



# COMMUNITIES OF EXCELLENCE

## IDAHO'S CHARTER SCHOOLS PROGRAM GRANT



### APPLICATION DETAILS

School Name: RISE Charter School	
Contact Person: Heidi Child	Contact Email: <a href="mailto:hchild@kimberly.edu">hchild@kimberly.edu</a>
Application Type: Start Up	Grant Budget: \$405,615
Grades Served: 4-12	New Seats Created: 225
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:

- Grant goals are reasonable and appropriate.
- Grant project goals are aligned to the mission and vision and will support the creation of the school.
- The application's executive summary articulates the direction by the local school district, to "create an innovative educational option." As a charter school with strong support from the district, the school's visionary group explored a variety of ideas for the focus of the charter school – ending up with the adoption of Summit curriculum and a project-based learning focus.
- The application articulates four goals. Each one is well-articulated and also aligned to the vision of the school. Each goal is also specific and measurable, and all but perhaps one seems achievable. 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 project-based learning focus, and the creation of a safe, inclusive learning culture and environment.

##### Weaknesses:

- While most of the demographic subgroup enrollment targets are within 5% of the local districts, the projected low income student population is not within the 5% comparison.
- Goal 1 calls for RISE students to meet or exceed Kimberly School District ELA and Math ISAT proficiency scores by a minimum of 25%. This was increased from the original application, which specified a 5% difference. The jump of 20 percentage points is an ambitious, and perhaps achievable, goal. That said, in the realm of standardized testing, such a difference would be marked indeed.

**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:**

- They will use the Summit curriculum and platform. Project-based learning along with flexibility so students can take courses at their own pace will enable individualized learning paths. Habits of Success helps develop academic and non-academic skills.
- While the school aims to prepare students for college, it also focuses on the development of hands-on skills which may translate into jobs in the unfilled "middle skill" range, which makes up a large proportion of the current labor market.
- The selected curriculum is aligned to Idaho Common Core Standards and provides hands-on projects, learning activities, and assessments.
- The school will utilize the flexibilities granted to charter schools by applying hands-on learning opportunities, internships, apprenticeships, and multi-year mentors to support student success.
- The school's name, RISE Charter School, is an acronym that encompasses the values of the educational experience that the school desires for its students. The letters RISE stand for relevant, innovative, self-directed and exploratory. The application provides a thorough rationale for its selection of Summit curriculum, an educational model that leverages project-based learning and life skill development.
- The application includes alignments between this model and the opportunities available within the school's target attendance area, to include: cognitive skill development, content knowledge, habits of success, and sense of purpose. Each of these attributes is described sufficiently, and relevant research is cited to support this focus. The school will leverage a daily meeting with all students, called Bulldog Breakfast, to connect students with their individual mentors and build common experience and knowledge regarding its Habits of Success.
- Additional grant funding has been secured by the school, including funding for access to a licensed professional counselor who will help to implement the school's Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program.
- Enrichment classes will be offered to every student. These will be taught by teachers, who will receive a \$1000 stipend per quarter.
- Specific curriculum materials and programs in mathematics, ELA, social studies, the arts and science are described, and are aligned with Idaho's common core standards. The breadth of curriculum that the school is adopting will lend itself to differentiating for varied student needs.
- Multiple elements of the school design are powerfully linked to student demographic data and employment trends within the Kimberly, Idaho region. The authorizing district, Kimberly SD, has approximately a 60% go-on to higher education rate. It is hoped that RISE will help not only to increase this percentage, but also prepare students who do not select a four-year college with productive employment opportunities in the local community.
- The school's use of technology is sufficiently described, and linked to relevant outcomes for students.

**Weaknesses:**

- Instructional methods and behavioral systems are identified however few details regarding implementation are provided. For example, the application names that individualized instruction will be provided, however it is unclear how or when this differentiation will occur.
- Direct connections between educational design components and the autonomies granted charter schools is not made as clearly as possible. This is certainly inferred, though.



