DAC Ascent Charter Application Rubric

Evaluation Rubric

The revised Evaluation Rubric (Rubric) is the final section of the Charter School Application and Rubric (2020). This Charter School Application and Rubric is the result of a collaborative effort that involved the Colorado Association of Charter School Authorizers, (CACSA) the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) Schools of Choice Unit, the Colorado Charter School Institute (CSI) and the Colorado League of Charter Schools (CLCS). It is intended as a resource for Colorado charter school authorizers who desire to have a charter school application and rubric that is aligned to statute and reflects best practice. The Evaluation Rubric is a tool for both the Authorizer and reviewers, and the charter school applicant and planning team. The Authorizer and reviewers may use the Rubric to determine the quality of applications and to make approval decisions. The charter applicant may use the Rubric to guide the writing of their application and self-evaluate their application prior to submission to the Authorizer. Each main Application Section of the Rubric is mandated by state statute.

Overall Evaluation Factors
The Overall Section Rating provides a holistic evaluation of the application that considers each indicator as well as the Applicant's ability to clearly and comprehensively present the proposed school. The following factors are considered in the evaluation of the application.

- Comprehensiveness – The new school proposal has all essential pieces of the school's plan.
- Support - All statements are backed up with data, citations, or expert testimony.
- Mission Alignment – All pieces of the plan are working towards the same purpose.
- Cohesion – All pieces of the plan are integrated together.

Reviewer Note: Reviewers who are not evaluating the application in its entirety but instead are evaluating certain sections, should consider the aforementioned factors in their review.

Application Deal Breakers
The Rubric identifies sections of the application that are considered essential to opening a quality school, and typically appear as an Authorizer's more heavily weighted requirements. (These sections are identified with a ^ symbol.) It is anticipated a developer should only apply to an authorizer if all of these essential sections are developed to a level that inspires confidence in the reviewer team.

Rating Descriptions

Rating	Characteristics
Fully Developed	The response reflects a thorough understanding of key issues, such that the reviewer has essentially no unanswered questions about the section. It addresses the topic with specific and accurate information that shows thorough preparation; presents a clear, realistic picture of how the school expects to implement the criteria; and inspires confidence in the applicant's capacity to carry out the plan effectively. Examples or evidence are provided for all appropriate sections.
Mostly Developed	The response addresses or meets an appropriate level of expectation for these criteria, leaving only a few clarifying questions for the reviewer. Examples or evidence are provided for all appropriate sections if available. If examples or evidence are unavailable, a timeline to include or submit this information is stated in the application.
Partially Developed	The response meets the criteria in some respects but has substantial gaps in several areas, leaving a number of questions remaining for the reviewer. Examples and evidence may be found in a few appropriate sections.
Not Developed	The response is wholly undeveloped or significantly incomplete; demonstrates lack of preparation; or otherwise raises substantial concerns about the viability of the plan or the applicant's ability to carry it out. No examples or evidence are provided.

Status:

- Complete
- Did not ask for DAC to review

Executive Summary

A. Executive Summary: The majority of elements required in this section are evaluated throughout the remainder of the rubric; only elements not captured in other sections of the application are included.	
The application describes the student population based on publicly available demographic data including racial/cultural, socioeconomic, special needs, ELLs, and achievement data for the proposed school's area and comparable schools. The educational program reflects an understanding of the identified student population.	- Fully Developed - Mostly Developed - Partially Developed - Not Developed

Overall Rating & Supporting Narrative:

● Fully Developed	● Mostly Developed	● Partially Developed	● Not Developed

Strengths:
Not sure

Concerns:

Is this a tuition based school? There is not a tuition-free, classical K-12 school in the 27J school district and this program is supported with high demand. (Taken from the application) The presentation made it sound as if it was a tuition free school that would be representative of all students.

What questions do you have regarding this section?
- The plan states they would open with 8th or 9th grade? Do they have a clear plan for themselves?
- How are they going to determine where the school is going to be located?
- virtue in an orderly, disciplined environment.
- Ascent Classical Academy 27J ("ACA27J"), is committed to serving all students who are willing to work hard to be successful in the program.

What would your recommendation be based on this section:

- **Approve as is**
- **Approve with conditions. Please outline your conditions here:**
- **Deny. Please indicate why you believe it should be denied here:**
  The wording in this application is pretty clear that if you don't fit their mold or beliefs, you will be turned away or exited from the school. This school is too extreme for 27j's values and beliefs.

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Vision & Mission Statements

B. Vision & Mission Statements:	
The vision statement clearly describes the school's proposed impact on the community. *The mission statement clearly describes how the school will accomplish this vision, with a focus on the target student population.*	- Fully Developed - Mostly Developed - Partially - Developed Not Developed

Overall Rating & Supporting Narrative:			
● Fully Developed	● Mostly Developed	● Partially Developed	● Not Developed

Strengths:
connected to measurable outcomes just not specified

Concerns:
how will they support ALL kids?

What questions do you have regarding this section?

