

Charter School Renewal Application

Charter Renewal Application #000827

STEM School Highlands Ranch

Location Code: 5259

Submitted To:

Douglas County Colorado
Choice Programming
Douglas County School District

373 Inverness Parkway Suite 203
Englewood, CO 80112
Phone: 720-433-1265

Submitted By:

Matt Cartier

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GENERAL

A. School Information

School Type: **Elementary / Middle / High**
 Grade Levels: **[K, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12]**
 School District: **Douglas County, Colorado**
 Neighborhood / Community: **Highlands Ranch**
 Organization Type:
 Sponsoring Entity: **Non-profit Organization**
 Address: **8773 S Ridgeline Blvd. , Highlands Ranch, CO 80129**
 Phone: **303-683-7836**
 Fax: **303-683-2099**
 Web Site: **<https://www.stemk12.org>**
 Calendar Type: **- 180 instructional days**
 Educational Service Provider: **(None)**

B. Primary Contact Person

Name: **Matt Cartier**
 Mailing Address:
 Mobile Phone:
 Alternate Phone:
 Email: **matt.cartier@kosonschools.org**
 Current Employer:

C. Attendance Projections

Grade Level	Year 1 Enrollment		Year 2 Enrollment		Year 3 Enrollment		Year 4 Enrollment		Year 5 Enrollment	
	Min.	Max.								
K	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
1	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
2	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
3	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
4	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125
5	120	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125
6	120	180	130	180	145	180	160	180	170	180
7	140	180	150	180	160	180	170	180	180	180
8	150	180	160	180	170	180	180	180	180	180
9	130	170	140	170	150	170	160	170	165	165
10	130	170	140	170	150	170	160	170	165	165
11	130	160	140	160	150	160	160	160	165	165

12	130	160	140	160	150	160	160	160	165	165
Total	1575	1850	1650	1850	1725	1850	1800	1850	1840	1850

D. Board Members

Name	Title	Contact Information	Current Employer
Cartier, Matt	President	P: 303-683-7836 M: E: Matt.Cartier@kosonschools.org	KOSON Schools (STEM School Highlands Ranch)
Davison, Linda	Board Member	P: M: E: Linda.Davison@stemk12.org	Retired lawyer
Gustafson, Carla	Board Vice Chairperson	P: M: E: carla.gustafson@stemk12.org	Engineering Manager, Merrick & Company
Horne, Michelle	Board Secretary	P: M: E: Michelle.Horne@stemk12.org	Freelance Science Writer and Editor, Self employed
Kalra, Ishmeet	Board Member	P: M: E: Ishmeet.Kalra@stemk12.org	Legislative Aide/Constituent Outreach (part time), State Representative Marshall
Lukez, Rudy	Board Member	P: M: E: Rudy.Lukez@stemk12.org	Director of Product Marketing for Cloud SaaSERP and SCM Applications, Nextworld
Quigley, Erin	Board Member	P: M: E: Erin.Quigley@stemk12.org	Director of Charter Design and Replication, The Wildflower Foundation
Reyna, Kelly	Board Chairperson	P: M: E: kelly.reyna@stemk12.org	Senior ELEVATE Advisor, CCC Intelligent Solutions
Shick, Greg	Board Member	P: M: E: Greg.Shick@stemk12.org	Director of Analytics, Charles Schwab
Theret, Ryan	Board Treasurer	P: M: E: Ryan.Theret@stemk12.org	Enterprise Banker for Colorado, KeyBank

Basic School Information & Required Attachments

1. Basic School Information

Name: STEM School Highlands Ranch

Mission: Never Stop Innovating

Vision: We envision a world of exponential possibilities where every child develops the innate knowledge, skills, creativity and character to thrive, lead and succeed in an ever-changing future.

The following information reflects the enrollment and demographic data from the last day of school during the 2022-23 school year.

Total Enrollment: 1476

Free or Reduced Lunch: 93 students, representing 6.3% receive Free or Reduced Price Lunch

Special Education Students: 123 students, representing 8.3% are Special Education Students

ELD Students: 89 students, representing 6.0% are English Language Development Students

Attachments

Section 1: Basic School Information

1.1	2.1.1 Enrollment 5.25.23	Johnson, Karen, 8/30/23 7:51 PM	PDF / 27.518 KB
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2. Required Attachments (may add as link to a Google Drive)

Master List of All Attachments:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1O3Y74O6OoSVFPpdtvLJkYIfTEIyoFrIJ/view?usp=sharing>

[1.1 Enrollment 5.25.23](#)

[2.1.2 Mission, Vision, Values and Beliefs](#)

[2.2 Unified Improvement Plan](#)

[2.3 Assessments per Grade Level](#)

[2.4.1 School Performance Framework 2023](#)

[2.4.2 School Performance Framework 2022](#)

[2.5.1 Current Budget & 5 Year Projections](#)

[2.5.2 Cash Flow Forecast](#)

[2.6.1 Parent Satisfaction Survey 2022-23](#)

[2.6.2 Parent Pulse Survey, December 2022](#)

[2.6.3 Student Advisory Survey Report 2022-23](#)

[2.6.4 Student Advisory Survey Data Report 2021-22](#)

[2.6.5 2022-2023 STEM Staff Survey](#)

[2.7 Areas of Strengths and Growth](#)

[2.8.1 Accomplishments and Achievements](#)

[2.8.2 School Profile of Graduates 2022-23](#)

[2.8.3 School Profile of Graduates 2023-24](#)

Attachments

Section 2: Required Attachments (may add as link to a Google Drive)

2.1	2.7 STEM Strengths and Growth	Johnson, Karen, 8/31/23 10:41 PM	PDF / 44.273 KB
2.2	2.8.1 Accomplishments and Achievements	Johnson, Karen, 8/31/23 6:51 PM	PDF / 112.597 KB
2.3	2.8.3 School Profile of Graduates 2023-2024	Johnson, Karen, 8/30/23 9:39 PM	PDF / 91.271 KB
2.4	2.8.2 School Profile of Graduates 2022-2023	Johnson, Karen, 8/30/23 9:38 PM	PDF / 91.271 KB
2.5	2.6.5 2022-2023 STEM Staff Survey	Johnson, Karen, 8/30/23 8:55 PM	PDF / 7.904 MB
2.6	2.6.4 Student Advisory Survey Report 2021-22	Johnson, Karen, 8/30/23 8:55 PM	PPTX / 3.99 MB
2.7	2.6.3 Student Advisory Survey Report 2022-23	Johnson, Karen, 8/30/23 8:54 PM	PDF / 1.813 MB
2.8	2.6.2 Parent Pulse Survey, December 2022	Johnson, Karen, 8/30/23 8:54 PM	PDF / 926.479 KB
2.9	2.6.1 Parent Satisfaction Survey 2022-23	Johnson, Karen, 8/30/23 8:53 PM	PDF / 5.014 MB
2.10	2.5.2 Cash Flow Forecast	Johnson, Karen, 8/30/23 8:38 PM	XLSX / 13.796 KB

2.11	2.5.1 Five Year Budget	Johnson, Karen, 8/30/23 8:37 PM	XLSX / 22.019 KB
2.12	2.4.3 School Performance Framework 2019	Johnson, Karen, 8/30/23 8:29 PM	PDF / 417.422 KB
2.13	2.4.2 School Performance Framework 2022	Johnson, Karen, 8/30/23 8:28 PM	PDF / 426.694 KB
2.14	2.4.1 School Performance Framework 2023	Johnson, Karen, 8/30/23 8:10 PM	PDF / 414.196 KB
2.15	2.3 Assessments per Grade Level	Johnson, Karen, 8/30/23 8:09 PM	PDF / 112.212 KB
2.16	2.2 Unified Improvement Plan 2022-2023	Johnson, Karen, 8/30/23 8:08 PM	PDF / 234.776 KB
2.17	2.1.2 Mission, Vision, Values	Johnson, Karen, 8/30/23 7:52 PM	PDF / 120.888 KB

1. Mission and Key Design Elements

1.1.1 Mission & Key Design Elements

a) State the school's vision and mission.

Mission: STEM School Highlands Ranch mission is to “Never Stop Innovating.”

Vision: We envision a world of exponential possibilities where every child develops the innate knowledge, skills, creativity and character to thrive, lead and succeed in an ever-changing future.

Values: We will Never Stop Innovating by:

- Creating an environment of respect and success in an exponentially changing world.
- Nurturing unlimited human potential.
- Leveraging the power of collaboration through continuous inquiry and experimentation.
- Optimizing resources and operations.
- Impacting the world ethically and positively.
- Reinventing and adapting relentlessly.

b) Describe the school's educational philosophy.

Educational Philosophy: STEM School Highlands Ranch is dedicated to cultivating a robust foundation of academic excellence that empowers all students. Our commitment goes beyond the fundamentals, as we create a dynamic academic ecosystem that nurtures achievement among a diverse array of learners.

