



## Ascent Classical Academy Flatirons Charter Application to Boulder Valley School District Addendum to Charter Application – August 30, 2018

Ascent Classical Academy Flatirons (“ACAF”) submitted a charter application on August 1, 2018. On August 15, 2018, the application team received a notice from the Boulder Valley School District (“BVSD”) that the application was incomplete. The application team offers this Addendum to clarify and present the requested information.

### 6. Student achievement and curriculum

*f. Describe the plan for addressing the needs of students with special needs, including budget and staff requirements. The plan shall include identifying and meeting the learning needs of at-risk students, students with disabilities, gifted and talented students and English language learners.*

Ascent Classical Academy Flatirons included a comprehensive plan on serving students with special needs, based on the Student Services program at sister-school Golden View Classical Academy. The expected expenses to serve the projected student population are included in the budget submitted with the charter application. The school is committed to serving all students and will adopt a budget that serves the needs of those with additional needs once the case load is determined.

The projected hard costs in the submitted budget include:

Director, Student Service (without benefits)	\$61,000
Two, Special Education Teacher (without benefits)	\$41,000 each, or \$82,000
Contract specialists, to include speech/language, psychologists, etc. This will be determined based on actual case load.	\$165,000
Space allocation in building (TBD)	Unknown

The Ascent Classical Academy Flatirons team requested additional guidance from BVSD on special education, including costs, but was given insufficient guidance for this application. The BVSD team instructed ACAF that special education arrangements are agreed to in the charter contract and were not available for the purposes of the charter application.

### 8. Governance and decision making

*a. Describe the governing body, including a detailed description of the relationship between the district charter school and the school district.*

The application team included a detailed approach to governance in Section H and how the Governing Board will meet all statutory and best-practice obligations to ensure the accountability of the school for academic, operations, and finance. The Governing Board is legally independent and the relationship between the school district and charter school is agreed to in the charter contract. The Governing Board will ensure it meets all its obligations to the community and school per the contract and state statute and will participate in a development plan to ensure members are educated on good governance practices, to include sessions led by the Colorado Department of Education, the Colorado League of Charter Schools, and the Barney Charter School Initiative.

*b. Consistent with state law, describe the types and extent of parental, professional educator and community involvement in the governance and operation of the district charter school.*

The Governing Board of the school may be comprised of parents, educators not employed by the school, and community members. The Governing Board holds the charter contract and is responsible for the governing and oversight detailed in the charter application. Additionally, the Board and school staff may have various committees with these groups represented. The School Accountability Committee (SAC) has a statutorily defined role, as detailed in the charter application. The SAC is comprised of parents, teaching faculty of the school, and at least one community representative.

*c. Provide information on how the district charter school will be accountable to the public.*

As a school of choice, the charter school has the ultimate accountability to the public in that it must deliver on its mission and ensure parents continue choosing it for their children every year. The school also meets a number of other accountability measures, to include ensuring transparency required in statute, posting financial and other information on its website, and having an annual audit conducted. As a replication school, the school has experience ensuring it meets legal and other requirements for accountability.

## **10. Financial data, facilities, and transportation**

*b. Include two proposed budgets for a term of at least five years, one for the number of students anticipated and another for the minimum number of students to allow for economic viability. The proposed budgets shall include all information and data necessary for the Board to understand how the district charter school will fund all of its operations during the term of the charter. A student fee schedule should be included in addition to a proposed schedule of cash flow.*

i. A minimum enrollment budget is attached.

ii. Ascent Classical Academy student fees help to cover the cost of textbooks, workbooks, and [some] literature that students may take home at the end of the school year. Fees also help to pay for several miscellaneous school supplies, including but not limited to paper, art materials, facial tissue, writing materials and utensils, special project materials, etc. Student fees will be determined every year.

Below are fees adopted by Golden View Classical Academy for the 2018-2019 school year and will be similar to those at Ascent Classical Academy Flatirons.

**Kindergarten:** \$75  
**1st-3rd grade:** \$100  
**4th-6th grade:** \$125  
**7th-12th grade:** \$100  
**Family Cap:** \$300

*\*Note: Student fees are non-refundable. Student fees do not include the cost of extra-curricular activities, clubs, athletics, and yearbooks.*

iii. A projected cash flow statement is attached.

f. Describe the services the district charter school plans to purchase from the district.

The school asked BVSD for a breakdown and detail of the services available for purchase. The application team did not receive clear guidance on the services offered by the district and does not expect to purchase any services from the district. The school is a member of a network of charter schools and will acquire services from the network.

g. Provide a detailed summary of all insurance coverage, which shall include workers' compensation, liability insurance, and insurance for the facility and its contents, and a proposal regarding the parties' respective legal liabilities.

The charter application included details on coverage and costs provided by Ascent Classical Academies' insurance broker and risk management team.

Proposed language for use in the charter contract for the parties' respective legal liabilities follows:

The School shall purchase insurance protecting the School and Charter Board, employees, and volunteers (if allowable by policy), and the School District where appropriate, consisting of comprehensive general liability insurance, errors and omissions liability insurance (school entity liability insurance) and auto liability insurance. The School shall also purchase statutory workers' compensation insurance coverage. Minimum coverages for the current school year are listed below:

Comprehensive general liability - \$2,000,000.

Officers, directors and employees errors and omissions - \$1,000,000.

Property insurance - As required by landlord.

Motor vehicle liability (if appropriate) - \$1,000,000.

Bonding (if appropriate).

Minimum amounts: \$25,000.

Maximum amounts: \$100,000.

Workers' compensation - (as required by state law).

