



Start·a·School

AN EDUCATION FREEDOM FOUNDATION INITIATIVE

Louisiana

Charter Schools

Louisiana charter schools are public schools operated by non-profit boards that are allowed increased autonomy in exchange for increased accountability. Charter schools are innovative, independent public schools that students may choose to attend. In exchange for operational autonomy in areas such as curricular, staffing, and budgetary decision making, all charter schools in Louisiana are held accountable for meeting student achievement goals and organizational and financial performance goals either by a local school board or by the state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE).

Louisiana Policy

The Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education has the constitutional and statutory authority to make policy decisions that govern the public education system of the state. It also exercises budgetary responsibility for all funds appropriated or allocated by the state for schools under its jurisdiction.

Acting in its capacity as a quasi-legislative body, the Board adopts policies and regulatory rules which have the force and effect of law. The regulatory policies adopted by the Board are contained in the bulletins compiled by the Department of Education or BESE. In accordance with R.S. 49:950 et seq., the Administrative Procedure Act, all regulatory policies adopted by BESE are advertised as Notices of Intent and Rules in the *Louisiana Register*. Rules become part of the *Louisiana Administrative Code*, the official compilation of administrative rules published by state agencies and boards, when they are promulgated in the Louisiana Register. Title 28, Education, Part I (Board of Elementary and Secondary Education) of the *Louisiana Administrative Code* contains additional policies and operational procedures.

Online Education Bulletins

Online regulatory publications (bulletins) are available through the [Louisiana Register](#). Questions regarding the following bulletins should be directed to the Louisiana Department of Education (LDE) Policy Office at (225) 342-3772. Links will be updated monthly as rules are adopted

Virtual Charter

Specific terminology used is "course providers." "Course provider" is defined as an entity that offers individual courses in person or online, including but not limited to online or virtual education providers, postsecondary education institutions, including any postsecondary institution under the management of the Board of Supervisors of Community and Technical Colleges, and corporations that offer vocational or technical course work in their field, and have been authorized to provide such courses by the state board.

"Virtual school" is also defined in statute as a public school, including a charter school, which has a unique code and delivers all or a majority of the instruction provided through the internet or other electronic medium.

Citations: [La. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 17:4002.1](#) to [La. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 4002.6](#); [La. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 17:236.3](#)

General Charter Info

Charter schools are independent public schools that are free to be more innovative and are held accountable for improved student achievement.

Charter applicants must:

- a) Have a board of directors with a minimum of three members and at least 60 percent of the board of directors shall reside in the Parish or Parishes in which the school seeks to enroll.
- b) Include three or more persons holding valid and current Louisiana teaching certificates in the development of the charter application.

Oversight & Governance of Charter Schools in Louisiana

Type 1: New school; authorized by the local school board

Type 2: New or conversion school; authorized by BESE

Type 3: Conversion school; authorized by the local school board

Type 4: New or conversion school; authorized by the local school board and BESE

Type 5: Recovery School District schools; authorized by BESE

Steps to Start a Charter School

Step 1: The first step in creating a Charter school is to register as a corporation. This is usually a non-profit LLC. Register with your state's Division of Corporations.

Step 2: If you are planning to operate as a non-profit, you will need to obtain your IRS Non-Profit status by submitting [IRS Form 1023](#).

Step 3: Decide if you will submit a District Charter Application or a State Charter Application by reviewing these links:

[District Charter Application Process](#)

The oversight for Type 1, 3 and 3B charter schools lies with the local district by which the schools are authorized.

[Sample 2024-2025 New Charter School Request for Applications](#)

Local district authorizers must use the BESE approved Common Charter Application and may add additional questions. Each local school system must have the Charter RFA application materials and point of contact on their websites. Please see the website for the school system in which you wish to apply for a Type 1 or 3 charter school. To view the BESE approved Common Charter Applications for New Operators, Experienced Operators, and Virtual Operators, see the applications below.