At the heart of our educational philosophy lies Problem-Based Learning (PBL), which serves as the catalyst for inspiring both our students and staff. Our pedagogical approach revolves around putting students at the center, with a relentless focus on tackling real-world problems that are relevant to their lives. This journey of discovery and growth entails a systematic process—students delve into a problem, ask probing questions, engage in comprehensive research, engage in creative brainstorming, rigorously test their ideas, analyze outcomes, and take impactful action, all while aligning with state standards.

Throughout this transformative learning process, we actively promote collaboration, critical thinking, creativity, and responsible technology usage. Each instructional unit encourages these essential skills, fostering a dynamic environment where students can thrive. Moreover, we prioritize partnerships with industry leaders, enabling our students to explore novel avenues for collaboration and discover innovative solutions.

In our educational paradigm, students assume the role of the captain of their own educational voyage. We provide them with meaningful learning opportunities that empower them to continually seek fresh perspectives, challenge themselves, and push their boundaries, thus becoming lifelong learners and creators of change.

Distinctives: Unique characteristics that define STEM School Highlands Ranch:

- **We are more than a school.** We are a think tank, a learning lab and a catalyst for creativity.
- **We see school differently.** We inspire and challenge our students.
- **We are more than just STEM.** We infuse exploration, inquiry and discovery into all subjects
- **We foster innovation.** We create a culture of safe failure and fearless innovation.
- **We empower students.** We empower students to push their own unique boundaries.

- **We see teachers as catalysts.** We spark interest in STEM and learning at an early age.

c) What are the school's key design elements? Emphasize the unique and innovative features of the educational program.

School Design: STEM students master fundamental academic skills while staying curious and engaged in the learning process.

Examples of Academic Mastery

- *Exceptional Mastery in Math, Literacy, and Science:* Our students consistently exceed expected benchmarks in these critical subjects throughout their K-12 journey.
- *Outstanding Advanced Placement (AP) Success:* Our students excel in AP exams, consistently achieving results that surpass the national average.
- *Superior Standardized Test Performance:* Our students consistently achieve above-average scores on standardized tests, showcasing their exceptional academic preparation.
- *Exceptional College Acceptance Rates:* A high percentage of our graduates gain admission to prestigious colleges and universities, a testament to their academic excellence and preparedness.
- *Unwavering Classroom Engagement:* A culture of active and enthusiastic learning permeates our classrooms at every grade level, fostering a vibrant and dynamic academic environment."

Examples of our Problem Based Learning Design

- *Kindergarten:* Young learners explore the real-world issue of food scarcity, understanding the connection between our expanding population and food resources, while contemplating future solutions.
- *Second Grade:* Students delve into the concepts of supply, demand, and scarcity by supporting animal shelters. They even put their entrepreneurship skills to use, crafting and selling homemade dog treats to raise funds for the Dumb Friends League.
- *Fourth Grade:* Collaborating with zoologists and the Denver Zoo, students investigate the disparities between animals in captivity and their natural habitats, gaining valuable insights into wildlife conservation.
- *Fifth Grade:* Guided by aerospace engineers, students harness beginner CAD modeling software to design innovative space exploration solutions that benefit Earth.
- *Sixth Grade:* Ocean conservation becomes a central focus as students delve into the correlation between Colorado's actions and oceanic challenges. They receive expert feedback throughout their research and solution development, working to safeguard our oceans.
- *Seventh Grade:* Inquisitive minds ponder biodiversity loss, conducting comprehensive background research to explore various species, problems, and 'what if' scenarios.
- *High School Leadership:* A STEM senior's remarkable achievement is celebrated as they ascend to the role of Technology Student Association National President, showcasing our commitment to excellence in technology education.

- *Ninth Grade English:* Students collaboratively investigate methods to enhance the integration of new technology at STEM, all while considering crucial aspects of data privacy.
- *High School:* Our older students employ their communication and critical thinking skills to address pressing issues related to teen mental health, crafting meaningful solutions through collaboration.
- *School-Wide Standards-Based Learning:* From Kindergarten to 12th grade, we embrace standards-based learning, empowering students to monitor their progress and master the Colorado Academic Standards, fostering a culture of continuous growth and achievement.

Examples of Differentiated instruction

- *Tailored Course Placement:* Students are empowered to enroll in courses that align with their unique needs and abilities, even if those classes are above their grade level.
- *Customized Assignments and Projects:* Classroom instructors adapt assignments and projects to accommodate both high-achieving and lower-achieving students, ensuring that each student's learning needs are met.
- *Inclusive Course Access:* There are no barriers or gatekeeping when it comes to course selections, allowing students to explore a diverse range of academic options.
- *Elementary Classroom Differentiation:* In the elementary years, students benefit from differentiated instruction within the classroom, fostering a supportive learning environment.
- *Middle School Advancement:* Middle school students have the opportunity to enroll in high school-level classes, promoting academic growth and challenge.
- *Adaptive Math Progression:* Elementary students fluidly transition across grade-level math courses, based on their individual aptitudes, ensuring they receive the appropriate level of challenge.
- *Concurrent Enrollment Opportunities:* High school students can take advantage of Concurrent Enrollment courses, available both on campus and at various off-campus institutions, broadening their academic horizons.
- *Maximizing Unique Strengths:* All students are engaged in projects designed to help them leverage their distinctive strengths and talents, promoting personal and academic growth.

Enrichment and Co-Curricular Opportunities

- *K-5 Grade Opportunities:* STEM offers an array of programs that encompass arts and crafts, Battle of the Books, board games, chess, choir, dance, First LEGO League, fencing, theater, and yoga.
- *Secondary Student Opportunities:* STEM offers a diverse range of enriching opportunities, including involvement in BEST Robotics, Brain Bowl, broadcasting, chess, comedy/improv, cubing, CyberPatriot, DECA/FBLA, First Robotics Competition (FRC), tabletop and roleplaying games, Girls' Persist leadership, MathCounts, Ornithology, podcasting, Project 7, Science Olympiad, SteMed/HOSA Future Health Professionals, Technology Student Association (TSA), theater productions, ULA Student Rocket Payload competition, and UNICEF. In addition, high school students can actively engage in CHSAA (Colorado High School Activities Association) sports, including Boys & Girls Soccer, Co-Ed Cross Country, Boys & Girls Volleyball, Boys Golf, eSports, Boys & Girls Basketball, Boys Lacrosse, and Co-Ed Track and Field, fostering a well-rounded educational experience.

Attachments

Section 1: 1.1 Mission & Key Design Elements

1.1 [1.1.1 Strategic Plan](#)

Johnson, Karen, 8/31/23 10:39 PM

PDF / 63.095 KB

2.1.2 Curriculum

a) Describe the school's curriculum and how it is aligned to the state standards.

At STEM School Highlands Ranch, we offer a rigorous and relevant STEM-focused core education that seamlessly integrates essential skills and concepts across literacy, mathematics, social studies, and science. Our approach emphasizes Problem-Based Learning, harnessing technology, critical thinking, and collaboration to engage students in real-world issues.

Our curriculum extends beyond the core subjects, encompassing computer science, art, music, health, economics, psychology, financial literacy, physical education, engineering, and World Language. These additional areas enhance the Colorado Academic Standards, promoting practical application of knowledge in both core and elective classes.

We are a standards-based learning school, utilizing Mastery Connect to help students, teachers, and parents track progress toward mastery of educational standards.

Our science and engineering curriculum benefits from community partnerships, offering students exposure to authentic scientific and engineering experiences, including field excursions and contributions to scientific projects. Engineering principles are seamlessly integrated into literacy, science, and math at all levels, fostering problem-solving skills. Students learn the Engineering Design Process through coding and early programming using Lego curriculum and robotics kits. We provide a wide range of educational pathways, including twenty-seven Advanced Placement courses, thirty-one continuing education courses, and three distinct graduation pathways through our P-TECH program, which partners with local colleges and industry leaders.

Our offerings include:

- AP Courses: Students can earn college credit through partner colleges.
- Concurrent Enrollment (CE): Students can take college courses alongside high school classes, with weighted grades.
- P-TECH Pathways: Innovative partnerships with schools, colleges, and industry employers allow students to earn both a high school diploma and an industry-recognized associate degree, while gaining valuable workplace skills. STEM offers P-TECH Pathways in Robotics and Automation, Cybersecurity, and Game Design and Development.

b) Describe the school's process and rationale for reviewing and revising the curriculum as needed.

The STEM School Curriculum Committee, comprised of staff, teachers, administrators, parents, and board members, meets regularly to oversee ongoing curriculum updates. Each monthly session features presentations from content representatives, covering scope and sequence, problem-based learning integration, assessment examples, and future requirements. The committee analyzes data, including enrollment figures for upper-level courses, concurrent enrollment, and achievement data across all grade levels and subjects.

In the 2023-24 school year, our focus remains on Standards-Based Learning, a strategy introduced during the 2022-23 academic year.

