

## Charter Review Protocol

### Overview

The Cleveland Transformation Alliance was established to advance the goals of the Cleveland Plan: to ensure every child in Cleveland attends a quality school and every neighborhood has a multitude of great schools from which families can choose. One of the four primary roles of the Cleveland Transformation Alliance is to monitor the growth and quality of the charter sector.

The Transformation Alliance carries out this work by:

- Maintaining updated charter review materials on our website;
- Communicating regularly with sponsors to strengthen relationships;
- Reviewing eligible sponsors that are seeking to authorize new charter schools to be located within the boundaries of the Cleveland school district, as mandated by state law;<sup>1</sup>
- Conducting ongoing reviews of previously reviewed sponsors by seeking evidence of their use of established, state-mandated criteria when opening new charter schools in Cleveland;<sup>2</sup>
- Making recommendations regarding charter schools seeking sponsorship from the Office of School Sponsorship at the Ohio Department of Education (ODE), as mandated by state law.<sup>3</sup>

### Maintaining updated charter review materials

The Transformation Alliance maintains on our website all materials related to our charter review work. This includes the charter sponsor review application (updated by June 30 each year); documents from completed sponsor reviews; the four established criteria to be used by sponsors as they approve new schools;<sup>4</sup> and resources to help schools and sponsors determine the Cleveland neighborhoods with the highest relative need for quality schools.

### Communicating regularly with sponsors

The Transformation Alliance sends quarterly updates to all sponsors of community schools in Ohio to ensure sponsors understand the role of the Transformation Alliance in monitoring the growth and quality of charter schools in Cleveland. Transformation Alliance staff track the status of each sponsor's authority to oversee schools and continue to track the opening and closing of community schools located within the boundaries of the Cleveland school district. Staff report to the Charter Review Committee and to the full board as new information becomes available.

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<sup>1</sup> Process for review of sponsors by the Transformation Alliance as described in Ohio Revised Code section 3311.86(E).

<sup>2</sup> Objective criteria established jointly by the Transformation Alliance, the Ohio Department of Education, and the Ohio Association of Charter School Authorizers, based on standards issued by the National Association of Charter School Authorizers, as described in Ohio Revised Code section 3311.87 (A)(1).

<sup>3</sup> Approval of applications by the Ohio school sponsorship program, Ohio Revised Code section 3314.029(5).

<sup>4</sup> Objective criteria established under Ohio Revised Code section 3311.87 (A)(1).

### **Reviewing eligible sponsors seeking to authorize new schools**

Each sponsor subject to approval by ODE shall request recommendation from the Transformation Alliance to sponsor community schools in the Cleveland school district. This requirement applies only once to eligible sponsors as their contracts with ODE are renewed, granted anew, or extended.<sup>5</sup>

Each year by June 30, the Transformation Alliance sends each sponsor that is eligible to authorize new schools a description of and timeline for the Alliance sponsor review process, a copy of the Alliance application, and the established criteria for authorizing community schools in Cleveland.

The Transformation Alliance Charter Review Committee requests that eligible sponsors submit applications to the Transformation Alliance no later than September 15, at which time the committee begins its review, a process that takes six to eight weeks. The committee submits recommendations to the Transformation Alliance Board of Directors no later than its December meeting, allowing the Alliance to offer its recommendations to ODE by December 15.

### **Conducting ongoing reviews using established criteria**

State law requires all sponsors to use the established criteria for authorizing community schools each time they wish to authorize a community school in the Cleveland school district.<sup>6</sup> State law also allows the Alliance to offer comment on the granting, renewal, or extension of an agreement between ODE and a sponsor when the sponsor has existing agreements with a community school located in Cleveland.<sup>7</sup>

By June 30 each year, the Transformation Alliance sends the established criteria for sponsoring new community schools in Cleveland to all sponsors, to ensure the sponsors and their boards of directors are aware of the criteria. The Alliance requests that sponsors give notice of plans to authorize new schools in Cleveland on or about September 30, including basic information about the operator, model, and potential locations, to allow the Alliance the opportunity to provide feedback before the sponsor enters into a preliminary agreement with the proposed school. The Alliance also requests evidence from the sponsor that it is using the established criteria to make a decision regarding the school, citing materials from the school's application to the sponsor as appropriate. Based on information provided by the sponsor, Alliance staff work with the Charter Review Committee to draft a letter to ODE regarding its assessment of whether the sponsor has used the criteria and is adhering to the goal of the Cleveland Plan to ensure every child in Cleveland attends a high-quality school and every neighborhood has a multitude of great schools from which families can choose. The letter is then presented to the Chair of the Board of Directors for approval by mid-November.

### **Making recommendations regarding ODE direct sponsorship of schools**

State law requires that community schools request a recommendation from the Transformation Alliance if they apply to ODE for sponsorship of community schools in the Cleveland school district.<sup>8</sup> To fulfill this aspect of our authority, the Alliance maintains regular contact with ODE's Office of School Sponsorship and will request notification regarding new schools to be authorized by ODE by September 30 to enable the Alliance to provide recommendations to ODE no later than December 15.

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<sup>5</sup> Process for review of sponsors by the Transformation Alliance as described in Ohio Revised Code section 3311.86(E).

<sup>6</sup> See Ohio Revised Code section 3311.87(A)(1).

<sup>7</sup> See Ohio Revised Code section 3311.86(D)(2).

<sup>8</sup> Approval of applications by the Ohio school sponsorship program, Ohio Revised Code section 3314.019.