



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD

Charter and/or Charter Agreement Amendment Application

Part I: General Information

All applicants must complete this section

SUBMITTED BY: Steve Lanning, Board Chair, YouthBuild DC PCS

SUBJECT: Charter Amendment Request for: (Mark all that apply)

- Enrollment Ceiling Increase, Program Replication of Grades Served, Grade Level Expansion (Single Grade), Grade Level Expansion (Grade Band), Additional Facility or New Location, Goals and Achievement Expectations, Mission or Education Philosophy, Curriculum, Standards or Assessments, Name Change - Campus or Facility, Campus Reconfiguration, LEA Status for Special Education, Special Education Enrollment Preference, Governance Structure (Bylaws, Articles of Incorporation or Management), Graduation Requirements, Competency-Based Learning Application

SUBMISSION DATE: 5/1/2020

SCHOOL BACKGROUND

Please address the following questions in their entirety. This information provides helpful background to the DC PCSB Board as it reviews these requests.

Overview of School Performance

- 1. Provide the following information about your Local Education Agency (LEA) by campus: a) Campus name(s) and location(s): YouthBuild DC PCS, 3220 16th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20010 b) Year opened: 2005 c) Grade levels served (Currently and at maturation of charter agreement, if applicable): Adult - ages 16-24 d) Date that charter will be eligible for possible renewal: 2035

2. Please select the performance indicators below that describe the school's current performance*: (Mark all that apply)

- X Currently rated Tier 1, or met at least 2/3 of targets on the most recent PK-only PMF or Alternative Accountability Framework. X School is not currently under corrective action. X Has historically met enrollment projections w/in 80% of target. X School has been in operation for 3+ years. X School is currently accredited. Expires May 1, 2023

*If the school has multiple campuses or varying PMFs, please describe the academic performance of each campus here: N/A

Disclaimer: While processing this application, DC PCSB staff may contact you later to request additional information for the Board's consideration. By submitting this application, you agree to cooperate with DC PCSB staff to ensure your application is processed in a timely manner. For questions, please contact DC PCSB staff person Laterica (Teri) Quinn at (202) 328-2660.

Section A1. **Enrollment Ceiling Increase**

***ONLY complete this section if applying to amend Enrollment Ceiling Increase:**

A school should apply for an enrollment ceiling increase if it plans to offer more spaces in the next fiscal year and wishes to be paid for the additional students. A school does not need to apply for a change in enrollment ceiling if it is offering the same total number of spaces but not in the exact grade levels it determined through its Schedule I. If applying for an enrollment ceiling increase, please be sure the school meets the criteria listed in the [Enrollment Ceiling Increase Policy](#). Failure to meet the criteria may result in denial of your charter agreement amendment request.

Note: Schools that do not meet all criteria outlined in DC PCSB's Enrollment Ceiling Increase Policy may be asked to provide additional information, such as the following:

- *Assessment data other than PARCC (e.g. WIDA, NWEA MAP, IEP goal mastery, etc.)*
- *School's response to resolving the issue(s), including steps already taken to improve the issue*
- *Any other information that provides context regarding missed criteria*

1. Why is the school seeking this enrollment ceiling increase? How does the school know there is demand for this expansion? How does the scope, pace, and need for the enrollment ceiling increase align with current demographic and growth projections in the city (such as the projections found in this [study](#)).

As we explain in Part I of this application, we are seeking this enrollment increase to meet the needs of the city's disconnected youth, those who are perhaps most at-risk and vulnerable during this crisis and over the long-term.

Research on graduation rates, unemployment and youth disconnection makes it clear that there is a dire need (and demand) for programs like ours—especially now. We have developed a program that this specifically designed to meet this need and demand, and we have demonstrated results.

2. DC PCSB will review the school's enrollment trends over the past 3 years. What patterns are we likely to find? Is there any context you can provide to explain your current enrollment patterns?
 - a. Describe the impact your school's enrollment ceiling(s), certificate of occupancy, and waitlist/vacant seats have had on your recruitment and program growth.
 - b. Describe ways that your school ensures you recruit, enroll, and re-enroll students with disabilities and English language learners, along with your target population. What methods do you employ to ensure your curriculum is accessible to all students regardless of race, ethnicity and gender as shown through re-enrollment rates?

As we have explained elsewhere in this application, YouthBuild PCS' applications exceed our enrollment cap each year; we have met (or nearly met) our enrollment targets each year and have over-enrolled for the past three years, opening up additional enrollment cycles in the winter and spring of each year to meet the needs to students on the waitlist.

