



Charter School Application: Founding Group-State Board Model

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Instructions

The required criteria and evaluation of charter school applications shall be completed pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 256E, and are detailed in the Application Guidance to Create a Founding Group-State Board Model Charter School. Please carefully read the guidance before beginning this application. For items that require attachments please utilize designated appendices. **It is highly recommended that potential applicants seek technical assistance from the Iowa Department of Education (Department) prior to beginning a charter school application.** Contact information is available within the guidance, application, and the [Charter School Webpage](#).

Introduction

This application is to only be submitted by an independent founding group* wishing to establish and operate a Founding Group-Iowa State Board of Education (State Board) model charter school within the boundaries of the state that operates as a new attendance center (i.e., school building) independently from a public school district.

*"Founding group" means a person, group of persons, or education service provider [or "an education management organization, charter school management organization, or other person with whom a charter school contracts for educational program implementation or comprehensive management"] that develops and submits an application for a charter school to the state board under this chapter" (Iowa Code § 256E.2(4)-(5)).

Application Submission Requirements

For an application to be reviewed, the founding group must complete and submit this form with all its required attachments by November 1, 11:59 pm of the school year preceding the establishment of the charter school. **Each question on the form is required and incomplete applications may not be reviewed for approval.** The founding group must submit the completed application form, and all its attachments, via email to janet.boyd@iowa.gov or by mail to:

Iowa Department of Education
Attention: Janet Boyd, Charter School Consultant
400 East 14th Street
Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0146

Technical Assistance Available by Request

It is strongly encouraged that applicants contact the Department to receive technical assistance before completing the application. If the independent founding group wishes to utilize technical assistance, it must contact Janet Boyd at janet.boyd@iowa.gov or 515-745-3385 before submission. Once an application is submitted, it is considered final, and no additional changes will be accepted.

Additional Guidance

For additional information on the requirements and evaluation process, see the Founding Group-State Board application guidance on the [Charter Schools webpage](#).

2021-2022 Charter School Application: Founding Group-State Board Model

Please note that all information submitted in the charter school application is public information.

Applicant Contact Information

| | | | |
|----------------|---|---------------|---------------------|
| First Name: | <u>Sarah</u> | Last Name: | <u>Swayze</u> |
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1. Executive Summary

1.1. Provide an executive summary of the proposed charter school.

Briefly summarize the proposed charter school's ability to meet the charter school purposes outlined in Iowa Code section 256E.1, subsection 3, (see the Purposes of Charter Schools section of the guidance).

Empowering Youths of Iowa, Inc (EYI) seeks to establish a charter school to be known as Empowering Excellence Charter School. The founding group creating and submitting this charter school application to the Iowa State Board of Education consists of community leaders, educators, and retired business leaders.

List endorsement here:

Kingdom Community Center
Midas Auto Shop
Goodwill Industry

HyVee
St. Luke's Hospital
Iowa Workplace Connection

The name of the person who will be in charge of the charter school and the manner in which administrative services will be provided.

_____ "TBA" will be directing Empowering Excellence Charter School as principal and vice principal, respectively. The Board of Directors of Empowering Youth of Iowa (EYI) has given Sarah Swayze permission to address contractual matters.

Empowering Youths of Iowa, Inc., a non-profit organization, has implemented a comprehensive public educational service program for more than three years. This program, among other things, values improved learning, accelerates learning to prevent learning loss during significant educational disruptions to student's learning], allows greater flexibility to meet the educational needs of a diverse student population, improves college readiness and workplace preparation, and increases community engagement.

Parents, pupils, and the community of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, deserve a new non-selective, tuition-free, and high-quality public-school option. Empowering Youths of Iowa, Inc. will offer this option as a 10-12 charter school: Empowering Excellence (EECS) Charter School.

Members of the EYI staff will take care of Empowering Excellence Charter School's administrative needs. These services include administration of human resources, information technology, and financial management, etc. The administration of the charter-school contract will be handled by a controller working full time with the assistance of 3.5 fiscal staff members.

1, Executive Summary

Many Americans living in poverty are unable to improve their circumstances due to lack of resources. High school students and adults without a high school diploma lack the skills necessary to obtain and maintain gainful employment. As of 2016, 209,740 individuals who do not have a high school diploma or equivalent are housed, either temporarily or permanently in the Iowa state prison system. Future Ready Iowa, a program created by Governor Kim Reynolds, issues a dire warning that many Iowans will not be qualified to hold jobs that require some postsecondary training until they obtain a high school diploma or its equivalent. Empowering Excellence Charter School (EECS) will provide an alternative way for all students to finish their education while earning postsecondary training. This will help students who haven't done well in regular school settings or who have already dropped out of school get what they need for a brighter future.

The Cedar Rapids School District has 39.2% of its student population on free or reduced-price lunch, and a significant percentage of these students will drop out of school and work low-wage jobs. The teaching staff and administrative staff at EECS believe that their exceptional academic curriculum, which emphasizes flexibility in earning credits, mentoring with support in educational and life decisions, and postsecondary preparation, will meet a significant demand in the community. It is their goal to assist students in achieving their personal, academic, and career-related objectives, and to cultivate the belief that they want more for themselves and have the capability to achieve success and become responsible contributing members of society.

Empowering Excellence Charter School is based on similar ideas to Empowering Youths of Iowa, Inc. It believes that all students have the desire to succeed and can succeed if given a platform to develop their dreams, set goals, and connect with academics and the workforce. Its goal is to empower all youth, especially those who are traditionally underserved in the local school district, by giving them the opportunity to grow intellectually and personally.

Social-emotional wellness significantly impacts students' learning readiness, and schools should focus on addressing it to improve learning outcomes. EECS staff recognizes the importance of addressing Social Emotional Learning (SEL) to promote safe, positive learning, and increase students' chances for post-secondary success. The staff will embrace mental health literacy, promote therapy, and comply with IDEA and Section 504 statutes to protect students with disabilities. EECS addresses the complete child, not just academics.

At EECS, our mission is to activate excellence by providing students with a flexible, personalized, and forward-thinking education that will help them achieve their academic, professional, and personal goals. Our vision is to cultivate students who are prepared for life after high school through mentoring, educational counseling, and career-related programs.

The EECS mentoring program will be unique in its structure. As soon as a student arrives for orientation, they will be paired with a mentor, a caring adult. Each mentor will be responsible for keeping tabs on their mentee's academic progress, offering advice on how to approach extracurricular activities and social difficulties, and sharing in the joy of their mentee's achievements. Mentees will meet with their mentors once a week to get academic and emotional support, review relevant data, and stay on track to graduate on time. This mentorship program aims to provide students with a strong support system throughout their academic journey. By fostering a one-on-one relationship between mentors and mentees, students can receive personalized guidance and encouragement to overcome challenges they may face. Additionally, regular meetings with mentors allow for continuous monitoring of progress and the opportunity to address any concerns or obstacles that may arise.

Empowering Excellence Charter School will utilize the work of the internship coordinator, Goodwill Industry staff, and volunteers who will give students opportunities to develop necessary skills such as interviewing and conducting searches for post-secondary schools and employment. They will steer mentees toward earning certifications in various skills, thereby increasing their chances of finding employment in their desired fields. Additionally, the internship coordinator will collaborate with local businesses and organizations to provide students with hands-on experiences and real-world connections, further enhancing their employability. This comprehensive approach ensures that Empowering Excellence Charter School equips students with the tools and experiences they need to succeed in the competitive job market. Through internships, students learn from hands-on and direct experiences that tend to be more valuable with the population that EECS serves. The objective is to assist young women and men in discovering their hidden excellence, boost their confidence, assist them in setting goals, and encourage them to work toward achieving them. This experience will lead to them being more prepared for the next phase of their lives.

Guidance counselors will organize job and career fairs, initiate contact with employers on behalf of the students, and arrange introductions between students and employers. Later, the counselor will assist their mentee in maintaining accurate records of their work hours. The staff of EECS believes that academics should be only a part of a student's education.

Empowering Excellence Charter School is an online high school that awards high school diplomas that align with Iowa Common Core standards. It offers students flexibility in earning credits by allowing them to set their own time, work at their own pace, and decide where they wish to learn. Our workspace learning program offers students the opportunity to earn credits toward graduation through experiential education at a variety of workplaces. The school will be open year-round and conducts classes Monday through Thursday from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm. Students are expected to earn 18-22 credits to graduate, which includes:

Graduation Requirement Plan

| Requirements | Units Required |
|--|-----------------------|
| English/Language Arts (English Language Arts 10, English Language Arts 11, English Language Arts 12, Literacy & Comprehension 1, Literacy & Comprehension 2, Classic Novels & Author Studies, and Introduction to Communications & Speech) | 4.0 |
| Mathematics (Pre-Algebra, Algebra 1, Geometry, Algebra 2, and Financial Math) | 3.0 |
| Science (1.0 Biology, 1.0 Earth Science, 1.0 Chemistry, Conceptual Physics, Environmental Science, and Life Science) | 3.0 |
| Social Studies (.5 U.S. Government, .5 Economics and Financial Literacy, 1.0 Civics and Citizenship, and 1.0 U.S. History,) | 3.0 |
| CPR Training | |
| Career Certificate Courses | 4.0 |
| Health/Physical Fitness | 1.0 |
| Total Credits | 18.0 |

EECS is self-paced and based on mastery, meaning students can take as much or as little time as necessary to complete the courses. Grading is based on mastery of Iowa's Priority Standard, and students are welcome to redo any work as needed until they have demonstrated proficiency. Teachers certified in the subject areas will sign off once a student completes a course.

The EECS will institute a curriculum for character education that will place an emphasis on the students' values and beliefs to develop a culture that lays a high bar on continuing improvement and strives to achieve it. Community partnerships with local businesses, career technical schools, colleges and universities, and social service agencies will play a significant role in boosting the percentage of students who graduate from high school as well as colleges and universities. This will help improve the number of students who graduate from all levels of education. The belief that "every student can succeed" will play a big part in the culture of Empowering Excellence Charter School.

Due to EECS's intention to collaborate with local education districts, the institution will not accept incoming freshmen. Instead, EECS will focus on establishing partnerships with Cedar Rapids Community School District and providing educational resources and support to students in the community. This initiative aims to enhance the quality of education in the region and foster a stronger connection between the institution and the local education system. Empowering Excellence Charter School recognizes the importance of providing students with a well-rounded education and believes that exposure to different learning environments can contribute to their overall growth. By encouraging prospective 9th and 10th graders to enroll in one of the larger institutions as part 'A' of their educational plan, EECS aims to ensure that students have multiple opportunities to thrive academically and socially. This approach allows students to explore various educational pathways while still having the support and resources of Empowering Excellence Charter School as a backup.

2. Proposed Vision and Mission

2.1. Describe the vision of the proposed charter school.

Describe the overall purpose and intention of the proposed charter school.

Vision

Our vision is to **Cultivate students** who are prepared for life after high school through mentoring, educational counseling, and career-related programs

2.2. Describe the mission for the proposed charter school and identify the targeted student population(s) and community(ies) the proposed charter school intends to serve.

Describe the mission and objectives of the charter school, including the targeted student population(s) and community(ies) to be served.

Mission: At EECS, our mission is to **Activate Excellence** by providing students with a flexible, personalized, and forward-thinking education that will help them achieve their academic, professional, and personal goals.

At EECS, our mission is to **Activate Excellence** by providing students with a flexible, personalized, and forward-thinking education that will help them achieve their academic, professional, and personal goals.

Recently, Governor Kim Reynolds signed Senate File 496, which secured transformational education reform that empowers parents, eliminates burdensome regulations, and allows flexibility for teacher salaries. Empowering Excellence Charter school's mission and vision aligns with this bill by promoting the success of all students from all economic status by fostering a 21st-century education for all students while preparing them for their future. Empowering Excellence Charter School purpose is to give students an environment where they can thrive.

EECS will equip students with the tools necessary to achieve their academic, professional, and personal goals by providing them with an educational program that is self-paced, innovative, and tailored to meet their individual needs.

Through mentoring, counseling, and other career-related activities, EECS hopes to get students intellectually and socially ready for the workforce once they graduate from high school. The school's mission is to instill in its pupils a strong academic foundation and principles, thereby preparing them to make meaningful contributions to both the communities in which they live and the world at large.

Students enrolled in the school are provided with an educational curriculum that is self-paced, individualized, and innovative by EECS. This program is designed to meet the requirements for testing, graduation, state standards, and grade level objectives. In collaboration with the students' parents and the staff of the school, a personalized "Roadmap to Excellence" that details the students' aspirations for their postsecondary education and careers will be prepared.

In its first academic year, (2024-2025), EECS will serve at least 70 students ages 16 to 21 in grades 11 through 12. This number will increase to 166 students during the charter's term. To meet its goal and vision, the staff and recruiters will go after students who have left the more traditional educational context or students who are not on track to graduate with their class cohort. The student population will also include those students who have not earned the appropriate credits toward graduation and those who have dropped out but desire to return to the educational system. These students will have the opportunity to earn the credits they have missed and recover credits for failed courses. Students who are very motivated to succeed can speed up their educational progress and graduate from high school earlier. Students who need this kind of flexibility will find it at Empowering Excellence Charter School because the school will provide adjustable attendance sessions in conjunction with a self-paced program. This approach will allow students the opportunity to work full time while also earning credit toward graduation and gaining postsecondary skills. Opportunities to enroll in college as well as career programs will be made available to all students.

Empowering Youths of Iowa, Inc. predicts a 25-50% special needs population at EECS. The school will offer educational interventions, assistance, and accommodations, with free or discounted meals for all. It will create an adaptable, family-friendly environment, enforce a 15:1 student-to-teacher ratio, and employ one full-time Special Education Teacher and three one-on-one resource aides to effectively educate this population.

EECS will help students with adverse childhood experiences (ACE), inappropriate conduct, or chronic absences improve their learning, well-being, and achievement through compassionate support. The school will offer certification, work-based learning opportunities, personalized academic settings, computer and WiFi services, in-person and face-to-face meetings through reputable organizations like the National Council for Online Education (NCOE) and the National At-Risk Education Network (NAREN).

To be eligible for enrollment at Empowering Excellence Charter School, a student must be between the ages of 16 and 21 years old, a resident of Cedar Rapids or the neighboring communities, such as Independence, Iowa City, Marion, Vinton, Linn-Mar, and College Community; in addition, the student must have completed the criteria necessary to attend high school. The staff of EECS will not focus on having a student body that is representative of the county, with proportions that are comparable regarding factors such as race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, disability, giftedness, linguistic requirements, and socioeconomic standing. EECS will not discriminate against applicants who are eligible based on factors such as pregnancy, marital or parental status, sexual orientation, or mental or emotional conditions, national origins, ancestry, religion, or learning disabilities when making admissions decisions. Students of all academic levels, as well as those who are eligible for ESE and ELL programs, will be welcome to enroll at EECS School when it opens in the fall of 2024. Empowering Excellence Charter School will collaborate with every student to help them realize their full academic and personal potential, as stated plainly in the mission statement of the institution.

Students applying to EECS who are the children of a member of the Governing Board and the Founding Group of the charter school or who are the offspring of an employee of the charter school will be given admission preference. Additionally, preference will be given to siblings of students currently enrolled at Empowering Excellence Charter School. EECS is required to comply with class size reduction and will maintain a student-teacher ratio that does not exceed 15:1.

EECS students often experience various life-altering issues, including violence, trauma, dysfunctional families, homelessness, abuse, and poverty. Some have been labeled as a threat to society because of their involvement in the drug trade. Because of these challenges, Empowering Excellence Charter School is committed to providing children who have been underserved by traditional schools with an alternative educational environment where they may develop meaningful relationships, set and achieve personal goals, acquire employable skills, and make meaningful contributions to their communities. EECS will facilitate progress toward this end by:

- improving self esteem
- building confidence
- improving academic success
- improving other skills as needed (social skills, behavior, daily living such as preparing a snack or meal, use of public transportation, etc.)
- preparing students for job training, college readiness, entrepreneurship, and life choices
- increasing graduation rates
- supporting school districts
- improving the community

Our staff and administrative team believe that through compassionate mentorship, social emotional support, academic assistance, parental support, and encouragement, we will help students achieve in school and life.

2. Proposed Vision and Mission

EECS' mission requires adherence to ideals and ethics.

- **Respect** - Respect is a fundamental aspect of the EESC community, ensuring equal treatment for all members regardless of origin or experiences.
- **Responsibility** - Decision-making is universally accessible and accountable for outcomes.
- **Integrity** - Community thrives on integrity, where all parties commit to the common good for belonging and trust.
- **Responsiveness**: Responsiveness fosters trust improves self and company image, and benefits everyone.
- **Support**: Support is crucial for building community among employees, students, parents.
- **Effort** - Family, staff, community, and students work together to achieve shared goals, resulting in success.
- **Flexibility** - Flexible education systems enable students to move freely between education, training, and jobs, adapting learning styles to suit individual needs and talents.

Empowering Excellence Charter School enhances students' success by focusing on key characteristics such as:

- personalized education
- higher standards
- data-driven instruction
- student engagement
- postsecondary preparation
- and skilled staff.

The school's strategic plan aims to improve all students' well-being by providing a continuum of care, focusing on educational achievement, post-secondary preparation, social work, relationships, connections, growth, self-advocacy, and life goals. The strategy includes high-intensity case management, job and educational program upgrades, data-driven improvement, and informal learning opportunities.

3. Proposed Location

3.1. What is the address (Street Address, City, Zip Code) of the proposed charter school? Or, if not yet identified, describe the proposed geographic area within the state where the charter school is proposed to be located.

3. Proposed Location

Empowering Excellence Charter School's main office will be located at 1800 First Avenue NE #201 in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. This location offers easy access, safety, and a welcoming atmosphere for students.

At EECS, the pupils are not required to adhere to a rigid timetable as they would in a regular classroom setting. Students will be able to study whenever it is most convenient for them, whether that is during the day or night. The necessity that students must be dedicated to an actual brick-and-mortar building and comply with the norms of occupying seat space or engage in a one size fit all scenario are both barriers to the achievement of students' life goals.

