



JANUARY 2025

# Quality Charter Review Recommendation Report 2025

Evaluated By

**Tennesseans for Student Success**

## Tennesseans for Student Success

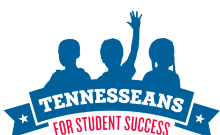
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This document was adapted from the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) Charter School Application Recommendation Report. NACSA is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the quality of public education by improving the 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.



# Contents

## This recommendation report includes the following:

<b>Overview</b>	Basic information about the proposed school as presented in the application.
<b>Recommendation</b>	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. <b>A recommendation for approval requires a score of Meets or Exceeds Standard in all three primary application sections.</b>
<b>Evaluation</b>	<p>Analysis of the application is informed by the published Tennessee Department of Education Charter Application Scoring Rubric across the three primary application sections:</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Operations Plan and Capacity: Governance, start-up plan, facilities, personnel/human capital, professional development, insurance, transportation, food service, additional operations, and waivers.</p> <p>Financial Plan and Capacity: Planning and budget worksheet, and budget narrative.</p>
<b>Rating Characteristics</b>	<p>The following definitions guide evaluator ratings:</p> <p><b>Meets or Exceeds Standard:</b> 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.</p> <p><b>Partially Meets Standard:</b> Responses meet the criteria in some respects but lack detail and/or require additional information in one or more areas.</p> <p><b>Does Not Meet Standard:</b> 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.</p>



# OVERVIEW

## Sponsor Name

Dr. Jean A Little

## Proposed School Name

Jackson Museum School

## Proposed Location

Central and East Jackson  
(38301, 38302, 38305)

## Board Members

Brent Bower, Dr. Austin Ferrell, Kim Bills, Andreea Temple, Jordan Long, Monola Patterson, Dr. Jean Little (Ex Officio)

## Enrollment Projections

Grade Level	Year 1 2026-27	Year2 2027-28	Year 3 2028-29	Year4 2029-30	Year 5 2030-31	At Capacity
K	75	75	75	100	100	100
1	50	75	75	75	100	100
2	25	50	75	75	75	100
3		25	50	75	75	100
4			25	50	75	100
5				25	50	100
6					25	100
7						
8						
9						
10						
11						
12						
Totals	150	225	300	400	500	700

## Anticipated Student Demographics

**Enrollment Demographics:** Not provided

## Proposed School Leader

Dr. Jean A. Little

## Special Population Projections:

54% ED, 18% SWD, 10% ELL

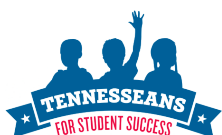
## Mission and Vision

**Mission:** The mission of Jackson Museum School (JMS) is to create an innovative, student-centered learning environment that nurtures academic excellence and character development, through inquiry-based and project-based instruction, and shapes students into adaptive thinkers and engaged problem solvers. JMS serves a diverse student body from Jackson, TN and the surrounding communities, bridging opportunity gaps through real-world learning experiences, cultural partnerships, and collaboration between teachers, families, and the community and emphasizing equity and access for all.

**Vision:** Not provided

## Educational Model/Instructional Design

Museum School



## RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE PENDING FINAL APPLICATION

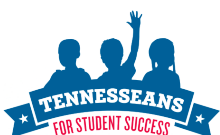
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### Application Strengths Summary

- The application thoroughly describes how the school will integrate Tennessee State Standards within 9-week museum, thematic, hands-on, interdisciplinary units.
- Research that demonstrates the effectiveness of core model design elements is provided and thoroughly described.
- The proposed school will implement a RTI2 program that is data-driven, personalized, and is monitored by biweekly assessments.
- The application details how the school will meet state requirements for tutoring, remediation, and support of 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> graders through targeted support, after-school programming, “Read to Succeed” initiative, parent involvement, and progress monitoring.
- The Assessment Plan contains formative and summative assessments that are aligned to the school’s academic plan and the Tennessee State Standards.
- The application demonstrates a deep knowledge of the community including current school options, demographics, racial disparities, and equity gaps.
- To ensure the school serves a diverse student body, a lottery preference for students from economically disadvantaged will be implemented.
- The proposed Governing Board will participate an annual self-assessment of governance practices, as well as review of bylaws and policies to support strong oversight practices.
- The Board will include at least one parent representatives of a currently enrolled student who will be appointed within six months of the school opening.
- The application contains a detailed facility plan, including goals, tasks, timelines, and responsible parties, that will support the implementation of the Museum model.
- The professional development plan includes goal setting, needs assessments, planned activities, evaluation, and continuous improvement. An annual plan will be developed and includes training on implementation of IEPs and ILPs, effective behavior management, and culturally relevant communication.
- The proposed school will partner with a local vendor to provide equitable access to nutritious meals through participation in the National School Lunch Program.

