

What It Means to be a Challenge Foundation Academy

1 East Washington St.
Suite 500
Phoenix, AZ 85004

TeamCFA employs proven academic, business and governance practices and leverages the free market to support the development and success of Challenge Foundation Academies (CFAs). Each CFA is an affiliate member of TeamCFA, an exciting, national network of public charter schools dedicated to achieving the highest academic results for K–12 students in a school culture that fosters active participation by all the stakeholders. Students, parents, teachers, administrative staff and board members are all full partners in TeamCFA where “Together Each Achieves More.”

All new CFAs will become participants in the TeamCFA program. Becoming a TeamCFA participant means committing to an operational model that will deliver academic excellence and operational efficiency at a lower cost than many other schools—a clear contribution to the country’s future and a significant financial dividend. TeamCFA’s primary goal is to help CFAs remain competitive in the school choice marketplace and to grow a network of exemplary schools for the nation to recognize and emulate. The principles and values that this effort endorses are to:

- ▶ Improve the academic achievement of our students;
- ▶ Increase the quality of our teaching and to properly compensate and incentivize exemplary teachers;
- ▶ Broaden the population of the students we serve;
- ▶ Increase the use of online technology to improve the educational content and delivery of that content to the student while enhancing teacher training and professionalism;
- ▶ Recruit and develop strong governing boards and staff and ensure their continuity;
- ▶ Assist efforts to build community in each area we serve and to encourage CFAs to see themselves as a part of the larger community served by the TeamCFA network; and
- ▶ Accomplish all of the above while engaged in a process of continuing improvement that weighs student, teacher, and board performance against steadily decreasing costs per student served.

CFAs desiring affiliation with this new program will enter into a contractual agreement with TeamCFA. The contract envisions growing the voluntary TeamCFA partnership—a partnership among the Challenge Foundation, TeamCFA and the CFAs. After joining TeamCFA, each CFA will become an active participant in the continuing development of TeamCFA and will help promote TeamCFA's goals. Each CFA's board of directors will direct its CFA's role in the TeamCFA network and will document its CFA's contributions to the TeamCFA network. Properly implemented, the TeamCFA program will lead to significant educational and financial dividends. Any documented cost savings resulting from the TeamCFA program will be used to further incentivize the program and to provide financial dividends to the CFA, TeamCFA, the local taxpayer and, perhaps, the nation.

TeamCFA will provide the following package of “basic services” to each participating CFA:

- ▶ A \$100,000 per year loan for 3 years upon contract signing. This loan will be subject to certain contract conditions covering the Core Knowledge curriculum. This loan will be progressively forgiven in the fourth, fifth and sixth years of the agreement assuming the CFA continues active participation in the TeamCFA network.
- ▶ The TeamCFA marketing program. This would include the website, marketing and promotional materials, *ConnectCFA* magazine, logo development, teacher discussion board, and assistance with setting up school e-mails.
- ▶ Supplemental Core Knowledge training through the annual TeamCFA / Core Knowledge Retreat.
- ▶ Core Knowledge training at a 10% discount with a 15% discount on materials.
- ▶ Assistance with Charter applications, grant writing, and filing the required tax forms.
- ▶ Board recruitment, training, and continuity program.
- ▶ Annual CFA Board recognition dinner for each CFA and periodic CFA staff/board lunches to promote interaction in each CFA as both staff and boards turn over.
- ▶ Help in starting a professional development program in the first five years for both teachers and school directors.
- ▶ Access to and collaboration with a national network of quality schools.
- ▶ A Compass learning/NWEA testing student enhancement program.
- ▶ A leadership development program funded by the Challenge Foundation.

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TeamCFA contracts will contain requirements in each of three areas of critical importance to the success of a CFA: Academic, Business and Governance. CFAs that elect to join our effort can later elect to opt out as permitted by and pursuant to the TeamCFA-CFA contract.

Academic:

CFAs will establish clear goals which emphasize the importance of parental involvement with the school, the board and volunteer activities. CFAs will establish policies that require a parent, student and teacher commitment contract be signed annually.

