



Part 1

Academic Model

- (1) Describe the academic needs of the student population you propose to serve. Explain how you will set, and measure progress towards, performance goals that put your students on a path towards achieving your vision. Include your plan to gather baseline data necessary to establish goals.
- (2) Describe the concrete structures, policies, and practices that will differentiate your school from options already available to the community you propose to serve.

TYPE YOUR RESPONSE IN THE BOX BELOW, IT WILL EXPAND AS NEEDED.

(1) New Orleans young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities require more specialized support to live the fulfilling adult lives that they deserve.

Collegiate Academies seeks to address a critical gap in the New Orleans public school system by opening a new school - Opportunities Academy (OA) - that provides tuition-free specialized transition programming for students (aged 18-21) with mild to significant disabilities. We anticipate serving a demographically similar student population to our current schools: more than 99 percent of our students are students of color, nearly 90 percent are from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, and 8-10 percent are English Language Learners.

As outlined in the executive summary on page 4, Americans with disabilities face disproportionately high rates of unemployment, poverty, and homelessness (bit.ly/NCSL2016). These disparities are amplified for people with disabilities who come from low-income households. Our city and our region reflect these inequities, with only one third of adults with disabilities employed in the state of Louisiana. In New Orleans, over half of the homeless population are people with disabilities (bit.ly/UnityNO). These difficulties are also passed on to the families of children with special health care needs, causing higher rates of unemployment and poor mental health for caretakers, as well (bit.ly/OAfamhealth).

Recognizing the acute challenges that our students with disabilities face, OA seeks to eliminate the current obstacles of unemployment, pervasive discrimination, and general exclusion confronting low-income youth with disabilities and foster a systemic shift toward an ecosystem of inclusivity in which individuals with disabilities and their families actively participate in the community, gain personal financial freedom, and experience a greater quality of life. The program is designed to address each of these goals in accordance with specific needs of each student and their family.

In examining this reality through data and conversations with family members and community stakeholders, **we identified the following baseline areas of need for our students:**

- **Employability:** Job Awareness, Job Finding, Work Skills
- **Daily Living:** Hygiene, Nutrition and Food Preparation, Financial Management, Health and Fitness
- **Community:** Resources, Recreation and Leisure, Transportation, Safety
- **Personal Life:** Communication, Social Skills and Networks, Physical Access, Soft Skills, Problem Solving
- **Lifelong Learning:** Reading, Writing, Math, Technology, Personal Interests

To set performance goals and measure student progress across these areas, Collegiate Academies utilizes a person-centered plan, or PATH (Planning Alternative Tomorrows of Hope) plan, that we will use both to obtain a baseline of student transition abilities and to allow us to progress-monitor each student's individual growth over their years in Opportunities Academy. Plans and objectives are modified to address specific skills for all students at all levels and to ensure instruction is appropriate and rigorous for each student.



Due to the wide variety of needs, programming will be highly personalized. Each OA student and their family will work with OA staff through a formal IEP process to set individualized goals across their PATH plan in the areas listed above. Student achievement will be measured in terms of their personal progress toward these goals, as tracked by the customizable PATH plan, with each level of the plan helping students to target and develop a variety of skills grounded in the major domains of transition necessary for a fulfilling and independent adult life.

Because OA students will enter the school with a range of abilities and skill sets, the main focus for measuring progress will be growth metrics. To foster this progress, goal benchmarks will be tracked on a nine-week cycle and the data will be used to plan for maximizing instruction and experiences for the next cycle in order to achieve students' individual goal attainment at the end of the year. OA will also use videos to track student progress on goals related to physical movement, creating "progress playlists" for students, families, and educators to watch the physical progress that a student is making over time.

Because OA is such an innovative program, there are not well-established metrics for success for students ages 18-21 with intellectual and developmental disabilities who have already completed their high school diplomas. **Collegiate Academies and OA will work with the Orleans Parish School Board to develop metrics and an accountability framework to appropriately measure the success of our students and our program.**

(2) OA offers innovative, tuition-free, transition programming to low-income young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities, with a strong focus on experiential learning in real-world settings to prepare students for lives of fulfillment and maximum independence.

Until the launch of Opportunities Academy as a program within Collegiate Academies schools in 2015, there were no such programs in New Orleans and low-income youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities only had access to minimally rigorous programming that was structurally the same from 9th grade through age 21. As the program has expanded, OA has developed innovative structures, policies, and practices to empower their students with the skills they need to meet their goals.

