



Application Information

Part I: General Information and Narrative

1. Provide the names and addresses of the organizer(s), charter school(s), and authorizer(s) of the existing schools, including contact information for a designed representative from the governing board of each organizer.
 - a. Circle City Preparatory Academy, 4002 N Franklin Rd., Indianapolis, IN 46226
 - i. Corp ID
 1. 9150
 - ii. Circle City Prep Elementary School
 1. 1126
 - iii. Circle City Prep Middle School
 1. 1127
 - iv. Authorizer is ICSB
 1. Bridgett Abston, babston@icsb.in.gov
 - v. Governing Board Chair
 1. Leslie Tarble, leslie.tarble@gmail.com
 - b. Ace Preparatory Academy Charter School, 5326 Hillside Ave., Indianapolis, IN 46220
 - i. Corp ID
 1. 9970
 - ii. Ace Prep
 1. 1111
 - iii. Authorizer is ICSB
 1. Bridgett Abston, babston@icsb.in.gov
 - iv. Governing Board Chair
 1. Tatiana Day, tatianaday78@gmail.com
2. Provide a brief (one paragraph) description of the reason for the combination.
 - a. Circle City Prep is excited to bring ACE Prep under our organizational umbrella this coming year. ACE Prep has a track record of strong academic outcomes over the last 9 years serving predominantly low-income families in the south Broad Ripple community. We believe this merger will grow on these strong outcomes for scholars and provide ACE Prep the organizational infrastructure and support to increase enrollment and ultimately become financially stable. Circle City Prep, who served 78 scholars K-1 in 2017-2018, has grown to a school of 415 scholars K-8 today. Circle City Prep has a track record of expanding our enrollment footprint while also maintaining strong academic results, an experience we believe will continue as we combine with ACE Prep.



Part II: Organization and Structure

1. Provide organizational charts for each charter school as it currently exists. Include education service providers if applicable.
 - a. Please see Attachment A for ACE
 - b. Please see Attachment B for CCP
2. Describe the current configurations of both schools, including grades offered, current enrollment, and maximum approved enrollment.
 - a. Circle City Preparatory Inc:
 - i. Current enrollment: 409 (spring count day), 411 (as of 4/2/2025)
 - ii. The Corp (9150) has 2 existing schools:
 1. Circle City Prep Elementary School (1126)
 - a. Grades K-5
 2. Circle City Prep Middle School (1127)
 - a. Grades 6-8
 - iii. Approved maximum enrollment from Charter Renewal (2022): 474
 - b. ACE Preparatory Charter School:
 - i. Current enrollment: 129 (spring count day), 134 (as of 4/3/2025)
 - ii. Approved maximum enrollment from Charter Amendment (2024): 210
3. Describe the legal structure of the proposed combination (merger, consolidation, sale of assets, dissolution, etc.). Include the transfer, sale, or disposition, of the assets and liabilities of any non-surviving organizer(s) or school(s). If the surviving organizer or school is to be relocated or renamed, provide the new location and/or name.
 - a. The Parties will execute a Charter Transfer Agreement ("Agreement") subject to review and approval by the Indiana Charter School Board ("ICSB"). The Agreement is structured like an Asset Purchase Agreement. The request is for the ICSB to allow Circle City Preparatory, Inc. ("CCP") to acquire the Charter for ACE Preparatory, Inc. ("ACE"). Pursuant to the Agreement, the legal entity for Circle City Preparatory, Inc., a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization and Indiana nonprofit entity, will remain and be the contracted party with the ICSB for the ACE Charter (as amended as necessary to effectuate the requested charter transfer). CCP seeks to transfer all eligible students, public funds, and certain specific legal obligations as outlined in the Agreement from ACE to CCP. This is not a merger of the two entities – CCP and ACE. The Parties understand and agree that until such time that a formal acquisition of the ACE Charter is reviewed and approved by ICSB, that the ACE Board shall be legally responsible for implementing the ACE Charter as approved by ICSB, adhering to all requirements of federal, state, and local law that apply to ACE. The Parties have executed a Memorandum of Understanding (Attachment D) to govern due diligence pending final approval by ICSB and execution of a Charter Transfer Agreement between the Parties. The transaction will not result in a Charter School closure.]



