

# Iowa State Board of Education

## Executive Summary

March 13, 2026

**Agenda Item:** Charter School Contract Termination Request – Opportunity Education Network (OEN) – Davenport Prep

**State Board Goal:** Goal 5

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

**Presenter(s):** Tom Bredfield, Education Program Consultant  
Bureau of School Improvement

James Troupis, Chief of Schools  
Opportunity Education

Mary Arrigo, Vice President, Academics  
Opportunity Education

**Attachment(s):** One

**Recommendation:** It is recommended that the State Board approve the contract termination request for OEN – Davenport 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 Iowa Code sections 256E.9 and 256E.10 and the other rights and duties of the parties of Iowa Code subsection 256E.6(1). As the authorizing agent for the State Board, the Department of Education has reviewed the charter school request and provides a recommendation.

OEN – Davenport Prep has submitted an amendment request that outlines the desired outcome and rationale

for the termination request of the current charter school contract, executed in February, 2025.

# Iowa Charter School Termination Request Opportunity Education Network – Davenport Prep

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.

1. **Requested Amendment**

A. Cite existing contract language to be amended.	B. Provide specific proposed amended language.
<p><b>Section 16.4 — Termination by the School</b></p> <p><i>“Should the School choose to terminate this Contract before the end of the Contract term, it may do so in consultation with the Authorizer at the close of any school year and upon written notice to the Authorizer given at least thirty (30) days before the end of the school year.”</i></p>	<p>Opportunity Education hereby exercises its right under Section 16.4 (Termination by the School) of the Charter School Contract dated February 6, 2025, to terminate the contract in its entirety. OEN – Davenport Prep will not open for the 2026-2027 school year as initially planned. Opportunity Education respectfully requests that the Iowa State Board of Education approve this action and recognize the contract as terminated in full, with no further obligations of either party.</p>

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

<p>Opportunity Education respectfully requests termination of the OEN – Davenport Prep contract under Section 16.4. This decision reflects both our ongoing, substantial investment in the State of Iowa and our commitment to responsible stewardship of public and philanthropic resources.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Continued commitment and investment in Iowa</b> Opportunity Education remains deeply committed to Iowa’s charter school landscape and the students it serves. We are investing large amounts of philanthropic resources in the growth and success of OEN – Des Moines Prep and OEN – Cedar Rapids Prep, ensuring both schools are positioned as sustainable, high-quality models for the state. Our decision not to move forward with OEN – Davenport Prep at this time is a matter of prudent focus, not retreat, and allows us to strengthen our existing schools without diluting quality or capacity.</li> <li>2. <b>Facility and funding feasibility</b> Despite extensive due diligence, we have not identified a facility in the Davenport area that is financially feasible on the current per-pupil funding level, which provides no facilities funding and remains inequitable relative to district-operated public schools. Even with the substantial philanthropic resources, the cost of acquiring, renovating, and operating a suitable facility in Davenport cannot be responsibly supported within Iowa’s current charter funding structure.</li> <li>3. <b>Responsible stewardship of public funds</b> Opportunity Education has not spent any portion of the state start-up grant allocated for OEN – Davenport Prep. We are committed to being responsible stewards of public funds and intend for those resources to remain available to the state, particularly if they can be used to support other charter schools as they prepare to open.</li> <li>4. <b>Strategic focus and excellence</b> Our decision allows us to maintain focus on excellence in the schools we already operate.</li> </ol>
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Concentrating leadership and resources on OEN – Des Moines Prep and OEN – Cedar Rapids Prep at this time will ensure continued academic and organizational strength, consistent with the expectations of the Iowa State Board of Education and the spirit of the Charter Schools Act.

**Summary**

This action reflects Opportunity Education’s ongoing partnership with the State of Iowa, grounded in excellence, transparency and fiscal responsibility. We remain fully committed to supporting Iowa students and the state’s vision for innovative public education while recognizing that a Davenport launch is neither feasible nor strategic at this time.

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

The desired outcome is the full termination of the OEN – Davenport Prep contract under Section 16.4, effective upon acknowledgment by the Iowa State Board of Education. Opportunity Education seeks to conclude the contract in good standing and with full transparency, ensuring that no state or philanthropic funds are expended toward the OEN – Davenport Prep launch.

This outcome allows Opportunity Education to focus its financial and leadership resources on sustaining and strengthening existing charter schools in Des Moines and Cedar Rapids, which continue to grow and demonstrate success. It also reflects our commitment to responsible stewardship of public and philanthropic investment in Iowa’s charter school system.

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 previous contract language was established during a period of rapid growth and expansion within Opportunity Education’s Iowa network, when launching OEN – Davenport Prep alongside other campuses appeared operationally and financially feasible. Through subsequent implementation experience, we have developed stronger internal practices for evaluating new school readiness, particularly around facilities, funding structures, and long-term sustainability.

Moving forward, these practices now include a more rigorous pre-launch review process that examines per-pupil funding realities, facility costs, and leadership capacity before advancing a new school proposal. This ensures that each future charter application reflects both educational excellence and financial responsibility from the outset.

By exercising the termination clause at this stage, Opportunity Education is applying these improved practices in real time. The decision demonstrates the organization’s commitment to transparency, fiscal stewardship and alignment between mission and capacity. It also reinforces a culture of accountability and excellence within our existing Iowa schools, ensuring that OEN – Des Moines Prep and OEN – Cedar Rapids Prep continue to thrive and serve as models of best practice for charter education across the state and country.

5. **Documentation**

- a. The amendment is approved by the charter school governing board (meeting agenda and minutes reflecting approval of the amendment request).
- b. A public meeting with stakeholders addressing the proposed change/s to the charter contract. 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.

Because OEN – Davenport Prep has not opened and does not yet have an established governing board, there is no formal board body to approve this amendment request. Opportunity Education, as the founding organization and applicant on record, is submitting this termination action consistent with Section 16.4 of the executed charter contract.

No public meeting was required or held for this action, as no students, families or staff are currently enrolled or employed under the OEN – Davenport Prep charter. Opportunity Education has, however, informed the Iowa Department of Education of its intent to terminate the contract and will continue to provide full transparency to state leadership and relevant stakeholders regarding this decision.

This approach ensures compliance with the spirit of Iowa's charter school requirements while recognizing the pre-operational status of OEN – Davenport Prep and the absence of an active governing board or community stakeholders tied to the school.