

Charter School Ready-to-Open Checklist

Audubon Center of the North Woods

Name of School:
Start-up coordinator:
Director:
Phone number and email address:
Checklist filled out by:
Date:

Item	Status
1. Authorizer contract	
1.1 The charter contract between Audubon Center of the North Woods(ACNW) and the charter school must be finalized and filed with the commissioner within 45 days of commissioner approval of the Authorizer's intent to grant a charter.	
2. Purpose	
2.1 The program model is developed consistent with the application and contract with Authorizer.	
3. Learning Program, Student Achievement and Accountability	
3.1 An academic program has been developed that is consistent with state academic standards	
3.2 A scope and sequence has been developed for the school's academic program	
3.3 An assessment system is in place that aligns with the curriculum	
3.4 A draft accountability plan is in place	
3.5 Student graduation/grade progression criteria have been identified	

Item	Status
3.6 A special education and LEP program have been developed	
3.7 Job-embedded Professional Development Plans have been developed for the school's professional staff	
3.8 Textbooks, materials, computers, supplies, etc. have been ordered and received	
3.9 Capital equipment has been ordered and received	
3.10 A special education director is hired or contracted	
3.11 Staff development is conducted for staff prior to the start of school so that staff are ready to start school with students	
4. Governance – Composition of the Board	
4.1 Five to nine members are on the Board	
4.2 At least one board member has expertise regarding the school mission and program concepts	
4.3 A board member with a finance background or expertise is designated as Treasurer	
4.4 A criminal background check has been conducted on each board member	
4.5 Voting interim board members are not independent contractors for the school	
4.6 The Board has a plan/schedule to engage in required training	
5. Governance – Foundational Documents	
5.1 The school's application has been approved by the Commissioner of Education	
5.2 Certificate of Incorporation as a non-profit entity has been filed with the Minnesota Secretary of State's Office and submitted to MDE	
5.3 Direct deposit (EFT Authorization) has been established with the Minnesota Department of Finance	
5.4 The school's Planning Grant budget (federal application) has been submitted and/or approved by the Board and MDE	
5.5 The school has filed with the I.R.S. for a Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN)	
5.6 The school has filed for a sales tax exempt number with the State	
5.7 The school has filed with the I.R.S. for Section 501(c)3 status	
6. Governance – Policy	
6.1 The Board has developed and approved Articles and Bylaws, after review by members during a Board meeting	

Item**Status**

6.2 Objectives have been set for the school, which are consistent with the accountability goals in the contract with the Authorizer	
6.3 The school has approved a conflict of interest policy that avoids apparent and actual conflicts of interest when administering grants and entering into contracts for equipment and service that is in compliance with applicable Minnesota statutes and with Federal Charter Schools Program requirements	
6.4 The Board has developed and is carrying out fair employment practices that are in compliance with applicable Minnesota and federal statutes	
6.5 The school has in place an admission and lottery process that provides equal access to all and is in compliance with Minnesota statute	
6.6 The Board provides policy direction to the director	
6.7 The Board has approved a Calendar for the school year	

7. Governance – Financial

7.1 The school has established a checking account with duplicate signature	
7.2 The Board carries out monthly review of fiscal reports and approval of the payment of bills	
7.3 The Board submits monthly financial reports for revenue and expenditures to the Board and the authorizer for review	
7.4 The Board has considered securing a bank line of credit	
7.5 The Board has adopted the annual budget and budget amendments	

8. Governance – Operations

8.1 The Board hears monthly reports on school development progress to assure school is being developed consistent with the charter's mission and contract with authorizer

8.2 Authorizer has a place on the agenda for "board/authorizer discussion."	
8.3 Meetings are held regularly and comply with Open Meeting Law	
8.4 A written agenda for each meeting is published for public inspection in the administrative offices, and provided to the authorizer	
8.5 School board meeting minutes recorded, approved, on file for public inspection in the administrative offices and distributed to the authorizer, MDE, and any other organizations requesting them; updated board rosters and contact information distributed as well	
8.6 The Board approves the hiring of all employees	
8.7 All staff are appropriately credentialed.	
8.8 If the board choose not to employ staff but rather contracts with another entity for professional services, this contract is developed and approved by the board.	
8.9 The board has secured legal counsel through contract or other means.	

