Adams 12 Five Star Schools

New Charter School Application

May 2020

Adams 12 Five Star School developed this Charter School Application and Evaluation Standards (Adams 12 Charter School Application”) based upon recommendations and best-practice charter authorizing principles from the Colorado Association of Charter School Authorizers (CACSA) and the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA). This document incorporates extensive feedback from multiple school district authorizers, the Colorado Charter School Institute (CSI), the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) Schools of Choice Unit, and the Colorado League of Charter Schools (CLCS).
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Application Timeline.
Additional application timeline and format information is provided in District Policy 1600, updated June 2020.

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Letter of Intent

Following instructions provided on the Adams 12 Charter Schools webpage, please submit an Intent to Apply to Become a Charter School at least 45 days prior to September 1st of the year before the school intends to open. The intent letter should be no more than three (3) pages in length and should address the following items:

1. The name of the proposed charter school.
2. The names and contact information identifying the proposed school’s primary contact person for communication related to the application, and identifying any other individuals who form the core group or steering committee that is working on the development of the school.
3. The name(s) of any charter management (“CMO”) or education management (“EMO”) partner(s) expected to contract with the school.
4. A brief rationale explaining why the charter school is being proposed, including the target student population and the curriculum model.
5. A brief explanation of how the school will serve a diverse student population, including educationally at-risk students (i.e. special education and second language students).
6. The proposed school address (if known) or target location area for the school.
7. The proposed opening date of the school.
8. The proposed grade levels to be served in the school’s first year through year five.
9. The names of any other districts to which the school is also applying.
10. Does the applicant intend to apply for startup funds through a Colorado Charter School Program (“CCSP”) grant?

A. Executive Summary

The Executive Summary should build upon information which, in some cases, was explained in the Intent to Apply to Become a Charter School letter submitted to the District in June. (That letter should be included in the school’s completed application.) The Executive Summary should be two-to-five pages long, highlighting key elements of the application for reviewers.

1. The circumstances and motivating goals that brought the applicant team together to propose this charter school.
2. Identify any organizations (including charter or education management partners), agencies, consultants or institutions of higher education that are partners in planning and establishing this charter school, along with a brief description of their current and planned role and any resources they have contributed or plan to contribute to the school’s development.
3. Primary contact person and Steering Committee:
   a. Identify the name of the School’s primary contact person for communication throughout the application process, and the names and roles of all Steering Committee members.
   b. Indicate if any of the Steering Committee members currently operate or are otherwise involved with other charter schools.
   c. Cite the individual and collective expertise or focus of the Steering Committee members to establish a high-quality charter school.
   d. Cite the capacity of the Steering Committee members to assume responsibility for public funds, administration, and governance.
   e. Identify which (if any) Steering Committee members will become founding board members, and the plan for recruitment of initial Board members to be in place by contract approval.
4. Provide aggregate information concerning the grade levels and schools in which prospective pupils are currently enrolled, along with demographic information for the target population
5. Provide a rationale for the added value that the proposed charter school would bring to the authorizing school district
6. Address how the proposed school will effectively meet the educational challenges impacting the targeted student population
7. Resume of Lead Administrator (if known)
8. Educational program or curriculum model overview.
9. Any unique features, such as a non-traditional school year, longer school day, key partner organizations, multiple campuses, school culture, etc.
10. Describe the school’s core values about teaching and learning
11. Key programmatic features the school will implement to accomplish its vision and mission as described in Section B.
12. Proposed grade levels to be served during the initial five years
13. Projected enrollment for each grade level in years 1-5
14. Projected enrollment percentages of the following, explaining how each projection was determined.
   a. English Language Learners
   b. Exceptional and Educationally Disadvantaged Students
   c. Free and Reduced Lunch Students
   d. Minority

**B. Vision and Mission Statements**
1. Provide a Vision Statement that is no more than two to five sentences and provides a clear description of how the school will impact the community.
2. Provide a Mission Statement that is no more than two to five sentences and defines how the school will accomplish the vision statement and how the school will meet the needs of the school’s specified target population. (Either address measurable outcomes within the school’s Mission or within the Goals and Objectives section.)

