

# School Business Plan Template

This document provides guidance to developers of potential public charter schools and those expanding or replicating existing schools, especially those that are drafting business plans to satisfy the requirements of Walton Family Foundation (WFF) startup and expansion grants. The outline is designed to help developers think through critical business issues surrounding the creation and ongoing management of charter schools.

## Financial Statements

Financial projections are central to any business plan. WFF recommends that you begin your business planning by working through a first draft of your financial projections. The “WFF Financial Template” is the required format for this part of the proposal and is located on the WFF website. The template is meant to be a starting point for each applicant; the assumptions and line items can be adjusted as necessary.

1. **Annual Operating Budget**

The annual operating budget (see first tab in the Excel Workbook) will show your school’s revenues (include only committed sources), estimated expenses, and projected surplus or deficit. The sample budget shows revenues by source (e.g., state air, federal aid grants, fees, etc.) and expenditure by object (e.g., salaries, benefits, rent, materials, books, services, professional training, utilities, insurance, etc.) for the year. Include a line for each service contract (if applicable). All income (committed and potential source) should be listed below in the **Income and Fundraising section** below the Annual Operating Budget (see the lower section on first tab in the Excel Workbook).

1. **Monthly Cash Flow Projections**

The monthly cash flow projections (see second tab in Excel workbook) utilizes the same revenue and expenditure categories as the annual operating budget, but it breaks the information down into monthly columns. This allows developers to analyze whether the school will have enough money to pay its bills at the end of each month. If revenues arrive later than when expenditures must be paid, then the school needs “working capital” (e.g., reserves or a short-term loan).

1. **Five-Year Revenue and Expenditure Projections**

The five-year projections of anticipated income and expenses (see the third tab in workbook) will forecast the planned growth, development and needs of the school over time.

## School Networks: For applicants that currently operate or manage one or more existing school and are applying for WFF funding for a significant expansion of a current school or to replicate a currently existing school, include the following information in the business plan.

1. Describe the purpose, motivation, and key objectives of the replication or existing school expansion.
2. Provide a summary of all existing schools currently managed or operated by the School Network or CMO and a future growth plan if applicable.
3. Provide an overview of academic track record of any existing schools
4. Provide a plan for closing the school (or other existing schools in the network) that do not meet the academic objectives and goals.
5. Describe the school culture or CMO “brand” and a strategy to solidify and communicate a consistent brand around the core components of previously successfully charter school(s).
6. Provide a detail plan of the proposed replication or expansion (include enrollment plan, staffing, facility, etc).

# Charter School Business Plan Outline

1. **Executive Summary**

Briefly describe your plans for the school, including its unique mission, instructional philosophy, leadership, projected revenues and expenses.

1. **School Description**

Describe in detail the vision for the school. Be sure to include:

1. Proposed name of the school.
2. General or specific location of the school.
3. The school’s mission statement.
4. Brief description of the student body, include counts by grade levels.
5. Statement of the school’s ideal target student population, with explicit reference to the types of students that you most hope to serve, described by income level, race/ethnicity, academic aptitude, and prior academic experience.
6. The school’s instructional philosophy and focus.
7. Brief description of the school’s leadership, faculty and staff.
8. **Critical Path Timeline**

Include a timeline showing when you expect to accomplish each critical step as you move toward opening your school.

1. **Authorizer**

Provide basic information about the entity that will be asked to authorize the school’s charter. Be sure to include:

1. The authorizer’s name.
2. Projected timeline for consideration of school’s charter petition.
3. Decision makers for the authorizer and basic information on each.
4. Authorizer’s historical recordof approvals and rejections, with details about their record concerning schools similar to yours.
5. Authorizer policies and practices that might influence the school’s charter petition and renewal.
6. Authorizer policies and practices that might strengthen or hamper the autonomy of the school.
7. Alternative authorizers, if available.
8. Options for appealing a rejection of your charter petition, if applicable.
9. **Market Analysis**

Provide a description of your “market” in terms of parents and students. Be sure to include:

1. Description of the general or specific boundaries of the neighborhood or area that the school will serve.
2. Description of the students in the neighborhood or area that the school intends to serve. Include size of target market and such demographic characteristics as income, race/ethnicity, education levels and household structures. Address the implications of these demographics to how you will shape your school, including governance, leadership, outreach, curriculum and instruction.
3. Description of the current and expected educational options for children in your target market. Present a matrix listing all traditional public, charter public, and private schools with which your school will be competing, noting key demographics and the academic performance of each one.
4. Description of the network of support.
5. Description of what makes your school unique in the current market.
6. **Marketing Strategy**

Describe your plans for recruiting students to your school. Be sure to include:

1. Plans for communicating with families, organizations, and local leaders about the school, with particular attention to communicating with hard-to-reach communities and neighborhoods.
2. Description of your student recruitment plans and policies, with particular attention to how you will recruit a representative sample of the geographic area you will serve.
3. Description of your proposed enrollment and admissions policies, including timelines. Attach your proposed enrollment and admission forms.
4. **Human Resources**

Describe your plans for recruiting and training staff. Be sure to include:

1. The staffing plan, including types and number of employees and efforts to recruit staff members who are racial/ethnic minorities.
2. Job descriptions for all school staff, including administrators, teachers, and aides
3. Organization chart.
4. Recruitment plans and policies for administrators, teachers, and aides. Address how these plans will reflect the diverse needs of the local community.
5. Plans and policies for providing key staff with feedback of their performance.
6. Plans and policies for continually improving the performance of staff.
7. Plans to outsource any key functions (e.g., payroll, food service, nursing, counseling, special education, etc.).
8. **Governance and Management Structure**

Describe how the school will be governed and managed. Be sure to include:

1. Form of business organization (e.g., for-profit or nonprofit corp.).
2. Description of any proposed or existing relationships with educational management organizations, charter management organizations, or outside consultants.
3. Description of any proposed or existing contracts for business, operational or instructional services.
4. History of the founding board, including how it was developed, with explicit attention to how the founding group sought board members to build the board’s expertise in key areas and its understanding of the families your school intends to serve.
5. Plans, if any, for developing the board, including representation of local constituencies, areas of expertise, and fundraising capacity.
6. Division of responsibilities between CMO (if applicacable), governing board, and administrators.
7. Describe the board plan for oversight, your key priorities and goal, how you will hold the school accountable and how you would handle not meeting the financial and academic goals.
8. **Instruction**

Describe your plans for achieving instructional excellence at your school. Be sure to include:

1. Proposed student goals and outcomes.
2. Achievement standards for key academic areas.
3. Chosen curriculum with description of its relationship to standards.
4. Mechanisms for periodically assessing progress towards goals, outcomes and achievement standards.
5. Methods for addressing students whose baseline aptitude, performance, and prior school experience are dramatically below standard.
6. Methods for assessing instructional practice and informing teachers of areas that need improvement.
7. School calendar and daily schedule.
8. Plans for extended day or year, if applicable.
9. **Data Management Plan**

Describe how you will use data to track student progress and improve student achievement and your plans for managing student and other school data to:

1. Comply with reporting requirements of your authorizer, relevant government agencies and private supporters.
2. Operate key school functions efficiently .
3. Improve the operational and financial management of the school.
4. Improve instruction and achievement.
5. **Facilities Plan**

Describe your plans for locating and developing school facilities. Be sure to include:

1. Detailed explanation of space needs over the next five year.
2. Detailed explanation of technology, furnishings, and equipment needs.
3. Explanation of facility options available to you and potential costs of each.
4. Plans for financing and completing renovations and upgrades.
5. Plans for financing a permanent home for your school, if applicable.
6. **Financial & Fundraising**

Describe your process of identifying expected funding sources, expertise with fundraising and your financial development plans, including likely prospects and how additional resources beyond local, state and federal would be used.

1. Describe the leadership and responsibility for the management of the fundraising plan.
2. Describe your financial management plan (include roles and responsibilities, how and when financial reports will be prepared and evaluated by the board).