Structures: In the interest of offering students highly practical experiential learning, OA will leverage structures that provide students with real-world experiences.

Student-led Enterprises: To give OA students work-based learning experiences, Collegiate has created student-led businesses hosted on Collegiate Academies' existing school campuses. For example, on G.W. Carver High School's campus, OA has a student-operated coffee shop where Carver staff and students can purchase beverages and snacks. This enterprise allows OA students the opportunity to gain real professional experience and practice skills like customer service, running payments on an iPad with real retail technology, and making change. As a school, OA seeks to improve on this model and potentially launch similar enterprises in locations beyond school campuses (i.e. a community-facing coffee shop) to enable students to practice professional skills in real-world settings.

Independent Living Lab: Through strategic partnerships, OA has been able to provide students with a furnished apartment space near the G.W. Carver High School campus that has been outfitted as an independent living practice site: the OAsis. Students gain practice with skills such as cooking, cleaning, and self-care in a realistic environment. As a school, OA would seek to further develop this structure and potentially build out similar spaces inside of the school facility.

OA Advisory Board: OA has already built community partnerships with key stakeholders, including Delgado Community College, Metropolitan Human Services District, New Orleans Therapeutic Day Program, and Louisiana Rehabilitative Services. These partnerships provide critical services to our students and guide the development of OA.



To sustain these partnerships and establish a participatory forum for further program development, Collegiate created an OA Advisory Board (non-governing) made up of parents, staff, and community stakeholders. Supporting the launch of OA as a school and its role in the larger community will be a primary area of focus for this body in the coming years.

Policies: OA policies will support each student in achieving their maximum level of independence.

Externships and internships: To ensure that all students are gaining practical skills that they can give back to their community, all OA students are required to participate in work-based learning experiences. For OA, these can take the form of on-campus internships, such as a student-led enterprise, or they can be externships that students participate in with our community partners off-campus, such as a part-time job with Grow Dat Youth Farm.

Community Access: Students and their families are required to set and meet goals related to accessing the community resources that each student will need in adulthood. Students and their parents establish connections with partners like Metropolitan Human Services District and Louisiana Rehabilitative Services. Students also practice riding the bus, gaining hands-on experience with navigating the RTA.

Practices: OA will establish practices that improve our student experience and quality of life.

Movement Class: Each student will participate in a daily class to promote well-being and physical health. Examples will include, yoga, dance, exercise in a weight room, and other activities specifically tailored to each student's abilities and needs. Staff receive training to ensure that these activities align with students' physical therapy and occupational therapy targets.

Post-secondary atmosphere: OA is designed to resemble a real college experience to give students with intellectual and developmental disabilities the opportunity to have an authentic and individually-driven post-secondary experience. Students go through a college-style application process and choose classes from a course catalog modeled on those of four-year institutions. This distinction not only builds student investment, but also provides an opportunity to structurally shift programming toward greater student independence, allowing students to gain practice in independent decision-making from the start.

By employing all of these structures, policies, practices, and more, Opportunities Academy would be the only tuition-free school in the city of New Orleans providing high-quality experiential programming for students age 18-21 with intellectual and developmental disabilities that is specially focused on facilitating real-world experiences for students to bridge the transition from high school into adulthood.

Enrollment Plans

The student population that you describe should be consistent with the enrollment projections that you provide in your proposal overview

- (1) Demonstrate through the use of data that the student population that you wish to serve exists.
- (2) Describe your recruitment strategy and provide your recruitment plan. Provide any evidence that you have collected that demonstrates that parents and guardians have committed to enrolling their children in your school. You may provide evidence in **Attachment 1. Attachment 1** will not count against the page limit.
- (3) Describe any mission specific admissions priorities, preferences or requirements, your school would seek to offer as well as any criteria used to participate in these programs. [Mission Specific Criteria must be approved through a separate application process following charter approval]



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(1) Opportunities Academy anticipates serving a population of students with intellectual and developmental disabilities who are demographically similar to student populations at our current schools.

