

2025-2026 New Innovation School Application



Revised November 2025

Table of Contents

[About this Application](#)

[Application Directions](#)

[Cover Page for Colorado Department of Education and Checklist](#)

[Letter to your School Community](#)

[Innovation Plan Narrative](#)

[Section I: Educational Program Flexibilities](#)

[Section II: Teaching/Staffing Flexibilities](#)

[Section III: School Management and Leadership](#)

[Section IV: Governance and Budget Flexibilities](#)

[Section V: Proposed Flexibilities \(Optional\)](#)

[Section VI: Innovative Practices Outside of Waivers \(Optional\)](#)

[Innovation Plan Waivers](#)

[Appendix A: Evidence of Engagement and Support from Administrators, Teachers and CSC](#)

Cover Page for Colorado Department of Education and Checklist

Complete the following cover page for the Colorado Department of Education (CDE).

When submitting an Innovation Plan to the Colorado State Board of Education, the following document must be completed. For additional information about the submission process, please see CDE's Fact Sheet, [Innovation Act Waiver Requests](#). Please do not submit your requests via DropBox or as a Zip file.

School Name: Isabella Bird Community School

School District: Denver Public Schools

Contact for Innovation Plan (Name, Title, and Email): Rebecca Mercer, Principal rebecca_mercer@dpsk12.net Jessica Wainman, Senior Team Lead/GT Specialist/DCTA Representative, jwainma@dpsk12.net

Please answer the following questions to help CDE review the Innovation Plan as efficiently as possible.

Is this plan for a new school or an existing school? New / Existing

Has the school applied for status as an Alternative Education Campus (AEC)? Yes / No

(If yes, please explain: _____)

Has the school been assigned to a Priority Improvement or Turnaround plan? Yes / No

Is the school a recipient of the federal School Improvement Grant (1003(g))? Yes / No

An Innovation Plan **must be submitted along with the following documents:**

- A signed resolution from the local school board, signaling approval of the plan and intent to submit the plan to the State Board for its approval;
- A separate document listing the state laws and State Board rules that the school is seeking to waive, as well as "replacement plans" for each of those waivers (i.e., a description of the manner in which the school will comply with the intent of the waived statutes or rules and will be accountable to the state for such compliance); and
- A separate document showing the school's prior year budget (if an already existing school) and a proposed budget, including funding required for all innovations to be implemented. This budget should include all costs associated with innovations, including staffing costs, and information about any local, state, federal or private funds the school anticipates receiving.

An Innovation Plan **must include the following components:**

- A statement of the school's mission and why designation as an innovation school would enhance the school's ability to achieve its mission;
- A description of the innovations the school would implement;
- A description of the improvements in academic achievement that the school expects to achieve as a result of the innovations. For example, a school may expect to see a narrowing in achievement gaps, or a decreased dropout rate, or increased scores on state or local assessments;
- A list of the programs, policies, and/or operational documents at the school that would be affected by the innovations, and how these would be affected. For example, if a school proposes to extend the school year, that would affect the school's calendar. Other examples of programs/policies/documents that may be affected include the following:
 - o the research-based educational program the school would implement;
 - o the length of the school day and year at the school;
 - o student promotion and graduation policies;
 - o assessment plans; or
 - o staffing and/or compensation plans;

- ❑ The school's prior year budget (if an already-existing school) and a proposed budget, including funding required for all innovations to be implemented. This budget should include all costs associated with innovations, including staffing costs, and information about any local, state, federal or private funds the school anticipates receiving;
- ❑ An estimate of the cost savings and increased efficiencies that the school expects to see as a result of the innovations, if any;
- ❑ Evidence that a majority of the administrators employed at the school consent to designation as an innovation school;
- ❑ Evidence that a majority of the teachers employed at the school consent to designation as an innovation school. (Note: for a school that is seeking to waive one or more of the provisions of a collective bargaining agreement, the school plan must include evidence of approval of at least 60% of the members of the collective bargaining unit who are employed at the innovation school. The approval must be gathered by means of a secret ballot vote.)
- ❑ Evidence that a majority of the school accountability committee for the school consent to designation as an innovation school
- ❑ A statement describing the level of support for designation as an innovation school demonstrated by other persons employed at the school, students and parents of students enrolled in the school, and the community surrounding the school.
- ❑ A description of any statutes or any regulatory or district policy requirements that would need to be waived for the public school to implement its identified innovations; and
- ❑ A description of any provision of the collective bargaining agreement at the school that would need to be waived for the school to implement its identified innovations.
- ❑ Any additional information required by the local school board of the school district in which the innovation plan would be implemented.

Letter to your School Community

Dear Isabella Bird Community,

With heartfelt appreciation and deep purpose, I share with you our renewed Innovation Plan as we embark on our thirteenth year as a learning community. This plan preserves and enhances the essential flexibilities that allow Isabella Bird to thrive as a school rooted in excellence, equity, and inclusion and fueled by love, high expectations, and authentic relationships.