The Curriculum Committee has established policies governing curriculum decisions, instructional material selection, handling of controversial topics, and opt-out procedures for families. Annually, the committee collaborates with the Director of Curriculum and Instruction, school-level directors, logistic leaders, and staff to ensure transparent communication with families regarding curriculum matters.

c) Describe the school's Social Emotional Learning Curriculum and its implementation.

STEM School Highlands Ranch values and supports the social and emotional health of our students by offering, teaching and embedding the following SEL programs:

- *Access Classes for Secondary Students:* Classes meet twice a week for 70 minutes with SEL and executive functioning mini lessons twice per month offering space for quarterly assemblies and community building opportunities take place as well as opportunities for students to retest, seek services from specialists, and work time.
- *MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Supports):* Implementation framework for maximizing the selection and use of evidence-based prevention and intervention practices along a multi-tiered continuum that supports the academic, social, emotional, and behavioral competence of all students.
- *Restorative Practices:* Students are explicitly taught restorative practices strategies and encouraged to engage with their trusted adults and peers in an effort to repair relationships that have been damaged.
- *Second Step:* K-5 curriculum that integrates social-emotional learning (SEL) in classrooms and schoolwide in order to decrease problem behaviors, promote school success, self-regulation, and a sense of safety and support for students.
- *Merrell's Strong Kids:* K-12 curriculum to promote consistent knowledge and language that will expand as students' progress through their education and increase emotional intelligence, which is vital for executive functioning skills.
- *SMARTS Executive Functioning:* Teaches students the necessary executive functioning skills needed to adapt to the tasks, challenges, and situations they are faced with.

Attachments

Section 2: 1.2 Curriculum

2.1	2. 1.2.4 Curriculum Committee Report 2022-2023	Johnson, Karen, 9/1/23 5:04 AM	PDF / 3.01 MB
2.2	2. 1.2.7 BOD Policy Opt Out	Johnson, Karen, 8/31/23 3:20 AM	PDF / 53.129 KB
2.3	2. 1.2.6 BOD Policy Controversial Issues	Johnson, Karen, 8/31/23 3:20 AM	PDF / 53.129 KB
2.4	2. 1.2.5 BOD Policy Selection of Instructional Materials	Johnson, Karen, 8/31/23 3:16 AM	PDF / 91.324 KB
2.5	2. 1.2.3 Curriculum Report 2021-2022	Johnson, Karen, 8/31/23 3:02 AM	PDF / 3.42 MB

2.6	2. 1.2.2 2023-2024 Middle School Academic Planning Guide	Johnson, Karen, 8/31/23 3:01 AM	PDF / 243.191 KB
2.7	2. 1.2.1 2023-2024 High School Academic Planning Guide	Johnson, Karen, 8/31/23 3:00 AM	PDF / 557.346 KB

3.1.3 Assessment

a) Describe the school's assessment systems and how they are used to improve instructional effectiveness and student learning.

STEM School Highlands Ranch uses a comprehensive and thorough assessment suite to remain in compliance, inform instructional practice and to partner with our STEM families.

- *Kindergarten:* Teaching Strategies Gold
- *Grade 2 and 5 / CogAT* Grades 3-8: Colorado Measure of Academic Success (CMAS) each spring in the areas of English Language Arts and Mathematics.
- *Grades 3-8:* MAP (NWEA)
- *Grades 5,8, and 11:* CMAS in science each spring
- *Grades 4, 7, & 11:* The social studies exam (MAPS) is given every three years.
- *Grades 7-9:* The PSAT 8/9 is the “practice” SAT test for 7th and 8th graders.
- *Grade 10:* PSAT 10.
- *Grades 9-12:* AP College Board Exams
- *Grades K-12:* Students are given the iReady three times per year, to progress monitor reading and math skills for all grade levels (K-12).
- *Grades K-12:* (ELL) - ACCESS Exam in January.

b) Describe how the school uses other data (qualitative and quantitative) to evaluate the effectiveness of the academic program.

STEM School recognizes that our focus on student achievement and growth is an ongoing process that drives future instructional priorities and goals. Data is shared with classroom teachers, staff, and parents in order to align goals of the Unified Improvement Plan. The School Accountability Committee (SAC) provides feedback and input to administration regarding data results and the UIP. We invest in our staff with purposeful current best practice and data driven professional development.

Attachments

Section 3: 1.3 Assessment

3.1	3.1.3.3 Student Achievement Results Demographic Populations 2022-23	Johnson, Karen, 8/31/23 6:53 PM	PDF / 966.194 KB
3.2	3. 1.3.2 Student Achievement Data Presentation Fall 2022	Johnson, Karen, 8/31/23 3:47 AM	PDF / 2.028 MB
3.3	3. 1.3.1 Student Achievement Data Presentation Fall 2023	Johnson, Karen, 8/31/23 3:46 AM	PDF / 1.86 MB

4.1.4 Organizational Capacity

a) Describe the school's organizational structure and roles of responsibilities of key personnel. Be sure to include the following in your response:

i) Process and system for decision-making;

The KOSON Schools Board of Directors has one employee, the Chief Innovation Officer, who oversees the Shared Services Team and the Executive Director of the school. The Shared Services Team consists of the Chief Financial Officer, Chief Operations Officer, IT Director, Human Resource Manager, and Communications Director.

The Executive Director of STEM School Highlands Ranch provides oversight at the building level, including the School Level Building Directors (Elementary School Director, Middle School Director, and High School Director), the Director of Student Support and Director of Curriculum and Instruction.

Beginning this year the school will participate in a yearly strategic thinking and budgeting process that aligns yearly operational plans to the school strategic and financial plan. These operational plans are used to create next year's staffing needs and operational budget.

ii) Process and system for evaluating school leaders;

STEM School believes that all employees are in a constant state of learning and developing. As a professional learning community, we uphold the belief that no employee is ever "done." Instead, each of us possesses strengths and deltas (areas of needed improvement) that are constantly evolving. In order to continuously improve teaching and learning as well as the organization's overall sustainability, it is necessary to provide moments of reflection and evaluation that encourage each employee to build on his/her strengths and mediate his/her deltas.

Every school leader, including the CIO, is evaluated annually. The process includes: a yearly review of job description, the development of annual goals connected to operational plan and professional skills, a Mid-year review, an end of year self-assessment, an end of year evaluation which leads to next years goals.

iii) Process and system for evaluating and coaching teachers; and

Evaluation systems and processes are communicated with clarity and frequently are embedded into professional development days throughout the year.

- Teachers complete a Self Assessment, utilizing the [Summative Rubric](#). Teachers and coaches work together to draft a growth plan for the year based on reflection and professional growth plans.
- The Director of Curriculum and Instruction and Teacher Support Team (support teachers in focusing and meeting their goals. They are not evaluators but partners in providing support and growth for all teachers.
- Each veteran teacher and administrator is evaluated by their supervisor on a formal basis at least once per year following a student-centered coaching/evaluation process. Informal observations will take place at least four informal observations with feedback. Each new teacher (Year 1 and 2) completes two formal observations and four informal observations each year.
- Each certified staff member and supervisor will meet each semester to discuss progress toward goals. Documentation using the Sample Summative Evaluation will be done. There should be evidence indicating successful implementation of each of the standards on the rubric which includes teacher choice regarding evidence examples.

iv) Process and system for staff professional development.

At STEM School Highlands Ranch, nurturing a dynamic and effective learning environment hinges on the continuous professional growth of our dedicated educators.

Our approach to professional development is tailored to meet the unique needs of our teachers. To ensure relevance and effectiveness, we annually survey our teaching staff to ascertain their professional development needs. Armed with this invaluable input, our Director of Curriculum and Instruction meticulously crafts a year-long professional development plan that aligns with both school-wide objectives and individual teacher goals.

At the outset of each academic year, our staff is introduced to the professional development goals, with the flexibility to select their own development pathways based on personal objectives and areas of improvement.

We allocate approximately 10 dedicated school days to professional development, providing ample opportunities for teachers to earn renewal hours by demonstrating proficiency in Teacher/SSP standards. For our new teachers, we offer a comprehensive teacher onboarding program, offering vital support during their initial days and weeks of employment.

Our commitment to continuous improvement extends to weekly staff meetings and training sessions that cover various topics, including Student Success (MTSS, 504, GT, IEP), Curriculum, and Culture Building, all underpinned by data-driven instruction principles.

Our Professional Development support system includes:

- **Teacher Mentor Program:** New teachers are paired with experienced mentors, fostering monthly meetings and reciprocal observations to facilitate growth.
- **Teacher Support Team:** Each teacher collaborates with a dedicated Support Team Member to set professional goals, gather data, plan lessons, provide student support, and access necessary resources.
- **Department/Grade Level Teams:** Team leaders guide cohesive groups that define their goals and purpose, collaboratively using data-informed instruction and student achievement data to drive success.