**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 Summit curriculum is standards-based and has regular assessments built in to allow easy adaptation for curriculum. A range of curriculum pacing, along with a variety of choices in enrichment classes will help provide motivation and success. Mentors will advance relationship-building and sense of belonging with students.
- All teachers will receive training for using ISAT data to drive instruction and students with IEPs and 504s are identified as having Individualized Learning Plans to support differentiation.
- The application indicates that differentiation strategies are built into the Summit educational platform, with extra support for students who need it. Specifics of these instructional strategies are not included in this section of the narrative.
- The school's executive director/principal plans to meet with the families of every student who currently has a 504 plan or IEP, in order to discuss individualized learning plans. The outcomes of these conversations will be shared with teachers during summer professional development.
- The school will hire a full-time special education teacher who will support implementation of 504 and IEPs.

**Weaknesses:**

- The application identifies that ISAT will be used to identify trends however since this assessment occurs on an annual basis, more timely data may be needed to meaningfully differentiate instruction and address student needs.
- While the application names that a SPED/RtI teacher will be hired to implement interventions, there are no details provided on how classroom teachers will support the needs of all students in their classrooms.
- Descriptions of the school's Response to Intervention (MTSS) within the application narrative is relatively superficial, but additional information is found in application appendices.
- As stated above, the application indicates that differentiation strategies are built into the Summit educational platform, with extra support for students who need it. Specifics of these instructional strategies are not included in this section of the narrative.

**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:**

- MAP testing, along with Summit's internal assessments outline a strong assessment plan. Students will participate in Idaho's ISAT test as well. Teachers will undergo extensive professional development in using the Summit and MAP assessments for ongoing student performance monitoring. Monthly data checks of MAP interim testing ensures continual achievement check-ins.
- A variety of assessment types are included in the application including, interim assessments, portfolios, oral defense, or personal advisory board presentations to evaluate academic and Cognitive Skills.
- Teachers will receive mini-observations on a weekly basis to support their continuous improvement.
- The application includes a description of the school's performance management plan for monitoring and reporting progress. The school is required, as part of Summit Curriculum's learning plan, to utilize NWEA's MAP growth data. Additionally, Summit employs a Cognitive Skills rubric which purports to measure higher order thinking skills. This rubric was developed in partnership with the Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning and Equity (SCALE), and is aligned with Common Core State Standards, Next Generation Science Standards, and the C3 Social Studies Framework.
- The school's principal will implement Kim Marshall's protocol of weekly mini-observations, providing each teacher with positive feedback and constructive advice. A teaching skills rubric will be the reference point for this feedback.

**Weaknesses:**

- The assessment plan named that NWEA MAP data will be used on a monthly basis, however with twice a year administration, this may not yield the most timely data to inform instruction. Teacher support or training for use of data was not provided. Additional classroom assessments or other data sources were also not identified as being used to inform instruction. Additionally, no plan to disaggregate performance by subgroups was included.
- Descriptions of the school's data conversations includes references to "monthly data checks of interim MAP assessments." Given that MAP will only be administered in the fall and spring, it does not qualify as an interim assessment, and will only provide "annual" growth data. Additional interim assessment data, tied to content and curricular objectives, should be described – to supplement the weekly mini-observations the principal will engage in.

**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:**

- A variety of community outreach (website, social media, posters, mailers, local radio/TV ads, etc.) will be used to reach families. A lottery has already been held and for the few remaining openings some targeted outreach will take place.
- There is over-crowding in the local school district with new housing being built so there is community demand for a new school option.
- The application provides a well-rounded marketing strategy with a variety of materials and modes of outreach, including bilingual materials.
- The application describes several opportunities for families to engage in the creation of the new school, including preparing the school building, teaching an enrichment course, and serving on an industry advisory board.
- The school appears to be founded on an exceptional partnership/mandate from and with the local school district. As such, the district and school have provided information sessions for parents and teachers. After conducting an enrollment lottery, it appears that every class at every grade level (grades 4 to 8) are filled, with a waitlist of nine students at grade 6. Parents of enrolled students are offered multiple opportunities to connect with and participant in the life of the school, and are invited to become involved in an advisory "Continuous Improvement Plan" process to advise and assist the principal and staff in school improvement.
- The application describes a multi-pronged effort to market the school to the surrounding community, including print and digital outreach. Additionally, opportunities for informational meetings and in-person meetings are named as engagement efforts.
- Growth within the Kimberly, Idaho community is significant, and 400 new families are projected to be seeking enrollment in the school's system. Thus, enrollment for the school appears to be very secure.

