



WASHINGTON STATE  
*Charter School Commission*  
STUDENTS • INNOVATION • TRANSPARENCY

# 2021 NEW SCHOOL APPLICATION RECOMMENDATION REPORT FOR: GLOBAL SCIENCE ACADEMY

December 3, 2020

## Report Submitted By

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# Washington State Charter School Commission

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This document was adapted in large part from the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) *Charter School Request for Proposals Recommendation Report*. The Commission wishes to express its thanks to NACSA for their willingness to share both the document and the background information that led to its adaptation in Washington.

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# INTRODUCTION

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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

Student-Centered  
Cultural and Community Responsiveness  
Excellence and Continuous Learning  
Accountability/Responsibility  
Transparency  
Innovation

## 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. <sup>1</sup>

## Cultural 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. <sup>2</sup>

## 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

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

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

- The examination of systems, structures, policies and practices for their impact on all students and families viewing those systems as deficits.<sup>3</sup>

### **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.

*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.

*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.

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 sanctions, 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

### **Evaluation Process**

Commission staff manage the application evaluation process and evaluation teams that include national and local experience and expertise on the operation of successful charter schools. The Commission staff leads these teams throughout the evaluation process to produce a merit-based recommendation regarding whether 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 and NACSA 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.

<sup>3</sup> Center for Improvement of Student Learning, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

<http://www.k12.wa.us/CISL/EliminatingtheGaps/CulturalCompetence/default.aspx>

## 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.

## 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 Plan and Capacity*

- School Overview
- Family and Community Engagement
- School Culture and Climate
- Student Recruitment and Enrollment
- Program Overview
- Curriculum and Instructional Design
- Student Performance Standards
- High School Graduation Requirements (if applicable)
- Supplemental Programming
- School Calendar and Schedule
- Special populations and at-risk students
- Student Discipline Policy and Plan
- Educational Program Capacity.

#### *Organizational Plan and Capacity*

- Legal Status and Governing Documents
- Board Members and Governance
- Organization Structure
- 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
- Transportation, Safety, and Food Service
- Operations Plan and Capacity

#### *Financial Plan and Capacity*

- Financial 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

Clear and complete responses to all prompts. Consistently detailed, comprehensive explanations provided, including specific evidence that shows robust preparation. Presents a clear, explicit picture of how the school expects to operate. When applicable, responses connect cohesively to other sections of the program. When applicable, the information/evidence demonstrates a high degree of capacity to implement the proposed program.

### Meets

Clear and complete responses to all prompts. Sufficient explanations provided, including evidence that shows preparation. Presents a clear picture of how the school expects to operate. When applicable, responses connect to other sections of the program. When applicable, the information/evidence provided demonstrates capacity to implement the proposed program.

### Partially Meets

Clear and complete response to some but not all prompts. The response provides partial explanations and lacks meaningful detail or requires additional information in one or more key areas. When applicable, responses provide limited connections to other sections. When applicable, the information/evidence provided demonstrates some/limited capacity to implement the proposed program.

### Does Not Meet

Unclear and/or incomplete responses to most prompts. The response provides insufficient details to most prompts. Responses lack connections to related sections. Responses demonstrate lack of preparation and/or raises substantial concerns about the applicant's understanding of, or ability to, implement an effective plan.

# APPLICATION OVERVIEW

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## Applicant Name

Mohamed Bakr

## Proposed School Name

Global Science Academy

## Proposed Location

Bellevue, WA

## Board Members

Ahmed Abdelaziz  
Ayman Alafifi  
Mohamed Ali  
Mohamed Bakr  
Kalika Curry  
Abdirahman Mohamud  
Otmame Riad

## Proposed School Leader

Not Identified at the Time of Application

## Enrollment Projections

Academic Year	Planned Enrollment	Maximum Enrollment	Grades Served
2022/2023	240	240	K-2
2023/2024	336	336	K-3
2024/2025	432	432	K-4
2025/2026	528	528	K-5
2026/2027	552	552	K-5

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Global Science Academy

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## Mission and Vision

**Mission:** The mission of the Global Science Academy of Bellevue (GSA) is to provide students with a rigorous STEM-focused educational program within a learning environment that encourages them to become global learners and citizens.

**Vision:** GSA graduates will be global citizens prepared to pursue life-long learning and shape the future of STEM fields.

## Values & Long Term Goals

**Values & Goals:** GSA's three main performance goals reflect our educational and organizational values:

**Goal 1:** Establish & maintain high academic attainment and continuous improvement for all students;

**Goal 2:** Establish & maintain an engaging, inclusive and supportive learning environment for all; and

**Goal 3:** Establish & maintain a well-run organization capable of sustaining long-term success.

## Education Program Terms

**Program Term #1 - Global Learning** - At the heart of GSA is our commitment to developing students as “global learners.” We will help students develop the qualities of a “globally minded” person by supporting students to become inquirers, knowledgeable, thinkers, communicators, principled, open-minded, caring, risk-takers, balanced and reflective.

**Program Term #2 - Fully Integrated STEM Curriculum** - GSA will take a unique approach to a holistic education that integrates Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) with reading, art and social-emotional learning. This holistic approach is supported by our other EPTs, described below.