4. Proposed Grade Levels and Enrollment

4.1. Select each grade level that would be served during the five-year duration of the charter school contract by placing a mark in the first column below (Check all that apply). For each grade level selected, indicate the minimum, planned, and maximum enrollment for each year of the charter school contract.

| √ | Grade | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 |
|---|-------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| | K | 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: 0 Planned: 0 Max: 0 |
| | 1 | 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: 0 Planned: 0 Max: 0 |
| | 2 | 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: 0 Planned: 0 Max: 0 |
| | 3 | 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: 0 Planned: 0 Max: 0 |
| | 4 | 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: 0 Planned: 0 Max: 0 |
| | 5 | 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: 0 Planned: 0 Max: 0 |
| | 6 | 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: 0 Planned: 0 Max: 0 |
| | 7 | 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: 0 Planned: 0 Max: 0 |

| √ | Grade | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 |
|---|--------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| | 8 | 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: 0 Planned: 0 Max: 0 |
| | 9 | 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: 0 Planned: 0 Max: 0 |
| | 10 | 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: 0 Planned: 0 Max: 0 |
| | 11 | Min: 25 Planned: 25 Max: 29 | Min: 25 Planned: 37 Max: 41 | Min: 30 Planned: 49 Max: 53 | Min: 40 Planned: 61 Max: 65 | Min: 55 Planned: 73 Max: 77 |
| | 12 | Min: 25 Planned: 45 Max: 49 | Min: 30 Planned: 57 Max: 61 | Min: 42 Planned: 69 Max: 73 | Min: 47 Planned: 81 Max: 85 | Min: 48 Planned: 93 Max: 97 |
| | Total | Min: 50 Planned: 70 Max: 78 | Min: 55 Planned: 94 Max: 102 | Min: 72 Planned: 118 Max: 126 | Min: 87 Planned: 142 Max: 150 | Min: 103 Planned: 166 Max: 174 |

The US has shocking high school dropout numbers, prompting immediate action to address the issue. As of 2022, there is a 6% dropout rate among Cedar Rapids' high school students. In Cedar Rapids Community School District, 79.29% of all students graduated in four years. Linn County has a significant number of high school students either dropping out or considering doing so annually.

63.9% of African American students, 73.26% of Hispanic students, 69.57% of English Language Learners, and 53.38% of students with disabilities graduated from high school in Cedar Rapids in 2021-22, according to data from the Iowa Department of Education Performance Report. EECS will target a specific subset of this population, as well as a second group of currently enrolled high school students in the Cedar Rapids Community District who are seeking an alternative to graduating from high school. As such, Empowering Excellence Charter School has no intention of siphoning off high school pupils from neighboring institutions, but it will focus its attention on those students who have dropped out or are on the verge of dropping out of high school. Re-enrolling dropouts in the public school system will be one of the primary focuses.

Empowering Excellence Charter School anticipates enrolling enough students to meet its projections because of its exceptional program offerings, such as a self-paced blended curriculum, flexible learning sessions, post-secondary preparation, a mentor for each student with weekly mentoring sessions, career counseling, and career academies in high-demand areas.

EECS, a charter school offering a credit recovery program, faces competition from other schools. However, we offer students the option to obtain various certifications and internships, which are unique features not found at other charter schools. The school's enrollment projections start below average and increase over the initial contract. Most high school students drop out in 11th or 12th grade, which will result presumably in higher enrollment numbers at EECS. As the school grows, guidance counselors may refer students to EECS, and our vocational program will likely attract more students.

EECS will not accept first-year students because it plans to work with area school systems. Instead, EECS will work to build relationships with area schools so that it can better assist local children's educational needs. The program's goals are to improve teaching standards in the area and to forge closer ties between the charter

school, local colleges and universities, businesses, and the local school system. The faculty and staff at Empowering Excellence Charter School understand the value of providing students with a diverse educational experience and share the conviction that this helps them develop as whole people. A major goal of EECS is to provide every student the best possible chance to succeed academically and socially, and one way it does this is by recommending that children entering ninth grade enroll in one of the bigger institutions as part of their educational plan. Students are given the freedom to pursue their own educational interests inside the safety net of Empowering Excellence Charter School's resources and guidance.

Student enrollment notes:

In developing the EECS plan, the founding members of Empowering Excellence Charter School have thoughtfully considered the grade levels to serve in our initial phase. While our initial year as a charter school will have no more than 76 students, we have made the decision not to enroll ninth and tenth grade students at this time.

At this time, we will not be including 9th and 10th grade students in this proposal because EECS focuses on high school completion and workplace readiness. By focusing on high school completion and workplace readiness, we aim to provide targeted support and resources to students who are closer to entering the workforce. This approach allows us to allocate our resources effectively and ensure that we are meeting the specific needs of the students in our program. In addition to this, there are many students over ages 19 and 20 attending school with only 9th and 10th grade credits.

Our plans are to:

1. **Focus on the Foundational Years:** Empowering Excellence Charter School's primary focus in the initial phase is on the foundational years of education. During this time, we aim to foster a supportive learning community where students in the earlier grades can develop essential skills and a solid academic foundation that will serve them well throughout their educational journey.
2. **Phase-In Approach:** EECS decision to exclude ninth-grade students in the initial phase is part of a phased approach to growth and development. By focusing on specific grade levels, we can allocate targeted resources and provide a more personalized learning experience for the students we serve, ensuring they receive the support they need to succeed.
3. **Flexibility for Future Growth:** As Empowering Excellence evolves and demonstrates its effectiveness; we will continually assess opportunities for growth and expansion. This includes the possibility of enrolling ninth-grade students in the future when we can confidently provide them with the resources and support needed for their academic and personal development.
4. **Commitment to Collaboration:** While EECS understands the importance of students experiencing larger settings provided by traditional schools, our current emphasis is on creating a close-knit and collaborative learning environment in the early years. The staff of Empowering Excellence Charter School are committed to working together with parents, educators, and the community to ensure a seamless and successful transition for students who may join us in subsequent years.

Starting with larger public schools: The staff at Empowering Excellence Charter School encourages students to begin their academic journey at larger public schools in the community before considering us as an alternative option.

1. **Honoring established educational institutions:** Empowering Excellence Charter School recognizes the valuable role that larger public schools play in providing comprehensive education to many students in our community. By encouraging students to start their educational journey in these institutions, we honor their longstanding commitment to fostering learning and personal growth.

2. **Educational exploration and experience:** Empowering Excellence Charter School. Encourages. 9 graders. To begin their academic path and larger public school, this allows students to experience a diverse and comprehensive learning environment. They will have the opportunity to interact with a broader range of peers, participate in a wide array of extracurricular activities, and access of rich set of academic resources.
3. **And inform decision making:** Empowering Excellence Charter School believes that students and their families should have access to a comprehensive range of educational choices to make informed decisions that best suit their individual needs and aspirations. Encouraging students to explore larger public schools. Initially allows them to gain valuable insights into various educational models.
4. **Valuable partnerships:** By collaborating with larger public schools. Empowering Excellence Charter School can create a more cohesive and supportive educational ecosystem. We seek to work in partnership with these institutions, offering additional support to students and sharing best practices that benefit the entire community.
5. **Complementing each other's strengths.:** Empowering, excellent charter school. It's designed to be an additional support option for students, providing personalized attention and tailored. Educational experiences. By starting in larger public schools, students can benefit from the advantages of larger institutions while also having the option to explore alternative learning environments as they progress in their educational journey.

As a charter school, Empowering Excellence Charter School strives to complement and enhance the existing educational landscape in the community, valuing the roles of larger public schools and viewing them as important partners in fostering student success. By working together, we can collectively provide a holistic and well-rounded education that empowers every student to thrive academically and personally.

5. Evidence of Need and Community Support

5.1 and 5.2 should address how the independent founding group gathered, engaged, and assessed the community's need and support for the proposed school. Evidence may include survey results, minutes from community meetings, summarized public comments, or any other documentation of community need and support for the proposed charter school.

5.1. Describe the evidence supporting the need for the proposed charter school.

Empowering Excellence Charter School must assess community issues and education laws to determine if Cedar Rapids needs a charter school. Acts File 813 and H 847, signed by Iowa Governor Kim Reynolds in 2021, allow founding groups to start charter schools. The State Board of Education provides funding for starting members, allowing them to request permission to open schools.

Empowering Excellence Charter School. research academic failure and dropout rates, finding that students often experience bullying, harassment, and social isolation. Factors like financial struggles, homelessness, dysfunctional families, mental or emotional difficulties, and caring for younger siblings also contribute to inability to attend class consistently.

Education and marketable employment skills are major obstacles to economic independence for many. Goodwill of the Great Plains CEO John Hantla and Goodwill Industries Executive Director Kelly Osborn suggest offering alternative high school diplomas with career links to engage clients disengaged from the K-12 education system.

In the preceding decade and a half, the Cedar Rapids Community School District (CRCS) has faced considerable and widespread adversity, which has had a disproportionate effect on the urban center of Cedar Rapids and its inhabitants. The city's people and physical infrastructure suffered significant damage because of three notable events: the Flood of 2008, the Flood of 2016, Covid-19, and the strong derecho of 2020. These natural disasters not only caused extensive property damage but also disrupted the education system in the CRCS. Schools were forced to close, displacing students and interrupting their learning. The district has since been working tirelessly to rebuild and recover, implementing measures to ensure the safety and well-being of its students while striving to provide a quality education despite the challenges.

Fall 2020 CRCS enrollment dropped by 615 students due to Covid-19 and derecho. Empowering Excellence Charter School, like EYI, will partner with principals to identify students at risk of dropout and support academic success, graduation, and adult life.

- building a caring relationship
- teaching and promoting a growth mindset and self-esteem.
- teaching study habits and academic skills.
- developing social and emotional skills.
- teaching skills needed for daily living and community access.
- providing each youth with a caring adult mentor volunteer at least two hours a week.
- arranging college visits
- enhancing career awareness through interest surveys, job shadows, apprenticeships, etc.
- assisting each student in developing a career goal and career plan related to their interests.
- partnering with each youth's parent/guardian and supporting them in establishing a home environment that embraces and supports learning.

Non-pandemic years cost communities nearly \$300,000 in dropouts due to crime, unemployment, and health issues; COVID increased rates by 2-9% and caused learning loss in Cedar Rapids schools (Graduation Alliance).

The Academic Proficiency and Growth Data of Currently Operating School Districts in the State was also analyzed by EYI, Inc. In 1989-1990, the Iowa legislature passed the Open Enrollment Act (Iowa Code 282.18), which states: "It is the intent of the general assembly to permit a wide range of educational choices for children enrolled in schools in this state and to maximize the ability to use those choices..., [To] maximize parental choice and access to educational opportunities that are not available to children due to their residence." According to the numbers, by 2021–2022, 7.5% of students will have taken use of the Open Enrollment Act. More pupils will be open enrolled in 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 from the lowest and largest enrollment categories, respectively, than will be open enrolled in" (Education Statistics - PK-12," n.d.). The goal of the EYI is to expand the educational options available to high school students.

According to the Harris Poll (May 2022), parents favor giving children a say in school, with 93% agreeing that schools should not be uniform. Homeschooling has surpassed charter schools as the most popular form of education, with 78% considering sending their child to public charter schools. 73% of all parents surveyed desire more public charter schools. 83% of parents of color want the same thing.

Cedar Rapids public schools experienced a nearly 10% drop in K-12 enrollment, with 1,170 students dropping from 17,129 in 2018-19 to 15,959 in 2022-2023. This could result in a \$2.57 million loss in per-pupil state aid (King 2023).

The district recently commissioned a professional enrollment analysis, which revealed a decline in the district population. The analysis reveals that enrollment has decreased by 2,382 students over the past two decades. In the past five years, enrollment has decreased by 957 students, a rate that has accelerated recently. Each year, the district loses between 100 and 200 pupils to open enrollment. The number of students who have enrolled outside of the CRCSD demonstrates that parents are looking for other options for their children's education. This trend suggests that parents are seeking alternative educational opportunities beyond what the CRCSD offers. It is indicative of a growing desire for more diverse and personalized learning experiences for their children.

Recent data from Cedar Rapids, Iowa Education Data and School Information (2022) shows that the city of Cedar Rapids has a 6% dropout rate among students in grades 9-12, further demonstrating the necessity for a charter school.

High school dropout epidemic affects 13% of public high school students, including black, Hispanic, and Native American students, who abandon school within two years.

Because of the loss of productive workers and the greater costs associated with increasing incarceration, healthcare, and social services, our communities and our country are also negatively impacted by the epidemic of high school dropouts.

According to the Iowa School Performance Report, <https://www.iaschoolperformance.gov/>, when comparing a number of neighboring districts, Linn Mar graduated 95.57 percent of its 542 students by 2022, Marion graduated 94.29 (165 out of 175 students), and College Community School District graduated 92 out of 118 students, or 77.97% on average, falling short of the state average of 82.3%. In terms of graduating students with IEPs and from poor socioeconomic backgrounds, Linn Mar and Marion both performed worse than the state average. In these specific areas, Linn Mar graduated 85.71% of its 44 students with IEPs and 82.86% of its 35 students from poor socioeconomic backgrounds. Similarly, Marion graduated 81.25% of its 16 students with IEPs and 78.57% of its 14 students from poor socioeconomic backgrounds. These numbers indicate a need for improvement in supporting and graduating students in these subgroups within both districts.

5. Evidence of Need and Community Support

With the addition of a charter school in Cedar Rapids, more children of African American and Hispanic heritage will have access to quality education thanks to the establishment of a charter school, especially those who are considered to be at increased risk of the negative effects of poverty. It is anticipated that 75% of children attending charter schools are eligible for reduced-price or free lunches (Vasile, 2022).

In 2003, 3.5 million youths without high school diplomas were unenrolled, and 6.5% failed to complete education in 2014, costing taxpayers \$957 billion annually (Jag, n.d.).

High school dropouts face higher poverty rates and poorer health outcomes, including cancer, pulmonary disease, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease, with a reduced life expectancy.

For additional information from the Harris Poll, please see:

<https://www.publiccharters.org/latest-news/2022/08/24/new-report-shows-parents-more-engaged-ever-education-and-never-going-back>.

5.2. Describe the evidence of community support for the proposed charter school.

Tawanda Cooley (Parent): “EYI school is very beneficial to students who struggle at regular schools, whether it be bullying or having troubles with learning a curriculum. My son Zander goes there, and he seems to be doing better, especially mentally. He has one-on-one experience. Not a stressful environment for him either. So he's able to do his work without being distracted. What makes this school so great is the teachers as well, as they are compassionate, loving, caring and strict when needed. Miss Swayze is an amazing person. She is so helpful with anything, and she is very resourceful. This program has been so helpful for my family because they helped with food and anything we needed. We are simply best blessed beyond measure. Because I've never come across a program with teachers that are so compassionate. My son does better, actually gets his schoolwork done. He doesn't struggle with bullying anymore, which is amazing because I don't have to get nasty and mean with anybody ever. We're always on the same page and the communication between me and the teachers is awesome. I want to thank everyone for their dedication to Zander's schooling.”

Shamia Palmer: “My name is Shamaia Palmer. I am the mother of Laron Palmer, who is a student from Metro currently at the Y program. EYI. Miss Swayze and her team are amazing. My son at one point was not graduating and he had a lot of work to complete with no host left. Of our ambition. Miss Swayze and her team have helped my son tremendously. LeBron has been going to this program since about November, maybe December, with over 25 credits he was missing and the turnaround he has gotten has been amazing and shocking. He is graduating high school this year. At one point we did not see that in his future. I am so proud of him, and I appreciate Miss Swayze and her team for a lifetime. Just for pushing him and staying patient. If you have a child that is struggling to have no hope left., EYI is the best decision that me and my son have ever made. And I am sure it will be the best for you as well. Please look into it. Do your research, if need be, but I guarantee you this would be the best decision that you ever make for your child to get high school completed, if they are struggling in the normal high school environment. We love you, Miss Swayze. Keep doing what you're doing. Keep up the good work.! You have a very big impact in this community.”

La’Ron Palmer (Student): “Hey, Miss Swayze. I'm texting you to let you know. I appreciate you so much and thank you a lot for the help that you provided. Without you or my mom, I didn't think I would have ever made it. Really made it. If I was real, I would have quit a long time ago. And no other person actually wanted to help me but you. And my mom. So, I really hope you know you did so much for me. You really did. Without EYI, I would have quit.”

Techau (Parent): “EYI services are needed in our community because when Kids went to online learning during COVID. They became isolated, depressed, lonely, and unmotivated. They often played on their phones, took naps, watched tv etc. They had no schedules, so many lost their focus and drive. So many of the kids have also gotten off track due to family, health, and behavior problems. Now that the kids have returned to school, there are a portion of those kids who have lost their focus and EYI helps them in the smaller setting get back on track; helps build life skills; teaches them responsibility for their actions; prepares them for graduation be that to get a diploma or GED and opens options for college or hands on labor positions. This in return creates young adults with self-esteem, hope, happiness, and success in life. EYI is vital to this community in providing the kids with the tools they need to have good lives!”

“To the Board of Education, Cedar Rapids Community School:

5. Evidence of Need and Community Support

As the parent and grandparent of excellent students and student leaders ('93, '13, '15, '20, '22), the foster/adoptive mom of a struggling student ('23), and the temporarily designated guardian of a student with learning disabilities ('23), I have witnessed the wide discrepancies in how students are treated by teachers, counselors and staff, seemingly based on their scholastic success and social skills. I know that teachers and staff are extremely busy with all the duties for which they are responsible. But my smart grandchildren could, and did, have the ears of their teachers and principal when they wanted to discuss a school problem. My granddaughter told me how she walked into the principal's office without an appointment to complain about a poor teacher. He was open to her complaints. On the other hand, when my daughter and her friend who lived with us, needed to discuss scheduling problems, both had to wait weeks to hear back from their counselors. My son and grandchildren were greeted enthusiastically by adults at school. My struggling girls were often treated dismissively or derisively, as if they were a bother. Based on their 12 years of school, neither girl had confidence that their problems were of any import to the people who were supposed to oversee and encourage their success.

I heard about Empowering Youths of Iowa from a teacher who recommended Sarah Swayze. "She's a wonderful, caring teacher," he told me. She is, indeed! Sarah understands marginalized kids. She knows what her students have experienced, and she makes it clear from the first day that she knows them and cares about their success.

