

STOCA ACADEMY

In a world that won't hold still, aim with purpose.

Charter School Application

Submitted on: August 28th, 2026

Point of Contact:

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Application Checklist

The Application Checklist should be used by the applicant to ensure all sections of the New School Application as well as any required supporting documentation have been completed. The CSI Review Team will also use this checklist during the Completeness Check process. *Note: Click on each application component to be taken to the corresponding section/requirement of the new school proposal.*

COLORADO
CHARTER SCHOOL INSTITUTE

Application Components		Applicant Completeness Check	Reviewer Completeness Check
Letter of Intent		KZ	
New School Application Narrative Items to be completed that are found within the New School Application Narrative	New School Application Assurances	KZ	
	A. Executive Summary & School Overview	KZ	
	B. Evidence of Need, Support, and Involvement	KZ	
	C. School Culture	KZ	
	D. Education Program	KZ	
	E. Student Services	KZ	
	F. Goals, Objectives, and Pupil Evaluation	KZ	
	G. Budget & Finance	KZ	
	H. Governance & Leadership	KZ	
	I. Operations	KZ	
Required Attachments Items to be completed that require the applicant to create separate attachments	Notice to Geographic District *if applicable*	N/A	
	Geographic District Board Resolution *if applicable*	N/A	
	B Letters of Support *(include all letters in one folder)*	KZ	
	B LOI Form	KZ	
	C Discipline Policy	KZ	
	D Sample Scope and Sequence	KZ	
	D School Calendar	KZ	
	D Student Schedule	KZ	
	D Homeschool Addendum *if applicable*	N/A	
	D Preschool Addendum *if applicable*	N/A	
	D Online Addendum *if applicable*	N/A	
	D AEC Addendum *if applicable*	N/A	
	G Budget *(using CSI budget template)*	KZ	
	H Conflict of Interest Policy	KZ	
	H Board Matrix	KZ	
	H Resumes of Board Members	KZ	
	H Board Member Agreement	KZ	
	H Board Bylaws	KZ	
	H Articles of Incorporation	KZ	
	H Enrollment Policy	KZ	
	H Grievance Policy	KZ	
	H Waiver Request	KZ	
	I Organizational Chart	KZ	
	I Service Provider Agreements *if applicable*	N/A	
	I School Leader Resume *if applicable*	KZ	
	I School Leader Evaluation	KZ	
	I Educator Evaluation	KZ	
	I Start Up Plan	KZ	
	I Facility Documentation *if applicable*	N/A	
	I ESP Addendum *if applicable*	KZ	
Electronic copy of entire application			

New School Application Assurances

By signing below and submitting a New School Application to the Colorado Charter School Institute, the Applicant hereby affirms the following:

- The Applicant is one or more individuals, a nonprofit, governmental, or other entity or organization (§22-30.5-510, C.R.S.)
- All individuals, corporations, or other entities associated with the Applicant and the New School Application have been identified using legal names, and any aliases, prior names, or business names have been included in the application.
- The proposed school will at all times during the term of any charter contract be organized as a Colorado nonprofit organization established and operated solely for the educational purposes described in the charter contract (§22-30.5-507, C.R.S.)
- The Applicant has reviewed and accepts the Voluntary Dispute Resolution procedures contained in the CSI Model New School Contract and the Applicant agrees that such provisions will be included in any charter contract (§22-30.5-509(r), C.R.S., §22-30.5-107.5, C.R.S.)
- The Applicant complies and shall continue to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, religion, ancestry, disability, need for special education services, or any other protected class.

Printed Name: Kryszelda Gorrell

Signature: 

Date: **Aug 28, 2026**

A. Executive Summary & School Overview

Executive Summary

Stoca Academy is a new public charter school for grades 6 through 12 in Commerce City, Colorado. Students learn to build with artificial intelligence rather than just use it, solve real problems alongside real employers, and graduate with two things at once: a transcript that opens college doors and industry certifications employers already recognize.

Stoca's founding leadership is seeking authorization from the Colorado Charter School Institute to open in the 2028–29 school year.

Stoca's students will reflect Commerce City. About 83% qualify for free or reduced lunch, about 29% are learning English alongside their coursework, and about 92% are students of color. At full enrollment the school serves 950 students: 500 in the high school (125 per grade, in classes of 25) and 450 in the middle school (150 per grade). The school adds one grade each year.

Most schools still reward students for following instructions, memorizing material, and putting in time. Those are the exact skills computers now handle. The World Economic Forum estimates that nearly 40% of the skills a job requires will change by 2030. Stoca teaches students to do what machines cannot: frame a problem nobody has solved yet, build something that works, and convince other people it matters.

Three features define the school:

- Every student graduates with a specialization, portable credentials, and defended work. Each graduate leaves with a career specialization, a set of industry certifications, and a body of real work presented and defended in front of professionals.
- Leaders teach. Every member of the leadership team, including the Executive Director, teaches a section of the Civic Leadership course, so leaders stay close to students and to the daily work of the classroom.
- One day a week is different. Four days a week, students are in class. On the fifth, each student works at their own level with a coach who knows exactly where they are. Every student gets individualized time with their coach to work on exactly what they need, ensuring no one falls through the cracks.

Stoca serves grades 6 through 12 as one school. The high school is the destination, and it is built to bring any 9th-grade entrant, including one arriving well below grade level, to full readiness on its own. The middle school is not a prerequisite. It is an accelerator that gives students a compounding head start and reaches Commerce City families at the point where high school choice is actually made. The School Overview explains how.

How Stoca Measures Success

The school holds itself to numbers, not intentions. Section F lists them in full. In short: student growth in reading and math in the top quarter of the state; students with disabilities growing within 5 points of their peers; a "green" rating on the state performance framework; at least 90% of graduates earning four or more industry certifications; and

graduates landing in college, an apprenticeship, or a credentialed job. Success means what students can build and where they go, not how many hours they sat in a chair.

Stoca is an AI-empowered school with a defined standard governing every AI tool and practice, described in the overview and detailed in Section D. For students with disabilities and multilingual learners, compliance is the floor: services are built into the instructional core rather than run on the side, the school does not counsel students out, and bilingualism is treated as an asset to credential rather than a gap to close. Section E details both.

Stoca's founding Executive Director built the highest-performing secondary school in Aurora Public Schools serving students very much like these. The Founding Team Capacity section below tells that story in full.

School Overview

Stoca Academy will serve grades 6 through 12 in Commerce City, Colorado, within the Adams County School District 14 (Adams 14) geographic community. The model is an AI-empowered, career-connected STEM school. At full build, the high school enrolls 500 students, 125 per grade in five sections of 25, and the middle school enrolls 450, 150 per grade. The school adds one grade per year.

Vision and Mission

Vision Statement

Stoca prepares the innovators of our future to navigate complexity, question boldly, and shape an AI-empowered world with purpose and confidence.

Mission Statement

Stoca's mission is to cultivate a connected, purpose-driven learning community where students think critically, innovate boldly, and use AI responsibly to solve real-world problems and create meaningful impact.

Why "Stoca"

The name comes from the Greek stochos: to aim, to hit the mark with intent. The same root gives us stochastic, the mathematics of systems governed by uncertainty and chance, and that is the school's thesis. Stoca prepares students for a stochastic world: an economy that is volatile, non-linear, and impossible to fully predict, where artificial intelligence is rewriting which skills hold value faster than any curriculum committee can respond. In that world, the essential skill is not recalling a fixed path. It is the trained judgment to aim true through the noise: to read an uncertain situation, separate signal from distraction, and act with precision anyway. Every Stoca student learns to do one thing above all, to aim true in a world that will not hold still.

Stoca's 6-12 Model at a Glance

Stoca is a high school with a middle school that feeds it, and the high school does not depend on the middle school to work. A student who enrolls in 9th grade with no Stoca background arrives at the same starting line as a student who spent three years in the Stoca middle school. The high school is built to take any 9th grader, including one entering well below grade level, and move them to the readiness the model demands.

The middle school exists because it makes three things possible that a stand-alone high school cannot. First, it gives students a head start that compounds. A Stoca 8th grader leaves middle school reading and doing math at grade level, already familiar with how the Studio model works, already exposed to the three Majors and four Minors, and two to three years into a world language most middle schools never offer. Their character is developed through the Unwavering Character strand of the school's framework. None of this is work the high school would otherwise have to deliver, it is acceleration. These students do not arrive ready for 9th grade, they arrive ready for the Studios. Second, the middle school is the responsible way to build and sustain the school. A 6–12 model is how strong charter high schools reach financial stability, and it lets Stoca serve Adams 14 students across a longer stretch of their education rather than a narrow four-year window. Third, it reaches students when high school choice is actually made. In the Denver metro, families often decide where a child will attend high school years before 9th grade, and the closer a student gets to that transition, the more the choice is driven by where their friends are going. Reaching students in middle school puts them on the Stoca path before that window closes, which builds the stable, committed high school enrollment the model needs.

The Educational Program at a Glance

Stoca's program runs on the NEXUS framework, five components built to reinforce one another: Next-generation technology, Experiential career pathways, X-disciplinary innovation, Unwavering character, and Strong core academics. Section D details each and shows how the middle school mirrors them.

Electives follow an Hourglass: broad exposure early, one deliberate specialization, then a widening back out as students pair that specialization with a continuous skills track.

Phase	What students do
Grades 6–8 — Exploratory Foundation	Build core mastery in reading and math and sample all three career fields and all four skill tracks, so later choices are informed.
Grades 9–10 — The Studios	Every student works across all three fields, earning foundational science and social studies credits.
End of Grade 10 — Declare a Major	Each student commits to one of three career fields. This is the one hard commitment in the model.
Grades 11–12 — The Majors	Deep, career-connected work ending in a Senior Capstone defended to industry and community panels.
Grades 9–12 — The Minor	A four-year skills track, independent of the Major, that earns the industry certifications on the transcript.

The three Majors are Human Health, Planetary Health, and Economic Health. The four Minors are Technology and Applied AI; Applied Linguistics and Heritage Language; Civic Leadership and Restorative Justice; and Financial Operations and Project Management. Every graduate leaves with a Major, a Minor, at least four industry credentials, and a defended body of work recorded on a dual-layer transcript. The full curriculum, the Founding Architect graduate profile, the school's core values and Science Mindsets, and all credential mappings appear in Section D and the appendices.

AI Governance

Most schools are still deciding whether to allow AI. Stoca starts one step ahead, from the position that if students will inherit an economy built on these systems, the school's job is to teach them to build with AI, question it, and govern it. That raises a question before any other: how is the AI itself governed so it helps students rather than harms them?

Every AI tool and practice at Stoca must clear one standard, the T.R.U.S.T. framework, developed through MIT's AI Strategy and Leadership program. In short: AI use and data flows are transparent to students and families; tools are audited for bias; and AI never replaces a teacher or decides a student's future. The purpose is to take paperwork off teachers so they can spend that time on the part of teaching a machine cannot do, knowing a student and adjusting in real time. The full framework and its five principles are detailed in Section D.

Community Need and Support

Adams 14 students have historically scored well below state averages in reading, math, and science, and families leave the district for high school at high rates. The traditional response treats these students as the problem. Stoca is built on the opposite premise: the capability is there, and the job of the school is to build the environment that unlocks it. The full evidence of need, including district performance data and choice-out rates, appears in Section B.

Community Support to Date

Stoca is building partnerships across the postsecondary and community landscape in Commerce City and the surrounding region, anchored by an alignment between the Community College of Aurora's Commerce City Promise credentials and Stoca's career pathways. Letters of support, partner commitments, and the full record of community engagement appear in Section B.

Founding Team Capacity

Stoca Academy is founded and led by Kryszelda Gorrell, who serves as Executive Director and Principal. Her path to founding this school is the reason the model looks the way it does. Our founder is the daughter of undocumented parents. Her father was deported twice and her mom once, and those deportations shaped her formative life. In her home, education was not about finding yourself. It was the way out, and she understood that early.

She learned school by scrutinizing every rubric, memorizing every cheat sheet, and drilling every type of math problem until she could do all of them. She graduated with a 4.018 and an IB Diploma. What she did not yet understand was that she had become very good at performing school without ever learning the thing school was supposed to build. She did school perfectly. She never learned how to think.

Physics was the first subject that meant something because it gave her a language that explained how the world worked and earned her a near-full ride to USC. However, she studied physics the way she studied everything else, one memorized problem type at a time. The first time the procedure stopped working, she had nothing underneath it. Her advisor's answer was to tell her to switch to something easier.

Four years later and a thousand miles away, it happened again. She had transferred to CU Boulder, graduated magna cum laude, and completed an honors thesis in theoretical physics. Two weeks before graduation, her thesis advisor

told her she was not smart enough for graduate school and refused to write her recommendation. History repeated itself in two different institutions with two different advisors, showing that this was more than just a personal issue.

She did not leave physics because the math beat her, she left because she had spent her whole life using education to change her story, and she ran into a system that misread her success and wrote her off for it. She did not fully understand what had happened until she was standing in her own first classroom, teaching high school physics in Chicago, looking at juniors and seniors who read at a first-grade level and believed there were no numbers between zero and one. She had learned to game school, and her students could not even get in the door. That was the moment everything turned over. The job was not to make kids better at checking boxes, it was to teach them to think.

Then there was C, a student in our Founder's founding class and one of the strongest debaters she ever coached. C reached the state tournament at Northwestern, twenty miles from home, having never left the city, and turned to her coach and said, "Ms. Mendoza, I feel like I'm in New York City." Our founder raised the money to send C to debate camp at the University of Michigan and drove her there and back herself, because C's family could not. C flourished at camp but three years later she was still the only student in that founding class who did not graduate on time. Stoca's founder learned later that C had spent her senior year avoiding her, afraid of disappointing her. Everything our founder had given her depended on our founder deciding, personally, to give it. The system failed twice; it broke when Stoca's founder left for Colorado, and it broke before that, the moment her care became one more thing C felt she was failing. C did not need a better teacher, she needed a better school, and a school is not something you fix one classroom at a time.

The founding cabinet is built in phases, matched to the budget. In Year 1, the Executive Director and the Dean of Culture and Students are the seated leadership. The Director of Academics and Innovation, a successor-track role, is added as the school scales. Operations and finance are delivered in the ramp years through a contracted back-office provider with governmental-accounting experience (Section G), supported by the in-house Business Manager, rather than through a full-time director. The Director of Technology and AI Integration is phased in as the program's technology footprint grows. This phasing is deliberate: it protects the school's cash position during the ramp while ensuring every core function is covered from opening, and it keeps Stoca's practices in a team and its systems rather than in one person. Recruitment plans and operational staffing are detailed in Section I.

This record demonstrates capacity across both halves of the job this application describes. On the educational program: instructional design, subgroup growth, and a career-connected model anchored to real industry partners. On operations and compliance: as Associate School Director at DSST's Henry Middle School, Stoca's founder brought a special education program into full IEP and 504 compliance within a year while the school posted strong network-leading growth.

Our founder now has an nineteen-month-old daughter, Ayla. She knows what she ran into. She knows what C ran into. She has no idea what Ayla will run into, and neither does anyone else. That is the real design problem. She cannot build Ayla a school that prepares her for one specific obstacle. She can build one that teaches her to pivot when she hits it, the one thing her own education never gave her. Stoca Academy is that school.

B. Evidence of Need, Support, and Involvement

Target Student Population

Stoca Academy is authorized to serve grades 6 through 12, enrolling 125 students per grade in the high school and 150 per grade in the middle school at full build. The high school model (the Founding Architect, Section D) is the school's North Star. The middle school is a fidelity-driven on-ramp to that model with no separate mission: every element of the middle school exists to prepare students for the high school.

Grade-span phase-in and decision rule

Stoca's default is to open 9th grade first in the 2028–29 school year, establishing and proving the terminal model before extending it downward. This reflects the correct design order: the destination is built first, then the on-ramp is built backward from it.

Because enrollment demand in this market is uncertain, Stoca is collecting Letters of Intent for both entry grades, 9th and 6th, concurrently. By October 2027, ahead of the 2028–29 opening, the governing board will review verified LOI counts for each entry grade and set the opening configuration. Stoca opens 9th grade first as its default; it opens 6th grade first, or 6th and 9th concurrently, only if 9th-grade LOI coverage falls below 100% of the 125-student target, or if 6th-grade coverage exceeds 9th-grade coverage by more than 15 percentage points. This preserves the mission-driven default while ensuring the opening grade reflects where family demand is strongest.

An honest consequence of the 9th-first default: under it, the middle school is a downward extension that begins after the high school is established, so its value as an internal feeder to the high school accrues in the school's later years, not its first. During the early years under the default, Stoca recruits 9th graders externally, as a standalone high school would. Under the alternate configuration, the feeder benefit accrues earlier. Both projections are provided below.

Grade	**Year 1**	**Year 2**	**Year 3**	**Year 4**	**Year 5**	**Year 6**	**Year 7**
6					150	150	150
7						150	150
8							150
9	125	125	125	125	125	125	125
10		12	125	125	125	125	125
11			125	125	125	125	125
12				125	125	125	125
TOTAL	**125**	**250**	**375**	**500**	**650**	**800**	**950**

Enrollment projection, alternate (6th-grade-first)

Grade	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7
6	150	150	150	150	150	150	150
7		150	150	150	150	150	150
8			150	150	150	150	150
9				125	125	125	125
10					125	125	125
11						125	125
12							125
TOTAL	**150**	**300**	**450**	**575**	**700**	**825**	**950**

Under the alternate, the middle school opens first and builds the feeder, so the first 9th grade (Year 4) is fed internally by the first cohort to complete 8th grade. A concurrent 6th-and-9th opening is a further option available to the board under the decision rule. *(The full alternate build to 6–12 continues beyond the five-year window shown.)*

Rationale for projected enrollment and matriculation

The projection is deliberately conservative and grounded in a third-party market analysis of the population, competition, and enrollment dynamics surrounding the proposed Commerce City location (Esri population data; NCES school locations; CDE open enrollment data, 2025–26).

Three facts from that analysis shape the plan. First, **Adams 14 alone cannot fill the school, and Stoca does not assume it will.** Roughly 600 high-school-age students per grade live in Adams 14, only 250 to 400 within a five-minute drive, and the immediate population is declining (about –8% from 2020 to 2026, a projected –15% by 2031). Second, **the regional population is large enough if recruitment is focused:** roughly 1,000 students per grade within a ten-minute drive and 5,000 within fifteen minutes, across five districts. Capturing 125 (or 150) per grade is a small fraction of that pool, though not automatic against 27 high schools operating within fifteen minutes. Third, **demand for alternatives is already demonstrated:** 43% of Adams 14 residents open-enroll out of the district (CDE, 2025–26), one of the highest choice-out rates in Colorado.

The middle school strengthens the enrollment case on both supply and demand. The area's existing middle schools are themselves low-performing and shrinking: Kearney (Adams 14) enrolls 209 eighth-graders, down 20% over five years, rated Orange; Adams City Middle School enrolls 157, down 37%, rated Yellow (NCES; CDE). Families seeking a stronger 6–12 pathway, one with no disruptive transition between a middle school and a separate high school, have no comparable option in the area. Seven Adams 14 elementary schools serve as natural feeders to a Stoca middle school, supplemented by feeders in neighboring districts.

Matriculation and backfill: because Stoca adds one grade per year within each band, each cohort matriculates with the school. High student mobility in Adams 14 is planned for through active backfilling of open seats in the non-terminal grades in the early years, closing as cohorts stabilize.

Why 950 Is an Achievable Target

Stoca sets its enrollment target deliberately, against the market, not aspirationally. Three lines of evidence show that a 950-student 6–12 school, building to a 500-student high school, is a realistic target in this community.

Within about four miles of Stoca's target location, DSST Conservatory Green enrolls roughly 556 students and DSST Elevate roughly 545, and Elevate grew approximately 241% over five years. Northfield grew about 73% in the same period. A 500-student choice high school is not an aspiration in this market; it is the size the nearest successful operators are already running, and recent entrants have grown into that scale quickly.

With transportation extending Stoca's catchment across the full fifteen-minute radius, roughly 5,000 students per grade live within range. Stoca's full-build targets represent approximately 3.0% of that pool at the middle school and 2.5% at the high school. Framed as a share of the students who can actually reach the school, 950 is a modest capture rate, not a stretch.

The seven Adams 14 elementary schools enroll roughly 447 fifth graders between them. Reaching 150 sixth graders therefore requires both genuine feeder relationships with those schools and regional reach into Thornton, Reunion, West Brighton, and Montbello. Transportation is what makes the second half of that reach possible: the hub-stop model described in Section I is not only an equity and access commitment, it is the reason Stoca's addressable market is roughly 5,000 students per grade rather than the few hundred within immediate walking distance. The enrollment plan and the transportation plan are therefore designed together.

The Enrollment Funnel: Dated Targets and Response Plan

Stoca's long runway, a November 2026 authorization for a Fall 2028 opening, is an advantage none of the comparable schools had at application: nearly two years to build demand deliberately. The school manages enrollment as a funnel with dated benchmarks, and names in advance what it will do if a benchmark is missed.

Stage	Target	By when
Interest forms	~290	Fall 2027
Applications	150–190	Close of open enrollment
Post-lottery registration	125–135% of seats (~155–170 for 125 seats)	Spring 2028
Final	100% of seats filled, with a waitlist	Before opening

Stoca escalates in a defined order: intensified targeted outreach in the highest-yield feeder communities; deeper community partnerships through the organizations already engaged (Section B, Evidence of Support); and additional in-language information sessions and one-on-one family meetings. Enrollment progress is reported to the board against these benchmarks, and the board's go/no-go decision is tied to them.

Consistent with the school's financial contingency plan (Section G), Stoca will open only if at least 100% of minimum enrollment (100 students) is secured in signed Letters of Intent by the spring of Year 0, with a 75% checkpoint in the winter. If that threshold is not met, the school delays opening by one year rather than open under-enrolled. This

enrollment discipline is a commitment, not an aspiration, and it protects both students and the school's financial viability.

Stoca's enrollment projections hold cohort sizes flat across grades and years as a deliberate planning convention for the application budget. The school recognizes that comparable Colorado charter high schools serving similar populations typically experience grade-level attrition, DSST cohorts, for example, decline from roughly 145 students in 9th grade to about 110 in 12th, and that the step from 8th to 9th grade is a matriculation transition rather than a flat continuation. Stoca will refine its projections to model this taper and its backfill policy during Year 0 financial planning with its authorizer. The flat projection is the conservative choice for the application: the school's minimum-enrollment floor of 100 students and its go/no-go trigger (Section G) are set so the budget remains viable under enrollment variance, so attrition is a refinement to a model already stress-tested against the downside, not an unaddressed risk.

Year (2025-26)	% Students of Color*	% Free/ Reduced Lunch Eligible	% Special Education	% Multi-Lingual Learner	% Gifted
Anticipated Demographics (Stoca Academy)	92.3%	85.5%	13.9%	29%	2.9%
Demographics of the Geographic District (Adams 14)	92.3%	85.5%	13.9%	29%	2.9%
Demographics of Nearby District: School District 27J	64.6%	49.3%	13.5%	17.2%	6.2%
Demographics of Nearby District: Adams 12 FIve Star	40%	40-45%	11-12%	18-20%	
Demographics of Nearby District: Mapleton	60-65%	65-70%	10-12%	30-35%	
Demographics of Nearby District: Denver Public Schools	75.3%	65.1%	14.4%	30.8%	10.9%

Rationale for Zero Variance

Stoca sets zero-variance demographic targets to Adams 14 as a deliberate equity commitment, not an assumption. Meeting those targets while recruiting regionally is a real design challenge the school takes on directly: the population becomes less Hispanic and less economically disadvantaged as the recruiting radius widens (83% Hispanic within five minutes, 57% within fifteen). To hold the Adams 14 profile, Stoca concentrates recruitment on the highest-need, most demographically aligned feeder communities, Adams 14 itself and Thornton (roughly 72% Hispanic with lower-quality existing options), supplemented by West Brighton/Reunion and Montbello, rather than filling from wherever seats are easiest to find. Any material variance from the Adams 14 profile would signal a failure of this targeted strategy and trigger a corrective adjustment to recruitment.

Stoca projects demographics matching the high-need feeder schools it will actually recruit from, not district-wide averages, which mask substantial within-district variation. That variation is decisive in this market. Within Adams 12,

for example, Thornton Elementary serves a population that is 83%+ free-and-reduced-lunch eligible, 48.9% multilingual, and 22.6% special education, while Horizon High School in the same district serves 3.6% multilingual learners and Adams 12's STEM Lab magnet serves 3.0%. The district-wide figure of roughly 18–20% multilingual learners describes neither school. Recruitment does not occur evenly across a district; it occurs in specific neighborhoods and feeder schools.

Measured against the schools Stoca will actually recruit from, Adams 14 district-wide, Thornton Elementary and the surrounding Thornton corridor in Adams 12, and Academy High School in Mapleton (77.4% FRL, 36.5% multilingual), the composite profile is approximately 81% free-and-reduced-lunch eligible (regional makeup), 29% multilingual, and 16% special education. That profile falls within roughly two percentage points of Adams 14 on every measure. Stoca's zero-variance commitment to the Adams 14 profile is therefore achievable through regional recruitment, not in spite of it, because the specific high-need schools it targets across all four districts share nearly identical demographics.

Existing Performance & Educational Options

The target population has few strong options at either school level. Adams City High School, the district's primary comprehensive high school, enrolls roughly 1,500 students and has declined about 9% over five years. The district's two middle schools, Kearney and Adams City, are rated Orange and Yellow on the state framework and are declining sharply in enrollment. The two campuses will consolidate into one junior high moving forward. The remaining local choices are a small alternative and credit-recovery campus and a charter school focused on college preparation. None offers an AI-empowered, career-connected STEM model, and none offers a continuous 6–12 pathway on that model.

The performance data defines the need. Adams 14 has remained on the state Accountability Clock for more than a decade, rated Turnaround or Priority Improvement. At Adams City High School, roughly 18% of students score proficient in reading and about 6% in math. District four-year graduation rates have historically run about 15 percentage points below the state average, and dropout rates near double the state rate. The district's middle schools carry the same low ratings. Because students of color, free-and-reduced-lunch-eligible students, and multilingual learners make up the large majority of the district, their results track the overall results. The need is straightforward: the students Stoca will serve are capable of far more than the available options have helped them reach, and no current school in the area pairs strong academics with a career-connected, AI-fluent pathway.

The district's high choice-out rate shows families actively seeking alternatives, and several regional charters are growing quickly (Northfield High School about +73%, DSST: Elevate about +241% over five years, the latter having added a grade each year through 2025; NCES). Stoca enters a market where families are choosing, not a vacuum, which is a demand signal as much as a competitive one.

How Stoca Substantially Differs

Stoca offers an option that does not currently exist in the area. It is built on the premise that the community's students are capable, and that a strong environment, not remediation, is what unlocks that capability. In the local market, Stoca differs in five concrete ways:

- Science identity as a designed outcome. Research shows that whether students stay in science and technology fields depends less on test scores than on science identity: a student's belief that they are capable of doing science and belong in it. No local school treats that belief as something to build on purpose. Stoca does, by putting students in the role of people who do real scientific and technical work from day one. The research base and how this is operationalized are detailed in Section D.

- A continuous 6–12 career-connected pathway. No local school offers an AI-empowered, career-connected STEM model, and none offers it across a continuous 6–12 span with no disruptive transition between a separate middle and high school.

- Real career pathways with recognized credentials. Stoca's three Majors are anchored to regional health, environmental, and industry partners (see Evidence of Support), and every graduate leaves with industry certifications on a dual-layer transcript, not seat-time credits alone.

- Acceleration built into the core, not bolted on. Rather than pulling students out of grade-level thinking for separate remediation, Stoca uses AI-supported, personalized skill-building inside the core so teachers can spend direct instructional time on higher-order work. Students build missing foundations and do rigorous grade-level work at the same time.

- Ethical AI as a core competency. No existing local school teaches students to use, question, and build AI under a defined ethical standard. Stoca governs every AI tool and practice through its T.R.U.S.T. framework, detailed in Section D, and treats digital and AI fluency as a core competency rather than an elective add-on.

Evidence of Support

Stoca's community engagement is active, organized, and building, and the founding leadership treats it as an ongoing commitment rather than a task completed before submission. Stoca will continue to document its current efforts and scale them through its authorization interview and into Year 0, consistent with CSI's expectation that community engagement will deepen throughout the authorization process.

Rather than opening with a high-volume push for enrollment commitments, the founding leadership is building trust with families and institutions first, on the counsel of an experienced charter-founding advisor, then converting that trust into formal commitments as the model is co-designed with the community through 2026 and 2027.

The current support numbers are listed below, with the evidence in the attachments section.

Support Signatures and Letters	Letters of Intent to Enroll
36	1

Stakeholder Engagement to Date

Engagement spans higher education, industry, public agencies, city government, and community advocacy networks. Status is reported honestly below: *engaged* means a substantive meeting has occurred; *scheduled* means a meeting is set; *identified* means a target has been named but not yet met; *exploratory* means an early or informal connection is being pursued.

Stakeholder	Status	Alignment to the Stoca model
Community College of Aurora (CCA) — highest-priority postsecondary partner	Engaged; meeting with President scheduled	Runs the Commerce City Promise (C3 Promise) with the city: no-cost short-term credentials for residents aimed at jobs paying $51K and above. Directly maps to all three Majors, including Translation and Interpretation certificates that feed the Heritage Language Minor.
MSU Denver — Dr. Samuel Jay, online learning and emergent technology	Engaged	An HSI serving a large first-generation population nearby; Dr. Jay's published work on AI and career readiness closely mirrors Stoca's model and T.R.U.S.T. framework.
CSU System — Rico Munn, Executive Vice Chancellor	Exploratory	Former Aurora Public Schools superintendent who supported the founding of Aurora Science and Tech; a CSU-system partnership is being pursued.
South Adams County Water and Sanitation District	Engaged; enthusiastic, follow-up requested	Anchor partner for the Planetary Health pathway and the Industrial Health Nexus studio.
South Adams County Fire Department — Capt. David Metish	Engaged; meeting with Captain Metish scheduled	Covers Commerce City's industrial zones and the state's only oil refinery, responding to 12,500-plus calls a year; relevant to the Human Health (EMS/EMT) pathway and the Industrial Health Nexus studio.
Suncor, Commerce City Division — Dennis Lee Banks, VP	Exploratory	A potential industry partner for the Planetary and Economic Health pathways.
City of Commerce City — Councilmembers Lori Young, Stephanie Trujillo, Craig Kim	Engaged and scheduled	Met with Councilmember Young; second meeting with Councilmember Trujillo and a meeting with Councilmember Kim are scheduled. Founding leadership has also participated in SpeakUp Commerce City and Chamber of Commerce events, and has applied to serve on the city's Workforce Advisory Committee, whose mission is regional talent pipelines and a future-ready economy.
Transform Education Now (TEN)	Engaged; active partner	A Colorado parent- and community-organizing nonprofit focused on educational equity, with an established organizing history in Adams 14. Hosted the August 22, 2026 family outreach event with Stoca.

Teach For America Colorado	Engaged; letter of support in progress	Stoca's founder is a 2011 corps member and active alumni leadership mentor. TFA has committed to continued support and to sharing Stoca across its network.
GreenLatinos — Ean Tafoya, VP of State Programs	Engaged	Co-Chair of the Colorado Environmental Justice Action Task Force; his air-quality and environmental-justice work in disproportionately impacted communities aligns directly with the Planetary Health pathway.
Legacy Fellowship	Advisory	Provides founding advisory input, including on grade-span strategy.

The founding leadership is also embedded in the community it will serve, including as a volunteer Girls on the Run coach at a Commerce City elementary school, and maintains family-facing engagement infrastructure: a live website with a "Commit to Stoca" interest page, English and Spanish canvassing flyers, a partner one-pager, business cards, and a plain-language glossary.

Across sectors, the throughline is the same: Commerce City has no AI-empowered, career-connected 6–12 option that ties classroom work directly to recognized credentials and regional jobs. Higher-education and workforce partners see a direct pipeline from Stoca's Majors and Minors into the C3 Promise credentials and their own programs. Health, environmental, and industry partners see students working on the region's real problems, including the air-quality and industrial-health questions specific to Commerce City. The Water and Sanitation District expressed enthusiasm and requested a follow-up; TEN moved from a first meeting to co-hosting a family event. Stoca is now gathering these views in writing as formal letters of support.

Community input is not collected for display; it changes decisions. When founding advisors and community partners pressed for a middle-school-first opening, given how far behind many Adams 14 students start, the founding leadership did not simply accept or reject the input. It built a decision rule (Section B, grade-span phase-in) that lets verified family demand for each entry grade determine the opening configuration by October 2027, rather than fixing the grade in advance. That is community input shaping the design directly while preserving the integrity of the model.

Feedback from families and partners is gathered through in-person listening at community events, in-language conversations at feeder schools and neighborhood sessions, and the website interest page, then reviewed by the founding leadership and carried into design decisions on pathways, schedule, and family supports.

Two groups remain under-engaged. Highly mobile families without stable contact information are difficult to reach through any single channel, and some families are disengaged after prior negative experiences with local schools. In addition, Stoca's Spanish-language outreach is not yet deep enough for a community that is roughly 29% multilingual. The plan below addresses each directly, led by in-language, in-person outreach through trusted community intermediaries rather than digital channels alone.

Plan to scale engagement through the interview

Stoca will expand engagement materially between submission and its authorization interview, and will document that progress for CSI. Committed next steps include:

- **Hiring a dedicated community engagement lead** in the coming weeks, focused on the priority recruiting communities of Adams 14, Brighton 27J, Thornton, and Mapleton, with bilingual capacity to close the Spanish-language gap.
- **Meeting families where they already gather**, including District Accountability Committee meetings and other family events, and pursuing one-on-one family conversations across the feeder communities.
- **A neighborhood family coffee session in Reunion**, hosted through an established community connection.
- **Reaching families of older students** (rising 9th graders) through community leaders with standing in those networks.
- **Deepening institutional partnerships** through scheduled meetings with CCA's President, Councilmember Kim, and Suncor's Commerce City leadership, and by securing letters of support.
- **Launching the formal Letter of Intent campaign** alongside the Fall 2026 co-design sessions, described below.

Upon authorization, stakeholders can continue to support Stoca by serving on a Family Advisory Council that meets regularly in accessible community locations; by acting as industry mentors and capstone-panel evaluators in the Human, Planetary, and Economic Health pathways; by providing letters of support and formal partnership agreements; and, for community leaders with the right fit, by joining the founding governing board. An experienced Adams 14 parent leader is already being engaged for the Family Advisory Council as a first step.

Family and Community Engagement Capacity

This approach is informed by years of leadership in urban school systems and grassroots community organizing, specifically the founder's tenure as treasurer for the Westwood Community Action Team. In this role, the founder directly managed community action planning and resource allocation to support local family stability. This experience directly shaped the "AI-Enabled Transparency" and "Participatory Budgeting" models in this application, ensuring that Stoca Academy honors family voice through concrete, measurable actions rather than rhetoric.

C. School Culture

Culture

Stoca runs one culture across grades 6 through 12: a culture of ownership, where students are Founding Architects of their school and of their own learning rather than passive pupils. That ownership is the school's primary tool for building the skills a test cannot measure, including resilience, curiosity, and ethical judgment.

Two conditions make the culture work. The first is psychological safety. Rigorous work requires risk, and students take intellectual risks only where failure is treated as information to act on, not a verdict on their ability. The second is high expectations paired with real support: Stoca holds elite academic standards and surrounds them with strengths-based coaching, so the standard never drops and no student is left to meet it alone. The research base for

this stance, including why adolescents disengage from environments that demand compliance without respect, is detailed in Section D.

Our Core Values

Five values define how the Stoca community operates. They are written as behaviors, not slogans, so students and staff can be held to them.

- **Alignment.** We act with integrity, keeping our words, actions, and decisions consistent with our values.
- **Boldness.** We take smart risks to challenge the status quo and build a better way forward.
- **Execution.** We finish what we start, and we finish it to a standard we are proud of.
- **Coordination.** We work as a system, not a crowd, using each person's strengths and role on purpose.
- **Stochos (Precision of Purpose).** We act with rigor and intent, separating signal from noise.

Culture of Learning

Every student begins from strengths. In the first days of school, students use a strengths instrument (Gallup StrengthsExplorer in the middle grades, CliftonStrengths in high school) to name what they are good at and how they contribute to a team. Character development starts from that strength rather than from a list of rules to obey.

Students work to a professional standard, not a classroom one. In industry-connected studios, students work alongside professionals and see that the habits that matter, collaboration, clear communication, and adaptability, are the same habits that lead to good careers. They behave less like pupils and more like junior members of a working team.

Assessment reinforces the culture instead of undercutting it. In place of high-stakes standardized tests, beyond those the state requires, students demonstrate mastery through Application Finals: real projects they revise across drafts and defend to a panel. This lets students from every background show what they know through their work, and it removes the test-day identity threat that research links to disengagement. Positive behavior is recognized publicly through Core Value shout-outs and student spotlights in Morning Meetings, and it earns students greater autonomy and leadership within their project sectors.

Inclusive of Every Learner

The culture is built to hold a wide range of needs without lowering its bar for any student.

- Students receiving special education services are Founding Architects first. Services are integrated into the instructional core, and the strengths-based stance means a student's plan starts from capability, not label. Section E details services.

- Multilingual learners use their full linguistic range in projects, debates, and defenses. Bilingualism is treated as an asset the school credentials, not a barrier to clear before real work begins.

- Gifted students are not held to the pace of the room. The mastery model and Application Finals let them accelerate and go deeper without waiting, including through advanced project work and the Architect-Mentor role.

- Students at risk of academic failure receive the most support, not the most punishment. Acceleration is built into the core, and the school's tiered supports, detailed in Section E, respond early, on the premise that a struggling student needs a stronger environment, not a harsher consequence.

- **Restraint and seclusion:** Stoca complies with Colorado's Protection of Persons from Restraint Act (C.R.S. 26-20-101 et seq.). Physical restraint is used only as an emergency response to a serious, imminent threat of physical harm, never for discipline, punishment, or convenience, and prone restraint and any restraint that restricts breathing are prohibited. Seclusion is not a planned intervention in Stoca's model. When an emergency restraint occurs, it is administered only by staff trained in de-escalation and safe intervention, for no longer than the danger requires, with same-day family notification, written documentation, and a follow-up debrief. The school reviews all incidents for disproportionality and reports as required by law.

The school's grounding research already spans this range. Dr. David Yeager's *10 to 25* identifies ages 10 through 25 as a single neurobiological window in which the adolescent brain is hyper-attuned to status, respect, and social purpose. The Mentor mindset the high school is built on is not extended to middle school by analogy; the research it rests on covers 11-year-olds and 17-year-olds alike. What differs is that the developmental need for adult scaffolding is greatest at the youngest end of that window, which is where the middle-school design concentrates its structure.

Element	Grades 6–8	Grades 9–12
Strengths instrument	Gallup StrengthsExplorer (designed for ages 10–14)	Gallup CliftonStrengths (ages 15+)
Restorative practice	Adult-facilitated circles with explicit protocols and scripted roles	Student-facilitated circles; students facilitate for peers
Identity	Becoming a Founding Architect: students build the habits and see the work up close	Being a Founding Architect: students hold real civic power and defend work publicly
Autonomy	Earned in structured increments within clear boundaries	Expanding autonomy and leadership within project sectors
Advisory	The anchor structure of the day; the primary adult relationship	Bookend structure integrating academic and project work
Public defense of work	Grade-level culminating projects defended to peers, families, and staff	Application Finals and the Senior Capstone defended to industry and community panels

Social and Emotional Learning Plan

Stoca Academy delivers social and emotional learning through Stoca's Unwavering Character, the behavioral infrastructure component of its NEXUS framework. SEL is not a separate curriculum or a bolted-on program. It is the deliberate cultivation of resilience, integrity, and social responsibility, anchored in a strengths-based identity and delivered through the school's daily structures.

Unwavering Character is grounded in Gallup CliftonStrengths for self-understanding, Dr. David Yeager's research on adolescent status and belonging, and the T.R.U.S.T. framework for ethical decision-making. These are the same anchors used across the school, so students experience one coherent system rather than a set of competing programs. The social and emotional competencies students develop are expressed through the school's own Science Mindsets, each of which ladders up to a pillar of the Graduate Profile.

Science Mindset (the SEL competency)	Graduate Profile Pillar it actualizes	How Unwavering Character builds it
Identity, Belonging, and Confidence Fuel Purpose	Influencing	CliftonStrengths coaching from Day 1; the 9th grade Strengths Exhibition, where students publicly articulate their identity and internal architecture
Ethical Responsibility + Service Guide Our Impact	Influencing	T.R.U.S.T. applied to student technology use; student-facilitated restorative circles; service through the Architect-Mentor tutoring model
Creative, Critical, and Ethical Judgment	Evolving	Ethical reasoning embedded in Application Finals; responsible decision-making under real stakes
Curiosity, Unlearning + Lifelong Learning	Evolving	The Pivot and Post-Mortem protocol; Architect Day self-direction, progressively released across the year
Communicating with Clarity, Data, and Strategy	Influencing	Strengths-based advisory; team-based project work; Communication Audits during exhibitions

These mindsets develop the same five core competencies named in the CASEL framework, the most widely used SEL standard in the country: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. Stoca develops these competencies through its own Science Mindsets rather than a separate SEL curriculum.

Self-regulation as executed practice. One social-emotional skill sits deliberately outside the mindset table: self-regulation, the emotional management, impulse control, and stress navigation that adolescents need to do rigorous work under pressure. It treats it as a habit built through the daily structure of the school, consistent with the Execution value: skills become real when they are practiced and shipped, not merely named. Students build self-regulation every time they run their own Architect Day, holding a plan and managing their own time and attention as independence is progressively released across the year. They build it through the Seasonal Sprint wellness model, where they set a physical goal and use their own data to manage effort and setback. They build it through the Pivot and Post-Mortem protocol, which turns the frustration of a failed attempt into a documented, unemotional next step. Advisory is where these threads are named and reflected on: advisors help students connect the regulation they are already practicing across the day to the emotional skill underneath it. Self-regulation is not a lesson at Stoca Academy. It is a muscle the architecture requires students to use.

An asset-based stance. Unwavering Character transfers an existing strength rather than remediating an assumed deficit. The school holds that its highest-need students already possess elite executive function developed outside

school, whether managing a household, holding a job, or translating for their family. The SEL plan names that capacity and moves it into an academic context.

MIddle School SEL Development

Unwavering Character is the school's single SEL system at every grade. In the middle grades, three adaptations apply.

- **The strengths instrument is age-appropriate.** Middle-school students complete Gallup's StrengthsExplorer, which is designed for ages 10 through 14, rather than CliftonStrengths, which is validated for ages 15 and up. Students complete CliftonStrengths in 9th grade, and the language of strengths carries forward without interruption. Using the correct instrument for the age is a matter of validity, not preference.
- **Advisory carries more weight.** The advisory bookends that open and close each day are the primary adult relationship for a middle-school student. Where a high-school student integrates advisory with project and Major work, a middle-school advisor is the consistent adult who notices when something is wrong, holds the ICAP, and is the first line of the school's response.
- **Identity is built before it is performed.** Middle-school students are becoming Founding Architects. They build the habits the identity requires, defending work, taking feedback without collapse, contributing a strength to a team, and they see the high school's public-facing work up close. The 9th Grade Strengths Exhibition remains the first high-stakes public articulation of identity, and middle-school students arrive at it prepared rather than surprised.

Discipline

Positive Discipline Approach: Stoca Academy employs a proactive, tiered system of support that balances clear expectations with restorative outcomes.

- Incentives: We foster a culture of belonging through "Core Value Shout-Outs," student spotlights, and celebrations integrated into Morning Meetings. Positive behaviors are incentivized by reinforcing the student's identity as a "Founding Architect," granting them increasing autonomy and leadership roles within their project sectors.

- Penalties & Interventions: Stoca replaces punitive, exclusionary discipline with a Restorative Reflection System. Infractions are met with clear, age-appropriate interventions mapped on the school's Behavior Matrix. When a student disrupts the learning environment, the response centers on root-cause reflection and repair to the community, so that accountability drives growth rather than a surface penalty. Every disciplinary decision is made by a qualified adult who weighs context, the student's history, and any disability-related considerations.

- Culturally Responsive Discipline: Our approach is investigative, not reflexive.We ensure that expectations are transparent and predictable for all students. We avoid the "compliance trap" by reviewing disciplinary data for disproportionality weekly; if our data shows a trend involving MLL or SPED populations, we initiate a root-cause analysis of Tier 1 instruction to determine if the "behavior" is actually a result of an access or curriculum gap.

Restorative Analysis

Discipline at Stoca is a human process. Staff may use school data, such as attendance, workload, and academic patterns, to understand what is driving a student's behavior and to address the real cause rather than repeat a consequence. Any such analysis informs an adult's judgment and never determines it. No tool assigns consequences, characterizes a student, or decides an outcome. This reflects the school's system-wide commitment that technology supports human judgment and never replaces it, applied with particular rigor in discipline, where fairness and due process are non-negotiable.

Students with Disabilities

We maintain 100% compliance with IDEA and Section 504. In any disciplinary proceeding, we conduct a Manifestation Determination to discern if the behavior is a direct result of the student's disability. We provide all necessary supports and accommodations to ensure discipline is never punitive toward a disability-related need. We prioritize the student's right to their IEP-mandated services in every disciplinary context.

Due Process

Stoca Academy adheres to a rigorous due process procedure. Students facing suspension or expulsion are afforded:

- Notice & Hearing: A clear explanation of the charges and an opportunity to present their side.
- Appeals: Families may appeal expulsion decisions to the School Board, which follows a formal review process to ensure procedural justice.
- Continuity of Education: For any student removed for more than ten days, we provide a structured Alternative Education Plan—including remote access to core project materials and 1:1 check-ins with their Advisor—to prevent any loss of academic progress.

Our Discipline Policy is a "living document." It is shared with families during the initial enrollment intake process, where we explicitly outline the partnership required between school and home to ensure student success. This ensures families have full clarity and ownership of our restorative culture from Day 1.

Middle School Discipline

The discipline approach is the same at every grade: proactive, tiered, restorative rather than exclusionary, and investigative rather than reflexive. Three middle-school-specific commitments govern its application.

- **More scaffolding, not lower expectations.** An 11-year-old's capacity for self-directed reflection is not a 17-year-old's. Restorative conversations in the middle grades are adult-facilitated with explicit protocols and defined roles, shorter in duration, and more concrete in the repair they require. The standard does not drop; the support around it increases. This is the Mentor mindset applied with developmental precision: elite expectations paired with elite support.
- **Exclusionary discipline is the last resort, and the bar is higher in the middle grades.** National data consistently show that suspension rates peak in the middle grades, and that this is where disproportionality by race, disability status, and language status is most severe. Stoca treats the middle grades as the

highest-risk band for exclusionary discipline and holds itself accordingly: removal from the learning environment in grades 6 through 8 requires documented exhaustion of tiered supports except where safety requires immediate action.

- **Disproportionality review covers every grade and is disaggregated by band.** The school's weekly disproportionality review examines discipline data by race, disability status, and multilingual-learner status, and separately by school level. A pattern that would be invisible in a combined 6–12 total can be stark in the middle grades alone. Where a trend appears, the school initiates a root-cause analysis of Tier 1 instruction, on the premise that the behavior may reflect an access or curriculum gap rather than a student choice.
- **Students with disabilities.** The protections described for the high school apply in full and with heightened attention in the middle grades, because this is where most identification occurs. Manifestation Determination, IEP-mandated services during any disciplinary proceeding, and Section 504 protections apply identically at every grade. Students in the middle grades who are in the process of evaluation receive the same protections as those already identified, consistent with IDEA's provisions for students the school has reason to suspect may have a disability.
- **AI-assisted root-cause analysis, with a tighter boundary for minors.** The T.R.U.S.T. guardrail applies at every grade: AI informs reflection, and humans make every disciplinary decision. In the middle grades the school applies additional restraint. AI is used only to surface patterns for an adult to consider, never to characterize a student, and the school's data-minimization commitment applies with particular force to the youngest students in the building.

Establishing Culture From Day 1: Students, Teachers, Administrators, and Families

Stoca Academy establishes culture simultaneously across all four communities before and during the first weeks of school.

Students. From Day 1, students engage in CliftonStrengths coaching to identify how their talents contribute to a team, shifting character development from compliance to a strengths-based, mentor-led process. The Founding Architect identity gives students immediate ownership: they co-author school traditions, and over the year they evaluate teacher exhibitions and facilitate restorative circles. Application Finals replace high-stakes standardized testing from the start, removing the identity threat that Yeager's research links to disengagement.

Teachers. Adult culture is set at hiring. Every candidate is screened against a hiring profile that requires identity-aware relationship-building and the ability to build psychological safety without lowering expectations. Founding staff are trained in minute-by-minute (MxM) plans for the key moments of the day and year, so cultural expectations are explicit and shared. The school also holds teachers to the same standard it holds students: in the 9th grade exhibition cycle, educators complete their own strengths exhibitions and are evaluated by students against the same professional rubric, a coordination-and-transparency ritual that signals the culture is reciprocal.

Administrators. Leadership models the Mentor mindset through two-way coaching protocols that analyze student work and behavioral data alongside teachers rather than directing from above. The Assistant Principal of Student Experience owns belonging, identity formation, and whole-child systems as a defined role, ensuring culture has an accountable leader from opening.

Families. Families enter as partners with students and Stoca to ensure students have multi faceted support. We intentionally build in time for families to deeply understand the discipline policy. Beyond compliance, the school combats the "Founder's Penalty" that new schools face by inviting families into a Tradition Incubator to co-design the school's first rituals, and by hosting AI-literacy workshops that let parents build skills for their own workplaces. Culture is something families help build in the first year, not something explained to them.

For Middle School Families

The four-community approach, students, teachers, administrators, families, applies at both levels. Two additions are specific to the middle grades.

Families. Middle-school families expect and need a different cadence of contact than high-school families, and Stoca plans for it rather than treating it as an exception. Because the school serves grades 6 through 12, a family may be in partnership with Stoca for as long as seven years, and the family-engagement structures described in Section B are built to deepen across that span rather than reset at 9th grade.

Transition. Movement from 8th to 9th grade inside Stoca is designed to be seamless. Students remain in the same culture, with the same values, the same restorative practice, and the same Mentor mindset, and the schedule, calendar, and advisory structure they already know. Support plans, IEPs, 504 plans, and multilingual-learner services transfer without gap or re-establishment.

Culture and Discipline Capacity

Stoca Academy's founding leader, Kryszelda Gorrell, has direct, role-level experience building and sustaining school culture and running discipline, in addition to a documented record of system results.

Stoca's leadership brings direct, documented experience building school culture at both levels this application proposes to serve.

The founder, Kryszelda Gorrell, has led culture in the middle grades directly. She was hired as Associate School Director at DSST's Henry Middle School, leading the instructional leadership team and directing special education. Midway through that year, when the school's 7th grade Dean departed, the principal and network asked her to take on the 7th grade Dean role while continuing as Associate School Director, giving her day-to-day responsibility for the culture and discipline of a middle-school grade level on top of her existing leadership. In the same year, she brought the school's special education program into full IEP and 504 compliance, resolving a standing compliance concern, while the school posted the largest fall-to-winter MAP growth in the network. Culture, compliance, and academic growth were built together rather than traded against one another.

At the high-school level, as Founding School Director of Aurora Science and Tech (AST) High School, she built the culture of the highest-performing secondary school in Aurora Public Schools serving a comparable population, where students with disabilities held some of the smallest growth gaps in the district.

Her capacity extends into community. As treasurer for the Westwood Community Action Team, she learned that school culture fails if it is not rooted in family stability and localized community power, which is why the school's culture model treats families as co-authors from Day 1.

The middle-school culture is owned day to day by the founding middle-school principal, hired ahead of the middle grades opening, and by the Dean of Culture and Students, whose role covers belonging, identity formation, and whole-child systems across both levels. Culture has an accountable leader at every grade from opening.

To operationalize this at scale, the founding team builds minute-by-minute (MxM) plans for the key moments of the day and year to train staff into a consistent culture, and leaders are trained in two-way coaching protocols that develop deans and teachers through equity-driven feedback.

D. Education Program

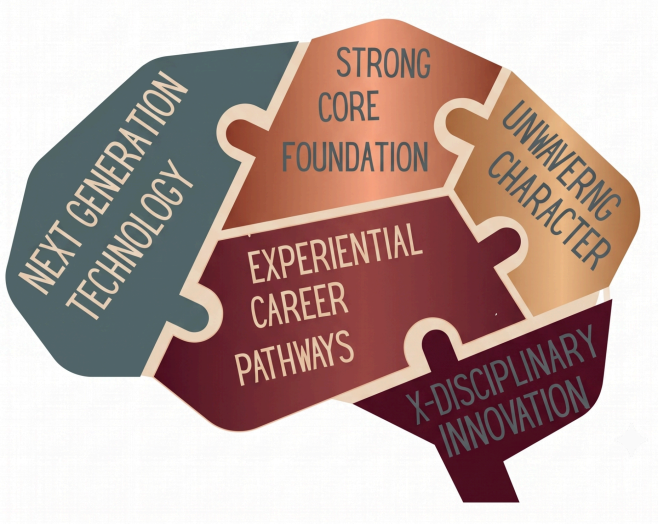
School Model

Stoca Academy is an AI-empowered STEM school serving grades 6 through 12. Its program is organized by the NEXUS framework and delivered through an Hourglass Architecture that moves students from broad exploration to deep, career-connected specialization. The high school model, which produces the Founding Architect graduate defined in the Graduate Profile, is the school's North Star. Every element of it exists to prepare students for the high school, and it is designed and measured entirely against that end.

The school's non-negotiable elements are consistent across both levels: a mastery-based core with a 90% mastery floor; growth and equity of growth valued over absolute achievement; the deliberate construction of Science Identity; and the governance of all AI use under the T.R.U.S.T. framework.

The NEXUS Framework

Stoca Academy bridges the gap between traditional schooling and an uncertain, AI-driven future through the **NEXUS Framework**, a central connection point for high-impact learning. Its five components (Next-Generation Technology, Experiential Career Pathways, X-Disciplinary Innovation, Unwavering Character, and Strong Core Academics) are detailed in full in the dedicated NEXUS Framework section in the curriculum and instruction section in the attachments.



A Cohesive Engine for the AI Era. Stoca Academy bridges the gap between traditional schooling and an uncertain, AI-driven future through the NEXUS Framework, a central connection point for high-impact learning:

- **N**ext-Generation Technology: Utilizing AI to accelerate foundational literacy and math mastery to grade level so students can focus on the complex, human-centered work of design and innovation.
- **E**xperiential Career Pathways: Moving beyond electives, we immerse students in three high-impact industry sectors: Human Health (partnering with CSU/CU Anschutz), Planetary Health (partnering with CDOT/environmental agencies), and Economic Health (partnering with local entrepreneurs for pro-bono consulting).

- **X**-Disciplinary Innovation: Students complete Application Finals in each sector, solving scaled-down industry problems that allow them to earn verified Credly micro-credentials.
- **U**nwavering Character Building: Using a strengths-based approach, the school meets adolescents' real developmental needs for respect, purpose, and belonging, coaching from strengths rather than enforcing compliance.
- **S**trong Core Academic Foundation: We maintain a rigorous traditional core (Math, English, Science) optimized by AI to meet every student where they are, ensuring they are not just "caught up" but career-accelerated.

Science Identity Development

Developing a science identity is critical for underrepresented groups to persist in STEM fields. This is more than exposure. The research suggests four dimensions to a science identity. Dispositions, skills, and knowledge that enable students to succeed in proximal (nearby, current) science learning experiences are what build these dimensions. They are not fixed personality traits; they are malleable, shaped and changed through experience. The more dimensions learners develop, the more likely they are to pursue and commit to a future in STEM.

The four dimensions of activation (Dorph et al., 2016) are:

- **Fascination:** An emotional and cognitive attachment to science topics and tasks.
- **Values:** Understanding the interactions between self and science, and placing importance on these interactions within social and community contexts.
- **Competency Beliefs:** The extent to which a student perceives themselves as capable of successfully engaging in science activities.
- **Scientific Sensemaking:** Engaging with science as a sensemaking activity (e.g., asking investigable questions, seeking mechanistic explanations, and using evidence-based argumentation).