**Weaknesses:**

- Based on current enrollment, the school is not within 5% of the combined percentage for traditional public schools within the school's enrollment catchment.
- The application does not provide a description of effective parent, family, and community engagement strategies that will be implemented once the school is open. Additionally, information on engagement of community members and local partners for internships and apprenticeships was not provided.
- Codifying and structuring opportunities for parents to provide feedback and direction regarding school improvement is a noble and challenging goal, for sure. This is not a weakness of the application, but an obvious statement regarding this element of the school's desired development path.



**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:**

- RISE will have access to PBIS and ELL supports through their authorizer, the Kimberly School District. RTI team will identify students, plan interventions and track results. A thorough Special Education plan is in place.
- The school will utilize a variety of academic and behavioral approaches to meet the needs of students with English language acquisition needs and students qualifying for special education.
- The school is partnering with the local district to provide adequate food services and transportation.
- The application continues to express the school's commitment to all students' success, especially via the Summit project-based learning. Within this section, additional details regarding services to students with unique learning and/or emotional needs is provided.
- General descriptions of the deployment of assessments leading to intervention planning are described.
- The school will implement special education services according to established district and state protocols.
- The school will implement the district's food service program, and the school's chartering district will provide food service personnel. In a similar fashion, the school will rely on district partnership to provide transportation for students utilizing established bus routes. The fact that the school does not need to invent all of this from scratch is a definite strength, as these logistical details can become a burden for one-off schools.

**Weaknesses:**

- While the application states that the school will implement RtI, research-based instructional approaches, and SESTA training, few details were provided about implementation, staffing, or frequency.
- The transportation plan does not address the needs of educationally disadvantaged students.
- While the application includes a description of the components of programs designed to meet the needs of students designated as at-risk or educationally disadvantaged, specific details are not described with much detail.
- Given that the student lottery is completed and the school's student population is known with some specificity, the application might provide specific estimates of the number of students who might receive special education services, be on 504 plans, etc. That way, it would be easier to ascertain whether the staffing of a single special education teacher will be adequate.



**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:**

- Ongoing Summit trainings and teacher mini-observations are embedded in their plan.
- Staffing recruitment is already underway and a hiring committee will be in place.
- The recruitment plan provided utilizes a variety of posting locations and information sessions to recruit educator talent. Additionally, the school will be consistent with the State Department of Education Idaho Career Ladder salary schedule and provide healthcare and retirement benefits, as well as stipends for participating in professional development.
- Initial staff recruitment involved outreach meetings to teachers within the chartering school district. Additionally, jobs have been posted since February on various social media sites. It is not clear if any founding staff have been selected, beyond the school's founding principal. Significantly, the school's teaching staff will qualify for the state's retirement program, PERSI.
- Staff development for teachers is necessary for implementation of the Summit project-based learning curriculum, and this will be provided via a summer intensive prior to the start of school. The importance of the principal's weekly mini-observation/feedback cycle is highlighted within this section, as an ongoing opportunity for growth and improvement throughout the year.

**Weaknesses:**

- More information could have been provided about the method of staff evaluation.
- The application, and the school's planning, would be stronger if specific days (e.g., planning before school opens, ongoing shortened days for PLCs, etc.) were included. As it reads now, there is a huge amount of professional learning that is intended.

**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 school will occupy, and for pay, the local school district's facility.
- The selected facility will adequately house the school at full build-out and provides classroom spaces, makerspaces, a library, and teacher workrooms.
- The grant project goals align with the mission of the school and will fund essential elements of the school design.
- The school's budget narrative and three-year operating budget demonstrates financial viability for the long-term success of the school. In addition to the hoped-for acquisition of the CSP grant, the school has been awarded a \$244,000 grant from the Albertson Family Foundation.
- The school will occupy an existing district building – the Round Building and the Intermediate Center. Combined, these facilities appear to be more than adequate to house the school's program and anticipated student population. The school will make a payment to Kimberly School District in the amount of 12% of all state payments received by the charter school.
- The provision of a suitable facility by the chartering district is further evidence of a sound partnership between the charter school and its chartering entity.

