



COMMUNITIES OF EXCELLENCE

IDAHO'S CHARTER SCHOOLS PROGRAM GRANT



APPLICATION DETAILS

School Name: MOSAICS Public School	
Contact Person: Anthony Haskett	Contact Email: ahaskett@mosaicps.org
Application Type: Start Up	Grant Budget: \$800,000
Grades Served: K – 8	New Seats Created: 540
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:

- The grant proposal thoroughly addresses all aspects of the rubric section. Goals are justified, are measurable and align to the mission of the school.
- All four goals are exceptionally aligned to the vision of the school, as well as being SMART goals. The goals, as a whole, speak to the school's desire to ensure every student's high achievement, enrollment of the school to reflect target demographics, engage in learning that reflects the school's STEAM focus, and the creation of a safe, inclusive learning culture and environment.
- Executive Summary and Grant Project Goals narrative were very strong at presenting the school and overall scope of this proposed grant application. The Grant project goals included measurement of growth through MAP and state assessments, included a recruitment goal to reach required demographic diversity, and presented a total of 4 goals clearly aligned to the mission and vision of the school. Goals had clear purposes, were measurable, and sufficiently rigorous to set high expectations for all students.

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:**

- The grant proposal thoroughly addresses all aspects of the rubric section.
- The school is grounded on a foundation of a highly trusting community where students take risks and learn from their mistakes. Specific structures, such as Restorative Practices, morning meeting, an afternoon debrief, and Zones of Regulation are described as fundamental to this community building.
- Project-based learning (PBL) is named as the key design element for instruction. Lifelong skills such as collaboration, communication, critical thinking and creativity and management – in addition to core soft skills – are described as additional outcomes in alignment with the school's philosophy. The school will also invest in expertise and training in Gold Standard Project Design from the Buck Institute for Education, arguably one of the very best organizations for PBL training.
- School designers have selected high-quality curricular resources for each content area, and explain how these decisions not only meet or exceed state and federal requirements in ELA and Math, but also complement the school's PBL design focus. Decisions about instruction and curriculum are supported by current and relevant research on their effectiveness.
- The school is investing in two approaches to accelerate student learning. First, their youngest students will be offered full-day kindergarten (Idaho only funds half-time kindergarten). The application cites research to substantiate the impact of this investment, especially for underserved students. Second, the school will use a looping model in which teachers loop upward with their classes, thereby creating two-year relationships with those students – which according to cited research, yields benefits for all students, but especially for minority students.
- The school's technology plan is well-developed, including SMART displays to enhance student/teacher interaction, a "makerspace" in which students will engage in design and prototype construction. These are well-aligned with the school's PBL and design-thinking focus.
- Lastly, the school is exercising key autonomies in two areas. First, they are providing low-income and Hispanic students computer coding and art classes in K-8. Second, the provision of all-day kindergarten for all students targets the needs of their demographics.
- Applicant presents a strong narrative that presents a well-researched educational model with suitable behavioral and social-emotional attention to address the particular needs of the target demographic of higher educationally disadvantaged students. Process of aligning with Idaho standards in PBL-planning was clearly articulated and the correlation between research and educational programming choices and use of available autonomies was clear.

Weaknesses:

- Only element that would have been nice to see included were numbers for each technology, though most of this was found in the grant budget document.

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 grant proposal thoroughly addresses all aspects of the rubric section. Grant emphasizes a multi-tiered systems approach to meet the needs of students.
- The application reiterates the use of an instructional model centered around PBL to engage students and meet rigorous performance objectives. A comprehensive assessment program is described, including benchmark, diagnostic, lesson and unit, formative and performance assessments. A specific example of how these assessments are integrated in ELA is provided.
- Differentiation and intervention structures, all part of the school's RTI and MTSS systems, are described. School schedules include a designated intervention time in which teachers and aides utilize a workshop model to remediate or extend students' skills.
- PBL workshop model and assessment tools were presented as key strategies that allow for the differentiation to remediate and extend content/instruction to meet student individual needs. It was clear how teachers would use data and information from assessments, istation, MAP, CORE Phonics, etc., to inform and adapt instruction, and an Rtl system of tiered supports was outlined.

