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**BEFORE THE TENNESSEE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

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**IN RE:** ) **State Board of Education Meeting**  
**Memphis School of Excellence - Cordova** ) **September 21, 2020**  
**Charter School Appeal** )  
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**FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATION REPORT  
OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

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Pursuant to Tennessee Code Annotated (T.C.A.) § 49-13-108, sponsors proposing to open a new charter school may appeal the denial of their amended application by a local board of education to the State Board of Education (State Board). On August 6, 2020, the sponsor of Memphis School of Excellence – Cordova (MSE) appealed the denial of its amended application by the Shelby County Schools (SCS) Board of Education to the State Board.

Based on the following procedural history, findings of fact, and Review Committee Report attached hereto, I am neutral with regard to whether or not the approval of the MSE amended application is in the best interests of the students, local education agency (LEA), or community. Therefore, I encourage the State Board to weigh the information presented in this report and the record provided to Board members to determine if the approval of the MSE amended application is in the best interests of the students, school district, or community.<sup>1</sup>

**STANDARD OF REVIEW**

Pursuant to T.C.A. § 49-13-108 and State Board policy 2.500, State Board staff and an independent charter application review committee conducted a de novo, on the record review of the MSE amended application. In accordance with the Tennessee Department of Education’s charter application scoring rubric, “applications that do not meet or exceed the standard in all sections (academic plan design and capacity, operations plan and capacity, financial plan and capacity, and, if applicable, past performance) .

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<sup>1</sup> T.C.A. § 49-13-108.

. . will be deemed not ready for approval.”<sup>2</sup> In addition, the State Board is required to hold a public hearing in the district where the proposed charter school seeks to locate.<sup>3</sup>

In order to overturn the decision of the local board of education, the State Board must find that the local board’s decision to deny the amended charter application was contrary to the best interests of the students, LEA, or community.<sup>4</sup> Because MSE is proposing to locate in a school district that contains a school on the current or last preceding priority school list, the State Board has the ability to approve the application, and thereby authorize the school, or to affirm the local board’s decision to deny.

#### **PROCEDURAL HISTORY**

1. The Sponsor of MSE submitted its initial application for a grades 6-12 school to SCS on February 3, 2020. SCS assembled a review committee to review and score the MSE application.
2. SCS’s review committee held a capacity interview with the Sponsor on March 3, 2020.
3. SCS’s review committee reviewed and scored the MSE initial application and recommended to SCS Board of Education that the initial application be denied based on the charter application scoring rubric and SCS Board policy #1011 – Charter Schools. The policy states, “the district shall consider whether the establishment of a proposed charter school in a particular geographic location of the LEA is feasible or will create oversaturation in the proposed geographic location.”
4. On April 28, 2020, the SCS Board of Education held a public hearing and voted to deny the MSE initial application.
5. On May 28, 2020, the Sponsor submitted the MSE amended application to SCS.
6. SCS’s review committee reviewed and scored the MSE amended application and again recommended denial based on the charter application scoring rubric and SCS Board policy #1011.
7. On July 28, 2020, based on the SCS review committee recommendation and SCS Board policy #1011, the SCS Board of Education voted to deny the MSE amended application.
8. The Sponsor appealed the denial of the MSE amended application in writing to the State Board on August 6, 2020, including submission of all required documents per State Board policy 2.500.
9. At the time of appeal to the State Board, the Sponsor did not submit proposed corrections to the application as allowed under T.C.A. § 49-13-108(b)(4).
10. On August 10, 2020, the State Board staff sent a request for information to SCS.

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<sup>2</sup> Tennessee Charter School Application Evaluation Rubric – Ratings and Sample Scoring Criteria, pg. 1.

<sup>3</sup> T.C.A. § 49-13-108. Due to the public health emergency, the public hearing was held virtually.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

11. The State Board’s review committee independently analyzed and scored the MSE amended application using the Tennessee Department of Education’s charter application scoring rubric.
12. On September 2, 2020, the State Board staff held a virtual public hearing. At the public hearing, the Executive Director, sitting as the State Board’s designee, heard presentations from MSE and SCS and took public comment regarding the MSE application.
13. On September 3, 2020, the State Board staff sent a second request for information to SCS and the Sponsor.
14. The State Board’s review committee conducted a capacity interview with the governing board of MSE and key members of the leadership team on September 4, 2020. Due to the COVID-19 public health emergency, the capacity interview was held virtually.
15. After the capacity interview, the State Board’s review committee determined a final consensus rating of the MSE amended application, which served as the basis for the Review Committee Recommendation Report, attached hereto as **Exhibit A**.

**FINDINGS OF FACT**

- **District Denial of Application.**

The review committee assembled by SCS to review and score the MSE initial and amended applications consisted of the following individuals:

Name	Title or Area of Expertise
Tamara Lumpkin	Education Director, Sowing Empowerment and Economic Development
Tom Benton	Vision Preparatory Charter School
Dr. David Wilkins	Mental Health (SCS)
LaTonya Goodman	Finance (SCS)
Rhonda Hill, Ed.D.	Student Support (SCS)
Ivory Stewart	Exceptional Children (SCS)
Tonye Smith McBride	Highly Specialized Advisor, Strategy and Performance Management (SCS)
Arlanda Parker	RTI (SCS)
Norie Cotton	Curriculum & Instruction (SCS)
Sean Isham	Operations (SCS)
Toya Riddick	Human Resources (SCS)
Meghan Strandell	Professional Development (SCS)
Magda Sakaan	English Language Learners (SCS)
Brittany Monda	Assistant Superintendent, Office of Charter Schools (SCS)

The MSE initial application received the following ratings from the SCS review committee:

Sections	Rating
Academic Plan Design and Capacity	PARTIALLY MEETS STANDARD
Operations Plan and Capacity	PARTIALLY MEETS STANDARD
Financial Plan and Capacity	MEETS STANDARD
Portfolio Review/Performance Record	PARTIALLY MEETS STANDARD

In totality, the SCS review committee recommended denial of the MSE initial application. The SCS review committee’s recommendation was presented to the SCS Board of Education on April 28, 2020. Based on the review committee’s recommendation and SCS Board policy #1011, the SCS Board of Education voted to deny the initial application of MSE.

Upon resubmission, the MSE amended application received the following ratings from the SCS review committee:

Sections	Rating
Academic Plan Design and Capacity	PARTIALLY MEETS STANDARD
Operations Plan and Capacity	MEETS STANDARD
Financial Plan and Capacity	MEETS STANDARD
Portfolio Review/Performance Record	PARTIALLY MEETS STANDARD

Again, in totality, the SCS review committee recommended denial of the MSE amended application.<sup>5</sup>

After the SCS review committee completed its review and scoring of the amended application, its recommendation was presented to the SCS Board of Education on July 28, 2020. Based on this recommendation and SCS Board policy #1011, the SCS Board of Education voted to deny the amended application of MSE.

- **State Board Charter Application Review Committee’s Evaluation of the Application**

Following the denial of the MSE amended application and subsequent appeal to the State Board, State Board staff assembled a diverse review committee of internal and external experts to independently evaluate and score the MSE amended application. This review committee consisted of the following individuals:

Name	Title
Leigh Cummins	Independent Education Consultant
Cheryl Green	Owner and Founder, Coplexity
Mark Modrcin	Director of Authorizing, State Public Charter School Authority of Nevada
Jason Roach	Principal, Rogersville Middle School

<sup>5</sup> Please see **Exhibit B** for a copy of the final SCS review committee rubric.

Name	Title
Tess Stovall	Director of Charter Schools, State Board of Education

The State Board review committee conducted an initial review and scoring of the MSE amended application, a capacity interview with the Sponsor, and a final evaluation and scoring of the amended application resulting in a consensus rating for each major section. The State Board review committee’s consensus rating of the MSE amended application was as follows:

Sections	Rating
Academic Plan Design and Capacity	PARTIALLY MEETS STANDARD
Operations Plan and Capacity	PARTIALLY MEETS STANDARD
Financial Plan and Capacity	MEETS OR EXCEEDS STANDARD
Portfolio Review and Performance Record	PARTIALLY MEETS STANDARD

The State Board review committee recommended denial of the application for MSE because although the Sponsor is an established operator in Memphis, the Sponsor failed to establish compelling evidence demonstrating both a need in the proposed community for a middle school and strong performance management with clear academic goals. Furthermore, the review committee did not find evidence of strong oversight and governance by the governing board or the capacity to open a second school in the Cordova area. Finally, the review committee did not find evidence of compelling academic performance data that merits replication of the Sponsor’s middle school model.

Specifically, the review committee found the MSE academic plan partially meets standard because while it presented a strong plan for a STEM-infused curriculum that is used across three existing schools, MSE did not present clear evidence of a demonstrated need in the intended community of Cordova specifically for a middle school, and evidence provided in the application states that the current middle schools in the area are under-enrolled. Secondly, the Sponsor’s current middle school’s proficiency rates in English Language Arts are below the existing middle schools in Cordova which does not demonstrate evidence that the school would provide a higher quality option in the area based on the current academic plan. Finally, there was misalignment between the stated academic goals and the performance levels of the Sponsor’s network of current schools, and therefore, the review committee did not find evidence of a strong performance management process within the network.

The review committee also found that MSE’s operations plan partially meets standard due to concerns about the Sponsor’s governing board, its operational oversight of the network, and the network’s capacity to open a second school in the Cordova area. While many members of the governing board have served on the board for many years, the network is currently experiencing rapid growth having recently opened its third school in the 2020-21 school year, and the application lacked compelling evidence of strong oversight and governance of the network’s schools. Moreover, given the recent opening of the network’s third school, there was not compelling evidence presented that the network could open a fourth school in less than a year without any detrimental effects to its current portfolio.

However, the review committee did note that the network has successfully opened its third school during the COVID-19 pandemic and has increased its network leadership capacity over the last year.

While the review committee recommended denial of the application, the financial plan presented in the MSE application was strong. The network has a strong and sustained history of financial health and the proposed school and network budgets were reasonable and detailed. The network also has a strong cash balance and contingency plans to weather the uncertainty of the unfolding pandemic. Moreover, the review committee shared evidence of additional grants the operator has received since the writing of the application.

Finally, the review committee found that the Sponsor's performance record partially meets the standard because, while there is a clear track record of success at the high school level, there was a lack of evidence that MSE will provide a high-quality school option based on the academic data available for the network's current middle school, and there was a lack of evidence to evaluate any program improvements by the network because of the lack of state assessment data from 2019-2020. Additionally, the network's most recent audit indicates two material weaknesses in the network's financial oversight and internal controls.

For additional information regarding the review committee's evaluation of the MSE amended application, please see **Exhibit A** for the complete Review Committee Report, which is fully incorporated herein by reference.

- **Public Hearing**

Pursuant to statute<sup>6</sup> and State Board policy 2.500, a public hearing was held virtually on September 2, 2020. SCS's presentation at the public hearing focused on the deficiencies found by the SCS review committee in the academic and past performance sections of the MSE amended application. Specifically, SCS outlined concerns with the academic plan, stating that the application did not adequately describe how the school would provide an option that is different from the schools currently operating in the proposed neighborhood, or how at-risk student groups would successfully participate in the science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) program offered by the school. Additionally, SCS argued that the school was unable to meet the standard for approval in the past performance section of the application because MSE failed to support its claims of consistent success at its current network schools with quantitative data. SCS also found that the school relied heavily on the SCS school performance framework (SPF), but did not provide data demonstrating that their schools were high-performing in terms of proficiency and growth when compared to state and national averages. In response to questions regarding the SCS neighborhood analysis, SCS noted that while there is a need in the Cordova area for 85 high school seats, the middle school grade band is severely over-enrolled, with 1,795 empty middle school seats. SCS noted that the need for seats at the high school level did not justify adding even more middle school seats to an already over-saturated area.

In response to SCS, the Sponsor highlighted its track record of operating schools in Memphis since 2010, noting that its high school has between 100% and 98% graduation rate, above state and district

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<sup>6</sup> T.C.A. § 49-13-108(b)(4).

averages. The Sponsor also highlighted academic data from its network schools, stating that its current school serving grades 6 through 12 received a score of four (4) out of five (5) on the SCS SPF; that it is in the top 15% of SCS schools on the SPF; its schools have earned a TVAAS level four (4) or five (5) in seven (7) of the past nine (9) years; and that its schools have not earned less than a level three (3) TVAAS score since opening. The Sponsor argued it is not appropriate to compare its schools to the state or nation, but pointed out that its ACT scores are higher than the average ACT score at Cordova High School. With regard to recent challenges with the network's middle school math scores, the Sponsor stated that it has implemented a number of strategies to improve middle school math performance. The Sponsor also noted that with the addition of its new elementary school this year, it anticipates students will come into the proposed middle school with more time in the network, and middle school math scores will improve as a result. The Sponsor also highlighted improvements it has made to staffing for special education and English learner students. Finally, the Sponsor noted that the Cordova area is experiencing economic growth, that they just successfully opened an elementary school in Cordova, and that they believe they can open grades 6-9 in Year 1 successfully by drawing students from Cordova public schools as well as private schools in the area. When questioned about the current MSE middle school proficiency data being below the Cordova middle schools and SCS averages, MSE responded that while their board considered this data when discussing expansion, they felt the data was very close and that, based on their ten-year history in SCS, they were confident they would be able to address any deficiencies.

A portion of the public hearing was dedicated to taking public comment, and no comments were submitted to be read at the public hearing. The State Board also provided a window for members of the public to submit written comments. The State Board received fifty-eight (58) comments in support of the school.

- **Alignment of Shelby County Schools' Application Process to State Board Quality Authorizing Standards**

State Board staff collected and analyzed detailed information regarding SCS's application review process to determine alignment with State Board Quality Authorizing Standards as set forth in State Board policy 6.111. At the public hearing, SCS presented information regarding its application process and alignment to the Quality Authorizing Standards. SCS articulated that its application process is fair, transparent, and focused on quality with rigorous criteria for approval. SCS stated that they recruit and train internal and external experts to participate in the review committee, and host a capacity interview with the applicant to ensure a fair review. Based on the information presented by SCS, the district's process appears in alignment with State Board Quality Authorizing Standards.

