

HORIZON MIDDLE SCHOOL

APPLICATION TO BE DESIGNATED AS AN INNOVATION SCHOOL

A. Horizon Middle School Vision Statement

Horizon Middle School is committed to the continuous improvement of educational practices and unwavering dedication to excellence in which the children are the beneficiaries of an outstanding education rooted in:

Belief Statements:

1. Respectful relationships are highly valued at Horizon Middle School and are centered on honesty, integrity, and compassion. Students know that the staff empathizes and cares for them, and staff feel appreciated for the work that they do with our children.
2. Teachers empower our students to be motivated learners by setting high, clear expectations. Our students are accountable for their own learning and through collaboration with their teachers, each set personal academic goals for achievement.
3. At Horizon Middle School we appreciate individual differences. We strive to teach the whole child by developing strengths and skills in the areas of fine arts and physical education, as well as academics. Through a data-driven approach, we provide differentiated instruction which meets the learning needs of all of our students.
4. Respect, responsibility, and right choices are the corner-stone of the positive school climate at Horizon Middle School. Our friendly, welcoming atmosphere invites parent and community involvement. Through positive role models and open communication, we have created a safe and nurturing learning environment.
5. Horizon Middle School strongly believes in the professional development of teachers. Teachers are always researching and implementing best practices in order to close the achievement gap. Differentiated instruction, on-going assessments, and timely feedback provide support for all students. Through technology integration and a strong literacy focus, we provide systematic and purposeful instruction.
6. Horizon Middle School is a Professional Learning Community. Teachers work together using an organized system of developing common assessments, gathering and analyzing data, and setting learning targets.
7. Communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and problem solving are life skills students need in the twenty-first century. Through an engaging curriculum and technology integration, our students learn the skills they need to be successful in a high-tech world.

B. INNOVATIONS:

As a school of innovation Horizon Middle School will have the ability to focus decisions on its IB program and control staff positions, budget, curriculum, evaluations and calendar in order to ensure students receive a challenging education and staff have the opportunity to provide quality instruction and assessments.

School Staffing/Employment

Horizon Middle School serves a diverse student population both economically and ethnically. The Horizon staff is dedicated to progressive programming, professional development and educational practices that best meet the needs of our students. As such, it is necessary to hire candidates who embrace the philosophy of said programs for the purposes of continuity, consistency and continued improvement.

Hiring

Staff, in order to ensure new staff meet our high standards and culture, will partner with administration during the interview process for all licensed positions with final approval residing with the principal. As a Title I school, Horizon will only interview and hire staff who meet the Highly Qualified requirements. Horizon staff and administration will retain the right of refusal of all transfers of staff into Horizon. Personnel requests, in coordination with Zone leadership and Human Resources, are to be approved and posted as early as possible in order to afford the opportunity to hire the best and most qualified candidates. Furthermore, in order to continue the innovative, progressive path set by the Horizon staff and administration it is vital that future administrative leadership share the vision and goals set forth. To that effect the Horizon staff will have a representative body of licensed staff members involved in the initial interview process of future principals. The final selection will remain with the zone leadership.

Probationary/Non-Probationary Status

The Horizon staff recognizes the need to ensure the highest quality and most dedicated teachers are hired and retained. In support of this commitment all staff will maintain Probationary status while employed at Horizon. Staff will continue to be afforded due process and the opportunity to improve educational practices in an effort to meet the high standards set forth.

Although all staff will remain probationary as stated in the Teacher Employment, Compensation, and Dismissal Act (22-63-101, *et seq.*, C.R.S.), Horizon will specify differences in the non-renewal process for employees in years 1-3 and employees in years 4 and beyond. Employees in years 1-3 with Falcon School District 49 may be non-renewed as stated by CO statute for probationary personnel. Falcon School District 49 employees in years 4 and beyond may be non-renewed as requested in this waiver. However, for these employees (years 4 and beyond) to be non-renewed they must be placed on a plan of remediation, no later than November 15th to ensure there is adequate time provided for improvement to occur before a recommendation of non-renewal is made. If a licensed staff member receives an unsatisfactory formal evaluation a second formal, with an alternate administrator, will be scheduled and conducted within a reasonable amount of time for the employee to affect change for improvement not to exceed four working weeks. If need for improvement still exists two more formal evaluations will be scheduled and completed by March 1. The plan of remediation will specify areas in need of improvement and specify the future observation dates necessary to monitor improvement. Staff placed on a plan of remediation will receive a minimum of four formal evaluations (a formal will be conducted over one class period) and four informal observations (a minimum of twenty minutes) for the year regardless of the observation step they are currently on. Staff will be notified by April 1, if they are to be non-renewed. If a teacher disputes the decision of administration they may notify the Zone Leader for mediation.

