



2019 NEW SCHOOL APPLICATION RECOMMENDATION REPORT FOR: CASCADE: MIDWAY

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Report Submitted By

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INTRODUCTION

The Washington State Charter School Commission (Commission) was created in 2013, after the approval of Initiative 1240 and subsequent passage of Engrossed Second Substitute Senate Bill 6194, to serve as a statewide charter school authorizer. The eleven-member Commission is tasked with running a process to approve new charter schools, and effectively monitoring the schools it authorizes through ongoing oversight.

Mission

To authorize high quality public charter schools and provide effective oversight and transparent accountability to improve educational outcomes for at-risk students.

Values

Accountability/Responsibility
Transparency
Innovation
High Expectations

Vision

Foster innovation and ensure excellence so that every student has access to and thrives in a high-quality public school.

The Commission is committed to being culturally responsive. To that end, the Commission has adopted cultural competence definitions to support this commitment.

Cultural Inclusion

Inclusion is widely thought of as a practice of ensuring that people in organizations feel they belong, are engaged and are connected through their work to the goals and objectives of the organization. Miller and Katz (2002) present a common definition: "Inclusion is a sense of belonging: feeling respected, valued for who you are; feeling a level of supportive energy and commitment from others so that you can do your best work." Inclusion is a shift in organization culture. The process of inclusion engages each individual and makes each feel valued and essential to the success of the organization.

Individuals function at full capacity, feel more valued and are included in the organization's mission. This culture shift

creates higher-performing organizations where motivation and morale soar.¹

Culturally Responsive Education Systems

Culturally responsive educational systems are grounded in the beliefs that all culturally and linguistically diverse students can excel in academic endeavors when their culture, language, heritage, and experiences are valued and used to facilitate their learning and development, and they are provided access to high quality teachers, programs, and resources.²

Cultural Competency

Cultural competence provides a set of skills that professionals need in order to improve practice to serve all students and communicate effectively with their families. These skills enable the educator to build on the cultural and language qualities that young people bring to the classroom rather than viewing those qualities as deficits.

Cultural competence allows educators to ask questions about their practice in order to successfully teach students who come from different cultural backgrounds. Developing skills in cultural competence is like learning a language, a sport or an instrument.

The learner must learn, relearn, continuously practice, and develop in an environment of constant change. Cultures and individuals are dynamic – they constantly adapt and evolve.

Cultural competence is:

- Knowing the community where the school is located
- Understanding all people have a unique world view
- Using curriculum and implementing an educational program that is respectful of and relevant to the cultures represented in its student body
- Being alert to the ways that culture affects who we are
- Places the focus of responsibility on the professional and the institution
- The examination of systems, structures, policies and practices for their impact on all students and families viewing those systems as deficits.

¹ Puget Sound Educational Service District. (2014). Racial Equity Policy. (p. 7) Seattle, WA: Blanford, S.

² Leadscape, National Institute for Urban School Improvement. (2010) Culturally Responsive Coaching for Inclusive Schools. (p. 4) Tempe, AZ: Mulligan, E. M., Kozleski, E. M.

Focus on Quality

The New School Application solicitation and the resulting evaluation process are rigorous and demanding. The process is designed to ensure that charter school operators possess the capacity to implement sound strategies, practices, and methodologies. Successful applicants will clearly demonstrate high levels of expertise and capacity in the areas of education, charter school finance, administration, and management, as well as high expectations for excellence in professional standards and student achievement.

Autonomy and Accountability

Charter schools have broad autonomy, but not without strong accountability. Charter schools will be accountable to the Commission for meeting academic, financial, and organizational performance standards. The three areas of performance covered by the evaluation policy correspond directly with the three components of a strong charter school application and the three key areas of responsibility outlined in charter contracts.

Accountability

Evaluation of charter school performance is guided by three fundamental questions:

- Is the educational program a success?
- Is the school financially viable?
- Is the organization effective and well-run?

The answers to each of these three questions are essential to a comprehensive evaluation of charter school performance.

Charter schools are evaluated annually against standards in the following categories:

Academic Performance – Charter schools are required to make demonstrable improvements in student performance over the term of the charter. Schools are required to administer all state standardized tests and to adhere to academic standards.

Organizational Performance – A nonprofit corporation holds the charter school contract and is responsible for complying with both the terms in the contract and all applicable laws. This charter school board of directors is a public body and is required to adhere to public meeting and public records laws.

Financial Performance – Schools must demonstrate the proper use of public funds, as evidenced by annual balanced budgets, sound audit reports, and conforming to generally accepted accounting practices.

Approved charter schools will be granted a five-year charter contract. Schools unable to demonstrate academic progress or unable to comply with legal/ contractual or financial requirements may face corrective action, non-renewal, or charter revocation.

Autonomy

In exchange for rigorous accountability, charter school operators experience substantially greater authority to make decisions related to the following:

- Personnel
- School management and operations
- Finances
- Curriculum
- School day and calendar
- Education Service Provider (ESP) agreements

Application Process

Commission staff manage the application process and evaluation teams that include national and local experience and expertise on the operation of successful charter schools. Commission staff leads these teams throughout the evaluation process to produce a merit-based recommendation report to approve or deny each proposal. This report from the evaluation team is the culmination of three stages of review:

Proposal Evaluation

The evaluation team conducted individual and group assessments of the merits of the proposal based on the complete submission. In the case of experienced operators, the Commission supplemented the evaluation team's work with due diligence to verify claims made in the proposals.

Capacity Interview

After reviewing the application and discussing the findings of their individual reviews, the evaluation team conducted an in-person assessment of the applicant team's capacity.

Evaluation Team Ratings

The evaluation team members each produced independent, ratings and comments regarding whether to recommend the proposal for approval or denial.

Commission staff collated the team ratings into an overall recommendation report to approve or deny each application based on its merits as outlined in the rubric. The authority and responsibility to decide whether to approve or deny each application rests with the members of the Commission.