Item	Status
8.10 Criminal background checks are conducted on all staff	
8.11 The Board has means in place to hold the director accountable	
9. Budget and Financial	
9.1 The Board has approved a preliminary 5 year budget. The budget includes major revenue components: General education, Lease aid, and Federal & State start up; and major expenditures: Staffing & benefits, Lease costs, other fixed costs, and startup costs	
9.2 The school's preliminary 5 year budget is periodically updated to include: Special education, Federal & NCLB, Transportation, and Food service	
9.3 Board has identified expenditures that will remain uncommitted until enrollment projections are met	
9.4 The school has established effective business practices: Staff has attended appropriate training on UFARS, MARSS, STARS & year-end financial reporting and established business processes to meet board policies & financial reporting needs	
9.5 Revenue budget is periodically updated to reflect current data for: Enrollment, Legislative changes, and other changes	
9.6 Expenditure budget is periodically updated to reflect current data for: Staffing needs, Salaries, benefits, and Lease & other costs	
9.7 Roster of registered & verified students submitted to MDE by June 15; Approved MARSS software has been obtained	
9.8 A completed, Board-approved budget is approved by June 30	
9.9 The Board provides financial oversight: Attends appropriate training on financial management and establishes policies on internal control, contract approval, purchasing and financial reporting	
9.10 Special Education and, if applicable, Federal Title 1 Program staff are entered into the MDE's EDRS system	
9.11 The school's staff provide appropriate, regular, and timely financial information to board, including: Detailed cash disbursements data, Detailed revenue & expenditure budgets, and Cash flow projections	
9.12 The school has submitted its Federal CSP Implementation Grant continuation request (if applicable)	
9.13 The school has established access to approved software; contracted with an auditor for the start-up fiscal year; established a line of credit established; and developed a Business Administration Policy/Procedures Manual	
10. Facility	
10.1 The school has secured a facility appropriate for educational use, by 150 days prior to opening date	
10.2 If applicable, any significant build-out of the school facility has begun no	

Item	Status
later than 120 days prior to opening date	
10.3 The facility meets accessibility requirements	
10.4 Facility has been inspected, and inspector's report is free of issues	
10.5 The space is adequate for the program model	
10.6 Board ensures that the lease is affordable and includes appropriate lease termination and renewal language	
10.7 Building lease has been compared to the Building Lease Levy maximum for appropriateness. Leasehold improvements are included in the lease payment.	
10.8 Prior to signing the lease, there is evidence that an adequate student marketing plan is implemented and recruitment results indicate a sufficient enrollment will result thereby. Also prior to signing, the lease should be reviewed by the school's legal counsel and by an appropriate person at MDE	
10.9 The school has applied for lease aid to MDE (should be submitted by June 1 for lease aid to be included in their metered payment in July)	
10.10 The school has developed a transportation plan, independently or with another entity	
10.11 If the school district is to transport students, notice must be given to that district not later than July 1 (sooner is preferable)	
10.12 The school has purchased appropriate insurance	
11. Marketing, Student Recruitment and Outreach	
11.1 Projected enrollment and budget are consistent	
11.2 The school has put in place and implemented an outreach plan for informing students of the school	
11.3 The school's recruitment plan is being implemented: Registrations are being submitted and 75% of budgeted enrollment is registered & verified by 90 days prior to school's opening day.	
11.4 The school provides opportunities for discussion with the parents, students if applicable and the public	
11.5 Regular communication has been initiated with parents of students to be enrolled	
11.6 Student selection is ongoing (if oversubscribed, a lottery must be used to select students)	
11.7 Student enrollment includes all appropriate data elements	
12. Leadership, Staffing and Management	
12.1 A position description for the school administrator has been approved by the Board	
12.2 The school administrator has been hired at least 150 days prior to the school's opening date	

Item

Status

12.3 The director has participated in training conducted by MDE or other approved organization	
12.4 The Board has ensured that compensation plans for all staff are reasonable	
12.5 Staff reduction provisions are included in contracts for lack of enrollment/funding to maintain expenditures as projected	
12.6 All teachers have been hired by 60 days prior to school opening, in order to begin employment 30 days in advance of opening day	
12.7 All teachers are appropriately licensed, are approved community experts or a variance has been obtained from the commissioner	
12.8 The school has set up an unemployment compensation option with the State	
12.9 The school has set up TRA and PERA with the State	
12.10 The school submits required state reports to MDE and the authorizer, consistent with MDE and authorizer timelines	