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:**

- The grant proposal thoroughly addresses all aspects of the rubric section. The assessment system in the grant proposal is robust.
- The application includes thorough descriptions of the school's performance management plan for monitoring and reporting progress. Building upon the introduction to assessments in the previous section, the application describes and justifies the use of specific standards-based assessments, including: NWEA MAP (reading, math and language usage), Idaho IRI, Words Their Way, DIBELS and the CORE Phonics Assessment.
- The school supports a culture of data-driven instruction is supported by the above portfolio of assessments. Additionally, the school utilizes Professional Learning Communities, which meet every other Wednesday for an hour. This time is focused on data analysis and reflection to adjust and improve instruction.
- Systemic analysis of the school's data profile will utilize many of the same assessments, as well as the ISAT. The school's leadership team, which includes the principal, instructional coach, grade level teacher representatives, an aide, parents and a board member will look for subgroup trends and identify strategies or improvement.
- Weekly Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) for teachers are identified, along with process of data review by school leadership team. A robust portfolio of interim and curriculum-based assessments is identified.

Weaknesses:

- Creating and sustaining this kind of data-driven instructional culture, especially one that values and includes such disparate voices and perspectives, is exceedingly complex work. This is not a weakness of the application, but instead a challenge to make it happen over time.
- Benchmark assessments were identified, but interim benchmarks were not specifically identified (though benchmarking is integrated into each of the identified assessments). Hard to know based on narrative the extent to which staff are/will consistently use/understand assessment tools as the specific training regarding these is not directly articulated in the application.

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:**

- The grant proposal thoroughly addresses all aspects of the rubric section. Holding and attending events by school personnel is very impressive.
- The school has created and prioritized engagement with students and the community in ways that invite and inform. For instance, because the school is designed around a STEAM model, specific engagements (e.g. LEGO camp, Early STEAM workshops at the library, Book and a Bite for needy students) are utilized to attract students and begin to orient them early to the school's focus and vision. The creativity and initiative described in this section are to be commended.
- The school interfaces regularly with other organizations serving low-income, historically marginalized populations. The application describes a number of recruitment events in which more than 900 families engaged in. The school's budget includes a very healthy \$20,000 for student recruitment. Specific projections for each category of educationally disadvantaged students to be served is presented. Enrollment goals for each year seem reasonable given the included analysis, and are bolstered by the successes and wait lists of two other charter schools operating in the area.
- The application describes a thorough approach to meaningful parent and community engagement. An Outreach and Recruitment Committee, comprised of board members, parents and the administrator is operational. Current and future means of communicating with and engaging parents is described. Partnerships with experts from the community will support the school's focus on PBL and STEAM.
- School identifies a variety of activities it has engaged in to market the school, including partnering with community organizations that serve low-income and historically marginalized student groups; particular focus on engaging hispanic community. \$20k included in CSP grant budget for targeted marketing to educationally disadvantaged/hispanic community through neighborhood canvassing, mailings, radio in multiple languages, and social media. Projections of each educationally disadvantaged category were identified in application attachment and found to be within 5% of other public schools. A broad range of surveys, weekly teacher communications, use of 2-way apps are all ways identified of engaging families/community. Community partnerships for curriculum development and community makerspace events are other ways identified for engaging community.

Weaknesses:

- Specific evidence-based-initiatives for community/family development could be referenced as a research basis to strengthen this section even further.



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 grant proposal thoroughly addresses all aspects of the rubric section.
- The applicant describes a thoughtful description of programs and interventions to support educationally disadvantaged students. The school will offer free transportation, breakfast and lunch in order to eliminate this most basic barrier to access. A program to support social-emotional learning, Restorative Practices and Zones of Regulation, will help students coming from traumatic situations to develop social skills and self-regulation. Staffing supports include an instructional coach, Title I and ELL Coordinator positions.
- Descriptions of the school's identification of and service to English Language learners is comprehensive. Students will be screened using the WIDA ACCESS Screener, and English Language Plans will be developed and implemented for all qualifying students. Students who qualify for Title I services will be offered intervention services in reading and mathematics through the school's intervention workshop model. Staff will receive ongoing training in behavioral interventions, and the school's RTI team, coordinators and administration will be trained in Nonviolent Crisis Prevention Intervention.
- Services for students with disabilities will be coordinated by the school's special education director. The application provides a thorough description of policies and procedures designed to support students with disabilities, including the development of IEPs and Section 504 plan accommodations.
- Plans for the school's lunch and breakfast program, as well as transportation, is described.
- A suitable/compliant ELL & SPED programs outlined and academic/behavioral intervention strategies are identified, along with related PD. Supplemental Services and small group instruction identified as strategies for differentiation and as part of tiered interventions. Non-discriminatory enrollment referenced. Push-in, inclusive approach to SPED, with appropriate PD and contracted SPED support services (budgeted for). Risk noted for learning curve related to running federal food program, with some mitigation activities identified..