### **ANALYSIS**

State law requires the State Board to review the decision of the local board of education and determine whether the denial of the proposed charter school was contrary to the "best interests of the students, LEA, or community."<sup>7</sup> In addition, pursuant to T.C.A. § 49-13-108, the State Board adopted Quality Charter Authorizing Standards set forth in State Board policy 6.111 and utilizes these standards to

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<sup>7</sup> T.C.A. § 49-13-108.

review charter applications received upon appeal. One such standard is to maintain high but attainable standards for approving charter applications. In making my recommendation to the Board, I have considered the State Board Review Committee Recommendation Report, the documentation submitted by both MSE and SCS, the arguments made by both parties at the public hearing, and the public comments received by State Board staff and conclude as follows:

Given the great responsibility of educating students and the amount of public funds entrusted to a charter school that is approved by a local district, it has been the practice of the State Board that only those schools that have clearly demonstrated a high likelihood of success and meet or exceed the required criteria in all areas will be authorized. However, when analyzing the best interests of the students, the school district, and the community, there are sometimes significant factors outside of the Review Committee Report that are important to consider. In this appeal, the Sponsor is an existing operator within SCS which has a track record of success, particularly at the high school level. The Sponsor provided data within the application and in the public hearing that it has increased the average ACT rate at the high school from 13.8 in 2014 to 18.6 in 2019, which is above the SCS ACT average. The high school has a very high graduation rate, and the network provided data to show that 89% of the high school's graduating class in 2019 matriculated to a post-secondary institution. Moreover, the Sponsor consistently performs well on the SCS SPF, ranking in the top 15% of schools within SCS. There is ample evidence available that the Sponsor's academic plan at the high school level is strong and has a high likelihood of success, if replicated. I do agree, however, with concerns identified by the review committee regarding the Sponsor's middle school academic plan, particularly in math. While I acknowledge that the lack of additional state assessment data due to the current health crisis is of no fault to the Sponsor, the review committee and I are not able to analyze the impact of the network's math curriculum and support staff adjustments over the past year.

I do agree with the review committee regarding the lack of demonstrated need within the Cordova community for a middle school option. However, there is evidence of a need at the high school level. The Sponsor's current high school performed higher than the current high school in Cordova on TNReady on three (3) of four (4) end-of-course exams, and the Sponsor's current high school's average ACT score is higher than Cordova High School. Additionally, SCS neighborhood analysis data states that Cordova High School is currently over capacity, and that the area specifically needs 2,187 more quality seats at the high school level. In fact, the vast majority of public comments received in support of the proposed school specifically speak to the need of an additional high school in the Cordova community. It is important for the State Board to weigh these considerations around the lack of need within the Cordova community for a new middle school with the demonstrated need for a new high school, as the proposed school will cover both grade bands.

From an operations standpoint, the concerns raised by the review committee are valid and worthy of consideration by the State Board when making its decision. This is a network that has expanded rapidly, and, if authorized, it will take a substantial effort by the governing board and the network staff to ensure the proposed school opens successfully but not to the detriment of the network's existing schools. While the network has increased its leadership capacity over the past few months, there is too little data at this

time to analyze the operational effectiveness of these changes. I do, however, commend the network for successfully opening its third school this school year in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Lastly, I also recognize that the current pandemic has created even more urgency around families' access to quality options for their children and the need for students to attend a school with a strong school community, caring adults, and is nimble to adjust to the ever-changing educational landscape. As such, I am neutral with regard to whether or not the approval of the MSE application is in the best interests of the students, LEA, or community.

### CONCLUSION

For these reasons, and for the reasons stated in the Review Committee Report attached hereto as **Exhibit A**, I am neutral with regard to whether or not the approval of the Memphis School of Excellence – Cordova application is in the best interests of the students, LEA, or community. Therefore, I encourage the State Board to weigh the information presented in this report and the record provided to Board members to determine if the approval of the MSE amended application is in the best interests of the students, school district, or community.



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Dr. Sara Morrison, Executive Director  
State Board of Education

9/16/2020

Date



EXHIBIT A

**Charter Application Review Committee Recommendation Report**

**September 14, 2020**

School Name: Memphis School of Excellence Cordova

Sponsor: Read Foundation

Proposed Location of School: Shelby County Schools

Evaluation Team:

Leigh Cummins

Cheryl Green

Mark Modrcin

Jason Roach

Tess Stovall

This recommendation report is based on a template from the National Association of Charter School Authorizers.



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## Introduction

Tennessee Code Annotated (T.C.A.) § 49-13-108 allows the sponsor of a public charter school to appeal the denial of an application by the local board of education to the State Board of Education. In accordance with T.C.A. § 49-13-108, the State Board of Education shall conduct a de novo, on the record review of the proposed charter school's application, and the State Board of Education has adopted national and state authorizing standards. As laid out in State Board policy 6.200 - Core Authorizing Principles, the State Board is committed to implementing these authorizing standards that are aligned with the core principles of charter school authorizing, including setting high standards for the approval of charter schools in its portfolio.

In accordance with T.C.A. § 49-13-108, the State Board adopted State Board policy 6.111 - Quality Charter Authorizing Standards. The State Board has aligned the charter school appeal process to these high standards to ensure the well-being and interests of students are the fundamental value informing all State Board actions and decisions. The State Board publishes clear timelines and expectations for applicants, engages highly competent teams of internal and external evaluators to review all applications, and maintains rigorous criteria for approval of a charter school. Annually, the State Board evaluates its work to ensure its alignment to national and state standards for quality authorizing and implements improvement when necessary.

The State Board of Education's charter application review process is outlined in T.C.A. § 49-13-108, State Board policy 2.500 – Charter School Appeals, and State Board policy 6.300 – Application Review. The State Board assembled a charter application review committee comprised of highly qualified internal and external evaluators with relevant and diverse expertise to evaluate each application. The State Board provided training to all review committee members to ensure consistent standards and fair treatment of all applications.

## Overview of the Evaluation Process

The State Board of Education's charter application review committee developed this recommendation report based on three key stages of review:

1. **Evaluation of the Proposal:** The review committee independently reviewed the amended charter application, attachments, and budget submitted by the sponsor. After an independent review, the review committee collectively identified the main strengths, concerns, and weaknesses as well as developed specific questions for the applicant in the four sections of the application: Academic Plan Design and Capacity, Operations Plan and Capacity, Financial Plan and Capacity, and Portfolio Review and Performance Record.
2. **Capacity Interview:** Based on the independent and collective review of the application, the review committee conducted a 90-minute in-person interview with the sponsor, members of the proposed governing board, and identified school leader (if applicable) to address the concerns, weaknesses, and questions identified in the application, and to assess the capacity to execute the application's overall plan.

3. Consensus Judgment: At the conclusion of the review of the application and the capacity interview, the committee submitted a final rubric and developed a consensus regarding a rating for each section of the application.

This recommendation report includes the following information:

1. Summary of the application: A brief description of the applicant’s proposed academic, operations, financial plans, and performance record.
2. Summary of the recommendation: A brief summary of the overall recommendation for the application.
3. Analysis of each section of the application: An analysis of the four sections of the application and the capacity of the team to execute the plan as described in the application.
  - a. Academic Plan Design and Capacity: enrollment summary; community involvement and parent engagement; existing academic plan; and performance management.
  - b. Operations Plan and Capacity: network vision and growth plan; network management; network governance; and network personnel/human capital.
  - c. Financial Plan and Capacity: budget narrative; budgets of network and school; cash flow projections; related assumptions; financial policies and procedures; and the capacity to implement the proposed plan.
  - d. Portfolio Review and Performance Record: evidence of successful student outcomes in network; evidence that schools within network are high-performing; detailed narrative of high-performing and low-performing schools; latest audit presented without findings; and organization in good standing with authorizers.

The State Board’s charter application review committee utilized the Tennessee Department of Education’s Charter School Application Evaluation Ratings and Sample Scoring Criteria (the rubric), which is used by all local boards of education when evaluating an application. The rubric states:

An application that merits a recommendation for approval should present a clear, realistic picture of how the school expects to operate; be detailed in how this school will raise student achievement; and inspire confidence in the applicant’s capacity to successfully implement the proposed academic and operational plans. In addition to meeting the criteria that are specific to that section, each part of the proposal should align with the overall mission, budget, and goals of the application.

The evaluators used the following criteria and guidance from the scoring rubric to rate applications:

Rating	Characteristics
Meets or Exceeds Standard	The response reflects a thorough understanding of key issues. It clearly aligns with the mission and goals of the school. The

	response includes specific and accurate information that shows thorough preparation.
Partially Meets Standard	The response meets the criteria in some aspects, but lacks sufficient detail and/or requires additional information in one or more areas.
Does Not Meet Standard	The response is significantly incomplete; demonstrates lack of preparation; is unsuited to the mission and vision of the district; or otherwise raises significant concerns about the viability of the plan or the applicant's ability to carry it out.



## Summary of the Application

School Name: Memphis School of Excellence Cordova

Sponsor: Read Foundation

Proposed Location of School: Shelby County Schools

Mission:<sup>1</sup> The mission of Memphis School of Excellence is to provide a safe and collaborative environment which will cultivate the academic and social development of its students by emphasizing math, science, and technology for the purpose of students setting and meeting higher education goals.

Number of Schools Currently in Operation by Sponsor:

Memphis: Three (3)—Memphis School of Excellence Elementary School Hickory Hill, Memphis School of Excellence Middle and High Hickory Hill, and Memphis School of Excellence Elementary Cordova

Proposed Enrollment:<sup>2</sup>

Grade Level	Year 1 (2021)	Year 2 (2022)	Year 3 (2023)	Year 4 (2024)	Year 5 (2025)
6	75	75	75	75	75
7	50	75	75	75	75
8	50	50	75	75	75
9	50	50	50	75	75
10	0	50	50	50	75
11	0	0	50	50	50
12	0	0	0	50	50
<b>Total</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>375</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>475</b>

Brief Description of the Application:

The sponsor, Read Foundation, is proposing to open a middle/high school in Memphis, Tennessee and serve students in 6<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grades. The school, Memphis School of Excellence Cordova (MSE Cordova), is a new-start school and would be the fourth school for the sponsor. The school intends to operate in the Cordova community of Memphis to provide a high quality middle and high school option for the area, and the proposed school would replicate the academic plan and structure of the sponsor’s current middle and high school in Hickory Hill.<sup>3</sup> The academic plan focuses on an “enriched curriculum, technology integration, standardized and authentic assessment, robust support staff, robust support for instructional staff, and parental involvement.”<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Memphis School of Excellence – Cordova Amended Application, pg. 507

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. pg. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.



The proposed school will be organized under the existing charter management organization, Memphis School of Excellence (MSE), and the current Board of Directors will govern the new school. MSE has budgeted \$0 in revenue and projects \$175,796 in expenses for the school in Year 0, with a plan to cover expenses incurred in Year 0 with a \$1,700,000 network cash balance as well as pursue other philanthropic grants. MSE projects the school will have \$2,355,392 in revenue and \$2,354,087 in expenses in Year 1 resulting in a net income of \$1,306. By Year 5, the school projects to have \$5,346,874 in revenue and \$4,290,329 in expenses, resulting in a net income of \$1,056,545.<sup>5</sup> The school anticipates that 35% of the student population will qualify as economically disadvantaged, 12% of the student population will be students with disabilities, and 7% of the student population will be English Learners.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid. Attachment O: Planning and Budget Worksheet.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. pg. 2.

## Summary of the Evaluation

The review committee recommends denial of the application for MSE Cordova because the applicant failed to establish clear and compelling evidence of demonstrated need in the proposed community or strong performance management with clear academic goals. Furthermore, the review committee did not find evidence of strong oversight and governance by the governing board or the capacity to open a second school in the Cordova area. Finally, the review committee did not find evidence of compelling academic performance data that merits replication of the network's middle and high school model.

Specifically, the applicant's academic plan partially meets standard because the review committee did not find clear evidence of a demonstrated need in the intended community of Cordova, and evidence provided by the applicant in the application states that the current middle schools in the area are under-enrolled. Secondly, the Sponsor's current middle school's proficiency rates in English Language Arts are below the existing middle schools in Cordova which does not demonstrate evidence that the school would provide a higher quality option in the area based on the current academic plan. Finally, there was misalignment between the network's stated academic goals and the performance levels of the network's current schools, and therefore, the review committee did not find evidence of a strong performance management process within the network.

The applicant's operations plan partially meets standard due to concerns about the network's governing board and its operational oversight of the network and the network's capacity to open a second school in the Cordova area. The network is currently experiencing rapid growth having opened its third school in the 2020-2021 school year, and this proposed school would be the fourth school for the network. However, the governing board did not provide compelling evidence of strong oversight and governance of the network's schools. Moreover, given the recent opening of the network's third school, there was not compelling evidence presented that the network could open a fourth school in less than a year without any detrimental effects to its current portfolio.

While the review committee recommends denial of the application, the financial plan was a strength of the application. The network has a strong and sustained history of financial health and the proposed school and network budgets were reasonable and detailed. The network also has a strong cash balance and contingency plans to weather the uncertainty of the unfolding pandemic.

The applicant's performance record partially meets the standard because of a lack of evidence that the operator's school meets the performance standard for a high quality school option based on the academic data available for the current middle school. Additionally, the network's most recent audit indicates two material weaknesses in the network's financial oversight and internal controls.

### Summary of Section Ratings

In accordance with the Tennessee Department of Education's charter application scoring rubric, "applications that do not meet or exceed the standard in all sections...will be deemed not ready for approval,"<sup>7</sup> and strengths in one area of the application do not negate material weaknesses in other areas. Opening and maintaining a successful, high-performing charter school depends on having a complete,

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<sup>7</sup> Tennessee Charter School Application Rubric – Evaluation Ratings and Sample Scoring Criteria, pg. 1.



coherent plan and identifying highly capable individuals to execute that plan. The review committee's consensus ratings for each section of the application are as follows:

<b>Sections</b>	<b>Rating</b>
Academic Plan Design and Capacity	Partially Meets Standard
Operations Plan and Capacity	Partially Meets Standard
Financial Plan and Capacity	Meets or Exceeds Standard
Portfolio Review and Performance Record	Partially Meets Standard

## **Analysis of the Academic Plan Design and Capacity**

*Rating: Partially Meets Standard*

### **Weaknesses Identified by the Committee:**

The applicant's Academic Plan Design and Capacity partially meets standard because the review committee did not find clear evidence of a demonstrated need in the intended community, that the school would provide a higher quality option in the area based on the current academic plan, or a strong performance management plan for the network.

The applicant intends to open MSE Cordova in the Cordova neighborhood of Memphis. While the applicant provided a clear description of the intended community, the application lacked evidence of student enrollment patterns that would result in the school meeting its proposed enrollment targets. Specifically, the sponsor states in the application that while the current middle schools in the Cordova area are at 68% capacity, the applicant can open in the 2021-22 school year serving grades 6<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup>. Additionally, while the applicant stated that the school would pull students from optional schools and private schools in the area, there was a lack of evidence that parent demand from these populations would bolster the projected student enrollment populations. Moreover, the applicant provided academic data for its current middle school's performance in English Language Arts as compared to the performance of the existing Cordova middle schools. In reviewing this data, the review committee found that the applicant's current middle school's proficiency rates are below the existing middle schools in Cordova. This fact, coupled with under-enrollment of the middle schools in Cordova, does not demonstrate that parents would necessarily opt-into the proposed academic model. The review committee acknowledges that the sponsor will begin to build out a strong community presence and brand awareness with the opening of its elementary school in the 2020-2021 school year, and, if it builds a track record of academic success in the community, more compelling student enrollment trends may indicate a need for the middle and high school. However, given that the elementary school recently opened, there is a lack of conclusive evidence of the impact of the school's opening. In totality, while the applicant stated there is a desire within the Cordova community for a school option in the middle school and high school grade bands, the review committee did not find specific evidence of a clear and compelling need or enrollment trends that support this assertion.

