

You Thrive Elementary School of Brooksville STEAM

Capacity Interview

**Section I. Educational Plan**

**Mission, Guiding Principles and Purpose**

1. What specifically makes You Thrive Elementary of Brooksville STEAM a “STEAM” school? Describe a student’s daily “STEAM” experience.

Students will use one-to-one devices to code, research, or create digital projects. Art is included when they design posters, build models, or decorate their projects to show creativity. Math is used to measure, count, and compare results, and science helps them test ideas and understand how things work.

A kindergarten student’s daily STEAM experience is fun, hands-on, and full of exploring. Using the TinkRworks curriculum, students learn through building, creating, moving, and asking lots of questions. Students might start the day with a short story or picture that introduces a problem, like helping an animal cross a river or building a house that won’t fall. Then they use simple materials such as blocks, paper, tape, and craft supplies to build and try out their ideas. Students work together, take turns, and practice using kind words while they create.

Technology is used in a kid-friendly way, like using one-to-one devices for simple coding games, drawing pictures, or taking photos of their projects. Art is part of every activity as students color, decorate, and design their creations. Math shows up when students count pieces, sort shapes, compare sizes, and talk about which tower is taller or stronger. Science happens when they test their ideas and see what works and what doesn’t work.

**Target Population and Student Body**

1. Please explain what data you used to propose your enrollment numbers?

As stated on page 10 and further explained through the data analysis on page 356 attachment T, the proposed enrollment numbers were developed using a review of local demographic trends, academic performance data, and documented community interest in a small, STEAM-focused elementary option.

Additionally, enrollment projections were aligned with facility capacity and our commitment to maintaining one class per grade level. The phased growth model, with a

maximum enrollment of 116 students, ensures that enrollment numbers are realistic and financially sustainable.

### **Educational Program Design, Curriculum and Instructional Design, and Student Performance**

1. Section 3, page 12, letter C- it references “small class sizes.” Could you expand upon what your vision is for smaller learning environments and small class size?

At You Thrive Elementary Schools “small class sizes” are an intentional structural component of our instructional model. The school will maintain only one class per grade level, with approximately 15–18 students per classroom and a maximum total enrollment of 116 students.

Our vision for smaller learning environments is rooted in individualized instruction, strong relationship-building, and continuous academic monitoring. With fewer students per classroom and fewer total students in the school, teachers are able to provide frequent, specific feedback; conduct meaningful small-group instruction; and closely monitor mastery of Florida’s B.E.S.T. Standards.

2. Section 3-there are multiple references to “MTSS to address academic needs through tiered instruction, targeted intervention...” “differentiated instruction, targeted intervention through the Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports.” The sample schedule provided in attachment B denotes time in the schedule for MTSS and Interventions. Section 4, page 15, letter A, provides a broad definition for the tiers of support, as well. Can you explain what intensive, explicit, systematic, and multisensory reading interventions will be provided for students during the allotted times and different tiers?

You Thrive Elementary Schools will provide intensive, explicit, systematic, and multisensory reading interventions through a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework. As stated on page 99 and detailed in Attachment D, the school will adopt and implement the district’s approved Reading Plan annually to ensure full alignment with state statutes, Florida’s B.E.S.T. Standards, and evidence-based reading practices.

#### **Tier 1 (Core Instruction – All Students):**

Students will receive a protected, uninterrupted daily reading block (90–120 minutes) that includes explicit and systematic instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Instruction follows a sequential scope and sequence, incorporates teacher modeling and guided practice, and includes multisensory strategies such as sound mapping, blending and segmenting routines, manipulatives, and decodable text application.

**Tier 2 (Targeted Intervention – Students Below Benchmark):**

Students identified through universal screening and progress monitoring will receive an additional 20–30 minutes of small-group intervention daily. Instruction will focus on specific skill deficits using explicit re-teaching, cumulative review, structured repetition, and multisensory strategies such as phoneme-grapheme mapping, syllable division routines, and guided oral reading. Progress monitoring will occur at least bi-weekly.

**Tier 3 (Intensive Intervention – Students Significantly Below Benchmark):**

Students demonstrating significant reading deficiencies will receive 30–45 minutes of intensive daily intervention in very small groups or individually. Instruction will be highly structured, systematic, and diagnostic in nature, with immediate corrective feedback, daily cumulative review, and frequent progress monitoring (weekly). Intervention plans will be adjusted based on data and MTSS team review.

All reading interventions will be delivered by trained instructional personnel in accordance with the district-adopted Reading Plan. Data from universal screenings, benchmark assessments, and ongoing progress monitoring will guide tier placement, instructional adjustments, and movement between tiers.

3. Section 3-As a part of the plan for MTSS, can you explain how you will screen for dyslexia for any student in K-3 who demonstrates a substantial reading deficiency per statute 1008.25?

As stated in Attachment E, page 100, You Thrive Elementary Schools will adopt the district’s Pupil Progression Plan. The district’s Pupil Progression Plan outlines procedures for early identification of reading deficiencies, including the administration of state- and district-approved dyslexia screening measures as required by Florida law and will prioritize K-3 students who show characteristics of dyslexia.

In alignment with the Pupil Progression Plan, students will be screened through universal assessments and targeted diagnostic tools to identify characteristics of dyslexia or other reading difficulties. When indicators are present, students will receive immediate intervention through explicit, systematic, and multisensory reading instruction within the MTSS framework. Parents will be notified in accordance with district procedures, and progress will be monitored regularly to ensure appropriate support and academic growth

4. Per Florida Statute 1008.25 Students identified with a Substantial Reading Deficiency require intervention and immediate parent notification. How will you monitor and ensure fidelity of the intervention, prioritize student growth, and facilitate parent communication?

Student progress will be monitored frequently (weekly or bi-weekly depending on tier) to ensure accelerated growth toward grade-level proficiency. Parents will receive ongoing communication, progress updates, and home-support strategies to maintain strong school-family partnership in improving reading outcomes. MTSS coordinator and Administration will oversee the communication and compliance.

5. On Page 28, your sample parent notification indicated completing intervention at home. This is not in compliance with Florida Statute 1008.25 that states, interventions "Be implemented during regular school hours.". How will this be corrected?