I'm impressed with how she's planning to prepare students for interviewing, interning, and entering the workforce in the area. Kids who don't have that support at home will benefit tremendously with her guidance in these areas.

I'm enthusiastically supporting Sarah with her charter school. She's just what our students need, particularly those who have fallen through the cracks at a traditional high school. My daughter told me last spring, "If it weren't for you and Ms. Swayze, I wouldn't have graduated." Every student deserves what Sarah offers: teaching, interest, encouragement, and preparation for life. And a cheerleader who celebrates their successes!"

Sincerely,

Carol Gorman

5.3. Optional attachment(s) to support 5.1 and 5.2. Please add any additional information or documents to [Appendix A](#)

6. Independent Founding Group and Governing Board Background Information

Independent Founding Group Members

"'Founding group' means a person, group of persons, or education service provider that develops and submits an application for a charter school to the state board" [Iowa Code § 256E.2(5)].

6.1. Enter the names of the independent founding group members.

Daniel Pledge-Johnson, Maurice Davis, Thomas Darden, Joseph Nyugen, Jim West, and Sarah Swayze are longtime residents, business, professionals, and community leaders' residents of Cedar Rapids.

6.2. Attach the curriculum vitae (CV) or résumé for each founding member to [Appendix B](#).

Proposed Governing Board Members

"'Governing board' means the independent board of a charter school whose members are elected or selected pursuant to the charter school contract" [Iowa Code § 256E.2(6)].

6.3. Enter the names of the proposed governing board members. If not yet known, enter the date when they will be available.

| | |
|-------------------|-------------|
| A. Tina Gudenkauf | D. Michelle |
| Nelson Robbins | |
| A. Jackie Watkins | E. Carol |
| Gormon | |
| A. Paul Robbins | F. Paul |
| Robbins | |

6.4. Attach the CV or résumé for each governing board member to [Appendix C](#).

Proposed Charter School Administration

6.5. Indicate the names of the proposed charter school administration and each individual's role.

Add rows as necessary.

| Proposed Administrator Full Name | Role |
|----------------------------------|------|
|----------------------------------|------|

| 6. Independent Founding Group and Governing Board Background Information | |
|--|-----------------------|
| TBA | Principal |
| Jim West | Director of Education |
| Janessa Morgan | Director of Operation |
| Sarah Swayze | Executive Director |
| | |

Attach the CV or résumé for each administrator to [Appendix D](#).

7. Proposed Calendar and Daily Schedule

7.1. Attach a copy of the proposed charter school's calendar that includes:

- **School year and semester start and end dates,**
- **Holidays and other no-school days, and**
- **Professional learning days.**

Empowering Excellence Charter School will work on three hours of instruction daily to provide a productive learning environment, using the same concept and practices that have made Empowering Youths of Iowa, Inc. successful. Students are able to fully engage in their coursework and effectively assimilate the material thanks to the focused and compressed schedule. Additionally, Empowering Youths of Iowa, Inc.'s smaller class sizes allow for individualized attention from teachers, fostering a supportive and engaging learning environment. A mastery-based, individualized curriculum is used by our highly qualified staff to give students extra time and attention so they can perform better. We take pride in encouraging and facilitating the success of our students. The focus is on assisting students in completing all necessary high school graduation requirements while preparing them for college, employment, and careers. Empowering Youths of Iowa, Inc. provides a range of extracurricular activities and materials in addition to academic support to improve students' overall development, including relationship-building, problem-solving, conflict resolution, internships, and college visits. These opportunities give students the chance to learn new skills, explore their interests, and create a diverse portfolio for their future endeavors. We want to give our students the tools they need to succeed both academically and personally after high school.

At Empowering Excellence Charter School, students can embark on a vocational trajectory aligned with their personal interests, concurrently pursuing their online high school diploma. Each student will be able to select from a variety of contemporary and highly sought-after disciplines, or proactively prepare for further education. Furthermore, it is worth noting that the students' career-focused courses typically equip them with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively pursue their long-term aspirations.

Students are required to devote at least 15 hours per week to their academic studies as well as 12 hours per week to their career development. This career development can take the form of a paid job, an internship, apprenticeship, online course work through Goodwill or project-based learning. The sum of all the hours worked over the academic year is 939.6. These hours help meet the demands of barriers that impede at-risk students from being successful academically and prepared for their careers. While this is less than the minimum 1,080 hours, these hours help meet the students' needs. Also the individualized support, smaller class size, and lack of lost time due to transitions in the hallways will create efficiencies in our instructional time and model. The foundation of the EECS discipline does not revolve around the mere physical presence of students in designated spaces, but rather emphasizes the diligent efforts exerted by students to facilitate their own academic achievements.

For students who require extra assistance, EECS will provide Saturday schooling twice a month, from 10:00 a.m. to 1 p.m. During Saturday schooling, students will have access to additional tutoring and resources to help them with their coursework. This program aims to support their academic progress and ensure they have the necessary tools for success.

7. Proposed Calendar and Daily Schedule

7.2. Attach a sample of the proposed charter school's daily schedule for one week that includes:

- Daily start and end times,
- Class period or content block start and end times, and
- Name of classes or content to be covered.
- If the proposed charter school wishes to offer grades nine through 12, attach a master schedule and course catalog.

7.3. Add attachments to [Appendix E](#).

Empowering Excellence Charter School is a career-focused, 24-credit online high school. Students enrolled in the school may finish their educational journey sooner, if necessary, based on their existing life patterns and the flexibility of their schedule. However, participants must finish the course of study by the end of the academic year, when they will turn 21. This unique feature allows students to take control of their education and tailor it to their individual needs and circumstances. It ensures that students have ample time to complete their coursework while also providing them with the necessary structure and deadline to stay on track towards graduation.

Schedule

Any time after enrolling in EECS, students may begin their courses. Although the program may be finished sooner, all courses must be finished by the student's 21st birthday. We advise students to finish one semester course every two weeks, though they are free to work more quickly and finish their courses sooner. The flexibility of the program allows students to set their own pace and complete the courses at their convenience. This approach empowers students to balance their studies with other commitments and ensures that they can achieve their educational goals within the designated time frame.

Pacing and Attendance

The scheduling of their own attendance is the responsibility of the student. It is strongly advised that students follow the pacing guide given to them when they enroll because they have until age 21 to finish the program. Students should put in 15 hours a week working on their courses to succeed in the program. This time allocation allows students to progress steadily and complete the required coursework within the given timeframe. Additionally, adhering to the suggested pacing guide ensures that students have ample time to seek assistance or clarification from instructors if needed, contributing to a more successful learning experience.

8. Proposed Academic Program

8.1. Describe the proposed charter school's academic program and identify how the program aligns with state academic standards.

EECS offers an innovative program to engage students at risk of dropping out, thanks to its dedicated staff, mission, flexible schedule, research-based curriculum, technology-assisted instruction, direct instruction, program design, personalized graduation plan, career academies, community partnerships, mentorship program, and emphasis on social and emotional well-being. Students can choose to graduate early and attend both regular and accelerated programs. Empowering Excellence Charter School aims to prepare students for post-graduation success in their chosen fields and the workforce.

Empowering Excellence Charter School aims to inspire students to become active participants in their education by offering a personalized, varied curriculum and instructional methodologies. Teachers use a mixed approach to meet each child's unique learning style and pace. The school's guiding principles include individualized instruction, small group and whole class instruction based on standards, and research-based digital instruction. Specific Learning Levels are developed to meet each student's intellectual level, enhancing their chances of success, and allowing them to demonstrate their learning to meet course criteria.

EECS innovative concept aims to help credit-deficient, over-aged students aged 16-21 acquire a regular high school diploma. The school day is split into two parts, allowing students to choose their preferred session or attend both sessions if available. In-person and online support is available from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., with online support available from 10:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.

The approach requires dedicated educators with expertise in core subjects, special education, literacy, English as a Second Language, and various electives or career tracks. Additional staff positions, such as teacher aides, career coordinators, and guidance counselors, are also needed to support students' academic success.

EECS offers alternative schooling with additional accountability measures to evaluate student achievement, ongoing progress, curriculum trends, attendance, graduation rates, credit accrual, employment, and post-secondary plans. These measures complement state and federal law, ensuring a comprehensive approach to addressing the unique needs of youth attending Empowering Excellence Charter School.

Students enrolled in EECS can earn 100% of their high school diploma online. Whether their goal is to be a job, go to college, or fulfill a lifelong goal, EECS staff will help them get there. EECS aligns its educational program with the educational program written in Chapter 12 of plan laid off by the state of Iowa which states "Beginning with the 2010-2011 school year graduating class, all students in schools and school districts shall satisfactorily complete at least four units of English-language arts, three units of mathematics, three units of science, three units of social studies, and one full unit of physical education as conditions of graduation. The three units of social studies may include the existing graduation requirements of one-half unit of United States government and one unit of United States history."

In implementing the high school program standards, EECS requires that all students successfully complete 18 or 22.0 credits to receive an accredited high school diploma and career certificate.

Graduation Requirement Plan

| Requirements | Units Required |
|--|------------------------------|
| English/Language Arts (English Language Arts 10, English Language Arts 11, English Language Arts 12, Literacy & Comprehension 1, Literacy & Comprehension 2, Classic Novels & Author Studies, and Introduction to Communications & Speech) | 4.0 |
| Mathematics (Pre-Algebra, Algebra 1, Geometry, Algebra 2, and Financial Math) | 3.0 |
| Science (1.0 Biology, 1.0 Earth Science, 1.0 Chemistry, Conceptual Physics, Environmental Science, and Life Science) | 3.0 |
| Social Studies (.5 U.S. Government, .5 Economics and Financial Literacy, 1.0 Civics and Citizenship, and 1.0 U.S. History,) | 3.0 |
| Health/Physical Education | One semester Yearly (1.0) |
| CPR Training | |
| Career Certificate Courses | 4.0 |
| Career Portfolio | |
| Total Credits | 18.0 |

Students can transfer credits from other accredited institutions and only need to take the courses that they are missing.

Because of the flexibility of our program, students can work on their high school diploma until the age of 21. Some students may earn their high school diploma in a shorter period.

All students will be paired with a mentor and advisor who will be their support, answer questions, connect them with their teachers and provide guidance and motivation.

English Language Arts (4 Credits Required): The purpose of the English language arts program is to provide instruction for mastery of Iowa's Language Arts Common Core Standards and to prepare students for graduation and post-secondary studies or careers. Eight credits in English language arts are required for graduation by the Iowa Department of Education. These credits ensure that students have a strong foundation in reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. The English language arts program also aims to foster critical thinking and analytical skills, enabling students to effectively communicate and comprehend complex texts. Edmentum Courseware Learning's digital curriculum will provide students with the following courses in English language arts: • English 9 Common Core (2 Semesters), English 10 Common Core (2 Semesters), English 11 Common Core (2 Semesters), English 12 Common Core (2 Semesters) • Introduction to Literature and Composition • Critical Reading and Effective Writing • Creative Writing • Media Literacy • Reading Skills and Strategies • Writing Skills and Strategies

Mathematics (3 Credits Required)

The purpose of the mathematics program is to provide instruction for mastery of the Iowa Common Cores for Mathematics and to prepare students for graduation and post-secondary studies or careers. The program aims to develop students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills through the study of mathematical concepts and principles. It also focuses on fostering a deep understanding of mathematical reasoning and its application in real-world situations. Six credits in mathematics are required for graduation by the Iowa Department of Education. Edmentum Courseware Learning's digital curriculum will provide students with the following courses in mathematics: Algebra 1, Common Core (CC); Geometry; Algebra II (CC); Precalculus; Statistics; Math for College Readiness; Math for College Success; Liberal Arts Math 1; Consumer and Applied Math; and Liberal Arts Math 2.

SCIENCE (3 Credits Required)

Curriculum and Instructional Strategies The purpose of the science program is to provide students with a broad knowledge of scientific concepts and establish a solid foundation for students to pursue post-secondary education. Students are required to complete a minimum of three credits of high school science for graduation. Edmentum Courseware Learning digital curriculum will provide students the following courses in science: • Earth Science • Physical Science • Biology • Chemistry • Psychology • Environmental Science

SOCIAL STUDIES (3 Credits Required)

Curriculum and Instructional Strategies The purpose of the social studies program is to prepare students to be knowledgeable, informed, and active citizens in an increasingly diverse community, nation, and interdependent world. The program is also designed to promote civic competence and ensure that values that have shaped our democratic nation are instilled in students. Students will be required to complete three credits of social studies to fulfill graduation requirements. The social studies curriculum will be aligned to Iowa State Standards. Edmentum Courseware Learning digital curriculum will provide students the following courses in social studies: • Geography and World Cultures • World History • U.S. History • U.S. Government and Politics • Economics with Financial Literacy • Sociology.

PE/Health (1 Credits Required)

Career Certificate Courses (4 Credits Required)

Students can further their education by taking sequential elective courses, which allow them to study topics that are of particular interest to them. These elective courses provide students with a chance to explore subjects outside of their core curriculum and delve deeper into specific areas of knowledge. By selecting these courses, students can gain a more comprehensive understanding of their chosen field and develop specialized skills that can enhance their future career prospects. The elective courses cover a wide range of fascinating topics, such as science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), foreign languages, and career and technical education (CTE). CTE electives may place an emphasis on a variety of occupational clusters or pathways. These pathways can include fields such as healthcare, business, information technology, and culinary arts. By offering a diverse range of CTE electives, students can explore different career options and gain practical skills that can directly translate into the workforce. Additionally, these courses often provide hands-on experiences and internships, allowing students to apply their knowledge in real-world settings and make valuable connections within their chosen industry. Goodwill Industry of the Heartland's digital curriculum will provide students the following elective courses and certifications: • Google IT Support Professional • Google IT Automation with Python • Custodial Technician • Google UX Design • ServSafe Food Protection Manager • Customer Service and Sales • ServSafe Food Handler

EECS' partnership with Goodwill Industries will also prepare students for postsecondary success with the use of NorthStar Digital Literacy. Northstar Digital Literacy focuses on essential computer and online skills, including basic computer skills, internet basics, email usage, Windows OS, Mac, essential software skills, technology usage in daily life, information literacy, career search, telehealth appointments, K-12 distance learning, and digital footprint. Self-guided modules assess individuals' ability to perform tasks based on these skills. The self-guided modules provide individuals with the opportunity to learn and practice these skills at their own pace. Each module includes interactive exercises and quizzes to ensure understanding and mastery of the material. Northstar Digital Literacy offers a comprehensive certification program for those who successfully complete all the modules, providing them with a recognized credential in digital literacy.

Empowering Excellence Charter aligns with the state standards by emphasizing:

- The implementation of rigorous academic criteria for all pupils in order to both challenge and promote their educational development.
- Competency-based learning facilitates the progression of students by granting credit for the demonstration of competencies by allowing students to work at their own pace to demonstrate competency.
- Differentiation based on students' levels, interests, and needs is a crucial aspect of academic instruction.
- Gathering feedback and statistics through surveys administered to students, staff, and families.
- Constant dialogue and iterative feedback loops involving all relevant parties.

Individualized Instruction

Empowering Excellence Charter School is an alternative corridor to graduation, offering a research-based curriculum, personalized graduation plans, career academies, community partnerships, mentorship programs, and a focus on social and emotional well-being. This innovative program targets at-risk students and those at risk of dropping out, promoting accelerated high school years and attracting all students in the county. EECS aims to equip students with career-related skills and a standard high school diploma, ensuring their success after graduation.

Empowering Excellence Charter School offers a personalized, differentiated curriculum and instructional strategies to encourage student ownership in the learning process. Teachers use a blended approach, combining personalized learning, small group, and standards-based instruction with research-based digital instruction. Specific Learning Levels cater to students' proficiency levels, allowing growth and development in learning.

EECS' model focuses on credit-deficient, over-aged students aged 15-22, seeking a standard high school diploma. It offers flexible online and in-person learning schedules, catering to students' needs and individualized learning preference. The model employs experienced, committed teachers, including core content, special education, reading, and elective or career-related courses. Supportive staff members include teacher assistants, guidance counselors, and career coordinators.

The school offers alternative schools with additional accountability measures to evaluate student achievement, curriculum trends, attendance, graduation rates, credit accrual, employment, and post-secondary plans, beyond just academic progress.

Empowering Excellence Charter School focuses on the whole student, offering innovative learning systems, academic interventions, social and emotional well-being, partnerships with families and community stakeholders, and graduation pathways for college/career preparation. The school is based on these five elements:

- A. Blended Model of Instruction
- B. Academic Interventions and Special Needs Services
- C. Social and Emotional Well-Being of Students
- D. Partnerships with Families and Community Stakeholders
- E. Graduation Pathway and College/Career Preparation.

Blended Model of Instruction: EECS will utilize the research-based CK-12 Learning digital curriculum for high school graduation, covering Math, Science, English, Social Studies, World Languages, and electives. This comprehensive curriculum supports academic success for all students, regardless of their level of preparedness. The curriculum offers customizable STEM resources, actionable insights, and auto grading and reporting. Coursework can be conducted using traditional or interactive online learning methods, ensuring rigorous, standards-based content and scope.

Advanced Placement: Advanced Placement programs provide college credit for high AP exam scores. Core courses cater to diverse students, offering 70-90 hours of interactive instruction, guided practice, and integrated assessment for mastering rigorous content and earning graduation credits.

Teacher-directed lessons utilize research-based strategies, models, and methods:

- Technology-enhanced instruction to engage students and expand their learning experiences through state-of-the-art technology and software programs.
- Gradual Release of Responsibility Model
- Close Reading Cooperative Learning
- Inquiry-Based Learning
- Standards-Based Learning
- Reciprocal Teaching Graphic Organizers (Story Maps, Venn Diagrams, Webbing)
- Writing experiences in a variety of contexts
- Instructional strategies and techniques such as modeling, repetition, paraphrasing, modified language, increased practice, visuals, language dictionaries, group and peer learning, will be used to support the needs of ELL and ESE students.
- Online resources to be utilized by teachers during direct instruction will include Khan Academy, ReadWorks, Algebra Nation, Math Nation, ReadTheory.com, Google Suite, Scholastic, NewsELA, IXL,
- GetFive.com, and Live.com. Ongoing assessments will be used to have students demonstrate mastery (quizzes, activities, tests, projects, research papers; summative exams, etc.);

ACADEMIC INTERVENTIONS AND SPECIAL NEEDS SERVICES

- A MTSS/RtI plan will implement interventions for academic and behavioral issues, using research-based programs for Tier 2 and Tier 3 students, as determined by the school's Shared Problem-Solving Team.