Evaluation

The IB program demands specific requirements in instructional practice. As such, a specific tool to measure IB practices during the evaluation process is needed. Horizon will implement an evaluation tool that meets these needs. The principal or designee will evaluate all staff at Horizon utilizing an evaluation that embodies values and measures the school's mission, vision, goals, program needs and innovations. The evaluation instrument and frequency will meet or exceed the standards specified by state statute SB-10-191 and will be designed to measure the aforementioned requirements as they pertain specific to Horizon Middle School as an IB school as well as SB-10-191.

Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect. To this end the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programs of international education and rigorous assessment. These programs encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who recognize and respect cultural differences.

Tony Wagner, in his book The Global Achievement Gap along with top CEOs and University academicians, identifies seven skills students need to be successful in "today's global knowledge economy." The premise is that today's students are living in a world where information changes quickly. Schools, therefore, need the ability to adapt and change quickly as well.

The IB program implemented at Horizon Middle School models this global perspective regarding education and preparing students to be critical thinkers as they enter the workplace. Horizon wishes to retain the decision making authority as it pertains to maintaining and retaining the IB program and other necessary programs required to remain creative and innovative in its goal to create a school that prepares all students to be successful in the 21st century. This includes the ability to adopt and implement curriculum and educational resources that meet or exceed state standards while supporting a program of rigor and high expectations for all students.

Student Grade Reporting and Assessment

Over the past two years the Horizon Staff have dedicated themselves to the understanding and implementation of assessments for and of learning, designed with a clear and appropriate purpose and which assess specific learning targets based upon state standards. Equally important is a system which effectively measures and accurately reports student mastery of these learning targets.

To this effect the Horizon staff designed a standards-based report card to accurately report student progress, student portfolios to reflect student work and assessment performance and a conference process to communicate this progress. This work represents the Horizon commitment to the five keys to quality assessment:

1. Assessments have a clear purpose
2. Assessments reflect clear and valued learning targets
3. Learning targets translate into assessments yielding accurate results
4. Results are managed and communicated well
5. Students are involved in the assessment process

In order to continue and improve this process the Horizon staff request the authority to design, revise and implement a grade reporting and assessment system to meet the aforementioned goals and objectives. The school will continue to use the district tool for reporting student progress to all vested parties. In additional costs to implement changes will be absorbed by the school within the allowed budget unless supported by the zone or district as a larger professional development agenda.

School Calendar/Class Scheduling

"If schools are to be transformed into learning communities, educators must be prepared to acknowledge that the traditional guiding model of education is no longer relevant in a post-industrial, knowledge-based society. Second, they must embrace ideas and assumptions that are radically different than those that have guided schools in the past."

– Richard DuFour

The Horizon staff is committed to the effective use of Professional Learning Communities in order to enhance and improve student achievement, parent communication and teacher performance. The Horizon staff use PLC time with purpose and meaning to meet the needs of Response to Intervention, student portfolios, IB unit planning and design, content planning, common summative assessment design, standards-based performance reporting and promote teachers as instructional leaders. In order to continue this "transformation", Horizon must have a schedule and calendar that effectively support progressive change. Horizon requests control to design and implement a calendar and master schedule that support such change. Calendar and schedule changes that extend contact time will be approved by a majority of fifty plus one of affected staff. Calendar adoptions will meet or exceed state and district requirements regarding student contact time and take transportation limitations and Board of Education requests into ultimate consideration. If additional teacher hours are required beyond the district contract it will be the school's responsibility to address those costs within its allotted budget.

