**Audubon Center of the North Woods**

**New Charter School Ready-to-Open Guide**

The Audubon Center of the North Woods (ACNW) is committed to working with approved charter school founding teams to open schools that align with ACNW’s vision: To authorize a portfolio of high performing charter schools that instill a connection and commitment to the environment in their school communities, while working towards a healthy planet where all people live in balance with the Earth. The pre-operational period is critical in laying the foundation for future school success. As such, ACNW has established a series of benchmarks and required actions to ensure key pieces are in place prior to opening. These indicators are aligned with ACNW’s operations, financial, and environmental education performance frameworks for operating schools.

As the school gets closer to its opening date, the founders will use their checklist in consultation with ACNW to help determine readiness to open. If the start-up school’s board is unable to meet one or more of the required conditions, it will submit a plan detailing how the condition will be accomplished by July 1. **The planning year culminates in a final Ready-to-Open (RTO) meeting approximately 8 weeks prior to the start of the school’s first operational year (typically no later than July 1).**

The RTO meeting will allow the school to demonstrate work that has been done and will also serve as a check-point to ensure that the RTO benchmarks have been met. In the event that the school is unable to satisfy the RTO benchmarks, the opening of the school will be postponed by one year in accordance with Minnesota Statute 124E.06, subdivision 3(h):

*The authorizer may prevent an approved charter school from opening for operation if, among other grounds, the charter school violates this section or does not meet the ready-to-open standards that are part of the authorizer's oversight and evaluation process or are stipulated in the charter school contract.*

**Start-Up Process**

Prior to the RTO meeting, pre-operational oversight for ACNW-approved schools is provided via a detailed checklist designed to walk new schools through the processes of developing their learning program, reaching out to potential students, securing facilities, creating appropriate financial management and governance policies, and ensuring compliance with the law. The checklist is intended to provide guidance on completing the tasks necessary to fulfill ACNW’s requirements for opening. It is not an exhaustive list and the timeline is recommended – some tasks may be added or removed and the timing of some items changed depending on the specific needs of your school. Progress in completing checklist activities is monitored by ACNW staff through meetings held with school founders/leadership on at least a monthly basis. The checklist encompasses the RTO benchmarks as well as numerous other tasks that require completion during the pre-operational period. Ultimately it is the school responsibility to ensure it is ready to open and ACNW will work with the school to determine whether it meets the Ready-to-Open requirements.

**Ready to Open Benchmarks**

The RTO benchmarks consist of eight areas of critical importance which are aligned with the detailed checklist used during the pre-operational period. In order to open, the school must demonstrate its satisfaction of each area. The benchmarks are as follows, see Appendix A for a full description of each item and required documentation:

1. **Enrollment** is sufficient to allow for financial viability and programmatic integrity.
   1. Confirmed enrollment is at or above the minimum number acceptable per the school’s contingency budget for lowest possible operating enrollment
2. **Board governance** is competent and compliant with law.
   1. ACNW observation of board meetings and minutes indicates understanding of key laws (e.g. Open Meeting Law), compliance with legal requirements and implemented of effective practice.
   2. Mandated training has been completed
   3. Necessary board policies, procedures, and bylaws are in place and approved by the board
   4. Appropriate insurance is in place
3. **Appropriate school site** has been acquired and the lease signed.
   1. The school had the lease reviewed by legal counsel or other relevant expertise prior to signing.
   2. ACNW has received a copy of the lease, received the opportunity to review and comment as specified by contract, and has no significant concerns.
   3. Facility is safe and suitable to receive students
4. **Funding** is prepared to flow from the state to the school.
   1. At least 10 of the 12 items listed below must be completed before the school will be considered eligible to operate. Any items not completed are well underway, will be completed prior to opening, and will not prevent funding from flowing to the school.
      1. Lease aid
      2. SERVS
      3. ADMWE (ADM WEB ESTIMATES)
      4. UFARS
      5. PERA/TRA set up
      6. Direct deposit for funds set up
      7. Title application submitted, if applicable
      8. Special Education applications and assurances
      9. MARSS
      10. Food service plan
      11. CSP grant items
      12. 501(c)(3)
5. **Learning program** elements are in place for meeting the mission of the school.
   1. The curriculum scope and sequence for the grades to be served in the school’s first year are complete
   2. All necessary materials (e.g. books, manipulatives, etc.) have been purchased and will be on-site prior to opening
   3. Classroom environments are suitable for the mission-specific learning program.
   4. Environmental education elements are in place
6. **Transportation** plan is in place and viable.
   1. The school has secured bussing either through the resident district or an alternative vendor
7. **Key staff** and majority of teachers have been hired.
   1. The school leader and at least 75% of staff members have been hired
   2. The school has an appropriately-licensed special education director in place prior to opening
   3. A plan is in place to hire any remaining staff well before the start of the year

**Ready to Open Meeting**

**Attendees**

The following persons must attend the RTO meeting.