What would your recommendation be based on this section:

- **Approve as is**
- ● **Approve with conditions. Please outline your conditions here:**
  More specific information about how they will support all the students who may struggle in their system

  Deny. Please indicate why you believe it should be denied here:

Goals, Objectives & Pupil Performance Standards

^C. Goals, Objectives, & Pupil Performance Standards:	
The applicant articulates annual and interim goals for the school that align to the school's vision and mission, relate to state and authorizer performance indicators, and accelerate student achievement. There is a clear rationale for the development of the stated goals and plan for addressing performance gaps.	● Fully Developed ● Mostly Developed ● Partially Developed ● Not Developed

Overall Rating & Supporting Narrative:			
● Fully Developed	● Mostly Developed	● Partially Developed	● Not Developed

Strengths: There is a clear focus on meeting the needs of all students and all subgroups.

Concerns: Goals are too general and focused on lagging measures. There is no mention of any interim measures, only comparisons to state assessments.

What questions do you have regarding this section?

How will student learning and growth be measured throughout the school year? How will students in K-3 be monitored in compliance with the READ Act? Are there goals for K-3 students in regard to reading?

What would your recommendation be based on this section:

- ● **Approve as is**
- ● **Approve with conditions. Please outline your conditions here:**
- ● **Deny. Please indicate why you believe it should be denied here:**

  There is not enough information or detail included in this section. Goals are general and there is no information regarding how these measures were selected.

Evidence of Support

^D. Evidence of Support:	
The applicant provides sufficient evidence that an adequate percentage of parents, pupils, and community members support the formation of the charter school, including a sufficient number of parents and pupils intending to enroll in the school should it open.	● Fully Developed ● Mostly Developed ● Partially Developed ● Not Developed

Overall Rating & Supporting Narrative:

● Fully Developed	● Mostly Developed	● Partially Developed	● Not Developed

Strengths:

Concerns:
Ascent was lacking information on their document. They stated that there were no options for Classical Public School options in 27J, making them a more exclusive to the district. They have an astounding 514 letters of intent but there is no clarification if any of these are 27J families.

They did not complete the secondary ask of detailed dates and the chart they listed was mostly left unanswered, despite stating a desire to open in 2023.

What questions do you have regarding this section?

What would your recommendation be based on this section:

- **Approve as is**
- **Approve with conditions. Please outline your conditions here:**
- **Deny. Please indicate why you believe it should be denied here:**
  I would not vote in favor of Ascent with the sheer reason being that I don't believe it is their intent to prioritize service for our 27J students. It seems more like an opportunity for families of financial stability close to the west side (Westminster and Broomfield were mentioned in the meeting) and they just need a district - any district will do- to sponsor them. While it would be intriguing and suitable for families to have access to a classical program, I believe 27J has always been focused on OUR kids and we need to stay the course. We have so many families in our district that need schools intended for their children. I truly believe Capstone is that school.

Educational Program

^E. Educational Program:	
Rationale: *There is a strong research-based rationale for the selection of educational model, curriculum, and instruction that is evidence-based and effective with the target population. This includes Include a description of how the school developed a curriculum that is culturally responsive and free of bias.*	● Fully Developed ● Mostly Developed ● Partially Developed ● Not Developed
Alignment: *The proposed curriculum is already aligned vertically and horizontally as well as to the state model content standards and school's mission and vision across all grade levels, or there is a reasonable plan for aligning the curriculum prior to the school's opening. If applicable, the applicant provides information for high school course offerings, graduation plans, and credits.*	● Fully Developed ● Mostly Developed ● Partially Developed ● Not Developed

Instructional Strategies: *The applicant provides a strong rationale for the school's instructional philosophy, including the process and methods used to differentiate the curriculum, the research to support the selected instructional model with the target population, the alignment to educational program, and the extent to which technology will be implemented into the educational program. The school's proposed calendar and bell schedule support the school's mission and meet state and authorizer requirements.*	● Fully Developed ● Mostly Developed ● Partially Developed ● Not Developed
Supplemental Programming: *Proposed supplemental programming are thoroughly described and align with the school's educational program.*	● Fully Developed ● Mostly Developed ● Partially Developed ● Not Developed

Overall Rating & Supporting Narrative:

● Fully Developed	● Mostly Developed	● Partially Developed	● Not Developed

Strengths:
- Core Knowledge has been around for 30+ years
- This charter includes specific curricular resources they will use

Concerns:
- In regards to meeting a variety of students' needs, the charter discusses professional development for teachers but doesn't specify what the approach will be or the bank of strategies teachers will be taught.
- When discussing Cultural Responsiveness, it aligns with the ideal of "The Melting Pot" as opposed to the ideal of "Pluralism". Thus it makes me wonder how truly culturally responsive it can be?
- With the above bullet, if this is the case, I wonder about who will apply to attend this school? Would the student population be reflective of our District population? Or would it consist of only one subset of our district's population?
- Critics of the Core Knowledge curriculum view it as narrow-minded and limiting in what it considers to be classic.

What questions do you have regarding this section?
- In addition to the questions above, this charter hasn't shared how students will be selected to participate in extra curricular activities including sports and tutoring, etc.

