



DENVER
PUBLIC
SCHOOLS

Portfolio Management Team

MEMO

To: Members, Board of Education
From: Susana Cordova, Superintendent
Jennifer Holladay, Associate Chief of Portfolio Management
Subject: Recommendation concerning French American School of Denver Application
Date: August 19, 2019

Recommendation: Approve the application from French American School of Denver with conditions on a quality basis.

On July 26, 2019, DPS received a proposal from French American School of Denver to open a new charter school as summarized below.

Applicant Summary

Proposed Model: Language Immersion

School Mission: “The French American School of Denver’s mission is to develop bilingual, bi-literate learners through a French language-immersion curriculum meeting the highest educational standards of the United States and France and delivered in a highly diverse learning environment that promotes critical thinking, creativity and empathy.”

Type of School: Charter School

Grades: K-5 (K-8 at Full Build)

Enrollment: 224 (Year 1), 504 (Full Build)

Region: Far Northeast

Proposed School Leader: Leader not yet identified

Overview of Application Process

The Superintendent recommends that the charter school application received from French American School of Denver be approved with standard and school-specific conditions. This recommendation is based on comprehensive and rigorous analyses of the strengths and weaknesses of the proposal conducted by the Application Review Team (a cross-disciplinary team of staff, a parent and an external consultant). In addition, members of the Application Review Team interviewed the Applicant, and the whole team considered the Applicant’s responses. The Application Review Team focused on the viability of the proposed School and the question of whether authorizing the proposed School would be in the best interest of the pupils, the District and the community guided by DPS Board Policy AF, C.R.S § 22-30.5-106 and C.R.S § 22-30.5-107. Based on these evaluations, the Superintendent has determined that approving the School would be in the best interest of the pupils, the District and the community.

The Application Review Team and District staff conclude that the Application meets the DPS quality criteria for school culture, education program, teaching, leadership and governance as well as the requirements of DPS Quality Authorizing as stated in the published Application Rubric¹, as long as the

¹ See the [2019 Call for New Quality Schools application](#) for this rubric.

below conditions are satisfied. The conditions placed on its approval are material to the school's meeting the DPS quality criteria; failure to meet the conditions would mean the school would not be ready to open.

The following are standard conditions placed on all charter applicants:

- I. In accordance with Resolution #3998 on new school authorizing, the School must begin its "Year 0" by fall 2021, meaning the School must open by the 2022-2023 school year.

Enrollment:

- I. By the end of SchoolChoice Round 1 during the spring prior to opening, the School shall have and maintain enrollment at 80% of its original application enrollment.

Facility:

- I. The School shall be located in the Far Northeast region as identified by the School in the application, or a region in which the District and the School mutually agree.
- II. The School may seek placement in a District facility through the processes established under the District's Facility Allocation Policy (FAP) or secure a private facility.
- III. If located in a District facility, the School shall be subject to the District's standard Shared Campuses Policy FN.
- IV. Non-Shared Campus Conditions: If the School does not choose to compete for placement in a District facility through processes established under Board Policy FAP, the School has the responsibility of and must secure its own facility.
- V. If not located in a District facility, the School shall be subject to the following conditions:
 - A. By October 30, 2019, or a date otherwise agreed to by the District, the School shall provide a short-list of probable, financially viable facility location(s) for the School that are acceptable to the District; and
 - B. By January 10, 2020, or a date otherwise agreed to by the District in writing, the School shall provide evidence in writing that it has secured a financially viable location for the School that is acceptable to the District. In the event that the secured facility costs more than what was originally estimated in the application, the School shall also submit a revised budget acceptable to the District by January 10, 2020.

Governance:

- I. In the year prior to opening, the School shall meet all required budget and governance submission deadlines which shall be provided to the School in the form of a draft contract document.
- II. On October 20, 2019; January 20, 2020; April 20, 2020 and July 31, 2020, the School shall provide to the District quarterly financial statements that include budget to actuals and the CDE chart of account level detail (program, object, job classification, project) for all funds that are satisfactory to the District.

Leadership:

- I. The School agrees to have and maintain a full-time founding school leader/principal during the nine months preceding the School's opening. Ensuring a school leader is in place during the School's pre-opening year is critical to the successful start-up of the School.