Students with Disabilities, English Language Learners, and Struggling Students

- ESE-certified teachers will offer specialized services for students meeting ESE requirements, while ESOL-certified teachers will cater to ELL's needs. The school will contract with vendors for additional support services, including speech, counseling, and occupational therapy. Test preparation will be provided during "Learning Workshops," using resources like the ACT/SAT Prep. Extracurricular activities and clubs will be organized to enhance students' educational experiences and motivate them to excel.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING OF STUDENTS

- School contracts vendors for individual and group counseling, employs full-time guidance counselors for academic and social well-being.

Mentoring Program

- EECS will implement a comprehensive Student Mentorship Program, assigning weekly mentors to provide academic and emotional support, ensuring graduation success.

Character Education

- Values and principles such as patriotism, responsibility, citizenship, kindness, respect, honesty, generosity, self-control, tolerance, and collaboration are promoted through monthly activities, bulletin boards, newsletters, and mentorship sessions as part of Character Education.

Community Leaders and Community Agencies

- The School's Community Leadership Program will host community members and speakers discussing academic success, employment, personal growth, and independent living. Students and families will have access to mental health and social support through partnerships with local organizations like EECS.

Partnerships with Families And Community Stakeholders

- The school will host events to encourage parental involvement in their child's education, such as Open Houses and Math Olympics.

Partnerships with Business Leaders and Professionals

- School partners with business leaders and professionals to discuss career pathways, entrepreneurship, professionalism, and work ethic.

Partnerships with Colleges, Vocational Centers, and Community Organizations

- Empowering Excellence Charter School will establish partnerships with local colleges, universities, and vocational schools, including Kirkwood Community College, Mount Mercy University, Coe College, University of Iowa, University of Northern Iowa, etc. The school will also foster partnerships with community organizations to provide assistance in housing, social-emotional issues, substance abuse, behavioral issues, family conflicts, teenage pregnancy, suicide prevention, health, wellness, and sexual assault.

GRADUATION PATHWAY AND COLLEGE & CAREER PREPARATION

Personalized Graduation Plans

- EECS staff will develop a personalized graduation plan based on student's credits, GPA, cohort year, credit recovery needs, testing, obligations, and community service hours.
- A virtual portal for tracking and measuring student progress towards Personal Graduation Plan completion.

Career Counseling/Guidance

The school will have a full-time career coordinator to help students explore careers, interview techniques, track employment, and coordinate career fairs. Additionally, a Vocation Lab will be available for students to research job opportunities, scholarships, and college admission requirements and get help with completing applications.

Career Pathways

EECS will partner with Goodwill Industries of Iowa and other businesses to offer students career paths in technology-related fields, preparing them for employment opportunities and industry certification. The program utilizes curriculum developed through their partnerships with others.

Proposed Future Certifications (offered at the school using the Goodwill Industries and Mercy Hospital):

8. Proposed Academic Program

- Hotel and Restaurant Management
- Robotics
- Game and Animation Designer/Programmer
- Entrepreneurship
- Microsoft Office Specialist
- Computer Programmer/Software Developer
- Emergency Medical Responder
- Medical Assistant
- CNA/Nursing

In accordance with the educational philosophy of EECS, two online platforms will be employed to cater to the diverse learning styles of our student population. The students will be provided with the opportunity to select between Edmentum and Ck12 as their preferred platforms for collaboration. CK12 provides students with the flexibility to progress at individualized rates, while also offering a range of components inside the Flexbook to cater to their specific need. The Lexile level of each course has the capacity to be modified in order to provide comprehensibility for all students. Edmentum emphasizes the cultivation of practical abilities relevant to real-world contexts. The program places a strong emphasis on recognizing students' individual passions, as well as fostering the qualities of perseverance and grit. The Courseware exhibits a high level of rigor, pertinence, and adherence to both state and national educational standards. Edmentum provides educational material that is specifically tailored to cater to the individual competency levels of students, employing a combination of media-rich and interactive active learning experiences.

Empowering Excellence Charter School aligns with Iowa's academic standards by meeting the following:

- a. It is free tuition free public education.
- b. The school has a founding group.
- c. Its goal is to improve student learning, well-being, and post-secondary preparation.
- d. It serves at-risk students.
- e. It is created to accelerate student learning.
- f. It creates new professional opportunities for teachers and educators.
- g. The school offers greater flexibility to meet the educational needs of a diverse student population.
- h. It attends to help close the achievement gap.

9. Proposed Instructional Model

9.1. Describe the proposed charter school's instructional model that includes:

- **Type of learning environment,**
- **Class size and structure,**
- **Curriculum overview, and**
- **Teaching methods.**

An instructional model is a framework for the proposed instructional design that aligns with the needs of the charter school's prospective student population(s). The description should address all of the following:

- Learning environment is the way instruction will be provided (e.g., face-to-face classroom-based, independent study, online).
 - Class size and structure includes the maximum class size, the teacher-to-student ratio, grades served in a particular classroom, etc.
 - Curriculum overview includes how teachers will teach the standards, including the curriculum (e.g., lessons, instructional materials, teaching techniques, activities).
 - Teaching methods include the methods and systems that teachers will use to provide differentiated instruction, remediation, and intervention to meet the needs of all students.
-

Empowering Excellence Charter School offers quality education that aligns with Iowa Core Standards. The school will also provide the following:

- Counseling for social issues, life management skills training, and preparing students for higher education, technology, and career opportunities.

Teachers implement an anonymous-learning approach for educational mission and state standards.

- Technology-driven learning - Digital curriculum for self-paced, individual academic progress.
- Teacher guided instruction focuses on core academics, social skills, and problem-solving to support students' learning, using flexible grouping and individualized support.

Edmentum Courseware's Virtual Academy and CK12 offers rigorous, standards-based courses and tutorials for students in English language arts and mathematics. Cognia has approved the program, and EECS plans to use it to meet state requirements. The curriculum includes experiential learning and modern tools to better serve a diverse student body. The curriculum has been redesigned to increase student motivation and achievement, showcasing Edmentum Courseware's distinctive edge in experiential learning that focus on online courses and online curriculum for first-time credit, credit recovery, elective course offerings, and supplemental digital curriculum to meet each student's needs.

Edmentum expedites student progress by offering exemptive pretests and divided content into modules with tutorials, mastery tests, and practice activities, like CK12.

CK-12 is an online educational platform that offers intelligent and interactive learning at no cost. It caters to over 200 million students and teachers worldwide, offering high-quality content and cutting-edge technology. CK-12 includes various learning modalities, adaptive practice, instruction, and learning modules, and is aligned with national CCSS standards. The platform provides a comprehensive learning experience for all learners, ensuring a comprehensive and engaging learning experience.

Both Edmentum Courseware and CK12 offer courses with opt-in support to meet students' individual academic readiness levels. General Studies courses cover various pathways, including Advanced Placement, Honors, Core, and Prescriptive. Advanced Placement courses offer college-level curricula and college credits, Honors courses provide subject-area knowledge extension, Core courses assume readiness for grade-level challenges, and Prescriptive courses generate individualized learning plans for efficient and accelerated credit recovery.

To enhance the learner experience, EECS plans to meet the needs of all students by selecting Edmentum and CK12 platforms because together students learning styles are address and all students will be able to use the following features:

- Dictionaries provide learners with a convenient and efficient means of accessing definitions for unfamiliar words.
- The "Click to Speak" feature enables a learner to effortlessly activate an audio rendition of the tutorial's text by simply clicking on it. This technology proves to be quite beneficial for readers facing difficulties, as well as for pupils who exhibit a preference for aural learning.
- The translation tool facilitates the translation of text into a selection of 16 distinct languages for learners. This resource proves to be highly beneficial for English Language Learners (ELLs) who still necessitate a certain level of assistance in their native language.

9. Proposed Instructional Model

Every lesson commences with an explicit purpose to ensure that learners possess a clear understanding of the subject matter they will be acquiring knowledge about. The tutorials commence by presenting an initial video aimed at capturing the learners' interest from the outset and fostering sustained involvement throughout the instructional session. The tutorial incorporates an integrated narration feature for each slide, enabling learners to either listen to the provided content or read it independently. The tutorial provides learners with a variety of resources that can support the success of all learners, including English Language Learners (ELLs) or those with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).

To summarize, Empowering Excellence Charter School will offer students an "anonymous" learning program that utilizes a digital curriculum as well as interactive programs and materials. Students will participate in both online and teacher-assessed online instruction to acquire the necessary skills and standards in order to earn credits. Teachers will utilize research based instructional programs, combined with computer-based supplementary programs, to teach content area courses. The curriculum selected by EECS will meet the needs of all students- -from high achieving to struggling students.

EECS will cater to a student population like that of Empowering Youths of Iowa, Inc, that is characterized by the inclusion of individuals with special needs, comprising around 25-50% of the total student body. The educational institution will provide educational interventions, support, and accommodations, along with complimentary and reduced-cost meals for all individuals. The proposed measures aim to establish a flexible and inclusive setting, maintain a student-to-teacher ratio of 15:1, and allocate resources for one full-time Special Education Teacher and three one-on-one resource aides. These strategies are intended to ensure the effective education of this population.

The delivery of instructions will be facilitated by trained teachers from Iowa, who will provide live classes lasting for 60 minutes. These sessions will encompass both the review of previously covered materials and the introduction of new curriculum content. Furthermore, learners who are unable to participate in the live courses can access and listen to the recorded sessions at their convenience and according to their preferences. In addition, students will be provided with guided notes to support their academic achievement.

Teachers assess students regularly to ensure they are mastering standards. School leaders collaborate with teachers to analyze performance data for differentiated instruction. Students struggling with individualized instruction will receive tiered interventions. Research-based materials, appropriate methods, and additional time will be provided for those who show lack of progress. The school's curriculum, instructional techniques, and strategies for assisting students below grade level are described.

10. Assessment of Student Progress

10.1. Describe how the proposed charter school will use assessments to measure and report student progress on the performance framework.

This should describe how the proposed charter school will administer, analyze, and use assessment results related to the performance framework (see the Charter School Contract Performance Framework section of the guidance).

The Universal Constructs, the Iowa 21st Century Framework, and the Iowa Core are the standards that all courses and tests must meet. Common Core, NAEA, NGSS, etc., may be used as a starting point, but further direction may be sought in addition to these resources. The completion requirement for a course should be proportional to the extent to which the student has demonstrated mastery of the learning outcomes for that course. Teachers and students should work together on assignments, group projects, and cross-curricular assignments.

The concept of "Empowering Excellence" refers to the process of enabling individuals or groups to achieve a high level of performance and success. The Charter School intends to employ a diverse range of continuous evaluations to evaluate student learning. The utilization of assessments and the subsequent analysis of the collected data are integral elements of our educational framework. These components are employed by educators throughout the academic year to modify instructional approaches in response to the specific requirements of individual students. The organizational structure of EECS necessitates collaborative efforts among teachers, wherein they are required to function as teams, engage in joint lesson planning, analyze data, and formulate ways to facilitate collective student learning.

At Empowering Excellence Charter Schools, the implementation of data-driven decision-making will be facilitated through collaborative efforts among teacher teams. Professional Learning Community (PLC) teams convene on a weekly basis to engage in discussions pertaining to student performance, both at the individual and group levels, as well as academic concerns. These teams also deliberate on strategies to adapt instructional practices based on the analysis of current data. Potential modifications could be implemented, such as the reallocation of students within tutoring cohorts or the provision of additional instruction to address areas of academic content that students have not yet attained proficiency in. The teams will be structured according to grade levels and will get assistance from the Assistant Principal, Principal, and instructional leaders. This technique promotes the development of collegial connections among the members of the staff.

Empowering Excellence Charter School will employ assessments, specifically NWEA-MAP examinations, on an annual basis to evaluate the progression of learning. The utilization of MAP testing yields results of great accuracy, which are employed for the following purposes:

- Identify the skills and concepts individual students have learned.
- Diagnose instructional needs.
- Monitor academic growth over time.
- Make data-driven decisions at the classroom, school, and district levels.
- Place new students into appropriate instructional programs.

NWEA offers a comprehensive evaluation of student achievement, juxtaposing it against a vast national dataset. The MAP reports include empirical data that can be utilized to assess whether pupils are achieving the anticipated progress. The educators at EECS will engage in the analysis of data reports provided by NWEA as grade level teams. Through this collaborative effort, they will formulate targeted strategies to effectively address the identified data indications. Educators will communicate their insights and strategies to the Academic Program Administrator, who oversees the execution of those strategies.

These assessments will enable students, educators, and educational administrators to promptly obtain feedback, facilitating swift replies. A school implementing these tactics can speed up obtaining data and measuring progress, eliminating the need to wait for extended periods such as several weeks or even an entire summer. Hence, members of the Empowering Excellence Charter School team will not perceive outcomes indicative of failure, but rather recognize warning signs pertaining to specific pupils. The Empowering Excellence Charter School staff will implement several strategies to effectively address students' learning shortcomings, including the provision of after-school tutoring, Saturday school sessions, peer tutoring, and additional assignments specifically designed to target and remediate these weaknesses.

10. Assessment of Student Progress

The concept of "Empowering Excellence" refers to the formation of groups that aim to foster and promote exceptional performance and achievement. These teams are designed to empower students and enable them to reach their full potential EECS. EECS will critically evaluate the findings derived from the interim assessments and subsequently formulate targeted approaches to effectively tackle the identified areas of academic weakness among the students. The utilization of data-driven systematic methods in education has the effect of redirecting attention from the act of teaching to the process of learning. Additionally, this approach acknowledges and respects the professional status of instructors, while also promoting the development of collaborative relationships among the staff.

The utilization of instructional data to assist student learning is an integral component of the Multi-Tiered Systems of assist (MTSS) method implemented by Empowering Excellence Charter Schools. It is anticipated that pupils will possess diverse levels of comprehension regarding the core curriculum, and proficient educators, such as those at EECH, will assess abilities through standards-based formative assessments. The frequency and severity of levels of intervention, sometimes known as tiers, exhibit variability. There is a positive correlation between the level of support needed and the tier and frequency of intervention required.

Students may frequently encounter diverse learning scenarios in which their experiences and/or expectations may differ, with the aim of ensuring that all students are provided with equitable opportunities to either acquire fundamental skills, fulfill established criteria, or engage in enrichment activities. Educators oversee the progress of students' learning by employing standards-based examinations and other instruments for monitoring progress. As students consistently exhibit proficiency in certain abilities, interventions are gradually reduced, thereby enabling students to face suitable challenges.

11. Proposed Identification and Provision of Student Supports

11.1. Describe the proposed charter school's plan for identifying and serving students with disabilities, including but not limited to compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

This should describe the school's service delivery plans and referral process, including related professional development, for students with disabilities. For additional guidance please refer to the Departments webpage at: <https://educateiowa.gov/pk-12/special-education> for guidance specific to Service Delivery Plans visit: <https://educateiowa.gov/pk-12/special-education/special-education-state-guidance/district-developed-service-delivery-plan>. A charter school is eligible for Area Education Agency services based on the address of the main office of operations.

EECS educators will use performance data as part of the multi-tiered system of support framework to diagnose issues in the classroom. Teachers will consider all relevant factors while attempting to diagnose an issue. This data will help the educator decide whether the issue is one that affects the whole class and thus requires Tier 1 interventions, or whether it is more targeted and thus calls for Tier 2 and Tier 3 strategies. When a teacher needs help describing a problem, they can turn to the Childcare Team (CCT) for guidance.

The Childcare Team will review Tier 1 data to assess the effectiveness of foundational training and interventions. They will use a problem-solving approach to identify potential learning roadblocks and create interventions to reduce or eliminate them. If a student is not progressing through Tier 1, they will provide individualized Tier 2 interventions based on student data. These interventions include targeted small group instruction and supplemental remedial programs. After analyzing the data, the team will determine the effectiveness of Tier 2 actions.

Tier 3 interventions are more intensive and tailored to each student, involving one-on-one tutoring and classroom tasks. The team will use problem-solving skills to design and conduct a tailored solution. The interventions will be carried out as planned and progress will be monitored at predetermined intervals. The team will discuss the student's response and assess its quality based on data collected during Tier 3 progress monitoring. If necessary, the team will send a student for further evaluation.

After individualized intervention, the Childcare Team may recommend psycho-educational and/or linguistic evaluations for students suspected of having a disability. If a child is suspected of having a disability, further evaluations through the Grant Wood AEA Child Find System will be denied. Evaluations will be conducted with parental consent and completed within sixty (60) school days, following the same process as first-time evaluations.

Evaluations will be carried out by competent Iowa professionals, such as examiners, physicians, psychologists, speech language pathologists, teachers, audiologists, and social workers, among others. The administration and analysis of the intellectual functioning tests will be handled by trained and experienced specialists.

The Childcare Team and competent specialists will analyze the student's evaluation data, including parents' evaluations, assessments, observations, and observations by instructors and service providers. They will determine if any additional data is needed based on the review and feedback from parents.

The referral process involves assessment to determine if a student has a disability, special education is needed, and the types of services needed. Multidisciplinary teams, including Speech Language Pathologists and Audiologists, evaluate a student's strengths and needs. Information can come from various sources, including parents and family members. The assessment team leader and the school psychologist coordinate the identification process.

The Childcare Team will use various data to assess a student's abilities, including medical history, social interactions, community adaptive behavior, and educational performance. Evaluations will involve various assessment instruments and procedures, including family members' information on life activities. Formal tests, such as intelligence, academic achievement, and acuity, will be used to determine students' potential special education status.

Assessments of a student's preferred method of instruction will be integrated into the program to select accommodations that facilitate their access to the general education curriculum. Less formal assessments, such as school observations, academic assignments, and portfolio samples, are essential for this stage. The evaluation process can result in a baseline of performance for those with disabilities, which leads to the construction of an individualized education program (IEP) and evaluation of its efficacy.

