

JANUARY 2025

Quality Charter Review Recommendation Report 2025

Evaluated By

Tennesseans for Student Success

Tennesseans for Student Success

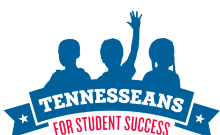
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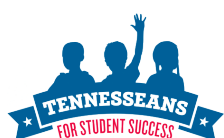
This document was adapted from the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) Charter School Application Recommendation Report. NACSA is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the quality of public education by improving the performance of charter school organizations. NACSA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

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

Enrollment Projections

Proposed School Name

The Forget School

Proposed Location

McGavock Cluster, District 4

Board Members

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	130	130	130	130	130	130
7	0	125	125	125	125	125
8	0	0	125	125	125	125
9	100	100	100	100	100	100
10	0	85	100	100	100	100
11	0	0	100	100	100	100
12	0	0	0	95	95	95
Totals	230	440	680	775	775	775

Anticipated Student Demographics

Enrollment Demographics: 40% Black/African American, 30% Latino/Hispanic, 30% White

Proposed School Leader

Special Population Projections:

42% ED, 15% ELL, 12.8% SWD

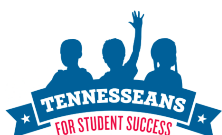
Mission and Vision

Mission: The Forge School empowers 6th through 12th grade students to forget their own futures by combining academic excellence, hands-on learning, and real-world experiences to ensure that upon graduation students are prepared to enter an architecture, construction, or engineering career with the durable skills and experience needed to thrive in a high-wage, high-demand industry.

Vision: The Forget is committed to empowering students to become innovative leaders in Architecture, Construction, and Engineering through hands-on, career-connected learning. Our vision is to have strong partnerships in our community to build pathways that equip students with the durable skills, knowledge, and real-world experience needed to design and construct and sustainable future. Our mission is to forget connections between education and industry, ensuring that our graduates are prepared to contribute to their communities with purpose, creativity, and expertise.

Educational Model/Instructional Design

Career and Technical Education



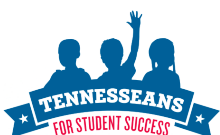
RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE PENDING FINAL SUBMISSION

Application Strengths Summary

- The school proposes to serve a community where school performance is lower than district averages and has a substantially lower rate of college and career readiness.
- The application demonstrates a strong rationale for selecting the target community and student demographics.
- The application clearly describes how community member responses on surveys and the listening tour directly influenced the key design elements of The Forge School.
- The school will explicitly teach professional skills (communication, collaboration, fortitude, and leadership) using research-based frameworks and the application clearly demonstrates how these skills will be incorporated into daily practice as well as their early career years.
- The school will implement state-approved curricula including SAVVAS, McGraw Hill, SPARK, Defined Learning, and Centrage.
- The school will leverage city and community relationships to implement a placed-based approach with relevant and personalized learning experiences.
- The school will implement a data cycle in which teachers will gather, organize, interpret, action plan, implement, and monitor improvements.
- The staffing plan is adequate to support the needs of diverse learners and should specialized services beyond staff capacity be needed, the school will contract with external providers to ensure all IEP requirements are fulfilled.
- The application describes Board positions and committees that will be implemented to support effective board governance and oversight of academics, finances, and operations.
- The application contains the process for an annual evaluation of the Executive Director that contains academic data, stakeholder input, survey data, and progress towards high-level goals.
- The school will utilize partnerships, advertisements, social media, and personal and professional pipelines to recruit and hire a diverse staff.
- The professional development plan is comprehensive and will support educators in serving diverse student populations in the unique educational model.
- The transportation plan includes use of both public transportation and school run bus routes to provide free and adequate transportation for all students who need it.

Application Improvements Summary

- Projected demographics vary across the application (p 59, 69, 86).
- The application does not provide information as to how the proposed curriculum will be well-suited for the target student population.
- It is unclear how the school's Restorative Practices and Positive Behavior Intervention System align with the Discipline Policy or practices.
- The application provides a vague plan for initial and ongoing board training and is absent details related to content, partner agencies, or facilitators.
- It is unclear if the staff recruitment plan will ensure the school is staffed with the personnel that meet CTE teacher requirements.
- Job descriptions for teaching staff do not include a requirement, or preference, for industry certificates and relevant industry work experience to support the Career and Technical Education program offerings.



