16-17 pts.)</p> <p><b>Unsatisfactory</b> (0 pts.)</p>   | <p><b>Comments:</b></p> |
| <p><b>Part III: ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE (20 pts.)</b><br/> <i>The application provides evidence that demonstrates student academic performance and growth on statewide assessments under chapter 120B and that the school is meeting the school’s primary statutory purpose of improving all pupil learning and all student achievement.</i></p> |                         |
| <p>Rating (mark with a "X")</p> <p><b>Satisfactory</b> (18-20 pts.)</p> <p><b>Approaching Satisfactory</b> (16-17 pts.)</p> <p><b>Unsatisfactory</b> (0 pts.)</p>   | <p><b>Comments:</b></p> |

**Part IV: FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY (20 pts.)**

*The application demonstrates that the charter school has a history of sound school finances and a finance plan to implement the expansion in a manner to promote the school's financial sustainability.*

|  |  |                  |
|--|--|------------------|
| <i>Rating (mark with a "X")</i>              |  | <b>Comments:</b> |
| <b>Satisfactory</b> (18-20 pts.)             |  |                  |
| <b>Approaching Satisfactory</b> (16-17 pts.) |  |                  |
| <b>Unsatisfactory</b> (0 pts.)               |  |                  |

**Part V: LEADERSHIP CAPACITY (20 pts.)**

*The application provides a compelling argument that the school has the capacity to expand. Applicants must demonstrate school board and management capacity to oversee the expansion. Application must contain a sound administrative and management plan to implement its expansion.*

|  |  |                  |
|--|--|------------------|
| <i>Rating (mark with a "X")</i>              |  | <b>Comments:</b> |
| <b>Satisfactory</b> (18-20 pts.)             |  |                  |
| <b>Approaching Satisfactory</b> (16-17 pts.) |  |                  |
| <b>Unsatisfactory</b> (0 pts.)               |  |                  |

**Part VI: EARLY LEARNING PROGRAMS (not scored)**

*Prekindergarten and Preschool Instructional Programs*

**VI.A. The application explains the school's plan for a comprehensive child assessment.**

|                                 |  |                  |
|---------------------------------|--|------------------|
| <i>Rating (mark with a "X")</i> |  | <b>Comments:</b> |
| <b>Satisfactory</b>             |  |                  |
| <b>Unsatisfactory</b>           |  |                  |

**VI.B. – The application explains the school's plan for intentional instructional practices.**

|                                 |  |                  |
|---------------------------------|--|------------------|
| <i>Rating (mark with a "X")</i> |  | <b>Comments:</b> |
| <b>Satisfactory</b>             |  |                  |
| <b>Unsatisfactory</b>           |  |                  |

**VI.C. The application describes the school's plan for coordinating an appropriate kindergarten transition with parents and kindergarten teachers.**

|                                 |  |                  |
|---------------------------------|--|------------------|
| <i>Rating (mark with a "X")</i> |  | <b>Comments:</b> |
| <b>Satisfactory</b>             |  |                  |
| <b>Unsatisfactory</b>           |  |                  |

**VI.D. The application provides an explanation of the existing and/or proposed staffing plan.**

|                                 |  |                  |
|---------------------------------|--|------------------|
| <i>Rating (mark with a "X")</i> |  | <b>Comments:</b> |
| <b>Satisfactory</b>             |  |                  |
| <b>Unsatisfactory</b>           |  |                  |

**VI.E. The application provides an explanation of teacher qualifications and professional development.**

|                                 |  |                  |
|---------------------------------|--|------------------|
| <i>Rating (mark with a "X")</i> |  | <b>Comments:</b> |
| <b>Satisfactory</b>             |  |                  |
| <b>Unsatisfactory</b>           |  |                  |

**VI.F. The application describes the school's plan for early childhood screening.**

|                                 |  |                  |
|---------------------------------|--|------------------|
| <i>Rating (mark with a "X")</i> |  | <b>Comments:</b> |
| <b>Satisfactory</b>             |  |                  |
| <b>Unsatisfactory</b>           |  |                  |

**VII: APPLICANT INTERVIEW (20 pts.)**

*Applicants demonstrate a thorough knowledge of their expansion application. Individuals participating in the interview are able to articulate their expertise and corresponding contributions to the proposed expansion of the school.*

|                                 |          |                  |
|---------------------------------|----------|------------------|
| <i>Rating (mark with a "X")</i> |          | <b>Comments:</b> |
| <b>Satisfactory</b> (16-20 pts) |          |                  |
| <b>Unsatisfactory</b> (0 pts.)  |          |                  |
|                                 |          |                  |
| <b>Score</b>                    | /100     |                  |
| <b>Preference Points</b>        | /20      |                  |
| <b>Final Score</b>              | /100-120 |                  |

**Recommendation:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Approve**                      \_\_\_\_\_ **Not Approve**