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# Charter School Application

# EVALUATION Rubric

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| School Name |  |
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| Receipt Date |  |
| Hearing Review Date |  |

**After a charter application is deemed to be complete, the evaluation rubric provides the sponsor with a means of determining the quality of the application. The design criteria and several indicators of quality are provided for each application component.**

**Introduction and Guiding Information**

The South Carolina Charter School Application Evaluation Rubric is intended to guide reviewers through an evaluation of the key components and criteria as outlined in the South Carolina Charter School Application Guidance.

When reviewing the applicant’s response to each section, reviewers should determine if the response for each section meets the standard, partially meets the standard, does not meet the standard, or falls far below the standard; each section of the rubric outlines key characteristics of a response that “Meets the Standard.” In the table below, each of the four ratings is defined:

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| **Rating** | **Definition** |
| Meets the Standard | *The response reflects a thorough understanding of key issues. It addresses the topic with specific and accurate information, presents a clear, realistic picture of how the school expects to operate, and the applicant’s capacity to carry out the plan effectively.* |
| Partially Meets the Standard | *The response meets the criteria in many respects, but lacks detail and/or requires additional information in one or more areas.* |
| Does Not Meet the Standard | *The response meets the criteria in some respects but has substantial gaps in several areas.* |
| Falls Far Below the Standard | *The response is undeveloped, or significantly incomplete, or otherwise raises concerns about the sustainability of the plan or the applicant’s capacity to carry out the plan effectively.* |

Using the provided standards and possible ratings, reviewers should score each section based on the evidence found in the application. Within each section, space is provided for reviewers to indicate areas of strength, areas of weakness, and evidence which may be used to support the assigned rating. Note that evidence should be as factual and objective as possible.

**Section I: Educational Plan**

Please review the characteristics of a response which Meets the Standard and indicate areas of strength, areas of weakness, and a rating using the definitions provided on page 2 of this document. Please also share evidence below to support your ratings.

