

FCS Pre-Submission Interview Potential Questions

The applicant interview is a crucial piece in the charter school authorization process. The primary goal of the interview is to elicit information to determine whether a petitioning group has the capacity to implement solid educational and business plans to improve student achievement. Concept specific questions may be asked. Additionally, we have listed below suggested questions which might be helpful to consider in preparation for the interview.

The interview will be conducted by the FCS Charter Coordinator who will record responses to be shared with the FCS Raters committee. Follow up questions from this interview may appear in the Initial Raters Memo during the petition evaluation process.

Charter School

- What is your motivation for applying to be a charter school?

Relationship with Authorizer

- What is your view of the state's requirement that the school system "control and manage" it's authorized charter schools?
- What about Fulton County Schools has attracted you to seek a partnership with us?
- What challenges do you anticipate between our two organizations?
- What does your concept offer to the FCBOE and the students and communities it serves?
- What would be the most important service or support that FCS could offer to your charter school?

Governing Board

- Will the existing founding board members become the governing board for the school?
- What group will hold the legally binding charter contract?
- What expertise do each of you bring to this founding board and why do you personally want to be on this board?
- How many hours per week do you plan on donating to this endeavor?
- What professional competencies will be needed on your school's governing board? Are they in place now? How will those competencies be filled over time (succession planning)?
- What training have you received thus far and what training will you need moving forward?
- Apart from meeting the student achievement goals set forth in the charter, how does the organization plan to assess successful board governance?
- What have been the major organizational challenges for the board so far and how have those challenges been addressed?

Charter School Concept

- Briefly describe your charter concept. How did your concept originate?
- What does your concept offer to students and their families?
- Why do you need a charter school to implement your concept; why not bring your change through a typical FCS charter system school?
- Where else have you seen your concept or something similar implemented? What is the evidence that the concept improved student and or organizational performance?

Business Plan

- Will your charter school be able to operate without debt on FCS funding levels or will it require additional, outside resources? If so, how will your school acquire those additional resources?
- What are your most pressing concerns, financially speaking?
- Describe your facility arrangement and backup plan, if any.
- What is the process for setting the charter school's annual budget? Who at the school will be responsible for financial management?
- When the board is presented with the budget for approval, how will board members know whether to approve it, deny it, or make changes to it?

Organizational Operations

- What sorts of decisions will the governing board make and what sorts of decisions will be left to the school leader?
- What do you see as the relationship between your board and the school's leadership?
- What is the process for hiring and evaluating the charter school leader? What is the process for dismissing the charter school leader or teachers?
- How will your school be organized in order to meet the federal, state and local requirements?
- How will the organization build an effective school culture?

(For Charters hiring EMO)

- Why did you decide to use an EMO in general and this EMO in particular?
- What process did you follow to select your particular EMO?
- Describe the relationship you will have with the EMO. What are the terms of your contract with the EMO?
- What authorities do you plan to empower the EMO with? How will you monitor their use of your authority?
- If the EMO does not meet your expectations, what are your alternatives?
- Does the EMO understand your relationship with FCS?

Case Study

Assume that in the third year of the charter, academic data indicates that the school is not meeting a majority of the targets established in the contract. The school has a long wait list. The school is financially sound. The staff and principal are working hard. However, the student performance is not significantly differently from student performance in similar FCS typical schools. How would the board handle this situation?

Assume that in the second year of the charter, a vocal group of parents denounce the principal for behavior they believe is rude and disrespectful of parents and students. They have even started a website detailing their various complaints and have attended one of your governing board meetings publicly calling for her removal. Student academic performance is strong and staff satisfaction is high. How would you as a board handle this situation?

Assume that in the third year of the charter, the board and the EMO develop differing philosophies concerning the direction of the school and decide to dissolve the vendor contract. How would this be accomplished?