



INNOVATION & EXCELLENCE

WASHINGTON'S CHARTER SCHOOLS PROGRAM GRANT

Charter School CSP Sub-Grant Score Report

APPLICATION DETAILS

School Name: Catalyst Public Schools	
Contact Person: Amanda Gardner	Contact Email: amanda@catalystpublicschools.org
Application Type: Waiver School	Grant Budget: \$1,300,000
Grades Served: K-8	New Seats Created: 504 (fully enrolled)
Total Averaged Score: 77.5	Priority Points Assigned: 6.75
Application Status: Awarded	

RUBRIC

<p>A. Grant Project Goals <i>Identify</i> 3-5 grant project goals and <i>justify</i> each goal in terms of its value in supporting the planning and implementation of your proposed school.</p> <p>Be sure to align your budget to your project and ensure that all planned grant spending, including future revisions to your budget, fit clearly within one of your stated project goals.</p>	
TOTAL AVERAGE POINTS	8.25/12
<p>Reviewer Comments – Grant Project Goals</p> <p>Strengths: Strong justification for goals</p> <p>Applicant identifies three goals and lists objectives for each goal which provide additional specificity for understanding the extent to which the goal has been met.</p> <p>The first goal is to provide instructional staff with technology, supplies, and professional development to implement the academic rotation model. The second goal is to set up strong financial and operational planning policies. The third goal is to support staff in delivering world-class instruction by providing intensive professional development (40-41).</p> <p>Justifications provided for each goal are reasonable and are linked to school performance (40-41). The goals as stated align with the school’s mission, which was located in the Charter School Board Member Information Form (120), but not directly stated in the application.</p> <p>The applicant identified three clearly stated grant project goals that have specific, action-oriented, realistic, relevant, and time-bound measures along with a statement of justification.</p> <p>Weaknesses: Because the school mission is not provided, it is difficult to determine if each goal aligns with the mission and vision. Additionally, while each goal has associated tasks, measures for determining completion and effectiveness are not provided.</p> <p>Despite objectives that help to clarify goals and provide at least some degree of specificity, the goals are not found to be at all specific or measurable.</p> <p>Measures and metrics for the provided goals are all but non-existent.</p> <p>Because the school mission is not provided, it is difficult to determine if each goal aligns with the mission and vision. Additionally, while each goal has associated tasks, measures for determining completion and effectiveness are not provided.</p>	

B. Educational Philosophy, Instructional Practices, and Curriculum

Fully *describe and justify* the design of the academic program in terms of the educational philosophy, instructional practices, and curriculum that will be utilized to meet the school’s performance objectives. Be sure to include key design elements, references supporting its validity and alignment to state and Federal requirements, and rationale for why this education model was chosen and how it will produce strong outcomes for the unique community and student population the school will be located within.

TOTAL AVERAGE POINTS	12.25/16
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Reviewer Comments - Educational Philosophy, Instructional Practices, and Curriculum

Strengths:

Strong focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Model anchored in: A Culture of Inclusion, School Connectedness, and Social-Emotional Growth●Rigorous Academics and Dynamic Supports●Scholar-Led Goal-Setting and Reflection●Effective Communication●A Consistent School-Wide Approach to Culture and Learning●Tiered-Service Model at Catalyst ●Effective Response-to-Intervention (RtI) Systems

Key design elements are presented along with appropriate descriptions. These elements include (1) a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Framework, (2) Deeper Learning Blocks and Academic Rotations, (3) Dynamic Supports, (4) Inclusive Co-Teaching, (5) Sunrise and Sunset Huddles, (6) Wellness Courses, and (7) Change Maker-Space and Passion Projects (42 - 43). The descriptions of the design elements complement the curriculum described in the following section.

Applicant justifies the selection of curriculum for ELA, History, Mathematics based on top ratings in EdReports and alignment with the instructional model of the school (43-44). STEAM, SEL, and Leadership curriculum justified based on sourcing and history of success (44).

Applicant describes an instructional model that includes baseline data through NWEA MAP Growth at the beginning of the school year. Summative data is based on Smarter Balanced assessment at the end of the school year and interim assessments take place throughout the school year.