Weaknesses:

- It was not entirely clear what funding sources would be utilize to sustain the school nutrition program; food costs were budgeted, but no federal FRL revenues were included in operating budget so unclear if budgeted costs are gross costs or net costs. Specific articulation of nutritional needs and how they will be met were not directly articulated. Funds for transportation were included in the budget, but specific funds for extracurricular or field trip transport were not identified.



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 grant proposal thoroughly addresses all aspects of the rubric section.
- The application outlines a summary of the school's approach to staffing, and review of the budget supports the model. The school plans to reallocate funds from the J.A and Kathryn Albertson Family Foundation in order to reduce class size in grades K and 1st. By its fifth year, when the school is fully enrolled, all staffing costs are covered without grant funds. The staffing model assumes that the school will open with a subset of the grades it will eventually serve, and grow each year until fully enrolled.
- The school's professional development plan is smartly targeted on two critical areas for success: project-based learning and restorative practices. PLCs every other week and six full days of professional development will support all staff in building consistency of implementation. Professional growth plans will be developed for every staff member – one that fosters a growth mindset and stretches their abilities beyond their current level.
- Thoughtful attention to staffing structure was evident (with clear org structure), and recruitment process was identified. Staff development was articulated to include 2-week preservice training, 6 staff training days throughout year, and PD as part of 2-week PLC cycles throughout the year. Several elements of the school program (PBL unit design, restorative practices, ELL/SPED supports, etc) were identified. Instructional Coaching with feedback cycles are integrated into school plan.

Weaknesses:

- It is suggested that the school's staff evaluation plan align with the stated desire to foster a risk-taking, growth-mindset orientation in staff. This is not an application weakness, but one that is essential in fostering the kind of culture that's described.
- One SPED coordinator/instructor likely will not be sufficient following Year 2 for projected caseload.

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:**

- The grant proposal thoroughly addresses all aspects of the rubric section.
- The school's 3-year operating budget and narrative demonstrates a conservative approach that assumes no increase in state funding. Substantial cash reserves are anticipated each year, and mitigation strategies for under-enrollment are outlined.
- The CSP budget template provides an incredibly detailed picture of planned expenditures utilizing CSP funds. All are aligned with the school's mission and vision. CSP funds are targeted toward a smart combination of staffing investments (ensuring smaller class sizes in K-1), curriculum, training, instructional resources, recruitment, and a host of other activities aligned to grant goals.
- The school has received a \$1.89 million grant from the Albertson Family Foundation.
- The school's plan for facilities is solid as well. Having received \$8 million in financing from Vectra Bank and Building Hope Finance, the school will construct a 40,000 square foot school building which will be tailored to its instructional model. Ample room is allocated for classrooms (including moveable walls to facilitate collaboration and team teaching), special education intervention, and a large maker space.
- Budget utilizes conservative assumptions. Clear plan for grant activities and expenditures is provided that generally aligns with grant goals. Budget shows feasible facility with building underway, costing within 18.5% of Year 1 budget, reducing to 15.7% by Year 3. Application cites further percentage reduction in future years. Facility description is complementary to school programming. Thoughtful use of resources for educationally disadvantaged, including all day K, additional K/1 teachers for smaller ratios, SPED furnishings, PD on restorative practices and SPED needs, Title I/ELL staff, etc.

Weaknesses:

- Key personnel for purchasing was not identified.
- Operating budget does not show contingency/reserves accumulated over time to provide sustainability to the school. Cash flow not provided in the budget, which would presumably be tight if not contingencies/reserves planned for. Key personnel and target dates for completion of CSP activities were not clearly articulated. Timeline for facility build/finish would be useful.