[New Operator Application PDF](#)

- Nonprofit organization whose primary members (founder and/or proposed school leader) do not have prior experience in leading or managing a public school; and
- Who do not intend to employ an educational service provider (ESP) with prior experience in leading or managing public schools.
- See the addendum for virtual operators

[Experienced Operator Application PDF](#)

- Nonprofit organizations whose primary members (founder and/or proposed school leader) have prior experience in leading or managing a single public school; and/or
- Nonprofit organizations which have operated more than one charter school; and/or
- Nonprofit organizations which intend to employ an education service provider (ESP) which has operated more than one charter school.
- See the addendum for virtual operators

Additional Resources:

- [Overview Template](#)
- [Eligibility Determination PDF](#)
- [District Charter Application Process Website Template PDF](#)

Sample Key Dates for Local Authorizing:

September 9, 2024

- Deadline by which local school boards must post application materials to their websites. Use of the template is optional.

October 25, 2024

- Charter applications are due to districts.

January 17, 2025

- Deadline for districts to consider charter applications. If a district has not made a decision about a charter application by this point, that applicant group is eligible to appeal to BESE.

January 31, 2025

- Report any charter entered into; the number of schools chartered; the status of those schools, and any recommendations relating to the charter RFA process to charters@la.gov.

*Note: This list includes a limited selection of key dates and deadlines. Please see the local authorizer's websites for a full description of timelines.

Please contact charters@la.gov with questions.

State Charter Application Process

The charter school application process provides Louisiana non-profit organizations with the opportunity to create schools that parents and guardians desire for their students. The students of Louisiana are diverse and thus, shall be provided with school choice options that best fit their individual needs.

The charter school law was enacted by the Louisiana Legislature to create a structure whereby city, parish, and other local public school boards and BESE can authorize the creation of innovative schools for students in Louisiana. BESE, as an authorizer of Type 2, 4, and 5 charter schools, has the responsibility to implement a comprehensive application process with fair procedures and rigorous criteria, enter into charter contracts with approved charter schools that articulate the rights and responsibilities of each party regarding school autonomy, and provide on-going oversight, including monitoring compliance, measuring progress, and implementing interventions in the areas of academic performance, organizational effectiveness, and financial responsibility.

For additional information on starting a charter school or charter school-specific guidance, please visit the [Charter School Library](#).

Sample 2024-2025 New Charter School Request for Applications (Schools Slated to Open August 2026)

- [2024-2025 Charter Application New-Operator PDF](#)
- [2024-2025 Charter Application Experienced-Operator PDF](#)

Sample 2024-2025 Annual New Charter School Request for Application (Schools Slated to Open August 2026)

February 3, 2025

- LDOE application opens for Type 2, 4, and 5 applicants

February 10, 2025, by 5pm (emailed to charters@la.gov)

- Letters of Intent due to department

March 10, 2025, by 5pm (emailed to charters@la.gov)

- Eligibility Determination Forms Due

March 31, 2025

- LDOE submission deadline for the full application for Types 2, 4, and 5 applicants

August 19, 2025

- Type 2, 4, and 5 Applicants: BESE considers applications for new charter schools.

Sample Mid-Year 2023-2024 New Charter School Request for Applications (Schools Slated to Open August 2025)

July 15, 2024, by 5 pm (emailed to charters@la.gov)

- LDOE application window opens for Types 2, 4, and 5 applicants.
- Letter of Intent Due

July 23, 2024, by 5 pm (emailed to charters@la.gov)

- Eligibility Determination Forms Due

August 26, 2024, by 5 pm (emailed to charters@la.gov)

- LDOE submission deadline for the full application for Types 2, 4, and 5 applicants.

December 10-11, 2024

- Types 2, 4, and 5 Applicants: BESE considers applications for new charter schools.

*Note: This list includes a limited selection of key dates and deadlines. Please see the local authorizer's websites for a full description of timelines.

