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Absolute Priority — Best Practices for Charter School Authorizers

Under DEW’s leadership, Ohio has developed a robust system of authorizer oversight. The enactment of HB 2 in 2015, which strengthened the state’s authorizer accountability structures while preserving essential school-level autonomy, was a watershed.¹ Ohio’s approach to promoting best authorizing practices includes clear standards, an authorizer evaluation process, accountability for authorizers based on the evaluation, and technical assistance.

As a threshold matter, Ohio state law requires entities seeking to authorize charter schools to obtain DEW approval (Ohio Rev. Code § 3314.015(B)(1)). Consistent with the approval standards set forth in Section 3301-102-03 of the Ohio Administrative Code, DEW has developed a Community School Sponsor Application that requires entities to demonstrate eligibility, a record of financial stability, the internal capacity to provide high-quality oversight and technical assistance, and the ability to adhere to quality authorizing practices and standards (Appendix F-1). Applications are scored using a Review Instrument (Appendix F-2) according to which DEW personnel assign ratings on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (Not Addressed) to 4 (Fully Developed) on 32 indicators. Applicants must receive at least 96 out of the 128 available points in order to be approved to serve as an authorizer. Approved entities enter into a contract with DEW that outlines the parties’ respective rights and responsibilities, details how the authorizer will be held accountable, and clarifies the authorizer’s obligations to DEW and the state (Ohio Rev. Code § 3314.015(B)(1); Ohio Admin. Code § 3301-102-04).

After having approved an entity’s application to serve as an authorizer, DEW is required to “monitor and evaluate . . . the effectiveness of any and all sponsors in their oversight of the schools with which they have contracted” (Ohio Rev. Code § 3314.015(A)(3)). Accordingly, DEW conducts evaluations of authorizers across three dimensions: (1) academic performance,

(2) compliance with all applicable laws and rules, and (3) adherence to quality authorizing practices. For the “quality practices” component of the evaluation, DEW uses a rubric that incorporates 33 individual standards grouped within six critical areas (1) Commitment and Capacity; (2) Application Process and Decision-Making; (3) Performance Contracting; (4) Oversight and Evaluation; (5) Termination and Renewal Decision-Making; and (6) Technical Assistance (Appendix F-3). These “quality practices” evaluation criteria are based on national authorizing standards, specifically those developed by the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA). DEW issues separate ratings on each of the three evaluation system dimensions, and each dimension is equally weighted. The three ratings are then used to determine an authorizer’s overall rating, which — pursuant to Ohio Rev. Code § 3314.016(B)(6) — can be Exemplary, Effective, Ineffective, or Poor.

An authorizer’s overall rating plays a central role in determining whether it is permitted to authorize additional charter schools, and — ultimately — whether it retains its authorizing powers. Entities with an overall rating of Exemplary or Effective for at least three consecutive years are required to be evaluated only once every three years (Ohio Rev. Code § 3314.016(B)(7)(b)). Authorizers rated as Ineffective are required to develop quality improvement plans focused on addressing deficiencies and improving authorizing practices (Ohio Rev. Code § 3314.016(B)(7)(c)). Any authorizer that receives an overall rating of “Poor” has its authorizing authority revoked. DEW may also place an authorizer on probation; implement a Corrective Action Plan; or revoke its authorizing powers if it fails to implement its quality improvement plan, allows a charter school to incur significant financial losses, or knowingly violates federal or state law (Ohio Admin. Code § 3301-102-07). For the purposes of this CSP proposal, a school’s eligibility for subgrant funding is predicated, in part, on its authorizer maintaining a rating of

Exemplary or Effective. Ohio law requires DEW to provide annual trainings on the authorizer evaluation system (Ohio Rev. Code § 3314.016(B)(6)). Accordingly, DEW updates and publishes Technical Documentation (Appendix F-4), an Overview Presentation (Appendix F-5), and a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) resource² each year.

This commitment to quality authorizing has had a significant impact on the overall quality of Ohio’s charter school sector. Over the past decade, the number of approved and active authorizers in Ohio has dwindled from 67 down to 19. In 2015–16, the first year in which ratings were awarded, only 8% of authorizers (5/65) were rated as Exemplary or Effective; following the 2023–24 school year, 100% (19/19) were rated as either Exemplary or Effective. With a clear mandate to maintain portfolios of high-quality schools, authorizers moved assertively to close low-performing schools and shuttered over 100 schools between 2016 and 2022. These strides towards increased authorizer accountability had a corresponding impact on sector-wide performance; in the years immediately following the enactment of HB 2, Ohio students attending traditional brick-and-mortar charter schools in Grades 4–8 (i.e., the precise types of schools that will be eligible for a subgrant through this CSP project) made significant gains on Math and ELA assessments relative to observationally similar traditional public school students.³

As detailed in Section C.3, Ohio will use CSP set-aside funds to support continuous improvement efforts within need areas identified through the authorizer evaluation process.

Competitive Preference Priorities

CPP 1 — At Least One Authorized Public Chartering Agency Other than an LEA

Ohio state law permits a host of non-LEA entities to authorize charter schools. Pursuant to Ohio Rev. Code § 3314.02(C)(d–g), entities permitted to serve as charter school authorizers include regional educational service centers (ESCs), state universities, and “education-oriented”

nonprofits. DEW also serves as an authorizer through its Office of Ohio School Sponsorship. During the 2024–25 school year, 67% (12/18) of Ohio’s active authorizers were entities other than LEAs, and 96% (327/340) of Ohio’s charter schools were overseen by a non-LEA authorizer: 26 by DEW, 72 by an ESC, 228 by a nonprofit, and one by a state university.

CPP 2 — Equitable Financing

Ohio has taken numerous steps to generate funding parity between charter schools and traditional public schools. The 2019 creation of the Quality Community Schools Support Fund (QCSSF) represented an unprecedented effort to provide additional state dollars to support high-performing charter schools. Eligibility for QCSSF funding is predicated on schools satisfying two principal performance criteria — they must (1) receive a four- or five-star “value-added growth rating, and (2) earn a performance index score higher than their local district for two consecutive years — and enrolling a student body composed predominantly of economically disadvantaged students. The amount of funding appropriated to the QCSSF increased substantially in FY24, with supplemental funding amounts increasing on a year-over-year basis from \$1,416 to \$3,000 per economically disadvantaged student and from \$809 to \$2,250 per non-economically disadvantaged student. A methodologically rigorous analysis conducted in 2024 determined that schools qualifying for QCSSF funding have seen statistically significant improvements in student progress in ELA and Math (gaining, respectively, an estimated 14 and 12 additional days of learning annually) and concomitant reductions in chronic absenteeism.⁴

In general, Ohio’s school funding formula works to equalize funding by providing additional state dollars to entities such as charter schools that do not have access to local sources of revenue. The funding formula is calculated based on student enrollment with supplemental funding provided based on specific student demographics. Additional weighted funding is

provided on a per-pupil basis for various student types and purposes including students with disabilities (six categories), English Learners, economically disadvantaged students, and students participating in career-technical education programs. Both districts and charters received a 12 percent boost in state foundation aid between FY23 and FY25. In a novel effort to create even greater funding equity, HB 33 (2023) introduced an “Equity Supplement” that provides brick-and-mortar charter schools with an additional \$650 per-pupil on an annual basis.

Ohio has put in place several other targeted measures to ensure charter schools are equipped to meet the evolving needs of their students. Charter schools that elect to provide their own transportation services receive supplemental funding (Ohio Rev. Code § 3317.0212). Ohio ensures that charter schools receive, in a prompt manner, their appropriate share of federal funds. Payments for Title I, IDEA, and other federal funding streams are computed and paid directly to charter schools in the same way that funds are distributed to traditional public schools. Special calculation formulas ensure that new and significantly expanding charter schools receive appropriate allocations. Charter schools also receive state funding in a timely fashion, with the FY25 Payment Schedule (Appendix F-6) depicting the timeline on which charter schools receive monthly foundation aid installments directly from the state.

CPP 3 — Best Practices to Improve Struggling Schools and LEAs

The implementation and expansion of charter schools in Ohio has contributed to overall improvements throughout the state’s education system. A 2024 study found that enrollment increases within Ohio’s charter sector have had a positive impact on test scores and graduation rates for *all public school students* across the state including those attending traditional public schools.⁵ This finding speaks to Ohio’s commitment to using best practices from charter schools to help improve struggling schools and LEAs.

Charter schools have shared best practices directly with traditional public school districts struggling to educate high-need student populations. Ohio Rev. Code § 3311.86 establishes a process through which neighboring district and charter schools may come together to form a Municipal School District Transformation Alliance (MSDA). Pursuant to that law, the Cleveland Transformation Alliance was established as a standalone nonprofit dedicated to creating an integrated system in which all partnering district and charter schools have been held accountable to high standards of school performance and student achievement. Building on a common definition of “high-quality” that speaks to the specific needs of Cleveland families and students, the Alliance has been responsible for (1) monitoring, publishing, and distributing an annual report on the quality of all of Cleveland’s schools (district and charter) that includes data disaggregated by race, income, English Language status, and other relevant factors; (2) implementing ongoing, consistent, and two-way communication and engagement with students, families, educators, and other stakeholders about high-quality education; and (3) raising awareness about available high-quality educational options in the city and how to access them. The Alliance — which on March 31, 2025, transferred responsibility for carrying out its core mission to its constituent partner organizations — has served as a trusted convener of individuals and organizations, formalizing a structure within which best practices from high-performing charter schools can be disseminated throughout the city’s educational system. In the seven years following the Alliance’s formation, the Cleveland Metropolitan School District’s high school graduation rate increased by 16 percentage points, and the number of graduates requiring remediation in post-secondary Math or ELA decreased by 23 percentage points.

A host of other collaborative efforts have been undertaken to support districts and schools struggling to engage and educate at-risk students. Utica Shale Academy is a dropout prevention

and recovery school with a focus on workforce development for students in the oil and gas, welding, and manufacturing sectors in the Appalachian area of Ohio. The school was founded in collaboration with Southern Local School District, which has benefited from an increased capacity to engage at-risk students interested in credential programs through career-connected learning opportunities and industry partnerships. Additionally, a joint effort between ACE Community Academy and Cardinal Local Schools in Geauga County to identify effective strategies for reengaging at-risk students who have disconnected from their educations has led to the development of a novel weekly schedule that features three days of classroom instruction paired with two days of hands-on learning in droning and welding. And the board of the Greater Ohio Virtual School (GOVS) includes superintendents from the public school districts served by the school, a mutually beneficial governance structure that allows district leaders both to share recommendations related to rigor and accessibility with GOVS and to learn about best practices for reengaging at-risk students in a virtual setting such as periodic in-person “tutoring” hours that feature individualized academic and wraparound support.

Ohio’s charter school authorizers are brokers of best-practice transmission. Authorizers have a contractual obligation to help the struggling schools in their portfolios and frequently draw on effective practices from high-performing charter schools when providing the required technical assistance (TA). Districts and educational service centers that serve as charter authorizers are particularly well-positioned to support cross-sector learning opportunities and to leverage best practices from charter schools for the benefit of struggling public schools. DEW also supports 16 State Support Teams (SSTs) that collaborate with schools, families, and regional partners to improve outcomes for all students by providing capacity-building support in the areas of leadership, team development, and instructional practices. Because SSTs facilitate

peer-to-peer networks and provide TA to all public schools, they are able to share best practices in special education, early childhood, and literacy both from and with charter schools.

CPP 4 — Charter School Facilities

Ohio provides charter schools with more than one mechanism of support for facilities.

Funding for Facilities. In recognition of the unique challenges faced by charter schools in securing and maintaining appropriate facilities, Ohio’s public school funding formula provides a \$1,000 per-pupil facilities subsidy for each student attending a brick-and-mortar charter school. This amount represents a \$750-per-student increase since FY19.⁶ Ohio allocates over \$80 million annually to charter school facilities through this funding mechanism.⁷ Using state capital appropriations, the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission has also completed two rounds of grant awards under the Community School Classroom Facilities Grant. This competitive opportunity allows charter schools meeting Ohio’s definition of high-performing to apply for state funding to pay for facility purchase, construction, or major renovation. The program has awarded \$21 million in funding to 12 charter schools since its creation in 2015.

Right of First Refusal to Purchase Public School Buildings. Ohio Rev. Code § 3313.411 requires public school districts to offer any unused school facility to the governing authority of a charter school for its appraised fair market value before it can be sold to other entities. State law defines a facility as “unused” if it (a) has not been used for school operations (i.e., either instructional or administrative) for one year, or (b) if it is an instructional-use facility in which less than 60 percent was used for “direct academic instruction” during the previous year. High-performing charter schools (i.e., those that earned at least three stars on the state’s performance index and at least four stars on the state’s value-added growth measure on the most recent Report Card) are afforded priority in the sale or lease of any property by a school district.

CPP 5 — Serving At-Risk Students

Charter schools in Ohio serve educationally disadvantaged students at disproportionately high rates. Over 80% of Ohio charter school students are economically disadvantaged, a percentage that significantly exceeds the statewide rate of 50.4%. Ohio charter schools also enroll students with disabilities (17.9% to 16.4%) and English Learners (6.0% to 4.3%) at rates exceeding statewide averages for those demographic groups.

Ohio’s uncommon commitment to supporting charter schools serving at-risk students is evidenced through its system of “dropout prevention and recovery” charter schools. In 2024–25, Ohio recognized 82 of these schools, which either (a) operate a drug recovery program in cooperation with a court, or (b) enroll the majority of their students through a dropout prevention and recovery program targeted toward students who are either a full grade behind their cohort-age peers or experiencing “crises that significantly interfere with their academic progress such that they are prevented from continuing their traditional programs” (Ohio Admin. Code § 3301-102-10). These programs are required to develop an individual career plan for each student that entails either enrollment in a two-year degree program, acquisition of a business or industry credential, or commencement of an apprenticeship and to provide “counseling and support” related to the implementation of that plan for the balance of the student’s high school experience.

