



BUILDING ON SUCCESS

IDAHO'S CHARTER SCHOOLS PROGRAM GRANT



APPLICATION DETAILS

School Name: Brabeion Academy	
Contact Person: Branden Durst	Contact Email: admin@brabeion.org
Application Type: Start-Up	Grant Budget: \$1,209,647
Grades Served: K – 12	New Seats Created: 780
Total Averaged Score: 70	Priority Points Assigned: 2
Application Status: Funded with conditions	

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**4.5/10****Reviewer Comments – Grant Project Goals**

- The academic goal focuses on ISAT proficiency but does not clearly state a growth outcome for ELA and math in Grades 4 and 8, which the rubric specifically requires.
- In reference to Goal 2, what is “measurable improvement”?
- Goals lack rigor. Some goals are compliance/capacity goals rather than direct student-outcome goals.

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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**11.5/20****Reviewer Comments - Educational Philosophy, Instructional Practices, and Curriculum**

- "no athletics and PE, no Brabeion" sounds like students must already be athletic, physically able, competitive, or sport-oriented to belong. The CSP rubric expects an open, fair, non-selective school that is ready to serve all students, including students with disabilities, ELL students, economically disadvantaged students, homeless/migrant students, and gifted students.
- Research citations are present, but some are broad and not always tied to comparable demographics or prior implementation in a similar student population.
- In the smart goal the applicant suggests research consistently demonstrate that physical fitness correlates directly with academic achievement, attendance, and student well-being. That's not expanded upon in this section, although this element seems to be core to the school. There are no citations either. It would be more accurate to say, research generally shows a positive association between physical activity/physical fitness and academic achievement, attendance, cognitive performance, classroom behavior, and student well-being, but the strength of the relationship varies, and the evidence is stronger for association than for simple direct causation. For academic achievement, the evidence is broadly positive but mixed in size. An umbrella review of 41 systematic reviews and meta-analyses found that physical activity has a null to small-to-medium effect on academic achievement among school-aged children and adolescents, meaning the overall trend is favorable but not uniformly strong across all studies. More recent meta-analyses also find positive effects, especially for mathematics and overall academic performance, with effects depending on duration, intensity, and program design. For attendance and classroom functioning, the evidence is also supportive. CDC materials summarize that physically active students tend to have better grades, school attendance, cognitive performance, and classroom behaviors, and that higher physical activity and fitness are associated with improved concentration and memory. CDC's 2024 YRBS analysis also found significant associations between physical activity/sedentary behavior and academic grades. For student well-being and mental health, research generally supports a positive relationship, but again with caveats. A 2025 review found physical activity beneficial for anxiety, depression, stress, self-esteem, and social competence in children and adolescents, while noting that the quality of evidence was limited by methodological issues. A 2024 adolescent review similarly examined exercise interventions and mental health outcomes, supporting the idea that physical activity can benefit well-being, though effects vary by intervention and population.
- Overall the model includes too many opposing ideas.
- A K-8 launch, that's serious about classical education, isn't feasible. K-7 is a stretch, but the only way to make the financials work. There is significant prerequisite achievement needed for eighth grade entry.
- CKLA's read-alouds and large content-rich texts can be quite challenging for students who lack background knowledge or English proficiency. Teachers in real classrooms note that some ELL or lower-level students struggle to follow because vocabulary or syntax is way over their heads.
- While Saxon builds computational fluency and procedural strength, it's weaker in promoting conceptual understanding or higher-order problem-solving, especially for students who may already struggle with abstract reasoning. Reasoning is key to a classical model. There's no theory. No explanation. No gentle concept introduction. No connecting ideas. You can get away with, most of the time, with K-2, but not after that. Dimensions is proven to be superior.



Teachers suggest several learning aids like Khan, etc. Saxon is great for reinforcing previously learned material, but it can be a bit much to expect a non-gifted elementary student. For ELL or behind-level students who might struggle with language-based word problems, combining language comprehension demands with new math concepts can be double-challenging. Saxon's spiral means constant review, but if they don't fully grasp earlier foundational concepts (perhaps due to language), spiraling might reinforce misunderstandings.

- Utilizes a proprietary American Experience curriculum featuring Hillsdale's 1776 Curriculum, but not seeking designation as a Hillsdale Curriculum School. Using the content alone isn't well advised.
- No clear documentation of what the "high-dosage" interventions include.
- No clarity around what the synchronous/asynchronous LMS comprises. "Ensures equitable access" is too strong. A 3:1 shared-device model may support equitable access during school hours, but it does not automatically ensure access for FRL students, especially if the model includes home learning, asynchronous support, or after-school assignments. Reviewers may ask whether students have access outside school, whether devices can be checked out, and whether internet access is provided. ELL support is vague. The sentence says ELL students can use "integrated translation and audio scaffolds," but it does not identify which platform provides those supports, how teachers will use them, or whether they align with the school's ELL service model. "Engageli for supplemental instruction" sounds more like an online/virtual learning platform. For a school emphasizing teacher-led direct instruction and limited technology for younger students, I question when and why Engageli is used, for which students, and whether it conflicts with the "without over-reliance on device-based instruction" claim. The application elsewhere says the model is intentionally teacher-led with a 3:1 device ratio and limited technology for younger students. It does not fully explain classroom use. It names tools, but it does not say enough about the workflow.