**Program Term #3 - Project-based Teaching and Learning** - GSA will implement project-based learning (PBL) across all grade levels and subject areas. PBL is a constructivist instructional approach that focuses on personalized learning and collaboration. Students work on a project over an extended period that engages them in solving a real-world problem or answering a complex question. They demonstrate their knowledge and skills by developing a public product or presentation for a real audience. Throughout this process, the teacher's role is to guide and advise students rather than direct and manage student work.



**Program Term #4 - Transformative Social Emotional Learning & Culturally Responsive Education** - GSA plans to use a comprehensive, school-wide approach to social emotional learning (SEL) in order to foster what Robert Jagers describes as “transformative SEL”: “a process whereby students and teachers build strong, respectful relationships founded on an appreciation of similarities and differences, learn to critically examine root causes of inequity, and develop collaborative solutions to community and societal problems.” GSA plans to make our school “transformative” by using culturally-responsive educational (CRE) practices in the classroom and throughout the school community.

**Program Term #5 - Intensive & Personalized Instruction through the Global Blocks** – GSA will dedicate two 90- minute blocks each day to provide intensive and personalized instruction in both ELA and Math. We describe these as the “Global Blocks” to connote a special time that is set aside every day for intervention and/or enrichment. During the Global Block, students receive personalized and differentiated support to master skills at their own pace and through the method most appropriate to their particular learning needs. Our teachers will use a “Gradual Release of Responsibility” (GRR) approach during the Global Block. GRR is a structured method of instruction that transfers responsibility within the learning process from the teacher to the learner.

## Educational Model/Instructional Design

Please see Educational Program Terms for Educational Model/Instructional Design information.

## Anticipated Student Population

GSA anticipates students with multi-generational roots in Bellevue as well as recent immigrants from numerous countries and regions including India, China, Mexico, Vietnam, the Philippines, Korea, the Ukraine, North Africa, and the Middle East. GSA expects its student population will reflect the Bellevue school district in which there are 97 languages spoken in schools, with 39% of students speaking a first language other than English.

In addition, GSA anticipates enrolling the same or higher percentages of “at risk” students than the district. Currently, in the Bellevue district, 17% of students qualify for free-or-reduced lunch, 7% have disabilities (SWD), and 15% are English language learners (ELL). According to the application, GSA will actively pursue a global learning approach and environment. The school anticipates attracting a higher percentage of ELL students from foreign-born families. In addition, as poverty is higher among many of these immigrant families, the school anticipates a higher percentage of its students will qualify for free-or-reduced lunch. Below are the anticipated student demographics:

Students Qualifying for Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL)	Students with Disabilities (SWD)	English Language Learners (ELL)
60%	10%	50%

# RECOMMENDATION

Global Science Academy

DENY

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## Application Strengths Summary

- A new elementary school in the Bellevue area would provide "much needed seats" due to population growth in the city.
- The school would provide two to four weeks of summer remediation for at-risk students who missed "several benchmarks" or are at risk for retention in grades K-5.
- The school is committed to hiring a diverse staff to reflect its students, families and community.
- Board dedication and commitment is evident.
- There is evidence of community support and families who would be interested in enrolling their student.
- A strength of the application is the knowledge and experience of the founding board members in the areas of accounting and finance.

## Application Weaknesses Summary

- The high numbers of students in the first years of the school may present enrollment challenges for the school.
- Although the school intends for STEM to be a focal point in instruction, there was little indication of how STEM would be integrated throughout the school.
- The staffing plan for special education and English language learners may be insufficient to support student needs given the overall enrollment and targeted student populations.
- The proposed discipline policy is inconsistent with the stated culture and proposed commitment to restorative practices.
- There is a general lack of detail around implementation planning, which makes it difficult to ascertain the level of understanding the proposed board has about the complexity of operating a charter school.
- The board, as currently comprised, does not have any members with expertise in K-12 education or the law.
- The Year 1 timeline for hiring the principal, other school leaders and teachers does not provide for sufficient training and preparation for school leaders or teachers.
- There is no detailed plan to support new teachers.
- The process and steps for analyzing assessment data are not included in the application.
- The choices made in developing the budget, where resources are allocated and where they are missing, indicates a lack of knowledge and experience with school operations.

## Summary of Category 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, in order to receive a recommendation for approval, the application must maintain a “Meets” rating in all areas.*

### **Educational Plan and Capacity**

**PARTIALLY MEETS**

### **Organizational Plan and Capacity**

**PARTIALLY MEETS**

### **Financial Plan and Capacity**

**PARTIALLY MEETS**

### **Existing Operators and Planned Growth**

**NOT APPLICABLE**

# EDUCATIONAL PLAN AND CAPACITY

Global Science Academy

PARTIALLY MEETS

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## Summary

Global Science Academy (GSA), by Year 5, is designed to serve 552 students in Grades K-5 in Bellevue. The applicant will create a school targeting at-risk and immigrant children and families. The high enrollment target during the first years of the school (240 in Year 1 and 336 in Year 2) may present significant challenges to the school.

The applicant group articulates a vision for a new elementary school in the Bellevue area that will meet three emerging needs in the community: 1) STEM-focused educational programs; 2) providing increasingly global community with learning environments that celebrate and advance the highest ideals of global citizenship; and 3) provide “much needed seats” due to population growth in the city (pg. 1). The team has conducted community outreach via multiple channels for two years, and the board chair, Mohamed Bakr, is considered a well-respected community member based on multiple letters of support.

