



BUILDING ON SUCCESS

IDAHO'S CHARTER SCHOOLS PROGRAM GRANT



APPLICATION DETAILS

School Name: Meridian Technical Charter High School	
Contact Person: Craig Miller	Contact Email: craig.miller@mtchs.org
Application Type: Expansion	Grant Budget:
Grades Served: 9 – 12	New Seats Created:
Total Averaged Score: 94.5	Priority Points Assigned: 4
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
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Reviewer Comments – Grant Project Goals

- This section of the application is very strong. The goals tightly align with the MTCHS mission and meet or exceed all of the required criteria. It is notable that a number of the goals state that 100% of students will meet the stated criteria (hours of technical training, three industry certifications).

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	19/20
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Reviewer Comments - Educational Philosophy, Instructional Practices, and Curriculum

- This section of the application is generally robust, containing substantial detail describing the instructional approach and justifications for MTCHS's model. It is apparent that the academic design supports the key tenets described in the narrative - lifelong learning, integration, purposeful application, and professionalism (especially the last one). Most of the detail provides evidence supporting the workplace or real-world learning environment MTHCS is seeking to create. The approach clearly makes use of the flexibilities granted to charter schools.
- MTCHS's long history of providing an innovative educational option is documented through discussion of the intersection of academic and technical instruction, student coursework requirements, dual credit opportunities, student attainment of technical certifications and real world work placements.
- The application does not cite academic research supporting the curricular decisions.



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**

- The application satisfies all criteria here, with sufficient description of how the school leaders and teachers use data to guide instruction, including the implementation of MTSS. Academic results clearly indicate that the school's data-driven practices are leading to strong student performance.
- MTCHS provides robust documentation for its model and how students are served within the general education environment. Extensive information is given on the school's Tier 1 and Tier 2 supports and how data is collected, analyzed and used to make curricular decisions, professional development plans and to support each student.
- More detail could be included on the actual supports given to students that do not respond to Tier 1 and 2 supports.

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**

- The application describes how the school makes use of the robust data available to monitor student performance - especially true for high schools. The workforce readiness approach provides access to several outcome indicators beyond test scores (postsecondary enrollment, technical certifications, PSAT/SAT, etc). The application describes how both school leadership and the school's authorizer use these data to monitor progress.
- MTCHS provided extensive information about its assessment practices, how staff use data, and how leadership uses data. Strong information was included about how technical/professional skills are grown and assessed. A strong culture of data driven instruction appears to exist.

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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**8.5/10****Reviewer Comments – Student Demand and Community/Local Support**

- It is clear how community demand for MTCHS is and should continue to grow over the coming years with the population influx in the community. The application provides ample evidence describing the expected demand that expansion will help to address. The descriptions of the activities expected to be used to recruit students are generally sufficient (open houses, mailers, working with middle schools in the district, etc.).
- The school has a long established, highly successful program that serves a very specific niche in the area. The school has very strong support from the local business community, whom could likely help with recruitment efforts. Additional in-person events, and the outlined marketing plan are strong based on the information the school has on how its current students learn about the school. Evidence was given of employer demand for additional graduates with the certificates and training the school provides.
- The recruitment and outreach activities described do not specifically address how they will result in the increase in the proportion of low income and EL students described in the enrollment goals.
- The school did not make a strong argument for increased student/parent demand for the school in its community beyond population growth. No evidence was presented to document how the projected increase in applications due to opening seats for Boise and Nampa school district was developed.
- Only one specific strategy to increase the number of female students was included, that wasn't already a part of the schools current outreach to its middle schools. The school could consider surveying current female students about what drew them to the school, and survey middle school female students to better understand what factors makes the school less compelling for them, or what programs would increase interest for female students. What "Girls in Tech" is or how it would provide more opportunities for female students was unclear.
- There was no information given on why the projected enrollment growth in years 30-31 and 31-32 are projected at double the rate of growth as the earlier years.

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**10/12****Reviewer Comments – Effectively Serving All Students**

- The nutrition and transportation practices that MTCHS uses appear to meet the needs of all students (and have for many years). The activities described to support the schools SPED population are generally sufficient.
- The school provided extensive evidence in this section regarding its RTI and Special Education services. The school ensures that teachers are trained to serve diverse learners.
- Again, it is not clear in the application what the school is planning to do to meet the needs of an increased EL population.
- There is no evidence provided that the school has planned to grow its special education staffing or services in proportion to the growth of the student population. No additional certified special education teaching positions are included in the narrative or budget.



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**2.5/4****Reviewer Comments – Staffing and Professional Development Plan**

- It is clear to see how MTCHS retains staff based on the staff support described in the application. It includes ample staff support and professional development opportunities, all of which seem sufficient to help staff meet the goals and approach of the school.
- The school provides strong evidence of how its teachers are trained and supported in delivering the school's model, and how staff with technical skills are recruited.
- The application does not describe in sufficient detail its practices for recruiting staff, which is a notable omission for a school that hires many staff directly from industry and will need to do more of this as a result of expansion.
- The school does not provide any evidence of how they will increase instructional staffing as the school grows. While hiring staff is mentioned, no clear plan is provided for an updated staffing structure to deliver the educational model.