At Isabella Bird, we are more than a school, we are a collective. A place where students are seen and heard, where learning is rigorous and relevant, and where community, culture, and compassion are the foundation of everything we do. The flexibilities granted through our Innovation status help us bring this vision to life in practical, powerful ways.

Our calendar flexibility enables us to begin the year with two full days of one-on-one student assessments. These moments are sacred. They allow us to deeply understand each child (academically, emotionally, and personally) so we can differentiate with purpose from day one. These early days reflect our commitment to a relationship-based and data-informed approach to learning.

We also dedicate extended time for student conferences, which center student voice, agency, and self-advocacy. This time allows students to claim their identities as learners and take ownership of their growth. This practice embodies our belief that students are not empty vessels to be filled, but capable, thoughtful contributors to their own education.

Our curriculum flexibility is equally vital. We recognize that traditional, one-size-fits-all approaches have not equitably served many of our students. At Isabella Bird, we aim higher. Flexibility allows us to audit, adapt, and design curriculum that affirms identity, honors lived experience, and catalyzes critical thinking and action. As Dr. Ghody Muhammad reminds us, education should be both responsive and responsible. Our aim is to cultivate children who know who they are, what they care about, and how to make change in the world.

As a designated GT Magnet School, Isabella Bird is also charged with meeting the unique academic and social-emotional needs of gifted and advanced learners. These students thrive in environments where curiosity is celebrated, depth and complexity are embedded, and learning is propelled by inquiry and purpose. Our instructional model, supported by curriculum flexibility, draws on best practices in gifted education, including compacting, acceleration, and authentic, real-world problem solving. These approaches are seamlessly integrated with our values of inclusion, cultural relevance, and community connection, ensuring that all learners are challenged and honored.

Our hiring flexibility is another essential piece of our Innovation Plan. It allows us to bring in unlicensed supplemental educators for non-core instructional areas, including arts, enrichment, language, and wellness programming. This enables us to expand our team with talented individuals from diverse professional backgrounds—community experts, multilingual mentors, cultural leaders—who enrich our school experience and reflect the identities of our students. These adults help facilitate project-based learning, service initiatives, and culturally sustaining electives that deepen engagement and expand what's possible in our classrooms.

This renewal process has been shaped by voices from across our community—our educators, CSC, PTCO, DEI Committee, and, most importantly, our families. Together, we have affirmed the importance of maintaining the structures and freedoms that allow us to align our practices with our values.

Staff engagement began with discussions led by school leadership and continued with collaborative planning by the SLT and DCTA Building Representative. Through dialogue, feedback, and reflection, staff helped shape the direction of the plan. We formed an Innovation Committee representing multiple roles and perspectives to draft the renewal with staff input at the center. This work expanded to include rich, ongoing conversations with the CSC and family community, who have consistently expressed strong support for retaining Innovation status, particularly as it relates to our calendar, curricular, and staffing flexibilities.

We know that Innovation status is not about autonomy for autonomy's sake. It is about accountability to our children, to our shared values, and to our collective future.

As we look ahead, we remain guided by a bold vision: to be a school that models what is possible when love, justice, and joyful learning converge. A place where students are not only well-prepared, but deeply fulfilled; not only achieving, but thriving.

Thank you for your continued trust, voice, and partnership. Together, we will continue to build a school community that is inclusive, courageous, and transformational.

With deep gratitude and commitment,
Rebecca Mercer
Principal, Isabella Bird Community School

Innovation Plan Narrative

A. School Mission, Vision, and Values

Mission

To provide an educational experience that is equitable, intellectually stimulating, and inspires curiosity to ensure our students will be academically prepared, socially and environmentally responsible, culturally responsive, and personally fulfilled life-long learners.

Vision

IBCS will be a foundational cornerstone in each student's life, enabling and encouraging them to have a positive influence in the world.

School Model

Isabella Bird Community School (IBCS) is a gifted magnet and inclusive elementary school grounded in the belief that every child deserves a compassionate, intellectually rich, and engaging education. Our model blends rigorous academics with social-emotional learning, creative expression, and a deep commitment to equity, identity, and student agency. Through a school-wide cluster grouping model, we ensure that advanced learners are challenged and supported, while all students benefit from differentiated instruction tailored to their unique strengths and needs. Instruction is inquiry-driven, culturally responsive, and rooted in real-world application—encouraging students to think critically, collaborate, and explore their interests in meaningful ways.

What sets IBCS apart is our whole-child approach to learning. Students are not only taught academic content but are also empowered to set goals, advocate for themselves, and take ownership of their learning. Our educators work collaboratively across disciplines to design integrated, project-based experiences that

connect to students' lives and reflect their diverse cultural backgrounds. We prioritize community service, environmental sustainability, and leadership development—cultivating global citizens who care for themselves, each other, and the world. IBCS is a vibrant, inclusive school where students thrive as thinkers, learners, and changemakers.

