Community School Applicant and Sponsor Process & Interview

Introduction

This guidance outlines Bowling Green State University's approach to conducting interviews of community school applicants and, when necessary, their current sponsor. Well-structured, face-to-face interviews help Bowling Green State University evaluate whether an application meets the criteria for approval and the likelihood it will lead to a high quality school. The interview will take place after formal submission of the application. The Bowling Green State University Application Review Team will complete individual, initial evaluations of the application prior to inviting the applicant to participate in an interview. Based on the quality of the applicant's proposal and the applicant interview, Bowling Green State University will make recommendations to its governing board regarding each application.

Participation

The interview team will be composed of the Bowling Green State University Application Review Team, including internal staff and external reviewers if needed. The applicant will have substantial discretion to determine both how many and which individuals best represent the proposed school. The applicant group should reflect the leadership of the community school effort, yet be small enough so each person will contribute substantively. Bowling Green State University will provide applicants with specific guidance designed to help determine which representatives should participate.

Planned Interview Structure

The interview team and the applicants will be provided an outline of the interview structure. Within this framework, interviewers have broad discretion to pursue the topics and questions, which they consider to be of particular importance. Interviews are not scripted and applicants should be prepared to discuss all aspects of an application including the education program, organizational plan, and financial plan.

Interviews typically include a combination of standard questions the interview team asks all applicants and application-specific questions prompted by questions or concerns raised by the application. While the stock questions help start the conversation, the most important questions are the specific follow-ups, which seek clarification or elaboration on the content of the application.

All representatives of the applicant group should have a meaningful opportunity to respond to questions, as appropriate. Unless the question is clearly directed at an individual (e.g., asking a particular director about his/her previous experience), the applicants should decide how to structure their responses.

Interviews will generally be up to ninety minutes in length and typically will proceed roughly as follows:

Topic	Time Allotted
Introduction and Overview	5-10 minutes
Applicant Introductions and Opening Statement	5-10 minutes
Questions and Discussion	60-70 minutes
Review of Next Steps and Opportunity for Applicant Questions	10 minutes

Ending the Interview
Applicants may have questions, which can be answered before discussing the next steps. However, Bowling Green State University will not respond to questions about how the application was rated nor the assessment of their interview.

Next Steps
The interview team will inform the applicants about the timing for an application decision. Bowling Green State University appreciates the applicant's efforts and recognizes the amount of time and energy put into the application and interview.

Interview Preparation Form

The primary purposes of the interview are to probe questions or concerns raised by the application and to evaluate the capacity of the applicant group to successfully implement the plan. The Interview Preparation Form is designed to prepare the interview team for an effective interview specifically based on the information provided in the application.

School Name:

Summary of Critical Issues
(Complete this section only after completing each of the following sections.)

Part & Section	Issue/Concern	Lead Question(s)	App Page #

Part 1: Education Program and School Design

Overall, how would you rate the quality of these sections? *(Provide a one-sentence summary.)*

What are the primary questions you would like to ask the applicant during the interview?

Part & Section	Issue/Concern	Lead Question(s)	App Page #

Part 2: Organizational Plan

Overall, how would you rate the quality of these sections? (*Provide a one-sentence summary.*)

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What are the primary questions you would like to ask the applicant during the interview?

Part & Section	Issue/Concern	Lead Question(s)	App Page #

Part 3: Financial Plan and Business Plan

Overall, how would you rate the quality of these sections? (*Provide a one-sentence summary.*)

What are the primary questions you would like to ask the applicant during the interview?

Part & Section	Issue/Concern	Lead Question(s)	App Page #

Interview Introduction Script

Good [morning or afternoon], my name is _____, and I will be serving as the chairperson for your interview.

First, let me congratulate your team for being invited to participate in this process, and thank you for dedicating your time and efforts toward creating a community school.

As you know, it is a rigorous process to be approved to open a community school, and in the end, only a few of the original number of applicants will have the opportunity to open a school. We thank you for committing to and engaging in this competitive process.

Please allow me to go over a few details about this interview, and then we will allow the interview team to introduce themselves, which will be followed by introductions and an opening statement from your team.

This interview will last up to 90 minutes. We will take 5 to 10 minutes for introductions and an opening statement from your team, approximately 70 minutes on questions regarding your application, and 10 minutes to answer your questions and discuss next steps.

Interviewers have read your application and developed questions based on the information provided so we can get both more information and clarifying information today.

We would like to set a few ground rules for the question portion of the interview. Your team should:

- Designate a primary respondent for each question. (The primary respondent may vary depending on the topic.)
- Expect to spend two to three minutes on the initial response to a question, allowing time for follow- up.
- Feel free to ask for clarification.

We have a number of topics to cover. Therefore, if we limit your response, it is in the interest of making sure you have a chance to respond to other questions or concerns.