### Application Improvements Summary

- The application does not include evidence of the viability of proposed community partnerships.
- It is unclear if enrollment projections are realistic and attainable.
- Staffing for special populations does not support the proposed co-teaching model.
- While the professional development plan is robust and includes personalized supports, the application does not provide a clear plan for addressing unsatisfactory leadership/teacher performance.
- In lieu of daily transportation services, the proposed school will explore a variety of options to remove barriers, including utilizing public transportation options and community shuttles, however the facility plan does not indicate that these would be considerations for the school location.
- While there is a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of financial oversight and implementation, there does not appear to be sufficient expertise to conduct them.



# ACADEMIC PLAN DESIGN AND CAPACITY

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## MEETS OR EXCEEDS STANDARD

### Summary

Jackson Museum School will serve 700 K-6 students, at capacity, in Jackson, Tennessee. The school will offer a student-centered learning environment that nurtures academic excellence and character development. The model integrates three design elements: Immersive Learning Experiences, Collaborative Community Partnerships, and Integrated Literacy Development. Students will engage in authentic learning experiences and present their learning through exhibitions each quarter.

Additional Key Features of the proposed school include:

- Collaborative, Cross-Curriculum planning
- Inquiry-based learning
- Project-based learning
- Experiential Learning
- House Program
- Place-Based education
- Differentiated instruction
- Cultural partnerships
- Reflective practice
- Social and Emotional Learning

The proposed school will serve a diverse student population in Central and East Jackson Madison County in which 40.88% of third graders fail to meet literacy benchmarks, and achievement gaps persist between racial demographics. Intervention processes will use systematic screening three times a year that is disaggregated and analyzed in Professional Learning Communities (PLC) to identify and support students in need of tiered intervention. Quarterly recognition ceremonies will support the promotion of a positive school culture as part of the school-wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) process.

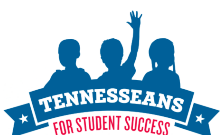
Teachers and leaders will participate in data literacy training, interpretation workshops, data analysis protocols and data-driven planning, technology for specialized data-driven purposes, coaching and mentoring, PLCs, and culturally responsive pedagogy lens training to support their successful implementation of the school model.

The school's extracurricular framework will include an Afterschool CREW (remediation or enrichment options) Program and partnerships with local organizations, which will supplement the Arts/Electives Program and regular Expeditions focused on history, science, and art. The application identifies several organizations that could be potential partners for academic supports, teacher recruitment, and cultural engagement however evidence of the feasibility of these partnerships is not provided.

The founding team conducted surveys, focus groups, canvassing activities, and presented to civic organizations to seek feedback from the community. Common themes in the responses were a desire for individualized attention for students, concerns regarding a one-size-fits-all approach to education, and a strong interest in innovative, experiential learning opportunities. While the information collected, as well as letters of support from community members, indicate a general support for the proposed school, it is unclear how many families with age-eligible children would pursue enrollment.

The proposed leadership is experienced at overseeing special populations programming and the application demonstrates a strong understanding of identification, programming, data reporting, and program evaluation requirements however the staffing plan does not support the implementation of co-teaching for special education and English learner supports.

Overall, the application contains a strong justification for the proposed school and an evidenced-based approach to meeting the needs of the target student population.



# OPERATIONS PLAN AND CAPACITY

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## MEETS OR EXCEEDS STANDARD

### Summary

The proposed school's Founding Board is currently composed of 6 community members with a range of experience and expertise in education, operations and logistics management, finance and grant facilitation, technology and systems management, charter law, governance, marketing, management, DEI, and community service/outreach. Bylaws indicate the Governing Board will maintain a membership of at least 7, and not more than 12. Targeted recruitment of Board Members with finance and fine arts expertise will be conducted to expand board membership. The Board will hold the CEO/Lead Founder accountable for effectively leading the daily operations while monitoring academics, school culture, and operational efficiency. Dr. Jean A. Little, a BES Fellow with over twenty years of experience in K-12 education, is the proposed CEO/Lead Founder.