**C. Goals, Objectives, and Pupil Performance Standards**
1. Outline the clearly measurable annual and interim performance measures and metrics related to student achievement, growth, and postsecondary and workforce readiness as applicable. Ensure these goals are aligned to the vision and mission of the school in establishing and monitoring its progress in accelerating student achievement. Include a rationale for how the proposed measures, metrics and goals were developed.
2. Articulate a clear plan to meet or exceed state accountability measures and expectations that aligns with the authorizer’s performance framework.
3. Explain the means for addressing growth gaps as they emerge (all school levels) and post-secondary and workforce readiness (secondary schools).

**D. Evidence of Support**
1. Please submit a table or chart summarizing the Letters of Intent to Enroll (LOI) received. Include details addressing how many students intend to enroll in each grade offered in year one, by grade
level, based on the LOI’s received. Only data that is considered current as of the date of the application should be included.

2. Please also provide letters of support from community organizations, businesses, potential partners, or educational institutions that support the application.

E. Educational Program

Rationale for Educational Program
1. Provide a rationale for selecting the chosen educational program model, curriculum and instructional practices, including research-based evidence that supports the effectiveness of the selected model with the targeted student population.
   a. If substantially different from current offerings in the region, provide rationale for the chosen program.
   b. If not substantially different from current offerings in the region, provide rationale for the added value the proposed educational program will provide.

Alignment
1. Describe how the proposed curriculum is aligned to state model content standards.
   Provide examples such as:
   a. Scope and Sequence
   b. Curricular Framework, including subjects to be taught by grade
   c. Sample lessons showing alignment to state standards
   d. Research that led to the curricular choices

2. Detail how curriculum objectives, content, and skills will be aligned horizontally and vertically.
3. Describe an organized, cohesive curricular design that aligns to the vision, mission and philosophy of the school, along with research to demonstrate that it will meet the needs of the target population.
4. Provide information for high school courses offered, graduation plans and credits as applicable.

Instructional Strategies
1. Discuss the process and methods that will differentiate instruction based on identified student needs.
2. Describe schoolwide instructional methods and strategies that will promote rigor and high expectations for all students.
3. Describe culturally responsive, research-based instructional methods and strategies that will be employed to meet the needs of the targeted student population.
4. Describe how the school will monitor implementation of curriculum with fidelity to include scope and sequence and exit standards.
5. Describe how the school will ensure that educational practices are aligned to the school’s educational philosophy and are demonstrated to be successful with the identified targeted student population.
6. Describe how technology will be implemented into the overall educational program. Describe a technology plan that clearly meets the vision and mission of the school.
7. Submit a proposed annual calendar, bell schedule, and student-teacher contact time as an attachment to the application.
Supplemental Programming
1. Describe the supplemental programming will be offered (i.e., electives, special courses, summer school, extra-curricular activities, social/emotional programming, remediation and intervention and staffing and funding needs).

F. Plan for Evaluating Pupil Performance
1. Describe how the school will use assessment data (baseline, formative, summative, yearly and state and federally required testing) to monitor the progress of all students. Describe how various forms of data will be managed and the systems that will be used. Describe how student progress will be shared with the school community.
2. Describe the corrective actions the school will take if it falls short of student academic achievement or growth goals.
3. Provide the school’s proposed Assessment Plan. Be sure to address the following:
   a. Describe the types of assessments that will be given and their frequency.
   b. Describe how assessments will measure what the students are intended to learn.
   c. Describe how the school will assure that the assessment measures are relevant, reliable and valid.
   d. Describe the plan to identify people with assessment expertise who are involved in the school’s assessment planning and development.
   e. Describe the professional development that will be provided to faculty to implement the assessment plan and identify alternative assessments.
   f. Describe how the assessment plan will inform and guide professional development.
   g. Describe how the assessment results will inform and foster refinement of curriculum and instruction.
   h. Identify how assessments will be used to allow early detection of students who are struggling.
   i. Describe how assessments will inform daily instructional practice.