The applicant lacked a clear performance management plan as it relates to its network-set goals. The review committee found evidence that the network's schools are regularly not meeting the network's own academic proficiency goals, and there was a lack of clarity around the network's use of the academic goals. Specifically, the network names in the application that one of its annual goals is that the "proficiency rates at each grade level and subject will exceed the district average by at least 10 percentage points each academic year. This will be an annual goal for the school."<sup>8</sup> A review of the network's 2018-19 TN Ready data reveals at least nine (9) grades and subjects where the network did not meet this goal. When asked about the development of the goal in the capacity interview, the applicant team stated that they set this goal so that the schools can be seen as a high quality option for parents. However, there was no additional information provided in the application or in the capacity interview on whether failing to meet the goal resulted in the network placing any schools on a corrective action plan or whether the network has considered modifying the goal. The review committee acknowledges that performing ten (10) percentage

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid. pg. 70.

points higher than the district average is a lofty goal, but the application mentions this specific goal multiple times, including in areas of the application covering the placement of a school on a corrective plan or a reason the network would delay or modify growth plans. This lack of alignment across the network's performance management does not provide the review committee evidence of a compelling plan for goal setting and adjustments based on those goals.

**Strengths Identified by the Committee:**

Although the review committee rated the academic plan section as partially meeting standard, the review committee found evidence of strengths in this section. The applicant's proposed parent involvement and outreach plan after approval of the application is robust and thoughtful and provides multiple avenues for parents to be engaged in the school. Additionally, based on information provided in the capacity interview, the network successfully opened its elementary school in the Cordova area for the 2020-21 school year, which is commended given the COVID-19 pandemic. Lastly, the applicant provided detailed information about the network's pursuit of the Tennessee Department of Education's STEM designation. While this process is ongoing, the review committee found evidence that the applicant understands the rigorous application process it will engage in during the 2020-2021 school year for this designation.

## **Analysis of the Operations Plan and Capacity**

*Rating: Partially Meets Standard*

### **Weaknesses Identified by the Committee:**

The applicant's Operations Plan and Capacity partially meets standard due to concerns about the network's governing board and its operational oversight of the network and the network's capacity to open a second school in the Cordova area.

The applicant has a governing board made up of six (6) members, many of whom have served on the governing board for several years. According to the rubric, the applicant shall provide a description of the governing board "with a rationale of how the current/proposed governance structure and composition will ensure the desired outcomes of a network of highly effective schools." Within the application, the applicant did not provide a compelling description of how the current membership of the governing board covered the necessary expertise and experience to provide effective oversight of the network. During the capacity interview, when asked to expand on the expertise of the governing board, the board members did not thoroughly articulate the strengths of the current governing board, identify any weaknesses that they want to fill on the governing board, or give a compelling answer to how the governing board provides oversight of the network. In particular, in the capacity interview, it was stated by one of the governing board members that the governing board does not have to do much because they are a high performing network. However, as noted in the academic section, there are network-specific academic goals that the schools are not meeting, including a specific academic goal that is noted as a reason the network would decide to delay expansion. When asked in the capacity interview about how the governing board reflected on the network not meeting the goal as it relates to continued expansion, the governing board member stated that expansion has been on the table for several years, but did not specifically address this academic underperformance. Additionally, the network failed to achieve one of its financial goals of no material findings in the audit. When asked during the capacity interview about the audit findings, there was inconclusive evidence that the governing board members were aware of the findings or had been presented with a corrective action plan by the network to fix the audit findings. Therefore, although the governing board members stated that they meet regularly, above the minimum stated in the board's bylaws, there is a lack of clear evidence of strategic oversight and management of the network at the governing board level, and this lack of evidence is particularly concerning during a time of rapid growth for the network.

Moreover, there was a lack of evidence of the network's capacity to open a second school in the Cordova area, which is a brand new area of Memphis for the network. As noted in the academic plan, while the network has secured a facility in the Cordova area, the information presented in the application stated that the middle schools in the area are significantly under-enrolled, and therefore, it will take a significant and intensive effort by the network to meet these recruitment goals. This effort would be conducted at the same time that the network's third campus, the elementary school in Cordova, is in its first year of operations. While the review committee understands that the application for the proposed school was written prior to the opening of the elementary school, the applicant could not fully articulate any challenges or lessons learned from expanding the network in the application, and since it is still extremely early in the first year of operations of the elementary school, many challenges or obstacles may be yet to be seen. The 2020-2021 school year, as its first year in operation, is a critical year for success at the Cordova elementary school, particularly during a pandemic. Although the review committee

appreciated the information provided by the applicant in the capacity interview on how it has expanded its network staff leadership over the summer, the review committee did not find strong, compelling evidence that the network was ready to open a fourth school in the next year.

**Strengths Identified by the Committee**

While the review committee rated the operations plan as partially meeting standard, the committee identified strengths within the section. The applicant has secured a facility in the Cordova area, and the network is currently operating its elementary school in the facility. The network has grown its leadership over the past year to provide the schools with additional support in special populations, specifically in serving English Learners and Students with Disabilities. Lastly, the applicant shared in the capacity interview that they were able to successfully open the elementary school in Cordova through the COVID-19 pandemic, which is commendable.

## **Analysis of the Financial Plan and Capacity**

*Rating: Meets or Exceeds Standard*

### **Strengths Identified by the Committee:**

The applicant's Financial Plan and Capacity meets or exceeds standard because of their reasonable and realistic operating budgets and the network's strong history of sustained financial health and contingency planning.

As presented in the application, the budget contains reasonable assumptions and budget numbers that reflect all operating costs, including staffing, contracting, and insurance. The applicant provided evidence of a clear plan for covering costs incurred during Year 0 with the \$1.7 million network fund balance. Additionally, the applicant included detailed financial procedures for the school and the network with a budget narrative that clearly aligned with the budget worksheet. The school's per-pupil funding projections were reasonable, and the school plans to operate with a positive net income beginning in Year 1. The applicant has a significant understanding of school funding cycles and the availability of additional grants. During the capacity interview, the network spoke to the additional grants that the network had received over the past few months because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

MSE is an experienced operator in strong financial health, operating three (3) schools with a positive cash flow. The network has more than \$1.7 million in cash available to offset any revenue shortfall during the pre-opening or the first two (2) years of operation of its proposed school. Additionally, the applicant provided a complete, realistic, and viable budget for the network with reasonable and conservative cost assumptions, which were not reliant on grant and fundraising sources.

During the capacity interview, the applicant spoke about how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the network's budget and how the current cash balance and increasing enrollment of the network puts it in a strong financial position to weather the uncertainty of revenue collections. Additionally, the applicant stated that, while the network currently does not have a line of credit, one is available from their bank should they need one. In totality, the review committee found evidence that the financial plan meets or exceeds the standard.

## **Analysis of the Portfolio Review and Performance Record**

*Rating: Partially Meets Standard*

### **Weaknesses Identified by the Committee:**

The applicant's Portfolio Review and Performance Record partially meets standard because of a lack of evidence that the operator's schools meet the performance standard for a high quality option worthy of replication as well as findings in the most recent network audit.

As noted in the academic plan, the review committee did not find evidence that the network's current academic model demonstrates clear academic success against state and national standards such that the operator is ready to expand and replicate its model. The applicant's middle school math scores are noted by the applicant and the review committee as an area in need of improvement. In the latest TN Ready data available, 2018-19, MSE Hickory Hill showed a proficiency rate of 20.6% for grades 6 through 8 while Shelby County showed a proficiency rate of 27.2%. Additionally, the applicant noted that the proficiency rate in middle school math went from 23.2% in 2016-17 to 20.6% in 2018-19. During the capacity interview, the applicant did provide information about how they had adjusted their curriculum and interventions to better support students in middle school math; however without additional TN Ready proficiency data available, the review committee was unable to determine if these adjustments have been successful in increasing student academic achievement. Moreover, the applicant did not provide any further data from internal assessments that it administers, such as NWEA MAP, to provide the review committee with any other evidence to consider regarding math progress. While the review committee acknowledges that the cancellation of the TN Ready assessment in 2019-2020 was out of the control of the school and network, the review committee lacks the evidence to ascertain that the network has made adjustments to its academic plan in middle school math such that will result in high academic performance for the proposed school.

Moreover, a requirement of the rubric in the portfolio review section is that the latest audit shows no findings. In the fiscal year 2019 audit included in the application, the auditor noted two (2) material weaknesses for the network: 1) effective internal controls over financial reporting and 2) misstatements in monthly and year-end financial statements. During the capacity interview, the applicant explained that the issues arose from federal grant reimbursement that came into the network after the end of the fiscal year, and the network stated that these issues were "common." While the review committee acknowledges that payments coming in after the end of the fiscal year are common, particularly with reimbursement grants, it is not common to see material weaknesses of this nature noted in an audit. As discussed in the operations section, the review committee also noted concern that the governing board members participating in the capacity interview did not appear to be aware of these findings or the steps the network took to correct the issue moving into the next fiscal year.

The charter school application rubric states that charter schools must provide clear and compelling evidence of successful student outcomes for each school in the network and evidence that the operator's schools are high performing and successful by meeting state standards. Additionally, the applicant must demonstrate it has a strong operational and financial record to sustain replication. Given the evidence of underperformance of the network's current operating schools in middle school math and the findings noted in the network's audit, the applicant does not yet have adequate evidence that its performance record is ready to be replicated.



**Strengths Identified by the Committee:**

While the review committee rated the portfolio section partially meets the standard, the review committee noted some strengths. The network has increased its average ACT rate over the last five (5) years from 13.8 in 2014 to 18.6 in 2019, which is above the district average. The principal of the current high school provided a detailed response on how the school continues to get feedback from students after they graduate from high school and how the high school has made adjustments to their academic program based on this feedback. The review committee also commends the school on a strong graduation rate as well as its post-secondary going rates of their students.



## Evaluation Team

**Leigh Cummins** was formerly the Policy and Research Analyst for the Tennessee State Board of Education, supporting both the charter appeals and standards review processes. Prior to the State Board, Leigh worked at the Tennessee Department of Education, supporting the development and implementation of teacher professional development within the Division of Curriculum and Instruction. She also previously served as an AmeriCorps VISTA at the University of Mississippi, coordinating a support program for first-year, at-risk college students. Leigh earned her B.A. at the University of Mississippi and her M.Ed. at Vanderbilt University.

**Cheryl Green** is the owner and founder of Coplexity, a consulting company focused on helping leaders and organizations and people use their collective capacity to solve complex problems. Cheryl has a background in education and has served as a teacher, principal and district leader in multiple school districts. She has served in multiple roles including training school principals and leading leadership effectiveness work with legacy Memphis City Schools and serving as the Senior Consultant/Managing Director with Insight Education Group. Since 2015, Cheryl has been helping organizations with program planning and implementation, meeting and session facilitation and organizational development. Cheryl has a BS in Secondary Education from Alabama A&M University, a M.Ed. from Delta State University and is certified in the field of Human Systems Dynamics.

**Mark Modrcin** currently serves as the Director of Authorizing for the State Public Charter School Authority of Nevada, helping oversee the performance of nearly 40 charter school operators statewide that serve over 50,000 students. Mark has also worked as a district authorizer in Tulsa, Oklahoma, overseeing a much smaller portfolio while also focusing on the development of a Charter Collaboration Compact, which aimed to develop synergies between the district and the sponsored public charter schools. Mark holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Business from Miami University, a MBA from the University of Tulsa, and is a 2015 alum of the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) Leaders Program.

**Jason Roach** has served as an educator in the state of Tennessee for 10 years. Upon graduating from Carson-Newman College, he worked at Lincoln Heights Middle School in Morristown, Tennessee as a 7th and 8th grade social studies teacher. During the last standards review process for social studies, he served as a Governor Haslam appointee to the Social Studies Standards Recommendation Committee and served as chairman of that committee. He has been a principal for five years and currently serves as the principal of Rogersville Middle School in Rogersville, Tennessee.

**Tess Stovall** serves as the Director of Charter Schools for the Tennessee State Board of Education. In this role, she manages the charter school application process and authorization duties of the State Board, and she was a member of the 2015 National Association of Charter School Authorizer's Leaders Program. Prior to joining the staff of the board, she served as the Transformation Facilitator at Cameron Middle School, the first district-led conversion of a traditional public school to a charter school in Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools. While in Washington, DC, Tess worked for Congressman Jim Cooper (TN-05) and a centrist think tank, Third Way, on economic and education policy. She is a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of The George



Washington University earning a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Political Science and Sociology and a graduate of the London School of Economics with a Master of Science Degree in Political Sociology.

## EXHIBIT B



### TENNESSEE CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION EVALUATION

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#### Ratings and Criteria

State law requires the Tennessee Department of Education to provide “a standard application format,” T.C.A. 49-13-116, and “sample scoring criteria addressing the elements of the charter school application specified in the Tennessee Public Charter Schools Act of 2002,” SBE Rule 0520-14-01-.01(2).

Evaluators will use the following criteria to rate applications. Within each subsection, specific criteria define the expectations for a well thought out response that “Meets the Standard.” Evaluators will rate the responses by applying the following guidance:

Rating	Characteristics
<b>Meets or Exceeds the Standard</b>	The response reflects a thorough understanding of key issues. It clearly aligns with the mission and goals of the school. The response includes specific and accurate information that shows thorough preparation
<b>Partially Meets Standard</b>	The response meets the criteria in some respects but lacks sufficient detail and/or requires additional information in one or more areas.
<b>Does Not Meet Standard</b>	The response is significantly incomplete; demonstrates lack of preparation; is unsuited to the mission and vision of the district or otherwise raises significant concerns about the viability of the plan or the applicant’s ability to carry it out

An application that merits a recommendation for approval should present a clear, realistic picture of how the school expects to operate; be detailed in how this school will raise student achievement; and inspire confidence in the applicant’s capacity to successfully implement the proposed academic and operational plans. In addition to meeting the criteria that are specific to that section, each part of the proposal should align with the overall mission, budget, and goals of the application.

Recommendations for approval or denial will be based on the written application (narrative and attachments), independent due diligence, and, if offered by the authorizer, applicant interviews.

Applications that do not meet or exceed the standard in all sections (academic plan, operations plan, financial plan, and, if applicable, past performance), as evidenced by the summary review ratings, and applications that do not meet or exceed any additional LEA requirements will be deemed not ready for approval. Tennessee law states, “The approval by the chartering authority of a public charter school application shall be in the form of a written agreement signed by the sponsor and the chartering authority, which shall be binding upon the governing body of the public charter school. The charter agreement . . . shall be in writing and contain all components of the application.” T.C.A. § 49-13-110(a). Thus, an initial or amended charter application, to be approved, must be ready to be incorporated into a charter agreement.

