



# Model Laboratory Taskforce

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# FAQ's

According to HB 520, a “public charter school” is defined as a public school that:

- (1) Is a public body corporate and politic, exercising public power, including the power in name to contract and be contracted with, sue and be sued, and adopt bylaws not inconsistent with this section;
- (2) Has autonomy over decisions, including but not limited to matters concerning finance, personnel, scheduling, curriculum, and instruction;
- (3) Is governed by an independent board of directors;
- (4) Is established and operating under the terms of a charter contract between the public charter school's board of directors and its authorizer;
- (5) Is a public school to which parents choose to send their children;
- (6) Is a public school that admits students on the basis of a random and open lottery if more students apply for admission than can be accommodated;
- (7) Offers a comprehensive instructional program within a public school district;
- (8) Operates in pursuit of a specific set of educational objectives as defined in its charter contract; and
- (9) Operates under the oversight of its authorizer in accordance with its charter contract.

# What happens next? What happens during the application process?

- Conduct an open town hall on Monday, November 27th in the Perkins Building from 6-8pm.
- Engage stakeholder groups in a strategic vision and planning initiative to guide the charter application process and transition.
- Establish a Model Steering Committee and Charter Application Drafting Committee by December 15th.
  - These committees will include Model faculty/staff, parent representatives, and ECU faculty/staff.
- Evaluate resources needed to ensure adequate support of the planning, application, and transition phases of the process.
- The Office of Development and Alumni Relations will work to identify a fundraising team and dedicate staffing resources to the Model campaign.
  - Initial planning meeting scheduled for December 1<sup>st</sup>
- Parent and alumni leaders will be asked to dedicate time and resources to working with the Development team to create a fundraising plan.

# What is the timeline for application approval?

- Complete a “draft” of the application by February 28th
- Share the draft with stakeholders March 1-16
- Revise draft and review potential application by April 1st
- Finalize statutory changes needed to accommodate currently enrolled Model students by April 15.
- Submit application to Madison County Schools by April 15<sup>th</sup>.
- If rejected, file an appeal with the Kentucky Board of Education within 30 days.
  - On appeal to the KBE, the standard of review will be whether or not the authorizer’s decision regarding the charter school was “contrary to the best interests of the students or community.”
  - It is the viewpoint of the committee that Model has already demonstrated operation in the best interests of students and the community.
- If KBE recommends approval and Madison County Schools denies a second time, KBE may jointly authorize the charter with Madison County schools.

# Will current Model students be guaranteed enrollment in Model as a charter school?

- As the law is currently written, a new charter application would not provide guaranteed enrollment for current Model students.
- A statutory amendment to address this issue is being pursued.
- Additionally, President Benson and Board of Regents have stated that any viable solutions moving forward will require accommodation of existing Model Lab students.
- To that end, if a legislative solution is not recognized, the implementation of the Charter would be delayed or phased in to preserve enrollment for current students.
- Any current Model students who are in-district and wish to maintain enrollment in 2018 will have that opportunity.

# Will Model continue to serve students with special needs?

- Yes, Model would continue to serve students with special needs. A public charter “shall not have entrance requirements.”
- According to KDE,
  - *“A public charter school shall not discriminate against any student, employee, or any other person on the basis of ethnicity, religion, national origin, sex, disability, special needs, athletic ability, academic ability, or any other ground that would be unlawful if done by a public school.” (Section 3)*
  - *Charter schools are NOT exempt from health, safety, civil rights and disability rights requirements in state and federal law. (Section 3).*
  - *Authorizers may give preference to “...applications that demonstrate the intent, capacity, and capability to provide comprehensive learning experiences to...” at risk students and special needs students. (Section 5)*

## Under the Charter, what entity operates Model and what is the role of ECU?

- Stakeholder feedback clearly indicated that a closer and more collaborative relationship between ECU academic programs and services and Model is necessary to maximize the strengths of both. The comprehensive strategic planning process will research, review and offer strategies to accomplish this goal.
- ECU would maintain operational control of Model and the ECU Board of Regents, with the addition of parent representatives, would act as the governing board. As authorizer, Madison County schools would monitor performance as it pertains to the charter contract. Madison County Schools would not have operational control of the school.