Attachments

Section 4: 1.4 Organizational Capacity

4.1	4. 1.4 KOSON Organizational Chart	Johnson, Karen, 8/31/23 10:47 PM	PDF / 26.78 KB
4.2	4. 1.4.4 STEM Shared Services/Executive Director Evaluation Rubric	Johnson, Karen, 8/31/23 3:57 AM	PDF / 112.988 KB
4.3	4. 1.4.3 STEM Administrator Evaluation Rubric	Johnson, Karen, 8/31/23 3:57 AM	PDF / 112.988 KB
4.4	4. 1.4.2 STEM Teacher Evaluation Rubric	Johnson, Karen, 8/31/23 3:56 AM	PDF / 225.521 KB
4.5	4. 1.4.1 Communications Pathway	Johnson, Karen, 8/31/23 3:56 AM	PDF / 137.17 KB

2. School Climate & Culture

1.2.1 School Climate & Culture

a) Describe how the school promotes a culture of learning, scholarship and high expectations. Be sure to include the following in your response:

i) How the school's overall learning environment aligns with its educational program. (Evidence may include, for example, student led organizations, student achievements and recognition, adult learning communities, levels of disciplinary referrals, class and staff attendance, and participation in school events and activities);

At STEM School Highlands Ranch, our Character Formula promotes Honesty, Integrity, Respect, Responsibility, and Empathy, fostering self-care and community well-being. Students embrace these values through service, advocacy, and academics. Student input is central to our culture. Quarterly open forums encourage students to discuss school culture and improvements. Students also participate in hiring, community service, and recognition programs. Our school culture thrives through clubs and service organizations, and students can initiate new ones. Student empowerment is core to our model, enabling students to drive their innovative learning and personal growth. We have systems and structures in place to support this. We emphasize positive school culture, built on relationships, trust, and collaboration, shaping students' identities and purpose through teamwork and collective thinking.

We regularly assess our school culture through surveys:

- Parent, student, and staff surveys
- TLCC Results (administered every other year)

Based on this data, we make ongoing adjustments to our Strategic Plan, Unified Improvement Plan, and Professional Development needs.

ii) How the school supports the social and emotional health of its students; and

STEM School Highlands Ranch, we prioritize the social and emotional well-being of our diverse student body. We achieve this through:

- ACCESS Advisory Groups
- Sources of Strength
- MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Supports)
- Restorative Practice
- Second Step
- K-5 SEL curriculum integration.
- Our professional development aligns with the CASEL framework, focusing on self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.

Our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee, comprising board members, parents, staff, and students, is dedicated to curriculum alignment, equitable achievement, inclusive hiring, and robust parent engagement. We leverage community data to tailor our DEI goals to our campus needs.

iii) How the school supports staff in creating a classroom environment conducive to student learning.

As a school we believe in the Gradual Release of Responsibility when designing our units and our

classroom environments. Teachers work to provide Direct Instruction, which includes modeling and the use of mentor texts. Then students are given the opportunity to explore and practice concepts in small groups. Teachers provide opportunities for formative assessments and feedback.

iv) Provide and discuss TLCC survey data.

STEM School Highlands Ranch values feedback for continuous improvement:

- *Staff Feedback:* Quarterly surveys inform staff climate and culture, guiding professional development. TLCC survey data also contributes to decision-making.
- *Parent Input:* Fall and spring Parent Surveys gather feedback on academics and operations, with results reviewed by the STEM Board of Directors and SAC.
- *Student Recommendations:* Students in 2022-23 provided insights on Budget Allocation, DEI, Mental Health, Standards-Based Learning, and Communication, considered for implementation by the administration.
- *Data-Driven Improvement:* TLCC survey data identifies strengths (Managing Student Conduct, Instructional Practices, Facilities, and Community Support) and areas for improvement (New Staff Onboarding, Professional Development, Leadership, and Time).

b) Safety and security

At STEM School Highlands Ranch, the safety and security of our students and staff are paramount. We maintain a collaborative partnership with the Douglas County Sheriff's Office, our dedicated School Resource Officer, and the school administration to ensure an unwavering commitment to safety. Our entire staff undergoes comprehensive safety protocol training.

i) Safety and security plan

STEM School Highlands Ranch trains and maintains 100% compliance for safety each year. The leaders are trained in FEMA response protocols and an Incident Commander is assigned to a leader to be transferred when emergency personnel arrive. In addition, STEM School Highlands Ranch has created a CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) that is trained in the appropriate processes and procedures related to school safety. This team will collaborate during all Standard Response Protocol training and all staff members will have mandatory training in the Standard Response Protocol.

The current plan is reviewed each semester to maintain the latest in response to any threat, whether human or environmental. STEM School Highlands Ranch works directly with the Douglas County Sheriff's Office and the Emergency Management Division for drills. STEM School Highlands Ranch follows the guidelines set by DCSD.

ii) EMCR plans

The Emergency Management Crisis Response Team is made up of administration, leadership, and staff. A specific Emergency Management Plan is developed in collaboration with the Leadership Team at the school site and includes collaboration with the district personnel. The team outlines specific safety plans related to the evacuation routes for each classroom and area of the building, along with maps and Emergency Response notebooks for each meeting location, that include information specific to the Standard Response Protocols in place.

iii) District security trainings

All staff members are required to complete the mandatory training modules required by the district each year. In addition, all staff members attend a district-led professional development session provided by DCSD at the beginning of the school year. Throughout the school year, aspects of the safety training are

communicated to staff, students and parents through the newsletter. In addition, feedback is provided after the completion of each drill that highlights areas of strength and areas that may need improvement or follow up. The school communicates monthly drills and all emergency situations to the district security team.

iv) District Data privacy training

We are committed to ensuring that student and staff data is protected, and that we are in compliance with the Colorado Student Data Transparency and Security Act ([HB 16-1423](#)) and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ([FERPA](#)). All staff members are required to complete the mandatory training modules required by the district each year related to data privacy. In addition, the school's IT Director and staff provide specific training throughout the year related to confidentiality of student data and student privacy.

Attachments

Section 1: 2.1 School Climate & Culture

1.1	2. 1.2.1 TLCC Results and Summary	Johnson, Karen, 9/1/23 3:53 AM	PDF / 94.168 KB
1.2	2. 2.2.2 Graduation Rates	Johnson, Karen, 8/31/23 4:34 AM	DOCX / 58.06 KB
1.3	2. 2.2.1 Student Attendance Reports	Johnson, Karen, 8/31/23 4:12 AM	PDF / 38.167 KB

2.2.2 Family & Community Engagement

a) Explain how the school promotes family and community involvement. Be sure to include:

i) Specific examples;

ii) Evidence of how plans have been realized; and

iii) Plans to improve the school’s partnerships with families and community.

At STEM School Highlands Ranch, we foster active parent leadership and engagement through our School Accountability Committee (SAC) and Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). These groups offer leadership opportunities for families, enhancing engagement to align with our mission.

- Our families commit to 30 hours of annual service, providing opportunities for them to connect with students and staff through various activities such as review panels, after-school programs, driveline assistance, classroom volunteering, and event planning. Effective communication between families and staff is essential for sustaining family engagement.
- We employ Canvas as our Learning Management System for real-time access to student grades, teacher feedback, and class updates for grades 3-5. Grades K-2 utilize Google Classroom.
- STEM administration, in collaboration with SAC and PTO, has established processes and aligned with the school communications team to keep families engaged throughout the year. SAC and PTO members are integral to our communication plan for introducing new initiatives.
- We encourage parental participation in events like Coffee with the Directors, the Family Buddy Program, STEM Fest, and STEM Blast Off. School communication channels include a weekly e-newsletter, social media accounts (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat), and email updates.

Our website serves as a central hub for operational information, enrichment, calendars, and athletics.

ii) The various partners involved in each of the initiatives described; and

STEM School Highlands Ranch has forged partnerships with educational institutions and industry professionals. These collaborations play a pivotal role in advancing our mission and educational goals. Our STEM Career Discovery program is a prime example, connecting K-12 students with industry experts to tackle real-world problems, explore their interests, and potentially secure internships or jobs after graduation and during college. Our partnership with The Coding School allows high school students to take Quantum Coding and AI independent study courses, enabling extended learning opportunities alongside MIT students. Concurrent enrollment partnerships with Arapahoe Community College, Aurora Community College, CU Denver, Red Rocks Community College, Community College of Denver, Metro State, and Colorado State University offer our students college-level courses aligned with their career aspirations, fostering a pathway to college and career success. STEM School covers tuition costs for these courses.

ii) How they align with the school's education program.

At STEM School Highlands Ranch, we offer Concurrent Enrollment (CE) classes, allowing high school students to take college-level courses with guaranteed transfer credit within the Colorado public university system. Our partnership with ACC, Metro, and UC-Denver allows us to provide an extensive array of CE courses, even enabling students to earn an Associate's of Arts Degree while in high school. Specific pathways in Biology – Pre Med, Computer Science, Aerospace, and Biomedical Engineering provide automatic transfer eligibility to Colorado Colleges.

In addition to our core subjects like coding, engineering, and the arts, we offer various academic-related supplemental programs on our campus. Field excursions are integrated into our Units of Study, offering students immersive experiences in the real-world work of scientists, engineers, historians, and mathematicians. These purposeful excursions maximize community partnerships and enrich student learning.

