



DENVER  
PUBLIC  
SCHOOLS

Portfolio Management Team



# CHARTER YEAR ZERO GUIDEBOOK

A GUIDE TO RESOURCES AND COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR CHARTER SCHOOLS OPERATING IN YEAR ZERO WITH DPS.

Published Summer 2019

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# ABOUT THIS GUIDEBOOK

DPS is highly committed to ensuring that all new schools open to serve students excellently from Day 1. This guidebook is designed primarily for new charter school leaders operating in Year Zero. Year Zero is the timespan between a new school's approval by the DPS Board of Education and the first day of school. Those schools approved to meet a future need begin Year Zero on July 1 in the year prior to opening. This Guidebook is designed to provide information and guidance on:

- Year Zero Accountability and Supports
- Year Zero Tools and Resources
- Year Zero District Contacts

Although this guidebook is an attempt to be comprehensive, it does not contain all available information for Year Zero schools and should not be considered legal authority or advice. This guidebook will be updated annually. Year Zero schools are encouraged to contact DPS' Portfolio Management Team (PMT) for details about the information referenced throughout this document. For more information, please see:

- [Portfolio Management Team website](#)

New district-run schools should connect with their Instructional Superintendent for additional resources that are specific to district-run schools. Instructional Superintendents are supported by a wide range of district partners and will connect district-run leaders with the appropriate supports.



# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO YEAR ZERO

## About the Portfolio Management Team

Our Mission on the Portfolio Management Team (PMT) is to authorize, launch, cultivate and advocate for high quality schools (i.e., district-run, innovation and charter) in DPS. Empowered by the [Denver Plan](#), we embrace school empowerment, high performance standards, clear accountability, family choice and broad community engagement.

We envision a nation where every public education system effectively serves the diverse needs of all children and where every student graduates prepared for success in life. We strive for DPS to be a national model for transformational change in public education by:

- Improving outcomes for all Denver students by recruiting and supporting a diverse portfolio of high-performing schools that are accountable for results;
- Producing transformational changes district-wide by identifying, sharing and facilitating the implementation of innovative, best-in-class policies and practices in all schools and central office departments.

Within DPS, we support the entire family of schools (district-run, innovation, IMO, iZone, and charter) and partner with other district teams to provide the best service to each school. As part of this role, PMT provides [accountability](#) and [support](#) for Year Zero charter schools.

While many members of Team DPS will be supporting and holding your school accountable, we are excited to be your main point of contact in DPS throughout your Year 0. Contact PMT [here](#).

## Ensuring Access to Great Schools for all Students

PMT helps ensure all DPS schools, regardless of governance type, serve all students and are held accountable in equitable ways. We refer to this commitment to equity across our family of schools as the “Three Equities”:

- **Equity of opportunity** means that the schools have access to equitable resources (most notably funding), support services from DPS, and available facilities.
- **Equity of responsibility and access** means that everyone in our family of schools must offer equitable and open access to all students regardless of socioeconomic status, disability, home language or other status and share an equal obligation in district-wide responsibilities, such as access for students with more severe disabilities and enrollment practices.
- **Equity of accountability** refers to the shared accountability system that applies to all schools through the [School Performance Framework](#), and the [School Performance Compact](#). This system ensures a common set of expectations for academic performance across our family of schools.

## Year Zero Overview



A new school’s Year Zero can also be referred to as its “planning year.” While in Year Zero, school leaders will be asked to meet standard and school-specific conditions, submit various documentation and take specific actions to be fully prepared on day one. PMT will also offer optional supports (check-in meetings, governance reviews, etc.) in Year Zero. As schools progress through Year Zero, school leaders should use your new school application and Resolution Condition Guidance document as the basis of your Year Zero work and planning. You may also find it helpful to consult your resolution approved by the DPS Board of Education in May.

# CHAPTER 2: ACCOUNTABILITY IN YEAR ZERO

One of PMT’s primary roles as an authorizer of charter schools is to hold charter schools accountable, while preserving autonomy. All new schools in DPS are expected to open on day one ready to ensure every child succeeds. Charter schools are held accountable to this goal through the new school application process and then in Year Zero through standard and school-specific conditions, as outlined in their resolution passed by the DPS Board of Education. Expectations for these conditions are described in further detail in a school’s Resolution Condition Guidance document provided following approval. To view all Year Zero conditions, submissions, and key dates in one place, see the [2019-2020 Year Zero Calendar](#).



## Charter School Conditions and Submissions

Throughout the Year Zero process, charter schools will be held accountable for meeting all standard and school-specific conditions.<sup>1</sup> Failure to satisfy any of the conditions, which are material to the approval of the charter, constitutes grounds for revocation of the conditional approval or charter contract. School conditions must be met before a school can open to ensure the school is in best interest of students, the district and the community.

Dates below are standard conditions for all schools planning to open in fall of 2020. See your Resolution Condition Guidance document for more information on school-specific conditions.

### Standard Conditions for Charter Schools:

| Standard Condition Due Date         | Condition Category | Standard Condition Language  |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|--|
| <b>SPF Release Date (Fall 2019)</b> | Governance         | Performance of Multi-School Organizations: If the school is part of a MSO, CMO, IMO or iZone, the organization’s existing campus(es) at the same grade configuration shall continue to meet or exceed performance expectations on the SPF. A restarted school operated by the organization may be rated “approaching” on its first two SPFs. |
| <b>Ongoing</b>                      | Governance         | <u>In the year prior to opening</u> , 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.  |

<sup>1</sup> Please note, individual school specific conditions may vary. Please reference your Resolution Condition Guidance document or the Board Resolution to view your school specific conditions.

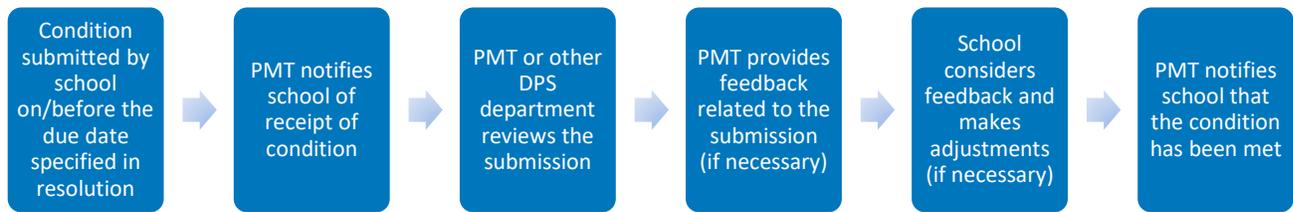
|  |                              |  |
|--|------------------------------|--|
| <b>October 18, January 20, April 20, and July 31</b> | Governance                   | The school shall provide to the DPS Finance team quarterly unaudited financial statements that include budget to actuals and the CDE chart of account level detail (program, object, job classification, project) for all funds, that are satisfactory to the district.  |
| <b>October 30</b>                                    | Facility                     | <u>By October 30, 2019</u> , 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.   |
| <b>December 2</b>                                    | Leadership                   | The school agrees to have and maintain a full-time founding school leader/principal <u>during the nine months preceding the school's opening</u> . Ensuring a school leader is in place during the school's pre-opening year is critical to the successful start-up of the school.   |
| <b>December 2</b>                                    | English Language Acquisition | <u>By December 2, 2019</u> , the school shall provide evidence that its ELA Administrator and ELA Trainer possess ELA qualifications demonstrating ELA expertise. If the school's ELA administrator and/or ELA Trainer do not yet have their ELA qualifications, the school shall provide a plan to PMT for how they will acquire them <u>by December 2, 2019</u> .  |
| <b>January 10</b>                                    | Facility                     | <u>By January 10, 2020</u> , 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 <u>January 10, 2020</u> .  |
| <b>Late-February to Mid-March</b>                    | Enrollment                   | <u>By the end of SchoolChoice Round 1 during the spring prior to opening</u> , the school shall have and maintain enrollment at the greater of the following two levels: 80% of its original application enrollment or 100% of its realistic enrollment target if one was provided. <sup>2</sup>   |
| <b>May (TBD)</b>                                     | English Language Acquisition | <u>In the school year preceding opening</u> , the school shall identify a qualified ELA Trainer, as determined by DPS staff, to participate in the DPS Charter ELA Train-the-Trainer Sessions.<br><br>The school shall develop a detailed plan, satisfactory to the district, to ensure that all teachers are ELA Year One-qualified or on-track to becoming ELA Year One-qualified within one full school year of hire and all teachers are ELA Year Two-qualified or on track to becoming ELA Year Two-qualified within two full school years of hire. |

### Conditions Submission Process

All completed conditions are to be submitted via a shared Google Year Zero Submissions folder. The Year Zero Submissions folder will be shared with you and your team during the summer of 2019. Each submission dropped into the folder must be clearly labeled and accessible to all viewers who have access to the folder. Please see the process on the next page for a brief outline of the submission process for both standard and school-specific conditions.