* Board chair and treasurer
* Financial manager
* School leader
* Operations manager/Start-up Coordinator
* ACNW representatives

Additional board members are welcome to attend; however, please be aware of Open Meeting Law requirements with respect to quorum. Representatives from MDE may be invited to attend and participate in the meeting.

**Location and format**

The RTO meeting will be held at the school site and will commence with a brief tour of the school facility followed by an opportunity for the school to demonstrate how each benchmark has been satisfied. The final portion of the meeting will be reserved for discussion of the school’s progress. A RTO meeting will typically take 2-3 hours, but may require additional time if the school is facing numerous or complex issues.

**Final Decision**

ACNW will issue a Final Determination of Readiness to Open within two weeks of the RTO meeting. Schools unable to satisfy all criteria after this period will be allowed to open no sooner than the start of the following academic year, contingent on satisfaction of RTO benchmarks at that time.

ACNW reserves the right to terminate the charter with the founding board at the time of the Final Determination if it is clear that significant deficiencies exist which lead ACNW to question the viability of the program. Those deficiencies will be outlined in the Final Determination correspondence.

Appendix A

Ready to Open Benchmark Requirement Detail

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| **Benchmark** | **Criteria** | **Documentation** | **Submission Timeline** |
| **1) Enrollment** is sufficient to allow for financial viability and programmatic integrity. | a. Enrollment is at or above the minimum number acceptable per the school’s contingency budget for lowest possible operating enrollment. | a. Contingency budget | a. Submit to ACNW at least two weeks prior to the RTO meeting. |
| b. Current enrollment figures (based on families who have completely filled out enrollment forms—those who have indicated interest but have not formally enrolled may not be counted). **Please supply roster information so that enrollment can be confirmed.** | b. Submit to ACNW at least two weeks prior to the RTO meeting.  Bring copies of most updated figures to RTO meeting if changes have occurred. |
| **2) Board governance** is competent and compliant with law. | a. ACNW observation of board meetings and review of minutes indicates understanding of key laws (ie: Open Meeting Law) and use of best practices such as review of member attendance rates, functioning committees, oversight of pre-operational functions, etc. | a. Minutes, board attendance rates, listing/descriptions of committees established and functioning. Board meeting minutes posted to website. | a. Submit board packets and approved meeting minutes to ACNW monthly via Epicenter, and ensure Epicenter is up to date (with no outstanding tasks) at least two weeks prior to the RTO meeting. |
| b. Mandated training has been completed for all members. | b. Complete board contact information sheet attached as Appendix B | b. Submit to ACNW at least two weeks prior to the RTO meeting. |
| c. Necessary board policies, procedures, and bylaws are in place and have been approved by the board. | c. Board policy handbook; bylaws should be included in contract. If changes have been made since contract, include updated bylaws. | c. Submit to ACNW at least two weeks prior to the RTO meeting. |
| d. Necessary insurance is in place | d. Insurance policy | d. Submit to ACNW at least two weeks prior to the RTO meeting.  Provide updates as needed. |
| **3) Appropriate School Site** acquired/Lease signed | a. ACNW possesses a copy of the lease, received the opportunity to review and comment as specified by contract, and has no significant concerns. | a. Signed lease  ACNW observation of site and discussion of improvements completed and underway. | a. Submit to ACNW at least two weeks prior to the RTO meeting. |
| b. Facility is safe and ready to receive students. | b. Certificate of Occupancy and Fire Inspection Report are included in Lease Aid Application. | b. Submit to ACNW via Epicenter no later than August 31. |
| c. Lease aid application submitted to MDE. | c. Submit Lease Aid Application to ACNW via Epicenter. | c. Submit to ACNW via Epicenter no later than August 31 |