The District shall provide at least 60 days' prior written notice if these coverage limits are changed, and all changes shall be commercially reasonable. Insurance terms and conditions

must be reasonably acceptable to the District and underwritten by insurers that are legally authorized in the State of Colorado and that are rated by A.M. Best Company not lower than "A-VII." Non-rated insurers must be approved by the District. Use by the School of the Colorado School Districts Self Insurance Pool will not require preapproval by the District. The School shall provide certificates of insurance to the District's Risk Manager by 8/15 annually. All of the School's insurance policies purchased by the School shall state that coverage shall not be suspended, voided, cancelled, reduced in coverage or in limits, except after thirty (30) days prior written notice by certified mail, return receipt requested, sent to the School and the District's Risk Manager. The School shall notify the District's Risk Manager within ten (10) days if for any reason there is a lapse in insurance coverage. The School is solely responsible for any deductibles payable under the policies purchased by the School.

**12. Requested waivers.**

*a. List the district policies for which waivers are requested. Include the reasons for each request.*

Attached are a list of the district policies that Ascent Classical Academy Flatirons is requesting be waived. In many cases, the district policies do not apply to charter schools. As an autonomous and independently governed school, many other policies should be waived and delegated to the charter school. In all cases where a waiver is approved and a replacement is required, the school will comply with state and federal law. Waivers and replacement plans will be negotiated and approved in the charter contract.

*b. Include a statement saying how the district charter school plans to comply with the intent of the statutes, rules and policies that are waived.*

As a charter school, Ascent Classical Academy will request a number of policy waivers that either do not apply to the school, responsibility for the policy will be delegated to the school, or the school already has replacement policies aligned to the culture, academics, and operations of the school. Samples of Ascent Classical Academy policies are included in the charter application that demonstrate how the school will address the intent of various policies the authorizer and school agree to waive that are included in the charter contract. In all cases, Ascent Classical Academy will comply with the purposes of the statutes, rules, and policies, but do so in a manner that correctly reflects the needs and autonomy of the charter school.

**13. Education management provider, if applicable. Include the following information if the district charter school intends to contract with an education management provider (EMP):**

*a. a summary of the performance data for all current schools of the EMP, including documentation of academic achievement and school management success.*

The EMP was established by founders of Golden View Classical Academy, a K-12 charter school in Golden, Colorado. Golden View Classical Academy recently received 2017-2018 performance data from the Colorado Department of Education and has a Performance rating. The most recent school performance framework is still in draft and not yet posted for public release. The school's SAT scores

are the 10<sup>th</sup> highest in the state. It is worth noting that half of the Top 10 schools in SAT scores, an ends measure, are classical or liberal arts schools. The charter application mentions other measures of success at Golden View Classical Academy. Golden View Classical Academy also has a strong operational culture with three years of audits without any findings.

The first school founded under the Ascent Classical Academies umbrella is Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County, a K-12 charter school opening in Castle Rock in 2018. This school does not yet have performance data though the EMP has been successful in launching the school. The EMP has a robust and experienced operations team to manage the finances, human resources, and operations of school sites.

*b. an explanation and evidence of EMP's capacity for successful expansion.*

As indicated in the charter application, the EMP is not a mere business service provider. It was born out of a successful school and structured to help support the success of other related K-12 classical charter schools. The capacity of the EMP to support the replication of schools rests on several key areas: implementing the academic model, scaling operations, and supporting campus and facility development.

The academic model and culture is critical and in the case of Ascent Classical Academy-affiliated schools, they use the model created by the Barney Charter School Initiative (BCSI). The Ascent Classical Academy team includes Dr. Terrence O. Moore, who was one of the primary architects of the BCSI model and the principal of Ridgeview Classical Schools while it was ranked among the top public schools in the United States. Dr. Moore has a strong reputation and is known internationally. In addition to his support, along with that of Hillsdale College, in implementing the academic program, Dr. Moore also has a wide network and access to a large number of potential teaching staff qualified and best suited to teach in classical, liberal arts schools like Ascent Classical Academy Flatirons.

Ascent Classical Academies, the EMP, also has a partnership with an experienced and proven operations team at G&G Consulting that provides experience and systems to support K-12 schools like the one proposed, with the ability to scale to support additional campuses.

Ascent Classical Academies' ability to provide a higher level of support, both to the academic program and operation, is best served by having network school operating with a single authorizer. For this reason, the school requested Boulder Valley School District allow it to charter under the Charter School Institute (CSI), which has statewide jurisdiction. Golden View Classical Academy is currently authorized under CSI and this relationship would make it easier to share and deploy resources, especially those supporting special education and educationally disadvantaged students. While the EMP's ability to serve network schools under this structure would be greatly increased, BVSD declined to allow the school to authorize through CSI.

As a replication entity with a track record of success, Ascent Classical Academies has access to additional resources required to develop quality facilities and learning environments for its students. These existing relationships in finance and real estate development provide support not available to the school as a stand along startup.

*c. an explanation of existing or potential conflicts of interest between the governing board of the district charter school and the EMP.*

Agreements between the EMP and Governing Board of the school are conducted at arm's length with independent legal counsel available to both parties. The EMP and school both have independent boards. Ascent Classical Academies has worked with legal counsel to identify conflicts of interest and to ensure appropriate policies are in place for recusals as conflicts are identified. Mr. Shuler and Mrs. Gilmartin, members of the Steering Committee and also employees of the EMP, will not continue as voting members of the school's governance body as the charter contract and agreements with the EMP are negotiated and moving forward.

**14. Additional information.**

*a. Provide an answer: Was the proposed school previously a private school or a non-public, home-based education program, or did it or any of the persons who are a part of the effort to establish the charter school have any role in the operation or management of such a school? If so, provide details.*

The proposed school has not previously been a private school or a non-public, home-based education program, nor did it or any of the persons who are a part of the effort to establish the charter school have any role in the operation or management of such a school.