At Stoca Academy, we intentionally build a science identity because we need to develop the next generation of leaders to impact the world. Our future depends on innovation in STEM, and a diverse workforce will only strengthen the collective impact our students make. Our NEXUS model is intentionally aligned to building a science identity, and each dimension above maps directly to a pillar of our Graduate Profile: Scientific Sensemaking to Architecting, Fascination to Evolving, Competency Beliefs to Engineering, and Values to Influencing.

Stoca Science Mindsets

This is how we think about the world and approach our work. Each mindset is AI-enhanced and STEM-rooted, and together they actualize the four pillars of our Graduate Profile.

1. Framing & Sense-Making Turn Ambiguity into Opportunity: Learners treat ill-defined problems as the raw material of real work. They do not fear ambiguity; they frame it.

- Treat ambiguity as a data set: gather, structure, and interpret before rushing to a solution.
- Distinguish signal from noise, separating what matters from what merely distracts.
- Frame ill-defined problems with precision before attempting to solve them.
- Synthesize multiple data streams to define the true core of a challenge.
- Ask investigable questions and seek mechanistic, evidence-based explanations.

- Enter any room or digital environment as a designer ready to build, not a passive consumer.

2. Communicating with Clarity, Data, and Strategy: Learners master the art of conveying complex ideas through data, storytelling, and continuous dialogue, demonstrating the wisdom to choose the right medium for the message.

- Understand the difference between a high-stakes oral pitch, a technical written report, and a visual data dashboard; choose the medium that best serves the message and the audience.
- Ground ideas in evidence; support claims with clear, actionable data.
- Translate technical concepts into compelling stories that bridge the gap between experts and novices.
- Embrace dialogue as a core requirement; understand that communication is iterative and requires active listening and the courage to give and receive constructive feedback.
- Engage in proactive, transparent updates, ensuring everyone is aligned on progress, blockers, and results.

3. Creative, Critical, and Ethical Judgment Drive Innovation: Learners think creatively and critically with AI, evaluate outputs for bias and accuracy, apply human judgment to guide decisions, and adapt thinking in complex or uncertain situations.

- Approach challenges with creativity, imagination, and context.
- Use AI to push thinking, not shortcut thinking.
- Evaluate AI outputs for accuracy, bias, relevance, and quality, and apply human judgment to contextualize or override algorithmic suggestions.
- Adapt ideas when conditions change, practicing flexible, reflective thinking.
- Make decisions grounded in ethics, purpose, and human impact.

4. Building & Technical Execution Turn Ideas into Reality: Learners convert analysis into working, tested, deployed solutions. They move from consumers of technology to builders of it.

- Turn ideas into functional artifacts: prototype, test, iterate, and ship.
- Move a build from prototype to delivery, managing the full development lifecycle.
- Orchestrate whatever tools the moment demands, today's stack and the one that replaces it.
- Build to a standard worth being proud of, and finish what they start.
- Audit and refine their own work for accuracy, technical errors, and logic flaws.
- Create technology to serve their community rather than merely consume it.

5. Ethical Responsibility + Service Guide Our Impact: Students understand the ethical implications of data, algorithms, and design choices, and they use technology to advance equity, justice, and real-world community good.

- Understand the ethical implications of AI, data, and emerging technologies.
- Apply principles of transparency, safety, and equity (T.R.U.S.T. framework).
- Design solutions that positively impact communities and reduce harm.
- Consider long-term societal effects of innovation.
- Advocate for equitable access, representation, and responsible use of technology.
- Use projects as pathways for service, stewardship, and civic engagement.

6. Identity, Belonging, and Confidence Fuel Purpose: Learners develop a strong sense of identity, cultural pride, and belonging, using their lived experiences as strengths while building purpose, agency, and confidence in innovation spaces.

- Embrace cultural, linguistic, and personal identity as strengths in STEM and innovation spaces.
- Build confidence through self-awareness, purpose, and agency.
- Recognize and challenge stereotypes embedded in systems, including AI systems.
- Cultivate belonging by affirming one's story, community, and lived experience.
- Connect identity and passion to long-term goals and real-world purpose.
- Support others in feeling seen, valued, and respected.

7. Curiosity, Unlearning + Lifelong Learning Drive Growth: Learners cultivate curiosity, iteration, and adaptability as essential skills for navigating rapid technological change and expanding their understanding across disciplines.

- Approach learning with a willingness to unlearn outdated models, challenge assumptions, and iterate based on new information, reflection, and feedback.
- Use technology for exploration, simulation, and expanding possibilities.
- Develop comfort with ambiguity, rapid change, and continuous improvement.
- Seek knowledge across disciplines and communities.
- View growth as a lifelong practice, not a fixed destination.

The T.R.U.S.T. Framework

Stoca is an AI-empowered school, which raises one question before any other: how is the AI governed so it helps students rather than harms them? The T.R.U.S.T. framework, developed through MIT's AI Strategy and Leadership program, is the non-negotiable standard every AI tool and practice at Stoca must meet. It governs how AI is chosen, used, and audited at every grade.

Principle	The commitment
T — Transparent Systems and Practices	AI use, data flows, and decisions are visible to students, families, and staff. No black boxes, and clear consent.
R — Responsible Use Grounded in Safety and Equity	AI advances equity and protects student privacy, with guardrails against inequitable outcomes and regular audits for fairness.
U — Unbiased and Continuously Audited Tools	Every system is reviewed on a regular schedule for bias and error, with teacher involvement and community oversight.
S — Supports Humans, Never Replaces Them	AI never replaces a teacher and never decides for a student. Human judgment anchors every major decision, including every disciplinary decision.
T — Thought-Expanding and Time-Freeing	AI deepens student thinking and frees teacher time for relationships. It accelerates insight; it does not shortcut learning.

These principles are not aspirational language. They are operating rules. The "Supports Humans" principle, for example, is what governs the human-centered discipline process described in Section C: staff may use school data to understand what is driving a student's behavior, but every consequence is decided by a qualified adult. The framework applies with equal force to instruction, assessment, and any tool that touches student data.

Promotion and Graduation Requirements

Middle School

Colorado awards no diploma at grade 8, and Stoca does not manufacture one. The middle school's programming is uniquely positioned to best prepare students for the 9th-grade Studios ready to succeed. Carnegie units begin in 9th grade; the middle school is governed by demonstrated mastery, not accumulated seat time.

This is the same principle that drives the high school's Dual-Layer Transcript. A traditional middle school promotes on attendance and passing grades, which credits time rather than capability, and passes underprepared students forward with a record that conceals the gap. Stoca promotes on evidence.

The promotion standard

Promotion from each middle-school grade requires demonstrated mastery, not credit accumulation. A student advances by meeting the following:

Domain	Promotion requirement
Mathematics	Meets the 90% mastery floor on grade-level standards, or is on an accelerating trajectory documented through interim growth data
English Language Arts	Meets the 90% mastery floor on grade-level standards, or is on an accelerating trajectory documented through interim growth data
Exploratory Foundation	Completes the sector exploration sequence and successfully defends the grade-level culminating project
World Language	Demonstrates the grade-level proficiency benchmark on the heritage or non-heritage track
ICAP	Maintains an active, current ICAP (see below)

A student who does not meet the mastery floor is not held back by default. The response is intensified support through the Multi-Tiered System of Supports and the Architect Day, which directs its most intensive coaching to students furthest from their growth targets. Retention is an individualized decision made with the family, never an automatic consequence of a test result.

The exit standard: Ready for the Studios

Promotion from 8th grade carries an additional standard. Every rising 9th grader must demonstrate the **Ready for the Studios** profile: grade-level or accelerating mastery in Mathematics and ELA, foundational scientific sensemaking and data literacy, an age-appropriate Tech Literacy Floor, an emerging Science Identity, practiced habits of publicly defending work, informed exposure to all four sectors, sampled Minor tracks, and an initiated ICAP. This profile is the middle school's contract with the high school, and the measure against which the middle school is evaluated.

ICAP implementation, grades 6 through 8

Colorado requires an Individual Career and Academic Plan for every student in grades 6 through 12. Stoca initiates the ICAP in **6th grade**, and the middle-school ICAP is built to feed directly into the high-school process without restart or duplication.

Grade	ICAP focus
6	Initiate the ICAP. Interest and strengths inventory, initial goal-setting, introduction to the four sectors.
7	Deepen sector exploration. Connect academic performance to postsecondary and career pathways. Begin documenting evidence of growth.
8	Transition planning. Review sector exposure against emerging interests, sample the Minor tracks, and set 9th-grade goals so entry into the Studios is intentional.

The ICAP is maintained in advisory. For students with IEPs, ICAP goals are coordinated with transition planning so the two documents reinforce rather than duplicate one another.

High School

Rationale for the Dual-Layer Competency Transcript

Our Graduate Profile shows that our students embody a "Founding Architect" identity, navigating complexity through the interconnected pillars of **Architecting, Evolving, Engineering, and Influencing**. These pillars are how Stoca actualizes the Science Identity development research.

Since our graduation model requires students to solve real-world, highly complex municipal and environmental challenges right here in Commerce City, our assessment mechanism must be as innovative as our curriculum. Our students defend Application Finals and compile a portfolio of verified, industry-recognized Credly credentials issued by companies like Google, IBM, and the Project Management Institute. Students will graduate with a dual layer transcript that will have Carnegie credits that a university will recognize and credentials that graduates can use as a resume to go straight into industry.

Why the Dual-Layer Model is Necessary and Relevant

The Dual-Layer Transcript Architecture is the vital bridge between Stoca Academy's visionary identity and the structural realities of higher education. It is designed to meet two competing demands: legibility and differentiation.

- **Layer 1 (The Foundations)** guarantees absolute institutional legibility. By mapping our mastery-based courses and interdisciplinary project blocks into standard Carnegie units, we ensure that university admissions systems, registrar algorithms, and financial aid software can instantly read, verify, and clear our students' prerequisite compliance.

- **Layer 2 (The Stoca Distinction)** provides an unmatched competitive advantage. By embedding direct metadata links to a verified Credly portfolio, the transcript transforms from a static document into a live, interactive asset vault.

When a university admissions officer reviews a Stoca Academy transcript, they see a student who has already proven college-level readiness. They don't just see a grade for "Environmental Science"; they click a link that displays an interactive data dashboard built by the student using raw Commerce City EPA air-quality metrics. They don't just see a mark for "Leadership"; they see an industry-verified credential in Agile project management or conflict resolution.

This transcript mirrors how the modern economy actually evaluates people. It shows a graduate's technical skills, their ability to work with others, and their capacity to adapt, in a form that colleges and employers already recognize.

Colorado Department of Education Requirements

The proposed graduation framework ensures 100% compliance with all Colorado Department of Education statutory mandates.

1. Civics Education (C.R.S. § 22-1-104). In accordance with Colorado law, Stoca Academy requires satisfactory completion of coursework on the civil government of the United States and the State of Colorado. This mandate is satisfied **once**, for every student regardless of Major, within the 9th–10th grade Studios (specifically Studio B, Behavioral Finance & Local Micro-Economies, which grants 0.5 Social Studies in Civics/Local Government). It is reinforced pedagogically through the Influencing and Architecting pillars as students engineer solutions requiring a working understanding of local governance, city council jurisdictions, and state-level policy.

2. Holocaust and Genocide Studies (C.R.S. § 22-1-104.7). This mandate is satisfied **once**, for every student, within Studio C (Sustainable Urban Finance), which grants 0.5 Social Studies in World History/Ethics. It serves as the foundational anchor of the *Evolving* pillar: the Holocaust and other historical genocides are taught as the paramount case studies in Equity-Driven Systems Design, illustrating the catastrophic cost of technological and bureaucratic systems built without empathy or ethical guardrails. Students internalize these realities before they design community systems of their own.

3. Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness (PWR). Pursuant to the Colorado Graduation Guidelines, all graduates demonstrate competency in English and Mathematics using at least one measure from the state-approved Menu of Options. Stoca Academy uses two rigorous, state-approved measures:

- **Industry Certificates:** Verified digital badges (e.g., Google AI Essentials, IBM Data Foundations) earned through our embedded credentialing sequence, which the CDE recognizes as valid demonstrations of postsecondary readiness.
- **District/School Capstone:** The Year 4 Capstone Exhibition, where students present data-driven narratives (English competency) alongside interactive algorithmic or technical models (Mathematics competency) to a panel of Commerce City industry partners.

The Foundations

Purpose and Rationale

The Foundations layer of the Stoca Academy transcript guarantees an understanding for higher education admissions offices, the Charter School Institute (CSI), and state compliance systems. While our pedagogical model focuses on competency-based mastery and real-world municipal problem-solving, we recognize that university admissions algorithms and state reporting mechanisms are built on standard Carnegie units. The Foundations layer acts as a translation mechanism, mapping our rigorous, interdisciplinary "Application Finals" into the traditional credit buckets that external institutions require to quickly verify academic readiness. The detailed scope and sequence of The Foundations can be found in the curriculum and instruction section in the attachments.

The Translation Mechanism

At Stoca Academy, Math and English are protected as dedicated daily courses, while Science and Social Studies are earned through multi-disciplinary project blocks aligned with our pillars. The Foundations layer distributes the competencies demonstrated in these courses and projects into standard high school credits. For example, when a student completes a year-long Capstone analyzing Commerce City's industrial zoning and presents an interactive data dashboard, the transcript translates that mastery into specific units of Environmental Science and Social Studies. This ensures admissions officers do not have to guess how our curriculum aligns with their prerequisites.

Core Academic Distribution

Every Stoca Academy graduate, regardless of declared Major, earns an identical guaranteed core. These totals meet or exceed Colorado's Higher Education Admission Recommendations (HEAR) for competitive four-year admission.

- **4.0 Units of English Language Arts:** Delivered as a dedicated daily course across all four years, using our mastery-based model to close gaps and accelerate growth. Reinforced through the *Influencing* pillar as students master strategic communication, technical writing, and data-driven storytelling.
- **4.0 Units of Mathematics:** Delivered as a dedicated daily course across all four years, mastery-based. Reinforced through the *Architecting* and *Engineering* pillars, requiring advanced quantitative analysis, algorithmic logic, and data structuring to build community solutions.
- **3.0 Units of Science, including 2.0 lab-based:** Rooted in our *Science Learning Activation* framework. 2.0 lab units are earned in the 9th–10th Studios (hands-on environmental, physical, and life science tied to our local industrial corridors); 1.0 advanced unit is earned in the 11th–12th Major. *This 3.0 is a floor, not a ceiling* (see Science Distinction below).
- **3.0 Units of Social Studies:** 2.0 earned in the Studios (Human Geography, Economics, Civics/Local Government, and World History/Ethics), 1.0 in the Major. Includes the required history unit and satisfies both the Civics and Holocaust/Genocide mandates.
- **2.0 Units of World Language:** Required of every student in grades 9–10 (see World Language below), with a two-door design that treats heritage bilingualism as an asset. Extended to 3.0–4.0 units plus the Seal of Biliteracy for students who continue via the Heritage Language & Applied Linguistics Minor.
- **2.0 Units of Physical Education & Health:** Delivered through the habit-based Seasonal Sprint model with a witnessed close (see Unwavering Character).

Science Distinction (The Ceiling)

Our 3.0 Science requirement is the floor. Ambitious students accelerate to 4.0+ units and earn a **Science Distinction** designation on their transcript through any of three paths, none of which requires adding load to every student's schedule:

- A **Healthcare or Environmental Major**, whose advanced 11th–12th lab work naturally carries a student past 4.0.
- The **Technology & Applied AI Minor**, a four-year quantitative/data-science pipeline that reads as science rigor to admissions officers.
- **Ceiling-less acceleration** through our Strong Core Academics model and the Architect-Mentor Program, via AI-supported advanced independent research.

This makes rigor *legible* for first-generation families and competitive STEM applicants, while keeping the required floor inclusive for the student whose agency is bilingual advocacy or civic leadership rather than a fourth lab science.

Total Credit Summary

Requirement	Units	Source
English Language Arts	4.0	Daily mastery-based course, Gr 9–12
Mathematics	4.0	Daily mastery-based course, Gr 9–12
Science (incl. 2.0 lab)	3.0	Studios (2.0) + Major (1.0); Distinction to 4.0+
Social Studies	3.0	Studios (2.0) + Major (1.0)
World Language	2.0	Required Gr 9–10; Minor extends to 3.0–4.0
Physical Education & Health	2.0	Seasonal Sprint + witnessed close
Career Electives	6.0	Four-year Minor + Major specialization
Total	**24.0**	

Fulfilling State Mandates

The Foundations layer explicitly records compliance with all Colorado statutory graduation guidelines. It verifies the completion of the required Civics coursework and the integration of Holocaust and Genocide Studies. Furthermore, it logs the student's Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness (PWR) competency, utilizing our highest-tier Application Finals as the state-approved Capstone measure for both English and Mathematics.

By grounding our transcript in this foundational layer, Stoca Academy eliminates the administrative friction often faced by graduates of innovative schools, ensuring that our students' exceptional capabilities are immediately recognized and validated by any traditional institution.

Elective Pathways: The "Hourglass" Academic Architecture

Rationale and Pedagogical Approach

Our elective framework utilizes an "Hourglass Architecture." to ensure students have a large amount of exposure to different courses and projects to make an informed decision for their majors in their upper classmen years.

This model requires broad, interdisciplinary exposure in the early high school years before demanding intense, career-connected specialization in the upper grades. By structuring the elective sequence this way, we ensure students develop a comprehensive, systems-level understanding of Commerce City and the Denver metro area before they attempt to architect solutions for it.

The framework is divided into two distinct programmatic phases (The Studios and The Majors) underpinned by a continuous, four-year skill progression (The Minors).

Phase 1: The Foundational Interdisciplinary Studios (Grades 9 & 10)

During their freshman and sophomore years, students do not take siloed, single-subject electives. They participate in "Interdisciplinary Studios" designed to intentionally crash multiple industry sectors together. The pedagogical goal of Phase 1 is maximum exposure and the explicit instruction of "cognitive transfer"—teaching students how to apply data from one sector to solve problems in another.

Representative Interdisciplinary Studios include:

- **The Industrial Health Nexus (Healthcare + Environment):** Students map Commerce City's environmental data (e.g., air quality and industrial zoning) directly to localized respiratory and public health outcomes, learning that human biology is inextricably linked to municipal engineering.
- **The Economics of Well-being (Healthcare + Economics):** Students audit the financial structures of regional healthcare systems, examining how zip codes, insurance algorithms, and neighborhood wealth distribution determine life expectancy and medical access.
- **Sustainable Urban Finance (Environment + Economics):** Students analyze the financial incentives behind municipal zoning, auditing the operational costs of greening industrial supply chains and calculating the localized economic impact of climate-resilient infrastructure.

Phase 2: The Specialization Clinics / Major Tracks (Grades 11 & 12)

At the conclusion of their sophomore year, having gained a holistic understanding of how these systemic challenges intersect, students formally declare a **Career Major**. In their junior and senior years, their elective blocks narrow into intense, specialized coursework that culminates in their state-recognized PWR Capstone project.

Students select from one of three Majors to build deep, industry-specific context:

1. **Healthcare & Bio-Systems:** Advanced coursework in bioethics, epidemiology, and medical systems design, preparing students to advocate for public health access.
2. **Environmental & Urban Ecology:** Advanced coursework in GIS spatial mapping, climate data analysis, and sustainable architectural prototyping.
3. **Economics & Community Wealth:** Advanced coursework in financial modeling, private liability tracking, venture pitching, and local resource allocation.

The Constant: The Skill Minors (Grades 9–12)

While the Majors (the content) transition from broad to narrow over the four-year progression, the **Minors** represent a continuous, four-year skills pipeline. If the Major provides the *context* of a student's work, the Minor provides the *tools of agency* required to execute it. Students select one Minor to pursue across all four years, generating the verifiable Credly badges required for the Layer 2 Stoca transcript.

The four Minor tracks include:

1. **Technology & Applied AI (The Digital Toolset):** A four-year progression through digital fabrication, generative AI prompting, data engineering (Python/logic), and cloud architecture, culminating in credentials such as Google AI Essentials and AWS Cloud Practitioner.
2. **Applied Linguistics & Heritage Language (The Cultural Toolset):** An asset-based language track focusing on cultural fluency, restorative translation, and technical localization, culminating in the Colorado Seal of Biliteracy.
3. **Civic Leadership & Restorative Justice (The Human Toolset):** A leadership track dedicated to strengths-based team orchestration, restorative conflict mediation, and public policy advocacy, grounded in the T.R.U.S.T. framework.
4. **Financial Operations & Project Management (The Execution Toolset):** An operational track focused on Agile frameworks, financial P&L tracking, and advanced strategic execution, culminating in credentials such as PMI Project Management Ready.

The Intersectional Outcome By combining a declared Major with a continuous Minor, Stoca Academy graduates enter the workforce with a highly customized, intersectional skillset. A student who majors in Environmental Ecology and minors in Applied Linguistics graduates as a fully credentialed, bilingual environmental advocate. A student who majors in Economics and minors in Technology graduates as a data-driven financial modeler. This Hourglass Architecture ensures our graduates are not merely college-eligible; they are comprehensively equipped to operate as highly skilled "Founding Architects" in a complex global economy.

Detailed explanations of the elective pathways are in the curriculum and instruction section in the attachments.

Stoca Leadership Teaches an Elective

Every member of Stoca's leadership team teaches. The Executive Director and each cabinet director share instruction of the **Civic Leadership and Restorative Justice Minor** on a defined rotating calendar, with one leader designated to own the course's coherence and continuity for students. At full build the Minor runs five sections, matching the five members of the leadership team.

The Civic Leadership and Restorative Justice Minor anchors the school's restorative culture. That the school's leaders personally teach it, rather than delegating it, is the most direct expression of the culture the school claims.

Since all five leaders teach the same course, coverage does not depend on a designated substitute. When a leader is pulled, the others already know the students and the material. The school does not build its schedule around anticipated emergencies; it builds a structure that absorbs them.

The arrangement is built into leadership roles and responsibilities rather than treated as a voluntary addition, and it reduces core instructional staffing by one full-time position at full build.

Industry Recognized Credentials

In order to ensure Stoca Academy graduates will graduate with a relevant resume and skills, Stoca will partner with Credly for students to earn microcredentials. The selection of Credly as our primary credentialing platform is a strategic mechanism to translate the "Founding Architect" identity into universally recognized currency. In an AI-driven economy where traditional K-12 transcripts often fail to communicate true capability, our students require verifiable proof of their cognitive agility, restorative leadership, and technical execution. Credly's digital badge infrastructure allows us to embed rich metadata directly into a student's record, dynamically linking their mastery of industry-standard competencies to the specific "Application Finals" they design for the Denver community. By utilizing this platform, we ensure that our graduates leave with more than just accumulated high school credits; they leave with a portable, employer-recognized portfolio that colleges and employers can read at a glance.

Credly is not a classroom simulation; it is the same credentialing platform used across the workforce, backed by Pearson. Through it, students earn industry certifications issued by recognized providers such as Google, IBM, Amazon Web Services, and the Project Management Institute, the same credentials working professionals hold. Employers trust these badges because each one carries verified metadata that confirms exactly what the holder demonstrated.

When a local Denver enterprise or a highly selective university reviews a Stoca Academy graduate's profile, they are not relying on an ambiguous letter grade. They are clicking through to an immutable, third-party verified record of the specific data tools utilized, the agile methodologies applied, and the artifacts produced. This entirely bridges the trust gap between K-12 education and the private sector, proving definitively that our students possess the exact competencies the global economy demands.

Graduation Requirements

To ensure competitiveness and rigor, Stoca Graduates will graduate with a minimum of 4 credentials as mapped below. Students will have access to the Credly platform to also find credentials that are relevant and interesting to their pathway.

The Stoca-to-Credly Credential Mapping

1. Architecting (Our "Sense-Making" Pillar)

Language from the graduate profile: "Navigate complexity and shape an AI-empowered world," "Treat ambiguity as a data set," "Frame ill-defined problems," "Distinguish signal from noise," "Evaluate AI outputs with critical rigor," "Synthesize data."

- **Credly Mappings:**
    - **Enterprise Design Thinking Practitioner (Issued by IBM):** Validates the student's ability to *frame ill-defined problems* and *treat ambiguity as a data set* before building a solution.
    - **Google AI Essentials (Issued by Google):** Verifies the student's ability to *evaluate AI outputs with critical rigor* and navigate an AI-empowered environment safely.

    - **Data Analysis Foundations (e.g., IBM or CompTIA Data+):** Validates the ability to *distinguish signal from noise* and *synthesize data* to define the core of a problem.

2. Evolving (Our "Ethical & Critical" Pillar)

Language from the graduate profile: "Think critically, embrace innovation, and use AI ethically," "Unlearn outdated paradigms," "Ethical responsibility," "Advance equity rather than reinforce bias," "Iterative mindset," "Treating every challenge as a prototype for growth."

- **Credly Mappings:**
    - **Artificial Intelligence Ethics / Certified Ethical Emerging Technologist (e.g., CertNexus):** Validates the student's ability to *use AI ethically*, evaluate algorithms for fairness, and ensure innovations *advance equity rather than reinforce bias*.
    - **Agile Explorer (Issued by PMI or similar):** Validates an *iterative mindset*, proving the student knows how to *unlearn* quickly, pivot after failure, and treat work as a *prototype for growth*.

3. Influencing (Our "Purpose & Impact" Pillar)

Language from the graduate profile: "Solve real-world problems and advance equity," "Translate technical rigor into real-world impact," "Strategic communication—choosing the right visual, oral, or written medium," "Collaborative action," "Collective intelligence and accountability."

- **Credly Mappings:**
    - **Gallup CliftonStrengths Advocate:** Validates the student's ability to organize a team utilizing *collective intelligence* and drive *collaborative action* based on peer talents.
    - **Project Management Ready (Issued by PMI):** Validates the student's ability to enforce *accountability* and organize workflows to *solve real-world problems*.
    - **Data Storytelling & Visualization (Various Issuers):** Validates the student's ability to engage in *strategic communication*, effectively conveying *data-driven narratives* across visual and oral mediums to achieve *real-world impact*.

Four Year Credentialing Sequence

To make this functional the credentials must scale in complexity. Students move from understanding themselves and basic problem-framing in 9th grade to managing complex, data-driven community projects by 12th grade.

This sequence integrates the credentials directly into the "Application Finals," ensuring students earn these badges organically through their project work rather than taking isolated, standardized tests.

Year 1 (9th Grade): The Blueprint

Focus: Self-discovery, problem framing, and foundational digital safety. Students learn how to identify their own talents and approach ambiguity without fear.

Semester	Credential / Badge	Stoca Pillar Alignment	The Application Final (Assessment Context)
Fall	**Gallup CliftonStrengths Advocate** *(or equivalent)*	**Influencing:** Collaborative Action & Restorative Empathy	**The "Self & Community" Audit:** Students map their top 5 strengths and apply them to a restorative circle model, demonstrating how their specific talents contribute to the school's psychological safety.
Spring	**Enterprise Design Thinking Practitioner** *(Issued by IBM)*	**Architecting:** Cognitive Agility & Problem Framing	**The Commerce City Systems Pitch:** Students identify an everyday inefficiency in the area (e.g., RTD transit delays or food access) and use design thinking protocols to frame the problem empathetically before proposing a solution.

Year 2 (10th Grade): The Framework

Focus: Navigating AI tools safely, cleaning basic data, and learning how to fail and pivot efficiently.

Semester	Credential / Badge	Stoca Pillar Alignment	The Application Final (Assessment Context)
Fall	**Google AI Essentials** *(Issued by Google)*	**Engineering:** Generative AI & Agentic Prompting	**The AI Co-Authored Report:** Students must write a research paper or build a foundational model using AI as a thought partner. They are graded heavily on their "Prompt Log" and their ability to audit the AI output for hallucinations.
Spring	**Agile Explorer** *(Issued by PMI)*	**Evolving:** Unlearning & Iterative Mindset	**The Rapid Prototype Cycle:** Working in teams, students build a physical or digital prototype for a community need. They must formally document a "failure," unlearn their initial assumption, and pivot their design using Agile methodology.

Year 3 (11th Grade): The Infrastructure

Focus: Heavy quantitative analysis, algorithmic bias, and ethical systems design. The rigor steps up significantly as students prepare for post-secondary environments.

Semester	Credential / Badge	Stoca Pillar Alignment	The Application Final (Assessment Context)
Fall	**Data Analysis & Visualization Foundations** *(Issued by IBM / Coursera)*	**Architecting / Engineering:** Signal vs. Noise & Applied Analytics	**The Local Impact Dashboard:** Students ingest raw demographic or environmental data from the Commerce City metro area, clean the data using basic Python or advanced spreadsheet logic, and build an interactive, public-facing visualization dashboard.

Spring	**Artificial Intelligence Ethics** *(Issued by CertNexus or similar)*	**Evolving:** Equity-Driven Systems Design	**The Algorithm Audit:** Students dissect a currently deployed algorithmic system (e.g., predictive policing, loan approvals, or hiring software), identifying where historical bias is reinforced and proposing an ethically sound architectural redesign.

Year 4 (12th Grade): The Architecture

Focus: Orchestration, cloud deployment, and strategic communication. This year serves as the ultimate demonstration of the Founding Architect identity.

Semester	Credential / Badge	Stoca Pillar Alignment	The Application Final (Assessment Context)
Fall	**Project Management Ready** *(Issued by PMI)*	**Influencing / Engineering:** Orchestration & Accountability	**The Senior Capstone Kickoff:** Students scope their massive, year-long Capstone project. They build Gantt charts, align resources, and demonstrate how they will manage peer and community stakeholder inputs over a 6-month timeline.
Spring	**Choice Pathway Badge:** • *Data Storytelling* • *AWS Cloud Practitioner*	**Influencing:** Strategic Communication & Real-World Impact	**The Capstone Exhibition:** Students finalize their Capstone. Those focused on advocacy earn the Data Storytelling badge by pitching their data narrative to a local industry panel. Those focused on technical builds earn a Cloud badge by officially deploying their architecture to a live environment.

Five Day Week: Four Instructional Days + Architect Day

Because Stoca Academy utilizes a weekly **Architect Day** *(specific day to be finalized with the master schedule)*, there is a structural advantage for this sequence. The dedicated instructional days are used for collaborative problem-solving, restorative circles, and deep-dive Application Final work. The self-paced, module-based training for these Credly badges, and the adaptive Math and ELA mastery work, become the accountable curriculum for the asynchronous day.

School Calendar and Schedule

Stoca Academy's schedule is engineered backward from three commitments: every student is known, every teacher's load is sustainable, and every transcript stays legible to selective colleges. The high school model runs a six-period day for 500 students (125 per grade) at mid-20s class sizes, staffed by 24 core teachers plus roughly 11 specialists. It uses a five-teach / one-prep load. The middle school schedule mirrors this structure. This staffing scales with enrollment rather than being carried in full from the start, and the school's contingency plan (Section G) details how it protects its core model, the Studios, credentials, and Architect Day, at its minimum viable enrollment.

The High School Structural Backbone

Studios run mornings, Majors run afternoons. This single rule is load-bearing. It is what allows one "pathway" teacher to teach a broad Studio (grades 9–10) and a deep Major (grades 11–12) in the same sector without ever being

scheduled in two double-blocks at once. It also keeps third and fourth period free of double-blocks for every grade, creating a school-wide window where scarce Minor and World Language sections are reachable by any student regardless of their Studio or Major placement.

One teacher, one content family. Academic teachers teach a single subject at five sections and one prep. Pathway teachers teach one sector across two depths (Studio and Major). No teacher is asked to plan multiple unrelated courses. Because Studios and Majors are 100-minute double-blocks, pathway teachers who plan the most complex interdisciplinary work naturally receive more prep time, our sustainability value delivered by the structure itself.

Enrollment is sized to the model. At 125 students per grade and 25 per section, every course runs a section count that divides evenly by the teaching load. This eliminates "orphan" sections entirely at maturity, no leftover partial sections, no teachers juggling unrelated subjects, no dependence on rare dual-certified hires.

Where Students Choose, and Where Choices Constrain

The schedule is built so students make real decisions at defined moments, then live inside a coherent four-year path. Below are three worked examples showing the choice points and the constraints each choice creates.

The Choice Points (same for every student)

When	Decision	Notes
9th grade, Quarter 1	**World Language track:** heritage or non-heritage	Determined by the student's language background; both lead to real credentials
9th grade, after Minor exposure	**Minor track** (Tech, Heritage Language, Civic Leadership, Financial Ops)	Explored through advisory first; declaration is soft and switchable
End of 10th grade	**Career Major** (Healthcare, Environmental, Economics)	Informed by two years of Studios; this is the hard commitment
11th–12th grade	**Flex** (Science Distinction, World Language continuation, Capstone, elective)	The freed slot; where a student adds depth

Example 1 — Maria: Bilingual Clinical Data Path

- **9th:** Heritage WL track (native Spanish). Explores Minors in advisory, chooses **Tech & Applied AI**.
- **10th:** Continues Tech Minor. After two years of Studios, leans toward health.
- **11th:** Declares **Healthcare Major.** Her Tech Minor now cross-walks with her Major: she writes Python pipelines on local public-health data.
- **12th:** Uses **Flex for Science Distinction** (a fourth lab science) to strengthen a pre-med application. Earns the Seal of Biliteracy through her heritage track.
- **Graduates as:** a bilingual clinical-data analyst with IBM Data Foundations, a Science Distinction, and the Seal of Biliteracy.
- **The constraint she navigated:** choosing Science Distinction in Flex meant *not* using Flex to extend her language study further. Depth in one direction traded against another.

Example 2 — Andre: Community Wealth Builder

- **9th:** Non-heritage WL track. Chooses **Financial Operations Minor.**
- **10th:** Considers switching to Civic Leadership after a Studio on municipal finance; stays with Financial Ops.
- **11th:** Declares **Economics Major.** His Minor cross-walks: he runs live profit-and-loss ledgers for a simulated venture.
- **12th:** Uses **Flex for his Capstone**, a community land-trust financial model defended to local investors.
- **Graduates as:** a financial modeler with a QuickBooks credential and PMI Project Management Ready.
- **The constraint he navigated:** his non-heritage language track caps at functional proficiency plus a Cross-Cultural Leadership credential, not the full Seal. An honest ceiling, named up front.

Example 3 — Jasmine: Environmental Policy Advocate

- **9th:** Heritage WL track. Chooses **Civic Leadership & Restorative Justice Minor.**
- **10th:** Studios in urban ecology pull her toward the environment.
- **11th:** Declares **Environmental Major.** Her Civic Minor cross-walks: she drafts environmental-justice policy briefs for local zoning boards.
- **12th:** Uses **Flex to continue her Heritage Language pathway** toward the Seal, positioning her for bilingual public advocacy.
- **Graduates as:** a bilingual environmental-justice advocate with GIS credentials and the Seal of Biliteracy.
- **The constraint she navigated:** using Flex for language meant *not* taking a fourth science, so she graduates at the 3.0 science floor rather than with a Science Distinction. Right for her goals, a real tradeoff.

A Day in the Life: A Stoca 9th Grader

Andre entered Stoca in 9th grade from a neighborhood middle school. He arrived reading below grade level and was quiet about it. This is a Tuesday in his first year.

8:00 — Advisory. Andre's advisor takes attendance and runs the day's announcements. Ten minutes, the same adult every morning, all year. His advisor is the person who notices when something is off and the first to know if Andre misses a mastery target.

8:15 — English Language Arts. Twenty-five students. Andre works part of the block on an adaptive platform at his own level and part in small-group instruction. He has not yet cleared the 90% mastery floor on textual analysis, so his teacher pulls his group for direct instruction while students who cleared it move into extension work. Nothing about being in that group marks him as behind; grouping shifts every cycle as students clear floors.

9:10 — Mathematics. Same section size, same structure. Andre cleared last week's floor, so today he accelerates into the next unit. There is no ceiling on how far he goes and no penalty for where he started the year.

10:10 — Studio: Industrial Health Nexus. This is where Andre's day looks unlike a traditional high school. The 9th-grade Studio runs as a double-length block. His team is gathering air-quality readings from the industrial corridor near the school and mapping them against publicly reported community health data. The work is integrated:

the science, the data analysis, and the civic questions are one project, and Andre is doing real fieldwork, not a worksheet about it. He earns lab-science credit for this work, and he is starting to see what the three career Majors actually involve.

11:55 — Lunch.

12:35 — Studio work block / Minor. Andre continues his Studio investigation and works on his continuous Minor track, the four-year skills strand that runs alongside his coursework and earns industry credentials. He is building toward his first credential this year.

1:35 — World Language. Andre is a heritage Spanish speaker on the heritage track, building academic and technical vocabulary in a language he already owns, the same language that will let him earn a Translation and Interpretation credential through the school's postsecondary partner.

2:35 — Civic Leadership. This is the Minor section taught by a member of the school's leadership team, part of the leadership-teaches model. Today the class is running a structured discussion on a real decision facing their own community.

3:25 — Advisory close. The day ends where it began, with the same advisor, a short reflection and a look at tomorrow.

On Architect Day, Andre's schedule is different. Architect Day is a full, scheduled, on-campus day, not a day off. He works self-paced through his Mathematics and ELA mastery modules and his credential modules, and he has a scheduled coaching block with a teacher on textual analysis, the standard he has not yet cleared. Because he is one of the students furthest from that target, he gets the most intensive, most frequent coaching in a group of no more than ten. A classmate who cleared every floor this cycle spends the same day extending her Studio investigation into a proposal she will defend to a panel. Every student is coached on Architect Day; what varies is intensity, so no student reads being coached as a mark of deficit.

By the end of his 9th-grade year, Andre has cleared mastery floors he entered below, earned his first industry credential, done real scientific fieldwork in his own community, and started to see which of the three Majors he wants to declare at the end of 10th grade. He did not need a different student. He needed a school built to move him.

Middle School Design

The middle-school schedule is engineered backward from a single commitment: the middle school exists to prepare students for the high school. It therefore mirrors the high school where mirroring builds readiness, and simplifies where the high school's complexity serves specialization the middle school does not deliver.

Mirrored from the high school: the annual calendar, the five-day week of four instructional days plus a weekly Architect Day, the six-period day, daily mastery Mathematics and ELA at sections of 25, and the advisory bookends that open and close each day.

Simplified for the middle school: the rigid AM-Studio / PM-Major structure does not apply, because the middle school has no Majors and therefore no pathway faculty spanning two depths. The Exploratory Foundation block may

be placed flexibly in the day. The middle school also has no staffed Minor tracks; Minor sampling is embedded within the Exploratory Foundation block.

Running the middle school on the same calendar and bell structure as the high school is deliberate. It permits shared transportation, shared food service, and shared professional development, and it means a student moving from 8th to 9th grade experiences no disruption in the rhythm of the school day.

Three features are specific to the developmental needs of grades 6 through 8. Daily Mathematics and ELA in small sections gives every student a known adult in the two subjects that gate all later learning, at the age when foundational gaps become permanent if unaddressed. The Exploratory Foundation double block gives students sustained time in project work, building the stamina the Studios will demand. The advisory bookends give every middle-school student a consistent adult who opens and closes their day, which matters more at these ages than at any other point in the 6 through 12 span.

The six-period middle school day

Period (start)	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
Advisory (8:00)	Advisory	Advisory	Advisory
P1 (8:15)	Mathematics	ELA	Exploratory Foundation
P2 (9:10)	ELA	Mathematics	Exploratory Foundation
P3 (10:10)	Exploratory Foundation	Exploratory Foundation	Mathematics
Lunch (11:05)	—	—	—
P4 (11:55)	Exploratory Foundation	Exploratory Foundation	ELA
P5 (12:55)	World Language	PE / Health	World Language
P6 (1:55)	PE / Health	World Language	PE / Health / Enrichment
Advisory (3:15)	Advisory	Advisory	Advisory

The school day runs **8:00 a.m. to 3:35 p.m.**, matching the high school. A 10-minute advisory opens the day for attendance and announcements; a 20-minute advisory closes it for organization and reflection, the same bookend structure the high school uses.

The Exploratory Foundation runs as a 110-minute double block, the structural precursor to the 9th- and 10th-grade Studios. It integrates science, social studies, sector exposure, Minor sampling, and the Tech Literacy Floor into project work, and is the one course that runs in larger groups. Mastery Mathematics and ELA hold sections of 25 because skill mastery requires small sections; exploration tolerates larger ones. That single distinction is what allows the middle school to deliver the readiness profile with roughly 17 core teachers at full build rather than the approximately 22 a full mirror of the high school would require.

Instructional minutes by core subject

Subject	Minutes per day	Minutes per week (4 instructional days)
Mathematics	55	220
English Language Arts	55	220
Exploratory Foundation (science, social studies, sector exploration)	110	440
World Language	55	220
PE / Health / Enrichment	55	220

Daily instructional time totals approximately 6 hours 45 minutes across four instructional days, plus the Architect Day, whose self-paced mastery work in Mathematics and ELA and tiered coaching constitute the accountable curriculum for that day.

A Day in the Life: A Stoca 7th Grader

Tuesday, one of four instructional days.

8:00 — Advisory. Maria's advisor takes attendance and runs through the day's announcements. It is ten minutes, and it is the same adult every morning.

8:15 — English Language Arts. Twenty-five students. Maria is working at her own mastery level on an adaptive platform for part of the block and in small-group instruction for the rest. She has not yet cleared the 90% floor on argumentative writing, so her teacher pulls her group for direct instruction while others move ahead.

9:10 — Mathematics. Same structure, same section size. Maria cleared this unit's floor last week, so today she is accelerating into the next one. There is no ceiling on how far she goes and no penalty for where she started.

10:10 and 11:55 — Exploratory Foundation. The double block, split by lunch. This quarter the block is running a Planetary Health investigation: Maria's team is mapping tree cover against summer surface temperatures in their own neighborhood. The work is integrated, the science and the social studies and the data tools are the same project, not three separate classes. Along the way she is sampling what the Technology and Applied AI Minor will feel like in high school.

11:05 — Lunch. No block crosses lunch.

12:55 — World Language. Maria is a heritage Spanish speaker, so she is on the heritage track, building academic and technical vocabulary in a language she already owns. Her classmate on the non-heritage track is in a different section of the same course.

1:55 — PE and Health. The seasonal sprint structure: Maria set a personal physical goal at the start of the season and is tracking her own progress data, the same feedback loop she uses in her Exploratory Foundation project.

3:15 — Closing Advisory. Twenty minutes with the same advisor who opened her day. She organizes what is due, updates her ICAP with evidence from the tree-cover project, and reflects on what she is stuck on.

3:35 — Dismissal.

On Architect Day, Maria's schedule is different. She works self-paced through her Mathematics and ELA mastery modules, and she has a scheduled coaching block with a teacher on argumentative writing, the standard she has not yet cleared. Students furthest from their growth targets receive the most intensive coaching. Maria's friend, who cleared every floor this cycle, spends the same day extending her tree-cover investigation into a proposal she will present to her class.

Architect Day: The Self-Direction and Support Model

Architect Day is Stoca Academy's weekly, fully asynchronous day, one day in five, on which students direct their own learning while adults deliver tiered, high-touch support. It is named for our graduate identity: on this day, students architect their own learning The day does four jobs at once, and it is designed so they reinforce rather than compete: it closes academic gaps through intensive coaching, accelerates ready students, builds the executive-function muscle of self-direction, and protects sustainable collaboration and planning time for teachers. Its central design commitment is non-negotiable: the students who are furthest behind are never left alone. On Architect Day, support flows toward need, and our most vulnerable students receive the most human contact, not the least.

The Problem Architect Day Solves

Traditional schools treat asynchronous or independent learning time as a convenience, a study hall, a catch-up block, a day off the master schedule. In doing so, they hand the most independence to the students who need it least and abandon the students who need structure most. For a school serving a 29%-multilingual, high-poverty population, a naive "independent work day" is an equity risk disguised as an equity feature.

Architect Day rejects that model. It is built on a belief the: our most vulnerable students already possess elite executive function, just not in an academic form. The student managing a household, translating for their family, holding a job, or navigating adult systems has sophisticated self-management skills. Architect Day exists to recognize that strength and transfer it into an academic context.

The Design Principles

1. Coverage is the fixed constraint; collaboration flexes around it. At no point in the day are Tier 3 students without a qualified adult. Every other design decision, when teachers meet, when they plan, bends to preserve continuous coverage of our highest-need students.
2. High-touch is universal; intensity flows to need. Every student is coached on Architect Day, this is not a day when only struggling students get attention. What varies is intensity: students furthest from mastery receive the most frequent and most intensive coaching; students who are on track receive coaching on stretch goals and mastery. Because coaching is universal, no student can read "being coached" as a marker of deficit.
3. Independence is earned and progressively released. The day is heavily scaffolded in the fall, when students are explicitly taught how to plan, prioritize, and self-monitor. Structure loosens through the winter. By spring,

students who have demonstrated the habit run their own day; those who have not remain supported. Independence is a visible achievement, not a calendar default.

4. AI directs human attention; it does not replace it. Our adaptive platforms generate the near-real-time data that identifies which students need intensive support on any given week. This is the ethical, human-centered use of AI our vision demands: technology tells teachers which students need them today, so that human coaching is aimed precisely where it matters, rather than technology substituting for the teacher.

How the Day Works

Architect Day runs the same instructional hours as a normal day. Students move through a rotation of intensive small-group coaching (groups of no more than 10), targeted support, and supervised independent mastery work. Adults rotate through matching roles, coaching, covering, collaborating, and planning, so that continuous coverage holds while teachers still receive real collaboration and planning time.

A representative block structure:

- Launch (advisory): Advisors help each student set the day's plan and priorities.
- Coaching-and-coverage blocks: Students cycle through intensive coaching and supervised independent work. Roughly 19 of our ~35 instructional adults are with students each block; the remaining adults collaborate in grade-level teams and departments or plan, in staggered shifts so coverage never drops.
- The all-staff block: One protected block per week in which the full staff engages in team-building and professional development, while all students engage in structured independence practice. During this block, our leadership team and specialists anchor the highest-need students, this is the day's deliberately thinnest coverage, made safe by its structure, its progressive release, and the presence of our most senior educators with our most vulnerable students.
- Close (advisory): Students reflect on the day and set goals for the coming week.

Adults on Architect Day. Our full instructional staff, including MLL and special-education specialists, participate in the coaching rotation. At a school where the highest-need students are disproportionately multilingual learners and students with IEPs, this is the optimal deployment of our most qualified educators: our specialists spend the day with the students who most need their expertise. Specialist coaching on Architect Day is written into IEPs and language plans as service delivery, ensuring legal service minutes are met, not displaced.

The Equity Commitment (and How We Protect It)

The central risk of any tiered support model is that students experience differentiated support as a status marker, that a student receiving intensive coaching feels labeled rather than invested in. If that happens, the model inverts: a shamed adolescent disengages, falls further behind, and the structure deepens the very gap it was built to close.

We protect against this structurally, not just rhetorically:

- High-touch is universal, so no student can point to coaching as a deficit marker; everyone is coached.

- Our best people and best spaces flow toward our highest-need students, so intensive support reads as investment, not remediation.
- We measure and publish student movement between tiers, so that "fluid, not fixed" is provable, not asserted. Support that routes to need and produces movement is the opposite of tracking, which sorts students and leaves them.
- Tiers change how much coaching a student receives, never what they are expected to achieve. Every student works toward the same graduate profile at the same rigor. We vary support, never the ceiling.
- Language discipline is trained and enforced. Staff are held to framing that describes intensive support as coaching and investment, never as "catching up" or "remediation."

The test we hold ourselves to is simple: a student who is behind should describe their Architect Day with pride, not in a lowered voice. If they cannot, the model is not yet working, regardless of how sound its logic.

Tradeoffs and Open Design Questions

Decision	What we chose	The tradeoff
Full async day, weekly	One fixed, predictable day in five	Requires a complex adult rotation; we accept adult-schedule complexity in service of students
Coverage over synchronized collaboration	Coverage holds all day; collaboration staggers	No single all-staff moment except the one protected block
Universal high-touch	Everyone coached; intensity flows to need	More coaching load than a deficit-only model; justified by the equity payoff
Specialists in the coaching rotation	Most-qualified adults on highest-need students	Specialist caseload work must be structured as service delivery to remain compliant
Leaders anchor the all-staff block	Leadership covers Tier 3 during staff time	Rotated so no single leader is chronically absent from staff culture

Educational Program Capacity

Stoca's founding leadership has built this program before, not in theory but in practice, with students very much like the ones Stoca will serve.

As Founding School Director of Aurora Science and Tech (AST) High School, our Founder opened a STEM high school from nothing: hiring the founding staff, building the instructional model, and setting the culture. That school became the highest-performing secondary school in Aurora Public Schools on the state framework. Its results speak to the specific claims this section makes. Black students posted the fourth-highest median math growth in Colorado. Students with disabilities had some of the smallest growth gaps in the district. AST recorded the highest SAT

composite in APS, and 91% of graduates enrolled in postsecondary education, including 93% of first-generation students, who outperformed their non-first-generation peers.

The specific components of Stoca's program are ones she has built rather than borrowed. As founding science department chair at Richard T. Crane Medical Prep High School in Chicago, Gorrell built a career-connected medical STEM program, the same structure Stoca's Health Major uses. Earlier, teaching at Collins Academy High School, Gorrell produced equity-closing gains in science. At DSST's Henry Middle School, Gorrell led the instructional leadership team and directed special education, bringing a program under legal scrutiny into full compliance while the school posted the largest fall-to-winter MAP growth in the network. That work is the direct precedent for Stoca's middle school, which must deliver students to ninth grade ready to succeed.

Stoca's mastery-based core, its rejection of procedural compliance, and its emphasis on identity over content grow out of her own training as a physicist and her experience of what a compliance-driven system costs a capable student. Graduate work done at Columbia University's Summer Principals Academy and completion of MIT's AI Strategy and Leadership program ground the school's technology model and the T.R.U.S.T. framework that governs it.

Two areas of the program are new to this team and are treated as such. Stoca's industry-credentialed Minor tracks and its middle school require capability the founding leader will not personally deliver. The school addresses this by hiring a founding middle school principal to design the middle grades against a defined readiness standard, and by building the credentialing pathway during Year 0 as a named priority rather than assuming it into existence.

E. Student Services

Compliance is the floor. Brilliance is the ceiling. Special education, multilingual services, and behavioral supports are integrated into the instructional core rather than siloed, so that students with exceptionalities are active Founding Architects rather than visitors in the classroom. This doctrine is identical in grades 6 through 8 and 9 through 12.

Serving grades 6 through 12 changes what the doctrine requires in practice, in three ways. The school reaches students at the ages when most identification occurs. It holds students long enough to see a support plan through rather than inherit or hand off one. And it must ensure that a student entering in 9th grade is not disadvantaged relative to a student who has been at Stoca since 6th.

Anticipated Rates and the Middle-Grades Difference

Stoca anticipates approximately 16.2% of students with disabilities and 29% multilingual learners, matching the high-need feeder schools it recruits from (see Section B).

These rates are not uniform across the grade span, and the school plans for the difference rather than averaging it away. Regional data show identification concentrated in the younger grades: Thornton Elementary in Adams 12 reports 22.6% special education, while Academy High School in Mapleton reports 8.4%. Stoca therefore projects a **materially higher special education rate in grades 6 through 8 than in grades 9 through 12**, and sizes middle-school special-services staffing to the middle-grades rate rather than to a 6–12 average. Sizing middle-school staffing from a high-school rate would systematically under-serve the grades where need is greatest.

Identification and Plan Audit

- **Every incoming student with an IEP or 504 plan receives a records review at entry.** The review verifies that present levels, goals, and services are current, internally consistent, and sufficient to support the student in Stoca's program.
- **A full re-evaluation is triggered by defined flags**, rather than conducted universally, so that the school's evaluation capacity is directed where it is most needed. Triggers include: goals that do not correspond to documented present levels; services that appear insufficient relative to identified need; an evaluation older than the statutory reevaluation interval or approaching it; a documented placement more restrictive than the student's present levels appear to warrant; a significant discrepancy between the plan and the student's performance on Stoca's entry diagnostics; or a family or teacher request.
- This triaged approach is deliberate. A universal re-evaluation promise at 125 to 150 new students per year would exceed what the school can staff and sustain, and an unkept promise serves students less well than a targeted commitment the school can honor. All statutory Child Find obligations, timelines, and reevaluation requirements are met in full regardless of triage.
- Because the middle grades are where most initial identification occurs, Stoca's Child Find and pre-referral processes carry the greatest volume in grades 6 through 8, and the school's evaluation capacity is weighted accordingly.

Continuum of Services (Least Restrictive Environment)

Stoca Academy is committed to the **Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)**. We provide a full continuum of services, prioritizing high-fidelity inclusion.

- **Co-Teaching & Push-In Models:** We treat collaboration as a core school value. All SPED and Gen-Ed teachers receive structured professional development in co-teaching models (e.g., Parallel and Team Teaching). We move beyond "one teach/one assist" to ensure both educators in the room function as equal leaders, maintaining high academic expectations for all students.
- **Creative Scheduling:** We operationalize IEP minutes creatively. If pull-out services or mental health supports are required, these are embedded into the school day without sacrificing the student's core community and project-based learning experiences.

Progress Monitoring & Compliance

- **The "Compliance is the Floor" Protocol:** Structural capacity is the foundation of our success. SPED and MLL teachers are allocated dedicated, protected time to track IEP goal attainment, ensure data integrity, and lead the IEP process.
- **Meaningful Interventions:** When a student needs support, staff move beyond repeating the same consequence toward interventions that address the root cause, informed by the student's academic and attendance data. Adults design and decide every intervention; data informs their judgment and never replaces it.

- **Collaborative Coaching:** Our instructional leaders are evaluated on their ability to analyze student work protocols alongside teachers. This turns the "coaching meeting" into a two-way street where teachers drive their own development based on rigorous, evidenced-based student outcomes.

Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) for Students Below Grade Level and At-Risk Students

Stoca serves a population in which many students arrive below grade level, so a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) is core infrastructure, not an add-on. The school treats below-grade-level performance as a signal about a student's environment, not a fixed trait or a deficit in the student. Grounded in Adam Grant's *Hidden Potential*, Stoca holds that the gap between a student's current proficiency and their potential reflects the conditions they have learned in, not the limits of their capability. The MTSS below is how the school closes that gap systematically.

Every student completes diagnostic assessments in the first weeks of school, triangulated with prior-school data, to establish an independent baseline. The school's adaptive core-academic platforms then generate continuous, near-real-time mastery data. For risk of disengagement and dropout specifically, the school's early-warning system flags attendance, wellness, and belonging concerns for advisor review as a proactive support trigger, never a disciplinary one.

Support runs on three tiers inside a mastery-based core. All students receive strong Tier 1 instruction; students are moved to more intensive tiers by data, and back down as they close gaps. Movement between tiers is fluid and reviewed on every interim cycle.

Tier	Who it serves	The support	Delivered by	Monitoring and movement
Tier 1 — Universal	All students	Strong core instruction in daily, protected Math and English; the 90% mastery floor; Universal Design for Learning; language-accessible instruction in every room	All core teachers	Interim growth checks each window; students not meeting growth targets are considered for Tier 2
Tier 2 — Targeted	Students below growth targets or below grade level on diagnostics	Small-group coaching on Architect Day (groups of no more than ten), targeted to specific unmastered standards; asynchronous mastery work to close foundational gaps privately	Specialists and trained coaches	Weekly dashboard review; students who respond return toward Tier 1, students who do not advance to Tier 3

Tier 3 — Intensive	Students with the largest gaps or not responding to Tier 2	The most intensive, most frequent small-group and individual coaching; individualized mastery plans; coordination with special education or language services where a disability or acquisition need is identified	Specialists, with pre-referral committee review	Continuous progress monitoring; referral for evaluation only after instructional access is ruled out as the cause (guarding against misidentification)

Since many students arrive below grade level, the school distinguishes an instructional or language-access gap from a disability before any special education referral. The pre-referral committee triangulates data, and no student moves to evaluation until Tier 1 instructional access has been examined as a possible cause. This guards against both over-identification and missed need (detailed in Students with Disabilities, above).

Dropout prevention. The school replaces exclusionary discipline with restorative practice, moving away from repeat consequences toward interventions that address the root cause. Each student's advisor is a stable, known adult, and the Experiential Career Pathways connect daily coursework to a visible future, addressing the disengagement that drives students out of school.