CFAs will set an academic achievement target that is at least above a clearly defined local peer group of schools (relevant benchmark) and acceptable to TeamCFA. The CFA will report annually a TeamCFA “Performance Benefit” on its progress towards meeting or exceeding the target.

Grades K–8 will implement the Core Knowledge program and will use assessments provided by the Core Knowledge Foundation and the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA). High-school level CFAs will implement academic standards and nationally-normed assessments acceptable to TeamCFA. Such CFAs will report annually a TeamCFA “Performance Benefit” on progress towards meeting its academic standards.

CFAs are encouraged to develop and implement—and are required to share with TeamCFA—successful curriculum, subject, or course enhancements that help the school achieve better academic results for less cost. This especially includes any online or virtual-school innovations and inclusion of more Advanced Placement programs.

Each CFA will develop a professional growth program for teachers acceptable to the Challenge Foundation and TeamCFA.

Business:

CFAs will have on file clearly defined and written staff evaluation. The evaluations will be performed, at a minimum, on an annual basis.

Because charter schools generally receive little or no capital funding and less operating funding than the traditional public school system, TeamCFA recognizes and applauds charter schools for operating on per student revenues already well below that of their traditional counterparts. This is clearly a taxpayer dividend. However, TeamCFA will help CFAs do even better to demonstrate leadership in this area. Working closely with the CFAs, TeamCFA will help CFAs reduce operating costs by a target of 3% during a five year period. The Challenge Foundation and TeamCFA will enlist every means of support available to help CFAs achieve this goal. Current CFAs are encouraged to avail themselves of the savings opportunities provided by the menu of services and cost-saving ideas provided. New CFAs will automatically be enrolled to participate in the full suite of offerings from TeamCFA, unless they can demonstrate that local contractors can deliver price levels, quality and terms comparable to those that the TeamCFA can negotiate, or provide information that working with specific local vendors is vital to the success of that CFA. The objective is to show steady growth in per student cost savings without diminishing educational or operational performance. CFAs must submit a five year operating and capital budget and report any updates or changes on a semi-annual basis. CFAs will report annual progress in this area as a TeamCFA "Performance Benefit." CFAs will also furnish TeamCFA with a copy of annual financial statements that have been audited by an independent CPA.

CFAs are encouraged to develop and implement, and are required to share with TeamCFA, successful bonus and merit pay programs for their staff that help the CFA achieve better academic results.

CFAs are encouraged to develop and implement, and are required to share with TeamCFA, any successful strategy for building a strong community-based, local support system. This may include fund raising, volunteers, coordination with youth groups, business and service groups, police and fire organizations, outreach to home-schooled children, etc.

CFAs will report annually to TeamCFA any instances where better academic results were achieved at reduced costs. The lower cost per student at each CFA compared to the local public school cost per student will be regarded as an additional TeamCFA "Performance Benefit." This will also be publicly posted on an annual basis.

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Governance:

CFA boards will regularly communicate and coordinate with TeamCFA and will be required to elect two representatives, designated by TeamCFA, to the CFA's board.

CFAs will implement and participate in TeamCFA network board member recruitment and training programs and will ensure that each of its board members are trained and knowledgeable of the CFAs corporate organizational documents and policies as well as TeamCFA policies.

CFA boards will oversee and direct compliance with all local, state and federal laws and regulations pertaining to charter schools and will report compliance to TeamCFA.

CFAs will ensure that the boards are meeting TeamCFA network expectations relating to governance, including financial and business oversight, personnel matters, holding proper and lawful governing board meetings, academic and school culture oversight, and reporting successes and challenges to TeamCFA.

CFA boards are responsible for setting and promoting the highest possible ethical, social and civic standards for the overall school community.

CFA boards are encouraged to develop and implement, and are required to share with TeamCFA, any creative and successful governance ideas or programs that will benefit other CFA boards.

The Challenge Foundation and TeamCFA are committed to support each CFA in accomplishing the above Academic, Business and Governance requirements. We welcome your inquiries and look forward to a growing, vibrant TeamCFA network!

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