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**5/7****Reviewer Comments – Financial Management and Monitoring Plan**

- The budget documents in the application appear sound and sufficient to meet the needs of the narrative.
- As a district charter, the school has the advantage of the subsidized support for their facilities, which allows the school to keep its facilities costs low. The revenue estimates are conservative, ensuring the school will likely bring in excess funds if they meet enrollment targets. Increased general education staffing is included in the three year budget in alignment with the projected growth.
- No additional special education staffing is included in the budget in alignment with projected growth. Facility expenses such as utilities, supplies, and repairs do not increase in proportion to adding an additional 15,000 square feet to the facility. Supply budgets do not increase in proportion to the growth in enrollment. A capital campaign is mentioned, but a timeline, goals and explanation of what would happen if the campaign is not successful are not included. The budget contingency drops below the 1.1 DCR included in the performance certificate with the district. No information was included related to how the needs of underserved or at-risk students needs were considered or addressed in the facility expansion planning. No plan is included for how the school will mitigate the risk of not meeting enrollment targets, however given the financial support of the district and financial expertise of the district staff, the school has resources to address that issue if the need arises.



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**10.5/12****Reviewer Comments – Board Capacity and Governance Structure**

- The application describes how board members are trained and expected to fulfill their oversight duties without moving into day to day management. The board is supported by ISBA and attends ISBA events and training opportunities.
- The school has strong board procedures and training practices in place. The composition of the board is evaluated to ensure appropriate areas of expertise exist, and that different stakeholder groups are represented. The inclusion of industry representatives ensures the school stays abreast of current business trends that would impact their students. Strong communication exists between the school's board and the board of trustees of the district. The board receives regular training, including training on governance responsibilities and accountability to the authorizer.
- An idea to consider that may help the school increase enrollment of female students would be recruit additional board members from local groups/nonprofits that focus on career development for girls.
- While the application states that the board evaluates itself for necessary skillsets, it doesn't state which skillsets board members currently possess.

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**

- MTCHS leadership has historically been shown to be successful. It is notable that the school dedicates academic-related leadership to one individual and budget/business management responsibilities to another. This approach is more likely to result in sufficient leadership time being dedicated to academics as opposed to the daily business of running a school.
- The school has a long history of successful management. Their leadership structure includes experienced administrators that oversee the academic and career/technical programming of the school to ensure continued success in both areas. Additional staffing has been included in the budget to overcome operational challenges related to recruitment and ensuring the fidelity of their model during expansion. The addition of the Work Based Teacher position to initiate a student based enterprise and innovation center, will also help overcome enrollment challenges by creating new programs and opportunities that will appeal to additional students.
- As a district charter, the school has the added support of district staff to ensure their financial, human resources and facilities staffing is well trained. Additional professional development and conference attendance opportunities will ensure that the leaders continue to have opportunities to grow their leadership practice. The school has secured the services of outside partners to improve recruitment and marketing efforts.

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Overall comments

Reviewer Comments

- This application is quite thorough overall, generally ample detail describing the academic philosophy and approach, the supporting activities, and materials/curriculum required. The school has access to - and uses - a robust set of data to ensure that students leave prepared for postsecondary or career success. The unique offering from MTCHS fills an important role in the community, and it is easy to see why a community expanding as quickly as Meridian would be well served by expansion.
- The one notable weakness in the application is a stated goal of serving more EL students without sufficient detail describing how those additional students will be recruited or supported.
- MTCHS is a highly regarded school with a long track record of serving students with a unique model. Expansion of this model to serve more students will be a positive addition to the larger community and provide increased career opportunities for more students. The school has robust recruitment and training plans for new teachers, strong leadership, strong governance and a well established education program. The addition of the student enterprise and innovation center are new areas of innovation that will provide additional opportunities for students that are relevant to their lives after high school. The support of the district for their expansion and the construction of additional square footage while keeping their facility costs low is valuable and critical for their long term success.
- There are areas that the school may want to consider spending additional time thinking about to ensure their plans have the best possibility of success. Doubling the school size without planning for additional special education staff has the potential to disrupt the layers of support the school has developed for students and teachers. This could lead to teachers not having adequate time to support students in the way they currently do, and may lead to a decline in the percentage of students who meet the goals of earning certifications and internships.
- The recruitment efforts targeted to enroll more female students may exist but were not well defined in the application. The school has done well to plan for additional staffing for recruitment, but may want to consider, if they haven't already, developing detailed plans for how their recruitment efforts will differ from those in the past to recruit additional female students. Spending time talking with current female students and female students that decided not to enter the programs could provide interesting data to improve recruitment efforts. These conversations may help the school determine if the challenge is making sure girls know the school is a good option for them or if there are other programs girls would be more interested in that the school could consider adding. Leveraging female alumni students to present to middle school students and speak about their experience at open houses could be helpful.
- Information was not shared with respect to recruitment efforts to attract students from the Boise and Nampa school districts in order to meet enrollment projections. Planning for how you will reach students in those districts so that they know the school is an option for them will be important. One suggestion would be to collaborate with the K-8 charter schools in those districts, to invite their students to camps, for hosted tours, provide afterschool activities at those schools to build awareness, and share information with the teaching staff or counselors of those schools so they understand that your school is an option for their graduating students.



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>19</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>8.5</u>	10
F. Effectively Serving All Students	<u>10</u>	12
G. Staffing and Professional Development Plan	<u>2.5</u>	4
H. Financial Management and Monitoring Plan	<u>5</u>	7
I. Board Capacity and Governance Structure	<u>10.5</u>	12
J. School Leadership and Management	<u>10</u>	10
STANDARD POINTS AWARDED	<u>90.5</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>2</u>	2
TOTAL POINTS AWARDED	<u>94.5</u>	110

