



JANUARY 2025

# Quality Charter Review Recommendation Report 2025

Evaluated By

**Tennesseans for Student Success**

## Tennesseans for Student Success

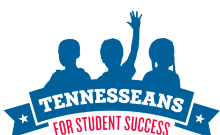
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This document was adapted from the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) Charter School Application Recommendation Report. NACSA is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the quality of public education by improving the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

KIPP Memphis Inc.

## Proposed School Name

KIPP Memphis Creative and  
Performing Arts Elementary School

## Proposed Location

Cordova Community,  
Memphis-Shelby County Schools

## Board Members

Alfred Anderson, Desiree Lyles-  
Wallace, Dorsey Hopson, Dr. Laritha  
Hill Sweet, Dr. Lin Johnson, Jane  
Maina, Mikara Davis, Roquel Crutcher

## 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	88	88	88	88	88	88
1	86	88	88	88	88	88
2	86	88	88	88	88	88
3		88	88	88	88	88
4		50	88	88	88	88
5			87	87	87	87
6						
7						
8						
9						
10						
11						
12						
Totals	260	402	527	527	527	527

## Anticipated Student Demographics

**Enrollment Demographics:** Not provided

## Proposed School Leader

Not yet identified

## Special Population Projections:

40% ED, 13% SWD, 12% ELL

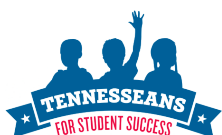
## Mission and Vision

**Mission:** Together with families and communities, we create joyful, academically excellent schools that prepare students with the skills and confidence to pursue the paths they choose--college, career, and beyond-- so they can lead fulfilling lives and build a more just world.

**Vision:** Not included

## Educational Model/Instructional Design

Creative and Performing Arts



## RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE

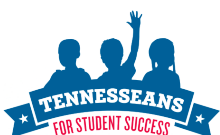
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### Application Strengths Summary

- Measurable goals included in the application align with the mission and model of the school and track students' progress in academics, as well as, creative and performing arts.
- The application provides research to support the inclusion of all major school design elements, as well as rationale for use with the target student demographic.
- The school will use creative and performing arts instruction based on the Essential Skills from the Music Teachers National Association and those from the National Core Arts Standards shared by the Kennedy Center for the Arts.
- The application thoroughly describes how they will incorporate tutoring, remediation, support, and summer school for 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> graders as well as foundational literacy instruction in alignment with TN legislation.
- The recruitment plan includes collaboration with several Memphis-based arts organizations, including Hattiloo Theatre, Collage Dance, and Memphis Ballet, to attract students and families who are interested in this school model.
- As an established network, there is a detailed plan for creating an intentional school culture.
- The application demonstrates a thorough understanding of identification, programming, and monitoring requirements for special populations including systems for avoiding misidentification or overidentification that include analyzing aggregated and disaggregated data.
- Board members will participate in an orientation, as well as 6-8 hours of Board on Track modules each year covering topics such as evaluation, board law, managing documents, cultivating institutional memory, human resource policies, overseeing the academic program, and running strong board retreats.
- The school will benefit from the established professional development structures used at other KIPP Network schools, in addition to site specific training from leaders.
- The network demonstrates successful financial monitoring and oversight processes.

### Application Improvements Summary

- While the network has collected feedback from teacher and parent discussion groups from their existing schools regarding the interest in an arts-based education, the first formal parent outreach event was not held until January 2025 therefore there is no available data to demonstrate levels of interest.
- The application describes the discipline philosophy however the policy is not included within the attachments or Student Handbook provided.
- There is a reliance on unsecured philanthropic funds in Years 0-2.



# ACADEMIC PLAN DESIGN AND CAPACITY

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## MEETS OR EXCEEDS STANDARD

### Summary

KIPP Memphis Creative and Performing Arts Elementary School will serve 527 K-5 students, at capacity, in the Cordova community of Memphis-Shelby County School District. The school will offer a rigorous academic program with a focus on creative and performing arts, as well as a strong school culture that creates a safe and joyful environment. The model will blend the general academic focus provided through the KIPP curriculum with access to creative and performing arts, ensuring that every student will have voice and dance performance instruction as part of their daily schedule.

#### Key Features of the School:

- Early and intensive literacy, numeracy, and post-secondary focus
- Standards-based curriculum, tested across many KIPP campuses
- High expectations
- Extended instructional time and dedicated daily intervention blocks
- Dance instruction to celebrate students' kinesthetic strengths
- Voice instruction to enhance each students' ability to communicate and express themselves
- Public performance opportunities
- Partnerships with art organizations in the community

This KIPP network school will implement most of the same core curriculum as the other schools in the network, however will have an explicit focus on arts, instead of STEM, given the research base on the success of arts education on Black student success and the lack of an arts-focused school in the target area. The application thoroughly describes the target student demographics, population growth, and low achievement levels to justify the need for the proposed school. The school plans to collaborate with local Cordova organizations to offer supports for students and families.

The assessment plan contains formative and summative assessments as well as robust data practices across all levels of the organization from principal meetings with network leadership, school level analysis with Professional Learning coaches, Content Leads, and Grade Level Chairs, as well as data driven professional development to support teachers in designing daily lessons that match student needs. As part of a robust internal assessment system, universal screeners and benchmark assessments will be administered in ELA and math to support the identification of students who are underperforming, and data will be used to group students by intervention intensity. All students will participate in a daily block for tiered interventions, with 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students attending two reading interventions daily.