- b. ACE Prep will continue serving K-6 scholars at their current location as ACE Prep with DBA of CCP @ ACE Prep
- 4. Provide an organizational chart and description of the post-combination structure of the organizer and school(s) which shows the organizational relationship between the surviving organizer, each surviving school, and any education service providers, if applicable. Include the name(s) and location(s) of the surviving school(s).
 - a. Please see Attachment C
 - b. Names of Schools within District of Circle City Preparatory Inc.:
 - i. Circle City Prep Elementary School
 - ii. Circle City Prep Middle School
 - iii. Circle City Prep at ACE Prep
 - c. Locations of Schools:
 - i. Circle City Prep Elementary and Middle Schools
 - 1. 4002 N Franklin Rd., Indianapolis, IN 46226
 - ii. Circle City Prep at ACE Prep
 - 1. 5326 Hillside Ave., Indianapolis, IN 46220
- 5. Provide resolutions from the governing board of each organizer involved in the proposed combination. Each solution must include sufficient detail, and agree upon, the anticipated final organizational structure, including the surviving organizer, the governing board and the school(s). ICSB must be notified at least forty-eight (48) hours prior to any meeting where a resolution to combine ICSB school is on the agenda and be provided electronic access to the meeting.
 - a. Please see Attachment D
- 6. If the applicant is proposing to combine a charter school authorized by another authorizer with a charter school authorized by ICSB, please provide evidence that notice has been provided to the other authorizer.
 - a. Not applicable



Part III: Governance

1. Provide a list of the governing board members of the surviving entity, indicating officer roles where applicable (in accordance with the surviving entity's bylaws), and updated contact information for each.
 - a. Circle City Prep's existing Board of Directors will continue with the addition of up to two (2) current ACE Prep Board members. Max Glenn is currently slated to officially join CCP's Board following the approval of the schools' combining by ICSB with an additional ACE Prep Board member at a later date.
 - b. Please see Attachment E
2. Provide updated copies of the articles of incorporation and bylaws for the surviving corporation.
 - a. Please see Attachment F for Incorporation Document
 - b. Please see Attachment G for Bylaws
3. Provide evidence of the surviving governing board's capacity to oversee the merged schools, noting any significant changes in the governing board's composition.
 - a. Please see Attachment H
 - b. The Board Assessment Report (Attachment H) provides clear evidence of the governing board's capacity to effectively oversee the merged schools. The FY24-25 evaluation, completed by both the Head of School and all participating board members, reflects a high-functioning board operating at the highest levels of performance across key governance domains.
 - i. The board scored Level 5 (Excellent) in areas critical to managing a merged charter school, including:
 1. Board Meetings – Demonstrating structured planning, effective facilitation, and compliance with open meeting laws.
 2. Board Composition and Structure – Reflecting strong governance experience, and clearly defined roles through bylaws and job descriptions. Board diversity is an opportunity that Circle City Prep looks to improve.
 3. Finance and Development – Showing robust oversight, realistic budgeting, compliance, and a strategic fundraising approach.
 4. Academic Oversight – Evidencing clarity of vision, adherence to charter obligations, and strong use of comparative data.
 5. Head of School Support & Evaluation – Indicating a strong governance-management partnership, performance evaluation, and leadership development.
 6. Board Goals & Accountability – With board goals clearly established and accountability mechanisms in place.
 - ii. There are no significant changes in board composition outside the addition of up to two (2) ACE Prep board members. The continuity of



experienced members and sustained high performance across governance areas supports the board's readiness to manage increased responsibilities following the merger.

