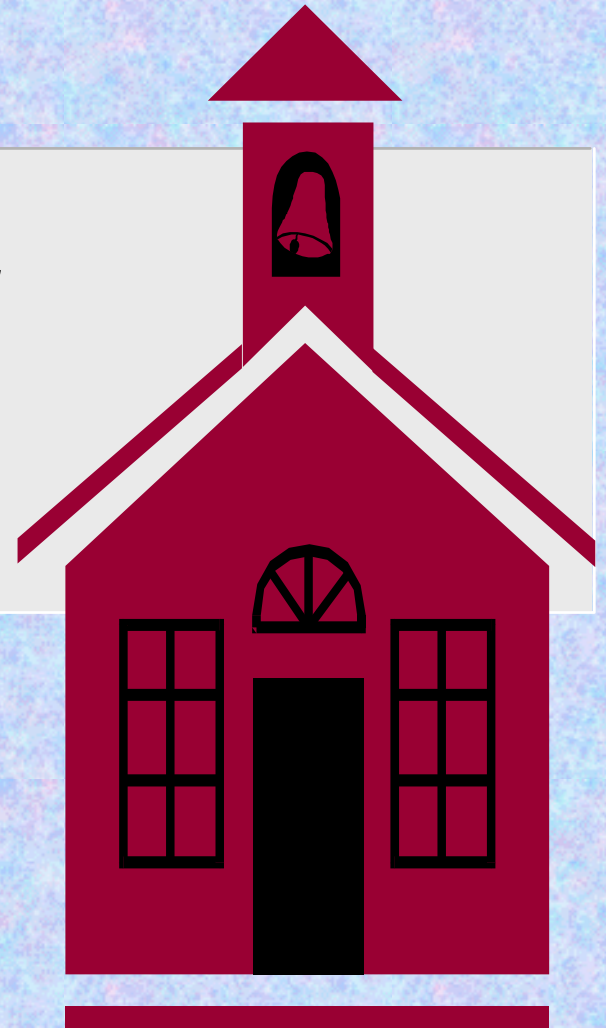


# *The Genesis of a Charter School*



**Sponsored by Ferris State University Charter Schools Office**

# ***What is a charter school?*** ***(public school academy)***

- Public school of choice
- Autonomy to make decisions concerning structure, curriculum, educational emphasis
- Held accountable for academic achievement of the students by means of its charter
- Receives public school funds for every child enrolled

# Who can apply for a public school academy charter?

- An individual
- A group
- An organization

# How does someone get started?

- Contact one of the authorizing agencies

# Who authorizes a public school academy?

- In Michigan there are four types of institutions granted authorizing power by the legislature to authorize public school academies.

- Local School Districts
- Intermediate School Districts
- Community Colleges
- State Universities

# Do all applicants receive a charter?

- NO. Each application is evaluated on its own merit.
- Each authorizer selects only the number of qualified applicants it plans to authorize each year.
- The authorizing process varies among authorizers.
- The number of academies authorized each year varies from year to year.

# Does the application require a lot of detail?

- Generally, YES. However, the amount will vary among authorizers.
- Most state universities have a standard application form that includes all of the elements required by the Revised School Code. The end product will likely exceed 20 pages, plus another 10-15 pages of attachments.

# What are the major elements required for an application to be considered?

- Identification of applicant
- Type of applicant (individual, group or organization)
- Proposed initial Board of Directors with completed questionnaires
- Proposed Articles of Incorporation (usually supplied by the authorizer)
- Proposed Bylaws (usually supplied by the authorizer)

# ("major elements" continued)

- Proposed operational description of the academy
- Proposed admission policy (must comply with the Revised School Code)
- Proposed school calendar and daily schedule
- Proposed age or grade range of pupils to be served

# (“major elements” continued)

- Proposed governance structure and staff responsibilities
- Description of proposed physical plan including a floor plan
- Name and address of the local school district
- Name of the intermediate school district

# (“major elements” continued)

- Proposed opening date
- Projected enrollment for years 1-5
- Description of targeted students
- Proposed advertising and recruitment plans
- Proposed plan for selecting students if capacity is exceeded (must comply with the Revised School Code)

# ("major elements" continued)

- Proposed plan to involve parents
- Proposed plan for problem intervention and other retention strategies
- Proposed head administrator qualifications
- Proposed teacher qualifications
- Proposed plan for use of non-certified individuals

# (“major elements” concluded)

- Proposed method of transportation (if any)
- Proposed description of how start-up costs will be met until state aid is available in late October
- Description of the education purpose of the academy, including philosophy and focus
- Description of proposed curriculum
- Proposed mission statement of academy

# What is the role of the academy's board of directors?

- The Governing Board of the academy
- Policy-making body and ultimately responsible for operating policies, budget and curriculum of the academy
- Same powers as the local school district's elected Board of Education
- Acts as the academy's school board

# Once appointed, can a board member be removed from office?

- YES. The board may take action to remove one of its own members before the end of his/her term of office according to the academy's bylaws.
- The authorizer also has the power to remove a board member before his/her term of office.

# Who hires the academy employees?

- The board may interview and hire all employees.
- The board may interview and hire a head administrator and delegate the responsibility to him, with all employees being approved by the board. *All employees must be appropriately certified.*
- The board may contract with an educational service provider (management company) to provide the employees as part of its contracted service.

# What are the authorizer's responsibilities?

- Receive inquiries about the authorizing process
- Provide an application to authorize an academy
- Receive and screen applications
- Execute approved charter contracts
- Appoint academy boards of directors

# (“authorizer’s responsibilities) continued

- Assure that authorized academies comply with terms and conditions of charter
- Assure that authorized academies comply with applicable state and federal laws
- Assure that authorized academies make reasonable progress toward meeting the goals stated in their charter contract

# Is the authorizer involved in the operation of the academy?

- Only indirectly. The authorizer's relationship is with the academy board of directors. All action by the authorizer regarding the academy must be taken through them.
- The authorizer is responsible for overseeing the academy's operation to assure that it remains in compliance with the charter contract.

# Does an authorizer have the power to stop operations of an academy?

- YES. The Revised School Code gives the authorizer the power to revoke a charter if the academy is not functioning as authorized in its charter contract.
- Authorizers will usually attempt remedial action to bring the academy into compliance before revocation proceedings are initiated.