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COMMUNITIES OF EXCELLENCE CONSORTIUM AWARDS OVER \$5 MILLION TO SUPPORT THE GROWTH OF IDAHO'S HIGH-PERFORMING PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL SECTOR

Awards to six Idaho public charter schools will support their ability to serve an additional 2,500 students.

Boise – (November 18, 2019) The *Communities of Excellence* consortium of Bluum, the Idaho Public Charter School Commission, the Idaho State Board of Education, the J.A. and Kathryn Albertson Family Foundation, and Building Hope announced the second round of grant funding from the Federal Charter School Program. Idaho's *Communities of Excellence* program is a competitive public charter school grant program funded under the Congressional *Every Student Succeeds Act*, which reauthorized the *Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965* (ESEA).

The grant awards are aimed at increasing the number of high-quality public charter school options for families throughout Idaho. Idaho's charter schools have consistently delivered strong academic outcomes for families. Data from the most recent National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP), commonly known as the Nation's Report Card, showed that charter schools in Idaho performed at the [top in both math and reading](#) and research Stanford University's Center for Research on Educational Outcomes (CREDO) showed [significant learning gains](#) in reading for charter school students, especially for students attending rural charter schools.

The strong performance of Idaho's public charter schools has coincided with increasing demand. A [recent survey](#) showed over 10,000 families were still on a waitlist to attend a high-performing charter school that meets their student's individual needs. "Families all across Idaho are looking for a great school to send their child to," said Terry Ryan, CEO of Bluum. "These awards will go a long way to ensuring more families have the opportunity to send their child to a high-performing public school of their choice."

The six public charter schools awarded grants are from across Idaho and have diverse, innovative school models that will ultimately grow to serve nearly 2,500 public school students in Idaho.

- **Elevate Academy (Caldwell)** Elevate Academy's focus on Career-technical education allows their students, 90% of whom qualify for free and reduced lunch, to apply core academic concepts to hands-on learning.
- **Fern Waters (Salmon)** In a rural school setting in Salmon, Idaho that serves up to 60 students in grades 4-8, Fern Waters provides a rigorous and diverse educational program combined with individualized learning and behavioral supports.



- **Gem Prep: Meridian North (Meridian)** Through personalization, and by leveraging best practices in technology, blended learning and online learning, Gem Prep: Meridian North (GPMN) engages K-12 students in 21st-century work, using competencies necessary for productive lives as citizens in a dynamic, increasingly competitive global world.
- **Hayden Canyon (Hayden)** Hayden Canyon Charter School’s vision is focused on elevating student achievement and equity through project-based and investigative learning in a rural setting. HCC’s education model focuses on developing servant-leader character, 21st Century skills, and habits of mind for creative, critical, and innovative thinking within all disciplines.
- **MOSAICS Public School (Caldwell)** MOSAICS’s goal is to increase learning opportunities for minority students and students from low socioeconomic backgrounds through an inquiry-driven, project-based approach to learning, for them to be exposed to different STEAM career fields beginning in kindergarten, and for them to understand how to pursue a career in STEAM.
- **Treasure Valley Classical Academy (Fruitland)** Treasure Valley Classical Academy opened this fall with 310 students in grades K-6. TVCA is based on the Barney Charter School Initiative’s K-12 school model intended to provide a classical education in the liberal arts and sciences, in tandem with teaching the principles of moral character and civic responsibility.

The goal of the CSP program is to increase the number of quality charter school seats...*especially for our most educationally disadvantaged and rural students*. To date, the *Communities of Excellence* Consortium has awarded \$10 million in grant support to a total of 11 schools that will collectively serve 5,275 students--nearly half of whom attend school in a rural community.

“The CSP program is bringing needed resources to our state. This funding provides more opportunity to create innovative, diverse learning environments in communities throughout Idaho, but especially for our needier and rural students,” said Matt Freeman, Executive Director of the Idaho State Board of Education.

A public charter school is nonsectarian in its programs, admissions policies, employment practices, and all other operations, and is not affiliated with a sectarian school or religious institution. Public charter schools are open to all students who apply and cannot charge tuition. A charter school receiving CSP funds must use a lottery if more students apply for admission to the charter school than can be admitted. Idaho has 60 public charter schools and collectively they serve over 25,000 public school students.

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About Bluum

Bluum is a nonprofit organization committed to ensuring Idaho’s children reach their fullest potential by cultivating great leaders and innovative schools. For more information visit www.bluum.org.

About the Federal CSP Grant

Idaho received \$22 million in funding over five years. At least 90 percent of these dollars will flow to public charter school subgrantees for school start-up, school replication and school expansion. At least seven percent must be utilized



for state-level technical assistance activities and program evaluation/research. No more than three percent for Bluum administration.