What would your recommendation be based on this section:

- **Approve as is**
- **Approve with conditions. Please outline your conditions here:**
- **Deny. Please indicate why you believe it should be denied here:**
  - With our school district's emphasis on each and every student and our aligning Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Frameworks, this charter's focus on Core Knowledge and the explicit values Core Knowledge represents do not align. I question whether 27J wants this.

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Plan for Evaluating Pupil Performance

^F. Plan for Evaluating Pupil Performance:	
The applicant proposes a thorough plan for evaluating student performance across the curriculum, that considers both student needs and the effectiveness of the educational program, has appropriate systems for maintaining and monitoring student information and using information to make changes to the educational program as appropriate, and includes procedures for taking corrective action in the event that performance falls below goals and standards.	● Fully Developed ● Mostly Developed ● Partially Developed ● Not Developed
Overall Rating & Supporting Narrative:	

● Fully Developed	● Mostly Developed	● Partially Developed	● Not Developed

Strengths:

Concerns:
This part of the application is too vague. There are no specifics given as to the type of assessments that will be given other than formal or informal, etc. The more I read of this application, the more I realize they do not have a clear thoughtout plan.

What questions do you have regarding this section?

What would your recommendation be based on this section:

- **Approve as is**
- **Approve with conditions. Please outline your conditions here:**
- **Deny. Please indicate why you believe it should be denied here:**
  The plan is vague and unstructured. The information written in this section could have been done by someone looking on the internet and pasting it in this section. References to CMAS, ACCESS and ITBS seem like buzzwords with no specifics on how they will use the data to inform instruction. Talking about giving the assessment and the knowledge of how to use the assessment data are very different things.

Budget and Finance

^G. Budget & Finance:	
Establishing Business Operations: *The applicant describes reasonable, functional and accountable business operations.*	● Fully Developed ● Mostly Developed ● Partially Developed ● Not Developed
Budget Narrative: *The budget is based on realistic revenue and expenditures, and budget details are based on valid assumptions, and enable the school's mission to be realized. There is a sound contingency plan to meet financial needs if anticipated revenues are not received or are lower than estimated.*	● Fully Developed ● Mostly Developed ● Partially Developed ● Not Developed
Five-Year Budget: *The budget demonstrates complete, realistic, and viable start-up and 5-year balanced operating budgets that align with the educational, organizational, and school growth plans as described in each section of the application.*	● Fully Developed ● Mostly Developed ● Partially Developed ● Not Developed
Special Populations: *The budget clearly commits resources toward serving special populations such as students identified as educationally disadvantaged, students with IEPs, 504 Plans, English Language Learners, gifted and talented and homeless students.* ● *What does the school need to budget for special populations during the first year of operation?* ● *What is the school's understanding of how the authorizer allocates special education funds?* ● *Does the school need to prepare financially to enroll a student or students with significant special needs?* ● *Is the school considering a special education reserve for unexpected educational expenses?*	● Fully Developed ● Mostly Developed ● Partially Developed ● Not Developed

Overall Rating & Supporting Narrative:

● Fully Developed	● Mostly Developed	● Partially Developed	● Not Developed

Strengths:

Concerns:

What questions do you have regarding this section?
What would your recommendation be based on this section:
● **Approve as is**
● **Approve with conditions. Please outline your conditions here:**
● **Deny. Please indicate why you believe it should be denied here:**

Governance

^H. Governance:	
Founding Board/Steering Committee Members: *The board consists of a wide range of experienced members with the capacity to oversee a successful school, and a commitment to do so. There is a clear description the transition to a formal board, the nature and extent of parent/community involvement in the board, and draft board member agreements and conflict of interest statements.*	● Fully Developed ● Mostly Developed ● Partially Developed ● Not Developed
Board Procedures: *The applicant includes bylaws and articles of incorporation, and the details of board membership, meeting frequency, and member expectations are thoroughly addressed and align with the proposed school.* *Proposed procedures align with statutory compliance requirements.*	● Fully Developed ● Mostly Developed ● Partially Developed ● Not Developed
Board Internal Accountability: *The applicant describes how the board will review, assess, and hold itself* *accountable for strong governance practices, such as evaluating the school leader, compliance with applicable regulations, and defining its role.*	● Fully Developed ● Mostly Developed ● Partially Developed ● Not Developed
Overall Rating & Supporting Narrative:	
● Fully Developed ● Mostly Developed ● Partially Developed ● Not Developed	

Strengths:
Overall, this section is very well written and there is some strong attention to detail, particularly with legal compliance, Board Governance, Board Accountability, and methodology/principal behind Policy Governance. It does appear that the current Board has a broad variety of backgrounds and the overall tone is one of high expectations for themselves, students, and staff.