To ensure these programs exist within an appropriately supportive regulatory environment, Ohio state law requires DEW to fashion an alternative accountability framework for dropout prevention and recovery charter schools (Ohio Rev. Code § 3314.017). Accordingly, the Dropout Prevention and Recovery (DPR) Community School Report Card (Appendix F-7) includes four components (Achievement, Gap Closing, Graduation, and Progress) that are used to calculate an overall rating. Rather than the 1–5 Star scale that characterizes the standard report

card, the DPR Report Card uses a three-tier designation system (Exceeds Standards, Meets Standards, Does Not Meet Standards) that has been tailored to reflect the discrete needs of the more than 20,000 students enrolled in these programs (Ohio Admin. Code § 3301-102-12).

State law also requires DEW to implement a Dropout Prevention and Recovery Advisory Council that provides a forum for communication and collaboration for operators and authorizers of DPR schools (Ohio Rev. Code § 3314.381). The Advisory Council convenes regular public meetings to inform the public of any initiatives, policies, or guidelines related to DPR programs. The Department has appointed an individual to serve as a dropout prevention and recovery liaison to facilitate the sharing of best practices and to provide targeted TA.

Ohio also actively promotes comprehensive career counseling services in all high schools. State law requires each public school, including charters, to establish a “policy on career advising” that prepares students for transitions from high school to post-secondary destinations and provides them with information about career fields that require either post-secondary course credit or industry-recognized credentials (Ohio Rev. Code § 3313.6020). The law requires schools to develop a “Student Success Plan” for any student identified as being at risk of dropping out that addresses the student’s academic and career pathway to graduation and the role of career-technical education, competency-based education, and experiential learning when appropriate. DEW has curated a Career Advising Toolkit (Appendix F-8) aligned to the state’s Career Connections Framework that ranges from Career Awareness in Grades K–5 to Career Exploration in Grades 6–8 to Career Planning in Grades 9–12 (Appendix F-9).

In accordance with the best practices outlined in the Career Advising Toolkit, charter schools throughout Ohio have developed, refined, and sustained effective Career Advising Policies. For example, each high school student at Concept Schools, a high-performing charter

network with 20 campuses across Ohio, attends College & Career Fairs, receives one-on-one career guidance, and has access to Naviance, a college- and career-readiness platform that helps students with career planning. In Cleveland, Breakthrough Schools provides Grade 8 students with personalized college and career counseling, a proactive approach that equips students with the tools and knowledge needed to enter high school with a clear plan and a strong sense of direction. Breakthrough graduates are also eligible to participate in the Beyond Breakthrough program, which provides alumni with direct access to partner employers and job opportunities in high-demand industries such as construction, manufacturing, technology, and engineering.

Invitational Priority

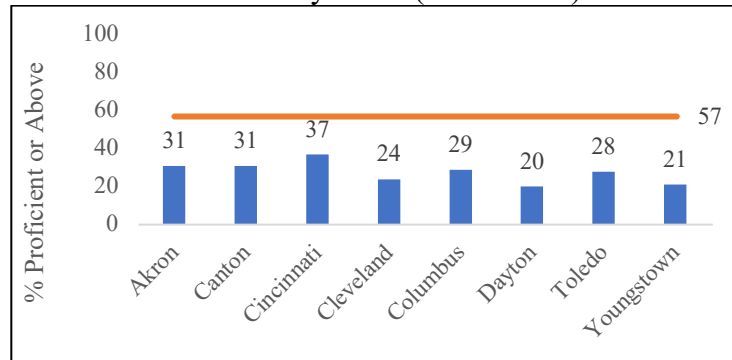
DEW strongly supports the creation of innovative charter school models that offer parents a range of options from which to choose. Through this CSP project, DEW will encourage the development of such models by awarding Competitive Preference Priority points to prospective subgrantees that (1) plan to serve a community that currently has no meaningful high-quality school option; (2) plan to operate in a rural community; (3) plan to implement a program whose key design elements (e.g., STEM, classical and civics education, career and technical education, etc.) are not currently available within the target community; (4) plan to develop models specifically tailored to students with particularly unique needs (e.g., students with disabilities, military-connected students, or Native American students); and/or (5) plan to operate a high school. To hold itself accountable for executing a CSP project that aligned with the Department of Education's vision, DEW has developed performance measures (Table 1) that assess the degree to which subgrantees are satisfying these priorities and will engage in continuous improvement efforts throughout the grant period (Section D.2) to further encourage the development of innovative models that respond to student need and parental preferences.

A. Quality of the Project Design

A.1. Conceptual Framework

The need for high-performing public schools in Ohio, particularly within the state’s urban school districts (the “Ohio Eight”), is well-established. In 2024, composite proficiency rates on state assessments in each of the Ohio Eight cities dramatically lagged the statewide average of 57 percent; students in Cleveland, Youngstown, and Dayton were more than 30 percentage points less likely than their peers across the state to meet or exceed grade-level standards (Figure 1).

Figure 1. 2024 State Assessment Proficiency Rates (Grades 5–8)



Lackluster literacy and numeracy outcomes within these cities lead to poor post-secondary outcomes; within each of these districts, the four-year graduation, college enrollment, and college completion rates fall below the statewide average.

Particularly since the enactment of HB 2 in 2015, brick-and-mortar charter schools have offered students within these districts a more reliable path to college- and career-readiness. One researcher, using an empirically rigorous approach comparable to the one utilized by researchers at the Center for Research on Education Outcomes (CREDO), found that students attending Ohio brick-and-mortar charter schools between 2016 and 2019 made “significant gains on state math and ELA exams when compared to district students of similar backgrounds.”⁸ Notably, the study also found that attending a charter school also led to increases in attendance and decreases in incidents leading to exclusionary discipline.

Emerging from the pandemic, these brick-and-mortar charter schools continued to position their students for superior post-secondary outcomes; a follow-up study in 2024 revealed that students attending charter schools gained approximately 13 additional days of learning in ELA and 9 additional days of learning in Math relative to their observationally similar traditional public school peers.⁹ An analysis of 2024 state assessment data reinforces these findings: relative to district schools in the Ohio Eight, brick-and-mortar charter schools in those cities attained higher proficiency rates, achieved a higher average performance index score on the state Report Card, and were more likely to receive a four- or five-star Progress rating.¹⁰

The design of Ohio's CSP project is rooted in these research findings that suggest that the expansion of high-quality, brick-and-mortar charter school options is highly likely to lead to improved educational outcomes for high-need students throughout the state. As seen in the Ohio CSP Logic Model (Figure 2), the project will pursue three essential objectives: (1) expand opportunity for high-need students by increasing the number of high-quality, brick-and-mortar charter school seats across the state; (2) promote college- and career-readiness within Ohio charter schools; and (3) strengthen the overall quality of Ohio's public education ecosystem.

Ohio's unwavering focus on authorizer quality over the past decade has led directly to meaningful improvements in student learning outcomes for students attending brick-and-mortar charter schools.¹¹ Through this CSP project, DEW will develop a New Authorizer Training Institute and create an Authorizer Improvement Network. These efforts will further enhance the quality of Ohio charter authorizing, allowing more students to enroll at schools being held accountable to high academic, operational, and financial standards while simultaneously having their autonomy respected and receiving support for continuous improvement efforts.

Figure 2. Ohio CSP Logic Model

Ohio CSP Logic Model				
Objective 1: Expand opportunity for high-need students by increasing the number of high-quality, brick-and-mortar charter school seats across Ohio				
Objective 2: Promote college- and career-readiness within Ohio charter schools				
Objective 3: Strengthen the overall quality of Ohio's public education ecosystem				
Inputs & Resources	Activities	Outputs	Short Term Goals 1 – 2 years	Long Term Goals 3 – 5 years
Inputs across all objectives: DEW staff, CSP grant funds, High-quality charter schools, State Report Cards, TA partners Obj 1: High quality authorizers, Subgrant competition materials, Peer reviewers Obj 2: Monitoring materials, Authorizer evaluation framework, High-quality authorizers, Data and research partners Obj 3: State support teams, Annual authorizer performance reports	Activity 1.1 Broadly publicize availability of CSP funding Activity 1.2 Recruit and train peer reviewers Activity 1.3 Execute high-quality subgrant competition Activity 1.4 Administer parent and community surveys Activity 1.5 Launch Charter School Leadership Incubator (CSLI)	- Robust applicant pool - RFA materials - Rigorous subgrant competition - High-quality subgrant projects - Parent and community surveys - Fellows trained through CSLI	- First parent survey administered - 7 subgrants awarded to schools whose models are specifically tailored to the students with particularly unique needs - 5 CSLI fellows trained	- 4 subgrants awarded to schools serving rural community or community with no meaningful high-quality school options - 15 subgrants awarded to schools whose key design elements are not available within the target community - At least 6,700 high-quality seats added through 25 subgrant awards - At least 3 CSLI fellows propose opening a school serving rural community or community with no meaningful high-quality school options
Assumptions & External Factors - Authorizers, operators, and boards need more guidance and best practices access in order to improve performance - Leadership incubation opportunities allow new schools to launch successfully in a range of communities - Strong authorizer accountability system - Pipeline of high-quality developers and successful operators seeking growth opportunities - Increasingly favorable funding and policy environment	Activity 2.1 Conduct authorizer and integrated federal grant monitoring to ensure high-quality project implementation Activity 2.2 Launch New Authorizer Training Institute (NATI) Activity 2.3. Convene Authorizer Improvement Network Activity 3.1 Deliver New Charter School Academy (NCSA) training Activity 3.2 Administer Leadership Development Training Program (LDTP) Activity 3.3 Launch Charter School Governance Institute (CSGI)	- Monitoring materials - High-quality and compliant subgrant projects - Authorizer trainings and convenings	- Number of charters rated 4 or 5 stars on progress component of State Report Card increases by 2 percentage points - 90% of NATI session attendees agree with TA feedback survey prompts related to quality, usefulness, and relevance	- Average Performance Index score for charter schools increases by 4 percentage points - 100% of authorizers receiving TA on Quality Practices Rubric improve ratings on 75% of indicators needing improvement - Gaps between charter schools and districts in which they are located increase on Performance Index and State Report Card progress measures for five consecutive years - CCWMR Readiness Rate will be 75%+ for high school students enrolled at CSP schools
		- Cohorts of leaders enrolled in NCSA and LDTP - Cohorts of board members enrolled in CSGI - Board and leader training materials, modules, and presentations	- 90% of leaders and board members agree with TA feedback survey prompts related to quality, usefulness, and relevance	- 80% of charter schools whose leaders participate in LDTP exhibit year-over-year improvement on School Report Cards - 80% of charter schools whose board members participate in CSGI exhibit year-over-year improvement on fiscal and operational measures - 100% of newly authorized fresh start charter school representatives attend NCSA training during pre-opening planning periods - 25 best practices codified and disseminated

Through authentic partnerships with families and community stakeholders and a rigorous subgrant competition process that prioritizes applicants seeking to address the unmet needs identified by those constituencies, Ohio's CSP project will strengthen the state's cohesive system for supporting charter school growth by catalyzing the creation of 6,700 high-quality seats across 25 new, expanding, and replicating brick-and-mortar charter schools. Given the concentration of need within the Ohio Eight, the preponderance of these seats will be located in districts with a significant number of schools identified for comprehensive support and improvement (CSI). During the 2024–25 school year, Ohio identified 137 CSI schools across 107 LEAs.¹² Seventy-six percent of these CSI schools were located within seven counties, each of which is home to one of the Ohio Eight districts. While this CSP project will support the creation of high-quality charter school seats within these communities, it will also contribute to more charter school options within districts (including rural areas) that currently lack meaningful public school choice. Ohio will accomplish this objective through extensive family engagement efforts, subgrant application priorities, and the development of a *Charter School Leadership Incubator* that provides structured pre-opening support for leaders developing innovative models that respond directly to the preferences expressed by stakeholders within those communities.

Increases in charter school enrollment have had a positive impact on achievement and graduation rates for students attending Ohio traditional public schools.¹³ As charter school practices get sharper and more sophisticated, intentional dissemination efforts will ensure these innovations circulate throughout Ohio's broader public education ecosystem; 25 new practices shared over the life of the project period is an ambitious attempt to ensure that all students — not just those attending brick-and-mortar charter schools — benefit from the ingenuity exhibited by charter school personnel. By facilitating cross-sector knowledge-transmission efforts through

regional State Support Teams, the Dropout Prevention and Recovery Advisory Council, and authorizers that work directly with both charter schools and traditional public schools, DEW will use this CSP project to build on existing efforts to use best practices from charter schools for the benefit of students attending struggling schools throughout the state.

A.2. Ambitiousness of Performance Measures

DEW has developed a series of ambitious performance measures to evaluate the extent to which its CSP project is meeting its three overarching objectives.