The marketing and recruitment plans will be city-wide and target special needs and ELL students and organizations that serve those populations. Applications will be available in multiple languages and support will be provided to families with translation need. The applicant identifies that a fair and open lottery will take place, with preference for siblings, in accordance with Washington laws. The recruitment plan includes dates for the application and enrollment periods. The applicant anticipates enrolling significantly higher percentage of students than local district schools given their global learning approach and targeted outreach efforts.

The description of the school program meets the basic educational requirements of the state. Education Program Terms (EPT) include global learning, fully integrated STEM, Project Based Teaching and Learning, transformative SEL and CRE, and Personalized Instruction through Global Blocks (pg. 26). Adequate research supports selection of each EPT. However, there was little indication of how STEM will play a central role in the core academic program of the school.

The applicant has selected the school’s curriculum to provide instruction in accordance with the requirements of Washington State. All core subjects have an identified curriculum. The Washington State standards for Arts and PE have been adopted and health will be integrated into the curriculum. The sample mathematics scope and sequence provides a map for instruction. The applicant proposes modifying curricula based on incoming student data then developing project-based learning activities – all during the 2022 summer pre-service. It is unclear how this significant task could be fully accomplished during the summer pre-service before the school’s first year of operation, based on the plans presented in the application.

The proposed school will offer summer remediation and transportation for students who are in danger of retention and students labeled at-risk. The applicants intend to offer robotics and coding and other extra-curriculars based upon student need and will fund all offered programs through the school’s annual budget.

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The applicant also intends to use after-school time programming as a tool for extending the learning day in ELA and mathematics.

GSA plans to provide a tiered intervention approach to serving students. However, there are several weaknesses to how the plan will be executed, including a potentially insufficient staffing model:

- The applicant states that families with disabilities will be notified “in real time” of changes made to their student’s IEP (pg. 47). However, families should be a part of IEP decisions and not just informed, in order to be IDEA compliant.
- There is only one special education teacher and one Special Programs Coordinator planned for Years 1 -3 in the budget (Attachment 28). It is unclear how one special education teacher will cover student IEP needs across grades K – 4.
- Despite GSA anticipating 50% of its students will be English Language Learners (ELL’s), the application states that, “GSA will implement a research-based LEP/ELL/MLL program model” without identifying or describing a specific model.
- Staffing of just one ELL Coordinator in years 1 and 2 to support potentially hundreds of students would likely be insufficient.

The proposed intended discipline measures are unclear and contradictory. The narrative of the application states GSA will integrate a positive behavioral intervention system rather than punitive discipline measures model, which will allow students to look at the positive aspects of self-correction (pg. 15). However, the provided discipline policy does not align with the stated goals of the applicant in the section narrative or in the section on culture – the discipline consequences are punitive and some of the listed offenses are subjective and lend themselves to cultural bias (pg. 15 & Attachment 10).

Overall, there are significant areas that lack detail, or have contradictory elements, which makes it difficult to ascertain the level of understanding the proposed board has about the complexity and potential difficulties of launching and operating a charter school.

## Educational Plan and Capacity: Analysis and Evaluator Comments

### Strengths

- A new elementary school in the Bellevue area would provide "much needed seats" due to population growth in the city (pg. 1).
- Annually, the community records a 5% increase in the population, growth that is fueled by immigrant families coming to the area. Between 2010 and 2017, 73% of the population growth was attributed to immigration (pg. 5). This represents a logical reason for the school to have a global focus.
- There has been a rise in STEM industries in Washington State, including the high-growth industries of aerospace, clean technology, information and communication technology, life science/global health, as well as maritime, and military/defense sectors (pg. 5). This represents a sensible reason for the school to have a STEM focus.
- The proposal outlines community engagement efforts including public forums, open houses with other schools, parent meetings with local organizations and faith groups with a focus on the immigrant community (pg. 11).
- The school would implement a tiered response to behavioral supports and seek to understand the underlying causes of student challenges (pg. 15).
- The school will utilize Parent Satisfaction/Family Engagement Surveys and the Education Equity Scorecard to provide a 360-degree view of the school's learning environment (p. 17).
- There were approximately 90 summer 2020 Zoom attendees that expressed interest in attending the school. However, over half of those parents were interested in middle and high school options (Attachment 3).
- Including the Tribal Sovereignty Curriculum demonstrates GSA's intention to nurture their students to be global learners and citizens, particularly by exposing children at an early age to a parallel cultures and issues related to oppression/exclusion by dominate cultures (pg. 31).
- The instructional strategies work with one another and support large and small group and individual engagement. This supports at-risk learners, scaffolding their individual confidence toward full inclusion into larger group settings (pgs. 36-37)
- In the capacity interview, the applicants stated they would have a STEM teacher in Year 1 to help embed content into the student day.
- The school would provide 2-4 weeks of summer remediation for at-risk students who missed "several benchmarks" or are at risk for retention in K-5 (p.50). These will be staffed by special education, general education, and ELL teachers.
- Knowledge of and ties to the community are evident in the descriptions of board member experience (pg. 67).
- During the capacity interview, board members shared the platform to provide responses based upon role and knowledge. Every board member present provided input and played to their strengths. The role of Kalika Curry as meeting facilitator during the performance task provided a preview of the strengths of the board members and the collaborative way they work together.
- One of the greatest strengths of the applicant is the commitment of the board members, reinforced

through the capacity interview, to creating a school for the immigrant and underserved populations in the community they wish to serve. Having taken over 40 hours of training as a board and engaging in ongoing community outreach, the board underscores that commitment.

