



# Application for Sponsorship of a Start-up School: FY 2026-27

## Guidance for developers of schools not yet chartered or in operation

**Mission Statement:** To provide a strong foundation of resources, oversight, guidance, and leadership both to and in partnership with educational leaders of community schools serving children and society.

**Vision Statement:** To promote high-quality charter schools in Ohio through strong academic performance and financial viability.

**Core Values:**

- Integrity: We will do what we say, and expect the same in return.
- Quality: We will continually strive for excellence individually and collaboratively.
- Respect: We will exhibit professionalism with each other and our stakeholders.
- Competence: We believe knowledge is power.
- Accountability: We hold ourselves to these core values.

**Sponsoring Priorities:** ERCO focuses on providing sponsorship to high-performing community schools in Ohio, ensuring they demonstrate strong academic performance and financial stability. This includes monitoring and evaluating school compliance with relevant laws and contract requirements. We also offer both proactive and reactive technical assistance as needed. If performance concerns arise, we intervene to address these issues and report the outcomes to the Ohio Department of Education. For more information, please refer to the "Things to Know" guidance document.\*\*

**Note: Developers planning to open a start-up school in the 2026-27 academic year must submit all application materials in a 3-ring binder on or before August 15th, 2025.**

**ERCO strongly recommends that developers of all new schools work toward the following factors that have proven critical to the success of a new community school:**

- Special education capacity and expertise
- EMIS/SOES reporting systems expertise
- Treasurer expertise
- Expertise in student achievement
- Governing board membership that includes experience in education, finance, etc. and the ability to meet the organization's needs and expectations in terms of activity, attendance
- Readily-accessible legal expertise
- Sound, realistic financial and enrollment projections
- Marketing expertise
- Access to cash reserves and credit lines in case of contingencies
- Audit Surety Bond, cash option, or an operator written guarantee

**Please submit the completed application and associated materials to:**

By postal mail to: **Educational Resource Consultants of Ohio, Inc.**  
**Attn. Sonya Lunsford**  
**3401 Hamilton-Mason Rd. Suite A**  
**Hamilton, Ohio 45011**

<b>Proposed Community School Name:</b> <b>Proposed Street Address:</b> <b>City, State ZIP:</b>	(Please type in this and below spaces provided)
<b>Grades to be served:</b>	
<b>Lead Developer/Primary Contact</b> Name (First, Middle, Last): Address: City, State, Zip Phone: Email:	
<b>Anticipated opening date of proposed school:</b>	
<b>County in which the proposed community school is to be located:</b>	
<b>School District in which proposed the community school is to be located:</b>	
<b>Treasurer:</b> Name: Address: City, State ZIP: Phone & Email:	
<b>EMIS/SOES Coordinator:</b> Name: Address: City, State ZIP: Phone & Email:	
<b>Management Company, if any, including:</b> <b>Primary Contact Name</b> <b>Address</b> <b>City, State ZIP</b> <b>Phone &amp; Email</b>	

Please attach resumes of the below listed Governing Board Members

**Board Member 1 (of 5 minimum):**

Name:  
Address:  
City, State ZIP:  
Phone & Email:

**Board Member 2:**

Name:  
Address:  
City, State ZIP:  
Phone: & Email:

**Board Member 3:**

Name:  
Address:  
City, State ZIP:  
Phone & Email:

**Board Member 4:**

Name:  
Address:  
City, State ZIP:  
Phone & Email:

**Board Member 5:**

Name:  
Address:  
City, State ZIP:  
Phone & Email:

**Board Member:**

Name:  
Address:  
City, State ZIP:  
Phone & Email:

**(Please limit each response to 500 words or less)**

**QUESTIONS FOR DEVELOPERS**

**1. Describe your experience leading a team and/ or managing staff.**

**2. Describe, in depth, your experience in serving special needs students in a public school environment. Also, please provide assurances that the school will adhere to all the provisions of federal law relating to students with disabilities including the IDEA, Section 504, and Title II of the ADA which are applicable to it.**

**3. Describe your experience in facilities management.**

**4. Have you ever been part of a team developing a community school?  
If so, which school, and are you still associated with that school?**

