

CHARTER SCHOOL FACILITY TIPS - 2017

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Part III, Section 16, “Facilities” - Application Tips

1. Address all requirements described in the **Model Florida Charter School Application**

If site is acquired:

- Describe location, size and layout.
- How many classrooms, support areas, etc, total square footage?
- Get letter from city/county that facility is zoned properly for a charter school.
- Make sure the budget addresses the facility costs.

If site is not acquired:

- Describe the desired location, size and layout. How else are you going to begin a search?
- Typically describe that you will use realtors to locate space. Go further to acknowledge that you may need an architect if facility requires modifications to come into code compliance.
- Make sure the budget addresses the facility costs.

I'll be looking to make sure you have an understanding of your facility needs:

- 1) I will first look for what size of facility you are budgeting. It has to match the budget template!
- 2) Plan on minimum 55 sf/student.
- 3) Plan on a minimum \$12 /sf lease rate (unless you can document a lesser amount)
- 4) That equates to \$660/student if you chose that approach.

2. Charter school facilities are regulated by the local (city of county) authorities. You will eventually need to get approval from the local authorities.

- Building Department, Fire Department, Zoning, Health Department. Do not commit to a lease without obtaining tentative approvals.

3. Do not plan on surplus school district facilities being available. Experience has been that existing charter schools may be invited to compete for surplus facilities on the rare occasion when such facilities become available.
4. Codes and other regulations compare mostly to private schools, not churches (common mistake).
 - Do not assume that a former charter school facility was code compliant. Many cities may have overlooked important codes for previous charter schools that have since been discovered and cannot be ignored.

“Biggest Facility Problems”

- Interior corridors are required to be 6’ wide minimum.
 - If no fire sprinklers, classrooms are required to have emergency escape windows or doors that open directly to the outside. Corridor walls and doors are required to be fire rated.
5. Make sure to tell me if you plan double sessions or have some other academic plan that does not require all students in the facility at the same time.
 6. Many applications assume the facility grows each year to match the student population. That might work on paper. It is up to you to figure how to make it work in reality.
 7. Tell us if you have a landlord offering discounted lease rates in the early years. Provide a letter confirming that discount.