School Choice/Open Enrollment

The staff at Horizon Middle School supports Article 36, Public School of Choice – 22-36-101, et seq, C.R.S. We believe parental choice in the education of their child is essential to providing the best learning opportunities and environment for students. Although we are committed to providing a quality education to students within school boundaries, we welcome the opportunity to allow additional students to attend Horizon as space and resources allow. Unfortunately there may be instances where a student of choice is not successful at Horizon. The student attendance and discipline policies JFBA, JFBH-R and JFBB must be adhered to in order to be successful as a student. The administrative team reserves the right to accept, deny or revoke choice enrollment for a student not residing within Horizon boundaries. Responsibility for enforcing BOE policies previously mentioned will remain at the discretion of Horizon's principal. If a choice application is approved and later found to contain false information or if the student does not adhere to Horizon's expectations for attendance, behavior or academics, the principal may revoke the at any time. Acceptance of permits and the appeal process for denial will continue to follow the BOE's current policy.

C. IMPROVEMENTS IN ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT THAT SCHOOL EXPECTS AS A RESULT OF INNOVATIONS:

The Horizon Middle School Unified Improvement Plan will continue to identify and focus on specific strategies to improve student achievement. The innovations applied for will ensure continuity in lesson design, collaboration, student and parent conferences, assessments, student portfolios and providing student interventions through RtI. Students will be provided a quality education that will meet their specific needs.

D. PROGRAMS, POLICIES, OPERATIONAL DOCUMENTS THAT WILL BE AFFECTED BY INNOVATIONS:

A calendar, reflective of the current calendar, which provides staff development and work days will be needed. This will afford quality time to develop and update student portfolios, standards-based grading, quality common summative assessments and IBMYP units of instruction. Horizon will continue to follow district days off, late starts, snow days and early releases. Teacher/student contact time will continue to meet or exceed state requirements.

As previously mentioned, staff evaluations will be structured to measure the needs and requirements of IB but will meet the requirements of SB-10-191.

E. PRIOR YEAR BUDGET AND PROPOSED BUDGET INCLUDING FUNDING FOR ALL INNOVATIONS:

Horizon will continue to operate under its current district and Title I budget as allocated based on per pupil count. Currently Horizon receives an additional \$18,000 to meet the needs of IB dues and fees and operating costs. This will also be required in order to maintain IB status.

No additional costs are anticipated. Horizon will continue to operate within the district provided funding.

F. ESTIMATE OF THE COST SAVINGS AND INCREASED EFFICIENCIES AS A RESULT OF INNOVATIONS:
Student and staff proficiency will increase.

G. EVIDENCE OF MAJORITY OF CONSENT TO DESIGNATE AS AN INNOVATION SCHOOL:

a. **ADMINISTRATORS** – See administrative letter.

Gregory V. Moles, Principal

Mary M. Gohl, Assistant Principal

b. **TEACHERS**

A building vote was conducted at which time 39 of 45, (86 percent) certified staff members approved the plan. The vote was certified by the Horizon Leadership team. See staff letter.

c. **SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL**

The Horizon School Accountability Committee reviewed and approved the plan with minor clerical corrections. See SAC letter.

H. STATEMENT OF LEVEL OF SUPPORT FOR DESIGNATION AS AN INNOVATION SCHOOL/ZONE:

a. **OTHER PERSONS EMPLOYED AT THE SCHOOL**

A vote was not requested.

b. **STUDENTS AND PARENTS OF STUDENTS ENROLLED AT THE SCHOOL**

The Horizon School Accountability Committee reviewed and approved the plan with minor clerical corrections. See attached letter.

c. **COMMUNITY SURROUNDING THE SCHOOL**

Throughout the 2010-11 and 2011-12 school years, the Sand Creek Innovation Zone held three innovation assemblies. The assemblies were opportunities for the community to provide direct input into the formulation of each school's plan, including Horizon Middle School's innovation application. Based on the feedback of those in attendance I believe that Horizon has the majority support from the community, students and parents of HMS in order to move forward with the application process.