English Language Acquisition (ELA):

- I. By December 2, 2019, the School shall provide evidence that its ELA Administrator and ELA Instructor possess ELA qualifications demonstrating ELA expertise. If the School’s ELA administrator and/or ELA Instructor do not yet have their ELA qualifications, the School shall provide a plan to the Portfolio Management Team (PMT) by December 2, 2019 for how they will acquire qualifications by the start of the 2020-2021 school year.
- II. In the school year preceding opening, the School shall identify a qualified ELA Instructor, as determined by DPS staff, to participate in the DPS Charter ELA Instructor trainings.

The following are school-specific conditions placed on the school:

- I. While the Special Education Instruction section largely meets the DPS quality criteria, the application does not fully address how the School’s special education programming will account for the language immersion model to be implemented by the School. By May 1, 2020, the School shall, in partnership with DPS ELA and Special Education partners, submit to PMT a more detailed plan for special education with a continuum of services that will ensure students’ access to the language immersion model.

All school-specific condition submissions shall be reviewed by the District using the 2019 Call for New Quality Schools new school rubric.

The following evidence supports the recommendation, as aligned to the Colorado Revised Statutes and DPS quality criteria.

Section of the Application	DPS Quality Standards as stated in published Application Rubric; DPS Policy AF: Charter Quality Authorizing Policy; Statutory Criteria
Section I: School Culture	<p>Vision and Mission: The vision and mission statements provide a clear description of how the applicants envision the school and its impact, with a focus on developing bilingual, biliterate learners in a diverse learning environment that promotes critical thinking, creativity and empathy. The mission and vision are evident throughout the application. (C.R.S. § 22-30.5-106 (1) (b) and C.R.S. § 22-30.5-102)</p> <p>Target Student Population: The application includes research of the student population it is seeking to serve in Far Northeast Denver where the school is seeking to open, as well as the Francophone population living across Denver. The application includes research on the academic performance history of schools in the Far Northeast, focusing on academic gaps indicators at those schools, and states that early language immersion education will serve these students. The application describes how the language immersion model would meet the needs of all students, including research supporting how it would meet the needs of English Language Learners (ELLs) and students of color.</p> <p>Student Recruitment and Enrollment: The application details a marketing and recruitment plan, which includes outreach to cultural and community centers and partnerships with preschools and faith-based organizations. The application specifies admission priorities for students and affirms participation in the DPS SchoolChoice process. (C.R.S. § 22-30.5-106 (1) (I))</p> <p>Demonstration of Community Support and Demand for the Application: The application includes evidence of community involvement, including letters of support from organizations such as the Education Attaché at the French Embassy and Opera Colorado. The application summarizes Intent-to-Enroll forms gathered by the school, showing evidence of 69% of its ideal</p>

enrollment for Year 1 and at least 50% of intended enrollment at each grade. (C.R.S. § 22-30.5-106 (1) (d))

School Culture and Student Voice: The application describes the planned culture and expectations for the school, which are driven by the language-immersion model and include an emphasis on mutual respect, community pride and openness. The application describes systems and structures that can be implemented on day 1 and beyond, such as the use of Positive Behavior Intervention Supports and daily morning meetings. The school culture described is designed to promote a positive and inclusive academic environment as well as positive social and emotional development for students. The application states that the school will monitor school culture formally through surveys from students, parents, and teachers, but it did not detail what information will be collected or how the data will be used to adjust systems or implementation based on findings.

Student Discipline Policy: The application states that the school will follow DPS policy JK and JK-R and describes the school's discipline structures, as well as how discipline at the school will be culturally sensitive and equitably meet the needs of students, such as through the use of professional development on implicit bias. The application identifies the Executive Director and Director of Student Services as responsible for the oversight of the discipline program. (C.R.S. § 22-30.5-106 (1)(p))

Student Attendance and Satisfaction: The application sets goals for attendance and student satisfaction that meet the standards of the DPS School Performance Framework (SPF) and describes the steps the school will take to promote attendance and student satisfaction. The application describes steps for improving student attendance should goals not be met.