**Weaknesses:**

- Nothing was mentioned about how they would modify their budget if the CSP grant was not awarded.
- The enrollment worksheet shows the school starting in the 20/21 school year – that must be an error.
- The grant implementation plan did not contain key personnel or target dates for completion of activities.
- There was no justification provided as to why teacher salaries decrease from Year 1 to Year 2 in the provided 3-year budget.
- While the current enrollment is on target to meet projections, the application would have been strengthened by including a plan to mitigate risks associated with underestimated financial resources associated with future low enrollment.

**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 governing board is comprised of community members with a variety of skill sets and the board has a plan to conduct an annual skill appraisal to determine any unfilled needs.
- The board is currently utilizing both recorded board trainings and in-person workshops for professional development. Additionally, the board plans to conduct an annual self-evaluation to further its development.
- Board composition and selection is clearly articulated, and individuals represent a breadth of critical expertise, including finance, education, legal, school governance, management and charter governance.
- 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.
- An annual self-evaluation will be utilized to identify specific areas of continuous improvement and ongoing training.

**Weaknesses:**

- The board bylaws were provided however a Conflict of Interest policy was not included.
- While the application states that current policies are being reviewed before adoption, information on how the board will monitor key performance, operational, or legal compliance was not included.

**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 selected school leader has a strong background in education and is from the local community.
- The application states that an ongoing review of key performance indicators will occur on a regular basis, however the application would have been strengthened by providing information on how the leader will be formally evaluated, at least annually.
- The school utilizes a single administrator organizational model. The school leader has the ultimate authority to direct all aspects of the school's instructional and operational functions, including discipline, finance, legal compliance, operations, certified evaluations and community relations.
- The principal is evaluated annually using the Idaho Principal Framework.
- The school's operational and business support functions will be supported through an MOU with the district's authorizing school district.

**Weaknesses:**

- No org chart was offered to help the reviewer understand the overall organizational structure. It is mentioned that Ms. Child will be the full-time administrator but it is unclear if she would also fulfill the role of the ED/principal position that is referenced?
- The application did not identify any material operational challenges or risk factors, nor plans to address them.
- Performance criteria for the school has yet to be defined.
- While the application identifies that an Advisory board will be created, no details on how this group will operate were provided.
- Administrators in single schools – even with significant support from chartering entities – are often required to "walk on water." Though not specified, it will be absolutely important for school leadership to seek out and take advantage of every support mechanism and relationship possible.

## Overall comments

**Reviewer Comments**

- Utilizing the project-based curriculum and experience of the Summit Learning network will be advantageous when starting a new school.
- It is a positive sign that the school district/authorizer is willing to share facilities with the new school and also offer services.
- More details should be developed around the org's structure, governance and leadership.
- The application outlines clear grant project goals that will support the implementation of the project-based school.
- The school plans to utilize community partnerships to prepare students for college and careers.
- Overall the application lacked sufficient detail to provide reviewers with an understanding of the proposed curriculum, instruction, and assessment plans.
- While the application contained strong ideas for family and community engagement, very little information on the execution of those ideas were provided.
- Additionally, the a clear plan for evaluating the success of the school and the leader was absent.
- RISE Charter School will clearly utilize and benefit from a mature partnership with Kimberly School District. Oftentimes, charter schools and districts experience less than optimal relationships. In this case, KSD appears to have sanctioned and even encouraged the visioning and creation process that has resulted in the creation of RISE. All parties should continue to invest in a trustful and supportive relationship between entities, to the benefit of the school and its families.
- The Summit model described in the application narrative appears to be a robust solution to the myriad challenges in starting a new school.
- The school's founding board represents necessary diversity of experience to operate effectively.
- A sound plan for facilities, nutrition program and transportation are all assets to the founding of a charter school.
- Much of the narrative within the application is relatively general and descriptive. Details regarding, or examples of, core instructional practices, assessment cycles, schedules and professional development would add strength and credibility to the application.