

MARCH 2024




Quality Charter Review Recommendation Report 2024

Evaluated By

Tennesseans for Student Success

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 www.tnsuccess.org

Tennesseans for Student Success

P.O. Box 680231
Franklin, TN 37068

For more information about the content of this document, please contact:

info@tnsuccess.org

Visit our website at: www.tnsuccess.org

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

NursesMC

Proposed School Name

Nurses Middle College Nashville

Proposed Location

Downtown Nashville

Board Members

Mallor Dwinal-Palish, Tilita Shaw, Mamie Williams PhD, MPH, APRN, Richard Zadd

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	125	140	150	150	150	150
10		110	125	130	130	130
11			90	110	110	110
12				110	110	110
Totals	125	250	365	500	500	500

Anticipated Student Demographics

Enrollment Demographics: 39% Black, 31% Hispanic, 25% White, 4% Asian

Proposed School Leader

Jenny Santana, RN, CCM, BSHCA

Special Population Projections:

82% FRL, 10% SWD, 33% EL

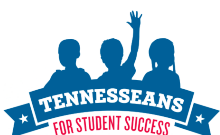
Mission and Vision

Mission: The mission of Nurses Middle College Nashville is to prepare a diverse group of students to become the highly educated and professional nursing workforce of the future.

Vision: Our vision is to create an innovative high school experience that is student-centric, structure to foster a supportive learning environment, and committed to developing the skills, knowledge, and passion necessary to excel in the nursing and allied health professions.

Educational Model/Instructional Design

Nursing-specific College and Career Focus



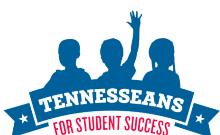
RECOMMENDATION: Approve

Application Strengths Summary

- The application outlines a unique high school model not currently available in Nashville in which students will complete work-based learning experiences and earn a Certified Nurse Aid (CNA) credential and college credits.
- The school plans to locate in downtown Nashville to leverage the cultural and linguistic diversity of the city given the racial disparities in healthcare professionals. The application indicates that the location, and recruitment from around the city, will support its mission of enrolling, and then preparing, a diverse group of students.
- The application contains several letters of support from local healthcare agencies.
- The school will measure effectiveness of the school through student outcome and growth goals, mission-specific goals, school culture goals, and financial performance goals in alignment with TDOE's Model Charter Performance Framework.
- The application describes a robust professional development plan for teachers that includes leadership institute, collaborative meetings, targeted trainings, instructional coaching, and acknowledgement and celebration of high-quality teaching practices.
- The application and accompanying documents describe how Positive Behavior Interventions will be embedded into the school culture.
- The start-up plan is robust and details responsible parties and timelines.
- The application points to the shortage of healthcare workers, especially nurses, nationally and across the state of Tennessee as an indicator of demand.
- The budgets is reliant on substantial amounts of philanthropic funds but the operators substantiates this funding through commitment letters to confirm award amounts beginning in Year 0.

Application Improvements Summary

- The staffing plan for the school was determined based on the required needs of the NursesMC model, but not on projections based on need or interest in the local community. Additional letters of support or interest from local students and families would demonstrate local interest aligned to staffing projections.
- While the application contains support from healthcare and postsecondary institutions, it is unclear if feedback from families in the community was solicited or incorporated into the application. Again, additional letters of interest from local families would be beneficial.
- The application provides minimal information about concrete financial procedures, policies, systems, and processes.



ACADEMIC PLAN DESIGN AND CAPACITY

MEETS OR EXCEEDS STANDARD

Summary

Nurses Middle College Nashville plans to offer a healthcare focused high school education located in downtown Nashville. The school will serve 500 students in 9-12th grade, at capacity. The school seeks to address the shortage of healthcare professionals and increase the diversity in the workforce.

Key aspects of the educational plan include:

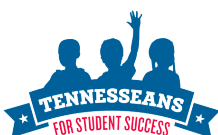
- Nursing College and Career Preparation with rigorous, standards-based curricula using a combination of published curriculum packages and CMO developed courses
- Applied Learning opportunities through Healthcare Partnerships, Work-Based Learning Opportunities and CNA Certification
- Dual-Enrollment Courses
- Postsecondary Supports from a College Transition Coordinator
- Culturally Responsive Teaching
- Advisory and Social-Emotional Learning

To implement the model, the school has partnerships with HCA Healthcare, Vanderbilt University Medical Center, Ascension Saint Thomas Midtown Hospital and the National Healthcare Corporation, in addition to post-secondary partners Galene College of Nursing, Belmont, and Tennessee State.

The application provides a strong research base for core components of the academic plan, such as applied learning, dual-enrollment and culturally responsive teaching. The CMO will conduct a crosswalk to ensure alignment of all selected curricula to state standards and supplement, as needed, particularly for ELA and Math.

The assessment plan includes the administration of informal classroom assessments, curriculum-embedded assessments, course exams, Star Renaissance assessments in reading and math 3x a year, PSAT, SAT, ACT, Health Education Systems Incorporated (HESI), Accuplacer, Certified Nurse Aid (CNA), and TCAP. The school's RTI team will analyze data using a schoolwide data-based decision-making planning tool as an Early Warning System process and will incorporate Response to Intervention Tier 2 (RTI²) for all students identified by screening exams as entering below grade level to ensure access to full curricular offerings. Teachers will meet in Professional Learning Communities, with the support of Department and Grade Level Chairs, to examine data and make instructional adjustment plans. Teachers will also support guided data analysis and reflection sessions with students and families.