Students with physical or mental impairments that significantly limit life activities may be eligible for Section 504 accommodations. Students experiencing classroom difficulties or suspected disabilities are referred to Grant Wood AEA Child Fine Team for appropriate interventions and services. Eligibility is determined through teacher observation, parental or medical information, test scores, and grades. Parents, students, school administrators, and school personnel should attend all eligibility meetings, as their input is crucial to the decision-making process.

Empowering Excellence Charter School will serve students with disabilities whose requirements can be fulfilled in a regular classroom environment (at least 80% of instruction occurring in a class with non-disabled peers) with the provision of reasonable additional support and services and/or modifications and accommodations. In other words, children with disabilities whose needs cannot be met in a regular classroom context will be served by EECS. Empowering Excellence Charter School is aware that it must deliver educational services in the most accommodating setting possible in order to comply with the regulations set out by FAPE. EECS is required to educate pupils with impairments together with their peers who do not have disabilities to the greatest extent possible that is appropriate. Only in the event that the type and severity of the student's disability is such that a suitable education cannot be obtained in normal courses to the student's satisfaction as stated in the student's IEP would special classes or instruction of the student outside of the general education environment take place. During the process of creating the student's individualized education program (IEP), the setting that is believed to be the least restrictive will always be taken into consideration.

EECS will use a consultation and partnership model to provide services to customers with disabilities. The school will offer a continuum of services, including adaptations, accommodations, and modifications to the classroom environment. These include altering material presentation, using assistive technology, allowing alternative methods to demonstrate knowledge, arranging the environment for enhanced learning, and utilizing research-based academic interventions to address specific challenges students may face in accessing grade-level content. The IEP covers all aspects of a student's education and is part of a universal design, ensuring a wider range of students succeed in their studies.

Special education professionals can provide support to students in the classroom setting, including assistance with accessing and organizing content, pre-teaching and re-teaching training, and implementing Iowa Standards. Students with impairments should have access to a curriculum that aligns with these standards and standardized testing criteria. Some students may require a combination of traditional classroom and resource room settings, and the school will ensure they receive the necessary assistance to address their needs. The individualized education program (IEP) will ensure that students receive the necessary assistance to address their needs in a resource room for up to 20% of the school day. The school recognizes that some students require specialized, rigorous, and research-based instruction, delivered by qualified professionals. This is outlined in students' individualized education programs (IEPs). The school will implement skill-building programs and tactics, supported by research tailored to the specific needs of students with disabilities. Additionally, students will receive related services, such as speech, behavioral management, occupational therapy, and physical therapy, contracted through Grant Wood AEA or independent contractors.

Extended School Year Plan

When deciding the Extended School Year (ESY) services that will be provided to all children who are enrolled in the special education program, Empowering Excellence Charter School will adhere to the Extended School Year (ESY) for children with Disabilities, Guidelines for Individual Education Plan (IEP). The needs of the student will determine the sort of ESY program that will be provided, as well as its level of intensity and whether or not it will include associated services and how long it will last. Help in person and on the job will be part of the ESY services that can be offered at 1800 First Avenue Northeast Suite 201. The IEP team will determine which ESY services are going to be most beneficial for each individual kid. By the end of May, EECS will have communicated to parents their recommendation for ESY services.

During the Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting, the IEP team will examine the student's progress toward these objectives, as well as determine whether or not the student has important life skills goal(s), behavior goals, and predicted regression of the IEP goal(s)/related services written into his or her IEP. In order to assess whether or not ESY services are required, the IEP committee will reply to the following questions:

Do the facts and/or the documentation suggest the possibility of the following, in the absence of an extended school year:

- a considerable or substantial regression of IEP goals/related services?
- Will developing essential life skills be greatly hampered in the absence of programs offered throughout the extended school year?
- that behaviors connected to the impairment will be adversely impacted if the student does not get treatment throughout the extended school year?
- that essential life skills and goals that have been taught in the past would be substantially harmed if extended school year programs are not provided?

ESY services are provided if the IEP team determines a parent's response is 'yes' to one or more criteria.

The IEP team identifies ESY services for students on the IEP-ESY form, considering the least restrictive environment (LRE) for delivery. If the local school district does not offer general education programs during school breaks, EECS is not obligated to create programs to meet this LRE requirement.

The IEP-ESY form will include:

- Specific goal(s) from the IEP that required ESY services.
- The type, amount and duration of special education and related services, including specialized transportation, needed to meet the identified IEP goal(s).

ESY programs vary in type, intensity, location, and services, depending on a student's needs. They will be provided in various locations, such as the EECS location, internship sites, job sites, online, and/or home. The IEP team will determine the most appropriate services and location for each student, while EECS and Goodwill determine specific site locations and inform parents.

Empowering Excellence Charter School offers all students, including IEP/504 and non-IEP and English Language Learners, access to extracurricular activities, cultural building, and functions, with parent permission if needed. Special accommodation is provided according to ADA requirements, and the school ensures all students have access to all activities on and off campus.

EECS will prioritize serving disadvantaged students, but enrollment is open to students of all capacities. If a student requires special education services, they will be provided in accordance with federal laws and regulations, as well as the student's Individualized Learning Program requirements. EECS would hire special education personnel as needed to meet the requirements of special education students. As time passes, the EECS will establish a special education committee consisting of the special education director, special education teachers, and paraprofessionals.

All staff members will receive instruction concerning students. The training will emphasize how to identify potential cognitive disabilities and the referral procedure. This includes knowledge of the Child Find procedure. The Child Find team and student development, the Individualized Education Program (IEP), installation, evaluation, and conference, as well as parental notification and disability-related discipline. Once per month, the Child Find team, special education teachers, and classroom teachers will convene to discuss concerns and offer support to EECS staff.

Students with disabilities would participate as fully as feasible in regular classroom instruction. These students shall have the same opportunities to participate in and earn credit for extracurricular activities as students with conventional development. Additional services, events, and programs will be available to these students. All students will have equal access to information about school-related events, programs, and services, including those with special needs. EECS offers a variety of clubs, programs, and services, including art and music classes, guidance and mental health counseling, medical care, transportation, physical education, extracurricular activities, vacations, and other forms of recreation.

If a teacher suspects that a student requires special education services, they will notify the director in writing so that an impartial evaluation of the student's requirements and suitability for special education services can be conducted. After Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports (MTSS) has been effectively implemented, the institution must demonstrate that it is assisting students and tracking their academic progress. When multi-tiered interventions have failed over an extended period of time, it may be necessary to discuss providing more specific goal support during the IEP process.

Referrals may be made by any member of the school's qualified staff. Referral must 1) state the reason for the referral and include any relevant test scores, academic records, or reports to support the reasoning for the referral, 2) describe any efforts made to improve the student's grades prior to the referral and any additional resources and services offered to help them succeed, and 3) describe the extent of parental involvement or communication prior to the referral. The student's guardians will receive a copy of the referral and an explanation of the procedural safeguards mandated by federal law.

EECS will collaborate with the Area Education Agency in our region to coordinate services and support for a variety of interventions, special education evaluations, and reevaluations, and to ensure compliance with all aspects of the law.

EECS uses a methodical and data-driven approach to teaching and learning both inside and outside of the learning environment, often known as Tier 1 settings. The EECS teaching staff conducts standards-based assessments at the beginning of instructional units as part of (MTSS), which is one of the aspects of this program that evaluates students' current levels of comprehension.

Ability levels are determined through standards-based formative tests, and it is expected that all children will have different levels of comprehension of the core curriculum. Highly experienced instructors, such as those who will be working at EECS, will be responsible for making these determinations. The learning experiences of the students will be differentiated in such a way as to provide them with possibilities for extension and enrichment learning if the students can demonstrate that they have mastered a variety of learning standards.

The EECS grading goals are used for more than one thing. First, to follow all state and federal rules, laws, and regulations. Next, to keep track of each student's progress in reading, math, and writing in order to determine proficiency.

EECS will take part in the ISASP for students in grade 11 in math, English-language arts, and science. As required by the Department of Education, all students will take part in the Condition for Learning poll every year.

Attendance will be checked and documented based on conversations that take place within the learning environment, whether that is working from home or at the location or both, and meetings with the mentors. The implementation of the program as well as the learning outcomes for the population of kids who are being served by EECS staff will be evaluated based on the meetings, attendance, and progress that have been made.

Data about student movement and attrition will be stored in our student information system (one of these will be chosen to serve us based on our agreement in the future).

In the goal of providing transparency to all parties who might be interested, the monthly financial performance statement will be made available to both the governing body and the public.

The School Improvement Advisory Committee (SIAC) will monitor the performance of the governing board to ensure stewardship and compliance with all applicable laws, regulations, and charter contract provisions.

Students of all abilities are encouraged to enroll at EECS. If students require special education services, they will be provided in accordance with federal laws and regulations, as well as their Individual Education Plan IEP. EECS will hire special education personnel as required to meet the needs of the students with special needs. EECS will establish a committee for special education including the director of special education, the special education teacher or teachers, the assistant principal of academics, classroom teachers, and contracted service teachers.

Professional training and development for personnel involved in the education of students with disabilities will include:

- The referral process to the special education teacher,
- Documentation of the Child Find procedure, the child study team,
- The student development process of the Individualized Education Program (IEP), implementation of a student's IEP,
- Evaluation of a student's progress toward achieving IEP goals and objectives,
- Compliance with parental reporting requirements,
- and discipline of students with disabilities.

The Child Find team, which consists of a group of special education instructors and the principal, will meet with the classroom teachers at least once per month to discuss their concerns and provide support.

11. Proposed Identification and Provision of Student Supports

As much as feasible, students with disabilities will be educated in regular classrooms alongside students without disabilities. Special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of students with disabilities from the general education environment will only occur if education in general education classes, with supplementary aids and services, cannot be completed satisfactorily. Non-academic, extracurricular, and supplemental programs, services, and activities will be awarded credit based on the student's abilities. Students with disabilities will receive the same information regarding school-sponsored programs, activities, and services as other students. These programs, services, and activities include art and music, counseling services and health services, transportation, recess and physical education, field excursions and other recreational activities, school-sponsored organizations, age groups, etc.

A student suspected of having a disability is referred in writing to the special education teacher (or designee) for an individual evaluation and determination of eligibility for special education programs and services. After the institution has successfully implemented MTSS, it must demonstrate its efforts to support and monitor student learning when using tiered interventions. Failure for an extended period may prompt discussions about more targeted goals which will be supported through an IEP.

Any member of the professional staff of the institution may make referrals following the guidelines provided by Grant Wood AEA.

When required, EECS will coordinate with the local area education agency for services related to interventions, special education evaluations, and reevaluations to ensure compliance with all aspects of the law. All legal requirements are satisfied.

11.2. Describe the proposed charter school's plan for identifying and serving English learners, including but not limited to compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

This should summarize the school's Lau plan and use of the English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA). For additional guidance please refer to the Departments webpage at:

<https://educateiowa.gov/pk-12/learner-supports/english-learners-el>

EECS ELL programming will support English Language Learners in accordance with state and federal law. Each year, the ELL program will be evaluated to ensure that the staff is adequately prepared to meet the requirements of diverse ELLs.

The ELL program at EYI charter allows pupils to achieve proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing English. These objectives are promoted in a respectful environment where the students' first language and culture are valued, and ethnic language pride is maintained.

The ELL program achieves its objectives using multiple approaches that are developmentally adaptable based on the age and level of English language proficiency of the students and are consistent with the recommended best practices for ELL instruction. The ELL program employs specific instructional strategies and, when necessary, native language tutoring. Students who speak a language other than English must adhere to all enrollment procedures, with the addition of the following steps.

As needed, families registering children are assisted on-site in completing documents and registration materials. To assist with registration, every effort is made to employ native-language interpreters when available. Other data may be utilized to identify pupils who require ELL services, such as:

- Student records
- Teacher interviews
- Parents information
- Teachers' observation
- Referrals
- Student grades
- Informal observation
- Standardized assessment

During registration, all families are required to submit a Home Language Survey. Both English and Spanish versions of the Home Language Survey are available. If additional language resources are required, TransACT, an educational service provider, can be consulted. Even though this practice has not yet been implemented. Once sanction for the charter school is granted, EECS staff will conduct oral and native language interviews in Spanish with those adults who may not have adequate English or literacy skills to complete the survey in English. If there is a need for other languages, every effort is made to locate competent individuals within the community, or EECS staff will use language line phone services.

Example of Home Language Survey

Home Language Survey

Surname/Family Name of Student: _____

First Given Name of Student: _____

Second Given Name of Student: _____

Age of Student: _____

Grade Level of Student: _____

Teacher Name: _____

11. Proposed Identification and Provision of Student Supports

1. Which language did your child learn when they first began to talk? _____
2. Which language does your child most frequently speak at home? _____
3. Which language do you (the parents and guardians most frequently use when speaking with your child? _____
4. Which language is most often spoken by adults in the home? (parents, guardians, grandparents, or any other adults)

Please sign and date this form in the spaces provided below, then return this form to your child's teacher.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Signature of Parent or Guardian _____

Date _____

Home Language Surveys are included in the enrollment packet for all students.

If a family indicates a language other than English on the Home Language Survey, or there are other indicators of ELL need, teachers will be notified. The ELL teacher facilitates the identification process, and a copy of the Home Language Survey is filed in the student's cumulative folder.

11.3. Describe the proposed charter school's plan for identifying and serving gifted and talented students, including but not limited to compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

This should summarize the school's gifted and talented plan. For additional guidance please refer to the Departments webpage at: <https://educateiowa.gov/pk-12/advanced-learning-opportunities/gifted-talented>

11. Proposed Identification and Provision of Student Supports

EECS will offer a credible option to kids who have lost interest in regular institutions. For kids that excel in one or more content areas and/or have been designated as gifted, this entails enhancing the depth and complexity of learning. A tailored learning plan will be developed for all kids, not just gifted and talented students. This can involve differentiation or more advanced courses beyond what is available in a typical classroom. Dual credit, as well as a menu of blended courses and individual projects centered on design thinking to solve real-world challenges, will be available.

Our gifted program will emphasize building relationships with students that are characterized by high levels of trust. Regular professional development will be provided on the characteristics of giftedness and the socioemotional requirements of students. Teachers will differentiate instruction so that advanced students work at higher Bloom's Taxonomy and Depth of Knowledge levels. To fully engage cognitively gifted students, designed-based learning, a type of design-based learning in which students are presented with a problem and must design a solution to address the challenge, will be implemented. Through this method of instruction, students will be encouraged to go beyond merely solving a problem and instead identify its fundamental cause and impediments to a solution, including social, economic, and political situations.

11.4. Describe the proposed charter school's plan for identifying and serving students who are failing academically or are below grade level, including but not limited to compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

This should describe the school's plan for identification and support for students:

- That do not meet benchmark on screening assessments,
- Are not proficient on statewide assessments,
- Have failing grades, and/or
- Are chronically absent.

For additional guidance please refer to the Departments webpage at:
<https://educateiowa.gov/pk-12/learner-supports/risk>

11. Proposed Identification and Provision of Student Supports

This should describe the school's plan for identification and support for students:

- That do not meet benchmark on screening assessments,
- Are not proficient on statewide assessments,
- Have failed grades, and/or
- Are chronically absent.

For additional guidance please refer to the Department webpage at <https://educateiowa.gov/PK-12/learner-supports/risk>

Students at risk may struggle with academic achievement and fall behind their peers in their grade level's instruction. They may fail as a result of external, uncontrollable school factors. Low socioeconomic status, excessive absences, domestic violence, language barriers, and behavioral or mental health problems may all contribute to the learning deficits of at-risk students. According to McMillan and Reed (1994), "at-risk students exhibit persistent patterns of academic underachievement and social maladjustment in school, leading to their failure to complete high school." Educators must identify the obstacles encountered by students at risk and provide differentiated instructional strategies to aid in their academic success in the school setting.

Most of the pupils at Empowering Excellence Charter school are expected to be "at risk," or academically behind their peers of the same age. As was previously said, we want to use periodic evaluations to spot signs of academic weakness among our students. By varying our curriculum and instructional program, we can ensure that all kids are given the opportunity to learn instructions suited to the varying abilities of the audience. Struggling students will be offered after-school tutoring as supplemental instruction outside of the classroom, more mentoring hours, and extra work to address deficiencies.

The above describes the tenets upheld by Empowering Excellence Charter school. Universal access to individualized learning plans, staff-managed structural support such as Response to Intervention (RTI) and Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) make this possible. Students who are not meeting academic criteria are identified, given additional resources, and their progress is tracked using RTI. PBIS is a systemic strategy for promoting and reinforcing desirable student behavior throughout an educational institution.

In both cases, as new needs come up, more layers of help are added. To make sure that each student's needs are met, tiered interventions are added to each student's plan. These solutions are teams made up of staff and family members, and they are put in place for a certain amount of time. Usually, the team will look at the student's progress every few weeks. Depending on how the student reacts to the intervention, the team may suggest making the intervention stronger, more frequent, or of a different type. If a student is not responding to several interventions, the student may or may not be suggested for more testing by special education personnel.

12. Proposed Co-Curricular and Extracurricular Programs

12.1. Describe the proposed charter school's co-curricular and extracurricular programs, including how the programs will be funded and delivered.

Co-curricular and extracurricular programs are not required to be offered.

Empowering Excellence Charter School has a unique and innovative approach to supporting the student body, which primarily consists of students facing challenges such as adverse childhood trauma and poverty. The school's approach focuses on providing a nurturing and inclusive environment that fosters resilience and personal growth. By implementing trauma-informed practices and offering comprehensive support services, Empowering Excellence Charter School ensures that each student receives the necessary resources to overcome obstacles and thrive academically. The school recognizes that these students may not have the time or opportunity for traditional extracurricular activities, so it prioritizes creating a supportive and engaging academic environment to ensure they receive a well-rounded education. In addition to many extracurricular activities, the school focuses on collaborating with local organizations to provide occasional workshops and guest speakers. These experiences aim to expose students to new opportunities beyond their classroom and broaden their horizons. By partnering with local organizations, the school can offer students unique learning experiences that go beyond the traditional curriculum. These workshops and guest speakers allow students to explore different career paths, develop new skills, and gain valuable insights from professionals in various fields. This emphasis on real-world connections helps prepare students for future success and fosters a sense of curiosity and exploration.