4. If the combined school(s) will be contracting with an education service provider, submit a single proposed amended or new services agreement covering the combined school(s). This agreement must be submitted and approved by ICSB's Executive Director before it may be executed or amended.
 - a. Not applicable
5. Describe any anticipated changes to an existing service agreement (if applicable), including: a) changes to fees or fee structure; b) changes to services provided; c) changes to the contract term.
 - a. Please see Attachment I
 - b. Attachment I outlines the updated service agreements resulting from the merger of Circle City Prep (CCP) and ACE Prep. The Head of School and Operation teams are in the process of renegotiating and/or restructuring all major vendor contracts to reflect the operational needs of the combined campuses. Key highlights include:
 - i. Consolidation of Services: Most vendors, including accounting, janitorial, IT, and landscaping, now have new agreements covering both sites, reflecting operational unification under the surviving board's oversight.
 - ii. Strategic Fee Adjustments:
 1. Accounting and grant management services were merged with an anticipated reduced total cost (\$5,000/month vs. \$4,000 + \$2,000 prior).
 2. Janitorial, landscaping, and IT services increased proportionally based on the addition of a second building
 3. PowerSchool SIS saw an increase due to new enrollment and system deployment as ACE transitions off ALMA.
 - iii. Continuity Where Appropriate: Some services, such as alarm monitoring, remain under separate contracts for now to maintain continuity and control costs during the transition.
 - iv. Improved Support: ACE will benefit from new or expanded services, including a daily nurse (shifting from a contractor to a hired CNA) and more frequent on-site IT support.
 - v. No Disruptions in Critical Services: Food services and specialized student support (OT/PT/speech therapy, dyslexia screening) continue uninterrupted with adjustments only due to increased student population.
6. Provide current and completed ICSB Statement of Economic Interest and Conflict Forms for each governing board member of the surviving entity.



- a. Please see attachment J
- b. Note: One other board member from ACE Prep may be joining our board over the summer. Their COI will be provided to ICSB in a timely manner if this occurs.



Part IV: Community Impact

1. Describe the impact of the proposed combination on any existing community or educational partnerships.
 - a. The combination of Circle City Prep and ACE Prep intends to bring additional resources, support, and opportunities to the ACE Prep community, building off their strong brand and partnerships established over the last 9 years. Circle City Prep brings a strong track record of student recruitment and enrollment, growing our school from 72 scholars to 410+ over the last 8 years. CCP looks to bring best practices, human capital and proven strategy to ACE to ensure enrollment targets are met year over year. Additionally, this partnership will provide ACE Prep families access to Circle City Prep's Middle School at their flagship campus, giving families a K-8 option with K-6 educated at ACE and 7th-8th graders enrolled at Circle City Prep Middle School.
 - b. Circle City Prep will look to align vendors and curriculum across both campuses as it makes sense fiscally and in the best interest of scholars. Curricularly, ACE Prep will adopt LEAP Math and Zearn as their core math curriculums K-6 in SY26. This will allow both schools to share professional development opportunities, align on best practices relating to the curriculum, and share weekly data points to gauge academic mastery and progress. Through the course of SY26 ACE and CCP will determine which core ELA curriculum to adopt for both schools in SY27. The goal is by SY28, both schools share most, if not all, curricular components.
 - c. Circle City Prep and ACE Prep have been working closely to review all major vendor contracts ensuring proper notice is given and cancellation is done in alignment to clauses in current ACE Prep agreements. Both schools will look to align technology support, printing, SIS, back-office finance, and support services and have already begun to engage in this process as necessary.
 - d. In addition to enrollment support, Circle City Prep will grow ACE Prep's extracurricular and athletics programming, an opportunity for which ACE families have been historically advocating. Currently 40% of CCP scholars participate in at least 1 extracurricular activity, and CCP looks to expand this opportunity to their sister campus in Broad Ripple. The Director of Culture and After-School Programming, who now leads this work at CCP, will support ACE's Coordinator of After-School Programming to build out clubs and athletics using CCP's best practices, processes, and playbook.
 - e. Finally, Circle City Prep has numerous partnerships with outside providers and organizations that would broaden the resources already available to ACE Prep scholars and families.
 - i. Student Health & Wellness
 1. Access to full-time Nurse (LPN)
 2. Dental Safari
 3. Adult & Child