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| **1. Mission and Vision** | | **Meets the Standard Characteristics** |
| **1.A** | **Mission** | 1. The mission is clear and focused, as well as consistent with the principles of the General Assembly’s purposes pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 59 40 20 and high quality educational outcomes for students. 2. An explanation is provided as to how this mission statement meets the purposes of the Charter School Act. 3. A description of how you the mission of the school was developed is provided. 4. The response includes a one-page chart or graphic organizer clearly illustrating how the proposed educational program’s curriculum and instructional design support the mission of the school and increase student achievement. |
| **Areas of Strength:**  **Areas of Weakness:**  **Evidence:**  **Rating:** | | |
| **1.B** | **Vision** | 1. The vision statement is clear and describes aspirations for the future of the school, student outcomes, and the future status of the school within the community. |
| **Areas of Strength:**  **Areas of Weakness:**  **Evidence:**  **Rating:** | | |
| **1.C** | **School Values and Beliefs** | 1. The response articulates guiding purposes and priorities that are meaningful, measurable, and attainable 2. The description of the proposed charter school’s philosophy and beliefs for educating students is clear and detailed. 3. The response provides a clear description of the school’s core values surrounding education |
| **Areas of Strength:**  **Areas of Weakness:**  **Evidence:**  **Rating:** | | |
| **1.D** | **School Culture** | 1. The description of the planned culture for the school, how it will include and serve all students (including students with special needs and English Language Learners), how this culture will promote a positive academic environment and how it will be implemented is presented in a clear manner. (Note: Student Conduct and Discipline is in a later section). 2. The response includes a description of the strategies which will be implement to invest students in the school and their academics and clearly explains how the students will exemplify the mission in the daily activities. |
| **Areas of Strength:**  **Areas of Weakness:**  **Evidence:**  **Rating:** | | |
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| **2. Evidence of Need and Support** | | **Meets the Standard Characteristics** |
| **2.** | **Evidence of Need and Support** | 1. There is clear evidence that an adequate number of parents or legal guardians with students eligible to attend the proposed school pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 59-40-50 support the formation of the charter school and justify the projected per pupil allocation in the application budget. A table indicating interest documented by grade level for the first year of operation is included. (Applicant is not to include names of individual students) 2. A concise description of the type of outreach the charter committee conducted to make the student population and their families aware of the proposed charter school and the outcomes of that outreach is provided. 3. The response includes information on community members, parents, and leaders who publicly support the proposed school and their role in the development of the school and application. 4. A description of partnerships or plans for community involvement along with the purpose and expectation is provided. 5. **If applicable,** evidence demonstrating assurance of community partnerships is provided in the response. 6. **The following requirements only apply to applicants proposing to convert an existing school to a charter school:**    1. If the applicant is a **public** school converting to a charter, there is sufficient evidence that two-thirds of the faculty, instructional staff, and parents voted to support filing the application to convert the school from a traditional school to a charter school.    2. If the applicant is a **private** school converting to a charter, evidence that the enrollment of the converted private school for the most recently completed school term before the date of the proposed conversion to a charter school reflects the racial composition of the local school district in which the converted private school is located.    3. If the applicant is a **private** school converting to a charter, a description of the need/evidence in the community to support converting to a charter school is provided. |
| **Areas of Strength:**  **Areas of Weakness:**  **Evidence:**  **Rating:** | | |
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| **3. Curriculum and Instructional Model** | | **Meets the Standard Characteristics** |
| **3.A** | **Educational Model** | 1. A concise introduction to the educational program that includes an overview of the curriculum and instructional design, the guiding educational philosophy, how the educational program aligns to the mission of the school, and how the education program will improve student achievement is included. 2. An explanation of how the proposed charter’s plans to provide new, innovative, and more flexible ways to educate children is provided. 3. An detailed explanation of how the charter school will meet or exceed the academic performance standards and expectations, including how the school will ensure alignment with the academic standards adopted by the State Board of Education is provided in the response. Any correlation or other documentation must be included or process identified to ensure that the school will provide an instructional program that meets or exceeds the academic standards should be provided as well. 4. The response includes a brief explanation of the key programmatic features the school will implement in order to accomplish its mission. 5. The response provides a clear description of how the educational program is research-based and data-driven including why the selected curriculum was chosen for the anticipated population of students. 6. A thorough description of how and why the proposed teaching methods will enhance the quality of instruction during the school day. Include information about any differentiated instruction that will be used to meet the needs of students. Including those students i) above or below grade level, ii) with disabilities, iii) identified as gifted and talented, and iv) requiring ELL services is outlined in the response. 7. **If applicable,** the method and courses to be offered for meeting or exceeding the South Carolina State High School Diploma requirements is provided in the response. 8. **The following requirements only apply to applicants proposing to convert an existing school to a charter school:**    1. Describe any changes in instructional methodology and strategies in your new school. Why are these changes being implemented? How will you know if they create the intended impacts and create rigorous instruction?    2. How will you ensure the fidelity and consistency of your instructional methodology and strategies across sites? |
| **Areas of Strength:**  **Areas of Weakness:**  **Evidence:**  **Rating:** | | |