APPLICANT TYPE	DESCRIPTION	REQUIRED SECTIONS
New-Start Applicant	Operator with no existing schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academic Plan Design and Capacity: <b>1.1 through 1.12</b></li> <li>• Operations Plan and Capacity: <b>2.1 through 2.10</b></li> <li>• Financial Plan and Capacity: <b>3.1 and 3.2</b></li> </ul>
<p>Existing Tennessee operator proposing new focus/grade structure <b>OR</b> Existing non-Tennessee operator <b>OR</b> Existing ASD operator to a non-ASD authorizer</p>	<p>Operator with existing schools in Tennessee proposing to change their focus and/or grade structure <b>OR</b></p> <p>Operator with existing schools outside of Tennessee <b>OR</b></p> <p>ASD Operator with existing schools in Tennessee proposing to another non -ASD authorizer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academic Plan Design and Capacity: <b>1.1 through 1.14</b></li> <li>• Operations Plan and Capacity: <b>2.1 through 2.16</b></li> <li>• Financial Plan and Capacity: <b>3.1 through 3.3</b></li> <li>• Portfolio Review and Performance Record: <b>4.1</b></li> </ul>
Existing Tennessee Operator Proposing Exact Focus/Grade Structure	Operator with existing schools in Tennessee proposing no change in focus or grade structure to a currently operating school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Submit original application</b></li> <li>• Academic Plan Design and Capacity: <b>1.2, 1.12, 1.13, and 1.14</b></li> <li>• Operations Plan and Capacity: <b>2.11. through 2.16</b></li> <li>• Financial Plan and Capacity: <b>3.4</b></li> <li>• Portfolio Review and Performance Record: <b>4.1</b></li> </ul>

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**Evaluator Name:** Shelby County Schools Evaluation Team

**Proposed School Name:** Memphis School of Excellence Cordova

Application includes an Executive Summary

Yes

No

**Application Review Team:**

<u>Reviewer</u>	<u>Department</u>
Tonye Smith-McBride (Lead)	Strategy & Performance Management
Ivory Stewart	Exceptional Children
David Wilkins	Mental Health
Tamara Lumpkin	Expert Reviewer
Arlandra Parker	RTI
Latonya Goodman	Finance
Norie Cotton	Curriculum & Instruction
Rhonda Hill	Student Support
Sean Isham	Operations
Tom Benton	Charter Leader
Toya Riddick	Human Resources
Meghan Strandell	Professional Development
Magda Sakaan	ELL
Brittany Monda	Charter Schools

**SECTION 1 ACADEMIC PLAN DESIGN AND CAPACITY**

<b>1.1 SCHOOL MISSION AND GOALS</b>		
Characteristics of a strong response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The mission statement defines the purpose of the proposed charter school.</li> <li>▪ The mission statement is clear, concise, compelling and measurable.</li> <li>▪ The vision provides a coherent description of what the school will look like when it is achieving its mission.</li> <li>▪ Goals are aligned to both the mission and vision and critical to the school's success.</li> </ul>		
<b>Initial Application Review</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/> Meets or Exceeds Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet Standard
<b>Strengths</b>		<b>Page</b>
N/A		
<b>Concerns/Questions</b>		<b>Page</b>
N/A		
<b>Final Application Review</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/> Meets or Exceeds Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet Standard
<b>Strengths</b>		<b>Page</b>
N/A		
<b>Concerns/Questions</b>		<b>Page</b>
N/A		

**SECTION 1 ACADEMIC PLAN DESIGN AND CAPACITY**

<b>1.2 ENROLLMENT SUMMARY</b>		
Characteristics of a strong response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A clear description of the community where school intends to draw students including school zones and academic performance of surrounding schools.</li> <li>▪ Rationale for selecting the community where school will locate and description of how the school will serve as a needed alternative.</li> <li>▪ Completed enrollment summary and anticipated demographics charts with reasonable enrollment projections.</li> </ul>		
<u>Initial Application Review</u>		
<input type="checkbox"/> Meets or Exceeds Standard	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Partially Meets Standard</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet Standard
<b>Strengths</b>		<b>Page</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The plan outlines a clear description of the community, surrounding schools, academic performance of those schools and four-point rationale for selecting the community. MSE Cordova used available state report card data to develop demographical information. MSE provided information about the percentage of SWD for each school in the Cordova area. MSE described, to some degree, residential/commercial growth over the last ten years. The plan provides detailed comparative data of both public and private schools.</li> </ul>		pp. 1 -4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rationale discussed-over enrollment of public schools need for high quality seats, expansion of public choice, and the offering of a stem centered program. MSE uses SCS’s own analysis that quality seats are needed in the Cordova area- especially in elementary and high school grade bands. MSE intentionally designed schools to be small to keep class sizes down and provide individualized learning environments.</li> </ul>		pp. 1 -4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summary key design elements of what the school will do more effectively than the schools that are now serving the targeted population are identified in the application (i.e. enriched curriculum, technology integration, standardized and authentic assessment, robust student support staff and support for instructional staff, and parental involvement).</li> </ul>		pp. 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The network’s data in current schools shows a track record of providing a community with a high-quality educational option for students/parents.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• While there is available capacity at middle schools in the area, these options are underperforming.</li> <li>• The high school is underperforming and at capacity. (Average HS building utilization, 104%)</li> <li>• There are only three middle schools and one public high school in the Cordova area.</li> <li>• MSE would be the only 6-12 public school in Cordova, expanding public school choice as referenced.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		pp. 2-5 pp. 5-8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The application includes a mission statement that defines the purpose of the proposed charter school. The mission statement is clear, concise, compelling and measurable.</li> </ul>		pp. 365
<b>Concerns/Questions</b>		<b>Page</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Even though there seems to be a need for an additional high school in the Cordova community, what would the impact be in opening MSE middle/high on the three current middle schools as they are all under capacity? With attrition of elementary students to middle schools, it is projected that the current middle schools will be able to meet the needs of the growth of the community.</li> </ul>		pp. 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The comparison data does not reflect the most current data for all schools and fails to consider the varying academic programs at the different schools in the Cordova community.</li> </ul>		pp. 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Although MSE shares information about potential students who are interested in the campus (i.e. signatures collected), what analysis has been conducted to determine the subgroup (i.e. SWD, ED, ELL) percentages of those expressing interest? And what are the resources needed to support those subgroups effectively? For</li> </ul>		pp. 8

<p>example, the term “less than a tenth” of students would be English Language Learners was used in the application. How did MSE determine this information?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The key design elements identified are similar to what the neighborhood schools serving the targeted population offer and the applicant does not describe how things would be significantly different in their school.</li> <li>• Many STEM activities are described as being part of after school clubs. How is participation eligibility in these activities (robotics club, coding, math counts, American math competition, etc.) determined to ensure equity of access and how are STEM activities integrated into the daily instructional fabric of the school? A similar question was asked during the interview portion, please expound upon this in the application.</li> <li>• The assessment program does not adequately describe how the school will benchmark the students for mastery of state standards?</li> <li>• The school identified a robust student support staff that consists of personnel designed to address the academic needs of student subgroups and at-risk students; however, the application does not provide a detailed picture of how students will be supported.</li> <li>• The applicant failed to describe how the school’s goals, different from the original application, align to both the mission and vision and are critical to the school’s success. Additionally, there is no clear description of what the STEM focused school will look like when it is fully achieving its mission (pp. 365).</li> <li>• The complete original application was not included in the appendix.</li> </ul>	<p>pp. 9</p> <p>pp.9</p> <p>pp. 9</p> <p>pp. 10</p> <p>pp. 30-36</p> <p>Appendix</p>
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**Final Application Review**

<input type="checkbox"/> Meets or Exceeds Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Partially Meets Standard</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet Standard
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<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Page</b>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The applicant provides an expanded 4-point rationale for selecting the Cordova community based on current performance trends in neighborhood schools, capacity and lack of choice options, specifically the need for a 6-12 continuum in the proposed neighborhood. The rationale for selecting the community where the proposed school will locate revolves around four primary reasons: 1) help alleviate the problem of over-enrollment of the public schools currently in operation in Cordova; 2) provide needed high-quality seats in Cordova at the middle and high school levels; 3) expand public school choice in Cordova for parents; and 4) offer students the opportunity to engage in our STEM-centered academic program that is on-target to receive STEM designation from the TNDOE</li> </ul>	<p>pp. 1-2, 4, 12</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comparative data for reflects current (18-19) performance for the existing public and private Cordova schools and provided additional SCS School Performance Framework data to justify a need for additional quality seats in the Cordova neighborhood. The network’s data in current schools shows a track record of providing a community with a high -quality educational option for students/parents.</li> </ul>	<p>pp. 6 -8</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The applicant corrected previous enrollment projections for students with special needs (12%) and ELL students (less than 10%).</li> </ul>	<p>pp.12</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The applicant reiterated their STEM focus and did provide information to show the status of their application for TNDOE STEM designation which may come as early as 2021-2022. This status, if approved, would differentiate MSE from other middle schools presently in Cordova.</li> </ul>	<p>pp.13</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MSE is prepared to provide resource supports for afterschool STEM activities to ensure equity of access.</li> </ul>	<p>pp.14</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The applicant fully aligned its goals with its mission and vision and offers a description of what the fully functioning STEM model looks like in an operating school.</li> </ul>	pp. 50-61, 70
Concerns/Questions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Although the applicant updated data to reflect current data, no new data justified the need for an increase in the number of middle school seats needed in the area when the three existing Cordova middle schools are already under capacity.</li> </ul>	pp. 6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Less than 50% of enrollment signatures received for middle school grades, and only 60% of 9<sup>th</sup> grade. This is a concern, especially given the small school model because they could only get 30 out of 50 targeted, which indicates a potential challenge in securing enrollment for the school to be financially sustainable at startup. The applicant did not adequately address this concern in the amended application. The applicant was unable to provide specific data from surveys projecting percentages of interested families with scholars who are eligible for special services (SWD, ED, and ELL).</li> </ul>	pp. 7, 12, 15-20
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The applicant presented a table and narrative showing evidence from TNReady data that students who are continuously enrolled at MSE in 6<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade score higher on average than those who enrolled in grades 7 and 8. However, in comparison to existing middle schools in Cordova, those same MSE 8<sup>th</sup> grade middle school students scored at a level only comparable in ELA.</li> </ul>	pp. 7-8

**SECTION 1 ACADEMIC PLAN DESIGN AND CAPACITY**

<b>1.3 ACADEMIC FOCUS AND PLAN</b>		
Characteristics of a strong response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A clear and comprehensive explanation of the school's academic focus that is aligned with the school's mission and vision.</li> <li>▪ A framework for a rigorous research based academic plan that reflects the needs of the targeted student population and is aligned with the school's stated mission and vision.</li> <li>▪ A robust and quality curriculum overview, supported by research, with a plan for implementation that includes all grades the school will eventually include.</li> <li>▪ Evidence the curriculum design is aligned with the Tennessee State Standards.</li> <li>▪ Evidence the proposed academic plan will be appropriate and effective for growing all students while at the same time closing achievement gaps.</li> <li>▪ A description of effective methods for providing differentiated instruction to meet the needs of all students, including a strong plan for Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTI<sup>2</sup>) that aligns with Tennessee guidelines.</li> <li>▪ If including blended learning, a clear explanation of the model the school will use and the role of teachers within the blended learning environment.</li> </ul>		
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**SECTION 1 ACADEMIC PLAN DESIGN AND CAPACITY**

<b>1.4 ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE STANDARDS</b>		
Characteristics of a strong response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Academic achievement goals are rigorous, measurable, and realistic and set high standards and high expectations for student learning.</li> <li>▪ Academic goals contribute to the stated mission and vision of the school.</li> <li>▪ Clear and compelling process for setting, monitoring, and / or revising academic achievement goals.</li> <li>▪ Evidence of clear, rigorous promotion/retention and exit policies and standards.</li> <li>▪ Appropriate, well-defined corrective action plan if school falls below state and/or district academic achievement expectations.</li> <li>▪ A clear description of the school's approach to help remediate students' academic underperformance based on assessment and other data, and evidence the chosen approach will result in improved academic achievement.</li> </ul>		
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**SECTION 1 ACADEMIC PLAN DESIGN AND CAPACITY**

<b>1.5 PHASE-IN/TURNAROUND – IF APPLICABLE</b>		
Characteristics of a strong response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Inclusion of strong prior experience in turning around or converting an underperforming school or plan for doing so if the organization does not have prior experience.</li> <li>▪ A clear explanation for how the organization will engage with the neighborhood, community, and student population prior to conversion.</li> <li>▪ Specific ways to engage and transform the existing school culture and how the organization will determine what aspects of school culture to keep, modify, or add.</li> <li>▪ If proposing a phase-in approach, the organization clearly describes how transition to a shared campus will occur with regard to campus collaboration and building-wide issues.</li> <li>▪ If proposing a full school take-over approach, the organization has a clear plan for communicating with existing staff and a comprehensive plan for needed additional support to ensure student success.</li> </ul>		
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**SECTION 1 ACADEMIC PLAN DESIGN AND CAPACITY**

<b>1.6 HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION STANDARDS – IF APPLICABLE</b>		
Characteristics of a strong response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Plan for meeting the Tennessee Graduation Requirements (including credits, transcripts, electives, GPA calculation) and compelling explanation of any additional requirements beyond the State’s requirements.</li> <li>▪ Clear, persuasive explanation of how the school’s graduation requirements will ensure student readiness for college or other postsecondary opportunities, including trade school, military service, or entering the workforce).</li> <li>▪ Effective systems and structures for students at risk of dropping out or not meeting graduation requirements.</li> </ul>		
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**SECTION 1 ACADEMIC PLAN DESIGN AND CAPACITY**

<b>1.7 ASSESSMENTS</b>		
Characteristics of a strong response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Assessment selection will provide sufficiently rich data for evaluation of the academic program and align with state standards.</li> <li>▪ Assessment plan details the collection and analysis of individual students, student cohorts, and school level performance throughout the school year, at the end of the academic year and for the term of the charter.</li> <li>▪ A process for using data to support instruction is clearly articulated, with detailed plans presented to provide adequate training for teachers and school leaders.</li> <li>▪ An explanation of how the organization will use data to inform instruction and evaluate academic progress for at-risk students, students with disabilities and English Language Learners.</li> <li>▪ Demonstrates an understating of the obligation under state law to participate in the statewide system of assessments and accountability.</li> </ul>		
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**SECTION 1 ACADEMIC PLAN DESIGN AND CAPACITY**

<b>1.8 SCHOOL CALENDAR AND SCHEDULE</b>		
Characteristics of a strong response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ School calendar (<b>Attachment A</b>) and student schedules meet Tennessee minimum requirements of the equivalent of 180 days of instruction.</li> <li>▪ Calendar and schedule support implementation of the academic plan and align with stated mission and vision.</li> <li>▪ Attendance goals are clearly outlined.</li> <li>▪ Description of a typical day for teachers and students align with key priorities of the academic plan and the overall mission and vision for the school.</li> <li>▪ If proposing Saturday School, summer school, or after school programming, a description of programming is included</li> </ul>		
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**SECTION 1 ACADEMIC PLAN DESIGN AND CAPACITY**