Our innovation plan will impact the following areas:

Calendar

The calendar flexibility waiver directly supports Isabella Bird Community School's mission to nurture compassionate, self-directed learners and global citizens. By dedicating time in the fall and spring for student-led conferences, we elevate student agency and deepen home-school partnerships. These conferences empower students to reflect on their growth, set goals, and advocate for their learning—key skills for developing confident changemakers. Additional time allocated for MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Supports) enables our staff to engage in whole-child data analysis, develop targeted intervention plans, and ensure that each student—regardless of ability or background—receives the academic, emotional, and behavioral support they need to thrive. This proactive, inclusive planning aligns with our guiding principles of compassion, equity, and high expectations.

The waiver also allows us to enrich our school culture and instructional practices in powerful ways. Our designated Culture Week is a vital time for staff to build meaningful connections, engage in deep instructional planning and strengthen school culture. This time builds school-wide empathy, pride, and connection. Additionally, added professional learning and collaborative planning days give teachers the opportunity to design inquiry-driven, culturally responsive instruction that meets the diverse needs of our learners. These embedded structures—made possible by calendar flexibility—strengthen our ability to offer a meaningful, integrated curriculum and ensure that every student is seen, challenged, and supported. The plan confirms the school shall submit their calendar and/or schedule to the district in a timeframe as requested by the district in order to meet requirements for alignment with hiring/onboarding, transportation, facilities and other service provision.

Curriculum

Curriculum flexibility is essential to fulfilling the mission of Isabella Bird Community School, particularly as a gifted magnet school committed to inclusion, challenge, and whole-child development. Our diverse student population includes advanced learners, twice-exceptional students, and students with a wide range of cultural, linguistic, and academic needs. The curriculum flexibility waiver allows us to supplement and adapt beyond the district-provided materials—enabling our educators to design learning experiences that are both rigorous and responsive. It gives us the autonomy to incorporate gifted-specific resources, inquiry-based units, culturally sustaining texts, and hands-on learning that deepen understanding and relevance for all students.

This flexibility is especially critical in our school-wide cluster grouping model, where students work across readiness levels and areas of strength. To meet them where they are (and take them further) we must be able to pull from diverse instructional frameworks, enrichment programs, and tools that align with their unique profiles. The waiver allows us to curate and implement alternative curricular resources that are evidence-based, equity-oriented, and aligned to our core values. It ensures that every learner, from those

needing acceleration to those requiring scaffolding, is seen, supported, and stretched within a meaningful, inclusive, and intellectually vibrant curriculum.

Hiring Flexibility

As a GT magnet school committed to inclusion and ensuring all students meet or exceed academic and social/emotional goals, this waiver supports our vision of becoming a model school for equity and sustainability. It enables us to hire from the community, reduce barriers to entry for diverse educators, and pilot programs aligned to our long-term goals by exercising the option to hire unlicensed educators, if necessary. Isabella Bird Community School will work with the DPS HR department to ensure that all necessary processes are followed, including an annual review of the school's compensation philosophy to ensure sustainability, transparency and equity.

B. Innovation Plan Goals

Table 1. Innovation plan goals.

Performance Indicator/Other Assessment or Measure	Current/Baseline Performance	2025-2026 Goal	2026-2027	2028-2029
IBCS SPF	Green	Achieve and Sustain the Highest School Performance Rating (Green) from CDE We will ensure consistent, data-informed MTSS and instructional alignment across all grade levels.	We will achieve a Green rating on the CDE school performance framework	We will achieve a Green rating on the CDE school performance framework
READ Act Data	72% K-3 at or above grade level	75%	80% of K-3 students will meet or exceed grade level proficiency in foundational reading.	80%
STAR Math	44%	Ensure 50% of students are meeting or exceeding grade	Ensure 55% of students are meeting or exceeding grade	Ensure 55% of students are meeting or exceeding grade

		level expectations in mathematics	level expectations in mathematics	level expectations in mathematics
--	--	--------------------------------------	--------------------------------------	--------------------------------------

Innovation status provides Isabella Bird Community School with the structural flexibility and autonomy needed to align our practices to our mission, and to meet both district performance goals and our own ambitious school-wide targets. The specific flexibilities outlined in our Innovation Plan are not incidental; they are intentional tools that allow us to drive academic growth, elevate equity, and center student voice.

Our calendar flexibility enables us to begin the year with one-on-one student assessments, build intentional school culture, implement student conferences and MTSS planning days throughout the year. The use of calendar flexibility to create time for MTSS is aligned to our MIS in the UIP. These practices ensure that instruction is differentiated from day one, that intervention is proactive and data-informed, and that families are partners in student learning. These structures directly support our goal of 50% of students meeting or exceeding expectations in mathematics, 80% of our students meeting or exceeding grade level expectations in foundational literacy and obtaining the highest level of rating from CDE on the school performance framework by creating time for deep analysis, planning, and relationship building.

