

**CHARTER SCHOOLS**  
**(Intent to Apply to Become a District Charter School)**

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**Instructions:** All district charter school applicants must file this intent to apply form with the district at least 30 days before submitting an application to the Board of Education. The intent to apply form may be returned to the Division of Accountability and Research, 15701 E. 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue, Suite 112, Aurora, CO 80011. The form should also be the first document included in the district charter school application.

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Today's Date: February 8, 2018  
Date when you intend to submit your application: March 9, 2018  
Name of proposed district charter school: Empower Community School  
Name of education management provider (EMP), if applicable: N/A  
Contact person: Wisdom Amouzou  
Mailing address: [REDACTED]  
City: [REDACTED] State: [REDACTED] Zip: [REDACTED]  
Daytime phone: [REDACTED] Fax: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: [REDACTED]

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Please respond to the following; attach separate sheets as necessary.

1. Applicant(s) has/will file an application to charter this school or a substantially similar school with other authorizers:  
 Yes     No  
If yes, please list the other authorizer(s):  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Applicant(s) submitting this form: (Check appropriate statement)  
 is incorporated in Colorado as a nonprofit  
 has filed application to become a Colorado nonprofit  
 (state type of entity, if other than above): \_\_\_\_\_
3. If applicant intends to contract with an EMP, the corporate status of the EMP is:  
 incorporated in Colorado as a nonprofit  
 has filed application to become a Colorado nonprofit  
 (state type of entity, if other than above): \_\_\_\_\_
4. The proposed district charter school will be located within the boundaries of the school district in which this intent to apply form is submitted:     Yes     No  
If no, the proposed district charter school will be located in \_\_\_\_\_.

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5. Does the school expect to contract with a charter management organization or company for school management or operation?  
 Yes      No

If yes, identify the charter management organization:

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6. Proposed principal or lead administrator information  
Name of proposed principal candidate:

Shawne Anderson and Dawn Coleman

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Current employment:

Mr. Anderson: Assistant Principal, Lincoln High School (DPS); Ms. Coleman: Dean of Instruction, Contemporary Leadership Academy (DPS)

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\_\_\_\_\_

Phone (day)

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone (evening)

\_\_\_\_\_

Email address

7. Model or focus of proposed school: (ex. Arts, College Prep, Dual Language, etc.)

AUTHENTIC EDUCATION is led by students - co-created with community - guided by educators.

Our authentic education model is built on six unifying principles:

1. Learning grounded in reality
2. Students adding value to the community
3. Playing to the students' strengths
4. La cultura cura (culture heals)
5. Using data to help not hurt
6. Education as a practice of freedom

8. Grade levels to be served:  
9-12
-

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9. Projected enrollment and demographics chart

	<b>K</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>Total</b>
School Year 1										120	-	-	-	120
School Year 2										120	112	-	-	232
School Year 3										120	112	104	0	336
School Year 4										120	112	104	100	436
School Year 5										120	112	104	100	436

	<b>% ELL</b>	<b>% SPED</b>	<b>% FRL</b>
School Year 1	36	11	68
School Year 2	36	11	68
School Year 3	36	11	68
School Year 4	36	11	68
School Year 5	36	11	68

10. Name of applicant team or founding entity:

**HadaNou Collective (HNC)**

A. Names, roles, and current employment of all persons on the applicant team:

Wisdom Amouzou Role: Executive Director Current Employment: Co-Founder of the HadaNou Collective
Ariana Villalovos-Estrada Role: School Founding Team Current Employment: Full-time student, University of Colorado at Boulder
Shawne Anderson Role: Co-Principal Current Employment: Assistant Principal, Abraham Lincoln
Olivia Jones Role: School Founding Team Current Employment: Center Co-Director, The Mardale Jay Writing Center
Dajia Maestas Role: School Founding Team Current Employment: Center Co-Director, The Mardale Jay Writing Center

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B. Does the applicant team or any members of the team currently operate any other schools?

Yes       No

C. Explain the individual and collective qualifications of the applicant team members to establish a high-quality charter school, in particular the capacity to assume responsibility for public funds, administration and governance.

Our core design team includes two educators, one administrator, one student, and one parent. The diversity in skill, perspective and experience has allowed us to gather a Community Design Team of families, community members, and students which guides major design decisions.

