

## MDE Opening Checklist for New Charter Schools

This list provides deadlines and instructions for new charter schools planning to open in the fall of 2013 to access necessary resources and revenue from the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE). While some steps may have already been undertaken, authorizers should verify with their pre-operational school(s) the status of each section outlined below.

### Required Program Approvals

The following programs require additional approval outside of the new charter school affidavit process:

- **Comprehensive Online Program**  
The process for initial approval begins with a Letter of Intent to apply for approval that should include the name of the charter school, contact information and the intended start date of operation. Charter school applicants must submit a signed Letter of Support from their Authorizer along with their intent letter. These letters must be sent to MDE **12 months prior** to enrolling any online students. After submitting the Letter of Intent, the applicant establishes a timeline for the preparation work and submission of the completed Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) Online Learning (OLL) Option Act-Provider Application. Schools that offer online courses only to resident students on a part-time basis (for example, during a study hall) are not required to seek MDE approval. For more information, contact Deborah Proctor at [deborah.proctor@state.mn.us](mailto:deborah.proctor@state.mn.us).
- **Project-Based Learning Program**  
Project-based learning (PBL) is an instructional program where students complete coursework for credit at an individual pace that is primarily student-led and may be completed on site, in the community, or online. Charter schools that wish to submit membership hours generated by project-based credits completed during the school year in place of or in addition to membership hours generated by credits completed in a seat-based setting need to submit an application to MDE. Applications must be submitted and approved **90 days prior** to the implementation of the program. Charter schools that are doing PBL only during the core school day (e.g., students are required to be in attendance at the school site all day, every day) do not need to complete a PBL application. Please contact Mary Barrie at [mary.barrie@state.mn.us](mailto:mary.barrie@state.mn.us) for further information.
- **Work-Based Learning Program**  
Charter schools planning to offer a work-based learning program must first complete the [Secondary Career and Technical Education Program Approval Proposal](#) form, available on the [Career and Technical Education Program Administration](#) page of the MDE website. The Program Approval Proposal may be completed and submitted to Adult and Career Education **at any time** during the school year. For more information and a checklist of steps, visit the [MnACTE/SNP Information Center website](#) or contact Al Hauge at [al.hauge@state.mn.us](mailto:al.hauge@state.mn.us).

## Direct Deposit Authorization for Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT)

Every company or organization, including a charter school receiving payments from the state, is considered a vendor. The first step to authorize the State of Minnesota to make electronic funds transfer (EFT) payments to a charter school's bank account is to register for a vendor number. In order to receive or view payments, every vendor must register online with the State of Minnesota's administrative agency, known as Minnesota Management and Budget (MMB).

- Receive a vendor ID number by completing the new vendor registration process on the state's accounting and procurement system, called Statewide Integrated Financial Tools (SWIFT), through the [SWIFT Supplier portal](#).
- Click on the [Vendor Registration Link](#) below the blue "Sign In" button and follow the nine registration steps. NOTE: In order to complete the nine step registration process, your school must already have:
  - A Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN) from the [Internal Revenue Service](#); and
  - A Minnesota Tax ID Number from the [Minnesota Department of Revenue](#).
- At the end of the nine step registration process, you will be requested to enter bank routing information. Please have that information available as it takes MMB a few weeks to enter and test your information before your school becomes fully EFT active.
- The school address registered in SWIFT and the official school address listed on the MDE website ([MDE-ORG](#), see below) **must match as of July 1 in order to receive payment by July 15.**

## District and School Site Verification for FY 2014

Each year, information regarding schools and districts is updated in the MDE master database ([MDE-ORG](#)) to validate district/school information for all major MDE reporting systems such as MARSS, STAR, SERVS Financial, UFARS, AYP, etc. New charter schools must submit a [Site Change Request Form](#) to activate a site for the FY 2014 school year, update contact/address information with MDE and establish log-in access with MDE's School and District Information Verification System. Complete the [Site Change Request Form](#) and **email completed form by July 1** to [mde.school-verify@state.mn.us](mailto:mde.school-verify@state.mn.us).

For questions regarding MDE's District and School Site Verification System, please contact Mary Pat Olsen at (651) 582-8624 or [mde.school-verify@state.mn.us](mailto:mde.school-verify@state.mn.us).

