

## DCSD Staff Recommendation on Charter School Application



***Recommendation: The recommendation from DCSD Staff is to **Deny** the 2025 Charter School replication application of Renaissance PK-12.***

### Overall Recommendation Guidance

- Letters of intent have been submitted with the application, but are insufficient to support an economically sound charter school.
- No viable school location has been selected, but the applicant has identified a geographic region of Castle Rock and has engaged with an architectural firm.
- The assumption that the waitlist of the Renaissance Elementary Magnet School, which is District-managed Magnet school, will transfer to enrollments at the new Renaissance PK-5 is not warranted.
- An application would be welcome in the future when the demonstration of demand has been established.

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## Evaluation

Evidence of Support
<p>Provide details on the student population to be served, how the founding committee has reached out to parents of targeted students, how many parents have expressed interest in the school by submitting letters of intent to enroll, and what community organizations, colleges and universities, nonprofits, and local groups are in support of the school as evidenced through letters of support.</p>
<p><b>Strengths:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 239 Letters of Intent were discussed during the capacity interview.</li><li>• Castle Rock region was determined as a target area and outreach is ongoing in that area.</li></ul> <p><b>Concerns:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 239 Letters of Intent will translate to approximately 16 student enrollments based on trends and research across the state. (15:1)</li><li>• There is no assurance that the majority of students on the current REMS waitlist would automatically enroll at the new Renaissance school.</li><li>• The demographic evidence provided in the application does not align with the demographic reports secured by the District. Residential growth and population growth do not always translate to enrollment growth.</li></ul>

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### Financial Plan/Budget

Provide structured evidence of the systems and procedures in place to ensure the school and Board follow sound financial practices to make sure their school is financially stable and funds are appropriately used to support the mission and vision of the school. Additionally, provide a summary of the 5-year school budget that includes a description of the school start-up plan, services and specific programming for both the academic and non-academic program, and any other areas of service that are unique to the school model.

#### Strengths:

- The 5 year budget template contains reasonable revenues and expenses assumptions that escalate and reflect their academic plan, i.e. teacher, supplies, etc.
- Renaissance has shown its understanding and compliance with State and District requirements over the past years by submitting budgets and audited financial statements by the deadline.
- Renaissance is currently running a financially stable charter school as shown by their balanced budget and \$1.2m fund balance. This shows the leadership's commitment to being fiscally responsible and proactive.
- The staff has also managed enrollment fluctuations over the past several years while maintaining a fund balance.
- The narrative addresses audit, financial transparency and clearly shows management is aware of and prepared to meet requirements set forth in statute and the charter contract with the District.

#### Concerns:

- Facility maintenance costs were based on current facility run rates. Construction timeline could be a tight schedule in the current market.
- The facility plan does not provide a detailed contingency plan for securing land and construction costs in the current environment.
- There are concerns about cost and escalation, due to building plans lacking a price per square foot.

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### Educational Plan

Show an educational program detailing an effective, well thought out, research-based educational program that aligns with the school's mission, goals, and the student population, along with the state standards of Colorado. Additionally, define the Curriculum and program alignment, instructional strategies, structures and supports for specials and electives, and professional learning requirements of the school.

#### Strengths:

- EL is a well-established, research based, curriculum model.
- The application states that they will use Illustrative Math which is highly rated by Ed-Reports. The application states that they will use core literacy programs from the CDE Approved Advisory List
- The application recognizes the strategies used by EL such as CREW to create a culture of belonging and high expectations.
- The application states that they will use research based interventions and intervention models. "Teachers will select appropriate supports, interventions, and extensions. For ELA these may include: iReady, IXL, Orton Gillingham, and Unlock Phonics. For math, these may include: iReady, IXL, or Zearn.
- In addition to specials and electives opportunities in art, music and PE, students will have additional opportunities to participate in adventure Education.
- The application details an in depth professional development plan highlighting PLCs, ongoing learning in staff developments, the onboarding of a Professional Learning Specialist.
- The ILT Team will be responsible for analyzing data to drive teacher learning. They will begin with a summer kickoff of learning.

#### Concerns:

- Multilingual learners (English learners) seem to be equated with special education, but student needs and instructional approaches are different.
- Application does not include processes to identify MLs/ ELs for gifted and talented, advanced programming, or special education. Explanation of gifted education is general and only mentions differentiation.
- Does not explain a service delivery model based on research, evidence based best practices for gifted learners and MLs/ ELs at the elementary level.
- Application does not include staffing ratios for MLs/ ELs.
- The application does not include a budget for translation and interpretation services as well as translation of IEPs as required by HB 23-1263.
- Application does not include family engagement as aligned with Title III.

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### Parent and Community Involvement

Show a clearly defined target population, and evidence that demand for the program among the target population exceeds available space. Include the roles of parents/guardians, community members, and community organizations and the role they will play as part of the school community.

#### Strengths:

- Response indicates parents, students and families were involved in needs assessment and the plan towards full buildout.
- Response indicates they will build on their current Parent Crew/SAC for parent involvement.
- Multiple partnerships with community organizations were listed out in Section D. Would be helpful to know how these apply to elementary level.
- Appear to do well in creating partnerships.

#### Concerns:

- Responses lack specificity regarding parent and community engagement.
- Response does not indicate how or if outreach was completed with special populations, including at risk.
- Response indicates students, families and staff were involved in needs assessment, but does not provide detail on how their feedback was gathered, what level of involvement they were provided, etc.
- Unclear if parent communication differentiated creation of Prek--5 school from the upgrade to the current facility (gym, lab spaces, etc)