Table 1. Objective Performance Measures

Performance Measure	Data Source
Objective 1: Expand opportunity for high-need students by increasing the number of high-quality, brick-and-mortar charter school seats across Ohio	
PM 1.1. By the end of the project period, award 25 subgrants to new, expanding, or replicating brick-and-mortar charter schools	Subgrant Awards
PM 1.2. By the end of the project period, provide funding to support the creation of at least 6,700 high-quality seats at brick-and-mortar charter schools	Subgrant Awards / DEW Enrollment Data
PM 1.3. Throughout the project period, at least 75% of subgrant applicants earn competitive preference priority points for proposing to implement a model specifically tailored to students with particularly unique needs	Peer Reviewer Scores
PM 1.4. Throughout the project period, at least 75% of subgrant applicants earn competitive preference priority points for proposing the implementation of a program whose key design elements are not available within the target community	Peer Reviewer Scores
PM 1.5. Throughout the project period, at least 25% of subgrant applicants earn competitive preference priority points either for serving a community that has no meaningful high-quality school options or for operating in a rural community	Peer Reviewer Scores
PM 1.6. During the project period, administer at least two parent surveys through DEW's Office of Research, Evaluation, and Advanced Analytics	DEW Parent Surveys
PM 1.7. During the project period, at least 3 fellows participating in the Charter School Leadership Incubator will propose opening a school within a community that has no meaningful high-quality school options or a rural community	Charter School Leadership Incubator Participation Data
Objective 2: Promote college- and career-readiness within Ohio charter schools	
PM 2.1. During each year of the project period, the average Performance Index score for charter schools on the State Report Card will increase by at least 1 point	Ohio State Test & School Report Card Data
PM 2.2. During each year of the project period, the gap between the average Performance Index score for charter schools and the districts in which they are located will increase	Ohio State Test & School Report Card Data

PM 2.3. During each year of the project period, the percentage of charter schools statewide rated 4 or 5 stars on the Progress component of their State Report Card will increase by at least one percentage point	Ohio State Test & School Report Card Data
PM 2.4. During each year of the project period, the College, Career, Workforce, and Military Readiness Rate for high school students enrolled at CSP schools will be greater than or equal to 75%	Ohio State Test & School Report Card Data
PM 2.5. On a year-over-year basis, 100% of authorizers receiving targeted TA related to the Quality Practices Rubric will improve their ratings on at least 75% of the indicators on which they had previously received fewer than 4 points	Authorizer Evaluation Data
PM 2.6. 90% of new authorizing professionals and non-authorizing staff attending New Authorizer Training Institute sessions agree with survey prompts related to the quality, usefulness, and relevance of trainings	PD Feedback Survey Data
Objective 3: Strengthen the overall quality of Ohio's public education ecosystem	
PM 3.1. Representatives from 100% of newly authorized fresh-start charter schools will attend <i>New Charter School Academy</i> training sessions during their pre-opening planning periods	CSP TA Data
PM 3.2. 80% of charter schools whose leaders participate in the <i>Leadership Development Training Program</i> will exhibit year-over-year improvement on their School Report Cards	CSP TA & School Report Card Data
PM 3.3. 80% of charter schools whose board members participate in <i>Charter School Governance Institute</i> trainings will exhibit year-over-year improvement on the fiscal and organizational/operational measures included in their Authorizer Annual Performance Reports	CSP TA & Authorizer Annual Performance Report Data
PM 3.4. During each year of the project period, 90% of leaders and board members attending CSP-supported TA will agree with survey prompts related to the quality, usefulness, and relevance of trainings	PD Feedback Survey Data
PM 3.5. During each year of the project period, at least five best practices developed by charter schools are formally disseminated throughout Ohio's public education system via State Support Teams, the Dropout Prevention and Recovery Advisory Council, or authorizers	DEW Website; meeting agendas; Authorizer Reports

DEW has carefully crafted its CSP project to accomplish these ambitious objectives. Data collection and analysis, which will take place in connection with the production of each Annual Performance Report (APR), will drive continuous improvement efforts throughout the project period. Targets related to fulfillment of the Competitive Preference Priorities embedded in the subgrant application reflect both the manner in which Ohio's charter sector has evolved and the new directions in which it is headed. Over 90% of the students enrolled in Ohio's brick-and-mortar charter schools are economically disadvantaged, a rate fully double the statewide average

of 45% in district schools. These numbers are a function of a previous restriction in state law that restricted charter schools to “academically-challenged” districts” and which resulted in these seats being clustered in the Ohio Eight. While this restriction was repealed in 2021, DEW still anticipates a sizable number of subgrants being awarded to innovative schools that have arisen in response to the persistent need within these communities and which are offering programs to which parents currently lack access. However, these targets also take into account the popularity of emerging models such as classical charter schools popular in suburban communities as well as the efforts that will be undertaken through the CSP project to expand choice options in underserved and rural communities. Specifically, fulfillment of these targets will be driven by targeted recruitment of fellows for the *Charter School Leadership Incubator*, broad publicizing of subgrant availability throughout the state, and dissemination activities that spark greater awareness of how Ohio charter schools are achieving impressive results for children.

With respect to Objective 2, targets related to college- and career-readiness are particularly ambitious. In 2024, the weighted average performance index score for brick-and-mortar charter schools throughout Ohio was 63.6. By contrast, the weighted performance index score for the districts in which those schools are located (as weighted by total charter school enrollment in those districts) was 59.6. Moreover, 36% of brick-and-mortar charter schools (82 out of the 230 schools receiving a rating) achieved a four- or five-star rating on the Progress component of their State Report Card, and 56.3% of graduates met at least one post-secondary readiness measure. The targets set forth in Table 1, which include Absolute, Comparative, and Growth measures, would represent a meaningful improvement in overall educational attainment for students attending Ohio’s charter schools.

The rationale behind the measures related to Objective 3 is set forth in section A.4.

A.3. Adequacy of Budget and Reasonableness of Costs

As set forth in the ED 524 and the Budget Narrative, DEW has developed a CSP budget wherein each proposed cost is directly connected to the project’s conceptual framework and the amounts dedicated to subgrants (\$50,000,000 | 90%), TA (\$3,932,098 | 7.1%), and administration (\$1,623,458 | 2.9%) are both reasonable and necessary to achieve the project’s ambitious objectives. DEW respectfully requests funding to make 25 subgrant awards that would support the creation of 6,700 high-quality brick-and-mortar charter school seats over the five-year project period. Table 2 displays the anticipated award cadence along with a breakdown of how DEW envisions grants being allocated among new, replicating, and expanding schools.

Table 2. Anticipated CSP Subgrant Award Cadence

Award Type	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Total
New School / Replication	2	3	3	3	3	14
Expansion	2	2	3	2	2	11
Total	4	5	6	5	5	25

The creation of 6,700 new seats would represent a roughly 8% increase in sector-wide capacity within site-based charter schools over the project period. This ambitious but realistic forecast derives from a careful analysis of historical trends, surveys of authorizers and operators, and evidence of continued need for diverse, high-performing schools that both meet student need and align with Ohio’s educational priorities.

Over the most recent five-year period, enrollment across Ohio charter schools increased by nearly 13,500 students, with the 121,000 students enrolled in 2023–24 representing a 12.5% increase over the 2019–20 baseline. By contrast, Ohio district schools experienced a 54,000-student decrease over the same period.¹⁴ Confining this analysis to brick-and-mortar charter schools yields similar results: between 2018–19 and 2023–24, enrollment at site-based Ohio charter schools increased by 7.4% while enrollment in district schools declined by 5.3%.¹⁵

Demand for charter schools has thus remained resilient notwithstanding countervailing statewide enrollment trends. Ohio has, accordingly, worked to increase the number of high-quality seats available to parents seeking public school alternatives for their children. Between 2020–2021 and 2024–25, the total number of brick-and-mortar charter schools across the state increased from 300 to 323, with enrollment capacity at site-based charter schools rising over the same time period by over 5,500 seats. The prospect of funding 25 high-performing schools over the next five years is borne out not only by these precedents but by the most recent CSP grant administered by DEW, which concluded in 2024 after 23 subgrants had been awarded.

To verify that the supply of high-quality charter schools will continue to increase in response to insistent demand, DEW recently surveyed both a select set of established operators (i.e., those that would meet the definition of a “high-quality” charter school set forth below in Section B) as well as authorizers whose schools would be eligible to apply for and receive CSP funding under DEW’s rigorous standards (i.e., those authorizers rated as “Exemplary” or “Effective” on their most recent evaluation). The results of these February 2025 surveys confirmed not only that a number of high-performing operators are planning to grow over the next five years but that they intend to do so in a manner that aligns with Ohio’s educational priorities. Specifically, the survey revealed that among the high-quality operators looking to add seats over the next five years are dropout prevention and recovery schools with a focus on CTE, credentialing, and workforce placement; STEM schools whose models prioritize building foundational mathematical skills in elementary and middle school; schools whose models are designed to support the unique needs of multilingual learners and students with disabilities; and schools planning to open or expand in underserved parts of the state including rural areas. Appendix C contains letters of support from operators and authorizers whose individual- and

portfolio-level growth plans support the design of Ohio's CSP Logic Model (Figure 2) and the establishment of the performance measures outlined in Table 1.

Demand for these models is particularly acute among the families who stand most to benefit from their growth. As seen in Figure 1, traditional public schools in the Ohio Eight districts have consistently struggled to prepare students for the demands of college and careers; unsurprisingly, then, charter school enrollment in cities such as Cincinnati (+22.5%), Columbus (+11.4%), and Dayton (+3.6%) has surged over the past five years.¹⁶ Ohio charter schools also enroll students with disabilities (+1.5 percentage points) and English Learners (+1.7 percentage points) at rates exceeding statewide averages, revealing these models to be popular among parents seeking a responsive program for their educationally disadvantaged students.

Moreover, the need for expanded choice in rural communities remains pronounced. According to data from the 2020 Census, all but five of Ohio's 88 counties have more than 50% of their area classified as rural, while 65 counties have more than 90% of their area considered rural. Nevertheless, educational options within these communities remain limited; only 24 (7%) of the state's charter schools serve students in those areas, and penetration of the state's school voucher program into rural counties has been minimal.¹⁷ With over 15% of students in rural communities classified as disabled,¹⁸ options for parents of high-need students in those areas have been constrained. As described above, DEW's multifaceted approach to incentivizing and facilitating charter school growth within those communities will help increase the supply of high-quality seats for underserved students during the CSP project period.

All subgrantees will be eligible to request up to \$2 million in CSP funding with actual award amounts determined based on consideration of eligible costs necessary to execute a high-quality growth initiative. DEW has requested a waiver to permit subgrantee budgets to include

recurring costs necessary to execute high-quality growth initiatives provided that schools are able to demonstrate the sustainability of grant-funded expenditures at the expiration of their project periods. Accordingly, we anticipate the average award size to be \$2 million. This amount reflects the actual costs associated with launching innovative schools in high-need Ohio communities and was determined based on an analysis of subgrantee budgets submitted during DEW's most recent CSP project period as well as a review of start-up budgets provided by a range of prospective subgrantees representing different award types (i.e., new, expanding, and replicating schools), regions, models, and grade bands.

Central to this funding model is DEW's commitment to allowing schools to avail themselves of the full 18-month planning period permitted under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Our review indicates that schools able to access CSP funds well in advance of their opening will be able to lay the groundwork for a successful launch by funding the salaries of key personnel (e.g., executive directors, principals, operational leads, curriculum designers, and community engagement managers) as well as reasonable pre-opening facility occupancy costs.

For all CSP-eligible schools, but particularly for resource-intensive models such as those prioritizing CTE, workforce development, and STEM, investments in the technology and equipment necessary to implement essential mission-related programming are expected to be significant components of approved subgrantee budgets. In accordance with Ohio's strategic educational priorities, DEW also anticipates schools using their CSP budgets to purchase high-quality curricular materials and licenses and to provide curriculum-based professional learning that ensures teachers are equipped to deliver rigorous, standards-aligned instruction. Prospective subgrantees have also identified CSP-eligible costs related to student and staff recruitment, classroom furnishing, systems infrastructure, and transportation that would support the proposed

level of investment and would promote fulfillment of DEW’s ambitious performance targets related to the college- and career-readiness of Ohio’s charter school students.

DEW will carefully review all proposed budgets for cost allowability and model alignment. Should subgrant recipients end up receiving less than the full maximum award amount, Ohio may make additional awards in accordance with grant objectives with funds that have been rolled over.

A.4. Building Capacity and Yielding Sustainable Results

Each element of DEW’s CSP project is explicitly designed to build lasting capacity within Ohio’s charter sector. Schools seeking CSP funding must provide a Sustainability Plan that demonstrates financial viability and internal capacity to support continued operation at the expiration of their project periods. As part of DEW’s comprehensive approach to subgrantee monitoring, schools must file an annual Grant Activities Report that provides an update on the status of its Sustainability Plan. DEW’s Monitoring Rubric also incorporates six “Indicators of Quality” that allow the Department to assess the degree to which subgrantees are building sustainable governance, leadership, and instructional capacity during their project periods. And, most notably, DEW has developed a plan to leverage its technical assistance set-aside funds to ensure subgrantees are well-positioned to continue operating with quality at the expiration of their CSP project periods. DEW’s full TA plan is set forth in Section C.3 and within the Budget Narrative; key components are summarized in the space that follows.

DEW’s support for active subgrantees occurs over four discrete phases of the project life cycle, which roughly correspond with the planning, program design, and initial implementation stages of a school’s launch. During the **Compliance** phase (Months 1–2), DEW works to ensure subgrantee familiarity with monitoring requirements. Subgrantees participate in a *Post-Award*

Training that covers the five core components of Ohio’s CSP monitoring plan (Section C.1) and each indicator on the *Monitoring Rubric* (Table 6). During the **Implementation** phase (Months 3–5), emphasis shifts to execution of the subgrantee’s CSP project. DEW project team members, authorizer personnel, and school leaders gather baseline data and discuss short-term goals. By the conclusion of the **Implementation and Improvement** phase (Months 6–12), subgrantees begin to receive support calibrated to the needs identified on the *Monitoring Rubric* following the first round of desk reviews and site visits. Finally, the **Continued Support for Implementation** phase (Months 13–36) pairs a continued focus on remediating compliance issues with a long-term strategic focus on goal fulfillment and post-award sustainability.