Monitoring and accountability. Weekly performance dashboards let advisors track mastery progress and route students into targeted Architect Day support when they miss weekly targets. The school measures and publishes student movement between tiers, holding itself to "fluid, not fixed" as a provable standard: the test of the MTSS is that students move *up* toward grade level.

The 9th Grade Bridge: No Penalty for Entry Point

A student who completes Stoca's middle school arrives in 9th grade already fluent in the school's mastery model, its culture, and its habits of defending work. A student entering in 9th grade from another school brings different strengths and is still building that fluency. Stoca commits that entry point will not determine a student's trajectory.

The commitment is not that no gap exists. It is that no student is penalized for entering later, and that the gap closes inside 9th grade.

Two structures deliver this. First, the mastery-based core makes entry point irrelevant to placement: students are placed by demonstrated mastery, not by prior enrollment, and accelerate from wherever they start with no ceiling. Second, the 9th Grade Bridge provides intensive first-semester support for students entering from other schools: onboarding to the mastery model and the school's culture, diagnostic-driven gap-closing in Mathematics and ELA, explicit instruction in the habits of defending work, and priority access to Architect Day coaching. The Bridge is designed to close the readiness gap by the end of the first semester, and its effectiveness is measured by comparing the growth of 9th-grade entrants to that of continuing students.

Under the default 9th-grade-first phase-in, every founding student is a 9th-grade entrant. The Bridge is therefore a founding-year structure that later becomes a targeted one, and the school's early reputation rests on how well it serves students who arrive without the middle school support.

Older Entrants: Admitting students after 9th grade

Stoca admits any age- and grade-eligible student who applies, in every grade the school serves, consistent with its open-enrollment obligations. Because the school recruits most heavily into its entry grades and backfills open seats primarily through grade 10, a student entering credit-deficient in the upper grades is less common, but the school plans for it rather than treating it as an exception it can turn away.

When an older student enrolls behind on credits, the school does three things. First, it evaluates the transcript and prior mastery honestly, and places the student by demonstrated readiness rather than by the grade label they arrive with. In a mastery-based model, placement follows mastery: a student who enrolls expecting to be an 11th grader but who is significantly credit-deficient may be placed as a 10th- or 9th-grade course load, because the school builds forward from where the student actually is rather than advancing them into coursework they are not yet prepared to succeed in. This is framed with the student and family as an honest starting point, not a penalty, and it is handled with attention to the student's age and social context in how supports and peer grouping are arranged. Second, the school builds an individualized mastery and credit-recovery plan: Architect Day is the engine for it, giving the student concentrated, self-paced mastery work and the most intensive coaching time in the school's week, targeted precisely to the standards and credits they still need, so a motivated student can close the gap faster than a traditional seat-time school would allow. The MTSS tiers described above apply, with an older credit-deficient entrant typically entering at Tier 2 or Tier 3 by design. Third, the student's advisor and the counseling team construct a realistic graduation and postsecondary pathway with the student and family, including, where appropriate, concurrent-enrollment and credential options that let the student make up ground while still moving toward a meaningful credential.

Placing a student by mastery is also what prevents the failure mode a competency-based model would otherwise create for a late entrant: because the school does not advance a credit-deficient student into a final-year Major track they cannot complete, it does not enroll students into pathways they are set up to fail. Where a student's timeline to graduation extends beyond the traditional four years, the plan names that directly and builds the most rigorous, achievable path to graduation and a postsecondary credential for that individual student, rather than counseling them away. Serving the student who arrives late and behind is precisely the test a school built for this community must pass, and the school's mastery model, which measures where a student actually is rather than assuming grade-level readiness, is designed to meet exactly that student.

Students with Disabilities

LRE Continuum

Stoca Academy serves students across the full continuum of mild, moderate, and severe disabilities in the Least Restrictive Environment. The school provides a full continuum of services: general education with Universal Design for Learning, co-teaching and push-in support, targeted pull-out for intensive individualized needs, and more restrictive or center-based supports where an IEP team determines them necessary. Placement is an individualized IEP-team decision.

The school commits to developing the staffing, related-service contracts, and physical capacity required by the IEPs of enrolled students, in collaboration with CSI during Year 0 program plan development. As enrollment data identifies the need for more intensive service settings, the school will build or contract for that capacity rather than redirect students elsewhere. Transition planning begins in 9th grade, aligning each student's post-secondary IEP goals with the Experiential Career Pathways.

Progress monitoring is human-led. SPED and MLL teachers have dedicated, protected time to track IEP goal attainment, supported by shared data dashboards governed by the T.R.U.S.T. standard, so data is used to advance each student's goals, never to label or limit them.

Service Delivery Across Grades 6 Through 12

Serving a continuous 6–12 span allows one team to follow a student for up to seven years. Stoca captures that continuity while guarding against caseload dilution through a single design rule: **case management spans the grades; service delivery and caseload caps are set by band.**

Element	Design
Case management	Stoca's goal is for each student to keep the same case manager for as long as possible across the 6–12 span, protecting continuity of relationship, history, and what has already been tried. The school commits to this as a priority it staffs toward and protects wherever staffing allows, not as a guarantee it cannot control.
Service delivery	Delivered by staff assigned to a band (6–8 or 9–12), so that no specialist carries a mixed developmental caseload across two schedules and two sets of legal requirements.
Caseload caps	Caseloads are capped by band and monitored quarterly. Where the middle-grades identification rate produces caseloads above cap, the school adds capacity rather than absorbing the overage.
Related services	Speech, occupational and physical therapy, psychological, and nursing services are staffed to the service minutes enrolled students require. The school right-sizes each: contracting for specialized or low-volume services, and hiring a full-time position where volume, cost, and school culture make that the stronger choice.
Transition planning	Begins in 9th grade for every student with an IEP, aligning post-secondary IEP goals with the Experiential Career Pathways. Middle-grades ICAP work feeds this directly.

The caseload cap is the safeguard that makes the spanning model work. Without it, a 6–12 team becomes a way of asking the same number of adults to serve more students across a wider developmental range. With it, the school captures the continuity benefit and adds staff when volume requires it.

Multilingual Learners

Stoca treats bilingualism as intellectual capital: a rigorous, credentialed capability rather than a deficit to be remediated away. The two-door World Language design, distinct heritage and non-heritage tracks, begins in the

middle grades rather than at 9th grade. Middle-school heritage speakers build academic and technical vocabulary in a language they already own, feeding directly into the high school's Seal of Biliteracy pathway and the Applied Linguistics and Heritage Language Minor.

Beginning language instruction in the middle grades is uncommon in this market and is a deliberate program commitment, not an enrichment add-on.

Stoca measures reclassification as a test of the program, not of the student. A 6–12 span gives the school up to seven years with a multilingual learner, which changes what a good result looks like.

Over seven years, a high eventual exit rate is not by itself evidence of a strong program. A program that reclassifies every student by 12th grade but takes six years to do it has failed students who could have exited in three. Stoca therefore measures **exit velocity**, time to reclassification, alongside exit rate, and holds the middle school accountable for early, fast progress rather than for eventually clearing the bar. Both measures are disaggregated and reviewed against WIDA ACCESS growth.

Identification and Reclassification Process

- **Identification:** At registration, every family completes a Home Language Survey. Where the survey indicates a language other than English, the student is screened for English language proficiency using the state-adopted WIDA Screener within the required timeline, and the results determine identification as a multilingual learner (MLL) and initial proficiency level. Families are notified of identification and program placement in their home language, and no student is identified as an MLL on the basis of national origin, surname, or a family's participation in other programs.
- **Program and progress monitoring:** Identified students receive English language development aligned to the WIDA standards, integrated with grade-level content rather than delivered as a separate track, and their progress is monitored each year with the ACCESS for ELLs assessment. MLL status, proficiency level, and services are recorded in the SIS with role-based access, and progress is reviewed within the school's MTSS cycle.
- **Reclassification and exit:** A student is considered for reclassification as fluent English proficient when they meet the state's exit criteria, including the ACCESS composite threshold Colorado sets, corroborated by classroom performance and educator input. Reclassified students are monitored for at least two years to confirm continued success, and a student who struggles after exit may receive renewed support. Exit is a body-of-evidence decision, not a single test score.

Instructional Design

- Every teacher is a teacher of multilingual learners. With multilingual learners composing a substantial share of enrollment, every Stoca Academy teacher is a teacher of multilingual learners. The instructional design begins from that fact rather than accommodating it afterward.

- Whole-staff capability is a condition of teaching here. Bryan Brown's Science in the City is a founding grounding text for all instructional staff, not for language specialists alone, because every teacher will be

responsible for multilingual students every day. Every teacher is trained in the language supports appropriate to their content, and that capability is evaluated, not assumed.

- Planning begins with the multilingual learner. Unit and lesson design starts with the students carrying the greatest language demand and extends outward, rather than designing for the middle and retrofitting supports afterward. This is the instructional expression of the school's commitment that support flows toward need. Designing first for the student furthest from access produces instruction that serves every student; designing for the middle serves neither.

- Direct language instruction runs alongside integration. Students with the greatest acquisition needs receive dedicated language coursework alongside their content instruction. The school holds both: language development taught explicitly by specialists, and language-accessible instruction delivered by every teacher in every room.

- Newcomers and long-term multilingual learners need different support. A student arriving in ninth grade with limited English requires structurally different support from a student who has attended U.S. schools since kindergarten and remains classified. Stoca Academy differentiates between them, providing newcomers more intensive acquisition support built specifically so they can access the NEXUS model rather than waiting outside it until their English catches up.

- Behavior data is read as instructional signal. At AST High School, a cluster of students entering the MTSS process for behavior was found, on inspection, to be composed almost entirely of multilingual learners. The conclusion the team reached was structural rather than individual: students were not accessing instruction, and the behavior was the signal. Rather than processing those students through intervention tiers, the school changed how instruction was delivered. The data had surfaced a design problem, not a student problem. Stoca Academy institutionalizes that reading. When multilingual learners cluster in any referral, discipline, or intervention pattern, the school interrogates its own instructional structure before it interrogates the students.

Commanding the Format

- At Stoca Academy, the preparation for any test is the learning itself: four years of daily, mastery-based mathematics and English at a 90% mastery floor. The school builds proficiency first, then teaches students to command the specific test format separately. Four years of daily, mastery-based mathematics and English at a 90% mastery floor is the preparation.
- The school does, however, name a specific risk created by its own design. Because assessment at Stoca Academy is performance-based, multimodal, and iterative, students accumulate less experience with timed, single-format examination than peers in traditional schools. The academic preparation is stronger; the exposure to that one format is thinner. Left unaddressed, the format itself, rather than any gap in knowledge, becomes the thing that hides a student's proficiency. This is the mechanism the school's founding leader observed directly at AST High School, where multilingual students posted strong ACCESS growth and still could not clear the score thresholds that would have credited it.
- Colorado's assessment calendar supplies the remedy at no instructional cost. Students take the PSAT 8/9 in ninth grade, the PSAT 10 in tenth, and the SAT in eleventh. Stoca Academy treats these three administrations

as deliberate rehearsal and diagnostic instrumentation rather than as compliance interruptions. Each is preceded by one dedicated instructional day devoted to the format itself: pacing under time constraint, the structure of an adaptive test whose second module responds to performance on the first, elimination strategy, and the judgment of when to move on. Three days across four years. The rest of the time is spent building the proficiency the format is supposed to measure.

- Accommodations are treated as an equity obligation, not an administrative task. Colorado permits eligible multilingual learners to request fifty percent extended time on the PSAT and SAT, subject to an annual filing deadline. Stoca Academy files for every eligible student, every year.
- Ninth and tenth grade results function as early warning. The school compares demonstrated proficiency against credited performance beginning in ninth grade, so a widening gap surfaces two years before the assessment that carries consequences, while there is still time to respond.

Monitoring and Evidence

- Stoca Academy separates what it measures about its program from what it measures about its students. Reclassification is feedback on Stoca Academy. Language development, credentials, and identity are the student's growth. Collapsing the two would make exiting a status the student is expected to chase, which is the deficit frame the model rejects.
- Program accountability. The school tracks ACCESS growth-target attainment as its primary program measure, consistent with its practice of weighting growth over absolute achievement throughout the model. Reclassification rates are tracked as the lagging indicator that sustained growth eventually produces. Targets are set against Colorado statewide and Adams 14 comparison data rather than against aspiration, so the school is held to a standard a reviewer can verify. The founding leader's prior results establish the baseline the school intends to exceed: at AST High School, 54 percent of multilingual learners met ACCESS growth targets, one of only four high schools network-wide above 50 percent, alongside 86 percent postsecondary enrollment.
- Reclassification is disaggregated by entry status. A newcomer arriving in ninth grade with limited English and a student who entered United States schools in kindergarten and remains classified are not the same accountability case. Newcomers are held to support-intensity and growth commitments. Long-term multilingual learners are the school's sharpest accountability population: a student who has received nine years of instruction and has not reclassified reflects a system failure, and the school treats that population as its most urgent work rather than as a historical condition it inherited.
- Student growth. The school tracks additive outcomes that a reclassification rate cannot capture: Colorado Seal of Biliteracy attainment, completion of the Heritage Language and Applied Linguistics Minor, World Language credit accumulation beyond the required core, industry credentials earned, and Application Finals defended. These measure what a student gained rather than what classification they shed.
- The proficiency-credited gap. Stoca Academy tracks the distance between proficiency its students demonstrate and proficiency the system credits. This is the measure the founding leader's prior experience made unavoidable: multilingual students posted strong ACCESS growth and still could not clear the thresholds that would have credited it. The gap is analyzed jointly by the leadership team and the multilingual learner team and reported to the Board of Directors. It cuts in both directions by design. A wide gap indicts the gate when students have demonstrably done the work, and it indicts the school when students were not prepared to command the formats that decide.

- Early warning replaces retrospection. Colorado administers the PSAT 8/9 in ninth grade and the PSAT 10 in tenth, which gives the school two years of comparison between demonstrated proficiency and credited performance before the eleventh-grade SAT carries consequences. A widening gap is visible while there is still time to respond, rather than discovered after the assessment that counts.
- Disaggregation is automatic, not discretionary. Every referral, intervention, and progress review disaggregates by language status as a first step, before any individual student decision is made. Patterns surface by default rather than depending on an individual educator noticing them.
- Overrepresentation triggers instructional review before further individual processing. When multilingual learners appear in referrals, intervention tiers, or below-growth-target groups at a rate meaningfully exceeding their share of enrollment, the school is obligated to examine its own instructional design before advancing additional individual cases. A widening proficiency-credited gap triggers the same review. This institutionalizes a finding the founding leader reached at AST High School, where a cluster of students entering the behavioral intervention process proved to be almost entirely multilingual learners, and the correct response was to change instruction rather than to process students.
- Tier 1 remains Tier 1. Universal, time-bounded supports are logged with language status so they function as data, but they are not routed through a language-access analysis. Treating every behavior by a multilingual student as an artifact of language would strip those students of ordinary adolescent agency and would obscure needs unrelated to language. The access question is asked at the point of escalation, where a decision begins to carry weight: before a multilingual learner moves from universal to targeted intervention, the team documents whether instructional access is a contributing factor.

Middle School Program

The proficiency-credited gap, the distance between the proficiency a student demonstrates and the proficiency the system credits them for, is measured beginning in 6th grade. This is deliberate. Under-crediting does its greatest damage early: a capable bilingual 6th grader who is misjudged and under-placed loses years of access before anyone examines the record. Measuring the gap from the first year a student enters Stoca means the school catches and corrects under-crediting before it compounds into a high-school problem.

Guarding Against Misidentification

Because the middle grades are where most identification occurs, they are also where misidentification does the most damage, and where over-identification of multilingual learners as students with disabilities is a documented national risk.

Stoca's safeguards operate at both levels and are disaggregated by band. The pre-referral committee triangulates data before any referral, distinguishing a language-acquisition need from a disability. The identification-review trigger flags any subgroup over- or under-represented in special education or gifted identification relative to enrollment, and initiates a structural review of Tier 1 instruction rather than a review of the student. Reviewing these data by school level rather than in a 6–12 aggregate matters: a pattern concentrated in the middle grades can be invisible in a combined total.

The school guards against both errors. Over-identification places a student in services they do not need and lowers expectations; under-identification denies a student services they are entitled to. Neither is acceptable, and the review examines both directions.

The 8th to 9th Grade Transition

For students continuing within Stoca, the transition from 8th to 9th grade carries no service gap. IEPs, 504 plans, and multilingual-learner services transfer without re-establishment. Where staffing permits, the case manager does not change. The student remains in the same culture, the same restorative practice, the same mastery model, and the same daily schedule structure.

This continuity is one of the clearest advantages of the 6–12 model. In a conventional system, the middle-to-high transition is a documented point of service disruption and disengagement, particularly for students with disabilities and multilingual learners. At Stoca it is not a transition between schools at all.

Gifted and Talented

- Identification: Stoca identifies gifted and talented students through a body of evidence consistent with Colorado's Exceptional Children's Educational Act and the Adams 14 region's practices, using multiple measures rather than a single cut score: normed cognitive and achievement data, performance and portfolio evidence from Studios and Majors, and educator, family, and self-referrals. The school actively screens for talent that traditional measures miss in multilingual and economically disadvantaged students, populations historically under-identified for gifted services, using local norms and nonverbal measures where appropriate. Identified students receive an Advanced Learning Plan with goals monitored through the MTSS cycle, and the school reviews its own identification data for demographic proportionality, applying the same equity discipline it applies to discipline and enrollment.

- Acceleration Model: We view Project-Based Learning as a primary vehicle for GT acceleration. GT students are provided with a robust Advanced Learning Plan (ALP).

- Acceleration Without Tracking**:** Because the core academic model is mastery-based and ceiling-less, gifted students accelerate individually rather than being sorted into a separate track. They move ahead in Math and ELA as fast as they demonstrate mastery while remaining in the same integrated, interdisciplinary Studios and projects as their peers, which preserves community and diverse perspectives. Depth, not separation, is the acceleration mechanism: advanced independent research, deeper Major and Minor work, and the Science Distinction pathway.

- Independent Growth: Students are empowered to find their own "ceiling" through AI-supported independent research and industry-aligned modules, ensuring they are always intellectually challenged.

504's

Stoca Academy serves students who qualify under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act: students whose disability substantially limits a major life activity but who do not require specialized instruction under an IEP.

Identification. The school's Child Find protocol covers 504 referrals alongside special education. Referrals originate from teachers, families, or medical documentation and route to a 504 team that evaluates a body of evidence before writing a plan. The same data-triangulation discipline used for dually-identified students applies here: the team distinguishes a 504-eligible condition from language acquisition, behavioral manifestation, or an unaddressed academic gap, preventing both over-identification and missed need.

Service delivery. Accommodations are delivered inside the general education setting through Universal Design for Learning and the school's co-teaching model, so a 504 plan never removes a student from core community or project work. Every student's active accommodations are logged in the SIS and visible to all of that student's teachers, making implementation a shared instructional responsibility rather than a document filed and forgotten. Architect Day absorbs common accommodations without friction: extended time, small-group setting, and reduced-distraction environments are native features of the block, not exceptions carved out of it.

Monitoring. The advisor serves as the consistent adult who tracks whether accommodations are working in practice. Plans are formally reviewed at least annually and any time the data indicates a change in need, consistent with the school's "Compliance is the Floor" protocol.

Student Services Capacity

Convergence Section

In every NEXUS component, the Convergence Section is where students move from "doing school" to "doing impact." For students with exceptionalities, convergence runs in two directions. Architect Day is where individualized support flows in. Application Finals are where mastery flows out.

Avenue One: Architect Day, the support engine. Architect Day is Stoca Academy's weekly asynchronous block where support flows toward need. Three design choices make it the school's highest-leverage service-delivery model for special populations. First, the most vulnerable students receive the most human contact: adaptive platform data identifies who needs intensive coaching each week, and students with IEPs, 504 plans, language plans, and below-grade-level gaps are matched to specialists in groups of no more than ten. Second, service minutes are written directly into IEPs and language plans as service delivery, met inside the school's most individualized block rather than bolted on around it. Third, coaching is universal, so no student can read "being coached" as a deficit marker. Architect Day also rejects the deficit lens at its root: the school holds that its highest-need students already possess elite executive function, and the block exists to transfer that strength into an academic context.

Avenue Two: Application Finals, the demonstration stage. Support is only half of convergence. Students with exceptionalities also need a stage where their mastery is visible on their own terms, and standardized, timed, single-format exams are the format most likely to mask their brilliance. Application Finals solve this directly. They are performance-based, multimodal, and iterative: a student demonstrates competence through a built artifact, a data dashboard, and an oral defense to a real industry panel, graded through a Pivot and Post-Mortem protocol that

rewards revision rather than a single high-stakes attempt. This is Universal Design for Learning applied to assessment, multiple means of expression, and it is where accommodations transfer without dilution. A multilingual learner defends in their full linguistic repertoire. A student with a reading disability proves systems mastery through what they have engineered. Consistent with Grant's finding that potential is revealed through iteration rather than one-off exams, Application Finals surface capability that traditional assessment leaves invisible. The founding leader observed this outcome repeatedly at AST High School, where students defended finals to medical professionals on the Anschutz campus and, through that defense, came to believe they belonged in the field. For students with exceptionalities, the Application Final is the moment the school stops measuring what they cannot yet do on a test and starts documenting what they can already build.

Avenue Three: The Heritage Language and Applied Linguistics Minor. Convergence is the point at which multilingualism stops being coursework and becomes professional practice with a public.

- The school generates its own demand for this work. Stoca Academy's Studios put students into Commerce City's industrial corridors, gathering air quality, soil, and water data and mapping it against public health outcomes, analyzing municipal zoning and infrastructure finance, and building systems solutions to local food and transit deficits. That work produces findings about conditions Commerce City residents are living inside, and a substantial share of those residents read Spanish first. The Minor is where the school's own community-facing research becomes accessible to the community it concerns. Students perform technical and civic localization of Stoca Academy's environmental, public health, and municipal findings, translating not word for word but for technical accuracy and audience, which is the actual professional discipline. Students also provide interpretation at Application Finals so that Spanish-speaking families and industry panelists are present in the room where student mastery is defended.

- This is credentialed practice, not volunteered labor. Many multilingual students have translated for their families since childhood, in medical offices, in legal proceedings, and in school conferences, carrying adult stakes without training, standing, or protection. Stoca Academy will not formalize that burden and call it enrichment. The distinction the school holds is between a student used as a translator and a student credentialed as one. Four conditions define the difference. Scope of work is defined in advance, and work outside that scope is declined. A credentialed adult holds professional responsibility for accuracy and for the student. Students may decline any assignment without academic penalty. And where the work is professional-grade and used by an outside party, the school's intent is that students are compensated as professionals rather than treated as a donated resource.

- The benefit to families is a consequence, not the claim. A student who holds the Colorado Seal of Biliteracy and verified industry credentials in applied linguistics advocates for their family from a position of professional standing rather than obligation. That standing is a downstream effect of credentialing the student. It is not the impact the program takes credit for producing.

- Non-heritage students hold support roles in work that heritage speakers lead. The Minor is open to every student, and its convergence work is structured so that heritage speakers direct the linguistic and community-facing decisions as the domain experts, while non-heritage students contribute through data, design, production, and logistics. This is deliberate. In most American classrooms, the monolingual English speaker is the default and the multilingual student adapts to them. Here that arrangement is inverted, and

the non-heritage student learns what it is to follow expertise they do not hold. This is the cultural-humility fieldwork of the World Language core made consequential, and it is the earned substance of the Cross-Cultural Leadership credential.

- External partnership is a stated intention, not a claimed relationship. The school intends to develop localization partnerships with Commerce City civic institutions, community organizations, and industry partners as the program matures. Partnerships will be designed within professional and legal constraints on the use of minors as interpreters, which are significant in healthcare and legal settings. Written technical and civic localization, school-hosted interpretation, and document translation under adult supervision are the school's primary vehicles for that reason.

Leadership Capacity

Stoca Academy's founding leader, Kryszelda Gorrell, brings fifteen years of instructional leadership with direct, measured responsibility for special populations.

As Associate School Director at DSST's Henry Middle School, where she also served as 7th grade Dean, Gorrell led the instructional leadership team and directed special education, bringing the special education program into full IEP and 504 compliance while narrowing academic growth gaps year over year. She held the same instructional and special education leadership at AST Middle School, where she built and rebuilt the special education program directly. Across both sites, responsible for the full instructional program and special education, she produced positive growth for students with disabilities in both ELA and math simultaneously, an outcome the disaggregated data flags as rare, and top-tier growth for multilingual learners in both subjects.

As Founding School Director of AST High School, those systems scaled and held under full accountability:

- Students with disabilities posted one of the smallest growth gaps in Aurora Public Schools, particularly in math, where gaps are typically largest, and reached 81% postsecondary enrollment.
- Multilingual learners reached 54% meeting ACCESS growth targets, one of only four high schools network-wide above 50%, and 86% postsecondary enrollment.

Two structural decisions drove these results and carry directly into Stoca Academy's design. First, special education is integrated into core instruction rather than run as a parallel system, so equity gains do not depend on pull-out. Second, leadership accountability for MLL and special education is held distinctly, a change that stabilized and improved MLL growth. The model in this application is the same model that produced this evidence.

To build founding-team capacity, the school will hire licensed and endorsed special educators and MLL specialists and contract related-service providers to the needs of enrolled students. The school's hiring profile screens every candidate for identity-aware relationship-building and the ability to build psychological safety without lowering expectations, the core competencies inclusion depends on.

F. Goals, Objectives, and Pupil Evaluation

Stoca Academy's accountability system rests on one principle: the school is judged first by growth and the equity of that growth, then by absolute achievement. Every goal below names a measure and a data source. The goals mature as the school matures. Interim growth data begins mid Year 1, state growth begins Year 2, and postsecondary, workforce readiness, and graduate credential metrics begin Year 4 with the first senior cohort. That schedule is a function of the one-grade-per-year build, not a hedge.

The numeric targets below are committed goals, grounded in prior results at Aurora Science and Tech High School (AST) and in CDE performance norms.

Priority Goals

Of the goals that follow, six are the school's priority goals: the north-star outcomes the Board and leadership treat as the primary test of the model. Every other goal in this section is a leading or supporting indicator that builds toward one of these six. This keeps the school focused on a small number of outcomes while still measuring the drivers that produce them.

Priority goal	***Why it leads***	***Target***
Top-quartile academic growth	*Growth, measured first, is the school's core accountability principle*	*School MGP ≥ 60 by Year 2, rising to ≥ 65 by Year 5*
Equity of growth	*Growth only counts if it is equitable*	*Gen-ed–to–SWD median-growth gap under 5 points; MLL growth at or above the school median, every year*
Green SPF plan type	*The state's summary judgment of the school*	*Earn a Performance ("green") plan type by Year 4 and sustain it*
Graduate industry credentials	*The signature outcome of the career-connected model*	*≥ 90% of graduates earn ≥ 4 industry credentials*
Postsecondary and workforce placement	*The ultimate test: where graduates actually land*	*≥ 85% placed in college, apprenticeship, or credentialed employment within six months*
Meet enrollment	*The organizational foundation that funds every other goal*	*≥ 100% of projected enrollment each year*

The remaining goals nest under these six as their drivers and leading indicators. The Mastery Floor, Application Finals pass rate, and within-year interim growth are leading indicators of top-quartile growth. Competitive pay, the longevity ladder, and staff retention are the financial and organizational drivers of it. Read this way, the full set is not a long list but a small number of outcomes shown alongside the measurable drivers that produce them.

School Goals

The goals form a single reinforcing cycle. Meeting enrollment produces stable per-pupil revenue. Stable revenue funds competitive, longevity-rewarding compensation. Competitive compensation retains effective educators. Retained educators produce strong student growth. Strong growth sustains demand and enrollment. Each goal category below is one link in that chain.

Academic goals

Goal	Measure	Data source	Target and timeline
Middle School			
Ready for the Studios	Percent of 8th graders meeting the full readiness profile	Internal readiness audit; mastery records	≥ 85% of 8th graders meet the profile before promotion to 9th
Academic Growth	Median Growth Percentile, ELA and math, grades 6–8	CMAS	MGP ≥ 60 by the second year of middle school operation
Academic Achievement	Percent meeting or exceeding expectations, grades 6–8	CMAS ELA, math, 8th grade science	At or above state mean by the third year of operation
Mastery Floor Attainment	Percent of students clearing the 90% mastery floor per cycle, by grade	Interim and mastery records	≥ 80% clear the floor each cycle, grades 6–12
MS Language Start	Percent of 8th graders meeting the grade-level World Language proficiency benchmark	Internal proficiency assessment	≥ 85% meet the benchmark on their track
High School			
Top-quartile academic growth	Median Growth Percentile (MGP), ELA and Math	State growth model (PSAT/SAT); growth-capable interim	School MGP ≥ 60 by Year 2, rising to ≥ 65 by Year 5
Equity of growth	Median growth gap between general education students and students with exceptionalities; MLL median growth	State growth model; interim, disaggregated	The gap in median growth between general education students and students with exceptionalities stays below 5 percentage points; MLL median growth at or above the school median, every year
Green SPF plan type	Overall plan type on the CSI/State School Performance Framework	CDE SPF / CSI CARS	Earn a **Performance** ("green") plan type by Year 4 and sustain it

College-ready achievement	SAT (EBRW + Math) school mean; SAT growth	PSAT 9/10, SAT	School SAT mean at or above the state mean by Year 4; SAT growth top quartile
Graduate micro-credentials	Percent of graduates earning at least four industry credentials	Credly issuance records; transcript audit	≥ 90% of graduates earn ≥ 4 credentials, from the first graduating class (Year 4)
Demonstrated mastery	Application Finals pass rate at "proficient" or above	Calibrated, panel-defended Application Finals	≥ 85% pass rate each year
Grade integrity and college competitiveness	(1) Alignment between course grades (GPA) and independent mastery evidence (Application Finals, SAT), reviewed by teacher and subgroup; (2) percent of students maintaining a cumulative GPA that keeps four-year college admission viable	Grade records compared with Finals and SAT results; transcript audit; divergence flags	Grades track demonstrated mastery with no systematic inflation, and divergence triggers a grading-calibration review. ≥ 80% of students maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher, remaining competitive for four-year college admission. Because integrity is measured jointly, this must be reached through genuine mastery, not inflation

Organizational goals

Goal	Measure	Data source	Target and timeline
Meet enrollment every year	Percent of projected enrollment realized at October Count in every grade level	CDE October Count; internal enrollment tracker	≥ 100% of projected enrollment each year; maintain a waitlist of 5% by Year 2
Student retention	Year-over-year student re-enrollment rate	Internal re-enrollment data	≥ 80% of eligible students re-enroll in the founding years, rising to ≥ 90% as the school matures
High School Matriculation	Percent of 8th graders enrolling in Stoca's 9th grade	Internal enrollment data	≥ 85% of 8th graders continue into 9th grade
Staff retention	Retention rate of effective-and-above educators	Internal HR data; evaluation ratings	≥ 85% of effective-and-above staff retained year over year
Attendance	Average daily attendance; chronic absenteeism rate	Attendance system	ADA ≥ 94%; chronic absenteeism at or below the state comparison rate

Family engagement	Family participation in conferences and Capstone defenses; annual satisfaction	Participation logs; annual family survey	≥ 65% participation in the founding years, building toward ≥ 85%; ≥ 85% satisfaction among families surveyed
Compliance	On-time, accurate state and authorizer submissions; IEP/504 compliance	Submission log; compliance audit	100% on-time submissions; 100% IEP and 504 compliance
Mission-aligned technology	Share of technology tools evaluated against the T.R.U.S.T. standard before adoption	Tool evaluation log; adoption records	100% of tools clear a T.R.U.S.T. evaluation before adoption; only mission-aligned, T.R.U.S.T.-passing tools are used

Family engagement and re-enrollment targets ramp deliberately. Many Commerce City families have not been invited into genuine partnership with a school before, so the founding-years targets reflect that starting reality. The goal is to build the systems that raise both over time, not to assume trust the school has not yet earned.

Financial goals

Goal	Measure	Data source	Target and timeline
Strong financial foundation	Unrestricted days cash on hand; fund balance; net income	Monthly financials; annual audit	Days cash ≥ 30 by Year 1, ≥ 45 by Year 3, ≥ 60 by Year 5; positive net income from Year 1
Competitive educator pay	Base salary benchmarked against the regional and authorizer comparison set	Salary benchmarking; budget	Base salary at or above the regional median, funded and sustained
Honor longevity	A funded longevity ladder; average raise for returning educators	Compensation schedule; payroll	A published longevity step schedule in place by opening; returning-educator raises ≥ 3% annually
Transition to PERA responsibly	Days cash on hand; consecutive years of positive net operating income; board-adopted transition resolution	Monthly financials; annual audit; board minutes	The school opens on a private 401k model and commits to electing into Colorado PERA once it sustains ≥ 60 days cash and two consecutive years of positive net operating income, provided the model confirms it remains above 45 days cash in the year after adoption. The board reviews PERA-readiness at each annual budget adoption beginning Year 3; any decision to defer once triggers are met must be

			documented with a specific financial rationale.
Revenue stability	Enrollment variance; actual vs. budgeted revenue	October Count; monthly financials	Revenue within ±3% of budget; enrollment variance at or below 3%
Mission-aligned spending	Share of expenditures that is instructional and student-facing	Annual budget; audit	Instructional spending share ≥ 60%

Mission- and model-specific goals

CSI invites unique measures, and the Board weighs them in authorization decisions. These are the goals that make Stoca legible on its own terms. Several are not standard charter goals and are elevated here deliberately.

Goal	Measure	Data source	Target and timeline
Close the proficiency-credited gap	The distance between proficiency students demonstrate (Application Finals) and proficiency the system credits (SAT/PSAT), tracked by subgroup	Finals scores vs. standardized results, disaggregated	Narrow the gap year over year, with the largest reduction for MLL students
Build Science Identity	Composite score across the four Science Identity dimensions (Fascination, Values, Competency Beliefs, Scientific Sensemaking)	Validated Science Identity survey, administered fall and spring	Each cohort's composite rises ≥ 5 points from 9th to 12th grade
Exit as a program metric for MLLs	English proficiency growth and reclassification rate	WIDA ACCESS; reclassification records	ACCESS growth and reclassification at or above state rates. Exit is measured as a test of the program, not of the student.
Guard against inequitable identification	Subgroup representation in special education and gifted identification	Identification data, reviewed against enrollment	A structural review is triggered whenever any subgroup is over- or under-represented in identification
Complete the pathway	Major declaration rate; Capstone defense pass rate	Registration; Capstone panel scores	≥ 95% declare a Major by end of 10th; ≥ 90% pass the defended Capstone

Postsecondary and workforce placement	Percent of graduates in postsecondary education, an apprenticeship, or credentialed employment within six months	Graduate follow-up; National Student Clearinghouse	≥ 85% placed, from the first graduating class
The on-ramp works	Growth and mastery performance of students who completed Stoca's middle school, compared with 9th grade entrants from other schools	9th grade interim and mastery data, disaggregated by entry point	Middle school completers meet or exceed the 9th grade cohort median. Any shortfall triggers revision of the middle school program, not of the readiness bar

State Accountability Goals (SPF Plan Type, Years 1 and 2)

Stoca's anticipated plan type is **Performance** ("green"), the target the school commits to reaching and sustaining once all indicators carry sufficient data. The framework matures on a fixed schedule: achievement is measurable in Year 1, growth first appears in Year 2, and postsecondary and workforce readiness first appears in Year 4 with the first senior cohort. Years 1 and 2 goals reflect that reality.

State indicator	Year 1 goal	Year 2 goal
Academic Achievement	PSAT 9 participation ≥ 95%; establish baseline; school mean at or above the state mean where reportable	PSAT 9 and 10 school mean at or above the state mean in EBRW and Math
Academic Growth	Not yet reported by the state. Interim proxy: ≥ 60% of students meet fall-to-spring growth targets on the growth-capable interim	First reported MGP ≥ 55 school-wide, with MLL and SWD MGP at or above the school median
Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness	Not applicable until the first graduating class (Year 4). Leading indicators tracked: attendance, credits on-track, ICAP completion	Not applicable (Year 4). Same leading indicators tracked and reported

Evaluation and Academic Progress

Progress is measured at three grain sizes and on a fixed cadence. **Individual students** are monitored on every interim cycle and every Application Final. **Cohorts** are reviewed at each interim window and at the end of each term. **The school as a whole** is reviewed each quarter, with the deepest review over the summer, against the goals above.

Within the year, the cadence is: a growth-capable interim in fall, winter, and spring; unit-level common assessments throughout; Application Finals at the close of each cycle; and the PSAT/SAT suite on the state schedule. Weekly data drives the tiered coaching that happens on the Architect Day, where support is directed to the students furthest from their growth targets.

Collecting, analyzing, using, and reporting data

The cycle is deliberate and repeats on every interim window:

1. **Collect.** Interim, common assessment, and Finals data are entered into the school's data system.
2. **Analyze.** Teams disaggregate results by subgroup at data meetings, identifying which students and which standards are off track.
3. **Refine.** Findings drive reteaching, intervention placement, Architect Day coaching assignments, and adjustments to pacing.
4. **Report.** Families receive plain-language student growth reports each cycle. The governing board receives a performance dashboard. State results are reported publicly through the SPF.

All student data is handled under the T.R.U.S.T. standard defined in Section D: data is used to support growth, never to label, track, or limit a student, and assessment tools are audited for bias.

Roles and responsibilities

Position	Responsibility
Director of Academics and Innovation	Owns the assessment calendar and data analysis; interprets data for teachers; leads data-informed professional development
Classroom teachers	Administer assessments; analyze their own class and student data; adjust instruction
Executive Director / Principal	Owns school-level accountability; reports to the board; acts on corrective triggers
Director of Technology and AI Integration	Maintains the data systems and dashboards; ensures data governance under T.R.U.S.T.
Dean of Culture and Students	Owns attendance, engagement, and behavior data feeding the leading indicators

Assessment

Primary Interim Assessments

The growth engine is a nationally normed, growth-capable interim administered in fall, winter, and spring. The leading candidate is NWEA MAP Growth or an equivalent instrument that produces a comparable normed growth metric, with final selection completed in Year 0.

This interim aligns with the model, curriculum, goals, and standards in four ways: it produces the growth metric that anchors the school's flagship goals; it meets each student at their actual level, matching the mastery-based core; it is standards-aligned to Colorado Academic Standards; and it generates the within-year growth data the Architect Day coaching depends on.

Two additional instruments complete the system. Application Finals, calibrated and defended to panels, are the primary evidence of mastery and real-world transfer. The PSAT 9/10 and SAT suite provide the college-legible achievement and growth measures used in the SPF.

Kindergarten School Readiness and READ Act

Not applicable. Stoca serves grades 6 through 12 only.

Progress monitoring for MLLs and students with IEPs

Stoca projects a multilingual-learner population well above the 20% threshold, so this applies fully.

Population	Progress monitoring tool	Cadence
Multilingual learners	WIDA ACCESS for English proficiency; the growth-capable interim disaggregated for MLL status; WIDA screener at intake	ACCESS annually; interim each window
Students with IEPs	Goal-aligned curriculum-based measurement and progress probes tied to each IEP goal; the growth interim disaggregated	At each IEP-defined interval; interim each window

Consistent with the T.R.U.S.T. standard and Section E, these tools are used to monitor growth and inform support, and to guard against both misidentification and the under-service of students already identified.

Response to Data

When school-wide, classroom, or individual performance falls below a goal or an authorizer expectation, the response is structured, not discretionary.

Acting Early: Predictive Data and Quarterly Cycles

Stoca acts on data before the state does. Interim and internal measures are treated as predictive, forecasting state outcomes months ahead, so the school intervenes while there is still time to change the result rather than waiting for a state report that arrives too late to act on.

The school also checks its own instruments. Each year, Stoca compares its internal results against state results. A large gap between what internal assessments credit and what the state credits is not treated only as a student problem; it is a signal that the school's own measurement may be miscalibrated. That discrepancy is used to audit and tighten the accuracy of internal assessment, which directly serves the proficiency-credited gap goal.

Analysis runs on a quarterly cadence. At the close of each quarter, leadership and teams step back from the data to set the instructional focus and the spending priorities for the quarter ahead. The deepest analysis happens over the summer, when a full year of data informs the launch of the next year. Since Stoca adds a grade every year, each summer cycle does two things at once: it responds to the data the school just generated, and it plans for the growth the next year brings.

Identifying and Reducing Opportunity Gaps

Every data set is disaggregated by subgroup at the point of analysis. A gap between any subgroup and the school median is itself the trigger for action. Two structural safeguards operate continuously: the Architect Day directs its most intensive coaching to the students furthest from their growth targets, and the identification-review trigger flags any subgroup that is over- or under-represented in special education or gifted identification.

Data Informed Decision Making

Data flows into three channels.It sets the agenda for professional development, which is delivered through one-on-one instructional coaching, whole-staff professional development, and grade-level and department Professional Learning Community (PLC) time. It drives instructional adjustment on every interim cycle. It informs teacher and leader evaluation through rubrics that weight growth and the equity of growth over absolute achievement. The coaching and evaluation lines are kept explicit and separate: coaching data develops educators, and teacher-owned reflection video is used for development only and is never an evaluation input.

Escalation ladder

Level	Trigger	Owner	Timeline	Possible changes
Classroom	A class or student off track on an interim window	Teacher and instructional coach	Reviewed every 2 to 4 weeks	Reteaching, intervention placement, coaching intensity, pacing
Grade or department	A cohort or subgroup off track across a term	Director of Academics and Innovation	Reviewed each interim window	Curriculum supports, schedule adjustments, targeted PD
School	A goal or SPF expectation missed for the year	Executive Director and governing board	Reviewed each quarter and over the summer	Staffing, curriculum, calendar, budget reallocation to instruction

Goals and Evaluation Capacity

Stoca Academy's leadership brings a proven record of running exactly the performance-management systems this section describes, at scale and with this population.

The founder, Kryszelda Gorrell, built that record. As Founding School Director of AST High School, she led the building of the highest-performing secondary school in Aurora Public Schools on the state framework, the direct result of a data-driven performance-management system. Under that system, Black students posted the fourth-highest median math growth in Colorado (94th percentile statewide), students with disabilities held some of the smallest growth gaps in the district, and AST recorded the highest SAT composite in APS. Earlier, as Associate School Director at DSST's Henry Middle School, she inherited a special education program resolving a standing compliance concern and brought it to 100% IEP and 504 compliance within a year, while the school posted the largest fall-to-winter MAP growth in the network. These results demonstrate fluency in the disciplines this section names: interim assessment, growth analysis, subgroup disaggregation, compliance, and corrective action.

Stoca's design turns that individual record into an institutional capability, owned by a cabinet that is built in phases rather than seated all at once. At opening, the Executive Director and the Dean of Culture and Students are the seated leadership. The Director of Academics and Innovation, on a successor track, is added as the school scales and owns assessment and data. Operations and finance are delivered in the ramp years through a contracted back-office provider with governmental-accounting experience, supported by an in-house Business Manager, rather than through a full-time director; this is reflected in the budget and described in Section G. The Director of Technology and AI Integration, who will own the data systems and their governance, is phased in as the program's technology footprint grows. The Executive Director owns accountability to the board and the authorizer throughout. This phasing is deliberate on two counts: it protects the school's cash position during the ramp, and it embeds the performance-management practice that produced these results in the team and the systems, so it outlasts any one member. This is not a plan the leadership hopes to learn. It is the system its members have already run.

G. Budget & Finance

Budget

Stoca's financial model is built on transparency rather than optimism. The budget uses the private-employment (401(k)) model and projects the fundable ramp: one grade of approximately 125 students added each year, from 125 in Year 1 to 650 by Year 5, with the 6–12 program reaching its mature build of 950 students beyond the five-year window.

At Year 1 enrollment of 125 students, Stoca projects $3,652,997 in total revenue, of which $1,765,750 is per-pupil revenue at $14,126 per pupil, growing to $15,958 by Year 4. The balance is state categorical, federal, and philanthropic revenue detailed below.

Year 1 Revenue Assumptions

Source	Year 1 amount	Basis
Per-pupil revenue	$1,765,750	125 funded pupils × $14,126 (applying the new funding formula at expected implementation with estimated demographics)
State categorical (Mill Levy Equalization, Capital Construction, ECEA/SPED, G&T, Facilities Incentive)	$465,719	CSI provided assumptions; sized to funded counts
Federal (IDEA, Title I, Title II, meal reimbursement)	$201,695	CSI provided assumptions;, sized to eligible counts
Local (student fees)	$9,844	Board fee schedule, waived for eligible families
Philanthropy (CSF + private contributions)	$1,209,989	Start-up bridge (see Philanthropy Strategy)
Total revenue	**$3,652,997**	

Recurring public operating revenue (excluding one-time philanthropy and start-up capital) is approximately $2,443,008 in Year 1, scaling to $10,839,447 by Year 4 as enrollment fills.

Multi-year revenue ramp

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Funded pupils	125	250	375	500
Per-pupil revenue rate	$14,126	$14,771	$15,418	$15,958
Recurring public revenue	$2.44M	$5.09M	$7.90M	$10.84M

Revenue is budgeted on the funded pupil count Stoca expects to certify at the October count, not on applications or letters of intent, consistent with the Financial Policies. The budget shows positive net operating income from Year 1, and positive net income, with philanthropy in place, from Year 1, and sustains both. It reaches 30 days cash on hand in Year 1, rising to roughly 60 days by Year 3, ahead of the reserve floor the Financial Policies require.

The Fixed-Cost Floor and the Start-Up Funding Case

Approximately 85 to 90 percent of Stoca's Year 1 costs are fixed or compliance-required: the facility, leadership, the Studios faculty, special-education and multilingual services, and the contracted back-office finance function cost the same at 100 students as at 125. A new school therefore pays for a nearly full school before enrollment scales. Philanthropy is not a cushion on a balanced budget; it is the structural bridge that carries the fixed-cost base through the ramp years until per-pupil revenue fills in. This is why start-up funding is a structural necessity, not optimism, and why the fundraising target is sized to the downside enrollment scenario and required reserves, not to the base-case plan.

One-time launch costs, tenant improvements, furniture, technology, and curriculum, are funded by the CSP/GSC start-up grant across Year 0 and Year 1 and are non-recurring. The multi-year forecast shows the recurring public revenue that covers operations once the grant period ends, so the school does not build a permanent cost base on temporary money.

Philanthropy Strategy

Across the ramp, Stoca's cumulative funding need beyond recurring public revenue is approximately $3.94 million. It has two distinct parts, and the school plans them separately:

Component	Amount	Status
CSP / GSC start-up grant	~$2.0M	Requested; $2.0M working request modeled in the GSC budget
Philanthropy beyond the grant	~$1.9M	Part committed-in-progress, part active target (below)

The philanthropy is planned in two tranches, committed and uncommitted, and Stoca is explicit about which is which.

The Colorado Schools Fund has provided a written letter of support to the CSI Board and anticipates considering the school for a grant of up to approximately $1,000,000, subject to its due diligence and board approval (CSF Support Letter, Attachment). CSF describes such funding as integral to the school's launch, including securing a facility and hiring staff before opening. This is roughly half of the philanthropy needed, anchored by a credible institutional funder whose mission is launching schools for exactly this population.

The remaining approximately $0.9–1.0 million is Stoca's active fundraising target, and it is planned, not left open. Seat 2 of the board (fundraising and development) owns this work as a governance priority. The school pursues it through three channels with rough targets: Colorado education foundations aligned to charter launch and workforce-connected schooling (target $400–600K), the founding leadership's professional and philanthropic networks (target $200–300K), and the partnership channels the Colorado Schools Fund opens as its due diligence proceeds (target $100–300K). The sequence is dated to the go/no-go decision: a winter Year 0 checkpoint confirms progress, and the funding sized to the minimum-enrollment scenario must be secured by the spring Year 0 decision.

The go/no-go gate below applies to funding as well as enrollment: the board opens only if the philanthropy sized to the minimum-enrollment scenario is secured by the decision date, and delays a full year otherwise. The uncommitted $1M is therefore de-risked structurally, not by assuming it arrives, but by refusing to open without it.

Financial Management

Stoca's finance function is structured for strong internal controls from opening, using the same pairing that recently approved CSI schools rely on: a contracted back-office Business Services Provider with governmental-accounting and charter experience, supported by an in-house Business Manager, and overseen by a board Finance Committee chaired by a Treasurer with financial credentials (Seat 1, a CPA or equivalent finance professional). As the school scales, a Director of Operations and Finance assumes internal ownership; the controls do not change, only the party performing them.

The school maintains segregation of duties so that no individual controls a transaction end to end, with compensating controls documented where a vacancy makes full separation impossible. It follows the CDE Chart of Accounts and the modified accrual basis, adopts board-approved expenditure and contract authority tiers, and enforces payment-fraud controls including call-back verification of banking changes. The complete controls, roles, and thresholds are set out in the Financial Policies and Procedures (Attachment G_Financial Policies).

Reserves and Financial Transparency

Stoca maintains three reserves: the TABOR emergency reserve (3% of fiscal-year spending) held unrestricted, an operating reserve measured in days cash on hand, and a capital and facility reserve. Because a new school cannot reach its mature target immediately, the board adopts a ramp: at least 45 days cash by the end of Year 3 and at least 60 days by the end of Year 5, with an absolute floor of 30 days, consistent with the Financial Policies and the goals in Section F. Days cash on hand is reported to the board monthly, and any indicator outside its target carries a written explanation and corrective action.

The school operates in full compliance with the Colorado Public School Financial Transparency Act: it adopts its budget in a public meeting, posts required financial documents within two clicks of its homepage, and presents its independent annual audit publicly. An independent audit is conducted in every year of operation including the first,

with a Single Audit under 2 CFR Part 200 in any year federal awards exceed the threshold, a condition the start-up grant is expected to trigger.

Contingency Plan

Stoca's minimum viable Year 1 enrollment is 100 students, a floor set by the cost structure above rather than chosen arbitrarily: below 100, the fixed-cost base cannot be covered even with start-up funding. Dropping from the planned 125 to 100 reduces revenue by approximately $490,000 while cutting less than $160,000 in cost. The school's Year 1 costs exceed non-philanthropic revenue by approximately $1.19 million, bridged by approximately $1.21 million in start-up grant and philanthropic funding. This is why the fundraising target is sized to fully cover the ramp-year gap, not a fraction of it.

If enrollment lands at the minimum, Stoca protects its non-negotiable elements to the last dollar, the Interdisciplinary Studios and their faculty, the industry-credential program, Architect Day, and the leadership-teaches model, and absorbs the shortfall in a set order: first by raising class size toward its ceiling of 30 where enrollment allows, then by consolidating one Minor pathway on demonstrated interest and success data with clear rationale to families, and only last by trimming electives and non-Studios specialist roles. The Year 1 AI and technology investment is treated as fixed, since it cannot be built incrementally.

The board makes a final open-or-delay decision by the spring of Year 0 and commits to opening only if at least 100% of minimum enrollment (100 students) is secured in signed Letters of Intent by that date, with a 75% checkpoint by winter, and only with a confirmed capital pathway for the facility and an executed lease. If the enrollment threshold or the funding sized to the minimum scenario is not met, the school delays opening by one year rather than open under-resourced. Every proposed budget is adopted with this downside case attached, per the Financial Policies.

Budget and Finance Capacity

Stoca does not claim an operating history; it is a new school. Its financial capacity rests on three things. First, the founding Executive Director held direct budget, compliance-calendar, and financial-reporting accountability as Founding School Director of Aurora Science and Tech, an authorizer-and-network-accountable role at a school serving students very much like these. Second, the finance structure supplies professional governmental-accounting capacity from opening through the contracted provider and the board's finance CPA, the same control pairing CSI has accepted in recently approved schools. Third, the board is deliberately composed to hold the school's two largest financial risks: Seat 1 (finance and accounting) provides board-level oversight distinct from staff, and Seat 2 (fundraising and development) leads the philanthropic strategy that bridges the ramp years. The founding team's discipline is demonstrated in the rigor of this plan itself: a stress-tested downside floor, a complete policy framework, and a budget that names its own risks rather than hiding them.

H. Governance & Leadership

Stoca Academy's governing board is in formation. The founding leadership is actively recruiting and interviewing a mission-aligned governing board against the published skills matrix, and the community-parent seat is being filled deliberately from engaged families who understand the model, rather than filled quickly. Reserving that seat for an authentic community voice, rather than seating it out of convenience, is a deliberate strategy, not a delay. This

section describes the governance structure, board composition and required competencies, roles and responsibilities, policy framework, and the recruitment timeline through the 2028–29 opening.

The board's formation timeline is driven by a specific commitment made elsewhere in this application: under the grade-span decision rule in Section B, the governing board reviews verified Letter of Intent counts and sets the opening grade configuration by October 2027. The board must therefore be seated, trained, and functioning well before that date, with sufficient context to exercise independent judgment rather than ratify a decision already made.

Board Structure

Stoca Academy will be governed by a self-perpetuating nonprofit board of directors, incorporated in Colorado as a nonprofit corporation and operating as a public charter school authorized by the Colorado Charter School Institute.

The board holds legal and fiduciary responsibility for the school, it does not manage the school. The distinction is enforced structurally: the board governs through the Executive Director, its single employee, and directs school operations only through that role.

Body	Role
Governing Board	Fiduciary oversight, policy, hiring and evaluating the Executive Director, approving the budget, monitoring performance against the goals in Section F, and ensuring legal compliance
Executive Director	Day-to-day leadership and management of the school; reports to the board; accountable for the goals in Section F
Advisory councils	Non-fiduciary expertise and community voice; advise the board and Executive Director; hold no governing authority

The Executive Director does not hold a voting seat on the board. Because the board hires, evaluates, compensates, and may dismiss the Executive Director, the Executive Director attends board meetings and reports to the board but does not vote.

Board Development

The founding board comprises five voting members, with bylaws permitting expansion to nine as the school opens and family representation grows.

Five is a deliberate founding size. A board of this size can be recruited, trained, and brought to genuine working knowledge of the school within the timeline above, and small boards attend. The school accepts the corresponding constraints and manages them explicitly: an odd number avoids tie votes; quorum is three; and members are recruited with an explicit attendance commitment, because with five members two absences reduce the board to bare quorum and a conflict-of-interest recusal can do the same.

Required competencies

Board composition is designed to complement, not duplicate, the expertise the founding Executive Director brings. Because the Executive Director's background covers instructional leadership, special education and compliance, school culture, curriculum design, performance management, and AI strategy, the board is composed primarily of non-academic expertise, concentrated on the risks most capable of preventing the school from opening or operating.

Seat	Primary competency	Why this seat
1	**Finance and accounting** (CPA, CFO, or nonprofit finance)	The school runs a pre-philanthropy deficit through its ramp years and depends on start-up and philanthropic funding to bridge it. Board-level financial oversight is the principal safeguard. Board-level financial oversight is the principal safeguard, distinct from the school's financial consultant.
2	**Fundraising and development**	Start-up and philanthropic funding bridges the ramp years. This is the single greatest financial risk to opening.
3	**Real estate, facilities, or construction**	The school must secure an interim facility and later a purpose-fit permanent facility in a constrained geography, including zoning, build-out, and lease negotiation.
4	**Commerce City community leadership, held by a parent or guardian**	Ensures the community the school serves holds a fiduciary voice, not only an advisory one, and grounds the school's legitimacy in the community rather than in its founders.
5	**Legal**, preferably with data privacy or education law depth	Charter contract, employment, Open Meetings Law, FERPA and student data privacy, and IDEA compliance.

The Community and Parent Seat

Seat 4 is held by a Commerce City parent or guardian and is designed to carry genuine weight rather than symbolic presence. Two commitments govern it.

- **Recruitment guards against selection bias.** The parent most easily recruited to a board is often the parent most comfortable in formal governance settings, which risks seating a voice unrepresentative of the school's population. Stoca recruits deliberately against this, and adapts the seat to the member rather than requiring the member to adapt to board convention: meeting times that accommodate shift work, materials available in Spanish, interpretation as needed, and structured governance onboarding.
- **One seat is not the whole family voice.** The parent seat carries a fiduciary voice. The Family Advisory Council described below carries breadth. Neither substitutes for the other, and the board does not treat the presence of one parent as evidence that families have been consulted.