Our curricular flexibility allows us to move beyond one-size-fits-all resources, ensuring that every student, particularly our gifted learners, students with disabilities, and historically underserved groups, receives instruction that is rigorous, relevant, and identity-affirming. We use this autonomy to implement inquiry-driven, culturally responsive units that deepen engagement, accelerate growth, and build critical thinking—all aligned with district academic priorities and our own innovation goals for equity and inclusion. The innovation strategies are effective for the duration of this plan and will adhere to the DCTA Collective Bargaining Agreement, except where specific waivers have been formally approved.

Our mission and vision require innovative and ambitious work. Thus we delineate six focus areas to guide our work:

1. IBCS will ensure our students are academically prepared through compelling, real-world, vigorous, and Common Core State Standards (CCSS) aligned instruction.
2. IBCS will ensure our students are socially and environmentally responsible and culturally responsive citizens by integrating themes of social justice, civil rights, and environmental consciousness into daily instruction.
3. IBCS will ensure our students are life-long learners by inspiring their creativity and developing their critical thinking and problem-solving skills in order to make sure our students are independent thinkers who are curious, engaged in the world around them, and self-motivated to make the world a better place.
4. IBCS will create innovative leadership roles and shared leadership structures to empower teachers to create shared ownership for success, foster innovation, and make efficient use of resources.
5. IBCS will address the ongoing and persistent disproportionality of gifted identification and education by developing innovative models to serve students of all backgrounds that demonstrate the characteristics of giftedness.

C. Innovation Plan Onboarding

The Leadership Team (SLT) will be responsible for onboarding all new hires about the innovation plan and how it impacts them and supports our school. This will be done at time of hire by providing a link to the innovation plan. All new hires will have the opportunity to review the innovation plan and ask and answer questions about how this status impacts their role through meeting with our IBCS in-building DCTA representative. New leader hires will be supported to understand what innovation status is during the onboarding and hiring process and will be explained to them by the CSC.

Section I: Educational Program Flexibilities

Educational Program Flexibilities		
Flexibility Area	Detailed Flexibility and Rationale	Select Associated Waivers
Calendar	<p>IBCS will develop its own annual calendar that supports the mission, vision and goals stated in the innovation plan that will meet or exceed state requirements for actual hours of teacher-pupil instruction and teacher-pupil contact.</p> <p>IBCS may develop a calendar that adds additional non-student contact days designed to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Full staff PD ● Data Analysis and Instructional Planning ● SEL instruction ● Equity and school culture building ● Content team collaboration ● Professional learning ● Preparation time to design standards based, grade level, rigorous and culturally responsive instruction ● MTSS (Multi-Tiered Student Support) ● Grade level and vertical team collaboration ● Parent communication and outreach ● Home visits <p>The IBCS calendar is created in collaboration with the leadership team and SLT and aligns to the DCTA contract of 186 contract days. The final calendar will be approved no later than April 1. A copy of the upcoming school-year calendar shall be provided to all parents/guardians of students who are currently enrolled. The approved upcoming school year calendar will be placed on the school's website prior to May 1 of the prior academic year.</p>	<p>DCTA CBA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Article 1-8: Definition of "School Year" <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Article 8-1-1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Article 8-1-2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Article 8-1-3 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Article 8-1-4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Article 8-1-5 Professional Standards- Calendar Subsections <p>State Statute:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 22-32-109(1)(n)(I): Schedule and Calendar <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 22-32-109 (1)(n)(II)(A): Actual Hours of Teacher-Pupil Instruction and Contact <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 22-33-102(1) Definition of "Academic Year"

	<p>Isabella Bird may design its yearly calendar with the following in mind:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To provide additional professional learning that compliments our curriculum, and to allow purposeful time to conduct home visits to build connections with students and families, IBCS will modify our yearly calendar. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ No more than six (6) additional professional learning days will be scheduled per year (in addition to the number of professional learning days scheduled by the district). Teachers will be compensated for this additional professional learning at their regular scheduled rate if the contract year is extended to provide it; ○ Any professional development days that may not align with those scheduled by the district. These days will be scheduled with input from the SLT to best serve the school community. <p>IBCS's yearly calendar may have fewer student contact days than the district calendar but will meet or exceed district and state minimum requirements for student contact days and instructional hours.</p> <p>The yearly calendar will be developed no later than 60 days before the end of the school year by the SLT and will be reviewed by the CSC.</p>							
<p>Extra Duty Compensation</p>	<p>DCTA Educators and paraprofessionals will be eligible for extra compensation, as outlined in the compensation philosophy. This could be, but is not limited to: extra stipends for long hours of work on personnel committees; stipends for teachers to build assessments or curriculum for grade levels; etc.</p> <p>Isabella Bird Community School affirms the school will work with the DPS HR department to ensure that all necessary processes are followed, including an annual review of the school's compensation philosophy to ensure sustainability, transparency and equity.</p>	<p>CBA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DCTA - Article 28: Extra Duty Compensation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DFPNSE - Article 19: Compensation 						
<p>Curriculum and Assessment</p>	<table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td colspan="2" style="text-align: left;">District curriculum</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">Curriculum Subject</td> <td style="width: 50%;">Commercial Program Name</td> </tr> <tr> <td>K-5 Mathematics</td> <td>IM Mathematics</td> </tr> </table>	District curriculum		Curriculum Subject	Commercial Program Name	K-5 Mathematics	IM Mathematics	<p>State Statute:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 22-32-109(1)(t): Determine Educational Program and Prescribe Textbooks; <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 22-32-109(1): Adopt Content Standards
District curriculum								
Curriculum Subject	Commercial Program Name							
K-5 Mathematics	IM Mathematics							

