



# BUILDING ON SUCCESS

IDAHO'S CHARTER SCHOOLS PROGRAM GRANT



## APPLICATION DETAILS

<b>School Name: Valor Classical Academy</b>	
Contact Person: Sean Hunter	Contact Email: <a href="mailto:shunter@acs-id.org">shunter@acs-id.org</a>
Application Type: Start Up	Grant Budget: \$2,000,000
Grades Served: K–12	New Seats Created: 654
Total Averaged Score: 95.5	Priority Points Assigned: 4
Application Status: Funded	

## RUBRIC

<p><b>A. SMART Grant Project Goals</b>  <i>Identify 2-4 SMART 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.</i></p>	
<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>	<b>9/10</b>
<p><b>Reviewer Comments – Grant Project Goals</b></p> <p><b>Strengths:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The narrative clearly addresses academic outcomes, stating that students at VCA will outperform the state average in reading, math, and science by at least 5 percentage points in year one, increasing in subsequent years, and exceed the state growth average as well.</li> <li>Goals also address adequate student body diversity and enrollment.</li> <li>The goals are clearly measurable and aligned with the school’s classical education mission.</li> <li>They emphasize academic rigor, inclusivity, and civic responsibility.</li> </ul> <p><b>Weaknesses:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The only grant goal that could be perceived as related to the unique mission and vision of the school (apart from academic success) apply only to graduating high school seniors, which the school will not have until 8 years after opening.</li> <li>The proposal could include more specific benchmarks for monitoring the success of post-secondary planning efforts.</li> </ul>	

<p><b>B. Educational Philosophy, Instructional Practices, and Curriculum</b>  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.</p>	
<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>	<b>15/20</b>
<p><b>Reviewer Comments - Educational Philosophy, Instructional Practices, and Curriculum</b></p> <p><b>Strengths:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The narrative describes a detailed curricular plan, justifying how the chosen curriculum achieves the classical education model described in the school's mission.</li> <li>It also includes adequate descriptions of behavioral expectations and how the chosen curriculum reinforces those expectations.</li> <li>A well-defined classical curriculum supported by the Hillsdale College framework ensures rigor and alignment with state standards.</li> <li>The integration of virtues and civic education strengthens the educational philosophy.</li> </ul> <p><b>Weaknesses:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The narrative does not cite any published research to justify curricular choices, nor does it address technology beyond stating that it will be used minimally in early grades.</li> <li>A great deal of this section is used to describe the high school experience and, while this is appropriate, there is little done to explicitly link what is expected of a student in high school (e.g., reading great works in their entirety, writing a thesis) to the support that students will receive in earlier grades in order to allow them to meet those expectations.</li> <li>Flexibilities granted to charter schools are not mentioned.</li> <li>The proposal could provide more detail on how curriculum adaptations will meet diverse learning needs, particularly for disadvantaged students.</li> </ul>	



**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 POINTS**

**6/6**

**Reviewer Comments – Teaching and Learning**

**Strengths:**

- The narrative satisfies all criteria in this section of the rubric, with particular attention to support for instructional practices and instructional tools incorporated into the chosen curriculum.
- Strong emphasis on data-driven instruction, differentiation, and collaborative planning through PLCs.
- The focus on professional development supports instructional quality.

**Weaknesses:**

- Limited details on how teaching strategies will address specific subgroup needs, such as ELL students.

**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.

**TOTAL POINTS**

**9/9**

**Reviewer Comments – Student Academic Achievement Standards**

**Strengths:**

- It is clear from the narrative that the three chosen primary assessment tools are well-understood and used for the appropriate purposes throughout the school year.
- Robust performance management plan with clear benchmarks for monitoring growth and accountability.
- A strong culture of data-driven decision-making is evident.

**Weaknesses:**

- The narrative describes a well-conceived assessment plan comprised of three assessment tools, then cites other assessments / data sources as influential in decision-making, which muddies the waters of an otherwise clear approach.
- The proposal could better explain how benchmarks will be adjusted based on subgroup performance trends.



<b>E. Student Demand and Community/Local Support</b>	
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.	
<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>	<b>10/10</b>
<b>Reviewer Comments – Student Demand and Community/Local Support</b>	
<b>Strengths:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The narrative includes ample evidence speaking to the need for VCA in the community and interest from potential students and families.</li> <li>• It is clear that there has and will continue to be sufficient effort made to advertise and increase awareness in advance of opening the school, and the narrative adequately describes expected student demographics, enrollment goals, and parent engagement strategies.</li> <li>• High community demand supported by interest forms and outreach efforts.</li> <li>• Effective parent and community engagement strategies are in place.</li> </ul>	
<b>Weaknesses:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The proposal could include more examples of partnerships directly impacting student outcomes.</li> </ul>	

