

**NOTICE OF SPECIAL MEETING OF THE  
MISSISSIPPI CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORIZER BOARD**

**NOTICE** is hereby given of a special meeting of the Mississippi Charter School Authorizer Board to be held on Monday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2017 beginning at 10:00 a.m. at the Mississippi Charter School Authorizer Board offices located at 239 N. Lamar Street, Suite 207, Jackson, MS 39201. Participation at this meeting may be by teleconference at locations different from the above location pursuant to Miss. Code Ann. §25-41-5(2013) with participation being available to the public at the location set forth above. The purpose of the meeting is to conduct the regular business of the board as set forth in the attached draft agenda.

This the 26<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2017.

BY: Marian Schutte  
Executive Director

**DRAFT AGENDA**  
**MISSISSIPPI CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORIZER BOARD**  
**April 3, 2017**

- I. Call to order
- II. Adoption of the Agenda
- III. Adoption of the Minutes of the March 6<sup>th</sup> Meeting
- IV. Chair Report
- V. Executive Director's Report
- VI. Committee Reports
  - a. Applications Committee
  - b. Performance and Accountability Committee
- VII. New Business
  - a. 2017 Request for Proposals: NACSA Third Party Reviewer Contract
  - b. FY17 Budget Revision
  - c. FY18 Budget Proposal
  - d. Approval of Invoices
- VIII. Public Comment
- IX. Next Meeting
  - a. June 5<sup>th</sup>
- X. Adjourn



TO: Mississippi Charter School Authorizer Board  
FROM: The National Association of Charter School Authorizers  
DATE: March 23, 2017  
RE: 2017 Charter School Application Process Support

## INTRODUCTION

With the passage of the Mississippi Charter Schools Act of 2013 (The Act), the State of Mississippi has renewed its commitment to creating high-quality public education options for children by establishing the Mississippi Charter School Authorizer Board (the Board or MCSAB). The Board's mission is "to authorize high-quality charter schools, particularly schools designed to expand opportunities for underserved students." (Charter Schools Act § 4(2)(a)). The National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) has managed the Board's first two application cycles and worked in partnership with MCSAB's executive director to co-manage the 2015 and 2016 cycles. This proposal outlines a scope of work and timeline for NACSA to continue supporting the Board process while it continues to assume substantial process management responsibility.

## SUMMARY

NACSA proposes continued support for the MCSAB's development as a high-quality charter school authorizer through support in the following areas:

**Application Process Management.** In collaboration with the Board and executive director, NACSA will support management of MCSAB's 2017 application cycle through recruitment, selection, training, and management of evaluation teams, and delivery of recommendations for approval or denial of each application.

The total estimated cost for this work is \$48,765.

## APPLICATION PROCESS: 2017 CYCLE

NACSA will support management of MCSAB's evaluation of charter school applications submitted during the 2017 RFP process. The primary deliverable will be a set of recommendations to approve or deny each application. The recommendations will be based on the results of a three-stage process. The first stage will consist of eligibility and completeness reviews; the second stage will consist of a threshold quality review; and the third stage will consist of an independent evaluation team review and capacity interview.

An application must meet the criteria at each stage in order to be recommended for approval. An application that does not meet the criteria at any point will not proceed to the next stage, and will be recommended for denial with reasons provided in writing.

**Stage 1: Completeness Checks and Eligibility Determinations.** MCSAB will conduct completeness and eligibility reviews. NACSA will be available to support this work as requested.



All applications deemed to be eligible and complete will proceed to Stage 2 of the review process. Applications that are either ineligible or incomplete will not, as a matter of law, be eligible for a qualitative review.

**Stage 2: Threshold Quality Review.** NACSA will work with MCSAB to conduct a preliminary qualitative review of all complete applications. This preliminary review will provide a threshold assessment based on leading indicators, such as the soundness of the budget and the pre-opening plan. The purpose will be to determine which applications qualify for a full assessment and interview.

The threshold quality review will be conducted by external reviewers managed by NACSA in collaboration with MCSAB's executive director. MCSAB will make final decisions on Stage 2 applications based on the results of the threshold quality reviews.

Each application that qualifies for Stage 3 will be assigned to an independent evaluation team comprised of external reviews. For applications that MCSAB determines have not met the minimum quality requirements, NACSA's reviewers will generate a written statement of the basis for denying the application.

**Budget Note:** For budgeting purposes, this proposal assumes 8 (eight) complete applications will require a threshold quality review.

**Stage 3: Independent Evaluation Team and Interview.** NACSA will recruit and train independent review teams to review all Stage 3 applications. Teams will have three to four members, including both in-state and national representatives, who have experience and expertise with charter school and/or public education start-up and operations. In combination, the team members will have the educational, financial, and operational expertise necessary to conduct a thorough evaluation of each application.

Evaluation teams will be responsible for evaluating a maximum of four applications each, depending on the number of applications that proceed past Stage 2. NACSA will train teams on the evaluation process and timeline, the evaluation criteria, the mechanics of evaluating an application, the capacity interview process, and recommendation development. We will work with MCSAB to provide state-specific legal and factual context relevant to evaluating the merits of each proposal.

**Application Evaluation.** Evaluators will be responsible for the entirety of each application to which they have been assigned. Even though reviewers will have different areas of expertise, NACSA expects reviewers to have the opportunity and responsibility to consider the application as a whole, including the alignment between sections. Evaluators will have approximately three weeks to complete their individual reviews. Following completion of individual reviews, the evaluation team will conduct a debrief on each application in order to identify strengths and weaknesses, come to consensus on their preliminary assessments, and identify key issues to be explored through the capacity interview.

