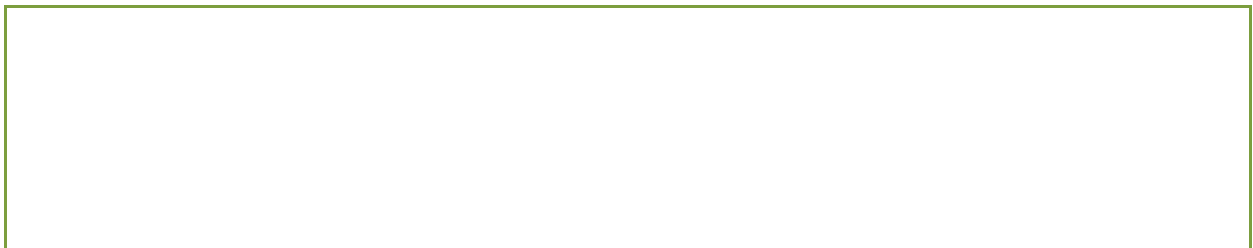




Addendum to the Charter School Program Grant Implementation Report, 2021–22 and 2022–23



Samantha E. Bos, PhD, Gibson Consulting Group
Cathy Malerba, PhD, Gibson Consulting Group
Gracie Douglas, Gibson Consulting Group
Gloria Stout, Gibson Consulting Group
Stacia Long, PhD, Gibson Consulting Group
Sheila A. Arens, PhD, McREL International
Tedra Clark, PhD, McREL International
Andrea Kreuzer, McREL International

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CSP = Charter School Program

EB/EL = Emergent Bilingual Students/English Learners

IB = International Baccalaureate

ISD = Independent School District

NOGA = Notice of Grant Award

TEA = Texas Education Agency

TEC = Texas Education Code

STEAM = Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math

Findings Highlights

Planning for the establishment of a new charter school campus is a multifaceted process of determining community fit, alignment to the mission and vision of the organization, and a desire to engage and serve students in new ways.

Across the grantees, the process for deciding to open a new charter school campus involved several individuals or groups including organizational leaders, board members, external partners, consultants, and committees of parents/guardians, students and staff. A critical part of the process of deciding to open a new campus was ensuring there was a good fit between the organizing mission and vision and the needs and desires of the community within which the charter school campus would operate. The decision to open a new charter school campus often reflected a desire to accomplish something specific in the community like engaging students in new ways through innovative programming, offering advanced college preparatory programs, enhancing young women’s leadership capacities through academies, or providing programming to meet the needs of students with unique learning needs (e.g., students who qualified for special education programs).

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This report is an addendum to the Charter School Program (CSP) Grant Implementation Report, 2021–22 and 2022–23 which describes the first two cohorts of CSP grantees' progress establishing new charter school campuses.¹ The addendum summarizes the results of supplemental interviews with grantee finance and operations staff.

The purposes of these supplemental interviews included:

- To add district or charter organization staff perspective on how the CSP grant was used,
- To learn more about the processes involved in deciding to open a new campus,
- To learn more about the variety of funding sources districts and charter organizations rely on to open a new campus,
- To learn more about the ways in which CSP grant funds were used to establish the campus,
- To learn more about the role of fundraising to launch and sustain new charter school campuses,
- To better understand unmet needs after receiving the grant, and
- To gather feedback about communication and support from the Division of Authorizing at the Texas Education Agency (TEA).

The CSP Grant Implementation Report, 2021–22 and 2022–23 covered three primary sources of information: CSP grant applications, CSP principal surveys, and CSP principal interviews.¹ Although these data sources provided detailed information about the establishment of new charter school campuses, preliminary qualitative analyses showed that principals often had a difficult time answering questions about how CSP grant funds were used to accomplish strategic objectives at their campuses (e.g., to create a positive school culture). The study team hypothesized that some principals did not make connections between the grant and certain aspects of their work because they were not all part of the team that wrote the original grant application and/or they had a limited role in administering the grant funds. To fill these gaps, the study team recommended additional data collection with independent school districts (ISD) or charter organization finance and operations staff. Findings from those interviews are the focus of this report.

Participants in the spring 2023 finance and operations interviews differed from the participants in the other spring 2023 implementation study data collection. All seventeen CSP Cohort 1 (2021–23) grantee campuses were invited to participate in the principal survey data collection and site-based data collection (principal interviews, focus groups, classroom observations). Six Cohort 2 (2022–23) grantee campuses were available to participate in the principal survey and none of the Cohort 2 grantees campuses participated in site-based data collection.²

¹ [Charter School Program Grant Implementation Report, 2021–22 and 2022–23.](#)

²

In contrast, all 19 Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 grantee districts and charter organizations (representing 29 charter grantee campuses) were invited to participate in finance and operations interviews. The staff participating in the finance and operations interviews typically had a district- or charter-organization level role, e.g., chief executives, finance leaders, or grants personnel, so

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While the CSP grant was a valued source of funding to assist with the establishment of new charter school campuses, it was not the only source of funding necessary for a successful campus launch. Participants frequently mentioned grants from philanthropic organizations and foundations, local, state, and federal funding, and other types of grants as important sources of funding. Smaller numbers of interviews referenced funding from business and industry partners and other external partners (Table 3). When those partnerships were place, they were tightly aligned to the mission of the school. For example, one charter school campus that received funding throu Td(ohrg504 Tw [(r)1.3nc)-5 (ia)-61.1ysiP78 -1.1j1 (h)4 rabi 0]TJ-0.001 Tc 0.001 Tw [(a)- (ne)-3 (s)5 (s)-sthr0.

more touchpoints to make sure that the grantees were staying in compliance with the grant requirements.

Grantees communicated some concerns about the timing of grant negotiations and funding. Several participants noted that there had been delays in receiving their CSP funding relative to the planned date for opening of their school, which led to challenges purchasing some of the needed items (e.g., laptops) and securing some contracted services (e.g., for staff training). Some grantees indicated that they would have liked more time to spend the grant funds, particularly considering the funding delays. Some participants found the CSP grant more restrictive than other grants and would have preferred to have more

flexibility to meet campus needs, for example, by funding additional staff aligned to their instructional model, or by helping the campus respond to unexpected changes in enrollment.

Although it was not directly related to communication and support from the Division of Authorizing, grantees also noted the challenges of opening a new charter school campus in the wake of COVID.

Sixteen Charter School Program (CSP) finance and operations interviews were conducted virtually, and one response was submitted in writing. This resulted in 17 documents



11. Thinking broadly about financing this school's operations, what are some areas where there are still unmet needs?
 - a. Will the grant provide sufficient funding to meet these needs? If not where are the biggest funding gaps?

12. Is there anything else you would like to share about your experiences launching [school name]?