Concerns:
I do have a few concerns with this portion of the application:
1. Representation of Schools on the Board
    a. Early in this portion of the application, under Board Composition, the application states that "The ACACS Network Board endeavors to ensure representation from the geographic areas in which it operates and intends to appoint a member from the local area.
        i. Currently, ACA has schools in Golden, Grand Junction, Durango, Lonte Tree, and Windsor. This means that only Golden and Lone Tree currently have representation on the existing Board. ⅖ representation does not reassure me that this will change if permitted to build in 27J.
2. Diversity of the Board
    a. Currently ACA has an entirely male Board.
        i. With the work that we are doing as a district to improve diversity, equity, and inclusion, this does not seem like a great match for the students/families of 27J. As mentioned in their presentation to the DAC, they have never created a school within the parameters of the socioeconomic status of our families, but rather caters to a select group of ability and socio-economic status.
3. Based on this application and a quick review of their website, it appears that one of the Board members is the husband of an

ACA Director.
4. BOD Selection Process
    a. Currently, existing BOD members select their own replacements. This seems like a fast track to the "good ole boy network" which can get charters into deep trouble sometimes. It also brings attention back to my first concern of finding representation for each school on the Board as currently, only JeffCo, DougCo, Highlands Ranch, and Boulder are represented, two of which do not have schools in their vicinity.
5. Special Pop Students
    a. Students with IEPs are referenced a few times in this section but no other special populations are singled out (i.e. GT, EL, 504).

What questions do you have regarding this section?
1. Will both schools proposed for 27J have representation? With our district being so geographically large, it is very easy to say they will be represented, but not have the ability to meet the needs of our several communities.
    a. A question to ponder here as well: Currently, ACA states that the max size of their Board will be 9 members. We also know that if approved, the ACA network would increase in size to 6, possibly 7 schools. Do we know how many other schools they are in the middle of proposing or planning? Will there be a limit or will they amend their bylaws so that a larger Board provides representation to each school. If Board size is increased, how effective will they actually be when decisions need to be made?
2. What is the plan to meet the needs of our students and families and to deliver a high performing school in such a drastically different environment than what they are accustomed to?
3. Are there some conflicts of interest concerns (See item #3 in the concerns section of the review)
4. I am wondering if there have been previous troubles with Special Pop students, in particular students with IEPs. Why are only IEP's referenced as needing to have data reported to the Board? This could be a simple oversight, but it also raises some red flags that the new legislation aims to eliminate with respect to charter's not allowing SPED students in during enrollment or persuading guardians of students with IEPs not to apply.

What would your recommendation be based on this section:

- **Approve as is**
- **Approve with conditions. Please outline your conditions here:**
- **Deny. Please indicate why you believe it should be denied here:**
  Again, I do think that this application was well written and that they have a high performing school track record; However, my worries listed above trump the track record. With respect to this section, there should be more about how they are going to provide equitable representation for the proposed schools, a plan for taking on an area that is vastly different from what they are traditionally accustomed to, and more detail on support for all special pops.

Employees

I. Employees:	
Employment: *The applicant clearly describes the relationship between charter and employees and includes a draft or plan for employment policies and procedures (such as job descriptions, organizational charts, etc.).* *The applicant describes the school's teacher evaluation system and its alignment with the intent of SB191*	● Fully Developed ● Mostly Developed ● Partially Developed ● Not Developed
Professional Development: *The applicant explains the core components of teacher and staff development and how these components will support effective implementation of:* ● *The school's mission, vision, values;* ● *The proposed educational program including the educational program terms;* ● *Educational equity, inclusion, and student agency;* ● *Instructional practices proven to be effective with the proposed student population, including all diverse learners and at-risk student populations; and* *Performance data collection, analysis, and use to improve student learning and evaluate the school's culture and climate.*	● Fully Developed ● Mostly Developed ● Partially Developed ● Not Developed

Overall Rating & Supporting Narrative:
● Fully Developed   ● Mostly Developed   ● Partially Developed   ● Not Developed

Strengths:
The applicant explained the core components of teacher and staff development and how these initiatives align with the school's mission, vision and core values. It is clear that the core leadership and development team intentionally developed schoolwide professional development that considers the educational equity, inclusion and agency of all stakeholders. Additionally, many examples were provided that clarified how the school will intentionally support instructional practices that will have a positive and effective impact on students' learning and wellbeing. It is evident that the school has considered its entire student body population, including all diverse learners and at-risk student populations.

Concerns:
N/A

What questions would you like your Executive Representative to ask the applicant?
How will the school ensure that the staff will be ready and prepared to meet the needs of students with disabilities? How will the school involve its own staff to determine professional development decisions?

What would your recommendation be based on this section:

- **Approve as is**
- **Approve with conditions. Please outline your conditions here:**
- **Deny. Please indicate why you believe it should be denied here:**

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Insurance Coverage

J. Insurance Coverage:	
Proposed insurance coverage aligns with statutory and district-mandated requirements and aligns with what the school is proposing within the application.	● Fully Developed ● Mostly Developed ● Partially Developed ● Not Developed

Overall Rating & Supporting Narrative:
● Fully Developed   ● Mostly Developed   ● Partially Developed   ● Not Developed

Strengths:

Concerns:

What questions do you have regarding this section?