TA during the Continued Support for Implementation phase is designed to mitigate the barriers that frequently prevent charter schools exiting their start-up phase from sustaining results as they mature. Responding to research demonstrating that the success of a charter school’s launch is a strong predictor of its sustainable success, DEW will launch two initiatives — a New Charter School Academy and Charter School Leadership Incubator — that proactively prepare founding teams to navigate common challenges related to facilities, transportation, and access to federal funding for which their schools are eligible. Through the New Charter School Academy, DEW will build the capacity of founding leaders and board members of start-up schools to build durable instructional programs, to cultivate robust staffing pipelines, and to develop student recruitment practices that engender fully-enrolled schools that are sustainable at scale on recurring entitlement revenues. Through the Leadership Incubator, DEW will strengthen the long-term sustainability of the state’s charter sector by cultivating a robust pipeline of strong, effective, and visionary leaders prepared to launch schools that feature a range of innovative models responsive to community need. DEW will also launch a Governance Institute that builds

the capacity of charter boards (including the governing authorities of start-up schools) to understand how to marry the requisite attentiveness to compliance with a long-term strategic focus on key outcome measures.

Robust participation in training programs for founding teams, leaders, and trustees will lead to quantifiable improvements in charter school operations and financial soundness. The ambitious participation, satisfaction, and year-over-year growth targets associated with Objective 3 are attainable in light of the resources that DEW and its expert partners will devote to building the capacity of these key stakeholders within high-leverage domains. These efforts not only will enhance the overall quality and sustainability of Ohio's charter school sector but will have ancillary benefits for students attending struggling district schools. DEW's plan to continue building the capacity of charter school authorizers draws on a decade of evidence within Ohio's charter school sector that shows a clear causal relationship between authorizer quality and sustainable school outcomes. The enactment of HB 2 not only resulted in a dramatic reduction in the number of authorizers active in Ohio but also inspired authorizers to more assertively hold schools accountable for performance. Consequently, 112 schools closed between 2016 and 2022. The renewed focus on authorizer quality and its attendant impact on school quality has led to consistent improvement in student outcomes at brick-and-mortar charter schools.¹⁹ DEW's CSP Logic Model posits that the impact of initiatives such as the New Authorizer Training Institute and the Authorizer Improvement Network will continue to be felt at the classroom level.

CSP-supported initiatives to drive academic performance will build on existing efforts that have already started to bear fruit. For example, Ohio used American Rescue Plan ESSER funds to administer an improvement program specifically for charter schools. The Schools Forward project (FY24–FY25) involved four authorizers and 51 schools. Authorizers submitted

school improvement proposals targeting the schools in their portfolio identified for CSI. Proposals were required to focus on at least one of DEW’s state priorities: literacy; accelerating learning, particularly for students with disabilities; expanding workforce pathways to graduation; or health and wellness. All four of the participating authorizers chose to focus on literacy. Early results suggest improvement in student engagement, instructional effectiveness, and student progress. Moreover, schools that have benefited from access to CSP funding during their planning and early implementation phases in order to develop robust academic programs will be exceedingly well-positioned to qualify for supplemental state revenues through the Quality Community Schools Support Fund, which — as described in CPP 2 — allocates additional money to schools with strong student performance data. In this manner, CSP funding will catalyze a virtuous cycle wherein schools leverage federal resources during their early years in order to gain access to additional revenue streams that ensure their sustainability once their subgrant project periods have lapsed.

B. Quality of Eligible Applicants Receiving Subgrants

DEW has honed a rigorous subgrant application and evaluation process that ensures CSP funding is allocated exclusively to high-quality charter schools that will improve educational outcomes for students. Table 3 depicts how the annual subgrant competition will be structured; key activities, processes, and timelines are detailed throughout this section.

Table 3. Subgrant Competition Timeline (Year 1)

Activity	Timeline
Publicize subgrant availability	January–March
Recruit, evaluate, select and train peer reviewers	March–April
Conduct pre-proposal webinars	April
Solicit questions and publish FAQ	April
Publish Notice of Intent to Apply	May
Open Request for Applications (RFA) window	May

Close RFA window	June
Conduct Technical and Peer Reviews	June–July
Issue Notice of Award to successful applicants	July

Publicizing Subgrant Availability. DEW’s Office of Community Schools maintains regular communications with Ohio’s entire charter school community including schools, authorizers, management organizations, developers, and advocates, allowing it to effectively inform all interested parties and potential applicants of the availability of funding. Through the robust authorizer monitoring and evaluation process detailed in our response to the Absolute Priority, DEW remains in constant communication with each approved authorizing entity throughout the state. DEW provides information about the CSP subgrant competition to each authorizer whose schools are eligible to apply for and receive CSP funding (i.e., those maintaining an Effective or Exemplary rating) and encourages those authorizers to support applications from the high-quality schools in their portfolios. Information about the CSP program will be displayed prominently on the Community Schools landing page on DEW’s website, and the Notice of Grant Opportunity inviting potential applicants to submit an Intent to Apply form will be widely distributed via email (~20,000 names on the Office of Community Schools mailing list) and via social media platforms such as X (~50,000 followers), Facebook (~35,000 followers), LinkedIn (~27,000 followers), and Instagram (~6,000 followers).

Delivering Pre-Proposal Trainings. DEW delivers pre-proposal TA in multiple formats. As seen in Table 4, the *Subgrant Application Training* provides an overview of Ohio’s CSP program and is broken into 12 distinct sections.

Table 4. CSP Subgrant Application Training Sections

Section	Purpose
Eligibility	Inform prospective applicants about the eligibility criteria for subgrantees

Application Format	Review the contents of the subgrant application including required forms, the application narrative, and appendices
Application Narrative	Highlight the required elements of the RFA submission that will be scored by peer reviewers
Competitive Preference Priorities	Review the manner in which applicants can earn additional points for proposing projects that align with DEW's strategic priorities
Application Appendices	Explain the documentation that applicants will be required to submit to complement their 30-page application narratives
Assurances & Certifications	Describe the assurances and certifications that will need to be uploaded both by the applicant and its authorizer
CSP Subgrant Funding	Provide an overview of subgrant award amounts, allowable and unallowable expenses, and budget submission requirements
Application Review Process	Review the technical review checklist, the peer review process, and the evaluation criteria in the RFA scoring rubric
Timeline & Award	Discuss the application window and award process
Post-Award Fiscal Information	Explain processes for requesting reimbursement, managing subgrant funds, and avoiding escalating consequences for misuse of funds
Monitoring & Reporting	Provide an overview of the monitoring and reporting requirements with which all CSP subgrantees must comply
Application Submission in CCIP	Explain the process for submitting a full application within the Department's unified grants application and planning system

Following the training, DEW solicits questions from interested applicants and maintains a rolling FAQ document that is updated during each competition cycle and posted alongside other pertinent CSP artifacts on DEW's webpage.

RFA Components. DEW has refined a subgrant application that both adheres to the requirements of the federal CSP program and reflects Ohio's unique landscape for charter school operators and authorizers. The RFA consists of three general components: (1) Required Forms, (2) the Application Narrative, and (3) Application Appendices.

Required Forms. In addition to a cover page, an application checklist, and a signed certification form, applicants must submit both a *Statement of Assurances* and a *Statement of Authorizer Assurances*. The applicant's statement of assurances mandates adherence to a range of federal and state laws and requires the applicant to stipulate that it has not received CSP funds

for the same or substantially similar purpose, will participate in all monitoring and evaluation activities, and will maintain an appropriate segregation of duties if it contracts with a management organization. Each applicant's authorizer must also verify that it has received a rating of Effective or Exemplary on its most recent evaluation, that it will perform periodic reviews and evaluations of the subgrantee, and that it will conduct subgrantee site visits and submit the resulting reports to DEW.

Application Narrative. The RFA provides an opportunity for prospective subgrantees to provide pertinent information about their educational models, the manner in which their goals align with the needs of families and communities in which they are located, and the degree to which their proposed CSP projects will promote educational outcomes for all students. The Application Narrative, which will be modeled on the Department of Education-approved framework used during prior CSP projects administered by DEW, consists of 11 sections.

Table 5. Application Narrative Structure

Section	Contents
Executive Summary	• Mission, vision, and goals • Alignment of school goals to community needs • Educational philosophy and innovative instructional approach (including how school will use the autonomies and flexibilities afforded Ohio charter schools to raise student achievement) • Funding requested & grant project goals and activities
Subgrant Project Goals, Budget, Budget Narrative, and Evaluation Materials	• SMART project goals • Alignment between subgrant goals and activities and school model • Budget and Budget Narrative fully describing intended use of funds • Detailed plan for executing the subgrant project, evaluating its success, and sharing best practices with schools across Ohio • Roles and responsibilities for all parties, including the role of authorizer in reviewing charter school performance and operations
School Community	• Market analysis with thorough research demonstrating a demand for the student population to be served • The school's plan to address the needs of its intended community • Alignment between market analysis and project goals

Educationally Disadvantaged Students	• Forecasted enrollment of educationally disadvantaged students • Plan for recruiting and enrolling educationally disadvantaged students • Innovative programs, interventions, and supports for all populations of educationally disadvantaged students
Educational Model	• How the curriculum will meet the needs of the anticipated student population • Instructional methods that complement curricular choices • Use of student performance data to design interventions, differentiate instruction, and support individual learners • Developing and sustaining a safe and organized school culture
School Goals	• SMART academic and non-academic goals aligned to school mission and Ohio achievement standards • Assessing progress toward goals • Tracking data for individual students, subgroups, and the school as a whole • Communicating progress toward goals to governing board, authorizer, parents, and the general public
Outreach & Engagement	• Marketing Plan that informs students and parents about the school (including measures for specific student populations) • Engaging families and community members in the school's development and operations • Transportation Plan designed to mitigate access barriers
School Personnel and External Support	• Organizational Chart for each year of subgrant funding • Plan for recruiting and retaining high-quality personnel • Plan to establish strong, effective network of external support
Governance & Management Plan	• Composition and selection of governing board • Evidence of board's preparation and adherence to strong practices • Process for drafting, developing, and adopting policies and procedures
Business Capacity & Continued Operation	• Financial policies and procedures • Sustainability plan that demonstrates financial viability and internal capacity to support continued operation at the expiration of the CSP project period • Facility Plan
Competitive Preference Priorities	• High-Need Location (i.e., plan to serve a community that currently has no meaningful high-quality school option) • Rural Location (i.e., plan to operate in a community that qualifies as Rural according to Census Bureau standards) • Diverse Model (i.e., plan to implement a program whose key design elements are not currently available within the target community) • Students with Unique Needs (i.e., plan to serve high concentrations of students with particularly unique needs — e.g., students with disabilities, military-connected students, or Native American students — and to implement a model specifically tailored to meet their needs) • High School Model (i.e., plan to serve students in Grades 9–12)

Application Appendices. Applicants are required to submit a host of appendices that are reviewed and scored in conjunction with the sections of the application narrative to which they correspond. These include the school's executed charter agreement with its authorizer; its enrollment policy; a CSP Budget Form that includes a breakdown of total anticipated subgrant expenses; a multi-year financial model; the school's most recent audited financial statement; a Performance Management Plan that includes a description of methods for collecting, analyzing, and reporting on student data; contractual disclosures; a CSP Subgrant Project Goals and Activities Form; and a Management Organization Questionnaire designed to ensure that subgrantees are independent of any management organization with which they contract.

Each component of the subgrant application is entered directly into the Comprehensive Continuous Improvement Plan (CCIP), DEW's unified grants application and planning system that contains goals, strategies, and action steps for all grants including CSP. Grant applicants and recipients plan and revise budgets, submit Project Cash Requests (PCRs) and Final Expenditure Reports (FERs), and communicate with DEW representatives through log entries. DEW representatives use the CCIP to monitor subgrantee financial activities. The CCIP also hosts a document library with resources related to policies, legislation, and compliance guidelines.

Application Review. The subgrant application review process consists of two discrete phases: a *technical review* conducted by DEW project staff and a *peer review* conducted by third-party experts.

Technical Review. Passing the Technical Review is a precondition for an application to be advanced to the peer review stage. During this phase, DEW checks an application for completeness, adherence to all requirements, and allowability of proposed expenditures. The first step of the Technical Review process is a verification of applicant eligibility. To be eligible for a

subgrant, applicants must satisfy the federal definition of a public charter school, be tuition-free, and maintain a high degree of autonomy over budget and personnel. Internet or computer-based charter schools as described in Ohio Rev. Code § 3314.02(A)(7) are ineligible to apply for CSP funding. Moreover, to ensure that subgrant funds are awarded only to those schools likely to advance Ohio's CSP project aims, the Technical Review includes an assessment of whether applicants meet the federal and state definitions of "high-quality." Consistent with Section 4310(8) of ESSA, Ohio defines "high-quality" in the following manner:

(1) Contracts with an authorizer rated Exemplary or Effective on its most recent evaluation;

(2) The two most recent audits conducted by the Auditor of State or other independent auditor have not identified any significant compliance issues; AND either

(3) (a) A Value-Added Progress rating of four or five stars and either (i) a Performance Index rating of three, four, or five stars, or (ii) an increase in Performance Index rating of five points or more over the three most recent school years; OR

(b) A Value-Added Progress rating of three, four, or five stars and a Performance Index rating of four or five stars, OR

(c) If the school did not receive a Value-Added Progress rating, the school received a Four-Year Graduation Rate rating of four or five stars, and (i) a Performance Index rating of three, four, or five stars, or (ii) an increase in Performance Index rating of five points or more over the three most recent school years; OR

(d) If the school received neither a Value-Added Progress rating nor a Four-Year Graduation Rate rating, an Early Literacy rating of four or five stars.

