



QCR REPORT: CHANGE ACADEMY  
MARCH 2023

# Quality Charter Review Recommendation Report 2023

**CHANGE ACADEMY**

March 2023

Evaluated By

**Tennesseans for Student Success**

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This document was adapted from the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) Charter School Application Recommendation Report. NACSA is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the quality of public education by improving the performance of charter school organizations. NACSA provides training, consulting, and policy guidance to authorizers and education leaders interested in increasing the number of high quality schools and improving student outcomes. For more information, visit <http://qualitycharters.org>.

# Contents

This recommendation report includes the following:

## Overview

Basic information about the proposed school as presented in the application.

## Recommendation

A fact-based assessment determining if the application meets the criteria for authorization by the local school district including an outline of strengths and needed improvements. **A recommendation of approval requires a score of Meets or Exceeds Standard in all three primary application sections.**

## Evaluation

Analysis of the application is informed by the published Tennessee Department of Education Charter Application Scoring Rubric across the three primary application sections:

**Academic Plan Design and Capacity:** School mission and vision, enrollment summary, academic focus and plan, academic performance standards, high school graduation and postsecondary readiness, assessments, school calendar and schedule, special populations, school culture and discipline, recruitment and enrollment, parent and community engagement and support.

**Operations Plan and Capacity:** Governance, start-up plan, facilities, personnel/human capital, professional development, insurance, transportation, food service, additional operations, and waivers.

**Financial Plan and Capacity:** Planning and budget worksheet, and budget narrative.

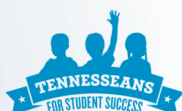
## Rating Characteristics

The following definitions guide evaluator ratings:

**Meets or Exceeds Standard:** Responses address the topic with specific and accurate information that shows thorough preparation; presents a clear, realistic picture of how the school expects to operate; and inspires confidence in the application's capacity to carry out the plan effectively.

**Partially Meets Standard:** Responses meet the criteria in some respects, but lacks detail and/or require additional information in one or more areas.

**Does Not Meet Standard:** Responses are undeveloped or significantly incomplete; demonstrate lack of preparation; is unsuited to the mission of the authorizer or otherwise raises substantial concerns about the viability of the plan or the applicant's ability to carry it out.



# OVERVIEW

## Sponsor Name

TGAND Outreach Ministries

## Proposed School Name

CHANGE Academy Charter School

## Proposed Location

Greater New Liberty Church  
Memphis, Tennessee

## Board Members

Alisha Kiner  
Kathy Kirk Johnson  
Dr. Janet Dumas Pepper  
Tara Harris  
Greg Woods  
Doug Thornton  
Letisha Simmons

## Proposed School Leader

Principal anticipated Fall 2023

## Mission and Vision

*Mission: To provide foundational literacy skills through a literacy-based curriculum, which focuses on academic achievement in reading, writing, speaking, and presenting; financial literacy through an entrepreneurship lenses; real world applicable skills through trade introduction and mastery; and leadership through integrity, empathy, and critical thinking.*

*Vision: To foster a safe and supportive environment, where every student feels empowered, capable, and is provided high-quality education to achieve greatness and provoke positive change.*

## Educational Model/Instructional Design

Single Gender: Male  
Language and financial literacy through entrepreneurship and vocation

## Enrollment Projections

Grade Level	Number of Students					At Capacity 20 <sub>28</sub>
	Year 1 20 <sub>24</sub>	Year 2 2025	Year 3 2026	Year 4 2027	Year 5 2028	
K						
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9	104	52	52	52	78	78
10	0	104	52	52	78	78
11	0	0	104	52	78	78
12	0	0	0	104	78	78
<b>Totals</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>312</b>	<b>312</b>

## Anticipated Student Demographics

**Enrollment Demographics:** 96.6% African American Male

**Special Population Projections:** 99% Econ. Disadvantaged  
10% Students w/ Disabilities  
5% English Lang. Learners



# RECOMMENDATION

DENY

## Application Strengths Summary

- Applicant demonstrates compassion for the needs of the identified community
- Applicant has secured a school location with intention to lease
- Applicant proposes low student to teacher ratios (13:1)
- Unique academic focus not currently available to students within the district
- Applicant demonstrates in-depth understanding of food service requirements
- Applicant demonstrates clear plans for school safety, maintenance, and student data security
- Founding team and board possess legal, financial, school auditing, and purchasing experience

## Application Improvements Summary

- Applicant should cite research indicating the effectiveness of single gender educational model, and differentiate this school from existing single gender schools in the district (Section 1.3)
- Applicant should reevaluate the English credit hour graduation requirements (Section 1.6)
- Applicant should reevaluate assessment framework (1.7) and reconsider plans to offer academic and behavioral interventions during lunch (Section 1.9)
- Applicant should include state mandated admissions lottery requirements (Section 1.11)
- Applicant should consider requesting waivers to meet state compliance requirements (Section 2.11)
- Additional attention to EL teacher and nurse staffing is warranted (Section 3.1)

# ACADEMIC PLAN DESIGN AND CAPACITY

DOES NOT MEET STANDARD

## Summary

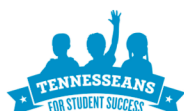
CHANGE Academy anticipates serving 312 male students at capacity in grades 9-12 in the Whitehaven/Westwood/Hillcrest community in Memphis, Tennessee. The applicant has secured an initial facility to be located at the campus of Greater New Liberty Church. The applicant proposes to meet the statutory purpose of charter schools in the state of Tennessee by, "heavily focusing on the needs of male students in Memphis who are academically behind and concentrating on aligned curriculum that reaches across the special educational needs of each student enrolled" (pg. 9).