4. Access to full-time Mental Health Counselor - Semester 2
 5. Gleaners Food Bank Site - looking to expand this program
 6. Scratch-made Food - looking to expand this program to ACE in SY27
2. Describe the outreach/engagement each organizer and school has conducted up to this point to solicit the school community's feedback on the proposed combination. Submit evidence of such feedback if such evidence exists.
 - a. While ACE Prep's team has been exploring options for enrollment and a potential merger over the last year, having open communication with families and staff, their engagement with Circle City Prep formally began in late fall of 2024. The two organizations have been working closely together over the last 3 months and have formally signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) March 31, 2025. Both schools, while meeting Open Door requirements, have generally kept this merger internal as the important legal alignment necessary prior to making this agreement public was navigated. Since March 31, Circle City Prep and ACE Prep have been executing a robust community engagement plan to ensure stakeholders are informed and engaged in the process.
 - b. Circle City Prep has engaged with The Mind Trust to ensure funding and human capital were available to support this process, limiting risk to the flagship campus and ensuring resources were available to increase enrollment and successfully navigate the merger progress. In partnership, CCP advocated for The Mind Trust to fund independent counsel so both parties were adequately represented and organizational priorities were heard through the process. The Mind Trust has also connected Circle City Prep leadership to other organizational leaders who have gone through a similar process or growth-moment in their school to provide advice and guidance through this process.
 - c. Additionally, Circle City Prep has been in close communication with the Indiana Charter School Board team to understand the process and requirements. The School has reached out to GROW, ACE Prep's current lease holders, to engage in conversation for next steps concerning the facility, and have connected with Charter School Growth Funds to explore opportunities for additional growth funding and support in the coming year.
 - d. Circle City Prep and ACE Prep Leadership plan to strategically reach out to community and neighborhood partners to notify them of the merger, solicit feedback and questions. Both organizations value community input and feedback and look forward to addressing concerns and questions as they arise.
3. Provide a communication plan for existing families, students, and staff regarding the proposed combination.
 - a. Staff



- i. Circle City Prep began directly engaging with staff March 19th, hosting an information session introducing CCP to ACE employees and sharing more about the merger and the proposed plan for the 2025-2026 school year. This information session launched more consistent interactions with ACE staff and started the internal application process for the team. Since then, Circle City Prep's current Head of School, Megan Murphy, and Director of Recruitment and Enrollment, Dymon Barrett, have been onsite at ACE meeting with the team and beginning to merge systems and operations for the coming year.
 - ii. Through this engagement, the team has garnered that staff are mostly concerned with consistency of leadership and how their school day expectations may change. In response, Circle City Prep and ACE have committed to (1) expediting the Head of School interview process, looking to name school leader by May 11th, (2) gradually integrating instructional and operational changes over 1-3 years rather than immediately (for example adopting new math curriculum in SY26 and maintaining all other curriculums currently being used at ACE), and (3) providing consistent, transparent communication around systems, routines, and expectations over the course of the next two months, heading into next year.
- b. Parent and Families
- i. ACE Prep has been upfront with their scholars and families about potential shifts in the organization over the last year. When the CCP partnership was more formalized through the MOU both ACE Prep's Head of School, Amanda Liles, and Circle City Prep's Head of School, Megan Murphy, sent written communication to families. Both Schools are looking forward to hosting three open information sessions in the coming week to create a space for families to learn more about the merger, what it means for their families, and have an opportunity to ask questions: Tuesday, April 8th at 4pm, Thursday, April 10th at 4pm and Friday, April 11th at 8am. Mrs. Liles and Ms. Murphy are prioritizing personal contact with target families following information sessions in order to make personal connections and investment in the next chapter of ACE Prep.
 - ii. Circle City Prep notified families in written communication on April 4th and will host an information session at the Panther Parent meeting on April 16th. Additionally, the School will review a heat map of current CCP enrolled students and offer enrollment at ACE Prep if their residence is in closer proximity to the Broad Ripple campus.
 - iii. Heading into the new school year, all families at both campuses will be required to attend a Parent Orientation prior to the first day of school on August 4th, where school leadership will share more information on school policies, communication norms, and events and supports for the school year.