The school's most distinctive program is the work study program, designed to break down social, economic, and cultural barriers hindering student success. Each student is provided with a professional job placement for five full days a month throughout their enrollment. This unique initiative offers invaluable work experience, exposure to a professional environment, and foster essential skills and networks for future careers. By integrating real world work opportunities into the student's education, the school aims to equip them with the tools and resources needed to overcome obstacles and achieve long term success. The Work Study Program connects classroom learning to potential future careers, allowing students to earn a modest wage, develop practical skills, and gain financial independence. This empowers them to break the cycle of poverty and trauma, reducing dependency on welfare and low paying jobs. The work study program operates in groups of four students who will share responsibility for a full-time equivalent position. They work on regular business hours from Monday to Friday throughout the academic year. This structure allows students to gain valuable work experience in their chosen field while still managing their academic commitments effectively. Working in groups enables participants to divide tasks and support each other, ensuring that the workload is manageable, and all responsibilities are fulfilled without missing any class.

By providing students with real-world work experiences, a supportive academic environment, and exposure to new opportunities, Empowering Excellence Charter School aims to empower its students to achieve long term success and breakthrough barriers that may have otherwise hindered their progress.

The EECS Work Study Program offers students a diverse range of job responsibilities that contribute to the operations and functions of various departments. Some examples of these duties include.

1. Data entry: Students will assist in organizing and inputting data into systems or databases, ensuring accurate and organized record keeping for the department.
2. IT support: Students will provide basic technical troubleshooting. Assist with software installation and help with system maintenance supporting the department's technology needs.
3. Project research: Students will Conduct research and gather relevant information for projects or initiatives, contributing to the department's decision-making processes.

12. Proposed Co-Curricular and Extracurricular Programs

4. Marketing Support: Students will assist in marketing efforts by managing social media platforms, creating content, and participating in promotional activities to raise awareness of department initiatives.

The work study team at EECS understands the importance of tailoring each student's job description to their skills, interests, and academic focus. Therefore, they will work directly with students to create a personalized partnership experience that is mutually beneficial for both the company and the student associates. This approach ensures that the students gain meaningful work experience in their chosen fields while contributing to EECS's goals and objectives.

The aim of the EECS Work Study Program is to provide students with practical skills, foster independence, and instill responsibility while complementing their academic studies. By engaging in real world work opportunities and learning from professionals, students have the chance to develop essential skills and build networks that will serve them well in their future careers. This program is a key component of the school's commitment to breaking down social, economic, and cultural barriers and empowering students to overcome obstacles and achieve success beyond their time at Empowering Excellence Charter School.

All students in EECS will have the chance to participate in a work study program thanks to the strong relationships the department will cultivate with local businesses and nonprofits throughout the year. As part of an education-to-business collaboration, the companies will pay for the entirety of the program.

Eventually, EECS would like to offer extracurricular programs that may include sports teams, art and music clubs, and community service initiatives. In time, EECS is committed to providing a comprehensive range of co-curricular and extracurricular programs aimed at enhancing students' educational experiences. The funding for these programs will be derived from a diverse range of sources, encompassing state support, private donations, grants, and fees paid by participants. At this time, transportation will not be an issue because EYI owns two vans which will be used at EECS also.

13. Proposed Student Recruitment

13.1. Describe the proposed charter school's plan and timeline(s) for recruiting, enrolling, and transferring students, including information about any enrollment preferences and procedures for conducting transparent admissions selections.

This should describe how information related to enrollment and lottery policies will be publicly available and provided to the targeted community(ies).

- EECS will employ a comprehensive plan for recruiting students to meet its projected enrollment. The following strategies and activities will be utilized to ensure that EECS's targeted population will be informed of available options that will be offered:
- EECS will hire a community liaison/enrollment specialist approximately three months prior to the opening of EECS to reach EECS's target population. Duties of the community liaison/enrollment specialist include the following:
- EECS plans to work diligently to establish relationships with surrounding schools, businesses, and organizations (i.e., churches, community health organizations, community centers, community assistance organizations, community businesses) to build awareness of the programs and services offered by EECS designing a system for referral of students to EECS.
- EECS will be visiting surrounding schools to meet with counselors and administrators to develop awareness of the programs and services available for at-risk students, students with disabilities, English language learners and students who are in danger of dropping out of school.
- EECS will be distributing pamphlets throughout the community (i.e., stores, schools, community centers, churches, etc.)
- EECS will conduct student recruitment fairs in which the following will occur:
- Parents and students will be provided with an overview of programs and services offered by EECS.
- Parents and students will be provided with the opportunity to meet key staff members.
- School staff will conduct tours of the facility once it is acquired.
- EECS will display banners and signage outside the facility.
- EECS will create brochures in three languages (English, Spanish, and other languages as needed) and mail to surrounding communities.
- EECS will advertise in the local newspaper and other media.
- EECS will put the website address for the currently operating Empowering Excellence Charter Schools (located in Linn) on all advertisements.
- EECS will offer an online application platform for lotteries that is designed to be racially neutral. The application procedure for Empowering Excellence Charter School will involve the utilization of an online lottery provider. The online lottery application is equipped with the capability to accommodate several languages. Families that exhibit a preference for paper applications will be provided with the opportunity to obtain them directly at the school's location. When necessary, educational staff will be accessible to provide support to families in the process of completing the applications.
- EECS will provide support for the lottery application process, which includes access to technology for completing the online application. Access to technical help can be obtained by families through visiting or contacting a magnet school.
- Public Open Houses: EECS will host a district-wide open house in its location of 1800 1st Ave NE. The focus of these events will be to disseminate information regarding the unique themes, aims, benefits, and outcomes that students can achieve by enrolling in one of the magnet school programs. The district-wide event will feature representatives from each magnet program, including school employees such as the magnet coordinator, administrators, teachers, parents, and students. A variety of linguistic options will be provided for the graphics, displays, and brochures. Furthermore, the school-sponsored events will incorporate guided tours of the campus and opportunities for students to engage in interpersonal interactions. In any case, there will be provision of technical support, which encompasses the provision of workstations for the purpose of accessing the web application. In accordance with the stipulated requirements, there will be provision for the availability of interpreters.
- EECS will jointly organize events aimed at engaging students and their families with a common objective. Recruitment activities will be held in various parts of the community to allow students and their families the chance to obtain pertinent information regarding the charter school.

13. Proposed Student Recruitment

- Empowering Excellence Charter School will collaborate and engage with Cedar Rapids Community School District and other educational agencies and community partners to effectively coordinate and consult on recruitment methods.

14. Proposed Code of Student Conduct

14.1. Describe the charter school's proposed code of student conduct, including procedures and disciplinary sanctions for both general education and special education students.

This should describe the proposed charter school's philosophy of student discipline, including:

- Which student actions will result in discipline,
 - How discipline practices and procedures will be monitored to ensure legal and policy compliance,
 - The appeal process that the school will employ for students facing expulsion, and
 - How the school will take into account the rights of students with disabilities in disciplinary actions and proceedings.
-

The proposed code of conduct at Empowering Excellence Charter School includes guidelines and expectations for students, with disciplinary sanctions for misconduct. It aims to create a positive and respectful school culture, promoting accountability and restorative justice practices.

Below are the key elements:

1. **Student Actions Resulting in Discipline:** The code outlines various student actions that may result in disciplinary consequences, such as bullying, harassment, violence, substance abuse, disruptive behavior, and violations of school rules. Any act of misconduct not explicitly listed but considered a violation of local or country laws will also be subject to discipline. For more information see appendix : [EECS Student Disciplinary Policies](#)
2. **Disciplinary Sanctions:** Failure to follow the guidelines may lead to consequences such as removal of access to online educational resources, possible involvement with law enforcement, and legal action. The disciplinary sanctions may vary depending on the severity of the misconduct and can include counseling, loss of privileges, or other restorative measures.
3. **Monitoring for Legal and Policy Compliance:** The school will actively monitor its disciplinary practices and procedures to ensure compliance with local laws and the school's own policies. Regular reviews, involvement of administrators, and staff training will contribute to maintaining a fair and consistent disciplinary process.
4. **Appeal Process for Expulsion:** The code should specify an appeal process for students facing expulsion, providing them and their parents/guardians with an opportunity to appeal to the board or committee. This process should be fair and transparent, ensuring that due process is followed.

When the Principal determines that a student should be suspended out of school, the following process is initiated:

1. **Incident review:** A discussion between the staff members and the principal will be held prior to the suspension of any student in parent slash guardian notification unless circumstances dictate a more immediate removal of student from school premises. Follow-up discussions regarding the situation and consequences will take place as soon as possible after the incident.
2. **Parent notification:** The parent slash guardian of the suspended student will be notified of the misconduct, length of suspension, and any other corrective actions taken.
3. **Intake meeting:** Upon returning from suspension, the student will participate in an intake meeting with the principal. At this time, a behavior contract may be introduced, stating that further misbehavior will result in a recommendation for expulsion.

Expulsion

After a proper investigation and hearing, a student may be expelled when his or her behavior renders it as appropriate. Repeated offenses can lead to expulsion. This may occur if the school director and/or Principal believed that the student must be suspended immediately to prevent a substantially reduce the risk of:

Interference with an educational function for school purposes, or he/she has caused the physical injury to some themselves other students, school employees, are visitors to the school.

Expulsion Procedure

When the Principal determines that a student should be expelled, the following process is put in motion:

1. Incident Review: The staff member, or industry partner requesting the student expulsion, consults with the principal explaining the incident. A determination is made to go forward with the recommendation or determine other consequences or cause action.
2. Parent Incident Notification.: The parent slash guardian of the suspended student pending exposure will be notified of the recommendation.
3. Parent Due Process notification by mail: Parents slash guardians will receive through certified mail notice of the recommendation for expulsion and/or recourse in the expulsion appeal process. The parents/guardians have 10 days upon receipt of this letter from the principal to file an appeal. The appeal will be overseen by an independent authority, typically requesting an appeal will be deemed A waiver of rights administratively to contest expulsion.
4. Notice of appeal meeting being granted will be delivered in writing, by certified mail or in person and contain the reasons or reason for the explosion in date, time, place of the meeting.
5. At the expulsion appeal hearing, the principal will present evidence to support the charges against the student. The student and parent/guardian will have the opportunity to present evidence and make a case for reinstatement.
6. If an explosion meeting is held, the Appeal Officer will make a written summary of the evidence heard at the meeting, determine whether to uphold the expulsion or reinstate the student. The decision is final unless the parents/guardians want to seek an appeal with the juvenile courts.

Discipline for Students with Disabilities

Empowering Excellence Charter School will use the following discipline procedures for student with an IEP:

1. The student with a disability who violated the code of conduct from his/her current placement to an appropriate interim alternative educational setting (IAES), another setting, or suspension, for not more than 10 consecutive school days to the extent those alternatives are applied to students without disabilities.
2. School personnel may remove the student with disability who violated the code of conduct from his/her current placement for additional removals of not more than 10 consecutive school days in that same school year for separate incidents or misconduct as long as those removals do not constitute a change of placement.
3. School personnel may apply the relevant disciplinary procedures to students with disabilities in the same manner and for the same duration as the procedures that would be applied to students with disabilities,

14. Proposed Code of Student Conduct

4. If in the manifestation determination review, the behavior that gave rise to the violation of the code of conduct is determined not to be manifestation of the student's disability.
5. Services During Periods of Removal are provided to the student.
6. Notification of a Change of Placement is given to the student.

School personnel must provide the students who were moved to a disciplinary alternative education program with written notice of the school's obligation to provide the student with an opportunity to complete coursework required for graduation. This includes information regarding all methods available for completing the coursework, and state. That the methods available for completing the coursework are available at no cost to the student. School personnel may remove the student to interim alternative placement without regard to whether the behavior is determined to be manifestation of the student's disability, if there are special circumstances, students will be removed from the school immediately for the same length of time as a student without an IEP if the expulsion is the result of drugs or bringing a weapon to school.

Disclosure

The school board of Empowering Excellence Charter School reserves the right to amend the school discipline policies at any time during the school year as the result of an independent review, occurrence of a situation not covered under this policy, or recommendation by a school representative, parent, or other stakeholder. The school discipline policy may only be amended with a majority vote of the school board during a time at which the board is conducting regular school business. If the school discipline policy is amended during the school year, parents/guardians and students will be promptly notified.

15. Proposed Organizational Structure

15.1. Describe the proposed charter school's organizational structure. For each position or group in the organizational chart, list the duties and powers.

This should include the position or group titles and, if available, may list specific names.

15. Proposed Organizational Structure

The organizational structure of the propose Empowering Excellence Charter School (EECS) includes the following positions and groups:

1. School Board:

- Duties: Responsible for the overall administration of EECS.
- Powers: Hold and are accountable for the charter with the Authorizer (Iowa Department of Education). Oversees the school's administration, including financial oversight, safeguards public interest and trust, governing the school according to bylaws, charter contract, and state/federal laws.

2. Charter Management Organization (CMO):

- Duties: Monitors data on school performance submitted by EECS administration.
- Powers: Assist in evaluating the school's performance and ensures accountability for achieving.

We do not intend to engage a Charter Management Organization (CMO) in our educational model. Instead, we will delineate responsibilities within our organizational structure, with key roles such as CEO, Principal, Director of Operations (HR, as listed in section 17), and Director of Education.

3. Board of Directors:

- Duties: Primarily responsible for evaluating CMO's performance.
- Powers: Conducts annual evaluations of the CMO to assess its effectiveness and contribution to EECS's success.

Attach a copy of the organizational chart to **Appendix F** [Empowering Excellence Charter School Organizational Structure](#)

Attach a copy of the organizational chart to [Appendix F](#).

15.2. Describe the delineation of authority and reporting between the governing board, staff, and any other related bodies or external organizations that play a role in managing the charter school.

The delineation of authority is a matter of local determination, as long as the delineation is clear and unambiguous.

The delineation of authority and reporting between the governing board, staff, and other related bodies or external organizations managing the Empowering Excellence Charter School (EECS) is as follows:

Empowering Excellence Charter School Governing Board:

- Negotiates and agrees to the charter contract with the Authorizer.
- Oversees all aspects of school operations to ensure compliance with state and federal laws.
- Monitors school performance, including academics and fiscal management, based on the requirements outlined in the charter contract.
- Adopts administrative policies and procedures.
- Provides transparent fiscal oversight as good stewards of public funds.
- Hires and evaluates the Charter Management Organization (CMO).
- Develops and monitors corrective action plans, if needed.
- Acts as ambassadors for continued school growth and success.

EECS Charter Management Organization (CMO):

- Offers comprehensive establishment services.
- Manages all aspects of financial operations.
- Ensures legal and contractual conformity.
- Provides human resources services, including recruitment, retention, supervision, payroll, benefits, and management.
- Designs and implements an educational program consistent with Iowa standards and the contract performances framework of the authorizing body.
- Manages student records, information, and test scores.
- Supervises student services, including special education, counseling, discipline, sports, and extracurricular activities.
- Coordinates marketing and relations with the public and stakeholders.
- Provides regional superintendents and treasures to serve as liaisons between EECS and the governing board.

Superintendent:

- Guarantees the successful implementation of the school's concept model.

15. Proposed Organizational Structure

- Supervises the School's principal and main school operations.
- Represents the Board before the state Department of Education, Authorizers/Sponsors, and other parties.
- Attends board meetings regularly.
- Evaluates the Principal using EECS developed evaluation protocol, and students may provide feedback on the Superintendent's performance.

School Treasure:

- Appointed with School Board sanction from the accounting department.
- Prepares the annual budget in collaboration with a committee composed of the treasurer, principal, and superintendent.
- Serves as the primary financial officer reporting directly to the governing board.
- Oversee financial officers, purchase orders, and accounts payable officers to ensure proper fiscal management.
- Presents monthly financial reports to the school board and board meetings.

School Administrator (Principal)

- Serves as the school's educational and administrative leader.
- Provides general oversight of the program, including hiring and terminating school staff (subject to board approval).
- Enforces policies, manages finances, develops community partnerships, and promotes the mission of EECS within the school and the greater community.
- An assistant principal (Director of Education) for academics oversees the academic curriculum, instructional strategies, teaching staff, and assessment.
- Manages student relationships, disciplines, safety, and counsels struggling students individually.
- Support personnel, including the front desk administrative assistant and data and reporting positions, directly report to the principal.

16. Proposed Staffing Plan

16.1. Attach proposed charter school's staffing chart for the first year of operation.

See Appendix H: Proposed Staffing Plan **Empowering Excellence Charter School Staffing Plan**

16.2. Describe the proposed charter school's staffing plan for the duration of the charter school contract.

This should include how staffing needs will be analyzed and addressed over the duration of the contract and how compliance with licensure requirements through the Board of Educational Examiners will be achieved.

The proposed staffing plan for the charter school, Empowering Excellence Charter School, includes an analysis of staffing needs that will be addressed throughout the duration of the charter agreement. As the grade levels and enrollment increase by no more than 25 students per year, two new classroom teachers will be hired each time a grade level is added. The administration and school board will continuously assess the need for additional staff, including office, administrative, and student services personnel. This assessment will be based on factors such as student-to-staff ratios, the implementation of specialized programs, and the overall growth and demands of the school community. The goal is to ensure that Empowering Excellence Charter School has sufficient and qualified staff to support the academic and developmental needs of its students as it continues to expand.

All instructors will be appropriately certified based on their degrees to teach their respective subjects, and mentors will be vetted and undergo background checks to ensure they are a good match for the diverse student body. Teachers will work as non-contractual employees for at least 12 hours per week at a rate of about \$30.00 per hour, while mentors will work 10 hours per week for about \$18.00 per hour.

The school will initially accommodate a maximum of 76-104 students in grades 11–12 in the first two academic years, with no ninth/tenth-grade enrollment at the time. However, beginning in the autumn of 2024, the school will ultimately serve at least 44–76 students in grades 11 and 12. The school's decision to hire both teachers and mentors reflects its commitment to providing comprehensive support for these students. By offering a diverse range of professionals, the school aims to create an inclusive and nurturing environment where students can thrive academically and personally. Additionally, the planned expansion in student enrollment over the next few years demonstrates the school's dedication to meeting the educational needs of a growing population.