Public Forum

An opportunity for the public to provide official comment on the proposed application. While there is no formal assessment of the public forum, it often confirms the evidence of community engagement provided in the application.

Recommendation Report Contents

This recommendation report includes the following:

Proposal Overview

Basic information about the proposed school as presented in the application.

Recommendation

An overall rating regarding whether the proposal meets the criteria for approval.

Evaluation

Analysis of the proposal based on four primary areas of plan development and the capacity of the applicant team to execute the plan as presented:

Educational Program Design and Capacity

- Family and community involvement
- Program overview
- Curriculum and instructional design
- Student performance standards
- High School graduation requirements (if applicable)
- School calendar and schedule
- School culture
- Supplemental programming
- Special populations and at-risk students
- Student recruitment and enrollment
- Discipline policy and plan
- Educational program capacity.

Operations Plan and Capacity

- Legal status and governing documents
- Organization structure and relationships
- Governing board
- Advisory bodies
- Grievance/complaint process
- District partnerships
- Education service providers (ESP) and other partnerships
- Staffing plans, hiring, management, and evaluation
- Professional development
- Performance framework

- Facilities
- Start-up and ongoing operations
- Operations

Financial Plan and Capacity

- Financial plan
 - Budgets
 - Cash flow projections
 - Related assumptions
 - Financial protocols
 - Fundraising plan
- Financial management capacity

Existing Operators (if applicable)

- Track record of academic success
- Organizational soundness
- Plans for network growth

Rating Characteristics

Evaluation teams assess each application against the published evaluation rubric. In general, the following definitions guide evaluator ratings:

Exceeds

The response surpasses all key performance expectations/goals found under meets expectations. It exhibits high overall performance in all categories and routinely goes beyond what is expected and is fully aligned with the strategic mission of the Commission.

Meets

The response reflects a thorough understanding of key issues. It addresses the topic with specific and accurate information that shows thorough preparation; presents a clear, realistic picture of how the school expects to operate; and inspires confidence in the applicant's capacity to carry out the plan effectively.

Partially Meets

The response meets the criteria in many respects, but lacks detail or specificity and/or requires additional information in one or more areas.

Does Not Meet

The response meets the criteria in some respects but has substantial gaps in a number of areas or the response is wholly undeveloped or significantly incomplete; demonstrates lack of preparation; or otherwise raises substantial concerns about the viability of the plan or the applicant's ability to carry it out.

PROPOSAL OVERVIEW

Applicant Names

Scott Canfield and Garth Reeves

Proposed School Name

Cascade: Midway

Mission

The mission of Cascade Public Schools is to prepare students for success in college, career, and civic life.

Board Members

Bonnie Latham – Interim Chair
Louis Garcia – Interim Vice Chair
Carolyn Chuong Holgate - Treasurer
Nicholas Bradford – Secretary
Greg Sommers

Proposed School Leaders

Scott Canfield and Garth Reeves

Proposed Location

Midway (Des Moines, Kent, Federal Way)

Enrollment Projections

Academic Year	Planned Enrollment	Maximum Enrollment	Grades Served
2020/2021	104	108	9
2021/2022	208	216	9 - 10
2022/2023	312	324	9 - 11
2023/2024	416	432	9 - 12
2024/2025	416	432	9 - 12

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

Cascade: Midway

APPROVE

Summary Analysis

Cascade: Midway is proposing an innovative high-school model to serve 416 students in the Midway region of South King County with an emphasis on interdisciplinary academics, individualized learning, and real-world career exploration opportunities. The application suggests that the school was designed alongside the community in order to meet the unique needs of students defined as at-risk in the charter school law. In order to better assess student performance and expand the definition of success, the applicant is proposing to offer a competency-based system of crediting – another innovative approach designed to serve the needs of students who may have struggled in traditional academic settings.

The proposed co-leaders, Scott Canfield and Garth Reeves, currently serve as assistant principals at a local high school. Combined they have over two decades of instructional and school administration experience. The proposed program is bolstered by strategic partnerships with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Puget Sound (BBBSPS), the National Center for Restorative Justice (NC4RJ), and Big Picture Learning (BPL).

The success of the program will rely heavily upon the interdisciplinary planning that will take place at each grade level. Staff and faculty will receive over 300 hours of professional development each year to support these efforts and other areas of emphasis such as diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). While the proposed program includes many components, particularly when students leave campus to learn, the complexity allows for cultivation of innovative practices.

The board of directors and members of the design team bring significant combined experience and expertise to the organization, particularly in regards to designing and implementing the complex educational program. However, the make-up of the board may pose perceived or real conflicts of interest for certain members given their employment status with the strategic organizational partners.

Cascade: Midway’s application proposes an ambitious program that, if successful, could provide at-risk students with an innovative charter public high school option in south King County. The co-leaders bring passion, experience, and a clear commitment to community and partnerships; this was reflected in the application as well as the Public Forum. While there are concerns outlined within this report, they are ultimately offset by the potential of the applicant to open and operate a high-quality charter public school.

Summary of Section Ratings

Opening and maintaining a successful, high-performing charter school depends on having a complete, coherent plan and identifying highly capable individuals to execute that plan. It is not an endeavor for which strengths in some areas can compensate for material weaknesses in others.

Therefore, to receive a recommendation for approval, the application must maintain a “Meets” rating in all areas.

Executive Summary	Educational Program Design and Capacity
MEETS	MEETS
Operations Plan and Capacity	Financial Plan and Capacity
MEETS	MEETS
Existing Operators	
NOT APPLICABLE	

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Cascade: Midway

MEETS

Summary

Cascade: Midway proposes to be “a small, innovative high school that will serve 416 students Grades 9-12 in the Midway Region of South King County [...] through”:

- An interdisciplinary, college preparatory approach to the academic core wherein students learn through projects to apply knowledge/skills to relevant issues and topics and demonstrate mastery of 21st Century Deeper Learning competencies.
- Individualized pathways with high expectations and high support, including Individualized Learning Plans (ILPs), data-driven goal setting, embedded tutoring, and literacy and numeracy blocks (Cascade Reads and Cascade Solves).
- Leaving to Learn opportunities for 1:1 mentorship and interest-based, career exploration internships. Through strategic partnerships with BBBSPS and BPL, we guide students to develop non-cognitive competencies and social networks that will pay dividends in college, career, and beyond (pg. 7).