Part V: Finance

1. Complete ICSB's 5-Year Budget Projection Workbook for the surviving school(s).
 - a. Please see Attachment K
2. In the budget narrative, describe the potential impact of the combination of expenses and revenue, highlighting potential cost-savings, including but not limited to: (a) administrative and instructional staffing cost, (b) operational costs, (c) occupancy costs, (d) transportation costs, (e) debt or other obligations, etc.
 - a. The merger of Circle City Prep (CCP) and ACE Prep creates both economies of scale and opportunities for cost efficiencies across the organization. While some service-related expenses increase to accommodate a larger operation, the combination of campuses under a single governance and operational model results in strategic cost-savings in key areas:
 - i. Administrative and Instructional Staffing Costs- There are no duplicative executive leadership costs, as both schools now operate under a unified leadership structure. The Executive Director, Director of School Culture, Director of Student Recruitment and Enrollment, and Director of Business Operations serve both campuses. Instructional roles scale up with enrollment growth, but administrative staffing grows modestly, reflecting efficiency gains from shared management.
 - ii. Operational Costs- By consolidating vendor contracts for core services (janitorial, IT, landscaping, accounting, SIS), the merged schools benefit from bulk pricing, streamlined service delivery, and elimination of redundant vendors. For example:
 1. Janitorial services increased due to a second building, but now operate under one provider at an anticipated rate of \$20,500/month versus the former separate services.
 2. IT services are expanded to serve ACE's needs but managed under a single vendor, avoiding duplicate contracts and enabling centralized troubleshooting and network management.
 - iii. Occupancy Costs- Occupancy-related vendor services such as waste removal (\$1,500/month) and snow removal (added \$12,000 annually) are now negotiated across both campuses, reducing per-campus overhead. In some cases, such as landscaping, minimal changes are needed due to ACE's limited outdoor needs, which helps contain costs.
 - iv. Transportation Costs- No new or expanded transportation contracts are indicated in the current vendor list, signaling continued cost avoidance in this area, due to neighborhood-based student recruitment and existing family transportation plans.
 - v. Debt or Other Obligations- There are no new debt service payments, interest obligations, or principal repayments outlined in Attachment K.



This positions the school to direct more revenue into instructional support and student services rather than liabilities.

3. Provide a copy of the most recent audit of the school or schools that are part of the proposed combination that is or is not already authorized by ICSB.
 - a. Please see Attachment L for CCP
 - b. Please see Attachment M for ACE