The key administrative roles include those of:

Executive Director/CEO duties include, but are not limited to:

- Will be responsible for executing the school's mission, vision, and strategic direction,
- Supporting the Board's strategic planning process,
- Supervising the principal and all educational staff,
- Fostering a positive atmosphere, serving as the staff's primary liaison to the Board of Directors,
- Reinforcing the Board's governance and fiduciary responsibilities.
- Oversee administrative and organizational support activities, including human resource policies, technology, facilities, vendor management, and community outreach.
- Manage the day-to-day finances of the organization, including developing an annual budget for board approval, managing an operations budget,
- Facilitating audits, providing financial reports, and informing the Board of Directors of general fundraising needs.
- Ensure compliance with all federal, state, and District laws and policies, as well as adhering to best practices in risk management.
- They will also be the school's key spokesperson and primary public face to both the extended school community and external stakeholders, providing regular communications, attending events, nurturing positive relationships, maintaining positive relationships with agencies, working with the Board of Directors, and overseeing the organization's website, electronic communications, and social media properties.

Principal duties include, but are not limited to:

- Serves as an advocate for the students and the school.
- Assign responsibilities to staff.
- Provides a safe and healthy learning environment.

- Manage staff.
- Ensures the educational environment is conducive to learning.
- Oversee curriculum.
- Develops and monitors the school budgets.
- Ensures that policies and procedures are followed.
- Serves as a liaison between the school and the community.
- Make sure that the school meets its legal obligations and any concerns from the community are addressed.

Director of Education's duties include:

- Responsible for developing and implementing educational programs,
- Scheduling and leading staff training,
- Providing family support,
- Working closely with the director of Operations for setting and maintaining budgets
- Upholding the school's vision and mission
- Oversee the educational programs and activities.
- Lead faculty and staff,
- Manage the school's budget and resources,
- Represent the school to the community.
- Develop and maintain relationships with parents and other stakeholders, including business.
- Analyze data to make decisions and develop strategies for improvement.

Director of Operations duties include, but are not limited:

- Oversees the enrollment, transfer, discharge, and readmission of students and the preparation of related records and files.
- Oversee the production of student enrollment and attendance reports.
- Oversees the upkeep of student records, such as assessment results, test scores, discipline citations, medical reports and record, and other documentation.
- Oversees student medicine administration and injury reports.
- Supervises requisitions, receives, and distributes classroom, offices, and workroom materials.
- Plans and process college visits
- Maintain the school's website.
- Assists with providing a translator for non-English speaking parents/students.
- Coordinates and prepares the development of the school site.
- Budget for general and special projects
- Make budget transfers as needed.
- Supervise charter school budget.
- Prepares and maintains purchase orders and other expense records; approves, logs, and monitor expenses.
- Creates required application for the hiring process.
- Hire, enhance, terminate, or sanction special compensation to employees.
- Find substitutes when needed.
- Process, assign duties, trains, and direct volunteer labor.

The CEO is responsible for overseeing the entire organization and making strategic decisions. The CEO, Directors of Education, and Director of Operations are salaried employees with specific annual salaries. It is mentioned that the school will target retired teachers who will not receive benefits like health insurance and retirement plans. Mentors, on the other hand, will have the opportunity to gain valuable experience and develop their skills while working closely with students in a supportive environment. The mentors will be compensated with a stipend or a small hourly wage for their services. This approach allows the organization to maintain a cost-effective structure while still providing valuable support to the students. Additionally, by targeting retired teachers, the school can benefit from their extensive experience and knowledge in the field of education. Compliance with licensure requirements through the Board of Examiners will be achieved by ensuring that all instructors are appropriately certified for their respective subjects. By ensuring that all instructors are appropriately certified for their respective subjects, the school can guarantee that students receive a high-quality education from qualified professionals. This not only enhances the credibility of the school but also ensures that students receive instruction that meets industry standards. Additionally, the school can offer professional development opportunities to instructors to further enhance their skills and keep them updated with the latest advancements in their fields.

The non-profit operations of a charter school, including finance, management, development, communications, and marketing, are under the control of the CEO. Additionally, they ensure that the school's operations and academic programs are successful and consistent with the requirements of their charter. The CEO plays a crucial role in overseeing the day-to-day operations of the charter school, ensuring that all financial resources are allocated efficiently and transparently. Moreover, they collaborate with various stakeholders to develop and implement strategies that promote the school's mission and enhance its reputation within the community.

The academic and cultural head of a charter school is the principal. They oversee developing the curriculum for the school to satisfy the academic demands of the kids. They also make sure that all federal, state, county, and school charter laws are followed. The principal collaborates closely with the CEO to align the school's academic goals with its overall mission and vision. They work together to establish a positive and inclusive school culture that fosters student success and promotes a safe learning environment. Additionally, the principal plays a key role in hiring and supporting qualified teachers who can effectively implement the curriculum and provide quality instruction to students.

Principals at charter schools frequently delegate the responsibility for overseeing instruction to other administrators or teacher leaders. They concentrate on establishing and upholding a mission for their institutions, hiring personnel, and overseeing the institution's finances. Principals at charter schools also play a crucial role in fostering a positive school culture and maintaining effective communication with parents, students, and staff. Additionally, they are responsible for evaluating the performance of teachers and implementing strategies to improve student achievement.

The plan is outlined in [Appendix H: Empowering Excellence Charter School Staffing Plan](#). The charter term years are color-coded and denoted with an asterisk. (add the five-year plan for staff).

EECS will also collaborate with Grant Wood AEA to help schools determine student needs, form collaborative community ties, define a common direction, take measures to fulfill goals, and report progress toward goals. Grant Wood, AEA, will also anticipate and respond to the school's professional development requirements. Programs and services promote proven educational approaches that match school objectives, incorporate adult learning theory, and promote better teaching. They will assist in meeting various learning requirements by providing support services to kids with disabilities who require special education, as well as brilliant and talented individuals. Services are in accordance with Iowa special education regulations. Grant Wood AEA will also provide technology services to the school, including technology planning, technical help, and professional development.

16. Proposed Staffing Plan

Services are also available that aim to enhance the overall learning experience by integrating technology into the curriculum and ensuring that educators are equipped with the necessary skills to effectively utilize these tools. Additionally, Grant Wood AEA offers ongoing support and training to ensure that both students and teachers can fully benefit from the available technology services.

EECS' collaboration with St. Luke's Hospital will aid in providing services and employment that will increase the employability skills of our students. Through the partnership with St. Luke's students will be hired as employees where they will earn certificates in CNA, patient care, phlebotomy, patient transport, housekeeping, etc. St Luke's staff conduct several mock interviews with the students.

Empowering Excellence Charter school will also partner with Goodwill Industry of Eastern Iowa, St Lukes Hospital, Hy-Vee to send students on internship, job shadows, and to earn certification in Microsoft Word programs such as Excel and PowerPoint and other career preparation opportunities.

17. Proposed Recruitment and Development of Administration, Staff, and Governing Board

17.1. Describe how the proposed charter school will recruit and develop school administrators, staff, and governing board members.

This should describe information, such as:

- Recruitment policies;
- How open positions will be advertised in the community(ies);
- Ongoing professional learning that will be provided to administrators, staff, and governing board members; and
- Plans for mentoring and induction for [teachers](#) and [administrators](#).

The proposed charter school, EECS, has a comprehensive plan for recruiting and developing school administrators, staff, and governing board members. They will conduct a thorough and exhaustive recruitment effort, utilizing their website and national teacher. Recruitment websites such as: Applitrack, ZipRecruiter, Indeed, and Iowa REAP to list available positions. The recruitment process may include online screening tests, interviews, reference checks, and demonstration lessons. EECS school will also use various methods to advertise open positions in the community, such as newspaper advertisements, university advertisements, teacher events, job fairs, and social media platforms.

In our staffing strategy, we aim to create a cost-effective instructional model. This includes targeting retired teachers who are seeking a more innovative and entrepreneurial educational environment. These experienced educators may be willing to trade higher pay for the opportunity to work in such a setting, aligning with our mission to deliver quality education efficiently.

To retain teachers and preserve school culture, EECS will focus on factors that promote retention. These include employee morale, empowering staff in decision-making, providing intensive mentoring for beginning teachers, and implementing a mentorship program with experienced teachers guiding new hires. The school will regularly assess staff needs and morale through surveys and organize events to boost motivation and collaboration among teachers.

Professional learning will be provided to administrators, staff, and governing board members through job-integrated professional development, separate professional development plans, access to up-to-date resources like journals and books, and regular workshops and seminars. EECS will evaluate its professional development program using a results-based framework, including assessments of academic performance, classroom discipline, student achievement, parental involvement, community outreach, and technology use. In terms of mentoring and induction for teachers and administrators, EECS will conduct a two-week summer program immersing teachers in the school's mission, vision, values, and culture. Teachers will receive 10 days of intensive prior to two-year focused differentiation of instruction and integrating technology into lessons. The administrative team will meet monthly to address issues, monitor teaching and learning, and involve faculty in decision making processes.

EECS will carry out yearly assessments of all educators and administrators, employing evaluation tools that adhere to Iowa's standards for school personnel. The educational institution will employ the Iowa Model Educator Evaluation System to assess the performances of teachers, administrators, counselors, and other staff members. In this communication, the user has provided a single word without any accompanying context or information. The instruments have received approval from both the state of Iowa and the school district to emphasize the importance of individual, school-level, and/or individual professional growth.

Overall, EECS aims to attract and develop a cohesive team of educators and staff who align with the school's mission and vision, and they will continuously assess and evaluate their strategies to ensure effectiveness in meeting the diverse needs of their students.

We do not intend to engage a Charter Management Organization (CMO) as our educational model. Instead, we will delineate responsibilities within our organizational structure, with key roles such as CEO, Principal, Director of Operations (HR), and Director of Education.

17. Proposed Recruitment and Development of Administration, Staff, and Governing Board

17.2. Attach the proposed charter school's employment policies, including performance evaluation plans to [Appendix G](#).

This should include hiring policies and a plan or form for [educator evaluation](#) and address compliance with applicable state and federal employment policies.

18. Proposed Governing Bylaws

18.1. Attach the proposed governing bylaws for the proposed charter school to [Appendix H](#).

19. Partnerships or Contractual Relationships

19.1. Does any independent founding group or proposed governing board member have a partnership or contractual relationship with an education service provider related to the proposed charter school's operations or mission (Mark either yes or no)?

"Education service provider" means an education management organization, charter school management organization, or other person with whom a charter school contracts for educational program implementation or comprehensive management" [Iowa Code § 256E.2(4)].

☐ Yes (must complete 19.1.1)

☒ No (skip to 20.1)

19.1.1. If yes, state the name(s) of the education service provider(s). For each provider listed, explain the partnership or contractual relationship.

N/A

20. Proposed Transportation, Food, Operational, and/or Ancillary Services

20.1. Describe the proposed plan for providing transportation services.

This should describe:

- Bus inspection,
- Bus safety,
- Driver training,
- Planned routes, and
- Transportation charges.

20. Proposed Transportation, Food, Operational, and/or Ancillary Services

Transportation Services: At this time, the EECS Charter School will not provide transportation but may revisit this if necessary and if state funding becomes available. In the meantime, parents are encouraged to explore alternative transportation options.

20.2. Describe the proposed plan for providing food services.

This should describe:

- How the school will provide nutritious lunches to children,
- If the school will participate in the National School Lunch Program, and
- Its process for income eligibility and verification.

20. Proposed Transportation, Food, Operational, and/or Ancillary Services

Food Services: EECS will provide free and reduced-cost meals for kids who are unable to afford the full price of a meal through the School Board-managed National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs. Under this program, children from families with incomes that are less than or equal to the eligibility requirements may be eligible for free or reduced-priced meals. Direct certification may be available to students whose families are eligible for TANF and/or food stamps and who have a social security number on file with the school. No application must be on file for students who have been granted direct certification. At the time of enrollment, we will give copies of the application forms to the parents. Applications will be accessible. Parents can complete and submit the application forms to determine their child's eligibility for free or reduced-priced meals. The school will review the applications and notify parents of their child's eligibility status within a specified timeframe.

The presence of the school and its intention to offer food service to children from public schools in the manner outlined above will be communicated to the local health department. In order to assure compliance, the school will submit the required documentation to get a "permit to operate" and keep the required certifications and licenses. This process ensures that the school meets all health and safety standards set by the local health department. Additionally, regular inspections will be conducted to ensure ongoing compliance with food service regulations.

EECS wishes to adhere to the laws and regulations set forth by the health department and the school board. We will set aside \$3,000 for lunch supplies in the first year. Right now, we have a two-door refrigerator that has an average cost of \$3,000. Once the application is granted, various plates, dishes, and other items worth about \$500 will be bought.

EECS plans to collaborate with a Food Service Management Company to provide nutritious meals to students. The school intends to participate in the National School Nutrition Program, offering free or reduced-cost meals based on family income. EECS staff will also consider Hy-Vee Catering services as an option. Hy-Vee has quoted their services at a price of \$7.00 to \$12.00 per person. We are currently working with Aramark Foods to gather information on their catering services. When it comes to finding and choosing a food service provider management business, EECS will work in tandem with the Bureau of Health and Nutrition at the Iowa Department of Education. EECS will hire a catering firm in accordance with the predetermined procedures and schedule.

Safety and Security: EECS has a comprehensive safety plan, including training for faculty and students in emergency situations like tornadoes, fires, and active shooter scenarios. The school has a threat assessment team that collaborates with local law enforcement to ensure campus safety and preparations.

Facility Security: The school will have controlled entry and exit points, with a full-time unarmed security guard. Security cameras and alarms will be in place to enhance safety. Visitors will need to be buzzed in and follow specific protocols. In addition to this, all parking lots and areas around and in the bank are covered by security cameras. The main door leading to Empowering Excellence Charter School is always locked.

20.3. Describe the proposed plan for all other operational or ancillary services.

This may describe:

- School facility maintenance,
- School business and finance,
- Technology, and
- Safety and security.

20. Proposed Transportation, Food, Operational, and/or Ancillary Services

EECS takes safety and security seriously. The school has a well-structured approach to ensure the safety of its students and staff, including:

1. **Training and Threat Assessment:** Faculty and students undergo annual training for emergencies like tornadoes, fires, and active shooter situations. The threat assessment team, composed of professionals from various fields, meets monthly to review potential threats and collaborate with local law enforcement to establish response plans.
2. **Emergency Policies and Procedures:** EECS has comprehensive policies and procedures for various emergencies, including reporting, evacuation plans, bomb threats, chemical spills, fire, weather, and more.
3. **Crisis Intervention Training:** The school's safety teams receive crisis intervention training to manage conflicts, provide support, and maintain a safe learning environment. This equips them with communication skills to address crisis situations effectively. Because it is a more cost-effective strategy, EECS will partner with CRCSD on training. For example, if CRCSD is hosting crisis intervention training, EECS will pay them a set price so that all our staff members can attend. This partnership allows EECS to leverage CRCSD's expertise and resources, ensuring that our staff members receive high-quality training without incurring excessive costs. Additionally, by pooling our resources, both organizations can maximize the impact of the training and enhance the overall effectiveness of our crisis intervention efforts.
4. **Campus Safety Measures:** The school will implement a range of measures to ensure campus safety, including controlled entry/exit points, armed guards, security personnel during student arrival and dismissal, and restrictions on items like backpacks.
5. **Visitor Protocols:** Visitors are subject to strict entry protocols, including being buzzed in, showing ID, signing visitor logs, and wearing visitor stickers. The purpose of the visit is verified, and visitors are escorted to the appropriate area.
6. **Security Measures:** Security cameras are installed throughout the campus, alarms and locks are in place to secure the building and property, and exterior doors are controlled to prevent unauthorized entry.

EECS has a comprehensive approach to safety, covering a wide range of scenarios to ensure the security and well-being of its students, staff, and facility.

EECS will provide students with laptop computers to help them complete their schoolwork. Best Buy will be used to purchase the laptops and the majority of the gear. The school is currently considering purchasing over 100 Lenovo Flex 3 11.6" Chromebooks with touch screens for students. A contract with TMobile will be used to secure mobile hotspots for students who do not have home internet access. The school believes that providing laptop computers will greatly enhance students' ability to engage in online learning and complete their assignments efficiently. By partnering with Best Buy, the school can ensure that students receive high-quality laptops and necessary accessories at competitive prices. Additionally, the decision to purchase Lenovo Flex 3 11.6" Chromebooks with touch screens reflects the school's commitment to equipping students with versatile devices that facilitate interactive learning experiences.

21. Proposed Family and School Partnerships

21.1. Describe how parents and guardians will be given opportunities to be involved in the proposed charter school.

This may describe:

- How input and feedback from parents will be requested and used,
 - How family-school partnerships will be used to strengthen support for learning,
 - Volunteer activities the school will seek or offer to parents,
 - How the school will conduct parent-teacher conferences and provide other opportunities for parents to communicate with their child's teacher, and
 - How the school will communicate with families that do not speak English.
-

Empowering Excellence Charter School is committed to fostering parental involvement and communication. They'll have a thorough parent liaison, engage parents through meetings, workshops, and volunteering opportunities. Communication methods like progress reports, report cards, standardized test results, and an automated system will keep parents informed. They'll provide training sessions and meetings for parents to understand student progress, educational programs, and strategies for supporting EECS. They also encourage parents to be part of committees, attend school events, and collaborate on curriculum enhancements. The school will maintain relationships with community organizations and educational institutions, expanding opportunities for students' growth and support.