I. DESCRIPTION OF STATE AND DISTRICT POLICIES THAT NEED TO BE WAIVED BEFORE INNOVATIONS CAN BE IMPLEMENTED:

Maintain support of a calendar which supports PLC opportunities for student portfolio development, standards-based report cards, assessment and IB MYP unit development and RtI.

Horizon will modify the district employee observation form to evaluate IB and building specific goals but will meet all requirements of SB-10-191.

The school will modify the district report card to support standards-based growth and development.

Horizon will hire highly qualified staff in order to support the requirements of IBO.

Horizon staff will interview and hire future administration, with zone leadership input, in order to maintain continuity of IB values and the established building culture of excellence.

The school will have control over curriculum adoption and use of supplementary resources utilizing a zone/school process.

The school will adopt an evaluation process to evaluate certified employees which will exceed state and district standards for the purpose of non-renewal.

C.R.S.	Title/Subject	Substantive/Delegation	Rationale/Replacement Plan
22-9-106	<i>Local boards of education-duties-performance evaluation system</i>	The school will meet or exceed the requirements of state law when conducting teacher evaluations. The school will have the authority to utilize an evaluation system, including the instrument and frequency that will meet state requirements.	The evaluation tool will meet all requirements of SB-10-191. We will utilize a tool that reflects the goals, mission and vision of Horizon as an IB school.
22-36-101	<i>Article 36 Public Schools of Choice – Choice of programs and schools within school districts.</i>	The school will review choice applications and maintain the right of acceptance or denial throughout the year. Horizon is not waiving School of Choice but assuming responsibility to determine choice. All other aspect of the statute will be complied with.	Acceptance or denial of choice permits is at the discretion of the principal. Choice permits may be revoked at any time during the school year if behavior, attendance or academic standards are not met.
22-63-203	<i>Probationary Teachers – renewal and nonrenewal of contract</i>	Certified staff employed at Horizon will maintain probationary status. Staff in years 1-3 will maintain probationary status and may be non-renewed as outlined in state statute. Staff in years 4 and beyond may be non-renewed as long as the requirements outlined in this plan are met.	The school is committed to ensuring a dedicated and effective staff is in place each year. As a Title I school all staff will continue to meet Highly Qualified status.
22-32-109(n) 22-32-109(n)(I) 22-32-109(n)II(A) 22-32-109(n)(II)(B)	<i>Schedule and Calendar</i>	The school will have the authority to establish its own calendar based on professional development needs of the school and zone.	The schedule and calendar of the school will meet or exceed statutory minimums for calendar, hours of teacher/pupil contact and schedule as required by the state. Teacher work days and professional development days will be established by the school. Subject to zone oversight.

22-32-109(t)	<i>Determine Educational Program and Prescribe Textbooks</i>	Delegate authority to the school to establish an educational program and textbooks and require the school to align its instructional program to state and local standards.	School educational program is described in the Innovation and Business plan. School will be able to adapt its instructional program in alignment with state standards and IB requirements.
Falcon D49 Board of Education Policy	Title/Subject	Substantive/Delegation	Rationale/Replacement Plan
GCE-R/GCF-R	<i>Instructional Staff Recruiting/Hiring</i>	The school will have the authority to interview and hire staff that meet Highly Qualified requirements. The school will have the authority to determine placement of decisions of staff based on program needs.	The district will no longer make direct placement of teachers to the school without the approval of the principal.
GCA	Professional Staff Positions	The school will determine individual job functions and write job descriptions or utilize standard district job descriptions.	The principal, with the assistance of Human Resources and the Horizon Leadership team, will write job descriptions which include essential functions and responsibilities.
GCI/GCI-R	<i>Staff Professional Development</i>	The school will promote the professional development of staff as aligned to the goals and program needs of the school.	Professional development will be planned with staff based on building goals and program needs.
GCOA/GCOA-R	<i>Evaluation of Instructional Staff</i>	The school will meet or exceed the requirements of state law when conducting teacher evaluations. The school will have the authority to utilize an evaluation system to include the instrument and frequency that will meet state requirements.	The evaluation instrument will be comparable to or exceed the standards specified in state statute.
GCKA/GCKA-R	<i>Instructional Staff Transfer and Vacancy</i>	The school will have the authority to interview and hire staff meeting highly qualified status. The school will have the authority to place staff to meet program requirements.	The district will not make placement of teachers to the school.
GDO/GDO-R	<i>Evaluation of Support Staff</i>	The school will evaluate all support staff assigned on a full-time basis.	The school will evaluate all full-time support staff and make determinations of continued employment on a yearly basis.
JFBA/JFBA-R	<i>School Choice/Open</i>	The school will review and	Acceptance of choice permits