Cascade: Midway will be guided by the mission, vision, core values, and long-term goals identified below:

<p>Mission:</p> <p>The mission of Cascade Public Schools is to prepare students for success in college, career, and civic life.</p>
<p>Vision:</p> <p>The vision of Cascade Public Schools is to reimagine public education, co-constructing an innovative network of mentorship-based, deeper learning schools with the communities we serve.</p>
<p>Core Values</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Achievement ▪ Community ▪ Empowerment ▪ Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
<p>Goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cascade: Midway students exceed regional outcomes for state assessments, graduation rates, and college enrollment and persistence ▪ 85% of Cascade: Midway students/families feel the values of achievement, community, and empowerment exist with fidelity in the school, as measured by student/family survey ▪ 90+% year-over-year retention rate for students ▪ 85% of staff feel Cascade: Midway is a positive place to work as measured by staff survey.

- Zero disproportionality in student discipline rates/outcomes
- Cascade: Midway is both a network hub and a collaborative lab for innovative school design regionally, statewide, and nationally

The applicant states that the Midway region has seen an “85% increase in families living below the poverty line from 2000-2017” and only 34% of adults over the age of 25 have a college degree, compared to a countywide (King County) average of 56% (pg. 7). The applicant provided statistics showing that eight grade students in the Midway region were four percentage points behind their statewide peers in ELA and fourteen points behind in math. The gap widens with eleventh graders lagging thirty percentage points behind in ELA and seventeen points behind in math. The gaps widened when the data was disaggregated by race, income status, and English proficiency.

Cascade: Midway assessed the demand for an innovative school model through “hours of individual meetings with community-based organizations (CBOs), individual community members, leaders of higher-education institutions, government officials, parents, and current and recently graduated students. In addition to these individual meetings, Cascade: Midway has hosted a series of community design sessions” (pg. 12).

Cascade: Midway would be the first charter school serving high school aged students in the community and anticipates a student population that is representative of general demographics in the area, including 77% identifying as students of color, 65% who qualify for free or reduced-price lunch, 24% with limited English proficiency, and 14% who qualify for special education services.

The school plans to employ enrollment preferences, should a lottery be necessary, “for students deemed at-risk, including academically underperforming students, students from chronically underperforming schools, and students from economically disadvantaged communities” (pg. 10).

Overall, the applicant demonstrated the educational need of the community by providing academic data to suggest that a significant opportunity gap persists for high-school aged students in the area. While it was challenging to ascertain whether the people who attended the various community meetings were interested parents, the applicant did provide substantial evidence of community engagement and incorporation of the feedback they received. The applicant provided a description of the anticipated student population and the enrollment preferences that would be granted in order to serve students defined as “at-risk” in the charter school law. The applicant provided a mission and vision as well as long-term, measurable school goals.

Executive Summary: Analysis and Evaluator Comments	
RUBRIC OUTCOME	MEETS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The applicant has described the school as a small innovative high school for students in 9th-12th grades. The team has listed three pillars that will drive innovation: an interdisciplinary college preparation approach, pathways through goal setting, and internships. It appears that the applicant wants to maintain a small school to develop 1:1 mentorship and a small student to teacher ratio (pgs. 7-9). ▪ Cascade: Midway’s growth trajectory is reasonable. It will open with 104 students in Grade 9, adding one grade level per year, reaching capacity in year four with 416 students (pg. 8). ▪ Applicant has identified five potential non-academic challenges. Each issue is accompanied by a strategy to respond to the challenge. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Financial sustainability – Working with experts to build a budget that would be sustainable on public funds within five years ▪ Facilities – Working with Washington Charter School Development to find short and long term facility options ▪ Enrollment – Plans for sustained community outreach ▪ Charter Awareness – Meeting with a variety of stakeholders to share information about the option of charter public schools (pgs. 8-9) ▪ Representing Our Diversity – Targeted student recruitment efforts and hiring strategies to attract faculty that represent the student population (pgs. 8-9). The applicant stated that disparities in graduation rates “exist statewide for underserved student groups with all three Midway region districts lagging behind the state for African-American, Latinx, Free and Reduced Price Lunch, Special Education and English Language Learners” (pg. 7). ▪ In the Capacity Interview, the team expressed the overarching definition of success is student agency, which is broadly understood to be a student’s investment and engagement with their own education. The applicant hopes to foster student agency through their approaches to student learning. ▪ The applicant articulates long-term goals as what the school hopes to achieve once it is at capacity and fully operational. The long-term goals address state assessment performance rates, graduation rates and college enrollment and persistence, high student, family, and staff survey results, zero disproportionality in student discipline rates/outcomes, and 90 percent year over year retention rate for students (pg. 11).

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM DESIGN AND CAPACITY

Cascade: Midway

MEETS

Summary

Scott Canfield and Garth Reeves, local educators and administrators with a combined 25 years of experience, will co-lead Cascade: Midway. The school proposes to address the academic needs of at-risk students through “[a] rigorous focus on students’ individual pathways, post- high school goals, and personal/academic skill development combine[d] with universal access to curriculum, a culture of high expectations, and high support for all learners to meet or exceed standards” (pg. 15). A strategic partnership with BBBSPS is planned so that each student has an adult mentor to support their personal and academic growth.

The co-leaders built the program alongside the community through a series of one-on-one meetings and design sessions. The below table, provided in the application, summarizes a list of “key themes [that] emerged from these conversations that either affirmed or influence[d] design iteration” (pg. 9).