## Enrollment Projection Reports

The data reported on the [Enrollment Projections Report for Charter Schools](#) is used for the calculation of estimated 2013-14 general education revenue, charter school lease aid, special education aid, and English Learners (EL) aid. For first-year charter schools, the free/reduced price meal counts are used to calculate compensatory revenue for both 2013-14 and 2014-15. The new school must dedicate someone to update the ADM/EL Enrollment Projections.

The [Enrollment Projections Report - School Year 2013-14](#) form must be accompanied by a student roster, sorted by grade or MARSS submission and completed by the following due dates:

- June 10, 2013 (or as soon thereafter as possible to generate the first state aid payment);
- September 30, 2013;

- January 3, 2014; and
- April 4, 2014.

Enrollment projections student roster should only include students:

- 1) whose parent(s) or guardian(s) have officially been offered and accepted a position for their child to attend your school; **and**
- 2) for whom you have already requested student records from their current school (except those enrolling in Kindergarten).

Information regarding enrollment projections for charter schools in their first three years of operation is available in the [School Finance section of the MDE website](#).

## School Calendars

Charter schools must submit a copy of their 2013-14 school calendar to MDE. The calendar must include the number of student instructional days per month and per year. Charter schools must also indicate the board meeting date when the calendar was officially adopted. There is a line on the [Enrollment Projections Report – Charter Schools](#) (see previous section) on which charter schools can report the date.

Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.11, Subdivision 9, paragraph (f) provides in part that:

*In order to receive state aid payments under this subdivision, a charter school in its first three years of operation must submit a school calendar in the form and manner requested by the department and a quarterly report to the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE). The report must list each student by grade, show the student's start and end dates, if any, with the charter school, and for any student participating in a learning year program, the report must list the hours and times of learning year activities. The report must be submitted not more than two weeks after the end of the calendar quarter to the department.*

Enrollment projection and school calendar questions should be directed to Jeanne Krile at [jeanne.krile@state.mn.us](mailto:jeanne.krile@state.mn.us) or (651) 582-8637.

## Charter School Building Lease Aid

All Minnesota charter schools must apply for lease aid on an annual basis. The lease aid entitlement is not included in the metered IDEAS payment report until a charter school has applied and its application has been approved by MDE.

Charter school lease aid applications **should be submitted as soon as possible**. Every effort will be made to have the entitlements loaded to IDEAS for the July 15 payment for those applications received by April 15. Complete application materials and instructions are available on the MDE website under the heading of [FY 2014 Charter School Lease Aid Requirements](#).

Questions should be directed to Patti Scott in School Finance at [patti.scott@state.mn.us](mailto:patti.scott@state.mn.us) or (651) 582-8646.

## Minnesota Automated Reporting Student System (MARSS)

- Send the name of the school's MARSS Coordinator to [marss@state.mn.us](mailto:marss@state.mn.us) **as soon as one is designated**.

- The MARSS Coordinator needs to set up a secure account in the [MARSS Web Edit System](#) so that the school will start receiving email notices about upcoming MARSS activity. If the MARSS Coordinator does not currently have an MDE secure account, under "Create new MDE-Account," select "click here." Follow the prompts to set up an account. If the MARSS Coordinator has a secure account, update to be the MARSS Coordinator for the new school.
- Attend the MARSS 101 workshop on **Wednesday, August 7, 2013** at MDE.
- First MARSS submission is due **Tuesday, September 24, 2013**. The MARSS Coordinator will receive an email response when the file is successfully loaded.
- An authorizer may request from the school a copy of the local MARSS WES report called *MARSS 12 Compensatory Revenue Report* which shows the preliminary October 1 enrollment.

A copy of the FY 2014 timeline and other MARSS resources are available on the [MARSS – Student Reporting](#) page of MDE’s website. Questions regarding MARSS should be directed to [marss@state.mn.us](mailto:marss@state.mn.us).

## Student Transportation

Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.10, Subdivision 16, provides that a charter school must notify MDE and the school district in which it is located whether it will provide its own transportation services or use the district’s transportation services. MDE needs this information in order to ensure that the transportation aid is sent to the correct district/school.

- The [Charter School Transportation Survey Form](#) is due **July 1** for new charter schools opening in the fall and March 1 for existing charter schools.
- Charter schools and authorizers can verify submission by checking the school's *General Education Revenue for Charter Schools Report* on the [Minnesota Funding Reports \(MFR\)](#) System.