What would your recommendation be based on this section:

- **Approve as is**
- **Approve with conditions. Please outline your conditions here:**
- **Deny. Please indicate why you believe it should be denied here:**

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Parent and Community Involvement

K. Parent & Community Involvement:

The applicant provides evidence of parent and community involvement in the development of the school as well as the ongoing support of the school once opened. The applicant addresses outreach efforts conducted to date and planned for the future that reach all student populations, including at-risk students. The applicant provides opportunities to solicit feedback from stakeholders. The applicant identifies reasonable plans for external partnerships to support the school.	● Fully Developed ● Mostly Developed ● Partially Developed ● Not Developed

Overall Rating & Supporting Narrative:

● Fully Developed	● Mostly Developed	● Partially Developed	● Not Developed

Strengths:
I have seen firsthand the efforts of Ascent Classical Academy and how they are not only supporters of parent involvement, they rely on it. Ascent has been crystal clear in their messaging that parental involvement is paramount in their school. I have seen evidence of the claim from their application that they have been holding regular community meetings with interested parents. I have seen that they have been active in word of mouth, public meetings and had enough community involvement that I could easily list a dozen acquaintances that know of and support Ascent. I think the fact that they ask parents to involve themselves in the school by way of volunteer work each year is excellent. I also appreciate the culture of community ownership to meet those expectations. I think the fact that they encourage and support classroom volunteers, vs Capstone who basically locks kids inside all day, is a great way to get parents involved. Parents are not voting for the bond and mill levies and perhaps its because they don't have such a personal relationship with what their child is actually doing during the day and what it takes to run a school. I personally, being PTO President have a completely different view on what the school does/doesn't do and needs/doesn't need now that I volunteer there sometimes 10 hours per week.- sometimes less, but sometimes more. Parents need to be expected to volunteer and parents need to feel included in the school decisions. It is too bad that so many schools talk that talk but so few walk that walk.

Concerns:

What questions do you have regarding this section?

What would your recommendation be based on this section:

- **Approve as is**
  Ascent brings hope to a community that is desperate for change. Parents in 27J and neighboring districts are anxious for a new approach to try. I see nothing wrong with Ascent potentially bringing over some students from neighboring districts as well, I see 27J benefitting from proving that parents in Adams 12 are fed up with being kept in the dark about their children's education.
  Approve with conditions. Please outline your conditions here:
  Deny. Please indicate why you believe it should be denied here:

Enrollment Policy

L. Enrollment Policy:	
The applicant details a plan for recruitment of all students, including special populations. The proposed enrollment policy and priorities for enrollment are non-discriminatory and align with district policy and procedures and statue as applicable.	● Fully Developed ● Mostly Developed ● Partially Developed ● Not Developed

Overall Rating & Supporting Narrative:

● Fully Developed	● Mostly Developed	● Partially Developed	● Not Developed

Strengths:
This portion of the document has strong wording around the ACA non-discriminatory proactive lottery approach to enrollment.

There is a set plan for each grade level and a specified order in which priority is given during the enrollment process. The latest legislation towards special education is addressed in a suitable manner. Even with priority enrollment, max percentages are assigned to each priority level ensuring that the school is not just comprised of students from Board members and staff. Communication to the public about the enrollment dates and process seem to be solid and there are set rules to the denial of admission.

Concerns:
I do have some fairly minor concerns but probably still worth pointing out:
1. Who is running their lottery? Many charters have moved to a third party entity running their lottery to ensure a non-biased approach. This document does not say exactly who is running the lottery. If ACA is running their own lottery, there is a much larger chance for problems to occur.
2. ACA has a weighted portion of their lottery that caters towards free and reduced students. While the intent is good, will this cause equity issues down the road as not all students are considered equal during what is already confirmed to be a random selection process.
3. One area that differs from other charters and traditional public schools within 27J is the need to "re-register" your student each year. Not a huge concern here, but it will definitely be new to our families and could cause some frustration until families get used to their processes.
4. Perhaps my biggest concern comes from a contradiction within this section, but again, this is relatively small and may be something that is mixed up due to the past two years of need during the pandemic:
   a. Early in this section ACA states they will only accept full-time students
   b. The last portion of this section addresses online and part-time programs which seems to contradict the aforementioned.

What questions do you have regarding this section?

1. Is ACA going to have an online component to its charter? If so, does this affect enrollment numbers or are max numbers the same regardless of being in the physical building or not?
2. Is the weighted lottery used at their other schools and if so, what have results been there? Have there been any issues with this methodology?

What would your recommendation be based on this section:

- **Approve as is**
- ● **Approve with conditions. Please outline your conditions here:**
  I would want to see a clarification of intent with respect to the Online and Part-Time Programs. I would also recommend a totally unbiased approach in the lottery system so that there are not weighted categories, ensuring that every student/family who applies, does so on a level playing field. Finally, I would recommend that a third party entity such as School Mint, run the lottery in place of the school itself.