In 2017, we moved to a new location that allows us to enroll many more students than we were able to previously. Currently, the only thing standing in way of our ability to serve more students is our enrollment cap.

We take great pains to ensure that we recruit and enroll students with disabilities, English language learners, and youth who face a variety of challenges—poverty, homelessness, and parenting, to mention just three—each year. Our materials, our orientation sessions, and our interactions with students are conducted in a way that is welcoming and inclusive. As our enrollment data demonstrate, we continue to enroll (and re-enroll returners) and serve well significant numbers of students who are identified as students with disabilities and English language learners. Through our partnership with LAYC Community Schools and others, we have rich connections to groups serving the city’s immigrant and other vulnerable youth. Our special education program has also been validated through the PCSB’s QAR process. Additionally, all our courses are offered in English and Spanish, and many of our staff members are fluent in at least two languages.

3. Will the proposed enrollment ceiling increase cause the school to exceed the maximum occupancy load detailed in the school’s certificate of occupancy? If so, when and how will the school address this?

No.

4. Please include a completed enrollment matrix* with your charter amendment application. Click [here](#) for enrollment matrix template.

**If requesting an amendment for more than one campus, please complete a separate enrollment matrix for each campus.*

***If school is not currently at Maximum Enrollment, please add columns to include all projected school years until maximum enrollment is expected to be reached.*

PROPOSAL

YouthBuild DC PCS submits to the DC Public Charter School Board this application to amend its charter agreement by changing the item(s) selected above. If approved, this amendment will be effective on_____, 20_____ (*leave blank if this has not been determined*).

1. Please provide details on the selected amendment(s) above and describe the requested change(s), including the school’s rationale for the proposed changes. Describe any planning that is already underway to prepare for the proposed amendment.

YouthBuild DC PCS is applying for an increase to our enrollment cap—to increase it from 122 students to 175 students, growing incrementally from 115 to 150 next year, and then to 175 in the succeeding years.

We are applying for this amendment for several reasons:

- I. The COVID-19 Crisis has Created an Immediate Need and Demand for Programs Like Ours**

First, the COVID-19 crisis has had profound effects on our city and our world—sickening over 1 million people in the United States, throwing millions out of work across the country, and leaving tens of thousands of DC residents unemployed. Between March 13 and April 29, more than 83,000 DC residents filed for unemployment (see <https://does.dc.gov/publication/unemployment-compensation-claims-data>), and recent national data show that there are likely at least half as many workers who are unemployed but have not filed for unemployment compensation (see <https://www.epi.org/blog/unemployment-filing-failures-new-survey-confirms-that-millions-of-jobless-were-unable-to-file-an-unemployment-insurance-claim/?referringSource=articleShare>). Unfortunately, DC has not yet flattened the curve. At the time of this writing, the number of confirmed Corona virus cases in DC continues to increase at a rate of more than 100 per day (See the Mayor’s April 29th Situational Update https://coronavirus.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/coronavirus/page_content/attachments/Situational-Update-Presentation_42920.pdf).

Second, this crisis has hit youth and low-income workers particularly hard. Most youth and low-income workers perform tasks that simply cannot be done from home, making them much more vulnerable to job loss. Though there are a number of measures in place to ease the pain of unemployment, including stimulus payments and additional unemployment insurance, these measures are short-term and often not available to our most vulnerable youth and young adults, such as those who are undocumented.

As Cambridge University researchers noted in an April 2020 working paper analyzing UK survey data, “Our findings suggest that the immediate impact of the coronavirus downturn on workers has been large and unequal, with younger workers and those at the bottom of the income distribution hit hardest.” If not addressed quickly, these impacts could inflict long-term damage, “preventing this shock from scarring the employment progression of the younger generation and the less-economically advantaged is of high importance to prevent permanent damage to the economy and individual welfare.”

(see <https://www.inet.econ.cam.ac.uk/working-paper-pdfs/wp2010.pdf>). **While this research is focused on the UK, we are seeing similar patterns in the US** (see <https://www.forbes.com/sites/adigaskell/2020/04/21/young-workers-likely-to-be-the-first-victims-of-covid-19-unemployment/#429f833c5b36>). **As an article in the April 29 edition of the New York Times notes, hopes for a “V-shaped recovery” where the economy quickly bounces back have faded. “With each month of unpaid bills and rock-bottom sales, more businesses will go bankrupt or decide not to re-open. More workers will drift away from their employers, turning temporary layoffs into permanent job losses.”** (see <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/29/business/economy/us-gdp.html?referringSource=articleShare>).