Examples of field experiences include visits to Anderson Farms, Denver Zoo, Denver Museum of Nature and Science, Cave of the Winds, Fiske Planetarium, Butterfly Pavilion, Cheyenne Mountain Zoo, and more, tailored to each grade level.

Our middle school students have the opportunity to attend optional field excursions such as overnights at Keystone Science School, 7th grade Sea Camp, and the 8th grade Boston/DC trip.

We believe in the value of extracurricular activities and offer over 60 after-school programs, engaging over 1,200 students during the 2022-2023 school year. These programs cover a wide range of interests, from arts and crafts to robotics and leadership. We aim to make extracurriculars accessible by waiving student activity fees for families in need.

Our student-led organizations include Student Council and Student Leadership/Advisory, and our students actively participate in area extracurricular conferences and competitions.

We celebrate student achievements through various means, including Spartan of the Month, Honor Roll, website and social media recognition, STEM character shoutouts, membership ceremonies, and opportunities for students to speak at industry events. Notable accolades include the Outstanding Character Award, Achievement Awards, and sports awards.

Attachments

Section 2: 2.2 Family & Community Engagement

2.1	2.2.2.4 STEM School Enrichment Participation Totals	Johnson, Karen, 8/31/23 6:57 PM	PDF / 58.182 KB
2.2	2.2.2.3 Staff Leadership Opportunities	Johnson, Karen, 8/31/23 5:45 AM	PDF / 62.548 KB

3. Board Governance

1.3.1 Board Capacity

a) Provide evidence that the board governs the school effectively. Be sure to include the following in your response:

i) Evidence that the board has the appropriate skills (legal, financial, educational, community, etc.) and experience to govern the school effectively;

STEM School Highlands Ranch [nine-member all-volunteer Board of Directors](#) dedicates enormous time and talent to our school. The Board is thoughtful, talented and reflective of internal and external metrics to measure successful governance and oversight of the school.

The STEM Board has three Class A members and six Class B members, each serving a 3-year term. Class A members are STEM parents, elected by the parent community with one Class A member elected each year. Class B members are identified and selected through a needs assessment of current board talents and selection of candidates that appropriately meet the needs of the school. Currently, seven of the nine board members are STEM parents. The Board has made significant progress in recruiting and stabilizing the membership, with all seats filled and Community members with financial and legal expertise. The Board also includes members with expertise in education, educational advocacy, and personnel and business management.

Community Members:

Kelly Reyna: Kelly is a Senior Advisor that works with automotive collision repair facilities across the country. She works with shop owners and general managers to identify opportunities for business growth, process implementation, and product training. Kelly has a Bachelor's degree in Psychology that has served her well in a career working with people in a management role. Kelly serves as Board President.

Carla Gustafson: Carla is an Engineering Manager with a consulting engineering firm and her engineering experience involves custom equipment and nuclear facility upgrades in support of the Department of Energy and National Nuclear Security Administration. Carla has a Chemical Engineering degree from Colorado School of Mines. Carla serves as Board Vice-President.

Ryan Theret: Ryan is the Enterprise Banker for Colorado for KeyBank. Ryan brings over 16 years of corporate banking experience with a focus on middle-market, large corporate and private equity structured finance lending. Ryan has a Finance degree from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo. Ryan serves as the Board Treasurer.

Ishmeet Kalra: Ishmeet is an active member in the larger community, serving as a parent representative in Douglas County School District's Strategic Plan Leadership Cohort, Gifted Education Advisory Council, and Equity Advisory Council. Professionally, Ishmeet has a Master's degree in Molecular Biology & Microbiology. Ishmeet serves as Co-Secretary.

Linda Davison: Linda is a retired lawyer that most recently worked in the Dever City Attorney's Office, Employment Law Unit. She specialized in government employment matters and has expertise in the American with Disabilities Act. Linda's Law degree is from the University of New Mexico School of Law.

Rudy Lukez: Rudy is currently the Director of Product Marketing for Cloud SaaS ERP and SCM Applications with Nextworld. He has previously held other product leadership positions at Oracle for Cloud applications and SMB marketing and the JD Edwards ERP product line spanning eleven years; supporting emerging technologies and their stories for internet and cloud-based products across business software applications; system infrastructures and new computer trends involving IoT, mobility; and social media and analytics. Rudy has a degree in Mechanical Engineering and Computer Science. Rudy also serves on the Douglas County Long Range Planning Committee.

Parent Members:

Michelle Horne: Michelle was elected as a Parent member in spring 2021. Professionally, Michelle taught middle school science for close to 10 years outside of Colorado. She has also worked in teacher training, mentoring student teachers, and freelance science writing and editing. Michelle has a Bachelor's degree in Biology, minor in Chemistry, and a Masters of Arts in Teaching Secondary Science. Michelle serves as Secretary.

Greg Shick: Greg was voted in by the Board to fill a vacant Parent member seat in spring 2023. Greg has spent his professional career working in data, starting with consulting, then AT&T, and now as Director of Analytics for Charles Schwab in asset and risk management. Greg also serves on the advisory board for the University of Denver's Business Information & Analytics Department. Greg has degrees in Statistics (DU) and Finance (UCD).

Erin Quigly: Erin was elected as a Parent member in spring 2023. Erin's professional experience includes high school language arts teacher, principal and executive director of a charter school. She co-founded a high school in New York City that continues to thrive. Currently, she is a consultant for principals nationwide. Erin has a Bachelor's degree in English Literature and Education, and a Master's degree in Education.

During the 2022-2023 school year, the STEM Board implemented Board on Track as a data management tool for meeting agenda, minutes and documents. The tool supports the Board in ensuring the agendas and meeting minutes are communicated to the public in a timely manner. The tool includes systems for setting goals and progress monitoring, to support Strategic Planning, Board assessments, committee work, and CIO evaluation. Board on Track also provides governance coaching and Board training resources implemented in our yearly calendar, member onboarding, and member training. Significant work has been done in the last year and half to move the board towards operating as a strategic board that holds the CIO accountable to the strategic priorities of the school.

On the [Board of Directors webpage](#), biographies of each board member and their roles are described. All STEM Board bylaws, resolutions, oaths, conflict of interest forms, and adopted policies are listed and accessible to the public. In addition, all past meeting agendas and minutes are available through links on the website. The STEM Board policies have been reviewed by the Bylaw Committee and the latest adopted policies include the following:

- [Policy on Board Training](#)
- [Conflict of Interest Policy](#)
- [Complaint and Whistleblower Policy](#)
- [Curriculum Program and Selection Policy](#)
- [Equal Access Policy](#)
- [Facilities Use Policy](#)
- [Information Technology Policy](#)
- [Technology Device Monitoring Policy](#)
- [Policy Adoption Policy](#)
- [Policy on Application of DCSD Policies](#)
- [Student Freedom to Organize and Equal Access Policy](#)

- [Viewpoint Neutrality Policy](#)
- [Policy on Opt-In/Opt-Out](#)
- [Policy on Student Data and Privacy](#)
- [Policy on Electronic Device Monitoring](#)
- [Policy on Enrollment](#)

In addition, the STEM School Highlands Ranch has reviewed each DCSD policy and ensured that waivers are submitted to the district, and communicated on the website for public view.

ii) Information on the board's priorities for recruitment of additional members and how the board recruits and selects new board members;

The Board actively recruits new parent-board members each year through our annual Board Elections that are conducted through a secure third-party platform. In many cases, the Board recruits leaders and participants from within our Parent Teacher Organization, and School Accountability Committee. In the upcoming year, STEM will add the Advancement Committee which will provide many opportunities for parents to participate, increasing our recruiting potential. The Board also actively recruits Class B (Community) member candidates through a needs-assessment each year.

The STEM School Highlands Ranch Board has worked with the Colorado League of Charter Schools and Board on Track for annual Board training, generally held in June. In this capacity, the Board has undergone a needs assessment and self-assessment to map out areas of strength and areas for future growth. The most recent Board assessment report is attached for reference.

iii) Evidence that the board sets school goals aligned to the mission;

The Board has a variety of committees that include representation from various members. The 2023 -2024 school year will focus on subcommittees and/or representation in the following areas: Governance, Finance, Academic/Curriculum, Development and Fundraising, Compliance, CIO Support and Evaluation, Strategic Plan Update, DEI Committee Representative, SAC Representation. Past committees included: Personnel, Safety and Wellness, Fundraising, Strategic Planning, Curriculum, DEI, Governance, IT, Finance and Legal committees that have provided guidance in program assessment and renewal processes.

Our strategic plan for the school clearly defines short and long term goals aligned to the mission.

iv) Evidence that the board regularly monitors progress relative to its priorities;

The Board utilizes an annual meeting calendar to ensure that the Board is adequately informed. Examples of these updates include Information Technology update on systems and security, Communication update, Academic update with Unified Improvement Plan, and Strategic Plan update.