The applicant effectively described and justified the academic program with clear descriptions of the school’s key design elements; the school’s core values and how these will be established and maintained throughout the school; and classroom design using academic rotations. The applicant also provided justification and research-based references for the school’s design with particular attention to meeting the needs of the school’s target population. Although the applicant did not clearly name the curriculum choices, these were easily found in the footnotes.

Educational philosophy rooted in habits of mind and building community.

The applicant effectively described the plan for technology with clear and specific information. The overall purpose is to leverage technology to ensure that learning is personalized and provide real time data to teachers to adjust teaching as needed. The technology provided and how it will be used will be appropriately differentiated for elementary (K-4) and middle grades (5-8) students.

A technology plan is included which lists the use of iPads, programs such as Zearn and Lexia, and middle-school students using Google Classroom and Google Sites to allow for more differentiated instruction (46-47).

Weaknesses:

Much more on school culture than instructional / academic model (more instructional model descriptions came out in section related to serving all students).

Would have liked to know more about curricular choices & how they differ across grade levels.

While a research basis likely undergirds most if not all of the key design elements, the actual research is only cited in one of the seven elements described (42).

Applicant does not identify correlations between research and projected school demographic information or demonstrate clear alignment between the curriculum and pedagogy beyond merely referencing EdReports (43).

The applicant did not discuss specific instructional methods, enrichment programs, or electives; however, the thoughtful description of the school’s program inspires confidence that these school elements are present, appropriate, and effective.

The applicant did not clearly explain how teachers will use a range of varied instructional strategies to support individual learners. A detailed discussion of instructional practices was not provided.

Applicant does not identify correlations between research and projected school demographic information or demonstrate clear alignment between the curriculum and pedagogy beyond merely referencing EdReports (43).

The applicant did not address technology for assessment needs.

The technology plan is described in only the broadest possible terms, leaving a great deal of uncertainty as to the specifics regarding how technology will be implemented into the curriculum. The role of technology in assessment is not well understood from this section of the narrative, nor is there adequate information regarding how technology choices are justified in light of the curriculum and educational model.

C. Teaching and Learning

Fully *describe and justify* the design of the instructional strategy in terms of the educational philosophy, instructional practices, and curriculum that will be utilized to meet the school’s performance objectives. Be sure to include key design elements, references supporting its validity and alignment to state and federal requirements, and rationale for why this strategy was chosen and how it will produce strong outcomes for the unique community and student population the school will serve.

TOTAL AVERAGE POINTS	4.5/6
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Reviewer Comments – Teaching and Learning

Strengths:

Demonstrates high expectations for all learners.

The applicant has a well-thought out, research-based educational model to meet the academic and social-emotional needs of the target student population. A deliberate and detailed plan to inform and engage the community prior to and after school opening has been presented and implemented, which will likely lead to effectively meeting enrollment targets.

In Section C, the applicant described the cornerstones of an effective MTSS which indicates an awareness and understanding of the role of assessment and early, gradual interventions to provide appropriate academic and behavioral supports (50).

Weaknesses:

In Section C, the applicant described the cornerstones of an effective MTSS which indicates an awareness and understanding of the role of assessment and early, gradual interventions to provide appropriate academic and behavioral supports (50).

Applicant does not identify correlations between research and projected school demographic information or demonstrate clear alignment between the curriculum and pedagogy beyond merely referencing EdReports (43).

D. Student Academic Achievement Standards

As an independently governed public school, charter schools need to ensure plans, systems, and tools for strong oversight and monitoring in the areas of academic performance. *Fully describe and justify* how your school will have rigorous goals and adequate oversight to ensure quality implementation, operation, and accountability.

TOTAL AVERAGE POINTS	7.5/9
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Reviewer Comments – Student Academic Achievement Standards

Strengths:

Strong focus on data-driven decision making.

Uses NWEA, Centerpoint, SmarterB alanced etc assessments to monitor student progress.

Educational philosophy rooted in habits of mind and building community.

Teachers participating in data cycles.

Strong focus on data driven decision-making, including use of the following:

NWEA (MAP) two times per year

STEP assessment

Literacy Screens (Middle school)

iReady

Culture of data driven practices as evidenced by:

--Weekly teachers meeting to discuss data

--Every 6 weeks Look Back/Step Forward data review exercise on data day

--Clear benchmarks for NWEA assessments as well as SBAC

Applicant describes an instructional model that includes baseline data through NWEA MAP Growth at the beginning of the school year. Summative data is based on Smarter Balanced assessment at the end of the school year and interim assessments take place throughout the school year (47).