MTSS is an area in which we excel at BEST Academy, as evidenced by our documented student learning gains. Interventions are delivered during the school day, closely monitored through data review and progress monitoring, and adjusted based on diagnostic assessments and teacher input. When additional practice is recommended at home, it is designed to reinforce — not replace — the structured, evidence-based instruction provided at school. Page 28 provides an example of our middle school MTSS communication, which clearly outlines identified skill deficits and notifies parents of targeted supports. As previously provided, our parent communication template details additional support recommendations based on diagnostic data and classroom teacher observations, ensuring transparency, accountability, and strong home-school partnership. We will design a specific plan for additional supports at home for our elementary schools based on student needs.

6. Section 5, letter D, page 23-It states that you intend to adopt and follow the Hernando County School District's Pupil Progression Plan, including all state-mandated promotion requirements. Per the Promotion to 4th Grade Technical Assistance paper, 3rd grade students who do not earn a level 2 or higher on the state assessment can be promoted based on an alternative assessment or portfolio, all outlined in the Pupil Progression Plan. Will the school utilize the same portfolio and alternate assessments as the school district? If the school district changes their portfolio or alternate assessments, will your school as well? If not, can you explain your plan?

Yes. You Thrive Elementary of Brooksville will utilize the same portfolio criteria and alternate assessment options as outlined in the Hernando County School District's Pupil Progression Plan and the Promotion to 4th Grade Technical Assistance guidance.

Yes. If the school district revises or updates its portfolio requirements, alternate assessments, or promotion criteria, You Thrive Elementary will implement those changes to remain fully aligned with district policy and state requirements.

As stated in Section 5, Letter D, the school will adopt and follow the Hernando County School District's Pupil Progression Plan in its entirety, including all state-mandated promotion requirements, to ensure consistency, compliance, and equitable student progression practices

7. Section 5, letter D, page 23-It states that You Thrive Elementary for Creative Excellence intends to adopt and follow the Hernando County School District's Pupil Progression Plan, including all state-mandated promotion requirements. Per the Promotion to 4th Grade Technical Assistance paper, 3rd grade students who do not earn a level 2 or higher on the state assessment or portfolio or alternate assessment must be provided 3rd grade summer reading camp taught by reading endorsed or certified teachers with highly effective evaluations. Can you explain your plan for providing 3rd grade summer reading camp for those students in need?

At this time, You Thrive Elementary Schools will follow the Hernando County School District's requirements and structure for 3rd Grade Summer Reading Camp as outlined in the district's Pupil Progression Plan. Brooksville will not serve 3rd grade for approximately three years, and Spring Hill will not open until the 2027–2028 school year, providing adequate time to review and align implementation details. When 3rd grade is operational, the school will implement summer reading camp in full compliance with district guidelines, including eligibility criteria, curriculum, staffing, and reporting requirements. Any updates made by the district prior to that time will also be adopted to ensure full alignment and compliance

## **Student Performance, Assessment, and Evaluation**

Section 5, page 21

1. How will the school measure and document that students are achieving at least one year of academic growth in Reading and Mathematics?

Quarterly Interim Assessments in ELA and Math will consist of standards-aligned benchmark assessments designed to measure student mastery of Florida's B.E.S.T. Standards taught during each grading period. Assessments will include a combination of multiple-choice questions, technology-enhanced items, constructed responses, and performance tasks that mirror the rigor and format of FAST Progress Monitoring. Results will be analyzed during data meetings to identify trends, adjust instruction, implement targeted interventions, and ensure students are on track to demonstrate at least one year of academic growth.

2. What are the established academic performance goals for students performing at or above grade level in Reading and Mathematics?

The school will set targets for students to advance toward higher achievement levels, including movement from Level 3 to Levels 4 or 5 when applicable. Enrichment, advanced problem-solving tasks, and standards extension activities will be provided to ensure continued academic growth and prevent stagnation.

3. What specific performance targets have been set for students achieving at or above grade level in science?

Because the school has not yet opened and does not currently have baseline science performance data, specific numerical growth targets have not yet been established. Upon implementation, baseline data will be collected using district benchmark assessments and classroom-based diagnostics aligned to Florida's B.E.S.T. Science Standards, and measurable annual growth targets will be set accordingly. As a STEAM-focused program, science is a core instructional priority, and we will establish performance goals that ensure students maintain proficiency, demonstrate at least one year of academic growth, and increase the percentage of students achieving Levels 3–5 on state science assessments

4. What targeted strategies and supports will be implemented to address and reduce achievement gaps among identified student subgroups?

You Thrive Elementary Schools will implement targeted, data-driven strategies to ensure **all** students have equitable access to high-quality, standards-aligned instruction and the supports necessary for academic success. Through MTSS, universal screening, small-group intervention, and ongoing progress monitoring, instruction will be adjusted to meet the individual needs of every learner. The school's goal is to ensure that all students demonstrate measurable academic growth and that achievement gaps are reduced through intentional, consistent, and equitable instructional practices

## **Student Performance, Assessment, and Evaluation**

Section 5, page 22

What specific interim assessments will be used to measure growth?

I-Ready and STAR Assessment

## Section 5, page 24

What will Quarterly Interim Assessments in ELA and Math consist of to effectively measure student progress?

Quarterly Interim Assessments in ELA and Math will consist of standards-aligned benchmark assessments designed to measure student mastery of Florida's B.E.S.T. Standards taught during each grading period. Assessments will include a combination of multiple-choice questions, technology-enhanced items, constructed responses, and performance tasks that mirror the rigor and format of FAST Progress Monitoring. Results will be analyzed during data meetings to identify trends, adjust instruction, implement targeted interventions, and ensure students are on track to demonstrate at least one year of academic growth.

## Section, page 25

What schoolwide performance indicators or thresholds will trigger identification of students performing below expected benchmarks?

Schoolwide performance indicators used to identify students performing below expected benchmarks will include FAST Progress Monitoring results, quarterly interim assessment data, classroom grades, and standards mastery reports. Additional indicators such as attendance patterns, behavioral concerns, teacher observations, student conferences ("student chats"), and parent input will also be reviewed to provide a comprehensive picture of student performance. Any combination of academic, attendance, or engagement concerns will trigger MTSS review to ensure timely intervention and support.