<b>1.9 SPECIAL POPULATIONS AND AT-RISK STUDENTS</b>		
Characteristics of a strong response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ An identified founding school team member with experience working with special populations.</li> <li>▪ Clear process for identifying students with disabilities, English Language Learners, and at-risk students, and gifted students.</li> <li>▪ Clear description of RTI<sup>2</sup> procedures, including a plan for how data will be collected, progress will be monitored, and instructional decisions made related to student performance</li> <li>▪ A viable plan to provide students with special needs with instructional programs, practices, and strategies that ensure access to the general education curriculum and academic success.</li> <li>▪ Requirements and processes for monitoring services to students in need and plans to exit students that attain sufficient progress.</li> <li>▪ An understanding of, and capacity to fulfill, State and federal obligations and requirements pertaining to students with disabilities and English Language Learners.</li> <li>▪ A realistic plan for hiring licensed and highly qualified personnel including service providers, nursing, and educational assistants.</li> <li>▪ Evidence of adequate resources and staff to meet the needs of all students, including professional development for teachers.</li> </ul>		
<b>Initial Application Review</b>		
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**SECTION 1 ACADEMIC PLAN DESIGN AND CAPACITY**

<b>1.10 SCHOOL CULTURE AND DISCIPLINE</b>		
Characteristics of a strong response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A clear vision for school culture or ethos that will promote a positive academic environment and will reflect high levels of academic expectation and support.</li> <li>▪ Coherent plan for creating and sustaining the intended culture for students, teachers, administrators, and parents from the school's inception, and for integrating new students and families as they arrive.</li> <li>▪ Plan for how school culture will embrace students with special needs.</li> <li>▪ Student discipline policy (<b>Attachment B</b>) that provides for effective strategies to support a safe, orderly school climate and strong school culture while respecting student rights.</li> <li>▪ Evidence of legally sound discipline policies that outline discipline procedures, suspension, and expulsion procedures and appeals processes.</li> <li>▪ If not included as part of school handbook (<b>Attachment B</b>), inclusion of student discipline policy (<b>Attachment C</b>)</li> <li>▪ Thoughtful consideration of how the discipline policies protect the rights of students with disabilities.</li> </ul>		
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**SECTION 1 ACADEMIC PLAN DESIGN AND CAPACITY**

<b>1.11 MARKETING, RECRUITMENT, AND ENROLLMENT</b>		
Characteristics of a strong response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Articulated student recruitment and marketing plan, timeline, and enrollment policy that will provide equal access to all interested students and families, including those in poverty, academically low-achieving students, students with disabilities, and English Language Learners.</li> <li>▪ Enrollment policy (<b>Attachment D</b>) that complies with state law and district policies.</li> <li>▪ Compelling student outreach plan that includes community, family, and student involvement, and that is realistic and likely to foster student retention and community support.</li> </ul>		
<b>Initial Application Review</b>		
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**SECTION 1 ACADEMIC PLAN DESIGN AND CAPACITY**

<b>1.12 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND PARENT ENGAGEMENT</b>		
<p>Characteristics of a strong response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Effective strategies for informing parents and the community about the school's development both pre- and post-authorization.</li> <li>▪ Clear plan for informing and educating parents on school policies.</li> <li>▪ A sound and compelling plan for engaging parents and community partners in the design and life of the school.</li> <li>▪ Description of existing community resources and partnerships already formed that will benefit students and parents and that include a description of the nature, purposes, terms, and scope of services of any such partnerships; and evidence of commitment from identified community partners including documentation of pledged support (<b>Attachment E</b>), if available.</li> <li>▪ Letters of support, MOUs, or contracts (<b>Attachment E</b>) to show proposed school is welcomed by the community.</li> </ul>		
<b>Application Review</b>		
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<b>Strengths</b>		<b>Page</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The applicant thoroughly outlines clear and promising strategies to engage parents and the community pre and post application. A competent strategy for marketing the school once opened is described and builds on the success of early marketing and recruitment efforts in the school's pre-authorization phase. The applicant describes a sound and compelling plan for parent engagement, especially once the school is opened. Numerous activities are outlined, which should lead to successful parent engagement.</li> </ul>		pp. 12-19
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MSE states that they will use over 10 different methods of communication in addition to parent-teacher conferences, school events, and a parent information room, where parents will receive support on how to fully utilize the technology. They appear to have a clear and intentional focus on parent outreach. The applicant provides a detailed plan for informing parents on school policies using varied means, such as apps, parent handbook, website, school database, as well as providing information in the child's home language.</li> </ul>		pp. 17-18 20-22
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prior to the submission of its application, MSE engaged the Cordova community and garnered a myriad of support from different stakeholders in the community. These efforts led to 488 parents indicating interest.</li> </ul>		pp. 12,14 135-146
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The application outlines several avenues for parent input in the design and life of the school via parent board membership, advisory council, volunteer opportunities, PTO, and virtual suggestion box. Additionally, the school has included strategies to encourage parent engagement via parent recognition programs, adult education classes and a parent academy.</li> </ul>		pp. 20- 22
<b>Concerns/Questions</b>		<b>Page</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The plan for community engagement would benefit from identification of community partners and/or specific strategies to ensure that the proposed activities will be impactful, such as adult education and language classes. It is not clear who will be leading these efforts and how it will be marketed to ensure the desired engagement and goal achievement for the Cordova neighborhood.</li> </ul>		pp. 15-19
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school did not clarify how recruitment efforts support full engagement with special populations, including but not limited to ELL and SWD, to ensure equitable access to information regarding possible enrollment.</li> </ul>		pp. 13
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school indicated parent members would serve on the school's advisory council, however no details are provided showing how members are selected to ensure diversity and authenticity in representation from the school's inception. The MSE team discussed briefly in the interview. The team should expound upon their answer here.</li> </ul>		pp. 17

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is conflicting information around home visits in the application. Home visits are identified as a critical part of parent engagement; however, there is no assurance of all students having equitable access to the process, and the overall expectation for teachers and parents regarding home visits.</li> <li>• While the application contains many strong letters of support from the Cordova community and throughout Shelby County, little evidence was found outlining the purposes, terms, or scope of services in these possible partnerships.</li> </ul>	<p>pp. 17-19 pp. 116 pp. 134</p> <p>pp. 135-146</p>	
<b>Final Application Review</b>		
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The community involvement and parent engagement resources outlined in the plan are designed to meet the needs and interests of all through social media, internet, literature and word-of-mouth.</li> <li>• The applicant outlined additional recruitment opportunities to highlight services for subgroups (ELL, SWD, At-risk) virtually and in-person. The inclusion of language indicating that marketing materials will be translated, and interpretation services will be provided at events</li> <li>• The inclusion of translation services will be provided to needed parents at school wide events and the front office staff will include at least one bilingual staff members for the most frequently spoken language other than English. To encourage diversity on the Parent Advisory Council, the applicant proposes to provide translation services to parents needing it for the nomination and election processes, and for meetings.</li> <li>• Detailed explanation of Adult Education Classes implementation, persons responsible, community partnerships and parental communications are described. The applicant included information that bilingual staff across the network will be leveraged for Adult Language Classes</li> <li>• The applicant has established MOUs with Christian Brothers University, Freed-Hardeman University, Memphis Charter School Leader Collaborative, and Southwest Tennessee Community College.</li> <li>• To clarify the process around home visits, the applicant provided more detail about the expectation that every family is given the opportunity to opt-in to the program and that every teacher would be required to visit families who opted in. The applicant also specified that the teacher would be able to speak the parents' language or would have a translator accompanying them.</li> </ul>	<p>pp. 12-15</p> <p>pp. 23-25</p> <p>pp. 26-28</p> <p>pp. 30-31,33</p> <p>pp. 229 - 243</p> <p>pp. 27</p>	
<b>Concerns/Questions</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The applicant does not provide details on how translations or contracts for translations of all printed and online marketing materials will be secured. The applicant does not provide details on how interpretation services will be secured or contracted for school events, parent meetings, and school tours.</li> <li>• Although the applicant did clarify which staff members would be given leadership tasks over Adult Education Classes and the Parent Academy, little, if any specificity was provided about the programs.</li> <li>• How will you ensure that parents who lack continual access to the digital platforms listed) remain in the loop on changes, quick notifications, and other important pieces of information, including digital accessibility?</li> </ul>	<p>pp. 24, 26-27</p> <p>pp. 30-34</p> <p>pp. 37</p>	

**SECTION 1 ACADEMIC PLAN DESIGN AND CAPACITY**

<b>1.13 EXISTING ACADEMIC PLAN (FOR EXISTING OPERATORS)</b>		
Characteristics of a strong response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provides a clear description of the existing academic plan.</li> <li>▪ Key features of the existing academic plan that will significantly differ from the operator’s existing schools (if any).</li> <li>▪ Clear, concise rationale for any academic program variance that includes implementation strategies, resources needed, and expected outcomes.</li> </ul>		
<b>Initial Application Review</b>		
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The applicant has no plans to differ from the academic plan at the existing school. Rather the applicant, through experience, has implemented several enhancements to strengthen the academic focus and plan. In particular, the STEM focus is now embedded via technology investments, gained certifications, enriched science and math instruction and stem activities (CodeCrew). In keeping with that, the school makes available technology at all levels, with at most a 2:1 ratio for devices. Likewise, all elementary teachers and administrators are Apple- or Google-certified.</li> </ul>		pp. 24-26
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school identified six enhancements to its academic program: enriched curriculum, technology integration, standardized and authentic assessment, robust student support staff, robust support for instructional staff, and parent involvement</li> </ul>		pp. 24-25
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school provided a rationale for academic program variance due to scaling and gained experience to strengthen its academic plan. The rationale included implementation strategies, resources needed, and expected outcomes.</li> </ul>		pp. 26
<b>Concerns/Questions</b>		<b>Page</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many STEM activities are identified as occurring after school and in club settings, how is equitable access to these STEM activities and others listed in this section guaranteed to all. Additionally, what is the suspected/proposed level of engagement/inclusion in the different programs? The MSE team discussed this in the interview; however, the team needs to expound on this in their application.</li> </ul>		pp. 25
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school outlined enhancements to its instructional program, however there is not a clear description on how these are incorporated and embedded into classrooms daily to make them “meaningful instructional tools” (pp. 30) that support MSE’s STEM identified focus.</li> </ul>		pp. 25/30
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As a STEM-focused school, how are ALL teachers, developed and supported to ensure infusion of STEM throughout all classes? This question was asked during the interview; however, the applicant needs to expound on this in the application.</li> </ul>		pp. 27
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school indicated they were making no changes to its instructional program, however they identified major revisions in terms of selected curriculums and technology integration. How will the school ensure adequate personnel and support is available to support these adoptions to guarantee alignment to its mission/vision and achieve expected outcomes? Additionally, the school identified a variety of educational software; however, no detail is provided on how these programs will be integrated into the curricular changes adopted. Part of this question was brought up in the interview and the school should expound upon their answer here to include the other concerns.</li> </ul>		pp. 9, 25-26
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The specifics of the schools’ RTI programming is vague and unclear. The application should include greater detail, which was provided during the interview.</li> </ul>		pp. 27

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The application does not provide significant details concerning how SWD, ELL and struggling students are supported within the STEM program. Additionally, intervention activities to ensure mastery of subject content/state standards is not detailed within the academic plan.</li> </ul>			pp. 24-26
<b>Final Application Review</b>			
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No significant differences. School will use existing plan. There is a clear description of the academic plan as it will not differ from the network's existing school. Plan to replicate: Enriched Curriculum, Technology Integration, Standardized and Authentic Assessment, Robust Student Support Staff, Robust Support for Instructional Staff, Parental Involvement . Although the academic plan will not differ greatly, the proposed school notated various enhancements that have been proven to strengthen the current academic focus and plan</li> </ul>			pp. 26-28, 35-46
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provided details regarding the academic enhancements and STEM focus (i.e. Timeline for STEM Designation, Curriculum and Instruction, STEM Courses and STEM Professional Development for School Leaders and Teachers).</li> </ul>			pp. 35-68 57-61
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>They are going to add three new positions: RTI, SPED, and ESL Coordinators.</li> </ul>			pp. 58-61
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The applicant addresses equitable access to STEM activities. Explained that all students are invited to participate in all extra-curricular activities. To ensure that cost is not a barrier the school will pay for all costs incurred by participating in all STEM-related activities, including, but not limited to, supply and material costs, entry fees, and transportation costs.</li> </ul>			pp. 56-57
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The applicant provided a table from the 2019-2020 school year, outlining internal and external STEM-specific professional development which included training sessions for teachers, instructional coaches, and leadership.</li> </ul>			pp. 57-61, 65-
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The applicant outlines the projected number of student support staff members needed with their roles and responsibilities more clearly defined. Specific materials to be utilized for RTI and other interventions is also provided with specificity.</li> </ul>			pp. 64-67
<b>Concerns/Questions</b>			<b>Page</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The applicant needs a clear, concise outline of proposed changes to existing academic plan.</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ELA curriculum outlined for elementary level, but what ELA curricula has been selected for both middle and high schools? Amended application outlines Prentice Hall for mathematics and Holt for science with the absence of ELA.</li> </ul>			pp. 62
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How does the RTI2 identification process for middle and high school differ according to the TN Framework for Instruction and Intervention? Specific resources and/or data sources to be used. While Part D includes information specific to Individualized Learning Plans (ILPs), the applicant does not reference ELD as part of their intervention program for English Learners as prescribed in the TDOE's RTI Implementation Guide.</li> </ul>			pp. 65-67
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has MSE planned for the engagement of special populations in the STEM program, if so, how are these students included?</li> </ul>			pp. 62, 67, 68
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As the application cites specific policy on Special Education, it does not cite policy as it relates to ELs (TN State Board Policy 3.207)</li> </ul>			pp. 68

**SECTION 1 ACADEMIC PLAN DESIGN AND CAPACITY**

**1.14 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT (FOR EXISTING OPERATORS)**

- Characteristics of a strong response:
- Clear description of any mission-specific goals and targets the organization will have, with measures and/or assessments fully described and a rationale for their choices.
  - Clear and compelling explanation of how the organization will measure its academic progress – individual students, student cohorts, all grade levels within a school and across the network of schools.
  - Appropriate, well-defined corrective action plan if one school, student cohort, or entire network of schools falls below state and/or district academic achievement expectations.
  - Clear and concise contingency plans that describe in great detail how the organization will react in the event academic targets are not met, and how the organization will react to adversity through delayed or modified growth.