Independence and Dissent

The board is recruited for its willingness to disagree with the Executive Director. A founding board convened around a founder's vision is structurally prone to deference, and the resulting failure is not visible as conflict but as agreement sustained until something breaks.

Stoca therefore names independent judgment as a qualification for board service, states it in the board member role description, and includes it in board self-evaluation. At least two members are expected to demonstrate a track record of independent challenge in prior governance or professional roles.

Planned Expansion

Bylaws permit a board of five to nine. Anticipated additions after opening include a second parent or guardian seat, an industry partner seat aligned to one of the school's Career Majors, and a seat addressing talent or marketing and enrollment as the school scales.

Advisory Councils

Advisory councils provide expertise and community voice without governance overhead, and are far more accessible to recruit because they carry no fiduciary duty, no Open Meetings Law obligation, and a lighter time commitment. They hold no governing authority.

Council	Composition	Purpose
Family Advisory Council	Parents and guardians across grades, recruited to reflect the school's demographics; conducted in English and Spanish	Family voice in school decision-making; breadth that a single board seat cannot provide
Industry Advisory Council	Partners from the Human Health, Planetary Health, and Economic Health sectors	Validate Major and Minor curricula against real industry practice; host experiential placements; serve on Application Finals and Capstone defense panels
AI Ethics and Governance Advisor	An independent specialist in AI governance, algorithmic bias, or student data privacy	Independent review of the T.R.U.S.T. framework in practice, including bias audits and data-privacy practice. Deliberately independent of school leadership so that the school's most distinctive claim is checked rather than self-certified
Student Voice	Students, structure determined after opening	Student perspective on culture and program

Board Operations

Meetings. The board meets monthly during the pre-opening period and at least monthly thereafter, in full compliance with the Colorado Open Meetings Law (C.R.S. 24-6-401 et seq.) and the Colorado Open Records Act (C.R.S. 24-72-201 et seq.). Meeting notices, agendas, and minutes are posted publicly. The board will begin formally meeting and

operating in accordance with Open Meetings Law upon seating of the founding board, targeted for **2027**, ahead of the October 2027 decision point.

Committees. The founding board operates with a minimum committee structure appropriate to its size: a Finance Committee and an Executive Director Evaluation function. Additional committees are added as the board expands.

Board development. Every member completes onboarding covering fiduciary duty, Open Meetings and Open Records requirements, charter school governance, the CSI Performance Framework, and the school's model and goals. The board conducts an annual self-evaluation that includes its own independence and the quality of its challenge to leadership.

Executive Director evaluation. The board evaluates the Executive Director annually against the leader rubric and the goals in Section F, which weight growth and equity of growth over absolute achievement. The board's evidence base includes staff-experience survey data, and the gap between leader self-rating and staff-reported experience is named as primary evidence for the rubric's self-knowledge criterion.

Conflicts of Interest: Disclosure and Mitigation

Stoca discloses potential conflicts proactively rather than waiting for a policy to surface them. The board will adopt a Conflict of Interest Policy, based on CSI's sample, requiring annual written disclosure from every board member and the Executive Director and recusal from any decision in which a member holds a financial or personal interest.

Two existing relationships involving the founding Executive Director are disclosed now:

- **Real estate interests and the facility search.** The founding Executive Director holds an ownership interest in a real estate development in the Denver metro area. Stoca will need to secure a facility in Commerce City. While the development interest is unrelated to any property Stoca is likely to pursue, the combination could create a perceived conflict in facility decisions. Mitigation: the Executive Director will disclose these interests in writing, will recuse from any facility decision that intersects with them, and will not participate in any Urban Renewal Authority matter involving a Stoca facility. Facility expertise on the board is held independently by the Seat 3 director (real estate and facilities), separate from the Executive Director.
- **Community relationships and board recruitment.** The Executive Director is actively building relationships with community members, including a parent under consideration for the community-parent board seat. To guard against seating a board out of personal proximity rather than fit, candidates are vetted against the published skills matrix, and the community-parent candidate is being routed first through the Family Advisory Council rather than directly onto the board.

The board's annual conflict-of-interest disclosure, recusal practice, and the standalone Conflict of Interest Policy govern these and any future conflicts on an ongoing basis.

Policy Framework

The following governing documents are adopted prior to opening and attached as available:

Document	Status

Articles of Incorporation	To be filed
Bylaws	To be adopted, permitting a board of five to nine
Conflict of Interest Policy, with annual disclosure	Drafted; see attachments
Board Member Job Description and Agreement	Drafted; see attachments
Enrollment and Lottery Policy	Drafted; see attachments
Grievance and Complaint Policy	Drafted; see attachments
Discipline Policy	See Section C
Financial Policies and Procedures	Drafted; see attachments. To be adopted with the Finance Committee

Recruitment Plan and Timeline

Period	Action
Immediate	Finalize the board member role description and skills matrix; identify and cultivate candidates through the school's professional, community, and philanthropic networks, prioritizing the finance, fundraising, and community-parent seats
2026–2027	Seat founding members; file Articles of Incorporation; adopt bylaws and conflict of interest policy; begin formal public meetings under Open Meetings Law; complete board onboarding
Through 2027	Establish the Finance Committee; adopt financial policies; convene advisory councils; ensure members hold sufficient working knowledge of enrollment data to exercise independent judgment
October 2027	**Board reviews verified Letter of Intent counts and sets the opening grade configuration** under the Section B decision rule
2027–2028	Approve the opening budget; approve the facility decision; complete Executive Director evaluation cycle design

School Accountability Committee

Stoca convenes a School Accountability Committee (SAC) in accordance with C.R.S. 22-11-402. The SAC is a statutory body distinct from the school's advisory councils, with a defined composition and duties.

Composition. The SAC includes, at minimum, the Executive Director or designee, at least one teacher, at least three parents or guardians of enrolled students, and at least one adult community member. Because Stoca serves secondary grades, the committee may also include student members. Parents and community members are recruited to reflect the school's demographics, with meetings and materials made accessible in English and Spanish, consistent with the school's Family Advisory Council practice.

Duties. The SAC makes recommendations to the Executive Director on the school's priorities for spending, and to the Executive Director and the governing board on preparation and implementation of the school's Unified Improvement Plan. It reviews school performance data, provides input on the budget, and advises on family and community engagement. The SAC meets at least quarterly and reports to the governing board.

Relationship to other bodies. The SAC carries the school's statutory accountability function. The Family Advisory Council carries a broader family voice, and the two share membership and information but are not the same body. Neither substitutes for the fiduciary voice of the community-parent board seat.

Governance Capacity

Stoca's governing board is in formation, and this section describes both the governance experience the founding leadership brings and the deliberate design of the board being recruited.

Stoca's founding leadership has operated as the accountable executive to a governing body. As Founding School Director of Aurora Science and Tech (AST) High School, the founding leadership reported to a network board and an authorizer, presented performance data against a formal accountability framework, and was evaluated against it. That work included the practical substance of governance: preparing board-facing performance reporting, managing budget approval and compliance calendars, and answering to an authorizer for academic and operational results. The founding leadership has been on the receiving end of governance done well, which directly informs how Stoca is designing the board it will report to.

Stoca's founding leadership holds a master's degree from Columbia University's Summer Principals Academy, which includes formal preparation in school governance, finance, and law, and completed MIT's AI Strategy and Leadership program, which grounds the board-level technology governance the T.R.U.S.T. framework required.

Stoca is recruiting a founding board of five, deliberately composed to complement rather than duplicate the founding leadership's expertise. Because that expertise covers instructional leadership, special education and compliance, school culture, curriculum design, performance management, and AI strategy, the board is composed primarily of non-academic expertise, concentrated on the risks most capable of preventing the school from opening or operating: finance and accounting, fundraising and development, real estate and facilities, legal, and Commerce City community leadership held by a parent or guardian. Every member completes onboarding covering fiduciary duty, the Colorado Open Meetings and Open Records requirements, charter school governance, and the CSI Performance Framework.

Stoca names independent judgment as a requirement for board service. At least two members are recruited with a demonstrated track record of independent challenge in prior governance or professional roles, the expectation is stated in the board member role description, and the board's annual self-evaluation assesses the quality of its challenge to leadership.

Governance capacity at Stoca is a function of the board, not of the founding leadership alone. The board's formation is driven by a specific commitment: under the grade-span decision rule in Section B, the governing board reviews verified Letter of Intent counts and sets the opening grade configuration by October 2027. The board must therefore

be seated, trained, and holding genuine working knowledge of the school well before that date, with sufficient context to exercise independent judgment rather than ratify a decision already made. Resumes, biographies, and a completed skills matrix are attached as members are seated.

I. Operations

Student and Staff Data Systems

Stoca's data system is a single, AI-enhanced Student Information System (SIS) that serves as the school's authoritative system of record. The school deliberately runs one integrated system rather than a patchwork, so that student data lives in one governed place, reporting is accurate, and the privacy surface is as small as possible. The SIS is selected against three priorities, in this order: compliance, privacy, and AI-enabled efficiency.

Priority 1: Accurate compliance and reporting

The SIS must reliably meet all Colorado Department of Education and CSI reporting requirements, including state data collections, funding and pupil-count reporting, special education and multilingual-learner reporting, assessment data, and the CSI reporting calendar. This is the non-negotiable function of the system, and no other feature is allowed to compromise it. The system Stoca selects will have a proven Colorado state-reporting track record, so that accurate reporting is a solved problem from day one rather than a build.

Priority 2: Student-data privacy

Stoca treats student data as a trust to be protected. The SIS and all related systems will comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Colorado Student Data Transparency and Security Act (C.R.S. 22-16-101 et seq.). The school will maintain:

- Role-based access controls, so staff see only the data their role requires. Records for students with IEPs, 504 plans, and language services are access-restricted to the staff serving those students.
- Data-privacy agreements with every vendor that touches student data, consistent with Colorado's requirements, and public posting of those agreements as the law requires.
- Data minimization, collecting only what is needed, and a breach-response protocol.
- Governance under the school's T.R.U.S.T. framework (Section D), which requires that AI use and data flows are transparent to families, audited, and never operate as a black box.

The Director of Technology and AI Integration owns data governance once seated; until then, the Executive Director holds data-governance accountability, supported by the contracted back-office provider.

Priority 3: AI-enhanced workflows across the organization

Consistent with Stoca's identity as an AI-empowered school, the SIS is chosen for its ability to streamline the operational work that otherwise consumes staff time, so that adults spend their time on students rather than on paperwork. One integrated system supports many facets of the organization from a single source of truth:

- Early-warning analytics that surface attendance, academic, and engagement patterns for advisor review, feeding the MTSS process (Section E).

- Workflow automation for enrollment, scheduling, gradebook, and compliance tasks.
- Family communication in English and Spanish, integrated with the student record.
- Special education, 504, MLL, and MTSS case management within the same governed system.

In every case, AI streamlines and surfaces; it does not decide. Consistent with T.R.U.S.T., any AI-generated insight informs a qualified adult's judgment and never replaces it, and no AI function reduces the accuracy or auditability of state reporting.

Selection and implementation

Stoca has evaluated **PowerSchool** and **Synergy (Edupoint)** as finalists. Both are established, compliance-grade student information systems with a proven Colorado state-reporting record, FERPA-aligned data-governance controls, native AI and analytics capabilities, and the breadth to support the SIS core alongside special education, enrollment, and communication in one system. PowerSchool is the most widely used K-12 SIS in North America; Synergy is a strong compliance-focused platform. The final selection is completed during Year 0 procurement (Start-Up Plan), evaluated against the three priorities above and total cost of ownership for a lean founding team.

The school will also evaluate CSI's shared-instance option where it lowers cost and strengthens reporting alignment, provided the selected system meets Stoca's AI-workflow requirements.

Alongside the SIS, Stoca will procure aligned systems for payroll and human resources (through the contracted back-office provider) and for special education plan management, integrated with the SIS wherever possible to preserve the single-source-of-truth principle. Evidence of the purchased data systems, the implementation timeline, and staff training will be provided per the CSI Year 0 milestones, so the system is fully functional and staff are trained before the first day of school.

Staffing

Summary: Full Build (6–12, 950 students)

Group	High School (9–12, 500)	Middle School (6–8, 450)	School-Wide	Total
Leadership	—	—	6	6
Core teachers	23	17	—	40
Special education	5	5	—	10
Multilingual learner staff	6	5	—	11
Counseling and psychology	2	2	—	4
Related services (contracted)	2.5	2.0	—	4.5
Office and support	—	—	7	7

Total	**38.5**	**31.0**	**13**	**82.5**

Ratios at full build: approximately **11.5 students per staff member**, and approximately **24 students per core teacher**.

High School (Grades 9–12)

Build-out by year

Year	Grades	Students	Sections/ Day	Core Teachers	SpEd	MLL	Leadership	Total FTE
1	9	125	30	8	1.5	1.5	2	19
2	9–10	250	60	15	3	3	2	34
3	9–11	375	90	19	4	4	3	46
4	9–12	500	120	23	5	5	4	60

The ramp above matches the school's budget exactly. Total staff grows from 19 in Year 1 (125 students) to 60 at high-school full build (500 students). Under the default 9th-grade-first phase-in, the middle school opens after the high school reaches full build; the budget reflects this, adding the first middle-school grade in Year 5. The full 6–12 complement of approximately 82.5 FTE at 950 students is the mature state beyond the budget's five-year window.

Core teacher composition at full build

Role	FTE	Load	Notes
Pathway faculty	10	5 / 1 (double-blocks 4 / 2)	Span a sector's Studio (9–10) and Major (11–12). ~4 Health, ~3 Environmental, ~3 Economic
English	4	5 / 1	Single subject; daily mastery blocks
Mathematics	4	5 / 1	Single subject; daily mastery blocks
World Language	2	5 / 1	Heritage and non-heritage tracks
Minor	3	5 / 1	Technology and Applied AI; Applied Linguistics and Heritage Language; Financial Operations and Project Management
Civic Leadership and Restorative Justice Minor	—	—	Five sections taught by the five-member leadership team on a rotating calendar
Total core	**23**		

Middle School (Grades 6–8)

Under the default 9th-grade-first phase-in, the middle school opens after the high school reaches full build. Under the alternate configuration set by the October 2027 decision rule, this sequence shifts earlier. Because the middle school opens beyond the five-year budgeted window, the figures below are **planning estimates**, not budgeted figures; they will be budgeted in detail as the school approaches middle-school expansion, using the same methodology as the funded high-school ramp.

Year (default)	Grades	Students	Core Teachers	SpEd	MLL	Counseling	Related (contract)	Band Total
5	6	150	~6	2	2	1	0.5	~11.5
6	6–7	300	~12	3.5	3.5	1	1.5	~21.5
7	6–8	450	~17	5	5	2	2.0	~31.0

A Middle School Principal is added as the middle school launches (see the full-build organizational chart). Band totals reflect instructional and service staff; middle-school leadership and shared office staff are additional.

The middle-school core-teacher figures reflect approximately 26 students per core teacher, a deliberately leaner ratio than the high school's opening (roughly 16 students per core teacher). This is a function of the instructional model, not a reduction in support. The middle-school Exploratory Foundation is delivered through an integrated double-block that combines science, social studies, and sector exposure under fewer teachers, whereas the high-school Interdisciplinary Studios and Major and Minor pathways require a wider set of specialized faculty. The middle-school ratios are internally consistent across all three years and consistent with the middle school's full-build complement of approximately 17 core teachers for 450 students. Special education, multilingual-learner, and counseling staff scale with enrollment at the same ratios used across the school, so student support is not thinned even as core teaching runs leaner.

School-Wide Leadership and Operations

These positions serve the entire 6–12 school and are not allocated to a single band.

Leadership

Role	FTE	Notes
Executive Director / Principal	1	Year 1
Dean of Culture and Students	1	Year 1
Director of Academics and Innovation	1	Year 2; successor track

Director of Operations and Finance	1	Year 4
Director of Technology and AI Integration	1	Year 5
Middle School Principal	1	Hired ahead of the middle grades opening
Total	**6**	All five cabinet members teach one section of the Civic Leadership and Restorative Justice Minor

Office and support

Role	FTE	Notes
Business Manager	1	
Office Manager	1	
Registrar / Data Systems	1	Maintains SIS and state reporting
Administrative Assistants	2	Front office, both bands
Health Tech	2	Nursing services contracted separately
Food Service (serving, point of sale)	3	Required under the contracted meal model
Transportation	2	
Total	**12**	Custodial and transportation contracted

Professional Development

Stoca Academy evaluates adults for the same reason it teaches students: people grow when someone invests in them honestly. Development and accountability are the same system, which is why every professional development investment is backwards-planned from a rubric criterion, and why the school does not evaluate what it has not developed toward. Three beliefs govern the design. Proficient is the goal and it is enough; a teacher proficient across every criterion is a fully successful professional. A comprehensive view of Stoca's educators is crucial to development, ensuring student outcomes are accounted for along with inputs. Growth outcome evidence is weighted toward how far students moved, especially those furthest from mastery, so teachers who take on the hardest work are rewarded rather than penalized for it.

Staff experience is named evidence for leaders exactly as student voice is for teachers, which is reflected in the leader rubric to ensure bias is mitigated.

Stoca evaluates teachers and leaders using growth-oriented rubrics that separate coaching from evaluation, weight growth and the equity of growth over absolute achievement, and triangulate multiple sources of evidence so no one

is judged on a single measure. Coaching data and teacher-owned reflection video are used for development only and are never an evaluation input. The complete **Teacher Growth and Evaluation Rubric** and **Leader Growth and Evaluation Rubric** are provided in the Attachments. The professional development plan that builds toward the practice these rubrics describe follows below.

Teacher Professional Development Plan

Year 1 Scope & Sequence, Backwards-Planned from the Teacher Evaluation Rubric

Stoca Academy's teacher development plan is backwards-planned from the school's Teacher Growth and Evaluation Rubric. Every development investment must produce evidence toward one of the rubric's nine criteria.

Development runs on three coordinated lanes, supported by a founding institute and a coaching model to ensure there is a comprehensive view of performance and development.

- Whole-staff block. Builds shared language, launches the grounding texts, and sets culture norms for the full staff at once.
- Team meetings. Grade-level and department teams turn shared work into development, each on the criteria only collaboration can build.
- Coaching. The differentiated, one-to-one lane where individual practice changes and individual evidence is produced.

Year 1 builds foundations, culture, the instructional cycle, and the core stance texts, before the data-driven criteria that require a full year of growth data.

Design Principle: Backwards-Planned from Evaluation

The nine rubric criteria drive the plan. Part 1 evaluates instructional practice. Part 2 evaluates professional and team practice and is weighted equally to or more than Part 1 in founding years. The table below maps each criterion to the development that builds it and to the evidence that development produces.

Rubric criterion (floor)	Primary development investment	Rubric evidence produced
Part 1 — Instructional Practice		
1. Support Flows Toward Need (always-required)	Yeager stance cycle; Architect Day coaching protocols; coaching Phase 3 (active monitoring)	Tier 2/3 growth (Year 2+); Architect Day coaching data and student voice (Year 1)
2. Mastery, Not Coverage (genuine progress)	Grant cycle; department Application Finals calibration	Calibrated Application Finals plus the 90% mastery floor
3. Identity & Language as Asset (always-required)	Brown cycle; asset-based and disciplinary-language moves	Student voice (multilingual and highest-need); observation
4. X-Disciplinary Cycle Fidelity (genuine progress)	The cycle taught by modeling it on teachers; grade-team coordination	Application Finals; observation
5. Teacher as Learner (always-required)	Credly educator pathway; Choudary AI-mindset cycle; text-to-practice work	Credential progress; applied practice change
Part 2 — Professional & Team Practice		

6. Reliability & Commitments (always-required)	Whole-staff norm-setting; team meetings as live shared work	Observed follow-through on shared systems
7. Feedback That Improves the Work (always-required)	Feedback protocols; peer observation; coaching conversations	Observed feedback that improves the work
8. Surfaces Problems Early (always-required)	Early-surfacing norms; team-meeting practice	Observed early problem-raising
9. Contributes to Psychological Safety (always-required)	Institute Day 1; sustained team norms	Staff-experience signal; observed climate

Each lane is intentional to support the team in different ways to ensure a comprehensive but efficient component.

Component	**Grouping**	**What only this lane can do**
Whole-staff block (Architect Day)	All staff at once	Build shared language and culture simultaneously; launch texts; set norms
Grade-level teams	Teachers who share students	Coordinate cross-subject work and Architect Day support routing
Department teams	Teachers who share content	Calibrate Application Finals so "proficient" means the same thing
Coaching (one-to-one)	The individual teacher	Differentiated practice change; produce individual evidence

Where the culture criteria live: the whole-staff block sets the norms for reliability, feedback, problem-surfacing, and safety. Team meetings are where those norms are lived in real shared work. Norms in one lane, practice in another.

Founding Summer Institute: Four Days

The institute is sized by principle, not by calendar. It holds only what cannot move into the year. Everything else moves to the weekly block or to coaching. Three commitments are irreducible and land the institute in four days.

Pre-work does the lifting. Teachers read Yeager before Day 1, so the institute is protocol and practice, not reading.

Day	**Focus**	**Why it cannot move into the year**
1	Psychological safety and founding culture	Must precede every vulnerable activity that follows; it cannot be retrofitted
2	Experience the X-Disciplinary cycle as learners	The lived cycle is the flagship and a Q1 dependency; a real cycle cannot be compressed into an hour
3	AM: Yeager stance and the coaching frame. PM: Credly launch and mastery / Application Finals orientation	The governing frame plus Q1 dependencies
4	Shared-systems compact and coaching-model launch	Q1 depends on these systems existing on the first day of student contact

Year 1 Scope & Sequence

The weekly block sustains the plan; it does not carry it. Roughly eighteen hours of whole-staff PD across the year cannot hold four text cycles, calibration, and the Part 2 culture work. The institute and the coaching lane are the engine. The sequence below coordinates all three lanes across the year.

Window	Whole-staff block	Team meetings	Coaching	Text & Credly	Evidence coming online
Q1	Choudary cycle (AI-mindset stance)	Shared-systems compact lived; early-surfacing norms grade teams begin cycle coordination	Baseline diagnosis; Tier 1 Phases 1–3; bi-weekly cadence begins; off-week video reflection begins	Choudary, Reshuffle; first credential in progress	Architect Day coaching data ; observation; reflection artifacts
Q2	Brown cycle (identity and language as asset)	Feedback protocols and peer observation ; grade teams deepen the cycle	Cycle fidelity deepens; progressive release; Tier 2 unlocks for teachers who clear baseline	Brown, Science in the City; credential continues	Student voice; Application Finals forming
Q3	Grant cycle (mastery and growth)	Department Application Finals calibration and moderated scoring; feedback culture matures	Outcomes and planning focus; Tier 2 role coaching (Finals, advisory)	Grant, Hidden Potential; first credentials completing	Calibrated Application Finals plus 90% floor
Q4	Consolidation; year-end self-evaluation against the rubric; evidence portfolios	Culture retrospective; consolidate	Portfolio review; Year 2 goal-setting; coach-sequence reflection	No new text; credential completion documented	Credential evidence; Year 2 look-ahead

The Coaching Model

Coaching is differentiated and the primary engine of personalized development. It covers the whole rubric, not instruction alone, because the rubric defines the whole job. Teacher ownership of development is real, but earned. A teacher directs their own coaching once a baseline of strong instruction is established. Until then, the coach sets the priority.

Tier 1: The Baseline Gate (universal)

Four phases define observable baseline instruction. Every teacher is coached through them.

Coach phase	What it builds
1. Strong expectations	Conditions for learning
2. Best first instruction	Content taught well the first time
3. Active monitoring	In-the-moment data collection
4. Planned higher-order questions	Rigor and sense-making

Baseline met = Phases 1–3 solid and observable. Clearing the gate unlocks Tier 2 and teacher-directed ownership. A teacher who wants to work on data-driven instruction but cannot yet manage a room is pushed to secure the baseline first.

Tier 2: The Whole Teacher (earned, teacher-directed)

Once the baseline clears, coaching layers on the tenets of the school, not classroom instruction alone: advisory, Application Finals, projects, and teammate-ness. This ensures that teachers also focus on moving school priorities forward.

Cadence and the Observation Reconciliation

- Bi-weekly one-to-one. On off weeks, teachers record one lesson video and complete one short structured reflection. Load is capped at one video and one reflection to honor teacher time.
- Reflection artifacts are evidence. They are direct evidence of applied practice change.
- Observation is retained; presence is not. Frequent evidence of practice is kept, grounded in low-stakes mini-observation. In-person presence as the proxy for that evidence is removed. AI-assisted video becomes the observation engine, freeing coaches for the higher-leverage work of planning, data, and outcomes.

Two Design Rules

- Video use is teacher-owned, teacher-initiated, a development input the coach may access, and never an evaluation input. This aligns with the school's T.R.U.S.T. framework, which prohibits using such tools to evaluate teachers.
- The coaching-versus-evaluation line is named. In an eight-teacher founding school the coach is also the evaluator. Teachers must know when a conversation is developmental and when it is accountability, because the model depends on teacher vulnerability.

The Coach Sequence as Leadership Pipeline Passage 1

The sequence that develops coaches is, by design, Leadership Pipeline Passage 1 (Teacher to Leader of Teachers). Built once, it serves both rubrics: it develops teachers toward the teacher rubric and moves emerging coaches through their first passage. It is the seam between the two instruments.

Coach develops	Passage 1 shift (what to let go of)
Observe against the rubric; run a low-stakes mini-observation	From perfecting one's own classroom to developing others' practice
The coaching conversation that changes practice	Giving effective feedback
Route the most coaching to hidden potential, not only the struggling	Value other teachers' students' success as one's own
Hold the developmental line; calibrate with other coaches	Facilitating teams; letting go of solo control

Alignment to the Leader Rubric

- Leader Criterion 3, Develops People, Toward Need, mirrors teacher Criterion 1, Support Flows Toward Need. Development routes most heavily toward teachers with the most hidden potential, not only the struggling. PD is differentiated, not one-size.

- The Director of Academics and Innovation is evaluated in part on PD-cycle completion and on the teacher Part 1 rubric distribution rising. This scope-and-sequence is the primary evidence for that outcome.
- The cycle is fractal. Model first, then grade, then release runs identically at the student, teacher, and leader levels. Leaders model being learners through the Acts on Self-Knowledge criterion and the guided reflection tool. The coherence of the system is that everyone occupies the same cycle.

Founding-Year Realities and Risks

- Support Flows Toward Need is only partly developable in Year 1. Its primary evidence, Tier 2/3 growth on a growth-capable interim, requires a full fall-to-spring cycle and arrives in Year 2. Year 1 develops the stance and protocol, evaluated on leading indicators. This is consistent with the rubric's founding-year note.
- Credly-for-educators is a build, not a subscription. It is the sole primary evidence for Teacher as Learner. The school must author model-aligned credential criteria and act as an issuer. This is the highest-priority dependency to de-risk before opening.
- The weekly block cannot carry the plan. The four-day institute and the coaching lane are structural, not supplementary.
- Coaching capacity does not scale linearly. Bi-weekly coaching for eight teachers is sustainable for a coach who also teaches a 4/2 load and is making their own Passage 1. The model must add capacity as the school grows.
- Observation-leverage claim, stated carefully. The directional claim, that in-the-moment delivery is a smaller lever than planning and content, is retained. A specific percentage figure is deliberately omitted pending a citable source.

Grounding in the Founder's Experience

The coaching model adapts the founder's prior instructional-leadership work, including a four-phase coaching progression, strong expectations, best first instruction, active monitoring, and planned higher-order questions, developed in her prior school-leadership role. The design also responds to a failure mode she observed directly: coaching that attended only to instruction while teachers carried the full weight of running a school, and observation practice that treated in-person presence as the measure of leadership. This plan corrects both, coaching the whole rubric and making practice evidence, not presence, the currency.

Facilities

Current Status and Strategy

Stoca Academy will open in leased space. In the early years the school's priority is to stay nimble and financially disciplined: to keep fixed facility costs low while enrollment is still being established, and to preserve the flexibility to grow into space as students arrive, rather than committing to a large permanent footprint before demand is proven. Once enrollment is validated and the school has built financial health, Stoca will pursue a permanent facility. This is a

deliberate strategy, not an open question. Committing to a building the enrollment cannot yet carry is one of the most common ways a new school fails, and Stoca's phasing is designed to avoid exactly that risk.

The plan runs in two phases:

- **Early years (leased, ~20,000 sq ft, growing with enrollment).** Two paths are open, and Stoca is pursuing both: an independent lease, or shared space co-located with another school or a community organization. Co-location lowers cost further and is a well-established path in this market that CSI has already accepted for Commerce City schools. Modular classrooms on leased or partner land are a further low-cost option that has been used and approved locally.
- **Permanent facility (once enrollment and financial health are established).** A larger lease or, more likely, the acquisition and renovation of an existing building purpose-fit to the instructional model. The trigger to move is enrollment approaching interim capacity; the choice of building is informed by the specialized-space requirements below.

Stoca is honest that the Commerce City property market is thin. That is a reason for a named partner and a phased plan, not a reason for concern. Recent applicants in this market defaulted to co-location and modular space in the early years and were approved on that basis.

Stoca's facility search is geographically constrained by design, and the constraint is a feature of the model. The school's case for need rests on serving the Adams 14 community, and elements of the instructional program, including the Industrial Health Nexus studio, which maps local air quality and industrial exposure against community health outcomes, are only coherent in Commerce City. A facility outside the community would compromise both the program and the school's equity commitment. The school accepts the resulting trade-off: a smaller pool of available properties, and potentially a higher cost per square foot than a metro-wide search would produce. Location is treated as a program requirement, not a cost variable to optimize.

Facility Needs Assessment

Requirements are driven by the instructional model in Section D and scale sharply as the school builds.

	Phase 1: Interim (Years 1–2)	Phase 2: Permanent (full build)
Enrollment served	125–250 students	Up to 950 students (6–12)
Approximate square footage	~20,000 sq ft	~80,750 sq ft (85 sq ft per student)
Instructional spaces	6–10	~30–35
Large flex/lab-capable spaces	5 (one grade's simultaneous Studios)	~20 (required simultaneously by the schedule)

Specialized space	Small-group rooms for special education and multilingual services; administrative space	Above, plus science labs meeting CDE requirements, maker and fabrication space, and industry-partner-facing space
Food service	Serving area with commercial refrigerator and warmer; no commercial kitchen required under the contracted model	Same, at capacity for 950; commercial kitchen optional
Other	Common area, code restrooms, ADA compliance, safe drop-off and bus access	Above at scale, plus athletic and physical-education space

The school sizes its permanent facility at **85 square feet per student**, below the historical Colorado standard of 110. This is deliberate and consistent with efficient career-and-technical school designs: comparable models run 79 to 90 square feet per student. At 85, full enrollment of 950 requires approximately 80,750 square feet. The most demanding single requirement is the roughly 20 large flex or lab-capable spaces needed simultaneously at full build, a consequence of the double-block Studios running concurrently. This is the principal reason the permanent facility is expected to require purpose-fit renovation rather than a ready-made lease.

Location criteria: transit access, safe drop-off, parking, outdoor space, and reasonable travel time from the neighborhoods Stoca recruits from.

Stoca budgets facilities on a glide path from roughly 42% of recurring revenue in Year 1 down to about 15% by Year 4 (approximately 13% in Year 2 and 15% in Year 3), as enrollment scales into the fixed facility cost. The early-year percentage is high by design, a new school carries its building before enrollment fills it, and start-up funding bridges the gap. The permanent facility is acquired through a phased approach: Phase 1, sized to the roughly 55,000 square feet the school occupies at Year 4 enrollment, is a project of approximately $18.3 million at about $332 per square foot all in, within the school's debt-service capacity at that scale, with later phases added as the school builds toward its full 950-student footprint. A renovation of an existing building lands within that capacity; ground-up construction does not, and is therefore treated only as a long-term possibility contingent on a developer or industry partner absorbing the land and shell, not as the base-case plan.

Facilities Partner: Blueprint

Stoca is engaging Blueprint to support its site search and facility development. Blueprint is a non-profit, full-service real estate development firm that partners exclusively with charter schools serving under-resourced communities. It provides strategic facility planning, full project management from site search through design and construction, and access to low-cost capital through philanthropic equity. Blueprint has an established Colorado presence, with completed or active projects including Lotus School for Excellence in Aurora, the Academy of Arts and Knowledge in Fort Collins, the Colorado International Language Academy in Colorado Springs, and High Rockies Community School in Fairplay. Blueprint has also done site work in Commerce City, so the search does not begin from zero.

Search Process

- **Criteria and community input:** Facility criteria are shaped by the community engagement in Section B. Family input on location, transportation, and safety informs the geographic priorities within Commerce City; industry and postsecondary partner conversations inform the specialized-space requirements of the permanent facility. Community input shapes the criteria, not the timeline, which is fixed by the opening date.
- **Property types under consideration:** existing or former school facilities; church or community-organization facilities with classroom space; co-location or shared space with another school or community partner; modular classrooms on leased or partner land; and adaptive reuse of commercial or light-industrial space, which is particularly consistent with the model and the community's building stock.
- **Partnership pathways:** Stoca is pursuing facility partnerships with university and industry partners, which would accelerate the permanent facility and deepen the program's industry connection. These are treated as potential accelerants, not as the plan. The baseline plan assumes no partner facility.

Timeline and Decision Points

Working backward from an August 2028 opening, aligned to CSI's facility milestones:

Date	Milestone
On authorization (2027)	Engage Blueprint; seat the board facilities committee
Through 2027	Active search, property tours, preliminary negotiations
October 2027	Board sets opening grade configuration (Section B), fixing Phase 1 space requirements
Late 2027 – early 2028	Execute lease or purchase agreement for the interim facility
~March 2028	Consult CSI on local jurisdiction requirements (fire marshal, building department, planning, ADA); signed lease or deed on file with a revised facility budget
~April 2028	Construction plans and permit applications filed
Summer 2028	Certificate of occupancy; CSI site walks; fire and health inspections; furnishing and technology installation
August 2028	Open
Years 2–3	Permanent facility search and renovation with Blueprint; relocation before enrollment exceeds interim capacity

The October 2027 decision interacts with the search. If the board opens 6th grade rather than 9th, or both, Phase 1 space requirements change. The search will identify candidate properties that accommodate either configuration until that decision is made, and interim lease terms will not be executed in a way that forecloses it.

Contingency

While negotiating its preferred interim site, Stoca will keep alternative options that require minimal renovation, so the school can open on schedule regardless of which one closes. Interim terms prioritize flexibility over cost: a shorter initial term with extension options rather than a long-term commitment that would strand the school in a building it must outgrow.

Compliance

Any facility will comply with all applicable requirements prior to occupancy, including local building and fire codes, certificate of occupancy, health department requirements including the retail food establishment license required for meal service, ADA accessibility, and applicable zoning and use approvals. Stoca will engage local authorities early in the search rather than after a property is identified, since zoning and use approval for a school in commercial or industrial zones can be the longest item on the critical path.

Safety

Stoca's approach to safety rests on a premise drawn from the school's culture model: the most effective safety system in a school is a community where every student is known by an adult. Physical security measures are necessary and Stoca will implement them fully, but they are the outer layer of a system whose foundation is relational.

Stoca will not employ armed security or a school resource officer. The school's restorative culture and its commitment to avoiding the criminalization of student behavior, described in Section C, are inconsistent with an armed police presence in a building serving a predominantly Hispanic and multilingual student population. Safety personnel consist of trained school staff. All staff complete annual training in emergency response, threat assessment, mandatory reporting, de-escalation, and trauma-informed response. The Dean of Culture and Students holds operational responsibility for school safety, coordinating with the Executive Director and, at the middle grades, the middle school principal. Front office staff manage visitor screening and access control during the school day.

Any facility Stoca occupies will meet all applicable building, fire, and life-safety codes and obtain a certificate of occupancy prior to student occupancy. Access control includes a single monitored point of entry during instructional hours, exterior doors secured from the outside and openable from within, visitor check-in with identification screening and visible badging, and secure storage for student records and controlled materials. Interior classroom doors are lockable from within. Camera coverage is limited to building entrances and common areas; Stoca does not place cameras in classrooms, and camera footage is governed by the school's data privacy practices under the T.R.U.S.T. framework.

Safety technology includes an emergency mass-notification system reaching staff and families, a two-way communication system reaching every instructional space, and integration with local emergency services. Student device and network use is filtered in compliance with the Children's Internet Protection Act. Student data security, including protection of records under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, is addressed through contracted security and privacy expertise and a compliant student information system, described under Student and Staff Data.

Stoca will adopt a comprehensive Emergency Operations Plan aligned to the Standard Response Protocol used across Colorado schools, covering lockdown, lockout, evacuation, shelter, and hold. The school will conduct all state-required drills, including fire, and will practice each protocol with students and staff. Drills at the middle grades are conducted with age-appropriate preparation, since a lockdown drill is experienced differently by an eleven-year-old than by a seventeen-year-old. The school will maintain a threat assessment team and process, a bullying prevention and response policy, a suicide prevention and postvention protocol, and mandatory reporting procedures. Stoca will coordinate its plan with Commerce City emergency services and, where required, with Adams County and state emergency management.

Stoca's daily structures do safety work that no equipment can. Every student is assigned to an advisory that opens and closes each day with a consistent adult, so an absence, a change in behavior, or a student in distress is noticed by someone who knows them. The Architect Day places students in regular individual contact with a coach. Restorative practice surfaces conflict early rather than driving it underground. Research on school violence prevention consistently identifies a trusted adult relationship as among the most reliable protective factors available to a school, and Stoca's schedule is built to guarantee one for every student.

Transportation

Colorado does not require charter schools to provide transportation, but Stoca is committed to providing transportation for access for families and students.

Section B establishes that Adams 14 alone cannot fill the school and that Stoca must recruit regionally from specific high-need feeder communities. Section B further commits the school to a student body reflecting the Adams 14 profile, approximately 82.6% free-and-reduced-lunch eligible (Stoca's projections). Those two commitments together have an unavoidable operational consequence: a low-income family in Thornton or Brighton cannot choose Stoca if there is no way for their child to get there. A school that recruits regionally without providing transportation does not recruit regionally; it recruits from families who own reliable second vehicles and have schedules that accommodate a daily commute. That is the mechanism by which choice schools quietly select for advantage, and Stoca rejects it.

Transportation is therefore treated as an access system central to the school's mission, and its cost is carried as a mission-critical operating expense.

Service Details

Stoca commits to providing transportation with at least one stop serving each of the following communities, all within the fifteen-minute drive-time radius established by the school's market analysis:

Community	District	Rationale
Commerce City	Adams 14	Home community; the school's primary population
Thornton	Adams 12 / Mapleton	Highest-priority external target; approximately 72% Hispanic with lower-performing existing options

Mapleton (Denver/north)	Mapleton	High-need, demographically aligned feeder community
Brighton	27J	Established feeder community within drive-time radius
Reunion	27J	Growing community within drive-time radius

Exact stop locations are deliberately not fixed in this application. Stoca will set specific stop locations based on where enrolled families actually live, using Letter of Intent and enrollment address data, ahead of each school year. Committing to precise coordinates before knowing where students live would optimize routes for a hypothetical population rather than a real one. The commitment made here is to the communities served, at least one stop in each, not to a fixed set of addresses.

Stoca will operate a hub-stop model rather than door-to-door service. Students board at a limited number of consolidated stops per community. This is the design decision that makes regional transportation financially viable: door-to-door service across five communities within a fifteen-minute radius would be prohibitively expensive for a school of this size, while hub stops keep route counts and ride times manageable.

Routes are structured to align with the school day, which begins at 8:00 a.m. and dismisses at 3:35 p.m. at both levels. Because the middle school and high school operate on the same bell schedule, a single transportation system serves the entire 6–12 school, and families with children at both levels ride together. This is a direct operational benefit of the shared calendar and schedule described in Section D.

Cost

Transportation cost scales with route count, which is driven by enrollment geography rather than total enrollment: a dispersed student body requires more routes than a concentrated one at the same headcount. Stoca budgets transportation in two complementary parts.

Contracted service (baseline). The school's baseline model is contracted transportation rather than a large owned fleet, avoiding capital outlay and the burden of recruiting and retaining CDL-licensed drivers in a tight labor market. The Year 1 contracted-transportation budget of $25,000 reflects a single hub-stop route at an assumed ridership of approximately 30% of the founding 125 students, roughly 35 to 40 riders across consolidated stops in the priority communities. This is a deliberately conservative starting assumption: a founding class recruited first and most heavily from Commerce City, the home community, needs fewer routes than the mature, regionally dispersed school. As enrollment grows and the catchment extends further into Thornton, Brighton, Reunion, and the surrounding communities, route count and cost scale accordingly, and the contracted-transportation line grows with it in the out-years of the budget.

To strengthen access and lower per-rider cost as the school scales, Stoca's start-up grant request includes a $103,000 student transportation vehicle, a one-time capitalized purchase. The school recognizes this is a conditionally allowable grant expense that requires CDE verification and a capacity analysis, and it plans for the recurring operating costs, fuel, insurance, maintenance, registration, and a driver needed to demonstrably operate the asset.

Fallback. If the vehicle is not approved, is deferred, or is removed in grant review, Stoca's transportation commitment is unchanged: the school delivers the same hub-stop access through its contracted model, scaling contracted routes to meet demand. The access commitment does not depend on owning a vehicle. This ensures that a reviewer who adjusts the vehicle line does not reduce the school's access capacity, only the mechanism by which it is delivered.

The ridership assumption, route count, and vehicle-versus-contracted mix are reviewed against actual Letter of Intent and enrollment address data before each school year, and the budget is adjusted to match where enrolled families actually live.

Equity of access

Two commitments govern how transportation is administered. Transportation is provided at no cost to families; a fee-based system would reintroduce the economic barrier the service exists to remove. And enrollment is never conditioned on a family's proximity to a stop: a student who lives outside a served community may still enroll, and the school works with the family on access rather than treating the route map as an eligibility boundary.

Route and ridership data are reviewed annually against enrollment demographics. If the served communities do not produce a student body reflecting the Adams 14 profile committed to in Section B, the route structure is treated as a contributing cause and adjusted, consistent with the corrective-action approach described in Section F.

Two categories of transportation are legally required and are provided irrespective of the general service offering:

Where transportation is designated as a related service in a student's IEP, Stoca provides it as specified, including specialized transportation where required. This obligation is independent of the school's general transportation program and of a student's residence relative to any route or stop.

Consistent with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, Stoca provides transportation to and from the school of origin for eligible students, coordinating with districts of origin as required.

Food Services

Stoca Academy will participate in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and the School Breakfast Program from its first day of operation, joining the CSI School Food Authority (SFA) as its sponsoring authority.

Stoca anticipates serving a population that is approximately 82.6% eligible for free or reduced lunch. For a school built on the premise that this community's students have been underserved rather than under-capable, guaranteed access to breakfast and lunch is a precondition of the academic program.

Stoca will also participate in Colorado's state-funded universal meals program (Healthy School Meals for All), so that all students eat at no cost to families regardless of individual eligibility determination. This removes both the cost barrier and the stigma barrier, and it removes the application friction that suppresses participation among exactly the families the school intends to serve.

Sponsoring authority: the CSI School Food Authority

Stoca will join the CSI SFA rather than operate as an independent School Food Authority. CSI currently supports 38 schools through its SFA, returned approximately $5.79 million in federal meal reimbursements to those schools in 2024–25, and served roughly 412,913 breakfasts and 1,099,662 lunches across them in that year. Schools transitioning service models within the CSI SFA have seen an average 47% increase in meal participation.

Joining the CSI SFA gives a founding school compliance infrastructure it could not build alone in Year 0: meal-pattern compliance, USDA civil rights documentation, Direct Certification matching, meal benefit application processing, monthly reimbursement claims, procurement support including competitive bids for food and milk, and required staff training in school nutrition regulations. Federal reimbursement dollars remain with the school.

Stoca will complete the CSI SFA onboarding sequence during Year 0: initial consultation with the CSI Director of School Nutrition, program assessment, service model selection, agreement and systems setup, and staff training ahead of opening.

Service Model and Facilities

CSI offers three service models to its SFA schools. The choice interacts directly with the facility, which is why it is addressed here rather than deferred.

Model	What it requires	Stoca's assessment
Self-operational	A fully operational kitchen meeting state and local health codes, a retail food establishment license, hired food service staff, and competitive bids for food and milk	Not viable at opening. Requires a full commercial kitchen and dedicated staff a founding school cannot reliably secure.
Contract with a food service vendor	Meals delivered hot or cold and heated before serving. No fully operational kitchen required. Likely requires a commercial refrigerator and warmer, health code compliance, and a retail food establishment license. Fixed per-meal cost secured by CSI through an RFP, which may include serving labor	Stoca's planned model. Delivers hot meals without requiring a kitchen facility.
Contract with the local school district	Meals delivered by a local district at a fixed cost per meal. Typically cheaper than a food service vendor. Likely requires a commercial refrigerator and warmer, which the district may provide. School likely provides staff to serve, run point-of-sale, and clean	To be pursued in parallel. CSI identifies this as typically the lower-cost option, and Stoca will solicit neighboring districts during Year 0.

Hot lunch does not require Stoca to locate a building with a commercial kitchen. Under the vendor or district contract models, the school requires a commercial refrigerator, a food warmer, a serving area, health code compliance, and a retail food establishment license. This materially widens the set of viable facilities available to the school.

Stoca's facility strategy anticipates two phases. If a facility with an operational kitchen becomes available on acceptable terms, the school will evaluate a self-operational model against contracted service. The more likely scenario, and the one the school plans for, is an initial facility without a full kitchen, served through a contracted model, with the option to revisit the service model if and when the school relocates to a permanent facility. The service model is therefore chosen to be facility-independent at opening.

Budget

Per-meal costs under the vendor and district contract models are established through CSI's RFP process and negotiated contracts rather than published rates, and will be finalized during Year 0 onboarding. The budget models food service as a contracted per-meal cost offset by federal NSLP and School Breakfast reimbursement and state universal meals funding, with school-provided labor for serving, point-of-sale, and associated administrative duties, and one-time equipment costs for a commercial refrigerator and warmer.

Compliance

Stoca will comply with all NSLP requirements as administered through the CSI SFA, including the CSI Wellness Policy required of NSLP participants, annual USDA civil rights documentation and training, meal pattern compliance for both breakfast and lunch, medical statements on file for every student requiring a meal modification with the parent letter and medical statement form communicated to families, Direct Certification matching conducted monthly, and monthly reimbursement claims submitted through the Colorado Nutrition Portal within required deadlines.

Operations Capacity

Stoca's founding leadership has opened a school before. That experience is the school's core operational asset, and it is paired with an honest accounting of where the founding team must add capacity before opening.

Stoca's founding leadership built a founding staff from zero at Aurora Science and Tech (AST) High School, hiring, onboarding, and retaining educators in a competitive labor market, and growing that staff as the school added a grade each year. That work covered the full cycle: writing role definitions, recruiting, selecting, and evaluating. The experience directly informs Stoca's staffing plan, including the decision to run a five-course teaching load from day one and to protect curriculum-development time through Year 0 stipends rather than a reduced teaching load. It also covered the harder half of staffing, which is retention. AST's results depended on keeping effective teachers, and Stoca's compensation design, including a published longevity schedule and a committed transition into PERA, reflects what that work revealed about why teachers leave schools like this one.

Stoca's founding leadership has designed and led school-wide professional learning in three settings: as a founding school director, as an associate school director leading the instructional leadership team at DSST's Henry Middle School, and as a department chair building programs from scratch. Stoca's professional learning architecture, built as a shared foundation with band-specific delivery across grades 6 through 12, is drawn from that experience. So is the school's discipline of separating coaching from evaluation, a distinction the founding leadership has managed directly in a small school where the coach is also the evaluator.

Opening AST required standing up the operational functions a school runs on: enrollment and recruitment, student information and state reporting, compliance calendars, family communication, and the daily systems that make a

building work. At Henry Middle School, Stoca's founding leadership brought a special education program into full IEP and 504 compliance within a single year, direct evidence of capacity in the compliance and documentation systems operations depend on. Stoca's plan reflects a deliberate judgment about where a founding school should build versus buy: human resources and finance functions are contracted through an outsourced provider, information technology is contracted, and food service is delivered through the CSI School Food Authority rather than operated independently. These choices keep a lean founding team focused on students.

Finding and managing a facility is the area where the founding team must add capacity, and the school states that plainly. Stoca's founding leadership has operated schools within facilities but has not led a facility acquisition or build-out. The school addresses this in three ways. The governing board includes a designated seat for a member with real estate, facilities, or construction expertise, recruited specifically for this gap. The school will engage a commercial real estate broker with Colorado charter experience and draw on CSI's facility support resources. And the facility strategy itself is designed to reduce the risk that inexperience creates: Stoca will open in an adequate interim facility sized to a single grade rather than committing to a full-build facility before the school has opened, and it will not open in a facility that cannot safely and adequately house its program.

Stoca does not rely on a single leader for operations. The founding cabinet is built to distribute these functions as the school grows: a Director of Operations and Finance, a Director of Technology and AI Integration, and a founding middle school principal who owns the middle grades. Until those roles are filled, the school contracts for specialized functions rather than assuming a founding leader can absorb them. That is a deliberate design choice, not a constraint. A school that depends on one person for operations is fragile, and Stoca is built so its systems outlast any individual on its team.

J. Appendix and Attachments

Below are the attachments and details cited from the application.

Glossary: A Guide to our Terms

Stoca is a new kind of school, and a few parts of it needed names that did not already exist. This page defines them in plain language. Nothing here is more complicated than it sounds.

HOW STUDENTS MOVE THROUGH THE SCHOOL

The Hourglass	How a student's path is shaped over seven years. Students start by exploring many fields, narrow to one they choose, then go deep in it. Wide, then narrow, then deep.
Exploratory Foundation	The middle school class where students explore health, environmental, and business fields together with science, social studies, and data skills. It is one long project block, not four separate subjects.
Studios	Ninth and tenth grade classes where every student works across all three career fields before choosing one. Students earn their science and social studies credits here.
Major	The career field a student chooses at the end of tenth grade and studies deeply in eleventh and twelfth: Human Health, Planetary Health, or Economic Health.
Minor	A professional skill track a student builds every year of high school, alongside the Major. If the Major is what a student works on, the Minor is the toolkit they work with. It earns industry certifications.
Capstone	A senior project students present and defend in front of industry professionals, city officials, and community members.

HOW STUDENTS ARE TAUGHT AND ASSESSED

Architect Day	One day a week when students work at their own level with a coach instead of sitting in regular classes. Students who need the most help get the most attention. Middle school students attend in person.
Application Finals	Projects students present and defend to a panel of professionals and community members, instead of only taking a written test.
Mastery floor	Students move forward when they have genuinely learned the material, not when the calendar says to move on. Our floor is 90%.
Ready for the Studios	What every eighth grader must be able to do before starting ninth grade. It is the middle school's promise to the high school.
Dual-layer transcript	Two records instead of one: the traditional transcript colleges recognize, plus the industry certifications employers recognize.
Tech Literacy Floor	The baseline technology and AI skills every student masters, at every grade level.

WHAT WE MEASURE

Student growth	How much a student learns in a year, compared to students who started at the same place. We care about this more than a single test score, because it measures what the school actually did.
The proficiency-credited gap	The distance between what a student can actually do and what tests give them credit for. Multilingual students are often more capable than a test in English shows. We measure this gap and work to close it.
Exit velocity	How quickly students learning English reach full proficiency. Getting there eventually is not enough; how fast matters.

OUR FRAMEWORKS

NEXUS	The five parts of our program: technology, career pathways, projects across subjects, character, and strong core academics in reading and math.
T.R.U.S.T.	Our rules for using AI responsibly. In short: be transparent about how we use it, protect student privacy and fairness, check our tools for bias, never let AI replace a teacher or decide a student's future, and use it to free up teacher time for students.

Founding Architect	What we want every graduate to be: someone who can design a solution to a problem nobody has solved, adapt when things change, build something that works, and persuade others to act.
Science Identity	A student's belief that they are capable of doing science and that they belong in it. Research shows this belief, more than test scores, predicts whether students stay in science and technology fields.

COMMON EDUCATION TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

IEP	Individualized Education Program. The legal plan for a student who receives special education services.
504 plan	A plan providing accommodations for a student with a disability who does not need special education services.
MLL	Multilingual learner. A student learning English alongside their regular coursework.
ICAP	Individual Career and Academic Plan. A plan Colorado requires for every student in grades 6 through 12, mapping their goals after graduation.
MTSS	Multi-Tiered System of Supports. The step-by-step way a school increases help for a student who is struggling.
UDL	Universal Design for Learning. Designing lessons so they work for the widest range of students from the start, instead of adapting them afterward.
LRE	Least Restrictive Environment. The legal requirement that students with disabilities learn alongside their peers as much as possible.
CMAS	Colorado Measures of Academic Success. The state test for grades 6 through 8.
SPF	School Performance Framework. How Colorado rates schools each year.
FRL	Free and reduced lunch. A common measure of how many families in a school have low incomes.

Grounding Research

Guiding Texts Informing Educational Model

Stoca Academy was inspired by our founder's personal experience, but it is built on evidence, not opinion. The model draws on research in how students learn, how organizations thrive, and the skills students will need in a rapidly changing world. The Stoca Academy model is driven by four foundational texts that explain how adolescents learn, how human potential is unlocked, and how the global economy is restructuring.

10 to 25: The Science of Motivating Young People by Dr. David Yeager

The Core Concept: Adolescence (ages 10 to 25) is a critical neurobiological window where the brain is hyper-attuned to status, respect, and social purpose. When institutions manage young people through control and compliance (the "Enforcer mindset"), adolescents will disengage. When adults treat them as contributors and provide high standards paired with high support (the "Mentor mindset"), they unlock explosive neurobiological potential.

Why This Research: Teenagers learn best when adults treat them as capable, and we build on that. This research scientifically validates why marginalized students walk away from STEM fields: they are reacting to systems that withhold respect and demand rote compliance. We cannot build a high-performing school by doubling down on disciplinary control; we have to re-engineer the environment to satisfy the adolescent brain's craving for legitimate purpose and social impact.

Direct Ties to the Stoca Academy Model:

- The "Founding Architect" Identity: We satisfy the neurological craving for status by handing students real civic power. They are not passive pupils; they are actively building software, analyzing environmental data, and pitching ventures to Commerce City leadership.
- The Shift to the Mentor Mindset: We create structures that force the Mentor mindset through our Unwavering Character pillar. By utilizing Gallup CliftonStrengths and the T.R.U.S.T. Framework, our educators are trained to look for individual talent rather than behavioral deficits, treating students as resources to be cultivated.
- Restorative Over Punitive Operations: We replace out of school suspension—the ultimate manifestation of the Enforcer mindset using restorative conflict design and preserving the psychological safety necessary for rigorous learning.

Science in the City by Bryan Brown

The Core Concept: Language is not only a vehicle for communication; it is culture, identity, and access. Traditional STEM education imposes a heavy "academic language tax" on students of color and multilingual learners, forcing them to master complex, culturally disconnected scientific jargon before they are permitted to engage in actual scientific thinking. To build authentic scientific understanding, educators must use culturally and linguistically responsive teaching, allowing students to use their own language and cultural frameworks to make sense of complex phenomena.

Why This Research: Adams 14 serves a student population that is historically over 80% Hispanic/Latino, with 29% identifying as Multilingual Learners (MLL). Traditional public schools treat this demographic reality through a deficit lens, placing these students in remedial English tracks that entirely lock them out of high-level STEM coursework. Brown's research validates Stoca's core belief that the achievement gap in Commerce City is not an intelligence gap; it is a linguistic and cultural barrier. We must dismantle the "academic language tax" so our students do not have to choose between their cultural identity and their Science Identity.

Direct Ties to the Stoca Academy Model:

- Required World Language & the Heritage Language Minor: We explicitly reject the deficit model of language acquisition. Rather than forcing native Spanish speakers into introductory language courses to check a graduation box, we treat their bilingualism as elite intellectual capital. Our required World Language sequence accelerates heritage speakers toward the Colorado Seal of Biliteracy, and our Heritage Language & Applied Linguistics Minor extends that work, validating heritage language as a highly marketable workforce asset.
- The Technical Localization Certification: We operationalize Brown's research through our cross-walk credentialing. A student majoring in Human Health or Environmental Ecology does not just learn the science; they use their Influencing language pathway to learn how to translate complex clinical or environmental data natively for Spanish-speaking populations in Denver. They are actively dismantling the language tax for their own community.
- Authentic Science Identity: By allowing students to debate, prototype, and defend their Application Finals utilizing their full linguistic and cultural repertoire, we prove that they do not have to assimilate into a rigid, traditional mold to be seen as highly capable "Founding Architects."

