



READY TO OPEN MEETING ROLE PLAY

Watertown Public Schools (authorizer) is conducting a Ready to Open meeting with its newest charter school, Nero Elementary, that plans to open in a little over a month and serve 200 students in K-3 grades (growing eventually to a K-5 school serving 900 students). Watertown staff have asked that board members, the school leader, and anyone else integral to the start up of the school be present for this meeting taking place at the site of the new school.

BACKGROUND

The start-up coordinator hired to manage the start-up process left shortly after the authorizer approved the school. This coordinator was integral to the authorizer's assessment of the applicant's ability to implement its plan. The new coordinator hired a school leader who left three weeks ago. A new leader was hired, but has only been on the job for two days. Additionally:

- The school site passed inspection; however, the bathrooms are completely unusable as toilets and sinks need to be replaced. Last week two classrooms experienced extensive damage due to a roof leak and there is concern this will not be fixed before school starts.
- About 7 of 10 teachers have been hired. Outstanding positions include: 2nd grade teacher, special education resource specialist/teacher, and the 3rd kindergarten teacher. According to the start-up plan, the staff and leadership planned for a professional development retreat next week.
- Enrollment is at 60 percent of projected, but the school is hosting a major open house carnival in three weeks and says it has upped its recruitment game.
- Diverging from the application, the school now plans to require all students to take public transportation to the school site. It plans to have all parents sign a waiver.
- Materials, including curriculum, are either on site or scheduled to arrive within the next two weeks.
- The board meets biweekly, is monitoring the start-up coordinator, and has approved the new leader. The school is over its pre-operational year budget by 7 percent, mainly due to the hiring of the new start-up coordinator and school leader.

TASK

What do you need to know to have confidence that this school will be ready to open? Develop 2-3 questions to ask the board members, school leader, and/or the start-up coordinator that will help you assess this school's readiness to open.