  Deny. Please indicate why you believe it should be denied here:

Transportation and Food Services

M. Transportation & Food Services:	
If the school plans to offer transportation, the applicant provides an explanation of a transportation plan that meets the needs of the school. *If the school does not plan to offer transportation, the applicant describes any alternative means for meeting students' transportation needs.*	● Fully Developed ● Mostly Developed ● Partially Developed ● Not Developed
If the school plans to offer food services, the applicant provides an explanation of a food service plan to meet the needs of the school. *If the school does not plan to offer food services, the applicant provides an explanation of how students qualifying for free or reduced price meals would be accommodated.*	● Fully Developed ● Mostly Developed ● Partially Developed ● Not Developed

Overall Rating & Supporting Narrative:			
● Fully Developed	● Mostly Developed	● Partially Developed	● Not Developed

Strengths:
They are clear that they will not participate in the NSLP. They show how they will identify a student's need through distributing/collection an Economic Data Survey to families. They state they will secure other funding.

Concerns:
The application lists as reference to CDE compliance and the CCSP Grant. It does not disclose budgetary considerations, how they will comply with the State and Federal laws surrounding school transportation, procuring insurance and liability, transportation personnel needed along with accompanying CDL licensing, insurance, bonding, and safety training. It does not discuss how it will meet the Federal requirements for students protected and serviced under IDEA or ADA. Student safety, costs for riding the bus, and transportation servicing areas are not discussed.

What do they mean by they "may" distribute and collect? Does this mean they for sure will or they are unsure how to go about this with families? Does the resource provider of the surveys connect them with food distributors who supplement the funding of meals for families who qualify for F&R breakfast and lunches? Who will be the personnel that will have access to the applications and/or the awarding of F&R based on the survey? Will they serve only lunch? If yes, what about a breakfast or snack item for the students who qualify for F&R or are experiencing food insecurities? If they partner with a providing contractor, will this contractor hold the liability and responsibility of all Colorado Health Department standards of food service and food quality? Where will they store the food when the school provides a "solid nutritional meal" to the student? Or, is this something the contractor will provide on a daily basis? Do they have a budget for students who forget their lunch? What is the budget for cleaning costs (even if the partnered with contractor coversa all the other food and food services costs)? Will they have to supplement the costs of the contracted provider?

What questions would you like your Executive Representative to ask the applicant?
Why did they not, at minimum, answer the required questions for this section? They noted that 27J provides transportation as part of it's fee, but the section wasn't addressed or considered. What does this 'mean' to Ascent? How will they go about working with the District if this is the case. It is written and appears like it wasn't even a consideration, but instead an attempt to be something that was written down in perhaps a hope that it will be passed over during the application review process

Compared to the Transportation section, they seem to have a clearer expectation, perhaps an underlying value, for whether they will serve meals and who will do this. However, please ask why it was such a direct statement around them not providing a kitchen/meals without a broader understanding of the process, partner(s), and budget for those they will contract with and how they will secure funding for free and reduced applicants. It's okay if they aren't providing it, but they do need to elaborate on the questions provided to them that they need to answer and/or elaborate on for the application. A family will ask, and they need to be prepared with the answer. The answer should align with both their values and mission along with all Federal and Colorado laws.

What questions do you have regarding this section?

- **Approve as is**
- **Approve with conditions. Please outline your conditions here:**
- **Deny. Please indicate why you believe it should be denied here:**
  While they are a charter school, with a distinct mission and focus for the families they will service, their transportation section needs additional information in order to ensure safety, compliance, and resourcing. More research around transportation needs, process, and provision needs to be completed.
  This section needs more elaboration and the questions above answered, considered, and addressed prior to an approval (see 'concerns' and "Exec. Rep. to ask the applicant' sections).

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Facilities

^ N. Facilities:	
Needs Assessment: The applicant provides a comprehensive facility needs assessment that aligns with the proposed school program	● Fully Developed ● Mostly Developed ● Partially Developed ● Not Developed

Facility Options: *The applicant provides a realistic timeline and resource allocation for the identification, selection, construction/repair, and/or lease/contract negotiation for a facility that meets the requirements identified in the needs assessments.* *The applicant provides a plan for ensuring student safety and security, including anticipated costs.*	• Fully Developed • Mostly Developed • Partially Developed • Not Developed

Overall Rating & Supporting Narrative:

• Fully Developed	• Mostly Developed	• Partially Developed	• Not Developed

Strengths:

Concerns:

What questions do you have regarding this section?

What would your recommendation be based on this section:

- **Approve as is**
- **Approve with conditions. Please outline your conditions here:**
- **Deny. Please indicate why you believe it should be denied here:**

Waivers

O. Waivers:	
The applicant provides a list of state statutes and district policies for which waivers are being requested and provides adequate rationale and replacement plans	• Fully Developed • Mostly Developed • Partially Developed • Not Developed

Overall Rating & Supporting Narrative:

• Fully Developed	• Mostly Developed	• Partially Developed	• Not Developed

Strengths:
Fairly common waivers for Charter Schools. Rationale and Replacement plans seem to be solid with very minimal financial impact to the district.

Concerns:
I have no concerns with this section. It really boils down to what the 27J Board and District Administration see as mutually beneficial. If I had to come up with something here, I would wonder how well ACA will play in the sandbox with other charters and district schools in 27J, or is the desire to opt out of most of the district policies centered around a desire to do their own thing without interference? Still, I would venture to bet they understand the need to have a positive relationship with their authorizer and the wording in other sections of this document support that as well as their desire to conduct business in a legal and positive fashion.