Finally, a DPR school seeking CSP funds must have received an overall rating of Exceeds Standards and a rating of Exceeds Standards for the Assessment Passage Rate on its most recent Dropout Prevention and Recovery Community School Report Card.

Peer Review. The second phase of the RFA evaluation process consists of a peer review. DEW posts an RFQ for peer reviewers on its Community Schools landing page and screens potential reviewers for satisfaction of Minimum Qualifications (at least three years of experience in charter school curriculum & instruction, law, governance, management, leadership, finance, start-up, policy, or operations) and Preferred Qualifications (at least three years of experience in charter school authorization and accountability, research and evaluation, development and implementation, and grant administration). Peer Reviewers must submit both a Pre- and Post-Review Conflict of Interest Form, the latter of which is completed after a reviewer has read an application and determined that no named individuals or contractual partners would give rise to an actual or perceived conflict. Selected reviewers attend a training that covers how to access and score applications in the CCIP, how to apply the scoring rubric to the application narrative and accompanying appendices, and how to provide detailed comments in support of each assigned score. Peer reviewers also receive a sample application and are required to read and score select sections before reconvening for a “consensus call” during which time DEW facilitates a calibration exercise to generate a shared understanding of evidence quality.

All applications that meet the requirements of the Technical Review are assigned to four Peer Reviewers, who are required to score and comment on each rubric item. Responses are scored on a five-point scale: 0 — Not Addressed | 1 — Poorly Developed (significantly incomplete or otherwise raises substantial concerns about an applicant’s plan or capacity) | 2 — Adequately Developed (meets some criteria but contains substantial gaps in others) | 3 — Well

Developed (meets criteria but requires additional information, explanation, or detail in one or more areas) | 4 — Fully Developed (presents a clear, realistic picture that inspires confidence in applicant's capacity to execute plan). Each score must be substantiated with evidence that the reviewer used to make their determination. These comments should note any circumstances such as a lack of clarity or evidentiary support or inconsistency between narrative sections.

DEW analyzes peer reviewer scores at the item level and excludes outliers (i.e., those that result in a gap of two or more points between one reviewer's scores and the consensus among the other three reviewers) when calculating averages. Only applications exceeding the quality cut score (i.e., 75% of the total available points excluding the Competitive Preference Priority categories) will be eligible for funding. Applicants meeting all submission criteria are ranked in order by score and are awarded in rank order based on the available grant funding. On a post-award call, funded applicants will receive guidance on how to modify their subgrant budgets and goals in order to receive final approval before the Department generates an award letter from the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

C. State Plan

C.1. Monitoring Eligible Applicants Receiving Subgrants

Ohio's CSP monitoring processes are integrated into the state's cohesive charter school accountability infrastructure. Monitoring activities occur at regular intervals throughout each subgrant project year. Ohio's thoughtfully designed monitoring approach provides for multiple interlocking layers of oversight, builds around existing reporting obligations, minimizes duplicative compliance burdens for subgrantees, and creates a rapid feedback cycle during which risk factors can quickly be identified and mitigated. DEW's monitoring plan consists of five core components: (1) routine authorizer monitoring; (2) fall desk reviews; (3) spring site visits; (4)

ongoing fiscal monitoring; and (5) annual reporting. A description of these components, which includes a timeline of when monitoring activities take place, is provided below.

Authorizer Monitoring. Under Ohio law, authorizers are required to monitor the charter schools in their portfolios on a semiannual basis. As noted in our response to Section B, prospective subgrantees must submit a Statement of Authorizer Assurances in connection with their RFA responses. In order for an Ohio charter school to be eligible for CSP funding, its authorizer must attest that it will perform periodic reviews and evaluations of the subgrantee and that it will conduct site visits and submit the resulting reports to DEW. Should an authorizer determine that a subgrantee is out of compliance with applicable laws, rules, or contract terms, it must immediately inform DEW and work with the school either to rectify the issue immediately or to develop a corrective action plan. Each November and February, subgrantees must upload a copy of their most recent authorizer site visit report into the compliance system. DEW's grant administration team will follow up with authorizers and schools all instances of noncompliance and will document all subgrantee actions in the compliance system. Data from authorizer monitoring will be used during the fall desk review and spring site visit.

Fall Desk Reviews. All subgrantees will be monitored for fiscal and programmatic grant compliance during a November desk review. Schools will share documentation and provide narratives detailing program implementation, operational benchmarks, financial controls, and evidence of alignment between expenditures and their CSP project objectives. DEW staff will review the materials, narratives, and authorizer monitoring data to assess compliance with each indicator on the *Monitoring Rubric* (Table 6). DEW will also monitor subgrantees to ensure compliance with all federal non-discrimination and civil rights laws including the Civil Rights Act of 1964, title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, section 504 of the Rehabilitation

Act of 1973, and part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Follow-up calls may be made to clarify narratives or to request additional documentation. Data from the desk review will inform the spring site visit, and schools with identified non-compliance or deficiencies may also be subject to unscheduled pop-in visits in addition to the scheduled spring visit.

Spring Site Visits. To ensure subgrantee adherence to program requirements and the terms of its approved grant application, DEW will conduct at least one annual comprehensive site visit each spring. During the visit, Department staff will interview school staff and governing board members, review financial documents, and gather any other data necessary to complete the *Monitoring Rubric*. At the conclusion of the site visit, Department staff will provide an overview of their findings. Schools will receive official site visit feedback, including the completed rubrics, within 14 days, and they will have 30 days to address any identified deficiencies.

Ongoing Fiscal Monitoring. To ensure subgrantees are using funds for allowable purposes, the Department requires all subgrantees to submit a detailed project budget spreadsheet and an accompanying Budget Narrative. As expenditures are incurred, subgrantees submit a Project Cash Request (PCR) along with proper documentation (timesheets, procurement records, invoices, etc.) for each expense for which they are seeking reimbursement. Each PCR is reviewed by the Grant Administrator to ensure expenses meet the allocable, reasonable, and necessary requirements for all federal funds and are aligned with the project goals of each subgrantee. Reimbursement requests will be processed semimonthly beginning on the first business day following the 15th and the last day of each month.

Annual Grant Activities Reporting. Subgrantees must file a Grant Activities Report by September 30 of each CSP project year. At a minimum, subgrantees must report on progress toward each project goal, provide an update on the status of their sustainability plans to develop

the necessary financial viability and internal capacity to support grant-funded activities at the conclusion of their project periods, and provide a detailed expenditure report and a property inventory of all equipment and non-consumable goods purchased with CSP grant funds. The Department requires a specific format for the expenditure and inventory reports and ensures that the project goals and outcomes are those specified in the approved subgrant agreement.

Subgrantee risk is assessed according to a Monitoring Rubric that includes roughly 30 indicators organized within five general areas: (1) program compliance; (2) fiscal compliance; (3) grant implementation; (4) performance on goals and objectives; and (5) quality practices. Indicators are tied to grant assurances, federal guidelines, and performance measures and include four components: (1) the criteria being evaluated; (2) acceptable supporting documentation; (3) narrative prompts; and (4) site visit interview questions. Subgrantees are assessed as either “compliant” or “noncompliant” on each program, fiscal, and grant implementation indicator. Performance objectives and quality practices are rated as either “met,” “in progress,” or “not met.” DEW will train select Office of Community Schools (OCS) programmatic and fiscal staff on the Rubric indicators and the process for monitoring subgrantees. An overview of the Monitoring Rubric is provided in Table 6.

Table 6. CSP Monitoring Rubric Framework

Indicator	Examples of Acceptable Documentation
Program Indicators	
P1. Subgrantee meets the federal and state definition of a "charter school"	- School policies - Proof of nonprofit status - Authorizer monitoring report
P2. If the school engages a management organization, its governing body remains independent, and all fees and agreements are reasonable	- Contracts (management, legal, auditing, accounting) - Written justification for selecting management organization
P3. Subgrantee has adopted and implements conflict of interest policies that prevent real or apparent conflicts of interest	- List of board members and affiliations - Conflict of Interest policy and board minutes
P4. Subgrantee has no outstanding litigation	Descriptions of outstanding or potential litigation

P5. Subgrantee informs students and parents in the community about the school or the school's plan for expansion	● Marketing materials ● Strategic recruitment plan
P6. Subgrantee uses a lottery when admitting students	● Enrollment procedures ● Student application ● Lottery records
P7. Subgrantee involves parents and other members of the community in the planning, design, and implementation of the school	● Parent policies ● Meeting minutes, volunteer logs, or other evidence of involvement
P8. Subgrantee has submitted all required reports	● Authorizer monitoring reports (fall and winter) ● Annual Grant Activities Reports ● CSP monitoring reports and Corrective Action Plans made available to families
Fiscal Indicators	
F1. School administration provides monthly/quarterly financial reports to its governing board for review and approval	● Financial statements and board approvals ● Board minutes (including documentation of financial oversight)
F2. School has adopted and implements a procurement policy consistent with federal regulations	● Policies and procedures ● Purchase requisitions, bid reviews, and contracts for CSP-funded expenses
F3. School has implemented an inventory control procedure for CSP-funded purchases	● Inventory report ● Inventory and asset disposition policies
F4. School uses an acceptable system for managing and maintaining fiscal records related to CSP purchases	● Itemized expenditure reports ● Records retention policies ● Cash management policies
F5. Subgrantee's use of CSP funds is allowable and matches the approved budget	● Purchase orders, invoices, receipts, etc. ● Board meeting minutes approving CSP contracts, budgets, and expenditures
F6. School received an independent financial and/or single audit	● Board policies ● Most recent audit report and corrective action plan (if applicable)
Grant Implementation Indicators	
GI1. Subgrantee is implementing its educational model as described in its approved application	● Curricular materials, unit/lesson plans, scope & sequence documents, etc.
GI2. Subgrantee is implementing its staffing plan and external supports	● Organizational chart & job descriptions ● Evidence of external partnerships
GI3. Subgrantee is implementing its governance and management plan	● Board and staff recruitment materials ● Board training dates and materials ● Board agendas and minutes
GI4. Subgrantee is implementing its performance management plan	● Performance analysis of student data
GI5. Subgrantee is implementing its plan to support educationally disadvantaged students	● MTSS/RtI materials ● Differentiated curricular documentation
Progress on Project Goals	
Project Goals 1–5	● List of activities conducted toward meeting the goal and description of impact on goal completion ● Estimated timeframe for goal completion ● Percentage of progress toward goal completion

Indicators of Quality	
Q1. Quality board membership	• Board bios/resumes • Board recruitment and retention plan
Q2. Effective board functioning	• Board training plan • Board policies and procedures
Q3. Effective system of leadership	• Leadership team meeting agendas • Teacher team meeting agendas
Q4. Effective professional development	• School and teacher PD plans • Record of PD opportunities (attendance rates, session focuses, training outcomes)
Q5. Culture of high expectations	• Student/Parent and Staff Handbooks • Examples of parent engagement opportunities
Q6. Data-driven decision-making	• Analysis of student performance, parent, and survey data

When a subgrantee is assessed as posing heightened risk on account of noncompliance identified by either DEW or an authorizer, it must either immediately rectify the issue or complete a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) within 30 days. Failure to address deficiencies within the prescribed time period will result in progressively escalating consequences including enhanced monitoring (e.g., pop-in site visits or additional desk reviews), mandated TA, probationary status, early termination, and potential clawback of previously distributed funds. If DEW finds that the subgrantee is not implementing quality practices, the subgrantee will need to progress toward incorporating those practices in order to receive continued funding. Issues of noncompliance uncovered by DEW will be communicated to the subgrantee and its authorizer; issues uncovered by the authorizer will be communicated to the subgrantee and the Department. Ohio law requires authorizers to alert DEW's Office of Community Schools within 24 hours of putting a charter school on a CAP for any reason. All CAPs are documented in the compliance system, and DEW staff continually monitors a subgrantee's progress in reaching full compliance.

C.2. Avoiding Duplication of Effort

Ohio will take a series of intentional measures to minimize duplicative work for both subgrantees and authorizers. DEW convenes monthly meetings of all authorizers across the state, and these sessions frequently include discussions about how to strengthen and streamline the

state’s monitoring processes. The design of Ohio’s CSP monitoring system, described in the subsection above, is emblematic of this collaborative approach. Subgrantees benefit from an oversight framework that takes advantage of existing reporting requirements, with compulsory semiannual authorizer reviews feeding into the monitoring protocol and informing CSP-specific activities such as the fall desk review and spring site visit. DEW and authorizers routinely share information about subgrantee performance, with reciprocal transmission of monitoring reports and Corrective Action Plans ensuring each party’s oversight does not occur in a vacuum.

The layout of DEW’s CSP Monitoring Rubric also reflects Ohio’s commitment to alleviating undue burdens on subgrantees. Throughout the Rubric, examples of acceptable supporting documentation that subgrantees were required to have submitted as part of their RFA response are highlighted in yellow. DEW takes responsibility for pulling that information into the compliance system from CCIP, eliminating the need for subgrantees to reupload those documents for the purpose of CSP monitoring. DEW further reduces administrative burdens on subgrantees by conducting CSP monitoring in concert with its other federal grant monitoring activities. This “collaborative monitoring” approach explicitly aims to reduce the number of site visits a school receives in a single year. Through its FY25 CSP project, DEW will include CSP in its collaborative monitoring plan alongside other federal programs such as Title and IDEA.

Eligibility for a CSP subgrant is conditioned on a school satisfying the definition of “high-quality” set forth in Section B. This definition is tightly aligned with the criteria that schools must meet in order to receive supplemental revenues through the Quality Community Schools Support Fund described in CPP 2. The similarity between these quality measures is deliberate. Prospective subgrantees are generally aware of the benchmarks they must satisfy in

order to receive CSP funding prior to a competition launching, thereby eliminating the need for them to satisfy potentially incongruous standards when attempting to secure critical resources.