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<sup>2</sup> Year Zero schools should refer to their approval resolution or Condition Guidance Document for the exact enrollment target to be met.



If you have difficulty accessing the Google Year Zero Submissions folder, or would like to have the link resent to you and your team, please reach out to the [School Development Team](#) as soon as possible.

If a condition submission is not met, PMT will follow up with you directly and will work with you and its board to resolve the issue. Please note, failure to satisfy any of the conditions, which are material to the approval of the charter, constitutes grounds for revocation of the conditional approval or charter contract.

### Additional Submission Requirements

In addition to the standard and school-specific conditions, Year Zero schools will be required to submit specific documentation to ensure the school is ready to open on day one and receive district supports. Many of these are submissions required of all schools, not specific to Year Zero.

| TENTATIVE*      |   |  |
|-----------------|---|--|
| Due Date        | Type of Submission  | Description  |
| September       | Governance Documents  | PMT will contact schools to request their board meeting schedule and board member roster. PMT will coordinate with each new charter school board to schedule a <a href="#">Year Zero Governance Review</a> .                 |
| January         | Start and End Bell Times Submission (If using DPS transportation) | Schools must submit their bell schedule to request transportation services. Click <a href="#">here</a> for how to submit your start and end bell times to request transportation services.                                   |
| January – March | Period Schedule and School Calendar Submissions                   | Schools must supply their <a href="#">period schedule/school calendar</a> for 2020-21 into Infinite Campus. This information is shared with other DPS departments for planning purposes for the new school year.             |
| March           | Facility Documentation  | Schools must provide PMT with a copy of a lease or purchase agreement no later than 150 days prior to the opening of the school, as agreed to in the charter school contract.  |
| April           | Request for Food Service  | Schools must notify DPS Enterprise Management if they intend to receive DPS food service. It is recommended that you meet with Enterprise Management well in advance to discuss food service options.                        |
| May             | Draft Budget Submission   | Schools must submit a draft budget for the 2020-2021 school year on May 1, 2020. District assumptions will be communicated to the school between February and May of 2020, as information becomes available to the district. |
| June            | Final Budget Submission   | Schools must submit their final budget for the 2020-2021 school year on June 1, 2020.  |
| July            | Facility Documentation  | Schools must provide PMT with a Certificate of Occupancy (must be zoned for Educational Occupancy) and a Certificate of Insurance no later than July 1, as agreed to in the charter school contract.                         |
| Ongoing         | DPS HR ESSA Submission  | Please update Infor HR and provide documents to <a href="mailto:DPS_CHTRDOCS@dpsk12.org">DPS_CHTRDOCS@dpsk12.org</a> no later than the 5th of each month.  |

\*All dates and processes included in the table/timeline above are subject to change and school leaders should rely on the [Comprehensive Calendar](#) for the most up-to-date and accurate information.

## Contracting and Waivers

A charter school contract serves as the foundational document for that charter school, establishing expectations for its own operations and performance, as well as codifying expectations of the district. After the DPS Board of Education approves a new charter school, PMT, along with school leaders and board chairs, begin the process of negotiating the terms of a new contract. Because DPS uses a standardized template for all charter schools (with school-specific details), any changes negotiated to the language of the contract are applied to all other charter schools. This process typically begins in October or November and concludes when the contracts are approved by the State Board of Education, typically in February or March.

### Timeline

The contracting process and timeline for charter schools is currently being developed and will be shared with Year Zero schools as soon as it is finalized. For more information on contracts or if you have questions about your school specific contract, please contact the [School Development Associate](#).

### State Waivers for Charter Schools

Colorado law allows districts to request waivers from certain areas of state statute and rule. This flexibility is intended to provide charters with the autonomy to fully implement the school plan outlined in the school's contract with the authorizing district. While many state waivers are considered to be automatic, many are not and require schools to go through a formal process to waive out of state statute and rule. This process includes submitting a formal request and a rationale and replacement policy plan for any statutes that the school wishes to waive. PMT will send each school a Charter School Waiver Guidance Document that includes specific steps to take when selecting waivers and sample language for commonly requested waivers. PMT will also send a Charter School Waiver Addendum for schools to fill out that will then be added to the final version of each school's contract. For more information on the state waivers, visit the [Colorado Department of Education's Waiver Information and Automatic Waiver List](#).

### District Waivers for Charter Schools

In order to honor their autonomy, charter schools are permitted to waive many district policies. Some of these policies are automatically waived (Type I waivers), while others must be actively waived by the school (Type II and Type III waivers). In order to maintain equity between all DPS schools, there are also several non-waivable policies (e.g. policy AB on the School Performance Framework (SPF)).

All waivers must be approved by DPS legal staff and the DPS Board of Education. Schools must submit a replacement policy for each Type III district policy being waived during the time of contracting, while replacement policy for each Type II waiver must be kept on file at the school and available upon request. PMT will send each school a Charter School DPS Board Waiver Guidance document that includes the types of policies that are waivable, as well as policies that are not waivable. Schools will need to actively select the district policy waivers they would like to pursue.

Annually, PMT will update schools regarding any new DPS policies and their implications for charter school waivers. If the school seeks to add a Type II or III waiver at that time, they can through go a streamlined mid-cycle application process for that waiver, whether or not the school is eligible for renewal. If you are interested in seeking an additional district waiver after the charter contract is approved, please contact the [School Development Associate](#).

## Year Zero Governance Review

PMT believes that good governance practices are essential to a charter school's success, including in Year Zero. In this spirit, PMT strongly encourages first-time charter school operators to participate in a Year Zero Governance Review, in which PMT will observe at least one board meeting and review the board's governance documents (meeting minutes, board packets, rosters, etc.). PMT will request board meeting dates and rosters in early September and schedule the observation via the school's board chair. The purpose of the observation is to understand the practices the governance board is using as well as to deepen relationships between the board and PMT. PMT will provide feedback on this observation, if requested.

Additional governance supports available to new charter boards include an informal board interview with feedback (similar to that conducted during the charter renewal process), as well as providing peer learning opportunities with currently operating charter boards. For more information on Year Zero Governance Reviews, please contact the [School Development Associate](#).

# CHAPTER 3: YEAR ZERO SUPPORTS



Year Zero schools have access to a multitude of resources and supports both inside and outside the district. This chapter is intended to convey what is available from PMT’s School Development Team (STD) as well as from DPS and beyond.

## School Development Team Supports

PMT believes that a strong Year Zero sets new schools up for success, and so it has made supporting new schools during Year Zero an essential responsibility of the SDT along with their

Year Zero oversight responsibilities. As the primary contact for all things Year Zero, please do not hesitate to contact SDT with any questions or concerns.

SDT offers different levels of support for schools in Year Zero. These differentiated supports include optional Year Zero Check-Ins, regular communications and opportunities for thought partnership. SDT also seeks to support Year Zero schools by connecting them to key contacts and departments within DPS, as well as outside it.

| Name          | Title                        | Email Address  | Phone        |
|---------------|------------------------------|--|--------------|
| Angie McPhaul | Senior Manager, Authorizing  | <a href="mailto:Angie_Mcphaul@dpsk12.org">Angie_Mcphaul@dpsk12.org</a> | 720-423-2075 |
| Max Tweten    | School Development Associate | <a href="mailto:Max_Tweten@dpsk12.org">Max_Tweten@dpsk12.org</a>       | 720-423-3584 |

## Year Zero Check-ins

Throughout Year Zero, new school leaders will have the option to participate in Year Zero Check-ins that are intended to be a progress-monitoring tool to ensure Year Zero Schools are on-track to open well on day one. SDT will work closely with school leaders as thought-partners to help problem solve and provide guidance in various aspects related to Year Zero including, but not limited to, standard and school-specific conditions, enrollment and school operations. Year Zero Check-Ins also will be used as a tool to connect new school leaders to key district supports and departments.

- **Year Zero Check-In #1 (Week of August 5, 2019):** SDT introductory meetings with each Year Zero school, which includes a preview of the Year Zero timeline, contracting and the condition submission processes.
- **Year Zero Check-In #2 (Week of October 21, 2019):** SDT meets with Year Zero schools to answer questions about contract and waiver templates (depending on finalized timeline).
- **Year Zero Check-in #3 (Week of March 16, 2020):** SDT reviews enrollment and operational items with Year Zero schools.
- **Year Zero Check-in #4 (TBD – June 2020):** SDT introduces schools to Accountability Team and DPS supports, discusses next steps for Year 1.