Third, DC graduation rates have declined over the last two years, to 68.5% and 68.2% respectively, and recent research (prior to the COVID Crisis) estimates that 9.1% of DC’s youth were “disconnected”—out of school and out of work (see <http://www.measureofamerica.org/DYinteractive/#State>). **DC schools ceased in-person learning on March 13, 2020. Though the full implications of the city’s switch to distance learning will not be fully known or understood for quite some time, with schools having to shift to distance learning almost overnight, there is significant risk that many of our high school seniors may fail to graduate this year, further dampening prospects for youth across the city.**

Fourth, historically when there is an economic downturn, demand for GED’s increases substantially. During the last recession, for example, we saw GED testing increase by more than 55,000 tests across the country--climbing from 692,000 tests in 2007 to 748,000 tests in 2009, and not returning to pre-recession levels (691,000) tests until 2011 (see <https://nces.ed.gov/transfer.asp?location=www.gedtestingservice.com/educators/historical-testing-data>).

All of this evidence points to a significant need AND demand for programming like ours.

II. YouthBuild DC is equipped and prepared to help young people and the city through this crisis.

First, we have developed a successful educational model for so called “opportunity” or “disconnected youth,” students ages 16-24 who have dropped out or aged out of school and are often unemployed. Our model, which draws on the nationally-recognized YouthBuild model, is designed to meet students where they are—providing them with a personalized learning experience that allows them to: 1) learn and master material at their own pace; 2) work toward earning the GED diploma, which now means earning a DC High School Diploma; 3) improve literacy, numeracy, and in some cases English language and citizenship, skills while they build career and post-secondary readiness; 4) develop work-readiness skills, earning industry-recognized construction certification; 5) give back to the city by building housing for low-income residents, and 6) build life skills to prepare them for success after completing the YouthBuild DC PCS program.

Our results speak for themselves:

- **We have earned a Tier 1 rating on the PCSB’s Performance Management Framework for the past three years;**
- **Our charter was just renewed for 15 years, without conditions;**



- **And, our GED completion rates, EL growth, and employment outcomes are among the highest in the adult public charter sector.**

Over the past 2 months, we have migrated to a fully-online program, and we have had very promising results. Students are able to continue:

- **GED prep;**
- **Numeracy and literacy progress;**
- **English language acquisition and learning;**
- **Technology training;**
- **And construction training;**
- **Students are also joining in one-on-one sessions with our case managers and transition specialists, allowing students to participate in counseling, build socio-emotional skills, and prepare for post-secondary education and employment. Students also continue to be engaged in virtual internships.**

Second, though more adult and alternative schools have opened in the city, none match our model—a model that combines personalized learning, an emphasis on community service, and an integrated education and training approach that enables students to earn a stipend while they attend school.

Even in the best of times, demand for our school continues to exceed the number of openings we have for students. In each of the last three school years, we have served far more students (students for whom we are not paid) over the course of the year than our enrollment cap has allowed. This learning model will not only prepare so called “disconnected youth” for next steps, it will also enable them to earn while they learn.

Third, this increase would enable us to fill increasing demand in the city for qualified/experienced construction workers. As the 2020 WIOA State Plan (see pp. 22-24) makes clear, construction is and continues to be a high-demand field in the District of Columbia. Moreover, construction is considered essential work, allowing graduates to obtain employment—even in this uncertain economy.

While construction and infrastructure jobs are expected to continue to grow, they also provide essential entry points for disconnected youth, since they offer a range of positions, with widely-varying skill and educational requirements that allow students multiple access points to employment and career growth (see updated WIOA State Plan, pp. 24-26). For the past 3 years, YouthBuild PCS has participated in the OSSE and the Workforce Investment Council – AEFLA-WIC grant program, allowing us to build an integrated education and training program that prepares students for success in construction and related fields .

Finally, by approving this enrollment increase, PCSB would enable us to better meet the needs of the city and our youth. Currently, the District is under tremendous stress—low-income residents are at greater risk than ever of losing access to stable and safe housing. And, with the sharp economic downturn, non-profit organizations that have historically provided housing are under tremendous pressure as well. YouthBuild has and is well-positioned to meet this need.