According to analysis of enrollment data across schools in the Recovery School District as of 2016, it was estimated that there were approximately 100 low-income students with low-incidence disabilities aged 18 to 21 per graduating cohort in the city of New Orleans who would qualify for extended special education services that prepare students to transition into fulfilling adult lives of employment, independence, and engagement with the greater community. The full citywide number, including OPSB schools and Type 2 charters, would add to that figure. This data indicates that a strong pool of potential enrollees in OA exists. We anticipate significant demand for enrollment.

During the 2017-2018 school year Collegiate operated three high schools in New Orleans and one in Baton Rouge, serving approximately 1,800 students in grades 9-12. In fall 2018 we opened our fifth campus, Rosenwald Collegiate Academy, on the West Bank. We value diversity in all forms and will continue to actively promote diversity through an inclusive, reflective organizational culture and recruit students and staff of all backgrounds, cultures, and abilities. The Opportunities Academy school would serve students with intellectual and developmental disabilities from all New Orleans communities. We anticipate serving a demographically similar student population to our current schools: more than 99 percent of our students are students of color, nearly 90 percent are from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, and 8-10 percent are English Language Learners.

(2) Spreading the word about Opportunities Academy.

As a network, Collegiate Academies schools have been recognized as high-quality options and are in demand. The number of families listing Collegiate Academies schools on the OneApp increased 98% between the 2015-16 and the 2017-18 school years according to data shared by EnrollNOLA. Last year, we doubled the number of families who ranked our schools for 9th grade seats.

Many of these students have had the opportunity to visit our schools and interact with Collegiate students during their middle school years -- a critical part of our student recruitment strategy that would be continued with OA. Each fall, our network operations team analyzes current enrollment patterns for trends and begins outreach to area schools with potential students. Based on typical "feeder" schools and high density neighborhoods, Collegiate prioritizes school visits and tours of our campuses by potential students. Each Collegiate school has an "Ambassadors" program that provides coaching and collaboration for current students who want to spread the word about their positive experience at our schools. Current OA students participate in the Ambassadors program and would continue to contribute to outreach and student recruitment efforts.

Throughout the fall and early spring, our network operations staff arrange for our team members or Ambassadors to visit schools with potential students to give a presentation and answer questions. More and more schools are also arranging tours where they have the opportunity to see our campuses, ask questions, and reflect on their hopes for their own high school and post-secondary experiences. From there, school representatives follow up with information and encouragement to list Collegiate schools on the OneApp. Internally, we track touch points against benchmarks we have set in order to push our recruitment team to reach ambitious goals.

To recruit students to the OA school we will also use a full range of OA-specific marketing materials that we have developed over the last year, including an OA promotional video. Additional recruitment efforts include hosting Open Houses for prospective students and interested local educators and visiting with local community members and schools whose students could benefit. The community stakeholders on OA's Advisory Council also help with outreach for the OA program and Council members have already connected the OA team with families of potential students.

The combination of these efforts over the past year delivered promising results, with a 60% increase in program enrollment for fall 2018. Please refer to Attachment 1 for evidence of parental commitment to enroll students in the Opportunities Academy school.



(3) OA’s mission-specific admission requirements.

The Opportunities Academy school would seek to serve students aged 18 - 21 years old who have an intellectual or developmental disability, as determined by an IEP. As outlined throughout this proposal, this group of students has historically faced higher rates of unemployment and homelessness, suggesting that the transition programming that has been provided to them has been insufficient in preparing them for successful, independent lives after high school. Opportunities Academy proposes a school that directly targets this group of students to provide the specific services that they need to thrive into adulthood.

Student Experience

- (1) Describe the culture that you envision for your school and the practices that will foster and maintain that culture.
 - a. Describe the steps that you will take to invest staff in the vision and to sustain their investment.
 - b. Define the norms that will shape the interactions between administrators and teachers and among teachers, the reason each norm is important, and the steps that you will take to establish and reinforce these norms.
- (2) Similarly, describe the behavior expectations of your school as well as the practices that will foster and uphold those expectations.
 - a. List and describe the values that will define your student culture. Provide your plan for instilling and maintaining student behavior expectations that correspond with these values.
 - b. Describe the system of policies and practices your school will implement for setting and maintaining student behavior expectations and norms.
 - c. Describe the procedures for due process when a student is subject to removal from the classroom or school, including a description of the appeal process that the school will employ and the plan for providing services to students who are out of the classroom (in-school or out-of-school suspensions) for more than 10 days
 - i. This description should include a list, with definitions, of the offenses for which students in the school must (where non-discretionary) and may (where discretionary) be subject to removal from the classroom (in-school suspension) or the school (out-of-school suspension), respectively.
 - d. Describe the practices the school will use to support student’s social and emotional learning, and the alignment between these practices and their impact on student achievement
- (3) Describe the mechanisms and structures available to elevate student voice and leadership at your school.