G. Budget and Finance
Establishing Business Operations
1. Describe how the school will establish functional and accountable business operations. Include the following:
   a. The structure of the proposed business office, including identifying critical positions and roles.
   b. Describe how the school will establish an accounting system (cash management, purchasing, accounts payable/receivable, payroll, tracking of fixed assets).
   c. Describe the process for developing and managing the school’s budget from year to year.
   d. Identify checks and balances applicable to financial transactions, including spending limits, required additional signers, and other financial safeguards.
   e. Describe the school’s plan to contract for an annual independent audit.
   f. Describe any core services that will be contracted out related to business operations (i.e., bookkeeping, payroll, HR.)
   g. Describe the source and application of revenues and expenditures in the first five years, with particular attention to start-up costs. Include a detailed 5-year balanced budget (see budget template attached).
h. Describe anticipated private revenue sources, including contributions and grants. Note which have already been obtained and which are anticipated, as well as how each revenue stream will be used in support of non-core operational expenses.

i. Describe the school's plan for compliance with district, state, and federal accounting and reporting requirements.

j. Describe the school board's commitment to oversight of financial practices, including clear alignment to the other financial components in the application.

k. Include a description of anticipated salary and benefit costs.

Budget Narrative *(Please note, Section S requests information for budgets for serving students with special needs.)*

1. Clearly explain revenue and cost assumptions and the source of the assumptions.

2. Describe basic start-up costs, facility funding, FFE acquisition, curriculum, professional development, Title funds, and secured and unsecured grants. NOTE: The applicant should submit a budget that reflects a balanced operational forecast. If the school intends to apply for any grant, including the CCSP Start-Up Grant, a second budget should be submitted that reflects a balanced operational forecast without the proposed grant award(s).

3. Include anticipated administrative costs and plans for school growth with appropriate projections and timelines.

4. Demonstrate how the budget narrative is aligned with the vision and mission and the programs described in each section of the application, particularly identifying anticipated costs associated with the target population, including special populations.

5. Describe how the projected population enrollment is adequate to meet long-range plans for the chosen school model, staffing and facility needs.

2. Provide a contingency budget plan, with specific adjustments and related dollar amounts noted, to meet financial need if anticipated revenues (i.e., PPR) are lower than anticipated.

3. Set forth the minimum enrollment needed for viable operations, including maintaining a balanced budget.

4. Describe how the school will comply with employment law and personnel operations, including tax, payroll, retirement, insurance and background check requirements.

5. Address and demonstrate a clear understanding of and plan for compliance with the Financial Transparency Act (C.R.S. 22-44-301) and provide sample financial templates and reports, such as a dashboard template, as an attachment.

6. Summarize the following assumptions included in the budget narrative:
   a. Facility-projected costs;
   b. Insurance-costs (liability, Workers' Comp, building, etc.);
   c. Employment plans (salary, benefits, PERA, and insurance);
   d. Transportation, including field trips (if transportation will be offered);
   e. Insurance and liability costs;
   f. Food Services (if offered); and
   g. TABOR Reserve

Five-Year Budget

Provide a five-year budget that demonstrates a complete, realistic, and viable start-up and 5-year balanced operating budgets, based on current and anticipated PPR, plus items such as administrative costs payable to the district, insurance costs, salary and benefit, PPR, facility costs, special education...
staffing, professional and contracted services, classroom supplies and materials, technology, furnishings, general supplies and materials, and other such as food or transportation. Use a standard budget template for this purpose. Provide a budget based on the assumption of being funded at the current amount of PPR from the proposed authorizer.

H. Governance

Founding Board/Steering Committee Members
1. Describe the process by which the initial Board or Steering Committee members were identified.
2. Provide resumes of committee members as attachments to the application.
3. Describe the process to appoint or elect the initial governing board.
4. Describe the process and timeline by which the founding board will transition to an operational board.
5. Describe the nature and extent of parental and/or community member involvement in the board.
6. Include a draft Board Member Agreement and Conflict of Interest statement as attachments to the charter school application.