A variety of standardized and teacher-created assessments throughout the school year are described that indicate the capacity for meaningful data collection and response to data (48).

Applicant references assessment practices in the previous section which include baseline data through the NWEA MAP and summative data through Smarter Balanced. Additional assessments include STEP to determine scholar reading levels and growth and teacher-created literacy assessments to inform instruction (48).

Specific data to be collected through assessments is described in detail with the sources listed and the benchmark goals for student proficiency (51).

A plan for data analysis with appropriate structures and clearly defined objectives is provided. The plan includes roles and responsibilities for staff members and purposeful systems for data analysis and reflection (52).

The applicant clearly identified a range and variety of assessment tools and explained how the school will use the assessments to determine the needs of individual students and to drive and differentiate instruction. The applicant also identified the differentiation and intervention structures (RTI and Multi-Tiered System of Supports), tools, and approaches in the school design, and explained how teachers will use these systems to respond to the needs of individual students.

The applicant described plans, systems, and tools for strong oversight and monitoring academic performance. A broad and thorough Performance Management Plan exists for monitoring performance goals that ensures successful student outcomes. As noted above in the previous section, the applicant has identified sound assessment tools, timelines, and practices that will effectively monitor student performance. A culture of data-driven instruction exists where teachers will plan, teach, analyze, and adapt instruction in individual classrooms

and during weekly data meetings. Additionally, every six weeks, the school will have a designated data day to review and analyze interim data.

Overall, the applicant demonstrates a strong commitment to using assessment to inform instruction and has laid the groundwork for an effective professional development model with feedback for instructors in seeking continuous improvement.

Weaknesses:

Limited information on types of assessments & how the data will be used to drive decision making

The applicant did not clearly explain how teachers will use a range of varied instructional strategies to support individual learners. A detailed discussion of instructional practices was not provided.

While the response met the criteria in many respects, additional information was required in some areas. For example, interim benchmarks to ensure progress toward performance goals for all student subgroups, and a plan to adjust these benchmarks annually were not provided. The applicant did not address how data are (or will be) utilized to inform policy and management decisions; how a portfolio inclusive of formative, interim and summative assessment tools will be consistently used and well understood by all staff; how progress will be reported; or assessment practices used to monitor teacher performance.

E. Student Demand and Community/Local Support

Schools funded under the CSP subgrant must ensure they are in tune with their communities’ needs and priorities. *Describe and justify* your school’s vitality and long-term sustainability through demonstrating your dedication to developing and maintaining community partnerships and connections.

TOTAL AVERAGE POINTS	11.5/12
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Reviewer Comments – Student Demand and Community/Local Support

Strengths:

Catalyst is a community designed and driven school with input from community leaders and parents.

Strong ongoing family engagement strategies.

The school creates multiple opportunities to build community.

Strong family connections to determine student needs.

Emphasis on recruiting diverse student body.

Outreach to families includes:

Robust marketing campaigns including digital media, social media presence, and creating marketing collateral in both English and Spanish●Hiring Community Engagement Ambassadors to act as liaisons with various community groups●Forming partnerships with local faith based organizations, preschools, and community groups dedicated to reaching traditionally marginalized groups●Free, online virtual design challenge camps with all materials provided for participants●County-wide canvassing efforts●Print advertising in both English and Spanish through Value-Pak coupons, billboards, and local papers

Staff engaged in 2018 Listening Tour to elicit community needs and wants.

Applicant describes standard and expected methods of communicating information about the school’s opening to potential student populations, including digital media, social media, bilingual marketing, Community Engagement Ambassadors, partnerships with faith-based organizations and community groups, canvassing, and print advertising (53).

The application indicates the implementation of structures to elicit parent and community input to include a listening tour, community design team, and a community forum (53).

Ongoing structures for involving parents and community members in the school’s decision making and communicating vital information about the school are described to include weekly progress reports, scholar-led conferences, parent portal and public website, parent resources for grade level standards, and a Community Advisory Council (56). These structures appear sufficient to allow for appropriate and desired levels of engagement from stakeholders.

The applicant lists some of the outreach expenditures which induce social media, canvassing, flyers, and presence at local store fronts (161); expenditures are reasonable and sufficient for the task.