	<i>Enrollment Transfer Policy Inter-district Choice/Open Enrollment</i>	maintain the right of acceptance. The school will have the right to revoke a choice permit on the grounds of attendance, behavior and academic performance throughout the year.	is at the discretion of the principal. Permits may be revoked at any time based on behavior, attendance or academic performance.
IGA/IGD/IGF	<i>Curriculum Development/Adoption/ Review</i>	The school will have the authority to make curricular decisions that are aligned to state standards and support programming needs. The school will have the authority to choose and purchase resources that support the programming needs of the school. Resources will be reviewed yearly by staff.	Administration and staff will collaborate to select instructional resources that meet programming needs. Purchases will support and enhance program needs.
IJJ	<i>Textbook Selection and Adoption</i>	The school retains the authority to select curriculum and instructional resources.	Administration and staff will collaborate to select instructional resources that meet programming needs. Purchases will support and enhance program needs.
IKAB	<i>Report Cards/Progress Reports</i>	The school will have the authority to report the academic, social and emotional progress of students as aligned to program needs.	Horizon will report the progress of students toward grade level progress utilizing an instrument true to IB requirements.
IC/ICA	<i>School Year/School Calendar/ Instructional Time</i>	The school will have the authority to establish its own calendar and building schedule.	The calendar and schedule will meet or exceed the requirements of the state regarding teacher/pupil contact time. Teacher work and professional development days will be established at the school level subject to district oversight.

J. DESCRIPTION OF THE MANNER IN WHICH SCHOOL(S) SHALL COMPLY WITH THE INTENT OF THE WAIVED STATUTES/RULES AND ACCOUNTABILITY TO STATE FOR SUCH COMPLIANCE: See rationale and replacement plan waivers table.

K. DESCRIPTION OF HOW SCHOOL(S) WILL COMPLY WITH NCLB TITLE II-A REQUIREMENTS (IF INNOVATIONS RELATED TO EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES AND/OR STAFFING PLANS): Horizon will continue to fulfill all requirements related to Title I. Horizon will continue to hire only Highly Qualified staff as

required by NCLB. Horizon will continue to develop a Title I plan incorporating Title requirements and which supports the educational plan of Horizon students and the Innovation Plan.

L. DESCRIPTION OF COLLECTIVE BARGAINING PROVISIONS THAT NEED TO BE WAIVED:

N/A

M. ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REQUIRED BY FALCON BOARD OF EDUCATION: Horizon will continue to meet all provisions and requirements of IDEA.

N. WRITTEN RESOLUTION FROM THE FALCON BOARD OF EDUCATION APPROVING PLAN AND SEEKING DESIGNATION AS A DISTRICT OF INNOVATION:

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION TO BE DESIGNATED AS AN INNOVATION SCHOOL ZONE:

A. DESCRIPTION OF HOW SCHOOLS IN THE ZONE WILL WORK TOGETHER:

B. ESTIMATE OF ECONOMIES OF SCALE THAT MAY RESULT FROM SCHOOLS IMPLEMENTING INNOVATIONS JOINTLY:

C. SHOWING OF HOW EACH SCHOOL SOLICITED INPUT FROM STUDENTS, PARENTS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS CONCERNING SELECTION OF SCHOOLS IN THE ZONE AND

D. STRATEGIES THAT WILL BE USED TO IMPLEMENT INNOVATIONS AND INTEGRATE THEM WITHIN THE ZONE: