

# Charter Application Recommendations to Denver Board of Education

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District Accountability Committee 2015

## The committee would like to thank:

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# Banneker-Jemison STEM Academy

Strengths	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• grassroots community school proposed by community members</li><li>• strong cultural awareness and commitment to fostering pride in students of their diverse backgrounds</li><li>• eloquent description of culture</li><li>• passionate school leader, executive director, and board of directors</li><li>• unique opportunity to provide STEM program for Five Points/Curtis Park Neighborhoods</li><li>• diverse professional backgrounds on the board of directors also members of the community</li><li>• vision for STEM curriculum is strong</li><li>• identified CORE knowledge as curriculum, a research based program with strong results in other schools</li><li>• current building identified as school site</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• although vision for STEM program strong, unable to articulate detailed student program in application or interview</li><li>• ED, proposed school leader, and various staff members are currently running a low performing educational program (HOPE Online Learning Center)</li><li>• budget issues need to be addressed</li><li>• instructional leader accountability not addressed</li><li>• weak description by the board of directors on how they would hold executive director accountable</li><li>• low potential student support demonstrated by few intent to enroll forms</li><li>• concerns about the school's ability to address the needs of English Language Learners and adhere to Denver Consent Decree</li></ul>

**Overall Recommendation and Rationale: Deny Application** The committee was impressed by the passion and culturally responsive approach of the proposed founders of Banneker-Jemison STEM. However, the academic program outlined in the proposal was lacking in non-STEM programming. In addition, the committee does not feel as though there are adequate accountability measures in place to ensure a strong financial and instructional future.

# Denver School of Science and Technology - STEM & Humanities

Strengths	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• strong academic program exemplified through current schools' results</li><li>• strong infrastructure to support a network of schools</li><li>• active demonstration of reflection on current practices to improve their program for kids and families</li><li>• strong financial health and budget</li><li>• strong parent and community support from current schools' communities</li><li>• strong collaboration amongst teachers in current schools and across schools</li><li>• teacher career pathways that keep the best teachers in front of students</li><li>• strong board presence demonstrated through each board member sitting on an accountability committee</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• wary of approving so many schools so far in advance (up to 2021 school year)</li><li>• creating a new program that focuses on humanities rather than STEM<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ creation of humanities curriculum pending approval of charter</li></ul></li><li>• ensuring that best practices and strong results transfer from school to school</li></ul>

**Overall Recommendation and Rationale: Approve Application -** The committee approves the opening of a new DSST school for the 17-18 school year. We are concerned however about approving so many schools so far in advance. There is no current developed programming for the humanities program, the committee recommends that the humanities program be further developed prior to approval.

# DSST Concerns

- 8 schools in application for approval, projected roll out till 2021
- No developed curriculum for Humanities
- Location of school expansion is unknown
- Community engagement not part of planning
- Capacity of DSST for expansion
- What is the DPS long term plan for single model saturation

# Downtown Denver Expeditionary Learning Middle School

Strengths	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● strong proposed instructional leader and board of directors</li><li>● strong parent support shown through letters and parent presence at interview</li><li>● strong student culture exemplified through plan and letters of support from parents</li><li>● unique and strong partnership with the Central Business District</li><li>● strong financial awareness exemplified by elementary school and proposed middle school budget</li><li>● early application shows initiative to provide a need parents are asking for and allowing adequate time for planning a middle school program</li><li>● provide an expeditionary learning middle school program for other EL elementary schools to feed into</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● First year of PARCC assessment data not yet available due to DDES only being in its 3 year</li><li>● current student demographics does not reflect the Downtown Denver community as a whole, heavily reflects the Central Business District<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ would like to see additional outreach and integration with the surrounding communities in order to meet the needs of a more diverse population</li></ul></li><li>● middle school facility identified but not shared with interview committee</li></ul>

Overall Recommendation and Rationale: **Approve Application** Committee would like to see additional outreach and integration of FRL students.

# University Prep

Strengths	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● committed to gathering and implementing community input to ensure successful turnaround</li><li>● strong outreach and support to current Pioneer staff regardless of charter approval shows a commitment to doing what is best for kids at Pioneer</li><li>● strong community representation on the board of directors</li><li>● responsive to ELL needs and consent decree shown by:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ dedicated Dean of ELL</li><li>○ community engagement coordinator</li></ul></li><li>● strong coaching for teachers to ensure quality instruction is happening in all classrooms</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● loss of a preschool program for this community</li><li>● having to tailor current U Prep program to a new community is going to be challenging</li><li>● charter turnaround has never been done before in Denver</li></ul>

Overall Recommendation and Rationale: **Approve Application**

## Overall Comments and Concerns:

- Highest quality applications
- Thorough review from DAC and District re: ELL
- Collaborative interviews and learning from each other
- District plan for Charter Schools
- Learning from Charter School experience
- Applicants motivation for opening a Charter School in Denver