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:**

- The grant proposal adequately addresses all aspects of the rubric section.
- Board composition and selection is clearly articulated, and individuals represent a breadth of critical expertise, including finance, legal, construction, management and charter governance. Additionally, board members include men and women, and two members are Latinos – intentionally representing the anticipated enrollment of the school.
- The board has completed, and will complete annually, a needs assessment and composition matrix to guide strengths and areas of need of the current board. Policies include compliance with open meetings and open records law. The application explains that the board carries the responsibility of selection of the school administrator who may not be a member of the board. This distinction is an important one, as it helps to ensure that the board operates at the governance level.
- The application prioritizes initial and ongoing professional development for all board members. Specific resources are identified, and an annual self-evaluation is utilized to identify specific areas of continuous improvement and ongoing training.
- Broad skillset represented in current board members and use of skills matrix and recruitment/development through board committee system to fill future board openings. Board members are capable representatives of the community.
- Governance-level activities/roles are articulated for the board. Board reporting mechanisms were referenced here, and included in more detail in the subsequent section(s). Strong focus on board training and funds allocated in the budget; annual self-evaluation.

Weaknesses:

- This section of the rubric did not mention how the board would monitor student achievement. Addressed in section School Leadership and Management, page 24.
- The application states that the board is "responsible for hearing and approving or disapproving the recommendations of the school administrator with respect to changes in staffing levels, program, discipline or curriculum (p.22)." These responsibilities likely fall outside the realm of governance, and are more reflective of management of school operations. It is recommended that the school and board make clear distinctions between matters of policy governance and school operations. Generally, it is recommended that the board's sole employee is the school administrator, and that its primary operational power is in the evaluation and hiring/dismissal of that administrator.
- Board policies are noted in development with the help of experienced support, but would be helpful to note a list of what policies are expected to be included. Additional information found in application attachments.

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:**

- The grant proposal thoroughly addresses all aspects of the rubric section.
- The school utilizes a single administrator organizational model. The principal has the ultimate authority to direct all aspects of the schools instructional and operational functions, including discipline, finance, legal compliance, operations, certified evaluations and community relations. The principal is supported by an instructional coach, a Title I/ELL Coordinator, and a special education director. Division of responsibilities between these individuals is clear.
- The board reviews key indicators of the school's success on a monthly basis, to include enrollment, academic achievement and growth, financial stability, student demographics, stakeholder satisfaction, and teacher turnover. The principal is evaluated annually using the Idaho Principal Framework.
- Operational challenges and risks, during the school's initial opening phase, have been identified. These primary risks include under-enrollment and the challenge of consistency around high expectations and instructional practices in every classroom. Plans for mitigating these risks are proactively and realistically identified.
- Founder has secured strong credentials and experience in charter sector leadership. He has demonstrated success in continuous school improvement/performance. An instructional coach is provided and dedicated staffing for educationally disadvantaged programs. Idaho Principal Framework referenced for principal's evaluation. Use of outside agency to support/check finances. Clear, thorough identification of potential risks, and strong plan for mitigating them through use of external partnerships and additional staff attention/training.

Weaknesses:

- It may be wise to choose from the list of key indicators those to be reviewed on a monthly basis (such as enrollment and financial status) and those that might be best reviewed quarterly or annually (specific academic data).

Overall comments

Reviewer Comments

- The grant proposal thoroughly aligned to the rubric throughout. It was easily understood and well written.
- MOSAICS grant application is exceptionally thoughtful, complete and articulate. Beginning with a compelling vision and focus, the grant proposes goals that are SMART and will clearly help to advance the success and progress of the school as it launches and grows. Writers of the application revealed a deep understanding of what the grant rubric asks for, and descriptions within each section of narrative are spot on. Multiple research references add the weight of evidence and credibility to the applicants' assertions. Grant budget documents articulate exactly what each dollar will pay for, and a strong rationale for its inclusion. Overall, this is one of the very strongest applications this reviewer has ever had the pleasure of evaluating.
- The only caution offered is that described in the governance section of the application – being very clear about what decisions and discussion are the board's, and what remains in the hands of the principal and his leadership team.
- Overall this application was very well written and documented, which was helpful for reviewing/scoring. Very thoughtful use of research-based programming elements specifically designed to bring high-expectations and necessary supports to a targeted educationally disadvantaged population. Clear identification of grant activities and funding/budget request.
- Some areas were not specifically articulated within the narrative, and reviewer needed to search for some elements in attachments. Areas where points were deducted may be areas where the school is not deficient in planning, but may be result of information not being clear.

