



# COMMUNITIES OF EXCELLENCE

## IDAHO'S CHARTER SCHOOLS PROGRAM GRANT



### APPLICATION DETAILS

School Name: Hayden Canyon Charter School	
Contact Person: Cynthia Lamb	Contact Email: <a href="mailto:clamb@haydencanyoncharter.org">clamb@haydencanyoncharter.org</a>
Application Type: Start Up	Grant Budget: \$799,788
Grades Served: K – 8	New Seats Created: 434
Application Status: Funded	

## RUBRIC

### A. Grant Project Goals

**Identify** 3-5 grant project goals and **justify** each goal in terms of its value in supporting the planning and implementation of your proposed school. **All grant spending, including future revisions to your budget, must fit clearly within one of your stated project goals.**

#### **Reviewer Comments – Grant Project Goals**

##### **Strengths:**

- HCC included more than three goals which cover the required topics, overall showing an alignment to the mission and vision of the school.
- Clear academic goals are articulated and rigorous, and HCC describes how it will serve a student population representative of its region. Three trackable goals are described and justified.
- They have a grant project goal that addresses student performance on tested subjects for grades 4 & 8.
- One project goals addresses serving students population.
- Project goals are aligned with school's mission & vision.
- Project goals have a justifiable purpose.

##### **Weaknesses:**

- While over three goals are included, they lack specific detail as to (1) how these measures and outcomes will be tracked, and (2) how and why the goals support the school in reaching performance goals. Actionable plans for achieving these goals, in particular goals 2 and 3, would have provided stronger evidence.
- While HCC's seat goal is trackable, it is debatable whether it is aligned to the school's mission. It is not clear that goal 4 is rigorous, and more pertains the implementation of HCC's instructional model than any outcome.
- Goals are not all articulated with trackable measures.
- Unclear demographic goal will be within 5% of population.



**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.

**Reviewer Comments - Educational Philosophy, Instructional Practices, and Curriculum****Strengths:**

- Educational philosophy, instructional practices, and curriculum are thoroughly explained here.
- HCC's instructional philosophy is crystal clear thanks to the included table, and the approach is linked back to best practice. The chosen curriculum is justified in terms of the school's philosophy. It is noteworthy that HCC aims to have students work toward various online platform certifications. It is interesting that the application describes 1:1 technology but indicates that technology will be used "judiciously."
- Explains key design elements for the educational model by:
  - Identifying well articulated instructional methods, school culture, and classroom design;
  - Explaining how practices complement curriculum designs; and,
  - Using research-based and widely accepted best practices to support education philosophy.
- Justifies core curriculum for each content area by identifying key curriculum that will be leveraged.
- Justifies curricular choices through the use of published research or data-based anecdotal evidence.
- Identifies how technology will be utilized within school's instructional delivery and assessments.
- Justifies how key elements have been chosen to utilize autonomies and flexibilities granted to charters.

**Weaknesses:**

- The technology plan did not sufficiently address assessment needs.
- Explanations related to classroom design and behavioral expectations are sparse, and there is no description of how technology will be used to meet assessment needs or is sustainable.
- Does not address how curricular choices will meet or exceed Idaho requirements in ELA or Math.

**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.

**Reviewer Comments – Teaching and Learning****Strengths:**

- The design of the instructional strategy in terms of the educational philosophy, instructional practices, and curriculum has been described and justified.
- The application describes how data will be used to drive adaptive instruction for every child.
- Strong explanation re: how schools will leverage data to inform instruction.
- Identifies range of differentiation and interview structures.

**Weaknesses:**

- This is a weaker area of the application. There is little detail regarding instructional practices aside from behavior that is generally accepted as strong instructional practice, such as using high quality assessments, engaging all students, and ensuring that curricula are rigorous. RTI is mentioned, but not in a way that illuminates how it will be implemented in the school.



**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. In this section, persuade the reader that your school will have rigorous goals and adequate oversight to ensure quality implementation, operation, and accountability.

**Reviewer Comments – Student Academic Achievement Standards****Strengths:**

- Identifies sound assessment practices that effectively monitor student and teacher performance; identifies what data or information will be collected, how it will be analyzed, and by whom; there is a plan to build a culture of data-driven instruction.
- HCC identifies interim student achievement benchmarks that will inform the school's overall sense of progress towards its academic goals for the student body. The application indicates that rubrics will be used to assess mastery using competency-based methods beyond standardized test, and robust student portfolios will be maintained. HCC describes how teachers will use data to drive daily instruction.
- Strong evidence of how data will be leveraged and use of a portfolio of supports.

**Weaknesses:**

- While there is a plan to assess students throughout the year(s), the application does not clearly identify interim benchmarks (throughout the year) or a plan to adjust these benchmarks annually. Also, the application includes the statement that data will be utilized to inform policy and management decisions, but lacks any further explanation as to how this will occur.
- There is little description of how student performance data will be used to inform policy and management decisions.