Board Procedures
1. Include board non-profit articles of incorporation and bylaws as an attachment to the charter school application.
2. Describe the length of board terms, a description of board officers and their roles, how often the board will meet, a description of the key expectations for board members and the following:
   a. Election of new members
   b. Number of parents to serve on the Board
   c. Number of community members to serve on the Board
   d. Number of positions on the Board voted on by parents, vs number of positions filled by appointment.
   e. Duties of individual board members and of the governing board as a whole
   f. How members will be held to and will hold themselves to:
      i) Responsibility to develop policies
      ii) Provide financial and operational oversight
      iii) Address parent and staff complaints
      iv) Commit to board training regarding governance best practices
      v) Development of a policy describing the relationship between the Board and the school leader, including a plan for hiring and evaluating the school leader
      vi) Compliance with statutory requirements regarding the staffing and role of the School Accountability Committee
      vii) Compliance with Open Meeting Statutes (Sunshine laws)
      viii) Compliance with Open Records laws and FERPA
      ix) Compliance with Conflict of Interest requirements
      x) Preparation, attendance and participation in scheduled board meetings
      xi) Understanding charter’s corporate documents and financial statements
I. Employees
1. Include a description of the relationship between the charter school and its employees, including whether employees are serving at-will or are under contract.
2. Include the proposed charter school’s employment policies or a plan for the timely development of employment policies, including a draft staff handbook if available.
3. Describe the Professional Development Plan for faculty. The discussion should include:
   a. How professional development is aligned and will help teachers operationalize the vision, mission, values, culture and goals of the school;
   b. How the daily schedule, staffing plan and budget align with the professional development plan;
   c. How professional development will support staff to meet the needs of students with academic challenges, students with IEP’s and 504’s, Gifted and Talented students and English language learners;
   d. How the professional development plan and teacher evaluations will use and be aligned with performance data;
   e. How professional development supports vertical and horizontal alignment;
   f. How professional development will change as the school grows and matures based on data; and
   g. How professional development will be evaluated.
4. Describe how the school’s teacher evaluation system will meet the intent of Colorado SB 10-191. Be sure to address:
   a. The role student progress and achievement play in teacher evaluations;
   b. The position that will have primary responsibility for evaluation;
   c. The frequency of teacher evaluations;
   d. How the evaluation system will be communicated to staff; and
   e. How the evaluation program will inform instruction.

J. Insurance Coverage
1. Describe the proposed insurance coverage the charter school will obtain. Be sure to address statutory requirements, including:
   a. Workers Compensation;
   b. Liability Insurance; and
   c. Coverage for buildings and contents.

K. Parent and Community Involvement
1. Please list existing community partnerships anticipated or currently in place with the Steering Committee or Board, including networking relationships. The nature of the partnership and provide a description of any planned resources or agreements, including a brief summary of each. Attach any relevant written agreements formalizing partnerships already in place.
2. Discuss how students and parents were informed of the proposed charter and what community meetings were conducted.
3. Describe the outreach efforts to prospective students, including at-risk populations, and identify the targeted student population, including at-risk students, for the proposed charter school.
4. Describe how parents and community groups were involved in the concept and development of the charter school.
5. Describe the plan to survey parents annually to assess success and satisfaction.
6. Discuss the school’s plan for ongoing parental and community involvement, including, if applicable,
   a. Volunteering;
   b. Monitoring child’s education;
   c. Accountability and governance; and
   d. Fundraising (if appropriate).
7. Describe how staff and board will engage with external partners to help build a network of support for the school.

L. Enrollment Policy
1. Detail the plan for student recruitment, including students with special needs, English Language Learners, Gifted and Talented students, at-risk students, and other educationally disadvantaged students.
2. Describe the outreach conducted by the founders to raise awareness in the targeted student population and their families about the proposed school, especially at-risk populations.
3. Provide the school’s enrollment policy and criteria for enrollment decisions that ensures non-discrimination throughout the enrollment process, including the authorizer’s proposed role in supporting this policy.
4. Describe the school’s criteria for priority for founding families, staff, etc. For schools using weighted lotteries, set forth the proposed weighting system to be used for educationally disadvantaged students, along with a rationale and formula to arrive at desired enrollment of these groups.

M. Transportation and Food Services

Transportation Services
If the applicant is proposing to offer transportation services, this section must be completed. If the school will not offer transportation services, describe what the school plans as an alternative.