## **Exceptional Students**

**1.** Describe, in detail, how the school will ensure delivery of Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE). (p. 35, section C)

You Thrive Elementary Schools will ensure the delivery of Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) in the same manner we have successfully implemented for the past 14 years at BEST Academy. Our established systems include equitable enrollment practices, consistent progress monitoring, ongoing staff training, and meaningful parent input throughout the IEP process. Students with disabilities will receive services as outlined in their Individualized Education Plans, with inclusion in the general education setting prioritized through accommodations, modifications, push-in support, and collaborative instruction whenever appropriate.

We will continue to work closely with district ESE staff to ensure compliance with state and federal requirements, including staffing certified ESE specialists, coordinating related service providers such as speech-language pathologists and occupational therapists, and ensuring proper documentation and service delivery. Placement decisions will be made by the IEP team, including parents and district representatives, to ensure that removal from the general education environment occurs only when necessary. Through collaboration with families, district personnel, specialists, and therapists, the school will maintain a strong, compliant framework that ensures students receive appropriate services, access to grade-level curriculum, and measurable progress toward their IEP goals.

2. Describe the continuum of services that will be available for elementary students, including: Inclusion support, resource, therapy services, behavior intervention support, gifted services (if offered). (p. 36-37, section E-G)

As stated throughout pages 36–39, we will provide Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) to all eligible students with disabilities in full compliance with IDEA and state requirements. Students requiring support will receive accommodations, related services, and progress monitoring as outlined in their Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), delivered in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). We will ensure qualified staffing, collaboration with district ESE personnel, active parent participation, and data-driven monitoring to support measurable progress toward each student’s IEP goals.

Related services, including speech-language therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and other district-approved supports, will be provided in accordance with each student’s IEP and coordinated with certified specialists and district personnel to ensure fidelity of implementation. Students requiring behavioral support will receive structured interventions aligned to their Behavior Intervention Plans (BIPs), with ongoing progress monitoring, staff training in positive behavior supports, and collaboration with families. Gifted services, as referenced on page 39, will be delivered in accordance with district guidelines and will include differentiated instruction, enrichment, and advanced STEAM-based learning opportunities to promote higher-level thinking and measurable academic growth.

3. What will your staffing plan ratios be in relation to ESE, what will your ratio be? (p. 38-39, section I)

As shared on page 59, Staffing, paragraph 4, we plan to hire dual-certified teachers who meet ESE requirements and, when applicable, hold or are eligible for gifted endorsement to support diverse learner needs across academic positions. If a gifted endorsement or additional specialized certification is required, we will ensure a qualified staff member

provides the service or contract with appropriately certified personnel to maintain full compliance and effective service delivery. Ratio 1-18 for k-3 and 1-22 for 4-5 (Exact numbers of ESE students per class is unknown).

4. How will your ESE/Student Services supports (therapists, certified school social workers, etc.) be funded? (p. 38-39, section I)

As you are aware, ESE and Student Services supports will be funded through the charter school's allocation of FEFP funds, including the ESE Guaranteed Allocation generated by eligible students. Additional funding may include federal IDEA funds and the school's proportionate share of district-allocated resources, as applicable. These funds will be used to support certified ESE teachers, therapists, social workers, contracted specialists, and other required services to ensure full implementation of IEPs and compliance with FAPE requirements.

5. Will you be purchasing screeners, such as the Naglieri? (p. 39, section K) Yes

6. How will the gifted program differ from general education enrichment? (p. 39, section K)

Gifted enrichment will provide advanced, standards-aligned instruction and STEAM-based extension activities designed to promote critical thinking, creativity, problem-solving, and accelerated academic growth beyond grade-level expectations.

7. Who will provide the consult services for gifted students? (p. 39. section K) See #3 Above

### **English Language Learners**

Page 47, Section A

Paragraph 2 – Who will complete the Home Language Survey? Who will conduct the proficiency assessment? What are the state timelines? How will families be informed of student placement? What will placement look like as far as student and teacher certification?

The Home Language Survey will be completed by the parent/guardian during enrollment and reviewed by the school registrar. If a language other than English is indicated, the registrar will coordinate with ESOL-certified personnel to ensure the student receives the required state-approved English language proficiency assessment within the state-mandated timeline (within 20 school days of enrollment). Families will be informed in writing of assessment results, English Language Learner (ELL) status, and program

placement, including their rights and available services. Placement will include instruction by appropriately certified or endorsed ESOL teachers, with services delivered in accordance with state guidelines and documented in the student's ELL plan.

Paragraph 3 – What type of language supports will be provided?

Language supports will include ESOL strategies embedded within core instruction, small-group language development support, accommodations aligned to state guidelines, and ongoing progress monitoring. Instructional staff, including ESOL-endorsed teachers, will implement sheltered instruction techniques, vocabulary development, and scaffolded academic language supports to ensure access to grade-level content. All services will be delivered in compliance with state requirements and monitored through regular data review and parent communication with the support of the ESOL Lead.

Paragraph 4 – What translation service will you use for written communication? What interpretation services will be used for face-to-face meetings?

Written communication will be translated using district-approved translation services and reputable translation platforms like Google Translate to ensure accuracy and compliance with state and federal requirements. For face-to-face meetings, including parent conferences and IEP meetings, the school will utilize qualified interpreters on staff or contracted interpretation providers, as needed.

Page 47, Section B

Paragraph 1 – Will a supplemental language acquisition program be used?

Yes. You Thrive Elementary will implement a supplemental language acquisition program in alignment with the Hernando County School District ELL Plan and state ESOL guidelines. Students identified through the WIDA Screener will receive structured English language development support delivered by ESOL-certified or endorsed teachers. Language instruction will include targeted small-group support and embedded ESOL strategies within core academic instruction to ensure access to grade-level content. Services and progress will be documented and monitored in accordance with state timelines and district requirements

Paragraph 2 – The district feels there is a typo – can the applicant confirm that the word gifted is correct, or should it say English Language Learner? Yes, that is a typo!

Paragraph 3 – How will a deficiency in language acquisition be determined? What will interventions for language acquisition look like?

The **WIDA Screener's** are used to determine a student's English language proficiency when a language other than English is indicated on the Home Language Survey. It assesses listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills to identify whether a student qualifies for ESOL services. Results guide placement decisions, instructional supports, and the development of an appropriate English Language Learner (ELL) plan in accordance with state guidelines.

After the WIDA Screener is administered and a student qualifies for ESOL services, interventions will be aligned to the student's identified English language proficiency level.