Finally, Ohio’s approach to TA, detailed in the subsection that follows, builds on the state’s robust authorizer evaluation system. Through its CSP project, DEW will facilitate trainings for authorizers within the discrete components of the “quality practices” rubric that have been identified as areas for growth. By using this framework to drive the delivery of CSP-funded TA, DEW ensures authorizers are receiving support in a manner that is directly connected to the state’s overarching vision for high-quality authorizing and frees authorizers from the responsibility of having to source an outside expert to provide these trainings.

C.3. Providing Technical Assistance and Support

Ohio’s TA plan has three essential elements: (1) targeted support for prospective subgrantees during the application process and active subgrantees while their CSP projects are ongoing; (2) sector-wide support to build the capacity of charter school operators in areas of strategic importance; and (3) support for Ohio’s charter school authorizers to utilize quality practices when conducting their core duties.

Element 1: Targeted Support for CSP Applicants and Subgrantees. DEW will work proactively to build the capacity of subgrantees to sustain operational excellence beyond the completion of their project periods. As described in Section B, DEW supports the development of high-quality CSP subgrant proposals that will lead to projects that drive improved educational outcomes for high-need students. The *Subgrant Application Training* (Table 4) provides a thorough overview of the application, review, submission, and post-award reporting processes, and DEW maintains a rolling FAQ document that it updates during each competition cycle.

As noted in Section A.4, support for active subgrantees occurs over four discrete phases of the project life cycle (Compliance, Implementation, Implementation and Improvement, and Continued Support for Implementation). DEW delivers CSP-related TA in multiple modalities including webinars, individual trainings (in-person or virtual) aligned to the unique needs of a single subgrantee, or small-group trainings that serve the shared needs of small cohorts of subgrantees. Ohio's CSP Grant Administrator serves as the primary contact for all grant-related support and can leverage expertise from various offices throughout DEW to provide TA in areas such as departments for specialized assistance in areas such as budgeting, federal programs compliance and implementation, services for students with disabilities and other educationally disadvantaged students, family engagement, facilities, transportation, and data reporting. Authorizers also provide TA to the subgrantee schools in their portfolios; the Quality Practices Rubric (Appendix F-3) sets forth an expectation that authorizers deliver timely TA in response to a school's "issues, problems, and concerns" once they have been identified. As explained in Section C.2, DEW and authorizers remain in close contact throughout a school's CSP project period to ensure that monitoring-related TA is well-coordinated and leading to measurable improvements in project implementation and impact.

Element 2: Sector-Wide Support for Charter School Operators. The second facet of DEW's TA plan consists of support designed to enhance the overall quality of Ohio's charter sector. DEW has preliminarily identified five areas of strategic importance in which CSP-supported TA will be delivered: (1) school finance; (2) supporting educationally disadvantaged students; (3) school start-up; (4) leadership development; and (5) governance. As described in Section D.2, DEW will continually reassess this component of its TA plan throughout the project period, relying both on its ongoing communication with authorizers charged with conducting

assessments to ascertain the TA needs of their schools and its own analysis of student performance data, CSP monitoring results, and sector-wide trends.

School Finance. DEW works with eligible applicants to ensure maximum access to all federal funds for which they are eligible. The Department's Office of Federal Programs assigns a consultant to answer questions related to the availability and use of federal funds, required documentation for budgeting federal funds, and the process for drawing down funds for expenditures consistent with approved budgets. Beyond the assigned consultant, the Department provides numerous technical assistance opportunities for charter schools to understand uses and processes related to receiving federal funds. These include annual regional trainings as well as semiannual conferences supporting administrators of federal programs. As part of the *New Charter School Academy* described below, DEW will develop a training series specific to administering federally funded programs in start-up charter schools.

Educationally Disadvantaged Students. DEW's Office for Exceptional Children and Office of Integrated Student Supports provide a range of TA supports to ensure charter schools are meeting the needs of their educationally disadvantaged student populations. At a basic level, DEW provides model forms, a video training series,²⁰ and links to differentiated materials through the Assistive Technology & Accessible Educational Materials Center. DEW creates a robust Special Education Profile for each LEA (including charter schools) that is organized around six essential questions that assess kindergarten readiness, achievement levels, access to general education environments, preparedness for life beyond high school, service delivery, and equitable outcomes. The design of the Profile helps schools use data pertaining to services and outcomes for students with disabilities to engage in continuous improvement efforts related to their special education programs. Ohio also provides instructional resources for teachers

responsible for educating students with disabilities and English Learners and employs program specialists who focus on the provision of systemic supports for students who are homeless, incarcerated, in foster care, military dependents, and/or in substance abuse programs.

School Start-Up. Research underscores the importance of a charter school launching successfully. Scholars at the Center for Research on Education Outcomes (CREDO) at Stanford University have found that “early signals of quality are strongly related to later performance,” and that poor first-year performance typically gives rise to a “predictable and extremely bleak” future.²¹ Accordingly, DEW will launch a *New Charter School Academy* and a *Charter School Leadership Incubator*. The purpose of the New Charter School Academy will be to train the founding leaders and board members of start-up schools during their pre-opening planning periods. The Academy’s format will be hybrid in nature, with a combination of in-person and virtual trainings covering topics ranging from state laws and administrative rules, accountability systems, reporting requirements, academic supports, finance, student recruitment and enrollment strategies that promote the inclusion of all students, staff recruitment and retention, and approaches to student discipline that minimize exclusion from classroom settings. In addition to these training modules, DEW — in partnership with national experts — will provide structured coaching and support to founding leaders throughout their planning years and during their schools’ first two years of operation. To ensure that schools start strong and sustain excellence over time, Ohio will offer a range of coaching support including site visits, regular coaching calls, virtual training, and artifact analysis. Leaders in their planning years will also take part in small-group intensives led by coaches and leaders of high-performing Ohio charter schools.

In alignment with Ohio’s ongoing effort to develop a Principal Apprenticeship Program that would provide multiple pathways for emerging administrators to receive training and

development in school leadership, DEW will create a Charter School Leadership Incubator program with the goal of developing a robust pipeline of strong, effective, and visionary charter school leaders. After being selected through a competitive application process that affords a preference to leaders aspiring to open schools in High-Need and Rural communities (as defined within the Ohio CSP RFA's Competitive Preference Priorities), fellows will embed at successful charter schools, shadowing experienced leaders and taking on progressively increasing responsibilities while simultaneously receiving ongoing professional development from expert partners in the key leadership domains enumerated in the preceding paragraph. Fellows will emerge from the Incubator Program prepared either to found their own high-quality school or to succeed an outgoing leader at an existing school, thereby ensuring leadership turnover within the sector does not result in an erosion of quality.

Leadership Development. In addition to supporting the founding leadership teams of start-up schools, DEW will work to build the capacity of newly appointed leaders within charter schools that have already reached scale. Session content will focus on school culture, effective governance/management partnerships, teacher development, instructional leadership, budgeting for sustainability, policy development, compliance and accountability, and charter fidelity. This *Leadership Development Training Program* will include a mentorship strand that pairs new leaders with seasoned counterparts for the purpose of discussing common challenges, sharing effective practices, and building a network of supportive peers.

Governance. In partnership with outside experts in charter board development, Ohio will launch a Charter School Governance Institute that aims to build the capacity of governing authorities to discharge their fiduciary oversight duties. Among the training topics likely to be covered will include Ohio's accountability system and School Report Card ratings; compliance

with Ohio’s Sunshine Laws and other statutory and regulatory requirements; an overview of the academic, organizational, and financial performance frameworks built into the charter contracts with their authorizers; budget development and financial controls; processes for conducting school leader, management organization, and board self-evaluations; preparing for renewal; educating students with disabilities; and performance management plan development and implementation. Virtual trainings will be held semiannually, and differentiated session content will be developed to orient new board members to their roles and responsibilities, to engage and educate more experienced members of school governing authorities, and to address the unique needs of founding boards of start-up charter schools. Sessions will be recorded, transcribed, and disseminated on DEW’s website alongside other CSP resources.

Element 3: Support for Charter School Authorizers. DEW’s TA plan for authorizers is intertwined with the state’s authorizer evaluation system. DEW rates authorizers on three components: academic performance, compliance with all applicable laws and rules, and adherence to quality practices. For the purpose of calculating an authorizer’s overall score, each component is weighted equally and is worth 4 total points. An authorizer must receive at least 10 of the 12 available points to be rated as “Exemplary” and at least 7 points to be rated as “Effective.” The Quality Practices Rubric consists of 33 indicators, each of which is scored on a scale ranging from 1 to 4 points. Accordingly, the animating vision for Ohio’s authorizer TA plan is simple: to improve the performance of authorizers on evaluation measures on which they have earned fewer than 4 points. DEW will accomplish this objective through monthly authorizer meetings, a training institute for new authorizer personnel, and the creation of an authorizer improvement network that offers mentorship, personalized coaching, artifact review, and transmission of exemplar policies and practices.

Monthly Authorizer Meetings. As described in Section C.2 above, DEW convenes monthly meetings of all Ohio charter authorizers. In addition to discussing how to strengthen and streamline the state’s monitoring processes, these sessions also feature topic-based trainings aligned to indicators within the Quality Practices Rubric including performance contracting; annual performance monitoring and reporting; approval, renewal, non-renewal, and termination; enrollment and financial reviews (including assistance with annual audits). DEW also uses this meeting format to review the state’s policies related to charter school suspension and closure. When winding down a school’s operations, authorizers must complete a Suspension and Closing Assurances Form (Appendix F-10) that includes nearly 70 action items related to notification of parents, staff, and state agencies; student records; and disposition of assets. DEW provides detailed guidance to authorizers on how to complete this form (Appendix F-11), which includes a requirement that closing schools meet with parents to review educational options for their children. Authorizers submit evidence of adherence to the state’s suspension and closing procedures on a quarterly basis while overseeing a school’s dissolution, and DEW provides support, feedback, and guidance on best practices (e.g., how schools and authorizers can help guide parents toward other high-quality charter school options).

New Authorizer Training Institute. DEW will develop an onboarding program for professionals new to the work of charter school authorizing. In partnership with a national expert in charter school authorizing, DEW will deliver trainings that orient new staff and board members within Ohio’s approved authorizing entities to the fundamental roles and responsibilities of an authorizer, Ohio’s statutory and regulatory environment (including the components of the authorizer evaluation system), and national best practices. Notably, DEW will invite “non-authorizer” staff within the state’s approved authorizing entities to participate in

these sessions in order to broaden their understanding of how high-quality authorizing can promote the educational missions of their respective organizations. Training materials, including webinar recordings, will be made available on DEW's website. Session content will be refreshed at least two times during the CSP project period to capture developments within Ohio's policy landscape and innovations from the field.

Authorizer Improvement Network. Finally, DEW will spur the creation of a statewide Authorizer Improvement Network to strengthen authorizer performance within growth areas identified on their evaluations. This Network will represent a multi-pronged approach to building the human, policy, and resource capacity of authorizers across the state. DEW will facilitate mentorship opportunities by strategically pairing authorizers struggling within one or more of the Quality Practices indicators with authorizers that have track records of excelling in those areas. DEW will also partner with a national expert in charter school authorizing to offer personalized coaching sessions for authorizers struggling to implement quality practices on any given standard. This partner will be available to review an authorizer's proposed evidentiary submissions on select indicators within the Quality Practices Rubric before those artifacts are formally uploaded for DEW to evaluate. Finally, this partner will curate and disseminate exemplar policies and practices to support authorizer efficacy within these domains.

C.4. Soliciting and Considering Input from Parents and Other Community Members

Ohio's comprehensive plan for soliciting and considering input from parents and other members of the community on the design and implementation of charter schools includes a range of data collection and dissemination activities. These activities occur at various stages of a charter school's life cycle, starting well in advance of its inception, extending into the application process, and carrying forward through its ongoing operations. Staggering the data collection and

analysis process in this fashion ensures that parental and community feedback are consistently driving decision-making on a statewide basis and at the individual school level.

Ohio’s Quality Practices Rubric (Appendix F-3) makes clear that authorizers must require developers to conduct “market research” as part of the charter school application process. This research must include a demonstration of demand for the school as evidenced by letters of commitment from parents and community stakeholders (see Appendices F-12 and F-13). Furthermore, the Quality Practices Rubric clarifies that the semiannual site visits authorizers are required to conduct pursuant to Ohio law must include collection and examination of perceptual data from parents. Authorizers annually upload evidence of adherence to these requirements to Epicenter, allowing DEW to develop a real-time picture of community need throughout the state.

To support school-level efforts to solicit and incorporate parental voice into daily operations, the Ohio Statewide Family Engagement Center at the Ohio State University provides a wealth of resources and professional learning opportunities for educators and administrators. Publicly available toolkits and training materials include Family Engagement Activity Guides for Middle School Career Development, Elevating Family Voice in Career Pathways, Engaging Families in Postsecondary Planning, Creating Family-Friendly Math Events, and Unlocking Early Literacy with Family-Teacher Collaboration. The Center also provides on-demand videos (e.g., How to Engage Families of Adolescents, Measuring Family Engagement, and Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Family Engagement), curates on-demand podcasts (e.g., Middle School Family Engagement and Beyond the Classroom: Engaging Families, Educators, and Learners), and hosts an annual Family Engagement Leadership Summit (with session topics including Engaging and Support Families of Students with Disabilities, Partnering with Families to Reduce

Absenteeism, and Designing Family Engagement for Out-of-School Time Programs) that equip charter schools across the state to strengthen their community partnership efforts.