| **4) Funding** is prepared to flow from the state to the school. | a. At least 10 of the 12 items listed below must be completed before the school will be considered eligible to operate. Any items not completed are well underway, will be completed prior to opening, and will not prevent funding from flowing to the school.   * + 1. SERVS     2. ADMWE (ADM WEB ESTIMATES)     3. UFARS     4. PERA/TRA set up     5. Direct deposit for funds set up     6. Title 1 app in if applicable     7. Special education applications and assurances     8. MARSS     9. Food service plan     10. CSP grant items     11. 501(c)(3) status | a. The items below may be documented through a variety of means, suggestions for verification of each item are found below. No additional verification is required for CSP items as authorizers are copied on all official MDE grant notices.  i., ii., iii., iv., v., vi., vii., viii. Electronic or other document verification    ix. Completed contract with food service provider, confirmation of enrollment in MDE reimbursement program  xii. Copy of 501(c)(3) determination letter | a. Submit to ACNW at least two weeks prior to the RTO meeting.  Attend the meeting prepared to discuss the current status of each item. |
| **5) Learning program** elements are in place for meeting the mission of the school. | a. The curriculum scope and sequence for the grades to be served in the school’s first year are complete. | a. Curriculum scope and sequence document. | a. Submit to ACNW at least two weeks prior to the RTO meeting. |
| b. School has a plan for purchasing all necessary materials (i.e.: books, manipulatives, etc.) and materials will be onsite prior to opening. | b. Purchasing plan and copy of CSP grant budget | b. Submit to ACNW at least two weeks prior to the RTO meeting. |
| c. Classroom environments appear safe and suitable for the mission-specific learning program. | c. ACNW will observe during RTO meeting. | c. N/A |
| d. Environmental Literacy Plan (ELP) is developed. | d. Submit a first draft of the Environmental Literacy Plan for expanded grade levels or new site. | d. Submit to ACNW by June 30. |
| e. Teacher professional development plan is developed. | e. Outline or narrative description of teacher professional development plan. | e. Submit to ACNW at least two weeks prior to the RTO meeting. |
| **6) Transportation** plan is in place (and viable). | a. The school has secured bussing either through the resident district or an alternative vendor. | a. Signed contract with vendor or resident school district agreement verification (or if using Metro Transit a clear plan in place). | a. Submit to ACNW at least two weeks prior to the RTO meeting. |
| **7) Key staff** and majority of teachers have been hired. | a. The school leader and at least 75% of staff members have been hired. | a. Complete teacher licensure verification form attached as Appendix C | a. Submit to ACNW at least two weeks prior to the RTO meeting. |
| b. Plans are underway to hire any remaining staff well before the start of the year. | b. Include an all-staff listing with titles and positions remaining vacant | b. Submit to ACNW at least two weeks prior to the RTO meeting. |
| c. The school has an appropriately-licensed special education director in place prior to opening. | c. MDE memo approving Special Education Director | c. Submit to ACNW at least two weeks prior to the RTO meeting. |

Appendix B

Board Contact Information

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| **Last Name** | **First Name** | **Date Seated** | **Employ-ment**  **Training** | **Governance Training** | **Financial Training** | **Position (e.g. chair)** | **Email**  **Phone** | **Address (optional)** |
| Date training was or will be completed (only if already scheduled) and provider name. | | |
| Sample | Susie | May 14, 2011 | Completed 7/7/2010 | Completed 7/7/2010 | Scheduled 8/4/2011 | Board Chair | [susiesample@yahoo.com](mailto:susiesample@yahoo.com)  612.218.8888 | 890 Jersey Ave Crystal, MN 55404 |
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Appendix C

Teacher Licensure Verification

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| **Teacher Name** | **File Folder #** | **Subject or Specialty** | **Courses Taught** | **Grade(s) Taught** | **License Details** |
| Sally Sample | 426777 | Math | Algebra I, Geometry | 6-7 | El-Ed K-6 and Math 5-8 (expires 6/30/2017) |
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**ACNW Pre-Opening Requirements**

**Indicator 1: Educational Program**

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| **1.1 Mission & Vision:** Is the school prepared to offer a program with fidelity to a clear vision and mission, as outlined in the charter contract? | |
| **Key Milestone** | **Status** |
| A program model has been developed consistent with the application and charter contract. |  |
| Objectives have been set for the school, which are consistent with the accountability goals in the charter contract. |  |

