

Iowa State Board of Education

Executive Summary

July 16, 2025

Agenda Item: Charter School Contract Amendment Request, Opportunity Education Network (OEN)-Cedar Rapids Prep

State Board Goal: Goal 5

State Board Role/Authority: The State Board of Education is the sole authorizer of Iowa charter schools 256E.1(4).

Presenter(s): Barbara Ohlund, Executive Officer 4
Division of PK-12 Learning

Attachment(s): Two

Recommendation: It is recommended that the State Board approve the amendment requests for OEN-Cedar Rapids Prep.

Background: After authorization, “an enforceable and renewable charter school contract shall be executed between the founding group and the state board setting forth the academic and operational performance expectations and measures by which the charter school will be evaluated” pursuant to Sections 256E.9 and 256E.10 and the other rights and duties of the parties 256E.6(1). As the authorizing agent for the State Board, the Department of Education has reviewed the charter school contract amendment request and provides a recommendation.

OEN-Cedar Rapids Prep has submitted contract amendment language, rationale, desired outcome, governing board approval and evidence of a public meeting.

Iowa Charter School Amendment Request Form

Exhibit 1

The **Iowa Charter School Amendment Request Form** is completed by an authorized Charter School that requests consideration of a proposed contract amendment to the State Board of Education. To submit this document, make a copy and submit the completed form to charters@iowa.gov labeled: **Amendment Request Form_2025_OEN - Cedar Rapids Prep.**

1. Requested Amendment

| A. Cite existing contract language to be amended. | B. Provide specific proposed amended language. |
|--|---|
| <p>1) The incorporated name of the school is now "OEN - Cedar Rapids Prep"; a change from the legal name "Quest Forward Charter School - Cedar Rapids"</p> <p>2) No language change is needed; but there is a reference to the application here: 2.5. Charter Contract. This Contract is a legally binding document and consists of this signed Contract, additional terms and assurances incorporated in attached Exhibits, the Application, which is incorporated herein by reference, submitted by the Applicant..."</p> <p>The application cites grade levels that have changed since. See chart at the bottom of this page.</p> | <p>1) We're not sure we need to change language elsewhere since the contract already refers to the school as Cedar Rapids Prep, but if we want to clarify the entity's name change for consistency, we could include:</p> <p>1) Clarification Note (Non-substantive): The incorporated name of the school entity has changed from Quest Forward Charter School – Cedar Rapids to OEN – Cedar Rapids Prep. No amendments to language are necessary, as the school is consistently referred to in the contract as "Cedar Rapids Prep."</p> <p>2) 2.5. Charter Contract (Amended). This Contract is a legally binding document and consists of this signed Contract, additional terms and assurances incorporated in attached Exhibits, and the Application, which is incorporated herein by reference, submitted by the Applicant.</p> <p>Notwithstanding any grade levels or enrollment figures referenced in the Application, for the purposes of implementation and compliance, the School shall operate according to the enrollment plan outlined in the Updated Enrollment Chart – Cedar Rapids Prep below. This chart supersedes any enrollment projections previously submitted in the original application:</p> <p><i>(at bottom of this page)</i></p> |

2. **Rationale** Describe the rationale for the language revision from 1A to 1B. Provide sufficient detail to explain the need for the amendment.

The proposed amendment reflects two key updates to ensure alignment between the school's charter and its actual implementation:

- (1) a revision to the sequence of grade levels served; and
- (2) a formal update to the school's incorporated name.

Grade Level Revision:

The original application proposed launching Cedar Rapids Prep with grades 6 and 9, scaling upward from there. After continued engagement with families, facility planning, and financial modeling, the school determined that launching with grades 6–8—then phasing in high school grades starting in Year 2—would provide a stronger, more sustainable foundation.

- **Family Demand:** Outreach to families in the Cedar Rapids area made clear that interest was strongest at the middle school level, with families eager for earlier academic and cultural interventions before high school begins.
- **Facility Readiness:** The initial school space is more naturally suited for middle grade learning environments and does not yet require high school-specific infrastructure like science labs or large-scale athletics facilities in Year 1.
- **Financial Planning:** Starting with middle school students allows the school to launch with a focused team, streamline instructional staffing, and build enrollment in a way that matches available funding and growth targets.

Name Change:

The school's legal name has changed from *Quest Forward Charter School – Cedar Rapids* to *OEN – Cedar Rapids Prep* to ensure consistency with its public-facing identity. The addition of "OEN" highlights the school's affiliation with the Opportunity Education Network and reinforces that Cedar Rapids Prep is part of a shared mission-driven network of schools working toward common goals and outcomes.

Together, these updates ensure the charter reflects the school's actual program design and strategic approach.

3. **Desired Outcome** Describe the desired outcome of the amendment.

The desired outcome of this amendment is to align the school's charter contract with the actual implementation plan for Cedar Rapids Prep. Specifically, the amendment ensures that:

- **Enrollment expectations** reflect the sequence and grade levels the school will serve in its early years, supporting accurate oversight, accountability, and compliance reporting;
- **Naming conventions** are consistent across legal, public, and operational platforms, reinforcing the school's identity and network affiliation.

This alignment helps build a strong launch year, promotes trust with stakeholders, and ensures clarity in both operations and reporting.

4. **Best Practices** Describe how previous practices that led to the established contract language (1A) will change to support the current amended language (1B). How will the charter ensure effective implementation of the proposed amendment?

The original contract language (1A) assumed an early build-out of a full 6–12 grade program, starting with grades 6 and 9. In practice, the school's revised model (1B) is more responsive to family demand, facility availability, and operational capacity.