Questions regarding the [Charter School Transportation Survey](#) should be directed to Kelly Wosika at [kelly.wosika@state.mn.us](mailto:kelly.wosika@state.mn.us) or (651) 582-8855.

## Special Education

Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.10, Subdivision 12 states: *Pupils with a disability. A charter school must comply with sections 125A.02, 125A.03 to 125A.24, and 125A.65 and rules relating to the education of pupils with a disability as though it were a district.*

Further, Minnesota Rule 3525.2405, Subpart 1 states: *Directors requirement. The school board in every district shall employ, either singly or cooperatively, a director of special education to be responsible for program development, coordination, and evaluation; in-service training; and general special education supervision and administration in the district’s total special education system. Cooperative employment of a director may be through a host district, joint powers agreement, or a service cooperative. A director may not be assigned direct instructional duties.*

- New charter schools must employ an appropriately-licensed special education director **before** the school begins operations.

Once a licensed special education director is secured, the special education director must immediately contact Steve Collins at [stephen.collins@state.mn.us](mailto:stephen.collins@state.mn.us) to initiate the school's special education application process. The application process for charter schools in their **first** year of operation includes:

- The *Statement of Assurances* (Form ED-01350-XX) must be signed by the licensed director of special education **and** the school director or board chair and submitted to MDE (send an email to [mde.spedfunding@state.mn.us](mailto:mde.spedfunding@state.mn.us) to request forms);
- State and Federal Cover Sheets* (Form ED-01558-XX) must be signed by the licensed director of special education and submitted to MDE;
- Program Aid Approval for First Year Charter Schools* (Form ED-02371-XX) must be signed by the licensed director of special education **and** the school director or board chair and submitted to MDE;
- The charter school must submit a roster of staff and proposed salaries to MDE; and
- The school's director of special education will then receive an official approval memo from MDE for the state portion of the process.

Note: In order to start receiving state and federal special education funds, charter schools must enter all expenditures on the Electronic Data Reporting System (EDRS). Contact Steve Collins at [stephen.collins@state.mn.us](mailto:stephen.collins@state.mn.us) to set up a required Static IP address, to receive a password and to access EDRS via the internet. Detailed information regarding the application process can be found in the May 1, 2013 memo, *State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2014 Special Education Application Materials and Eligibility for Program Approval and Maintenance of Effort (MOE)* available on the [School Finance – Special Education](#) section of the MDE website.

Questions regarding the state and federal special education application process should be directed to Steve Collins at [stephen.collins@state.mn.us](mailto:stephen.collins@state.mn.us) or (651) 582-8467.

In addition, MDE developed a [Special Education Primer for Charter Schools](#) that new charters and authorizers may find helpful.

## English Learner Education

The Education for English Learners Act, Minnesota Statutes, sections 124D.58 to 124D.64 governs programs and services for English Learners (ELs). Charter schools must develop processes and procedures to identify students, whose home language is other than English, as EL appropriately. Charter schools must develop programming for ELs with appropriate staff per the Education for English Learners Act and Minnesota Rules 3501.1200 and 3501.1210, which establishes the English Language Development Standards for English Learners. Parents must be notified within ten days after the enrollment of any pupil in an instructional program for English Learners. [Sample notification letters are available on the MDE website.](#)

State EL Programs Aid is available to supplement charter funds for EL programming per Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.65. Title III funds are also available to charters that qualify as a single entity or as a member of a Title III Consortium. Additional information about EL education is available on the [MDE website](#). Questions regarding English Learner Education may be directed to Anh Tran at [anh.tran@state.mn.us](mailto:anh.tran@state.mn.us) or (651) 582-8508.

## Statewide Testing – District Assessment Coordinator

Charter schools must determine who will fulfill the role of District Assessment Coordinator (DAC). The District Assessment Coordinator is the charter school's main contact with MDE and state assessment service providers.