Community Input	Design Alignment
Respond to students’ culture and individual needs	Individualized Learning Plans (ILPs), Advisory, Culturally Responsive Teaching
Value student empowerment and an expanded definition of success	Explicit values; focus on non-cognitive and Deeper Learning
Support four-year degree attainment, but not at the expense of developing individualized, growth-minded post-high school pathways via the trades, technical and two-year colleges, entrepreneurship, etc.	College preparatory curriculum, authentic post-high school planning, 1:1 mentorship and internships
Have a global and decolonizing approach to curriculum development that is explicitly anti-racist	Interdisciplinary, culturally responsive pedagogy
Focus on inclusion and belonging through positive relationships and empathy	Focus on personal growth goals, restorative practices
Support equity in their policies and procedures	Anti-racist values and policies, commitment to diversity, equity, and
Provide opportunities for students to apply academic learning in real world settings and develop social networks and capital through mentoring	Internships, independent projects, and mentorship

While the co-founders of Cascade Public Schools provided evidence of their community engagement efforts and incorporated feedback into the educational program, there was a lack of evidence demonstrating that there is parent demand for this type of public school option.

The design of Cascade: Midway is built on the three educational program terms described below:

Educational Program Term	Description	Observable Programmatic Components
Cascade Core Programs (CCPs)	“[A]n interdisciplinary, college preparatory approach to the academic core.” Courses will be built around topics and issues that are relevant to students. CCPs integrate core subjects and “immerse students in Deeper Learning competencies within a competency-based and culturally inclusive curriculum” (pgs. 15-16)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Daily interdisciplinary CCP courses (9th & 10th) ▪ Seminar and project-based learning (all grades) ▪ Demonstration of learning through performance and competency-based methods (all grades)
Individualized Pathways	Each student will develop an ILP with their advisor “focused on developing student strengths and addressing growth” (pg. 16)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ILPs ▪ Planning and goal setting for high school and beyond ▪ Advisory system ▪ Data-driven supports for acceleration and intervention
Leaving to Learn	“[P]rovides access to opportunities to develop student leadership, bridge community and school, apply academic knowledge, and foster the specific competencies that support success in college and beyond. Each student is immersed in a field of study related to their interests and develops meaningful relationships with mentors in that field” (pg. 17).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Internships ▪ 1:1 Mentorship ▪ Other Leaving to Learn opportunities including community service, field trips/travel, access to college courses

The educational program terms are reflected in the wide array of design elements and instructional strategies proposed by the applicant. Each grade level will have two cohorts of 52 students, each led by a teaching team of two instructors. A Learning Specialist (ELL/SpEd), elective teacher, and the Internship Coordinator will join the teaching teams to form a Grade Level Team (GLT). “CCPs will be developed by interdisciplinary GLTs, during job-embedded collaborative planning time” with the support of a consultant who specializes in project-based learning (pg. 27).

The *Leaving to Learn* program is based on a framework developed by BPL. Garth Reeves worked at Highline Big Picture High School in Burien for five years and has continued to serve as a Schools Coach with the larger BPL organization. Jeff Petty, the Regional Director of BPL, will also support the program design. Students will

intern with community leaders, businesses, and organizations that align to their identified interests and goals.

The initial review of the application elicited a variety of practical and logistical questions about the complexity of managing upwards of 416 internship placements and/or mentor relationships, with student safety and learning being the primary concerns. During the Capacity Interview, the applicant team was able to address many of the concerns raised, particularly around student safety, however, managing all of the components of the program may be challenging given the lean staffing structure proposed.

Other Big Picture Learning schools in Washington have received a waiver from the State Board of Education (SBE) to use a competency-based crediting system (instead of a time-based system). Cascade: Midway has stated that it intends to do the same if it is deemed legally necessary under the charter school statute. Cascade: Midway plans to use its “Cascade Learning Goals” which include five core “competency clusters” each with “multiple learning targets [that are] inclusive of K-12 Learning Standards...” (pg. 31). In addition to the Cascade Learning Goals, students will have to demonstrate “Deeper Learning Competencies” as well as “eight non-cognitive competencies” identified by William Sedlacek (pg. 32). Mastery of these competencies, in addition to other grade-level requirements will result in grade promotion and graduation.

The Communication, Quantitative Reasoning, and Empirical Reasoning “clusters” include academic program outcomes stating that 90%+ of students will meet standard on the respective ELA and Math Smarter Balanced Assessment (grade 10) and WA Comprehensive Assessment of Science (grade 11) exams (pg. 26). These goals may be overly ambitious given the performance data of the anticipated student population outlined in the Executive Summary.

If Cascade: Midway does adopt a competency-based system of crediting, it will allow students to receive up to 33 credits in high school which far exceeds the 24 credit requirement. The co-leaders propose to do this by “moving to a trimester schedule, using a blocked interdisciplinary approach..., providing literacy and numeracy support blocks, and offering a rigorous internship model” (pg. 36). The application did not include a specific Grade Point Average (GPA) calculation. However, the applicant did address the necessity of including a GPA for college and scholarship applications and is researching other organizations that produce non-traditional transcripts for exemplars.

The programs designed to meet the needs of special education students, students with disabilities, English Language Learners, and highly capable students are aligned with the overall culture of inclusion. The applicant adequately addressed the ways that students will be identified, served, monitored and evaluated, and how the programs will be staffed with appropriately certificated teachers. The application included vague language regarding the transfer of student Individualized Education Programs (IEPs); however, the applicant addressed it when asked in the Capacity Interview and will revise the language prior to submitting policies and procedures to the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). There does appear to be an inconsistency within the application regarding the Learning Specialist caseload.

The applicant states that the school’s culture will be rooted in its core values of achievement, community, empowerment, and commitment to DEI. Cascade: Midway plans to partner with the NC4RJ to provide extensive training to teachers and students in order to build a culture based on restorative practices. An ethos of “inclusion and belonging” in addition to “restorative disciplinary practices” will undergird the school’s approach to student discipline (pg. 61).