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| **1.2 Instruction & Assessment:** Is the school prepared to implement instructional and assessment programming that focuses on student achievement? | |
| **Key Milestone** | **Status** |
| A scope and sequence has been developed for the school's academic program for the grades to be served in the school’s first year. |  |
| An assessment system is in place that aligns with the curriculum and accountability goals. This includes formative assessments and a system for data collection and analysis. |  |
| Textbooks, materials, computers, supplies, etc. have been ordered and received. |  |
| Staff development has been conducted or scheduled for staff prior to the start of school so that staff is ready to start school with students. |  |
| Job-embedded Professional Development Plans have been developed for the school’s professional staff |  |
| The school administrator has been hired at least 150 days prior to the school’s opening date. |  |
| The school has a clear plan in place for instructional leadership and appropriate staff is hired at least 120 days prior to the school’s opening date. |  |
| The director has participated in training conducted by MDE or other approved organizations. |  |

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| **1.3 Educational Requirements:** Is the school on track to comply with applicable educational requirements? | |
| **Key Milestone** | **Status** |
| An academic program has been developed that is consistent with state academic standards. |  |
| Student graduation/grade progression criteria have been identified. |  |
| The Board has approved a calendar for the school year by April 30 that meets requirements for instructional days and/or minutes. (The calendar must be turned in to MDE with the school’s enrollment projection report by June 10). |  |

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| **1.4 Special Education:** Is the school equipped to protect the rights of students with disabilities and implement a program that appropriately serves their needs? | |
| **Key Milestone** | **Status** |
| A special education program has been developed including a TSES Manual. |  |
| A special education director is hired or contracted. |  |
| The school has contracted with supplemental service providers (speech, psychologist, etc.). |  |
| The “Application for Special Education Fund – Statement of Assurances” has been submitted to MDE by June 1. |  |
| The school has developed a Child Find process. |  |
| The school has identified a 504 Plan Coordinator |  |

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| **1.5 English Learners:** Is the school equipped to protect the rights of English Learners (EL) and implement a program that appropriately serves their needs? | |
| **Key Milestone** | **Status** |
| The school has a required process in place to identify English learners, including implementation of the Home Language Questionnaire and appropriate assessments. |  |
| An English Learner plan of service is in place and, if needed, appropriate staff are hired or contracted. |  |

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| **1.6 Parent & Student Satisfaction:** Is the school taking steps to ensure parents and students are satisfied with the educational program, and are able to provide feedback on the program as needed? | |
| **Key Milestone** | **Status** |
| The school has provided and engaged in opportunities for discussion with the parents, students if applicable and the public. |  |
| Regular communication has been initiated and conducted with parents of students to be enrolled. |  |
| The school has developed parent and student satisfaction surveys and has a plan to administer these surveys. |  |

**Indicator 2: Governance**

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| **2.1 Board Composition & Capacity:** Does the school’s board demonstrate the capacity to effectively govern a successful charter school? | |
| **Key Milestone** | **Status** |
| At least five members are on the board per MN Stat. 124E.07 and all required roles and positions are filled per the school’s bylaws. |  |
| At least one board member has expertise regarding the school mission and program concepts. |  |
| A board member with a finance background or expertise has been designated as treasurer. |  |
| A criminal background check has been conducted on each board member. |  |
| The board has engaged in or has scheduled required training as required by MN Stat. 124E., including beginning training within 6 months of being seated and completing required initial training within 12 months of being seated. |  |
| The board has created a board development plan for bringing on new board members, onboarding new members, and engaging in ongoing training. |  |
| The board has secured legal counsel through contract or other means. |  |
| Board is in compliance with all statutory Conflict of Interest requirements. |  |
| All board members disclose if they have plans to apply for a position at the school. |  |

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| **2.2 Board Decision-Making and Oversight:** Does the board show evidence of engagement in appropriate decision-making and oversight through effective and transparent board meetings? | |
| **Key Milestone** | **Status** |
| The board has developed and approved articles of incorporation and bylaws. |  |
| Meetings are held regularly and comply with Open Meeting Law. |  |
| A written agenda for each meeting has been published for public inspection in the administrative offices and provided to the authorizer. |  |
| School board meeting minutes have been recorded and approved, and are available on the school’s website. |  |
| The board has an approved nepotism policy. |  |
| The board has a clear plan for developing and reviewing policies. |  |
| The board has developed a governance calendar. |  |
| The Board hears monthly reports on school readiness to  open/development progress to assure school is being developed  consistent with the charter's mission and contract with authorizer |  |
| The Board has developed a plan for monitoring the school’s performance on contractual goals in both academics and environmental education. |  |
| Board includes an agenda item for "board/authorizer discussion" in  board meeting agenda. |  |
| Updated board rosters and contact information have been distributed |  |

