

# Iowa State Board of Education

## Executive Summary

January 15, 2026

**Agenda Item:** Overview of the Charter Application Reviewer Process

**State Board**

**Goal:** Goal 5

**State Board**

**Role/Authority:**

The State Board of Education is the sole authorizer of Iowa charter schools Iowa Code section 256E.1(4).

**Presenter(s):** Barbara Ohlund, Executive Officer 4

Division of PK-12 Learning

**Attachment(s):** None

**Recommendation:** It is recommended that the State Board hear and discuss this information.

**Background:** Iowa Code chapter 256E established charter school law, under which both local school boards and founding groups may apply to the State Board of Education for approval to establish and operate a charter school. The Iowa Department of Education conducts a comprehensive five-step review process that includes evaluation of the application, an extensive capacity interview, and a public forum hosted by the applicant. The process concludes with a recommendation to the State Board to approve or deny the application.