Educational program capacity is demonstrated through the variety of expertise and experience shared amongst the leadership and design team members. The school's co-founders are currently serving as Assistant Principals at West Seattle High school. Several speakers at the Public Forum spoke to Mr. Canfield's and Mr. Reeves' leadership, integrity, and commitment to serving kids well. Board members and design team members bring experience from other educational and youth development settings. The applicant provides a clear plan for how various partners will assist the school in its planning year to further develop and refine the school's programs and curriculum.

The ambitious educational program proposed by the applicant is not without its share of complexity. There is risk in recommending this applicant for approval as many elements of the educational program are in need of refinement. However, collaborating with organizations like BPL and BBBSPS, who are respected experts in experiential learning and mentoring respectively, lends credibility and builds confidence in Cascade: Midway's ability to deliver on the promises made in the application.

In the Capacity Interview, Mr. Reeves articulated the need for a program like Cascade: Midway, because while at Highline Big Picture he saw students who had struggled in the classroom thrive when exposed to real-world learning opportunities. The charter school law was crafted precisely to meet the needs of students who have been underserved by traditional systems and Cascade: Midway's program is proposing an innovative way to serve students and expand the definition of success.

Educational Program Design and Capacity: Analysis and Evaluator Comments	
RUBRIC OUTCOME	MEETS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The team has indicated that they have assessed demand through community forums and individual meetings with leaders in higher education and government officials. The applicant entered the meeting to assess several questions from school options, to how a school can meet the needs of students. Evidence includes meeting artifacts, pictures and sign in sheets and letters of support (pgs. 12-13 and Attachment 2: Evidence of Community Engagement). ▪ There is a lack of evidence of parent demand for this school. There are community design meeting sign up/attendance sheets but the signatories do not indicate they are families that want to enroll their children in this school (Attachment 2: Evidence of Community Engagement). ▪ Cascade: Midway proposes to partner with BBSPS and BPL to provide a mentoring and a framework the internship program (pgs. 16-17). ▪ The applicant addressed the culturally responsive aspects of each of the educational program terms (CCPs, Individualized Pathways and Leaving to Learn). In particular, for the Leaving to Learn, the applicant illustrates a “focus on culturally inclusive motivational and engagement strategies (autonomy, mastery, purpose) for interest development, post-high school exploration and demonstration of mastery” (pg. 17). ▪ Daily interdisciplinary courses around particular themes/essential questions will encourage engagement by high school students who look for relevance in what they are learning. For example: Phenomena: Globalization - Essential Question: What is the “true cost” of the things we use, buy, and consume? (pg. 15 and Attachment 3: Sample Curriculum Scope and Sequence). ▪ It appears performance-based and portfolio assessments will play a large role at the school, which help provide a fuller picture of student mastery (pg. 15). ▪ Much of the curriculum will be developed by interdisciplinary “Grade Level Teams,” which will require highly skilled teachers. It may be difficult to find enough of those highly-skilled teachers given the market (pg. 17). ▪ Learning goals are aggressive with 90+% meeting standard across various subjects on the state tests. These may be unrealistic given the performance data of the proposed student population (pg. 26). ▪ The applicant has stated that Cascade: Midway will offer students access to a continuum of service options and instructional supports. They propose that student services and supports will be provided in the least restrictive environment (LRE), as determined by the IEP team, with an inclusion model as the preferred setting wherever appropriate (pgs. 47-49). ▪ Staffing will consist of each grade level being staffed by a full-time Learning Specialist (Special Education and/or English Language Learner certificated), staff who provides case management, specially designed instruction, and push-in support in the general education setting (pg. 46). ▪ There appears to be an inconsistency within the application regarding the caseload of the Learning Specialist. The application specifies that there will be one Learning Specialist per grade level serving both Special Education students and English Language Learners. The projected student demographics suggest that up to 38% of student could fall into one of these categories,

potentially creating a caseload of 41 students per grade. However, in Section 10, the applicant appears to suggest that the Learning Specialist may carry a caseload consisting of only students with IEPs, which averages to 15 students per grade (pgs. 8, 46).

- The application states that CCPs are differentiated to meet the needs of Highly Capable students (pg. 56).
- The team appears to put emphasis on prevention and the interruption of conditions that lead students to feel excluded or disengaged from school. As such, they have created a table that articulates how each process will build a school culture that supports prevention. The table has two outputs: content and process. Both outputs align student experience with staff development and the expectations of the community partnerships (pg. 63).
- Co-Principals bring experience as teachers and administrators, but also have established relationships with intended partners and taken trainings from well-known anti-racist practitioners. Overall, the Leadership Team has the experience in the relevant areas and indicates a high capacity. The school leaders serve together as assistant principals, and data on their outcomes at West Seattle High School lends confidence in this undertaking (Attachment 9: School Leadership Resumes and Job Descriptions).
- The co-leaders should have high comfortability collaborating as they've worked together as assistant principals for 4 years at a traditional public high school (pg. 67).
- The proposed Chief Academic Officer (CAO) has been a coach with Big Picture Learning since 2009, thus he should be highly familiar and somewhat of an expert with the model (Attachment 9: School Leadership Resumes and Job Descriptions).

OPERATIONS PLAN AND CAPACITY

Cascade: Midway

MEETS

Summary

Cascade Public Schools (CPS) is a non-profit corporation established in Washington State and is currently led by a five-person board of directors (six as of the Capacity Interview). The applicant states that there are two Memorandums of Understanding, one with BBSPS for the delivery of a mentorship program and the other with the NC4RJ for restorative justice curricula and professional development. Both Louis Garcia, Executive Director of BBSPS and Nicholas Bradford, Founder of the NC4RJ serve on the CPS board of directors.

While the partnerships with the organization that these two members represent are clearly critical to the Cascade: Midway program, and the experience and expertise they bring to the board is valuable, their membership as voting members of the board, potentially creates both real and perceived conflicts of interest, even if the services are provided free of charge to the school. The applicant shared in the Capacity Interview that an attorney had been consulted regarding the arrangement and no concerns were raised.