What questions do you have regarding this section?
None at this time.

What would your recommendation be based on this section:

- **Approve as is**
- **Approve with conditions. Please outline your conditions here:**
- **Deny. Please indicate why you believe it should be denied here:**

Student Discipline, Expulsion or Suspension

P. Student Discipline, Expulsion, or Suspension:	
The applicant provides a discipline policy that aligns with statute and policy and provides appropriate details for addressing student discipline, expulsion, and suspension. ● *Complies with state law, limiting reasons that may be used to justify expulsion or suspension of students in preschool through grade 2;* ● *Does not discriminate against students on the basis of hair texture, type, or protective hairstyles commonly or historically associated with race.*	● Fully Developed ● Mostly Developed ● Partially Developed ● Not Developed
The applicant describes how the school's approach to discipline is culturally responsive, consistent with the school's proposed culture and climate, and provides the opportunity for all students to achieve personal and academic success.	● Fully Developed ● Mostly Developed ● Partially Developed ● Not Developed

Overall Rating & Supporting Narrative:

● Fully Developed	● Mostly Developed	● Partially Developed	● Not Developed

Strengths:
❖ Implementation of a PBIS system

Concerns:
❖ "Students in the seventh through twelfth grades are entirely capable of living appropriately i the ACA27J culture"
❖ Will students with disabilities be supported through this process?

What questions do you have regarding this section?
❖ Are ALL students being supported?
❖ What are the specifics of the PBIS system that will be implemented?

What would your recommendation be based on this section:

● **Approve as is**
● **Approve with conditions. Please outline your conditions here:**
● **Deny. Please indicate why you believe it should be denied here:**

   ❖ How are ALL students being supported through this structure?

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Serving Students with Special Needs

^Q. Serving Students with Special Needs:	

The applicant provides a plan for serving students with special needs that includes appropriate discussion of the following High-Quality Special Population Program Planning items.
 	
1.   Human Resources:
● *Approximately how many students with disabilities do the founders estimate that the school will enroll?*
● *If the school will be responsible for providing special education:*
   ○ *How many special education teachers will the school need to employ?*
   ○ *What kind of certification will the special education teachers need?*
   ○ *What are the state's teacher and special education teacher qualifications standards?*
   ○ *How many special service providers will the school need to employ?*
   ○ *What with the ratio of student: service provider be and is it aligned with*
	● Fully Developed
	● Mostly Developed
	● Partially Developed
	● Not Developed

best practice?
    ○ *Will the school hire dual-certified teachers?*
    ○ *Will the school hire part-time or retired special education teachers?*
    ○ *Will the school need to hire staff for health-related issues?*
    ○ *What are the implications for salaries and benefits if the school hires full-versus part-time employees?*
● *If an LEA will be responsible for all, or part of, special education in the school:*
    ○ *Will the school be required to contract with an LEA for the purposes of special education?*
    ○ *If the school needs to work with an LEA, how will it negotiate with the LEA to ensure its students will receive appropriate services?*	

2. Curriculum and Assessment: ● *How will the school modify the curriculum and instructional delivery to address the unique needs of children with disabilities?* ● *How can the school train general and special education teachers to modify/adapt the curriculum and instructional approach for children with disabilities in inclusive classrooms while meeting requirements of IEPs?* ● *How will the school include children with disabilities in required assessments or develop alternate assessment?* ● *How will curriculum and assessment decisions be considered and monitored by IEP teams and staff*	● Fully Developed ● Mostly Developed ● Partially Developed ● Not Developed
3. Professional Development: ● *How will the school provide special education and general education teachers with professional development?* ● *Will general education and special education teachers need any specialized professional development related to educating and including children with disabilities?* ● *Does the district or the state operate a professional development program or network that the school can utilize?*	● Fully Developed ● Mostly Developed ● Partially Developed ● Not Developed
4. Administration: ● *Who will administer the special education program?* ● *Who will be responsible for collecting, managing, and reporting data related to children with disabilities?* ● *Will the founders create their own system to administer special education or will they adopt the policies/procedures dictated by the authorizer, local district, or other administrative unit?* ● *How will the school handle student records and other school property appropriately in the event of closure of the charter school?*	● Fully Developed ● Mostly Developed ● Partially Developed ● Not Developed

5.   Facilities:
● *If the school will be responsible for special education evaluations and services:*
    ○ *Where will it conduct student evaluations?*
    ○ *Where will it conduct IEP meetings?*
    ○ *Where can it store confidential student records?*
    ○ *Where will it provide pullout services?*
    ○ *Where will related services personnel meet with individual students?*
    ○ *Will entrances, classrooms, common areas, and bathrooms be accessible to individuals— including adults—with physical disabilities?*
    ○ *Will the facility have space for a nurse to store and administer medications or use medical equipment?*
    ○ *If the school uses some type of online learning, how the school will administer evaluations and maintain electronic document security in a virtual environment?*
	● Fully Developed
	● Mostly Developed
	● Partially Developed
	● Not Developed

MTSS/RTI: *The plan also provides a comprehensive description of the monitoring for all students to determine universal, targeted, or intensive needs.*	● Fully Developed ● Mostly Developed ● Partially Developed ● Not Developed

Overall Rating & Supporting Narrative:

● Fully Developed	● Mostly Developed	● Partially Developed	● Not Developed

Strengths:

Most sections were very thorough and included necessary details and met identified criteria. There was a deep focus on special populations and how needs would be met.

