Charter Conversion Pathway Plan Rubric for Priority Improvement and Turnaround Schools & Districts

This rubric is intended to guide planning for schools and districts pursuing the conversion-to-charter pathway at the end of performance watch or for early action. Charter conversion plans will include the district's overall rationale for the conversion to charter, the details of the plan, and the importance of supporting students and staff in the conversion to charter plan. This rubric is not intended to provide guidance on every aspect of a charter school's authorization as that is a separate process that must be completed in compliance with Colorado statute and local authorizing regulations. The purpose of this rubric is to explain the conditions, structures, plans, and systems deemed essential by Colorado Department of Education staff to present a strong conversion-to-charter pathway plan in a state accountability hearing. CDE staff will use this document to provide feedback to the submitting LEA and the State Board of Education. Additional guidance on school charters is **AVAILABLE HERE.**

Notes:
- **Charter Application:** Many sections of the pathway plan may reference information found in greater detail in the charter application. Please feel free to append and reference the charter application (with page or section numbers) as applicable.
- **Application Differentiation:** Some sections of the rubric are differentiated based on proposed authorizer (district or CSI) and/or whether the charter operator for the conversion has been identified. Please ensure that the proposed charter conversion plan addresses the standards appropriate to the circumstances.

Rubric Overview of Sections

Plan Section	Plan Components	
District Charter Pathway Plan Overview	(a) Need for Conversion to a charter school (b) Selection of charter operator (c) Enrollment	(d) Alignment with district strategy (e) Governance and oversight (f) District family and community engagement
Charter Operator and Plan	(a) Charter operator qualifications (b) Charter school governance (c) Mission and vision	(d) School design (e) Student learning outcomes (f) Implementation and monitoring
Charter Contract	(a) Enrollment and equity (b) Academic performance and accreditation (c) District right to review	(d) Contract non-compliance, dispute resolution, revocation (e) Contract/service negotiation

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PART 1: District Charter Pathway Plan Overview

District Charter Pathway Plan Overview	☐ Meets expectations ☐ Partially meets expectations ☐ Does not meet expectations	
Plan Component	**Rating of Evidence**	**Comments**
(a) Need for Conversion to Charter	**Meets Expectations**	**Comments**
Plan provides a clear and compelling rationale for conversion to charter.	• Explicitly explains how conversion to a charter school will ensure a greater level of success for student learning. • Provides clear rationale for why the district is selecting to convert the school to a charter rather than another pathway.	
(b) Selection of Charter Operator	**Meets Expectations**	**Comments**
Plan describes the process the district used (or is being used) to select the charter operator and ensure the operator has a track record of success.	• Describes whether the district is proposing an operator that is already authorized or will be soliciting a new operator and the rationale for the chosen approach. **District recommending identified charter operator** • Describes a rigorous process of recruitment, vetting and selection of operator. • Selection process demonstrates verifiable, quantitative data that demonstrates the charter operator's past effectiveness in running schools with similar needs and similar demographics and/or in a turnaround environment (if applicable). • Describes current district relationship with the charter operator, including whether the operator is currently authorized to operate in the district and the	

	extent to which the operator and the district have been engaged in co-planning for the conversion. **District soliciting new operator (attach call for school proposals if applicable)** • Clearly describes the process, timeline, and criteria for soliciting proposals and selecting a new charter operator. • Includes a proposed solicitation and selection process that ensures district will consider verifiable, quantitative data that demonstrates the charter operator's past effectiveness in running schools with similar needs, similar demographics, and/or in a turnaround environment (if applicable). • Describes contingency plan if a suitable charter operator cannot be found or authorized within the desired timeframe.	
(c) Enrollment	**Meets Expectations**	**Comments**
Plan includes description of enrollment considerations for charter including whether the charter will adopt mechanisms to ensure continuity of services for the students at the school identified for conversion	• Describes the anticipated school size, grades served, and location of the new charter school if any different than the current school. Provides rationale for any changes in location, size, or grade configuration. • Describes how students will be enrolled in the charter school, including any mechanisms the charter will have in place to ensure continuity of services for students previously served at the school identified for conversion (e.g. assuming a boundary, preferencing students in the previous boundary in a lottery, etc) • Describes the proposed timeline and process for the charter school conversion (e.g. will the charter school assume all current students upon opening or is the proposal to implement the conversion at targeted	