## Communication

SDT will maintain regular contact with Year Zero school leaders, including through regular email updates, direct phone call, and the Year Zero Check-in meetings described above. SDT is always available to schedule additional meetings to support schools in Year Zero and will do its best to offer these supports within the confines of its authorizer role. In addition to this communication, Year Zero leaders should familiarize themselves with the [DPS resources](#) available to charter schools.

## DPS Supports

To support a successful school launch, Year Zero schools should begin developing relationships with key contacts and departments across DPS with whom they will be working once they are operational. Once a school opens, it receives support from specific DPS Charter Partners (including partners for ELA, Special Education and more). Until this time, Year Zero schools may work with different individuals within the district. DST offers support through connecting new school leaders to these contacts. For more information on individual departments as they relate to Year Zero, please refer to the [Operations](#) and [Student Support Services](#) chapters of this guidebook.

### Key DPS Contacts

| Department   | What can each department help with?   | Lead Contact (As of July 2019)                                  |
|--|---|---|
| <b>Student Equity and Opportunity (Special Education)</b>    | Whole Child Supports (SEL, ESEA Title Programs, nursing, social work and psychological services)<br>Exceptional Students (Special Education, Gifted and Talented, 504 accommodations, speech/language, occupational and physical therapy)<br>Other (ENRICH, Student Records and Medicaid) | <a href="#">Ingrid Wulczyn</a>                                  |
| <b>English Language Acquisition</b>                          | ELA Teacher Qualifications, Charter Teacher Training Channel, Consent Decree requirements, ELA program implementation and CH-ISA teams.   | <a href="#">Allison Ratchford</a>                               |
| <b>Finance</b>   | Charter school budgeting and finance questions.<br>Existing charter school networks should contact their current finance partner.   | <a href="#">Eric Adelman</a>                                    |
| <b>Federal Programs</b>                                      | Grants and fundraising, Title 1, Colorado Charter Schools Program (CCSP) Grant  | <a href="#">Ikaika Hill</a><br><a href="#">Eric Schneider</a>   |
| <b>SchoolChoice &amp; Enrollment</b>                         | SchoolChoice process, enrollment priorities   | <a href="#">Laurie Premer</a>                                   |
|  | DPS Enrollment Guide and SchoolFinder   | <a href="#">Timothy Walmer</a>                                  |
| <b>Charter Information Systems Support (CISS)</b>            | Systems access (Infinite Campus, Principal Portal, DPS Email access and Google accounts); technology requirements, ordering technology  | <a href="#">CISS</a>  |
| <b>Enterprise Management (Food &amp; Nutrition Services)</b> | DPS food service offerings, breakfast options and vending   | <a href="#">Theresa Hafner</a>                                  |
| <b>Accountability, Research, &amp; Evaluation (ARE)</b>      | SPF and charter school performance data   | <a href="#">Sophie Gullett</a>                                  |
| <b>Early Education</b>                                       | Program requirements, sliding-scale tuition, curriculum options, TS Gold, etc.  | <a href="#">Lisa Roy</a>  |
| <b>Safety</b>  | DPS officers, emergency training, crossing guards, fire drills, school emergency equipment, emergency planning and crisis management training.  | <a href="#">Michael Eaton</a><br><a href="#">Melissa Craven</a> |
| <b>Transportation</b>  | Transportation scheduling, services and routes available  | <a href="#">Tricia Fiut</a>                                     |
| <b>Athletics</b>   | DPS sports programs and extracurricular activities  | <a href="#">Karen Higel</a>                                     |

### The Commons

[The Commons](#) is the internal DPS website (intranet) and includes a department directory for other district departments that may not be captured above. Please [click here](#) to access The Commons Department Directory.

## DPS Resources

PMT believes that each school in the DPS family of schools deserves the right level of support and access to resources to help them succeed. In addition to DPS Charter Partners described above, PMT provides a number of resources to charter schools that acknowledge their autonomy while holding them accountable and encouraging collaboration between all DPS schools. These resources include the PMT website, a weekly e-newsletter Chalk Talk and the Comprehensive Calendar, through which charter school leaders stay informed on deadlines and DPS updates.

With a strong foundation and regular collaboration structures, DPS is proud to have one of the most collaborative district-charter relationships in the country. Charter school leaders stay involved in DPS policy and processes through meeting structures such as Charter Roundtable and Collaborative Council. See below for more information on these DPS resources.

### PMT on The Commons

School leaders should use [PMT's section of The Commons](#) as the starting point to access any needed resources. Under [Services for Charter Schools](#), you can find links to Charter Partner supports (including ELA, Finance, Special Education, etc.), Chalk Talk Archives, the Comprehensive Calendar and the Charter School Leader Guidebook. PMT maintains this site and updates it at regularly.

### Chalk Talk

Chalk Talk is a weekly email newsletter that informs charter school leaders of upcoming deadlines, meetings and trainings, as well as new policies and best practices. Chalk Talk also incorporates announcements from larger district communications (e.g. Leader Weekly) as they relate to charter schools. As a school leader, please disseminate relevant information to your staff as needed.

While this communication is specifically targeted toward school leadership, we are happy to include other members of your administrative staff to this distribution list. To request that someone be added to the Chalk Talk mailing list, email [portfolio@dpsk12.org](mailto:portfolio@dpsk12.org). Archives of Chalk Talk can be found [here](#).

### Comprehensive Calendar

In order to support charter schools, PMT has assembled a [comprehensive calendar](#) for charter leaders. We encourage you to refer back to it regularly. *Note: not every submission item will apply to schools operating in Year Zero, however it is important to become familiar with the calendar as there are a few important submissions whose deadlines are listed in the calendar.* We highlight key upcoming deadlines in each issue of Chalk Talk. The calendar:

- Serves as a resource for charter leaders when planning for the year
- Reflects key dates for submission deadlines, optional and mandatory trainings, and other relevant information
- Includes detailed sign-up and submissions instructions as well as relevant attachments
- Is regularly updated as new dates and events are scheduled
- Has been developed in collaboration with other departments

### Charter Roundtable

These are quarterly meetings for all charter school leaders to meet with the superintendent, PMT and other district leaders. These meetings often are an opportunity for the Collaborative Council (see below) to present policy recommendations to the broader charter community for input. It is also the opportunity for the charter community to hear directly from the superintendent on key issues. For more information, please contact [Elizabeth Stamberger](#), Associate Director of Ecosystem and School Support.

## Collaborative Council

This is a group of charter leaders (elected by their peers to be representatives of the broader charter community) and district senior leaders that meets regularly to discuss and develop policy recommendations that improve the way the district and charter schools work together, as well as improve the broader ecosystem in Denver. For more information, please contact [Elizabeth Stamberger](#).

## Supports Outside of DPS

The SDT encourages Year Zero charter schools to take advantage of supports outside of DPS.

### Colorado Department of Education Schools of Choice Office

[The Schools of Choice Office](#) at CDE offers resources and support for charter schools, schools and districts seeking innovation status and manages the [CCSP \(Colorado Charter School Program\) grant](#).<sup>3</sup> The Schools of Choice Office hosts [events and trainings](#) for school leaders and sends out a weekly newsletter that provides information on upcoming trainings, changes in legislation and policy updates.

### Colorado League of Charter Schools

[The Colorado League of Charter Schools](#) is a non-profit, membership organization dedicated to supporting charter schools in the state. The League offers a wide range of supports for developing charters, newly approved charter schools and existing charter schools. The League's Year Zero supports include: checklists, calendars, access to their job board, one-on-one meetings and events.

## Year Zero Project Management Plans

Throughout Year Zero, schools should operationalize the new school application approved by the DPS Board of Education and begin mapping out tasks to be completed prior to opening. In the pages to follow schools will find multiple sample project plans to help guide school leaders throughout the year. School leaders should develop a specific project management plan to ensure that every element described in the application is executed, while also considering DPS deadlines and conditions.

In previous years, successful new school leaders have used various planning tools to help guide Year Zero tasks that have ultimately led to a successful execution of the new school application. Listed below are several checklists and planning tools that new school leaders have used in the past.

### PMT Year Zero Start-Up Checklist

This suggested [checklist](#) is not exhaustive but it can be a helpful tool for school leaders to begin thinking through tasks that need to be completed in Year Zero. SDT encourages each school to develop a school-specific project management plan in addition to the Year Zero Checklist.

### Colorado League of Charter Schools Startup Plan

Developed by the Colorado League of Charter Schools, this [plan](#) can help new school developers plan from the beginning stages of application writing to post-authorization. See page 31 of the plan for Post-Authorization Startup Plan. Please note, deadlines listed in the chart may not align to district deadlines. Please refer to the Comprehensive Calendar at the end of this guidebook for correct dates.