Concerns:

Non-supported special education students who are not going to be enrolled, the LEA will provide services; what commitment will the school have here or will the student be forced back to the 27J school of attendance?

What questions do you have regarding this section?

What would your recommendation be based on this section:

- **Approve as is**
- **Approve with conditions. Please outline your conditions here:**
- **Deny. Please indicate why you believe it should be denied here:**

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Dispute Resolution Process

R. Dispute Resolution Process:	
The applicant sets forth a method for resolving disagreements which arise from the school's charter contract between a charter school and its chartering district, in compliance with statutory requirements.	● Fully Developed ● Mostly Developed ● Partially Developed ● Not Developed
Overall Rating & Supporting Narrative:	

● Fully Developed	● Mostly Developed	● Partially Developed	● Not Developed

Strengths:

Concerns:

What questions do you have regarding this section?

What would your recommendation be based on this section:

- **Approve as is**
- **Approve with conditions. Please outline your conditions here:**
- **Deny. Please indicate why you believe it should be denied here:**

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School Management Contracts

^S. School Management Contracts:

The applicant demonstrates the effectiveness of the proposed school management provider academically, operationally and financially, includes a rationale for the selection of this provider, and identifies any existing or potential conflicts of interest between provider and school and board stakeholders.	● Fully Developed ● Mostly Developed ● Partially Developed ● Not Developed
The applicant provides a draft management contract as an attachment, which addresses the cost, length of contract, and the process to evaluate, oversee, renew, or terminate the contract without adversely affecting the viability of the school	● Fully Developed ● Mostly Developed ● Partially Developed ● Not Developed
The applicant provides a draft EMP Management Plan as an attachment that adequately describes evidence of EMP capacity, division of roles and responsibilities, cost and compensation structure, clear identification of all payments to be paid to the EMP, the employer of record for EMP and school staff, and a board approved plan for how the EMP will be evaluated.	● Fully Developed ● Mostly Developed ● Partially Developed ● Not Developed

Overall Rating & Supporting Narrative:

● Fully Developed   ● Mostly Developed   ● Partially Developed   ● Not Developed

Strengths:

Concerns:

What questions do you have regarding this section?

What would your recommendation be based on this section:

- **Approve as is**
- **Approve with conditions. Please outline your conditions here:**
- **Deny. Please indicate why you believe it should be denied here:**

Links to documents

Overall Recommendation

Overall Recommendation
Risk Factors (Reviewers should summarize risk factors, as applicable, from the application for consideration by the authorizer in acting on the application. Generally, risk factors inform the reviewer's overall recommendation—approval or denial—as well as proposed conditions and milestones to address identified risk factors to the extent possible.) There are general concerns that the school has not specifically identified the population of students that they intend to serve. While they have indicated that they will support all students and that their model is good for all students, they also indicate that they are willing to support all students who are willing to work hard. There was general concern about how the school would support those that are struggling ● The school does not currently appear to have a robust structure of academic and behavioral interventions for those that are not performing well ● They do not intend to provide lunch for their students which may discourage those families who rely on free or reduced lunch to apply ● They indicated that 27J would provide transportation ● Their responses to DAC questions indicated confusion regarding these questions indicating that the question was addressed by stating that all students will benefit from this model ● They intend to use CSI as their administrative unit. This is cause for some concern as there would be little connection between the expectations for special education in 27J and Ascent. There is concern about the goal to support the community in 27J.

- While there is a great deal of interest there is no indication that the families are from 27J. There were many families that attended their presentation but most of them did not live in 27J.
- The governing board does not appear to have representation from all of their current schools even though the application indicated that one representative from Ascent in 27J would have a spot on the board. The additional answers to our questions indicate that they do not intend to place a board member from each school on the board while their applications says otherwise. Ascent indicated that the board operates through policy governance indicating that "unique needs of a community are not addressed through governance" but are addressed at the school level.
- There appears to be a conflict of interest with a member of the board and an employee at Ascent.

Recommendation

- Approve as is (4 sections)
- Approve with conditions and milestones (2 sections)
- Deny (8 sections)

Proposed Conditions
Conditions to be fulfilled before execution of the contract and based on identified weaknesses in the proposal

Proposed Milestones
Milestones to be fulfilled after execution of the contract and before the opening of the school

Rationale for Denial
Specific legal, financial, equity issues that cause significant concern regarding the viability of the proposal

We propose that the Superintendent and the School Board review our recommendation and deny the proposal based on our concern that Ascent will not provide equitable access and support to all students in 27J and that there is a lack of regard for the needs of the 27J community.