	grades over a period of time?). Provides a clear rationale for the approach. • If the charter school is going to 'phase in' enrollment, describes how students in other grades will be served during the phase-in.	
(d) Alignment with District Strategy	**Meets Expectations**	**Comments**
Plan provides an explanation of alignment to the district's overall strategic plan.	• Includes a brief description of district academic improvement strategy. • Clearly explains how the decision to convert to a charter school is part of a larger district strategy for improvement.	
(e) Governance and Oversight	**Meets Expectations**	**Comments**
Plan includes description of the governance and oversight capacity of the district board and authorizer and of the charter school board	**District Board Governance and Oversight** • Explains the district's oversight and relationship with the charter school (or anticipated relationship if no charter operator has been selected yet). Specifically, discusses how the district board will provide accountability oversight (types of data the local board will monitor, frequency of monitoring, etc.) to the charter school. • Explains any pre-opening milestones, if applicable, that the district will monitor to ensure a successful opening. **District-authorized Charter School** • Demonstrates that district has adopted board policies regarding charter authorizing that conform to Colorado State Statute on Quality Authorizing (1 CCR 301-88, Rule 3.00).	

	• Describes the district staff capacity for providing charter authorizing and accountability (e.g. FTE, roles, responsibilities). • Describes the district accountability protocols and processes for charter schools. • Describes the district support protocols and processes for charter schools. **CSI-authorized Charter School** ● Includes MOU with CSI to release exclusive authorizing authority (if applicable) and clearly defines relationship with CSI (data sharing, option to purchase services, areas of shared decision making, etc.).	
(f) District Family and Community Engagement	**Meets Expectations**	**Comments**
Plan describes assistance, support, and plan for existing community and families of the school.	• Describes current district family and community outreach regarding recommended plan and how family and community input was considered in district planning (if applicable). • Describes how the district and/or charter school will ensure all current school families can make an informed choice for their student's schooling in the coming year(s).	

PART 2: Charter Operator and Plan

Charter Operator and Plan	☐ Meets expectations ☐ Partially meets expectations ☐ Does not meet expectations	
Plan Component	**Rating of Evidence**	**Comments**
(a) Charter Operator Qualifications	**Meets Expectations**	**Comments**
(Only if a charter operator has already been identified by the district) Plan describes the qualifications of the charter operator chosen.	• Details the track record of success by the charter operator including student data for **all** past and present schools led by the operator. • Provides the names and qualifications of key staff members from the charter operator who will lead the charter school.	
(b) Charter School Governance	**Meets Expectations**	**Comments**
(Only if a charter operator has already been identified by the district) Plan demonstrates that the charter board has the capacity to oversee a successful school and a commitment to do so.	• Clearly describes the governance structure of the charter school, demonstrates that the charter board consists of a wide range of experienced members with the capacity to oversee a successful school, and a commitment to do so (e.g. board roster and qualifications, board role descriptions, board training requirements, terms, etc). • Clearly describes the charter board's role in academic accountability and oversight aligned to the school plan and identified student learning outcomes.	
(c) Mission & Vision	**Meets Expectations**	**Comments**
(Only if a charter operator has already been identified by the district) Plan articulates a vision and mission that reflects high expectations for student learning.	• Provides a clear and concise picture of what the school aims to achieve, what the unique focus of the school is, and the student population and community to be served. • Clearly articulates how the mission and vision are related to the turnaround of the conversion school and its identified needs.	

	• Clearly articulates the educational philosophy, school environment, instructional methodology, and anticipated school size.	
(d) School Design	**Meets Expectations**	**Comments**
(Only if a charter operator has already been identified by the district) *Plan articulates the design of the charter school that reflects high expectations for student learning and provides a clear plan for accelerating learning in a turnaround environment.*	• Clearly articulates the educational philosophy and instructional methodology of the charter school and how that philosophy and methodology will meet the needs of the community. • Describes the school's evidence-based approach to and plan for accelerating learning in a turnaround environment. Clearly ties proposed major improvement strategies to priority needs from the conversion school. • Describes what elements of the existing school will be retained, if any (e.g. staff, program design features, extra curricular activities, etc). • Charter waivers clearly align with the school design and pathways plan.	
(e) Student Learning Outcomes	**Meets Expectations**	**Comments**
(Only if a charter operator has already been identified by the district) *Plan thoroughly describes the goals and specific gains in academic achievement expected for the school. Articulates clear measures for monitoring learning outcomes.*	• Identifies actionable goals for student academic achievement, including goals for academic achievement for specific student populations within the school. Includes a rationale for why the proposed metrics were selected. • Gives in-depth explanation for how the plan will improve student learning and ensure the charter school will achieve an improvement or performance plan. • Explains how student learning and performance will be comprehensively measured by multiple sources of evidence and data. • Shows how anticipated student outcomes are clearly aligned to the mission and vision of the plan.	