Part VI: Operations

1. Describe how the combination will affect enrollment, including the transfer of students between schools, the ability of the surviving school(s) to meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets, and any other impacts. If applicable, please provide a revised Enrollment plan for the surviving school(s).
 - a. Please see Attachment N
 - b. The Schools believe that this merger will support ACE Prep in hitting enrollment targets annually, growing year over year until serving between 250-300 scholars. Circle City Prep and ACE are also exploring an opportunity to provide transportation from ACE to CCP for middle school grade-level scholars to provide a K-8 option for families at one drop off at ACE.
2. Describe how the combination will affect existing academic programming at the school(s), including the provision of academic programs to at risk students (including students with disabilities and English language learners). Please describe how and to what extent the academic program differs between the current school(s) and how that difference will be reconciled post-combination.
 - a. Circle City Prep and ACE look to align on all core curricular decisions within the next 1-3 years in order to align on instructional professional development and formative assessment results. In school-year 2025-2026, ACE Prep will adopt LEAP (K-4) and Zearn (5-6) math curriculum in alignment with Circle City Prep. The following year, the organization will look to align on foundational literacy programs in addition to core content ELA curriculum. As it relates to assessments, both schools will use iReady for K-8 math and reading summative data in addition to DIBELS m-class for foundational literacy skills.
 - b. The merger will not impact services to special education and/or multilingual learners at either campus. Currently ACE Prep serves 9% special education scholars who will be supported by a full-time licensed special education teacher who reports to the Head of School. At Circle City Prep, 11% of the student body is identified as special education and will be supported by a team of 2 full-time certified special educators and a Manager of Special Education who is a member of the Instructional Leadership Team. ACE Prep currently serves 5% multilingual learners while Circle City Prep serves 30%. ILPs at ACE will be owned by the special educator and supports will be administered by the instructional team. Circle City Prep multilingual scholars will be supported by a team of 2 full-time certified ENL/ESL teachers and a Manager of Multilingual Learners who is a member of the Instructional Leadership Team.
 - c. ACE Prep will adopt Circle City Prep's instructional schedule, moving to a 7:30-3:30 extended day with a 1pm early release on Fridays.



3. Describe the effect of the combination on administrative, instructional, and other staffing for each surviving school.
 - a. Through this merger, Circle City Prep will be creating a Home Office that will serve and support both campuses. The home office will consist of the Executive Director who will manage building level principals (Heads of School), Chief Operating Officer (COO), Director of Extracurricular Activities, Director of Recruitment and Enrollment, and Director of Business (HR and Finance). Additionally, the Executive Director will own board governance, fundraising, and tactical organizational vision setting and planning. All members of the Home Office team have worked for the organization for 2+ years except for those who we are currently in the process of hiring. The building-level Directors of Operations will report to the COO. Moving these services to a home office allows us to pool resources across campuses strategically in order to allow building leaders to focus on high-quality instruction.
 - b. Each campus will be led by a Head of School, with Co-Heads of School at the Circle City Preps campus. ACE Prep's Head of School and CCP's Head of School of Academics will manage the Instructional Leadership teams that consist of Instructional Coaches and Managers of Special Populations. ACE Prep's Head of School and CCP's Head of School of Student Supports will manage the student supports team that include disciplinary and behavior supports. Due to CCP's size, the student supports team also consists of Behavior Interventionists, mental health professionals, and a family engagement coordinator. CCP and ACE will look to share resources and services as needed as it relates to CCP's additional human capital.
 - c. ACE will adopt Circle City Prep's Associate Teacher model, staffing a Kinder, 1st-3rd, and 4th-6th Associate Teachers (3 total hires) in 2025-2026 in order to provide additional academic intervention and a pathway to build an internal human capital pipeline. In addition to home office support, ACE Prep's staff would grow from 16 FTEs to 20 in 2025-2026. All current ACE Prep staff members have been invited to re-apply and Circle City Prep is expediting them through the application process. 9 of 16 ACE Prep staff members have chosen to re-apply at the time of this application submission.
 - d. More detail of proposed organizational structure can be seen in Attachment C.



Part VIII: Academic Performance

1. Complete the Academic Performance Workbook for all ICSB authorized schools to include demographics, interim data, and summative performance data for the past three (3) school years.
 - a. Please see Attachment O
2. Provide the performance dashboard for all data (up to at least five years) for all non-ICSB authorized schools, as well as the underlying data used to calculate the performance dashboard metric.
 - a. Not applicable
3. Provide a signed assurance from each governing board chair that the combination is not being undertaken to avoid state or authorizer accountability.
 - a. Please see Attachment P