The applicant clearly demonstrated dedication to developing and maintaining community partnerships and connections. There is a sound strategy in place for marketing, branding, and community outreach through a wide variety of efforts to achieve promised student enrollment. These include: digital media; social media; Community Engagement Ambassadors; partnerships with faith based organizations, preschools, community groups; free, online virtual design challenge camps; county-wide canvassing; and print advertising in English and Spanish.

The applicant demonstrated significant planning and effort to meaningfully engage current and prospective families and community members on the implementation and operation of the school. These efforts included a county wide listening tour in summer 2018, the formation of a community design team, and a community forum in spring 2019 with over 200 attendees.

The applicant described the current level of parent engagement and noted that the school has strong grassroots support, and strong relationships with superintendents and elected officials. These relationships can be attributed to effective parent, family, and community engagement strategies that are utilized by the school through a multi-tiered approach that will provide opportunities for all families to engage. These approaches include the option for families to play a role in the school's decision-making life on an on-going basis, and the provision of information about educational options and the school's state report card on the school's website.

Weaknesses:

In addition to print media in Spanish, there is no mention of bilingual staffing for use with person-to-person recruitment.

Collaboration with community partners is not well supported in this section of the application.

F. Effectively Serving All Students

Charter schools are obligated to take specific actions to ensure an open, fair, non-selective method of attracting and enrolling students, and all charter schools need to be ready to serve the group of students that choose to attend. *Fully describe and justify* your plan to offer a continuum of services for all types of students, including those that are educationally disadvantaged (such as low-income, special education, English learners, homeless, migrant and other at-risk students) and gifted and talented.

TOTAL AVERAGE POINTS	8.75/12
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Reviewer Comments – Effectively Serving All Students

Strengths:

Use of high needs/high support index.

Interventions tier system moves from Universal to Targeted to Intensive depending on need.

For high needs/high support index, scholars must represent one of the following groups who often are at risk of not receiving an excellent education: ●Military-involved families ●Low-income families ●Scholars on IEPs or who attended developmental preschool ●Scholars experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity ●Scholars who identify as being people of color ●Scholars who identify as being transgender ●Scholars who are English Learners

School embraces RTI.

Strategies include small group instruction, targeted learning time, 1:1 meetings with families.

Specific interventions for ELLs--include placement with bilingual teacher.

A standard MTSS system with appropriate supports is described, including interventions for not only academic, but also behavioral and social-emotional learning.

Applicant reflects adequate inquiry and knowledge in the needs of the prospective educationally disadvantaged students through an RtI model, tiered supports, co-teaching, small group academic rotations, intake conferences, and early and ongoing assessment (57-58).

This section also describes specific interventions for EL students that reflect best practices and complement the general education Catalyst model (58). These interventions represent an understanding of the anticipated needs of the EL population.

The applicant described the plan to offer a continuum of services for all types of students, including those that are educationally disadvantaged (such as low-income, special education, English learners, homeless, migrant and other at-risk students) in most respects, and addressed the design of the school’s programs, interventions, and/or plans to support students with special needs. The school has a clear plan in place to deeply understand the needs of current and prospective students, including educationally disadvantaged and those with disabilities. The school conducts intake conferences and 1:1 meetings with new families, assesses student skills early, and uses the data to set goals and schedule supports. Student supports and interventions will be research-based using the RtI/MTSS model. Co-teaching, small group academic rotations, and targeted learning time are key elements of the school’s design that will support high academic achievement for all students. High expectations for students will be ensured by hiring staff with an equity lens and the provision of professional development to help teachers maintain a growth mindset. Additionally, students and families will be informed of the importance of high expectations, and will be expected to sign a Contract for Excellence. Specific strategies aligned with the school’s model for use with ELL students were detailed.

Weaknesses:

While the applicant includes a basic description of a three-tiered system of support, this explanation does not include a description of how data collections and response to data is utilized within this MTSS system. The

supports are described, but the process for identifying need and attempting the various supports is not well described.

While there is clearly an attempt to identify educationally disadvantaged, at-risk, diverse, and underserved families, the “high-needs/high-support index” the applicant describes is not explained in adequate detail to convey a clear picture as to how this information is used to specifically recruit or reach these sub-populations (54).

