

MARCH 2024



Quality Charter Review Recommendation Report 2024

Evaluated By

Tennesseans for Student Success

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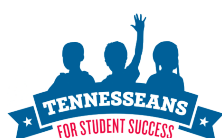
This document was adapted from the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) Charter School Application Recommendation Report. NACSA is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the quality of public education by improving the performance of charter school organizations. NACSA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



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 for approval requires a score of Meets or Exceeds Standard in all three primary application sections.
Evaluation	<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>
Rating Characteristics	<p>The following definitions guide evaluator ratings:</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Partially Meets Standard: Responses meet the criteria in some respects but lack detail and/or require additional information in one or more areas.</p> <p>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.</p>



OVERVIEW

Sponsor Name

Blueprint Ed, Inc

Proposed School Name

Blueprint College and Career Prep

Proposed Location

Parkway Village/Oakhaven Community
Memphis, TN

Enrollment Projections

Grade Level	Year 1 2025-26	Year2 2026-27	Year 3 2027-28	Year4 2028-29	Year 5 2029-30	At Capacity
K						
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9	180	180	180	180	180	180
10		180	180	180	180	180
11			180	180	180	180
12				180	180	180
Totals	180	360	540	720	720	720

Board Members

Alexis Gwin-Miller, Charles Elliot, Patrick Collins, David Arnold, Samantha Bradshaw, Cathy Pope, Lakenna Booker, Candis Dawson-Taylor, Angela Ventura-Wooten

Anticipated Student Demographics

Enrollment Demographics: 73% Black, 25% Hispanic

Special Population Projections: 65% FRL, 15% SWD, 30% ELL

Proposed School Leader

Dr. Alexis Gwin-Miller

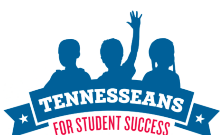
Mission and Vision

Mission: Blueprint College and Career Prep’s mission is to disrupt multigenerational poverty by equipping students with the skills and knowledge needed for successful careers and college experiences.

Vision: The vision is to create a transformative educational environment that not only fosters academic excellence but also provides a clear pathway to meaningful, sustainable careers for the students.

Educational Model/Instructional Design

College, Career/Workforce Development



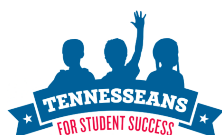
RECOMMENDATION: Approve

Application Strengths Summary

- The application thoroughly explains how the school's core components and model align with T.C.A. purposes of charter schools in the state of Tennessee as well as the priorities and initiatives of Memphis-Shelby County School.
- The application makes a compelling case for the need for a high-performing 9-12th grade option in the proposed location citing community characteristics and needs. Existing high schools in the area have graduation rates around 70%, Ready Graduate Rates of 15.7%, and TDOE School Letter Grades ranging from C to F.
- The school's proposed founder is a member of the Memphis community and has forged partnerships with local organizations that support families, including C-FACT (Community Families and Children's Trust) and Parkway Village Development Corporation.
- The application contains letters of support from families, community organizations, trade-based apprentice programs, and post-secondary institutions.
- The application describes how leadership will utilize the Understanding by Design framework to create curriculum guides, units, lessons, and assessments that are aligned to TN Standards, the Next Generation Science Standards, and national College Readiness standards.
- The school will implement an extended school year and school day to provide additional direct instruction time, as well as tutoring, re-teaching, enrichment, and extracurricular activities.
- The application outlines how the key school design elements were informed by the 90/90/90 Schools research, which includes practices of schools with 90% of students living in poverty and 90% students of color that achieve 90% proficiency rates.
- The proposed school's goals align with MSCS Strategic Initiatives for literacy, staff recruitment and retention, and world-ready graduates.
- The application outlines a robust parent engagement plan including orientation, weekly progress reports, monthly newsletters, meetings with the school leader, and Family Engagement Nights that focus on academics, character development, and college readiness.
- The proposed school has established partnerships with local middle schools and family centered organizations to support student recruitment and enrollment efforts.
- The application contains a start-up plan that addresses key activities in curriculum development, staff recruitment, and student recruitment, in addition to anticipated challenges and mitigation strategies.
- The application contains draft financial policies and procedures for appropriate oversight and management.

Application Improvements Summary

- The application does not identify curriculum resources that the founding team has considered for selection. Additionally, curricula for intervention for special populations was not identified.
- There is variation in the anticipated percentage of students with disabilities within various sections of the application, ranging from 8.3% (p. 68) to 15% (p. 24, 144). The budget is based on 15%.



ACADEMIC PLAN DESIGN AND CAPACITY

MEETS OR EXCEEDS STANDARD

Summary

Blueprint College and Career Prep (BCCP) is designed to serve 720 students, at capacity, in grades 9-12th in the Oakhaven/Parkway Village communities of Southeast Memphis. The school will provide a Career and Technical Education (CTE) and College-prep school option in an area of the city with high child poverty rates, low educational attainment, and low employment rates. The area is also experiencing growth and in need of a high-quality secondary option given the chronic low performance of the 3 existing high schools in the area.

Dr Gwin-Miller, the lead founder and proposed school leader, studied with Big Picture Learning Network to develop and implement a college and career preparatory school focused on design thinking. Other key features of the school include:

- Deeper Learning Framework
- Workforce Development through Learning Through Interests and Internships (LTI)
- Advisory
- Project-based learning
- Personalized Learning plans
- Summer Learning Academy for rising 9th graders
- Saturday School

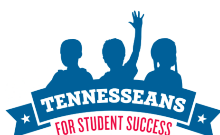
The application outlines the research basis for core components of the academic program, such as work-based learning, service learning, advisory, and extended school day. While curriculum has not yet been selected, clear criteria and the process for selection is described. Curricula will be aligned with standards and rigorous assessments and must be adaptable to the instructional model and students' needs.