How Empowering Excellence Charter School plans to involve parents and guardians in various aspects of the proposed charter school:

- **Parent Liaison:** The school will appoint a parent liaison who will act as a bridge between parents and the school. This liaison will be readily available to address parents' questions, concerns, and requests for information. The contact information for the parent liaison will be prominently displayed on the school's website.
- **Open Communication Channels:** The school aims to establish transparent communication channels between parents and teachers. Methods such as progress reports, report cards, standardized test results, parent letters, and conferences will be used to keep parents informed about their child's academic progress and overall development.
- **Automated Communication System:** Empowering Excellence Charter School will employ an automated communication system to keep parents updated about school events, activities, closures, and important announcements. This ensures that parents are well-informed about what's happening at the school.
- **Monthly Newsletters:** The school will send out monthly newsletters to parents, providing them with insights into school happenings, curriculum updates, and important dates.
- **Google Remind Application:** Teachers will utilize the Google Remind application, a private mobile messaging platform, to facilitate smooth communication between school staff and parents from kindergarten to 12th grade.
- **Parent Training Sessions:** EECS will focus on accessing and interpreting student progress reports generated by Edmentum Courseware, the learning platform used by the school. This empowers parents to actively engage in their child's education journey.
- **Monthly Parent Meetings:** Regular monthly meetings will be conducted for parents. These meetings will cover a wide range of topics, including educational programs, graduation requirements, state assessments, and strategies for supporting their children's academic and career development.
- **Volunteer Opportunities:** Parents will have the chance to volunteer at the school and participate in various school events, such as college and career day, open house, and Edmentum Courseware Workshops. This involvement fosters a sense of community and shared responsibility for the students' education.
- **Parent-Teacher Conferences:** Empowering Excellence Charter School will conduct parent-teacher conferences, providing parents with valuable insights into their child's academic progress, strengths, and areas for improvement. This personalized communication ensures that parents are well-informed partners in their child's learning journey.
- **Parent-Student Handbook and Contract:** Each year, parents and students will sign a contract. These agreements serve as a mutual commitment to abide by school policies and procedures and to work together to enhance student learning.

21. Proposed Family and School Partnerships

- **Community Partnerships:** EECS will collaborate with various community organizations and educational institutions within Linn County. These partnerships will provide students with additional resources, opportunities, and support for their academic and personal growth.
 - Coe College
 - Mount Mercy University
 - Midas
 - Winnberg Theatre
 - St Luke's Hospital
 - Iowa Eye Clinic
 - HyVee
 - Kingdom Community Center
 - Cedar Rapids Water Works
 - International Paper
 - Kirkwood Community College

 - Goodwill Industry

By implementing these strategies, Empowering Excellence Charter School aims to create a strong foundation of collaboration, communication, and parental involvement to enrich the educational experience of their students.

22. Start-Up and Five-Year Plans

22.1 and 22.2 should be distinguished from each other.

22.1. Describe the school start-up plan that includes information, timeline(s), and the individual(s) responsible for each of the following items:

- **Finances;**
- **Budget;**
- **Insurance coverage; and**
- **Facility construction, preparation, and contingencies.**

22. Start-Up and Five-Year Plans

On June 13, 2020, Empowering Youths of Iowa, a non-profit organization, commenced its operations with the aim of providing services to students who are currently enrolled in the Cedar Rapids Community School District. Since that time, various members have undertaken the responsibilities of finance, budgeting, insurance coverage, as well as facility building, preparation, and contingencies. The individuals responsible for performing the tasks associated with each of the below jobs are:

1. Finances: Tina Guadenkauf
2. Budget: Janessa Morgan and Sarah Swayze
3. Insurance Coverage- Empowering Excellence Charter will be covered by the same company that is currently covering Empowering Youths of Iowa, Inc.
4. Facility construction, preparation, and contingencies- The location designated for the provision of educational services by Empowering Excellence Charter School is situated at 1800 First Ave NE #201. The facility has been appropriately arranged to accommodate students, and its ongoing maintenance is overseen by Sarah Swayze, Janessa Morgan, Terry Aron, and Jim West.

22.2. Describe the five-year plan that includes information, timeline(s), and the individual(s) responsible for each of the following items:

- Finances;
- Budget;
- Insurance coverage; and
- Facility construction, preparation, and contingencies.

[Empowering Excellence Charter School 5-yr Budget Forecast](#)

By collaborating with the service provider, Empowering Youths of Iowa, Inc., which has been operational for the previous three years, Empowering Excellence Charter School is able to take advantage of many of the systems that are currently in place. The following is a list of the current positions available at EECS, along with the individuals who will fill those positions and a timeline indicating when they will start working there. This information is also included in the 5-year plan that is provided.

Finances: Tina Gudenkauf

Budget: Janessa Morgan and Sarah Swayze

Insurance—Empowering Youths of Iowa, Inc. is already covered, and the name of the organization will soon be changed to Empowering Excellence Charter School.

The space that is currently occupied by Empowering Youths of Iowa, Inc. will be utilized by the EECS as their facility. The address of the building in Cedar Rapids, Iowa is 1800 First Avenue Northeast Suite 201. Other locations, such as the public library and local eateries, will be utilized to facilitate the meeting of students who are unable to do so at the designated place.

A. Present a projected timetable for the school's start-up, including but not limited to the following key activities:

- i. Applying for and securing appropriate legal status (e.g., status as a state corporation, federal non-profit)
- ii. Identifying and securing facility
- iii. Recruiting and hiring staff (leaders, teachers, and other staff)
- iv. Staff training
- v. Finalizing curriculum and other instructional materials
- vi. Governing board training
- vii. Policy adoption by Board (if necessary)
- viii. Recruiting students
- ix. Enrollment lottery, if necessary
- x. Establishing financial procedures.
- xi. Securing contracted services.
- xii. Fundraising, if applicable
- xiii. Finalizing transportation and food service plans.
- xiv. Procuring furniture, fixtures and eq.

The activities included should align with the start-up budget described earlier in the application. If an activity will be paid for by a source of funding not included in the start-up budget, it should be clearly indicated. (This timetable is a projection and is not meant to be binding on the school or sponsor. A formal timeline may be negotiated in the charter agreement) February, 2024Empo:

- Board members and Mike Huguely meet with the Mayor of Cedar Rapids to discuss charter school application and to solicit support **(Sept 2023)**.
- Submission of charter school application proposal to the Cedar Rapids Community School District Board of Education **(October 2023)**
- Board Chair and Founding Committee Identified **(Jul/Aug 2023)**
- Apply for 501 (c)(3) with IRS in **(January 2024)**
- Meet with interested parties in Linn County **(Aug/Sept/October/Nov/Dec 2023)**
- Governing board training (as required by Statute) once application is approved **(Feb 2024)**
- Community Outreach **(Aug 2023 - September 2024)**
- Public Forum **(Nov & Dec. 2023)**
- Start Up Grant Applications **(January 2024)**
- Identification of Principal **(March 2024)**
- School Board meets with Principal **(March 2024)**
- Complete Student Application Form **(Feb 2024)**
- Publish School Website **(April 2024)**
- Design/Print Brochures **(Jan /Feb 2024)**
- Mailed out brochures to the community **(March/May/July/Sept 2024)**
- Advertise on social media and local newspaper **(March/May/July/Sept 2024)**
- Hire Secretary **(March 2024)**
- Set Up Bank Account **(March 2024)**
- Submit Application for Tax Exemption **(Feb 2024)**
- Informational meeting **(May/June/July/Aug 2024)**
- Approval of Policies & Procedures **(April 2024)**
- Teacher Recruitment **(Mar/April/May/June/Jul 2024)**

22. Start-Up and Five-Year Plans

23. Fundraising

23.1. Does the proposed charter school have anticipated fundraising contributions (Mark only one set of brackets)?

This includes any fundraising activities or grant activities known to the applicant at the time of the application. Examples might include U.S. Department of Education grants, state grants, or local fundraising efforts.

- ☐ Yes (must attach evidence to 23.1.1)
☒ No (skip to 24.1)

23.1.1. If yes, attach evidence of the contributions to [Appendix I](#).

24. Evidence of Prior Student Success

24.1. Will the proposed governing board contract with an education services provider (Mark only one set of brackets)?

- ☐ Yes (continue to 24.2)
☒ No (skip to 26.1)

24.2. Attach evidence of the educational service provider's success in serving student populations like those proposed in this application to [Appendix J](#).

This may include demonstration of:

- Growth on assessment scores over time for the specific population;
- Provision of curriculum and instruction matched to the student population being served;
- Increased student enrollment and attendance for the specific population;
- Decreased student discipline for the specific population; and
- Exemplary parent and community involvement for the specific population.

24.3. Has the educational service provider operated other charter schools (Mark either yes or no)?

A "No" response does not disqualify the applicant.

- ☐ Yes (must attach evidence to 24.3.1)
☒ No (skip to 25.1)

24. Evidence of Prior Student Success

24.3.1. If yes, attach evidence of past performance of other charter schools and the founding group's capacity for an additional charter school to [Appendix K](#).

This must include demonstration of the founding group's:

- Past performance of other charter schools, which may be demonstrated by:
 - Growth on assessment scores over time;
 - Curriculum, instruction, and assessment matched to the mission of the charter school;
 - Increased student enrollment and attendance;
 - Decreased student discipline;
 - Exemplary parent and community involvement;
 - Financial stability; and
 - Staff stability.
- Capacity for an additional charter school, which may be demonstrated by:
 - Sound budget management;
 - Proper allocation of resources;
 - Fundraising efforts; and
 - Level of commitment and time for the proposed school.

25. Proposed Staff Performance Evaluation

1.1. Describe the proposed educational service provider's staff performance evaluation measures and compensation structure for teachers, administrators, and other staff members.

1.2. Describe the proposed educational service provider's methods of contract oversight and dispute resolution.

1.3. Describe the proposed educational service provider's investment disclosures and conflicts of interest.

2. Proposed Charter School Contract with State Board

2.1. Attach an outline of the proposed charter school contract with the State Board to [Appendix L](#) that includes:

- Duration,
- Designation of roles,
- Authority,
- Duties of the governing board, and
- Charter school staff.

Any contract should include a review by the applicant's legal counsel.

3. Statute and/or Rule Waiver

3.1. Does the independent founding group wish to request a waiver of one or more of the following requirements from which the charter is not already exempt according to Iowa Administrative Code chapter 19.11 (2): Iowa Code section 256.7(21) and the educational standards of Iowa Code section 256.11 and/or the minimum requirements for instructional hours or days (Mark only one set of brackets)?

☒ Yes (continue to 27.2)

☐ No (skip to assurances and conditions)

3.2. Select each statute and/or administrative rule with which the charter school does not intend to comply (Mark all that apply).

☐ Requirements of Iowa Code section 256.7, subsection 21 and the educational standards of Iowa Code section 256.11.

☒ Provision of instruction for at least the number of days or hours required by Iowa Code section 279.10, subsection 1.

3.3. Describe the technical assistance sought by the independent founding group from the Department concerning statutes and administrative rules that may be waived including the reason the charter is requesting to have each statute and/or administrative rule waived.

Students are required to devote at least 15 hours per week to their academic studies as well as 12 hours per week to their career development. This career development can take the form of a paid job, an internship, apprenticeship, online course work through Goodwill or project-based learning. The sum of all the hours worked over the academic year is 972. These hours help meet the demands of barriers that impede at-risk students from being successful academically and prepared for their careers. While this is less than the minimum 1,080 hours, these hours help meet the students' needs.

Iowa Public Charter School Program Assurances and Conditions

ASSURANCES

Please mark the following assurances with Y for yes and N for no. If the applicant is unable to assure compliance with any of the assurances, the application will not be approved. Later discovery of a provider's failure to adhere to any of the assurances may be the basis for the State Board to revoke the charter contract.

| | |
|---------|--|
| Y/ N | The proposed charter school assures that: |
| | A. It will meet all applicable federal, state, and local health and safety requirements and laws prohibiting discrimination based on race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, religion, ancestry, or disability. If approved, the charter school will be subject to any court-ordered desegregation in effect for the school district at the time the charter school application is approved, unless otherwise specifically provided for in the desegregation order. |
| | B. It will operate as a nonsectarian, nonreligious school. |
| | C. It will be free of tuition and application fees to Iowa resident students between the ages of five and 21 years. |
| | D. It will comply with chapters 216 and 216A relating to civil and human rights. |
| | E. It will provide special education services in accordance with chapter 256B. |
| | F. It understands that it is subject to the same financial audits, audit procedures, and audit requirements as a school district. The audit must be consistent with the requirements of sections 11.6, 11.14, 11.19, and 279.29, and section 256.9, subsection 20, except to the extent deviations are necessary because of the program at the school. The Department, the auditor of state, or the Legislative Services Agency may conduct financial, program, or compliance audits. |
| | G. It will comply with the requirements of section 256.7, subsection 21, and the educational standards of section 256.11, unless specifically waived by the State Board during the application process. |
| | H. It will provide instruction for at least the number of days or hours required by section 279.10, subsection 1, unless specifically waived by the State Board as part of the application process. |
| | I. It will comply with the requirements of chapter 256E. |
| | J. Its governing board meetings will be conducted in a manner that is open to the public. The governing board will be a governmental body for purposes of chapter 21 relating to open meetings. |
| | K. It understands that all records, documents, and electronic data of the charter school and of the governing board—its governing body for purposes of chapter 22—will be public records and are subject to the provisions of chapter 22 relating to the examination of public records. |

| | |
|--|---|
| | L. It will employ or contract with teachers as defined in section 272.1, who hold valid licenses with an endorsement for the type of instruction or service for which the teachers are employed or under contract. |
| | M. It will have a chief administrator that is one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An administrator who holds a valid license under chapter 272, • A teacher who holds a valid license under chapter 272, or • An individual who holds an authorization to be a charter school administrator issued by the Board of Educational Examiners under chapter 272. |
| | N. It will not discriminate in its student admissions policies or practices based on intellectual or athletic ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, or status as a person with a disability. However, a charter school may limit admission to students who are within a particular range of ages or grade levels or on any other basis that would be legal if initiated by a school district. |
| | O. It will give enrollment priority to the siblings of students enrolled in a charter school. |
| | P. It will enroll an eligible student who submits a timely application unless the number of applications exceeds the capacity of a program, class, grade level, or building. In this case, students must be accepted by lot. |
| | Q. It will, upon enrollment of an eligible student, notify the public school district of residence not later than March 1 of the school year preceding the year of enrollment. |
| | R. It will adopt a conflict-of-interest policy and a code of ethics for all board members and employees. |
| | S. It will adopt a policy regarding the hiring of family members to avoid nepotism in hiring and supervision. The policy must include but is not limited to a disclosure to the governing board of potential nepotism in hiring and supervision. Any person subject to the policy with a conflict must not be involved in the hiring decision or supervision of a potential employee. |
| | T. It will prohibit individuals compensated by an education service provider from serving as a voting member on the governing board unless the State Board waives such prohibition. |
| | U. It will have a majority of the membership of the governing board be residents of the geographic area served by the charter school. Each member of the governing board who is not a resident of the geographic area served by the charter school must be a resident of Iowa. |

- | |
|--|
| V. It will post the charter school's annual budget on the charter school's website for public viewing within 10 days of approval of the budget. Each posted budget must continue to be accessible to the public on the website for all subsequent budget years [Iowa Code § 256E.7(2)-(11)]. |
|--|

CONDITIONS

Each condition must be met and followed for the duration of the charter school contract. The failure to maintain any of these conditions could result in the revocation of the charter by the State Board [Iowa Code § 256E.10(3)].

Reporting

To meet the data reporting requirements, including student enrollment and performance information needed for the performance framework, charter schools must use a student information system that will transmit information to the Department that is compliant with the School Interoperability Framework (SIF) education data standard [Iowa Admin. Code r. 281—19.10(3)].

Non-Discrimination

Iowa Code section 256E.7, subsection 4, states that a charter school cannot discriminate in its student admissions policies or practices based on intellectual or athletic ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, or status as a person with a disability. However, a charter school may limit admission to students who are within a particular range of age or grade level or on any other basis that would be legal if initiated by a school district. Enrollment priority must be given to the siblings of students enrolled in a charter school.

Certification

WE, THE UNDERSIGNED, do hereby submit an Iowa public charter school program application and agree to the conditions and assurances contained therein.

Founding Group Authorized Representative Signature

Date

Proposed Governing Board President Signature*

Date

Education Service Provider Authorized Representative Signature*

Date

*If identified

Appendix A: 5. Optional Attachment – Evidence of Need and Community Support

Dan Walsh letter of support

[ICPCS Letter of Support for EEHS](#)

[Goodwill letter of support](#)

[Appendix B](#): 6.2. Attach the curriculum vitae (CV) or résumé for each founding member.

[JGN Resume](#) [Jim West](#) [Sarah Swayze Resume](#) [Maurice Davis Resume](#) [Darden Resume](#)

Appendix C: 6.4. Attach the CV or résumé for each governing board member.

Carol Gorman [TINA GUDENKAUF](#) [Jacqueline Watkins](#) [Michelle Nelson](#) [Paul Robins Resume](#) [Janessa Morgan Resume](#)

Appendix D: 6.5. Attach the CV or résumé for each administrator.

Dan Pledge

Appendix E: 7.3.

Daily Schedule

Proposed Calendar and Daily Schedule.

EECS Color Coded Calendar and Daily Schedule

Work Study

Empowering Excellence Charter School Course List

Empowering Excellence Charter School Course Catalog

EYI Course Completion Worksheet

Student Work Completion Log

Appendix F: Proposed Organizational Structure.

[Organizational Structure](#)

[Conflict of Interest](#)

[Empowering Excellence Charter School Organizational Structure](#)

[Empowering Excellence Human Resources and Employment Policies](#)

[Empowering Excellence Staffing Chart](#)

[The governance structure at Empowering Excellence](#)

Appendix G: 7.2. Proposed Recruitment and Development of Administration, Staff, and Governing Board.

Proposed Staffing Plan

[Empowering Excellence Charter School Start-up timeline](#)

[EECH Employee Policies.docx](#)

[Administrator evaluation](#)

[Educators' summative-eval](#)

[Empowering Youths of Iowa Charter Professional Boundaries](#)

[marzano-admn-principal-rubric](#)

[summative-eval](#)

[Teacher Evaluation](#)

[Teacher formative-assess-eval](#)

Appendix H: 18.1. Proposed Governing Bylaws.

Charter School Bylaws

Appendix I: 23.1.1. Fundraising.

Appendix J: 24.2. Evidence of Prior Student Success.

Appendix K: 24.3.1. Evidence of past performance of other charter schools operated by the applicant.

Appendix L: 26.1. Attach an outline of the proposed charter school contract with the State Board.

EMPOWERING EXCELLENCE CHARTER SCHOOL CONTRACT

Request for a Waiver