The extent to which schools have effectively incorporated these practices is assessed not only during semiannual authorizer site visits but through the CSP application and monitoring processes. As part of its Application Narrative (Table 5), an eligible charter school responding to Ohio’s CSP RFA must share evidence of parental demand for the new seats it intends to offer, explain how the school will address the needs of its target community, and demonstrate alignment between its market analysis and its project goals. Once a school has been awarded a subgrant, it is assessed during fall desk reviews and spring site visits on Monitoring Rubric Indicator P7 (“Subgrantee involves parents and other members of the community in the planning, design, and implementation of the school.”). DEW reviews this information at the individual school level and aggregates it across cohorts of subgrantees in order to identify trends, discover effective practices, and inform the TA offerings described in the preceding subsection.

During the upcoming CSP project period, DEW’s Office of Research, Evaluation, and Advanced Analytics will partner with the Office of Community Schools to develop two types of survey instruments. The first battery of questions will be used to poll representative samples of parents from across the state about the types of educational models and programs that would appeal to them. The second instrument will be used to survey businesses that partner with Ohio’s dropout prevention and recovery charter schools. Results will be analyzed, shared both with schools to inform their programming and with authorizers to inform their portfolio development, and built into the CSP project through the RFA’s Competitive Preference Priorities related to High-Need Location and Diverse Charter School Models and through TA offerings for charter operators and authorizers. Each survey will be conducted at least twice during the project period.

A complete timeline of family engagement activities is provided in Table 7.

C.5. Maximizing Flexibilities Afforded Under State Law

Under Ohio Rev. Code § 3314.04, charter schools are generally “exempt from all state laws and rules pertaining to schools, school districts, and boards of education, except those laws and rules that grant certain rights to parents.” Accordingly, Ohio charter schools have the flexibility to design and adopt curricular materials and instructional methods that are responsive to the needs of their student populations, establish academic goals aligned to their missions, appoint members of their governing bodies, structure their instructional calendars, hire and dismiss staff, and contract with service providers to help execute their programmatic models.²² This flexibility allows charter schools to adapt and innovate in their educational delivery methods while remaining subject to the same academic performance standards as traditional public schools. Among the specific flexibilities afforded Ohio charter schools are the following:

Staffing. Ohio requires charter school educators to possess a license, permit, or certification. However, charter schools are exempt from provisions of state law that require educators to be “properly certified or licensed” in specific subject areas or grade levels, allowing them to hire qualified teachers who took non-traditional pathways into the classroom and to adopt innovative staffing models. Charter schools are also exempt from civil service laws and have greater flexibility in determining the appropriate qualifications for their administrators.

Minimum Operating Standards. The State Board of Education, through the administrative rule-making process, establishes minimum operating standards for all traditional public schools (Ohio Admin. Code Chapter 3301-35). With one exception,²³ charter schools are not required to meet these standards but are instead bound by the provisions of Ohio’s charter school law.

Budget and Expenditure Management. Charter schools are exempt from competitive bidding requirements enshrined in state law and must adopt procurement policies aligned to the Code of Federal Regulations (2 CFR 200) for purchases using federal funds. This flexibility enables schools to partner with service providers based on customized criteria established by their governing bodies. Charter schools also have the flexibility to determine how best to allocate state and local operating funds in order to meet the needs of their student populations.

DEW is committed to working with charter school operators and authorizers to maximize the flexibility provided under Ohio state law. The Executive Summary of the RFA to which prospective CSP subgrantees will respond requires applicants to describe how they will use the autonomies and flexibilities afforded Ohio charter schools to raise student achievement. During routine monitoring activities, DEW will assess the degree to which subgrantees are (1) implementing their educational model as described in their applications; (2) utilizing data to drive academic plans, budgetary decisions, and professional development offerings; and (3) making progress toward their project goals. Schools assessed as “noncompliant” or “not met” on any of these indicators within the Monitoring Rubric will receive coaching on how to more effectively leverage their statutory and regulatory autonomies in order to address the needs that emerge from a careful analysis of student data and to meet their CSP project goals.

Similarly, Ohio’s Review Instrument for evaluating applications from potential charter school authorizers includes an assessment of the entity’s “understanding of community school autonomy” and its explanation of “how it will ensure autonomy for the schools it sponsors” (Appendix F-2). Among the “quality practices” assessed through DEW’s authorizer evaluation process are the degree to which an authorizer (1) assists schools in understanding the roles and responsibilities outlined in their charter contracts, (2) bases high-stakes decisions on measurable

performance outcomes, and (3) provides evidence-based professional development to staff members aligned with oversight responsibilities in areas such as governance, instructional delivery, and compliance. DEW will facilitate the delivery of TA to authorizers on the elements of the Quality Practices Rubric on which they are assessed as underperforming. As such, DEW’s project plan contemplates authorizers receiving targeted training on how to conduct oversight that simultaneously promotes operational autonomy and maintains a high bar for accountability.

D. Quality of the Management Plan

D.1. Feasibility of the Management Plan to Achieve Project Objectives

DEW’s Management Plan (Table 7) includes clear responsibilities, timelines, and milestones that are realistic, appropriate for the objectives of the grant, and adequate to ensure project success. As outlined in the Budget Narrative, DEW will allocate the necessary resources to execute each of the technical assistance activities and administrative tasks enumerated in Table 7. Project personnel possess the requisite expertise and experience to ensure the CSP project achieves its ambitious aims. The work of any external partner will be managed by the **bolded** DEW team member in the corresponding row of the Management Plan.

Table 7. Ohio CSP Management Plan

Timeline		1
Project Management		
October 2025, monthly	Convene meetings of all Ohio charter school authorizers	OCS , PD, AU
January 2026	Collaborate with Department of Education to finalize project goals and budget	PD
January 2026, monthly	CSP Project Team meets	PD , GA, PA
January 2026, monthly	CSP Project Steering Committee meets to review data, assess progress toward grant goals, and propose modifications to	PD , PA, GA, PM,

¹ GA = Grant Administrator, PD = Project Director, PA = Program Administrator, OCS = Office of Community School Administrator, AA = Accountability Administrator, AU = Authorizers, REA = Research and Evaluation Administrator, CCO = Chief Communications Officer, PM = Project Manager, SST = State Support Team, CIO = Chief Integration Officer, DS = Data Scientist, FPA = Federal Programs Administrator, ECA = Exceptional Children Administrator, OA = Office of Accountability, PR = Peer Reviewers, TAP = Technical Assistance Partner; SPI = Superintendent of Public Instruction

	processes, timelines, TA offerings, and dissemination strategies	OCS, AA, REA, CCO, CIO, DS, FPA, ECA
January 2026	Centralize application, budgeting, reporting, and compliance monitoring in the CCIP unified grants platform	GA
January 2026, monthly	Convene Dropout Prevention and Recovery Advisory Council to coordinate operators, authorizers, and public guidance	PA
Winter 2026	Recruit for, hire, and onboard CSP Grant Administrator and Program Administrator	PD
Winter 2026, Ongoing	Maintain and update CSP website (e.g., subgrant application materials, recorded trainings / videos, exemplar tools, monitoring findings + Corrective Action Plans)	PA
Winter 2026, annually	Attend CSP Project Directors Conference	PD, GA, PA
Spring 2026, Ongoing	Streamline compliance by importing CCIP documents and integrating CSP monitoring with other federal reviews	PA
Spring 2026, annually	Collect data from State Support Teams, authorizers, and Dropout Prevention and Recovery Advisory Council to assess dissemination of best practices developed and refined within charter schools	GA, Steering Committee
Spring 2026, annually	Solicit and evaluate applications from potential authorizing entities via Community School Sponsor Application	OCS
June 2026, ongoing	Act on Steering Committee recommendations and oversees implementation of adjustments to project plan	PD, GA, PA
Annually	Submit Annual Performance Report	PD, GA
Winter 2030	Submit Final Performance Report	PD
Subgrant Competition		
January–March 2026, annually	Publish and publicize Subgrant Application	GA, CCO
March–April 2026, annually	Recruit, evaluate, select and train peer reviewers	PD, PA
April 2026, annually	Conduct pre-proposal webinars	GA, PA
April 2026, annually	Solicit questions and publish FAQ	GA, PA
May 2026, annually	Publish Notice of Intent to Apply	GA, PA
May 2026, annually	Open Request for Applications (RFA) window	GA, PA
June 2026, annually	Close RFA window	GA
June 2026, annually	Subgrant applicants complete feedback survey	PA
June–July 2026, annually	Conduct Technical and Peer Reviews	GA, PR
July 2026, annually	Issue Notice of Award to successful applicants	GA, SPI
Monitoring		
August–September 2026, annually	Evaluate authorizers and monitor adherence to improvement plans for those rated Ineffective or Poor	OCS
September 2026, annually	Issue alternative Dropout Prevention and Recovery report cards and ratings for DPR charter schools	AA
September 2026, annually	Monitor Student Success Plans for at-risk students in dropout prevention and recovery schools	AU
Summer 2026, as-needed	Train Office of Community Schools staff on CSP Monitoring Rubric indicators and subgrantee monitoring procedures	GA
Fall 2026, annually	Assess subgrantee risk via comprehensive Monitoring Rubric	GA

September 2026, semimonthly	Monitor expenditures through ongoing budget reviews and Project Cash Request documentation	GA
September 2026, annually	Collect annual Grant Activities Reports detailing progress, sustainability, spending, and inventory	GA
November 2026 and February 2027, annually	Review semiannual authorizer site-visit reports and assurances forms related to active CSP subgrantees	GA, PD
November 2026, annually	Conduct desk reviews to verify subgrantee fiscal and programmatic compliance	GA, OCS
Spring 2027, annually	Perform site visits to ensure adherence to grant terms and program requirements	GA, OCS
November 2026 and February 2027, annually	Monitor parent and community involvement at subgrantee level via desk reviews and site visits	GA
Ongoing	Require corrective action within 30 days for noncompliant subgrantees and notify authorizers promptly	GA
Technical Assistance		
October 2025, ongoing	Support State Support Teams to deliver peer coaching and share charter best practices in leadership and instruction	PM, OCS, SST
Winter 2026, ongoing	Continuously assess TA needs using authorizer feedback, performance data, and monitoring results	PD, GA, OCS
February 2026, annually	Deliver annual trainings on the authorizer evaluation system and publish updated technical documentation, overview presentations, and FAQ resources	AA, OA
Summer 2026, ongoing	Provide targeted support to subgrantees during the Compliance, Implementation, and Improvement phases of their CSP projects	PD, GA
Summer 2026, annually	Recruit participants for the New Charter School Academy	PD, GA, OCS, TAP
Summer 2026, annually	Provide trainings aligned to Quality Authorizing Practices rubric	AA, OA, TAP
Summer 2026, annually	Recruit participants for the Charter School Governance Institute	PD, OCS, CIO, TAP
Summer 2026, annually	Recruit participants for the Charter School Leadership Incubator program	PD, OCS, CIO, TAP
Fall 2026, ongoing	Provide targeted support to subgrantees based on findings within Monitoring Rubric and coach subgrantees rated as non-compliant on rubric indicators to leverage autonomies and meet CSP project goals	GA, OCS
Fall 2026, annually	Design onboarding program for new authorizer staff and board members as well as "non-authorizer" personnel within approved authorizing entities	PD, TAP
Fall 2026, annually	Recruit participants, mentors and coaches for the statewide Authorizer Improvement Network, recruit participants, mentors/coaches and design training materials	PD, CCO, GA, TAP
Fall 2026, annually	Design, revise, and deliver training materials for the Charter School Governance Institute	GA, TAP
Fall 2026, annually	Design training materials and deliver training for Authorizer Improvement Network participants	PD, TAP

Fall 2026, annually	Design, revise, and deliver training materials for New Charter School Academy participants	PD, TAP
Fall 2026, annually	Design, revise, and deliver training materials for the Charter School Leadership Incubator program	PD, TAP
Fall 2027 and 2029	Conduct biennial statewide parent and DROP-partner surveys	PD, REA, PA
Winter 2027 and 2029	Analyze findings from biennial statewide parent and DROP-partner surveys	REA
Winter 2027 and 2029	Share results from biennial statewide parent and DROP-partner surveys, and incorporate into targeted TA	PD, CCO, CIO
As needed	Train eligible applicants to ensure maximum access to all federal funds for which they are eligible	FPA, OCS
As needed	Deliver specialized supports and resources for students with disabilities, ELs, and other disadvantaged groups	ECA, OCS
As needed	Provide PBIS modules and on-demand consultants to reduce exclusionary discipline	PM, SST

Colleen Grady, Chief of DEW’s Office of Educational Options & Improvement, will serve as the *Project Director*. Colleen has worked in a variety of leadership capacities within the Department. In her current capacity, Colleen is the executive manager for more than \$2.7 billion of budgetary activity per year that is largely focused on the operation, sponsorship, and improvement of charter schools. Previously, Colleen served as an Executive Director and Senior Policy advisor for DEW, during which time she supervised three agency offices administering school choice programs, provided strategic policy support across all agency program offices in the Department, and led stakeholder engagement for Ohio’s initial state ESSA plan.

Lily Bartholomew, Program Administrator for the Office of Educational Options and Improvement, will serve as the *Project Manager*. At DEW, Lily provides strategic operational support and helps administer over \$2 billion in education funding annually. Lily has managed grants, overseen executive-level administrative functions, and supported legislative implementation for education delivery models, ensuring compliance and operational efficiency.

Lori McKown Wood, the Administrator of DEW’s Office of Community Schools, has more than 30 years of program administration experience. Within her current role, Lori is

responsible for conducting trainings, developing data-driven improvement initiatives, and supervising staff to make sure that charter schools and authorizers are operating within a healthy ecosystem across the state. Lori was previously responsible for licensure compliance and improvement planning as a Program Specialist within DEW's Office of School Sponsorship.