### **Weaknesses**

- Messaging about the school refers to the school as an “Arabic STEM Public School” (Attachment 3) but there is no mention in the narrative about Arabic language or Arabic-culture specific educational programming.
- The number of students in Year 1 is 240 and expands to 336 in Year 2. Also, the school plans to recruit 72 students in 2nd grade in Year 1 which presents instructional and logistical challenges. The school plans to have 528 students by Year 4 (pg. 22). These high numbers of students in the first years of the school may present significant enrollment challenges to the school.
- A significant percentage of survey respondents who supported the school are looking for middle and high school, not elementary school, options (Attachment 3).
- Although the application discusses an “integrated STEM approach” there was little discussion of how STEM would be fully integrated throughout academic program or culture of the school.
- While the applicant states that the school will ensure its application process is accessible to all, there is little detail regarding how that will be accomplished other than through translation (pg. 23).
- When asked how the applicant estimated the population of special education students at 10%, the capacity interview panel members replied that they know the parents who are prepared to attend the school and can adjust that number based upon that knowledge. It is unclear if the applicant has fully considered how the student application and lottery processes may bring many unknown students to the school.
- In order to recruit the high numbers of students, the school needs a fully developed marketing plan with specific goals and targets for each marketing initiative and a team to carry out that marketing plan. However, description of the recruitment efforts are minimal and limited to: “GSA will engage in citywide outreach, including visits to head start programs, preschools and daycares to make parents aware of the option of applying to our school’s lottery, distributing information about the school in multiple languages. During the start-up year, we will hold open sessions for families to meet our team” (pg. 22).
- The description of the technology curriculum conveys no information about what teachers will teach, students would learn, or what would be assessed and how. This is the extent to which the technology curriculum is explained: “Technology education is at the heart of our integrated STEM approach to learning and will be incorporated into the curriculum of each subject area as appropriate. Global Science Academy contemplates technology education beginning in Kindergarten with students acquiring by the end of each grade level the grade-appropriate Technology standards. Per OSPI regulations, recommended assessments will be administered and reported annually” (pg. 36).
- The applicant proposes modifying curricula, based on incoming student data (though there will not be any for kindergartners), then developing project-based learning activities – all during the 2022 summer pre-service. It is unclear how this significant task could be accomplished during the summer pre-service before the school’s Year 1 (pgs. 31).
- It is unclear how project-based learning would be implemented schoolwide.

- Although the applicant states that the curriculum will be collaboratively aligned using an iterative protocol, the protocol is not identified (pg. 32). This process appears critical to the proposed school’s success and is repeated every nine weeks. For example, how the social studies curriculum, which includes diversity, career & technical education, the Sovereign Tribal History, as well as the history of Washington State (pgs. 34-35) will be collaboratively aligned in the Professional Learning Communities setting is unclear.
- While the applicant affirms that SEL must have a “strategic, systemic, and school-wide approach”, there is little description as to how this will occur (pg. 42). The applicant identifies a stand-alone program to support student resiliency but does not describe how teachers or other staff will implement or integrate the program (pg. 43).
- The applicant states that families with disabilities will be notified “in real time” of changes made to their student’s IEP (pg. 47). However, families should be a part of IEP decisions and not just informed, in order to be IDEA compliant.
- While there is a line item for “Afterschool Tutorial Services” in the 5 year budget, there is no line item for summer remediation programming which is stated as an offering (pg. 61 and Attachment 28).
- There is only one special education teacher planned for Years 1-3 in the budget (Attachment 28). It is unclear how one special education teacher will cover student IEP needs across grades K – 4 with 432 students, 10% of whom will have special needs and all of whom will be receiving ELA and mathematics simultaneously. In the capacity interview, the applicant stated that if student enrollment or demonstrated need exceeded the capacity the school would hire more staff, which would likely require more fundraising to cover additional positions.
- There is reference to a multi-tiered approach to differentiate instruction. However, there are few details of this MTSS process – how long students will spend at each level, etc. (pg. 54).
- Despite GSA expecting 50% of its students will be ELLs, the application states “GSA will implement a research-based LEP/ELL/MLL program model” without identifying or describing that model (pg. 57).
- The ELL assistance appears to be limited to Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE) instructional techniques and support of an ELL Specialist (pg. 58). Staffing of just one ELL Specialist will likely not be sufficient.
- The application states “GSA will undertake a training program for teachers who are directly involved with LEP, ELL and MLL students” without providing any details of that training program (pg. 58).
- The only learning geared for highly capable students is differentiating project-based learning activities (pg. 59).
- The provided discipline code (Attachment 10) does not align with the stated goals of the applicant in the section narrative or in the section on culture (pg. 15). Discipline consequences are punitive and have potential areas of potential cultural bias (Attachment 10). The possession of cell phones, improper attire, repeated small offenses, and any other behavior that school staff believe should receive a short-term suspensions is inconsistent for a school desiring inclusion.
- The proposal names seven proposed board members who possess an array of business, science, finance, higher ed, and tech backgrounds, but no K-12 education expertise. The applicants have not identified a school leader, though Dr. Tarim will help them source and onboard a CEO. There does not seem to be a concrete plan to continue the school design team’s role in the operation of the school, so it is unclear how the vision for the school will continue into implementation with this board.



