

2023-2024 Charter Renewal Application Packet – STEM School Highlands Ranch

PACKET CONTENTS

Renewal Recommendation
Renewal Application Process & Evaluation
Attachment #1: Renewal Application & Attachments STEM School Renewal Application
Attachment #2: School Performance Frameworks (SPF) STEM Highlands Ranch SPF 19-20 ; STEM Highlands Ranch SPF 21-22 ; STEM Highlands Ranch SPF 22-23
Attachment #3: Choice Programming Site Visit Report Site 23/24 DCSD Renewal Site Visit
Attachment #4: External Reviewer Site Visit Report Outside Reviewer Report
Attachment #5: Current Charter Contract- STEM 1.8.19 Contract STEM 6.29.19 Contract Extension

RENEWAL RECOMMENDATION:

It is the recommendation of DCSD staff that the charter contract between Douglas County School District (DCSD) and STEM School Highlands Ranch be renewed for a term of **5 years**.

RENEWAL APPLICATION PROCESS & EVALUATION:

The renewal process provides an opportunity for schools to (1) present any new or supplemental evidence of school performance and (2) articulate school plans and capacities for the next charter term. The charter renewal recommendation to the Board will be based on an array of evidence gathered over the charter term, including data and information collected by Douglas County School District Office of Choice Programming, the Colorado Department of Education, and any supplemental information that the applicant group provides.

The renewal process begins in September when the charter school declares its intent to apply for renewal. No later than September 1, the charter school submits its Renewal Application to the DCSD Office of Choice Programming. All information is presented to the Superintendent's Cabinet through a compilation of evidence collected through the school's site visit, an analysis of the school's educational, operational, and financial health, and any feedback provided to the DCSD Office of Choice Programming by the applicant team upon initial review of this final report.

SCHOOL OVERVIEW

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.

Key Design Elements:

- Problem-based learning harnessing technology, critical thinking, and collaboration to engage students
- Standards-based learning school, using "MasteryConnect" to help students, teachers and parents track progress
- Twenty-seven AP courses, Thirty-one Concurrent Enrollment, and three P-TECH graduation pathways
- Social Emotional Learning based on Access Time, Second Step (K-5), Merrell's Strong Kids (K-12), and SMARTS Executive Functioning
- Newly implemented annual strategic thinking and budgeting process aligned to operational and financial plans
- New teachers engage in a teacher onboarding process, receiving vital support during their initial days and weeks
- Full-time School Resource Officer on staff, created a CERT (Community Emergency Response Team), Implemented EVOLV system pilot in partnership with the Douglas County Commissioners
- Added P-TECH classrooms, full CHSAA gym, theater for performing arts
- Projected capital improvements over the next five years include: primary playground, roof replacements, Game design classroom in the current P-TECH building

Website: <https://stemk12.org/>

Address: 8773 S Ridgeline Blvd. Highlands Ranch, CO 80129

Year Opened: 2011

School Model: Innovation, Problem-Based Learning

Grades Served: K-12

Total Enrollment: 1399



Subgroup	This School (%)	DCSD (%)
FRL	11.87%	16.15%
SPED	23.37%	12.87%
ML	6.30%	4.88%
504	7.79%	4.99%
GT	21.13%	11.48%

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM ANALYSIS

Is the school implementing the material terms of the education program as defined in the current charter contract?

The school is implementing the essential terms of the education program in all material respects and the educational program in operation reflects the essential terms as defined in the charter, including but not limited to:

- Instructional days or minutes requirements
- Graduation and promotion requirements
- State assessments

Yes

Is the school protecting the rights of all students?