In addition to the staff members profiled above, the Ohio CSP project team (detailed in Table 8) includes a number of key personnel with research, administrative, and leadership experience that will be invaluable to the project. More information about their qualifications is provided in Appendix B (Resumes). Upon notification of a grant award, DEW will recruit, hire, and train both a CSP Grant Administrator and a Program Administrator, integral members of the project team who will devote 100% and 75% of their time to CSP-related activities respectively. Job descriptions for those roles are included as Appendix F-14 and F-15.

D.2. Feedback and Continuous Improvement

DEW has a strong commitment to continuous improvement processes in all areas of operations. Accordingly, Ohio will systematically collect and analyze a range of qualitative and quantitative data and will use that information to guide targeted improvements to how this CSP project is being administered and executed.

To coordinate the Department's continuous improvement efforts, Ohio will form a Project Steering Committee composed of representatives from DEW's Office of Community Schools, Office of Accountability, Office of Communications, Office of Data Quality, Office for Exceptional Children, Office of Federal Programs, and Office of Research, Evaluation, and Advanced Analytics. The Steering Committee — which will meet quarterly to synchronize work, analyze stakeholder feedback, and track progress toward grant goals — will be responsible both for advising the Project Director and for implementing any adjustments to CSP-related TA,

monitoring, and dissemination activities that the Project Director determines to be necessary in order for the project to achieve Ohio's CSP project objectives.

During each Steering Committee meeting, the Project Director will report on progress toward each of the performance measures outlined in Table 1. Accordingly, these meetings will consist of a systematic review of data related to academic performance (i.e., Ohio State Test and School Report Card data); subgrant applications and awards (including the percentage of applicants and funded proposals addressing Competitive Preference Priorities); seat creation (including the distribution of new seats across communities and charter school model types); TA participation, satisfaction, and effectiveness (including survey data from participants about the quality, relevance, and usefulness of CSP-funded trainings); authorizer improvement (including Authorizer Evaluation System ratings and scores on specific Quality Practices indicators); and best practice dissemination.

To monitor progress toward DEW's dissemination targets, the Steering Committee will annually collect data from Ohio's regional State Support Teams, authorizers, and Dropout Prevention and Recovery Advisory Council to gauge the extent to which they have disseminated best practices developed and refined within Ohio charter schools to improve struggling public schools of all types. Moreover, twice during the project period (in Years 2 and 4), DEW will administer two statewide surveys: one polling parents on preferred educational models and another gathering input from businesses partnering with dropout prevention and recovery charter schools. The results of these surveys will be analyzed by the Office of Research, Evaluation, and Advanced Analytics, discussed within the Steering Committee, and then used to inform adjustments to Charter School Leadership Incubator recruitment efforts and other TA offerings.

To the extent that the Steering Committee determines that DEW is not on track to fulfill a project goal, it will attempt to assess the root cause of that shortcoming by triangulating data from a range of additional sources. Specifically, the Steering Committee will review Annual Grant Activities Reports from each subgrantee; post-award survey data from subgrant applicants about the efficiency, clarity, and transparency of the RFA process; and information about Corrective Action Plans imposed on subgrantees and/or authorizers. Based on this information, the Steering Committee will recommend potential improvements to the subgrant competition and monitoring processes, to technical assistance topics and modalities, to project timelines, and to the types of best practices materials being codified and disseminated. The Project Director will ultimately be responsible for determining what adjustments to make in ensuing project years and for overseeing the successful execution of those shifts on a Department-wide basis.

D.3. Appropriateness and Adequacy of Time Commitments

Attaining Ohio's ambitious CSP objectives will require key project personnel to devote significant time and effort to the project. Accordingly, DEW anticipates three key team members from the Office of Educational Options & Improvement — i.e., the Project Director (10%), Project Manager (50%), and Community Schools Administrator (20%) — to be joined by two new hires: a CSP Grant Administrator (100%) and a CSP Program Administrator (75%). As set forth in Table 8, representatives from other DEW offices will devote an additional 3.1 FTEs to the project. Beyond the individuals named in Table 8, the Office of Accountability will allocate 2.0 FTEs to conduct evaluations of charter school authorizers. Given the team's collective expertise and experience administering high-quality federal grant programs, the staffing commitment that DEW will make to the success of this CSP project (5.45 FTEs) is entirely appropriate and adequate to meet the project's goals and objectives.

Table 8. Key Personnel Time Commitments

Project Team Member	Role	Time Commitment
Colleen Grady	Chief, Educational Options & Improvement (Project Director)	10%
Lily Bartholomew	Project Manager	50%
Lori Wood	Community Schools Administrator	20%
[TBD / Contingent Hire]	CSP Grant Administrator	100%
[TBD / Contingent Hire]	CSP Program Administrator	75%
Rachel Wakefield	Accountability Administrator	50%
Eben Dowell	Research and Evaluation Administrator	5%
Chris Woolard	Chief Integration Officer	5%
Karlyn Geis	Data Scientist	10%
Jeremy Marks	Federal Programs Administrator	5%
Jo Hannah Ward	Exceptional Children Administrator	10%
Lacey Snoke	Chief Communications Officer	5%
[TBD]	Authorizer Evaluators	[Cumulative 2.0 FTEs]

As detailed in the Budget Narrative, DEW will support the project-related contributions of the Project Director, Grant Administrator, and CSP Program Administrator with CSP funds. All other DEW efforts will be funded by existing operational resources. The work of contracted TA partners will be overseen by the designated DEW staff member identified in Table 7.

Waivers

DEW, on behalf of its subgrant applicants, requests a waiver of requirements in section 4303(h) of the ESEA regarding use of funds to allow subgrantees to use funds for sustained costs (e.g., personnel costs for school leaders or instructional staff, software subscriptions, student assessments, reasonable facility costs, etc.) throughout the life of the grant, provided that such costs are necessary to open new charter schools or to replicate or expand high-quality charter schools and that the school can demonstrate that it will maintain financial sustainability after the end of the subgrant period. This waiver is necessary to ensure the success of DEW's CSP project as it will afford subgrantees the flexibility to allocate subgrant funds in a strategic manner that most effectively advances their project goals while allowing them to plan proactively for sustainability beyond their planning, program design, and initial implementation phases.

Application Requirements

Application Requirement	Location(s) in Project
(a)(1)(i) Support the opening, expansion, and replication of high-quality charter schools	Section A.1 [pp.12–16]
(a)(1)(ii) Inform eligible applicants of available funds	Section B [p. 27]
(a)(1)(iii) Work with eligible applicants to ensure they receive commensurate share of federal funds, participate in federal programs for which they are eligible, and meet the needs of students served under such programs	CPP 2 [p. 5] Section A.4 [p. 24] Section C.3 [p. 43]
(a)(1)(iv) Establish closure plans and procedures	Section C.3 [p. 47]
(a)(1)(v) Work with SEA to operate CSP program	N/A
(a)(1)(vi)(A) Ensure subgrantees use funds for appropriate purposes	Section C.1 [pp. 36–39]
(a)(1)(vi)(B) Ensure subgrantees are preparing for post-grant sustainability of quality programming	Section A.4 [pp. 23–26] Section B [p. 30] Section C.1 [pp. 36–37] Section C.3 [pp. 41–46] Waiver Request [p. 60]
(a)(1)(vii)(A) Support charter schools in LEAs with a significant number of CSI schools	Section A.1 [p. 15] Section A.4 [pp. 25–26]
(a)(1)(vii)(B) Support use of charter schools to improve or turn around struggling schools	CPP 3 [pp. 5–8] Section A.1 [pp. 15–16] Section A.4 [p. 25] Section C.3 [p. 48]
(a)(1)(viii)(A) Work with charter schools to support inclusion in recruitment and enrollment	Section B [p. 30] Section C.1 [p. 38] Section C.3 [p. 44]
(a)(1)(viii)(B) Work with charter schools to support student retention and reduce overuse of exclusionary disciplinary practices	Section C.3 [p. 44]
(a)(1)(ix) Share best practices between charter schools and other public schools	CPP 3 [pp. 5–8] Section A.1 [pp. 15–16] Section A.2 [pp. 17–18] Section D.2 [pp. 57–59]
(a)(1)(x) Ensure charter schools meet the educational needs of all students including students with disabilities and English learners	Section C.1 [pp. 34–39]
(a)(1)(xi) Support efforts to increase charter school quality initiatives including quality charter school authorizing	Absolute Priority [pp. 1–3] Section A.4 [pp. 23–26] Section C.3 [pp. 41–48]
(a)(1)(xii)(A) Provide oversight of authorizing activity	Absolute Priority [pp. 1–3] Section A.4 [p. 25] Section C.3 [pp. 46–48]
(a)(1)(xiii) Support the opening of high schools	CPP 5 [pp. 9–11]

	Section A.3 [p. 20] Section B. [pp. 30, 33]
(a)(2)(i) Meet Competitive Preference Priorities 1–5	CPP1–CPP5 [pp. 3–11]
(a)(2)(ii) Strengthen cohesive statewide system to support the opening, expansion, and replication of high-quality charter schools	Section A.1 [pp.12–16] Section A.3 [pp. 19–23] Section C.2 [pp. 39–41]
(a)(2)(iii) Strengthen cohesive strategy to encourage collaboration between charter schools and LEAs on the sharing of best practices	CPP 3 [pp. 5–8] Section A.1 [pp. 15–16] Section A.2 [pp. 17–18] Section D.2 [pp. 57–59]
(a)(3)(i) Contents of the subgrant application	Section B [pp. 26–34]
(a)(3)(ii) How subgrant applications will be reviewed	Section B [pp. 26–34]
(a)(4) Partner organization roles and responsibilities	Section D.1 [pp. 53–57] Budget Narrative
(a)(5) Ensure each subgrantee has considered and planned for the transportation needs of students	Section A.3 [p. 22] Section A.4 [p. 24] Section B [p. 30] Section C.3 [p. 42]
(a)(6) A description of how Ohio addresses charter schools in the State’s open meetings and open records laws	Section C.5 [p 51, fn.22]
(a)(7) Support diverse charter school models including models that serve rural communities	Invitational Priority [p. 11] Section A.1 [pp. 12–16] Section A.2 [pp. 16–18] Section A.3 [pp. 19–23] Section B [p. 30] Section C.3 [pp. 44–45]

Reference List

- ¹ Ohio law refers to charter schools as “community schools” and to charter school authorizers as “sponsors.” While these terms are synonymous, this application will primarily utilize the more common nomenclature for clarity and consistency with federal law and CSP guidelines.
- ² <https://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Community-Schools/Sponsor-Ratings-and-Tools/2024-2025-Sponsor-Evaluation-Tools/2024-2025-FAQ>
- ³ Lavertu, S. The impact of Ohio charter schools on student outcomes, 2016–19. *Thomas B. Fordham Institute*.
- ⁴ Levartu, S. (2024). The impact of increasing funding for high-performing charter schools: The Quality Community School Support Fund, 2019–23. *Thomas B. Fordham Institute*.
- ⁵ Levartu, S. (2024). Did the emergence of Ohio charter schools help or harm students who remained in district schools? *Thomas B. Fordham Institute*.
- ⁶ Ohio Department of Education & Workforce (2025). *Community Schools Funding Components*.
- ⁷ ExcelinEd (2024). *Building for success in Ohio: Measuring how well Ohio is meeting charter school facility needs*.
- ⁸ Lavertu, S. (2020). The impact of Ohio charter schools on student outcomes, 2016–19. *Thomas B. Fordham Institute*.
- ⁹ Lavertu, S. (2024) Ohio charter schools after the pandemic: Are their students still learning more than they would in district schools? *Thomas B. Fordham Institute*.
<https://fordhaminstitute.org/sites/default/files/publication/pdfs/ohio-charter-schools-after-pandemic-report-web-final.pdf>
- ¹⁰ Churchill, A. (2024). Ohio’s urban charters pull ahead on the 2023–24 report card. *Thomas B. Fordham Institute*.
- ¹¹ See Levartu, *supra* note 3.
- ¹² Ohio Department of Education & Workforce (2025). List of CSI schools (Updated February 2025).
- ¹³ See Levartu, *supra* note 5.
- ¹⁴ Jacobs, D., & Veney, D. (2024). Do you know where the children are? A five-year analysis of public school enrollment - 2024. *National Alliance for Public Charter Schools*.
- ¹⁵ Churchill, A. (2024). Ohio charters are speeding ahead in the post-pandemic enrollment competition. *Thomas B. Fordham Institute*.
- ¹⁶ See Churchill, *supra* note 10.
- ¹⁷ Millard, K. (2025, April 3). Data shows education vouchers exclude Ohio’s rural counties. *WCMH*. <https://www.nbc4i.com/news/politics/ohio-school-vouchers-rural-counties/ohiobythenumbers.com>
- ¹⁸ [ohiobythenumbers.com](https://www.nbc4i.com/news/politics/ohio-school-vouchers-rural-counties/ohiobythenumbers.com)
- ¹⁹ See Levartu, *supra* note 3.
- ²⁰ <https://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Special-Education/The-Basics-of-Special-Education-Video-Series>
- ²¹ Peltason, E. H., & Raymond, M. E. (2013). *Charter school growth and replication* (Vol. 1). Center for Research on Education Outcomes (CREDO).
- ²² Ohio’s Open Meetings Act (Ohio Rev. Code § 121.22) and Public Records Act (Ohio Rev. Code § 149.43) apply to charter schools.
- ²³ Ohio Admin. Code 3301-35-15, which establishes standards for the implementation of PBIS and the use of seclusion and restraints, is applicable to charter schools.