- There is a general lack of detail around implementation planning, which makes it difficult to ascertain the level of understanding the proposed board has about the difficulties of operating a charter school. For example, starting a school with three grades and 240 students in Year 1 presents instructional and logistical challenges that the group did not seem to anticipate. There are a number of program pieces and staff positions that would likely be required to fully serve students with special education, language acquisition, and possibly trauma needs, that are not fully accounted for in the budget.
- Weaknesses in the application identify the lack of experience and knowledge of K-12 education by the founding board. The applicant panel responded to questions in the capacity interview that indicated a lack of understanding of charter school law when referencing enrollment exclusion of adjudicated youth, and special education identification. In addition, the applicant intends to write “new IEPs”, within 30 days, for students entering the proposed school with an IEP. There is no indication of data collection prior to such changes and it reinforces the lack of school operations knowledge by the founding board.

# ORGANIZATIONAL PLAN AND CAPACITY

Global Science Academy

PARTIALLY MEETS

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## Summary

There are some weaknesses in the currently described board and board structure. The applicant acknowledges the need to add capacity to the board, including in the areas of special education and elementary education expertise. The applicant sufficiently described the board's orientation towards governance, the roles of the governing board and how the board will interact with the proposed school.

While Mr. Bakr and Soner Tarim both participated in the capacity interview and the public forum, the rest of the individuals listed are not discussed in the submitted application materials. It is unclear exactly how they supported the development of the application or how they will support the school during its planning year and launch.

The organization chart demonstrates clear reporting lines. The school will have a CEO, Principal, Vice Principal, Student Support Specialist, and Operations Specialist to manage the separation of academic and operations responsibilities. In the capacity interview, the applicant stated that the CEO will assume the external-facing responsibilities of the school, such as fundraising and marketing, so that the principal can be the instructional leader.

The applicant intends to use the Marzano School Leader evaluation rubric for the principal's evaluation and the Danielson Framework for Teachers for teacher evaluations. Both tools are research-based (Attachment 22).

The applicant intends to recruit staff through the use of multiple media vehicles and intends to select a diverse staff that mirrors the school community.

However, there are significant inconsistencies with the schedule of events prior to, and early in, Year 1. These inconsistencies do not illustrate a solid understanding of the immense undertaking of successfully opening and operating a charter school.

- The start-up plan is generic and assigns responsibility for all tasks to the "CEO, principal, and team" which is insufficient to demonstrate the group's understanding of how to deploy capacity based on timelines, roles, etc. (Attachment 27).
- The professional development calendar describes a seven-day professional learning experience that includes a focus on each of the educational program terms (Attachment 23). However, during the capacity interview, the applicants stated that professional development will occur throughout the summer prior to opening in 2022.
- The timeline for hiring the principal and teaching staff is unrealistic. Given the hiring the principal is responsible for prior to the opening of the school, as well as the professional development and enculturation of staff, a start date of June 2022 for the principal is inadequate to complete all of the

tasks for beginning a new school year in Fall 2022. Ensuring the school is fully staffed by August 2022 is far too late for any of the staff to be fully trained and prepare for receiving students (pg. 85 and Attachment 27).

- Having the vice principal, SEL Coordinator, Special Program Coordinator and ELL Coordinator begin the same time as teachers means the programs they oversee may not be fully developed (pg. 91).
- During the capacity interview, the applicant team noted that teachers would participate in school activities during the summer, but without pay, to complete associated tasks. However, GSA would not start paying staff until September because "they were already being paid" by their previous employers.
- The professional development plan identifies the principal and vice-principal as the deliverers of summer professional development, requiring that they have expertise in each of the education program terms. However, the plan does not provide for their training.

The system of assessment lacks sufficient detail. The applicant proposes to use diagnostic, formative, interim, and summative assessments and provides a calendar of administration (pgs. 97 – 99). The process and steps for analyzing assessment data – who will do what when – are not included in the application. It is unclear who specifically will bear the logistical responsibilities for assessment administration, data collection, analysis, and distribution.

There is no detailed plan to support new teachers. Despite this statement “GSA fully acknowledges as a new school that attracting seasoned teachers with years of experience will not be common until the school has established itself in the Bellevue community” (pg. 90), there do not appear to be any special initiatives or supports provided to teachers new to the teaching profession – aside from the use of Professional Growth Plans which will be used for all teachers.

The applicant’s real estate plan is not fully developed. The total square footage needed for the school is identified. The number of classrooms, specialty rooms, administrative offices and other specific use spaces are included. The applicant intends to contract with New Ventures Group, a real-estate brokerage firm for support in seeking a facility. In the capacity interview, the applicant confirmed it is planning on leasing a facility, yet only paying for occupied space, increasing payment and occupancy as student enrollment grows – an assumption that may prove untenable.