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| **2.3 Management Accountability:** Does the board have systems in place to hold management accountable for clear and measureable outcomes? | |
| **Key Milestone** | **Status** |
| A position description for the school leader was approved by the board that includes qualifications consistent with MN Stat 124E.12 Subd.2. |  |
| The board has developed a director evaluation protocol, and other necessary means to hold the director accountable are in place. |  |
| School leaders complete training provided by MDE for new schools. |  |

**Indicator 3: School Environment**

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| **3.1 Facilities & Transportation:** Has the school secured a facility and transportation services that will effectively serve students in compliance with laws, rules, regulations and charter contract provisions? | |
| **Key Milestone** | **Status** |
| The school has secured a facility appropriate for the school program model by 150 days prior to opening date. This includes an Occupancy Rating for educational use. |  |
| If applicable, any significant build-out of the school facility has begun no later than 120 days prior to opening date. |  |
| The facility meets accessibility requirements (ADA). |  |
| The facility has been inspected, including by the Fire Marshall, and inspector's report is free of issues. The school has a Certificate of Occupancy. |  |
| The board has ensured that the lease is affordable and includes appropriate lease termination and renewal language |  |
| Prior to signing the lease, the school had its legal counsel who has expertise in charter school leases review the lease. |  |
| Prior to the school signing the lease, there is evidence that an adequate student marketing plan is implemented and recruitment results indicate a sufficient enrollment will result thereby. |  |
| The school provided the lease to ACNW within 14 days of its execution as required in the charter contract. |  |
| Capital equipment has been ordered and received. |  |
| The school has developed a transportation plan, independently or with another entity, and has signed agreements in place as appropriate. |  |
| If the school district is to transport students, notice has been given to that district not later than July 1 (sooner is preferable). |  |

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| **3.2 Health & Safety:** Is the school prepared to be an effective steward of the health and safety of all students? | |
| **Key Milestone** | **Status** |
| The school has a board approved Crisis Management Plan |  |
| The board has approved appropriate policies related to health and safety. |  |
| Bids have been requested for food service. |  |
| Food services have been contracted and are in place for opening. |  |
| The school has received food and nutrition approval from MDE or has scheduled an approval visit. |  |
| Appropriate staff attends food service training provided by MDE. |  |
| All other appropriate documentation is submitted to MDE. |  |
| The school has secured appropriate nursing services and has a policy and system in place for dispensing pharmaceuticals. |  |

**Indicator 4: Student Rights**

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| **4.1 Admissions & Enrollment:** Is the school on track to meet enrollment targets and to implement open, impartial and transparent admissions and enrollment practices? | |
| **Key Milestone** | **Status** |
| The school has in place an admission and lottery process that provides equal access to all and is in compliance with Minnesota statute. |  |
| The school has a marketing and student recruitment plan in place that will be used to meet enrollment targets prior to opening and in future years. |  |
| 50% of budgeted enrollment is registered and verified by 120 days prior to school’s opening day |  |
| 75% of budgeted enrollment is registered and verified by 90 days prior to school’s opening day |  |
| 100% of budgeted enrollment is registered and verified by 60 days prior to school’s opening day |  |
| 125% of budgeted enrollment is registered and verified by 30 days prior to school’s opening day |  |
| The student post-enrollment process includes all appropriate data elements and documents including budget not limited to the Home Language Questionnaire, free/reduced lunch eligibility, health and special education information, etc. |  |
| A lottery has been scheduled if the school is overenrolled. |  |
| Enrollment updates are submitted regularly to the authorizer. |  |
| Enrollment projection report submitted to MDE with student roster by June 10 (or as required by MDE) |  |

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| **4.2 Due Process & Privacy:** Is the school equipped to honor due process and privacy for all students? | |
| **Key Milestone** | **Status** |
| The school has a disciplinary policy in place that is compliant with the MN Pupil Fair Dismissal Act. |  |
| Dress code, harassment and other student-level policies are in place. |  |
| All staff have been trained in school operations, including discipline policies, data privacy, and student conduct and procedures. |  |