K-5 Literacy	CKLA Knowledge and Skills
Social Studies and Science	Amplify and InquirED
Social and Emotional	Second Step
Supplemental GT Curriculum	Jacob's Ladder and Junior Great Books
Literacy Intervention Curriculum	Really Great Reading
Supplemental GT mathematics	Beast Academy

District assessments

Assessment Subject	Assessment Type
Mathematics	DPS Interims and STAR Mathematics
Literacy	DPS Interims and CKLA assessments s required by district
Science/Studies	DPS Interims and Curriculum unit assessments as required by district

IBCS will participate in the universal flexibilities process when selecting a new curriculum, and will follow the district approval process if seeking to implement a new curriculum outside of this process. If curriculum flexibility is not provided by DPS, IBCS will retain flexibility to make changes to their curriculum in accordance with state and legal requirements.

Teachers will supplement as necessary to meet the individual needs of our student population. We will regularly evaluate our educational program and make changes to curriculum content, instruction, and assessments. Curriculum will be chosen based on our diverse student needs in order to build a strong foundation and love of learning and will align to our mission and vision with a focus on inquiry, real-world, authentic topics, and critical thinking. We strive to leverage students' interests and abilities in a logical and conceptual

	<p>way through concept-based learning and curricular integration.</p> <p><u>Academic Excellence Through Challenging and Meaningful Instruction:</u> IBCS offers engaging, compelling, and essential questions to inspire curiosity. Teachers employ inquiry-driven instruction, and incorporate themes of social justice, civil rights, environmental awareness, and service learning, thus giving students opportunities to deeply explore their personal connection to the larger world. This ensures students recognize their future is inextricably tied to the rest of humanity. Our curriculum and instruction is grounded in research-based best practice, differentiated to meet the diverse needs of our students, and strives for academic excellence for all students.</p> <p>Isabella Bird Community School will exercise curriculum flexibility by supplementing curriculum to ensure equity. If curriculum flexibility is not provided by DPS, Isabella Bird Community School will retain flexibility to make changes to their curriculum in accordance with state and legal requirements.</p> <p>Grade levels will plan for utilizing the curriculum to ensure it is differentiated for Gifted and Talented students and use Culturally and Historically Relevant teaching practices. They will review each unit for equity and differentiation, and supplement where the curriculum is not representative of the student community.</p> <p>We currently utilize the district curriculum but maintain flexibility in supplementation and enhancement for rigor and for equity and anti-racism lenses. We are completely dedicated to teaching using strategies and curriculum that is informed by and follows the tenets of the Science of Reading.</p>	
<p>Professional Learning</p>	<p>Knowing that we value relationships, collaboration, shared leadership, inquiry, and constructivism, we also feel the need to shift the term professional development to professional learning. “The concept of <i>professional learning</i> looks more like ‘ownership over compliance, conversation over transmission, deep understanding over enacting rules and routines, and goal-directed activity over content coverage” (Martin et al., 2014, pg. 147). Essentially, professional learning is a growth in practice model that values active engagement, teacher</p>	<p>State Statute:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 22-32-109(1)(t): Determine Educational Program and Prescribe Textbooks; <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 22-32-109(1): Adopt Content Standards and Plan for Implementation of Content Standards

voice, creation and collaboration, inquiry, and reflection.

We understand that professional learning can occur in a multitude of ways such as collaboration with other teachers, professional conversations, coaching, book studies, visiting other classrooms, analyzing data, unit planning, workshops, classroom observations, etc. We feel that the best professional learning opportunities are those that are driven by our staff who know our needs and the needs of our students.

Professional learning at IBCS is:

- Targeted and based on the specific learning needs of students and teachers. The content of the professional learning will be determined by analyzing student data.
- Grounded in the principles of adult learning theory.
- Collaborative, job-embedded, on-going, continuous, and involves active learning.
- Authentic and offers differentiated learning experiences.
- Sustained and supported through implementation with on-going coaching and support
- Monitored and assessed consistently to evaluate its effectiveness and its impact on student learning and to make necessary adjustments to increase its effectiveness.

To support the mission and vision of Isabella Bird Community School, we may host our own professional learning days rather than attend district scheduled professional learning. If district professional learning covers foundational reading skills or implementation of CDE mandated curriculum, staff may be asked to attend those sessions. We will determine professional learning needs in collaboration with the ILT and plan high quality learning that continues the professional growth of all teachers.