Annual Board training is held in June to align with the start of member terms, with Parent member elections held in April/May. As part of Board training, the board identifies key actions/priorities for the following school year. At the start of the school year, the Board confirms the Board Committees and members of each Committee. The board has periodically scheduled working sessions to monitor progress toward identified goals as outlined in the strategic plan. Most recently, the Board has focused on reviewing and updating the Board policy documents. Significant time is dedicated each school year to progress monitor the identified goals in our strategic plan.

v) Evidence that the board has adequate numbers and regularly has a quorum, according to its bylaws; and

The Board is fully staffed with three Parent members and six Community members. The Board meets on

the first Tuesday of each month except for July. Occasionally, the meeting date is changed to the following week to accommodate the travel schedule of our volunteer board. 100% of our board meetings achieve a quorum of five members. The board fully meets all requirements for a charter school board.

Minutes and agenda are posted on the Board page of the stemk12.org website. The Board of Directors utilizes Board on Track to ensure that meeting agendas and minutes are public in a timely manner.

vi) Evidence that the board evaluates the school leader(s), school business administrator, and/or management organization on an annual basis and holds these individuals accountable for meeting specified goals.

The Board conducts an annual review of the CEO/CIO. For the school year 2022-2023, STEM was led by an Interim CEO. The Board personnel committee utilized the Board on Track evaluation system to receive feedback from the STEM Board and staff, and prepare a written performance review for the Interim CEO. The Board initiated a CEO Search Committee that worked to develop the Chief Innovation Officer roles and responsibilities which were approved by the Board and posted to fill the role. As part of the onboarding of the new CIO, a CIO Support and Evaluation committee is working to define key performance indicators based on the Strategic Plan. The committee will use the Board on Track evaluation tool to prepare customized goals and metrics, to form the basis for performance feedback and annual performance evaluation of the CIO in the spring.

Attachments

Section 1: 3.1 Board Capacity

1.1	3. 1.3.1 CEO_CIO Evaluation Process	Johnson, Karen, 8/31/23 6:23 AM	PDF / 70.271 KB
1.2	3. 1 .3.1 KOSON Board Assessment Fall 2023	Johnson, Karen, 8/31/23 5:52 AM	PDF / 284.444 KB

4. Access & Equity

1.4.1 Special Education

a) Describe the steps the school takes to identify students in need of Special Education services.

STEM School Highlands Ranch enrolls students with mild or moderate needs through the enrollment process. Once an offer is extended to a student, the school reviews the student's IEP in order to determine if FAPE (Free Access to Public Education) can be met. Parents and at times the sending school are a part of reviewing the information.

STEM School Highlands Ranch students are identified through the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) process if not already identified as qualifying for special education. The MTSS process is led by a full-time expert (MTSS Coordinator) and additional members of the Student Support team to provide support for Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 interventions. The MTSS Coordinator works directly with both the classroom teachers and paraprofessionals. Through constant dialogue with the student, teacher, and family, students are recommended for further evaluation when students appear to not be responding to early intervention services or are not progressing adequately towards closing the gaps in their academic or social-emotional learning.

b) Describe the special educational programs and range of services the school provides for identified students

At STEM School Highlands Ranch, our Learning Support Services team, led by a Director of Student Support, includes various professionals such as IEP case managers, occupational therapists, speech-language pathologists, social workers, learning specialists, and psychologists. Currently, we serve 120 students on IEP with 11 providers. Our staff-to-student ratios, for instance, speech and language, occupational therapy, and psychology, are maintained at one professional per every 30 students, ensuring specific support for accessing the curriculum. All special education staff hold CDE licenses with endorsements for their respective support areas. Our school nurse, an RN, manages medically necessary plans for students. Faculty and staff undergo onboarding, including compliance competencies for supporting students on IEP, managing medical plans, and mandatory reporting for child protection.

In terms of our programming plan, STEM School Highlands Ranch employs a combination of pull-out and push-in models for special education services. We prioritize Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) principles, striving to minimize classroom removals and provide support within the classroom setting whenever possible. This approach enhances the classroom teacher's ability to support all students effectively. The collaborative problem-based learning environment allows students to contribute creative solutions to significant problems, fostering skill development and growth.

Our educators and support specialists deliver integrated support within the general education classroom, helping mild and moderate students on IEP bridge learning gaps. Students maximize contact time with their classroom teachers while remaining in the general education setting with their peers. They can also access the Learning Support Services room for assessment accommodations, direct service minutes tailored to individual needs, and additional academic support during study hall.

To ensure accommodation fidelity, general education teachers monitor accommodations, while case managers and administrators verify their proper use. We maintain an accommodation tracking system that facilitates progress monitoring of students' goals, allowing us to gather teacher feedback on student growth.

c) Submit a copy of the school's written Rtl or MTSS procedures.

STEM School Highlands Ranch has regular student data meetings across grade teams. These meetings, attended by all grade-level classroom teachers as well as specialists, are an opportunity for teachers to bring forward a student about whom they have concerns and work as a team to develop a plan for addressing these concerns. Data brought includes observations, interim assessments, READ Act data, classroom assessments, and anecdotal records. A plan for in-classroom intervention is developed and implemented for 6 weeks, at which point a student is brought back to the group for conversation around the next steps. Interventions available include but are not limited to: differentiation of grade-level instructional materials, , small group counseling groups (i.e.: friendship, anxiety, emotional regulation groups), behavioral supports, etc. If these interventions are not successful, additional interventions and strategies are implemented. If these are still not effective, then the team decides as a group whether or not to bring the student up for consideration for a special education or Section 504 evaluation. In addition to this monitoring of individual interventions, we look at schoolwide data to determine if additional programming is needed.

MTSS: At STEM School, a layered continuum of prevention-based supports is in place to improve the outcomes of every student. The framework of a Multi-Tiered System of Support encompasses support of Health & Wellness, Behavior, Family & Community, Academic and Mental Health. The following chart displays the flagship school MTSS process.

Attachments

Section 1: 4.1 Special Education

1.1	4. 1.4.1.2 Tiered Supports	Johnson, Karen, 8/31/23 6:05 AM	PDF / 26.893 KB
1.2	4. 1.4.1.1 MTSS Process	Johnson, Karen, 8/31/23 6:05 AM	PDF / 92.571 KB

2.4.2 English Language Learners

a) Describe the steps the school takes to identify English Language Learners (ELL).

Students, whose parents have indicated that they are multi-lingual learners on their enrollment forms, will go through a screening process at the beginning of the year to determine eligibility into the ELD Program. Once eligibility is determined, parents are notified of their student's designation (NEL, LEP or Non-Qualified). All new students to STEM School Highlands Ranch are screened for languages spoken in the home in addition to English.

NEP students (non-English proficient) are taught basic English communications skills. LEP (Limited English proficient) students are taught Cognitive Academic English language skills.

Both NEP and LEP are required to take the ACCESS test (Federally mandated) each January. Scores on the test help to determine a student's progress through the ELD program. Services are given 3-4 times a week by the ELD teacher. NEP students will learn basic English, while LEP students will learn Academic English in accordance with the curriculum taught in the classroom.

The ACCESS test will help to determine if students are ready to move to Monitor Status. Monitor year-one and year-two students are monitored on how they are doing with their coursework and are seen on an

as-needed basis by the ELD teacher as indicated by the student's progress. An open line of communication is continuously taking place between the ELD teacher, the student, the teacher(s) and the parents.

ELD instruction focuses on listening, speaking, reading and writing.

b) Describe the programs and range of services the school provides for identified ELL students.

Students learning English as a second language or third language will be provided intensive support with an expert teacher for at least 45 minutes each day as well as specific support throughout the school day. Word walls with academic words combined with visual picture representation will serve MLL students as well as all students through Universal Design.

The identified teacher with endorsements also serves as a liaison for compliance. This leader will guide STEM School Highlands Ranch to best position ELL students for rapid growth and to measure equal to other students for academic growth.

Multilanguage-identified homes will be provided with extensive support and partnership with the school to accelerate the proficiency of English language learners as the student acquires comfort with academic English. Problem-based learning in a social context creates multiple opportunities to practice language skills around highly motivating open inquiry.

