



QCR REPORT: KNOXVILLE PREPARATORY  
MARCH 2023

# Quality Charter Review Recommendation Report 2023

**KNOXVILLE PREPARATORY SCHOOL**

March 2023

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. For more information, visit <http://qualitycharters.org>.

# Contents

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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 of approval requires a score of Meets or Exceeds Standard in all three primary application sections.**

## Evaluation

Analysis of the application is informed by the published Tennessee Department of Education Charter Application Scoring Rubric across the three primary application sections:

**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.

**Operations Plan and Capacity:** Governance, start-up plan, facilities, personnel/human capital, professional development, insurance, transportation, food service, additional operations, and waivers.

**Financial Plan and Capacity:** Planning and budget worksheet, and budget narrative.

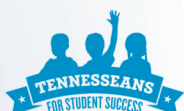
## Rating Characteristics

The following definitions guide evaluator ratings:

**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.

**Partially Meets Standard:** Responses meet the criteria in some respects, but lacks detail and/or require additional information in one or more areas.

**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.



# OVERVIEW

## Sponsor Name

PREP Public Schools

## Proposed School Name

Knoxville Preparatory School

## Proposed Location

Western Heights  
Knoxville, Tennessee

## Enrollment Projections

Grade Level	Year 1 2024-25	Year 2 2025-26	Year 3 2026-27	Year 4 2027-28	Year 5 2028-29	At Capacity 2030-31
6	105	105	105	105	105	105
7	0	102	102	102	102	102
8	0	0	99	99	99	99
9	0	0	0	103	103	103
10	0	0	0	0	100	100
11	0	0	0	0	0	97
12	0	0	0	0	0	94
<b>Totals</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>306</b>	<b>409</b>	<b>509</b>	<b>700</b>

## Board Members

Ted Alling, Chair  
Kelly Alling, Vice-Chair  
Sue Anne Wells, Ph.D.  
Jack Studer

## Proposed School Leader

Principal, anticipated July 2023

## Mission and Vision

*Mission: to engage young men in a rigorous yet supportive, single-gender learning environment that nurtures resilience, promotes academic excellence, inspires leadership, and prepares critical thinkers.*

*Vision: to inspire and empower young men to achieve academically and participate in a collaborative learning community that will establish a trajectory for lifelong learning and success.*

## Anticipated Student Demographics

### Enrollment Demographics:

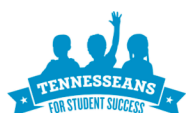
62% African American  
34% Hispanic/Latino  
4% White  
100% Male (pg. 11)

### Special Population Projections:

80% Econ. Disadvantaged  
17% Students w/ Disabilities  
12% English Lang. Learners

## Educational Model/Instructional Design

Single gender (male) with a focus on innovation and leadership





# RECOMMENDATION

PENDING

## Application Strengths Summary

- Exemplary alignment with Tennessee State Standards and policies, with proven history of success at existing school in Hamilton County (Chattanooga Preparatory School)
- Extensive enrollment landscape analysis was completed to justify Knoxville replication
- Permanent school facility has been identified
- Robust wrap around services including laundry facilities, food pantry, and financial assistance for uniforms, laptops, and home internet service provided
- Unique school model, not currently available within the district
- Robust community engagement and support from community partnerships outlined
- Substantial start-up funding indicated

## Application Improvements Summary

- Reviewers were unable to access data specific to Knox County in key parts of the application - recommendation sections listed as pending indicate additional data is needed for final recommendation (Section 1 and Section 2)
- Clarification is warranted for Governance Board makeup; one board member biography is not indicated per list provided on Knox Prep website (Section 2.1)
- Applicant should consider adding prospective incubation sites to the application (Section 2.3)
- Applicant should consider the impact of two required Saturday workdays per term on teacher workload sustainability and retention efforts (Section 2.4)
- Applicant should evaluate teacher starting salary to reflect more competitive pay scale for Knoxville (current salary listed is lower than Year 0 teacher in Knox County) (Section 2.4)

# ACADEMIC PLAN DESIGN AND CAPACITY

PENDING

## Summary

Knoxville Preparatory School is designed to serve 700 male students, at capacity, in grades 6-12 in Western Heights, Knoxville, Tennessee. The applicant proposes a facility location at 967 Irwin Street, Knoxville, TN. The applicant proposes to meet the statutory purpose of charter schools in the state of Tennessee by, "bolster[ing] self-confidence and promote social / emotional development among low-income, urban boys, empowering them to hone leadership capacities, social/emotional maturity, self-discipline, and resilience." One key priority of the school is to "fortify college and career readiness and success through a rigorous curriculum that integrates problem-based, experiential, and expeditionary learning strategies" (pg. 7 of Chattanooga Prep application).