Parent/Guardian Involvement and Satisfaction: The application sets goals for parent satisfaction that meet the standards of the DPS SPF. The application describes methods that will build family-school partnerships, including strategies to engage families/parents in their home language. The school administration will be responsible for monitoring parent satisfaction data through a semi-annual survey. (C.R.S. § 22-30.5-106 (1)(k) and C.R.S. § 22-11-401)

School Schedule and Calendar: The application includes the school's calendar and master daily schedule that aligns with the intended educational program, including the required 45-minute ELD block. The daily schedule includes all core contents, electives such as PE and ART and specific French-language programming in French Language Arts and World Civilizations classes. The application describes how the daily schedule was crafted to optimize learning for students through an extended school day that allows more time for core subjects, French Language Arts and electives. (C.R.S. § 22-30.5-106 (1) (e))

Supplemental Programming and Community Partnerships: The application describes academic and related supplemental programming and whole child-related supplemental programming the school will offer. This includes before/after school care and partnerships with the Alliance Francaise and the Lapoule Art Foundation. The application includes letters of support from these potential partner organizations. Costs for providing this supplemental programming are reflected in the budget.

**Section II:
Educational
Program**

Pedagogy and Instructional Strategies: The application identifies the Two-Way Immersion pedagogical approach and describes multiple instructional strategies aligned to this pedagogy, including integrated content and language development and inquiry-based learning. The application explains how the Two-Way Immersion model will meet the needs of the target student population, including French Language Development for struggling non-proficient French speakers, and provides research to support the selected instructional strategies. (C.R.S. § 22-30.5-106 (1) (e))

Curriculum: The application describes the school’s curriculum for math, science and resources for French language arts, and it provides a plan for curriculum development for all other contents that will ensure the curriculum is fully developed prior to opening. This plan for curriculum development includes a clear timeline and benchmarks, a process for aligning content to CDE and Common Core standards, and a process for monitoring the implementation of the curriculum once developed. The application identifies that a Curriculum Development Committee has been created to execute this plan. The budget accounts for the funds needed for this curriculum development process, as well as for instructional materials. (C.R.S. § 22-30.5-106 (1) (e))

Scope and Sequence: The application provides yearlong and detailed scope and sequence documents for all core subjects for 3rd grade, including learning objectives, standards covered and end-of-unit performance tasks.

Culturally Responsive Education: The application identifies three dimensions of culturally responsive education as the theoretical framework that guides the school. The application describes practices and mindsets that demonstrate how culturally responsive education and teaching are a part of the school’s educational program, including ensuring that the lives of students and community are reflected in the classroom and materials and are free of bias, as well as forming community partnerships with people and organizations that reflect the student population. The application describes how the school will create a school culture that promotes the recognition of students’ cultural backgrounds and celebrates the diversity in the school community.

Assessments, Progress Monitoring and Pupil Performance Standards: The application identifies the interim and state-mandated assessments the school will utilize, though the school’s READ Act assessment is not clear, and does not provide a clear rationale for the selection of some of these assessments. The application includes numerous annual performance goals that will “Meet” or “Exceed” expectations on the DPS SPF. The application identifies specific interim performance goals to confirm students are on track during its first year of operation and describes the tools and protocols for data analysis, including a clear schedule for their use. (C.R.S. § 22-30.5-106 (1)(f) and (C.R.S. § 22-30.5-106(1) (c))

Promotion and Retention Policies: The application states the school will follow DPS policy IKE/IKE-R and describes the policies and standards for student promotion and retention, including the role parents would play in promotion and retention decisions.

Intervention and Acceleration: The application details an MTSS plan, including how the school’s assessment system will be used to identify students in need of academic and social emotional supports, and it describes strategies and interventions to support these students.

Special Education Instruction: The application affirms its responsibility to serve all students, and it describes a process for identifying students with disabilities that is based on a body of evidence. The application describes an MTSS process elsewhere that would support the school in avoiding the misidentification and overrepresentation of student groups, but does not link this to the school’s special education programming. The application briefly describes how the school will assess IEP goals and supports, and it describes some methods to regularly monitor and

