



## Memorandum

**To:** Charter School Review Committee  
**From:** Institute For the Transformation of Learning  
**Subject:** Charter Application Process  
**Date:** May 29, 2024

*This memo outlines recommendations to the charter application process.*

- 1. Charter Application Timeline-** The rationale for changing the timeline of the charter application process includes feedback from the previous application cycle. The proposed timeline allows more time for applicants to move through each phase.

	Current	Proposed
<b>Phase I-</b> <i>Letter of Intent &amp; Prospectus</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> Friday November	1 <sup>st</sup> Friday December
<i>Formal Interview and Scoring Process (CSRC meeting)</i>	November	February
<b>Phase II- New Applicant Capacity Interview- ITL (if asked to submit full application)</b>	December	March
<i>Full application submission and technical review (ITL)</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> Friday January	April
Applicant Presentation to CSRC and recommendation for approval or denial of the application	March	May/June
<b>Phase III</b> •Financial Impact Statement Submitted	March - December	July- November
•Review and Approval or Denial by Steering and Rules		

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and then the Common Council (*City attorney prepares proposed contract.)		
•Negotiation of final contract with City Attorney		
•Notice to DPI		

- 2. Priority Education Models:** Currently, the CSRC accepts a variety of applicants and educational models. **The recommendation is for the CSRC to consider prioritizing applications based on a certain criterion.** By prioritizing educational models, we aim to support the development of charter schools that are innovative, inclusive, and effective in meeting the diverse needs of Milwaukee’s students and the demands of the community. This is based on educational and workforce trends that reflect a shift towards educational programs particularly in high schools that are evolving to meet the changing demands of the workforce, technological advancements, and diverse student needs. Additionally, based on recommendations from the National Association of charter School Authorizers (NACSA), authorizers should explore new ways of assessing need and demand for educational programs.

**Recommendation:** *The CSRC will conduct a rigorous review process to evaluate applications based on their alignment with the priority educational model, potential for impact, and overall feasibility. Applications that do not meet these priority criteria may be considered on a case-by-case basis but will not be given the same level of preference.*

**Priority Educational Model:** The CSRC is committed to fostering innovative and high-quality educational opportunities that address the unique needs of our community. As part of our strategic goals, we prioritize applications for new charter schools that propose educational models aligned with our key focus area.

- **High School (9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grades)**
- **Trades and Vocational Programs:** *education and training in building trades including carpentry, electrical, and HVAC systems, concrete, mechanics, etc. providing pathways to certifications, apprenticeships, and post-secondary education.*

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Here are some key points derived from various studies and reports to support priority application in the trades:

### 1. Demand for Skilled Labor:

- **Workforce Shortages:** The construction industry is facing a significant shortage of skilled workers. According to a report by the Associated General Contractors of America, 81% of construction firms are having difficulty filling hourly craft positions.
- **High Demand Occupations:** The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that construction occupations will grow faster than the average for all occupations, adding about 700,000 new jobs from 2020 to 2030 .

### 2. Economic Benefits:

- **Earning Potential:** Skilled tradespeople often earn competitive wages without the burden of student loan debt associated with a four-year college degree. Research by the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce shows that many workers in construction trades can earn salaries comparable to those with bachelor's degrees.
- **Job Security:** The demand for infrastructure improvement and maintenance, along with new construction projects, ensures job security and steady employment opportunities for skilled tradespeople.

### 3. Educational Outcomes:

- **Engagement and Graduation Rates:** Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs, including those focused on construction trades, have been shown to improve student engagement and reduce dropout rates. Students in CTE programs are more likely to graduate high school compared to their peers in traditional academic programs.
- **Post-Secondary Success:** CTE students are often better prepared for post-secondary education and training programs. They tend to have higher enrollment rates in apprenticeships and technical colleges, leading to successful careers in their chosen fields.

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#### 4. Skills Development:

- **Practical Skills:** Trade schools provide hands-on, practical training that directly translates to job readiness. Students gain real-world experience through internships, apprenticeships, and project-based learning.
- **Soft Skills:** These programs also teach valuable soft skills, such as teamwork, problem-solving, and time management, which are highly valued in the workforce.

#### 5. Community and Economic Impact:

- **Local Economy:** Establishing a construction trade high school can have positive ripple effects on the local economy. It supports local businesses by providing a steady stream of skilled workers and can attract new businesses looking for a skilled labor pool.
- **Community Development:** Schools focusing on trades can engage in community projects, providing services and improvements that benefit the local area while giving students practical experience.

#### 6. Equity and Access:

- **Opportunities for All:** Trade schools can provide opportunities for students who might not thrive in traditional academic settings, offering pathways to well-paying careers and economic mobility.
- **Diverse Pathways:** They cater to diverse learning styles and interests, ensuring that all students have the chance to succeed based on their strengths and preferences.

#### Supporting Studies and Reports:

- **National Center for Education Statistics (NCES):** Research shows that students who participate in CTE programs have higher rates of graduation and post-secondary enrollment .
- **Harvard Graduate School of Education:** The Pathways to Prosperity report emphasizes the importance of developing multiple pathways to career success, including through trade schools and apprenticeships .

practical skills and career readiness that align with current workforce needs and contribute to both individual and community success.

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**References:**

1. Associated General Contractors of America: 2021 Workforce Survey Results
2. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics: Employment Projections
3. Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce: The Overlooked Value of Certificates and Associate's Degrees
4. National Center for Education Statistics: Career and Technical Education (CTE) Statistics
5. National Center for Education Statistics: CTE Statistics
6. Harvard Graduate School of Education: [Pathways to Prosperity Report](#)