While the response met the criteria in many respects, additional information was required in some areas. For example, the applicant did not discuss how the needs of students who are gifted and talented will be met, behavioral interventions or discipline strategies, how students will be identified, or how staff will be trained on effective intervention strategies and corresponding support tools.

Lots of focus on ELL population but not a lot about SPED - more reliance on 1:1 & small group tutoring than a flushed out SPED model.

Specific investments in value-added activities to accelerate learning for educationally disadvantaged and at-risk students are not found.

G. Staffing and Professional Development Plan

Fully describe and justify your approach to staffing, inclusive of ratios, positions, etc. required for effective implementation of the chosen education model. Further, describe the process in which all staff will be supported in their ongoing professional development.

TOTAL AVERAGE POINTS

3.5/4

Reviewer Comments – Staffing and Professional Development Plan

Strengths:

Advanced planning for teacher pipeline with teaching fellows & small group instructors.

Strong strategies to develop, evaluate, and retain staff.

Focus on PD--CAo to provide 6 full days of training to staff per year.

Tiered staffing structure including built-in mentoring: Lead Teachers, Small Group Instructors (SGIs), and Teaching Fellows (TFs).

Intend to hire based on candidates' commitment and demonstrated track record in serving diverse communities.

Thorough hiring process that includes use of sample lesson or video demonstration.

Each teacher builds own professional development plan in collaboration with principal.

Section G is referenced in response to measuring teacher performance. This includes an observation of teachers at a minimum of once per week under the See it, Name it, Do it Framework and creates opportunities for coaching of teachers (62).

The applicant presents a thorough plan for staffing that includes core qualities and experiences aligned with the school's needs based on projected student demographics. The plan includes the hiring of Lead Teachers, Small Group Instructors, and Teaching Fellows which creates a natural pipeline over time for the Lead Teacher position and an ability to assess applicants on the job for that level of responsibility (59-60).

An overview of a professional development plan is provided which includes a variety of structures with clearly defined expectations. A reasonable schedule for these activities is included that provides adequate spacing throughout the school year and frequency of meeting types based on the targeted objectives (62). The plan includes structures for coaching and feedback. Structures such as the 2X2 and observation/evaluation cycles suggest the opportunity for continuous improvement in the classroom.

The applicant described the approach to staffing required for effective implementation of the education model in many respects. The school will recruit teachers both locally and nationally, and aims to hire a diverse staff of highly qualified teachers who demonstrate a track record of success in educating students of color, with disabilities, and from low-income families. Priorities will be given to teachers with certification from a program with a deep focus on DEI, or who are representative of the students to be served. A detailed description of the hiring process was provided, that includes phone screening, in person interviews, reference checks, and a sample lesson. Classrooms will have at least two teachers including a lead teacher and a small group instructor (SGIs) or teaching fellow (TFs).

The applicant fully described the process by which all staff will be supported in their ongoing professional development (PD). A comprehensive plan for PD was provided that is grounded in DEI and cultural humility. Each teacher will develop a Professional Growth Plan (PGP), and participate in four weeks of summer PD that addresses school culture, academic program, classroom set-up, home visits, and PGPs. A variety of PD activities will take place throughout the school year on a daily, weekly, quarterly, and annual basis that uses coaching and feedback, and provides sufficient support to all staff to ensure the educational model will be implemented with fidelity across all grade levels.

Weaknesses:

While an appropriate MTSS is described which indicates the likely capacity of the school to address the needs of diverse learners, this section of the proposal does not provide detailed information regarding training or professional development that would properly enable the staff to carry out such a system. Without this information, it is somewhat unclear to what extent the staff will have the capacity to carry out the vision as described.

While the school's hiring plan for different levels of instructors creates opportunities for natural talent pipelines, this section does not include more detailed information on recruitment strategies for the entry-level teaching positions that would ensure those positions are filled with the highest-quality candidates available.

Recruitment and retention strategies were not provided.

Although the applicant provided many details related to staffing, additional information is required to determine if the plan is sufficient to achieve the school's opening and/or growth plan. For example, the applicant did not describe the school's overall staffing structure, including administrative positions and reporting or supervisory lines. The budget indicates that the school administration will include the two co-founders in the role of executive management along with a principal, but the differentiation of roles and responsibilities is not described. There is a reference to a Chief Academic Officer earlier in the application (p. 2) and in the budget narrative, but this position is not discussed in staffing or clearly indicated in the budget. It is not clear if this position refers to the principal or is an additional position.