	<p>evaluate the effectiveness of the special education program. The application demonstrates a clear understanding of the school’s obligation to students with mild and moderate disabilities, and it includes a student/staff ratio in the budget that adequately provides special education staff to students with disabilities. The application affirms its obligation to host a center-based program, should the District request it. While this section largely meets the DPS quality criteria, the application does not fully address how the school’s special education programming will account for the language immersion model to be implemented by the school, including how the school will ensure students’ access to the language immersion general education curriculum, how it will avoid misidentification and overrepresentation of non-native French speakers in special education, or how it will provide appropriate resources and schedule adjustments to meet the needs of students with mild and moderate disabilities. (C.R.S. § 22-30.5-106 (1) (q))</p> <p>Gifted and Talented Instruction: The application describes an understanding of the systems to identify gifted and talented (GT) students, in alignment with DPS policy, and identifies the Director of Student Services as responsible for overseeing the GT identification process and creating Advanced Learning Plans. The application includes methods the school will use to improve representation of traditionally underrepresented student cohorts, and it describes some services the school will provide for GT students. (C.R.S. § 22-30.5-106 (1) (q))</p> <p>English Language Acquisition: The application describes an ELA-E program model for serving English Language Learners (ELLs), including a 45-minute English Language Development (ELD) block. The applicant’s ELL plan meets DPS criteria for identifying ELLs, involving parents/guardians, identifying ELLs in need of additional support and/or intervention, exiting/re-designating, and ensuring teachers will be ELA qualified. The application identifies an ELD curriculum and identifies the Director of Curriculum as the school administrator responsible for the management of ELA programming. The application states that ELLs will be progress monitored for content and language by their ELD teacher, but it does not provide further details on this monitoring process. (C.R.S. § 22-30.5-106 (1) (q))</p> <p>Class Size: The application describes the school’s planned class size at 28:1, with the opportunity to be lower with the support of aides in grades K-3, should the budget allow it.</p>
<p>Section III: Teaching</p>	<p>Teacher Recruitment, Hiring and Retention: The application describes the school’s teacher recruitment, selection and retention criteria and practices in alignment with the school model. This includes prioritizing hiring teachers who align with the mission and vision and who demonstrate fluency in French for those teaching in French. The application describes recruitment and marketing strategies for attracting teachers from French-speaking countries, but it does not describe strategies to attract teachers who reflect the diversity of the target population.</p> <p>Teacher Coaching: The application provides a plan to conduct coaching observations with clear criteria that utilizes the Executive Director and 1-2 teacher coaches, which is adequate to implement the plan and support teachers in implementing the full educational program. The application partially describes how coaching and feedback will be differentiated based on teacher needs, including alignment to the language of instruction, as well as how teachers will be held accountable for implementing feedback.</p> <p>Teacher Evaluation: The application describes teacher evaluation tools and processes, which are derived from the Colorado Quality Teacher Standards rubric and the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards and are 50% based on measures of student learning. The application describes that the Executive Director will have the primary responsibility for conducting teacher evaluations annually. The application describes how the teacher evaluation factors into employment decisions and the opportunity for teacher improvement through an</p>

	<p>improvement plan.</p> <p>Teacher Professional Development: The application outlines a clear schedule for professional development (PD) that will be provided to teachers and staff to implement the educational program, including trainings on serving ELLs and Students with Disabilities, as well as on cultural responsiveness. The application states that PD will be provided based on individual needs and teacher professional development plans, but it does not describe how PD will be evaluated.</p>
<p>Section IV: Leadership</p>	<p>Leadership Capacity and Sustainability: The application provides profiles that detail the skills, qualifications, characteristics and essential duties/responsibilities for the Executive Director (ED) and leadership positions, as well as a summary of three possible candidates for ED and one candidate for Director of French programming. The application provides a detailed plan and timeline for recruiting and filling these positions. The application describes the school’s leadership succession plan that includes Board, teacher and community stakeholder input. (C.R.S. § 22-30.5-106 (1)(h))</p> <p>Organizational Structure: The application includes an organizational chart for the school (Year 0 – Year 5) that clearly identifies each employee and which year they are added to the school and has well-defined roles and clear lines of accountability. The application includes a staff roster that details all staff positions for the school and describes how the school’s organizational structure will support the implementation of the educational program. The organizational structure and staff roster are financially viable and aligned with the budget.</p> <p>Leadership Coaching and Evaluation: The application describes the school’s system for providing coaching and professional development for the ED and leadership team, including executive training and ongoing support from the Denver Language School for the ED. The application identifies the criteria and tools that will be used to develop the school leader evaluation, although the evaluation tool itself has not yet been developed. The application partially describes the next steps the school’s board will take if the ED does not meet accountability measures, only stating that the ED will be removed for poor performance. (C.R.S. § 22-9-106)</p>
<p>Section V: Governance, Operations and Budget</p>	<p>School Accountability Committee and Collaborative School Committee: The application describes the composition, roles and responsibilities of the school’s School Accountability Committee (“SAC”), which meets statutory requirements. The application describes a structure that will sufficiently support the SAC, including partnering with PTA representatives to create a pipeline for parent involvement. (C.R.S. § 22-30.5-106 (1)(k) and C.R.S. § 22-11-401)</p> <p>Charter School Board Capacity and Structure: The application describes the board’s current and future structure, board officer roles and committees it will implement. The application describes the board’s current and desired capacity (i.e. skills, expertise, etc.), as well as the key expectations for board members and the process for recruitment of new members. The current board has experience in fundraising, legal affairs, higher education, curriculum design, budget preparation and the French community abroad and in Denver, and is seeking additional capacity. The application provides a plan for building the capacity of the governing board, which includes trainings with the Colorado League of Charter Schools and the French Consulate, as well as a partnership with the Denver Language School governing board. (C.R.S. § 22-30.5-106 (1)(h))</p> <p>Charter School Oversight: The application describes the board’s roles and responsibilities in overseeing the school, including in evaluating the Executive Director and monitoring financial metrics. The application has established goals and benchmarks for Year 1 that include establishing committees to address certain operational metrics, but it does not outline a system for monitoring academic metrics or goals and benchmarks beyond Year 1. (C.R.S. § 22-30.5-106)</p>

