SCHOOL REDESIGN
REQUEST FOR INFORMATION FORM

Please tell us about your organization and its accomplishments, and how your organization can help the students of Colorado reach their potential by completing the following form.

Instructions

- Please submit your organization's response electronically to: **PartnerRFI@cde.state.co.us** by **Friday, February 23, 2018** at **5:00 PM MST**. Late responses may be accepted or rejected by CDE at its sole discretion.
- Please address all of the questions in this application for your organization type. You may exceed the length of the boxes in the form – the PDF form will automatically add a scroll button within the box. However, please strive to keep answers concise.
- You may submit additional attachments that are directly relevant and provide additional support or evidence for the responses in the RFI form.
- If there are any questions about the RFI process or the PDF form, please address those to Brenda Bautsch at Bautsch_b@cde.state.co.us.

Public Posting and Release of Information

- CDE will publicly post the responses that sufficiently address all of the questions listed in the RFI and provide concrete evidence of improving student outcomes in low-performing schools on CDE's public website for schools and other interested parties to access the information: http://www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/performance
- This information will be posted no later than March 23, 2018.
- Further, all information submitted in response to this RFI (inclusive of submissions that are not posted on CDE's website) are subject to public release through the Colorado Open Records Act, CRS § 24-72-200.1, et seq.

Additional Information on the RFI Process

- In the event that a response is incomplete, missing information or needs additional evidence, CDE at its sole discretion may reach out to the respondent for more information or a resubmission, or CDE may elect not to include the response on its publicly posted list.
- This Request for Information will be re-opened annually to allow for additions to the public list of providers.
- If a provider is added to CDE's public list through this RFI process and needs to make changes to the posted information, please contact Brenda Bautsch at Bautsch_b@cde.state.co.us.

Background

1) Organization name: STRIVE Preparatory Schools ("STRIVE Prep")

2) Organization contact person and contact email and phone number:
Chris Gibbons, Founder and CEO
cgibbons@striveprep.org, 720.201.4787

3) How would you classify your organization? You may check more than one category:
- [x] Charter network, charter management organization or charter school
- [ ] Turnaround leader development provider
- [ ] Management organization or non-profit network.

4) Describe what geographical regions in Colorado you would prefer to work in:

The Denver metro area, though we would consider other regions if conditions are appropriate.

5) Please complete the following online form to select which school districts your organization is willing and able to engage with: https://goo.gl/forms/8gceFV5PVEVnQZ0e2

Provider-Specific Information

Please go to the appropriate section for your organization and respond to the questions listed. If applying under more than one category (e.g. management partner and turnaround leader provider), please address the questions under both sections.

If applying as a ***charter network, charter management organization, or individual charter school*** please complete the following questions:

1) Describe your organization's mission and educational model. Describe how your model meets the needs of historically underserved students (students living in poverty, English language learners, and racial/ethnic minority students):

STRIVE Prep, a community of public charter schools in Denver, Colorado, is where every student can strive for college and thrive throughout life. Founded more than a decade ago on the belief that every child should have access to a high-quality education right in their neighborhood, STRIVE Prep has expanded to serve more than 3,600 students in 11 schools, spanning elementary, middle, and high school grades. 91% of our students qualify for free or reduced lunch; 14% of students have an Individualized Education Program; 49% are English Language Learners; and 97% of students identify as students of color.

STRIVE Prep is committed to preparing all students for educational success from kindergarten through college and career by challenging them to realize their full potential through high expectations, in a safe, rigorous, and compassionate learning environment with shared accountability among students, families, and staff. The school ignites a joy for learning and prepares our students for success through elementary school, middle school, high school, four-year colleges and universities, and beyond. Students learn more successfully within a strong culture of achievement where they feel encouraged and inspired to learn while developing positive character traits.

Our model is designed particularly with our student population in mind. A recurring theme for STRIVE Prep schools is our emphasis on scholar achievement through quality teaching. We believe great instruction (across all content areas) should provide scholars regular opportunities to:

- Read to comprehend/infer/interpret/draw conclusions;
- Engage in regular writing of all types (e.g. on-demand pieces, longer researched essays);
- Support arguments with evidence (in writing, verbally, and all day every day);
- Explore and evaluate conflicting views encountered from different sources;
- Solve complex problems with no obvious answer;
- Express their thinking verbally and in writing;
- Explicitly teach and reinforce "habits of success" (such as goal-setting and

2) What do you anticipate would be the greatest challenges making your educational approach successful at a turnaround school or as a new school in a new community, and how would you go about working to address those challenges?