Hidden Potential: The Science of Achieving Greater Things by Adam Grant

The Core Concept: A student's current level of performance does not dictate their intellectual ceiling. The gap between where a student is and where they could be is rarely a lack of talent; it is a failure of their environment. Elite performance is unlocked through effective scaffolding, character development, and environments that normalize failure as a step toward mastery.

Why This Research: This text dismantles the deficit narrative often applied to underrepresented communities. In Adams 14, where academic proficiency scores have historically trailed state averages, the traditional system assumes the students lack capability. Grant's research proves that the capability is simply hidden behind structural barriers. If we change the scaffolding, we can rapidly accelerate students from foundational gaps to industry-grade execution.

Direct Ties to the Stoca Academy Model:

- The 90% Mastery Floor: We refuse to let students languish in remedial tracks. We utilize AI-orchestrated adaptive learning in our core academics to rapidly diagnose and repair foundational gaps in math and literacy, providing the precise, asynchronous scaffolding needed to accelerate them to grade level and beyond.
- Application Finals vs. High-Stakes Testing: Grant emphasizes that potential is revealed through iteration, not one-off high-stakes exams. Our Application Finals are graded through cycles of reflection and adaptation, teaching students to embrace the volatility of real-world problem solving and proving that resilience is a highly marketable skill.
- Ceiling-less Acceleration: We do not cap student growth. If a student masters their foundational work, they are immediately transitioned into the "Architect-Mentor Program," where they solidify their own learning by tutoring local middle schoolers, converting their academic growth into community leadership.

Reshuffle by Sangeet Paul Choudary

The Core Concept: The global economy is undergoing a massive structural reshuffle driven by Artificial Intelligence and platform networks. The traditional "pipeline" model of value creation, where institutions dictate a linear path to success, is being unbundled. Power, wealth, and agency are shifting rapidly to those who can navigate distributed networks, orchestrate AI tools, and design community-centric platforms.

Why This Research: Public schools are operating as 20th-century pipelines in a 21st-century platform world. They rely on seat-time and standardized GPA metrics that are becoming entirely illegible to modern employers. If we prepare Commerce City students for a linear, pipeline economy, we are preparing them for a world that no longer exists. To guarantee economic mobility, we must align our academic outcomes with the macroeconomic realities of the AI transition.

Direct Ties to the Stoca Academy Model:

- The Dual-Layer Transcript & Credly Certifications: Because traditional high school transcripts are obsolete in a reshuffled economy, we adapt them. Our Layer 2 Distinction transcript ensures students graduate with verified, portable micro-credentials (e.g., Google AI Essentials, AWS Cloud, PMI Agile) that hold direct currency in a platform economy.
- The Tech Literacy Floor & AI-Builder Pathway: We refuse to let our students be passive consumers of algorithms. The curriculum requires every student to understand the mechanics of generative AI, data engineering, and cloud architecture, ensuring they have the technical leverage to lead in a reshuffled workforce.
- The Experiential Career Pathways: We collapse the wall between the classroom and the economy. By anchoring our three Majors (Human, Planetary, and Economic Health) directly to regional industry partners, our students build the professional networks and digital portfolios necessary to bypass the traditional entry-level pipeline entirely.

Workforce Trends Research

We are standing at an existential pivot point in public education. The traditional models of the last two decades were built to produce highly compliant students who can execute procedural tasks and pass standardized tests.

That world no longer exists.

According to the World Economic Forum, 39% of workers' core skills will change by 2030 due to the accelerating adoption of Artificial Intelligence. When AI can instantaneously execute procedural logic, write code, and process big data, the "procedural display of success" is outsourced to machines. The future economy demands skills that are highly resistant to automation:

1. Cognitive Skills

These support higher-order thinking required for complex problem solving and decision-making.

- Analytical Thinking and Logical Reasoning — ability to break down problems, interpret data, and make evidence-based decisions. Skill Reporter
- Creative Thinking and Innovation — generating original ideas, adapting solutions, and ideating across disciplines. Skill Reporter
- Systems & Strategic Thinking — understanding interdependencies and long-term implications within complex environments. LinkedIn

2. Human-Centered / Social Skills

These are resilient to automation and critical for collaboration and leadership.

- Leadership and Social Influence — guiding teams, shaping culture, and fostering accountability. Skill Reporter
- Communication and Active Listening — clear spoken and written expression, and thoughtful engagement in dialogue. Human Resources Online
- Collaboration and Teamwork — working effectively with diverse groups across contexts. World Economic Forum
- Empathy and Emotional Intelligence — understanding perspectives and managing relationships. Human Resources Online

3. Personal / Intrapersonal Skills

Highly adaptable workforce traits that support lifelong learning.

- Resilience, Flexibility, and Agility — ability to adapt to change, recover from setbacks, and pivot approaches. Skill Reporter
- Curiosity and Lifelong Learning Mindset — sustaining ongoing skill growth and intellectual exploration. Skill Reporter
- Motivation and Self-Awareness — self-directed growth, reflection, and goal-oriented behavior. Human Resources Online

4. Technical/Technology Skills

These reflect the accelerating impact of AI and digital transformation across sectors.

- AI Literacy & Big Data Competency — understanding, using, and collaborating with AI systems and data analytics. World Economic Forum
- Technological Literacy & Digital Fluency — comfort with digital tools, platforms, and technology integration. World Economic Forum
- Cybersecurity Awareness — protecting digital assets and understanding risk in networked environments. Bright Horizons
- Networking & Data Infrastructure Skills — building and maintaining digital systems and connections. Panda

5. Operative / Management Skills

These skills link human leadership and technical coordination.

- Resource & Project Management — organizing work, time, and resources for efficient outcomes. Bright Horizons
- Talent & Team Management — developing people, optimizing team performance, and aligning skills with objectives. Human Resources Online

Yet, public schools continue to double down on the Enforcer mindset. They mandate rote compliance, standardize assessments, and silo disciplines. We look at the data and wonder why underrepresented students leave STEM. Dr. David Yeager's research provides the answer: they do not leave because they lack interest. They leave because

traditional schools treat adolescents as problems to be managed rather than resources to be cultivated. When we strip away their agency, ignore their identity, and demand rote compliance, they disengage. We are actively starving our students of the exact cognitive and social skills the future economy demands.



The Reality of an AI Driven World

We cannot afford to treat Artificial Intelligence as a theoretical future; it is here now. As educators, we no longer have the luxury of debating whether we like AI. It is here, and fundamentally reshaping the global workforce, and it is our non-negotiable ethical duty to teach our students how to use it responsibly, critically, and powerfully.

Big school districts cannot turn quickly. That is not a criticism of the people in them; it is the nature of institutions that size. But the World Economic Forum reports that AI is reshaping 70% of the skills jobs require. While that happens, most districts are spending their energy trying to block AI or catch students using it to cheat on assignments that were already outdated. Our students cannot wait for that to change. Our students cannot wait for that to change, so we are building the school they need now, and we intend to prove it works.

Our approach to AI is about power, and who has it. If we do not teach Commerce City students how these systems work, how to question them, and how to build them, we are training them to be users of technology in an economy that runs on it. Someone else will design the tools that shape their lives. Those designers will not know this community, and it will show in what they build.

So we teach AI for a specific reason: our students should be the ones building it. Every student masters a baseline of technology skills, and every student is pushed toward building with AI, not just using it. That is how they get a say in what gets made.

AI should make school more human, not less. We are not putting students behind screens. We are using AI to take the paperwork off our teachers. Teaching is not a checklist. It is reading a room, knowing a kid, and adjusting in real time. Grading, tracking data, and finding where a student got stuck are jobs a machine can do. Building trust with a fourteen-year-old is not. So we hand the first set to the machine and give that time back to teachers.

That time is the whole point. It lets our teachers do what Dr. David Yeager's research calls the mentor mindset: holding students to a high standard while giving them the support to actually reach it. High expectations without support is just pressure. Support without expectations is just comfort. Students need both, and both take a person, not a program.

Letters of Intent to Enroll and Support

Letters of support can be found in the folder here.

All digital forms are linked to the Stoca Academy website for accessibility. That website is: www.stocaacademy.org

Templates Used

Hard Copies

Commit your Student to Stoca Academy!

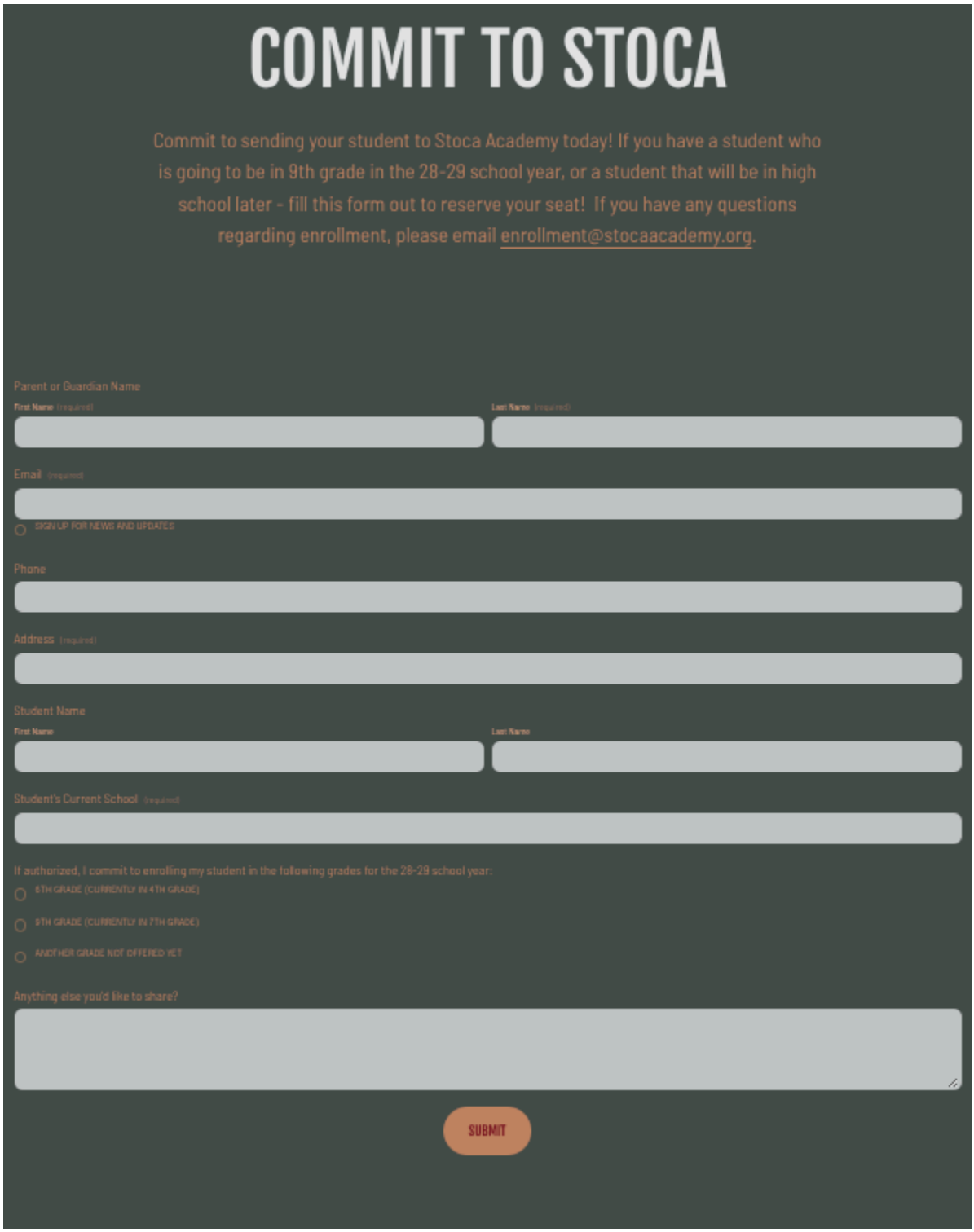
First Name	Last Name
Email	Phone
Address	
Student First Name	Student Last Name
Student's Current School	Student's Current Grade
If authorized, I commit to enrolling my student in the following grades for the 28-29 school year: ☐ 6th Grade (Currently in 4th Grade) ☐ 9th Grade (Currently in 7th Grade) ☐ Another Grade not Offered Yet	

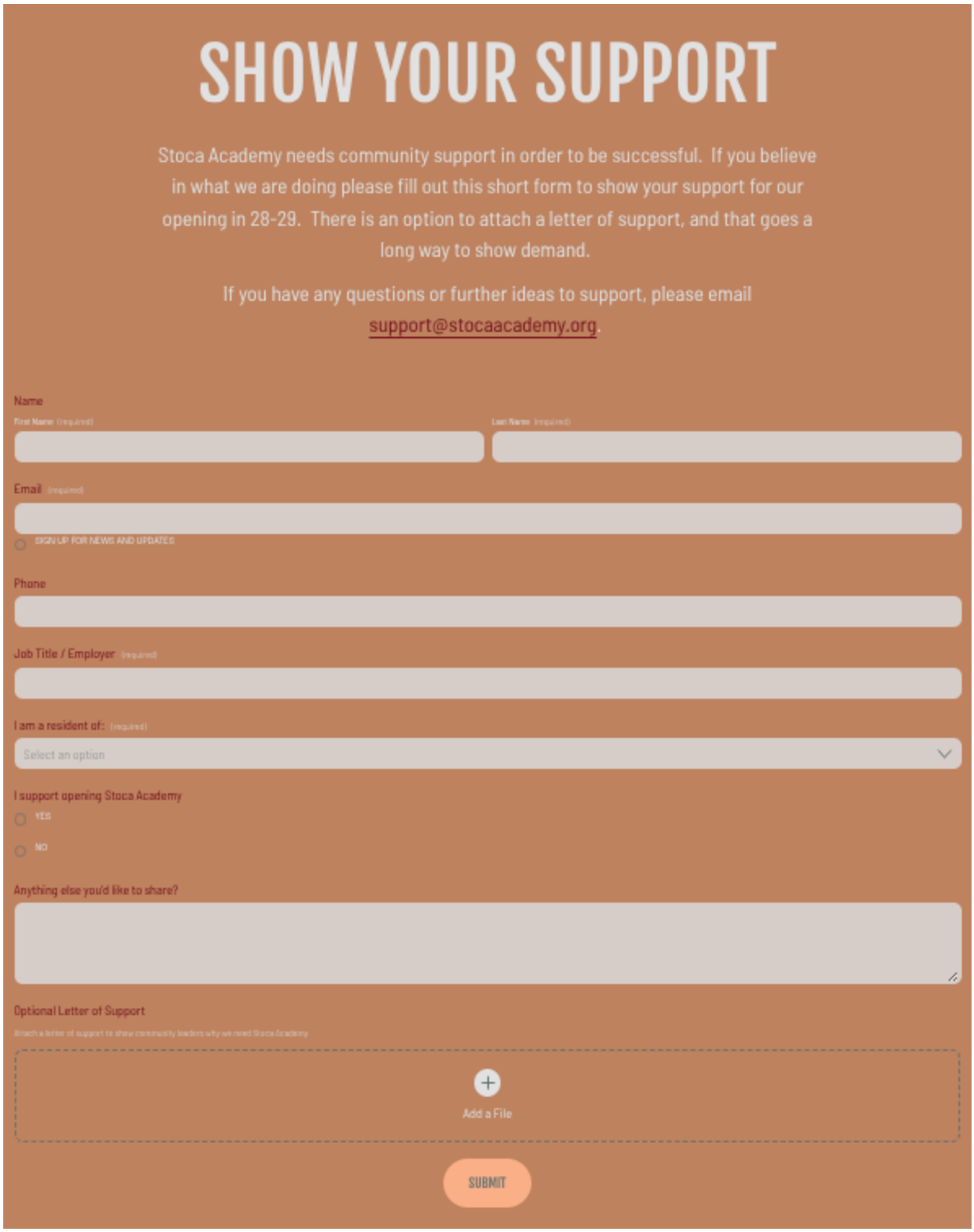
I support the opening of Stoca Academy!

Name	**Email**	**Phone**	**I support opening Stoca Academy! (circle one)**
			YES NO
			YES NO
			YES NO
			YES NO
			YES NO
			YES NO
			YES NO
			YES NO
			YES NO
			YES NO
			YES NO
			YES NO
			YES NO

			YES NO
			YES NO
			YES NO
			YES NO
			YES NO

Digital Forms





Current Support

These are the signatures gathered to date.

Hard Copies

STOCA ACADEMY

In a world that won't hold still, aim with purpose.

Tuition Free Public Charter School | Grades 6-12 | Commerce City, CO | Opening Fall 2028

I support the opening of Stoca Academy!

Name	Email	Phone	I support opening Stoca Academy! (circle one)
Jeanette Randall	neffie27@comcast.net	7	YES NO
Felix Munoz	munozmfelix@gmail.com	720-227-7741	YES NO
Leslie Rodriguez	lesrod448@gmail.com	720-648-6145	YES NO
Zehra Zaid	drzaid@fcpeducationdenrising.com	832-241-1602	YES NO
Shalese Eggleston	Sage120313@gmail	7207173731	YES NO
Sandra Lopez	lopezisela87@gmail.com	720-[illegible]	YES NO
Gladys Castaneda	castaneda@gmail.com	905-7259 720-338-6855	YES NO
Felica Kirby			YES NO
Jazmin Treviz	jazmin12@live.com	303) 847 8762	YES NO
gerard Torrez	gtorrez.swyoungliff@gmail.com	720-762-6631	YES NO
Silvia Ordonez	Sil20720012@gmail.com	303 519 2194	YES NO
Marcela Corral	marcearecorral@gmail.com	7203098670	YES NO
Ashley Arias	aarias@aariascoaching.com	503-290-4064	YES NO
			YES NO
			YES NO
			YES NO
			YES NO
			YES NO

Digital Forms

Date	Name	Job Title	Residence	I support the opening	Anything else you'd like to share
2026-08-28 13:34:55	Becca Bloch	HRBP/MagicSchool AI	Denver	Yes	Can't wait for this school to launch!
2026-08-28 12:16:47	Dirza Pedroza	DSST Public Schools/ Creative Content Manager	Denver	Yes	
2026-08-28 09:01:43	Derek Frey	Director of Athletics & Activities	Denver	Yes	
2026-08-28 08:42:13	Ariel Smolik-Valles	N/A	Denver	Yes	
2026-08-28 06:23:23	Gregg Gonzales	Chief Schools Officer/Attuned Education Partners	Other in Denver Metro	Yes	
2026-08-28 06:17:15	Melissa McCollor	Special education teacher, Denver Public Schools	Other not in Denver Metro	Yes	I taught briefly in Commerce City and fully support this school because I saw students, ready to give up on education by 8th grade. Students deserve to know that education is a priority not a privilege afforded only to some.
2026-08-28 06:03:18	Nella García Urban	CEO/ DSST Public Schools	Commerce City	Yes	All students deserve great schools.
2026-08-28 06:00:35	Lauren Abuhademma	Principal | KIPP Colorado	Other in Denver Metro	Yes	KZ is an incredible leader and I am confident she will make the school's vision become a reality for the students who attend the school.
2026-08-28 05:20:54	Brian Huang	Teacher	Other in Denver Metro	Yes	
2026-08-27 21:47:53	Amanda Shaw	DSST Public Schools	Other not in Denver Metro	Yes	
2026-08-26 23:58:00	Makita Cotto	Vice President of HR	Aurora	Yes	I want to express my strong support for STOCA Academy and the important role it can play in serving

					students and families. A strong school provides more than academics, it also creates an environment where students feel supported, challenged, respected and encouraged to grow. Families should have access to meaningful educational options and that STOCA Academy deserves the opportunity to serve students and the community.
2026-08-24 09:48:05	Molly Naylor	MLE Instructional Specialist, DPS	Denver	Yes	
2026-08-23 13:30:48	Kaitlin Koehler	Talent Development Manager	Other not in Denver Metro	Yes	
2026-08-23 09:50:19	Rachel Schneider	Geography teacher/DSST	Aurora	Yes	
2026-08-21 13:43:53	Andre Felix	Athletic Director / Aurora Science & Tech	Other in Denver Metro	Yes	Knowing that the leader of this institution would be Kryszelda Mendoza gives me all the confidence that this school will be a success. She's a fearless leader, fierce advocate, and a change maker. I appreciate folks who think education can and should be different than it currently is to drive the outcomes kids need in the 21st century and beyond.
2026-08-21 10:04:15	Emma Jablow	DSST Public Schools	Denver	Yes	
2026-08-19 22:19:42	Pamphile Habiyaremye	Algebra 2/2h teacher at Aurora Science and Tech Middle Academy	Aurora	Yes	I am a supporter of Stoca Academy and believe it may be one of the best-designed school models for meeting the needs of the future workforce in this AI era . Many fellow

					educators share my view that education urgently needs to change to set kids up for success, but few are willing to take the risk of pushing for that change. Opening Stoca Academy could give other school systems a working example to follow, before an entire generation is failed by the current system.
2026-08-19 22:10:09	Kiersten Ellefsen-Olelewe	Principal, Vega Collegiate Academy Special Education	Aurora	Yes	
2026-08-19 21:20:40	Mackenzie Ent	Teacher - DSST	Denver	Yes	
2026-08-19 19:48:45	Sami Moore Levy	Teacher/DSST	Denver	Yes	
2026-08-19 19:04:21	Samantha Downing	Teacher	Denver	Yes	
2026-08-19 14:37:36	Clara Pena	Teacher	Other not in Denver Metro	Yes	Kryszelda is an incredible leader. I have known her for over 15 years. She combines her instructional expertise and a data-driven mindset to maximize student achievement. Kryszelda is dedicated to creating a supportive and high-performing education community. You will be in good hands under her leadership!
2026-08-19 11:50:48	Annika Pittman	Assessment Specialist	Denver	Yes	Thrilled to see this as an option in our community!

Letters of Intent to Enroll

Address	Anything else you'd like to share?	Email	If authorized, I commit to enrolling my student in the following grades for the	Parent or Guardian Name	Phone	Student Name	Student's Current School

			28-29 school year:				
3816 S Helena Way, Aurora, CO 80013	You build a world class Middle School and we'll strongly consider by 2030	billknous@gmail.com	Another grade not offered yet	William Knous	(303) 503-1353	Liam Knous	Monarch Montessori

Discipline Policy

Philosophy and Purpose

Stoca Academy's discipline system exists to keep students in the community of learning, not to remove them from it. The school's premise, consistent with its culture (Section C), is that behavior is a signal, and that the school's first obligation is to understand and address what is driving it. Exclusionary discipline is a last resort, used only after restorative practices and interventions, and only where safety requires it.

Every disciplinary decision is made by a qualified adult who weighs context, the student's history, and any disability-related considerations. No automated tool assigns a consequence, characterizes a student, or decides an outcome. Discipline is applied in a manner that is anti-racist, trauma-informed, and culturally responsive, and the school monitors its discipline data for disproportionality (Section 7).

Scope

This policy applies to conduct on school grounds, in a school vehicle, or at a school-sanctioned activity, and to off-campus conduct with a direct and substantial connection to the school. It applies to all students, with the additional protections for students with disabilities described in Section 6.

The Restorative Ladder (Tiers 1–2)

Lower-level conduct is addressed through a progressive restorative ladder before any exclusionary consequence is considered. The ladder escalates in who is involved, not in severity of punishment.

Rung	Who is involved	Response
A	Teacher and student	Student shares their account; teacher counsels; restorative conversation; intervention constructed and documented
B	Teacher, student, guardian	Above, plus guardian notification and involvement

C	Teacher, student, guardian, support staff	Above, plus counselor, social worker, or specialist consultation; restorative practice; intervention monitored
D	School leader involved	Documentation reviewed by a school leader; guardian conference; restorative practice; behavior plan (or, for a student with a disability, an FBA/BIP); ISS of 0–1 day only where safety requires planning time

All ladder interactions are documented in the student information system and monitored for effectiveness.

Behavior Matrix: Conduct Tiers and Consequence Ranges

Conduct is classified by severity into tiers. Each tier carries a proportionate range of responses. Restorative practice is available at every tier; exclusionary consequences rise only with severity and only as a last resort.

Tier	Conduct (examples)	Response range
Tier 1 — Classroom/minor	Disruption, minor defiance, dress code, unauthorized device use, minor property damage, tardiness	Restorative Ladder A–C. No suspension.
Tier 2 — Repeated/moderate	Recurring Tier 1 after ladder fidelity; severe defiance disrupting activity; nicotine; minor theft or property damage under $500; false fire-alarm activation	Restorative Ladder D; ISS 0–1 day where safety requires
Tier 3 — Serious	Substantially disruptive misconduct; being under the influence; possession of alcohol or marijuana; verbal/gestural bullying or bias-based harassment; theft/damage $500–$1,999; conceivable threat	ISS 0–2 days; OSS 0–1 day (grades 6–12); restorative re-entry required
Tier 4 — Grave	Mutual fighting; realistic threat; robbery; possession of a dangerous weapon (no threat); indecent exposure; witness intimidation; theft/damage over $2,000; physical or recurring bias-based harassment	OSS 0–3 days; optional expulsion review; full threat appraisal; restorative re-entry
Tier 5 — Severe/legally defined	Assault; unlawful sexual behavior or contact; sale/distribution of controlled substances; arson; extortion; detrimental behavior endangering others	OSS 3–5 days; expulsion review; mandatory legal/reporting processes where applicable
Tier 6 — Mandatory review	Firearm; homicide or attempted homicide; first- or second-degree assault; sexual assault	Mandatory expulsion review per C.R.S. 22-33-106; mandatory law-enforcement and child-welfare reporting where required by law

Referrals to law enforcement are limited to conduct where the law requires it or where there is a real and immediate threat of serious bodily injury. Ending the school-to-prison pipeline is an explicit design goal; referral is never a default response to lower-tier conduct.

Restraint and Seclusion

Stoca complies with the Colorado Protection of Persons from Restraint Act (C.R.S. 26-20-101 et seq.) and its implementing rules. Physical restraint is used only as an emergency safety measure, when a student's behavior poses a serious, imminent threat of physical harm to self or others and less restrictive interventions have failed or are insufficient. Restraint is never used for discipline, punishment, coercion, retaliation, or staff convenience, and prone (face-down) restraint and any restraint that restricts breathing are prohibited. Seclusion is not a planned intervention in Stoca's model.

When an emergency restraint occurs, it is administered only by staff trained in evidence-based crisis de-escalation and safe physical intervention, for no longer than necessary to resolve the immediate danger, and under continuous adult monitoring. The school notifies the family the same day, documents the incident in writing with a review, and holds a follow-up debrief with the family and staff to reduce the likelihood of recurrence. The school reviews all restraint incidents for patterns, including disproportionality by disability, race, and multilingual-learner status, and reports as required by law. Staff are trained on this policy at hire and annually, and the policy is published to families in English and Spanish.

Note: if any student meets the threshold for a behavior intervention plan, restraint reduction is an explicit goal of that plan, consistent with the school's restorative model.

Suspension and Expulsion: Due Process

- **In-school and short-term out-of-school suspension.** Before any suspension, the student is informed of the allegation and given the opportunity to share their account. Guardians are notified promptly, in their preferred language, using interpretation and translated documents as needed. Students receive the opportunity to make up academic work.
- **Suspension beyond ten cumulative days / expulsion.** Consistent with C.R.S. 22-33-105, a recommendation for expulsion triggers a formal hearing with written notice, the right to be represented, the right to present and cross-examine evidence, and a written decision. As a CSI school, the hearing and any appeal are conducted by Stoca's governing board (or its designated hearing officer), consistent with the school's disciplinary-appeals waiver, with legal counsel and CSI involved to ensure due process.
- **Services during removal beyond ten days.** A student removed for more than ten cumulative days continues to receive educational services sufficient to enable progress toward grade-level standards and, for a student with a disability, the services required by their IEP.
- **Appeal.** Families may appeal a suspension or expulsion decision to the governing board per the school's grievance and appeals process.

Rights of Students with Disabilities

- Before applying exclusionary discipline that would exceed ten cumulative days in a school year to a student with an IEP or 504 plan (or a student the school reasonably suspects may have a disability), the school

convenes a **manifestation determination review** to decide whether the conduct was a manifestation of the disability or resulted from failure to implement the plan.

- If the conduct is a manifestation, the school does not proceed with the removal as a standard disciplinary matter and instead addresses the behavior through the IEP/504 process, including an FBA and BIP as appropriate.
- The school observes its **Child Find** obligations: where behavior may indicate an unidentified disability, the school initiates evaluation rather than escalating discipline.
- These protections are applied in coordination with the special education team and are never waived for administrative convenience.

Disproportionality Monitoring

Stoca reviews disciplinary data on a regular cycle, disaggregated by race, disability status, multilingual-learner status, and gender, and by school level (6–8 and 9–12) rather than in aggregate, because a pattern concentrated in the middle grades can be invisible in a combined total. Where any group is over-represented in referrals or exclusionary consequences, the school interrogates its own instructional and cultural design before processing additional individual cases, institutionalizing the practice the founding leadership developed at AST. Disproportionality findings are reported to the governing board.

Communication to Students and Families

The discipline policy and behavior matrix are published to students and families annually, in English and Spanish, in the Student/Family Handbook, and are reviewed at enrollment and at the start of each year. Families receive the policy in their preferred language, and interpretation is provided at any disciplinary conference or hearing.

Curriculum and Instruction

Graduate Profile: The Stoca Academy Founding Architect

Readiness means transferrable skills, not content knowledge.

Our graduates do more than master content; they embody a "Founding Architect" identity. They navigate the world using the NEXUS Model to demonstrate mastery in four interconnected pillars. At the core of these pillars is Science Identity, which we define as the enduring belief that a student is capable of, and belongs within, the scientific and innovative community.

The Research Foundation: Science Learning Activation

We ground our approach in the Science Learning Activation framework (Dorph et al., 2016). Research shows that "activation," a constellation of fascinations, values, competency beliefs, and sense-making practices, is the prerequisite for long-term engagement. By explicitly fostering a Science Identity, we ensure students view themselves not just as learners, but as "doers" of science.

1. Architecting (Our "Sense-Making" Pillar)
Linked to: "Navigate complexity" — Our graduates are masters of Architecting; they possess the cognitive agility to navigate complexity. They do not fear ambiguity; they frame it.

- The Identity Connection: We build Scientific Sense-Making by treating ambiguity as a data set. Our graduates are masters of framing ill-defined problems.
- The Outcome: They distinguish signal from noise, evaluate AI outputs with critical rigor, and synthesize data to define the core of any problem. They enter any room or digital environment not as passive consumers, but as designers ready to build.

2. Evolving (Our "Ethical & Critical" Pillar)
Linked to: "Think critically, embrace innovation, and use AI ethically" — Our graduates are masters of Evolving; they understand that in a rapidly shifting technological landscape, the ability to "unlearn" outdated paradigms is the ultimate competency.

- The Identity Connection: We nurture Fascination by treating "unlearning" as a scientific necessity. A scientist knows that theories are only as good as the next experiment.
- The Outcome: They approach every innovation through a lens of ethical responsibility, ensuring that their solutions advance equity rather than reinforce bias. They operate with an iterative mindset, treating every challenge as a prototype for growth.

3. Engineering (Our "Build & Execution" Pillar)
Linked to: "Shape an AI-empowered world with confidence" — Our graduates are masters of Engineering; they turn ideas into working solutions. An architect who cannot build is only a critic. Our graduates build.

- The Identity Connection: We forge Competency Beliefs by requiring students to ship real, tested artifacts. Nothing confirms that a student belongs in the scientific and innovative community like building something that works.
- The Outcome: They convert analysis into functional, deployed solutions. They do not wait for a finished tool or for permission; they build it themselves. They orchestrate whatever technology the moment demands, today's stack and the one that replaces it, managing a build from prototype to delivery. In a world that trains everyone else to consume technology, our graduates create it.

4. Influencing (Our "Purpose & Impact" Pillar)
Linked to: "Solve real-world problems and advance equity" — Our graduates are masters of Influencing; they realize that the best idea in the world is worthless without the ability to move others to act.

- The Identity Connection: We deepen Valuing Science by connecting scientific work to social and community purpose. True Science Identity is confirmed when a student realizes their scientific mind can serve their community.
- The Outcome: They drive alignment through strategic communication, choosing the right visual, oral, or written medium to convey data-driven narratives. They lead through collaborative action, ensuring that their solutions to real-world problems are grounded in collective intelligence and accountability. Crucially, they recognize that sustainable impact requires human-centered architecture; they proactively cultivate psychological safety within teams and utilize active empathy to navigate conflict restoratively, repairing community foundations whenever they fracture.

A Note on Capacity vs. Tools

Engineering is a durable capacity, not a fixed toolset. We name the capacity, turning ideas into working and tested solutions, in the graduate profile because that ability outlasts any single technology. The specific tools, platforms, and credentials that prove it live in our assessment rubric below, which the board and staff revisit every two years to track workforce shifts. This keeps our graduate identity stable while our tooling stays current. As of 2026, the technical proficiencies that operationalize the Engineering pillar are detailed here.

The Engineering Rubric: Hard Tool Fluency

Pillar Focus: The mastery of verified digital, algorithmic, and data-driven tools required to build, test, and automate solutions within an AI-driven economic landscape.

Operational Competency	Performance Indicators (What Teachers Grade)	Aligned Workforce Skill & Citation	Direct Credly Badge Mapping
E.1 Generative AI & Agentic Prompting	• Student constructs, refines, and sequences advanced prompts to co-author code, analyze text, or generate functional models. • Student audits AI outputs for hallucinations, technical errors, and algorithmic logic flaws.	• AI & Big Data / Technological Literacy: Ranked among the fastest-growing core skills by global employers. • Orchestration & Human Agency: As AI tools automate task execution, the human value shifts entirely to directing and reviewing agentic workflows.	Google AI Essentials *(Google)* · Artificial Intelligence Fundamentals *(IBM)*
E.2 Applied Data Engineering & Analytics	• Student captures, cleans, structures, and transforms raw datasets using programmatic tools (e.g., Python or advanced sheets). • Student builds interactive dashboards and data models to visualize trends.	• Data Engineering & Analysis: A critical, high-demand technical skill layer underpinning successful digital transition and AI integration.	Data Analysis & Visualization Foundations *(IBM / Coursera)* · CompTIA Data+ *(CompTIA)*
E.3 Systems Prototyping & Cloud Mechanics	• Student utilizes digital fabrication tools, CAD, or cloud-based environment architectures to deploy functional prototypes. • Student manages version control and documents the development lifecycle of a technical build.	• Cloud Computing & Networks: Consistently among the top technical requirements for early-career pathways in technology and operations.	AWS Certified Cloud Practitioner *(Amazon Web Services)* · Enterprise Design Thinking Practitioner *(IBM)*

NEXUS Component: Next Generation Technology

Definition

Next-Generation Technology is our programmatic engine for AI-empowered agency. We shift students from passive consumers of digital platforms to active, ethical, and highly skilled builders of technology. This component establishes a mandatory "Tech Literacy Floor" while simultaneously pushing students to the "AI-Builder" ceiling.

Rationale

Most current educational environments treat technology as a delivery vehicle (e.g., Canvas, PearDeck), effectively keeping students in the role of passive "users." To thrive in the future economy, students must understand the mechanics and ethics of the tools they use. Our approach ensures that every graduate can navigate, critique, and

build with artificial intelligence, anchored in a framework that prioritizes human agency over algorithmic dependency.

System Integration:

The Horizontal Nexus

Next-Generation Technology is the "horizontal" layer that permeates every NEXUS component:

- **Experiential Career Pathways:** AI is the industry-specific toolset (e.g., Clinical AI, GIS modeling, financial predictive analytics) that defines professional competency in their chosen field.
- **X-Disciplinary Projects:** AI serves as the research and analytical sandbox where students perform data synthesis, debate-mapping, and complex problem-solving.
- **Unwavering Character:** Technology serves as the documentation and reflection hub, where students log pivots, manage strengths-based data, and practice digital citizenship.
- **Strong Core Academics:** AI is used as a diagnostic and tutoring engine, providing real-time feedback on mastery and allowing students to customize their learning pathways.

Core Pillars

- **Graduate Profile (Engineering and Influencing):** Actualizes **Engineering** by teaching students to build tools, and Influencing by giving them the power to leverage technology to scale impact.
- **Values (Alignment and Stochos):** Actualizes Alignment by using technology that is mission-consistent and interoperable. Actualizes Stochos by using technology strictly as a vehicle to reach our community-impact targets.
- **Science Mindsets (Ethical Responsibility, and Framing & Sense-Making):**
    - **Ethical Responsibility:** Technology is governed by the **T.R.U.S.T. Framework** (developed through MIT xPRO), ensuring every digital interaction is transparent, responsibly used, unbiased and audited, human-supporting, and thought-expanding.
    - **Framing & Sense-Making:** Students rigorously stress-test AI outputs, identifying hallucinations, bias, and algorithmic pitfalls as a core part of their "Founding Architect" training.

Operational Reality

- **The Tech Literacy Floor:** All students take an introductory tech course to master the fundamentals of digital environments, ensuring they have the "working knowledge" (formatting, data management, system navigation) necessary to function in a professional setting.
- **AI Builder Path:** We partner with PlayLab to enable students to build their own custom AI agents and applications.
- **Sector-Specific AI Literacy:** Technology is not taught in a vacuum. Students learn to apply AI specifically to their industry pathway (e.g., Clinical AI in Human Health, GIS/Green AI in Planetary Health, and Predictive Analytics in Economic Health).
- **The "Anti-Automation" Curriculum:** We intentionally design projects where AI *cannot* do the work for the student. We emphasize tasks requiring human judgment, physical interaction, and high-stakes community advocacy, ensuring technology remains a scaffold, not a surrogate.

- **Certifications:** We utilize industry-recognized pathways, including Google certifications and CodeHS, to validate technical proficiency.

The Convergence Section

In every NEXUS component, the "Convergence" section identifies where we move beyond "doing school" and into "doing impact." It is the application of our academic foundation to the real world.

- **Cross-Sector Empowerment:** Tech is essential to the NEXUS architecture; it is the fundamental toolset that allows students to scale their impact across all health, finance, and advocacy sectors.
- **Community Tech Bridge:** Our students serve as Community Tech Ambassadors. They design and lead Tech Literacy Sessions for parents and community members, bridging the digital divide and ensuring our neighborhood is not just "affected by" but "active in" the AI revolution.
- **Student-Authored Policy:** We co-create tech/phone policies with students, honoring their maturity while setting healthy boundaries.
- **The Convergence Strategy:** Convergence means using tech to bridge the professional gap. Students demonstrate their AI-builder capabilities to community partners, showing how their tools solve industry-specific bottlenecks.
- **The Tutoring Integration:** Tech-fluent students act as "Tech Consultants" to younger peers and community members, reinforcing their own expertise while serving as the human interface between the school and the community. Specifically, students will build programming for the community to come learn how to use technology and AI to build confidence.

External Anchors

- **The TRUST Framework:** The cornerstone of our digital ethics, developed through the MIT xPRO AI Strategy and Leadership program by Kryszelda Gorrell, ensuring all technology integration is anchored in verified professional principles.
- **The Necessity of Partnership:** Technology evolves at a rate that precludes internal-only curriculum. Our external partners (PlayLab, Google, CodeHS) are vital lifelines that provide real-time updates on industry standards, ensuring our curriculum remains relevant in a volatile landscape.

Credentials & Transcripts

- **Verified Technical Credentials**: Industry-recognized certifications and a public portfolio of custom-built AI agents and apps.
- **The Digital Portfolio:** The definitive evidence of technical fluency—a record of what the student has built and how they have empowered others to use technology.

NEXUS Component: Experiential Career Pathways

Definition

Experiential Career Pathways provide a sector-based immersion strategy that transitions students from foundational academic learners to professional industry practitioners. We organize our curriculum into three high-impact sectors: Planetary Health, Economic Health, and Human Health.

- Planetary Health: Focuses on urban design, environmental advocacy, and sustainable development.

- Economic Health: Focuses on finance, community funding, and entrepreneurship.
- Human Health: Focuses on clinical practice, public health, and predictive wellness.

Rationale

Education fails when it is decoupled from the economy. By embedding students into real-world industry problems from 9th grade, we convert "science identity" into career agency. We ensure students possess the social capital, professional network, and verified micro-credentials required to lead in a high-complexity, AI-driven world. Choosing these three sectors intentionally creates an intersection between community need and student interest because all three sectors are growing in society and need prepared leaders to move the sector forward.

System Integration

- **Graduate Profile (Influencing):** Students are no longer passive observers and instead active contributors who solve industry-level problems.

- **Science Mindsets**
    - **Identity, Belonging, & Confidence Fuel Purpose:** Students perceive themselves as legitimate, valued professionals within major institutions rather than mere visitors.
    - **Curiosity, Unlearning + Lifelong Learning Drive Growth:** Students continuously iterate their approach to "ill-defined problems," treating every industry challenge as a prototype for growth.
    - **Framing & Sense-Making Turn Ambiguity into Opportunity:** Students engage in rigorous data analysis, questioning the efficacy of existing systems (e.g., traffic patterns or wellness clusters) to advocate for data-backed improvements.
    - **Creative, Critical, and Ethical Judgment Drive Innovation:** Students grapple with the social implications of their work, ensuring that their AI-driven solutions to public health or urban design advance equity and community welfare.
- **Values (Boldness and Alignment):** By placing students in professional environments we create conditions where they must be bold to succeed and Alignment by ensuring their academic pathways are mapped directly to regional labor market needs.

Operational Reality

- **9th & 10th Grade (Exposure & Application):** Students engage in Excursions—targeted, immersive site visits and project-based investigations that build industry literacy. We maintain an open operational stance, continuously adding new Excursions based on dynamic partnership opportunities.

- **Sector-Specific Electives:** Students pursue structured coursework within their chosen sector:
    - Human Health: Utilizing Project Lead The Way (PLTW) to provide rigorous, standardized clinical foundations.
    - Planetary Health: An environmental science pathway utilizing AP Environmental Science as the "North Star" for rigor and content mastery.

    - Economic Health: An in-house developed curriculum focusing on practical mathematics, financial literacy, and business management.
- **11th & 12th Grade (Professional Contribution):** Students transition to high-stakes, problem-solving internships (e.g., 3D-printing biomedical components or predictive analytics for public health), moving from observing to producing.

The Convergence Section

In every NEXUS component, the "Convergence" section identifies where we move beyond "doing school" and into "doing impact." It is the application of our academic foundation to the real world.

- **Application Finals:** These are gateway rituals at the end of 9th and 10th grade. Industry partners set high-stakes challenges; students demonstrate their technical competence through these Finals, which serve as the "bridge" to internship eligibility.
    - Potential Application Final Options

These application finals are mapped in alignment with Credly credentialing as a potential pitch.

Year / Badge	The Commerce City Assessment Context	Why It Changes the Rigor
Year 1: Enterprise Design Thinking Practitioner	The Industrial-Residential Pitch: Instead of broad Denver transit issues, students frame a challenge unique to Commerce City's zoning—such as navigating food access in specific neighborhoods or the intersection of heavy industry corridors and residential spaces.	It forces 9th graders to apply empathy and human-centered design to complex, deeply local municipal realities right outside their doors.
Year 2: Agile Explorer	The Community Resource Prototype: Working in teams, students build a physical or digital prototype addressing a need specific to the Adams 14 community footprint. When they hit a failure point, they must pivot their design based on feedback from local residents, not abstract users.	It builds resilience by tying the "unlearning" process directly to the people they live and go to school with.
Year 3: Data Analysis Foundations	The Environmental/Economic Dashboard: Commerce City is a major industrial hub (including the Suncor refinery) with distinct environmental and economic data profiles. Students ingest public EPA air quality data, local health metrics, or economic development records to build their interactive visualizations.	The "Signal vs. Noise" competency becomes real. Students aren't just cleaning data; they are analyzing environmental and economic realities that directly impact their own families.

Year 4: Data Storytelling & AWS Cloud	The Commerce City Capstone Exhibition: Students pitch their finalized Capstones to local Commerce City industry partners, city council members, or Adams 14 district leadership. Their technical builds and data narratives are explicitly targeted to drive action within their immediate municipality.	It validates their "Science Identity" by proving their architectural solutions can move the needle in their own hometown.

- **The Industry-to-Education Bridge**: Our students act as consultants to our industry partners, demonstrating new AI tools and pedagogical frameworks. Our industry partners also receive development in mentoring and working with the next generation in order to create environments that can set them up for success to ensure a strong pipeline of professionals.
- **Mentorship:** 11th/12th-grade interns act as "Project Leads" for 9th/10th-grade students during their Excursions and Application Finals, reinforcing the school's virtuous cycle of high-trust mentorship.

External Anchors

- Anchoring Partners ensures deep relationships for dynamic experiences for our students and the partners.
    - Planetary Health - e.g., CDOT, Suncor: These partners are essential to provide access to real-world infrastructure data, allowing students to map traffic patterns, model tree canopies, and engage in genuine energy-efficiency auditing.
    - Economic Health - e.g., Local Business Chambers, FinTech: These partners are critical to validate the practical application of our in-house curriculum, providing mentorship for students acting as pro-bono consultants for grant-writing and business management.
    - Human Health - e.g., Anschutz Medical Campus, UC Health: These partners provide the high-fidelity clinical environments (cadaver labs, diagnostic research) necessary to build a student's "Science Identity" through exposure to the highest tier of medical practice.
- We apply the Apprenticeship Model of Cognitive Development (Lave & Wenger), validating that mastery is achieved through legitimate peripheral participation in real-world communities of practice.

Credentials & Transcripts

- **Verified Professional Resume:** We adapt the traditional transcript in favor of a professional resume documenting all internships and projects.
- **Micro-credentials:** Students earn Credly badges for specific technical skills (e.g., Clinical Lab Proficiency, GIS Modeling, Financial Analytics), providing a verified, portable record of their career-readiness.

NEXUS Component: X-Disciplinary Innovation

Definition

X-Disciplinary Projects are high-stakes, real-world investigative cycles that require students to synthesize knowledge from multiple subjects to solve "ill-defined" community problems. These are not supplemental activities; they are the primary assessment vehicles for the Founding Architect graduate profile.

Rationale

In the modern workforce, problems do not present themselves in silos. By using X-Disciplinary Projects, we force students to move beyond content knowledge into the realm of transferable skill application. We anchor this in the XQ Design Principle: Meaningful, Engaged Learning, which argues that rigorous content is best mastered when it is applied to complex, authentic challenges.

System Integration: Actualizing the Ecosystem

- **Graduate Profile (Architecting & Influencing):** Students must *Architect* a solution using data and *Influence* community stakeholders to adopt it.
- **Science Mindsets (Identity and Belonging):** Students are given a public stage where their scientific voice is heard, validated, and tested by real-world constraints.
- **Values (Boldness & Stochos):** Students demonstrate *Boldness* by choosing high-stakes neighborhood gaps to address, ensuring their work is laser-focused on *Stochos* (the target/impact).

Operational Reality:

The Four-Year Trajectory

Our trajectory moves students through increasing levels of social stakes. We utilize the XQ Competency Framework to ensure each year builds the technical rigor required to move from internal self-discovery to external community transformation.

9th Grade: The "Identity & Strengths" Exhibition

- Focus: Architecting the Self.
- Nexus/AI Integration: Students leverage Gallup's *CliftonStrengths* and AI-driven personality modeling to synthesize a clear portrait of their personal talents. They curate a visual exhibition of their transferable skills.
- The "Founding Architect" Model: In a radical act of coordination and transparency, educators complete their own exhibitions by November. Students act as the formal evaluators, holding teachers to the same professional rubrics they must master.
- Alignment to Values/Mindsets:
    - Value (Alignment): We align our vulnerability with our professional goals.
    - Science Mindset (Identity & Belonging): Grounded in Dr. David Yeager's research, this ritual signals that the student's voice is a legitimate, authoritative contribution to the school community.

10th Grade: The "Community Gap" Pitch & Debate

- Focus: Evolving through Rigorous Inquiry.

- Nexus/AI Integration: Students utilize AI to perform Scientific Sense-Making on Commerce City data, identifying "ill-defined" community gaps. They debate their findings, competing to define the school's research direction.
- The "Coherence" Engine: The winning pitch dictates the research focus for the next two years. This is true student agency: students define the school's academic curriculum.
- Administrative Convergence: Leadership hosts "Monthly Round Tables" to facilitate teacher planning and ensure that community insights directly focus the student-driven research process.
- Alignment to Values/Mindsets:
    - Value (Stochos): We maintain *Stochos* (the target) by ensuring all academic work is directed toward the most pressing neighborhood needs.
    - Science Mindset (Curiosity & Lifelong Learning): Students must pivot their research strategy based on data, modeling the "unlearning" required of high-level researchers.

11th & 12th Grade: The "Expert-in-the-Room" Execution

- Focus: Influencing through High-Stakes Systems Navigation.
- Nexus/AI Integration: 11th Grade focuses on the High-Stakes Pitch; 12th Grade serves as the "Application Final," where students defend their data-backed solutions to a panel of industry partners, city officials, and community leaders.
- The "Application Final" Stakes: These are not simulations; they are real-world accountability moments. Students must utilize Persuasive Communication (XQ Competency) to navigate complex political and economic systems.
- Alignment to Values/Mindsets:
    - Value (Boldness): We demand *Boldness*—the willingness to pitch to people who have the power to say "no" or "not yet."
    - Graduate Profile (Influencing): Students prove they can bridge the gap between their technical "Science Identity" and the practical needs of the neighborhood, demonstrating that they are ready to found the future.

The Practice-to-Performance Architecture

We do not believe in "high-stakes" without "high-practice." Before students reach the neighborhood-level exhibitions, they engage in Course-Driven Projects within their disciplinary blocks (Math, Science, Humanities).

- **The "Micro-PBL" Routine:** Every core educator is trained in the Project-Based Learning (PBL) model. They design "Micro-Projects"—short, subject-specific cycles—that act as training grounds for the larger X-Disciplinary Exhibitions.
- **Skill-Isolation:** If an upcoming X-Disciplinary Project requires "Persuasive Communication," the English department runs a "Micro-Project" to isolate and practice that specific skill.
- **The "Low-Stakes" Feedback Loop:** These course-driven projects are where the Pivot & Post-Mortem Standard is first introduced. Students learn to document their iterations in a safe environment, receiving teacher feedback before the stakes of the public neighborhood Exhibition.

The Pivot & Post-Mortem Protocol

- **The Volatility Buffer:** We normalize "real-world volatility." When external partners shift or project parameters collapse, students document the change in their Pivot Log.
- **The Post-Mortem Exhibition:** Every project concludes with a formal reflection on the "iterations and failures" that preceded the final product.

The Convergence Section

In every NEXUS component, the "Convergence" section identifies where we move beyond "doing school" and into "doing impact." It is the application of our academic foundation to the real world.

- **Monthly Round Table Discussions:** Leadership hosts these forums to surface the most pressing issues in Commerce City. By linking these issues to our X-Disciplinary Projects, we ensure our "student voice" is tied to real neighborhood stakes.
- **Assessment Innovation:** We move beyond traditional testing. We utilize AI-transcribed oral debates, public rhetoric exhibitions, and digital credentialing through platforms like Credly to document the mastery of "soft skills" (leadership, collaboration, visual rhetoric).

External Anchors & Research

- **XQ Institute Framework:** We utilize the XQ Competencies (e.g., *Problem Seeking, Problem Solving, Persuasive Communication*) as our assessment rubric. We are not just grading "A-F"; we are measuring progress toward these 37 research-backed competencies.

Credentials & Transcripts

- **Competency-Based Certification:** Transcripts feature "Competency Badges" (e.g., *Mastery of Systems Thinking, Persuasive Communication*) rather than just letter grades. Students graduate with a digital portfolio of their projects, validated by the community partners who served on their defense panels.

NEXUS Component: Unwavering Character

Definition

Unwavering Character is the behavioral infrastructure of Stoca Academy. It is the deliberate cultivation of resilience, integrity, and social responsibility, anchored in a strengths-based identity. It is the "internal gyroscope" that ensures students remain steadfast, self-aware, and ethically rigorous in the face of volatility.

Rationale

An AI-empowered future demands more than technical proficiency; it requires a deep understanding of one's own internal architecture and the ability to project that truth to others. By rooting our character program in Gallup CliftonStrengths, we provide a universal language for self-understanding. We ensure students can translate that self-understanding into the persuasive, clear, and ethical rhetoric required to lead in high-stakes environments.

System Integration

- **Graduate Profile (Evolving and Influencing):** Actualizes Evolving by helping students identify personal growth levers, and Influencing by teaching them to leverage their unique talents and communication style to lead others.

- **Values:**
    - Alignment: A shared strengths-based language ensures we all work from the same "operating system."
    - Boldness: Strengths provide the confidence to pivot; communication provides the platform to defend those pivots.
    - Coordination: We appreciate and orchestrate the diverse talents and voices each student brings, so the team functions as a system
    - Stochos: We keep our eyes on the target by communicating our intent clearly to the community.
- **Science Mindsets:**
    - **Identity, Belonging, and Confidence Fuel Purpose:** Strength-informed self-awareness gives students their "anchor" in the community.
    - **Communicating with Clarity, Data, and Strategy**: Students master the ability to translate technical findings, pivot justifications, and ethical dilemmas into persuasive narratives for diverse audiences.
    - **Creative, Critical, and Ethical Judgment Drive Innovation**: Character is defined by *what we say* and *how we say it*. Students learn that clear, honest communication is the highest form of ethical integrity.
    - **Framing & Sense-Making Turn Ambiguity into Opportunity**: Students use communication to "test" their own biases and challenge the status quo, engaging in Socratic debates that refine their character and their ideas.

Operational Reality

- **The Strengths-Based Advisory:** Every teacher serves as an advisor. By utilizing AI-orchestrated data (e.g., strength-based prompt logs), advisors receive tailored insights, making the relationship sustainable and focused on actionable development rather than forced rapport. Advisory will be a space for students to reflect and plan out their success in alignment with their goals and academic work to integrate all the pieces of their day.

- **The Sustainability Pivot:** The specific structure of advisory will be co-designed with the teaching team, but teachers will be advisors to their first period class to remove an extra “prep” for teachers. First period is essential so teachers can directly focus on attendance accountability. First period will be 10 minutes longer to do house keeping announcements for students for the day, and then Advisory will happen for 20 minutes at the end of the day so advisors can support students in organizing their homework and reflecting on the day as book end support.
- **The "Pivot & Post-Mortem" Habit:** Resilience is documented through technical logs that require clear, persuasive argumentation. Students explain *why* a pivot was necessary to stakeholders, practicing the Communication Mindset under real-world pressure.

- **Whole Community Meetings**: There will be structures in place where the entire school will gather for meetings on a regular cadence to build stronger community. The specifics of this will be co-designed with the teaching and leadership team.

The Convergence Section

- **9th Grade Strengths Exhibition:** Students communicate their "Strengths Journey" in a public exhibition. This is the first high-stakes application of the Communication Mindset, where students must articulate their internal architecture to a public audience, grounding their identity in the community.

- **Autonomy-Driven Wellness (PE & Health):** We replace the "check-the-box" credit system with a "habit-building" design, treating physical health as a foundational operating system.
    - Seasonal "Sprint" Structure:
        - The Goal-Setting Phase: Students set a high-stakes, personal physical goal (e.g., the 60-minute continuous movement challenge).
        - The "Expert-in-the-Room" Phase: Utilizing your staff's (and the community's) expertise, students learn the science of training—connecting the "why" (physiology) to the "how" (practice).
        - The Agency Phase (Journals & Tracking): Students use data (Fitbits, trackers) to monitor progress, creating a "data-feedback loop" identical to the one they use for their STEM projects.
        - Integration: By allowing students to "jump in and out" (e.g., using a fall cross-country season as their PE "lab"), you respect their existing extracurricular identities while still ensuring they are engaging in the meta-skill of deliberate practice and reflection.
        - The Witnessed Close: Each seasonal Sprint ends with a short demonstration or advisor sign-off, so every PE/Health credit is verified by a human, not self-reported alone. The 'Expert-in-the-Room' phase and this close together provide the instructional contact that makes the credit rigorous and compliant.
    - **Integration:** Students may "jump in and out" of formal modules by using existing extracurriculars (e.g., cross-country) as their lab, ensuring they engage in the meta-skill of deliberate practice and reflection.
- **Restorative Justice Leadership:** Once the foundation is solid, student leaders facilitate a restorative justice program. They use their knowledge of strengths and communication styles to mediate conflicts, holding peers accountable in ways that honor individual wiring.
- **Educator-Student Feedback Loop:** Students and teachers engage in "Communication Audits" during exhibitions, fostering a reciprocal culture of professional refinement and mutual respect.