The applicant intends to provide transportation to ensure students have access to the school and transportation is not a barrier. A transportation plan will be developed during the planning year (pg. 103).

The board will create safety, health, and security policies to ensure the well-being of students and staff. Policies will be in compliance with the Washington State School Staff Health Training Guide and the OSPI School Safety Center. All staff will be required to have a criminal background check and submit to fingerprinting (pgs. 103 -104). The list of compliance areas include mandatory reporting, Immunizations, CPR, AED, and first aid, Blood-borne pathogens, and others.

Overall, and similar to the education plan, the organizational plan lacks details and is marked by significant inconsistencies that would hamper the successful opening and operation of a charter school.

## Organizational Plan and Capacity: Analysis and Evaluator Comments

### Strengths

- The bylaws are complete and identify board size, officer duties, an appropriate set of standing committees including governance, finance, development, academic excellence, and leader(s) evaluation (Attachment 13).
- The founding board of the proposed school are a set of accomplished and capable individuals. Several team members have extensive experience working in higher education where they instruct and guide adults. Two board members have deep experience in finance and accounting and all board members have had managerial experience (pgs. 67-68).
- Most of the proposed trustees possess experience (personal, professional, or both) with the underrepresented and marginalized communities the school wants to serve.
- There will be at least two standing committees of the board: Finance and Education (pg. 76).
- Board dedication and commitment was evident in the capacity interview. During the interview, each board member's knowledge and skill set was displayed.
- School leadership will be trained in mediation strategies as a first means of solving concerns and issues (pg. 81) before a formal complaint policy comes into play.
- The applicant takes into consideration some of the cultural/linguistic differences in handling conflict by not requiring face-to-face discussions of the complaint circumstances with the parties involved and allowing for complaints to be handled in writing (pg. 82).
- The school is committed to hiring a diverse staff to reflect its students, families, and community (p. 85).
- Each teacher would have a personalized growth plan (PGP) which will inform their individual supports and EOY evaluation (pgs. 86-87).
- Applicant appropriately ties facility safety to a positive learning environment and commits to all city health and safety laws. It will document all policies related to safety and risk management, and go further to describe safety features for their facility that will be in place or be emplaced (pg. 103).
- Detailed, appropriate insurance coverage is outlined in Attachment 26.

### Weaknesses

- The current board members do not have expertise in K-12 education or the law.
- The grievance/complaint process is insufficient as it does not adequately address staff, student, or parent grievances/complaints and the process of reaching a mutually agreed upon resolution is not articulated. The applicant only provides for a course of action (or inaction) to be determined by the school leader or board member without direct contact with the complainant (pgs. 81-82).
- The only communication offered with the Bellevue School District (Attachment 18) occurred August

27, 2020 (the day prior to the submission of the application).

- This staffing decision to have a CEO is questionable, since the CEO’s primary responsibilities appear to be non-academic in an elementary school of approximately 560 students (pgs. 1, 85, 90). Many of these responsibilities could be handled by bringing on a director of operations instead or an operations specialist. In answering a question about the vision for 5th graders in the capacity interview, the board chair noted that the board may apply for a middle and high school. This clarifies the board’s reasoning regarding the CEO position. However, the position may not be necessary for this charter term.
- Having the vice principal, SEL Coordinator, Special Program Coordinator and ELL Coordinator begin the same time as teachers may prove challenging as the programs they are hired to oversee may not be fully developed (pg. 85).
- The timeline for hiring the principal and teaching staff is unrealistic (pg. 85). Given the hiring and training plan outlined in the application, a start date of June 2022 is inadequate time to complete all of the tasks for beginning a new school year, let alone opening a new school. It is unclear how a school that isn’t fully staffed until August 2022 will be prepared to receive students.
- The number of ELL and special education teachers is low for the anticipated size of the school in Years 1 and 2. The ELL Coordinator and Special education teacher are expected to manage their respective programs and provide services to a significant number of students (pg. 89).
- There will be just one ELL Coordinator for Years 1 and 2 which means the ELL Coordinator would be coordinating the support for 50% of all 335 students, or 168 ELL students in Year 2 (Attachment 21).
- Despite this statement “GSA fully acknowledges as a new school that attracting seasoned teachers with years of experience will not be common until the school has established itself in the Bellevue community” (pg. 90), the applicant did not provide information regarding specific supports for those who are new to the teaching profession.
- During the capacity interview, the applicant team noted that teachers would participate in school activities during the summer, but without pay, to complete associated tasks. However, GSA would not start paying staff until September because “they were already being paid” from their previous employers.
- There is no rationale for pay disparities in the salary schedule between general education and special education teachers, SEL and special education coordinators, and special area teachers and the school librarian (pg. 88).
- “The Principal will also provide the CEO with quarterly reports on the progress and achievement levels of students based on assessment and other data disaggregated by grade, ethnicity, poverty-level, special student population, among other factors, as well as a report on the support services, compliance, and financial status of the school” (pg. 90). Quarterly reporting is not frequent enough to keep the CEO and board informed about school performance.
- The process and steps for analyzing assessment data – who will do what when – are not included in

the application (pg. 100). It is unclear who will bear the logistical responsibilities for assessment administration, data collection, analysis, and distribution.