<b>F. Effectively Serving All Students</b>	
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.	
<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>	<b>12/12</b>
<b>Reviewer Comments – Effectively Serving All Students</b>	
<b>Strengths:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The narrative adequately addresses the needs of low-income students, students with special needs, and students who are behind academically.</li> <li>• It is notable that the school staff are learning from the experience of other similar schools and anticipate the need to provide remedial education services to students entering the program.</li> <li>• Comprehensive plans for equity and access, including transportation and nutritional support for economically disadvantaged students.</li> </ul>	
<b>Weaknesses:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More detail on how success for disadvantaged subgroups will be monitored and improved over time would strengthen the section.</li> </ul>	



<b>G. Staffing and Professional Development Plan</b>	
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.	
<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>	<b>4/4</b>
<b>Reviewer Comments – Staffing and Professional Development Plan</b>	
<b>Strengths:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school's staffing plan seems reasonable for a school opening in the Treasure Valley.</li> <li>• Comprehensive training plans, partnerships with Hillsdale College, and mentorship for teachers are well-articulated.</li> </ul>	
<b>Weaknesses:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VCA has access to a notable resource in Hillsdale's free teacher supports, however the narrative does not cover specifics regarding what is provided by Hillsdale.</li> <li>• Limited discussion on how the school will retain high-quality teachers in the long term.</li> </ul>	

<b>H. Financial Management and Monitoring Plan</b>	
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.	
<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>	<b>7/7</b>
<b>Reviewer Comments – Financial Management and Monitoring Plan</b>	
<b>Strengths:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The financial planning documents included in the application seem reasonable and meet the criteria listed in the rubric (assuming that included an anticipated grant from AFF is appropriate).</li> <li>• It is also notable that the application refers to the budgetary considerations for other similar schools as a benchmark.</li> <li>• A conservative financial plan with strong oversight mechanisms and alignment to project goals.</li> <li>• Facilities planning is phased and strategic.</li> </ul>	
<b>Weaknesses:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The proposal could include more contingency planning for potential budget shortfalls or enrollment fluctuations.</li> </ul>	



**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.

<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>	<b>10.5/12</b>
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**Reviewer Comments – Board Capacity and Governance Structure**

**Strengths:**

- The board is obviously well qualified, and the narrative includes satisfactory detail around board support and policies.
- Strong board composition with expertise in governance, finance, and education.
- Regular training ensures ongoing effectiveness.

**Weaknesses:**

- The narrative does not include capacities / competencies of current board members, any assessment of gaps, and a plan to fill those competency gaps with future board members.
- Limited details on how the board will evolve to address future challenges or skill gaps.

**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.

<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>	<b>9/10</b>
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**Reviewer Comments – School Leadership and Management**

**Strengths:**

- The narrative includes a detailed plan for both current and future school leadership including all necessary details regarding leadership responsibilities and evaluation.
- Well-defined leadership structure and clear performance evaluation processes.
- Strong strategic planning for operational success.

**Weaknesses:**

- No information regarding risks or mitigation is included.
- The proposal could include more discussion on leadership succession planning or strategies for scaling management during growth phases.

**Overall comments**

**Reviewer Comments**

- This application has many strengths, including a well-articulated curricular plan that is aligned with the schools mission, ample resources for support of school leadership and staff, and a solid assessment / evaluation plan.
- The evidence provided in the narrative makes a clear case for the need of the school in the community.
- The application is missing some key details, including risks and mitigation, research citations justifying the curricular choices, and project goals that are relevant to the mission of the school.



APPLICATION TOTAL POINTS		
Rubric Section	Points Awarded	Points Possible
A. Grant Project Goals	<u>9</u>	10
B. Educational Philosophy, Instructional Practices, and Curriculum	<u>15</u>	20
C. Teaching and Learning	<u>6</u>	6
D. Student Academic Achievement Standards	<u>9</u>	9
E. Student Demand and Community/Local Support	<u>10</u>	10
F. Effectively Serving All Students	<u>12</u>	12
G. Staffing and Professional Development Plan	<u>4</u>	4
H. Financial Management and Monitoring Plan	<u>7</u>	7
I. Board Capacity and Governance Structure	<u>10.5</u>	12
J. School Leadership and Management	<u>9</u>	10
<b>STANDARD POINTS AWARDED</b>	<b><u>91.5</u></b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Priority Points: 2 Additional Points</b> may be awarded for schools that articulate a plan to serve and intentionally meet the unique needs of students in <b>rural</b> geographic areas.	<u>2</u>	2
<b>Priority Points: 2 Additional Points</b> may be awarded for schools that provide a high-quality <b>high school</b> program.	<u>2</u>	2
<b>Priority Points: 2 Additional Points</b> may be awarded for schools that articulate a plan to serve and intentionally meet the unique needs of a student population of <b>more than 50% economically disadvantaged</b> students.	<u>0</u>	2
<b>Priority Points: 2 Additional Points</b> may be awarded for schools that serve a <b>100% at-risk</b> student population.	<u>0</u>	2
<b>Priority Points: 2 Additional Points</b> for schools <b>authorized by a public school district</b> .	<u>0</u>	2
<b>TOTAL POINTS AWARDED</b>	<b><u>95.5</u></b>	<b>110</b>