External Anchors

- We utilize the Gallup CliftonStrengths framework to ground identity and the XQ Competency Framework (specifically Persuasive Communication) to measure the efficacy of our communication curriculum.

Credentials & Transcripts

- **The "Architect of Character" Badge:** A micro-credential earned through successful documentation of "Strengths-Application" and "Communication Clarity" in high-stakes pivots.
- **The Digital Portfolio:** A permanent record of the Strengths Exhibition and Post-Mortem Exhibitions, serving as evidence to colleges and employers that this student has the demonstrated capacity to navigate high-stakes environments with professional maturity.

NEXUS Component: Strong Core Academics

Definition

Strong Core Academics is a mastery-based instructional model that leverages AI-orchestrated adaptive learning to diagnose, remediate, and accelerate student progression in Math and ELA. By automating foundational fluency, we shift the educator's role from "content broadcaster" to "Learning Architect and Mentor." Math and English are delivered as dedicated daily courses across all four years (see Graduation Requirements), where this mastery-based model closes gaps and accelerates growth. The adaptive platforms named here are interchangeable placeholders pending final procurement. The specific adaptive learning platforms are selected during Year 0 curriculum adoption against defined criteria (standards alignment, mastery-based progression, multilingual accessibility, and data integration with the SIS under the T.R.U.S.T. standard).

Rationale & The "Hidden Potential" Mandate

We anchor this in the philosophy of Adam Grant's Hidden Potential: the gap between a student's current proficiency and their potential is not a fixed attribute; it is a structural failure of their environment. It is a human right to have an education that meets the learner where they are.

- **For students behind grade level:** Our system provides the dignity of private, asynchronous mastery. They can close gaps without the social stressor of peer observation.
- **For students at/above grade level:** The model is "ceiling-less." We leverage AI to accelerate them into competitive, college-level, or professional-grade material, ensuring they never "plateau" while waiting for the rest of the class to catch up.

System Integration: Actualizing the Ecosystem

- **Values (Alignment, Stochos, and Coordination):** We believe in the *Collective* responsibility of meeting every student's needs. By providing varied "entry points" for content, we ensure total *Alignment* between the school's mission and the student's daily reality. Stochos is achieved by targeting exact cognitive readiness—no student wastes time on content they already know, and no student is pushed into advanced work without the necessary foundations.
- **Science Mindsets (Curiosity, Unlearning + Lifelong Learning):** We provide a "no-ceiling" environment where students can continuously iterate and push beyond current grade-level limits.
- **Graduate Profile (Evolving):** This model actualizes the "Evolving" pillar by teaching students that their current performance is just a data point—not a verdict—and they have the tools to change it.

Operational Reality & The "Human-in-the-Loop" Accountability

- **The Advisor-Led System:** Every student is assigned a teacher-advisor. This relationship replaces the traditional "punitive" attendance model.
- **The Accountability Trigger:** Weekly performance dashboards allow advisors to track "asynchronous completion." If a student does not meet their weekly mastery targets at home, the advisor *invites* them into the "non-contact" day for intentional, structured support. This is not a punishment; it is a collaborative intervention designed to protect the student's trajectory.
- **Staff Agency:** This model is designed to be built *with* our founding staff. By automating the "diagnostic and tracking" labor, we empower teachers to design the intervention strategies themselves, giving them the agency to lead and the time to mentor.

The Convergence Section

In every NEXUS component, the "Convergence" section identifies where we move beyond "doing school" and into "doing impact." It is the application of our academic foundation to the real world.

- **The Tutoring Model: The Architect-Mentor Program:**
    - **The Engine:** We transform our 10th–12th graders into **Founding Architect-Mentors**. Students who hit the "Mastery Floor" (90%+) in our core platforms are eligible to bridge the gap between their own mastery and the community's needs.
    - **The Convergence Strategy:** By tutoring local middle schoolers, our students practice Dr. David Yeager's research on *social importance*. They don't just "learn" math; they "serve" through math.
    - **Why it works:** It turns the "student" role into an "expert" role, providing the social status necessary to build deep academic confidence and creating a self-sustaining culture of high-trust mentorship that integrates Convergence Academy into the wider Denver educational landscape.
- **Architect Day**: Reserving one day a week to provide targeted universal coaching support to all students to ensure they are on track. Details of Architect Day can be found in the Graduation Requirements section.

External Anchors

We utilize these platforms to provide a precise, high-rigor scaffold:

- **ALEKS (Mastery):** Chosen for its cognitive knowledge mapping; we use this to ensure bulletproof calculation skills required for elite STEM paths.
- **Edmentum (Diagnostic Recovery):** Chosen to unify foundational repair with CTE workforce-aligned certifications.
- **CENTURY Tech (Habit-Building):** Chosen for automating neuro-adaptive micro-learning to build literacy and numeracy at speed.
- **Studient (Motivation Engineering):** Chosen to handle the logistics of the "90% Mastery Floor" and teacher-capacity relief.

Credentials & Transcripts

- **Competency-Based Reporting:** Transcripts will reflect both traditional course completion and a "Mastery Portfolio." This portfolio provides external partners, colleges, and employers with a granular view of a student's specific technical proficiencies, certified by verified mastery floors (e.g., 90%+ in Algebra I)

- School Calendar + Scope and Sequence
- Board Conflict of Interest Policy
- Board Member Matrix
- Org Chart

Phase 1: The Foundational Interdisciplinary Studios (Grades 9 & 10)

During freshman and sophomore years, students do not take siloed, single-subject electives. They participate in immersive, 100-minute **Interdisciplinary Studios** that intentionally crash core academic disciplines together. These Studios generate every student's foundational Science and Social Studies credits and satisfy both state mandates, identically for all students before they declare a Major.

The registrar's software translates these integrated, project-based blocks into standard Carnegie units, guaranteeing CDE and higher-education compliance. *(Note: Math and English are not generated here; they are protected as dedicated daily courses. The Studios carry Science and Social Studies only.)*

9th Grade Core Studios & Credit Mapping

Studio A: The Industrial Health Nexus

- The Intersections: Environmental Ecology + Human Healthcare
- The Execution: Students use the local environment as a living laboratory, gathering physical air quality, soil, and water data from regional industrial corridors and mapping it against public health data to identify how industrial zoning correlates with respiratory outcomes.
- Credit Translation: 0.5 Unit Lab Science (Life/Environmental) + 0.5 Unit Social Studies (Human Geography).

Studio B: Behavioral Finance & Local Micro-Economies

- The Intersections: Personal/Community Finance + Behavioral Psychology + Local Government
- The Execution: Students audit how resources, capital, and currency flow through municipal ecosystems, analyzing personal finance, consumer behavior, tax structures, and the local governance and civic systems that shape them.
- Statutory Mandate Integration: This Studio is the instructional home for the Civics mandate (C.R.S. § 22-1-104), examining U.S. and Colorado civil government, city council jurisdictions, and state policy.
- Credit Translation: 0.5 Unit Social Studies (Economics) + 0.5 Unit Social Studies (Civics/Local Government).

10th Grade Core Studios & Credit Mapping

Studio C: Sustainable Urban Finance

- The Intersections: Climate Resilience + Public Infrastructure Economics
- The Execution: Students tackle the financial and structural realities of urban development: capital costs of greening supply chains, municipal bonds, and zoning incentives.
- Statutory Mandate Integration: This Studio is the instructional home for the Holocaust and Genocide Studies mandate (C.R.S. § 22-1-104.7), examining the catastrophic cost of state and bureaucratic systems engineered without ethical guardrails, grounding Equity-Driven Systems Design.
- Credit Translation: 0.5 Unit Lab Science (Applied Environmental/Physical) + 0.5 Unit Social Studies (World History/Ethics).

Studio D: The Commerce City Systems Hack

- The Intersections: Public Health + Environment + Engineering Design
- The Execution: A pure, collaborative systems-engineering block. Students take an ill-defined local challenge (e.g., a food desert or transit deficit) and capture, clean, and analyze agricultural, health, and logistics data to build a data-driven systems solution.
- Credit Translation: 1.0 Unit Lab Science (Physical Science/Engineering Design).

Studio science + social studies totals (all students): 2.0 Lab Science + 2.0 Social Studies.

Phase 2: The Specialization Clinics / Major Tracks (Grades 11 & 12)

At the end of sophomore year, students declare a Career Major. Each Major generates an identical credit top-up, 1.0 Science + 1.0 Social Studies, so all three pathways land on the same guaranteed core.

Major 1: Healthcare & Bio-Systems

- Advanced Coursework: Epidemiology, molecular biology, bio-informatics, and medical compliance.
- Credit Translation: 1.0 Unit Advanced Lab Science (college-preparatory chemistry/biology) + 1.0 Unit Social Studies (Health Policy & U.S. Government, via the Senior Capstone). Students seeking Science Distinction extend to 2.0 advanced lab science.

Major 2: Environmental & Urban Ecology

- Advanced Coursework: GIS spatial mapping, climate data modeling, and green structural prototyping.
- Credit Translation: 1.0 Unit Advanced Applied/Physical Lab Science + 1.0 Unit Social Studies (Environmental Policy & U.S. Government, via the Senior Capstone). Distinction extends to 2.0 advanced lab science.

Major 3: Economics & Community Wealth

- Advanced Coursework: Quantitative financial modeling, asset/liability analytics, corporate taxation, and resource allocation.
- Credit Translation: 1.0 Unit Applied Science (scientific method, data pipelines, and algorithmic logic applied to economic systems) + 1.0 Unit Social Studies (U.S. History & Macroeconomics). Economics majors seeking Science Distinction elect an additional lab science.

Every graduate, every Major: Studios (2.0 Sci + 2.0 SS) + Major (1.0 Sci + 1.0 SS) = 3.0 Science (2 lab) + 3.0 Social Studies.

World Language: Required Sequence + Heritage Language Pathway

Grounded in Bryan Brown's Science in the City, we reject the "academic language tax" and treat bilingualism as elite intellectual capital. World Language is required of every student and housed in the Influencing pillar.

The Required Core (Grades 9–10): 2.0 Units. Every student takes a scheduled World Language course in 9th and 10th grade, earning 2.0 Layer 1 units and clearing the HEAR competitive bar. The course uses a two-door design with shared civic work and equal dignity:

- Heritage speakers enter at advanced academic literacy in their home language (never remediated into "Spanish I") and accelerate toward the Colorado Seal of Biliteracy.
- Non-heritage speakers enter through language acquisition paired with structured cultural-humility fieldwork, learning to lead and build trust across linguistic differences, the experience of not being the default in the room.

The Upper-Level Pathway (Grades 11–12): The Heritage Language & Applied Linguistics Minor. Students who continue extend to 3.0–4.0 units. The Minor is open to all students, not barred to non-heritage speakers, and carries two completion credentials so every student has a reachable finish line:

- Heritage speakers: the Colorado Seal of Biliteracy (full bilingual fluency).
- Non-heritage speakers: a Cross-Cultural Leadership credential plus functional second-language proficiency. This is an honest ceiling for four years from zero, functional proficiency and genuine cross-cultural leadership, not full bilingual fluency, and it names a rare, valuable skill.

Major and Minors Offered at Stoca

Major Track 1: Healthcare & Bio-Systems

Rationale: Systemic Health Architecture for Urban Communities

At Stoca Academy, the Healthcare & Bio-Systems Major views health as a complex, intersectional system where biology crashes directly into civic infrastructure, regional economics, and bioethics. The healthcare industry is

being reshaped by AI and technology faster than any other industry, and Stoca Academy approaches healthcare learning with that in mind.

True medical leadership requires an understanding of community wellness. By shifting the focus away from purely memorizing clinical terminology toward understanding systemic access, social determinants of health, and epidemiological modeling, students prepare to solve the complex health challenges of the Denver metro and Commerce City area. Graduates from this track do not just enter clinical pipelines; they become healthcare architects capable of redesigning delivery models, advancing equity, and engineering community-wide interventions.

The Sequence: Clinical Competency and Bio-Systems Navigation

This upper-level major track is designed for students who intend to enter medicine, public health administration, bioethics, or biochemical engineering, utilizing deep data structures to optimize human wellness.

- **Year 1 (Prerequisite Exposure): Studio A – The Industrial Health Nexus**
    - *Focus:* Analyzing environmental data sets against localized respiratory and metabolic public health outcomes.
- **Year 2 (Prerequisite Exposure): Studio B – The Economics of Well-being**
    - *Focus:* Auditing health insurance algorithms, medical delivery costs, and zip-code-level life expectancy trends.
- **Year 3: Bioethics, Epidemiology & Systemic Access (Specialization Phase I)**
    - *Focus:* Quantitative analysis of disease transmission, biological data streams, and clinical ethics.
    - *Coursework:* Students master epidemiological data collection and study the ethical paradigms governing medical clinical trials, biotechnology deployment, and historical systemic disparities in care. They learn to identify genuine clinical signals amid complex diagnostic noise.
    - *Outcome:* Mastery of baseline medical terminology, bioethical argumentation, and statistical modeling tools used by regional public health agencies.
- **Year 4: Medical Systems Design & Public Health Advocacy (Specialization Phase II)**
    - *Focus:* Advanced healthcare architecture, clinical compliance, and strategic community health interventions.
    - *Coursework:* Students study structural healthcare administration, regional healthcare compliance frameworks, and the logistics of mobile or localized clinical delivery.
    - *Application Final Integration:* As their Senior Capstone, students draft and refine an exhaustive public health intervention plan (e.g., a targeted immunization framework or localized nutritional optimization system) and formally defend it before local health boards or medical industry panels.

The Structure: The Cross-Walk Certification

In their junior and senior years, students majoring in Healthcare & Bio-Systems cross-walk their clinical knowledge with their declared Skill Minor to build a distinct, employment-ready technical edge.

- **Intersection: Healthcare Major + Technology Minor**
    - *The Focus:* Bio-Informatics & Clinical Data Analytics.

    - *The Execution:* Students write data-cleaning pipelines in Python to process localized public health data sets, creating diagnostic or operational dashboards.
    - *The Certification Target:* A Stoca-issued **"Clinical Data Technician"** credential or IBM Data Foundations badge.
- **Intersection: Healthcare Major + Financial Operations Minor**
    - *The Focus:* Healthcare Administration & Medical Logistics.
    - *The Execution:* Students map and audit the profit-and-loss ledgers, supply chain constraints, and operational expenses associated with managing localized medical clinics or mobile health units.
    - *The Certification Target:* A specialized digital credential in **Medical Operations Management**.

Major Track 2: Environmental & Urban Ecology

Rationale: Regenerative Architecture for the Built Environment

Modern climate challenges manifest most acutely at the intersection of heavy industry, residential zoning, and municipal infrastructure. The Environmental & Urban Ecology Major analyzes real time data affecting neighborhoods Stoca students live in to make environmental research relevant.

Using localized industrial corridors as an active laboratory, students learn to treat urban ecology as a deeply integrated, living system. By merging environmental science with spatial mapping, public policy, and technical prototyping, students learn how to distinguish environmental signals from political noise. This track prepares students to dismantle systemic environmental burdens and architect sustainable, high-performance urban infrastructure that fosters long-term community health.

The Sequence: Engineering Equitable Environments

This upper-level major track is designed for students targeting careers in civil engineering, urban planning, environmental law, renewable energy development, or GIS data science.

- **Year 1 (Prerequisite Exposure): Studio A – The Industrial Health Nexus**
    - *Focus:* Physical air quality sampling, soil chemistry analysis, and environmental data aggregation.
- **Year 2 (Prerequisite Exposure): Studio C – Sustainable Urban Finance**
    - *Focus:* Auditing the capital logistics, municipal bonds, and property tax frameworks behind green urban transitions.
- **Year 3: Urban Prototyping & GIS Spatial Mapping (Specialization Phase I)**
    - *Focus:* Spatial data engineering, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), and climate modeling.
    - *Coursework:* Students learn to capture, process, and analyze complex spatial datasets. They model urban heat islands, toxic plume vectors, and hydrological runoff patterns using professional-grade mapping software.
    - *Outcome:* Technical proficiency in mapping environmental indicators, reading municipal zoning maps, and generating data-backed environmental models.
- **Year 4: Sustainable Infrastructure Design & Capstone Defense (Specialization Phase II)**
    - *Focus:* Structural urban architecture, circular economy frameworks, and environmental regulatory compliance.

- *Coursework:* Students study advanced sustainable construction standards, renewable grid integration, and local/federal environmental compliance law.
- *Application Final Integration:* For their Senior Capstone, students build functional architectural prototypes or comprehensive zoning redesign maps for specific regional corridors, presenting their infrastructure solutions directly to urban planners, regulatory bodies, or environmental engineering firms.

The Structure: The Cross-Walk Certification

Students majoring in Environmental & Urban Ecology integrate their ecological expertise with their declared Skill Minor to form market-ready execution capabilities.

- **Intersection: Environmental Major + Technology Minor**
  - *The Focus:* Computational Ecology & Cloud Spatial Modeling.
  - *The Execution:* Students deploy automated environmental monitoring sensors and utilize cloud platforms to store, analyze, and stream real-time environmental data models.
  - *The Certification Target:* Preparation for foundational **GIS Mapping Certifications** or an AWS Cloud Practitioner credential.
- **Intersection: Environmental Major + Civic Leadership Minor**
  - *The Focus:* Environmental Justice & Public Policy Advocacy.
  - *The Execution:* Students design comprehensive public comment frameworks, community action strategies, and policy briefs aimed at modifying local industrial zoning boundaries or emissions rules.
  - *The Certification Target:* A Stoca-issued **"Civic Environmental Advocate"** credential, verified by local neighborhood organization boards.

Major Track 3: Economics & Community Wealth

Rationale: Engineering Inclusive Financial Ecosystems

Traditional secondary economic education focuses heavily on abstract macroeconomic theories or basic consumer finance, leaving students disconnected from the mechanics of institutional wealth creation and systemic capital allocation. The Economics & Community Wealth Major treats capital as an architectural material that can be intentionally designed, tracked, and allocated to build sustainable community equity.

Students study how money actually moves through a community: lending, real estate, municipal tax credits, and the structures that either build local wealth or block it. They learn quantitative financial modeling and operational budgeting, so a graduate can build a business plan that holds up, analyze a real estate deal, and design a project that puts capital to work in their own community.

The Sequence: Capital Scaffolding and Venture Architecture

This upper-level major track is designed for students seeking careers in venture capital, corporate finance, real estate development, forensic accounting, or economic policy engineering.

- **Year 1 (Prerequisite Exposure): Studio B – Behavioral Finance & Local Micro-Economies**

    - *Focus:* Mapping localized cash flows, consumer behaviors, and community financial baselines.
- **Year 2 (Prerequisite Exposure): Studio C – Sustainable Urban Finance**
    - *Focus:* Analyzing the economic models behind public infrastructure, real estate acquisition, and municipal zoning.
- **Year 3: Property, Capital & Systemic Wealth (Specialization Phase I)**
    - *Focus:* Asset valuation, real estate development frameworks, private liability structures, and corporate taxation.
    - *Coursework:* Students dissect the mechanics of capital accumulation, private financing, and investment structures. They audit real-world real estate deals, private loan underwriting models, and historical wealth-distribution patterns to master the rules of capital deployment.
    - *Outcome:* Mastery of complex financial spreadsheets, amortization schedules, balance sheet analysis, and asset class dynamics.
- **Year 4: Financial Modeling & Venture Architecture (Specialization Phase II)**
    - *Focus:* Pro-forma financial projection, underwriting, risk management, and capital pitching.
    - *Coursework:* Students construct highly detailed financial forecasting models, tracking operational expenses, cost of capital, and potential return metrics for complex projects or startups.
    - *Application Final Integration:* For their Senior Capstone, students engineer a fully articulated business venture or localized community land trust model—complete with complete financial ledgers, risk underwriting, and market validation—and formally defend their pro-forma model to regional venture capital investors, developers, and civic leaders.

The Structure: The Cross-Walk Certification

Students majoring in Economics & Community Wealth pair their quantitative financial training with their designated Skill Minor to secure an execution-level marketplace advantage.

- **Intersection: Economics Major + Technology Minor**
    - *The Focus:* FinTech Algorithms & Predictive Modeling.
    - *The Execution:* Students write data-driven scripts to analyze public stock data, real estate pricing trends, or algorithmic lending risks.
    - *The Certification Target:* A Credly badge in **Financial Data Analytics** or IBM Data Foundations.
- **Intersection: Economics Major + Financial Operations Minor**
    - *The Focus:* Forensic Accounting & Corporate Operations.
    - *The Execution:* Students take over the absolute operational management of an enterprise workflow, setting up advanced ledger divisions, tracking contractor payroll configurations, and running comprehensive profit-and-loss reports.
    - *The Certification Target:* An industry-recognized **Intuit QuickBooks Certified User** or standard Bookkeeping credential.

Minor Track 1: Technology & Applied AI

Rationale: Agentic Automation and Digital Tool Mastery

In an economic environment rapidly transformed by generative artificial intelligence and distributed cloud networks, basic digital literacy is no longer a competitive skill. The Technology & Applied AI Minor operates on the principle that students must move from passive consumers of technology to agentic tool builders and data engineers.

This continuous, four-year skills pipeline focuses heavily on modern execution: data engineering, cloud systems deployment, and generative AI orchestration. By mastering these digital frameworks, students build the technological toolkit required to automate repetitive execution and supercharge the analysis within their chosen Major pathway.

The Sequence: The Digital Toolset Pipeline

This continuous four-year skill track equips every student with the technical infrastructure required to act as an automated developer and advanced data modeler.

- **Year 1: Digital Fabrication & Design Thinking (Foundation)**
  - *Focus:* Rapid UI/UX prototyping, 3D structural modeling, and iterative problem scoping.
  - *Coursework/Credentials:* Students master user-centric design methodologies to frame complex problems, building out wireframes and physical prototypes.
  - *Credential Target:* **IBM Enterprise Design Thinking** badge.
- **Year 2: Generative AI & Agentic Prompting (Application)**
  - *Focus:* Leveraging large language models, automating workflows, and building customized digital agents.
  - *Coursework/Credentials:* Students learn the mechanics of advanced prompt engineering, context-window management, and the ethical guardrails required to harness generative technology safely without losing human critical thought.
  - *Credential Target:* **Google AI Essentials** credential.
- **Year 3: Applied Data Engineering & Programming Logic (Leadership)**
  - *Focus:* Scripting, data pipeline construction, and dataset cleaning using Python and spreadsheet engines.
  - *Coursework/Credentials:* Students learn to capture raw data streams from their Major tracks, write scripts to clean and transform that data, and construct interactive visual databases to expose hidden system patterns.
  - *Credential Target:* **IBM Data Science Foundations** Credly badge.
- **Year 4: Cloud Architecture & Enterprise Deployment (Architecture)**
  - *Focus:* Distributed networks, system security, and hosting complex digital solutions.
  - *Coursework/Credentials:* Students master cloud computing concepts, infrastructure-as-a-service, and network security deployment to ensure their senior prototypes can scale securely.
  - *Credential Target:* **AWS Cloud Practitioner** industry certification.

Minor Track 2: The Applied Linguistics and Heritage Language Track

Rationale: Language as Cultural Fluency in the AI Era

At Stoca Academy, World Language is not viewed as a rote academic requirement, but as the ultimate tool for empathy, psychological safety, and community leadership. Housed within our Influencing (Purpose & Impact) pillar,

our language program explicitly pivots away from transactional bilingualism toward cultural fluency. When navigating complex municipal challenges in Commerce City—a community rich with linguistic diversity and bilingual assets—sustainable impact requires leaders who can facilitate restorative justice, mediate conflict, and build collective intelligence across cultural lines.

This elective track utilizes an asset-based Heritage Language model. It leverages the existing linguistic capital of Commerce City students, accelerating them toward the Colorado Seal of Biliteracy while freeing their upper-level elective blocks for advanced technical credentials and public policy advocacy.

The Sequence: Influencing Through Cultural Fluency

This four-year elective track is designed for students who intend to lead diverse teams, drive inclusive public policy, and utilize bilingualism as a strategic tool for community alignment.

- **Year 1: Heritage Language & Linguistic Assets (Foundation)**
    - **Focus:** Asset-mapping and foundational cultural literacy.
    - **Coursework:** Native speakers enter directly into Heritage Language I, focusing on advanced academic literacy, writing, and professional communication in their native tongue. Non-native speakers engage in Applied Linguistics, focusing on the mechanics of language acquisition through the lens of community engagement.
    - **Outcome:** Students build the academic foundation required to pass the Seal of Biliteracy assessments, validating their existing cultural capital as a highly marketable workforce skill.
- **Year 2: Cultural Fluency & Community Translation (Application)**
    - **Focus:** Utilizing language to bridge municipal and technical gaps.
    - **Coursework**: Students move beyond grammar to study how language shapes public policy, healthcare access, and environmental justice in Adams County and the greater Denver area. They analyze how non-English speaking populations interact with digital and municipal systems.
    - **Application Final Integration:** Students act as "Cultural Translators" for their peers in the Architecting tracks, ensuring that the interactive dashboards and technical prototypes built for Commerce City are linguistically accessible and culturally resonant for all residents.
- Year 3: Restorative Mediation in Native Tongues (Leadership)
    - **Focus:** Psychological safety and conflict design across cultural lines.
    - **Coursework:** This course merges advanced language application with the T.R.U.S.T. model. Students learn the specific vocabulary and emotional intelligence required to facilitate restorative circles, mediate community conflict, and repair harm in bilingual environments.
    - **Outcome:** Students demonstrate the ability to lead high-stakes, emotionally complex conversations without relying on AI intermediaries, proving their capacity for authentic social influence.
- Year 4: Global Systems & Public Policy Advocacy (Architecture)
    - **Focus:** Strategic communication and data-driven narratives.

    - **Coursework:** Students utilize their bilingualism to analyze international policy, global economic shifts, or local immigration frameworks. They learn to craft compelling, bilingual policy memos and strategic communications.
    - **Application Final Integration**: As part of the Senior Capstone, students in this track formally pitch their community solutions to local Commerce City councils, bilingual business coalitions, or industry panels, demonstrating total fluency in both the language of the community and the language of systemic change.

The Structure: The "Cross-Walk" Certification

In their junior and senior years, students who minor in the *Influencing* (World Language) track do not take generic translation classes. Instead, their language curriculum explicitly adopts the vocabulary and technical frameworks of their declared Major.

- **Intersection 1: Architecting Major + Influencing Minor**
    - **The Focus:** Bilingual Data & Cloud Localization
    - **The Execution**: A student mastering Python or AWS Cloud learns how to translate user interfaces, localize algorithmic outputs, and present data architectures to Spanish-speaking enterprise clients or community stakeholders.
    - **The Certification Target**: A Credly badge in Software Localization or a Stoca-issued "Bilingual Data Communicator" credential, verified by a local Denver tech partner.
- **Intersection 2: Evolving Major + Influencing Minor**
    - **The Focus:** Medical & Environmental Technical Translation
    - **The Execution:** A student focusing on bioethics or environmental justice learns the highly regulated terminology of public health, medical compliance, and environmental law in both English and their heritage language.
    - **The Certification Target:** Preparation for the American Translators Association (ATA) foundational exams, or a specialized "Bilingual Public Health Navigator" credential.

The Technical Localization Capstone: Bridging STEM and Cultural Fluency

Rationale: In a globally connected and rapidly diversifying economic landscape, bilingualism is a profound asset. However, the technology and healthcare sectors face a critical shortage of professionals who possess both deep technical fluency and the ability to translate complex systems across linguistic barriers. To address this gap within the Denver area, Stoca Academy offers a premier **Technical Localization Certification** for upper-level students.

The Mechanism: This certification serves as a structural "cross-walk" between a student's primary technical Major (e.g., *Architecting* or *Evolving*) and their *Influencing* language track. Rather than engaging in generic language translation, students master the highly specialized, industry-specific vocabulary of their chosen technical field in a second language.

Applied Outcomes and Credentialing: A student architecting a data dashboard for local environmental tracking does not simply build the tool in English; they learn the technical localization protocols required to deploy that software natively for Spanish-speaking populations. A student studying bioethics learns the regulated terminology required to translate public health data for marginalized communities.

By their senior year, students pursuing this intersectional pathway are eligible to earn specialized, industry-recognized digital credentials in **Technical Localization**. This ensures that our graduates enter the post-secondary world not merely as bilingual speakers, but as **Bilingual Technical Architects**—fully equipped to lead inclusive, career-connected engineering, healthcare, and policy teams.

Minor Track 3: Civic Leadership & Restorative Justice

Rationale: Human Operations, Restorative Culture, and Governance

The Civic Leadership & Restorative Justice Minor provides the vital human operations toolkit required to lead complex teams and navigate dense civic ecosystems. Grounded firmly in our T.R.U.S.T. culture framework, this pathway trains students to view human organizations as dynamic systems that require intentional design, active conflict mediation, and clear relational governance. Students learn the precise organizational frameworks required to mobilize teams, design restorative accountability circles, and interface effectively with formal municipal power structures.

The Sequence: The Human Toolset Pipeline

This continuous four-year skill track prepares students to build psychological safety, lead high-stakes organizational mediation, and direct civic policy.

- **Year 1: Foundations of Community Leadership & Strengths Mapping (Foundation)**
    - *Focus:* Strengths-based team architecture and interpersonal dynamics.
    - *Coursework/Credentials:* Students discover their unique talent vectors and learn how to map the psychological strengths of a team to maximize collaboration and operational velocity.
    - *Credential Target:* **Gallup CliftonStrengths** Leadership Profile.
- **Year 2: Restorative Mediation & Conflict Design (Application)**
    - *Focus:* Restorative circle facilitation, emotional intelligence, and proactive harm reduction.
    - *Coursework/Credentials:* Students study the structural mechanics of restorative justice. They learn to facilitate accountability processes, manage tense interpersonal mediation, and design communication frameworks that preserve psychological safety under stress.
    - *Credential Target:* Stoca Certified **"Restorative Circle Practitioner"** credential.
- **Year 3: Civic Governance, RNOs & Municipal Power (Leadership)**
    - *Focus:* Structural local government, school board configurations, and Registered Neighborhood Organizations (RNOs).
    - *Coursework/Credentials:* Students study the structural pathways of civic influence. They audit how municipal budgets are approved, how zoning variances are contested via RNOs, and how public comments shape regional regulatory policy.
    - *Credential Target:* **Civic Leadership & Governance Badge**, endorsed by local Denver municipal partners.
- **Year 4: Organizational Psychology & Strategic Alignment (Architecture)**
    - *Focus:* Executive leadership, change management, and human operations architecture.

- *Coursework/Credentials:* Students master the frameworks of organizational culture design, learning how to strategically align diverse stakeholders around a shared mission and manage the psychological friction of large-scale systemic transitions.
- *Credential Target:* Professional leadership credentials such as **Harvard ManageMentor / Leadership Excellence** badge.

Minor Track 4: Financial Operations & Project Management

Rationale: Tactical Execution and Operational Rigor

The Financial Operations & Project Management Minor is built for the student who wants to master the absolute mechanics of execution. Visionary concepts and systemic models are meaningless without the operational discipline, financial tracking, and logistical precision required to execute in the real world.

This track teaches students the project-management and accounting skills that professionals actually use: workflow automation, resource planning, and bookkeeping. Students learn to run a multi-step project, track a real budget, and assess financial risk, so the ventures and programs they design in their Major are financially sound and can actually be built.

The Sequence: The Execution Toolset Pipeline

This continuous four-year skill track delivers the exact project management and accounting frameworks needed to convert high-level concepts into functional, solvent enterprises.

- **Year 1: Agile Frameworks & Project Scoping (Foundation)**
  - *Focus:* Lean execution, sprint planning, task dependency mapping, and Gantt charts.
  - *Coursework/Credentials:* Students learn how to break complex, ambiguous team objectives down into distinct, measurable, time-bound tasks while maintaining absolute operational accountability.
  - *Credential Target:* **PMI Project Management Agile Explorer** credential.
- **Year 2: Operational Workflow Automation & Infrastructure Tracking (Application)**
  - *Focus:* Modern productivity infrastructure, workflow automation, and relational asset management.
  - *Coursework/Credentials:* Students master professional project-tracking platforms. They build integrated, automated dashboards to manage logistics, inventory, and cross-team dependencies seamlessly.
  - *Credential Target:* Specialized digital credentials in **Asana, Monday.com, or Jira Project Systems**.
- **Year 3: Financial Operations & Ledger Management (Leadership)**
  - *Focus:* Accounting mechanics, profit-and-loss (P&L) tracking, contractor payroll models, and cash flow auditing.
  - *Coursework/Credentials:* Students move beyond basic personal budgeting to study formal business accounting. They learn how to structure balance sheets, map operational expenses against incoming revenue streams, and manage private loan amortization parameters.
  - *Credential Target:* **Intuit QuickBooks Certified User** or standard bookkeeping industry certification.
- **Year 4: Advanced Strategic Execution & Risk Underwriting (Architecture)**

- *Focus:* Capital budgeting, corporate governance, risk assessment, and professional project execution.
- *Coursework/Credentials:* Students synthesize their project management and accounting data to underwrite operational risks, manage comprehensive capital allocations, and prepare for formal external audits of their Senior Capstone project financials.
- *Credential Target:* **PMI Project Management Ready** international certification.

Sample Scope and Sequence - Science

Middle School Science (Grades 6–8)

Middle-school science is delivered inside the **Exploratory Foundation** double block, integrated with social studies, sector exposure, and data-tool practice. The scope builds investigation skill and science identity year over year, so students arrive at the 9th-grade Studios already fluent in gathering and reasoning from real data. Each grade runs four quarter-length investigations.

Grade 6 — Systems and Observation

Quarter	Investigation	Core science content	CAS domain (indicative)
Q1	What is a system?	Matter, energy, and simple systems; observation and measurement	Physical Science; Science & Engineering Practices
Q2	Living systems	Cells, organisms, ecosystems; interdependence	Life Science
Q3	Earth's systems	Weather, water, and local geography	Earth & Space Science
Q4	Our neighborhood as a system	Introductory data collection on a local question	Practices; cross-disciplinary application

Grade 7 — Cause, Effect, and Evidence

Quarter	Investigation	Core science content	CAS domain (indicative)
Q1	Human and environmental health	Body systems; environmental factors in health	Life Science
Q2	Energy and matter in motion	Forces, energy transfer, chemical vs. physical change	Physical Science
Q3	Ecosystems under pressure	Populations, resources, human impact	Life & Earth Science
Q4	Planetary Health investigation	Students map a local variable (e.g., tree cover vs. surface temperature) using real data	Practices; data analysis

Grade 8 — Investigation and Argument

Quarter	Investigation	Core science content	CAS domain (indicative)
Q1	Data and models	Constructing and critiquing models; variables and controls	Science & Engineering Practices
Q2	Chemistry of everyday systems	Atoms, molecules, reactions in real contexts	Physical Science
Q3	Genetics and change over time	Heredity, adaptation, natural selection	Life Science
Q4	Studio-readiness capstone	A full investigation cycle: question, data, analysis, defended claim	Practices; Studio-readiness

Readiness outcome: By the end of grade 8, a student can frame a question, collect and clean real data, build and critique a model, and defend a claim with evidence, the exact skills the 9th-grade Studios require on day one.

High School Science (Grades 9–12)

High-school science is delivered through **Interdisciplinary Studios** (grades 9–10, identical for all students) and **Major tracks** (grades 11–12, by declared pathway). Every student earns the same guaranteed core: 2.0 lab science units in the Studios plus 1.0 in the Major, with distinction options extending to 2.0 in the Major.

Grades 9–10 — The Foundational Studios (all students)

Grade	Studio	Science content	Credit
9	**Industrial Health Nexus**	Environmental and life science: air, soil, and water data gathered from local industrial corridors, mapped against public-health outcomes	0.5 Lab Science (Life/Environmental)
9	**Behavioral Finance & Local Micro-Economies**	Applied data and systems reasoning in an economics context (science practices embedded)	(Social studies credit; science practices applied)
10	**Sustainable Urban Finance**	Applied environmental and physical science: climate resilience, green infrastructure	0.5 Lab Science (Applied Environmental/Physical)
10	**Commerce City Systems Hack**	Physical science and engineering design: a full systems-engineering investigation of a local challenge	1.0 Lab Science (Physical/Engineering Design)

Studio science total (all students): 2.0 lab science units.

Grades 11–12 — The Major Tracks (by declared pathway)

Major	Advanced science coursework	Credit
Healthcare & Bio-Systems	Epidemiology, molecular biology, bio-informatics	1.0 Advanced Lab Science (college-prep chem/bio); distinction extends to 2.0
Environmental & Urban Ecology	GIS spatial mapping, climate data modeling, green structural prototyping	1.0 Advanced Applied/Physical Lab Science; distinction extends to 2.0
Economic & Community Health	Quantitative and applied-science methods supporting venture and infrastructure design	1.0 Lab Science (applied); distinction options available

Culminating assessment: Each student completes a Senior Capstone in their Major, a defended, real-world scientific or technical investigation evaluated by industry and community panels, which serves as the summative demonstration of science mastery.

Scope and sequence for the protected daily cores (Mathematics and English Language Arts) and for the full Studio and Major sequences are developed in detail during Year 0 curriculum development, in collaboration with CSI, and aligned to the current Colorado Academic Standards.

School Calendar and Schedule

Calendar

The Stoca Week

Stoca runs a five-day week: **four instructional days plus one Architect Day.** Architect Day is accountable instructional time, not a day off. On it, students complete self-paced, module-based mastery work in Mathematics and ELA and the credential (Credly) modules, with tiered coaching directed to the students furthest from their growth targets. The four instructional days and the Architect Day together carry the annual instructional hours below.

Daily schedule: 8:00 a.m. to 3:35 p.m., identical for the middle school and high school, enabling shared transportation, food service, and professional development.

2028–29 Key Dates (Model)

This is a model since the 28-29 Adams 14 calendar has not been published.

Date (model)	Event
Aug 6–14, 2028	Teacher professional development and preparation (no students)
Aug 17, 2028	**First day of school**
Sep 4, 2028	Labor Day — no school

Oct 16–20, 2028	Fall break — no school
Nov 22–24, 2028	Thanksgiving break — no school
Dec 25, 2028 – Jan 5, 2029	Winter break — no school
Jan 15, 2029	Martin Luther King Jr. Day — no school
Feb 19, 2029	Presidents Day — no school
Mar 26–30, 2029	Spring break — no school
May 25, 2029	Memorial Day observance — no school
May 30, 2029	**Last day of school**
Monthly	One late-start or early-release per month for staff professional development (built into hours below)

Parent-teacher conferences, exhibition and presentation nights, and assessment windows are scheduled within this frame and published to families annually in English and Spanish.

Instructional-Time Compliance

Colorado requires a minimum of **1,080 hours of planned teacher-pupil instruction and contact time** for secondary schools (and no fewer than 160 student contact days). Stoca's calendar exceeds both.

Measure	Stoca (model)	Colorado minimum
Student contact days	~174	160
Daily gross time (8:00–3:35)	455 minutes	—
Daily instructional and contact time (net of lunch/passing)	~395 minutes (~6.6 hours)	—
Total annual instructional and contact hours	**~1,140 hours**	**1,080 hours**

Architect Day is counted toward instructional and contact time as accountable, structured instruction, consistent with the school's waiver of the standard teacher-pupil contact-hour definition. The school will document its final hour calculation for CSI and align it to CDE guidance during Year 0, and will not make material calendar modifications without notifying CSI.

Alignment to Adams 14

The calendar mirrors Adams 14's typical start and end windows and places its major breaks (fall, Thanksgiving, winter, spring) in the same periods, so that families with children in both Stoca and Adams 14 schools share a common rhythm and so that shared transportation arrangements remain viable. Where Stoca's calendar diverges, it is to accommodate the school's own professional-development model and the Architect Day structure. Final dates will be set against the published Adams 14 2028–29 calendar and adopted by the board.

Middle School Schedule

Exploratory | Math | ELA | World Lang | PE / Health | Support | Intervention | Prep

Teacher	P1 · 8:15	P2 · 9:10	P3 · 10:10	Lun	P4 · 11:55	P5 · 12:55	P6 · 1:55
Exploratory Foundation — 5 teachers · 9 double blocks · ~50 per section · Grade 8 in P1–P2, Grade 6 in P3–P4, Grade 7 in P5–P6							
Exploratory 1 Gr 8 / Gr 6	Exploratory Foundation (110 min)		Exploratory Foundation (110 min)	·		Support	—
Exploratory 2 Gr 8 / Gr 6	Exploratory Foundation (110 min)		Exploratory Foundation (110 min)	·		—	Support
Exploratory 3 Gr 8 / Gr 7	Exploratory Foundation (110 min)		Support	·	—	Exploratory Foundation (110 min)	
Exploratory 4 Gr 6 / Gr 7	—	Support	Exploratory Foundation (110 min)	·		Exploratory Foundation (110 min)	
Exploratory 5 Gr 7	Support	Support	Support	·	—	Exploratory Foundation (110 min)	
Mathematics — 4 teachers · 18 sections of 25 · 90% mastery floor · slack periods used for intervention							
Math 1	Math	Math	Math	·	Math	Math	—
Math 2	Math	Math	Math	·	Math	—	Interv.
Math 3	Math	Math	Math	·	—	Math	Interv.
Math 4	Math	Math	—	·	Math	Math	Math
English Language Arts — 4 teachers · 18 sections of 25 · 90% mastery floor							
ELA 1	—	ELA	ELA	·	ELA	ELA	ELA
ELA 2	ELA	—	ELA	·	ELA	ELA	Interv.
ELA 3	ELA	ELA	—	·	ELA	ELA	Interv.
ELA 4	ELA	ELA	ELA	·	—	ELA	ELA
World Language — 3 teachers · 15 sections of 30 · heritage and non-heritage tracks begin in the middle grades							
World Lang 1 Heritage	—	WL	WL	·	WL	WL	WL
World Lang 2 Heritage / Non-h.	WL	WL	—	·	WL	WL	WL
World Lang 3 Non-heritage	WL	WL	WL	·	WL	—	WL
PE / Health — 2 teachers · 9 sections · larger groups							
PE / Health 1	Support	Support	—	·	PE	PE	PE
PE / Health 2	Support	Support	Support	·	PE	—	PE

High School Schedule

24 core teachers · 500 students · six-period day. Studios run mornings (P1–P2), Majors afternoons (P5–P6), shown as merged double blocks. A decoupled 10-minute morning and 20-minute closing advisory bookend the day in shared space.

Studio Major Flex English Math World Lang Minor Prep

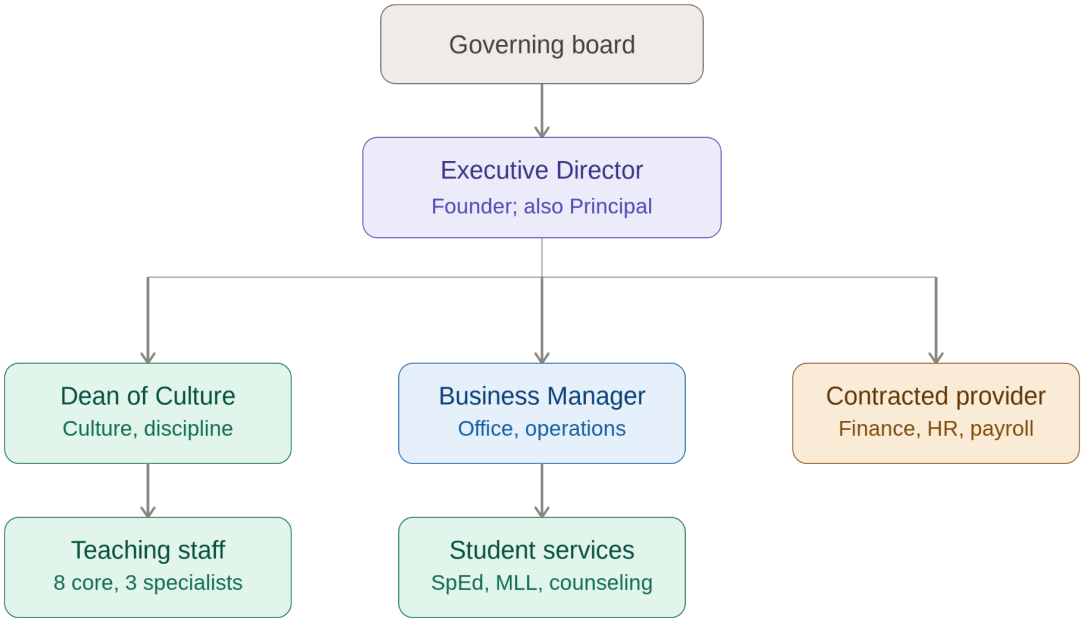
Teacher	P1 · 8:15	P2 · 9:10	P3 · 10:10	Lun	P4 · 11:55	P5 · 12:55	P6 · 1:55
Pathway Faculty — Studio (AM) + Major (PM) · 10 teachers							
Health 1 path	Studio		—	·	Flex	Major	
Health 2 path	Studio		Flex	·	—	Major	
Health 3 path	Studio		—	·	Flex	Major	
Health 4 path	Studio		Flex	·	—	Major	
Environmental 1 path	Studio		—	·	Flex	Major	
Environmental 2 path	Studio		Flex	·	—	Major	
Environmental 3 path	Studio		—	·	Flex	Major	
Economic 1 path	Studio		Flex	·	—	Major	
Economic 2 path	Studio		—	·	Flex	Major	
Economic 3 path	Studio		Flex	·	—	Major	
English — 4 teachers · 5 teach / 1 prep							
English 1	—	Eng	Eng	·	Eng	Eng	Eng
English 2	Eng	—	Eng	·	Eng	Eng	Eng
English 3	Eng	Eng	—	·	Eng	Eng	Eng
English 4	Eng	Eng	Eng	·	—	Eng	Eng
Mathematics — 4 teachers							
Math 1	Math	Math	Math	·	—	Math	Math
Math 2	Math	Math	Math	·	Math	—	Math
Math 3	Math	Math	Math	·	Math	Math	—
Math 4	—	Math	Math	·	Math	Math	Math
World Language — 2 teachers (core Gr 9–10 + language Flex)							
World Lang 1 Herit.	—	Flex	WL	·	WL	WL	WL
World Lang 2 Non-h.	Flex	—	WL	·	WL	WL	WL
Minor — 4 teachers · 1 per track							
Minor Tech	—	Minor	Minor	·	Minor	Minor	Minor
Minor Heritage L.	Minor	—	Minor	·	Minor	Minor	Minor
Minor Civic	Minor	Minor	—	·	Minor	Minor	Minor
Minor Fin Ops	Minor	Minor	Minor	·	—	Minor	Minor

Every pathway teacher's Studio (P1–P2) and Major (P5–P6) sit in different bands, so spanning both never conflicts. P3–P4 carry no double blocks, keeping the mid-day universally open. Academic teachers run one subject at five sections and one prep.

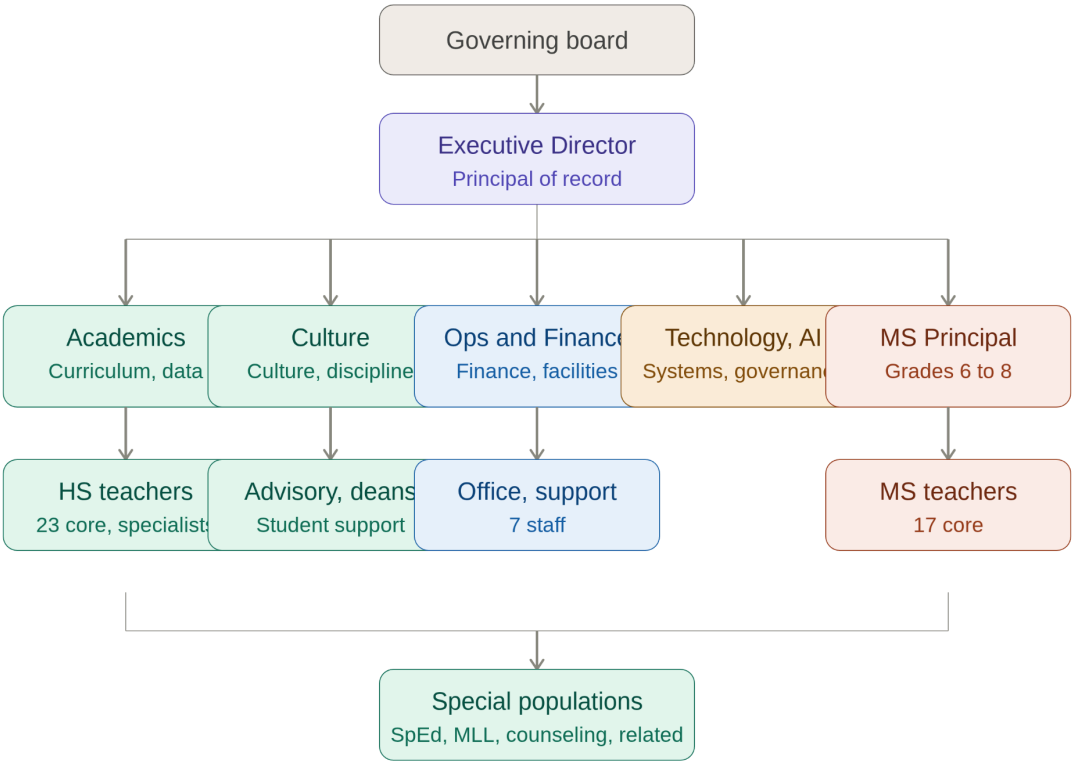
Reading the grid: every pathway teacher's Studio (P1–P2) and Major (P5–P6) sit in different bands, so spanning both never conflicts. P3–P4 carry no double blocks, keeping the mid-day universally open for Minors and language tracks. Academic teachers run one subject at five sections and one prep.

Organizational Chart

In founding, the organizational chart will differ from when Stoca Academy is at full build.



Full Build



Leader Growth & Evaluation Rubric

Aligned to the teacher rubric: each domain now has an Evidence Map. Part 2 uses three-way triangulation — leader self-evaluation, staff-experience survey, and observation/peer — with the gap between self-report and staff reality named as the coaching signal. The ED / Principal is evaluated by the Board on the whole-school version.

How to Read This Rubric

- Three parts on a Pipeline spine. Part 1, Results & Outcomes (scored, role-specific). Part 2, Leadership Practice (how conditions get built). Part 3, the Successor Passage (Pipeline-based, successor-designate only). The Leadership Pipeline underneath explains what changes as a person moves up.
- Outcomes are accountability, read as trajectory. Growth and equity of growth over multiple years, not absolute achievement in one. A single down year does not sink a strong leader; a pattern cannot be outrun by strong practice.
- A two-way accountability loop. Leaders are held accountable for how the people they serve experience their leadership. Staff experience is named evidence for both the outcomes (staff health and retention) and the practice domain — measured as conditions (am I developed, safe, given useful feedback), not popularity, so leaders who hold a hard line are not punished for it.
- Self-knowledge is foundational. The first practice criterion, acting on self-knowledge, underpins the rest: a leader cannot develop others, build safety, or steward the bones without seeing their own impact clearly.
- Proficient is the goal; "Leading" is contribution beyond the domain, not a higher grind. Same philosophy as the teacher rubric. Floors are always-required or genuine-progress; founding-year outcomes are thin, so leading indicators and practice weigh more early.

The Leadership Pipeline for Stoca (the developmental spine)

The Leadership Pipeline holds that each move up requires a transition in three things — skills, time application, and work values — and that the hardest part of each passage is letting go of what made you successful at the last level. A full corporate pipeline has six passages; a 500-student school has three. We name them now so development is clear as we scale, and so we can honestly ask whether a person wants to make a passage or wants to get great where they are.

Passage	New Skills	New Time Application	New Work Values (what to let go of)
1. Teacher → Leader of Teachers (coach, grade/dept lead)	Coaching adults; giving effective feedback; facilitating teams; planning others' work	From perfecting your own classroom to developing others' practice	Value other teachers' students' success as your own. Let go of being the best individual teacher.
2. Leader of Teachers → Leader of a Function (Dean, Director)	Systems and strategy for a whole function; leading through other leaders; managing cross-domain seams	On the health of the whole function, not direct delivery	Value the function's outcomes over any single team; trust the leaders below you. Let go of hands-on control of the work.
3. Functional Leader → School Leader (Principal / ED — the successor passage)	Running the whole school across all functions; external leadership (Board, families, partners, fundraising); holding the whole model	External and strategic; across all domains; on vision and sustainability	Value the whole school's mission and long-term sustainability over your own domain expertise; steward the bones. Let go of your home domain and your identity as its expert.

Founder's note: the founder holds one foot in every passage at once and faces the hardest letting-go of all — Principal to Executive Director. The research is explicit that founders resist this transition and keep a foot in the role they love; naming it here is a safeguard against that exact failure.

This spine also structures leader development: what to develop for a given person is the skills, time, and values shift of the passage they are making — not generic "leadership skills." And it makes the honest conversation possible: a great teacher who does not want to stop being a great teacher is not failing; they are choosing not to make Passage 1, which is a legitimate, valued choice.

Part 1 — Results & Outcomes (how it is leveled)

Criterion	Below Standard	Developing	Proficient (the goal)	Leading (optional)
Results & Outcomes (in your domain) FLOOR: always-accountable; trajectory-read	A pattern of missed or declining outcomes across multiple cycles, with no credible plan or leading indicators to reverse it. Includes chronic loss or distrust of the staff you lead.	Outcomes mixed or flat; some targets met. A credible plan is in place and leading indicators are beginning to move.	Outcomes on a positive multi-year trajectory; growth and equity-of-growth targets met over time; your people are developing and staying; the domain is healthy.	Outcomes strong and improving beyond trajectory; the domain lifts the whole school; results and a strong bench are documented and shared.

The two-way loop reaches the outcomes domain: for people-leaders, chronically losing or demoralizing good staff is itself an outcome failure, not just a practice gap. Read as a trajectory — one hard year is not a pattern.

Part 1 — Evidence Map (Outcomes by Role)

Each role's outcome evidence, growth- and equity-weighted. This is the Part 1 counterpart to the teacher rubric's Evidence Map.

Role	Primary Outcome Measures (growth & equity-weighted)	Leading Indicators
Executive Director / Principal (Board-evaluated)	Whole-school growth & equity of growth; graduation and credential attainment; enrollment and student retention; financial health; culture; staff retention and trust.	Teacher rubric distribution improving; staff-experience survey; staff retention (esp. strong teachers); enrollment pipeline.
Director of Academics & Innovation	Schoolwide student growth (growth-capable interim); equity of growth (Tier 2/3); mastery and credential completion; instructional-model health; retention of strong teachers.	Application Finals calibration; teacher Part-1 rubric rising; staff-experience survey; PD-cycle completion.
Dean of Culture & Students	Attendance; discipline disproportionality (equity); belonging and climate (student & staff survey); student and staff retention.	Restorative-cycle completion; referral trends; advisory health; staff-experience survey.
Director of Operations & Finance	Financial health (margin, reserves, clean audit); enrollment targets met; compliance clean; systems reliable; retention of ops staff.	Cash-flow trend; enrollment-pipeline metrics; audit findings; staff-experience survey.
Director of Technology & AI Integration	Staff tech and AI fluency growth (educator credentials); classroom AI-integration adoption; faithful T.R.U.S.T. implementation; staff trust in tech supports.	Credential-completion rate; adoption/usage data; support resolution; staff-experience survey.

Part 2 — Leadership Practice (building the conditions)

Shared across all leaders. Evaluated on impact and informed by staff-experience evidence — the upward half of the accountability loop — measured as conditions, not popularity. Professional and team practice (reliability, feedback) is folded in here rather than as a separate track.