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<sup>3</sup> CCSP provides sub-grants to qualified charter school developers for the planning phase and/or early years of implementation of new charter schools through the CCSP grant and assists new and existing charter schools within Colorado to support and improve their performance through coordinating and facilitating quality Technical Assistance.

# CHAPTER 4: CHARTER SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

While much of this guidebook is intended to provide process, requirements and logistical information for schools in Year Zero, this chapter is intended to provide information on “best practice” in charter school governance. Like all sections in this guidebook, it should not be considered comprehensive but as a possible starting point for new charter school governing boards during Year Zero. In addition to these and other resources, the new school application governance section should serve as a foundational document for further defining the school’s governance structure, SAC, and roles and responsibilities of its board members. Best practices are built based on PMT’s [School Quality Framework](#) and are not meant to be prescriptive or limit charter autonomy.

## Establishing a School Accountability Committee

As noted in the new school application and in state statute (C.R.S. 22-11-402), all schools must establish a School Accountability Committee (SAC). The SAC must include at least seven members (one principal; one teacher; three parents/guardians; one community member and one member of an organization representing parents, teachers and students). The role of the SAC is to recommend to the principal priorities for spending school monies, advise the principal on the school performance or improvement plan, increase the level of parent engagement in the school, and perform other duties as noted in C.R.S. 22-11-402. Charter schools are encouraged to set up systems and structures that support the SAC and provide insight into the school’s oversight.

For more information, please review the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) [District Accountability Handbook](#) as it relates to school accountability committees.

## Founding Board’s Roles and Responsibilities during Year Zero

The [Colorado Charter School Handbook](#) from CDE highlights the importance of the founding board during Year Zero and discusses the roles and responsibilities of a governing board, as well as board development, policy making and governance structures.

## Board Training

To support the board’s duties and responsibilities outlined in the resources provided, SDT recommends that charter school governing boards receive adequate training to successfully execute each responsibility during Year Zero. [CDE](#) offers a number of governance training modules for charter board members<sup>4</sup>, as does the [Colorado League of Charter Schools](#).

## Additional Resources for Governing Boards

New governing boards can refer to these resources linked below for more information on establishing and maintaining strong governance practices, understanding the principles of good governance and avoiding common pitfalls.

- [CSSI Strong Board Governance Standards](#)
- [Colorado Nonprofit Association Principles and Practices](#)
- [Starting Strong: Best Practices in Starting a Charter School](#)
- [CRPE Improving Charter Governing Boards](#)
- [National Institute of Charter Schools](#)

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<sup>4</sup> These modules are required for schools receiving start-up funds from CDE.

# CHAPTER 5: OPERATIONS IN YEAR ZERO

Year Zero schools must plan for an extensive level of operational items in the year prior to opening. Some of these items are directly tied to Year Zero conditions, such as securing a facility and meeting enrollment targets, while others are required for any operating school, such as determining food service and submitting start and ends bell times. This chapter is intended to convey [operational decisions](#) that schools must make during Year Zero, as well as context related to those decisions.

## Finance

PMT recognizes the importance of stable and secure finances in enabling the successful start-up and long-term viability of any school. To ensure this, charter schools in Year Zero are responsible for meeting standard finance conditions, meeting any school-specific finance conditions placed on the school at the time of approval and submitting draft and final budgets in May and June. For more information on financial conditions, refer to your Resolution Condition Guidance document. For more detailed information on charter school finance in general, please see the [Charter School Leader Guidebook](#).

During Year Zero, a member of the DPS Charter Finance team will contact you to obtain contact information for your business managers and to share next steps regarding the school's budget. If your school is applying for a start-up grant, this contact will occur in the fall.

### Funding in Year 1

All schools in DPS are funded in-part based upon their student enrollment: district-run schools through student-based budgeting (SBB) and charter schools through per-pupil revenue (PPR). This funding structure impacts how DPS provides funding payments to schools, for which Year Zero schools should prepare. Because total student enrollment cannot be determined until October Count, DPS uses [enrollment projections](#) provided by DPS' Department of Planning and Analysis to determine funding amounts to be paid to a school between July and December. Funding payments made between January and June are adjusted to true-up based on final October Count numbers. Schools with higher enrollment at October Count compared to projections will receive more funding, while schools with lower enrollment will receive less.

Because actual enrollment compared to projections can vary more for a new school, Year Zero schools whose enrollment is significantly above projections by mid-September (more than 10% higher) will receive funding payments between October and December adjusted to reflect the higher enrollment. Adjustments will not be made prior to the October payment. Year Zero schools should maintain regular communication with the Finance and Planning teams to ensure clarity on funding to expect in Year One.

### Financial Transparency Act

Per the Financial Transparency Act, all charter schools are required to post the following information in the following order on your charter school's financial transparency webpage:

- Charter School Adopted Budget – including Uniform Budget Summary (current and prior two years)
- Charter School Financial Audit (current and prior two years)
- Salary Schedules or Policies (current and prior two years)
- Individual School Site Financial Information from the Financial Data Pipeline file submitted by the district – charter schools should link to DPS' Financial Transparency Webpage for compliance

- List of waivers received by the charter school, including standardized description and rationale for each automatic waiver
- Federal form 990 and any associated schedules
- Other charter school-specific financial information
- Link to Public Transparency website view (link available on CDE’s web site)

The Financial Transparency Act does not apply until the contract between the district and the charter school is effective, typically July 1<sup>st</sup> of Year 1. Charter schools must comply with the above requirements no later than 60 days after the contract is effective, although encouraged to post as soon as possible.

For further information please visit the [Financial Transparency](#) page of the Colorado Department of Education’s School Finance Division. On these pages you will find additional resources, templates and information regarding financial transparency requirements. If you have further questions, please email [Adam Williams](#) at CDE.

## Facilities

Securing a viable facility should be a top priority during Year Zero. As part of its commitment to Equity of Opportunity, DPS makes district facilities available to all schools in its family of schools. If a charter school seeks to open in a district facility, it must participate in the facility placement process established by the [Facility Allocation Policy \(FAP\)](#). A charter school may also seek out a private facility.

### Facility Allocation Policy

DPS makes sure that the placement process is open and fair by using the FAP, which was adopted in 2015. This policy, which applies to both district-run and charter schools, sets clear criteria for the board to decide which schools best meet district priorities. The purpose of this approach is to ensure that priority needs are met by the best of all available providers. Just as important, the policy instructs the district to ensure that appropriate community engagement occurs to inform placement decisions. The FAP establishes expectations for the district to evaluate facility requests and advance recommendations to the DPS Board concerning the allocation of district facilities and other support that may be provided to meet facility needs for both new and existing schools regardless of governance type.

Schools will be notified of any available district facilities through the Call for New Quality Schools document which is typically released annually. Schools may then compete for placement in the district facility through a separate placement application process. *Note: District-run schools must be located in district facilities and are also subject to the FAP.*

### Facility Use Agreement

In the event that a charter school is located in a district facility the school must sign a Facility Use Agreement (FUA). The FUA terms are typically aligned with the charter contract term unless noted elsewhere. The FUA will include a facility use fee and describe the facility use fee payment procedure. The FUA also outlines all other compliance related items related to occupying the facility (e.g. insurance, repairs, covenants, etc.).

### Shared Campus Agreement

In the event that a charter school shares a DPS facility with other schools (district-run or charter), all schools in question, regardless of governance type, must sign a [Shared Campus Agreement](#). The district will initiate these conversations with Year Zero schools once a school is approved and placed on a shared campus.

## Opening in a Private Facility

A charter school that determines to open in a private facility should consider several factors including:

- location relative to the target student population,
- cost relative to that projected in the original application (schools must submit a revised budget in the event the final facility is more expensive),
- scope and cost of construction to bring the facility up to code, and
- notification as to whether the facility will be a permanent or temporary location for the school.

When looking for a facility, charter schools should consider what will be required to ensure the building is appropriate for serving E-12<sup>th</sup> graders as defined for Educational Occupancy. Educational Occupancy (E-Occupancy) is a set of requirements governed by International Building Code that considers ADA accessibility, fire code, HVAC requirements and other important features of a building being used as a school. A charter school opening in a private facility must be designated for E-Occupancy, and the school must provide a Certificate of Occupancy demonstrating this by July 1 of its opening year.

For additional information and support with identifying a possible private facility, please consult the [Charter School Facilities Selection Guide](#). Once a charter school determines its final location and notifies the School Development Team, the school will be expected to provide regular updates on the progress of preparing the facility for students.

## Transportation

During Year Zero, schools should begin executing their transportation plans as outlined in their original application. Also as part of its commitment to Equity of Opportunity for its family of schools, DPS provides charter schools with fee-for-service access to offerings from DPS Transportation Services. For schools seeking to utilize DPS Transportation Services, this section will aid school leaders in understanding the service offerings and assist school leaders in operational planning. Schools operating in an enrollment zone may be required to participate in DPS transportation.