**5. Have you ever worked for a community school that is now closed? If so, which school?**

**6. Explain in depth your planning process toward opening this school and how long you've been planning.**

**7. Provide a narrative on why you are interested in starting this school.**

**8. Describe how you will recruit and retain highly qualified teachers, staff, and resources for a successful launch.**

**9. What is the mission of the school?**

**10. Describe the roles and responsibilities of your school's Governing Authority.**

**11. Describe your plan for marketing the school and recruiting students.**

<b>12. Do you have potential facilities secured, or identified? Please share details, addresses.</b>
<b>13. What is your connection to the community in which the school is to be located?</b>
<b>14. Have you researched the educational market in the community where you intend to launch the school? Explain the need for this school in this community.</b>
<b>15. What other schools are operating within a 5-mile radius of your proposed attendance area?</b>
<b>16. How familiar are you with Ohio’s law on related party transactions, conflicts of interest, and arm’s length decision-making?</b>
<b>17. If you have developed a previous school, was the school ever non-renewed by a sponsor, or determined to be subject to findings of recovery or “unauditable” status by the Auditor of State?</b>
<b>18. If you have any additional schools, has any been suspended or placed on probation? If so, please explain the situation(s) that caused the suspension or probation status.</b>
<b>19. If you have any additional schools, describe your plan to launch this school without compromising the performance of the existing school.</b>
<b>20. Explain how the curriculum has been aligned to Ohio’s Standards and benchmarks and Core Curriculum requirements.</b>
<b>21. Describe your plan for collecting student baseline data and ongoing progress monitoring throughout the year.</b>
<b>22. Describe your plan for managing formative student data throughout the year.</b>
<b>23. Describe your plan for monitoring the school’s SMART goals throughout the year.</b>

<b>24. How will you arrange transportation ahead of startup, to avoid compromising enrollment with delays?</b>
<b>25. How will you avoid/prepare for potential startup delays, ensuring that the school opens on or before the start of classes as the local public district schools, to avoid compromising enrollment?</b>
<b>26. What initial student enrollment do you estimate? What is your basis for that estimate?</b>
<b>27. What financial contingencies are in place if the school does not enroll the anticipated number of students?</b>

**Please include the below additional information with your completed Application**

**28. Educational program/plan:**

- a. Mission/Vision statement
- b. Projected student profile information
- c. Goals and objectives for student learning and operations
- d. School curriculum and pedagogy
- e. Plan for regular review and revision of curriculum
- f. Student assessment metrics and methodology
- g. The identification process for at-risk students
- h. School handbook
- i. Admissions policy
- j. Student retention & promotion policies
- k. Parental involvement program
- l. School culture
- m. Due process policies for student discipline, including suspension and expulsion

**29. Need assessment (also known as a market assessment) for proposed locations**

**30. Operations plan:**

- a. Organizational chart with titles, names (if available), roles, and responsibilities
- b. Developer resume
- c. Staffing plan (*please provide your capacity to execute the plan*)
- d. Performance review policy for faculty and staff
- e. Teacher professional development plan (*please provide your capacity to execute the plan*)
- f. Projected first-year enrollment (*please provide your capacity to execute this projection*)
- g. First-year budget with monthly detail showing expected cash flow
- h. Expected assets and liabilities on September 1 in the year of opening
- i. Five-year financial forecast
- j. A copy of any management contracts and service agreements at or above \$5000/year or more
- k. A description of services expected to be contracted to any single vendor(s) at a cost of \$5000/year or more.
- l. Facilities plans, including proposed or planned future facilities (*please provide your capacity to execute the plan*)
- m. A copy of the lease terms for the new school's intended facility
- n. Letters of intent or documentation of sources and amount(s) of start-up funding, if any
- o. Business Plan (*please provide your capacity to execute the plan*)
- p. Growth Plan (*please provide your capacity to execute the plan*)

**31. Governing board**

- a. Resumes of all members
- b. By-laws and procedures, including conflict of interest policy
- c. Board meeting schedule for first-year
- d. Meeting minutes, if any, for the development board or committee
- e. Plan for completion of board training within the most recent two years

**32. Articles of Incorporation**

**33. Employee Identification Number**

<b>Application Timeline for Schools to Open in 2026-27</b>	
Deadline for ERCO to receive application	August 15th, 2025
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Telephone interview(s)/discussion(s) with ERCO leadership</li> <li>• ERCO due diligence, materials compiled, report prepared</li> <li>• Vetting process of applicants</li> </ul>	Can take place prior to, during, or following application submission
Advisory Board Interviews, Evaluation of Applications	October 30th, 2025
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School receives written notification of Decision</li> <li>• Developer receives 9 months Planning Stage (date of written notice through the first date of instruction)</li> </ul>	November 15 <sup>th</sup> 2025 November 15 <sup>th</sup> to August 15 <sup>th</sup> or later
<p>If sponsorship is offered, the following is distributed to the applicant's governing authority:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preliminary agreement</li> <li>• Orientation materials ("Things to Know" - startup, new school guidance)</li> <li>• Contract</li> <li>• Contract formatting instructions</li> <li>• Checklist of required appendices and attachments</li> </ul>	Within 30 calendar days
<p>Deadline for ERCO to submit to ODE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signed preliminary agreement adopting contract</li> <li>• Documentation required by ODE</li> <li>• Board resolution adopting contract</li> </ul>	March 15
Deadline to submit to ERCO signed, completed, formatted contract with attachments and appendices	May 1
Contract reviewed for completion, information requested to correct deficits, if any	May 1-May 14
Deadline for ERCO to submit signed, completed contract to ODE Office of Community Schools	May 15
Opening Assurances Site Visit	By appointment- Summer
Deadline for ERCO to submit opening assurances to ODE Office of Community Schools	10 -20 business days prior to the first day of instruction

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**Any questions regarding this application, please contact ERCO at 513-771-4006**