The school is protecting student rights pursuant to:

- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act relating to the treatment of students with identified disabilities and those suspected of having a disability, consistent with the school's status and responsibilities as a school in a district LEA
- Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and US Department of Education authorities relating to English Language Learner requirements
- Law, policies and practices related to admissions, lottery, waiting lists, fair and open recruitment, enrollment, the collection and protection of student information
- Conduct of discipline procedures, including discipline hearings and suspension and expulsion policies and practices, in compliance with CRS 22-33-105 and 22-33-106
- Recognition of due process protections, privacy, civil rights and student liberties requirements, including 1st Amendment protections and the Establishment Clause restrictions prohibiting public schools from engaging in religious instruction

Yes

School Performance Framework Ratings (Retrieved from: Colorado Department of Education) **STEM School**

DCSD Charter School	SY 22-23	SY 21-22	SY 20-21	SY 19-20
STEM Elementary	Performance Plan	Performance Plan	No Score (COVID-19)	Performance Plan
STEM Middle School	Performance Plan	Performance Plan	No Score (COVID-19)	Performance Plan

STEM High School	Performance Plan	Performance Plan	No Score (COVID-19)	Performance Plan
------------------	------------------	------------------	------------------------	------------------

OPERATIONAL ANALYSIS

<p><i>Is the school complying with governance requirements?</i></p> <p>The school complies with applicable laws, rules, regulations and provisions of the charter relating to governance by its board including, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board policies • Board bylaws • Conflicts of interest • Board composition and membership requirements, if applicable 	Yes
<p><i>Is the school holding management accountable?</i></p> <p>The school complies with applicable laws, rules, regulations and provisions of the charter relating to oversight and evaluation of school leadership.</p>	Yes
<p><i>Is the school complying with reporting requirements?</i></p> <p>The school complies with applicable laws, rules, regulations and provisions of the charter relating to relevant reporting requirements to the authorizer, CDE, and/or federal authorities.</p>	Yes
<p><i>Is the school meeting teacher and other staff credentialing requirements?</i></p> <p>The school complies with applicable laws, rules, regulations and provisions of the charter relating to state certification requirements and background checks.</p>	Yes
<p><i>Is the school complying with facilities and transportation requirements?</i></p> <p>The school complies with applicable laws, rules, regulations and provisions of the charter relating to the school facilities, grounds, and transportation, including, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire inspections and related records • Certificate of occupancy • Documentation of insurance coverage • Student transportation 	Yes
<p><i>Is the school complying with health and safety requirements?</i></p> <p>The school complies with applicable laws, rules, regulations and provisions of the charter relating to governance by its board including, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate nursing services • Food services requirements, if applicable • Emergency management plan 	Yes

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS A review of the past three years shows STEM met all fiscal benchmarks set forth by Douglas County School District, showing strong fiscal health. STEM has 38 weeks of reserve fund balance, which has steadily increased over the last 4 years. While reviewing the remaining benchmarks, STEM is well over the required ratio for each fiscal benchmark. STEM did exceed appropriations for the 22-23 school year and should take steps to ensure spending does not exceed appropriations in the future. STEM continues to show strong fiscal health and meets all financial deadlines.

FY 2022-2023 DISTRICT AND CHARTER FINANCIAL HEALTH ANALYSIS

Asset Sufficiency Ratio (ASR) Benchmark ≥ 1			Operating Reserve Ratio (ORR) Benchmark ≥ .0192			Operating Margin Ratio (OMR) Benchmark ≥ .01			Change in Fund Balance Ratio (CFBR) Benchmark > 0			Default of loan covenant or delinquent on payment	Accreditation Issues Current Year	Accreditation Issues Prior Year	CDE Comment 21-22
2023	2022	2021	2023	2022	2021	2023	2022	2021	2023	2022	2021		2023	2022	2022
11.86	11.50	9.26	0.79	0.74	0.61	0.05	0.08	0.01	0.08	0.14	0.01	No	Spending exceeded appropriations in General fund	None	None

COLORADO LAW - GROUNDS FOR NONRENEWAL

Colorado law (C.R.S. 22-30.5-110) specifies the grounds for revoking or not renewing a charter. A charter may be revoked or not renewed by the chartering local board of education if it determines that the charter school did any of the following:

A. Committed a material violation of any of the conditions, standards, or procedures set forth in the charter contract;	NO
B. Failed to meet or make reasonable progress toward achievement of the goals, objectives, content standards, pupil performance standards, targets for the measures used to determine the levels of attainment of the performance indicators, applicable federal requirements, or other terms identified in the charter contract;	NO
C. Failed to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management;	NO
D. Violated any provision of law from which the charter school was not specifically exempted.	NO

Conditions Placed on the School: None