What will change:

- Rather than immediately spanning middle and high school, the school will now launch with a **middle school-only model in Year 1**, allowing for deeper focus on instruction, school culture, and operations.
- The addition of high school grades will follow a deliberate, phased approach, beginning with 9th grade in Year 2 and expanding annually thereafter.

How the charter will ensure effective implementation:

- **Hiring practices** have been updated to prioritize educators with experience in middle grades, particularly those who understand adolescent development, academic acceleration, and family engagement at the transitional stage.
- **Instructional planning** is being vertically aligned across grades 6–8, with scaffolding designed to prepare students for success in high school as those grades phase in.
- **Operational structures** (e.g., scheduling, facilities use, support staff) are being built around a smaller, focused student body in Year 1, with scalable systems designed to grow each year.
- **Strategic planning** includes annual review checkpoints to ensure readiness for each grade expansion, informed by enrollment trends, financial health, and student outcomes.

This phased approach reflects a best-practice model of responsible school growth—prioritizing executional quality and student success over speed of expansion.

5. **Documentation**

- a. The amendment is approved by the charter school governing board (meeting agenda and minutes reflecting approval of the amendment request - attachment labeled **GBAmendment Approval**)
- b. A public meeting with stakeholders addressing the proposed change/s to the charter contract (attachment labeled **PMAmendment**). Note that a designated public comment specific to the amendment on the governing board agenda may fulfill the public meeting requirement. Include names and roles of each individual that participated in public comment and a summary of their input.

The school is still in pre-opening and this is a modification ahead of the first board meeting. Please see the OEN - Cedar Rapids Prep Articles of Amendment FILED STAMPED documentation for the name change.

| | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 |
|----------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Grade 6 | Min: 25 Planned: 100 Max: 150 | Min: 25 Planned: 125 Max: 200 | Min: 25 Planned: 125 Max: 200 | Min: 25 Planned: 125 Max: 200 | Min: 25 Planned: 125 Max: 200 |
| Grade 7 | Min: 25 Planned: 55 Max: 150 | Min: 25 Planned: 125 Max: 200 | Min: 25 Planned: 125 Max: 200 | Min: 25 Planned: 125 Max: 200 | Min: 25 Planned: 125 Max: 200 |
| Grade 8 | Min: 25 Planned: 100 Max: 150 | Min: 25 Planned: 125 Max: 200 | Min: 25 Planned: 120 Max: 200 | Min: 25 Planned: 125 Max: 200 | Min: 25 Planned: 125 Max: 200 |
| Grade 9 | Min: 0 Planned: 0 Max: 0 | Min: 25 Planned: 100 Max: 200 | Min: 25 Planned: 125 Max: 200 | Min: 25 Planned: 135 Max: 200 | Min: 25 Planned: 150 Max: 200 |
| Grade 10 | Min: 0 Planned: 0 Max: 0 | Min: 0 Planned: 0 Max: 0 | Min: 25 Planned: 100 Max: 200 | Min: 25 Planned: 115 Max: 200 | Min: 25 Planned: 125 Max: 200 |
| Grade 11 | Min: 0 Planned: 0 Max: 0 | Min: 0 Planned: 0 Max: 0 | Min: 0 Planned: 0 Max: 0 | Min: 25 Planned: 90 Max: 200 | Min: 25 Planned: 105 Max: 200 |
| Grade 12 | Min: 0 Planned: 0 Max: 0 | Min: 0 Planned: 0 Max: 0 | Min: 0 Planned: 0 Max: 0 | Min: 0 Planned: 0 Max: 0 | Min: 25 Planned: 85 Max: 200 |

IOWA

No: W01404005
Date: 04/01/2025

SECRETARY OF STATE

504RDN-775701
OEN - CEDAR RAPIDS PREP

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF DOCUMENT FILED

The Secretary of State acknowledges receipt of the following document:

Articles of Amendment

The document was filed on Mar 25 2025 9:26AM, to be effective as of Mar 25 2025 9:26AM.

The amount of \$10.00 was received in full payment of the filing fee.



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paul D. Pate".

PAUL D. PATE SECRETARY OF STATE



775701

ARTICLES OF AMENDMENT
OF
QUEST FORWARD CHARTER SCHOOL – CEDAR RAPIDS

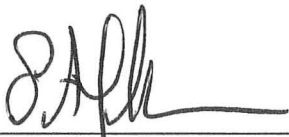
Pursuant to Revised Iowa Nonprofit Corporation Act §504.1005, the undersigned corporation submits for filing the following articles of amendment to its articles of incorporation:

1. The name of the corporation is Quest Forward Charter School – Cedar Rapids (the “Corporation”).
2. The first article of the articles of incorporation is hereby amended and restated as follows:

FIRST: Name. The name of this corporation is OEN – Cedar Rapids Prep (“Corporation”).

3. The amendment was adopted on March 18, 2025.
4. The Corporation does not have members and member approval was not required.
5. The amendment was adopted by the board of directors of the Corporation in accordance with Iowa Code §504.1001-1004 and with the consent of QFCS LLC, as required by the Corporation’s bylaws.

QUEST FORWARD CHARTER SCHOOL –
CEDAR RAPIDS

By: 
Steve Christensen
Secretary and General Counsel

Person to contact about this filing: Steve Christensen
Daytime Telephone: 303-962-0025

FILED
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SECRETARY OF STATE
3-25-25
9:26 AM
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2025 MAR 25 AM 9:26

02/03/2025 KATHY Z. HAYN 1143419 AMEN \$10.00