**Initial Application Review**

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<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Page</b>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The applicant includes goals for the whole school, cohorts, and specific populations of students to provide evidence of the school’s impact over time, as well as to demonstrate its overall accountability for student performance. MSE refined their mission specific goals and targets to address recent data.</li> </ul>	pp. 30-36
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The narrative contains a clear description of goals and targets, with measures and/or assessments fully described and a rationale for their choices; however, it is not mission-specific (see below). Clear and compelling explanation is offered of how the organization will measure its academic progress – individual students, student cohorts, all grade levels within a school and across the network of schools.</li> </ul>	pp. 37-38
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The frequency of some assessments, observations, and other data gathering will allow the school to flag poor performance (at the school, classroom and individual levels) and take corrective action before the end of the school year, allowing time to make improvements. The application outlines clear, measurable goals which include frequency of assessments in the areas of Academic Achievement, ELL, STEM, High School Graduation/College Readiness, School Climate and Finance.</li> </ul>	pp. 30-36
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The application includes corrective action and contingency plans in the event that individual schools, student cohorts, teachers, school leaders, or the entire network underperform in meeting state and/or district academic achievement expectations. The corrective plan structure is consistent across groups and individuals (design a growth plan, implement the growth plan, evaluate employment status).</li> </ul>	pp. 38-40
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Circumstances to delay or modify growth is thoroughly explained based on established thresholds to ensure the network maintains academic, operational and financial success is detailed in the application.</li> </ul>	pp. 44-46

<b>Concerns/Questions</b>	<b>Page</b>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The applicant did not clearly identify mission-specific goals, related to their STEM focus and its impact on student performance.</li> </ul>	pp. 30-36
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The application only included measures of participation, as opposed to student performance outcomes resulting from participation in STEM related activities (e.g., Science Fair - p. 31). Three-year goals were mentioned in the application; however, annual performance goals for all students enrolled were not established (p. 30).</li> </ul>	pp. 30-31
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upon implementing a growth or improvement plan to address underperformance at the school-wide, classroom or network level, how will performance be evaluated to determine if sufficient progress has been made and/or adjustments to programming, staffing, or student supports is needed?</li> </ul>	pp. 39, 41

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As a network leadership team, how will the capacity continue to be built for members who have completed your “Grow your Own Administration” program to ensure continuous student achievement outcomes at your proposed Cordova campus?</li> </ul>	p. 43
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In establishing school specific goals, the applicant fails to account for subgroup performance (i.e. ELL, SWD).</li> </ul>	pp. 30-36
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The operator is an existing network and has received scores from SCS related to their academic performance. The information presented in the application discussing their plans for improvement is vague and does not include specifics for addressing deficiencies in areas where academic targets are not being met. Additionally, within these plans the applicant should highlight specific subgroup populations and its focus on their overall improvement to achieve identified goals.</li> </ul>	pp 38-39
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is the Board of Directors role in monitoring the implementation of corrective action plans, as listed in the application? (Ex: When network targets aren’t met?)</li> </ul>	pp. 41
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The applicant identifies the Teacher Advisory Program as a support mechanism for students experiencing academic and behavior challenges. More details are needed on how this program and other academic and behavior supports will look in reality. How will the school ensure teachers are equipped to provide the appropriate supports to students?</li> </ul>	pp. 36
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The applicant identifies academic, operational and financial factors when determining its readiness to grow. Some of the academic circumstances that “would result in delay or modification” exist when analyzing the network’s current data. However, when the application states: “consistently been academically successful”, the applicant omits and does not address negative trend data of the schools the supports them delaying growth. This information was brought up during the interview. MSE should expound upon this in the application and clarify their rationale for proposed growth.</li> </ul>	pp. 45

**Final Application Review**

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MSE has a comprehensive performance management plan, with specific and measurable goals. Underperformance is addressed at school-wide level, classroom level, and student level. MSE has created multiple modes and methods for utilizing data to drive instructional practice. That same data is used to make decisions in staffing, student support, and programming.</li> </ul>	pp. 38, 87
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The plan outlines SMART goals that are differentiated by grade bands, subgroups and also include goals for school personnel and means for evaluating progress towards these goals. Goals are specific to school and network expectations. The goals are aligned with the components of their mission, making them mission-driven.</li> </ul>	pp. 70-77, 78-79; 81-82; 84
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The frequency of assessments and evaluation of goals will provide the school and network with opportunities to identify areas of opportunity and provide corrective action. Clear and concise contingency plans that describe in great detail how the organization will react in the event academic targets are not met, and how the organization will react to adversity through delayed or modified growth.</li> </ul>	pp. 70-72, 88-90
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additional Multiple sources of data will be used to measure and monitor the academic performance of the school as well as relevant data will be utilized to make determinations about progress and needed adjustments/improvements (e.g. programming, staffing, and student supports). Also, the school will</li> </ul>	

<p>provide the Board frequent updates and data at Board meetings to monitor the implementation of corrective action plans. Appropriate, well-defined corrective action plan if one school, student cohort, or entire network of schools falls below state and/or district academic achievement expectations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More details are included regarding training and support for Teachers on (PBIS) behavioral supports for students and monitoring behavior and culture data (i.e. Chart of School Expectations and PBIS Framework/Tiered Supports). Also, the school is in the process of aligning their Teacher Advisory Program with their implementation of PBIS.</li> </ul>	<p>pp. 81-82, 84, 88-89, 212-215</p> <p>pp. 108-110</p>
<b>Concerns/Questions</b>	<b>Page</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is unclear, how the Board of Directors will engage with network leadership regarding corrective action plans? (Ex: When network targets aren't met?)</li> <li>• Most of the STEM-related goals are not outcome-based, as they only measure participation rates.</li> <li>• Information regarding how ELL students will exit the program does not align with TDOE mandates. Additionally, in establishing school specific goals, the applicant fails to include goals as they relate to the collaborative completion and updates or student growth measures of Individualized Learning Plans (ILPs).</li> </ul>	<p>pp. 41</p> <p>pp. 70-72</p> <p>pp. 70-71</p>

## SECTION 1 ACADEMIC PLAN DESIGN AND CAPACITY

### SUMMARY COMMENTS

Each part of your summary comments should, in a few sentences, provide a clear understanding of your overall evaluation of the proposal as well as the most significant strengths and/or weaknesses. The summary comments for each section should support your rating for the section and should not be simply cut and pasted from your subsection analysis.

<b>Summary Rating for Entire Academic Plan Design and Capacity</b>		
<b>Initial Application Review</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/> Meets or Exceeds Standard	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Partially Meets Standard</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet Standard
<p><b>Strengths:</b>                      A clear description of the school community, based on historical data from neighborhood schools from which the students will originate, is embedded in the application. The applicant provides a detailed explanation of how the school will engage parents utilizing a variety of communication strategies to support these efforts. The applicant acknowledges through lessons learned some enhancements to its academic program has occurred.</p> <p><b>Weaknesses/Questions:</b>                      The applicant does not provide a compelling rationale for a middle/high school in the Cordova area. The description of the proposed academic program does not adequately describe what the school will do significantly different than the schools currently serving the neighborhood. The data used to make comparative judgements were not reflective of current data. Furthermore, all middle schools in the Cordova community are currently under-utilized.</p> <p>The proposed “STEM” focus is not clearly defined beyond access to a daily science and technology classes. Student access to STEM extracurricular activities is limited and equity of access to the afterschool activities is unclear. The applicant acknowledged in the interview; students are not required to participate in these activities but encouraged to do so. Additionally, no metrics are identified to access the effectiveness of the STEM instructional program nor the STEM related extra-curricular activities in terms of their impact on student mastery of state and national standards.</p> <p>The applicant struggles to identify negative trend data that may be symbolic of system wide instructional and/or student support concerns. Further review of the data may require an adjustment to the network’s instructional programming, student support systems, and/or goals. Benchmark goals and academic supports for SPED, ELL and struggling students are absent or limited. Social, emotional and behavioral supports are under- developed.</p>		
<b>Final Application Review</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/> Meets or Exceeds Standard	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Partially Meets Standard</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet Standard
<p><b>Strengths:</b>                      The applicant provided a more detailed description of the enhancements made to its academic program and outline additional means by which STEM would be embedded across the curriculum. Additional comparative data was added to illustrate a more accurate picture of MSE’s performance compared to neighborhood schools. The school has a definitive plan for benchmarking student performance and establishing corrective action plans when performance data does not indicate a progress toward goals.</p> <p><b>(If Any) Weaknesses:</b>                      The applicant does not provide a compelling rationale for a middle/high school in the Cordova area. The description of the proposed academic program does not adequately describe what the school will do significantly different than the schools currently serving the neighborhood. The applicant is utilizing an unattained TDOE designation to differentiate it from other schools in the Cordova community; however, there is</p>		

no guarantee that the designation will be received. Furthermore, it is not a given that if one school attains STEM status another school will automatically receive it also.

The applicant's plan to address equitable access to STEM activities still does not make STEM classes and participation in STEM activities a core part of the academic program in which all students are required to participate. The applicant failed to detail how subgroups will participate successfully within the STEM program. The STEM's program success is still measure by participation rates and not mastery of STEM-related academic standards. Additional interventions to support struggling students academically are not fully developed.

The applicants Parent Academy classes and additional support for non-English speaking parents is vague and lack the detail to make them truly impactful on overall student achievement.

**SECTION 2 – OPERATIONS PLAN AND CAPACITY**

<b>2.1 GOVERNANCE</b>		
Characteristics of a strong response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Strong understanding of the roles and responsibilities of a governing board including structure, size, powers, duties, and expertise that aligns with the school's mission and vision.</li> <li>▪ Proposed structure is likely to ensure effective governance and meaningful oversight of school performance, operations, and financials.</li> <li>▪ Evidence the proposed board members will contribute the wide range of knowledge, skills, and commitment needed to oversee a successful charter school, including but not limited to educational, financial, legal, and community experience and expertise.</li> <li>▪ Plans for meaningful board training as required by law.</li> <li>▪ If applicable, a timely plan for creating or transitioning from a founding board to a school governing board.</li> <li>▪ Clear, compelling plans to ensure parents have access to the governing board, including a process for complaints that is fair, transparent and a plan for communicating the process.</li> <li>▪ Sound plan and timeline for board recruitment, expansion and orientation of new members.</li> <li>▪ Governance documents (<b>Attachments F1-F7</b>) are complete and align with state laws and district policies.</li> </ul>		
<b>Initial Application Review</b>		
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**SECTION 2 – OPERATIONS PLAN AND CAPACITY**

<b>2.2 START-UP PLAN</b>		
Characteristics of a strong response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Compelling plan for leading the development of the school from post-approval to opening, including identification of a capable individual or team to lead the planning and start-up, as well as a viable plan for compensating this individual or team during the planning year.</li> <li>▪ Adequately addresses potential challenges.</li> <li>▪ Detailed start-up plan specifying tasks and timelines which are aligned with a sound start-up budget.</li> </ul>		
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**SECTION 2 – OPERATIONS PLAN AND CAPACITY**

<b>2.3 FACILITIES</b>		
Characteristics of a strong response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Facility plans are reasonable and adequately meet the requirements of the educational program and anticipated student population.</li> <li>▪ A sound plan and timeline for identifying, financing, renovating, and ensuring code compliance for a facility.</li> </ul>		
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**SECTION 2 – OPERATIONS PLAN AND CAPACITY**

<b>2.4 PERSONNEL/ HUMAN CAPITAL</b>		
Characteristics of a strong response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The school's organizational charts (<b>Attachment G</b>) clearly delineate the roles and responsibilities of – and lines of authority and reporting among – the Board, staff, any related bodies (such as advisory bodies or parent/educator councils), and any external organizations that will play a role in managing the school.</li> <li>▪ If leader is identified, chosen leaders have necessary qualifications, competencies, and capacity for their assigned roles and resumes for school leadership are included (Attachment H). If available, includes previous student achievement data for school leadership (<b>Attachment H</b>). NOTE: If school leader has not been chosen, a clear description of qualifications, expectations, responsibilities and timeline for hiring is included.</li> <li>▪ Identifies strategies for supporting school leadership.</li> <li>▪ Recruitment and hiring strategy, criteria, timeline, and procedures are likely to result in a strong staff and are well suited to the school.</li> <li>▪ Compensation packages are likely to attract and retain strong staff are clearly defined.</li> <li>▪ Provides a strong plan for supporting, developing, and annually evaluating school leadership and teachers that aligns statewide evaluation requirements.</li> <li>▪ Effective planning for unsatisfactory leadership/teacher performance and turnover.</li> <li>▪ Employee manual and personnel policies (<b>Attachment I</b>) are complete and effective.</li> <li>▪ Staffing projections for each year are robust and aligned with the educational program and conducive to the school's success.</li> </ul>		
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**SECTION 2 – OPERATIONS PLAN AND CAPACITY**

<b>2.5 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT</b>		
Characteristics of a strong response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Professional development standards, opportunities, leadership, and calendar/scheduling effectively support the education program and are likely to maximize success in improving student achievement.</li> <li>▪ Thoughtful plan for professional development in the areas of special education and English Language Learners, including implementation of IEP's, discipline of students with disabilities and communication with ELL families.</li> <li>▪ Professional development plan supports professional growth, generates collaboration, and cultivates future leadership.</li> </ul>		
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**SECTION 2 – OPERATIONS PLAN AND CAPACITY**

<b>2.6 INSURANCE</b>		
Characteristics of a strong response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Plan to secure comprehensive and adequate insurance coverage, including worker’s compensation, liability, property, indemnity, directors and officers, automobile, sexual abuse and any other required coverage.</li> <li>▪ If applicable, additional liability for such activities as sports teams.</li> <li>▪ Insurance company letter (<b>Attachment J</b>) states required coverage will be provided upon approval of the charter school application.</li> </ul>		
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**SECTION 2 – OPERATIONS PLAN AND CAPACITY**

<b>2.7 TRANSPORTATION – IF APPLICABLE</b>		
Characteristics of a strong response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Clear description of transportation plan that includes anticipated routes, extracurricular activities, and Saturday school where applicable.</li> <li>▪ A comprehensive oversight plan that identifies school staff responsible for this oversight.</li> <li>▪ Description of how the school will arrange transportation for special needs students where necessary.</li> <li>▪ Demonstrated familiarity with state and federal regulations relating to provision of transportation services to students.</li> </ul>		
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**SECTION 2 – OPERATIONS PLAN AND CAPACITY**

<b>2.8 FOOD SERVICE</b>		
Characteristics of a strong response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A clear description of how the school will offer food service to all students, adhering to all nutritional guidelines.</li> <li>▪ A plan to collect free and reduced-price lunch information, including procedures to receive reimbursement.</li> <li>▪ A plan to ensure compliance with applicable state and federal regulations.</li> </ul>		
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**SECTION 2 – OPERATIONS PLAN AND CAPACITY**

<b>2.9 ADDITIONAL OPERATIONS – IF APPLICABLE</b>		
Characteristics of a strong response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Detailed plans for use of technology within the classroom and for state assessments.</li> <li>▪ Provides compelling data management plan that includes communication strategies for parents.</li> <li>▪ Demonstrates understanding of health and safety requirements that includes a plan for hiring a registered nurse for creating individual health plans as required by law.</li> <li>▪ Detailed safety and security plans for students, staff, guests, and property.</li> <li>▪ Provides detailed maintenance plan for school facilities.</li> <li>▪ If school plans to contract with a CMO, describes rationale and process for selecting CMO and explanation of why the CMO is a strong choice and good fit for the proposed school and community.</li> <li>▪ Provides clear division of roles between the board and the service provider.</li> <li>▪ If available, the CMO arrangement (<b>Attachment K</b>) is free of conflicts of interest and there is a viable plan for identifying and managing potential conflicts.</li> </ul>		
<b>Initial Application Review</b>		
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**SECTION 2 – OPERATIONS PLAN AND CAPACITY**