H. Financial Management and Monitoring Plan

As independently governed public schools, charters are fully responsible for ensuring quality financial management practices and ongoing financial stability. *Fully describe* your school’s plan to be compliant, strategic, and responsible with finances and business services.

TOTAL AVERAGE POINTS

5/7

Reviewer Comments – Financial Management and Monitoring Plan

Strengths

Good alignment between grant goals & budget allocations.

Committed to setting up strong and effective financial and operational systems.

Educational Services District for back-office support and partner with Joule Growth Partners for CFO-level supports.

Facilities: 30 year lease signed, with option to purchase.

Facilities cost sustainable--at full enrollment, facilities cost is approximately 12% of total budget.

Long-term plan for facility.

A four-year operational budget overview is presented within the narrative with categories of expenditures aligned to three budgetary goals. The goals include equitable distribution of technology to all scholars and staff, strong and compliant financial and operating procedures and policies in place, and a belief in the crucial contribution of staff to achieving school goals (71-72).

Explanations of goals provide broad overview of examples of expenditures under the categories listed in the table. These include a basic description of technology and supplies, along with descriptions of back office support to ensure financial transparency and compliance, and categories of professional development (71-72). Applicant affirms current board expertise in the areas of finance, operations, and facilities with a gap in knowledge around legal and public health expertise (64).

The applicant has provided some evidence of the ability to manage the successful and sustainable implementation of the proposed activities. The completed CSP Budget Template and the grant project goals and expenditures in the budget are clearly aligned with supporting the educational model and success of the target student population. The budget narrative specifies investment in value-added activity to accelerate learning for educationally disadvantaged and at-risk students.

The applicant provided a viable facilities plan that included a specific location with an adequate learning environment as evidenced by prior use of the facility as an elementary school, and facility costs well below twenty percent of the school’s annual budget.

The applicant provided a realistic projection for each category of educationally disadvantaged students to be served, as well as enrollment goals for each year through final expansion that are reasonable and supported by credible data.

Weaknesses:

Enrollment projections are somewhat confusing in the differences presented between documents (budgets & narratives). For example, in 2024-25 only 56 of 84 students move from 3rd to 4th but then there are 84 8th graders in 2028-29 when you look at the expanded enrollment document. In another instance 28 students move to 56 from 4th to 5th but no information is provided about the need for a focused enrollment push that year.

Funding for marketing, recruitment, and outreach is not specifically described in this section.

Applicant also lists food as an expenditure for Design Team and Information Session, which is generally not an

allowable expense under the terms of the CSP grant (161).
 Projections for each category of educationally-disadvantaged student are not found.

Some information is not clear or aligned throughout the application. For example, the budget narrative addresses a CAO and DOF, but does not address the executive management positions, which are a substantial portion of administrative salaries: almost 50% in the first two years. Additionally, the presence of both Personnel and Personnel CMO tabs, and 5 Year Budget Standalone and 5 Year Budget CMO tabs is confusing, particularly because information tabs are not aligned. The Personnel tab shows 2 FTEs for executive management for all five years, but the Personnel CMO tab shows 2 FTEs for executive management for only the first two years. The 5 yr Budget Standalone shows executive management salary for all five years. Thus, the plan is not clear. Similar discrepancies exist for the Family and Community Engagement Manager and the Operations/Business Manager.

Additionally, the applicant did not explain if the applicant charter school is seeking or has received additional grant funding for implementation or operational costs through any other sources outside of the CSP grant. The budget reflects about \$400,000 in funding from Other Entities in year 1, but no evidence is provided or discussed to support this assumption. This is concerning because without this funding, the budget is not balanced in year 1.

The narrative is lacking in substantive detail regarding quantities and specific purchases and timelines (beyond categories) for expenditures. Budgetary assumptions are not clearly articulated, nor are contingency plans presented for lower than anticipated enrollment. While the narrative offers a broad understanding of the categories of purchases over the four years of the grant, it does little to present a comprehensive picture of the expenditures to be made using grant funds.

Budget includes significant salary expenditures for essential personnel separate from grant activities. According to Page 10 of the Allowable Cost Guide, CSP funds cannot be used to supplant salaries.