- The professional development plan identifies the principal and vice-principal as the deliverers of summer professional development, requiring that they have expertise in each of the education program terms (Attachment 23). However, the plan does not provide for their training.
- In the capacity interview, the applicant confirmed it is planning on leasing a facility, yet only paying for occupied space, increasing payment and occupancy as student enrollment grows. This may be unrealistic.
- The start-up plan is generic and assigns responsibility for all tasks to “CEO, principal, and team” which is insufficient to demonstrate the group’s understanding of how to deploy capacity based on timeline, role, etc. Descriptions of tasks are generally one line with concomitant timeframes of generally one-two months. This does not illustrate a solid understanding of the immense undertaking of opening a charter school (Attachment 27).
- From the provided biographies, it is unclear which (if any) of the board members have experience related to facilities management or acquisition experience.

# FINANCIAL PLAN AND CAPACITY

Global Science Academy

PARTIALLY MEETS

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## Summary

The applicant group possesses adequate financial capacity to oversee a charter school. At least two of the proposed board members have strong financial management backgrounds, including expertise in accounting, finance, tax laws, risk assessments, audit, internal control, compliance, and corporate governance.” If approved, they would be supported by a CEO, operations manager, and a back-office support provider such as Olympic Educational Services District (OESD).

The limitations of the application are evident in the budget. The choices made in developing the budget, where resources are allocated and where they are missing, indicates a lack of knowledge and experience with school operations. Taken together, these weaknesses suggest the group is not fully prepared to open and operate a high-quality charter public school.

## Financial Plan and Capacity: Analysis and Evaluator Comments

### Strengths

- A strength of the application is the knowledge and experience of the founding board members in the areas of accounting and finance. Section 28, Financial Management Capacity, articulates a solid understanding of accepted accounting practices. Two of the board members have significant experience in finance, including a CPA that has over 25 years of professional experience in audit, risk management, and governance (pg. 115).
- The budget and budget narrative align to the application narrative and are designed to fund the program as presented. All of the assumptions made in the application are clearly identified in the narrative.
- Although gifts and donations make up a significant portion of the start-up budget, once the school is operational, no gifts or grants are included in the budget (Attachment 28).
- The school will not operate with a deficit in any year (Attachment 28).
- "GSA will establish a Finance Committee by the first full board meeting. This committee will be responsible for selecting an audit firm on an annual basis, reviewing the financial policies and procedures manual on an annual basis, approving the annual budget, and working with the School's finance team to review the monthly financial statements." (p.112).

### Weaknesses

- Staffing is inadequate to the tasks identified by the applicant, especially regarding special education and ELL services. The budget narrative (Attachment 29) identifies the following: 1) In Year 2, the proposed school expects to serve 34 special education students (10% of enrollment) with 1 special education teacher and 1 coordinator who must oversee the entire program and support regular education teachers in understanding and operationalizing IEPs. 2) In Year 2, the proposed school intends to serve 168 ELL (50% of enrollment) students with 1 ELL teacher and 1 ELL coordinator. 3) The school principal, tasked with managing the total instructional program will not be hired until four months before the start of the school year, while the CEO whose duties are primarily operational will have a 10-month runway.
- The applicant includes \$200,000 in gifts within the start-up budget but does not provide reasonable evidence that the funds will materialize. The application states that there is "a committed pledge from the founding Board of Trustees of \$200,000" however, in Attachment 31 it appears that this is a pledge to fundraise that amount from outside sources. The applicant provides no indication of contingency planning should a shortfall occur in the start-up year.
- The applicant assumes the facility lease payments will not begin until October 2022 (Attachment 29) although occupation of the building would need to take place at least four months prior to that to ready the building for students, install hardware and other equipment, and execute minor repairs or renovations. This reliance on negotiation of such favorable terms for the school may be unrealistic and the applicant provides no evidence that this can be realized.



- Facility lease amounts are based on “Washington state averages” as the applicants have not identified any potential spaces upon which to base real costs. They also assume they can apportion rent based only on the space they need as the program scales. These estimates could be dramatically underestimated if that arrangement is not available.
- In the capacity interview, the applicant group acknowledges that they had to make tough decisions on staffing decisions - for example, which positions to prioritize in years 1 and 2- because of budget concerns. If the applicants are able to fundraise significant funds they would add positions and also raise the level of funding for professional development programs and salaries, etc.
- It is unclear if staff salaries are competitive with local districts to attract and retain talent.
- The fundraising plan is fully lacking in detail about strategies, target donors, events, goals, etc. (Attachment 32).
- The financial responses avoid issues such as planning around potential enrollment variance with statements such as “enrollment targets are carefully designed, and we do not anticipate to have enrollment variance” (Attachment 29).

# EXISTING OPERATORS

Global Science Academy

**NOT APPLICABLE**



# EVALUATION TEAM BIOGRAPHIES

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## **Adam Aberman, Team Lead**

Adam Aberman 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 17 years, Adam has assessed over 250 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. Adam has led teams of reviewers of charter school applications, submitting the finalized application reviews to boards of education.