The applicant states that the startup board “has expertise in nonprofit governance, fundraising, charter school development, education sector experience, and innovation in education” (pg. 76). The board plans to recruit additional members bringing the total to between nine and eleven in year one. The application indicates that current gaps exist on the board in the areas of “real estate, legal, finance, and human resources...” (pg. 76). The board plans to grow its membership and increase its diversity of expertise to fill in the knowledge gaps that exist.

The following three questions guide the governance philosophy of the board:

1. Are we on track to deliver academic success?
2. Are we operationally and fiscally sound?
3. Do we have the right leader(s) to drive us on the path of excellence?

Board member expectations:	Board committees:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Safeguard the school’s mission and competitive advantage ▪ Secure sufficient resources to fulfill the school’s mission ▪ Ensure strategic and effective resource allocation ▪ Hire, support, and assess the performance of the school’s Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Chief Academic Officer (CAO) ▪ Serve as ambassadors for the organization ▪ Set policies and procedures ▪ Monitoring and ensure legal and regulatory compliance ▪ Engage in DEI training ▪ Assess its own performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Governance ▪ Development ▪ Finance ▪ Academic Excellence ▪ Leadership Support

The applicant provided information regarding three advisory bodies: the Student Senate, the Family Advisory Council (FAC), and the Instructional Council (IC). Student Senators will act as liaisons between the FAC and the Student Senate, and two student Senators will serve as members of the IC.

In addition to the proposed partnerships already outlined, the school plans to contract with Seneca Family of Agencies and the True Measure Collaborative to support their Special Education program. The Puget Sound Educational Service District will provide back office services. Cascade: Midway will not contract with an Educational Service Provider.

The organization will be co-led with each leader serving a dual role. Scott Canfield will act as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Principal and Garth Reeves will act as the Chief Academic Officer (CAO) and Co-Principal. Their respective job duties are outlined in the below table.

CEO/Co-Principal Responsibilities	CAO/Co-Principal Responsibilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Finance ▪ Fundraising ▪ Human Resources/Hiring (operations staff) ▪ Compliance and state reporting ▪ Operations ▪ Strategic and contractual partnerships ▪ SpEd and ELL compliance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Curriculum, Instruction, & Pedagogy ▪ Assessment ▪ Academic Reporting ▪ Professional Development ▪ Human Resources/Hiring (Teaching Staff) ▪ Multi-Tiered Systems of Support ▪ Special Programs (including SpEd and ELL)

The Cascade: Midway team has already begun recruitment efforts because they “recognize that the educational program and school model of Cascade: Midway (interdisciplinary, project-based, collaborative planning, advisory, etc.) reflects the need for a unique candidate profile” (pg. 84). As outlined in the budget, the starting salary of a Lead Teacher will be \$72,000 a year and other core content teaching positions begin at \$64,000 a year. Compensation will be based on experience and “[t]he CEO and CAO will determine salary offers by assessing all teacher candidates against the indicators of the [teacher evaluation tool] to prevent bias and ensure an equitable process” (pg. 83). However, a salary range for teachers was not provided in the application. The applicant provided a long list of supportive working conditions that are designed to promote retention of high-quality teachers.

Teachers will be evaluated using the University of Washington’s Center for Educational Leadership 5D+ Rubric for Instructional Growth and Teacher Evaluation and administrators will use and adapted version of the UW-CEL’s 4 Dimensions (4D) of Instructional Leadership Framework.

The applicant has stated that staff will engage in 248 hours of professional development during the 2020-2021 school year, including “[three] hours of job-embedded, collaborative instructional planning time every week” for Grade Level Teams (pg. 89). Professional development topics include instructional planning, use of the evaluation framework, and data analysis.

Student academic achievement data will be collected, analyzed, and distributed to the school community by the CAO in conjunction with the Student Services Coordinator. The CEO and CAO will collectively report student progress to the board of directors at least quarterly.

The applicant provided five mission-specific goals, two are academic in nature, and three are organization-focused. They are as follows:

- Annually, 80% or more of students will meet Personal Growth goal targets according to their Individualized Learning Plans and demonstrated in portfolio and exhibition.
- By the end of the school year, 95% of students participate in Exhibition, demonstrating progress toward mastery of Cascade Learning Goals and Deeper Learning competencies.
- By the end of the school year, 80% or more of Cascade: Midway students identify the values of achievement, community, empowerment, and a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion exists with fidelity in the school.
- By the end of the school year, 80% or more of Cascade: Midway families identify the values of achievement, community, empowerment, and commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion exists with fidelity in the school.
- By the end of the school year, 80% or more of staff identify Cascade: Midway as a positive place to work with organizational fidelity to professional collaboration and mission-driven excellence.

Information regarding the specifics of the culture and climate survey are necessary to assess its efficacy and reliability, though measuring the climate and culture could provide helpful data when addressing student and staff retention. The academic goals appear to be truly “mission-specific” as they strive to measure fundamental components of the program that are not captured in other state accountability systems. The applicant will need to ensure that the personal growth targets in each student’s ILP are rigorous for this goal to be meaningful.

Cascade: Midway endeavors to co-locate with BBBSPS by year three. Co-location could help to offset some of the facilities challenges faced by charter public schools in Washington State. However, a co-location arrangement will need to be navigated with care as additional conflicts of interest could arise for board member Louis Garcia. The school is working with Washington State Charter School Development and Raza Development fund to secure temporary and permanent facilities.

The start-up plan proposed by the applicant is aligned to the budget and addresses the required elements outlined in the application. Operational capacity primarily resides in the school’s co-leaders with support from other board members. The co-leaders’ experience as assistant principals will prove useful in their proposed roles, however, assessing the skill and knowledge gaps within the organization, and using that to drive strategic hiring decisions will be necessary to manage the complexity of running a charter public school.