The school will implement an Early Warning Indicator System (EWS) and Response to Intervention (RTI2) program. It will utilize universal screening, progress monitoring, and student records to measure student needs. Daily flex blocks and RTI/Enrichment class will allow teachers to organize students into small groups for intervention, remediation, reinforcement, and/or enrichment. This schedule supports service delivery and programming for special populations.

Formative assessments will be used to adjust daily instruction while interim assessments will guide adjustments for upcoming units and aid in preparing for summative assessments. School leadership will utilize academic and operational data dashboards to monitor academic achievement, finance, attendance, and culture monthly.

The school's graduation requirements surpass TDOE requirements and will require 22 credits, in addition to participation in an ACT preparation class and applying to a four-year college or university. These will support the school in meeting its mission of preparing students for post-secondary options.

Overall, the academic plan represents a rigorous educational model that is targeted to meet the specific needs of the proposed communities.



OPERATIONS PLAN AND CAPACITY

MEETS OR EXCEEDS STANDARD

Summary

BCCP's founding board is composed of 11 members who are highly respected leaders in Memphis and represent a wide range of expertise. Additionally, a parent representative will be appointed to the board within 6 months of opening. The application contains clear responsibilities for board officers and committees, as well as how they will conduct the academic and fiscal oversight of the school and CEO. The board will annually conduct a review of the CEO, a self-evaluation, a formal review of bylaws and policies, and a review of organizational strengths and weaknesses to support effective governance of the school.

The proposed CEO, Dr. Alexis Gwin-Miller, was a former New Schools Creation fellow with the High Tech High Graduate School of Education during which she studied national school models and completed a school design residency. She has experience working with a high performing charter, district school leadership, and turnaround schools in Memphis.

All teachers will participate in summer professional development, full and half-day professional development days throughout the year, professional learning communities, as well as ongoing observation and feedback opportunities with a coach. Training will focus on academic achievement, classroom culture, and professional rubrics connected to school core values. Additionally, staff will participate in data days following interim assessments to analyze, interpret, and leverage data to identify trends, address gaps, establish instructional priorities, and refine teaching plans. Teachers demonstrating leadership interest and potential will be supported to grow into future leadership roles within the school such as the Dean of Student Supports and Director of Operations, both positions in Year 4 of build out.

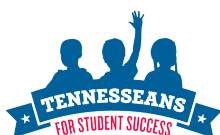
The application provided letters of partnership and support from many community organizations:

- Memphis Business Academy
- Tennessee College of Applied Technology-Memphis
- SCORE CDC
- LeMoyne-Owen College
- Webmark Health Solutions
- Palmershire Park Community Association

The application contains a strong facility plan including a letter of commitment from Memphis Merit Academy for co-location for Years 1-3 and potentially beyond. Additionally, two other facility options have been identified to support the needs of the school at full-scale.

The school will offer transportation and anticipates that 25% of students will need busing to get to school and off-site classes and internships. The applicant used estimates from a local transportation provider to build a realistic budget and will conduct an RFP for services. Operations staff will also oversee the implementation of the National School Lunch Program in conjunction with Shelby County Schools. It is unclear if MSCS offers lunch programming to its charter schools.

Overall, the founding team and board demonstrate capacity and expertise to execute the start-up plans and school operations.



FINANCIAL PLAN AND CAPACITY

MEETS OR EXCEEDS STANDARD

Summary

The school anticipates \$412,523 from the Charter School Program Start-Up Grant (CSP) and \$200,000 in philanthropy to support revenue for the planning year and first year of operation. While the school plans to apply for the full CSP award amount, it built the budget on a lower assumption. Startup funding will allow the school to hire key positions, including the CEO and Dean of Operations (.5) in Year 0.

The leadership team for Year 1 will include the CEO, Head of School, Operations personnel, and special education staff. Other staffing details include:

- ELL Teacher
- Associate Teacher
- Elective Teachers (4)
- CTE Teachers (2)
- Lead Teachers (8)
- Internship Coordinator

The Finance Team is composed of the Board Treasurer, CEO, and a contracted Back-office provider. The application contains drafted financial policies to guide the financial management and oversight including purchasing, banking, travel policies, audit, and day to day financial operations.

While the application enrollment projections appear to be realistic given the community demand, the budget is based on only 95% of enrollment to account for attrition or missed targets. The budget assumes \$9,000 in revenue from families for fees and supplies, however with an anticipated 70% of students qualifying for free and reduced lunch, it is not clear if this is a realistic assumption.

The budgets included in the application show a positive operating income and healthy ending fund balance each year, with a \$1million fund balance by Year 5 assuming \$0 in fundraising or grants in Years 2-5. Additionally, the cash flow provided reflects typical schedules of distribution and is reflective of schedules specific to Memphis charter schools.

The school plans to apply for several grants in the early years of the school's operations and will continue to form relationships with local and national philanthropic funders with a history of funding charter schools. Additionally, the budget narrative outlines several contingency plans should revenue sources not materialize, including pursuing a line of credit, negotiating payment terms with vendors, and securing short-term private loans from philanthropic individuals.

The budget narrative clearly explains and supports all revenue and expense assumptions. Overall, the applicant's financial oversight plan and proposed budgets are sound.