<b>2.10 WAIVERS</b>		
Characteristics of a strong response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Detailed description of waivers requested that includes compelling and thoughtful rationale describing how the waivers will impact student achievement.</li> <li>▪ A demonstrated understanding of the rules and statutes that cannot be waived under Tennessee law.</li> </ul>		
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**SECTION 2 – OPERATIONS PLAN AND CAPACITY**

<b>2.11 NETWORK VISION, GROWTH PLAN, &amp; CAPACITY (FOR EXISTING OPERATORS)</b>		
Characteristics of a strong response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Detailed strategic vision for the network that includes a robust five-year network growth plan. Growth plan should include the following: proposed years of opening; number and types of schools; a clear, detailed outline of any pending applications (whether in the same LEA, Tennessee or another state); all current and/or targeted markets/communities and criteria for selecting them; and projected enrollments.</li> <li>▪ Strong, compelling evidence of organizational capacity to open and operate high quality schools in Tennessee and elsewhere including specific timelines for building organizational capacity.</li> <li>▪ Clear, detailed description of the results of past replication effort, challenges, and lessons learned, and how the organization has addressed any challenges.</li> <li>▪ Realistic presentation of anticipated challenges and risks over the next five years associated with opening additional schools, along with a plan to overcome them to achieve the organization’s stated outcomes.</li> <li>▪ Comprehensive and complete annual report (both network and individual schools) (<b>Attachment L</b>).</li> <li>▪ If facility has been selected, facility plans are reasonable and adequately meet the requirements of the educational program and anticipated student population.</li> <li>▪ If facility has not been selected, or selected facility needs renovations/upgrades, a sound plan and timeline for identifying, financing, renovating, and ensuring code compliance for a facility.</li> </ul>		
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The applicant has described a thoughtful plan demonstrating its capacity for this replication. In particular, network level personnel possess vast experience. The plans and the people currently in place bode well for the school’s future. A facility that will meet the needs of its intended population has been acquired.</li> </ul>		pp. 47- 63
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The application clearly outlines the names, as well as, the roles and responsibilities of the network level support team who will work with those charged with leading the direct opening of the school.</li> </ul>		pp. 63
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Although recruitment will not begin until January 2021, the roles and responsibilities of the school’s leadership team are described in the narrative.</li> </ul>		pp. 49-58
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The application identifies and specifically addresses the realistic challenges to opening and operating a new school over the next five years.</li> </ul>		pp. 59
Concerns/Questions		Page
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The comparative data in the narrative to support the applicant’s rationale for a new school, is not indicative of the most recent data for the comparative schools from the 2018-19 school year.</li> </ul>		pp. 47 -48
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MSE self-identified school culture as a risk within the next five years. They proposed developing “a culture characterized by high expectations and college readiness” to mitigate the risk. The applicant needs to clarify how school culture and academics work together with a clearly articulated plan to ensure that students are academically ready for college, based on data.</li> </ul>		p. 62
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The network’s annual report was not included in the appendix only the reports for individual schools.</li> </ul>		Appendix
Final Application Review		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Meets or Exceeds Standard</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet Standard
Strengths		Page

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The applicant added comparative data from 2018-19 to support their rationale for a new school.</li> <li>• The applicant provided a detailed discussion of how PBIS will be implemented to support the academic program. As described, the implementation is thoughtful, developmentally appropriate, and makes good use of data.</li> </ul>	<p>pp. 91, 92</p> <p>pp. 108-110</p>
<b>Concerns/ Questions</b>	<b>Page</b>
N/A	

**SECTION 2 – OPERATIONS PLAN AND CAPACITY**

<b>2.12 NETWORK MANAGEMENT (FOR EXISTING OPERATORS)</b>		
Characteristics of a strong response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Leadership team identified and role and responsibilities listed.</li> <li>▪ As <b>Attachment M</b>, organizational charts for Year 1, Year 3, and Year 5 clearly delineate roles and responsibilities of the governing board, including lines of authority between the board, school leadership, and staff. If applicable, the chart should include other related bodies (advisory bodies or parent-teacher councils) and a charter management organization if school has contracted with one and it will play a role in managing the school.</li> <li>▪ Clear, compelling network strategy that includes any shared or centralized support services, along with their costs, across the network.</li> <li>▪ Strong description of relationship between schools and charter management organization, including presentation of a contract or MOU (if applicable).</li> <li>▪ Fees from member schools are clearly delineated, along with a rationale for their collection, use, and structure (if applicable).</li> <li>▪ Associated table provided in application is complete with explanations for school and organization-level decision-making responsibilities.</li> </ul>		
<b>Initial Application Review</b>		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Meets or Exceeds Standard</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet Standard
<b>Strengths</b>		<b>Page</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The applicant included a clear plan for central office support which includes detailed roles and responsibilities for each central office team member with clear lines of authority established between network and school-level staff.</li> </ul>		pp. 64-78
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The application included a plan to develop a monthly dashboard with quantitative measures to continuously evaluate central office support services.</li> </ul>		pp. 69
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An equitable and clearly articulated formula for assessing the cost of fees collected for shared services across the network, including the new school, is presented in the narrative and tables within the application. Although there are not specific details of what is included on the dashboard, nor contingency plans should services not be effective, the applicant meets the rubrics standards</li> </ul>		pp. 68
<b>Concerns/Questions</b>		<b>Page</b>
None		
<b>Final Application Review</b>		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Meets or Exceeds Standard</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet Standard
<b>Strengths</b>		<b>Page</b>
Applicant satisfied the requirement in the initial round of the application.		
<b>Concerns/ Questions</b>		<b>Page</b>
N/A		

**SECTION 2 – OPERATIONS PLAN AND CAPACITY**

**2.13 NETWORK GOVERNANCE (FOR EXISTING OPERATORS)**

Characteristics of a strong response:

- 1) If there is a network board that operates as the main governing body with each school having an advisory committee:**
  - Applicant provides a complete description of the governance structure at the network level and delineates how that relates to each individual school within the network.
  - Provides a robust plan for ensuring there is adequate local/Tennessee stakeholder representation.
  - Roles and responsibilities of this board described clearly and concisely.
  - Description of the current size and composition of the governing board, with a rationale of how the current/proposed governance structure and composition will ensure the desired outcomes of a network of highly effective schools.
  - A clear and compelling plan to evaluate academic and operational success including the evaluation of the school and school leader (s).
- 2) If there will be one governing board for all schools at the local level, or separate governing boards for each school:**
  - **If there will be one governing board for all schools:**
    - A clear, detailed description of the governance structure at the network level and how it relates to the individual school including any changes that will take place at the board level for it to be effective (if necessary).
    - A copy of the by-laws and organizational chart is included.
    - A clear, thorough plan to transform the board’s membership, mission and by-laws to support the expansion plan. Plan should include timeline for the transition and orientation of the board to its new responsibilities.
  - **If there will be a separate governing board for each school:**
    - A clear, detailed description of how the new governing board will be formed and the relationship between the new and old boards described, along with any overlapping responsibilities.
    - Includes biographies of new board members, roles and responsibilities of the board described clearly and concisely, an organizational chart and governing board structure.
  - By-laws of the new board are included (if available) and there is a plan in place for board training as required by Tennessee law.

**Initial Application Review**

Meets or Exceeds Standard

**Partially Meets Standard**

Does Not Meet Standard

**Strengths**

**Page**

- The applicant proposed to have one governing board for all schools, as well as an advisory council for each school. The governing board will have one parent from each school appointed to the board. The applicant demonstrates a good understanding of governance, with clearly described roles and responsibilities for the governing board and advisory council. The structure provides for input from a variety of stakeholders. Additionally, the applicant’s board will be regularly provided with data to evaluate the school’s performance. pp. 79-91
- The application includes the names of the present governing board, as well as, their varying fields of expertise, roles, and responsibilities. pp. 82-83

**Concerns/Questions**

**Page**

- The applicant proposes adding a Cordova parent member to the board within six months after school has started. What is the rationale for soliciting parent input so late after the formation of the school? Additionally, with varying demographics at each school site and three distinct grade bands, how will the board ensure full representation of parent voice on the board? pp.79
- The Academic Committee and a Finance Committee are identified as additional board committees; however, the composition of these committees is not detailed in the application. pp. 82
- The information presented discussing the plan for evaluation from the board is vague and not compelling. It does not include metrics for how/what performance would be assessed, timelines for reviewing metrics, and does not include the follow-up or progress monitoring of deficiencies for their schools and school leaders. pp. 88

Final Application Review		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meets or Exceeds Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet Standard
Strengths		Page
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To ensure diversity of voice and allow more parent participation in the decision-making process, the applicant outlined a variety of means by which parents will be able to share their concerns. These include attending Board meetings, participating in the Parent-Teacher Organization, and completing Board surveys</li> </ul>		pp. 130
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The applicant clarified the composition of the Academic and Finance Committees on the board. The composition includes members with relevant expertise.</li> </ul>		pp 130
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The evaluation of the Executive Director by the Board of Directors largely aligns to evaluation of the Shelby County superintendent. The timeline, categories and criteria allow for a thorough evaluation.</li> </ul>		pp. 134-146
Concerns/ Questions		Page
None		

**SECTION 2 – OPERATIONS PLAN AND CAPACITY**

<b>2.14 CHARTER SCHOOL MANAGEMENT CONTRACTS (IF APPLICABLE; FOR EXISTING OPERATORS)</b>		
Characteristics of a strong response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ As <b>Attachment N</b>, a detailed, strong rationale explaining the selection of the CMO, including descriptions of proposed duration of the contract, roles and responsibilities of the governing board, school staff, and the service provider, scope of services provided, performance evaluation measures, financial controls, and terms of renewal.</li> <li>▪ Draft of proposed management contract.</li> <li>▪ Detailed documentation of CMO's non-profit status, including evidence it is authorized to do business in Tennessee.</li> </ul>		
<b>Initial Application Review</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/> Meets or Exceeds Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet Standard
<b>Strengths</b>		<b>Page</b>
N/A		
<b>Concerns/Questions</b>		<b>Page</b>
N/A		
<b>Final Application Review</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/> Meets or Exceeds Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet Standard
<b>Strengths</b>		<b>Page</b>
N/A		
<b>Concerns/ Questions</b>		<b>Page</b>
N/A		

**SECTION 2 – OPERATIONS PLAN AND CAPACITY**

<b>2.15 PERSONNEL/HUMAN CAPITAL – NETWORK-WIDE STAFFING PROJECTIONS (FOR EXISTING OPERATORS)</b>		
Characteristics of a strong response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Network staffing projections for each year are robust and aligned with the educational program and are conducive to the school's success.</li> </ul>		
<b>Initial Application Review</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/> Meets or Exceeds Standard	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Partially Meets Standard</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet Standard
<b>Strengths</b>		<b>Page</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The described network staffing projections are aligned with the educational program and should provide ample support for the success of the school's core academic program.</li> </ul>		pp. 94-97, Budget pg. 318
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subgroup populations (i.e. ESL, SPED) have coordinators to oversee programming at the network level.</li> </ul>		pp 94
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The 5-year network staffing projection is clearly aligned with the roles and job descriptions found throughout the application.</li> </ul>		pp. 94-95
<b>Concerns/Questions</b>		<b>Page</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Middle and High Schools (6-12) have content-specific instructional coaches for ELA, Math, Science and Social Studies. Elementary schools have one instructional coach. How and why is there a change from the elementary to Middle/High School model for coaching supports?</li> </ul>		pp. 94
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you determine the number of SPED teachers/assistants and the type of special education services needed to fully implement IDEA? Electives/SPED/Intervention teachers are combined in one category; thus, specific SPED staffing is unclear.</li> </ul>		pp. 95
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The outlined staffing formula does not provide dedicated personnel to support intervention and RTI support for students. How will you effectively implement RTI per TDOE mandates? The elementary's RTI program was discussed during the interview with limited information around changes to their middle/high program. The applicant should expound upon it here.</li> </ul>		pp.95
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By SY 2022-23, instructional coaches' caseloads will grow to 13 teachers with a maximum of 14 versus 4 teachers in SY 2020-21. How will the instructional coaches build instructional knowledge and capacity to support 13-14 teachers of various content and grade bands? What supports will be provided? How will the network ensure all schools are receiving similar quality of support and how will the leadership team measure the effectiveness of that support?</li> </ul>		pp. 96
<b>Final Application Review</b>		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Meets or Exceeds Standard</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet Standard
<b>Strengths</b>		<b>Page</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Network staffing projections are clearly outlined and align with the educational program and budget.</li> </ul>		pp. 94-95, 153-155
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The staffing plan to serve the needs of special populations is adequate. Additionally, the intervention staffing, and programming are appropriate to meet students' needs.</li> </ul>		pp.159, 168-169

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The applicant will provide supports to assist the instructional coaches as their caseloads increase. Supports will include regular observations with feedback, shadowing, meeting discussions based on observations, and feedback from instructional coaches. Support will be led by the Academic Coordinators and the Director of Academics.</li> </ul>	pp. 159
<b>Concerns/ Questions</b>	<b>Page</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Although the applicant met the standard, the applicant added roles to the organizational chart but did not fully outline responsibilities.</li> </ul>	pp. 309

**SECTION 2 – OPERATIONS PLAN AND CAPACITY**

**2.16 PERSONNEL/HUMAN CAPITAL – STAFFING PLANS, HIRING, MANAGEMENT, AND EVALUATION (FOR EXISTING OPERATORS)**

Characteristics of a strong response:

- Chosen leaders have necessary qualifications, competencies and capacity for their assigned roles.
- Identifies strategies for supporting school leadership.
- Recruitment and hiring strategy, criteria, timeline, and procedures are likely to result in a strong staff and meet requirements for being “highly qualified” and are well suited to the school.
- Effective planning for unsatisfactory leadership/teacher performance and turnover.
- The organizational charts (**Attachment G**) provided clearly delineate the roles and responsibilities of – and lines of authority and reporting among – the Board, staff, any related bodies (such as advisory bodies or parent/educator councils), and any external organizations that will play a role in managing the school.