Operations Plan and Capacity: Analysis and Evaluator Comments	
RUBRIC OUTCOME	MEETS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The applicant outlines an organizational structure that includes Grade Level Teams, a Multi-Tiered System of Support Team and Student Support Team. The outline of this team structure suggests that the school is culturally responsive and will continue foster and ongoing co-design processes (pg. 70, Attachment 12: Organizational Charts). ▪ The applicant clearly outlines the basic expectations of the Board of Directors. These expectations indicate a thorough and thoughtful understanding of the role of the Board of Directors as a whole (pgs. 72-73). ▪ The applicant addressed building governing board capacity through a series of professional development opportunities regarding topics such as facilities, legal requirements, fundraising, financial oversight, performance framework, self-evaluation. The schedule of professional development topics supports the current board’s transition to a formal governing board (pgs. 76-77). ▪ The applicant states that the board will evaluate the administrators using an adapted version of the Center for Educational Leadership’s 4 Dimensions of Instructional Leadership framework. There is no training listed for the board on this framework (pgs. 76-77). ▪ Potential conflict of interest with BBBSPS and NC4RJ representatives being on the board – particularly if the employees’ performance is based in part on the success of the partnership (pgs. 76-77). ▪ The board as currently constituted does not have expertise in in real estate, legal, finance, or human resources (pg. 76). ▪ The applicant identifies the core value of community as having deeply influenced the structure of the advisory bodies at Cascade: Midway. The applicant states that no decision should be made in isolation or lack the voice of the school’s most important stakeholder: the students. The applicant demonstrates this through three advisory bodies: Student Senate, Family Advisory Council (FAC) and Instructional Council (IC). The applicant comprehensively weaves the students’ voice into each of these advisory bodies and aligns the core value of community throughout each of these advisory bodies structure, actions and achievable outcomes (pg. 78). ▪ The applicant has listed key people who are responsible for collecting specific data and disaggregating data and reporting on data. Various parties include the CAO, Student Services Coordinator, Learning Specialist, and Mentorship Coordinator (pg. 94). ▪ There is mention that teachers will be compensated competitively, however, no range is provided in the application (pg. 83). ▪ There is nothing remarkable or radically different in the school’s teacher recruitment strategy to find the most top-notch teachers required to engage in the type of multidisciplinary teaching and curriculum development that the school will require (pg. 84-85). ▪ The applicant was not able to speak to a specific approach to recruiting top teachers. They had spoken with individual teachers but could articulate a succinct overall plan for teacher recruitment (Capacity Interview note).

- CEO and CAO structure and delineation of duties is appropriately divided by areas of expertise and staff functions (Attachment 12: Organizational Charts).
- School leaders cite the school's values and their own negative experience with evaluations when developing the format for delivering feedback to teachers. Using classroom observations and weekly meetings can create an open environment and a culture of learning and daily professional development, in addition to improving communication. There is a blend of this informal style and a more formal structure of data analysis and summative evaluations at year's end (pg. 88).
- The first and second mission-specific goals are tied to curriculum in such a way as to be measurable. The organizational goals may be difficult to measure and interpret (Attachment 23: Mission-Specific Goal).
- Success of the co-leadership model depends significantly on the individuals in those roles. The co-founders know each other well and have functioned in those capacities previously as co-APs. The downside would be if one of them were to leave the school as significant capacity resides in both leaders (pgs. 101-102).

FINANCIAL PLAN AND CAPACITY

Cascade: Midway

MEETS

Financial Plan and Capacity: Summary

The applicant provided a thorough description of financial planning, purchasing, payroll, and internal controls. Delineated roles and responsibilities are shared amongst the board finance committee and Treasurer, the CEO, the CAO, the Director of Finance, and the back-office service provider. The applicant acknowledges expectations regarding required audits and compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act.

The policies and procedures suggest that the school will follow Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) rules and regulations, however, charter public schools must follow Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) rules.

Both co-leaders have experience managing multi-million dollar budgets. Additionally, board members Louis Garcia, Carolyn Chuong Holgate, and Greg Sommers have experience in managing budgets, business planning, and grant management.

The overall financial plan shows the applicant spending approximately 16% of revenues on administrative personnel, with just over 50% of revenue spent on personnel costs as a whole. The salary of the Director of Operations and Finance is listed at \$72,000. That salary may not be considered competitive, given the cost of living in the area and the complexity of managing charter public school operations.

The financial plan indicates that \$62,000 will be spent on Special Education services provided by Seneca and the True Measure Collaborative. The net income in year two is \$50,124 which be sufficient to cover unanticipated expenses or staffing changes. It increases to \$124,247 in year three.

The multi-year fundraising plan provided is detailed and comprehensive. The fundraising goal is 10% of the overall six-year budget. The Development Committee of the board will lead the fundraising efforts in collaboration with the CEO. The CEO acknowledged in the Capacity Interview that he did not have significant fundraising experience; however, he is working with a fundraising advisor. The applicant did provide evidence of nearly \$42,000 already raised through smaller, individual giving. This is in addition to a funding commitment from New Schools Venture Fund for \$215,000. The fundraising efforts of the leadership team are encouraging and the fundraising plan appears to include a diversity of funding options. The professional experience of Greg Sommers and Carolyn Chuong Holgate suggests that the applicant has ability to apply for and manage grants.

The financial plan and budget demonstrate the board and leadership team has some capacity to operate a financially viable school. However, the applicant acknowledges that hiring an experienced Director of Operations and Finance, contracting with the local ESD, and increasing board membership will be necessary to fill current knowledge and experience gaps.