STRIVE Prep is deeply committed to serving every student; our existing schools have similar populations to those that we anticipate would be involved in the turnaround process. Because we accept and embrace students regardless of their background or previous academic achievement and celebrate their unique strengths as assets to the school and broader community, we have specific supports for students that help them learn and grow to the best of their abilities. STRIVE Prep will implement a series of supports to ensure that students with diverse learning needs are well served. These supports will include data driven, multi-tiered systems of supports (MTSS); mental health services; character education, including socio-emotional supports; and a wide range of electives that expose students to arts, physical education, Spanish, and self-directed learning among others. Middle and high schools offer competitive sports; two STRIVE Prep high schools are members of the Colorado High School Activities Association with a third collaborating with a co-located district high school to offer sports.

Additionally, STRIVE Prep understands that restarting a school is very different than opening a new school one grade at a time. Though there are some similar operational and logistical duties, there are many unique aspects of restarting a

3) When considering operating a school in a district that you have not operated in before, what would be the key aspects or conditions of an agreement you would need to have in place with the district (or authorizer) in order to make your school successful?

Currently, STRIVE Prep's eleven schools all operate within Denver Public Schools (DPS). Operating a school outside of DPS will come with additional challenges, but we believe with consistent communication that we would be able to successfully navigate the differences in district practice.

In order to be successful, STRIVE Prep would seek explicit agreements before operations begin on the following: (1) transportation services; (2) enrollment agreements, boundaries, timelines, and access to resources (including family and student list sharing); (3) facility provision, cost, scope of services, and access prior to opening; (4) purchased services, including food and nursing; (5) special education services, including placement; (6) waiver from school board policies and state law, particularly hiring and employment policies (as directed by the Colorado Charter Schools Act), fiscal management, and operations; (7) phase in and out of grades to be served; (8) administrative fees; and (9) equitable revenue sharing.

4) Please describe your action plan for engaging with local communities. How might the charter network, management organization or school:

   a. Engage with parents, community members, school and district staff and leaders, and local school board members to design a school that meets the community's needs and has community support?

STRIVE Prep works to develop deep roots in the communities it serves. STRIVE Prep clears a path for all families to access a high-quality school that is just down the street, not across town. In other words, we aim to operate as a community school as it is our strong belief that students should not have to leave their communities to get an excellent education.

To become part of the community, we will solicit consistent feedback from and collaborate with the school community, including parents, students, and community members. We will hold listening sessions to better understand community needs, and if practicable based on locations, we will facilitate tours of our current schools. Depending on location and grade span, we may also host a community process to gather feedback regarding possible principal candidates, purposefully working with families to identify key leadership characteristics that are important to them.

The leader, after being hired, will create relationships and partnerships with parents and community members to make sure that the leadership team and

   b. Address the varied funding models found in different districts?

STRIVE Prep will work with the applicable school district to determine revenue available, including federal, state, and local funds. Once revenue is determined, our finance team will prepare a budget; should revenue not be at our normal expected levels, the finance team will adjust the budget, protecting as much as possible the line items that directly impact student academic achievement and student experience. As STRIVE Prep is an already existing network of 11 schools, some economies of scale may be available, though it should be noted that we would not commingle funds between school districts.

Particularly in initial implementation years, STRIVE Prep would likely fundraise for the higher costs associated with school turnaround. Past fundraising efforts have proved successful, and we have existing relationships with funders who are interested in future turnaround efforts.

STRIVE Prep has a long history of delivering clean audits.

c. Address the unique authorizing requirements and policies of different districts?

STRIVE Prep will work with the applicable school district to understand its authorizing requirements and policies. Though STRIVE Prep currently operates schools only in DPS, current employees have some experience with authorization in other districts. Additionally, as policy greatly varies by school, STRIVE Prep would conduct an analysis of currently existing board and district policy to determine potential impact and request waivers. Where appropriate, we would use external resources, such as the Colorado League of Charter Schools or charter schools located in the district, to inform our understanding of local authorizing and policy.

Should a requirement or policy vary greatly from our current practice, we would probe its impact on current operation as well the districts willingness to collaborate around solutions. Our approach to resolution would vary depending on the fact specific nature of the issue.

d. What do you perceive would be the likely differences in districts other than the ones you currently work with?

STRIVE Prep has educated students in DPS since 2006, and over this time, we have built a strong, collaborative relationship with DPS. Any new relationship may have pressure points, particularly during a time of change. Specifically, we anticipate that a partnership with another district may be the first partnership of its type that a district has engaged in. As a result, we would purposefully communicate with the district around relationship, expectations, and accountability.

As noted above, we would seek agreement on the following: (1) transportation services; (2) enrollment agreements, boundaries, timelines, and access to resources (including family and student list sharing); (3) facility provision, cost,

e. How would you approach facility acquisition in other districts?