# Under the Charter, what entity operates Model and what is the role of ECU?

- According to KDE,
  - *“Per its definition, a public charter school has autonomy over decisions, including but not limited to, matters concerning finance, personnel, scheduling, curriculum, and instruction. (HB 520 Section 1.(12)(b)) However, a public charter must: “Ensure students' participation in the required state assessment of student performance, as required under KRS 158.6453.” (Section 3.(3)(g)). The charter is required to report assessment performance to the KBE per HB 520, Section 7.(d)(4).*
  - *HB 520, while generally exempting charter schools from statutes and regulations, requires adherence to all health, safety, civil rights and disability statutes and regulations (Section 3), all regulations promulgated by the KBE applying to charter schools and all other requirements mandated by HB 520 (Sections 1, 3, 10 and 11). Most importantly, a charter school must adhere to the charter contract with the authorizer. Any charter contract should contain high expectations and accountability requirements for the charter school, including performance reports that must detail how the charter is addressing student achievement. (Section 9)*
  - *HB 520 The board of directors of the public charter school shall have final authority over policy and operational decisions of the public charter school, although the decision-making authority may be delegated to the administrators and staff of the school in accordance with the provisions of the charter contract (Section 8).*

## When will a lottery take place? When will current students know if they will continue to be able to attend Model?

- As stated in Q3 above, any current Model students who are in-district and wish to maintain enrollment in 2018 will have that opportunity.
- It may also be possible for out-of-district students from counties with reciprocal agreements to attend the charter. This is not clear under current regulations so we are asking for additional information regarding this possibility.
- In terms of a statutory changes needed for placement of current Model students in a new charter, answers should be known by the end of the 2018 legislative session, April 2018.

# Who will be eligible to apply for Model as a charter school?

- All in-district students who opted to apply would be eligible to participate in the lottery process.
- It may also be possible for out-of-district students from counties with reciprocal agreements to attend the charter. This is not clear under current regulations so we are asking for additional information regarding this possibility.
  - According to KDE, *“attendance areas for charter schools are the district boundaries where the charter is located.”*

## Will siblings receive priority enrollment?

- Once the charter is in place, siblings will receive priority enrollment
- According to KDE, “*HB 520 requires enrollment preferences for students that attended the school the previous year and for siblings. Returning students are enrolled first and are not required to participate in the lottery. (Section 2)*”

## Will students currently on the waiting list receive priority in a lottery for enrollment?

- No, the lottery system for a new charter would not recognize current waitlist placement for priority enrollment.

## Will these options require tuition in the current or modified form?

- No tuition will be charged for students attending a public charter.
- If a phase out plan is implemented, students attending under the current Model format would continue to pay tuition at rates similar to the current fee structure. The dramatically increased fee structure discussed during previous town halls related to the implementation of a full private school model. This type of increase would not be necessary during a phase out process. It is possible that tuition would increase incrementally as in previous years to support increased operational costs. This type of plan will be thoroughly vetted over the coming months.

# How will Model be funded as a charter school? How will the funding change from the current structure?

- Current structure: 1/3 SEEK, 1/3 tuition, 1/3 ECU general fund
- Charter structure: SEEK, Federal, Local, and ECU general fund
  - Exact proportions are not yet determined
  - In early years, the ECU general fund contribution would be used to fund the debt service for a building.
  - Once the charter is fully established, the amount of ECU general fund contribution may decrease.

# Does the charter school designation take money away from Madison County Schools?

- Local and federal dollars allocated for Model students that are currently maintained by Madison County Schools would be redirected to Model. These are per pupil funds tied to the students served by Model that are not passed on under the current contract.

## Will enrollment stay the same or increase as a charter school?

- The size of Model as a charter is something that has not yet been determined. The next phase of this process is to engage in strategic planning, which will include determination of the appropriate size for Model.

# Will transportation be provided as a charter school?

- Transportation arrangements between a charter school and the district are addressed in the legislation.
- According to KDE,
  - “If a local school district provides transportation to students attending a public charter school under terms agreed upon by the local school district and the public charter school in the charter contract, the local school district is not required to transfer transportation funds.”
  - “If a local school district does not provide transportation to students attending a public charter school, proportionate transportation funds must be transferred to the public charter school.”
  - “The amount of funds transferred must be calculated by multiplying the total amount of transportation funds the local school district receives by a fraction, the numerator of which equals the number of students attending the public charter school who would otherwise be transported by the local school district, and the denominator of which equals the total number of students transported by the local school district.”

# Will the structure and curriculum at Model change in a charter school designation?

- The structure and curriculum are left to the discretion of the charter school.
- According to KDE, *“Per its definition, a public charter school has autonomy over decisions, including but not limited to, matters concerning finance, personnel, scheduling, curriculum, and instruction.”*
- Structure and curriculum should be further evaluated during the planning phase and appropriate recommendations for change included in the mission, vision, and strategic plan of the school, as well as the application.

## What is the timeline for construction of a new school? How much will it cost to build a new school?

- The timeline for construction depends on timing of the application and implementation of the charter school. A delayed or phased-in approach will likely delay building a new facility.
- The exact cost for a new building has not been established. Estimates based on previous model put cost at around \$45 Million. The next phase will include building specifications, including location and cost.

## If the charter school designation is not approved, what happens to Model?

- The ECU administration and Board of Regents will re-evaluate the options available to maintain Model. During the Model Taskforce process, most solutions discussed were not seen as viable options by many of the stakeholders. However, during phase two of the planning process additional alternatives need to be re-explored and vetted for viability. These options would be presented as alternatives in the event that the charter is not approved.

# QUESTIONS