Financial Plan and Capacity: Analysis and Evaluator Comments	
RUBRIC OUTCOME	MEETS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The team has stated that policies and procedures for financial planning will be finalized by the board led by the finance committee, in collaboration with the school’ CEO, Director of Finance, and the back-office service provider (pg. 104). ▪ The team appears to have a process in place for reviewing the budget, which will be reviewed by staff, the leadership team at Cascade: Midway and the board finance committee. They assure that budgets will be taken to the board at a public meeting for approval (pg. 104). ▪ The applicant assures that they are using policies and procedures that are aligned to applicable local, state and federal regulations that relate to accounting, payroll and purchasing. There is a process for approving invoices over \$10,000 which must be approved by the Board Chair and Board Treasurer or CEO (pgs. 104-106). ▪ The applicant included a discussion of controls, roles, audit requirements, etc. (pg. 104-108). ▪ Salary for DOF may not attract applicant with necessary knowledge and experience (GAAP and FASB) (Attachment 27: Financial Plan). ▪ There is a commitment for a \$215,000 New Schools Venture Fund grant for the 2019-2020 academic year (Attachment 29: Evidence of Philanthropic Commitments). ▪ Starting salaries of \$139,000 for both the CEO and CAO for a school of just 104 may be considered high given the other salary ranges presented for other positions (Attachment 27: Financial Plan). ▪ The team has indicated that if there is a budget shortfall, they will make necessary reductions, focused on staffing, to ensure that the school is financially sustainable while still providing an academically rigorous and culturally-responsive experience (Attachment 28: Detailed Budget Narrative). 	

EXISTING OPERATORS OR PROPOSED CHARTER MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT

Cascade: Midway

NOT APPLICABLE

Existing Operators/CMO Development: Summary

Cascade Public Schools does not currently operate any schools, nor is it planning to become a Charter Management Organization.

EVALUATION TEAM BIOGRAPHIES

Krystal Starwich, Team Lead

Director of New School Applications

Washington State Charter School Commission

Krystal is the Director of New School Applications for the Washington State Charter School Commission (Commission). In addition to managing the agency's new school application process, she also works to build capacity in potential charter school operators through educational and community outreach opportunities. Prior to her role with the Commission, she worked as a Grant Coordinator for Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction and implemented the state's first US Department of Education Charter School Program (CSP) grant.

Prior to joining OSPI, she spent three years at an independent school in Seattle providing a variety of operations and student support. She earned her Bachelor's Degree in Political Science from the University of Washington and her Master's Degree in Public Administration from Seattle University. Her non-profit professional experience includes legal advocacy and fund development for a community-based organization serving survivors of domestic violence, and volunteer program coordination for a political non-profit. She is passionate about youth civic engagement and has been a longtime volunteer and board member of the YMCA's Youth and Government program.

Adam Aberman, Evaluator

Adam is the CEO and Founder of The Learning Collective. Adam has profound content expertise in technology-based innovation and a 20-year track record educating young people in numerous venues from traditional public schools to school district administration trainings. Over the past 15 years, Adam has assessed over 200 current, and 100 proposed, charter schools nationally (California, Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, New York and Washington), including lead writer for charter renewal inspection visits, charged with evaluating the school and writing the report that is submitted to authorizers. During every school visit, Adam evaluates the effectiveness of charter schools on a wide range of issues. The range of issues includes schools' use of assessment data, curricular development and alignment with the Common Core, instructional leadership and staff evaluations, classroom instruction, professional development, board governance, parental involvement and school finances.

Adam has led teams of reviewers on over 50 charter school applications, submitting the finalized application reviews to boards of education. Adam has also worked with the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) and other organizations on evaluation and strategic planning projects regarding Florida, Idaho, Minnesota, New York, Oklahoma and Ohio authorizers. Other TLC clients have included Alliance College-Ready Public Schools, Chicago Public Schools, College Board, Inglewood Unified School District, KIPP, Tiger Woods Foundation and UCLA. Adam began his career in education as a Spanish bilingual public school teacher in Los Angeles. Adam received a B.A. from Vassar College and Master in Public Policy, with an emphasis on Education, from Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government.

Casey Caronna, Charter School Program Grant Coordinator, OSPI

Casey is the Charter School Program Grant Coordinator for Washington State's Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). Casey is a life-long Washington resident and obtained a Bachelor of Arts with an emphasis in Political Science and Educational Administration from the Evergreen State College and a Master of Arts in Education from Goddard College. His previous experience includes working for the Boy Scouts of America, Saint Martin's University, and the Evergreen State College. He brings a holistic and well-rounded understanding of the educational world to the newly formed charter school sector in Washington State.

Laura Crandall, Evaluator

Laura is the head of Crandall Strategy & Research, and has twelve years of experience in education management. For six years she was Head of School in a preschool through grade eight independent school of over 200 students. There, she led a faculty of thirty-five and managed budgets of up to \$2.9 million. Laura has understanding of crisis management, having also served as Interim Head of School for an independent school that suffered the sudden loss of their School Director. She was on a dual accreditation team for the Northwest Association of Independent Schools (NWAIS), and this is her third year as an independent evaluator for the Commission.

Prior to becoming Head of School, Laura was the Business Manager of an independent school, and was responsible for facilities management, policy and procedure development, financial management and controls, and admissions processes. She has a deep understanding of what is essential to an educational environment in which students will thrive. Laura holds an MPA with a focus in local government. She works as a public policy and finance analyst based in Seattle, Washington.

Crystal Wash, Evaluator

Crystal, a former school administrator, has served in various leadership roles including, Senior Literacy Trainer and Project Consultant where she provided expertise to IL School Districts in Teacher Evaluation. She began her career as an elementary classroom teacher, which led to becoming a demonstration classroom teacher. Crystal opened her classroom for teachers to observe and develop their expertise using the Balanced Literacy Approach. Following her teaching, Crystal was promoted to Literacy Project Consultant in which she led literacy Collaborative Inquiry Groups for K-2 teachers.

Crystal was accepted into New Leaders for New Schools, as a resident principal program and later became an Assistant Principal. Within her administrator roles, Crystal remained committed to developing teachers' expertise in instruction. In 2012, Crystal engaged in groundbreaking work as a Principal Calibrator. Her role focused on providing training and support on Danielson-based teacher evaluation to administrators. Over her career, Crystal has conducted a variety of education workshops that focused on teacher evaluation and content instructional strategies to support the Framework for Teaching.

Crystal received an MBA from Northwestern University, a Masters in Educational Leadership from National Louis, MED in teaching and learning from DePaul University, Reading Endorsement from Chicago State and a BA in Philosophy and English from Indiana University