All teachers will complete the DPS GT internal certification courses within two years in order to support the learning needs of our large percentage of GT, HGT, and ME students. This is to meet the requirements of teaching in a GT magnet school.

Additionally, we will implement up to six (6) additional professional learning days throughout the school year. These days will be scheduled as a part of calendar development.

School staff will still complete all training related to health, safety, and other legal compliance. This includes our Special Education staff attending all DPS professional learning.

Supplemental and Enrichment Programming	<p>To support enrichment, Isabella Bird may seek to hire supplemental and enrichment educators that do not hold a teacher’s license to allow for student learning enrichment. This will enable us, and has enabled us to hire talented and skilled staff to teach enrichments during school hours, such as library, gardening and STEM. We want flexibility to hire people who are not licensed. This offers students the opportunity to access excellence in education through staff who may not be certified for non-core content. This will not impact our core-subject teachers such as specialists and special educators.</p> <p>Isabella Bird will identify when hiring supplemental and enrichment educators without a teaching license would best support our school community by working with the Leadership Team SLT.</p> <p>All applicable teachers will meet Multilingual Education requirements outlined in the Consent Decree, and teachers of core content (including specialists) will continue to meet licensure requirements, including special education licensure requirements.</p>	<p>State Statute:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 22-63-201: Employment - License; <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 22-32-110(1)(ee): Local Board Powers-Employ teachers' aides and other non certificated personnel; <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 22-63-402: Disbursements

Section II: Teaching/Staffing Flexibilities

N/A in this Application

Section III: School Management and Leadership

N/A in this Application

Section IV: Governance and Budget Flexibilities

Governance and Budget Flexibilities		
Budgeting on Actual Teacher Salaries	<p>IBCS will continue budgeting on average teacher salaries. This budgeting strategy allows us to ensure equity, stability, and sustainability, allowing staffing decisions to be driven by student needs and instructional priorities rather than individual compensation differences. This aligns with a vision of a school that honors professionalism, expertise, and long-term commitment. The Principal will consult with the Financial Partner and Network Director accordingly.</p>	No Associated Waivers

All proposed innovations are designed to operate within existing funding levels and current district resource allocations.

Any staffing models, instructional approaches, or programmatic adjustments enabled by innovation status will be implemented without reducing services, staffing levels, or support for students. The school does not anticipate reallocating funds in a way that generates savings; instead, innovation flexibility will allow for more strategic and responsive use of existing resources to better align with the school's academic and whole-child priorities.

Innovation Plan Waivers

In order to implement their desired flexibilities, innovation schools may request waivers from district policies, state statute and rules, and from applicable collective bargaining agreements. The school is responsible for identifying the flexibilities that would best support the school, while district staff will support the school in developing the specific waivers and replacement plan language that would enable the school to best access those flexibilities. Once you have determined the flexibilities your school would like to pursue, the Authorizing & Accountability Office will identify the necessary waivers to implement your flexibilities and develop the exact replacement policy language, in consultation with the school to ensure it accurately represents the desired flexibility. For information on current flexibilities for innovation schools, see the [Innovation Guidebook](#). Once you have developed your draft innovation plan, the specific waivers will be inserted at the end of the plan.

In developing an innovation plan, schools should be aware that federal requirements cannot be waived under the Innovation Schools Act process. This would include, for example, provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act and Every Student Succeeds Act. In addition, the following state laws and regulations may not be waived (this list is not exhaustive):

- Public School Finance Act of 1994 (article 54 of title 22, C.R.S.);
- Exceptional Children's Educational Act (article 20 of title 22, C.R.S.);
- Data for school performance reports, including state assessments (Part 5 of Article 11 of Title 22, C.R.S.);
- Fingerprinting and criminal history record checks of educators and school personnel;
- Children's Internet Protection Act (article 87 of title 22, C.R.S.); Requirement to post online the list of waivers that have been obtained;
- State assessments (22-7-1006.3, C.R.S.);
- School Accountability Committees (22-11-401, C.R.S.);
- Requirement to post online the list of waivers that have been obtained (22-44-305, C.R.S.);
- Notification to parents of alleged criminal conduct by school employees (22-1-130, C.R.S.);
- Requirements concerning suspension and expulsion of students in preschool through second grade (22-33-106.1, C.R.S.);
- Provisions concerning discrimination based on hair texture, hair type, or a protective hairstyle that is commonly or historically associated with race (22-30.5-104(3), C.R.S., 22-32-110(1)(k), C.R.S., 22-63-206(1), C.R.S.); or
- Any statutes that are not included in Article 22, including but not limited to the Public Employees' Retirement Association Act (Article 51 of Title 24, C.R.S.).