Please contact charters@la.gov with questions.

Resources:

- [RFA Overview Template](#)
- [Eligibility Determination PDF](#)
- [Standards Rubric PDF](#)

Stay up to date with monthly school system planning calls by checking the [LDOE School System Calendar](#).

Louisiana Corporate Partnerships

Louisiana Corporate Partnerships offer a unique opportunity for charter schools and businesses to collaborate. Whether it be through the initial charter application process or by an amendment of existing charter, such partnerships can be mutually beneficial for both parties. Benefits of Corporate Partnership might include:

Business	Charter Schools
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish partnerships with public education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish partnerships with the business community
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attract employees and business to your local community through high quality school options	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Build a stronger board of directors
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Help train qualified, skilled workers for the 21st century workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Obtain the infrastructure students need to be successful
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide technology and infrastructure students need	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Focus on instruction and results

In order for a business to be considered a Corporate Partner, it must individually, or as part of a consortium of businesses, donate one or more of the following to the school in an amount equivalent to at least 50% of the per pupil allocation: land, building space, renovations to existing school building, and/or technology. Through the mutually beneficial relationship, Corporate Partners are entitled to up to 50% of the school seats for dependents of company employees as well as a minority percentage of charter school board seats.

In order to form a Corporate Partnership, businesses would enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with the school outlining the ways in which businesses would be involved in providing support.

Refer to Chapter 39 of the [Charter Schools bulletin](#) titled Corporate Partnerships and the [Louisiana Corporate Partnerships FAQ PDF](#) to learn more. Please send remaining questions to charters@la.gov.

Statutes and Rules

- [RS 17:236.3 Virtual school; definition; attendance policies](#)
- [RS 17:3981 State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education; powers and duties relative to charter schools](#)
- [RS 17:3982 Local school boards; duties; Orleans Parish School Board; immovable property; sale or lease](#)
- [RS 17:3983 Chartering process by type; eligibility; limitations; faculty approval; parental approval](#)
- [RS 17:3983.1 Initial charter school proposals and applications; notification to state legislators](#)
- [RS 17:3991 Charter schools; requirements; limitations; renewal; amendment; revocation; board membership](#)
- [RS 17:3991.1 Corporate partners; enrollment preferences and board membership](#)
- [RS 17:3992 Charter revision and renewal](#)
- [RS 17:3993 Liability](#)
- [RS 17:3994 Litigation costs](#)
- [RS 17:3995 Charter school funding](#)
- [RS 17:3996 Charter schools; exemptions; requirements](#)
- [RS 17:3997 Charter school employees](#)
- [RS 17:3998 Reports; review](#)
- [RS 17:3999 Application of Chapter](#)
- [RS 17:4001 Louisiana Charter School Start-Up Loan Fund; creation; purpose; distribution](#)
- [RS 17:4002.1 Course providers; short title](#)
- [RS 17:4002.2 Legislative findings](#)
- [RS 17:4002.3 Definitions](#)
- [RS 17:4002.4 State board; powers and duties relative to course providers](#)
- [RS 17:4002.5 Public school governing authority duties; accountability; rules](#)
- [RS 17: 4002.6. Course providers; funding; course amounts](#)

Resources

- [2023-2024 Alternative Education Disclosure Form PDF](#)
- [2023-2024 Charter Board Change Form PDF](#)
- [2023-2024 Charter Transportation Plan PDF](#)
- [2023-2024 Self-Assessment Board Completeness Check PDF](#)
- [Charter Performance Compact PDF](#)
- [Fillable_2023-2024 Quarterly Waiting List Report PDF](#)
- [Material & Non-material Process PDF](#)
- [Material Amendment Request Form PDF](#)
- [Non-Material Amendment Notification Form PDF](#)

Additional Resources

- [Overview Template](#)
- [Eligibility Determination PDF](#)
- [Standards Rubric PDF](#)
- [National Center for Research on Education Access and Choice](#)