Recently, Adam worked with the Tennessee State Board of Education to lead its strategic planning and goal-setting process and is currently helping lead the Orleans Parish School Board's new charter petition evaluation process. 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 is also the founder, former board member and current board member emeritus of [www.icouldbe.org](http://www.icouldbe.org), the non-profit Internet-based career mentoring program that has served over 25,000 nationally since 2000.

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.

## **Gayle Burnett, Evaluator**

Gayle Burnett has been leading and facilitating courageous conversations regarding diversity, race, and equity for much of her lifetime. She is the co-author of *Peace in Everyday Relationships* (Hunter House Publishers, 2003), a fellow alum of Harvard's Strategic Data Project, and a certified Gallup Strengths Coach. Gayle's career choices have been diverse. She was as an assistant vice president and analyst for a Wall Street clearinghouse bank in the international markets of Singapore, Australia and London, a past partner and principal of Inter-Change Consultants, from 1990 to the 2004, she worked with a wide array of diversity and leadership clients, including Ernst & Young, Lucent Technologies, AT&T and the NCAA. More recently, Gayle served the Atlanta Public Schools by developing leadership programming, providing research and analysis to senior leaders, and supporting and facilitating the development of innovative learning environments in several capacities, including the Executive Director of the Office of Innovation. Finally, she worked with The Rensselaerville Institute as the Special Projects Guru & Interim President, supporting that organization's transition of leadership while maintaining excellence in performance. Gayle holds an MA in Economics from the City University of New York.

## **Andra Maughan, Evaluator**

Andra Maughan has expertise as a school leader both in the public charter school sector and in the public district sector. She is currently an Assistant Director for Inclusive Education in the Kent School District (KSD). Prior to joining KSD, she was the Head of School at Rainier Valley Leadership Academy, the Principal of Excel Public Charter School, a Principal in Seattle Public Schools for 3 years and an Assistant Principal at Chief Sealth International High School for 3 years.

As a school leader, she has experience leading schools designated as Title 1, Dual Language, and International in addition to her work as a school leader in the charter sector. She co-led the transition for Rainier Valley Leadership Academy in their amendment to their charter and separation from Green Dot Public Schools and partnered with community-based organizations to improve and increase access to programming and services for scholars and families. She is passionate about serving all students and has worked to ensure equitable access to opportunities for students.

Prior to becoming a school administrator, she was a special education consultant, a special education teacher, and taught in South Korea for a year. She holds her Principal's Certificate from the University of Washington's Danforth Educational Leadership Program, her Masters in Special Education from the University of Washington, her Bachelor's Degree from Central Washington University, and holds a Certificate of Education Finance from Georgetown University.

She is from Eastern Washington (Richland) via Helena, MT, but has spent her entire professional career in the Seattle area with a focus on schools in South Seattle.

## **Dr. Gil Mendoza, Evaluator**

Dr. Gil Mendoza is a partner in a leadership consulting firm, Transform Through Team Trust (T4). He retired in 2019 from Washington state service with the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), where he served in several Assistant Superintendent Roles and up to state Deputy Superintendent. He served on the Washington State Charter School Commission as the state Superintendent of Public Instruction's designee.

Prior to OSPI he spent his public-school career as a teacher, counselor, principal and central office administrator, up to the district superintendent level. He has held senior leadership roles in both small and large districts, and within the 2-year college system, serving on the transition team for a newly created technical college.

Dr. Mendoza has held numerous elected and appointed leadership positions in state professional organizations and service, including several other individually, governor appointed assignments to the Council on Vocational Education, the Professional Educator Standards Board, and the Washington Student Achievement Council.

His undergraduate degree with teaching credentials in both basic and special education is from Gonzaga University. His Master's degree is from the University of Washington, in Vocational and Special Education, and his Doctorate in Educational Leadership from Seattle University.

Dr. Mendoza served as a commissioned officer and captain in the United States Army, worked in the computer software services industry, and with the Washington State Department of Corrections prior to beginning his career in public education.

## **Heather Wendling, Evaluator**

Heather Wendling is the Director of Learning at the National Association for Charter School Authorizers (NACSA). This position allows her to leverage her perspectives as an educator, attorney, parent, and advocate for quality schools for all kids. Heather previously served as a Senior School Evaluator and the Director for New Charters at the SUNY Charter Schools Institute. At SUNY, Heather contributed to the oversight of all 147 SUNY authorized charter schools, evaluated their qualitative and quantitative data, and ultimately made determinations about the strength of their academic programs to inform their respective renewal recommendations. She also produced the annual request for proposals, provided guidance and technical support for potential applicants, served as the lead academic reviewer for all new charter proposals through multiple levels of evaluative analysis, and ultimately produced comprehensive summaries of findings to support recommendations for charter approval to the SUNY Charter School Committee trustees. After charter approval, Heather also designed systems and strategies to support the 32 schools approved during her tenure through planning, launch, and their first year of operation to facilitate the strongest possible start and the most optimal outcomes for students.

Outside of her full-time position, Heather provides a variety of consulting services for select clients. Recently, Heather helped establish the Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge's initiative to authorize the first charter schools in the Middle East by designing a comprehensive performance framework to infuse clarity and accountability in an emerging sector.

Heather earned her BA in Political Science from SUNY Stony Brook, her MST degree from Pace University Graduate School of Education, and her JD from the University of Connecticut School of Law.