The application indicates that because of the structure of the model and mission-specific graduation requirements, if students fail a course they will be expected to repeat, recover credits, and be retained out of necessity. As above, students who enroll performing below grade level will receive intensive remediation through a RTI framework before beginning the prescribed scope and sequence towards their CNA credential. The application thoroughly describes legal requirements for special populations but overall can improve specificity for how all students, particularly those with unique learning needs will access general education programming within this academic model.



OPERATIONS PLAN AND CAPACITY

MEETS OR EXCEEDS STANDARD

Summary

The current four-member board is composed of two former charter high school founders and two leaders in the healthcare industry. The board will expand by two members during the pre-opening year in addition to appointing a parent whose child is enrolled in the school within 6 months of the school's opening. The application outlines defined officer roles and committees to support the oversight of the school. The board is currently in the process of interviewing candidates for the Executive Director position. Once selected, the ED will begin a three-year fellowship through NursesMC to prepare them for the responsibilities of the role. The board will also evaluate the Executive Director of NursesMC Nashville annually using a six-step evaluation process that aligns with the school's mission, model and goals.

The school leadership is composed of an Executive Director, Director of Teaching and Learning, Director of Nursing, and Business Operations Manager. There are clearly defined roles and responsibilities for each leadership position and how they will support the operations of the school.

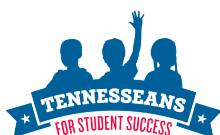
Teachers will participate in robust training including summer professional development, weekly during early release days during the year, professional learning communities, and on-going instructional coaching. The school will offer competitive salaries and benefits to support their recruitment of high-quality, diverse teachers. It will also recruit on employment platforms, employ social media, and leverage partnerships with universities, in addition to personal and professional pipelines.

The school plans to locate downtown to utilize WeGo public transportation but will also provide transportation to those who need it to ensure it is not a barrier to attendance. The application indicates that it will contract with MNPS to provide food services however it is unclear if this is an option that MNPS will offer to the charter school.

The founding team, in addition to a facilities project manager employed through the NursesMC CMO and a consultant for Level Field Players, has identified two viable property options. The school intends to lease for two years and purchase a facility in Year 3. Estimates for square footage rental costs (\$24.50 per sq ft) are below the current market commercial rate in downtown Nashville for Years 1-3. The school plans to purchase a facility in Years 4 and beyond with an assumed 5.5% debt service rate for 35 years.

The school board will contract with the Nurses MC CMO for startup and implementation support. The CMO currently contracts with two other schools and has a well-defined school model and systems, services, structures, and processes to operate the proposed school. The CMO Agreement outlines key functions in the areas of academic programming, talent, finance and operations, and external affairs. The application indicates that the school's board will annually evaluate the effectiveness of the CMO however a process has not yet been defined.

Overall, the board and CMO demonstrate start-up and operations experience.



FINANCIAL PLAN AND CAPACITY

MEETS OR EXCEEDS STANDARD

Summary

The school has received a commitment of \$5.7 million in startup funds and \$21.7 million over the first five years from Bloomberg Philanthropies. A letter of support (Attachment G, pg. 234) provided in the attachments indicates that the organization plans to partner with the school for this startup funding. Additionally, the school plans to apply for the Charter School Program (CSP) grant to further support start-up costs.

Startup funding will allow the school to hire key positions, including the Executive Director, Director of Teaching and Learning, Director of Nursing, Recruitment Specialist, Business Operations Manager, and administrative support during the pre-opening year. Additionally, funds are reserved for student recruitment, family meetings, and community engagement activities.

Additional staffing information for Year 1:

- 10 Core Content Teachers
- 1 Special Education Teacher
- 1 English Language Learner Teacher
- 1 Guidance Counselor
- 1 School Nurse
- 1 Dean of Student Supports

The Finance Team is composed of the Executive Director, Business Operations Manager, the Board Finance Committee, and the Chief Financial Officer from the CMO. Financial policies and procedures are not yet developed but the school does plan to have an RFP to solicit an accounting firm to complete an annual audit.

The school will pay the CMO \$275,000 for consulting services until June 30, 2024 and then \$550,000 for both Year 0 and Year 1 of the school's operation before shifting to a 5% public per pupil revenue fee structure.

The budgets included in the application show a healthy ending fund balance each year, beginning in Year 0 based on the commitments for substantial philanthropy funding in Years 0 through 5. The Year 1 budget is based on 61% of total revenues coming from Bloomberg philanthropy and 39% from state and federal funding sources. Similarly, Year 2 and Year 3 budgets also rely heavily on Bloomberg Philanthropy funding. Beginning in Year 4, the school plans to receive funds from Healthcare System Support.

Given the committed startup funds, the school will be well resourced and have a sound budget. Funding from the Healthcare System Support and CSP grant will further support student and staff needs in Years 0-5.