Criterion	Below Standard	Developing	Proficient (the goal)	Leading (optional)
1. Acts on Self-Knowledge FLOOR: always-required	Unaware of or defensive about their impact; does not seek feedback, or seeks it and does not change; blind spots persist and damage trust.	Open to feedback but acts on it inconsistently; names some blind spots but is slow to adjust.	Actively seeks feedback and changes; names their own mistakes and impact before others must; adjusts course when wrong. This builds trust.	Models public self-correction; helps others build the same habit; makes seeking and acting on feedback a team norm.
2. Guardianship of the Bones FLOOR: always-required	Lets the model's core erode; permits drift or changes bones without cause; cannot distinguish adapting the surface from breaking a bone.	Protects the bones but inconsistently; sometimes over-rigid on the surface or too permissive with the core.	Protects and strengthens the core in their domain; adapts the surface freely while keeping the bones intact.	Deepens the model; helps the team and Board steward the bones; strengthens fidelity across domains.

3. Develops People, Toward Need FLOOR: always-required	Invests development in the already-strong, or in no one; lets struggling staff sink; grows no bench.	Develops people unevenly; attention still flows to the easiest-to-coach.	Invests the most, and best, development in staff with the most hidden potential; grows a bench; uses the Pipeline to develop people toward the passage they are making.	Builds a development engine others replicate; produces leaders; visibly grows the bench toward succession.
4. Builds Psychological Safety & Candor FLOOR: always-required	Leads through fear, blame, or control; gives or receives feedback poorly; people hide mistakes and avoid risks.	Neither strongly builds nor erodes safety; feedback and candor are inconsistent.	Creates conditions where people take real risks, fail forward, and are candid; gives and receives direct feedback that improves the work.	Builds durable team safety and a strong feedback culture; protects candor through hard moments; models vulnerability.
5. Coordination & Reliability FLOOR: genuine progress	Manages tasks but not the system; misses commitments others depend on; seams with other domains break; work is siloed.	Coordinates within their domain; occasional missed commitments; cross-domain seams inconsistent.	Makes their team function as a dependable system; keeps the commitments others rely on; the seams with other domains hold; distributes leadership.	Orchestrates across domains; strengthens the whole leadership system's coherence and reliability, not only their own.

Part 2 — Evidence Map (three-way triangulation)

Each practice criterion is triangulated across the leader's self-evaluation, the staff-experience survey (the upward half of the loop), and observation or peer input. Where the leader's self-rating and the staff's experience diverge, the gap itself is the coaching signal — and is direct evidence for "Acts on Self-Knowledge." The staff survey is primary where the people served are the best witness (self-knowledge, development, safety) and supporting where peers or systems judge better (coordination).

Criterion	Primary Evidence	Supporting Evidence
1. Acts on Self-Knowledge	The gap between the leader's self-evaluation and the staff-experience survey (size and direction of the discrepancy)	Observation; 360 / peer feedback; whether the gap closes over time
2. Guardianship of the Bones	Evaluator observation against the bones document; domain model-fidelity review	Leader self-evaluation and reflection; drift indicators in the domain
3. Develops People, Toward Need	Staff-experience survey ("am I developed?"); bench growth and internal advancement	Leader self-evaluation (moves made: cycles run, development delivered); retention of developing staff
4. Builds Psychological Safety & Candor	Staff-experience survey ("is it safe to take risks and be candid?")	Leader self-evaluation and reflection; observation; team retention
5. Coordination & Reliability	Peer / cross-domain feedback (do the seams hold?); record of commitments kept	Leader self-evaluation; staff-experience survey; systems reliability

On the self-evaluation: leaders rate themselves on each criterion and attach evidence and reflection — the moves they made and why they chose that level. The self-evaluation is evidence for the conversation, never a component of

the score. Its honesty depends on being safe; counting it would inflate it and erase the very discrepancy that makes it useful. A guided reflection-question document is a planned companion tool that will operationalize this self-evaluation.

Part 3 — The Successor Passage (successor-designate only)

A developmental, confidential criterion for the leader on the succession path. It is Pipeline Passage 3 — Functional Leader to School Leader — read as a stage on that passage, not pass/fail. It makes the succession design an evaluated commitment, and it names what the successor must let go of, not only what they must gain.

Criterion	Early in Passage	Beginning the Passage	Well Into the Passage	Ready
Making Passage 3: Functional Leader → School Leader DEVELOPMENTAL: read as a stage	Excels in own function; has not begun the skills, time, or values shifts of whole-school leadership; still leads as a functional expert.	Beginning the passage: taking on responsibilities beyond own domain; building external credibility with Board, families, and partners; starting to value the whole over the part.	Well into the passage: holds multiple domains; spends time on the whole school, not one function; visibly stewards the bones; seen as a leader in their own right, not a deputy.	Ready: demonstrates the skills, time application, and work values of a school leader; has let go of their home-domain identity; can run the whole school and evolve the model faithfully — including the standing to respectfully challenge the founder and be right.

Part 3 evidence: the passage progression itself — is the leader taking on cross-domain responsibility, building external credibility with Board, families, and partners, and demonstrating the skills, time, and work-values shifts of a school leader. This developmental criterion is confidential to the succession process and is not a scored accountability line.

Teacher Growth & Evaluation Rubric

A single instrument serving development and accountability. Two parts, scored and reported separately. Each criterion is triangulated from multiple measures — observation, student outcomes, and student voice — so no teacher is judged on any one source. Version 2: adds the evidence structure, student voice, and research grounding.

How to Read This Rubric

- Proficient is the goal, and it is enough. A teacher Proficient across every criterion is a fully successful professional. Proficient is the target, not a way station.
- "Leading" is contribution to the collective, not a higher grind. Optional. It means lifting others — mentoring, refining the model, strengthening the team — never chasing a badge.
- Every criterion has a floor, of one of two kinds. Always-required behaviors are non-negotiable from day one. Genuine-progress-required criteria (the craft you are learning) are met by visible, honest movement — so "everything has a floor" coexists with a founding team learning the model together.
- Outcomes are evidence, not a separate score. Student outcomes anchor the practice criteria — they answer "is this practice working?" — but are never scored as a standalone judgment, which would hold teachers accountable for results outside their control.

- Growth and equity of growth, not absolute achievement. Outcome evidence is weighted toward how far students moved — especially the students furthest from mastery — not where they landed. This rewards the teachers of the highest-need students rather than punishing them.
- Founding weight. In founding years, Part 2 (Professional & Team Practice) is weighted equally to or more than Part 1: in a small team, one corrosive colleague is a large share of the culture.

Part 1 — Instructional Practice

Criterion	Below Standard	Developing	Proficient (the goal)	Leading (optional)
1. Support Flows Toward Need FLOOR: always-required	Attention and intensity flow toward already-successful students; struggling students are left alone or given less of the teacher's time.	Recognizes who needs more, but distribution of time and intensity is inconsistent; still gravitates toward easier-to-teach students.	Deliberately gives the most, and best, support to students furthest from mastery; uses data to route attention to need. Struggling students are never alone.	Coaches peers to distribute attention toward need; builds school-wide systems that route support to hidden potential.
2. Mastery, Not Coverage FLOOR: genuine progress	Teaches to pacing and coverage; students advance without demonstrating mastery; no evidence of the 90% floor.	Building mastery-based practice; some checks for real understanding, but inconsistent use of the mastery floor and defended work.	Students demonstrate genuine mastery (90% floor, defended Application Finals); teaches for transferable skill, not recognition.	Refines the mastery model; calibrates Application Finals with peers; elevates rigor across the team.
3. Identity & Language as Asset FLOOR: always-required	Uses deficit framing about students' language or culture; treats multilingualism as a barrier; requires assimilation to participate.	Avoids deficit language but does not yet leverage students' linguistic and cultural repertoire as an asset for learning.	Treats students' languages and cultures as intellectual capital; lets students make sense in their full repertoire; builds on identity as a foundation.	Models and coaches asset-based practice; helps dismantle the "academic language tax" in curriculum and assessment.
4. X-Disciplinary Cycle Fidelity FLOOR: genuine progress	Skips the cycle; assigns projects without modeling, student-grading, or progressive release.	Attempts the cycle; models and releases unevenly; having students grade against the rubric is emerging.	Runs the full cycle with fidelity — models first, has students grade against the rubric, then progressively releases toward independence.	Refines the cycle; mentors peers; contributes improvements to the model's design.
5. Teacher as Learner FLOOR: always-required	Disengaged from own growth; resistant to feedback and unlearning; static practice.	Open to growth; engages the educator credential pathway and feedback, but inconsistently acts on it.	Actively develops — progresses through the educator credential pathway, unlearns outdated practice, and applies feedback and the grounding texts to change practice.	Drives collective learning — facilitates text-to-practice work, mentors growth, models curiosity for the staff.

Evidence Map — Part 1(Multiple Measures)

Each instructional criterion is triangulated. "A growth-capable interim" refers to an assessment such as MAP that measures how far a student moved, reported as growth. Note what is absent: the SAT is a school-level outcome (see below), not teacher-evaluation evidence.

Criterion	Primary Evidence	Supporting Evidence
1. Support Flows Toward Need	Growth of Tier 2 / Tier 3 students specifically (equity of growth) on a growth-capable interim	Architect Day coaching data; student voice survey
2. Mastery, Not Coverage	Application Finals (calibrated) + mastery-floor (90%) data	Growth data; credential completion
3. Identity & Language as Asset	Student voice survey (highest-need and multilingual students)	Growth equity across language groups; classroom observation
4. X-Disciplinary Cycle Fidelity	Application Finals — the cycle's product	Classroom observation
5. Teacher as Learner	Educator credential progress + evidence of applied practice change	Observation; contribution to shared PD

Part 2 — Professional & Team Practice

These criteria measure impact on the team, not communication style or personality fit. They are evaluated by observable effect — were commitments kept, did feedback improve the work, was the team safer — so they are fair, consistent across evaluators, and defensible. All are always-required floors. Weighted equally to or more than Part 1 in founding years.

Criterion	Below Standard	Developing	Proficient (the goal)	Leading (optional)
6. Reliability & Commitments FLOOR: always-required	Misses commitments the team depends on; unreliable on shared systems and deadlines; others must cover or rework.	Generally reliable; occasional missed commitments that affect the team.	Keeps the commitments the team depends on; follows through on shared systems so others can rely on them.	Strengthens team reliability; builds systems that make follow-through easier for everyone.
7. Feedback That Improves the Work FLOOR: always-required	Avoids or weaponizes feedback; defensive to input; feedback interactions damage the work or the relationship.	Gives and receives feedback unevenly — sometimes avoids hard conversations or receives input defensively.	Gives and receives direct feedback in a way that improves the work; engages conflict constructively.	Raises the team's feedback culture; helps others give and receive feedback well.
8. Surfaces Problems Early FLOOR: always-required	Lets problems fester or hides them until they become crises; withholds information the team needs.	Surfaces problems, but sometimes late or incompletely.	Raises issues early and directly, so the team can respond before they escalate.	Builds a culture where early problem-surfacing is safe and normal.
9. Contributes to Psychological Safety FLOOR: always-required	Erodes safety through blame, status games, or making it unsafe for others to take risks or admit mistakes.	Neutral to safety; neither erodes nor actively builds it.	Contributes to a climate where colleagues feel safe to take risks, fail	Actively builds team psychological safety and protects it when threatened.

			forward, and be candid.	

How Outcomes Are Used (and Not Used)

- SAT is a school-level goal, not teacher-evaluation evidence. It is a point-in-time, high-stakes measure, essential for student college access and the school's external credibility, but too infrequent and too correlated with income to fairly evaluate an individual teacher. It belongs in the Goals section, not the rubric.
- A growth-capable interim (e.g., MAP) is the growth engine. It credits movement regardless of starting point, which protects the teachers of the highest-need students. It anchors the equity-of-growth evidence.
- Application Finals are the mastery and model-fidelity evidence. They are the richest, most Stoca-specific measure — but credible only if calibrated so that "proficient" means the same thing across teachers and years.
- Founding-year note. Growth data does not exist until a full fall-to-spring cycle completes (year two). In the founding year, growth-dependent criteria are evaluated on leading indicators — are the systems and practices sound — plus Application Finals, observation, and student voice. The instrument matures as the school does.

Calibration & Fairness

The subjective criteria (attention distribution, asset-based practice) and the performance measures (Application Finals) are only valid if scored consistently. This matters acutely in a small founding school where a single evaluator can become a single point of bias.

- Triangulation. No criterion is scored from one source; observation, outcomes, and student voice must agree before a rating is confident.
- A calibration mechanism. Subjective criteria and Application Finals require a second observer or moderated scoring, so ratings are not hostage to one person's lens.
- Student voice as an independent check. The students furthest from mastery are the only ones who truly know whether they were invested in or abandoned; their perception is primary evidence for Criteria 1 and 3.
- Weight away from self-report on the values criteria. Teacher self-ratings are prone to social-desirability and implicit bias; the values floors rely on observation and student voice, not self-assessment.

Research Grounding & Defensibility

- Each design decision is grounded in the teacher-evaluation and culturally-responsive-assessment literature, so the instrument is defensible as a validated method rather than a set of local preferences.
- Multiple measures + outcomes-as-evidence. → The guidance literature calls for a theoretical framework, multiple measures of effectiveness, and reliability-focused development (Coggshall et al., 2012; Goe et al., 2012). The Massachusetts Model Rubric uses impact on student learning, from multiple measures, to inform the practice rating rather than as a separate score.
- Four levels with Proficient as the target. → Danielson's Framework for Teaching (four domains, research-grounded, widely adopted) and the Massachusetts Model Rubric, which frames growth as moving from Proficient toward Exemplary.

- Candid accountability held with support. → Kim Marshall's rubrics and his argument that evidence-based feedback with robust follow-up support is the most respectful approach, delivered through frequent low-stakes mini-observations rather than a single annual high-stakes rating.
- Identity & language as asset (Criterion 3). → The culturally responsive assessment literature (Walker, ETS, 2023) on asset-based approaches that disrupt deficit narratives and value growth over fixed ability; foundational scholarship by Ladson-Billings and Geneva Gay; Stembridge's six themes of culturally responsive education; and state-rubric definitions of asset-based and anti-racist practice (Massachusetts).
- Bias guard; weight away from self-report. → A 2024 systematic review of culturally responsive practice measures (Franco, Bottiani, & Bradshaw) documents that self-ratings carry social-desirability and implicit-bias threats, and favors observational and student-report measures.
- Student voice and calibration. → The Measures of Effective Teaching (MET) study (Gates Foundation) on combining multiple observation protocols with student surveys; the standard that good rubrics achieve validity, reliability, fairness, and efficiency through evaluator calibration.
- Growth, not absolute achievement; caution on high-stakes use. → Analyses of multiple-measure systems (e.g., Jackson, Shanker Institute) caution against over-relying on correlations and using measures for high-stakes decisions without sufficient reliability — supporting growth-weighted evidence and humility at the accountability end.
- Professional & Team Practice (Part 2). → Amy Edmondson's research on psychological safety as the foundation of team learning, and Google's Project Aristotle, which identified psychological safety as the strongest predictor of team effectiveness — grounding the team criteria in impact rather than personality.
- Full sources are listed in the application's works-cited. This section demonstrates that the evaluation method is anchored in established research on teacher effectiveness, culturally responsive practice, and team performance.

What Sits Outside This Rubric (Intentionally)

- The HR / evaluation process (pinned). How many cycles below floor before an improvement plan, the plan process, documentation, and separation — a separate personnel policy, legal and procedural, built later.
- "Who thrives here" (a hiring and culture artifact). The founder's convictions about who belongs live at the front door — in hiring and onboarding — stated strongly, but are deliberately not evaluation criteria, so the instrument stays fair and can outlive any single leader.

Budget

Please see the budget attached to the email or here.

Financial Policies and Procedures

Adopted by the Board of Directors: _____

Draft prepared August 2026 for Finance Committee and Board review

This policy governs the financial operations of Stoca Academy from the planning year through full build-out of the 6–12 program. Dollar thresholds are collected in Appendix A so the Board can adjust them in one place as the School grows. Where this policy is silent, the

Colorado Department of Education Financial Policies and Procedures Handbook and the requirements of the Colorado Charter School Institute control.

1. Objective and Fiscal Management

The financial accountability of Stoca Academy (Stoca or the School) is to conduct its operations and business with sound fiscal management. The Board of Directors is responsible for adopting a budget that provides the financial basis for facilities, staff, materials, and equipment to carry out the educational program, and for exercising control over the finances of the School to ensure proper use of, and accounting for, all school funds.

Financial management is the shared responsibility of the Board of Directors, the Executive Director, the Director of Operations and Finance, the Business Manager, the contracted Business Services Provider, and all staff members. The Executive Director and the Director of Operations and Finance administer the budget, making expenditures and commitments within the authority the Board delegates in this policy. Ultimate responsibility for financial operations rests with the Board. Together these parties are responsible for installing and supervising internal control systems that include, at minimum:

- Receipt and deposit of moneys.
- Payment of salaries and wages as adopted by the Board.
- Timely payment of bills and financial obligations.
- Accurate posting of transactions and reconciliation of general ledger and bank accounts.
- Responsible administration of employee benefits.
- Procurement and safeguarding of assets.
- Proper spending and accounting of grant and other restricted funding sources.
- Accurate recording and support of the pupil count on which the School's per-pupil revenue depends.
- Timely generation of monthly financial statements and reports for the Finance Committee's review and Board approval.

Legal: C.R.S. 22-44-101 et seq.; C.R.S. 22-45-101 et seq.; C.R.S. 22-30.5-501 et seq.

2. Roles, Responsibilities, and Segregation of Duties

Stoca's finance function is built in phases. In the planning year and the early operating years, professional governmental-accounting capacity is supplied by a contracted Business Services Provider with charter school experience, working alongside an in-house Business Manager. As the School scales, a Director of Operations and Finance assumes internal ownership of the function and the Provider's scope steps down to specialist support. The controls in this policy do not change with that transition; only the party performing them does. Each control below names a role, and where the role is not yet seated, its duties are performed by the Business Services Provider under the Executive Director's supervision.

Responsibilities

Party	Primary financial responsibilities
Board of Directors	Adopts the annual budget, this policy, and the audit; approves expenditures, contracts, and debt above the thresholds in Appendix A; selects the independent auditor; monitors financial performance against the CSI Performance Framework.
Finance Committee	Chaired by the Board Treasurer. Reviews monthly financial statements, the draft budget, investment and reserve balances, related-party contracts, and the annual audit before Board action. Meets at least monthly during the planning year and the first two operating years, and at least quarterly thereafter.
Executive Director	Accountable to the Board for the School's financial condition. Administers the adopted budget, approves expenditures within delegated authority, presents monthly financials, and reports any material variance or control failure to the Finance Committee without delay.

Party	Primary financial responsibilities
Director of Operations and Finance	Owns budget development, cash-flow forecasting, grant fiscal compliance, procurement, and the audit. Reviews and approves reconciliations and journal entries prepared by others. Does not have custody of cash or check stock.
Business Manager	Day-to-day processing: purchase orders, accounts payable, payroll submission, cash receipts, activity funds, and records. Prepares reconciliations for independent review. Does not approve expenditures above the first tier in Appendix A.
Business Services Provider	Contracted governmental accounting, general ledger maintenance, payroll processing, financial statement preparation, and CDE and CSI reporting support. Independent of School cash handling.

Segregation of duties

No single person controls a financial transaction end to end. The following separations are maintained at all times; where a vacancy makes a separation impossible, the Executive Director documents the compensating control and reports it to the Finance Committee at its next meeting.

Function	Performed by	Reviewed or approved by
Purchase requisition	Budget manager	Executive Director or Director of Operations and Finance
Purchase order and encumbrance	Business Manager	Director of Operations and Finance
Vendor setup and changes	Business Manager	Director of Operations and Finance (independent confirmation of banking changes)
Accounts payable entry	Business Manager	Director of Operations and Finance
Check signing or payment release	Executive Director (Treasurer above threshold)	Board Treasurer
Cash receipts and deposit	Business Manager or site staff	Business Services Provider reconciles independently
Payroll entry and changes	Business Manager	Executive Director; pay changes authorized in writing
Journal entries	Business Services Provider	Director of Operations and Finance
Bank and balance-sheet reconciliation	Business Services Provider	Director of Operations and Finance, then Finance Committee

3. Reserves and Fund Balance

To protect the School's financial integrity, the Board maintains three reserves. First, the TABOR emergency reserve required under Article X, Section 20 of the Colorado Constitution (3% of fiscal-year spending), held in an unrestricted general fund or a designated cash fund. Second, an operating reserve measured as days cash on hand — the School's unrestricted operating cash divided by average daily operating expenditures (total annual operating expenditures divided by 365). Third, a capital and facility reserve funded from capital construction revenue and any Board-designated surplus, used for building systems, technology replacement, and the equity contribution to any facility transaction.

The Board's mature-state target is at least 60 days cash on hand, with an absolute floor of 30 days. Because a new school cannot reach that target in its opening years, the Board adopts a ramp schedule consistent with the School's charter application: at least 45 days cash by the end of Year 3 and at least 60 days by the end of Year 5. Days cash is calculated on unrestricted, unassigned operating cash — restricted grant balances, the TABOR reserve, and Board-designated capital reserves are excluded from the numerator. If the

operating reserve falls below the applicable floor, the Executive Director presents a written plan to the Board to rebuild it within twelve months.

Expressing the reserve in days rather than a fixed dollar amount keeps the target proportional to the School's cost structure as the budget and enrollment change, and matches how the authorizer and lenders evaluate reserve adequacy. Days cash on hand is reported to the Board with the monthly financial statements.

The School operates to ensure long-term financial strength: revenues will meet or exceed expenditures each year unless the Board specifically approves otherwise by resolution; cash is managed for liquidity and safety; restricted contributions are used only for the purpose given; restricted fund balances are not used for operations; and payroll and other financial obligations are paid on time.

Legal: Colo. Const. Art. X, Sec. 20; C.R.S. 22-44-105.

4. Accounting Basis and Financial Records

The School maintains the CDE Chart of Accounts in its accounting and financial reporting, including the fund, location, SRE, program, object, job class, and grant dimensions required for state reporting. Books and accounting records are kept using fund accounting and the modified accrual basis of recording revenue and expenditures, in conformity with generally accepted principles of governmental accounting and the CDE Financial Policies and Procedures Handbook adopted by the State Board of Education. The accounting system provides for appropriate separation of accounts, funds, and operational duties.

The School maintains, at minimum, a General Fund, a Food Service Fund, a Pupil Activity Fund, and — where facility financing is undertaken — a Capital Projects Fund and a Debt Service Fund, each reported separately. Grant awards are tracked by grant year and funding source within the general ledger rather than by memorandum schedule.

Financial records are retained in accordance with the Records Retention section of this policy, which follows the Colorado School District Records Management Manual, unless a longer period is required by state or federal law.

Legal: C.R.S. 22-44-204(3); C.R.S. 22-45-102; C.R.S. 29-1-506.

5. Internal Controls

The School maintains internal controls sufficient to safeguard assets and to produce reliable financial records. Segregation of duties is maintained as described in Section 2: no individual with authority to approve disbursements is also responsible for bank reconciliations or accounting records. Where staff size limits full segregation of duties, compensating controls and independent review are used and documented.

Controls are documented as they are performed. The School's records must show evidence that a control occurred, not only that a control exists. This applies in particular to:

- **Journal entries.** Every journal entry has clear supporting documentation attached and is reviewed and approved by someone other than the preparer.
- **Balance-sheet reconciliations.** All balance-sheet accounts are reconciled monthly and reviewed and signed off by someone other than the preparer. Beginning balances for each fund are reconciled to the prior year's ending balances.
- **Cash receipts.** Cash and check receipts follow the audit trail described in the Banking and Cash Receipts section.
- **Payment fraud controls.** Any change to a vendor's or employee's banking information is confirmed by a call-back to a previously known telephone number, documented, and approved by someone other than the person entering the change. Requests to expedite a payment or change payment instructions by email alone are not honored.

The School maintains processes to discourage and detect fraud and a means for reporting suspected fraud, including a channel for anonymous reports that does not route through the Executive Director, with follow-up by the Executive Director or the Board Treasurer as appropriate. No employee is retaliated against for making a good-faith report. Suspected fraud, misappropriation, or a material control failure is reported to the Board Treasurer immediately and to the authorizer as required.

6. Annual Budget

The annual budget is the financial plan for the operation of the School. The fiscal year runs July 1 to June 30. The budget provides the framework for expenditures and revenues for the current and future years and translates the educational program into financial terms. The Board assigns overall responsibility for budget preparation, presentation, and administration to the Executive Director, who delegates portions to the Director of Operations and Finance. The Board understands that the budget resources its mission and strategic plan and takes the budgeting process seriously.

Multi-year forecast and UIP alignment

In addition to the annual budget, the Executive Director or designee prepares and maintains a multi-year financial forecast projecting revenues, expenditures, enrollment, staffing, and fund balances for at least three subsequent fiscal years, presented to the Board annually alongside the proposed budget. Because the School adds a grade each year through full build-out, the forecast explicitly models the staffing and facility step-ups that growth requires. The budget aligns with and supports the priorities in the School's Unified Improvement Plan, with budget development explicitly referencing UIP goals.

Enrollment assumptions and downside case

Every proposed budget is built on a stated enrollment assumption and is accompanied by a downside case modeling enrollment at the Board's minimum viable level, showing the resulting revenue, the expenditure reductions available, and the reserves or philanthropic commitments required to bridge the gap. The budget is not adopted without that case. Per-pupil revenue is budgeted on the funded pupil count the School expects to certify at the October count, not on applications or letters of intent.

Budget calendar

The Finance Committee begins budget preparation each January. An initial draft budget is reviewed by the Board at the meeting on or before April 30. Each April the Executive Director meets with the School Accountability Committee to discuss priorities for the coming year and incorporates its recommendations into the proposed budget. The proposed budget is presented to the Finance Committee and Board in May, with the intent of adoption in a public meeting and submission to the authorizer before the statutory date of June 30 or the authorizer's deadline, whichever is sooner. Within 10 days of submitting the proposed budget, the Executive Director publishes the required public notice. A revised budget is approved at the December or January Board meeting after the official pupil count, and a supplemental budget is approved if a new resource for a specific purpose becomes available to meet a contingency.

The budget is prepared in the statutorily required format, itemizes expenditures by fund, shows prior year audited numbers and current and ensuing year budget amounts, includes the Uniform Budget Summary and all required resolutions, and discloses planned compliance with TABOR spending limitations.

Budget-change authority

Any administrative request for an increase in expenditures, or a policy change resulting in a budgetary increase, greater than the budget-change threshold in Appendix A on a single budget line item requires Board approval before it is enacted. Changes below that threshold may be approved by the Executive Director provided the total fiscal-year budget remains within the total expenditures approved by the Board, and are reported to the Finance Committee. When a contingency occurs, the Board may transfer unencumbered moneys from the contingency reserve within the general fund. The adopted budget includes a contingency appropriation of not less than 1% of budgeted expenditures.

Financial emergencies

If the Board determines during a budget year that appropriated expenditures exceed actual available revenues, the Board may declare a fiscal emergency by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of its members, and determine what actions and committees are appropriate to address the situation.

Legal: C.R.S. 22-44-108, 109, 110, 112, 113, 115.5; C.R.S. 22-11-302 to 406.

7. Financial Reporting and Fiscal Health Monitoring

A summarized version of revenues and expenditures of all funds (balance sheet and income statement) is provided to the Board monthly at a regularly scheduled Board meeting, and to the Finance Committee in advance of that meeting. Reports include a Balance Sheet, a Statement of Revenue and Expenditures versus Budget, and a Statement of Cash Flows or rolling cash-flow forecast.

The Statement of Revenue and Expenditures versus Budget includes, at minimum: actual revenue and expenditures to date for each fund, in dollars and as a percentage of the annual budget; the same for the prior fiscal year's comparable period; expected year-end balances; and a comparison of expected year-end fund balances to budget.

The monthly package also reports the indicators the authorizer uses to evaluate financial health, so the Board sees the School as CSI sees it: days cash on hand, current ratio, change in net position, enrollment variance against budget, debt service coverage where debt is outstanding, and the TABOR reserve balance. Any indicator outside its target is accompanied by a written explanation and the corrective action underway.

Financial reports are prepared within 20 days of the close of the month or prior to the regularly scheduled Board meeting. Bank and balance-sheet reconciliations are completed monthly, targeted by the 10th of the following month. Narrative explanations accompany material or unusual budget-to-actual variances, including original-budget-to-final-budget and final-budget-to-actual variances.

Legal: C.R.S. 22-45-102(1)(b); C.R.S. 22-45-103.

8. Cash Management and Investments

This section serves as the School's investment policy. It governs all operating and reserve funds not needed for immediate disbursement. The Director of Operations and Finance, with the Business Services Provider, maintains a cash-flow projection model tied to the budget and monitors cash balances weekly during the ramp years.

Objectives and standard of care

Funds are invested with three objectives, in priority order: safety of principal first, then liquidity sufficient to meet operating obligations and the operating-reserve target in Section 3, and then yield. Investments are made with the judgment and care a prudent person would exercise, not for speculation.

Delegation and investment officer

The Board delegates day-to-day investment management to the Executive Director, who, with the Director of Operations and Finance, executes and monitors investments. The Board Treasurer provides oversight and reviews investment and pool balances with the monthly financial statements. Investment transactions follow the segregation-of-duties and reconciliation controls in Sections 2, 5, and 9.

Permitted investments

Investments are limited to those legal for Colorado public funds under C.R.S. 24-75-601.1 — which include U.S. Treasury obligations and specified federal agency securities, insured or collateralized certificates of deposit, highly rated money market funds, and other instruments named in the statute. The School may also participate in a local government investment pool organized under C.R.S. 24-75-701 et seq., such as ColoTrust or CSAFE. Pool balances are investments, not bank deposits: they are not covered by Public Deposit Protection Act collateralization, and are recorded and disclosed as investments.

Diversification, maturity, and liquidity

Funds are held in highly liquid vehicles — an investment pool and insured or collateralized depository accounts — with maturities kept short and matched to projected cash needs. Grant funds held for a restricted purpose and any bond or financing proceeds are held separately from operating cash and are not commingled. The School holds enough in immediately available form to meet near-term obligations, including at least one payroll cycle plus expected accounts payable.

Safekeeping and reporting

Any individual securities are held by a third-party custodian in the School's name. Bank and pool statements are reconciled monthly per Section 9. The Executive Director or designee reports investment and pool balances, and days cash on hand, to the Board with the monthly financial statements, and the annual audit lists investments held at year-end.

Legal: C.R.S. 24-75-601.1; C.R.S. 24-75-701 et seq.; C.R.S. 24-75-601.3.

9. Banking, Deposits, and Cash Receipts

All revenue received by the School is deposited in an official bank or savings and loan designated by the Board that qualifies as an eligible public depository and holds a Public Deposit Protection Act number on file. The official custodian complies with all state-law requirements for the deposit of public school funds.

Cash receipt procedure

A receipt is issued for any cash or check received from families or others, using pre-numbered receipts or an electronic receipting system. Receipts are summarized by source of funding, properly coded by account and class, and submitted with the deposit documentation as supporting backup. Two people count and sign for any cash collected at an event, athletic gate, or fundraiser before it leaves the site, and the count sheet accompanies the deposit. Deposits are made within one to three business days of receipt, and cash held overnight is secured in the School safe. The bank validation slip, the site documentation, and the deposit summary from the accounting system are filed together for use during reconciliations and audits. The Business Services Provider, independent of the cash collection and receipting process, reconciles deposits to the bank accounts.

The School favors electronic payment channels over cash for fees, meals, and activities, so that the volume of cash handled on site stays low as enrollment grows.

Check signing and payment release

Checks and electronic payments drawn on School funds require the signature or electronic approval of the Executive Director or the Director of Operations and Finance up to the single-signature limit in Appendix A, and a second approval by the Board Treasurer above it. At least one active Board member is a designated authorized signer on all accounts, and a minimum of three authorized signers is maintained for continuity. Recurring items such as utilities, rent, debt service, and monthly benefit payments may be approved annually as a waiver list submitted to the Board. Check-signing authority is separate from the expenditure-approval authority in Section 12: a payment may carry one signature up to the limit, but the underlying expenditure must still be authorized at the level required in that section before payment is made. Blank checks are never signed, and check stock is secured by a person with no accounting-system access.

Petty cash

If the School maintains petty cash, a fund not exceeding the limit in Appendix A is established by check against the general fund, held securely by administration, logged for all money in and out, and reconciled and posted to the general ledger at least monthly.

Legal: C.R.S. 11-10.5-101 et seq.; C.R.S. 11-47-101 et seq.; C.R.S. 22-32-104(4)(c); 22-32-107; 22-40-105; 22-45-104.

10. Fixed Assets, Capitalization, Depreciation, and Inventory

Fixed assets are acquired and disposed of only upon proper authorization, and are adequately safeguarded and insured to 90% of replacement value.

Capitalization

Tangible assets with a useful life greater than one year and a unit or donated cost that equals or exceeds the capitalization threshold in Appendix A are capitalized and recorded on the School's fixed-asset schedule. This threshold matches the level applied by the School's auditor, by the authorizer's finance review, and by the federal equipment definition, so that one register serves all three. Assets below the threshold are expensed when purchased. Bulk purchases of like items below the threshold — student devices, classroom furniture — are capitalized as a group where the group cost exceeds the threshold and the items are placed in service together.

Depreciation

Capitalized assets are recorded and depreciated under generally accepted accounting principles and GASB Statement No. 34, using the straight-line method over the estimated useful life of each asset class (for example, vehicles, buildings and improvements, leasehold improvements, furniture and equipment, and technology). Leasehold improvements are amortized over the shorter of the useful life or the remaining lease term. Land is not depreciated. The fixed-asset schedule records for each asset a description, acquisition date, cost or donated value, funding source, useful life, accumulated depreciation, and disposal information.

Inventory and federally funded property

The School maintains a centralized inventory of capitalized assets and of items that are highly portable or attractive — laptops, tablets, cameras, and instructional technology — regardless of cost, with the exception of equipment permanently fixed in a building. Student devices are tracked by serial number and assigned user. A physical inventory is conducted annually and reconciled to the property records.

Property purchased in whole or in part with federal funds is tracked at the federal equipment threshold (2 CFR 200.1), even where that is below the capitalization threshold. Federal property records include a description, serial or other ID number, source of funding, title holder, acquisition date, and cost, and each federally funded item carries a unique asset tag showing the grant year and funding source. Federally funded property is stored securely and used, managed, and disposed of in accordance with the Uniform Grant Guidance.

Legal: C.R.S. 29-1-506(1); 2 CFR 200.1, 200.313, 200.335; GASB 34.

11. Purchasing and Procurement

No person may commit the School to a purchase contract unless expressly authorized by the Executive Director or designee. The Executive Director, with the Director of Operations and Finance, installs and supervises internal controls for purchasing, including a purchase-order system, verification of purchase, payment documentation, and bidding procedures. Procedures ensure purchases are appropriate and that funds are available before purchases are authorized.

Purchase orders

Purchase orders are originated within the requestor's budgetary authority and approved under Section 12. Availability of funds is checked at approval, and each purchase is charged to the correct budgetary account. A record of all purchase orders is maintained. Goods are checked against the purchase order and packing slip on receipt, and payment is processed only after the receipt is recorded and the purchase order and invoice are reconciled. The purchasing power of the School is not used for the private benefit of any employee, and any employee who charges an item without an authorized purchase order may be held personally liable.

Non-federal procurement thresholds

Except in a documented emergency, non-federal purchases follow the tiers in Appendix A: small purchases may be made by direct check, procurement card, or purchase order with quotes encouraged; mid-tier purchases require informal written competitive bids from at least three qualified sources, with a documented rationale where fewer than three are obtainable; and purchases at or above the formal-bid threshold require a written RFP or invitation to bid, with Board approval before award.

Federal procurement

Purchases made with federal funds follow 2 CFR Part 200, including micro-purchase, simplified acquisition, competitive-proposal, and sole-source standards, which may differ from the non-federal thresholds. Micro-purchases up to the federal threshold may be awarded without competitive quotations if the price is reasonable, and are distributed equitably among qualified suppliers to the extent practicable. Procurement with state and local funds is not more restrictive than federal procurement. The School does not contract with vendors suspended or debarred on SAM.gov, documents price reasonableness for all federally funded purchases, and retains procurement documentation for the federal record-retention period.

Bidding and waiver

The Director of Operations and Finance secures bids at and above the informal-bid threshold and where otherwise in the School's interest, with Board approval of bids at and above the formal-bid threshold. Formal bidding may be waived in writing when time is of the essence and the School's interest is served, with a memorandum to the Board stating the terms and reasons; waivers are reported to the Board and may not be used for federally funded purchases. Bidding is not required for obsolete-equipment disposal, books and curriculum, food-service requirements, intergovernmental and cooperative purchasing agreements, recurring contracts that renew annually, or proprietary, sole-source, or professional services.

Unauthorized purchases

Purchases that do not comply with this policy are unauthorized. The School is not liable for unauthorized purchases, and individuals who make them may be held personally responsible for payment.

Legal: C.R.S. 22-32-109(1)(b); C.R.S. 24-17-201; C.R.S. 24-109-104, 105; 2 CFR 200.317-200.327.

12. Expenditure Approval Authority

Expenditures from any School fund must be approved in accordance with the following authority (signatures may be electronic or hard copy). Contract execution authority is set separately in Section 14.

Expenditure amount	Approval authority
Up to $2,500	Budget manager — a Studio or department lead, dean, or director — within the approved budget
$2,501 – $25,000	Executive Director or Director of Operations and Finance
$25,001 – $250,000	Executive Director and Board Treasurer
Over $250,000	Board of Directors, executed by the Executive Director or designee

Recurring payments such as rent, payroll, employee benefits, utilities, insurance, and debt service may be processed without individual approval at each occurrence, provided they are consistent with the board-adopted budget and approved contracts. Emergency disbursements may be authorized by the Executive Director with notice to the Board Treasurer within one business day and to the Board at its next regular meeting.

13. Credit and Purchasing Cards

The use of School credit and purchasing cards is permitted for official School business only, as a convenience for approved small-dollar purchases, and never as a substitute for the purchase-order or procurement process. Cards are issued to designated staff on the recommendation of the Executive Director and approval of the Board, and every cardholder signs the School's cardholder agreement.

The single-transaction limit and the monthly cardholder limit are set in Appendix A; the Executive Director may set a lower limit for an individual cardholder and reviews all limits annually. Any purchase at or above the single-transaction limit requires the Executive Director's written pre-approval before the transaction, and any purchase exceeding the Executive Director's delegated authority requires Board approval under Section 12. Splitting a purchase into smaller transactions to stay under a limit is prohibited. Personal purchases, cash advances, alcohol, and use of another person's card are prohibited. Itemized receipts are required for every transaction and are reconciled monthly, within 15 days of the statement closing date, and the Board receives a card expenditure summary at least quarterly. Card statements are posted publicly as required by the Financial Transparency Act.

Day-to-day card custody, checkout, receipts, role-based cards, reconciliation, and violation consequences are governed by the Stoca Academy Card Use Procedure, incorporated by reference and maintained as a companion to this policy. Failure to comply can result in immediate suspension of the card.

Legal: C.R.S. 22-40-107; C.R.S. 22-44-304.

14. Contracts and Contractor Payments

Any written contract includes a provision requiring a criminal background check for any person providing direct services to students under the contract, including subcontractors or agents, where that person has regular (not incidental) contact with students at least monthly. Contractors bear the cost of required background checks. Contracts documenting purchases made with federal funds contain all provisions mandated by the Federal Uniform Grant Guidance. Contracts that involve student data include the data-privacy terms required by the Student Data Transparency and Security Act.

Contract approval and signing authority

Contracts are approved and executed under the authority below. Because a contract is a commitment over time, contract value is measured by its total value over the full term, or its annualized value, whichever is greater — not by a single payment:

Contract value or term	Authority to approve and sign
Up to $50,000 total, and a term of one year or less	Executive Director
$50,001 – $150,000 total, or any multi-year term	Executive Director and Board Treasurer
Over $150,000 total, or any term beyond five years	Board of Directors, executed by the Executive Director or designee
Any real property lease, purchase, or financing instrument; any employment agreement for a cabinet-level position; any contract with a related party	Board of Directors, regardless of amount

No contract exceeds a term of five years, inclusive of renewals or extensions, unless the Board specifically approves. Contract-signing authority is set at a lower dollar level than one-time expenditure approval because contracts bind the School over time and carry ongoing legal and financial obligations. A contract register listing counterparty, term, value, renewal date, and termination notice period is maintained and reviewed by the Finance Committee annually.

Contractor payments and worker classification

Payments to consultants, speakers, and other professionals, where a receiving report would be inappropriate, are handled by a service contract. A memorandum of agreement or understanding is used only for independent contractors as determined by IRS regulation, and the originator identifies the services clearly. The School classifies workers as employees or independent contractors in accordance with IRS rules and issues Forms 1099 as required.

Legal: 2 CFR 200.318-200.327; C.R.S. 24-18-201; C.R.S. 22-32-109(1)(b); C.R.S. 22-32-122; C.R.S. 22-16-101 et seq.

15. Vendor Relations and Related-Party Transactions

No favoritism is extended to any vendor. Employees exercise sound judgment to avoid conflicts of interest or the appearance of impropriety with vendors, and gifts or gratuities of more than nominal value are refused. No employee or person officially connected with the School acts as an agent for the sale of textbooks, apparatus, or supplies used in the School.

No employee, Board member, or member of their immediate family, and no firm owned by any of them, may sell goods or services to the School or its students without the express prior written consent of the Board. The School does not purchase goods or services from a business owned by an immediate family member of a Board member or employee unless procured through a competitive process and determined to be in the School's best interest. Service contracts with related parties are reviewed by the Board at least annually and disclosed in the annual audit. The School encourages local businesses to provide goods and services, when practicable and possible.

Legal: C.R.S. 24-17-104; C.R.S. 24-18-201.

16. Payroll and Employee Compensation

The Executive Director develops and implements payroll procedures, subject to Finance Committee review, to ensure accurate and timely compensation in accordance with board policy, state requirements, and contractual agreements. All employee pay amounts are approved in writing at hire and before the first paycheck, and subsequent changes are documented in writing with Board approval where required. Pay authorizations, retained in the employee's personnel file, include salary or wage, benefits, and any stipends. Compensation is set from the Board-adopted salary schedule; any offer outside the schedule requires Executive Director approval with written rationale, and any cabinet-level compensation requires Board approval.

Employees are paid on a regular schedule communicated in advance. Time sheets approved by the supervisor are submitted by the established cutoff each pay period, and direct deposit is required. Terminated employees are paid as required by Colorado wage law. No additions, deletions, or modifications are made to payroll data without written direction from the Executive Director or the Board, and a payroll change report is reviewed each cycle by someone who did not enter the changes.

Retirement plan

The School opens on a private-employment retirement model, offering a Section 401(k) plan with an employer contribution and participating in Social Security and Medicare. Consistent with the commitment in the School's charter application, the Board reviews readiness to elect into the Colorado Public Employees' Retirement Association at each annual budget adoption beginning in Year 3, and elects into PERA once the School sustains at least 60 days cash on hand and two consecutive years of positive net operating income, provided the multi-year forecast confirms the School remains above 45 days cash in the year following adoption. Any decision to defer once those triggers are met is documented in the minutes with a specific financial rationale. On election, the School withholds and remits PERA contributions as required by state law, and this policy is amended to reflect the change.

Deductions are made for retirement, federal and state income tax, Medicare, and FAMLI in accordance with federal and state requirements, and employees may participate in voluntary retirement and pre-tax programs, including Section 125 plans. Employees whose compensation is supported in whole or in part by federal funds complete time-and-effort documentation as described in Section 19.

The Business Services Provider reconciles payroll detail to billings for deductions and benefits, prepares required end-of-month reports, and monitors the payroll vendor to ensure federal and state payroll reports (for example Forms 941 and unemployment reports) are filed accurately and on time. W-2s and 1099s are issued by January 31 and 1095s are issued as required.

Legal: C.R.S. 22-63-106; C.R.S. 24-51-101 et seq. (PERA); C.R.S. 8-13.3-501 et seq. (FAMLI).

17. Travel and Expense Reimbursement

Employees and Board members are reimbursed, within budget, for necessary expenses incurred on School business, all of which must be approved in advance by the Executive Director or designee (or by the Board Chair for those who report directly to the Board). Travelers limit claims to essential, actual expenses and use the most economical, reasonable means of travel.

Lodging is paid at actual cost for travel more than 50 miles from the School, at or below 110% of the GSA per-diem lodging rate for the destination. Meals are reimbursed at actual cost with a detailed receipt; a meal included in a conference fee or lodging is not separately reimbursable. Mileage in a personal vehicle is reimbursed at the IRS standard mileage rate in effect and measured from the School location; commuting between home and the regular work location is not reimbursable. Other allowable expenses include commercial transportation, parking, tolls, and necessary business communications. Alcohol, entertainment, personal items, political expenses, fines, personal calls, and valet parking are not reimbursable. The tax-exempt certificate is used where possible, and sales tax is not reimbursed where the certificate should have been used. Reimbursement requests submitted more than 90 days after the expense or after fiscal year-end may be denied.

Student travel — including industry site visits, clinical placements, and athletic and activity trips — follows the same documentation standards, with a trip budget approved in advance, a roster, and a settlement of collected funds and expenses within 30 days of return.

18. Property Disposal

The Board may sell or lease property not needed in the foreseeable future on terms it approves; a sale to a state agency or political subdivision does not require a finding that the property is unneeded. When acquiring replacement equipment, the School may trade in or sell the replaced item and apply the proceeds, subject to any awarding-agency approval. Disposal of any capitalized asset is documented on the fixed-asset schedule with the method, date, and proceeds. Property purchased with federal funds is disposed of in accordance with the Uniform Grant Guidance and documented with the awarding agency.

Legal: C.R.S. 22-32-109(1)(e); C.R.S. 24-17-202; 2 CFR 200.313, 200.343.

19. Grants and Grant Management

The Executive Director is responsible for implementing all grants and meeting each grantor's reporting requirements, including ensuring that purchases made with federal grant dollars are allowable under grant guidelines and the cost principles of the Uniform Grant Guidance (2 CFR Part 200), EDGAR, and supplement-not-supplant rules. The Director of Operations and Finance maintains a grant calendar listing each award, its period of performance, budget, reporting dates, and the staff member responsible.

Gifts and private grants

Only the Board may accept grants, gifts, or bequests above the gift-acceptance threshold in Appendix A; the Executive Director may accept gifts below it and reports them to the Board monthly. Regardless of amount, Board approval is required for any gift that carries conditions, naming rights, a matching requirement, or an ongoing cost to the School. Title to all gifts, grants, and bequests rests with the Board. An IRS donor acknowledgement is issued promptly on receipt. Multi-year pledges are recorded and tracked, and pledge revenue is not recognized in a budget year before it is receivable.

Federal fund management

Federal expenditures meet the tests of allowability, allocability, and reasonableness, with supporting documentation retained per federal record-retention rules. Federal drawdowns are requested on a reimbursement basis, limited to immediate cash needs, with preparation, approval, and submission segregated where practicable. Vendors are checked against SAM.gov before federally funded contracts. Staff paid with federal funds provide semi-annual certifications (single-program) or Personnel Activity Reports (split funding), reconciled to payroll. Federally funded construction complies with Davis-Bacon prevailing-wage requirements. The Director of Operations and Finance conducts an annual internal review of federal-grant compliance and provides annual staff training, including on time-and-effort reporting.

Start-up and Charter School Program funds

Charter School Program start-up funds are budgeted and expended against the approved grant budget, tracked separately in the general ledger by grant year, and reconciled monthly to drawdowns. Because start-up funding is non-recurring, the multi-year forecast shows the operating cost that continues after the grant period and identifies the recurring revenue that will cover it. Any position or contract created with start-up funds is documented with its post-grant funding plan before it is filled.

Grant revenue recognition

Grant funds received in advance are initially recorded as unearned revenue and recognized as revenue as expenditures are incurred, so revenue and expense align each period. Reimbursable grant amounts that are earned but not yet received are recorded as a grant receivable, again matching revenue to expense in the appropriate period.

State grant reimbursement

For state grant reimbursements such as BEST, the owner's representative collects and reviews vendor invoices for scope and appropriateness; the School prepares and submits the funding request with supporting invoices; CDE reviews and, after division approval, issues a pay warrant; and the School follows up to ensure reimbursements are received and tracks each from submission to receipt.

Legal: 2 CFR Part 200; EDGAR; C.R.S. 22-32-110(1)(y).

20. Fundraising, Student Activity, and Athletic Funds

All fundraising programs are submitted to the Executive Director for approval before beginning or being announced, using a fundraiser approval form that states the purpose, the sponsor, the expected revenue and cost, and the account to be credited. Activity funds are moneys collected at the School from students, staff, and fundraising, for which the School acts as a fiduciary, providing recordkeeping and oversight.

Each club, team, class, and activity has its own account within the Pupil Activity Fund. A staff sponsor is named for each account and is responsible for its records; the Business Manager maintains the ledgers and reports balances to sponsors at least quarterly. Activity accounts may not carry a negative balance without the Executive Director's written approval. Funds raised for a stated purpose are used for that purpose, and funds remaining when a class graduates or a club dissolves are transferred as the Executive Director directs, consistent with the purpose for which they were raised.

Gate receipts, ticket sales, concessions, and similar cash-intensive activities follow the dual-count and same-day deposit controls in Section 9. Where practical, the purchasing policy is followed for activity-fund purchases so the School obtains the best price and quality. Student fees are charged, waived, and refunded in accordance with the Board-adopted fee schedule, and fee waivers for eligible students are applied automatically rather than on request.

21. Food Service Fund

The School operates its food service program as a separate fund and does not use general fund resources to subsidize it except by Board resolution. Meal counting and claiming follow USDA and CDE requirements for the programs in which the School participates, including edit checks, on-site reviews, and the retention of daily counts by category. Claims are prepared by staff independent of the meal-count function and reviewed before submission.

Where the School participates in state universal meals funding, claims are reconciled to federal reimbursement so that both revenue streams are recorded in the correct period and the state share is not double-counted. Non-program food revenue, catering, and adult meals are tracked separately and priced in accordance with federal requirements. Food service equipment purchased with federal or state funds is recorded and tagged under Section 10. If food service is delivered by a vendor, the contract follows federal procurement rules and includes the reporting the School needs to file its claims.

Legal: 7 C.F.R. Parts 210, 215, 220; C.R.S. 22-82.9-101 et seq.

22. Pupil Count and Enrollment Records

Per-pupil revenue is the School's largest revenue source and is determined by the October count. The Director of Operations and Finance, with the registrar, is responsible for the accuracy and documentation of the count and for retaining the records the pupil-count audit requires: enrollment and withdrawal forms, attendance records for the count window, residency and age documentation, program eligibility records for students claimed at special funding rates, and the supporting records for special education, multilingual learner, and gifted counts.

Enrollment is reconciled to the general ledger revenue accrual monthly, and any variance between budgeted and actual funded pupil count is reported to the Board with the monthly financials and corrected in the revised budget. Records supporting the count are retained for the period required by the CDE audit resource guide and are made available to the authorizer and CDE on request.

Legal: C.R.S. 22-54-103; C.R.S. 22-54-112; CDE Student October Count Audit Resource Guide.

23. Insurance, Bonded Employees, and Officers

The School maintains the insurance coverage its charter contract and lenders require, including property, general liability, educators' legal liability, automobile, workers' compensation, cyber, and employee dishonesty or crime coverage. The Finance Committee reviews coverage annually against the School's enrollment, payroll, property values, and peak cash balances, and the Board approves material changes.

All employees or custodians responsible for moneys controlled by the Board are bonded under a group fidelity bond in an amount not less than the level in Appendix A, reviewed annually against the School's peak cash balance. The cost of bonding is borne by the School.

Legal: C.R.S. 22-32-104(4)(b),(c); C.R.S. 22-32-109(1)(h).

24. Borrowing, Debt, and Facility Financing

Short-term borrowing. When it becomes evident early in the fiscal year, before substantial revenue streams are received, that cash balances will not meet anticipated obligations, the Board negotiates short-term debt under Colorado statutes as needed and may authorize the Board Chair and Treasurer to execute promissory notes and related documents. Short-term loans are liquidated within three months of the close of the fiscal year. A line of credit may be maintained for cash-flow timing and is not used to fund operating deficits.

Long-term and facility financing. Because the School plans to occupy and may acquire a permanent facility, the Board may incur long-term obligations, including a lease-purchase, a mortgage, or a charter school revenue bond issue, only by Board resolution and only where all of the following are documented before commitment:

- A financing analysis comparing lease and purchase over the term, including total occupancy cost per pupil and per square foot.
- A pro forma showing projected debt service coverage of at least 1.10 times in every year of the financing, tested against a downside enrollment case as well as the base case.
- The source of any required equity or down payment, identified and in hand or committed in writing before closing.
- Confirmation that the obligation complies with TABOR, including a non-appropriation clause or voter approval as applicable.
- A statement of the covenants the financing imposes — days cash, coverage, reporting, and additional-debt tests — and how the School will monitor and report compliance.

Any facility lease, purchase, or financing instrument requires Board approval regardless of amount, and notice to the authorizer as the charter contract requires. Debt service is budgeted and recorded in a debt service fund using the appropriate CDE object codes, not as capital outlay. Where financing covenants are outstanding, compliance with each covenant is reported to the Board with the monthly financials and confirmed annually in the audit.

Lease obligations are used judiciously because they reduce budget flexibility. Capital equipment is funded on a pay-as-you-go basis where feasible, and only the highest-priority equipment is lease-financed.

Legal: C.R.S. 22-40-107; C.R.S. 22-30.5-104(7); Colo. Const. Art. X, Sec. 20.

25. Audits and Financial Monitoring

All funds and accounts of the School are audited annually following the close of the fiscal year. The Board engages an independent auditor licensed in Colorado and knowledgeable in governmental accounting, who serves at the Board's discretion and whose findings are reported to the authorizer and CDE. An audit is conducted in every year of operation, including the first: the exemption available to very small local governments does not apply at the School's scale, and a Single Audit under 2 CFR Part 200, Subpart F is required in any year the School expends federal awards above the federal threshold — a condition the start-up grant is expected to trigger. The annual budget carries an audit line sized to a governmental audit and, where applicable, a Single Audit.

The audit report contains, among other items: financial statements in conformity with generally accepted governmental accounting principles and GASB 34; disclosures per the CDE Financial Policies and Procedures Handbook, with supplemental schedules in CDE format; all funds and activities; budget-to-actual comparisons by fund; the auditor's opinion, with explanation if other than unqualified, including general fixed assets; disclosure of any noncompliance with state law, including the Public School Finance Act of 1994 as amended, irrespective of materiality; a listing of investments held at the statement date; related-party transactions; and pension disclosures where applicable.

A draft audit report is completed by September 30 and a final report by October 15, so that the School meets the authorizer's consolidation deadline and the statutory filing deadline with the Office of the State Auditor. Management responds in writing to every finding and management-letter comment with a corrective action, an owner, and a date, and the Finance Committee tracks those items to closure. To maintain independence, the Board undergoes a formal auditor-selection process at least once every five years, even if it retains the same firm, and may request an audit at more frequent intervals. In preparation for audit, the School reconciles all balance-sheet accounts, grants and authorizes flow-through amounts, maintains workpapers, drafts the management discussion and analysis, and minimizes audit adjusting entries.

Legal: C.R.S. 22-32-109(1)(k); C.R.S. 24-75-601.3; C.R.S. 29-1-601 et seq.; 2 CFR 200.501; GASB 34, 68.

26. Public School Financial Transparency

The School complies with the Colorado Public School Financial Transparency Act by posting the required financial documents on its website in the specified format, within two clicks of the home page, including: three years of budgets, posted within 60 days of adoption; three years of audits; three years of federal income-tax returns; quarterly financial documents, posted within 60 days after quarter-end; the salary schedule or salary policies; accounts payable check registers and credit or purchase card statements; investment performance reports; a link to the authorizer's financial transparency site with the school-level reporting template; and a link to the CDE website. Information remains posted for three fiscal years.