Students will receive targeted language development support through ESOL strategies embedded in core instruction, including sheltered instruction techniques, vocabulary scaffolding, visual supports, sentence frames, and structured academic talk. Depending on proficiency level, students may also receive small-group English language development focused on reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills aligned to grade-level content.

Page 48, Section C – Paragraph 1 – Who will administer the annual English language proficiency assessment? ESOL Lead

Paragraph 2 – Who will handle monitoring, reviewing and holding ELL Committee meetings? Who will be responsible for notifying families of exiting decisions? ESOL Committee which includes Administrator, ESOL Lead, Teacher, Parent and Guidance.

Page 48, Section D –

Paragraphs 1 and 2 – Will the staff member described only work with ELL students? No

### **School Culture and Discipline**

1. Pg 34 Section 6 Exceptional Students Paragraph A

“the school also anticipates a higher number of students requiring 504 accommodations.” What supports are you planning on using to train teachers and provide accommodations?

The school will provide annual Section 504 compliance training, ongoing MTSS-based professional development, and administrative oversight to ensure teachers implement documented accommodations with fidelity, supported by a designated 504 Coordinator who monitors plans, provides coaching, and conducts periodic implementation reviews.

2. Pg 36 “Students will be monitored through universal screening, classroom-based assessments, and ongoing progress monitoring.” Please elaborate as to what the universal screening tool is that will be utilized as well as the progress monitoring for Tier 2 and Tier 3 behavior and social emotional?

The school will utilize all available data points outlined on pages 35–36—including FAST Progress Monitoring (PM), district-aligned benchmark assessments, classroom-based assessments, attendance, discipline data, and behavioral screeners—to make informed decisions regarding both academic and behavioral supports. Universal screening tools such as FAST PM will be reviewed through the MTSS problem-solving process to identify patterns indicating whether behaviors may stem from academic frustration, skill deficits, or a need for acceleration and enrichment. By analyzing academic and behavioral data collectively, the MTSS team will design targeted Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions that address the root cause of student needs rather than responding solely to observable behaviors.

3. Pg 36 continued- What is the plan for which support staff will be monitoring and providing Tier 2 and Tier 3 supports?

Tier 2 supports will be monitored and implemented by the classroom teacher in collaboration with the MTSS team, which includes the Principal (or designee), ESE Specialist, and any assigned counselor or behavior support staff, with data reviewed on a biweekly basis. Tier 3 supports will be overseen by the Principal and ESE Specialist in coordination with district personnel such as the school psychologist or behavior specialist, as needed, with weekly progress monitoring and formal MTSS review meetings to adjust interventions and ensure fidelity of implementation.

4. Pg. 50 Please elaborate on the process if a student is to be expelled or removed from your charter school for disciplinary reasons. How will you notify parent and the school board (i.e., Student Services) that a student has been expelled?

As a public charter school operating under Section 1002.33, Florida Statutes, the school follows the Hernando County School District Student Code of Conduct and fully adheres to HCSD’s established policies and procedures for suspension, expulsion, due process, and notification to Student Services in accordance with Sections 1006.07, 1006.08, and 1006.09, Florida Statutes.

## **Section II. Organizational Plan**

### **Governance**

#### **Governing Board Code Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, of Ethics**

1. Will the Articles of Incorporation be updated to authorize actions, positions, and other provisions set forth in the Bylaws. Will the Articles of Incorporation be amended to be consistent with one another? Pg. 53, Attachment H and J.

The Articles of Incorporation were updated in November 2015. Article IV states: “*The manner in which directors are elected or appointed is as provided for in the corporation’s bylaws.*”

2. What is the Board Code of Ethics and Conflict of Interest Policies? Please provide more detail. Attachment K is a form to determine conflicts of interest for all employees. Pg. 53 Attachment K.

Our bylaws and our Governing Board Manual address Conflict of Interest and Code of Ethics as follows:

Bylaws: Article III; 3.9 states: “*No contract or other transaction between this Corporation and one or more of its directors, or any other corporation, firm, association or entity in which one or more of the directors are directors or officers or are financially interested, shall be either void or voidable because of such relationship or interest or because such director or directors are present at the meeting of the Board of Directors or a committee thereof which authorizes, approves or ratifies such contract or transaction or because of his or their votes are counted for such purpose, if: (a) The fact of such relationship or interest is disclosed or known to the Board of Directors, and the Chief Executive Officer, prior to a vote, authorizes, approves or ratifies the contract without counting the votes or consents of such interested director; and (b) The contract or transaction is fair and reasonable as to the Corporation at the time it is authorized by the Board. Common or interested directors may be counted in determining the presence of a quorum at a meeting of the Board of Directors or a committee hereof which authorizes, approves or ratifies such contract or transaction.*”

Governing Board Manual outlines our *Board’s Fiduciary Duty (often referred to as Code of Ethics) including the “Duties of Care, Loyalty, and Obedience.”*

### **Primary roles, powers and duties of the governing board; committee structure**

1. What are the primary rules, powers and duties of the governance structure? Pg. 53

Page 121 of application-

#### ARTICLE VIII

#### POWERS OF THE BOARD

8.1 The Board of Directors shall be responsible for setting policy for the Corporation and for the planning and evaluation of the programs and services conducted by the Corporation.

The Board

shall have no authority over the daily operations of the Corporation.

8.2 The powers of the Board shall be:

- 1) To appoint or terminate the Chief Executive Officer as provided herein;
- 2) To approve major personnel, fiscal and program policies;
- 3) To approve program plans and priorities;
- 4) To approve program proposals and budgets;
- 5) To review and accept audit report;
- 6) To approve procurement policy;
- 7) To review reports;
- 8) To review program progress and reports;
- 9) To approve pay structure and schedule;
- 10) To approve Agency-Wide Budget, and IRS Form 990;
- 11) To approve Bylaws;
- 12) To approve Governing Board Manual;
- 13) To approve Mission Statement;
- 14) To approve Strategic Plan;
- 15) To require potential Board Members to apply via an application process;
- 16) To approve/disapprove potential Board Members;
- 17) To recruit board members with financial expertise, community connections;
- 18) Fund raising capabilities, etc.;
- 19) To follow Board selection procedures contained within the Bylaws;
- 20) To determine rules of procedure for the Board and its committees'
- 21) To appoint members to policy councils or to determine the procedure for selection of members to such councils; and
- 22) To elect officers and committee members.

