

DCSD Staff Recommendation on Challenge To Excellence Charter School Expansion Application



Recommendation: *The recommendation from DCSD Staff is to **Approve** the 2023 Charter School Expansion application of Challenge To Excellence Charter School.*

Overall Recommendation Guidance

School Overview:

Website: <https://c2e.org/>

Address: 16995 Carlson Drive Parker, CO 80134

Year Opened: 2002

School Model: Project Based Learning

Grades Served: K-8

Total Enrollment: 544

Subgroup	This School (%)	DCSD (%)
FRL	5.70%	16.15%
SPED	10.48%	12.87%
ML	23.76%	4.88%
504	3.31%	4.99%
GT	9.94%	11.48%

- Challenge to Excellence (C2E) currently has an enrollment of 550 students K-8. Some grade levels have two sections, while others have three sections. This causes staffing changes based on “bubble years.”
- C2E is applying to expand its current building to add ten (10) classrooms, a middle school cafeteria, and an administration office. ***This would move the overall enrollment from 550 students to 675 students.***
- Waitlist numbers have been provided, showing an increase in waitlist K-8 from **2020-21 of 232** students, to a waitlist in **2023-24 of 408** students.
- A Feasibility Report was conducted by G&G Consulting Group, LLC in May, 2023.
- A review of the past three years shows Challenge to Excellence meeting most fiscal benchmarks set forth by Douglas County School District, however they missed two benchmarks in 2022. The benchmarks missed are Operating Margin ratio and Change in fund balance ratio. Operating Margin Ratio indicates the amount added to reserves for every \$1 in total general fund gross revenue and Change in Fund Balance Ratio indicates the change in the fund balance of the general fund from one year to the next in relation to the prior year fund balance. Operating Margin has a benchmark of $\geq .01$. C2E has gone from a .03 in 2021 to a -.07 in 2022, showing a decrease in the past year. Change in Fund Balance has a benchmark of ≥ 0 . C2E has moved from a .05 in 2021 to a -.12 in 2022. C2E is above all other benchmarks.
- Construction is targeted to begin in summer of 2024, with an estimated completion and opening in the fall of 2025.
 - Phase one (1) will add four (4) classrooms on the north side of the existing building. The purpose of phase one is to move all students inside and out of mobiles - No increase in enrollment from phase 1.
 - Phase two (2) will add six (6) additional classrooms. Phase two allows for the increase in student enrollment.

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- Projected Enrollment Numbers by Year

Grade Level	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2027-28	2029-30
K	75	75	75	75	75
1	50	75	75	75	75
2	50	50	75	75	75
3	50	50	75	75	75
4	75	50	75	75	75
5	75	75	75	75	75
6	50	75	75	75	75
7	50	50	75	75	75
8	75	50	75	75	75
	550	550	675	675	675

Evidence

Evidence of Support

Provide details on the student population to be served, how the founding committee has reached out to parents of targeted students, how many parents have expressed interest in the school by submitting letters of intent to enroll, and what community organizations, colleges and universities, nonprofits, and local groups are in support of the school as evidenced through letters of support.

Waitlist numbers have been presented, and there is sufficient demand from families in the community.

Financial Plan/Budget

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

Financial Analysis was conducted by G&G Consulting Group, and a five-year budget was included to demonstrate feasibility for this expansion by C2E.

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Educational Plan

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

There is no intended shift in curriculum, or design. C2E is in good educational standing, and is a STEAM-focused school. C2E is a John Irwin Award winner.

Human Resources

Provide information on the school's employees and employment policies, and the relationship that will exist between the charter school and its employees. Additionally, if the proposed charter school intends to contract with an education service provider, such as a Charter Management Organization (CMO), or Education Management Organization (EMO), or any other type of school management or service provider.

C2E plans to hire an additional 13 FTE to accommodate the increase of 125 students. This is a 24% increase in staffing, and aligned to the 23% proposed increase in student enrollment. There is no CMO or EMO involved in management.