| **3.B** | **Educational Structure** | 1. The response includes a description of any unique features, such as a non-traditional school year, longer school day, key partner organizations, multiple campuses, school culture, etc. 2. The proposed charter school’s grade levels to be served, the grade levels upon opening, and the growth plan (if the school does not plan to initially open with all grade levels) is outlined in the response. 3. Information regarding the size of the school at full capacity, including the number of classes per grade level and the number of students per class is included. 4. A clear description of the basic learning environment (e.g., classroom-based, independent study), including class size and structure is provided. 5. The response clearly explains how the instructional design, learning environment, class size and structure, curriculum, and teaching methods will enable each pupil to achieve the standards per S.C. Code Ann. § 59-40-60 E(5). 6. A brief description of the average school day for a prospective student is provided. In addition, the response describes how their experience would set itself apart from the average school day at nearby schools? 7. A description of the teacher lesson planning process is provided in detail. The response provides information about what planning tools teachers will use to prepare lessons. |
| **Areas of Strength:**  **Areas of Weakness:**  **Evidence:**  **Rating:** | | |
| **3.C** | **Professional Development** | 1. The applicant’s response identifies the person(s) or position(s) responsible for overseeing professional development (PD). 2. A detailed description of the core components of the school’s PD plan for all staff (all teachers, leaders, other staff) and how they will support effective implementation of the educational program is included in the response. 3. A schedule and explanation of professional development that will take place prior to school opening is provided. In addition, an explanation as to what will be covered during the induction period and how teachers will be prepared to deliver any unique or particularly challenging aspects of the curriculum and instructional methods are included. 4. The response describes the expected number of days/hours for professional development throughout the school year, and explains how the school’s calendar, daily schedule, and staffing structure accommodate this plan. Also included is information regarding any time scheduled for common planning or collaboration. 5. An explanation of how the professional development aligns with the vision and core academic priorities of the school is provided. The response also outlines how the effectiveness of PD be evaluated, when teachers have time for common planning or collaboration, and if so, how will this time be used. 6. An detailed explanation of how the school calendar, daily schedule, and staffing structure will help facilitate sufficient time to conduct, reviews, and provide guidance on professional development and growth is included. 7. **The following requirement only applies to applicants proposing to replicate an existing charter school:**    1. A description of any shared PD across campuses is included. The response addresses who will be responsible for developing, leading and evaluating any shared PD. |
| **Areas of Strength:**  **Areas of Weakness:**  **Evidence:**  **Rating:** | | |
| **3.D** | **Virtual Offerings, *if applicable*** | ***If the proposed charter school plans to offer virtual courses, the response should include the following information:***   1. Identifies the provider with whom the school plans to partner to offer the courses 2. Describes how the school will comply with the 25 percent “real time” requirement 3. Describes how much teacher interaction students will receive within the online instruction 4. Identifies or describes the online portal to be used |
| **Areas of Strength:**  **Areas of Weakness:**  **Evidence:**  **Rating:** | | |
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| **4. Serving Students with Special Needs** | | **Meets the Standard Characteristics** |
| **4.** | **Serving Students with Special Needs** | 1. A clear indication that the prospective charter school understands requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) of 2004, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and plans to comply with these requirements, which includes appropriately certified personnel, documentation, assessments, adaptations, and modifications is evident in the applicant’s response. 2. The response includes a description of the plan to provide a variety of service delivery and placement options for students with special needs. 3. Clear plans for transitioning students out of special education is included in the response. 4. A concise description of the plan to include needed staff, adequate funding, evaluation of programs’ success, flexibility to add contracted services, and specific services the sponsoring district is expected to provide for the initial year of operation is provided. 5. The response includes a description of the plan to provide nonacademic and extracurricular services and activities in the manner necessary to afford children with disabilities an equal opportunity for participation in school or district activities. |
| **Areas of Strength:**  **Areas of Weakness:**  **Evidence:**  **Rating:** | | |
| **5. Goals, Objectives, and Assessment Plan** | | **Meets the Standard Characteristics** |
| **5.A** | **Goals, Objectives, and Assessment Plan** | 1. Goals that are appropriate and manageable and will provide evidence that the school is advancing its mission and meeting the purpose of S.C. Code Ann. § 59-40-20 including closing achievement gaps, as applicable are clearly outlined. Goals should be “SMART” (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic of the school’s mission, and time-based). 2. The response includes measurable objectives with benchmarks (or states how and when a baseline will be established). 3. Some, but not all, outlined goals and objectives utilize standardized test data that aligns with the state (Report Cards) and federal accountability systems. Goals and related objectives may include indicators for students served over multiple years to document growth and educational program outcomes. 4. Strategies to meet the goals and objectives that reference the educational program section. 5. A clear description of the diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments including state-mandated assessments with baseline data gathering and details on the types of assessments is included and demonstrates the applicant’s understanding of assessment types and the appropriate use of each. 6. A detailed plan to monitor progress toward meeting the goals and objectives of the school and how the school will make modifications based on data, including revising and redirecting professional development and instruction is included in the response. 7. The response includes an explanation of data collection, analysis, and management. 8. An explanation of how student assessment and progress will be communicated to parents, the sponsor, and the broader community is provided and it is clearly stated how the applicant intends to implement the communication plan. 9. **The following requirements only apply to applicants proposing to replicate an existing charter school:**    1. A brief description of the academic performance of school to be replicated is provided. The response should address if the goals that were set have been met. If not, the response should describe the corrective action plan used to address those goals which were have not been met.    2. The response discusses any achievement gaps that were/are present at the school to be replicated and how they were/are being addressed. |
| **Areas of Strength:**  **Areas of Weakness:**  **Evidence:**  **Rating:** | | |