**Capacity Interviews.** The capacity interview is critical to a full assessment of the soundness of a charter school plan, and of the applicants' readiness to implement the plan effectively. Evaluation teams will conduct an in-person capacity interview for each applicant team in order to give applicants an opportunity to address questions or concerns raised in the proposal as submitted, and also to assess the capacity of the applicant group to implement the proposed plan effectively.



# MEMO

MCSAB will be responsible for identifying and securing space for the interviews and for coordination of interview logistics.

**Recommendation Reports.** For Stage 3 applicants, evaluation teams will produce a detailed recommendation report that provides an overview of each aspect of the proposal with analysis of the degree to which the proposal meets the criteria for approval. The reports include ratings of each section of the plan and an overall recommendation of whether the application meets the criteria for approval.

**Budget Note:** For budgeting purposes, this proposal assumes that 5 (five) applications will proceed to a Stage 3 review.

## MCSAB RESPONSIBILITIES

MCSAB is continuing to build internal capacity to manage application decision-making. As it assumes primary management of the application process, this proposal assumes that MCSAB will be responsible for a number of core process management responsibilities including, but not limited to, the following:

**Board Orientation.** The executive director will review the process plan with the Board and will remind the Board of its responsibilities as a charter school authorizer, both generally and specifically, as related to application decision-making.

**Eligibility Determinations.** MCSAB will review eligibility documents and make determinations about the legal eligibility of applicant groups.

**Completeness Findings.** MCSAB will conduct completeness reviews and be responsible for initial and final completeness findings.

**Applicant Orientation(s).** NACSA encourages MCSAB to continue to provide orientations for applicants that explain the process and elaborate on the role of the evaluation teams.

**Applicant Communications.** MCSAB will be responsible for ongoing applicant communications, including distribution of third-party evaluations.

**Due Diligence.** MCSAB will be responsible for reviewing the track record of performance for any experienced operators.

## APPLICATION PROCESS BUDGET

The budget is variable based on the number of applications. Typically, the cost of application evaluation is \$7,500 to \$8,000 per application depending on the structure of the evaluation teams, the number of experienced operators requiring due diligence, and other variables.

For budgeting purposes, we have assumed the following:

- Application submissions: **9**
- Applications proceeding to Stage 2: **8**
- Applications proceeding to Stage 3: **5**
- Experienced operators: **0**



The assumptions are based on expecting a similar number of submissions to the second round.

**Budget Note:** The number of applications approved or denied at Stage 3 has no bearing on the cost of the process.

Expense	Assumptions/Detail	Subtotal	Estimated Cost
Stage 1: Completeness and Eligibility Review	MCSAB-managed		N/A
Stage 2: Independent Threshold Quality Review	Assumes 8 complete applications (\$250/application per reviewer: 8 applications; 4 reviewers)		\$8,000
Stage 3: Full Independent Team Review & Interview	Stage 3 Review (Assumes 5 applications and 2 teams of 3) (Team 1: \$750/application per reviewer: 3 applications; 3 reviewers) (Team 2: \$750/application per reviewer: 2 applications; 3 reviewers)	\$11,250	
	Capacity Interview Participation and Prep (\$300/interview per reviewer: 5 interviews; 6 reviewers)	\$4,500	
	Team Lead Stipend (\$650/application per team lead: 5 applications. 2 team leads)	\$3,250	
	Stage 3 Subtotal: \$19,000		
Travel	Two evaluation teams for capacity interviews		\$5,640
Process Management & Recommendation Report Preparation	Includes reviewing, editing, and proofreading all recommendation reports; review team coordination and management. (Approx 10.2 days @ \$125/hr)		\$10,176
Administration & Overhead			\$5,949
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>\$48,765</b>

### APPLICATION TIMELINE

The following timeline is based on the timeline published by the MCSAB. NACSA will work with the Board to finalize additional internal tasks and related dates.



STAGE	TASK OR MILESTONE	DATE (2017)	RESPONSIBLE
RFP LAUNCH	Launch of 2017 RFP Complete	January 24	MCSAB
RFP LAUNCH	Prospective Applicant Informational Webinar	January 31	MCSAB
RFP LAUNCH	Deadline for Mandatory Letter of Intent and Eligibility Demonstration	March 7	APPLICANTS
RFP LAUNCH	Eligibility Determinations	March 10	MCSAB
PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT	Applicant Orientation Webinar	March 23	MCSAB
PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT	Deadline for Complete Proposals	May 9	APPLICANTS
STAGE 1	Initial Completeness Findings Distributed	May 17	MCSAB
STAGE 1	Completeness Remedy/Resubmission Deadline	May 19	APPLICANTS
STAGE 1	Final Completeness Findings Distributed	June 5	MCSAB
STAGE 2	Stage 2 Threshold Quality Evaluation	June 6–June 27	NACSA
STAGE 2	Stage 2 Findings Distributed	July 10	NACSA
STAGE 3	Stage 3 Evaluation Team Proposal Review	July 11–August 1	NACSA
STAGE 3	Capacity Interviews	August 2–4	MCSAB/APPLICANTS
STAGE 3	Public Hearings	Mid-August TBD	MCSAB
STAGE 3	Third Party Evaluations to Applicants	August 18	MCSAB/NACSA
STAGE 3	Operator Response to Third Party Evaluation Due	August 25	APPLICANTS
DECISIONS	MCSAB Proposal Decisions	September 11	MCSAB

**Charter School Authorizer Board  
Items Presented for Payment  
April 3, 2017**

Travel

Board Travel - April Meeting

TBD

Contractual

Cornerstone Consulting - January Invoice

\$ 658.75

Cornerstone Consulting - February Invoice

\$ 276.25

Commodities

Equipment

TOTAL

\$ 935.00