English Language Development: At STEM School Highlands Ranch, we are committed to following all compliance processes mandated by Douglas County School District for English Language Development. As a charter school, our approach includes:

- Adhering to all hiring practices and guidelines outlined by the Colorado Department of Education and Office for Civil Rights when selecting staff responsible for English Language Development.
- Ensuring that all our English Language Development (ELD) Teachers possess a valid CDE license with either a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Bilingual Education Specialist Grades K-12 or Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Education Grades K-12 endorsement at the time of hire (or providing documentation of obtaining this endorsement within two years of hire), with continuous maintenance throughout their employment with the charter school.
- Meeting or surpassing the minimum district staffing ratio for ELD teachers, or providing a rationale for our current ratios, ensuring one ELD teacher for every 30 identified English Learners (NEP, LEP, FEP Year 1 and Year 2).
- Abiding by all federal, state, and district English Language Development laws, procedures, and guidelines during the identification and service provision for English Learners. This encompasses compliance with Title III, ELPA, OCR regulations, including assessment protocols, student observations, and redesignation practices.
- Following all District English Language Development procedures and guidelines for the support and service of English Learners, encompassing direct and indirect services, Title III, and ELPA.
- Guaranteeing that ELD Teachers participate in all mandatory ELD training sessions, such as quarterly professional development, annual WAPT, and ACCESS 2.0 trainings, as well as transition meetings.
- Offering access to both formal and informal training on ELD services, related services, assessments, and identification/eligibility processes to support the educational access of identified English language learners to our charter school's unique curriculum.
- Providing access to consultation resources, including the English Language Development coordinator, ELD Team Lead, and/or ESL Charter Lead, to ensure compliance with federal and state laws and district procedural guidelines.
- Ensuring access to testing and instructional materials specifically designed for English Language Development programming services.
- Participating in an annual audit of our school's English Language Development programming to

maintain accountability and compliance.

English Language Development Compliance Plan: At STEM School Highlands Ranch, our English Language Development Compliance Plan includes:

- **Staffing:** Currently, we employ 2 full-time equivalent (FTE) ELD teachers who diligently attend all required ELD and WIDA online training sessions. They play a pivotal role in ensuring compliance with both district and federal policies and laws. Additionally, they oversee all testing processes, ELLPs assessments, and the annual school audit.
- **Clustering and Co-Teaching:** Our K-5 ELD students are thoughtfully clustered to promote co-teaching for enhanced language support and instruction. This approach fosters collaboration between ELD specialists and general education teachers. Small group instruction is tailored to students' ability levels, determined by ACCESS and W-APT data. We prioritize supporting students during the literacy block to minimize disruptions to their regular classroom instruction.
- **Focused Instruction:** Our ELD program emphasizes writing instruction, with a focus on Basic English for NEP students and Cognitive Academic English for LEP students. We recognize that writing is often the final domain in the ACCESS test where students gain proficiency. By concentrating on writing and incorporating academic vocabulary from science and social studies, we empower our students to progress rapidly through the ELD program while simultaneously enhancing their academic studies.
- **Identification and Services:** For the 2023-24 school year, we have identified and are providing services to the following students:
 - LEP (Limited English Proficiency): 42 students
 - NEP (Newcomer English Proficiency): 5 students
 - MY1 (Monitor Year 1): 18 students
 - MY2 (Monitor Year 2): 12 students"

Attachments

Section 2: 4.2 English Language Learners

2.1	4.2.4.2 ELD Compliance Plan	Johnson, Karen, 8/31/23 6:35 AM	PDF / 68.597 KB
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5. Fiscal Performance

1.5.1 Financial Framework

a) Based on historical financial reporting:

i) Provide an explanation for any Near Term or Sustainability Ratios that did not meet standard; and

At STEM School Highlands Ranch, our commitment to sustainability and financial health is evident in our consistent performance across various benchmarks. We consistently meet or surpass sustainability ratios, as illustrated in the attached chart. Our track record demonstrates strong and healthy benchmarks, as assessed through annual reviews by Douglas County School District (DCSD).

Furthermore, we adhere to industry standards beyond DCSD's assessments. For instance, we closely monitor Salary and Benefits to Net Revenue, ensuring that it remains below 70% of Net Revenue, a practice we have maintained over the years. Our bond payment commitments to Net Revenue consistently fall within the 10-15% range, with STEM consistently residing in the lower range of this net indicator, specifically at 9-11%.

Additionally, we fulfill our 2014, 2019, and 2021 Bond covenant requirements year after year, exceeding these stipulations. These requirements encompass aspects such as days cash on hand, liquidity, and proper insurance coverage. Each month, STEM diligently reports to the EMMA exchange to address any reportable factors that might jeopardize our bond requirements.

Our commitment to maintaining key indicators that meet or exceed expectations is unwavering. We prioritize compliance with DCSD standards, bond holder expectations, and our own internal reviews to ensure our financial health remains robust."

This revised statement succinctly conveys STEM School Highlands Ranch's dedication to sustainability and financial responsibility while emphasizing the consistent achievement of key benchmarks.

ii) Provide a plan with a timeline for improving any ratios that do not meet standard. N/A

Attachments

Section 1: 5.1 Financial Framework

1.1	5. 1.5.1 DCSD STEM Ratios	Johnson, Karen, 9/1/23 4:20 AM	XLSX / 13.929 KB
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2.5.2 Financial Audit

a) If applicable, provide an explanation for any notes to financial statements.

STEM School Highlands Ranch did not have audit notes or exceptions for the most recent audit year of 2021-2022.

Audit Reports are available on the STEM financial transparency page. The 2022-2023 Audit will be posted on the financial transparency prior to final renewal review late September, early October 2023.

Attachments

Section 2: 5.2 Financial Audit

2.1	5. 1.5.2.2 2022 Audit	Johnson, Karen, 8/31/23 6:48 AM	PDF / 544.837 KB
2.2	5. 1.5.2.1 2021 Audit	Johnson, Karen, 8/31/23 6:48 AM	PDF / 498.685 KB

3.5.3 Budget Information

22-30.5-110. 2(b) A charter school renewal application submitted to the chartering local board of education shall contain: (b) A financial statement that discloses the costs of administration, instruction, and other spending categories for the charter school that is understandable to the general public and that will allow comparison of such costs to other schools or other comparable organizations, in a format required by the state board of education. Included each year in the audit is a separation of support cost and instructional cost. See audit links.

a) Submit a budget summary covering projected sources of revenue and planned expenditures for the next 5 years. If requesting an expansion to the school's enrollment, please provide two five-year budgets:

5 Year attached budget summary includes the following projections:

- No Increase to PPR (per DCSD requirements STEM used a flat PPR of 10,004.30 for all 5 years)
- STEM reduced MLO 1% each year as Douglas County continues to grow MLO continues to be a diluted amount.
- STEM conservatively anticipates growth at 75 students per year maxing out at 1800 in year 5. Current student capacity within our buildings is 1854 students.
- STEM is evaluating all cost including staffing (e.g. teacher to student ratio)
- Each Year STEM will continue to use economic factors, student count and key ratios when evaluating the budget.

i) Budget Summary 1 - without expansion for Years 1-5: (See attached link)

ii) Budget Summary 2 - with expansion for Years 1-5: N/A

If the school is planning to expand in grades or facilities, provide an additional budget narrative reflecting the expansion. N/A

c) For the next 5 years, provide a detailed itemized budget narrative and rationale for budget line items that have significant changes from year to year (such as planned facilities expansion, capital investments, or any other significant changes.) N/A

d) Please prepare a Cash Flow Schedule for the first renewal school year only. (see attached link)

Attachments

Section 3: 5.3 Budget Information

3.1	2.5.2 Cash Flow Forecast	Johnson, Karen, 8/31/23 6:51 AM	XLSX / 13.796 KB
3.2	2.5.1 5 Year Budget	Johnson, Karen, 8/31/23 6:50 AM	XLSX / 22.019 KB

6. Five Year Planning

1.6.1 Enrollment

a) Based on the school's current enrollment, provide a five-year enrollment chart by grade level, in the prescribed format below. Note that schools must allow for the natural progression of students from year-to-year; they may not account for year-to-year attrition in their enrollment charts. If the school expects an increase in enrollment over the next charter term, provide that information in the chart. If your charter is requesting a grade expansion, this chart will serve as the expected enrollment chart of the school over the next five years.

Five Year Enrollment Chart provided in the "General" section.

b) If the school is requesting an increase in enrollment, provide evidence of a plan to obtain an approved amendment to the current Traffic Management Plan, approved by the appropriate local jurisdiction, along with a proposed timeline.

STEM School Highlands Ranch is not requesting an increase in enrollment over the 1850 enrollment number that it has had in the past. We are working to get back to that number for this facility.

Attachments

Section 1: 6.1 Enrollment

1.1	6.3.6.3 Enrollment Projections	Johnson, Karen, 8/31/23 10:35 PM	PDF / 29.61 KB
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2.6.2 Facility

a) Provide detailed information on the school's facility plans for the five years of the next charter. The plan should include an adequate and detailed financial arrangement and timeline for the facility. If the school is planning on a facility expansion, please detail the timeline and budget needs anticipated for the expansion.

During the 2021-23 school years, in addition to the new PTECH classrooms, the facility expanded to include a gym and theater space. Funds were acquired through a bond that the school holds. This space has been a huge accomplishment for the school, as it allows the athletic program to fulfill its goal of establishing a CHSAA program for the organization.

The school's current facilities include the school building and a neighboring building referred to as the PTECH/KOSON facility. At capacity, the school can enroll approximately 1850 students. The PTECH building houses 3 classroom spaces and operations related to the Business Office.

The classroom spaces are utilized and fitted to run the PTECH pathways being offered at the school, including Robotics and Automation and Cyber Security. During the 2023-24 school year, the third classroom will be outfitted to support the Gaming Pathway, with anticipated completion in January 2024.