**Section II: Organizational Plan**

Please review the characteristics of a response which Meets the Standard and indicate areas of strength, areas of weakness, and a rating using the definitions provided on page 2 of this document. Please also share evidence below to support your ratings.

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| **1. Governance** | | **Meets the Standard Characteristics** |
| **1.** | **Governance** | 1. The response includes a brief profile of each member of the charter committee, including any leadership experience and credentials. 2. A summary of the process in which the charter committee formed and developed the proposed school is provided. 3. A detailed description of the model or philosophy of governance of the proposed charter school which will guide the board is included in the response. 4. The response describes the authority of the charter committee to develop policies, make decisions, and execute each of the following responsibilities:    1. employing and contracting with teachers and nonteaching employees;    2. ensuring that all certified personnel, teachers, and noncertified teachers undergo background checks and other investigations before they are employed in the school;    3. contracting for other services including, but not limited to, transportation, accounting, and legal;    4. developing pay scales, performance criteria, and discharging policies for its employees, including the school’s administrator;    5. deciding all other matters related to the school’s operation, including budgeting, curriculum, and operating procedures; and    6. ensuring that the school will adhere to the same health, safety, civil rights, and disability rights requirements applicable to all public schools operating in the same school district. 5. A clear plan for ongoing board training and capacity building aligned with the budget for board training is provided. 6. The response includes a description of the ongoing parent and community involvement in the governance of the school. 7. **The following requirement only applies to applicants proposing to replicate an existing charter school:**    1. The response outlines how will the governance structure of the new school will relate to the school which is being replicated. |
| **Areas of Strength:**  **Areas of Weakness:**  **Evidence:**  **Rating:** | | |
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| **2. Educational/Charter Management (EMO/CMO)** | | **Meets the Standard Characteristics** |
| **2.** | **Educational/Charter Management (EMO/CMO),**  ***if applicable*** | **Only applicants intending to contract with an EMO or CMO should have a response in this section**   1. There is evidence that the service provider has successfully managed other schools, if they have other schools in their portfolio. 2. Evidence is provided to show that the other schools managed by the proposed service provider have demonstrated academic achievement for similar targeted student populations, if applicable. 3. A term sheet for the proposed management of the charter school with clear performance measures and contract severance provision(s) is included. 4. A statement detailing what type of evidence that the EMO/CMO is authorized to conduct business in South Carolina is included in Appendix Item O. 5. A description that conveys clear understanding of financial obligation to the EMO/CMO and whether it increases, decreases, or stays the same for the duration of the relationship, including building ownership if the developers are making payments to the EMO/CMO is included in the response. |
| **Areas of Strength:**  **Areas of Weakness:**  **Evidence:**  **Rating:** | | |
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| **3. Leadership and Operations** | | **Meets the Standard Characteristics** |
| **3.** | **Leadership and Operations** | 1. The response includes a detailed plan for how a lead administrator will be hired and how the transition of leadership and charter committee responsibilities will happen. 2. An overview of the administrative and operational functions at the school including the roles, powers, and responsibilities is provided. In addition, an explanation as to how the capacity of the school’s administrative team is tied to the mission, organizational sustainability, and student achievement is provided. 3. Outlined in the response, is a description of the capacity and experience of the school leadership and management team along with job descriptions of the administrative positions, including the school leader and any other administrative staff with a clear delineation of employee classification and who is responsible for employment decisions and oversight at each level. 4. The response includes information of team members who have any involvement with the replication of existing successful public charter schools. 5. As applicable, any proposed management company or educational service provider responsibilities are included. 6. The nature and extent of parental, professional educator, and community involvement in the operation of the charter school is described in the response. 7. The response includes a capacity building plan for leadership and staff development with funding reflected is in the budget. 8. School leader evaluation and succession plans are clearly outlined and provide a detailed description of what will be used. |
