



BUILDING ON SUCCESS

IDAHO'S CHARTER SCHOOLS PROGRAM GRANT



APPLICATION DETAILS

School Name: North Star Charter School	
Contact Person: Andy Horning	Contact Email: ahorning@northstarcharter.org
Application Type: Start Up	Grant Budget: \$800,000
Grades Served: K – 12	New Seats Created: 259
Total Averaged Score: 100	Priority Points Assigned: 2
Application Status: Funded	

RUBRIC**A. SMART Grant Project Goals**

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.*

TOTAL POINTS**10/10****Reviewer Comments – Grant Project Goals****Strengths:**

- Four well-defined goals clearly align with Idaho’s performance criteria, including ELA / Math for 4th & 8th grades and K–3 literacy via IRI.
- Strong focus on concurrent credit, dual campus expansion, and standards-based grading.
- Each goal includes specific, measurable outcomes (e.g., 15% enrollment growth, 85% IRI benchmark, 100% dual credit participation).
- Demonstrated alignment with NSCS’s mission to deliver academic excellence and virtuous citizenship.
- The goals are measurable and appropriate to the mission of the school.
- The goals are aligned to state standards, and are designed to provide rich curriculum and learning experiences.
- High school students will all engage in concurrent enrollment for college courses, thereby giving them huge advantages for post high school pursuits.

Weaknesses:

- Goals could briefly include timeline benchmarks beyond “annually tracked” to strengthen evaluation rigor.

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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.

TOTAL POINTS**20/20****Reviewer Comments - Educational Philosophy, Instructional Practices, and Curriculum****Strengths:**

- Well-articulated instructional approach: PBIS, direct instruction, PBL, small group, and differentiated learning.
- Clear curricular selection for all content areas: Wonders, Bridges, CPM, CommonLit, Heggerty, etc., all aligned with Idaho Content Standards.
- Thoughtful technology integration (Chromebooks, Google Classroom, Istation, iReady).
- Use of charter autonomies: hiring flexibility, dynamic curriculum design, unique electives.
- Supported by quantitative outcomes (e.g., ISAT scores 30%+ above state averages).
- The Academic Excellence Committee is a collaborative group of stakeholders who meet regularly to review academic progress and evaluate curriculum.
- Curriculum is evidence-based and aligns with high standards set by the school.
- The school provides adequate details of the various systems that support student learning (technology, instructional practices, school culture, etc.).
- The school has a proven track record of success and there is reasonable assurance that will continue.

Weaknesses:

- Could strengthen the evidence of curricular success with more comparative longitudinal data (beyond 2023–24).

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:**

- Comprehensive multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) with clear descriptions of Tiers 1–3.
- Research-based programs used across tiers (Orton-Gillingham, Bridges Math Intervention, SIPPS, etc.).
- Built-in time for PLCs and data analysis informs instructional decisions in real time.
- The applicant provides detailed information on types of assessments used, timing of their use, evaluation of data and interventions.
- The master schedule is devised to allow for multiple intervention opportunities.

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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:**

- Clear Performance Management Plan reviewed by school leaders and Board.
- Strong use of formative, interim, and summative assessments.
- Board-level oversight includes annual performance reviews and data by grade / teacher.
- Includes tracking of subgroup data, advanced opportunities, and intervention effectiveness.
- A comprehensive Performance Management Plan provides a detailed explanation of how assessment tools are used, how data analysis takes place and is valued by staff and board, and how ongoing monitoring mitigates the risk of students falling behind.

Weaknesses:

- A few more explicit examples of how benchmarks shift year-over-year based on subgroup performance would enhance the section.

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.

TOTAL POINTS**9.5/10****Reviewer Comments – Student Demand and Community/Local Support****Strengths:**

- Over 1,200 applicants for K–12 seats underscores strong demand.
- Merger with Rolling Hills demonstrates community buy-in.
- Robust marketing plan with third-party partners to boost brand awareness.
- Clear stakeholder engagement: surveys, focus groups, public events, town halls.
- The school already has an excellent reputation and now with this merger will be able to share the success story with future students.
- The school has a very strong waitlist and has identified marketing strategies and outreach efforts.

Weaknesses:

- The applicant could have expanded further on how they will be intentional in recruiting traditionally under-served students.

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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.

TOTAL POINTS**11.5/12****Reviewer Comments – Effectively Serving All Students****Strengths:**

- Inclusive, non-selective approach with tailored supports for ELL, SPED, GATE, and at-risk students.
- Detailed intervention models, counseling, family partnerships, and accommodations.
- Nutrition and transportation plans—includes transport van for campus equity.
- Transition plans for HS special education students to post-secondary options.
- It is clear that the school values providing an inclusive and supportive environment for all students.
- The push-in model allows for students to remain in their general education classes.
- The transportation plan provides equitable access to education and extra-curricular activities.