**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. In this section schools will document their vitality and long-term sustainability through demonstrating their dedication to developing and maintaining community partnerships and connections.

**Reviewer Comments – Student Demand and Community/Local Support****Strengths:**

- This section included strong evidence and sound planning.
- HCC's leaders and staff have clearly invested considerable time and resources in community engagement, and the wait list indicates demand in the community. It is also clear that leaders have anticipated a dropoff in interest since the school has not opened and understand that more outreach is needed. There is a robust description of current outreach and plan for future outreach. This is an area of strength in the application.
- Overall strong strategies for recruitment with clear and target driven goals
- Clear articulation of parent recruitment plan.

**Weaknesses:**

- No specific focus on recruiting low-income or students of color.
- Unclear how parents will provide input to school model.
- Most activities focus on delivery information or content – not inclusive dialogue.



**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. In this section, describe 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.

**Reviewer Comments – Effectively Serving All Students****Strengths:**

- The application acknowledges that HCC will need address issues associated with rural poverty. The school is allocating staff for special education and English learners and planning for staff training in order to meet the needs of these students, indicating not only a willingness to serve these students but a commitment to do so. The school describes how it plans to offer meals and transportation adequately.
- Strong nutritional and transportation plans.
- Strong academic interventions in place.

**Weaknesses:**

- Behavior is not explicitly addressed in this section despite being an element for evaluation.
- The strengths of the behavioral interventions are unclear.

**G. Staffing and Professional Development Plan**

Describe the 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.

**Reviewer Comments – Staffing and Professional Development Plan****Strengths:**

- The staffing structure outlined in HCC's application appears sound and reasonable, and the school has a good understanding of its staffing needs. Some thought has clearly gone into how HCC will ensure that it is fully staffed, as the application includes specific numbers of candidates and a process for vetting them. Job-embedded membership will be a regular component to teaching at HCC.
- Very strong staff development plan that is grounded in EL.

**Weaknesses:**

- Evidence is strong in this section, however; it is difficult see the PD plan come to fruition because it requires an estimated "350 dedicated hours". This reviewer assumes there may be a plan for a 4 day school week which would allow time for this PD plan, but there is no clear mention of a four-day week in this application. More detail as to how these 350 dedicated hours (nearly 44 work days) would be accomplished within the confines of the school day and year would help in interpreting this plan and determining if it is sound.
- Moderate recruitment plan & selection plan.

**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. In this section, explain your school's plan to be compliant, strategic, and responsible with finances and business services.

**Reviewer Comments – Financial Management and Monitoring Plan****Strengths:**

- A 3-year budget is provided that appears reasonable and relatively sustainable. A phased approach to growth is described. The financials described in this section indicate that HCC's leadership is well-equipped to meet the financial needs of the school. There is also a mitigation plan describing how the school will earn revenue when portions of the building are not in use by HCC.

**Weaknesses:**

- Concerns regarding professional development. In the Budget Narrative, \$3,500 is allotted for training staff in EL Model. In attachment A2, \$3,500 is allotted for "June and August weeklong PD." The budget is unclear how the proposed robust PD plan will be funded.
- The phased approach to growth detailed in the application does not include target dates or personnel responsible. Unfortunately, there is no acknowledgement that HCC's facility will meet the needs of students requiring special services.

**I. Board Capacity and Governance Structure**

A competent, trained governing board is essential to the success of a public charter school. In this section the school will demonstrate how it has developed a strong governing board with a diverse set of skills. Board members should understand their roles and responsibilities and have in place a transition plan and ongoing professional development to maintain board strength going forward.

**Reviewer Comments – Board Capacity and Governance Structure****Strengths:**

- There is a clear plan for board training.
- The application describes how HCC's board will assess its strengths and weaknesses in order to meet the needs of the school, and also includes a description of transitioning the founding board to the operating board. There is a clear and accurate articulation of the board's role and responsibilities. Board training through ISBA and other resources is also described.

**J. School Leadership and Management**

This section should describe the intended leadership structure of your school and demonstrate a strong leadership and staffing plan that ensures high-quality implementation and sustainability of the school.

**Reviewer Comments – School Leadership and Management****Strengths:**

- A division of roles appears clear in the application, and it appears that the school leadership has been purposeful to ensure that staff possess appropriate skill sets. The application describes an appropriate process for how the board will evaluate the school leader. There is good attention to detail related to risks and potential mitigation.

**Overall Comments****Reviewer Comments**

- Sound EL model and leadership structure.
- Emphasis on professional development needs to be supported by appropriate plans and funding.
- HCC offers some impressive detail regarding planning for facilities and staffing. It is clear that a great deal of thought has gone into how the school will be sustained, including how the community will be engaged. The application gives great confidence in HCC's ability to sustain operations and fill to capacity.
- There could be some more detail regarding how students with special needs will be served. The application did not well describe how behavioral issues – especially those generated from environments outside the school – would be addressed in a constructive way. The instructional practices section is quite weak because the detail therein relates more to common best practice than specific approaches at this particular school.