In accordance with the DPS Board's [Executive Limitation 12 \(Employee Treatment\)](#), further explained in [this memo](#), the Superintendent will not recommend approval of any innovation plan that seeks to waive:

- The Teacher Employment Compensation and Dismissal Act (TECDA), with the exception that schools may continue to seek waivers of C.R.S. 22-63-201, which permits flexibility on licensure for non-core content subjects and C.R.S. 22-63-402, which pertains to supplemental compensation;
- The following articles of the DCTA collective bargaining agreement
 - Article 7 (grievance rights);
 - Article 8-1 (Contract Year), (subsections to 8-1 will still be waivable);
 - Article 10 (Performance Improvement Process);
 - Article 11 (complaints against teachers); and/or

- Article 30 (Professional Compensation System).

Additionally, in accordance with [ADE-R](#), the Superintendent will not recommend approval of innovation plans that seek to waive any of the following DPS Policies:

AB	School Performance Framework
ABA	School Performance Compact
ADE	Innovation in Education
AF	Charter Quality Authorizing Policy
EBAB	Hazardous Materials and Asbestos Management
ECA	Building Safety and Security Policy
FAP	Facility Allocation Policy
FF	Naming of Facilities
FN	Shared Campuses
FN-R	Regulation regarding Shared Campuses
IHBHD	Gilliam Center
IKE/IKE-R	Promotion, Retention and Acceleration of Students (specifically the requirement that parents/guardians agree with a retention decision)
JC	Student Assignment
JC-R	Regulation for Student Assignment
JF	Admission and Denial of Admission
JK	Student Conduct and Discipline Procedures
JK-R	Student Conduct and Discipline Procedures Regulation
JKA	Restraint of Students
JKA-R	Restraint of Students Regulation
JFABD	Homeless Students
JFABD-R	Regulation for Implementation of Homeless Student Policy
JFABE	Students in Foster Care
JFABE-R	Students in Foster Care Regulation
JHB	Student Attendance and Truancy
JHB-R	Regulation for Student Attendance
JHB-R2	Attendance Procedures for Different Learning Environments
JICF	Gang Activity Prevention
JICG	Use of Tobacco by Students
KDE	Emergency Management
EEA	Transportation
EEA-R1	Regulation for Transportation of Students in School Buses
EEA-R2	Student Transportation in Private Vehicles

Calendar

DCTA CBA:

- [Article 1-8: Definition of "School Year"](#)
- Article 8-1-1
- [Article 8-1-2 Professional Learning Days/Parent Conference Day](#)
- Article 8-1-3
- Article 8-1-4
- Article 8-1-5

State Statute:

- [22-32-109\(1\)\(n\)\(I\): Schedule and Calendar](#)
- [22-32-109 \(1\)\(n\)\(II\)\(A\): Actual Hours of Teacher-Pupil Instruction and Contact](#)
- [22-33-102\(1\): Definition of "Academic Year"](#)

The school shall **develop its own annual calendar that supports the mission, vision, and goals stated in the innovation plan**, provided it meets or exceeds the minimum calendar standards of the district and state, including the actual hours of teacher-pupil instruction and teacher-pupil contact.

Schools will follow calendar creation and submission guidance in the District's innovation guidebook.

- The SLT or SLT-equivalent must vote to approve the final calendar, which must be approved no later than the date specified in the innovation guidebook. If no date is specified in the guidebook, the final calendar will be approved no later than April 15th.
- Input from parents and teachers will be sought prior to scheduling in-service programs and other non-student contact days. This calendar shall serve as the academic calendar for the school. All calendars shall include planned work dates for required staff in-service programs. Once a calendar is adopted, any further changes must be approved by the district. Such changes shall be preceded by adequate and timely notice of no less than 30 days, except for emergency closing or other unforeseen circumstances as determined by the district.
- A copy of the upcoming school-year calendar shall be provided to all parents/guardians of students who are currently enrolled. The approved upcoming school year calendar will be placed on the school's website prior to May 1 of the prior academic year and a copy shall be provided to the school's Collaborative Director. The school shall submit their calendar to the district in a timeframe as requested by the district in order to meet requirements for alignment with hiring/onboarding, transportation, facilities and other service provision.

The term "school year" as used in corresponding Articles and policies affecting the school shall mean the school calendar as it is established by the innovation school. This definition will include an identification of days. "Academic year" refers to the year as it is established by the innovation school's developed academic calendar for the School.

8-1-1 - Newly hired educators shall have access to orientation and/or comparable training opportunities on a schedule that is reasonable and approved by the school.

8-1-2 & 3 - In addition to the district's professional learning days, a maximum of 6 more additional professional learning days will be scheduled each year. If the contract year is extended, teachers will be compensated for additional professional learning days at their regular rate. Any professional development days that do not coincide with those of the district, will be scheduled with input from the

CSC to better serve the school community. Notice of professional development days will be provided at least ninety (90) days prior to the end of the school year.

8-1-4 - Aside from the standard 40-hour work week, educators may also be required to participate in 3 number of evening events as part of their contractual obligations.

8-1-5 - The school will establish terms governing any special conditions related to an educator's assignment.