The KIPP Memphis network has an experienced team with expertise in supporting special populations, including a Director of Special Populations who plans and oversees all programming for students with special needs beyond the general education program. The Director will lead staff in regular professional development related to serving students with special needs. The school will staff appropriate levels of special education and English-as-a-second language teachers throughout its expansion to maintain appropriate ratios. The application demonstrates a thorough understanding of identification, programming, and monitoring requirements for special populations including systems for avoiding misidentification or overidentification that include analyzing aggregated and disaggregated data.

Overall, the Academic Plan provides a compelling rationale for the school in the target community and a justification for leveraging the success of core components of the KIPP model, as well as adding an arts focus, to best meet the needs of the target student demographic.



## OPERATIONS PLAN AND CAPACITY

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### MEETS OR EXCEEDS STANDARD

#### Summary

KIPP Memphis is currently governed by an eight-member board that represent a variety of skills including experience in education, finance, law, human resources, nursing, advocacy, and a parent of a child who attends a KIPP Memphis school. Additional recruitment is ongoing with the goal of adding 5-6 additional members with a particular focus on adding a parent of a student from Cordova and representatives from arts organizations in Memphis.

The board utilizes a committee structure to oversee specific area of Network and school operations, including finance, academics, operations and facilities, and governance. The success of the school, CEO, and Board will be evaluated annually using relevant data which is outlined in the application.

The application details the requirements for a facility that incorporates the unique arts focus, with educational space square footage increasing in alignment with enrollment. The facility team is led by an experienced Chief Operating Officer, with support from three board members who have extensive experience in managing building projects, facility financing, and legal requirements. To date, the team is working with partners in Cordova to identify both on and off market options known by community leaders and two suitable sites have been identified with a third ready for review. A detailed timeline for facility acquisition, construction, and preparations for occupation is provided and should renovations be delayed, the school will utilize modular classrooms as a contingency plan.

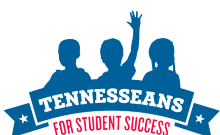
The Start-Up plan contains key tasks that should be accomplished in the areas of governance, school administration and operations, human resources, community engagement and recruiting, academics, and facilities. The Executive Director and network level staff have experience launching three KIPP schools in MSCSD and demonstrate an understanding of potential challenges in various areas of the start-up phase including hiring, student recruitment, facility acquisition, and ensuring sufficient funding.

The school will have several advisory bodies, including a Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO), Teacher Advisory, and KIPPster student delegates, that will support the school leadership in making decisions by incorporating the voices of key stakeholders. While a school leader has not yet been identified, a detailed list of skills, qualifications, and characteristics are included in the application and will be used to conduct a talent search.

The application contains a strong plan for professional development that includes training during the summer and continuing throughout the school year. The Network Chief of Academics prepares the Network's catalog of professional development while the Principal of the school will set the tone and expectations and Professional Learning Coaches and Content Leads will discuss data and specific lesson structure and teaching strategies with teachers.

The Director of Operations, with support from the Network will oversee school operations, including transportation, food service, nursing, and school safety. The school will provide daily transportation and transportation to field trips and summer school, in addition to a food service program that complies with district, state, and federal guidelines. The selected vendors have an existing relationship with the network and staff have experience overseeing these operations at the other KIPP Memphis schools.

The Network and Board have demonstrated strong operational oversight for the existing three schools in MSCS, with a leadership team that is scaled to add on this fourth school. There is a clear understanding of potential risks associated with new school startup and mitigation strategies.



## FINANCIAL PLAN AND CAPACITY

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### MEETS OR EXCEEDS STANDARD

#### Summary

The Pre-Opening budget assumes \$1.4 million in combined philanthropy and network donations that will fund a partial-year salary for the Principal, Secretary, and Director of Operations, in addition to funds allocated for advertising for student recruitment, and necessary materials and supplies. While the KIPP Memphis Network will provide a variety of services during the start-up year, network fees will not begin until Year 1 of operation. Fees increase from .10% in Years 1 and 2 to 15% by Year 5.

KIPP Memphis has a track record of success in fundraising from the community and will benefit from a donation from the KIPP Foundation to support the first three years of the charter. The anticipated philanthropic contribution is \$1.65 million. The budget narrative indicates that CARES Act funding distributed to KMPS will be used to provide start-up support for this school, however it is unclear if this is an allowable use of funds since the school was not operational during the pandemic and payments may only be used to cover costs that were necessary expenditures incurred due to the public health emergency with respect to COVID-19.

The budget narrative provides a thorough explanation of expense assumptions, including salaries, contracted services, and supplies. By year 3, the school does not budget for philanthropic donations in revenue and anticipates a surplus with which to begin building a fund balance, however should revenues be lower than expected then a line of credit with First Horizon would be the first contingency plan. The budget aligns with the proposed mission and includes specific funding for performing arts partnerships.

While the school budget is reliant on unsecured philanthropy in Years 0-2, the network has a healthy unassigned fund balance. Additionally, the network team that includes the CEO, CFO, COO, and board finance committee have sufficient expertise in financial monitoring and established procedures for overseeing accounting, financial systems, processes, and controls. The network has demonstrated success in budget and fiscal management, as well as a history of successful fundraising. Overall, the application demonstrates an understanding of charter school finance operations and management, as well as contingency plans in the event of unforeseen revenue or expense deviations.