Weaknesses:

- Future food service plan at Rolling Hills could be bolstered by stronger detail or partnerships.
- It seems that the school could develop a strong nutrition program that doesn't rely on donated food to provide assistance to students in need.

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.

TOTAL POINTS**3.5/4****Reviewer Comments – Staffing and Professional Development Plan****Strengths:**

- Competitive hiring and compensation strategy, strong mentorship program, PD on PBIS and instructional practices.
- Leadership opportunities and internal PD cultivate growth and retention.
- Collaborative PLC structure sustains PD across all staff levels.
- The school has developed internal structures for professional development and opportunities for staff to grow in their profession.
- It appears as if they do not have any trouble recruiting and retaining staff.

Weaknesses:

- Limited mention of succession planning or national recruitment strategies, though local hiring appears strong.
- There could have been more detail about the coaching and evaluation process.



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.

TOTAL POINTS**6.5/7****Reviewer Comments – Financial Management and Monitoring Plan****Strengths:**

- Conservative 3-year budget with sound assumptions on revenue, enrollment, and inflation.
- Clear facilities plan with detailed costs, debt servicing, and timeline post-merger.
- All CSP spending aligned with implementation activities and growth goals.
- Appears the leadership team brings strong fiscal oversight, aligned with federal procurement standards.
- The school has a proven track record of financial viability and that should easily continue with the added enrollment due to the merger.
- They have experience managing the CSP grant and all federal requirements.
- The acquisition of the new building, and plans for renovations including the culinary arts program, are appropriate and align with CSP grant goals.

Weaknesses:

- Limited description of contingencies if projected enrollment growth does not materialize.
- Nothing is mentioned about how it will mitigate limited new enrollment but that doesn't seem likely given the extensive waitlist.

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.

TOTAL POINTS**12/12****Reviewer Comments – Board Capacity and Governance Structure****Strengths:**

- Well-balanced board with finance, marketing, education, and operations expertise.
- Annual Board development via ISBA, annual Head of School reviews, open meeting compliance.
- Clearly defined governance vs. operations boundary.
- Enforced conflict of interest and robust recruitment pipeline for filling gaps.
- The board is comprised of 'parent' directors and 'community' directors, thereby creating a well-balanced board with few conflicts of interest.
- They invest in ongoing board development and understand their role and the role of the head of school.



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.

TOTAL POINTS**10/10****Reviewer Comments – School Leadership and Management****Strengths:**

- Tiered leadership (Head of School, Principals, Dean, COO, etc.) is well structured for K–12.
- Prior experience managing merger and bond complexities suggests strong leadership capacity.
- Annual HOS evaluation process is comprehensive and informed by metrics.
- Leadership team was integral to successful merger and expansion strategy.
- The school's leadership structure, with roles / responsibilities outlined, is appropriate for the size of the school and allows for leaders to specialize in certain areas or grade ranges.

Overall comments**Reviewer Comments**

- I think North Star absorbing Rolling Hills is wise. It'll be interesting to see how student enrollment shakes out with INCA nearby.
- Generally, there's limited documentation around their thinking and planning if things don't go as planned.
- This reviewer has a high degree of confidence that this continuation of North Star Charter School, along with the merger of students / staff from Rolling Hills, will create a greater educational experience for even more students in their community.
- This is an established organization with years of successful experience from which to draw upon as they grow and expand.



APPLICATION TOTAL POINTS		
Rubric Section	Points Awarded	Points Possible
A. Grant Project Goals	<u>10</u>	10
B. Educational Philosophy, Instructional Practices, and Curriculum	<u>20</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>9.5</u>	10
F. Effectively Serving All Students	<u>11.5</u>	12
G. Staffing and Professional Development Plan	<u>3.5</u>	4
H. Financial Management and Monitoring Plan	<u>6.5</u>	7
I. Board Capacity and Governance Structure	<u>12</u>	12
J. School Leadership and Management	<u>10</u>	10
STANDARD POINTS AWARDED	<u>98</u>	100
Priority Points: 2 Additional Points may be awarded for schools that articulate a plan to serve and intentionally meet the unique needs of students in rural geographic areas.	<u>0</u>	2
Priority Points: 2 Additional Points may be awarded for schools that provide a high-quality high school program.	<u>2</u>	2
Priority Points: 2 Additional Points may be awarded for schools that articulate a plan to serve and intentionally meet the unique needs of a student population of more than 50% economically disadvantaged students.	<u>0</u>	2
Priority Points: 2 Additional Points may be awarded for schools that serve a 100% at-risk student population.	<u>0</u>	2
Priority Points: 2 Additional Points for schools authorized by a public school district .	<u>0</u>	2
TOTAL POINTS AWARDED	<u>100</u>	110