Additional Year 1 Staffing Includes:

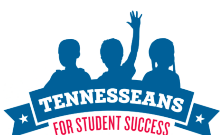
- Operations Manager
- Academic Coordinator/Special Education Director
- 6 Classroom teachers
- 1 Special Education teacher
- 1 Special Education/ESL Teacher
- 1 Secretary
- 1 Librarian

Dr. Little will receive support from the BES Senior Director of Leadership Development and Board Governance Coach to oversee the onboarding of board leadership and committees. Standing and ad hoc committees will focus on key areas of school oversight including academics, development, finance, and governance. Monthly data dashboards will reflect the school's progress towards their mission, vision, goals, and core values. Additionally the Tennessee Principal Evaluation Model will be used to annually evaluate the CEO and the board will annually conduct a self-evaluation of governance strengths and weaknesses.

To support the implementation of the Museum Model, the school will seek a facility with traditional classrooms, a makerspace room, a library/media center, an administrative space, a support services space, cafeteria, performance room, gymnasium, outdoor space, and an auditorium however acknowledges that including all of these in a facility for Year 1 is not realistic and is planning is to enhance facilities alongside enrollment growth. Currently, the founding team is evaluating facility options in the target area and have identified 3 potential options. The board plans to collaborate with Level Field Partners, an organization that has supported charter facility projects across the state, Cameron Quick of the Tennessee Charter School Center, and BES, to navigate the facility procurement process.

The application contains a detailed start-up plan that designates key Year 0 activities across Culture and Academics, Staff Recruitment, Onboarding, Community Engagement, Enrollment and Family Engagement, Operations, Facilities, Finance, and Governance, along with the designated responsible staff or board, and accompanying due dates.

Overall, the application outlines a clear start-up plan, strong governance structures, and detailed facility acquisition process.



# FINANCIAL PLAN AND CAPACITY

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## PARTIALLY MEETS STANDARD

### Summary

The proposed school's budget allocates funding for resources specific to the Museum model, including transportation for expeditions, supplies for hands-on learning project and Exhibits, software for intervention, enrichment curriculum materials, and a gradual expansion of elective and fine art staff. Staff salaries and benefits are comparable with the local district. The budget includes line items for all contracted services included nursing, special education, and bus drivers. While the budget includes assumption information, and revenue sources are fully described with accompanying methodology, the narrative does not provide information as to how expenses, outside of salary and benefits, were determined. Agreements or MOUs for contracted services are not provided to determine if budgeted line items are sufficient. The application does indicate that vendors will be selected through an RFP process.

The school budget is constructed so that expenses will not exceed 90% of projected revenues for Years 1-5. While this is a conservative strategy, it may not be a sufficient mitigation tool for significantly lower than projected enrollment. Budget revenues are primarily local, state, and federal funds with 12% or less of budgets from expected fundraising, grants, and annual Board of Directors contributions. As enrollment increases, supplemental funds decrease demonstrating a path to sustainability.

Financial oversight will be led by the Board Treasurer and Finance Committee Chair who has finance experience in taxes and payroll. The Board is recruiting an additional Board Member with financial expertise, as well. The Finance Committee, composed of the Chair, the CEO/Lead Founder, Operations Manager and Financial Services vendor will annually develop the upcoming fiscal year budget, present recommendations to the Board, monitor implementation and recommend proposed budget revisions as well as ratify a Fiscal Policy Manual that outlines legal compliance and Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP). Additionally, a Financial Services provider will be used to address any potential gaps in expertise by supporting key financial decisions and providing ongoing professional development. An annual audit will be conducted by a reputable auditor to ensure compliance to the Tennessee Department of Education requirements. There are clear distinctions in the role of the board and school administration regarding financial oversight, accountability, and management however a detailed description of duties that the vendor will provide was not included. Additionally, since the full scope of work the vendor will provide is unclear, it is unclear if budgeted amounts for these services are sufficient.

The application provided additional contingency plans in the event of cash flow challenges including negotiating or deferring vendor payments, seeking short-term loans, pursuing additional grant and philanthropic dollars, or prioritizing educational initiatives.

Overall, the budget is based on generally reasonable expense assumptions, including staffing and benefits, however some expenses cannot be evaluated. While the team is in the process of recruiting additional financial expertise to the Board, currently there is not enough information to determine that the team will have the level of financial expertise required to oversee successful finance roles and responsibilities.

