



COMMUNITIES OF EXCELLENCE

IDAHO'S CHARTER SCHOOLS PROGRAM GRANT



APPLICATION DETAILS

| School Name: Treasure Valley Classical Academy | |
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| Contact Person: Clinton Condra | Contact Email: ccondra@tvacademy.org |
| Application Type: Start Up | Grant Budget: \$1,250,000 |
| Grades Served: K – 12 | New Seats Created: 702 |
| | |
| 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:

- Most of TVCA's goals are measurable and reflect the mission and vision for the school. In addition, most goals are directly related to student learning, with the exception of TVCA's seat goal (understand that this is a Bluum objective, just does not relate directly to the outcomes of the school). TVCA does articulate a goal to mirror the demographics of the community's student population.
- One grant goal addresses Idaho's required performance criteria.
- One grant goal addresses serving student population within 5% of local demographics.
- Goals align with school mission and vision.
- Each goal has justifiable purpose.

Weaknesses:

- While this school is years away from enrolling grade 12 students, it would have been helpful to include a goal addressing high school student participation in advanced opportunities, preparation to receive industry recognized certifications, and/or student participation in a recognized high school apprenticeship program.
- The academic performance goal (Goal 3) would be enhanced by adding a criteria reference. The current goal states that TVCA's students will outperform students in surrounding schools, but it is not clear how many students would be expected to meet proficiency targets using this as a benchmark.
- Goals are not measurable as written.



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 application is strong here and describes justifies TVCA's instructional methods and curriculum well. The reader gets a very clear picture of how students will spend much of their day and what a typical classroom looks like. Progression through the grades and changing expectations therein is also well articulated, and the intended use of technology is also made quite clear. The application narrative leaves no doubt as to how the instructional methods chosen reflect the philosophy of the program.
- Identifies a well articulated instructional method, school culture, and classroom design.
- Explains how practices compliment the curriculum.
- Approach is research-based and widely accepted.
- Identifies key curricular materials.

Weaknesses:

- Autonomies and flexibilities granted to charter schools are not mentioned.
- Does not clearly address how the plan for each content area meets or exceed state & federal requirements.
- Does not identify correlations between research and projected school demographic information.
- Limited plan for how technology will support education model and program – most is operational.

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:**

- Again, instructional practices and tools to be used are described in detail, as is TVCA's methodology for addressing learning and behavioral challenges. TVCA addresses the use of standardized assessments adequately, and clearly links performance on assessments to the instruction that students will receive.
- Instructional practices, tools and curriculum presented are detailed and consistent.
- They explain how they will use classroom and standardized test to determine needs of students.
- Very strong RTI outline.

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:**

- TVCA describes a wide range of assessments to be used to monitor performance, and also identifies top-line metrics that will determine the answers to the key questions the school wants to know about its students.
- Identifies sound assessment practices that effectively monitor student and teacher performance.
- Interim benchmarks have been identified to ensure progress.
- Describes how data will be used.
- Assessments include a portfolio of formative and inclusive assessments.
- System for data analysis in place.

Weaknesses:

- The application did not mention sound assessment practices that effectively monitor teacher performance, other than state-required teacher observation and evaluations (noted in a different section). This section did not include a description of how data will be utilized to inform policy and management decisions, nor was it noted that a system for data analysis and reflection to inform instruction is in place.
- There is no description of interim benchmarks across student groups, nor does the application describe how TVCA will use data to inform policy or management decisions. While a suite of assessments is described in the application, there is not a clearly articulated system or process for analyzing those data.

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 portion of the application is also strong. The need for the school is clear and well explained, and it appears that TVCA is engaging all appropriate parties as it looks to expand into upper grades (including building a new facility). Marketing and digital outreach are addressed explicitly in the application and the activities described seem appropriate for attracting a diverse population. TVCA also plans to instate a parent teacher community association.
- Sound strategy for marketing, branding, and community outreach in place.
- Will target students reaching the +/- 5% goal.
- Parent engagement is strong and they have identified effective engagement strategies.
- Role of parent is clearly described.
- Clear engagement strategy with community.

