

DCSD Staff Recommendation on Charter School Application



Recommendation: The recommendation from DCSD Staff is to **Deny** the 2025 Charter School replication application of Leman Academy of Excellence.

Overall Recommendation Guidance

- No verifiable letters of intent have been submitted with the application.
- There is no verification that there is sufficient evidence of demand for the replication.
- No viable school location has been selected.
- No facilities plan was submitted with the application.
- An application would be welcome in the future when the demonstration of demand has been established.

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Evaluation

Evidence of Support

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.

Strengths:

- Student enrollment projections are reflective of the overall DCSD Demographics.
- There was a reflection of the success at the Stroh Ranch campus regarding student enrollment efforts.

Concerns:

- There is no evidence of demand that was submitted with the application.
- There was no outreach done in the intended area of the proposed charter school.
- No plan was identified to conduct outreach or to solicit intents to enroll in the near future.
- During the capacity interview, it was stated that Crystal Valley would be far enough away from current campuses where there wouldn't be an impact in enrollment. Demographic studies have shown that in order to fulfill enrollment projections at the BG campus, east Castle Rock enrollments will be needed.

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.
- Leman 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.

Concerns:

- Enrollment is the key factor to financial success; the application does not show evidence of community support.
- The current Bayou Gulch school has not met enrollment projections from the original application.
- The 5 year budget does not reflect any contingency.

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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:

- The school model is based on the Classical model.
- The application describes how both curriculum and instruction are aligned with Common Core Standards
- The program as a whole allows for horizontal and vertical alignment that scaffolds between grade levels and contents.
- Students have the opportunity for supplemental programming in alignment with the classical model.
- Within the interview process the applicants described the coaching model that is used to support teacher ongoing professional development.

Concerns:

- There is concern that the curriculum does not align to Colorado academic standards (beyond national standards) especially for social studies.
- Electives and supplemental programming does not seem to be defined well. For example, the application discusses art and music integration but not opportunity for an art, music or PE elective.
- Application does not include an explanation or budget provision for several special service providers (e.g., Gifted Education Coordinator, CLD specialist, School psychologist/social worker, SpeechLanguage Pathologist) nor does it explain that these services will be contracted.
- Classical Education is not a research and evidence based instructional model for Gifted Education. Application does not describe any **supplemental** research and evidence based practices specific to serving the academic and social emotional needs of Gifted Learners

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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:

- Already have a board in place from Stroh and BG that they will build upon with this school.

Concerns:

- Parent and community engagement has not begun. A general plan was provided but without specificity. The plan is to replicate what was done with BG location.
- LAE does not plan targeted outreach to special populations. Plan does not lay out how parent feedback will be provided or implemented.
- Planned activities and strategies that were mentioned are marketing rather than true engagement that provides opportunities for partnership.