Extra Duty Compensation

DPS CBAs:

- [DCTA - Article 28: Extra Duty Compensation](#)
- [DFPNSE - Article 19: Compensation \(Paraprofessional Compensation\)](#)

The School has the authority to **determine its own compensation philosophy to provide school determined extra-duty pay and to compensate employees based on school priorities** including activities such as, but not necessarily limited to, additional time, additional roles and responsibilities, coaching, tutoring, professional development or for performance incentive pay, provided that the School submits a Compensation Philosophy to their CSC and HR for annual review and approval. The compensation philosophy must be shared with the school's HR partner no later than the date specified in the innovation guidebook. If no date is specified in the guidebook, the compensation philosophy must be provided to the school's HR partner for review by March 1st.

Pursuant to state law, the DPS board will delegate the duty specified in 22-32-109(1)(f) to the innovation school.

Curriculum and Assessment

State Statute:

- [22-32-109\(1\)\(t\): Determine Educational Program and Prescribe Textbooks](#)
- [22-32-109\(1\)\(aa\): Adopt Content Standards and Plan for Implementation of Content Standards](#)

The DPS Board authorizes the school to **develop an educational program that aligns to the mission and vision** of the school and supports the mission, vision, and goals stated in the innovation plan. The school will continue to follow the district's curriculum and assessment flexibility process as long as the district continues to operate a process through which schools are provided with curriculum flexibilities. The school may maintain this flexibility if the district changes its policy on curriculum and assessment.

The school's curriculum will provide a program of instruction that enables students to meet or exceed the CCSS and CAS. The school is required to adhere to the READ Act requirements in CRS 22-7-1201 thru 22-7-1214. The school will regularly evaluate its education program and make changes to curriculum content, instruction, and assessments.

Professional Learning

- [22-32-109\(1\)\(t\): Determine Educational Program and Prescribe Textbooks](#)
- [22-32-109\(1\)\(aa\): Adopt Content Standards and Plan for Implementation of Content Standards](#)

The DPS Board authorizes the school to **develop professional development that aligns to the mission and vision of the school** and enables the school to implement the innovation plan. As described in the innovation plan, the School will participate in district-provided coaching and professional development except when such coaching or professional development contradicts the successful implementation of the innovation plan and/or the mission/vision of the school.

The school will continue to follow the district's curriculum and assessment flexibility process.

In determining the School's PD and coaching schedule, the Collaborative Director will collaborate with the Principal to ensure that district PD and coaching supports the School in implementing the goals of the innovation plan. The School must participate in all training required for health, safety, equity, and other legal compliance.

Supplemental and Enrichment Programming

State Statute:

- [22-32-110\(1\)\(ee\): Local Board Powers-Employ teachers' aides and other non certificated personnel](#)
- [22-63-201: Employment - License](#)
- [22-63-402: Disbursements](#)

The school may **employ either licensed or non-licensed personnel for supplemental and enrichment instruction or supervision consistent with the innovation plan**, and the DPS board may enter into employment contracts with non-licensed teachers at the school as necessary to implement the school's innovation plan. Non-licensed personnel will, at a minimum, possess a bachelor's degree or have relevant work experience, subject to approval by DPS HR. The school will employ licensed teachers for teaching of core content pursuant to state and federal law. Core content areas are considered as: Language Arts; Math; Science; Foreign language; Social Studies (Civics, Government, History, Geography, Economics); Art; Physical Education. All core content teachers shall meet the federal and state requirements, and shall possess a valid Colorado teacher license.

School district monies will be used to pay both licensed and non-licensed teachers hired to perform services consistent with the innovation plan. Prior to hiring any person, in accordance with state law, the district shall conduct background checks.

Appendix A: Evidence of Engagement and Support from Administrators, Teachers and CSC

Please explain and link any documentation of staff and community engagement conducted by the school in designing and writing the innovation plan. This could include a description and list of staff and/or community meetings held regarding innovation, materials used during these meetings or in the development of the plan, committees or teams utilized to write the innovation plan, trackers used to monitor engagement communication, or any other means by which the school engaged its community or gathered feedback on the innovation plan. When describing these engagement opportunities, please also include how many people attended and how participation was structured (i.e. open to everyone, committee with specific membership, etc.).

Engagement Opportunity	Participation Structure and Attendees	Links
10/1/25	SLT - ILT and principal brought Innovation renewal to this body to decide how to move forward	25-26 SLT Agenda
10/23/25	SLT met with Innovation partner	Innovation Plan Notes
10/23/25	DCTA Staff- overview of options and polling staff	Canva Link
10/31/25	DCTA Staff- presenting results and steps to move forward and timeline	link
1/23/26	Writing team wrote letter	Statement of Support
1/15/26	CSC engagement	meeting
1/15/26	Community Feedback Presentation Recording of Meeting	Innovation Plan Community Meeting Recording Please check out the recording of the Innovation Plan Community Meeting we held last week. In the meeting, we discussed our current innovation plan and our proposed changes for our upcoming innovation renewal. (blurb shared in school newsletter)