8.3 The Board, through its Chairperson, shall have the power and authority to execute any contract or agreement as required of the Board by any Federal, State or local governmental authority.

2. What are the committee structures – finance, academic excellence, governance, development/community? Please provide detail. Pg. 53

Our only committee currently is Finance Committee and it comprises the CFO, Governing Board Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and a board member with finance/accounting experience.

**Board meetings; compliance with open meetings and record laws**

1. Will the organization follow the Florida Statute requirements regarding public notice of board meetings, special meetings, emergency meetings, organizational meetings, etc. Pg. 53 and 54

Yes.

**Desired size and composition of governing board; Key skills and constituencies of the governing board**

1. The Articles of Incorporation identify a different composition of the governing board than that of the Bylaws. Will this be reconciled? Pg. 54

As stated above, the Articles of Incorporation were updated in November 2015; Article IV states: *“The manner in which directors are elected or appointed is as provided for in the corporation’s bylaws.”*

2. What are the key skills and constituencies of the governing board. Pg. 54

We believe this was answered in Letter E on page 54 and each board member’s resume was attached to the application. If there is something more specific you would like to know, please advise what specific information you are looking for.

**Selection of Board members and selection of officers; term limits**

1. Will the Articles of Incorporation be amended to authorize the term limits, positions and roles in the Bylaws. Pg. 54 and Attachment H

As stated above, the Articles of Incorporation were updated in November 2015; Article IV states: *“The manner in which directors are elected or appointed is as provided for in the corporation’s bylaws.”*

2. Paragraph 3.5 of the Bylaws says that directors are eligible for up to 2 additional 5 year terms while the application says 3 additional 5 year terms. Later in the paragraph it says 3-year term. Will the Bylaws be amended to correct this? See Attachment J.

The actual statement is *“No Director shall serve more than three (3) full consecutive five-year terms.”*

3. What are requirements to be a board member? Pg. 54

We believe this was answered in Letter E & G on page 54. If there is something more specific you would like to know, please advise what specific information you are looking for.

4. How have the officers/board members been selected, who is reviewing the applications and what is the criteria? Pg. 54

Per Article VII, potential Board Members are required to submit an application to the Board for review and consideration. The Board makes the final decision on selection.

5. If there are board member/officer vacancies, how will the vacancies be advertised and who will make that selection? How long are they advertised for? Pg. 55

We advertise vacancies via our website and social media for 30 days. After 30 days, only completed applications are reviewed by the CEO and then forwarded to the board with recommendations. Final selection is made by a majority vote of the Board.

Article III; 3.6 states: *“Any vacancy occurring in the Board of Directors, including any vacancy created by reason of an increase in the number of directors, may be filled by the affirmative vote of a majority of the remaining directors then in office, even though less than a quorum. A director elected to fill a vacancy shall serve for the remainder of the unexpired term, or until a successor is duly elected or appointed. The Board may, in its discretion, elect not to fill a vacancy if it determines to reduce the number of directors, provided the number of directors remain within the limits set forth in these bylaws.”*

6. How are board members/officers removed? What is that process? Pg. 54

Article III; 3.7 *“At a meeting of directors called expressly for that purpose, any director or the entire Board of Directors may be removed, with or without cause. The Chairperson shall raise the issue of removal of any director at the request of the Chairperson, the Chief Executive Officer or any three other directors at the next duly noticed regular or special meeting of the board. The notice shall identify as an agenda item the removal of the member. Removal shall be by a majority vote at any regular or special meeting at which a quorum is present. “For cause” shall include, but shall in no way be limited to a director who: (1) fails to perform their duties; (2) ceases to meet the requirements of the specific sector for which the member is a representative; (3) fails to abide by the provisions of these By-Laws including those requirements regarding conflicts of interest or otherwise acts beyond the scope of their duties as a director; (4) violates any federal, state or local law”*

In addition. Article IV 4.1 states: *“D. A director may resign by delivering their written resignation to the Chief Executive Officer or the Chairman of the Board. Resignations shall be effective as soon as the director’s successors have been duly elected and qualified.”*

7. After term ends, does the board member/officer term expire automatically or does other formal action need to be taken? Pg. 54

Formal action is taken at a regular or special meetings, as needed.

**Board member recruitment and development; orientation process for new members; ongoing professional development to increase capacity on the board**

1. Will the board member governance training as required under 1002.33 be made publicly available? Pg. 55

The organization follows F.S. Chapter 119 regarding public records.

**Board member recruitment and development; orientation process for new members; ongoing professional development to increase capacity on the board**

1. Provide more detail on how the organization plans to address conflicts of interest. To whom is the disclosure made, who determines whether a conflict of interest exists, is it determined by a committee? Board chair? At a public hearing? What happens if the board determines there is no conflict of interest? Will the decision be made at a public meeting and recorded in writing? Pg. 55.

*Article III; 3.9 states: “No contract or other transaction between this Corporation and one or more of its directors, or any other corporation, firm, association or entity in which one or more of the directors are directors or officers or are financially interested, shall be either void or voidable because of such relationship or interest or because such director or directors are present at the meeting of the Board of Directors or a committee thereof which authorizes, approves or ratifies such contract or transaction or because of his or their votes are counted for such purpose, if: (a) The fact of such relationship or interest is disclosed or known to the Board of Directors, and the Chief Executive Officer, prior to a vote, authorizes, approves or ratifies the contract without counting the votes or consents of such interested director; and (b) The contract or transaction is fair and reasonable as to the Corporation at the time it is authorized by the Board.*

*Common or interested directors may be counted in determining the presence of a quorum at a meeting of the Board of Directors or a committee hereof which authorizes, approves or ratifies such contract or transaction.”*

**Advisory bodies or councils in place or will be formed.**

1. Under Paragraph K, they say there are no advisory bodies or councils, but board committees are listed under paragraph C. Those committees seem like they could be advisory bodies, and the roles and duties of each and the reporting structure of such entity relative to the school’s governing board and leadership should be described. Please provide committee structures and purpose to permit an evaluation of whether the same are advisory bodies or councils. Pg. 56

K. states “if applicable”. We answered N/A as this is not applicable to us.

a. For instance the Finance Committee could be an advisory board to the Governing Board of Directors if they provide non-binding strategic advice and recommendations to the charter school board, and if the committee reviews

agenda topics such as facility/ project requests, budget forecasting, special projects, guidance to principals, network growth, future facility reviews, etc.