1. Describe how the school will provide transportation services to students, including field trips. Be sure to address, at minimum, the following:
   a. How the plan will serve the needs of low-income students;
   b. How the plan will comply with insurance and liability issues; and
   c. How the plan will comply with state and federal rules and regulations.

Food Services
If the applicant is proposing to offer food services, this section must be completed. Access CDE’s website for more information about School Nutrition.

1. Describe how the school will provide food services to students. Please note if the application is approved, a likely part of contract negotiations will include that the school address the following:
   a. How the plan will serve the needs of low-income students;
   b. How the plan will comply with insurance and liability issues; and
   c. How the plan will comply with state/federal rules and regulations.
2. If offering a nutrition program offered by a School Food Authority, the applicant should affirm that the school will use federal Free and Reduced-Price Lunch (FRPL) Program forms and will distribute these to families. Further, that the school will apply federal policy in determining FRPL eligibility.

3. If not offering a nutrition program offered by a School Food Authority.
   a. Describe how students who would qualify for a Free and Reduced-Price lunch/breakfast or how students needing food will be accommodated.
   b. Describe how a Free and Reduced-Price lunch program will be provided. Indicate if the general fund is to be used for this purpose.

N. Facilities

Needs Assessment
1. Provide a facility needs assessment, outlining the necessary square footage for the expected student population and a plan for space utilization appropriate to the school design.

Facility Options
1. If a facility has been identified, describe the facility, the appropriate square footage for the expected student population, a plan for space utilization appropriate to the school design, tenant finish or other improvements needed for the facility and expected debt service, lease costs, and maintenance and upkeep costs of the facility.
2. If a facility has not been identified, describe potential facilities or locations. Address how each aligns with a facility needs assessment, and detail plans for ensuring that the facility complies with the zoning, fire code, and other requirements including but not limited to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
3. Provide a timeline for identification, selection, construction/repair, and lease or contract negotiations for the facility.
4. Discuss plans for ensuring student safety and security, including anticipated costs.

O. Waivers

Waivers of District Policy
Applicants should identify district policies for which the school intends to request a waiver. The applicant should explain the justification for the waiver requests, and should explain the replacement procedures and/or policies proposed to ensure that a sufficient plan exist to address the subject of the waiver.

Automatic Waivers of State Rule and Statute
The State Board of Education offers automatic waivers to state statutes and state rules for charter schools. Applicants may select from a list of waivers that have been automatically granted to charter schools upon the establishment of a signed charter contract. Because these waivers are automatically granted upon request, the applicant does not need to justify the waiver request. However, applicants should prepare a list of all automatic waivers requested, clearly explaining the replacement procedures and or policies proposed to ensure that a sufficient plan exists to address the subject of the waived statute. More information waivers can be accessed on CDE’s waiver webpage.
Non-Automatic Waivers of State Rule and Law
Charter schools may receive waivers from specified statutes once a charter contract has been established. This flexibility is intended to provide charters with the autonomy to fully implement the educational plan outlined in the school’s contract with the authorizing district. Charter school waiver requests must meet the requirements set in the Charter School Act (22-30.5-101, C.R.S.). Applicants should prepare a list of all non-automatic waivers requested. For each requested waiver, please provide the rationale and a replacement plan specifying the manner in which the charter school will comply with the intent of the waived statute.

P. Student Discipline, Expulsion or Suspension
1. Describe the school’s discipline policy, including suspension and expulsion processes, that aligns with federal civil rights, special education law, applicable state statute (CRS 22-33-105 and CRS 22-33-106), and district policies.
2. Detail how the charter proposes to handle student discipline, expulsion and suspension.
3. Detail how the charter will provide for an alternative education of expelled students.
4. Provide a copy of the student discipline policy, including suspension and expulsion.