### Planning Process Support

As you go through your planning process, Transportation Services is happy to partner with you in the early stages to help guide you on the services and availability options. The point of contact throughout this process is [Tricia Fiut](#).

Below are a set of helpful resources for school leaders to navigate all of the services offered by Transportation Services. As a new school, you will be required to work with Transportation Services regarding [submitting a bell time request](#). The submission period is January/February of the current school year. ***Submitting a bell time request does not guarantee Transportation Services' approval.***

- [DPS Transportation Services Website](#)
- [Menu of transportation services offered](#)
- [DPS RTD Pass Program](#) (Contact [Sherri Jones](#) with questions about RTD Passes and Eligibility)
- [Board Policy EEA](#)
- [Special Education](#)
- [English Language Acquisition](#)

## Enrollment

DPS and its charter school partners together are leaders in advancing equity of responsibility and access – we share a deep commitment to ensuring all students have access to all of the members of our family of schools. Enrollment is a critical part of Year Zero; it is the foundation of the school’s budget given the per-pupil revenue (PPR) financial structure that charter schools use. This section outlines key information for Year Zero schools to know in relation to their enrollment.

### Enrollment Projections

Each December, DPS releases upcoming year enrollment projections for each school in the district. These projections are based on both school and district enrollment trends, as well as building capacity. Enrollment projections are significant because they are used to determine funding payments made to a school between July and December, as discussed in the [Finance](#) section of this guidebook. Schools are asked in December to review their enrollment projections for the following year and provide any feedback prior to them being finalized.

Although DPS funds Year Zero schools based upon enrollment projections, Year Zero schools are held accountable to meeting enrollment targets based upon the enrollment listed in their original applications, *not these projections*. For more information on your school’s enrollment conditions, please see your school’s Resolution Condition Guidance document.

When considering enrollment and enrollment projections, the [DPS Department of Planning and Analysis](#) is a key contact for Year Zero Leaders. This department calculates enrollment projections for future school years, projects student demographics and provides data analysis for the district.

### Enrollment Guides and School Finder

DPS uses two primary tools to provide families with information on all DPS schools and help them navigate through the SchoolChoice process: the [Enrollment Guide](#) and [School Finder](#). During the fall of Year Zero, schools will be asked to submit information for the Enrollment Guide by a member of the DPS Communications Team. Publishing your school’s profile in the Enrollment Guide does not require a final location, although having this information will be beneficial for families. For more information on the Enrollment Guide, please contact [Tim Walmer](#).

School Finder (operated by SchoolMint) is the new online, mobile-friendly, school-search tool for DPS families. Families can enter the school features that are important to them and get a list of matching schools that are ranked by how closely each school meets desired criteria. Families can also search by address or simply by using an alphabetical list. Having an active School Finder profile is integral to any school’s recruitment strategy.

To develop and launch a School Finder profile, a school must first have a final address. Once your school has determined its location, contact [Max Tweten](#) with PMT to begin the process of developing your School Finder profile. Once initiated, it will take up to two weeks to launch your school profile.

### SchoolChoice Process and Recruitment

[SchoolChoice](#) is the process families use to enroll their students in DPS. It occurs over the course of two SchoolChoice rounds. For the 2020-2021 school year, the proposed dates for Round 1 are January 15 – February 18, 2020. Dates for Round 2 are April 6 - August 28, 2020 for grades K-12, and through April 2021 for ECE. [Round 1](#) operates by lottery, while Round 2 operates on a first-come, first-served basis within established priority groups from Round 1 (more about priorities [here](#)). The SchoolChoice process streamlines enrollment for all families, providing greater equity of access. This includes a single online

choice form (through SchoolMint), as well as seats set aside for students who do not have the opportunity to participate in SchoolChoice.

As part of the SchoolChoice process, Year Zero schools can participate in enrollment expos and other district-sponsored enrollment efforts. In addition to these events, Year Zero schools that wish to engage in direct outreach may obtain student contact lists from DPS Communication Services by following these [instructions](#) (schools must first obtain DPS credentials from the [Charter Information Systems Support \(CISS\) Team](#)).

To help reach enrollment targets, schools should begin enrollment and recruitment efforts as early as possible. It is also important that the choice process remains a positive experience for families. To ensure this, DPS asks that schools wait to begin recruitment until the fall after SchoolChoice Round 2 of the year prior has concluded and that they focus their efforts on transition grade students (i.e. incoming kinder, 6th and 9th graders). For SchoolChoice Round 2, schools must follow DPS' [established guidelines](#) for recruiting and marketing. Before beginning outreach, please contact the [School Development Associate](#) to learn of any additional guidelines for recruitment during SchoolChoice Round 1.

## Food and Nutrition

Charter schools can choose to purchase food services offered by DPS or an outside, third-party provider. All Year Zero schools should begin thinking about how they will provide meals to their students early in their planning processes. Typically in April, schools will be asked to notify [Enterprise Management \(Food and Nutrition Services\)](#) if they intend to receive food services from the district.

If you choose to purchase food services through DPS, DPS will provide free and reduced-price meals to qualifying students in a manner determined by DPS and in accordance with the school's Board policy and applicable federal and state law. Please note, all schools are responsible for the unpaid student meal balances at the end of each school year.

Year Zero schools should reach out to [Theresa Hafner](#) for additional information on food services within DPS (including [cost](#)).

## Free and Reduced Meal Information

[The NSLP \(National School Lunch Program\)](#) provides per meal cash reimbursements to qualifying School Food Authorities such as DPS for qualifying school meals taken by children. This means that all eligible schools may participate and all children attending those schools may participate.

All public schools, including charter schools, can participate in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs. Among other factors, household income and family size determines whether students receive free meals, reduced price meals or "paid" meals, for which students pay most of the cost. For schools participating in the School Breakfast Program, DPS provides all qualifying breakfasts to students for free.

## Safety

All schools should begin to further develop their emergency management plans during Year Zero. The information provided below will support in this process.

## Emergency Management

DPS' [Emergency Management](#) Division maintains, develops and integrates training for DPS employees and students. These efforts include school drills and departmental and district-wide trainings. DPS

follows standards established by federal and state law. The organizational structure for emergency management within DPS also aligns with those principles outlined by the National Incident Management System (NIMS).

In order to ensure this standard is met, Emergency Management Training is required for all school emergency teams (School E-Teams) annually. School E-Teams consist of the school administrator, assigned team members and their alternates.

In order to ensure the [safety](#) of all students and staff, the following is required of all schools, including charter schools:

- Complete and submit a [school emergency plan](#) to Emergency Management within the first two weeks of school. This information is vital to a crisis response as well as communication. If a school would like assistance in completing its plan, contact the Emergency Management Division at 720-424-1916 or email [Melissa Craven](#).
- School emergency team members must complete an annual [online training](#) on Emergency Preparedness.
- All new schools or schools with a new principal/administrator are required to attend a two-hour classroom session by October 1 (in addition to completing the above online training).
- All new schools will also need to attend a one-hour face-to-face teacher training. For more information or to schedule trainings please contact the Emergency Management Division.
- Lockdown drills are required at each school within the first 30 days of each semester and will be scheduled by the Emergency Management Division.
- Charter secondary schools on shared campuses are required to contribute to the cost of the Campus Security Officers.
- Refer to the [Comprehensive Calendar](#) for all emergency preparedness dates (listed for Safety and Emergency Management departments). These deadlines apply once a school is operational.

## Translation and Interpretation

As part of Equity of Responsibility and Access, DPS schools must provide information that is accessible to all families, regardless of home language. Year Zero schools should translate all essential information for families during Year Zero and beyond. DPS offers translation and interpretation services for charter schools at a fee as described below.

### Required Translations

Schools are required to translate essential information into the following languages:

- Amharic
- Arabic
- Burmese
- Nepali
- Russian
- Somali
- Spanish
- Vietnamese

Essential information includes, but is not limited to:

- Parent-Student Policy Handbook
- Information about matters arising under IDEA or Section 504
- Documents related to the ELA Program (e.g., screening procedures, HLQ, program opt-out options)

- Information related to public health and safety (e.g., vaccination requirements and emergency protocols)
- Any other written information that will be provided to non-LEP (Limited English Proficiency) parents describing the rights and responsibilities of parents or students and the benefits and services available to parents and students (e.g., information about the disciplinary process, information regarding free- and reduced-price lunch, access to student records, graduation requirements and post-secondary readiness and financial aid information).
- Documents containing “school-specific essential information” including but not limited to:
  - Standards-Based Progress Reports and other academic progress reports, including reports related to the READ Act.
  - Announcements that contain information about school programs and activities for which notice is needed to participate or for which parent permission is required (e.g., advanced and Gifted and Talented opportunities and prerequisites, remedial or tutoring options, field trips and school performances)
  - Disciplinary notices

### Required Interpretation

When a charter or district employee(s) communicate(s) with *LEP parents* orally regarding essential information, the communication shall be by means of a *qualified interpreter* in a language the parent understands. With respect to non-essential information, the charter school shall provide written translation or oral interpretation upon receiving reasonable, specific parental requests.