	<p>(1)(h))</p> <p>Charter School Board Status and Compliance: The application states that the school is in the process of filing its Articles of Incorporation and includes drafts of Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, policies and procedures for compliance with the Colorado Sunshine Law/Open Records Act as well as its grievance process and policy in the appendices. (C.R.S. § 22-30.5-106 (1)(h))</p> <p>Employment Policies: The application provides the school’s employee manual, which explains the school’s at-will employment policy. The Teacher Evaluation section also states that teachers may earn non-probationary status after three consecutive years of demonstrated effectiveness. (C.R.S. § 22-30.5-106 (1) (i))</p> <p>Operations - Transportation: The application provides a plan for transportation that includes providing student buses starting in Year 2. The application discusses working with DPS and the Regional Transportation District to offer free or reduced cost transportation to students in Year 1, as well as a plan to develop a carpool database for parents. (C.R.S. § 22-30.5-106 (1)(m))</p> <p>Operations - Student Safety: The application describes a process to create and maintain the District-required Emergency Management Plan and states that the school administration will be responsible.</p> <p>Operations - Insurance Coverage (Charter Schools): The application provides a list of the types of insurance coverage the school will secure, including a description of the levels of coverage.</p> <p>Operations - Food Service: The application states that the school will secure an independent food vendor that is compliant with federal USDA guidelines and food safety and facility regulations. (C.R.S. § 22-30.5-106 (1)(m))</p> <p>Facility: The application lists three potential private facility locations in the Far Northeast planning region, two of which are aligned with the facility estimate used in the budget. The application documents necessary facility costs including renovations and other expenses involved in preparing the building for school use and ensuring the building is ADA compliant. (C.R.S. § 22-30.5-106 (1)(n))</p> <p>Budget: The application describes the School Finance Act revenue assumptions and provides an overview of how the allocation of resources supports the school’s vision, mission and education plan. The application describes services to be contracted, including costs and criteria for selecting service providers, and it identifies the Executive Director and an outside business service provider as those who will be directly managing and overseeing the budget. The budget aligns with the staff roster and education program. The application includes a contingency plan and budget analysis in the event of only 80% enrollment in year 1, including each budget cut. This contingency plan includes a reduction of 2.6 FTE instructional staff aligned to the elimination of one 1st grade class and teacher and the entire 5th grade class and teacher. (C.R.S. 22-30.5-106(1)(g))</p>
<p>Section VI: Waivers (Charter Schools Only)</p>	<p>District Policy Waivers: The application addresses the need to acquire District Policy waivers. (C.R.S. 22-30.5-106(1)(o))</p> <p>State Statute Waivers: The application addresses the need to acquire state statute waivers and provides a rationale for pursuing such waivers. (C.R.S. 22-30.5-106(1)(o))</p>