There is a distinct difference between committees and advisory bodies/councils and we do not intend to use our committees as advisory bodies/councils for the purposes of this application.

**Process that the school will follow regarding objection to a governing board policy or decision, administrative procedure, or practice at school**

1. Is there a timeline within which a complaint must be investigated, resolved and appealed? Pg. 56

After notification of complaint, the school administrator will make every effort to resolve the complaint with five (5) days of receiving the notification, but no longer than seven (7) days. The school will follow procedures as set out in the Parental Rights in Education Law and F.S. 1001.42(8)(c)1.-6.

2. Who will be involved in the informal discussion at the school level? Representative from the school? How will that person be chosen? Pg. 56

All complaints will initially be reported to the school administrator. Parent complaints may be referred to the parent liaison regarding governing board policy; the parent liaison serves as the bridge between parents and the governing board. Other parent complaints will be referred to the school administrator. Student complaints will be referred to the school administrator.

3. Will the representative's contact information be shared with the parents and on what platform (website?) Pg. 56

Yes, both the school administrator and the parent liaison's contact information will be shared with parents and will be on the school's website, per Florida statute.

4. Who will the formal complaint be submitted to? School administration? Which Department?

School administrator

The Board? Pg. 56

If successful resolution is not made by the formal investigation, parties may petition the Governing Board for an appeal.

5. What is the process after the complaint is submitted? There is no information on how a complaint will be handled, deadline for a decision, or how a decision is made for concerns regarding student welfare, including 1001.42(8)(c). Pg. 56

After notification of complaint, the school administrator will make every effort to resolve the complaint with five (5) days of receiving the notification, but no longer than seven (7) days. The charter school will follow procedures as set out in the Parental Rights in Education Law and F.S. 1001.42(8)(c)1.-6.

6. Who will the appeal be submitted to, what are the procedures for appeal? Will the appeal process comply with chapter 120 F.S.? Pg. 56

As stated above, if successful resolution is not made by the formal investigation, parties may petition the Governing Board for an appeal. In addition, parents have the right to request appointment of a Special Magistrate under section 1001.42 (8)(c) and Rule 6A-6.0791, Florida Administrative Code, for certain unresolved student welfare or parental rights disputes.

The school is unaware of any statutory requirement that charter schools, as public schools operating under F.S. 1002.33, must themselves conduct their internal appeal processes in accordance with all provisions of Chapter 120 F.S..

7. How will parents request an appointment with a special magistrate? Will there be a person designated to help parents through that process? In place of a special magistrate, can parents request the board review the case? Will funds be allocated for this process? Pg. 56

Parents must complete and submit a Parent Request for Appointment of a Special Magistrate form (CSSM-1) to the FLDOE. Yes, parents can request the board review the case. The school will be responsible for the cost.

### **Management and Staffing**

In Section 11(A), per Attachment M (page 188), the organizational chart reflects two teachers reporting directly to the STEAM Principal in the first year of operation.

Please describe the staffing plan for the STEAM program. Specifically:

- What will the classroom student-teacher ratios be? Earlier in the application, “small class size” is referenced. What would that look like in terms of students to teachers?

We will follow Class Size Amendment law – Pre-K – 3: 18:1; 4-5: 22:1

- How will staffing allocations be managed?

Through the Staffing Plan

- Is there a formal staffing plan available?

Yes

1. In Section 11(C), and per Attachment P, leadership roles are outlined. Please explain the process for certification compliance, including Out-of-Field, ESOL, Reading (Tier III), and other applicable requirements.

YTF HR will request certification review by HCSD Certification staff. If applicant is OOF, and is hired, we will follow Florida Statute regarding requesting Governing Board approval, parent notifications, and posting on our school website within 30 calendar days.

2. Section 11(E) on page 59 references ongoing professional development. Please clarify what this will include. For example:

- For staff who are out-of-field in ESOL, which platforms or programs will be used to obtain required coursework?

Staff who are out-of-field in ESOL will complete the required coursework through district-approved ESOL endorsement programs and Florida Department of Education–approved providers. This may include district professional development modules, online ESOL endorsement courses offered through accredited institutions, or state-approved in-service pathways aligned to certification requirements. All coursework will meet Florida certification standards and timelines for ESOL endorsement compliance.

- How will training and compliance be monitored and documented?

Training and compliance will be monitored through personnel certification tracking, professional development logs, in-service records, and administrative review of credential status. School leadership will maintain documentation of completed coursework, endorsements, and required training hours to ensure all staff remain in compliance with state certification and endorsement requirements

## Human Resources and Employment

3. In Section 12(B), Attachment FF provides an evaluation tool for non-instructional staff and school administrators. Please specify:

- Which evaluation tool or rubric will be used for school-based administrators who hold FLDOE certification?

School-based administrators holding Florida certification will be evaluated annually using a research-based framework aligned to Section 1012.34, F.S. The school has utilized the Danielson Leadership Framework to measure instructional leadership, school culture, operational effectiveness, and student performance outcomes. Evaluations will include measurable student growth data and observable leadership practices, and will inform professional development and continuous school improvement planning

- What evaluation platform will be used for instructional staff?

Frontline will be used

In prior years at BEST Academy, due to the small school size and daily administrative presence in classrooms, instructional staff received frequent documented walkthrough feedback throughout the school year. As a result of this high frequency of observation and continuous monitoring, the formal evaluation cycle included one scheduled formal observation in addition to regular documented walkthroughs.

While instructional oversight was continuous and ongoing, the school acknowledges that moving forward, full implementation of the HCSD Instructional Evaluation Plan — including required formal observation frequency — will be implemented.

- How will VAM/student performance data be incorporated into the final evaluation process, and how will performance pay be determined?

You Thrive Elementary will not use Value-Added Model (VAM) calculations; however, student performance data will be

incorporated into final evaluations in alignment with Florida Statutes and the adopted Hernando County School District (HCSD) framework. Performance pay, if board-approved and fiscally feasible, will be based on the final evaluation rating and demonstrated student learning growth in accordance with applicable law.

4. Section 12(E), per Attachment R, notes that revisions will be adopted and presented to the board within 60 days of charter approval, which aligns with the July timeline depicted in the application. What processes or materials will be used to onboard potential staff for the 2026–27 school year?