### Requesting Language Services

DPS charter schools are eligible to request language services from DPS on a fee-for-service basis or use an alternate translation service. The following information outlines the District Language Services process.

- All services, except Special Education related requests, are rendered on fee-for-service basis.
  - Translation costs vary depending on language and number of words.
    - Spanish: \$190/1,000 words
    - Other languages: \$200 to \$310/1,000 words
    - A minimum fee of \$60 applies for small projects
- Interpretation service costs vary based on language:
  - Spanish: \$38.00 per hour (1.5 hour minimum)
  - Other languages: \$45 to \$90.00 an hour (2 hour minimum).
- Special Education related requests such as Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) are free in any language.
- All charter requests require pre-approval and must be quoted by the Translation department manager or coordinator.
- Please read the [guidelines](#) before submitting an [interpretation or translation request](#).

If you have additional questions, please contact [translation@dpsk12.org](mailto:translation@dpsk12.org) or call 720.423.3767.

## Technology and Human Resources

At DPS, technology support is provided by the Department of Technology Services (DoTS). Since charter schools are responsible for managing their own technology but also need DPS systems access, the Charter Information Systems Support (CISS) team exists to [provide support, training and service](#) to all

charter schools as needed. CISS should be a charter school’s first contact for issues related to any of the services listed below.

## Charter Information Systems Support (CISS)

Upon opening, your school will be provided with a CISS support partner. This partner is available to provide:

- [DPS system access](#) (i.e. DPS email, DPS Google accounts, etc.) to your staff and students,
- Infinite Campus (IC) administration support,
- Training and support for IC and the DPS human resource data platform (Infor HR),
- Portal support (i.e. Office Professional Portal, Parent/Student Portal and Principal Portal)
- Supports for state and federal submissions, and
- Other, backend technical support as needed.

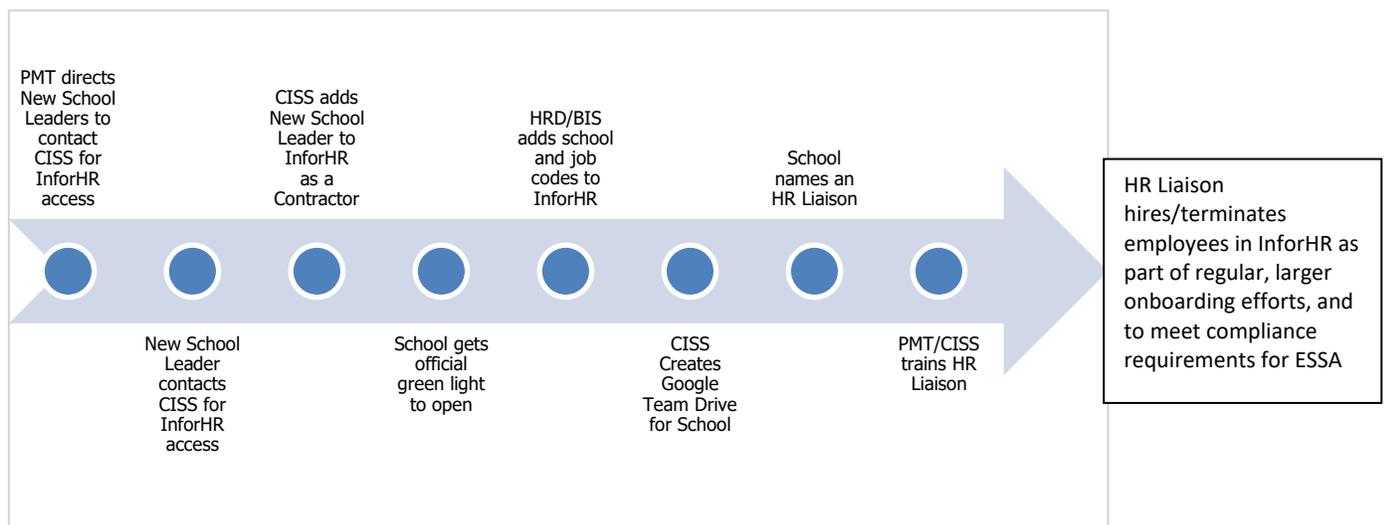
During Year Zero, you will need to contact CISS to gain access to your DPS login credentials (including DPS email and Google account), as well as to access your Infor HR account for human resource data. To do this, please contact [CISS](#) directly.

## Infor HR

The purpose of Infor HR is to capture charter school employee data that is used in reporting information to CDE as part of the Teacher Student Data Link, Special Education December Count and Human Resources Submissions, as well as to request DPS systems access for educators (e.g., IC, ENRICH, etc.). To ensure the integrity of DPS HR data, your school will receive full access to Infor HR once it satisfies its enrollment condition(s). To expedite the process of inputting employees into the system once your account becomes fully active, please ensure you collect education info for each teacher, as well as official copies of their transcripts when you collect other hiring data. Once your Infor HR account is active, you will need to name an HR Liaison, who will then be trained on the Infor HR system by a member of the CISS or Portfolio Management Team. See Figure 1 below for more details.

For more information on Human Resources and the Infor HR system, see the [Charter School Leader Guidebook](#) and the [Charter School HR Liaison Guidebook](#).

**Figure 1: Gaining access to your Infor HR account**



*\*For all new school employees hired before a school has satisfied all its approval conditions, CISS can add them to InforHR as Contractors. Once your school is created in InforHR, HR liaisons will need to **transfer** those employees from Contract status to Employee status.*

## **Conducting Employee Background Checks**

As per the charter contract,

*“The School agrees to obtain and retain copies of background checks for all employees, which must be procured through the submittal of fingerprints. The School shall give notice to the District of any employee it finds who has a prior conviction of a felony and of any employee who is convicted of a felony during the term of an employee’s employment. The District may conduct background checks of School employees as it deems necessary for the health and safety of students. The School may request that the District provide fingerprinting services to assist with conducting personnel background checks, as well as drug-screening services, should the School desire such services. Such services would be provided to the School at cost, per terms agreed to by the School and District.”*

Charter schools must establish an account with the Colorado Bureau of Investigation (CBI), who will process and provide employee background checks from fingerprints submitted through:

- CBI-approved vendors; or
- Paid services offered by DPS.

### **Process for Obtaining and Maintaining Employee Background Checks**

1. Each school must set up an [individual CBI account](#) so that background check reports and alerts are communicated directly to the school.
2. Once a CBI account has been established, the school should determine whether to utilize fingerprinting services provided by a [CBI-approved vendor](#) or the DPS Department of Safety.
  - a. **Fingerprinting through a CBI-approved vendor:** Follow instructions provided in the [CBI New Account Packet](#).
  - b. **Fingerprinting through the DPS Department of Safety:** Contact the [School Development Associate](#) or [portfolio@dpsk12.org](mailto:portfolio@dpsk12.org) and provide the school’s CBI account number. Portfolio will coordinate with the Department of Safety to link the account to DPS’ fingerprinting equipment. See below for specific steps to be taken for each employee getting fingerprinted by DPS.
3. All new employees must receive background checks, including new across sector (e.g., DPS employees switching to work at a charter school).
4. Schools must obtain and retain up-to-date records of the employee background checks that resulted from the fingerprinting process.

### **DPS Fingerprinting:**

- New hires must complete the [Request for Criminal History Form](#) and the [Charter Fingerprint Authorization Form](#).
- New hires must bring forms to DPS Department of Safety office (1860 Lincoln Street, 1<sup>st</sup> floor, behind security desk). As walk-in appointments, these individuals will have to wait for the next

available opening to be fingerprinted. To schedule fingerprinting appointments, email [Kyle\\_Roper@dpsk12.org](mailto:Kyle_Roper@dpsk12.org).

- Cost to school: \$39.50 per background check (includes fingerprinting), invoiced to school monthly
- Once fingerprinting and background checks have been processed, schools will receive a basic CBI record through their CBI account.