STRIVE Prep has operated schools in both private and district-owned facilities. Though it is our preference to locate in a district-owned facility and mutually negotiate a facility use agreement, we have also located in private facilities in the past. If a district-owned facility is not available, STRIVE Prep would work with a local real estate agent to locate an appropriate facility in the designated area. We would engage both an architect and contractor that have experience with schools to ensure that applicable regulations were fully met.

If applying as a ***turnaround leader development provider*** please complete the following questions:

1) Provide a summary of your organization's experience in developing successful, effective leadership in low-performing schools and school districts. Describe key structures or systems used to provide feedback and monitor progress.

2) Provide a description of the services and learning components your organization provides. Specifically, please describe:
    a. The key components, timeline, and learning structures of your program that ensures participant growth in the turnaround context.
    b. How your staff engage with participants throughout the program (e.g. how frequently, in person or virtually, in whole or small group).

3) Provide a description of your ideal participant and his/her learning trajectory throughout the course of your program, including:
    a. What roles should your participants hold (e.g. district level, school leader, aspiring leader)?
    b. How do you determine the readiness and accept participants into your program?
    c. What are the leadership qualities that your program is expected to develop? Include any documents or tools you use.

4) Provider capacity
    a. Describe your organization's capacity to implement the identified program components. Does this program and staff to run it currently exist? Do all program materials and components currently exist or do they need to be developed?
    b. Describe regions of the state of Colorado that your program has the capacity to serve.

If applying as a ***management partner or non-profit network*** please complete the following questions:

1) Please list which of the following roles your organization can serve (check all that apply). See Table 1 above for a description of the roles listed below.

- ☐ Whole system
- ☐ Instructional transformation
- ☐ Talent development
- ☐ Culture shift
- ☐ Turnaround leadership
- ☐ Other: _____

2) How will you differentiate your services to meet the unique needs of schools and districts in Colorado, especially those with historically underserved students?

3) When considering partnering with a school or district that you have not partnered with before, what would be the key aspects or conditions of an agreement you would need to have in place with the district (or authorizer) in order to make your school successful?

4) Describe your experience working with other third party providers to support coherent school and district improvement.

Evidence of Track Record of Improved Student and School Outcomes (ALL respondents)

1) Please illustrate your organization's track record in dramatically improving schools or districts and radically increasing outcomes for targeted groups of students. Include a description of the criteria and the data that you use to determine the impact of your work. Please highlight the context and location of where this work has occurred. Formal research studies are preferred, if available.

STRIVE Prep serves nearly 3,700 students in 11 schools, spanning elementary (1), middle (7), and high schools (3) . STRIVE Prep students subgroups consistently outperform state subgroup averages on state assessments. 91% percent of our students qualify for free or reduced lunch; 97% of students identify as students of color.

As noted above, STRIVE Prep also has previous, local experience with turnaround schools. STRIVE Prep - Lake opened as a turnaround middle school in fall 2010 after years of low performance for a number of years; it has consistently received performance plan (2011, 2012, 2013, 2017) or improvement plan (2014, 2016) ratings on the Colorado School Performance Framework (SPF) since its opening. More recently, in fall 2016, STRIVE Prep opened STRIVE Prep - Kepner as a turnaround school. This school received an improvement plan SPF rating in 2017, a significant improvement over the four consecutive turnaround plan ratings that the previous school received in 2012 through 2016.

A larger percentage of STRIVE Prep students met the SAT college ready benchmark than DPS students overall. This gap was even more significant when disaggregated by free and reduced lunch students and Hispanic students.

	Reading and Writing			Math		
	All Students	Hispanic Students	FRL Students	All Students	Hispanic Students	FRL Students
STRIVE Prep	51%	51%	54%	36%	35%	38%
DPS	50%	40%	38%	34%	24%	22%

Table 1: Percent of STRIVE Prep and DPS Student Meeting the College Ready Benchmark on the SAT, 2017

Similarly, STRIVE Prep Hispanic students, students who qualify for free and reduced lunch, and English Language Learners generally outperform their state and district peers on CMAS: PARCC in English Language Arts and Math.

References

For management partners and turnaround leader development providers, please include the name and contact information for the last three schools or districts your organization contracted with. These schools or districts will be contacted by CDE staff for references.

For charter school networks, CMOs and individual charter schools who are submitting information, please list three references that could speak to your capacity to support successful student outcomes in a turnaround environment, including a current authorizer of one of your schools.

Reference # 1:

Tom Boasberg
Superintendent
Denver Public Schools
Thomas_Boasberg@dpsk12.org

Jennifer Holladay
Associate Chief, Portfolio Management
Denver Public Schools

Reference # 2:

Thomas A. Gougeon
President
Gates Family Foundation
tgougeon@gatesfamilyfoundation.org

Reference # 3:

Rosemary Rodriguez
Former Board Member
Denver Publics Schools
Together We Count
rosemaryrod2003@yahoo.com