Additionally, the applicant did not provide a specific timeline for remodeling and equipping the facility, or discuss the school's ability to meet the needs of students receiving special services. It is also not evident that a plan is in place to mitigate risk associated with not meeting projected enrollment or underestimating the financial resources necessary to adequately serve the population of students enrolled.

I. Board Capacity and Governance Structure

A competent, trained governing board is essential to the success of a public charter school. *Fully describe* how your school has developed a strong governing board with a diverse set of skills. Be sure to include how board members understand their roles and responsibilities and have developed a transition plan and ongoing professional development to maintain board strength going forward.

TOTAL AVERAGE POINTS

6.5/12

Reviewer Comments – Board Capacity and Governance Structure

Strengths:

Have identified gaps in board members & have a plan to address.

School has developed a Board Playbook of policies and practices.

Board selection tied to school mission/vision.

Topics of PD that all board members participate in include:

- Government vs. Management,
- Overview of our Charter Contract,
- Conflicts of interest and Ethics,
- Open Public Meeting Laws,
- and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

A broad yet appropriate description of the types of candidates the board would consider adding in the future and a process to confirm candidates is offered (65). Board professional development plans are listed in broad descriptions and indicate a likelihood of the ability to build capacity for necessary oversight functions (65).

The section references a “board playbook” that includes roles and responsibilities for members and officers, bylaws and articles of incorporation, best practices for evaluating leaders, etc. (65).

The proposal includes a table defining the shared roles and responsibilities among the Co-founder/CEO, Co-founder/CAO, and Director of Operations and Finance (66).

The applicant addressed the importance of a strong governing board with a diverse set of skills and stated that the board includes expertise in schools, finance, operations, and facilities. Skills gaps were identified in legal and public health expertise. Specific information about board recruitment and selection was provided and includes in-person meetings, advisory council participation, reference and background checks, and board orientation.

The applicant also discussed how the board will receive professional development in key areas including Government vs. Management, Overview of the Charter Contract, Conflicts of Interest and Ethics, Open Public Meeting Laws, and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI).

Weaknesses:

Current gap on board in legal and public health category.

While the board identifies a gap in legal and public health expertise and an intention to recruit in this field, the proposal does not state specifically how the board will seek to find qualified candidates to fill this particular need.

The referenced board playbook is not described in detail, nor does it appear to be offered as an attachment in the application. Therefore it is not clear to what extent the applicant has clearly defined roles and responsibilities for the board or how they remain at a governance level and not at a school leadership level.

The policies and procedures to ensure monitoring of performance and academic, financial, operational, and legal compliance are not clearly articulated in this section of the proposal.

Evidence of self-evaluation or a culture of continuous improvement for board oversight is not readily apparent from the descriptions offered.

Although the applicant met the criteria for this section in some respects, there are substantial gaps in a number of areas. For example, board composition and structure are not clear. The number of board members and officer positions were not identified. No evidence was provided that the board has established clear policies and procedures that guide its oversight of the school, and board roles and responsibilities were not specifically discussed. Additionally, the applicant did not provide information about how the board will monitor their own and school performance; academic, financial, operational, and legal compliance; and conduct an annual review of policies. Although the applicant stated that the board will receive training in a number of critical areas, board training and PD are not included in the operating budget, so the plan and commitment to ongoing training is unclear. The lack of information in this section raises significant questions about the board's preparation and capacity to provide effective oversight and leadership.

The applicant did not articulate a comprehensive process that will be used by the board to evaluate the performance of the school leadership, including identification of an appropriate protocol for addressing performance concerns.

J. School Leadership and Management

Fully describe and justify the intended leadership structure of your school and demonstrates a strong leadership and staffing plan that ensures high-quality implementation and sustainability of the school.

TOTAL AVERAGE POINTS

3/10

Reviewer Comments – School Leadership and Management

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

No mention of evolution of school leadership.

An organizational structure with clear lines of reporting is not found to be included in the model. Instead, essentially all key functions of the school have shared ownership among the two co-founders (66). Specific responsibilities under these category headings are not described. It is unclear what structures and systems will be implemented for effective management and leadership of the school.

Evaluation of the school leadership by the board is not found to be described. Therefore it is unclear what metrics or systems would be used to judge the performance of school leadership or how such evaluations could be used to encourage continuous improvement.