We will follow the same procedures we currently follow for onboarding charter school staff.

- (page 15 / page 230), bullet #5 “References with Written Approval.” Please note that hiring authorities are required to conduct reference checks with all previous employers for candidates who will have student contact. Written approval from the employee or former employee is not required, as the hiring authority has an obligation to complete these checks. **Florida Statute 1012.27**

This statement is referencing our personnel manual which pertains to an outside entity contacting our organization for a reference for a current or previous employee, this is not how we conduct our own employment reference checks for our new hires. Currently, we conduct reference checks for all new hires of all their previous employers, regardless of written consent.

- (page 27 / page 242), please note that Florida Statute 1012.61 requires that instructional staff receive an allotment of 4 sick leave days on the first day of their contracted year, and each subsequent year employed in an instructional contract.

Charter schools are exempt from this statute. Please refer to F.S. 1002.33 (16)(a).

- There is also a reference to background information being stored in the personnel file. Please note that background screening records must be kept

separate from the personnel file, secured under lock and key, and not stored electronically.

While this statement notes that background screening records must be kept separate from personnel file, secured under lock and key, and not stored electronically, there is no Florida law or statute that specifies that those records must be ‘under lock and key’ or prohibits electronic storage. What F.S. 1012.32 does state is that background screening information must be treated confidentially with restricted use, and F.S. 435.09 does state that this information is exempt from the public records law. To align with these requirements, background records are stored under restricted access and treated as confidential.

- Please confirm how acknowledgements of codes of conduct and ethics will be managed for both instructional and non-instructional staff. Additionally, we will need a copy of the Staff Handbook/Personnel Manual if the school does not intend to follow the established HCSD Staff Handbook.
  - 6A-10.081 Principles of Professional Conduct for the Education Profession in Florida

Through education at time of onboarding and annually through the annual review process.

- Additional review will need to take place once the following are completed:
  - Employee Handbook
  - Policies and Procedures Manual

### **Professional Development**

How will you meet the requirements of trainings as outlined in F.S. 1012.98 (3a-j)?

You Thrive Elementary will meet the training requirements outlined in F.S. 1012.98 (3)(a-j) through the comprehensive Professional Development Plan described in this charter application (see pages 67–69). As outlined on those pages, staff will participate in state-required, district-aligned, and school-based trainings tied to student achievement data, reading instruction, ESOL, ESE, ethics, and school safety requirements. All trainings will be documented and monitored to ensure compliance and continuous instructional improvement.

## **Parent and Community Involvement**

Page 72, Section A – Paragraph 3 – How will the focus of parent workshops be determined? What is the appointment process/required qualifications for a parent liaison? What does communication entail (newsletters, email, SMS system, etc.)?

The focus of parent workshops will be determined through analysis of student performance data, parent surveys, teacher input, and identified schoolwide needs. Topics may include literacy strategies, mathematics support, Art integration, state assessment expectations, attendance, and social-emotional development. Workshop themes will align with school improvement and areas where additional family support can strengthen student achievement.

The Parent Liaison will be appointed by school leadership based on experience in family engagement, strong communication skills, knowledge of school procedures, and the ability to collaborate effectively with staff and families.

Communication will include regular newsletters, email updates, phone calls, SMS messaging systems (Parent Square), school website updates, social media posts, and parent conferences.

Page 72, Section B – Paragraph 1 – How will you identify student/family needs? How will you collaborate with community partners to provide resources for identified needs?

Student and family needs will be identified through multiple data sources, including academic performance data, attendance trends, behavior reports, MTSS reviews, parent surveys, teacher referrals, and direct communication with families. School leadership and the Parent Liaison will analyze this information to determine areas of need such as academic support, food insecurity, mental health services, transportation challenges, or access to community resources.

The school will collaborate with established community partners, local agencies, nonprofit organizations, and district support services to provide targeted resources and referrals for identified needs. Partnerships may include mentoring programs, counseling services, tutoring support, food assistance programs, and family engagement initiatives, ensuring students and families receive coordinated and timely support.

Page 73, Section C – Paragraph 1 – Are there any MOUs, contracts, etc. currently in place? What questions are included in the survey related to family needs? How do the business listed on Attachment T provide instructional enrichment and experiential learning opportunities?

At this time, formal MOUs or contracts are not yet finalized; however, letters of support and partnership discussions have been initiated with the organizations listed in Attachment T.

Family needs survey questions will include items related to academic support needs, access to technology, transportation challenges, food security, mental health resources, after-school programming interest, language support needs, and parent workshop topics. Survey results will be reviewed to guide resource allocation and partnership collaboration.

The businesses and organizations listed in Attachment T provide instructional enrichment and experiential learning opportunities through field trips, hands-on workshops, guest speakers, STEM/Arts programming, career exploration experiences, and project-based learning extensions aligned to the STEAM focus of the school. These partnerships support real-world application of academic standards and expand learning beyond the classroom environment.

### Section III

#### Facilities

#### YOU THRIVE BROOKSVILLE (S.T.E.A.M.) – SECTION 16: FACILITIES

1. The facility description in the application lacks evidence of size(s) and layout of space(s) and alignment with the educational program, mandated class sizes, etc. (See Application, page 74. See also: F.S. 1002.33(9)(k)3, F.S. 1002.33(18), and 2023 FBC, 8th Ed., Section 468)

a. How many classrooms are in the existing facility and what's the approximate size (sq. ft.) of each? 2 classrooms at approximately 820 sq feet.

b. Describe how the restrooms are configured. For example:

i. Is there a toilet in each primary (K-Grade 3) classroom? Yes

ii. Are there separate boys and girls toilets for intermediate (grade 4-5) classrooms? Yes

iii. Are there toilets for staff use, separate from students? Yes

c. COMMENT: To facilitate any future subsequent charter application reviews for a facility that is already acquired, please consider submitting a floor plan that shows the uses, sizes, and layout of spaces.

2. The facility rental cost (\$1,000/mo) matches neither the budget, nor the draft lease agreement. (See Application, pages 74, 358, 364 & 365.)

a. What is the anticipated monthly rent? \$2,500

b. Is that amount reflected accurately in both the start-up and operating budgets? Yes

c. How does that monthly amount compare with the rate currently being paid?