Q. Serving Students with Special Needs
Programming
1. Detail how the school will accommodate the needs of all students. Rather than listing law or regulation, provide an explanation of how students will be served in the charter school. Information related to student identification, interventions, programming, assessment, progress monitoring, re-designation and exiting special programming should be addressed.
2. Describe how the charter school will implement programming and provide oversight for:
   a. Students identified as educationally disadvantaged students;
   b. Students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs);
   c. Students with Section 504 Plans;
   d. Students identified as English Language Learners;
   e. Students identified as Gifted and Talented; and
   f. Homeless students.
3. The plan for implementation must include a comprehensive description of:
   a. Programming models and processes that will be implemented to ensure accommodation, instruction, intervention and support for students on 504 plans or IEPs, or for students who are educationally disadvantaged (i.e., co-teaching, inclusion, resources, curriculum, grouping of students, plan for needed physical space or equipment, etc.);
   b. Programming models and processes that will be implemented to identify and accommodate students who are Gifted and Talented;
   c. Framework for oversight to ensure compliance with law and regulation (i.e. compliance with individualized plans, methods for progress monitoring and assessment, procedural compliance, chain of command, problem-solving/accountability process, etc.); and
   d. A description of the framework for identifying, monitoring and providing a continuum of support for all student to including universal, targeted and/or intensive needs. (MTSS/RtI).
Staffing
1. Describe how the school will hire and retain properly licensed staff to meet the needs of students with individualized needs. Describe the professional development plan for special education teachers, including a calendar of professional development days.
2. Describe the professional development plan for general education teachers and related service providers to have access to coaching, mentoring, and professional development specific to their practice to serve the needs of students with individualized needs, including a calendar of professional development days.
3. Describe the teacher-to-student ratio for special service providers that complies with authorizing district’s requirements for students with individualized needs.
4. Describe a plan to modify the instructional programs, practices, and strategies, as well as any schedule adjustments and any additional resources the school will employ to meet the needs of students with individualized needs.

Budget Narrative for Serving Students with Special Needs
1. Detail in the narrative how the budget will ensure required resources are in place and will be maintained to support all students, including students with individualized needs, 504 designations, READ Plans, Gifted and Talented, or educationally disadvantaged students. The description should include curricula and instructional materials; assessment materials; equipment; necessary staffing ratios in each identified area, according to authorizer ratio requirements; and professional development costs.
2. Describe any specialized services that are to be contracted out. Include services contracted to the authorizer, or to outside consultant(s), including special service providers and school nursing services.

R. Dispute Resolution Process
1. Describe how the school’s proposed dispute resolution process is aligned with statutory requirements (CRS 22-30.5-107.5) should an issue arise between the charter school and its chartering school district authorizer.

S. School Management Contracts
1. Provide a history of the operations of the education management provider, as well as a summary of the performance data for the schools the education management provider is managing at the time of the application or has managed previously, including documentation of academic achievement and school management success.
2. Provide evidence demonstrating the education management provider’s capacity for successful expansion while maintaining quality in the schools it is managing.
3. Provide evidence that there are no existing or potential conflicts of interest between the members of governing board of the proposed charter school and the education management provider.
4. Provide evidence that the management contract is negotiated at arm’s-length, with both parties having independent legal counsel.
5. Provide a plan adopted by the charter school governing board to evaluate the performance of the management company at least annually, including a copy of the instrument that will be used to conduct the evaluation.

6. State which staff will be employed by the management company vs. the school.

7. Provide a copy of the actual or proposed performance-based contract between the governing board of the school and the education management provider that specifies, at a minimum, the following material terms:

   a. Performance evaluation measures;
   b. The methods of contract oversight and enforcement that the governing board will apply;
   c. The compensation structure and all fees that the proposed charter school will pay to the education management provider; and
   d. The conditions for contract renewal and termination. The contract must be able to be severed by the school due to lack of satisfactory academic performance or for cause without undue burden to the school.

Appendix - School Management Contracts

If the applicant will be applying for a Colorado Charter School Program (“CCSP”) grant, the grant application must be included as an addendum to this charter school application by September 1 prior to the year in which the school plans to open. The CCSP grant requires the applicant to justify the composition and selection process of the governing board and explain how it will ensure input from stakeholders. The applicant must demonstrate its clear autonomy from outside entities and provide evidence that board members possess the necessary expertise and strong board preparation, practice, training and policy making ability in the areas of conflict of interest and financial and other required transparency.