| **Areas of Strength:**  **Areas of Weakness:**  **Evidence:**  **Rating:** | | |
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| **4. Employees and Employment Procedures** | | **Meets the Standard Characteristics** |
| **4.** | **Employees and Employment Procedures** | 1. The plan includes a description of the process to be used to advertise for, select, and employ instructional staff and other employees. 2. A statement asserting that at least one member of the administrative staff will hold a current SC certification of administration or will have at least one year of experience in the field of school-based administration is provided in the response. 3. The response provides a thorough description of the proposed teacher evaluation process. (Charter schools may use the ADEPT Evaluation System, SC TAP, or another evaluation system that has been approved by the Office of Teacher Evaluation). 4. A detailed explanation of how the school will communicate its employment policies and any policy changes is included in the response. 5. A description of the grievance and termination procedure for the charter school’s employees is provided. |
| **Areas of Strength:**  **Areas of Weakness:**  **Evidence:**  **Rating:** | | |
| **5. Enrollment** | | **Meets the Standard Characteristics** |
| **5.** | **Enrollment** | 1. The response includes a detailed description of how the proposed charter school intends to enroll students, including the proposed timeline to reach a diverse student population, processing of applications, lottery process if needed, and the appeal process for a student who is denied admission for a reason other than the lottery. 2. An explanation of how the community will receive information about the formation of a new charter school and any upcoming lottery and enrollment deadlines is provided. 3. The response includes an explanation of the notification of placement and the timeline for parents to accept the placement or not. 4. A definition of any group receiving priority enrollment in the lottery, as allowed by the South Carolina Charter Schools Law, is clearly outlined. 5. An explanation of how the school intends to enroll out-of-district students, including estimated percentage of enrollment, notification to sending district, and approval procedures for receiving and sending districts (not applicable if applying with the SCPCSD as sponsor), is provided in the response. 6. A clear description of a plan for how the proposed charter school intends to ensure that enrollment reflects that of the local school district in which the charter school is located or that of the targeted student population of the local school district that the charter school proposes to serve, to be defined for the purposes of this chapter as differing by no more than 20 percent from that population is included. |
| **Areas of Strength:**  **Areas of Weakness:**  **Evidence:**  **Rating:** | | |
| **6. Student Conduct, Rights, and Responsibilities** | | **Meets the Standard Characteristics** |
| **6.** | **Student Conduct, Rights, and Responsibilities** | 1. The response includes a description of the process and timeline for developing a student handbook and related policies. 2. A description of student rights and responsibilities, including behavior and discipline standards and disciplinary actions to be taken by the administration for breaches of student conduct policy is outlined in the response. 3. A reasonable appeal process for students recommended for expulsion that includes a right to appeal a decision to the charter school board, including notice and hearing procedures for the board of directors of the charter school is included in the plan to address student rights and responsibilities. 4. The response ensures that the discipline policy will/does comply with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (20 U.S.C. § 1232) (FERPA). 5. A process for addressing IDEA compliance regarding student discipline, suspension, and expulsion for students with IEPs and the continued provision of FAPE and a description of how the school will identify and address significant behavioral concerns, specifically as it relates to students with special needs is clearly described in the response. |
| **Areas of Strength:**  **Areas of Weakness:**  **Evidence:**  **Rating:** | | |
| **7. Transportation** | | **Meets the Standard Characteristics** |
| **7.** | **Transportation** | The response to this section includes the following:   1. A description of how the proposed charter school plans to address the transportation needs of its students and, especially if the lack of transportation is to prevent a child from attending the proposed school. 2. A description of the plan if the school is providing transportation by school bus (must comply with state regulations for driver and training and the state safety requirements for school buses). 3. A description of the service(s) if the school intends to contract with the local school district or a third party to provide transportation for their students. |
| **Areas of Strength:**  **Areas of Weakness:**  **Evidence:**  **Rating:** | | |