- The DAC should follow the steps outlined in the *New DAC Information on Accessing Systems and Resources*. [View the New DAC Information on the MDE website](#).
- The DAC should find and review the [Procedures Manual for the Minnesota Assessments](#) (current edition), which is posted to the Minnesota Assessments portal. This manual is the main source of information related to the Minnesota Assessments. It provides an overview of the assessments, roles and responsibilities for testing, and test administration practices, policies, and procedures. It also includes many of the forms used for testing. In this manual, the DAC should focus on the following:
  - The Important Dates sheets in the front of the manual provide the dates and overview of tasks related to statewide assessment.
  - Chapter 4 provides information about roles and responsibilities. For the DAC, this section will provide information on responsibilities before, during, and after testing.

## Food and Nutrition

MDE's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) administers school and community nutrition programs for over 700,000 Minnesota children and adults through over 1,000 local schools, child and adult care facilities and summer food program sites. New charter schools wishing to operate a school nutrition program must do the following:

- Determine student meal service needs, (e.g., milk-only, breakfast, lunch, a la carte).
- Determine facility resources for meal service.
- By July 1**, request bids for a catering service or cooperative agreement with a neighboring school district to provide school meals if the charter school will not be preparing meals on-site. Information on bid proposals and contracted meals is available on the [MDE website](#).
- By August 1**, complete the [Application Agreement](#) with MDE; select "Application Instructions: New Sponsors."
- By September 1**, complete training. School nutrition supervisors and employees must register and attend training before the application to operate a school nutrition program will be approved. Training workshops are offered in August at MDE, and include "Essentials 101," "Meal Service Basics" and "Approving Free/Reduced Meal Applications and Counting and Claiming." New charter schools employees must, *at minimum*, take the "Essentials 101" class. Contact MDE Food and Nutrition Service for training dates and locations at (651) 582-8526 or (800) 366-8922.

Questions should be directed to Donna Becker, School Program Specialist, at [donna.becker@state.mn.us](mailto:donna.becker@state.mn.us).

## Federal Title Programs

Eligibility and preliminary allocations for charter schools opening for the first time are based on projected enrollment data that the school submits to MDE in June, before the school opens, to the Division of School Finance (see Enrollment Projections above). The projected total enrollment, free/ reduced price meal counts and English Language Learner student data are

then used to determine preliminary eligibility and to calculate preliminary allocations for Titles I Part A, II, and III.

- Notification of the charter school's preliminary eligibility and allocations based on the projected data is mailed to each individual school **in late September or early October**.
- In mid-October**, these charter schools are required to attend a training session that walks them through the application process. At this training, new charter schools are asked to provide the data submitted through the October 1 MARSS data submission. The data are then used to determine the actual eligibility status and allocations for Titles I Part A, II and III.
- Applications for these federal funds for charter schools opening for the first time **are due in November**.

Questions regarding Federal Title Programs should be directed to John Moore at [john.moore@state.mn.us](mailto:john.moore@state.mn.us) or (651) 582-8649.

## SERVS

MDE's State Educational Record View and Submission (SERVS) system was designed to simplify, consolidate and automate data collection processes. SERVS Financial helps districts, charter schools and other eligible entities apply for Formula or Competitive funding opportunities, and for Formula grants, submit reimbursement requests and track budgets. In order to access the system and apply for those opportunities, charter schools must designate the staff members/representatives able to access this password protected system. Specifically, an "identified official with authority" must be authorized. This is the person who has legal authority to sign legal documents on behalf of the organization submitting an application and authorize an access role in SERVS for staff.

SERVS Financial Access Authorization and Instructions are available on the [SERVS Financial website](#). The identified official with authority will need to send the signed and dated authorization form via email (in Word format) to [mde.servsfinancial@state.mn.us](mailto:mde.servsfinancial@state.mn.us). **This authorization must be updated at least annually and at any other time staff needs to be added or removed for authorization.**

After the identified official with authority has successfully sent in the form, they should inform each staff person of their access role in SERVS Financial and remind staff that it is a secure site. The identified official with authority and the staff assigned a role must then log into SERVS Financial and request access to their assigned role. First-time users must create an account before selecting their access role.

Users must visit the [SERVS Financial website](#) page and select "Enter the SERVS Financial System" to log into SERVS. Proceed to set up and create an account and then request the assigned role that was authorized.

NOTE: To view, modify, or create an account, users must go to the [Data Submissions section of the MDE website](#).

If denied access to a role, an explanation is included in an e-mail notification. All roles must match the role authorized by the identified official with authority who completed the authorization document. Please allow one to five business days to process requests for access, which are processed in the order received.