Over the course of the past three years, for example, YouthBuild has



- **Worked with Brothers of Charity, to completely renovate a transitional housing shelter for veterans.**
- **And, YouthBuild students have worked with Central Union Mission to make repairs and renovations throughout their main shelter in downtown DC.**

We have deep connections to construction firms—through groups such as ACE Mentoring that allow us to meet the city’s needs. Construction, service, and community development are vehicles to prepare students for the next steps in their lives. In addition to providing students with a career pathway, construction is a metaphor at YouthBuild DC. As students learn “hard” construction skills—how to hang drywall and use a power saw, for example—they also learn essential “soft” employment and career preparation skills—the importance of showing up on time, drug-free and ready to work.

III. Planning for the Increase

As we explained earlier in this section, we have envisioned a gradual increase in enrollment, moving from 122 to 150 next year, then moving to 175 students the following year. We have the capacity to serve many more students that we do currently, especially since our model involves both academic preparation and vocational (on-site) training. We are planning for a hybrid learning model next year that will combine distance, blended, and traditional classroom learning, and we can easily accommodate 28 additional students as part of this model. We anticipate adding new case management/counseling staff as well as student support staff.

2. How will the proposed amendment(s) support or enhance the school’s mission?

The mission of YouthBuild PCS is to: transform the lives of out of school youth in the District of Columbia by offering a bilingual educational option that combines an academic program with vocational training, employability skill-building, and community service—a program designed to prepare young people for college or the workplace while they work to create housing for the city’s low-income residents.

This amendment would allow YouthBuild PCS to serve up to additional students in each enrollment period in SY 2021, and up to an additional 20 students in each enrollment period in SY 20191-20— helping more students to earn their GED (and earn a DC State High School Diploma), obtain college and career-readiness skills, and gain industry-recognized certifications (such as OSHA, HBI-PACT and higher level construction certifications), while they transform themselves and their community. And, as we add more students, this amendment will also enable us to expand and deepen our programming for current students

As we explain in the prior section of this application, there is a high need for programs like ours, programs *that work*, that prepare disconnected and opportunity youth for success. In the past two years, we received more than 350 applications each year, for a mere 122 program slots—and we have served

far more students than we are funded to serve (159 students in SY18-19 for example), and data show that demand for construction and related jobs continues to grow each year (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020). This increase would allow us to meet this need, address this demand, and help to ensure that both the needs of our students and our city are met. Right now, we are the smallest adult education program in the Adult Education Charter Sector, and our enrollment ceiling is the lowest in the Adult Education Charter Sector. Our current enrollment cap of 122 places severe constraints on the number of students we are able to serve, and also on the ways in which we are able to meet the needs of our students and the city.

3. While considering this amendment request, DC PCSB staff may review the school's history of board actions, DC PCSB audits, community complaints, enrollment trends, and any relevant data used by DC PCSB to monitor equity in schools. Please describe any DC PCSB audits, notices of concern or other board actions issued against your school in the past 3 years. What was the outcome? Please explain what steps, if any, you've taken to address the concerns that prompted a DC PCSB audit, board action, or community complaint.

N/A

4. DC PCSB will review the school's Financial Audit Reviews (FAR) and current financials to determine the fiscal health of the organization. If applicable, describe how the proposed amendment will impact the school's finances. Explain any anticipated expenses for the proposed changes and how the school will finance them. *[EXCLUDES the following amendments: Governance, Goals, Mission, Curriculum, Name Changes and Graduation Requirements. If not applicable, write N/A.]*

Note: *If applicable, in addition to your narrative please attach a proposed [5-year Operating Budget](#).*

After making a significant investment in improving the school, our financial picture is strong. We have received clean audits for the past several years, and we are debt free. We have demonstrated strong financial outcomes on the last two FAR reports. As we note in the attached 5-year operating budget, we anticipate that this increase will continue the school's strong financial performance.

5. How has the school informed its external stakeholders (e.g. local ANC commissioners, neighbors) and internal stakeholders (e.g. staff, parents) of the proposed amendment(s)? Please attach any written communication (e.g., meeting minutes). Describe any notable support for or opposition to the proposed amendment(s). If concerns have been brought to your attention, how do you plan to address them? *[EXCLUDES the following amendments: Governance, Goals, Mission, Curriculum, Graduation Requirements and Competency-Based Learning Credits. If not applicable, write N/A.]*

Plans for an increase have been shared with our ANC commissioner and with our staff through conversation and meetings. Stakeholders are concerned about the increased needs of vulnerable youth and young adults—and the city--and see this increase as an essential way to meet those needs. We have received no pushback on the planned increased.