Weaknesses:

- While not enough to reduce TVCA's score here, the application does not clearly address risks associated with attracting enrollment in high school grades.
- No specific call out related to how they will specifically target underserved populations.



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 extent to which TVCA's curriculum will enable the school to meet the needs of students with special needs is covered in detail. The school already employs a full time special education teacher, and plans to employ a clinical social worker. TVCA has clearly prioritized purchasing buses to meet the needs of students who would otherwise struggle to get to school. Meal provision is also addressed adequately.
- High expectations are in place for all students.
- Comprehensive academic plans and intervention in place.
- ELL strategies are in place.
- Addresses nutritional and transportation needs of students.

Weaknesses:

- While the application convincingly describes how it will address the needs of all students enrolled at TVCA, it actually does not articulate how these students will all be held to high standards. TVCA touches on how the curriculum will assist in remediation, but does not then address how the school will ensure that students will be expected and given the opportunity to meet the same high bar as their peers. Ability groupings are described, but the process that will be used to transition students from low performing groups is not.
- Unclear if they will effectively address the needs of economically disadvantaged students.
- Limited mention of behavioral strategies.

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:**

- TVCA's staffing is described in detail and appears feasible and logical. It is notable that BCSI provides free support to staff, which is likely a draw. The application describes ample opportunity for staff to develop in order to implement TVCA's model with fidelity.
- Outlines feasible staffing structure that can reasonably deliver education model.
- Identifies steps that will be taken for student recruitment and selection.
- Staff recruitment plan is sufficiently sound.
- Demonstrates how they will provide coaching and feedback.

Weaknesses:

- While evidence is strong here, this section lacked a sound plan for supporting and encouraging innovation and continuous improvement within the classroom.
- While staff evaluations are addressed, coaching support is not.



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:**

- TVCA has a clear plan in place for transitioning to a K-12 campus. The attached budget and budget narrative are detailed and appropriate, including addressing students with special needs.

Weaknesses:

- There does not seem to be any portion of the application that addresses risks and mitigation for underenrollment or the needs to serve additional students with special needs.

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:**

- Another area of strength in the application. The existing board represents a diverse set of skill sets, and the board is recruiting a Hispanic and bilingual member in order to include that perspective. The application describes how management duties were transferred to the building principal and the board's oversight expectations were established. TVCA also has also made use of their opportunity to have board training conducted by BCSI.
- Justifies composition and selection of governing board.
- Demonstrates how the board has and will prioritize training.
- Explains how the board ensures they remain at governance level of leadership.

Weaknesses:

- Does not fully address how board will self evaluate.



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 staffing and organizational structure are very clear in TVCA's application. Management duties are appropriate and well described. The building principal is certainly a good fit for this school, environment, and educational philosophy.
- Leadership team's role is well defined.
- Leadership has capability to implement and sustain new school or expansion project.

Weaknesses:

- This section failed to articulate a comprehensive process that will be used by the board to evaluate the performance of the school leadership and BCSI, including identification of appropriate protocol for addressing performance concerns.
- TVCA does not describe how the building principal will be evaluated. Again, risks and potential mitigation are not addressed in this application.
- Limited explanation of the evaluation process.

Overall comments**Reviewer Comments**

- TVCA's application is very detailed and almost always thorough. It is clear that the school has a firm grasp on its instructional philosophy, methods, and approach to meeting the needs of students with behavioral issues. It was especially easy to picture not only a day in the life of a student at TVCA, but also how expectations for that student will change as he or she advances through the grades. It is also easy to see that TVCA's leadership and board have a well conceived plan in place for expansion. There were many places in the application where specific, steps, dates, and numbers were used to describe academic and facilities plans, indicating that these plans exist and are being followed.
- The most important area of improvement in TVCA's application is to articulate high academic expectations for all students. The school's academic goal addressing academics is relative to the surrounding community, not an absolute target for number of students proficient in ELA and math (in addition to any other subjects). The application's effectively serving all students section is not especially convincing in regards to its expectations for students not initially performing well academically. While school leadership and staff almost certainly believe that all students can learn to a high standard, the narrative in the application does not make that clear enough.