Wisdom Amouzou and Olivia Jones are the team's educators. Wisdom worked as a Diversity & Equity fellow with RISE-Colorado to design and pilot equity workshops for students, families, and educators. He also taught leadership courses to undergraduate students and developed pedagogy at the African Leadership Academy in Johannesburg, South Africa and has experience developing curriculum for Secondary Literacy Classrooms for grades 8th-12th. He grounds all curricula in a culturally-relevant and reality-based pedagogy that keeps learners engaged and active agents in their education. After graduating from the University of Colorado at Boulder with a B.A. in Communication and a certificate in Leadership Studies, Wisdom taught in Denver and was awarded the 2015 Sue Lehmann Teaching & Learning Fellowship. He was also a 2017 Camelback Ventures Fellow where he received professional development related to organizational leadership, hiring & managing teams, stakeholder development, and project and budget management.

Olivia spent the last five years developing curriculum for English Language Arts primarily for grades 9-12, including Advanced Placement English Language and Composition. She has experience co-creating divergent curriculum with students. Most recently, she worked with a group of fifteen 12th graders to co-created curriculum which pushed young people to use writing as a way to resist and transform persistent structures of privilege and oppression.

Olivia and Wisdom began collaborating in March 2015 when they brought students together to design and implement a workshop around issues of justice and safety facing communities of color. Ariana Villalovos-Estrada was one of those students. Later that same year, Ariana was one of seven students in the Denver Public Schools District to design, present, and lead a session at the Martin Luther King Jr Symposim entitled "Education to End Injustice." She presented to approximately 200 students from all over the Denver Metro Area with the objective of inspiring students to find ways to use their education to make tangible changes in their community. In 2017, Ariana returned to Manual to develop and implement liberating student-led curriculum through the Writing Center at Manual to support current Manual students to discover the power of voice through writing. She has since go on to become the first in her family to attend college and is pursuing a degree in Ethnic Studies and Education at CU Boulder.

Dajia is an Aurora parent and a founder of one of the HadaNou Collective centers. She now serves as co-director of The Mardale Jay Writing Center which supports student writers at five middle/high schools on the east side of Denver. As a co-director, she is responsible for managing the center's programming, budget, and partnerships.

Shawne has experience starting schools as Charter, District run schools and public/private partnerships. Shawne has worked extensively with project based and problem based school designs as well as designs that address the interests and cultures of the students they serve. He has worked in education for 24 years. His strengths include culture setting, culturally relevant pedagogy and new school implementation.

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D. Include as attachments resumes for each individual on the applicant team.

Have you included the attachments?  Yes  No

E. Explain the circumstances and motivations that brought the applicant team together to propose this charter school.

This application is motivated by the demand in the North Aurora community for an alternative, smaller high schools. Right now, 1,469 students live in Arapahoe County but attend DPS schools and of the ten high schools in Aurora Public Schools only one is meeting CDE's benchmarks for academic achievement.

East of the Northwest corridor of autonomous schools in Aurora, current options include: Hinkley High School(enrollment of 2,168, graduation rate of 60%) and William Smith High School (enrollment of 317, graduation rate of 74%). William Smith offers authentic, expeditionary learning in a small school setting, but was only able to admit 90 of the 300 would-be freshmen who applied in Fall 2016.

HNC is committed to the communities in North/Central Aurora. Like many of our families in Aurora, Wisdom Amouzou and his family also came to this country seeking asylum. He arrived in Aurora at the age of 10 having immigrated from the West African country of Togo. He attended Aurora Hills Middle School and graduated from Gateway High School earning one of the top ten grade point averages in his graduating class. He was also one of 7 students in the district to win the \$20,000 APS VISTA Scholarship. It wasn't until he got to CU Boulder that he began to analyze and understand the various systems of inequity that impacted the K-12 education of his peers in Aurora. This fueled his passion to join the classroom and eventually co-found HNC. Going from a refugee to naturalized American citizen, English language learner to bi-lingual, low-income to middle class, Wisdom understands firsthand the journey that our most vulnerable populations in APS must navigate to shape their successful futures.

While all of HNC's centers are located in Denver and Golden, many of the students and families leading the centers live in Aurora and are choosing into Denver Public Schools because they are unsatisfied with their neighborhood schools in Aurora. For example, 8 of the 14 student founders of The Mardale Jay Writing Center (established in fall of 2016 at Manual High School) live in Aurora.