The academic focus for CHANGE centers around 6 key areas: Literacy Focus, Vocational Curriculum, Individualized Learning Plans and Objectives, Entrepreneurship and Financial Development, Culture and Community, and International Exposure (pg. 12). The applicant states intentions for community engagement starting in Fall 2023. Letters of support from an interested parent, The University of Tennessee Knoxville, board member Tara Harris, a Whitehaven resident, and a local business owner are included. The applicant should consider including additional evidence of community and parent outreach to better demonstrate community interest. Key features of the school include:

- Foundational literacy and vocational curriculum embedded in all content areas
- Teachers trained as graduation and literacy coaches
- Extended school days to close achievement and literacy gaps
- Common Lit curriculum for ELA courses
- Illustrative Mathematics (IM) for Math curriculum
- Full curriculum blended learning is planned

The applicant plans to utilize ACT Explore for ELA and Math screening and progress monitoring. This assessment tool was discontinued in 2014. The applicant should provide more detailed plans for identification of students with moderate to severe learning needs, and gifted students. The applicant should include plans for identification, progress, and exit monitoring of EL students.

Overall, the applicant lacks evidence for the effectiveness of the proposed single gender educational model. The applicant should include evidence that the chosen curriculum is aligned with Tennessee Academic Standards and outline plans for tracking chronically absent percentages, ELPA proficiency, and graduation and Ready Graduate rates.



# OPERATIONS PLAN AND CAPACITY

DOES NOT MEET STANDARD

## Summary

School leadership is defined as a Principal and Director of Operations to be hired in Year 0. The applicant's budget worksheet indicates an Assistant Principal, Special Education Coordinator, Director, and one additional administrative staff position to be hired in Year 1, but lacks narrative description of those positions. The applicant plans to utilize an online platform for assessment and progress monitoring, but a vendor has not yet been identified. The applicant plans for an extended school day equating to 60 extra days of instruction (pg. 41). The applicant should cite research indicating the effectiveness of this approach.

Members of the board of directors will serve on the following committees: Governance Committee, Committee of Directors, Executive Committee, Finance/Audit Committee, and other task forces as needed. The board indicates intentions to utilize resources from the Tennessee Charter School Center for required board trainings.

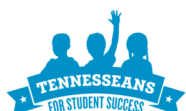
Clarification is needed in the following areas:

- Advisory committee structure to ensure diverse representation and consistent input from parents and stakeholders
- Anticipated applicant pools for principal and teacher recruitment
- Principal evaluation process
- Intention to acquire charter school surety bonds on Attachment J
- Plan for contracting school nurse services
- Justification for no waivers requested

Staff professional development will be facilitated by a consultant hired in Year 0. Evaluation of teaching staff will follow the TEAM model.

The applicant proposes to lease part of the campus of Greater New Liberty Church. The applicant does not anticipate offering transportation services, unless required by student IEP. The applicant should include plans for transportation of homeless students required by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

Overall, the applicant demonstrates sincere community awareness. The applicant should include plans for partnerships with area non-profit organizations to meet the needs of the significant number of economically disadvantaged students anticipated. The application lacks resumes for some founding board members and needs additional clarity on the anticipated roles of each board member.



# FINANCIAL PLAN AND CAPACITY

DOES NOT MEET STANDARD

## Summary

Financial policies and procedures will be finalized by the Board, with Paychex and the Director of Operations coordinating back-office services (pg. 130 and pg. 56). The applicant should indicate if Paychex has experience working with charter schools in Memphis.

Paychex will be contracted in the first quarter of the planning year. The applicant plans to select an auditor from the state approved vendor list starting in March 2024 (pg. 53).

The applicant anticipates hiring a principal in Fall 2023, upon approval of charter agreement (pg. 52). The applicant should include more detail on the desired qualifications for the principal position.

Additional staffing details:

- Teacher and staff salaries are competitive
- TCRS state retirement will be utilized
- 1:13 core academic teacher to student ratio in Year 1
- 1:10 SPED teacher to student ratio in Year 1
- No EL teacher indicated in narrative or budget worksheet
- No CTE teachers indicated for CTE funding assumed
- 1:104 school counselor to student ratio in Year 1
- No nursing services indicated in budget worksheet
- 1 educational assistant/aid is planned for Year 1 to Year 5

The applicant anticipates fundraising to be initiated in Fall 2023 (pg. 52) with the goal of \$250,000 from local contributions. No contingency loan is indicated. CSP Startup Grant is included in Year 0, assumed at \$750,000 and carried over into operating revenue for Year 1.

Overall, the applicant outlines some unreasonable assumptions such as CTE funding without demonstrated CTE career cluster pathways and small district funding not justifiable for TISA funding. The applicant does not include several employee benefit assumptions for Year 0. The applicant should include resumes of all founding board members to better demonstrate experience with finance, fundraising, and grant writing to ensure successful startup. The applicant should consider including a letter from TGAND Outreach Ministries indicating availability of line of credit or no interest loan, as revenue shortfall contingency planning evidence.