



Instructions and Timeline for Application for Sponsorship

Step One: Research & Initial Contact

If you are interested in starting a community school, you should first research the viability of a community school in your proposed location, as well as the educational and financial plans needed for your school. You may also want to review the resources available on our website, as well as other helpful information by state and local organizations dedicated to community (charter) school development. Contact the Community Schools Center at (419) 246-3137 to indicate your interest and discuss any initial questions.

Step Two: Application

We have two applications – one for new or replicating community schools and one for schools seeking a change in sponsor. Please complete the appropriate application. Once completed, please submit your application and all supporting materials either electronically to Kathy Sickles at ksickles@eslakeeriewest.org or by mail to:

Educational Service Center of Lake Erie West
Community Schools Center
4955 Seaman Rd.
Oregon, OH 43616

Step Three: Application Evaluation and Interview

Our review team will review your application. If we need additional information to make a determination, we will contact you during the review period. If your application is approved, we will contact you to set up an in-person interview. If the school is applying to change sponsor, our review team may also schedule a school visit or attend a governing authority meeting during this time period. After your interview, the review team and ESCLEW governing board will make a decision whether to authorize a Preliminary Agreement, if you are applying for a new or replicating school, or whether to move forward with contract negotiations if you are applying to change sponsors.

Step Four: Preliminary Agreement

If your school is approved, ESCLEW and the School will execute a Preliminary Agreement, which describes the intent of the sponsor and the founder of the proposed school to work in good faith towards the execution of a contract. This agreement enables the developers to apply for public community school grant funds for planning purposes, and it will also be submitted to the Ohio Department of Education (ODE).

Step Five: Contract Adoption and Execution

We will provide you with a list of documents to compile to prepare for your contract and school opening. You will also need to submit clean FBI/BCI criminal background checks for all founders and proposed governing authority members at this time. At this stage and throughout the school development process, ESCLEW will meet with school leadership to provide technical assistance on community school operation. In addition, school governing authority members will need to complete five hours of training on board governance and open meetings law.

Many of the documents you compile will ultimately be incorporated in your contract. Under law, the contract must include descriptions of the school's mission, educational program, instructional delivery system, governance, financial plan, and accountability structure. The contract will also include specific timelines and

terms of operation. ESCLEW will provide you with a draft contract that includes all of these necessary components.

The contract between a new start-up school and sponsor must be adopted by the sponsor’s approved board, stating the sponsor’s intent to enter into the community school contract or a sponsor’s signed board minutes summarizing that action. A formally-adopted resolution between the sponsor and school, with at least a draft version of the community school contract, must exist at the time of the contract adoption. Under statute, the contract must be adopted no later than March 15 of the year the new start-up school will open.

An executed contract is a community school contract signed by both the governing authority and the sponsor. A contract must be signed by May 15 of the year the school will open. Therefore, all negotiations must be complete and the contract must be signed by both parties by that date.

Schools changing sponsor are not required by law to operate under this adoption and execution timeline. However, we request that any school changing sponsor honor the May 15 deadline for contract execution to ensure a smooth transition from the existing sponsor. A new contract, however, would not go into effect until the expiration or transfer of the school’s existing community school contract.

Step Six: Sponsor Assurances and School Opening

Before the school can open, sponsors must inspect the school and ensure that you have fulfilled all of your legal obligations with respect to the school and its facility. We will provide you with the guidance and technical support to assist you in meeting that goal. ESCLEW must provide assurances that you have met all requirements at least ten business days before the school opens. The school must open by September 30 of the year in which the contract is signed, unless it is a drop-out recovery school. If the school does not open by that time, the contract will become void.

Timeline for Schools Opening in the 2017-2018 School Year:

10/31/16	Deadline to submit Application for Sponsorship
11/01/16 – 12/31/16	ESCLEW Review and Interview Period
1/15/17	Deadline for ESCLEW to notify Founding Team of recommendation to ESCLEW board
2/15/17	Preliminary Agreement approved by ESCLEW and issued to School
2/28/17	Deadline to return signed Preliminary Agreement
3/15/17	Contract adopted by ESCLEW Board; Contract template provided to School
4/30/17	Deadline for Contract to be negotiated, approved and signed by School Governing Authority, and for the School to provide all necessary documentation
5/15/17	Deadline for Contract to be signed by ESCLEW and distributed to ODE
Summer 2017	Site visit/sponsor assurances due at least ten business days before school opens
9/30/17	Deadline for school to open, unless drop-out recovery school