**Indicator 5: Personnel Practices**

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| **5.1 Licensure:** Is the school’s staff appropriately licensed? | |
| **Key Milestone** | **Status** |
| All hired teachers are appropriately licensed or with other proper permissions as required by statute. |  |

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| **5.2 Staff Retention:** Does the school have structures in place to support staff and help them succeed in their roles? | |
| **Key Milestone** | **Status** |
| The school has considered strategies and structures to support staff and high staff retention rates. |  |

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| **5.3 Employment Practices:** Has the school demonstrated that it has and will engage in appropriate and equitable hiring, evaluation and termination practices? | |
| **Key Milestone** | **Status** |
| The board has developed and has been carrying out fair employment practices that are in compliance with applicable Minnesota and federal statutes. |  |
| If the board chooses not to employ staff but rather contracts with another entity for professional services, this contract has been developed and approved by the board. |  |
| The Board has finalized compensation plans for all staff and ensured they are reasonable. |  |
| Contracts include clear provisions for staff reductions if needed. |  |
| The school has set up an unemployment compensation option with the State. |  |
| Staff positions have been posted. |  |
| All teachers have been hired by 60 days prior to school opening in order to begin employment at least 30 days in advance of opening day. |  |
| The board has approved or is in the process of approving the hiring of all employees. |  |
| Criminal background checks have been conducted on all staff. |  |

**Indicator 6: Compliance & Reporting**

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| **6.1 Charter School Annual Reports:** Is the school prepared to comply with statutory and contractual requirements regarding annual reports? | |
| **Key Milestone** | **Status** |
| The school has a World’s Best Workforce Plan in place. |  |

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| **6.2 Insurance:** Has the school acquired insurance coverages as required by statute and the charter contract? | |
| **Key Milestone** | **Status** |
| The school has purchased appropriate insurance per MN Stats. 124E, 466 and the charter contract. |  |

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| **6.3 Authorizer & State Compliance:** Is the school prepared to comply with authorizer and state deadlines and compliance requirements? | |
| **Key Milestone** | **Status** |
| The charter contract between Audubon Center of the North Woods (ACNW) and the charter school has been finalized and filed with the commissioner within 45 days of commissioner approval of the Authorizer's intent to grant a charter. |  |
| Certificate of Incorporation as a non-profit entity has been filed with the Minnesota Secretary of State's Office and submitted to MDE. |  |
| Staff has attended appropriate training on UFARS, MARSS, STARS, Title, Lease Aid, FNS, & year-end financial reporting and established business processes to meet board policies and financial reporting needs |  |
| A roster of registered and verified students has been submitted to MDE by June 15 and approved MARSS software has been obtained. |  |
| Special Education and, if applicable, Federal Title 1 Program staff are entered into the MDE’s ADMWE (ADM WEB ESTIMATES) system. |  |
| The school has set up TRA and PERA with the State. |  |
| The school has submitted required state reports to MDE and the authorizer, consistent with MDE and authorizer timelines. |  |
| The school has submitted a Title I, Title II and/or Title III application as appropriate. |  |
| The school has developed a website that meets state and authorizer requirements. |  |
| The school has filed with the MN Attorney General and Secretary of State. |  |
| Appropriate school staff are trained in using Epicenter, and the school has a plan in place to ensure timely reporting to the authorizer using Epicenter. |  |
| The board has a plan in place for bi-monthly reports to the authorizer that provide updates on the school’s opening progress. |  |
| All MDE requirements for creating an account and reporting in MARSS are complete. |  |
| A Data Assessment Coordinator (DAC) is designated/All necessary DAC requirements and trainings are completed. |  |
| MARSS coordinator's name is sent to marss@state.mn.us as soon as  designated. |  |
| Establish Site Verification Coordinator to register school site in MDE database by July 1st. |  |
| School information is submitted and verified in MDE-ORG. |  |
| The school board has designated and submitted information to MDE regarding the Identified Official with Authority (IOwA) for the organization. |  |