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(f) Implementation & Monitoring	Meets Expectations	Comments
(Only if a charter operator has already been identified by the district) *Includes timeline for phase in or takeover of the existing school by the incoming charter and how the charter school will monitor the implementation of the school's plan.*	• Thoroughly outlines a timeline with a plan for implementation for opening the charter including key actions with timeframes • Includes specific implementation benchmarks at regular intervals (at least semi-annually) which identify systems level implementation progress goals aligned to the plan. Benchmarks are quantifiable and include measurable indicators of systems-level implementation of identified practices. • Describes how the school leadership team will regularly monitor and adjust the school's plan based on implementation versus specified benchmarks. • Describes how school leadership will regularly provide updates to the charter board and/or district staff and board on implementation progress.	

PART 3: Charter Contract

NOTE: The plan submitted to CDE for review should include a copy of the proposed charter contract or charter contract template. A contract that meets expectations will clearly outline the terms of the charter including the following components. Strong contracts will comply with CACSA model charter contract components.

Charter Contract	☐ Meets expectations	☐ Partially meets expectations	☐ Does not meet expectations

Plan Component	Rating of Evidence	Comments
(a) Enrollment & Equity	**Meets Expectations**	**Comments**
Terms of contract outline essential systems and policies for enrollment and equity.	• Matches enrollment protocols and expectations outlined in the plan. • Clearly articulates non-discrimination in enrollment in compliance with state and federal law. • Clearly articulates expectations for equity in serving students with disabilities, English language learners, gifted and talented students, etc. in compliance with applicable state and federal law. • Clearly articulates discipline and expulsion expectations aligned to Colorado law and district policy (where applicable).	
(b) Academic Performance & Accreditation	**Meets Expectations**	**Comments**
Terms of contract state clear performance expectations and review procedures aligned to those expectations.	• Clearly states academic performance expectations aligned to plan. Ideally, strong charter contracts include annual performance expectations and mechanisms for review. • Identifies supports and interventions for charter school performance deviations including failure to meet or make adequate progress toward meeting academic performance targets in contract (if applicable), Colorado Academic Standards, and State School Performance and Accreditation standards.	

(c) District Right to Review	Meets Expectations	Comments
Terms of contract clearly articulate the district's right to review data and documents.	Clearly articulates the district's right to review data and documents, including but not limited to: • School records (student files, discipline data, policies, special education, etc.) • Financial records (quarterly financials, bank records, etc.) • Educational program (school visits, test administration protocols, etc.) • HR data (evidence that background checks have been conducted) • School operations (health safety, occupancy, etc.) • Facilities (inspection of facilities) • Board minutes, meeting notices, other communications • Parent complaints	
(d) Contract Non-Compliance, Dispute Resolution, Revocation	**Meets Expectations**	**Comments**
Terms of contract define policies and procedures involving contract non-compliance, dispute resolution, and contract rocation.	• Clearly defines statutory criteria for failure to meet contract objectives and requirements. • Includes a clearly defined dispute resolution process between the district and charter school. • Clearly defines protocols for responding to breach of contract including: notification, corrective action, mandatory remedial action, failure to remedy, and revocation. • Describes the process and responsibilities of both parties in the event of a school-initiated closure.	
(e) Contract/Service Negotiation	**Meets Expectations**	**Comments**
Plan includes description of the contract and service negotiation between the charter and the district	• Describes how contract and services will be negotiated between the district and the charter school or supplies the charter document with these details (e.g., purchased services agreement).	

	• Describes how ESS and other specialized services for students with special needs will be delivered and what will be provided by the district or BOCES through purchased services contract (if applicable). • Describes the facilities arrangement for the charter conversion and includes a copy of the facilities use agreement or lease (if applicable).	

Summary of CDE Plan Review

Plan Section	Overall Rating	Evidence & Rationale
District Charter Pathway Plan Overview		
Charter Operator and Plan		
Charter Contract		

Summary Evaluation	Overall Rationale
☐ CDE has determined that the proposed Plan meets the expectations of rigorous standards and, if implemented as described, can have significant, urgent, and positive impact on student learning.	
☐ CDE has determined that the proposed Plan meets most of the the expectations of rigorous standards and/or, has most components of an effective implementation plan. If both are addressed, the plan can have a positive impact on student learning.	
☐ CDE has determined that the proposed Plan needs substantive revisions in order to meet the expectations described above.	
☐ CDE has determined that the currently proposed Plan is not sufficient to meet the expectations described above.	

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