Evidence of sufficient expertise to manage charter school specific compliance, operations, finance, and legal matters is not presented in this section.

leadership structure of the school with sufficient detail or evidence to demonstrate a strong leadership and staffing plan that ensures high-quality implementation and sustainability of the school. First, although the applicant stated that the school administrators bring knowledge and experience to their roles, no details (or resumes) are provided. The application indicates that the school will be led by the two co-founders as the executive managers of the school. However, it is not clear why two positions are dedicated to this role, and no information provided about the responsibilities for the person (or people) in the role. This seems administratively heavy and financially inefficient.

Second, the applicant did not provide evidence of a well-defined organizational structure with clear administrative roles and responsibilities. A table was provided with headings and administrative positions responsible, but there is substantial overlap and insufficient detail to determine which positions are responsible for what specific tasks. Reporting and supervisory lines are not provided making it difficult to determine how positions are differentiated.

Additional/Overall Comments

Reviewer Comments

What are the plans for student attrition? Will students be added at any / all grade levels when necessary?

Who is responsible for managing & evaluating Joule Growth Partners?

Why 7 mile radius for transportation? How will school plan to address transportation for distances marginally over this number?

Transportation plan--busing for 1-7 mile radius, special arrangements for homeless

A discussion of the role of autonomy and flexibility afforded to charter schools to meet the unique needs of the school's anticipated demographics is not found.

The school's transportation plan is described in only the broadest possible terms. The applicant does not provide specific details into the research conducted on the transportation needs of projected student body, nor does it present evidence of the groundwork for a comprehensive plan to prevent transportation from becoming a barrier to access (59).

Applicant offers a basic description of the nutritional plan which indicates compliances with federal and state requirements. The proposal cites the use of a vendor with an existing relationship in Washington charter schools and an ability to secure needed federal, state, and local funding for sustainability (59).

Aside from mentioning the necessity of innovative distance learning models necessary due to the COVID-19 crisis, the proposal does not emphasize the ability to leverage the flexibility and autonomy granted to charter schools (67).

While the applicant identifies the material operational challenge of COVID-19, it does not elaborate significantly on its response or process for building a response (67). Other key risk factors and strategies to navigate or mitigate them are not found.

Additionally, the applicant stated that the transportation plan includes contracting with the local school district for bus maintenance services, but it is not clear if this partnership has been formalized and, if not, if there's a back-up plan.

The applicant provided a reasonable plan for providing meals and meeting the nutritional needs of the student population. The applicant also provided a reasonable transportation plan for students who live 1-7 miles from the school and students with special needs, as required, that includes purchasing surplus buses and partnering with the local school district for maintenance.

APPLICATION TOTAL POINTS		
Rubric Section	(AVERAGE) Points Awarded	Points Possible
A. Grant Project Goals	8.25	12
B. Educational Philosophy, Instructional Practices, and Curriculum	12.25	16
C. Teaching and Learning	4.5	6
D. Student Academic Achievement Standards	7.5	9
E. Student Demand and Community/Local Support	11.5	12
F. Effectively Serving All Students	8	12
G. Staffing and Professional Development Plan	3.5	4
H. Financial Management and Monitoring Plan	5	7
I. Board Capacity and Governance Structure	6.5	12
J. School Leadership and Management	3	10
STANDARD POINTS		100
Priority Points: 3 Additional Points may be awarded for schools that focus on the development of the whole student (college and career academic readiness and social-emotional development). Applicant must demonstrate a strong instructional and social-emotional focus that supports students toward both educational goals and positive relationship and identity development (including but not limited to mentorship, restorative justice practices, and whole-school college readiness or entry goals).	2.75	3
Priority Points: 3 Additional Points may be awarded for schools with an explicit focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion. Applicant must demonstrate that its staffing, educational model, community and family engagement strategy, and overall design process are responsive to community input, provide ongoing opportunities for learning for school staff, and have planned evaluative measures to help drive diversity, equity, and inclusion through school culture and climate.	2.75	3
Priority Points: 3 Additional Points may be awarded for schools that recruit from rural or unincorporated regions. Applicant must demonstrate that it intends to locate in or near rural or unincorporated regions and how it intends to meet the unique needs of the student population that it recruits from there.	2.75	3
TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS		109