Like Dajia Maestas, who lives in North Aurora and commuted over an hour to Manual High School for her freshman and sophomore years. During her junior year, she was struggling to manage academics, a part-time job, and the commute so she transferred to Hinkley High School. In just one semester there, she fell off track to graduate. Due to large class sizes, she failed to build relationships with her teachers and felt "lost in the sea of students." By the following semester, Dajia and her mother decided to move her back to Manual High School where she could benefit from smaller class sizes and authentic student-led learning experiences like her work in The Mardale Jay Writing Center. Students, families, and educators (like Wisdom and Dajia) are the authors of this charter application.

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**F. Which applicant team members will become founding board members?**

After analyzing our needs as an organization and identifying specific gaps in experience and skills, we began recruiting individuals to sit on an Executive Board and fill those gaps. We determined that the Executive Board would be a 5-7-member group responsible only for fiduciary matters, risk management, and for meeting governmental regulations. We looked for collaborative professionals with sector expertise in Financial Literacy, Facility Management/Community Development, Human Resources, Cultural Competence, and Community Representation to ensure we operate within the public trust. Right now, the board is comprised of:

Veronica Palmer, Co-Founder and CEO of RISE Colorado  
Yee-Ann Cho, Associate Director and Chief Operating Officer at the Daniels College of Business at the University of Denver  
Antonio Pares, Partner at Donnell-Kay Foundation  
Shannon Kete, Chief of Staff at CLS Bank International

As stated in our by-laws, once our charter is approved we will require at least two parent representatives be appointed to the Board at all times.

**11. Identify any organizations, agencies, consultants or institutions of higher education that are partners in planning and establishing this charter school, along with a brief description of their current and planned role and any resources they have contributed or plan to contribute to the school's development.**

**Chris DeWitt Consulting**

Chris DeWitt, who formerly served as Manager of School Development for DPS, is well versed in the process and components of quality school design, having facilitated dozens of Application Review Team meetings, reviewed over 30 applications over 2.5 years, overseen the revision of the new school application and rubric, and facilitated numerous community meetings throughout the District. The consultant supported the HNC founding team in developing their ideas and rubric-aligned application materials through research and facilitation. There is no planned role for Chris DeWitt beyond the charter authorizing process.

**Moonshot EdVentures**

Moonshot edVentures offers technical assistance to school leadership teams at various stages of the school launch process. The organization kicked off with its first fellowship of school launchers, each with their own unique models, challenges, and strengths. Moonshot offered professional development to ED, Wisdom Amouzou and access to consulting services including: financial monitoring systems design and implementation, board governance structure, strategic prioritization, project plan creation, and project management support.

**The Law Office of Brad A. Miller LLC**

The law office serves as legal counsel to the school's Board and administration. This representation will include, but not be limited to the following, as requested by You: provide general legal advice; assist with the charter school application and contract, non-profit formation, and other related items; assist the Board and administration with general legal compliance; attend Board meetings and assist at the same; develop Board and school policies and/or handbooks; assist with development and implementation of initiatives, as directed; assist and update the Board with legislative and political issues (this does not include any "lobbying"); assist the administration with any contracts and employment law issues; and perform other tasks as directed.

**Bart Skimore, CPA Inc.**

Bart A. Skidmore, CPA, Inc., based in Denver, CO, provides a full range of accounting, bookkeeping, consulting, payroll and investment management services, either on site or remotely. The company founder, Bart Skidmore, has been providing accounting, individual tax and investment management services to clients for over twenty five years. He updated the 5 year budget (with year zero) with assumptions and organized the overall structure of the budget to ensure a sound and sustainable budget.

**Vernon Jones Jr. - Consultant**

As a son of an educator, as a parent of five, as a former school leader in a traditional/innovative neighborhood school, a neighborhood charter, and as a Pastor that is committed to lifting lives, Vernon Jones Jr. has seen it and processed it all through a variety of lenses. He has come to the conclusion that no matter the governance model, no matter the school design, no matter the designation of the school, informed and engaged parents/guardians, students, and community are essential if we want to see ALL CHILDREN THRIVING. We have partnered with Vernon to aid with our community engagement efforts in Aurora.