The Board adopts its annual budget in a public meeting, and the annual independent audit is presented in a public meeting and made available to the public, the authorizer, and the state as required. General budget and actual-expense information is public; payroll and other confidential information is protected, and reports made available to the public are prepared to protect confidential information.

Legal: C.R.S. 22-44-301 et seq. (Public School Financial Transparency Act).

27. Conflict of Interest, Ethics, and Disclosure

In carrying out their fiduciary duties, a Board member or staff member shall not: use their position for private advantage or personal financial gain; accept a gift of substantial value that would tend to improperly influence them; engage in a substantial financial transaction for private purposes with a person they supervise; perform an official act that confers an economic benefit on an undertaking in which they have a substantial financial interest or serve as counsel, consultant, representative, or agent; or participate directly or indirectly in the purchasing process where they have a direct relationship with a vendor. A direct relationship includes a business owned by, or employment with, a spouse or immediate family member — spouse, child, step-child, parent, sibling, in-law, grandparent, grandchild, or relative living in the household. A conflict includes both actual conflicts and the appearance of a conflict.

Board members and employees with financial authority complete a written conflict-of-interest disclosure annually and update it when circumstances change. Board members and staff observe the ethical principles for public officials in C.R.S. 24-18-104 through 110 and do not accept gifts over the limit set by the Colorado Independent Ethics Commission. A member with a personal or private interest in a matter before the Board discloses the interest, does not vote, and refrains from influencing other members, except where participation is necessary for a quorum and written disclosure has been made to the Secretary of State stating the amount of the financial interest, the purpose and duration of services, the compensation received, and other descriptive information; in that case the member makes a public disclosure on the record. Violations may result in discipline up to dismissal or removal, as permitted by law.

Legal: C.R.S. 24-18-104, 105, 109(3), 110, 201.

28. Records Retention

The School uses the Colorado School District Records Management Manual, developed by the Colorado State Archives, to determine retention periods. Records are retained for the periods specified by that manual, as amended, unless a longer period is required by state or federal law; federal grant records are retained for the period required by the Uniform Grant Guidance. Documents that are not

records required to be retained, and are not necessary to the functioning of the School, may be destroyed when no longer needed. Official records may be kept in physical or secure digital form, with access restricted to authorized personnel and the storage location documented and reviewed annually. On expiration of the retention period, records are disposed of securely: paper is shredded and digital records are permanently erased.

Legal: C.R.S. 24-72-113; C.R.S. 24-80-101 et seq.; 2 CFR 200.334.

29. Policy Review and Matters Not Addressed

The Finance Committee reviews this policy annually and recommends amendments to the Board, and reviews Appendix A each year against the School's enrollment and budget so the thresholds stay proportionate as the School grows. Any matter not addressed in this policy will follow the most current Financial Policies and Procedures Handbook published by the Colorado Department of Education, and the requirements of the School's authorizer take priority.

Appendix A. Schedule of Financial Thresholds

These amounts are set by the Board and reviewed annually. Amending this appendix by Board action amends the corresponding sections of the policy.

Threshold	Amount	Section
Budget-manager expenditure authority	$2,500	12. Expenditure Approval Authority
Executive Director expenditure authority	$25,000	12. Expenditure Approval Authority
Executive Director and Treasurer authority	$250,000	12. Expenditure Approval Authority
Board approval of expenditure	Over $250,000	12. Expenditure Approval Authority
Single-signature payment limit	$25,000	9. Banking, Deposits, and Cash Receipts
Budget-change requiring Board approval	$25,000 or 10% of a line item	6. Annual Budget
Contingency appropriation	Not less than 1% of budgeted expenditures	6. Annual Budget
Informal competitive bid required (non-federal)	$25,000	11. Purchasing and Procurement
Formal RFP and Board approval required	$250,000	11. Purchasing and Procurement
Capitalization threshold	$10,000	10. Fixed Assets
Federal equipment tracking threshold	Federal threshold under 2 CFR 200.1	10. Fixed Assets
Purchasing card single transaction	$2,500	13. Credit and Purchasing Cards
Purchasing card monthly cardholder limit	$10,000 unless set lower	13. Credit and Purchasing Cards
Petty cash fund	$500	9. Banking, Deposits, and Cash Receipts
Contract signing — Executive Director	$50,000 and one year or less	14. Contracts
Contract signing — ED and Treasurer	$150,000 or any multi-year term	14. Contracts
Contract signing — Board	Over $150,000, or over five years	14. Contracts
Gift or grant requiring Board acceptance	$25,000 per donor or event	19. Grants and Grant Management
Fidelity bond / crime coverage	Not less than $250,000	23. Insurance and Bonding

Threshold	Amount	Section
Operating reserve target	60 days cash; 45 days by Year 3; floor 30 days	3. Reserves and Fund Balance
Debt service coverage minimum	1.10x, base and downside cases	24. Borrowing, Debt, and Facility Financing

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Adopted by the Board of Directors of Stoca Academy on _____.

_____ _____

Board President Board Treasurer

Governing Board Attachments

Board Roles Descriptions

Stoca Academy is a proposed AI-empowered STEM public charter school serving grades 6 through 12 in Commerce City, Colorado, opening in 2028–29. The school is designed for a community where roughly 82.6% of students qualify for free or reduced lunch, 29% are multilingual learners, and about 92% are students of color.

- **What the board does.** The board holds legal and fiduciary responsibility for the school. It sets policy, approves the budget, hires and evaluates the Executive Director, monitors performance against the school's goals, and ensures legal compliance. It does not manage the school day to day.
- **Commitment.** Monthly meetings, held publicly under the Colorado Open Meetings Law, plus committee work and preparation. Members complete governance onboarding. Attendance matters materially: with a founding board of five, quorum depends on consistent participation.
- **What is sought.** Expertise in one or more of: finance and accounting; fundraising and development; real estate, facilities, or construction; law, particularly education, employment, or data privacy; and Commerce City community leadership. Board members are not required to be educators.
- **Independent judgment is a qualification.** Stoca is founded by a leader with a clear vision and deep operational expertise. The board's value depends on its willingness to question that vision, ask difficult questions, and disagree publicly when warranted. Members are recruited on the expectation that they will do so.
- **Family and community members are actively sought.** One founding seat is designated for a Commerce City parent or guardian. No prior board experience is required. Governance training, materials in Spanish, interpretation, and meeting times that accommodate work schedules are provided.

Board Matrix

	Seat 1	Seat 2	Seat 3	Seat 4	Seat 5
Board Member Name	Vacant	Vacant	Vacant	Vacant	Vacant

Term	3-yr, staggered	3-yr, staggered	3-yr, staggered	3-yr, staggered	3-yr, staggered
Board Position	Treasurer (anticipated)	Member	Member	Member	Secretary (anticipated)
Primary competency sought	Finance & accounting (CPA, CFO, or nonprofit finance)	Fundraising & development	Real estate, facilities, or construction	Commerce City community leadership (parent/guardian)	Legal (education law or data privacy preferred)

Competency map (X = competency sought for that vacant seat)

Competency	Seat 1	Seat 2	Seat 3	Seat 4	Seat 5
Finance & accounting	X				
Fundraising & development		X			
Real estate / facilities / construction			X		
Legal (charter, employment, FERPA, IDEA)					X
Data privacy / education law					X
Commerce City community leadership				X	
Parent or guardian of the community served				X	
Nonprofit governance / fiduciary experience	X	X			X
Chair-eligible / board leadership	X				X

Formation status and plan

The board is being recruited deliberately against this matrix rather than seated quickly. All five seats are currently vacant. The founding leadership is actively recruiting and interviewing candidates whose expertise complements, rather than duplicates, the founder's instructional and program background, and is concentrating recruitment on the competencies most capable of preventing the school from opening or operating: financial oversight, fundraising, facilities, legal, and authentic community leadership.

The community-parent seat (Seat 4) is being filled with particular care, from engaged Commerce City families who understand the model, to guard against seating a voice unrepresentative of the school's population. This seat is routed first through the Family Advisory Council.

Timeline. Members will be seated, onboarded, and functioning well before the October 2027 decision gate, at which point the board reviews verified Letter of Intent counts and sets the opening grade configuration (Section B). Resumes and a completed matrix will be provided as members are seated. The governance architecture the board

will operate under, bylaws, conflict-of-interest policy, board member agreement, and role descriptions, is drafted and attached.

Conflict of Interest Policy

Purpose. This policy protects the interest of Stoca Academy when it contemplates entering into a transaction or arrangement that might benefit the private interest of a director, officer, or employee, or might result in a possible excess benefit transaction. It supplements, and does not replace, applicable Colorado and federal law governing conflicts of interest for public charter school board members.

Definitions.

- An *interested person* is any director, officer, or member of a committee with governing-board-delegated powers who has a direct or indirect financial or personal interest.
- A *financial interest* exists where a person has, directly or through family or business, an ownership or investment interest in, or a compensation arrangement with, any entity or individual with which the school has or is negotiating a transaction or arrangement.

Duty to disclose. Every interested person must disclose the existence and nature of any actual or potential conflict of interest, in writing, to the board, and must disclose all material facts to the directors considering the proposed transaction.

Procedure for addressing a conflict.

1. The interested person may present to the board and respond to questions but must then leave the meeting during the discussion of, and vote on, the transaction.
2. The remaining board members determine whether a conflict exists and whether the transaction is in the school's best interest, fair, and reasonable, and whether a more advantageous arrangement is reasonably attainable.
3. The interested person does not vote on the matter. The recusal and the board's decision are recorded in the minutes.

Annual disclosure. Each director, officer, and member of a delegated committee signs a written conflict-of-interest disclosure upon joining and annually thereafter, affirming they have received, read, and agree to comply with this policy.

Standing disclosures at application. The founding Executive Director discloses an ownership interest in a Denver-metro real estate development and an application to the Commerce City Urban Renewal Authority. The Executive Director will recuse from any facility decision or Urban Renewal Authority matter that intersects with these interests. (See Section H, Conflicts of Interest.)

Violations. If the board has reasonable cause to believe a member has failed to disclose a conflict, it will inform the member and afford an opportunity to explain. If, after hearing the response, the board determines a failure to disclose occurred, it will take appropriate corrective and disciplinary action.

Compliance with law. This policy operates alongside the board's obligations under the Colorado Open Meetings Law (C.R.S. 24-6-401 et seq.), the Colorado Open Records Act (C.R.S. 24-72-201 et seq.), and applicable conflict-of-interest statutes for public charter school directors.

Board Member Agreement

As a member of the Stoca Academy Board of Directors, I understand that the board holds legal and fiduciary responsibility for the school and governs through the Executive Director, its single employee. I commit to the following.

Fiduciary duties.

- I will act in the best interest of the school and its students, exercising the duties of care, loyalty, and obedience.
- I will govern, not manage: I will set policy and oversee performance, and will not direct day-to-day operations except through the Executive Director.

Participation.

- I will attend and prepare for board meetings, understanding that with a small founding board, attendance is essential to quorum and effective governance.
- I will complete board onboarding and annual training covering fiduciary duty, Open Meetings and Open Records law, charter governance, FERPA, and the CSI Performance Framework.
- I will participate in the board's annual self-evaluation, including an honest assessment of the board's independence and the quality of its challenge to leadership.

Independence.

- I understand that independent judgment is a qualification for board service at Stoca, and I will raise disagreement and ask hard questions rather than defer, recognizing that a founding board's central risk is deference sustained until something breaks.

Ethics and conflicts.

- I will comply with the school's Code of Ethics and Conflict of Interest Policy, disclose actual and potential conflicts in writing upon joining and annually, and recuse myself from any decision in which I hold a financial or personal interest.
- I will maintain the confidentiality of privileged board information and will speak with one voice once the board has acted.

Compliance.

- I will support the school's compliance with its charter contract, Articles of Incorporation, bylaws, and all applicable state and federal law.

Signature: _____ Printed name: _____ Board position: _____
Term: _____ Date: _____

Bylaws

Article I — Name and Purpose

The name of the corporation is Stoca Academy, a Colorado nonprofit corporation operating a public charter school authorized by the Colorado Charter School Institute (CSI). The corporation is organized and operated exclusively for educational purposes, to operate Stoca Academy consistent with its charter contract, mission, and applicable law.

Article II — Board of Directors

Section 1. Powers. The business and affairs of the school are managed by its Board of Directors. The board holds legal and fiduciary responsibility for the school. It governs and does not manage: it sets policy, oversees performance, ensures legal and financial integrity, and acts only through the Executive Director in matters of school operations.

Section 2. Size. The board consists of no fewer than five (5) and no more than nine (9) voting members. The founding board is five members, with expansion to nine as the school opens and family representation grows.

Section 3. Composition and criteria. The board is recruited against a skills matrix prioritizing finance and accounting, fundraising and development, real estate and facilities, legal, and Commerce City community leadership held by a parent or guardian. Independent judgment is a qualification for service. No more than forty percent (40%) of voting members may be parents or guardians of enrolled students, consistent with Colorado law. The Executive Director is not a voting member of the board.

Section 4. Election and appointment. The board is self-perpetuating. New directors are nominated and elected by a majority vote of seated directors. The founding board chair and initial members are identified by the founding leadership and confirmed by the founding board.

Section 5. Terms. Directors serve staggered terms of three (3) years to ensure continuity, and may serve up to three (3) consecutive terms. Terms are staggered so that roughly one-third of seats turn over in any year.

Section 6. Resignation, removal, and vacancies. A director may resign by written notice to the board chair. A director may be removed, with or without cause, by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the remaining directors, including for failure to meet attendance or governance obligations. Vacancies are filled by majority vote of remaining directors for the balance of the unexpired term.

Article III — Officers

Section 1. Officers. The officers are a Chair, a Vice Chair, a Secretary, and a Treasurer, elected by the board from among its members.

Section 2. Roles.

- **Chair.** Presides at meetings, sets agendas with the Executive Director, and leads the board's oversight and self-governance.
- **Vice Chair.** Acts in the Chair's absence and supports board development.
- **Secretary.** Ensures accurate minutes, proper notice, and maintenance of records consistent with Open Records requirements.
- **Treasurer.** Chairs the Finance Committee and leads the board's financial oversight, distinct from the school's financial staff and consultants.

Section 3. Terms. Officers serve one-year terms and may be re-elected.

Article IV — Meetings

Section 1. Frequency. The board meets at least monthly during the pre-opening period and at least monthly thereafter.

Section 2. Open Meetings. All meetings are conducted in full compliance with the Colorado Open Meetings Law (C.R.S. 24-6-401 et seq.). Notice, agendas, and minutes are posted publicly. The board conducts business in public session except where executive session is expressly permitted by law.

Section 3. Quorum and voting. A majority of seated directors constitutes a quorum; for a five-member board, quorum is three. Action is taken by majority vote of directors present at a meeting at which a quorum exists, except where these bylaws or law require a greater number.

Section 4. Participation. Remote participation is permitted consistent with Open Meetings Law. Directors are expected to attend, prepare by reviewing materials in advance, and participate actively.

Section 5. Annual meeting. The board holds an annual meeting to elect officers, seat new members, and conduct board self-evaluation, including assessment of the board's independence and the quality of its challenge to leadership.

Article V — Committees

Section 1. Standing committees. The board maintains a Finance Committee and an Executive Director Evaluation function. It convenes the statutory School Accountability Committee (SAC) under C.R.S. 22-11-402, which advises on spending priorities and the Unified Improvement Plan and reports to the board.

Section 2. Additional committees and councils. The board may establish additional committees. Non-fiduciary advisory councils (Family, Industry, AI Ethics and Governance, and Student Voice) advise the board and Executive Director and hold no governing authority.

Article VI — Executive Director

The board employs, evaluates, compensates, and may dismiss a single employee, the Executive Director, who leads and manages the school, reports to the board, and attends board meetings without a vote. The board evaluates the Executive Director annually against the leader rubric and the goals in the charter application.

Article VII — Conflict of Interest

Directors, officers, and committee members are bound by the school's Code of Ethics and Conflict of Interest Policy, adopted separately, and sign a conflict-of-interest disclosure upon joining and annually thereafter. Any director with a financial or personal interest in a matter discloses it and recuses from discussion and vote.

Article VIII — Indemnification

The corporation indemnifies its directors and officers to the fullest extent permitted by the Colorado Revised Nonprofit Corporation Act, and may maintain directors-and-officers liability insurance for this purpose.

Article IX — Amendments

These bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of seated directors at any meeting for which notice of the proposed amendment was given, consistent with the charter contract and applicable law.

Article X — Dissolution

Upon dissolution, assets are distributed consistent with the Colorado Revised Nonprofit Corporation Act, the charter contract, and applicable law governing public charter school assets.

Grievance and Compliance Policy

Purpose. Stoca Academy is committed to resolving concerns fairly, promptly, and at the level closest to the concern. This policy provides a clear, multi-tiered process for students, families, staff, and community members to raise and resolve complaints, and defines the board's limited role in that process.

Scope. This policy governs general complaints about school decisions, staff, or operations. Complaints alleging discrimination, harassment, or civil-rights violations (including under Title IX, Section 504, the ADA, or IDEA), and matters governed by a student's IEP or 504 plan, follow the specific legal processes required for those matters and are routed immediately to the appropriate coordinator, in addition to any protections in this policy.

Tier 1 — Informal resolution at the source

Most concerns are resolved directly. A person with a concern first raises it with the staff member closest to the issue, typically the teacher, advisor, or immediate supervisor. The staff member responds within five (5) school days. Stoca supports this step with in-language assistance so that language is never a barrier to raising a concern.

Tier 2 — Formal complaint to the Executive Director

If the concern is not resolved at Tier 1, or if the person is not comfortable raising it at the source, the person submits a written complaint to the Executive Director (or designee). The complaint may be submitted in English or Spanish, in writing, by phone with staff assistance, or in person. The Executive Director reviews the complaint, gathers relevant information, and issues a written response within ten (10) school days. The response explains the decision and the basis for it.

Tier 3 — Appeal to the Board of Directors

If the person is dissatisfied with the Executive Director's response, they may appeal in writing to the Board of Directors within ten (10) school days of the Tier 2 response. The board's role is limited to appeals and policy-level matters; the board does not manage day-to-day operations or substitute its judgment for routine operational decisions. The board (or a designated committee) reviews the record, may request additional information, and issues a final written decision within thirty (30) days or at its next regular meeting, whichever provides a timely resolution. The board's decision is final at the school level.

General provisions

- **Non-retaliation.** No person is retaliated against for raising a good-faith complaint. Retaliation is itself a violation of this policy.
- **Documentation.** Complaints and resolutions are documented and retained consistent with the school's records practices and privacy law.
- **Accessibility.** Every tier is accessible in English and Spanish, and the process is published to families and staff annually and available on request.
- **Authorizer.** Nothing in this policy limits a person's right to raise concerns with CSI consistent with the CSI Board Grievance Policy, or to pursue rights available under state or federal law.

Enrollment and Lottery Policy

1. Open Enrollment and Nondiscrimination: Stoca Academy is a tuition-free public charter school open to all age- and grade-eligible students who reside in Colorado, without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, ancestry, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, or need for special education services. Consistent with C.R.S. 22-30.5-507(3), admission is not conditioned on and enrollment is never denied on the basis of socioeconomic status, family or language background, prior academic performance, special education status, or parental involvement. The school does not administer any test or academic screen as a condition of admission and does not counsel any student out.
2. Grades Served and Eligibility: Stoca Academy serves grades 6 through 12, adding one grade per year from opening. Any student eligible for the grade levels the school serves in a given year may apply. The school's two primary entry points are grade 6 and grade 9; applications are accepted for every open grade.
3. Application Process and Timeline
    - Stoca conducts an open application window each year, publicized widely across the communities the school serves, in English and Spanish.
    - Applying requires only a simple interest form capturing the student's name, grade, and residence, plus any status information that correlates directly to a lottery weight (see Section 5). No other information is requested at application.
    - Applications are accepted through multiple channels, including online, by phone, by text, in person at community locations, and on paper, so that no family is excluded by access barriers.
    - The application window, lottery date, and notification timeline are published at the start of each cycle. Families are notified of admission, waitlist status, and next steps promptly after the lottery.

4. Lottery: If the number of applicants for any grade exceeds available seats, Stoca fills those seats through a random, publicly observable lottery held for that grade. Each grade runs its own lottery. Applicants not selected are placed on a waitlist in the random order the lottery generates.
5. Weighted Lottery: As a Colorado Charter Schools Program (CSP) grant applicant, Stoca uses a weighted lottery to advance equitable access, consistent with federal CSP parameters and CSI policy.
    - **Weighting.** The weighted lottery gives one additional lottery entry (two total chances) to any applicant who is economically disadvantaged, a multilingual learner, or both. A student qualifying in more than one category receives a single additional entry, not one entry per category.
    - **Purpose.** These two categories are the core of the demographic profile Stoca commits to serve in Section B (economically disadvantaged and multilingual learners). Weighting them ensures the enrolled community stays aligned with that commitment and does not drift as the school recruits across a broad region.
    - **Mechanism.** Qualifying applicants receive one additional entry in the lottery for their grade, applied uniformly. Students with disabilities and all other populations are fully served on the same open-access basis and are protected by the school's non-discrimination and continuum-of-services commitments described in Section E and above.
    - **Data limits.** Status information is collected at the application stage only where it correlates directly to the lottery weight, and is used only to administer the weighted lottery.
    - **Approval.** The final weighting takes effect only as approved by CSI and CDE Schools of Choice. Any subsequent amendment requires the same approval.
6. Preferences and Exemptions from the Lottery: Consistent with federal CSP requirements, Stoca applies only limited, legally permitted preferences:
    - **Siblings.** A sibling of a currently enrolled student, or of a student admitted in the same lottery, receives enrollment preference where a seat is available in the sibling's grade.
    - Any additional preference permitted under CSP (for example, a limited preference for children of founding staff, if allowed and capped) is applied only within federal and CSI limits and only as approved.
    - Stoca does not use preferences that would undermine equitable, open access.
7. Enrollment of Specific Populations: Stoca enrolls and serves students with disabilities, multilingual learners, students experiencing homelessness (consistent with the McKinney-Vento Act), students in foster care, and migrant students on the same open-access basis as all other students. Identification of a disability or language status is never a basis for denial, delay, or discouragement of enrollment.
8. Waitlist and Vacancies: Students not admitted are held on a grade-level waitlist in lottery order for the school year. As seats open, they are filled from the waitlist in order. The waitlist does not carry over between years; families reapply each cycle.
9. Outreach and Recruitment: Stoca conducts ongoing, targeted outreach so that its applicant pool reflects the race, gender, ethnicity, and needs of the community it serves. While the school is open to any eligible student in Colorado, its recruitment is concentrated, by design, in the communities the model is built for. Commerce City, Brighton, and Reunion are the primary recruitment footprint, receiving the earliest and most intensive outreach, followed by the nearby high-need feeder communities of Thornton, Mapleton, and the surrounding Denver-metro area. This concentration shapes who learns about and applies to Stoca, and works together with the need-based weighted lottery to keep the enrolled community aligned with the demographic commitment in Section B.

- Outreach is conducted in English and Spanish, through trusted community intermediaries, feeder-community events, canvassing, and in-person, in-language contact, consistent with the engagement plan in Section B. The school partners with community organizations to reach families who face barriers to school choice. Outreach concentration is achieved through where and how the school recruits, not through any residency-based preference in the lottery itself, which would be inconsistent with the school's open, statewide access as a CSI-authorized public school.

10. Compliance: This policy is implemented consistent with the Colorado Charter Schools Act, C.R.S. 22-30.5-507(3), federal CSP requirements including the federal definition of a charter school, and CSI enrollment policy. Before CSP grant funds are released, the school will hold a signed and executed charter contract that includes this approved lottery and enrollment policy.

CSI Waiver Requests

Contact Information

Field	Entry
School Name	Stoca Academy
School Address (mailing)	1049 Hazel Ct Denver, CO 80204 (will update when facility is located)
Charter School Waiver Contact Name	Kryszelda Gorrell
Charter School Waiver Contact Phone	(720)767-2216
Charter School Waiver Contact Email	kryszelda@kryszential.com
CSI Waiver Contact Name	Stephanie Aragon
CSI Waiver Contact Phone	720-315-6042
CSI Waiver Contact Email	legalandpolicy_CSI@csi.state.co.us

Automatic Waivers

Stoca Academy acknowledges and accepts the automatic waivers granted to Institute charter schools, listed below. No action is requested on these; they are granted by default.

State Statute Citation	Description
C.R.S. § 22-32-109(1)(f)	Local board duties concerning selection of staff and pay
C.R.S. § 22-32-109(1)(t)	Determine educational program and prescribe textbooks
C.R.S. § 22-32-110(1)(h)	Local board powers — terminate employment of personnel
C.R.S. § 22-32-110(1)(i)	Local board duties — reimburse employees for expenses

C.R.S. § 22-32-110(1)(j)	Local board powers — procure life, health, or accident insurance
C.R.S. § 22-32-110(1)(k)(I)	Local board powers — policies relating to in-service training and official conduct
C.R.S. § 22-32-110(1)(ee)	Local board powers — employ teachers' aides and other non-certificated personnel
C.R.S. § 22-32-126	Employment and authority of principals
C.R.S. § 22-33-104(4)	Compulsory school attendance — attendance policies and excused absences
C.R.S. § 22-63-301	Teacher Employment Act — grounds for dismissal
C.R.S. § 22-63-302	Teacher Employment Act — procedures for dismissal
C.R.S. § 22-63-401	Teacher Employment Act — teachers subject to adopted salary schedule
C.R.S. § 22-63-402	Teacher Employment Act — certificate required to pay teachers
C.R.S. § 22-63-403	Teacher Employment Act — payment of salaries
C.R.S. § 22-1-112	School year — national holidays

Non-Automatic (Requested) Waivers

Waiver 1 — C.R.S. § 22-63-201, Employment Certificate Required

Rationale: Stoca must have the authority to hire teachers and leaders who support the school's career-connected, leadership-teaches model. The Executive Director functions not as a traditional district principal but as the school's chief executive with a wider range of responsibilities. The school's Career Majors and Minors are taught in part by industry practitioners whose expertise is essential to the model and who may not hold traditional teaching licenses.

Replacement Plan: The school will attract principals and teachers from a wide variety of backgrounds, including teachers from out of state, teachers with a lapsed Colorado license, persons with successful teaching experience in settings not requiring a license, and persons with relevant business or professional experience. All employees are employed at will and meet applicable fingerprinting and background-check requirements. Core instructional staff will meet the guidelines set forth in the Colorado state ESSA plan: (1) endorsement on a Colorado teaching license; (2) a BA or higher in the relevant subject area; (3) 36 semester credit hours in the subject taught; or (4) passing a State Board–approved content exam in the relevant subject. Specialized career and industry instruction is delivered by vetted content experts under the supervision of licensed educators. Special education teachers hold the requisite state license and endorsement. The school will report in-field/out-of-field designations, teacher years of experience, and any other requirements promulgated by CDE.

Duration of Waiver: The waiver will extend for the duration of the contract.

Financial Impact: The school anticipates that the requested waiver will have no financial impact on CSI or the school.

How the Impact of the Waiver Will Be Evaluated: The impact will be measured by the same performance criteria and assessments that apply to the school, as set forth in the charter contract.

Expected Outcome: The school will be able to hire the teachers and leaders that best fit its design, which is vital to the success of its program.

Waiver 2 — C.R.S. § 22-9-106, Performance Evaluation System; and C.R.S. § 22-2-112(1)(q)(I), Commissioner Duties

Rationale: Stoca and its Executive Director or designee must be able to evaluate all personnel using the school's own growth-and-evaluation system. A designated administrator without a Principal License should not be precluded from administering evaluations under the Executive Director's direction, and the Board of Directors must be able to evaluate the school leader. The school should not be required to report its teacher evaluation ratings as part of the commissioner's report under C.R.S. § 22-2-112(1)(q)(I), but will still report in-field/out-of-field.

Replacement Plan: The school uses its own evaluation system, meeting the intent of the law as outlined in C.R.S. §§ 22-9-101 et seq. Staff are annually trained in the system. Its methods use quality standards that are clear and relevant to administrator and teacher roles, are based on research-based practices, aim to improve student academic growth, and meet the intent of the statutory quality standards. Stoca's Teacher Growth and Evaluation Rubric and Leader Growth and Evaluation Rubric (Attachments) separate coaching from evaluation and weight growth and the equity of growth. The school will not report teacher evaluation data through applicable state collections; teacher performance ratings are used internally to inform hiring and professional development. Core course-level participation will continue to be reported pursuant to C.R.S. § 22-11-503.5, which is non-waivable.

Duration of Waiver: The waiver will extend for the duration of the contract.

Financial Impact: The school anticipates that the requested waiver will have no financial impact on CSI or the school.

How the Impact of the Waiver Will Be Evaluated: Because teacher performance critically affects whole-school performance, the impact will be measured by the same performance criteria and assessments that apply to the school under the charter contract.

Expected Outcome: The school will be able to evaluate its teachers and leaders through its own performance appraisal system, designed to produce greater accountability consistent with the school's goals.

Waiver 3 — C.R.S. § 22-32-109(1)(n)(I), School Calendar; § 22-32-109(1)(n)(II)(B), Adoption of District Calendar; § 22-32-109(1)(n)(II)(A), Teacher-Pupil Contact Hours

Rationale: Stoca will prescribe the details of its own school calendar and daily schedule to meet the needs of its students, and its calendar may differ from other schools in the geographic district. The school runs a five-day week structured as four collaborative instructional days plus a weekly **Architect Day**, a fully scheduled, adult-supervised day of self-paced mastery work and tiered coaching, within a mastery-based instructional model. Because this structure does not match the conventional teacher-pupil contact-hour definition, which assumes uniform whole-group instruction five days a week, Stoca requests a waiver of these provisions. The school will always meet or exceed the minimum instructional time required by state law.

What Architect Day is, and why it is accountable instructional time. Architect Day is not a day off, a remote-learning day, or an independent-study day. It is a fully scheduled school day, held on campus, staffed by the school's own teachers, and running the same instructional hours as any other day. On it, every student moves through a supervised rotation of intensive small-group coaching (groups of no more than ten), targeted support, and adult-supervised independent mastery work in Mathematics and ELA and the school's credential modules. Teachers rotate through coaching, coverage, and collaboration roles so that continuous adult supervision and instruction hold throughout the day. The design commitment is that the students furthest from grade level receive the most adult contact on this day, not the least: support intensity flows toward need, and every student is coached. Middle-school students attend Architect Day in person on the same schedule. Architect Day is therefore accountable teacher-pupil instruction and contact time delivered in a non-traditional but fully supervised structure, not a reduction in instruction

Replacement Plan: The final calendar and daily schedule are adopted by the Board of Directors and school administration; meet or exceed the minimum instructional hours and student contact days required by state law, with Architect Day counted as accountable instructional and contact time because it is scheduled, on-site, teacher-staffed, and running full instructional hours; and consider the needs of the school community. Stoca's model calendar totals approximately 174 student contact days and approximately 1,140 instructional and contact hours, above the state minimum of 1,080 hours, with Architect Day included in that total (School Calendar attachment). The school documents its instructional-hour calculation for CSI, aligns it to CDE guidance during Year 0, distributes the calendar to families, submits its calendar annually to CSI for review, and does not make material modifications without notifying CSI.

Duration of Waiver: The waiver will extend for the duration of the contract.

Financial Impact: The school anticipates that the requested waiver will have no financial impact on CSI or the school.

How the Impact of the Waiver Will Be Evaluated: By the school's documented annual instructional-hour calculation reviewed by CSI, by student growth and mastery outcomes, and by the performance criteria in the charter contract.

Expected Outcome: The school operates its four-instructional-day-plus-Architect-Day week and mastery-based calendar, delivering at least the required instructional time in a structure that directs the most support to the students who need it most, which is central to the success of its program.

Waiver 4 — C.R.S. § 22-33-105(7)(a)(II), Process for Disciplinary Appeals; and the companion discipline-authority provisions C.R.S. § 22-32-109.1(2)(a) (Conduct and Discipline Code / Safe School Plan) and C.R.S. § 22-33-106 (Grounds for Suspension, Expulsion, and Denial of Admission)

Rationale: As a CSI charter school with an independent governing board, Stoca requests a waiver of these provisions so that its own board, rather than CSI acting as a school district and its board of education, carries out the full set of student-discipline functions the statutes assign to a district: hearing disciplinary and related appeals, adopting and

enforcing the school's conduct and discipline code and Safe School Plan, and applying the grounds for suspension, expulsion, and denial of admission under that code. These provisions are waived together so that discipline authority sits coherently with Stoca's board and its own restorative discipline model, rather than being split between the school and the authorizer. This waiver transfers *who* exercises these functions; it does not reduce the substantive protections the statutes guarantee.

Replacement Plan: Stoca adopts, enforces, and applies its own board-adopted Discipline Policy and its Year 0 Safe School Plan and Written Code of Conduct, developed with CSI, which **meet or exceed** the substantive requirements of these statutes. Specifically, the school's code: imposes proportionate, restorative interventions designed to reduce out-of-school suspensions, expulsions, and law-enforcement referrals; provides full due process for suspension and expulsion consistent with C.R.S. § 22-33-105, including written notice, hearing, representation, and appeal; observes all rights of students with disabilities, including manifestation determination and Child Find; prohibits corporal punishment and complies with mandatory child-abuse and safe-school reporting; addresses the required code elements (dangerous weapons, controlled substances, and habitually disruptive students); and monitors discipline data for disproportionality. The governing board carries out the district-board functions these provisions assign, hears appeals under the disciplinary-appeals waiver above, and involves the school's legal counsel and CSI in appeals to ensure student due process. The school develops its policy under C.R.S. § 22-33-105 and its Safe School Plan for CSI review and approval, and reports expulsion and safe-school data as required by law, which is not waived.

Duration of Waiver: The waiver will extend for the duration of the contract.

Financial Impact: The school anticipates that the requested waiver will have minimal financial impact on the school and no financial impact on CSI.

How the Impact of the Waiver Will Be Evaluated: The school records all suspension and expulsion data with access for review by CSI and the governing board, reports safe-school data as required, and the governing board develops and approves discipline policies and the Safe School Plan for CSI review; impact is measured by discipline and disproportionality outcomes and the charter contract's performance criteria.

Expected Outcome: A coherent, board-held student-discipline system, restorative, proportionate, and fully protective of student due process and the rights of students with disabilities, administered at the local level under Stoca's own code with CSI oversight.

Waiver 5 — C.R.S. § 22-32-109(1)(b), Competitive Bidding

Rationale: State law directs that this provision not be granted as an automatic waiver, so Stoca requests it. As an autonomous charter school, Stoca is responsible for its own contracting and procurement and must be able to purchase goods and services on terms suited to a small, new school rather than under district-designed bidding procedures.

Replacement Plan: Stoca follows the purchasing and procurement controls in its board-adopted Financial Policies and Procedures, which set tiered thresholds requiring quotes, informal competitive bids, and formal RFPs at defined dollar levels, apply the more restrictive federal procurement standards (2 CFR Part 200) to federally funded

purchases, and prohibit conflicts of interest and unauthorized purchases. These controls meet or exceed the intent of the statute.

Duration of Waiver: The waiver will extend for the duration of the contract.

Financial Impact: The school anticipates that the requested waiver will have no financial impact on CSI or the school.

How the Impact of the Waiver Will Be Evaluated: Through the school's independent annual audit and the purchasing controls in the Financial Policies, and by the performance criteria in the charter contract.

Expected Outcome: The school procures goods and services efficiently and with sound controls appropriate to its size, without district-specific bidding procedures.

Waiver 6 — C.R.S. § 22-32-110(1)(y), Power to Accept and Expend Gifts, Donations, and Grants

Rationale: State law directs that this provision not be granted as an automatic waiver, so Stoca requests it. Philanthropic gifts, donations, and grants are central to Stoca's start-up funding model, and the school's governing board must be able to accept and expend them directly under its own policies.

Replacement Plan: The board accepts and expends gifts, donations, and grants under the Grants and Grant Management provisions of its Financial Policies, which require board acceptance above a set threshold, board approval of any gift carrying conditions or ongoing cost, proper tracking of restricted funds by purpose and grant year, donor acknowledgement, and compliance with the Uniform Grant Guidance for federal awards.

Duration of Waiver: The waiver will extend for the duration of the contract.

Financial Impact: The requested waiver has no negative financial impact; it enables the philanthropic revenue the budget relies on to be received and used.

How the Impact of the Waiver Will Be Evaluated: Through the independent annual audit, the Financial Transparency Act postings, and board review of gifts and grants.

Expected Outcome: The school accepts and deploys philanthropic support promptly and transparently under board control, supporting the start-up funding plan.

Waiver 7 — C.R.S. §§ 22-63-202, 22-63-203, 22-63-203.5, and 22-63-206, Teacher Employment Provisions

Provisions: § 22-63-202 (employment contracts, written-contract and duration requirements); § 22-63-203 (probationary teachers, renewal and nonrenewal of employment contract); § 22-63-203.5 (nonprobationary portability); § 22-63-206 (transfer and compensation).

Rationale: Stoca employs all staff at will and does not operate the probationary/nonprobationary tenure structure, the statutory contract and nonrenewal procedures, the portability of nonprobationary status, or the district transfer provisions these sections establish. These provisions assume a district employment framework Stoca does not use, and waiving them is necessary for the school's leadership-teaches, career-connected staffing model.

Replacement Plan: Stoca employs staff at will under board-adopted personnel policies, with clear offer letters, defined expectations, and its own hiring, evaluation, and separation procedures. Teacher effectiveness is governed by the school's growth-and-evaluation rubrics, and due-process protections are provided through the personnel policies and the grievance policy. The school determines its own staff assignments and compensation under the board-adopted salary structure. Grounds and procedures for dismissal (§§ 22-63-301 and 302) are automatically waived; this request addresses the remaining employment provisions so the at-will framework is internally consistent.

Duration of Waiver: The waiver will extend for the duration of the contract.

Financial Impact: The school anticipates that the requested waiver will have no financial impact on CSI or the school.

How the Impact of the Waiver Will Be Evaluated: By the same performance criteria and assessments that apply to the school under the charter contract, and by staff-retention and instructional-quality outcomes.

Expected Outcome: The school hires, assigns, evaluates, retains, and separates staff under an at-will framework suited to its model, with its own due-process protections.

Waivers Stoca is NOT requesting (stated for clarity)

Stoca is not seeking waivers from health and safety requirements; special education and IDEA obligations; civil-rights, nondiscrimination, and open-enrollment law; the rights of students with disabilities and multilingual learners; assessment and accountability participation (including the non-waivable C.R.S. § 22-11-503.5); financial transparency and audit requirements; or the Open Meetings and Open Records laws.

EMP Addendum

Stoca's budget models **both** a private-employment model (delivered through an ESP acting as Employer of Record) **and** a public-employment model (direct enrollment in PERA). This preserves the same deliberate flexibility Stoca applies to its board formation, grade configuration, and facility decisions: the founding Board will evaluate ESP partners against published criteria, verify the associated funding streams, and then make an informed decision, on a milestone timeline agreed with CSI, whether to contract with an ESP or to move directly into PERA. Nothing is executed until the Board, advised by independent counsel, has made that decision on the record.

CSI's guidance asks a governing board two things above all: whether it understands the effect of any agreement it signs, and whether anything in that agreement contradicts the charter contract or limits the authorizer's oversight. Part 2 addresses the second directly. Part 1 addresses the first by setting out the Board's decision framework before the decision is made.

PART 1 — Responses to the Addendum

Numbered to match the eight EMP Addendum prompts. Because the Board has not selected a provider, provider-specific evidence (responses 2, 3, and 5) and the executed agreement (response 8) are provided before execution, per the process below; the Board resubmits them to CSI before signing any agreement.

1. Rationale for selection of the provider. The Board has not selected a provider. It is first deciding whether to contract for Employer-of-Record, business-operations, and back-office services at all, or to enroll directly in PERA as a public employer. A new school opens with a lean staff and a single full-time administrator, yet before the first student arrives it needs a federal employer identification number, a state unemployment account, workers' compensation coverage, a payroll and benefits system, an accounting system on the state chart of accounts, and a compliance calendar covering both CSI and CDE. An ESP acting as Employer of Record allows Stoca to run the private-employment model and carries this work through an entity that has done it before, on terms that transfer functions to school staff over time. The Board's alternative is to forgo an ESP, employ the staff directly, and enroll in PERA directly. The budget models both so the Board can decide with verified numbers.
2. Evidence of effectiveness with other schools. Provided once the Board selects a provider and before any agreement is executed, including the provider's last three years of audited financial statements, any current or past liens, and any pending or past litigation, along with Colorado charter references the Board can verify.
3. Evidence of capacity for expansion while maintaining quality. Provided per the selected provider before execution, with evidence of serving schools of comparable scale and phase without degrading service to existing clients.
4. Proposed relationship before candidates are compared, (b) retain independent legal counsel that reports to the Board and is unaffiliated with any candidate for the selection and negotiation, and (c) require any advisor with a financial interest in a candidate to recuse from the selection vote, consistent with the school's Conflict of Interest Policy.
5. Evidence the provider is authorized to conduct business in Colorado. Verified for the selected provider (good standing with the Colorado Secretary of State) before execution.
6. Cost sharing, fee structures, and central versus school-level functions. Any agreement would pass employment costs through at documented cost with no markup, and price the provider's services as a defined fee (a share of per-pupil revenue or a fixed schedule). A written capacity-transfer schedule would move functions to school staff over the contract term, with the corresponding in-house positions appearing in the staffing plan and budget as they are assumed.
7. Financial obligation to the provider. Any agreement would carry a term of no more than one year, subject to annual appropriation of funds consistent with TABOR, with termination for convenience on short notice and no penalty, no debt accruing to the school, and full Board control of all school funds and accounts. The financial obligation across the charter term, including any changes in cost, would be documented for the Board before execution.
8. Performance contract with material terms. A proposed services agreement will be provided to CSI before execution, specifying at minimum: performance-evaluation measures; the Board's methods of oversight and enforcement; the delineation of central (provider) versus school-level functions; contract length; renewal and termination conditions; which staff are hired, terminated, paid by, or report to the provider; and the full compensation and fee structure between the board and provider, and conflicts of interest. Any ESP would be engaged strictly as a vendor of services. The Board retains ultimate responsibility for the academic, financial, and operational performance of the school; the charter contract is primarily over any ESP

agreement; and the Executive Director and Board direct the provider, not the reverse. Conflict-of-interest disclosure: one of the Colorado providers the Board will evaluate, VAO Collaborative, is led by Shannon Gossard, who has served as a finance advisor to Stoca during application development. The Board discloses this relationship proactively. To manage it, the Board will (a) evaluate all candidates against criteria adopted on the record.

PART 2 — How the Board Keeps Control (mapped to CSI's look-fors)

Any ESP agreement Stoca executes will satisfy each of CSI's autonomy and oversight protections:

- Primacy of the charter contract. The agreement states expressly that the charter contract controls over the ESP agreement.
- The board remains ultimately responsible for the school's academic, financial, and operational performance; the ESP is defined as a vendor of services.
- TABOR adherence: a one-year term, subject to annual appropriation.
- Financial transparency and open records: the ESP makes all records pertaining to the school readily available to the school, the authorizer, and the independent auditor, and complies with Financial Transparency Act posting.
- Board control of funds: all school funds and accounts remain under Board control; no funds route through the ESP outside Board authority.
- Federal property purchased with federal dollars remains the property of the school.
- No cure-by-provider or communication-blocking provisions: nothing permits the ESP to cure a Board breach or to restrict CSI from communicating with the Board.
- Transition rights: on termination, records, systems, and functions transfer to the school without penalty.

PART 3 — The Decision Framework and Timeline

Criteria the Board will adopt on the record before comparing candidates: demonstrated Colorado charter experience (verifiable results and references); fit at Stoca's scale and phase; lawful Employer-of-Record capability in Colorado; price (employment costs passed through at cost, no markup); acceptance of the Board's terms as above; a written capacity-transfer schedule; and financial condition and standing.

Process: the Board adopts the criteria on the record; surveys the Colorado providers capable of serving a school of Stoca's size and model (the current landscape includes Minga Education, Tatonka Education, and VAO Collaborative, and may expand); compares candidates against the criteria, or adopts a written sole-source justification if it proceeds sole-source; selects before executing any agreement; and records the basis for its decision in its minutes. If the Board instead elects PERA, it documents that decision and no ESP agreement is executed.

Milestone timeline (with CSI): the Board expects to make the ESP-versus-PERA decision during Year 0, after authorization and as funding streams are verified, and welcomes agreeing a specific milestone schedule with CSI. Stoca's Financial Policies already provide that the Board reviews PERA-election readiness at each annual budget adoption beginning in Year 3, so an initial ESP arrangement (if selected) is structured to transition toward the public model on the trigger conditions in those policies.

PART 4 — Disclosure and Steps Before Execution

The Shannon Gossard / VAO Collaborative relationship is disclosed above (response 4). Before executing any ESP agreement, Stoca will: adopt selection criteria on the record; retain independent counsel unaffiliated with any candidate; complete provider due diligence (financials, liens, litigation, Colorado authorization); resubmit provider-specific responses and the proposed agreement to CSI; and record the decision and its rationale in the Board minutes with any interested party recused.

A proposed services agreement will be provided to CSI for review before execution, per Part 1, response 8.

School Leader Resume

KRYSZELDA JOYCE GORRELL

EXECUTIVE LEADER IN EDUCATION

Denver, CO
(720)767-2216
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SUMMARY

Innovative school founder and network leader with 15+ years of experience founding, directing, and transforming schools. Recognized for building high-performing teams, delivering measurable student outcomes, developing standards aligned science programming, and driving equity-focused partnerships across K-12 education.

EDUCATION

- **M. Ed. - Leadership and Administration**
  - Columbia University, Teacher's College
- **M.A.T. - Seconday Physical Science**
  - National Louis University
- **B.A. - Physics, Magna Cum Laude**
  - University of Colorado, Boulder

CERTIFICATIONS

- MIT xPRO – AI Strategy and Leadership (February 2026)
- Gallup StrengthsFinder Coach (2024) + Coaching with AI (2025)
- Harvard Medical School - AI Driven Healthcare Transformation (Expected September 2026)
- Former Illinois Principal and Teaching Lisence

RECOGNITION & AWARDS

- Finalist, Colorado Charter Leader of the Year (2025)
- Semi-Finalist, Yass Prize for Innovation in Education ($200K awardee, 2024)
- 1st Place, Center for Education Reform Pitch Competition ($25K awardee, 2024)
- Panelist, American University SIEEJ Conference (2024) – School Safety & Gun Violence
- Moderator, Teach for America Leaders of Color Conference (2024)
- Graduate, Relay GSE National Principal's Academy Fellowship – Distinction (2019)

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Stoca Academy **2026-Present**

School Founder & Executive Director | Commerce City, CO

- Founding a brand new 6-12 school in Adams 14 that is STEM Focused and Career Connected for new opportunities for students in the community.
- Innovation Fellow with Colorado Schools Fund and Legacy Fellowship to open the nation's very first public AI-empowered High School opening in Fall 2028. Will establish the founding board and 501(c)(3); write and submit the charter application; set vision and foundation for the school model; hire and build founding staff; secure founding families and students.

DSST Public Schools **2017-2026**

School and Network Leader | Denver & Aurora, CO

- Network Team, School Director on Special Assignment – Mentor and coach new school directors; led STEM program design across middle and high schools; supported other schools in the network with gaps in leadership, managed charter renewal for Aurora Science & Tech HS.
- Founding School Director, Aurora Science & Tech HS – Hired and built inaugural staff; launched culture and academic foundations; secured partnership with Anschutz Medical Campus & UCHealth (one of six k-12 campuses in the US); achieved Green rating in CO SPF; named top APS high school (2023–24 and 2024–25).
- Associate School Director, Aurora Science & Tech MS & Henry MS – Re-founded AST MS in year two, leading Instructional Leadership Team (ILT), DEI initiatives, and SPED development. Turned around Henry MS in year four, achieved 100% IEP/504 compliance at Henry MS (from district remedy plan) as the Special Education Administrator; master scheduler for the campuses.
- Director of Curriculum & Instruction, Conservatory Green MS – Designed school-wide instructional vision, led ILT, and implemented data-driven practices; managed standardized testing and schedules.

Richard T. Crane Medical Prep HS **2013-2017**

Founding Science Department Chair & Physics Teacher | Chicago, IL

- Developed NGSS-aligned curriculum; coached teachers; achieved 2 years of growth on pre-ACT; led debate team from lowest division to second-highest in Chicago Debate League.

Teach Plus **2016-2017**

Teacher Leader and Professional Development Facilitator | Chicago, IL

- Designed and facilitated NGSS professional development for 6th–12th grade science teachers.

Collins Academy HS **2011-2013**

Physics Teacher | Chicago, IL

- Teach For America corps member; achieved 2 years of student growth on pre-ACT.

REFERENCES

Provided upon request.

Start Up Plan

Stoca's plan from application submission through opening. The school is pursuing authorization in November 2026 and opening in August 2028, a deliberately long runway that lets Stoca seat and train its board, run a genuine enrollment campaign, and secure its facility without the compression a single-year Year 0 imposes. The plan runs in four phases: the immediate authorization phase (Fall 2026), then Year 0A (2027, the build year), Year 0B (late 2027–summer 2028, the open year), and opening. Tasks carry a target window and a responsible role. Responsibility shifts across the phased founding team as members are seated; the Executive Director (ED) holds most early tasks.

Phase 0 — Authorization (Fall 2026)

The immediate priority is securing authorization. These are firm, near-term milestones, with continuous progress communicated to CSI through the decision.

Task	Target date	Responsible
Submit the new school application	By deadline	ED
1-2 Board members identified and named (candidates against the skills matrix)	By Oct 20 pitch	ED
Community meeting	By Oct 9, 2026	ED
Capacity interview with CSI	By Oct 16, 2026	ED
Pitch to the CSI Board	Oct 20, 2026	ED
Ongoing progress updates to CSI (community engagement, board formation, funding)	Continuous through November	ED
CSI authorization decision	November 2026	CSI

Phase 1 — Year 00: The Build Year (2027)

With authorization secured, Stoca uses the first full year to build the foundation deliberately, board, facility search, finance systems, curriculum, and the enrollment campaign.

Governance and Board

Task	Target window	Responsible
Seat the founding board (from identified candidates) against the skills matrix	Early–mid 2027	ED, board chair
File Articles of Incorporation; confirm 501(c)(3) status	Q1 2027	ED, legal seat

Adopt bylaws, conflict-of-interest policy, board member agreements	Q1–Q2 2027	Board
Board onboarding and governance training (Open Meetings, FERPA, CSI framework)	Mid 2027	Board chair, ED
Seat board committees (Finance, ED Evaluation); convene the School Accountability Committee	Mid 2027	Board chair
Board governs the bulk of the build year	Mid 2027 onward	Board

Facilities

Task	Target window	Responsible
Engage Blueprint; seat the board facilities committee	Q1 2027	ED, facilities seat
Active site search, tours, shortlisting (interim facility)	Through 2027	ED, Blueprint
Confirm Phase 1 space requirements after the grade-configuration decision	Oct 2027	ED, board

Finance and Funding

Task	Target window	Responsible
Contract back-office finance/HR provider with governmental-accounting experience	Q1 2027	ED
Adopt Financial Policies and Procedures with the Finance Committee	Q1–Q2 2027	Treasurer, ED
Secure Colorado Schools Fund commitment and philanthropic bridge funding (authorization unlocks funder conversations)	2027	ED, fundraising seat
Finalize the budget against CSI per-pupil assumptions	2027	ED, provider, finance reviewer

Enrollment and Community

Task	Target window	Responsible

Hire the community engagement lead (Adams 14, 27J, Thornton, Mapleton)	Early 2027	ED
Launch the formal Letter of Intent campaign with co-design sessions	2027	ED, engagement lead
Build the Stoca brand and community presence across the runway	Throughout 2027	ED, engagement lead
Board sets opening grade configuration (6th, 9th, or concurrent)	Oct 2027	Board, ED
Convene the Family Advisory Council	Mid 2027	ED
Secure letters of support and partnership agreements (TEN, CCA, TFA, industry)	2027	ED

Academic Program

Task	Target window	Responsible
Fund Year 0 curriculum-development stipends (startup grant)	2027	ED
Adopt named core curricula (ELA, Math); build Studios, Majors/Minors, Credly pathways	2027	ED
Develop Program Plans for special education, multilingual learners, and gifted with CSI	2027 (Year 0)	ED, special-education lead

Phase 2 — Year 00: The Open Year (Late 2027 – Summer 2028)

The time-sensitive, pre-opening work: lock the facility, hire, enroll, and prepare to open.

Facilities

Task	Target window	Responsible
Consult CSI on local jurisdiction requirements (fire marshal, building dept., planning, ADA)	~March 2028	ED, Blueprint
Execute interim lease or purchase agreement; submit revised facility budget to CSI	Late 2027 – ~March 2028	ED, Business Manager
File construction plans and permits; begin tenant improvements	~April 2028	Blueprint, ED
Certificate of occupancy; fire/health inspections; CSI site walks	Summer 2028	ED, Business Manager

Furnishing, technology, and signage installation	Summer 2028	Business Manager

Enrollment

Task	Target window	Responsible
Interim enrollment checkpoint: ~75% of minimum in signed LOIs	Winter 2027–28	ED
Go/no-go decision: 100% of minimum (100 students) in signed LOIs	Spring 2028	Board, ED
Adopt and publish enrollment/weighted-lottery policy (CSI + CDE Schools of Choice approval)	Late 2027 – Spring 2028	ED, legal seat
Conduct the enrollment lottery if oversubscribed; register students	Spring–Summer 2028	ED, Business Manager

Staffing

Task	Target window	Responsible
Hire Dean of Culture and Students	Spring 2028	ED
Recruit and hire founding teachers (8 core, 3 specialists) and student-services staff	Spring–Summer 2028	ED, Dean
Background checks, licensure verification, onboarding	Summer 2028	Business Manager, provider
Confirm special-education and multilingual staff licensure/endorsements	Summer 2028	ED, Dean
Contract related-service providers (speech, OT/PT, nursing with SSP license, psychology)	Summer 2028	Business Manager

Operations and Compliance

Task	Target window	Responsible
Select and stand up the SIS and data systems (data-privacy compliant)	Spring 2028	Business Manager, provider
Secure insurance (liability, property, D&O, workers' comp)	Spring–Summer 2028	Business Manager, provider
Establish TABOR and other required reserves	Spring 2028	Provider, Treasurer
Establish transportation (contracted, shared bell schedule) and food service (CSI SFA)	Spring–Summer 2028	Business Manager

Develop the Safe School Plan and Written Code of Conduct with CSI	Year 0 – Summer 2028	ED, Dean
Adopt discipline policy, grievance policy, and student/family handbook (English and Spanish)	Spring–Summer 2028	ED, Dean, legal seat
Submit requested waivers; complete CSI Year 0 assurances and reporting	Post-authorization – Year 0	ED, provider
Establish MTSS structure, diagnostics, and pre-referral committee	Summer 2028	ED, Dean

Academic Readiness

Task	Target window	Responsible
Finalize Year 1 scope and sequence and master schedule (including Architect Day)	Spring–Summer 2028	ED, Dean
Finalize the calendar against the published Adams 14 calendar; board adoption	Spring 2028	ED, board
Deliver founding-staff summer institute and pre-opening PD	Summer 2028 (Aug 6–14)	ED, Dean
Establish the coaching model and teacher/leader growth rubrics	Summer 2028	ED
Host founding-family orientation and in-language information sessions	Summer 2028	ED, engagement lead

Phase 3 — Opening

Task	Target date	Responsible
Final certificate of occupancy; final CSI site walk	Early Aug 2028	ED, Business Manager
Verify staff trained in emergency response protocols	Mid Aug 2028	Dean
First day of school	Aug 2028	All

This plan is a living document reviewed by the board and updated against the CSI Year 0 milestone calendar. The long runway between a November 2026 authorization and an August 2028 opening is used deliberately, to seat and train the board early, run a genuine enrollment campaign, secure the facility without compression, and build community trust and the school's brand ahead of opening. Milestone gates (signed lease, enrollment thresholds, certificate of occupancy, Program Plan completion) are treated as hard checkpoints, and the go/no-go enrollment decision governs whether the school opens on schedule.