After the interview, the interviewers will make recommendations to our governing board based on your written application and this interview as to whether your team should be considered to open a community school.

Those recommendations will factor into the final decision of whether to approve your application. Let us begin with introductions, starting with the interviewers.

[*Interviewer introductions*]

Please introduce your team and, if you would like, give us a brief overview of your vision for the school. Be sure your introductions include what role you have played in the application process, as well as what role you intend to have if the school is approved.

[*Applicant team introductions and opening statement*]

[*Questions and discussion begins]*

Sample Interview Questions

Following is a list of sample interview questions grouped by application section. Not all questions will be asked in any one interview. Rather, the most important topics addressed will be based specifically on the application.

Section	Question
Introduction	If approved, what are the biggest challenges you will have between now and opening day?
	Walk me through what a typical day will look like for a student in the [highest year offered in the first year].
	What are the greatest strengths of the school?
	What do you see as the greatest strengths of your application?
Education Program and School Design – Mission and Vision	What is the school's mission and vision?
	How will you measure success?
	During the first year, how will the governing body and the principal know whether the school is doing well?
	After four years, how will the governing body and principal know whether the school is doing well?
	What will be the primary characteristics of the school if it is successful?
Education Program and School Design – Curriculum and Instruction	How was the curriculum selected?
	What is the plan for selecting or developing the curriculum?
	What types of remediation do you expect students to need?
	What is the plan for working with students who are not meeting expectations?
	Who will provide tutoring and enrichment?
	When will tutoring happen?
	How will you make ability grouping decisions? How often and under what process will those decisions be re-evaluated?
	How do your proposed goals align with the expected levels of school performance set out by Bowling Green State University and the Ohio Department of Education?
Education Program and School Design – Special Populations	What is your plan for working with English Language Learner (ELL) students?
	How will you communicate with students and parents whose first language is not English?
	What is your plan for working with students with disabilities?

Section	Question
	How will you ensure students with disabilities are still learning even if they are in an in-school suspension or are suspended?
	How will you approach the potentially complex issues which accompany students who have an IEP and multiple diagnoses?
Education Program and School Design – Discipline	What will you do with students who exhaust all options in your discipline plan?
	How will you make suspension and expulsion decisions?
	How will teachers be trained on the discipline plan?
	What evidence is there which supports your method of discipline will be effective with your anticipated student population?
	What will you do if there are potential legal consequences for student conduct?

Section	Question
Education Program and School Design – Parent and Community Engagement	How will you engage the community in your school, and vice versa?
	What efforts have you made to build relationships in the community to date?
Education Program and School Design – Recruitment and Marketing	How will you ensure students from deprived and disadvantaged families have an opportunity to attend your school?
	Why would parents want to enroll their students in your school?
	Why would students want to enroll in your school?
Organizational Plan – Governance	What are the governing authority's responsibilities?
	How will you recruit governing authority members to fill identified skill gaps?
	How will governing authority members evaluate the principal?
	What opportunities will there be for parental involvement and input in the school's governance?
Organizational Plan – Leadership and Staffing	What makes your school's principal uniquely qualified to lead your school?
	What are the primary qualifications you are looking for in [*TITLE OF POSITION*]?
	What will be the primary responsibilities of the [*TITLE OF POSITION*]?
	What kinds of teachers do you need to implement this program well?
	What is your plan for recruiting such teachers?

Organizational Plan – Professional Development	What type of professional development will you need to do before opening?
	What kind of professional development will you regularly provide?
Organizational Plan – Teacher Evaluation	How, and for what purpose, will teachers be evaluated?
	How often will you conduct teacher evaluations?
Organizational Plan – Facilities	What buildings have you explored or identified?
	What are you essential building needs?
	What will be the transportation options to and from your desired location?
Financial Plan and Business Plan – Startup Costs	In the first three years, what parts of the budget depend on grants and other supplemental funding?
Financial Plan and Business Plan – Financial Viability	What adjustments will you make if initial enrollment is 10% lower than anticipated?
	What is the plan for achieving financial sustainability?
Financial Plan and Business Plan – Financial Capacity	Who will be responsible for financial systems and management? If it is a management company, how will the governing board provide oversight?
	Has the governing board and management company discussed specific terms of an agreement?
	Who will monitor the school's finances on a regular basis and how?
	How will your education program change to serve the local student population?
Replicators and Schools Contracting with Management Companies – Education Program Design	How will those changes impact your [*BUDGET, STAFFING, PD, etc.]?*
	Explain the school's reason for changing authorizer and disclose if the school has been non-renewed for cause by the current sponsor.
Schools with Current Sponsorship	What disciplinary actions from the past three years, including corrective action plans, probation notices, and intent to suspend/suspension notices, have been levied by the current sponsor?
	What have the results been from the past three years of compliance or academic evaluations of the school by the current sponsor?