## Assessments

There are a number of assessments required by state law, each with specific testing windows. Year Zero schools should begin to plan their school calendars accordingly. [DPS' Accountability, Research and Evaluation Division \(ARE\)](#) will ask Year Zero schools to designate Site Assessment Leaders (SAL) during the summer prior to opening. A primary and secondary SAL for each assessment should be identified. [Click here](#) to view SAL responsibilities.

| Assessment  | Grade/Subject   | Testing Window   |
|---|---|--|
| <b>Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS) –English Language Arts &amp; Math</b> | Grades 3-8  | Please refer to the <a href="#">Assessment Calendar</a> for the most up to date testing windows. |
| <b>Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS) – Science and Social Studies</b>      | Grades 5, 8, and 11 – Science<br>Grades 4, 7, and 11 – Social Studies   |  |
| <b>PSAT</b>   | Grade 9 & 10 –Evidenced Based Reading, Writing and Language, and Math   |  |
| <b>SAT</b>  | Grade 11 – Evidenced Based Reading, Writing and Language, and Math  |  |
| <b>WIDA ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT)</b>   | Grades K – Reading, Writing Speaking and Listening  |  |
| <b>WIDA Screener</b>  | Grades 1-12 – Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening<br><br>(Students identified as having a language other than English spoke at home)   |  |
| <b>ACCESS for ELLs</b>  | Grades K-12 – Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening  |  |
| <b>READ Act Assessment</b>  | All K-3 – Reading (Must use an approved assessment)<br><br>Students in the READ cohort (4th grade and up) must also be assessed during each READ window. However, they do not need to use an approved assessment in those upper grades. |  |
| <b>School Readiness Assessment</b>  | ECE-K<br><br>(All DPS schools use <a href="#">TS Gold</a> )   |  |
| <b>CoAlt:DLM English Language Arts and Math</b>                                       | Grades 3-11 – English Language Arts & Math<br><br>(Students identified as eligible based on severe cognitive disabilities)  |  |
| <b>CoAlt Science and Social Studies</b>   | Grades 5, 8, and 11 – Science<br>Grades 4, 7, and 11 – Social Studies   |  |

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
|  | (Students identified as eligible based on severe cognitive disabilities)                              |  |
| <b>National Assessment of Educational Progress</b> | Grades 4, 8, and 12 – Reading & Math<br><br>(Schools identified by U.S. Department of Education only) |  |

**Technology Readiness**

Year Zero schools should also plan technology purchases given the specific testing requirements and assessment compatibility. Please reach out to the [DPS Accountability, Research & Evaluation](#) Division to find out the most up-to-date assessment information, SAL designation and training and technology readiness. For additional information on Technology Readiness please contact the [Manager of Assessment Administration](#).

**School Performance Framework**

To advance our shared commitment to Equity of Accountability, DPS has developed the [School Performance Framework \(SPF\)](#). The SPF is like a report card for schools, and measures many important aspects of what we know makes a great school – such as how satisfied students and parents are, how much students have improved their scores on state tests from year to year and how well the school serves and challenges all of its students. The SPF, comprised of individual measures worth varying amounts of points, is the common tool to which every school is held accountable. Depending on program type and grade levels served, a school is measured on one of three framework types: Traditional, Early Ed, and Alternative. Additional information on the SPF and DPS data can be found on the [SPF website](#) or the [DPS SPF Info Hub](#) (you will need your DPS Google account credentials to log in).

# CHAPTER 6: STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES IN YEAR ZERO

DPS is a diverse district. Seventy-seven percent of its students are students of color, more than one-third of its students are English Language Learners (ELLs), and over eleven percent of students have a disability. All bring unique, valuable perspectives and experiences to its classrooms. It is every DPS educator's responsibility to support the development of each child's unique assets and to provide targeted supports that will help all students achieve their potential. Year Zero schools must continue to plan for how they will serve these historically under-served populations, including students with disabilities and English Language Learners. This chapter is intended to convey information and resources for schools to take into account during this planning process.

## English Language Acquisition

There are specific requirements all Year Zero schools must meet in order to be in compliance with the Consent Decree. All Year Zero schools should identify a qualified ELA Administrator, begin developing ELA resources, planning for the English Language Development (ELD) block and planning for the Charter ELA Teacher Qualification program.

### Consent Decree

In April 2013, DPS began implementing a Modified Consent Decree with the guide of improving English Language Learner (ELL) instruction to better serve Denver's students. The Federal District Court's approval and entering of the Consent Decree, which reflects updates to the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974 and the English-Language Acquisition (ELA) Court Order, will support DPS's commitment to continue to implement the strategies it has developed to improve its English Language Acquisition (ELA) program and meet updated requirements set forth by the U.S. District Court.

Chapter 8 of the Consent Decree applies to DPS' charter schools.

- A. The District shall ensure that all District schools, including charter schools, take appropriate action to overcome language barriers that impede meaningful and equal participation by all students enrolled in the District's instructional programs. To that end, the ELA Department shall work collaboratively with the District's Office of School Reform and Innovation<sup>5</sup> to monitor the identification of, services for, and assessment of ELLs enrolled at District charter schools. The offices also shall work collaboratively to ensure that the District makes educational alternatives available to all ELLs, without regard to language proficiency level, by, among other things, providing notice of such alternatives to LEP parents in their native language. To the extent a charter school fails to meet its legal obligation to provide meaningful and appropriate language acquisition services, the District shall take steps to remedy the charter school's ELA program deficiencies within a reasonable period of time.
- B. The District shall require all charter schools offering ELA services to identify a school administrator, or an administrator-designee, with ELA expertise to provide oversight and evaluate the effectiveness of ELA services provided by the school.

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<sup>5</sup> Now the Portfolio Management Team.

- C. The District shall not approve an application for a new or renewed charter that fails to propose an ELA Program reasonably designed to enable the District’s ELLs to overcome their language barriers in a reasonable period of time so that they can meaningfully and equally participate in the educational programs offered by the school.

In addition to chapter 8 of the Consent Decree, DPS charter schools are responsible for fulfilling federal and state regulations, as well as the ELA requirements of the Charter Contract, to provide students with the English language skills they need to meaningfully and equally participate in mainstream English learning instructional programs.

### **ELA Handbook for Charter Schools**

All Year Zero schools should thoroughly read the [ELA Handbook for Charter Schools](#), which is designed primarily for Charter ELA Administrators. The ELA Handbook for Charter Schools provides information and guidance on:

- ELA Compliance
- ELA Teacher Qualification Program
- ELA Instruction and Programming
- ELA Support for ELLs

If you are seeking more information about ELA or a specific ELA programming model, please contact [Allison Ratchford](#).

### **English Language Development (ELD) Instruction**

Year Zero schools must begin to develop the school’s ELD Instruction and programming based on what was written in their new school application.

In compliance with the Consent Decree and the Charter Contract, all charters are mandated to offer a daily English Language Development block for ELLs of at least 45 minutes. The key components of an ELD Lesson are:

- Language objective
- Link to background knowledge
- Explicit and direct instruction of the language
- Opportunities for students to rehearse, practice and/or apply the language through multiple domains (speaking, listening, reading, and writing)

### **ELA Teacher and Administrator Certification**

Year Zero schools should plan to develop the school’s strategy to have all of their teachers ELA certified within the aforementioned timeline. This plan is due every May for the following school year and fulfills one of the standard ELA conditions for Year Zero schools. For more information on this condition, please see your school’s condition guidance document.

As per the Charter Contract, teachers at charter schools must meet ELA teacher qualifications in one of the three ways described in the 2012 Consent Decree:

- State endorsement (LDE/CLD)
- Advanced degree (LDE/CLD)

- Approved district ELA training program (District training or Charter ELA Teacher Qualification program)

Teachers must complete their ELA certification within *two (2) full school years* from their date of hire into the district/DPS charter school (teachers hired in August or September will have until the completion of the subsequent school year to complete their certification).

Year Zero schools should also ensure they have a qualified ELA administrator by the time of opening. According to Chapter 8 of the Consent Decree, ELA administrators *must* have ELA expertise to provide oversight and evaluate the effectiveness of ELA services provided by the school. Starting the 2018-19 school year, any new ELA administrators will need ELA Expertise as defined above for teachers or by participating and successfully passing the Admin Cohort.

If you are seeking more information about ELA Teacher or Administrator Certification, please contact [Tanis Humes](#).

### Charter Instructional Services Advisory Team (CH-ISA)

Year Zero schools should plan to develop the school’s CH-ISA team and determine who will serve on that team.