ACADEMIC PLAN DESIGN AND CAPACITY

MEETS OR EXCEEDS STANDARD (pending full application materials)

Summary

The Forge School proposes to serve 775 students grades 6-12th, at full capacity, in the McGavock Cluster of District 4 in Nashville. The school will foster a culture of academic success, establish a strong foundation in core subjects, and implement hands-on and real-world learning experiences to support students in pursuing careers in Architecture, Construction, and Engineering.

Other aspects of the academic program:

- Ongoing guidance and career support
- Individualized learning portfolios
- Civic engagement
- Project Based curriculum
- Mentoring
- Presentations of Learning
- Community Service
- Extended School Year
- Restorative Practice
- Positive Behavior Intervention System

The application details how the new charter school would alleviate high school overcrowding, balance middle school enrollment, provide an alternative option for families, and serve a diverse and growing population in the McGavock cluster.

Academic data is gathered through daily/weekly classwork, unit exams, student projects, interim assessments, and state and nationally normed assessments. Students will play an active role in assessment and personal reflection through Presentations of Learning, Discovery Journals, and Student Blueprint/Work Based Learning Portfolios.

The school will implement a Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTI2) program that will include a universal screening assessment, Early Warning System process, data analysis process, data-based decision making and interventions targeted towards a students need. The block schedule allows for 30–45-minute intervention blocks multiple days a week, as needed. Students with disabilities, English Language Learners, and intellectually gifted students will be supported an inclusive educational model that implements co-planning and co-teaching to provide students with access to educational services in the least restrictive environment. Small group and individual pull-out services time, as needed, is also built into the Block Schedule.

Overall, the Academic Plan demonstrates a clear plan for implementing the proposed mission and vision of the school in a community with sufficient need and demand.



OPERATIONS PLAN AND CAPACITY

UNABLE TO EVALUTE

Summary

The school will be governed by an independent board of varied expertise, skills, and interests. The bylaws indicate that the board will contain at least 3 and no more than 15 members. Currently, the Founding Board is composed of 6 members and is actively looking for a parent representative. Members will complete 6-hours of training within their first year and 4-hours annually however it is unclear who will provide the training or what content the training will cover.

The governing board intends to appoint Sara Nelson Tuttle, The Forge School Lead Founder, as the Executive Director. Mrs. Tuttle has an extensive background in school leadership, including expertise in operations, curriculum development, and student achievement, meets the qualifications in the job description, and has a passion for the mission and vision of the school. As a Nashville Incubator Fellow, Mrs. Tuttle will benefit from ongoing executive coaching during the first year of operation, with an option to extend beyond that time. Coaching will be grounded in a needs analysis and will focus on school culture, leadership, coaching, community engagement, board engagement, data analysis, fundraising and diverse talent cultivation. Additional support for the leadership development will be pursued through grant opportunities.

Additional key leadership positions include the Community Partnerships & Operations Director, Lower School Principal, and Upper School Principal, all of whom will be hired in advance of Year 1 to support the successful school opening.

The start-up plan clearly outlines key focus areas for Year 0 such as Student Recruitment and Enrollment, Governance, Curriculum and Instruction, Finances, Personnel, Transportation, Food Services, Health and Safety, Community Partnerships, Family and Community Engagement, and Operations, as well as designates staff that will own, advise, or support the tasks and activities within each category. Additionally, the application identifies potential challenges that many new schools encounter in the areas of personnel recruitment, student enrollment, and facility acquisition, and provides strategies to mitigate the risks.

The staff development plan includes an Annual Leader Retreat, Summer Professional Development, Ongoing PD, individualized weekly coaching and classroom observations, Acts of Recognition, Mentoring, Collaborative Planning, and Leadership opportunities. A clear plan for evaluation is provided however the application fails to provide a plan for addressing unsatisfactory leadership or teacher performance and turnover.