N/A

3. The application lacks sufficient documentation to evaluate anticipated renovation and maintenance costs. (See Application, page 74.)

- a. When was the facility constructed and how large is it? Approximately 1968 and approximately 5,500 square feet.
- b. How long has it been since major systems (HVAC, roof, lighting, electrical, fire alarm, etc.) were either installed or replaced? Lessee will not be responsible for roof, HVAC, lightning, electrical, fire alarm, etc.)
- c. Is the storm drainage system clear and free of debris? Yes
- d. Are sidewalks in good condition and paved areas free of cracks and adequately sealed? Yes

### **Transportation**

1. Will You Thrive Elementary School of Brooksville utilize their own school buses or be dependent on the HCSD Transportation Department to transport students? No
2. What role will HCSD Transportation play and at what capacity to transport You Thrive Elementary School of Brooksville students?

You Thrive Elementary School's will coordinate with Hernando County School District (HCSD) Transportation, as allowable under statute and subject to district approval, to determine whether limited transportation services may be available through existing district routes or contracted services

3. Please clarify how FEFP funding will be distributed for students who may be transported by the HCSD.

As you are aware, FEFP funds follow the student; therefore, the school will receive its per-student allocation, and any transportation funding generated for district-provided services will be reconciled as outlined in the charter contract and district procedures. All funding distributions will comply with state law and district financial reporting requirements to ensure transparency and accuracy

4. Are we providing transportation for transfer students only? If so, how would that work with the way our current routes are paired? (DSPMS & HHS)

At this time, transportation would be provided for eligible transfer students only, consistent with district policy and the approved charter agreement. Coordination of routes, pairing, and alignment with existing routes (including DSPMS and HHS feeder patterns) would be determined in collaboration with HCSD Transportation to ensure efficiency and compliance with district routing procedures.

As standard practice, specific route details, stop locations, pairing logistics, and pickup/drop-off times are discussed directly with district transportation personnel on an annual basis prior to the start of each school year. Final determinations would be made in coordination with the district to ensure student safety, efficiency, and alignment with existing route structures.

5. The Transportation Plan/Proposal states the school will follow all HCSD policies and work collaboratively based on availability, will You Thrive Elementary School of Brooksville bus drivers also follow the HCSD Safe Driver Plan?

No

6. What is the school's process for driver training, conducting in-service training, CDL requirements, CPR certifications, and dexterities?

All school bus drivers will be required to hold a valid CDL with appropriate passenger and school bus endorsements, complete background screening, and maintain current medical certifications. Driver training will be conducted through Hernando County School District transportation training programs, which occur annually and include required in-service components. Training will cover student safety procedures, emergency evacuation drills, defensive driving, student management, CPR certification, and required dexterity assessments. Drivers will also participate in any state-mandated updates or refresher courses to remain in compliance with Florida Department of Education transportation standards. All credentials, certifications, and training documentation will be monitored to ensure ongoing compliance and student safety.

7. Where will the You Thrive Elementary School of Brooksville buses be housed?

Hernando County School's Transportation Lot

8. What is the school's plan to provide insurance coverage and bus maintenance?

The school's plan for insurance coverage and bus maintenance will follow the same structure currently implemented for the BEST Academy bus. The school will maintain appropriate commercial vehicle insurance coverage, including liability and required state minimums, through its existing insurance carrier. Bus maintenance, inspections, and required safety checks will be conducted in accordance with state regulations, manufacturer guidelines, and documented preventative maintenance schedules to ensure safe and compliant operation.

9. What school attendance area have you chosen to provide transportation, if any?

If transportation is provided, it will be limited to the Brooksville attendance area. Transportation boundaries and eligibility will align with Hernando County School District routing policies and any approved charter agreement provisions. Final route availability and service areas will be coordinated annually with HCSD Transportation based on enrollment and district capacity.

10. Will the school mirror our current elementary school bell schedules, so that it would be easier for HCSB to accommodate any transportation requests they may have?

As standard practice, specific route details, stop locations, pairing logistics, and pickup/drop-off times are discussed directly with district transportation personnel on an annual basis prior to the start of each school year. Final determinations would be made in coordination with the district to ensure student safety, efficiency, and alignment with existing route structures

### **School Safety and Security**

1. Is it your plan to utilize Crisis Go to comply with the Alyssa's Alert requirement? Additionally, utilize Crisis Go for emergency communication and ensure your staff are trained in its use. Pg 78 and Pg 80

Yes

2. Is it your plan to utilize Versaterm for threat assessment documentation? Pg 79

Yes

3. Is it your intention to ensure you have a core four (Administration, Instructional, Mental Health, and Law Enforcement) present at each of your school-based threat management meetings? Do you have a plan for ensuring a sworn law enforcement officer will be present? Pg 79

Yes

### **Budget**

1. Section 16 (page 74) indicates that the Elementary School will operate at the same location as BEST Academy. Please clarify whether the Elementary School will employ its

own guardian, custodial, clerical, and support staff, or whether it will utilize BEST Academy’s existing personnel. If staff will be shared between the two schools, please explain how compensation and related expenses will be allocated and whether the submitted budget accurately reflects this arrangement.

Budget reflects expenses accurately. Staffing plan shows the allocation.

2. Do you anticipate sharing any additional expenses with BEST Academy because of the shared facility, such as utilities, building maintenance, or supplies? If so, please describe how those costs will be allocated between the schools and whether the submitted budget reflects this arrangement. No.

3. Section 20 (page 83) states that the “Start-up budget (from charter approval through Day 1 of instruction) emphasizes one-time costs such as ...” However, the revenues reflected in the start-up budget consist primarily of FEFP funds and student fees, the majority of which will not be received until after the commencement of instruction. **Please provide a detailed explanation of how You Thrive Elementary School of Brooksville intends to fund and cover start-up expenditures incurred prior to the start of instruction.**

YTF has sufficient reserves to cover start-up costs prior to the receipt of FEFP funding.

### **Start-Up**

1. COMMENT: In early discussions with HCSD (January-February 2026), please include charter school facility capacity and expansion plans applicable to concurrency reviews for residential development. (See Application, page 89. See also: F.S. 163.3180 and F.S. 1013.35)

2. COMMENT: Moving facility safety & compliance checks from July 2026 to June 2026 would allow time to correct identified deficiencies prior to opening. (See Application, page 90.)