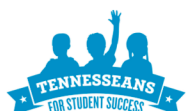
The blended learning framework of the school focuses on problem-based learning and college preparatory plans with options for Advanced Placement, dual enrollment, and industry certifications. The applicant has conducted extensive community engagement and demonstrates understanding of the needs of the target student population. Letters of support include numerous parents, non-profit organizations, and community members.

Key features of the proposed school include:

- Extended school days on Monday -Thursday
- Early dismissal on Fridays for tutoring, tiered intervention time, and co-curricular activities
- Required summer programming for students who fall behind academically
- Extensive college and career planning including college visits beginning in 6th grade
- Lavinia Group curriculum utilized for Literacy and Mathematics
- LANGUAGE! Live curriculum geared towards struggling readers and writers
- Discovery Education, Khan Academy, and Odysseyware digital content utilized

The applicant thoroughly explains how they plan to utilize a multi-tiered system of support to address the needs of English language learners and students with disabilities, including students with moderate to severe disabilities.

Overall, the applicant demonstrates evidence that the school will provide innovative inquiry-based, blended learning curriculum and personalized instruction exceptionally well. Curriculum and assessment plans align with state academic standards exceptionally well.



# OPERATIONS PLAN AND CAPACITY

PENDING

## Summary

Administrative staff is defined as a Principal and Dean of Students hired in Year 0 followed by Dean of Faculty hired in Year 2. The school will utilize Lexia and Odysseyware for progress monitoring. Substantial extended learning staff are outlined including staffing allocations for academic coaches, interventionists and part-time academic support staff in Year 1.

Members of the Governance Board will participate in the following committees: Executive Committee, Finance Committee, Development Committee, Governance Committee. A local advisory council will be formed to ensure proper parent and stakeholder communication. The board will utilize the Tennessee Charter School Center for required board training and resources for board duties.

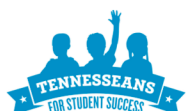
The applicant has identified an excellent network of potential community partners including:

- Boys and Girls Club
- Centro Hispanico
- Emerald Youth
- Knoxville Rotary Club
- Knoxville Education Foundation
- Knoxville Fellows
- Legacy Parks
- Lawson Family Foundation
- NAACP
- 100 Black Men Gala
- Urban League

Evaluation of the teaching staff and principal will follow the Project Coach model (pg. 74).

The applicant proposes to develop a permanent facility in District 2/Region 5 within the Old North Knoxville neighborhood, in close proximity to the Western Heights community. Transportation and food services will be contracted with independent service providers in summer before school opening.

Overall, the PREP Public Schools and the network leadership team bring exceptional start-up, operational, and management expertise giving creditability to their plans to start and operate a new school.



# FINANCIAL PLAN AND CAPACITY

MEETS OR EXCEEDS STANDARD

## Summary

Financial policies and procedures will be finalized by the principal and Finance Committee outlined by the following roles:

- Finance Committee: establish and review financial policies and goals
- Principal: day-to-day school administration, local, state, and federal reporting, human resources management, facilities, enrollment and financial management

Financial goals and procedures will be monitored monthly by the Governance Board, in consultation with the Finance Committee.

The Finance Committee will select an independent auditor to conduct an annual audit of the school's financial records starting in the first quarter of Year 0.

Additional staffing details:

- TCRS state retirement system will be utilized
- 1:13 academic teachers to student ratio in Year 1
- 1:16 SPED teacher to student ratio in Year 1
- No EL teacher indicated on budget worksheet
- 1:105 school social worker to student ratio in Year 1
- Extended School Program staffing (interventionists/academic coaches) indicated in Year 1
- 1 part-time Academic Support Staff position in Year 1

The applicant anticipates three primary funding sources. Knox Prep has initiated fundraising efforts that have amassed \$4.75 Million in start-up funding from private donations and gifts. PREP Public Schools has engaged the grant writing services of Skye Strategies to pursue state and federal level grant funding, in addition to state and local TISA revenue.

Overall, PREP Public Schools and network leadership team possess substantial school start-up and management expertise. The applicant financial plan and proposed budget are sound.