**Section III: Business Plan**

Please review the characteristics of a response which Meets the Standard and indicate areas of strength, areas of weakness, and a rating using the definitions provided on page 2 of this document. Please also share evidence below to support your ratings.

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| **1. Budget and Finance** | | **Meets the Standard Characteristics** |
| **1.** | **Budget and Finance** | 1. The response includes a clear description of the budget in terms of educational and operational priorities. The response also describes how the budget is aligned to the mission of the school and how resource allocations will be adjusted to meet the needs of the students and the long-term sustainability of the charter. A detailed explanation of the school’s data-driven decision-making process in regards to resource allocations is also included. 2. A summary of any negotiated services to be provided by the proposed sponsor (local school district, the SCPCSD, or the institution of higher education/technical college), including but not limited to financial accounting, payroll services, food services, custodial services, maintenance, curriculum, library and media services, and warehousing is included and clearly outlines the requested information. 3. The response includes an in depth explanation of how the school will remain fiscally solvent, adhere to generally acceptable accounting practices, have no material breaches, address any financial concerns, and follow the South Carolina pupil accounting system, auditing, and reporting procedures. 4. A description of how the school will maintain its books and records according to generally accepted accounting principles and will create an appropriate system of internal control is provided. 5. Clear and detailed descriptions of planned client subcontracts to outside providers (if applicable) are provided. 6. A description of the process the school will follow to contract with a certified public accountant to conduct an annual, independent financial audit and to disseminate the results from the audit to the school district and required state agencies is provided. 7. An indication if the school plans to offer South Carolina Retirement System benefits to its employees is made. If the school plans to do so, a description of the planning committee’s understanding of the costs and restrictions associated with such benefits and how the school’s budget will absorb applicable costs from year to year is clearly communicated. 8. A thorough discussion of the school’s contingency plans for cash flow challenges, a budget shortfall, lower than expected student enrollment or other financial challenges in the early years of operation. |
| **Areas of Strength:**  **Areas of Weakness:**  **Evidence:**  **Rating:** | | |
| **2. Facilities** | | **Meets the Standard Characteristics** |
| **2.** | **Facilities** | 1. Describe the basic facilities requirements for accommodating your school plan, including number of classrooms, square footage per classroom, common areas, overall square footage, and amenities.    1. Identify any other significant facilities needs not already specified, including: playground, large common space for assemblies and other large group meetings, athletic facilities, and other special considerations (identify and explain). 2. If a facility has been identified, include the address of the facility, a description of the facility, and the name and address of the owner of the facility.    1. If entering into a lease agreement, describe the material terms of the agreement. What specific buildout is required? What are those estimated costs?    2. A description of the planning committee’s contingency plan should the lease or planned purchase fall through. 3. If a facility has not been identified, specify a plan for obtaining such a facility and include a description of the facility needs, a statement as to whether an existing facility will be remodeled or a new facility will be built, and a schedule for completing or obtaining a suitable facility and, if applicable, a description of and timeline for any plan to raise funds for completing or obtaining the facility. 4. A discussion of the planning committee’s process for obtaining facilities. 5. A description how the school’s facilities plan is aligned with the projected enrollment growth outlined in the charter application. |
| **Areas of Strength:**  **Areas of Weakness:**  **Evidence:**  **Rating:** | | |
| **3. Insurance Coverage** | | **Meets the Standard Characteristics** |
| **3.** | **Insurance Coverage** | All of the following documentation should be included in Appendix Item GG:   1. A description of workers’ compensation insurance and the amounts. 2. A description of liability insurance and the amounts to be obtained by the charter school. The minimum policy must cover the limits of the South Carolina Tort Claims Act (S.C. Code Ann. § 15-78-120 (Supp. 2013)). 3. A description of the insurance to cover loss to the school building and contents for fire and theft. 4. A description of indemnity insurance against civil and criminal liability for the charter school to protect the sponsor, the members of the board of the sponsor, and the employees of a sponsor acting in their official capacity with respect to all activities related to the charter school. 5. A description of automobile insurance and both property and liability insurance. 6. An indication whether the charter school will obtain any other type, or types, of insurance. For each type, include a description and estimated cost of coverage. 7. All Insurance Documents—for each type of insurance listed, a statement from a South Carolina–licensed insurance company or the state insurance reserve fund stating the charter school applicant’s ability to secure the insurance and an estimate of the cost of the insurance, if available. |
| **Areas of Strength:**  **Areas of Weakness:**  **Evidence:**  **Rating:** | | |