During the next five years, there are a number of capital construction projects planned but expansion of the facility is not anticipated. Major capital construction needs include: a new 2-5 playground, roof

replacement of the PTECH building, fencing around the perimeter of the school, roof replacement on the high school portion of the school building, sound attenuation, and the fit up for the Game Design classroom in the PTECH building.

Upcoming Facility Plans: \$1,170,000

- Playground - \$350,000
- PTECH Classroom upgrades - \$300,000
- Roof Replacement(s) - \$300,000
- Exterior Fencing - \$120,000
- Attenuation - \$50,000
- Interior Painting - \$50,000

Attachments

Section 2: 6.2 Facility

2.1	6. 2.6.2 Master Capital Construction Plan	Johnson, Karen, 8/31/23 7:04 AM	XLSX / 41.115 KB
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3.6.3 Five Year Planning

a) Describe the changes and improvements the school will undertake in the next five years based on the school's examination of results and student performance outcomes.

At STEM School Highlands Ranch, we are currently guided by a five-year strategic plan established by our Board of Directors in 2020. This plan centers around five key focus areas: Staff Retention, Parent Engagement & Trust, Fundraising, Distributed Leadership, and Community Alignment around replication.

Our dedicated Strategic Planning Team has developed a comprehensive Dashboard featuring eleven Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). These KPIs serve as high-level, measurable metrics that gauge our success across critical dimensions. They embody the standards of excellence upon which our institution thrives. To delve into the specifics of our goals, strategies, and actions as outlined in the strategic plan, please visit our website.

In unison with our mission and vision, we are committed to exploring innovative ideas and opportunities that not only enrich our students but also guide our community towards producing the next generation of leaders.

Key Performance Indicators:

1. Student Achievement
2. Staff Satisfaction
3. Community Building
4. Student Demand
5. Staff Retention
6. Educational Initiatives Partnerships
7. Family Satisfaction
8. Finances
9. Fundraising
10. Leadership Opportunities

11. College Acceptances

Each KPI encompasses multiple strategically aligned data sets that reflect our progress towards achieving these indicators. To enhance our systematic approach and management, we have initiated the realignment of our dashboard data, transferring it into Board On Track during the 2022-23 school year.

Looking ahead to the 2023-24 school year, we aim to conduct a comprehensive review of our existing strategic plan, ensuring its continued alignment with our mission and vision. As part of this process, the Board of Directors has undertaken an evaluation of the CEO structure, resulting in the introduction of the Chief Innovation Officer (CIO) role. We are also in the process of recruiting new senior leadership in the roles of HR Manager and COO, which presents an opportune moment for assessing and adjusting our strategic plan to reflect these organizational changes.

b) Describe any significant changes the school expects to make in the following areas over the next charter term:

i) Amendments to your school's charter; and

STEM School HR may seek to replicate through its parent company KOSON Schools within the next five years.

ii) Governance and/or Education Service Provider (ESP) structure. No anticipated changes

Questions (c) and (d) should only be answered by schools requesting expansion into other grade levels.

c) Provide a synopsis of the proposed educational program for the expanding grades, including key components of the education model and any unique or innovative features of the proposed expansion. Briefly explain the evidence base and performance record that demonstrates the expansion model will be successful in improving academic achievement for the student population. Highlight the following in your response: NA

i) Curricular choices;

ii) Educational approaches; and

iii) Instructional strategies.

d) Describe the team's individual and collective qualifications for implementing the new school design successfully, including capacity in areas such as:

i) School leadership, administration, and governance;

ii) Staffing and recruiting;

iii) Goal setting and performance management; and

iv) Curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

Attachments

Section 3: 6.3 Five Year Planning

3.1	Strategic Thinking and Budgeting Process	Cartier, Matt, 9/1/23 4:31 AM	PDF / 54.243 KB
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Optional: Supplementary Information

1. Supplemental Body of Evidence

To enhance this renewal application, this list highlights areas that are integral to the strategic planning and budgeting process, ensuring we have the necessary plans, funding, and resources to foster positive growth for the next five years.

1. Strategic Planning: STEM School has been operating under a comprehensive long-term strategic plan since 2019, which has undergone rigorous evaluations by a committee, consultants, leadership, and board members. In the upcoming fall, we will engage in a strategic thinking and budgeting process to further refine and guide the strategic thinking development for the next five years.

2. Teacher Retention: Significant efforts by senior leadership, lead teachers, and support staff have led to substantial improvements in teacher retention. In the past year, we achieved our highest teacher retention rate, exceeding 80%. This positive trend is encouraging while state and national retention rates have been increasing. This last year there was 100% retention of school directors at the elementary, middle, and high school positions. While progress has been made, we recognize the need for continued focus on this priority area.

3. Enrollment: Our enrollment has faced challenges since 2019, prompting us to initiate a comprehensive campus-wide campaign that highlights the school's strengths and emphasizes factors that enhance student learning and growth. This campaign aims to increase satisfaction among students, teachers, and parents.

4. Staff Evaluations: All staff members, including senior leadership and the CIO, undergo annual evaluations. Our staff handbook and employee training programs clearly articulate the growth and development process. Going forward, this evaluation process will align with our strategic plan ensuring that human efforts are coordinated to the overall school strategic plan.

5. Special Education: Recent changes in leadership and support staff have led to significant improvements in our special education programs. Communication, processes, and follow-through have seen substantial enhancements, resulting in increased parent satisfaction. We remain committed to further growth in this area. Visit this [link](#) to learn about the many academic supports in place for students.

6. Graduation Competencies: Our graduation requirements are well-defined, and our counseling department actively communicates the competencies required for graduation. We offer multiple pathways to graduation, allowing students to transition to the next phase of their educational journey.

7. Board Development and Training: Our board has made significant strides in improving its operations and leadership practices. We partner with Board on Track and the Colorado League of Charters for ongoing training, leading to the establishment of standing board committees, an annual calendar, CIO evaluations, and board evaluations in the last two years.

8. School Waivers: We have recently reviewed all school waivers and policies and have established a process for their continual review and updates.

9. School Leadership: In the past year, significant leadership changes have occurred in various positions, including the board chair, CEO, Executive Director, HR, and COO. These changes have been positively received by the community and have resulted in numerous campus improvements, impacting teacher retention, stakeholder satisfaction, and overall business processes.

10. Parent and Student Concerns: The school has implemented a clear grievance and whistleblower policy, prioritizing the efficient and thorough handling of concerns. This year, the school will launch a campaign to increase stakeholder satisfaction.

11. Standards-Based Grading: While under previous leadership, the school introduced standards-based grading from K-12, which presented challenges for students, teachers, and parents. In response, we are implementing adjustments in grading, increasing training, and enhancing communication this year to address the concerns and challenges from the pilot year. We will actively seek feedback from students, teachers, and parents and closely monitor the impact of this approach on our school's mission.

12. Social Emotional Learning: This year STEM kicked off the ACCESS class for all secondary students to provide space and resources for intentional instruction in SEL, executive functioning, and life skills.

Incorporating these improvements and developments in each area demonstrates our commitment to the continued growth and success of STEM School Highlands Ranch. We look forward to working collaboratively to ensure our school thrives in the years to come.

Attachments

Section 1: Supplemental Body of Evidence

1.1	Example of Purpose and Goals Document for a Board Committee	Cartier, Matt, 9/2/23 3:00 AM	PDF / 30.588 KB
1.2	Non-Automatic Waivers	Cartier, Matt, 9/2/23 1:26 AM	PDF / 106.973 KB
1.3	Complaint and Whistleblower Policy	Cartier, Matt, 9/2/23 1:23 AM	PDF / 80.157 KB
1.4	Graduation Competencies and Academic Planning Guide	Cartier, Matt, 9/2/23 1:20 AM	PDF / 557.35 KB
1.5	Strategic Thinking and Budgeting Process	Cartier, Matt, 9/2/23 1:10 AM	PDF / 54.243 KB
1.6	Updated Strategic Plan	Cartier, Matt, 9/2/23 1:07 AM	PDF / 63.091 KB
1.7	Leadership Evaluation 23-24	Cartier, Matt, 9/2/23 1:05 AM	PDF / 112.988 KB
1.8	CIO Evaluation 23-24	Cartier, Matt, 9/2/23 12:50 AM	PDF / 60.027 KB
1.9	Redefining Teacher Evaluation PPT	Cartier, Matt, 9/2/23 12:42 AM	PDF / 451.611 KB
1.10	Teacher Evaluation Process 23-24	Cartier, Matt, 9/2/23 12:41 AM	PDF / 69.463 KB
1.11	Teacher Evaluation 23-24	Cartier, Matt, 9/2/23 12:39 AM	PDF / 216.558 KB
1.12	Gifted and Talented Programming	Johnson, Karen, 9/1/23 4:05 AM	PDF / 23.276 KB

2.COVID Response

Attachments

Section 2: COVID Response

– No Attachments –