**Indicator 7: Financial**

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| **7.1 Budgeting:** Does the school have an established budget and have they demonstrated ongoing monitoring and adjustment as needed? | |
| **Key Milestone** | **Status** |
| The Board has approved a preliminary five-year budget. The budget includes major revenue components: General education, Lease aid, and special education, food service; and major expenditures: staffing and benefits, lease costs, other fixed costs, and startup costs. |  |
| The board has developed at least two contingency budgets. |  |
| Board has identified expenditures that will remain uncommitted until enrollment projections are met. |  |
| Revenue budget is up to date to reflect current data for: Enrollment, Legislative changes, and other changes |  |
| Expenditure budget is up to date to reflect current data for: Staffing needs, Salaries, benefits, and Lease & other costs. |  |
| A completed, board-approved budget is approved by June 30. |  |
| Projected enrollment and final budget are consistent |  |
| The board reviews and approves quality financial statements on a monthly basis, including income expenditure report, balance sheet, cash flow projections, receipt of donations and payment of bills. |  |
| The school has established a line of credit. |  |

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| **7.2 Financial Policies and Practices:** Has the school established appropriate financial policies and practices? | |
| **Key Milestone** | **Status** |
| 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. |  |
| The school has established a checking account and the board has authorized check signers. |  |
| The board has established policies on internal controls, contract approval, purchasing and financial reporting. |  |
| The school has contracted for or hired a Business Manager. |  |
| The school has developed a Business Administration Policy/Procedures Manual. |  |

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| **7.3 Financial Reporting and Submissions:** Has the school demonstrated timely and accurate financial reporting and submissions? | |
| **Key Milestone** | **Status** |
| Direct deposit (EFT Authorization) has been established with the Minnesota Department of Finance after registering with SWIFT using Federal Employer Identification Number from IRS and Minnesota Tax ID Number from the Minnesota Department of Revenue. |  |
| The school has filed for a sales tax exempt number with the State |  |
| An accurate enrollment verification form is submitted to MDE by  June 10th (as early as possible to generate the first state aid payment) |  |
| The school has filed with the I.R.S. for Section 501(c)3 status. |  |
| The school has filed with the I.R.S. for a Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN). |  |
| The school has submitted its Federal CSP Implementation Grant continuation request (if applicable). |  |
| The school has applied for lease aid to MDE by June 1. |  |
| Title applications are submitted to MDE. |  |
| A working account with SERVS is created and registered. |  |
| Register for a DUNS number. |  |
| Register for Central Contractor Registration (CCR) at System for  Award Management (SAM), the payment processing system the  Federal Government uses to approve and disperse Federal Funds. |  |
| Identify/designate an ADMWE (ADM WEB ESTIMATES) coordinator. |  |

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| **7.4 Financial Audit:** Is the school positioned to undergo an annual audit? | |
| **Key Milestone** | **Status** |
| The school has established access to approved software and contracted with an auditor for the start-up fiscal year. |  |

**Indicator 8: Environmental Education**

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| **8.1 Student Outcomes:** Is the school on track to implement an environmental education program that will increase students’ environmental literacy? | |
| **Key Milestone** | **Status** |
| The school has in place an Environmental Literacy Plan (ELP) that identifies strategies and evaluation methods for moving students closer to the goal. |  |
| The school has identified an Environmental Education Coordinator, whose role includes serving as the key point of contact between the school and ACNW and gathering and reporting data on the ELP. |  |
| The school has established a process to ensure all teachers understand ACNW’s EE expectations, monitor progress toward the EE goals, and gather relevant data. |  |
| The school has identified how it will adapt environmental education to the needs and unique aspects of the school’s educational program or school community. |  |

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| **8.2 Governance and Operations:** Does the school have the appropriate financial, human, and organizational resources in place to carry out environmental education and monitor the school’s progress toward its goals? | |
| **Key Milestone** | **Status** |
| The school has systems in place to track its progress toward increasing student, faculty, and school leader environmental literacy. |  |
| The board has established a process for monitoring the school’s progress toward its EE goals, at a minimum quarterly. |  |
| The board has adopted a budget that allocates appropriate funding to implement the school’s EE program as described in the ELP and the school’s charter contract. |  |
| The school has established a method to provide appropriate training for faculty and staff (including custodial, food program, and other support staff) to implement the school’s EE and recycling programs. |  |
| The board’s decision-making process related to facilities, food, schoolyard and outdoor areas, transportation, purchasing, and teacher training reflects a commitment to environmental sustainability. |  |
| The school has a waste reduction and recycling program in place. |  |