CH-ISA Teams are school-based teams that consist of three members (ELA Administrators + two additional members<sup>6</sup>) and have specific roles and responsibilities that are grounded in federal and district requirements. For more information, please consult the [ISA Handbook](#), which is written for district-run schools but applies the same to charter schools.

| CH-ISA Team Roles            | CH-ISA Team Responsibilities   |
|------------------------------|--|
| <b>Student Advocacy</b>      | The CH-ISA Team advocates for students at their school by ensuring correct identification and placement in program services as well as monitoring on-going academic progress to guarantee that students are receiving appropriate instruction.                               |
| <b>ELA Site Coordination</b> | The CH-ISA Team ensures the timely completion of required forms for each stage of the ELA Lifecycle.   |
| <b>Data Team</b>             | The CH-ISA Team is the primary decision-making body for English Learners at a school site. The team utilizes formal and informal data to gauge English language proficiency as well as academic performance to make appropriate decisions with respect to program placement. |
| <b>Communications</b>        | The CH-ISA Team is responsible for communicating with site staff as well as student families regarding student language proficiency, academic progress and program placement/designation.  |

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<sup>6</sup> It is recommended that the two additional members of the CH-ISA team have experience with ELA.

## Special Education

All DPS schools are required to comply with federal and state regulations (IDEA and ECEA) regarding services for students with disabilities. Schools in Year Zero should begin creating plans for providing high-quality services for a mild/moderate population in alignment with their charter contract. If the contract commits to opening a center program, planning for that program will be a key part of Year Zero.

Once a Year Zero school hires its special education staff, those staff should begin preparing to receive and serve those students possessing an IEP or 504 Plan. The case manager for the school should begin to have access to those documents through the DPS online platform. For more information about Special Education in charter schools, including accessing incoming students' IEPs, please contact [Ingrid Wulczyn](#), Senior Manager for Special Education, Charter Schools.

## Specialized Service Providers

In accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), any Specialized Student Service Providers (SSPs) schools employ are required to meet child find obligations, perform educational disability identification, and provide services that meet minutes requirements for student's Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and/or 504s.

Schools in DPS, both district-run and charter, may choose to have School Psychologist, Social Worker, and Nurse (P/S/N) services provided by DPS Student Equity and Opportunity, or may choose to hire their own providers.

Typically in February, charter schools will receive a request from their Finance Partner to select the number of days of P/S/N services to purchase. Charter schools that choose to find their own provider(s) must notify the appropriate [DPS charter partner](#) and provide the necessary proof of qualifications for outside providers by a set deadline, typically in March. If a school does not supply the name of their direct hired providers by the deadline, DPS may assume responsibility for the current vacancies by assigning an SSP to the school. Prior to the start of the school year, charter schools will receive notification of their assigned P/S/N providers, who will officially begin working with those schools when the new SSP contract year begins in August.

Costs for each day of DPS P/S/N services for the 2019-2020 school year are as follows:

- Psychologist: \$19,499/day
- Social Worker: \$17,927/day
- Nurse: \$16,858/day

**Please note, all schools must have a School Psychologist for a minimum of one day per week for 504 and special education IEP development and compliance. One day of nursing services is also required, though at least two days is recommended. When determining support levels, take into consideration the staffing levels recommended in the [Budget Guidance Manual](#).**

Occupational Therapist, Physical Therapist, and Speech Language Pathologist services are provided to charter schools through district-hired staff as identified through IEPs. Their services are paid for through the charter special education fee. Schools wishing to employ their own OTs/PTs/SLPs should contact the Portfolio Management Team.

For additional information on recommended staffing levels for SSPs, as well as services to expect based on the number of P/S/N days purchased from the district, see the 2019-2020 Budget Guidance Manual. For any questions relating to P/S/N staffing levels and services, please contact [Tom O'Keefe](#).

## Gifted and Talented

Every charter school is required to designate a Gifted and Talented (GT) Point of Contact, who should be designated prior to a Year Zero school opening. The GT Point of Contact is responsible for not only the compliance elements of gifted and talented identification but also the programming. This includes (but is not limited to):

- Writing a programming plan that identifies the GT services and supports at the school
- Coordinating (and possibly administering) high-stakes testing
  - NNAT 3 universal assessment in grades K, 2, and 6 (depending on grades in school)
  - CogAT testing for students who have applied for magnet site testing
- Distributing results of high-stakes testing to appropriate stakeholders
- Collecting body of evidence for students at the school toward identification
- Working towards identification of a representative percent of the school (top 10% reflective of school demographics)
- Identifying students for talent development as part of the talent pool (students that do not meet the criteria for identification but could use some additional programming support)
- Collaborating with formally identified students, families and their teachers to write an Advanced Learning Plan (ALP) including standards based, measurable smart goals in academic and affective areas
- Progress monitoring the identified and talent pool students; end of year close out
- Sharing programs, events and offerings with families each month
- Building capacity at the school to provide appropriate level programming
- Partnering with the district-level GT department Charter Coordinator

The full role including timelines, deadlines, and supporting documents can be found in the [GT Teacher/Point of Contact Manual](#). For more information on GT programming and requirements, see the GT section of [The Commons](#).

## Discipline

Year Zero schools should begin further developing documents that outline the school's procedures related to discipline, such as school handbook or discipline plan. Please contact [Lisa Pisciotta](#), Program Manager for Equity in Discipline, for support in developing these documents. Schools considering waivers to DPS policies JK and JK-R should contact the [School Development Associate](#).

### Documenting Student Discipline Incidents

All schools are required to document student discipline incidents and behavior interventions in Infinite Campus (IC) for Type Two through Six offenses on an ongoing, real-time basis. The IC documentation is incorporated into the district-wide discipline and attendance data that is submitted to the Colorado

Department of Education (CDE) at the end of each school year. Compliance is essential. DPS staff will monitor data entry throughout the year and contact schools if any errors or concerns are identified.

## Student Discipline Policy

Charter schools are required by contract to comply with [DPS Board Policy JK – Student Discipline](#) and Policy JK-R – Student Conduct and Discipline Procedures, including criteria for suspension and expulsion, unless the school has an approved waiver. All expulsion decisions are made by DPS in alignment with these policies.

## Disproportionality

DPS' priority is to eliminate disproportionality in discipline incidents resulting in out-of-school suspensions for students of color and students with disabilities. DPS has an out-of-school suspension rate goal of 0-3% for all students – white students, students of color and students with disabilities. Schools are encouraged to frequently monitor their discipline data in Principal Portal. Principal Portal provides a daily update of a variety of student discipline analytics, allowing school leaders the opportunity to closely monitor their data.

## Restorative Practices

All charter schools are obligated to follow the DPS discipline policy JK-R, unless the school has an approved waiver. In addition, schools are encouraged to seek out restorative practices to address discipline incidents rather than using a disciplinary consequence.

Restorative Practices (RP), a school climate and culture framework, uses inquiry-based and relationship-focused strategies to strengthen community, acknowledge and repair harm caused by one's actions, and build conflict-resolution skills. Rather than punishment of wrongdoers, RP focuses on creating an opportunity for both parties to share their perspective, acknowledge the role they played in a conflict and identify next steps for repairing any harm caused to the relationship or the larger community. RP also focuses on intentional planning for reintegration into communities after harm has been caused.

## Discipline Resources for Charter Schools

Charter schools have access to the following DPS professional learning and school-level resources:

- Discipline Building Leader (DBL) Induction
- Discipline Building Leader (DBL) Monthly Meeting
- Shoulder-to-Shoulder Personalized School Sessions
- Type One Intervention Trainings
- Discipline Data Reports
- School Re-set Supports
- Culturally Responsive De-escalation Training
- Restorative Practice Trainings
- Trauma Informed Training

*Note: The Student Equity and Opportunity (SEO) department oversees many of DPS' student services (including Special Education, Whole Child Supports, 504 accommodations, mental health, social work, school nurses, Gifted Education, Title programs and more. For charter schools, these services are primarily provided by charter-specific SEO partners. For more information about SEO, please visit their [Commons Page](#).*

# CHAPTER 7: YEAR ONE AND BEYOND

Once your school opens its doors, support and oversight of your school will transition from the SDT to other members of PMT. In your first year of operation there will be some required interactions, including a site visit and board observation in February, as well as the opportunity to take part in several optional supports. In future years, the types of support and monitoring will be dependent largely on performance. To learn more about operating a charter school in year one and beyond, see the [Charter School Leader Guidebook](#).<sup>7</sup>

The charter school contract will expire at the end of your fourth year of operation; the contract renewal process will kick off in the spring of your third year of operation and conclude in the fall of year four of operation. Contract renewal decisions are made by the DPS Board of Education and based largely on student performance data, as well as indicators of organizational health.

## Closing Remarks

PMT is committed to ensuring a strong partnership between DPS and its Year Zero schools. This guidebook will continue to be revised periodically to maximize communication of new DPS policies, systems and structures. Additional information can also be found on our [website](#). We encourage school leaders to provide us with feedback on our systems and processes. For any questions, concerns, or feedback about this guidebook, please contact the [School Development Team](#).

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<sup>7</sup> PMT updates the Charter School Leader Guidebook annually. To find the most up-to-date version, visit the [Resources and Communication](#) page of the PMT Commons website.