**Initial Application Review**

Meets or Exceeds Standard     
  **Partially Meets Standard**     
  Does Not Meet Standard

**Strengths** **Page**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The network has presently identified the key roles and responsibilities of network and school-based leadership: Executive Director, Assistant Executive Director, Director of Academics, Special Education Coordinator, PowerSchool and Engagement Coordinator, Human Resources and Federal Programs Manager, Principal, Academic Coordinator, Dean of Students and Counselors.</li> </ul>	pp. 98-103
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The applicant already has in place a “Grow Your Own” program to identify and promote talent from within the network; several candidates have been identified to fill leadership positions at the proposed school. The network invests resources in classroom teachers to build leadership capacity in an effort to retain and transition staff into leadership roles within the network. Key roles and responsibilities for each position are clearly defined and cross-training tasks and duties are outlined for select leadership roles.</li> </ul>	pp. 102-105
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The application outlines a comprehensive “Grow Your Own Administration” pipeline plan which provides opportunities for advancement into leadership at every level, including the Executive Director position. In order to create an internal plan for leadership succession at the highest level, the organization has already hired an Assistant Executive Director.</li> </ul>	pp. 98-104
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The applicant describes a varied and detailed recruitment strategy likely to net positive results and provides evidence of the network’s prior success in retaining staff members (85% at other school sites since opening).</li> </ul>	pp. 105-107

**Concerns/Questions** **Page**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some key leadership positions are currently vacant, how will the executive leadership ensure new hires have the capacity to effectively fill the positions (ex. Human Resource and Federal Programs Manager). In some instances, preferred requirements/qualifications were not outlined. Additionally, if the identified people are new to leadership positions, the applicant would benefit from describing a plan of support necessary to ensure success in their new roles.</li> </ul>	pp. 98-103
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Although outlined on pgs. 98-103, the organizational chart on attachment G does not delineate the roles and responsibilities. Additionally, external organizations playing a role in managing the school are not represented.</li> </ul>	Att. G
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The counselor’s role did not reference all of her mandated duties under the TN State Board of Ed Counseling rubric. How will the network ensure appropriate staffing, time, resources and support to address the roles and responsibilities outlined by the state board of education?</li> </ul>	pp.103

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What specific academic and non-academic data will be used to determine satisfactory vs unsatisfactory leadership performance?</li> </ul>	pp. 108
<b>Final Application Review</b>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Meets or Exceeds Standard</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets Standard
<input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet Standard	
<b>Strengths</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Network level leadership has been clearly identified. The applicant will develop tailored plans of support that will address any identified needs for those in leadership roles, whether filled or vacant. The applicant outlined the evaluation tools for each leadership position, which uses academic and non-academic data to assess performance.</li> <li>The applicant provided more detailed accounting of the counselor’s mandated duties and support system. The Network’s plan to ensure supports to high school students by school counselors as outlined in the TN Comprehensive School Counseling Model Implementation Guide.</li> </ul>	<p>pp. 163, 167-172</p> <p>pp. 163-169</p>
<b>Concerns/ Questions</b>	
N/A	
<b>Page</b>	

## SECTION 2 OPERATIONS PLAN AND CAPACITY

### SUMMARY COMMENTS

Each part of your summary comments should, in a few sentences, provide a clear understanding of your overall evaluation of the proposal as well as the most significant strengths and/or weaknesses. The summary comments for each section should support your rating for the section and should not be simply cut and pasted from your subsection analysis.

Summary Rating for Entire Operations Plan and Capacity		
Initial Application Review		
<input type="checkbox"/> Meets or Exceeds Standard	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Partially Meets Standard</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet Standard
<p><b>Strengths:</b>                      The Operations Plan and Capacity section of the application provides a detailed plan for growth at both the school and network level. The network has clearly outlined its organizational capacity to support multiple school sites and detailed staffing plans to support its overall focus. The governance structure is clearly delineated with roles and responsibilities described at both network and school levels. The governance structure allows for input from all levels of stakeholders and seeks to provide critical oversight over academic programming with the addition of the Director of Academics, ELL Coordinator and SPED Coordinator at the network level.</p> <p><b>Weaknesses/Questions:</b>                      The rationale for expanding is not supported by the metrics identified for growth by the network. Parent involvement in the governance structure is unclear. During the interview, it was stated each school would have an advisory council; however, the organizational chart only identifies one advisory council with limited parent participation (1 parent representing two schools and 1 Cordova parent to be selected at later date). Network staffing allocations are of concern. Proposed school-based staffing allocations do not seem adequate to support struggling students, ELL, and SWD via intervention and RTI programming. Additionally, with the plethora of duties assigned to the school counselor throughout the application, it is unclear how this role will be supported by network personnel to ensure students have access to SEL supports and other counseling related activities outlined in the TN State Board of Ed’s Counseling Policy.</p>		
Final Application Review		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Meets or Exceeds Standard</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet Standard
<p><b>Strengths:</b>                      MSE has clearly delineated its network level leadership and has outlined plans to support and develop executive leadership as they assume new roles as the network expands. Additionally a process to evaluate the performance of those in leadership using academic and nonacademic data has been developed. The role of the school counseling department has been expanded and aligned with the expectations identified in the TN Comprehensive School Counseling Model Implementation Guide.</p> <p><b>(If Any) Weaknesses:</b></p>		

**SECTION 3 – FINANCIAL PLAN AND CAPACITY**

<b>3.1 &amp; 3.2 CHARTER SCHOOL FINANCING</b>		
Characteristics of a strong response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Budget worksheet (<b>Attachment O</b>) contains assumptions and reasonable budget numbers that reflect rent, utilities, maintenance, insurance and build-out costs.</li> <li>• Detailed budget assumptions that include the impact of the anticipated number of students who receive free or reduced-price lunches.</li> <li>• Detailed financial procedures, policy, or other reasonable assurance that the proposed school will have sound systems and processes in place for accounting, payroll, and independent annual school-level and network-level (where applicable) financial and administrative audits.</li> <li>• Sound criteria and procedures in place for selecting contractors for any administrative services.</li> <li>• Complete, realistic, and viable start-up and five-year operating budgets.</li> <li>• Detailed budget narrative (<b>Attachment P</b>) that clearly explains reasonable, well-supported revenue and cost assumptions, including grant/fundraising assumptions, identification of the amounts and sources of all anticipated funds, property, or other resources (noting which are secured vs. anticipated, and including evidence of firm commitments where applicable).</li> <li>• Sound contingency plan to meet financial needs if anticipated revenues are lower than estimated.</li> <li>• Individual and collective qualifications for implementing the financial plan successfully, including capacity in areas such as financial management, fundraising and development, and accounting.</li> </ul>		
<b>Initial Application Review</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/> Meets or Exceeds Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet Standard
<b>Strengths</b>		<b>Page</b>
N/A		
<b>Concerns/Questions</b>		<b>Page</b>
N/A		
<b>Final Application Review</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/> Meets or Exceeds Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet Standard
<b>Strengths</b>		<b>Page</b>
N/A		
<b>Concerns/ Questions</b>		<b>Page</b>
N/A		

**SECTION 3 – FINANCIAL PLAN AND CAPACITY**

<b>3.3 FINANCIAL PLAN (FOR EXISTING OPERATORS COMPLETING SECTIONS 3.1 AND 3.2)</b>		
Characteristics of a strong response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Detailed description of the fiscal health of other schools in the network (if applicable) including a comprehensive description of any schools on fiscal probation or in bankruptcy.</li> <li>▪ Complete, realistic, and viable budget for the network (<b>Attachment Q</b>). The budget includes reasonable, well-supported revenue and cost assumptions, including grant/fundraising assumptions, identification of the amounts and sources of all anticipated funds, property, or other resources (noting which are secured vs. anticipated) and including evidence of firm commitments where applicable.</li> <li>▪ Sound contingency funds to meet financial needs if anticipated revenues are lower than estimated.</li> </ul>		
<b>Initial Application Review</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/> Meets or Exceeds Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet Standard
<b>Strengths</b>		<b>Page</b>
N/A		
<b>Concerns/Questions</b>		<b>Page</b>
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<b>Final Application Review</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/> Meets or Exceeds Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet Standard
<b>Strengths</b>		<b>Page</b>
N/A		
<b>Concerns/ Questions</b>		<b>Page</b>
N/A		

### SECTION 3 – FINANCIAL PLAN AND CAPACITY

<b>3.4 FINANCIAL PLAN (FOR EXISTING OPERATORS NOT COMPLETING SECTIONS 3.1 AND 3.2)</b>		
Characteristics of a strong response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Budget assumptions and reasonable budget numbers that reflect rent, utilities, maintenance, insurance and build-out costs of facilities.</li> <li>• Detailed financial procedures, policy, or other reasonable assurance that the proposed school will have sound systems and processes in place for accounting, payroll, and independent annual school-level and network-level (where applicable) financial and administrative audits (both school level and network level).</li> <li>• Complete, realistic, and viable start-up and five-year operating budgets for network and individual schools (<b>Attachment Q</b>) that align with the academic plan and operations plan included in the application. If applicable, clearly describes the fiscal health of any other schools in the network and any fiscal issues the schools have faced (bankruptcy, fiscal probation, etc.).</li> <li>• Detailed budget narrative (<b>Attachment P</b>) that clearly explains reasonable, well-supported revenue and cost assumptions, including grant/fundraising assumptions, identification of the amounts and sources of all anticipated funds, property, or other resources (noting which are secured vs. anticipated, and including evidence of firm commitments where applicable).</li> <li>• Sound contingency plan to meet financial needs if anticipated revenues are lower than estimated. Particularly important is Year 1 cash flow projections and contingency, as well as a 24-month cash-flow projection.</li> <li>• Individual and collective qualifications for implementing the financial plan successfully, including capacity in areas such as financial management, fundraising and development, and accounting.</li> <li>• Detailed budget is inclusive of both individual schools and network.</li> <li>▪ All cost revenues and all major expenditures are accounted for and are realistic.</li> </ul>		
<b>Initial Application Review</b>		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Meets or Exceeds Standard</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet Standard
<b>Strengths</b>		<b>Page</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The network does not rely on non-guaranteed funds to support its key academic programming. It has developed a conservative budget that may lead to long term sustainability.</li> </ul>		pp. 111,317
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intact systems are in place to ensure adequate and sound systems for accounting and payroll.</li> </ul>		pp. 111
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The network appears to be financially healthy and per attached financial records will have a strong balance even after absorbing start-up cost for the proposed school. The applicant has maintained a budget surplus which can be used in the event of cash shortfalls during start-up.</li> </ul>		pp. 112
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The applicant provides complete, realistic, and viable five-year operating budgets for the network and the individual school in Attachments O and Q.</li> </ul>		pp,309-316
<b>Concerns/Questions</b>		<b>Page</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The funding allocated for supplies and materials does not seem adequate enough to support an extensive STEM curriculum within the classroom.</li> </ul>		pp. 319, 324
<b>Final Application Review</b>		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Meets or Exceeds Standard</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet Standard
<b>Strengths</b>		<b>Page</b>
Applicant satisfied the requirement in the initial round of the application.		
<b>Concerns/ Questions</b>		<b>Page</b>
N/A		



## SECTION 4 – PORTFOLIO REVIEW/PERFORMANCE RECORD

<b>4.1 PAST PERFORMANCE (FOR EXISTING OPERATORS)</b>		
Characteristics of a strong response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Applicant provides clear, compelling evidence of successful student outcomes for each school in the network (Portfolio Summary Template, <b>Attachment S</b>) and evidence that the operator’s schools are high performing and successful by meeting state standards and national standards (<b>Attachment R</b>).</li> <li>▪ Graduation rates are indicative of highly successful graduation strategies (if applicable, <b>Attachment R</b>).</li> <li>▪ Applicant selects one or more of the organization’s consistently high-performing schools and provides a detailed narrative outlining primary causation of high-quality, high-performing status, along with description of challenges met and overcome.</li> <li>▪ Applicant selects one or more of the organization’s low or unsatisfactorily performing schools and provides a detailed narrative outlining primary causation of low performing school(s) in the network and specific strategies outlined that corrected, or will correct, the deficiencies (if applicable).</li> <li>▪ Latest audit (<b>Attachment U</b>) shows no findings and is prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting and auditing principles as is outlined in Tennessee law.</li> <li>▪ Organization is in good standing wherever they have located schools, and there have been no revocations, litigation that has resulted in negative outcomes, non-renewals, or financial, organizational, or academic deficiencies (if applicable, <b>Attachments T and V</b>).</li> </ul>		
Application Review		
<input type="checkbox"/> Meets or Exceeds Standard	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Partially Meets Standard</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet Standard
Strengths		Page
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The applicant has a demonstrated record of success at the middle and high school levels. In particular, the school ranks highly among schools in the district according to the SCS School Performance Framework. The school also has strong TVAAS performance and has high graduation rates.</li> </ul>		pp. 114, 118-122
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school isn’t satisfied with its ACT performance, which slightly surpasses the district. There are plans in place to help raise scores to meet and/or exceed state and national levels.</li> </ul>		pp. 125
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The applicant provides two sound examples of how it has made a comeback from two historic challenges. In both cases, they effectively demonstrated an ability to assess the data and to implement the structures and systems necessary to address the root causes. There needs to be additional discussion around current challenges (see below).</li> </ul>		pp. 130-133
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The network has performed at high academic levels compared with other middle and high schools in the SCS district in the areas of math proficiency, ELA proficiency, TVAAS, ACT average, graduation rate, and ready graduate percentage.</li> </ul>		pp. 120-123 Pgs. 125-126
Concerns/Questions		Page
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the applicant description of its academic programming and its determination of it being a success, the applicant fails to analyze the performance of its elementary school. Although the school has only served k-5 since the 18-19 school year, the students did complete the state assessments and have TCAP &amp; TVAAS data that can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the elementary academic program.</li> </ul>		pp. 114
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The applicant only uses the SCS School Performance Framework rating when determining whether it is successful and does not support its claim of being “consistently successful” with quantitative data in the narrative. Additionally, although comparisons are made against other SCS schools, the applicant does not compare its performance to statewide and national averages. Evaluation of AP Exam performance is also excluded.</li> </ul>		pp.114, 118-120
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In its comparative evaluation of its performance data against other SCS schools, the applicant does not utilize all of the most current data available. The 2019 data is omitted several times throughout the application, including the updated data for its network of schools; therefore, some claims made by the</li> </ul>		pp. 118-126

network may not hold true when current data is applied. The school needs to update their data throughout the entirety of the application to reflect the most recent testing periods to represent their current academic performance against district, state, and national standards.		
<b>Final Application Review</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/> Meets or Exceeds Standard	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet Standard
<b>Strengths</b>		<b>Page</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The applicant adequately analyzes performance trends of its elementary school using 18-19 TNReady data to compare it to district and state averages. Data reflects higher averages at MSE in Math only as compared to the district and state.</li> </ul>		pp. 182
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To assess its performance in comparison to nationwide and state performance data, the applicant added ACT and graduation rate data as compared to state and national averages. The graduation rate was considerably higher than the state or nation.</li> </ul>		pp. 201, 202.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The applicant updated 2019 performance data in comparative form throughout the document. Data provided to demonstrate performance include the SCS Performance Framework data , ACT performance, and graduation rates</li> </ul>		throughout pp.192-204
<b>Concerns/ Questions</b>		<b>Page</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In the amended application, the applicant continues to use only SCS School Performance Framework rating when determining whether it is successful and does not support its claim of being “consistently successful” with quantitative data in the narrative. Additionally, although comparisons are made against other SCS schools, the applicant does not compare its performance to statewide and national averages.</li> </ul>		pp. 192 – 203,