6. When did your school's board approve the proposed amendment(s)? Please attach minutes from the meeting and vote results.

This amendment was approved at the April 23, 2020 YouthBuild DC PCS Board meeting. Minutes are attached.

Enrollment Matrix – Adult Education Charter Schools

	Academic Year 2017-18	Academic Year 2018-19	Academic Year 2019-20	Academic Year 2020-21	Academic Year 2021-22	Academic Year 2022-23
Grade Levels	Projected	Projected	Projected	Projected	Projected	Projected
Adult Education				150	175	175
Total				150	175	175
# Campuses				1	1	1
LEA Total				150	175	175

**If requesting an amendment for more than one campus, please complete a separate enrollment matrix for each campus.*

***If school is not currently at Maximum Enrollment, please add columns to include all projected school years until maximum enrollment is expected to be reached.*

[Click here for downloadable Word version.](#)



**YouthBuild Public Charter School - Board of Trustees Meeting
April 23, 2020**

DRAFT Minutes

YouthBuild and TenSquare staff present:

Claire Libert, Interim Head of School
Janalee Jordan-Meldrum; Jeff Cooper, TenSquare Support

Trustees present:

Steve Lanning
Mark Jordan
Suraj Patel
Liz Grant
Giselle Jones
Amira Kamara
Noel Bravo

Mr. Lanning called the meeting to order at 4:15pm. Noel Bravo, board trustee, joined at 4:25pm.

Ms. Libert provided an update on the school's distance learning and support programs related to COVID-19. She explained the continued evolution of the program since March 16th and shared a student-facing schedule with the Board. The school has been in regular contact with all but eight students (all adults who had largely disengaged before in-person learning ended), and so far, 70% of students have participated in distance learning since the shutdown due to the corona virus.

Ms. Libert stated that although DCPS has announced it will end distance learning on May 29th, she is planning to continue distance learning through June 19th as planned. She stated the staff would take some time off over the summer, and that summer school could be offered if/when the GED testing centers re-open.

She also stated that for SY20-21, she was considering having one week of staff professional development instead of the usual two—allowing staff to come in at different times to prepare their classrooms, and starting school earlier, on August 17th. She and the team are also developing plans for social distancing and distance learning as the school prepares for re-entry and possible in-person shut-downs during the year.

Given rapid changes to school schedules throughout the district, the Board discussed an SY19-20 - 20-21 Calendar Resolution, which would give Ms. Libert the authority to change the calendar year for the school without going back to the Board for approval. The Board determined to give Ms. Libert broader authority than what was proposed in the resolution, so that the ability of the head of school to make changes in the school year calendar does not require approval from the board.

ACTION: Upon motion and second, the Board unanimously passed the SY19-20 and 20-21 Calendar Resolution, attached to these minutes as Appendix 1, with the following amendments:

“SY19-20 and 20-21” is stricken from the title of the Resolution;

“including the COVID-19 pandemic and other future crises” is stricken from the first paragraph of the Resolution;

***The following paragraph is added as the last paragraph of the Resolution:
“FURTHER RESOLVED that the authorized officer must provide the Board with written notice of the change prior to it taking effect.”***

Ms. Jordan-Meldrum provided an update on proposed policy changes from OSSE and PCSB, noting that schools will not be measured by the PMF this year. She also discussed the likelihood for increased demand for YB services, noting that during the last recession, GED test rates increased significantly. She also pointed out that youth were being hit especially hard by this crisis.

Ms. Jordan-Meldrum stated that PCSB notified YB in April that an analysis showed that YB met the minimum criteria for an enrollment increase. And, if YB applied for an enrollment increase, PCSB staff would likely recommend that the Public Charter School Board consider the application.

Claire outlined YB’s rationale for the increase and recommended that the Board approve a request an enrollment increase, from 122 – 150, then to 175 students in subsequent years.

ACTION: Upon motion and second, the Board unanimously approved the submission of an application to amend YB’s charter to increase enrollment to 175.

Ms. Jordan-Meldrum noted that YB had applied through CityFirst Bank for a Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan, but that funds had run out before YB’s application was process. She explained that the majority of the loan would be forgiven if YB met its payroll obligations under the program.

Mr. Cooper explained that although no revenue would be lost in the current school year, it is anticipated that the city will not increase funding levels as expected and may even reduce funding for charter schools. Additionally, there may be less private foundation money available to fill any gaps created by the reduced public funding.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:35pm.