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

4/6

Reviewer Comments – Teaching and Learning

- The option of Home Learning on Reinforcement Days can easily lead to students drawing conclusions about themselves and their peers academic successes resulting in divisiveness and a breakdown of unity as a school. This can also be confusing and misleading as some families will not be able to provide Home Learning even if their students are eligible due to work schedules or language barriers.
- The home-learning option raises questions about consistency, equity, and implementation fidelity.
- The narrative would benefit from clearer examples of what Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions actually look like by grade band and subject.



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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**7.5/9****Reviewer Comments – Student Academic Achievement Standards**

- The system is ambitious for a first-year school, especially given the complexity of delivering on all the academic and physical development goals.
- I didn't get a sense of assumptions made with this sort of hybrid delivery, response plans to those identified risk to be observed, etc.
- The application would be stronger if it included a sample dashboard or data-meeting protocol in the appendices.

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**7/10****Reviewer Comments – Student Demand and Community/Local Support**

- The Enrollment Round 4 spreadsheet shows both Kindergarten and 1st grades will be phased out in Years 4 and 5, respectively. This does not align with the Project Narrative. Details of phasing out these grades are not specified in the narrative, nor are plans for obtaining enrollment at the 2nd grade level moving into year 6.
- The narrative gives less detail on the marketing, branding, and outreach strategy than the rubric requests.
- Strategies for recruiting educationally disadvantaged, at-risk, diverse, and underserved families are not described in enough operational detail.
- The application provides demographics but does not fully compare the combined educationally disadvantaged percentage to traditional public schools in the catchment area.
- Political/community support is named, but letters or specific commitments were not included, other than an email from a founding parent/teacher.

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**7/12****Reviewer Comments – Effectively Serving All Students**

- The economically disadvantaged student plan is relatively brief and relies heavily on general MTSS rather than describing tailored supports.
- ELL supports are underdeveloped beyond Spanish-speaking staff stipends, translation/audio scaffolds, and general language-access commitments.
- The "our entire program is gifted and talented" framing could read as dismissive unless paired with more formal gifted identification, acceleration, and enrichment procedures.



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**3/4****Reviewer Comments – Staffing and Professional Development Plan**

- Pay-for-performance can be controversial and counterproductive. Some high-performing charter networks avoid it because it can create unhealthy competition among teachers, encourage narrow test-score incentives, or undermine collaboration. The places that tried performance pay seemed to struggle when state performance standards changed unless using TAP or some nationalized system. Fordham has noted that some successful charters are wary of merit pay for exactly that reason. More detail is needed to assure fairness, transparency, and alignment with student growth measures.

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**3.5/7****Reviewer Comments – Financial Management and Monitoring Plan**

- Total facility costs as detailed in Appendix A are above 20% of the school's annual budget.
- Applicant states, "We have received a lucrative financial sponsorship from adidas America", but the attached document is a purchase agreement contract for discounted gear. This phrasing is misleading.
- Applicant states, "We have been named a joint beneficiary in a multi-million-dollar private estate." It would be helpful to understand what this source of monies looks like, how it will be allocated, how long it is available for, what expenses it off-sets that per-pupil funding doesn't cover in out-years, etc.
- Facility financing is highly risky. When I used to do facility finance modeling, a \$14M deal was not financially feasible in Idaho. This is a \$22M deal. The applicant highlights "They are financial commitments from sophisticated institutions..." Through 2022, 94 charter schools or affiliates, representing 99 bond transactions, had experienced monetary default, equal to 4.3% of transactions and 2.8% of par volume. Defaults are more concentrated among smaller, single-site, unrated schools, and recent market reports suggest the sector has seen rising stress since pandemic-era relief expired.

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**

- N/A



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**8/10****Reviewer Comments – School Leadership and Management**

- Leadership has not clearly outlined risks associated with delivering this hybrid, athletic-centered, and classically grounded school.

Overall comments**Reviewer Comments**

- Brabeion Academy presents a distinctive and ambitious school model with community interest, experienced leadership, and a compelling emphasis on physical development, character, and academic rigor.
- The application would benefit from greater clarity and restraint in several key areas. Some goals lack sufficient rigor or specificity, particularly around academic growth and fitness outcomes. The instructional model combines multiple complex elements: classical education, athletics, hybrid learning, home learning, MTSS, and proprietary curriculum, but does not fully address the implementation risks, equity implications, or supports needed for all learners. Additional detail is needed regarding ELL and economically disadvantaged student supports, Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions, technology access, outreach to underserved families, pay-for-performance safeguards, and the financial sustainability of the facility and outside funding assumptions. Overall, the proposal has meaningful strengths, but several sections rely on broad claims that should be better substantiated, operationalized, and aligned to the CSP rubric's expectations for serving all students effectively.



APPLICATION TOTAL POINTS		
Rubric Section	Points Awarded	Points Possible
A. Grant Project Goals	<u>4.5</u>	10
B. Educational Philosophy, Instructional Practices, and Curriculum	<u>11.5</u>	20
C. Teaching and Learning	<u>4</u>	6
D. Student Academic Achievement Standards	<u>7.5</u>	9
E. Student Demand and Community/Local Support	<u>7</u>	10
F. Effectively Serving All Students	<u>7</u>	12
G. Staffing and Professional Development Plan	<u>3</u>	4
H. Financial Management and Monitoring Plan	<u>3.5</u>	7
I. Board Capacity and Governance Structure	<u>12</u>	12
J. School Leadership and Management	<u>8</u>	10
STANDARD POINTS AWARDED	<u>68</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>70</u>	110