For questions regarding SERVS, please contact [mde.servsfinancial@state.mn.us](mailto:mde.servsfinancial@state.mn.us) or call (651)

582-8500.

The following information must be entered in SERVS to receive federal funds and is also needed by School Finance to make payments:

- Federal Tax ID number;
- State Tax ID number;
- Federal DUNS number; and
- Confirmation of CCR registration in the System for Award Management (SAM).

## DUNS and CCR/SAM Registration

All school districts, charter schools, non-profits and other entities applying for federal funding are required to have a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) and or validate existing Central Contractor Registration (CCR) in the System for Award Management site (SAM). Registering for CCR in SAM and having a DUNS number is a federal requirement. A DUNS number is a unique nine-character number that identifies your organization. The DUNS number will be used to track how federal grant money is allocated. The SAM system is a web-enabled government wide application that collects, validates, stores, and disseminates business information about the federal government's trading partners in support of the contract award, grants, and the electronic payment process.

- Register for a DUNS number
  - o To register for a DUNS number, go to the [Dun and Bradstreet website](#) or the [Grants.gov website](#).
  - o You will need to provide specific information in order to obtain a DUNS number.
- Register for CCR at SAM
  - o To register for CCR at SAM online, please visit the [SAM website](#). Set up an account in the system and follow the directions.
  - o The following outlines some of the information that will be needed to register in SAM:
    - DUNS number
    - Tax identification number (TIN) and name used in federal tax matters
    - Electronic Funds Transfer information for payment of invoices

## FY 2013 Financial Reporting (only for new charters that received public funds in FY 2013)

Minnesota charter schools are required by law to prepare financial reports and annual budgets. The Uniform Financial Accounting and Reporting Standards (UFARS) is an integral part of the accounting and reporting process for school districts.

- New charter schools are strongly encouraged to attend UFARS training, which will be listed on the [Calendar on the MDE website](#).

New schools that received state or federal revenue in FY 2013 (including current federal CSP grantees) are required to submit financial data to MDE for FY 2013 per Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.77, Subdivisions 2 and 3:

- FY 2013 Unaudited Preliminary UFARS data is **due September 15, 2013**.
- FY 2013 Audited Final UFARS data is **due November 30, 2013**.

- FY 2013 Compliance Table (audit data and UFARS) is **due November 30, 2013**.
- FY 2013 Audit Report is **due on December 31, 2013**. If the audit is mailed, it must be postmarked on or before December 31, 2013.

Every charter school is strongly encouraged to annually notify the public of its revenue, expenditures, fund balances, and other relevant budget information by posting the information on the school's official website. Charter schools are not statutorily required, but are strongly encouraged, to comply with Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.10, Subdivision 1, which requires the school's board to:

- Publish the school's revenue and expenditure budgets for the current year (FY 2014) and the actual revenues, expenditures, fund balances for the prior year (FY 2013) in a form prescribed by the commissioner (ED-00110-34), by November 30, 2013, or within one week of the board's acceptance of the school's final audit for FY 2013, whichever is earlier.

Questions regarding UFARS and audit report submissions or budget publication requirements should be directed to the MDE Accounting HelpDesk at [mde.ufars-accounting@state.mn.us](mailto:mde.ufars-accounting@state.mn.us).

## MDE List Serves

The department has List Serves to which SERVS and other messages are sent. To receive information for Special Ed, EL, Title ESEA Programs, Business Managers or Superintendent/Directors, charter schools should submit name(s) to the following MDE contacts:

- Superintendents/Directors – Contact [Cynthia.Heitman@state.mn.us](mailto:Cynthia.Heitman@state.mn.us) in Communications
- Special Education Directors – Contact [Glenda.Meixell@state.mn.us](mailto:Glenda.Meixell@state.mn.us) in Special Education Finance
- Business Managers – Contact [Teri.Kostelecky@state.mn.us](mailto:Teri.Kostelecky@state.mn.us) in School Finance
- Title I Directors – Contact [Patricia.Olsen@state.mn.us](mailto:Patricia.Olsen@state.mn.us) in ESEA Programs, Division of Student Support
- EL Coordinators – Contact [mde.el@state.mn.us](mailto:mde.el@state.mn.us) in Division of Student Support

For more information, [visit the MDE website](#).