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(1) Collegiate schools establish a vibrant culture of growth among students, families, and staff.

We believe our goals can only be achieved if we approach our work with a growth mindset: a belief that growth and improvement is always possible for every child and adult. This core belief acts as a foundation for our community culture.

- **We build a culture of high expectations.** This culture is evident in our celebrations of growth. One of the pillars of our programming is the consistent recognition of successes. Research suggests that rewarding students for positive behavior is an effective component of classroom management." At Collegiate, we focus on recognizing students and staff alike for growth and improvement that demonstrates the benefits of



hard work and perseverance. OA will offer students incentives along with encouragement, including public recognition of progress in classroom displays. **We gain and sustain staff investment in this norm by regularly modeling its success in our staff structures:**

- **Teacher Feature:** At each of our quarterly network-wide convenings, we select one teacher from all of the schools to celebrate with a video made up of interviews with their coworkers and students describing the impact of the teacher on their school community.
- **Shout-outs:** Each school has a version of “morning meeting,” a daily ritual for staff, both administrators and teachers, to share announcements and give a “shout out” for a positive, values-aligned behavior that a colleague has demonstrated. This routine helps teachers practice giving specific positive feedback so that they are prepared to give it to students regularly.
- **We embrace a culture of “Servant Leadership” that guides administrators to remain focused on meeting the needs of staff and students in order to maximize student learning.** We approach our work with a growth mindset: a belief that growth and improvement is always possible for every child and adult in our buildings. The norms that shape interactions to this end are best described as “Servant Leadership” -- the idea that leaders should seek to meet the needs of the people that they lead.
 - **Administrators as servant leaders:** In practice, this organizing principle pushes leaders to set clear goals, identify the legitimate barriers to staff reaching these goals, and partnering with staff to succeed despite inevitable challenges. Leaders must operate in a way that builds deep levels of trust from their team. They must communicate their decisions clearly and transparently, seeking input where appropriate to reach the best possible decision for Collegiate students. They must demonstrate a true openness to feedback of all forms -- including constructive feedback -- in order to model what growth mindset looks like in practice. They must consistently make and communicate decisions that are in the best interests of students, never hesitating to do what is right for the families served by Collegiate Academies schools.
 - **Teachers as servant leaders:** The norms among teachers take on the same ethos: build trust, communicate clearly, put the team first, gratefully and actively accept feedback from anyone in the building. The norms are reinforced in formal ways outlined above, but the most powerful way to cultivate them is personal dedication and commitment to exercising them each day. This daily dedication to Collegiate’s core values and to Servant Leadership is the surest path to a strong team culture and transformational academic results for New Orleans students.
- **We leverage relationships to remove barriers to learning.** Teaching is not just about the delivery of curricula. It requires a connection with students founded in mutual trust and respect. We build relationships with students and families through the following programs and structures. This relationship building not only improves the services we provide our students, but strengthens teachers’ ties to our students and schools.
 - **Family Visits:** Preparing students for lives of success requires our team to be involved in their lives both at school and at home. Our schools are different from other schools, and we realize that it is important to be transparent about these differences from the beginning of a student’s time with us. For this reason, every student and their family will receive a visit from representatives of the Collegiate team before the school year begins. This structure is particularly critical for OA, where family members work with the OA team to gain access to community resources for their child and participate in the IEP process to help their student define their OA path.
 - **Parent groups and events:** Collegiate maintains and develops relationships with families of our students through regular parent/staff meetings and frequent events throughout the school year. These meetings and events provide the opportunity for families to provide feedback and receive information, and a space for staff and families to spend time together.



Staff investment in our culture is critical to organizational success.

An aligned team is a necessary condition for meeting ambitious goals around student learning. We believe our goals can only be achieved if we approach our work with a growth mindset: a belief that growth and improvement is always possible for every child and adult in our buildings. Investing staff in these values and mindsets involves:

- **Hiring processes that are infused with Collegiate values:** While School Leaders have the autonomy to hire the team that they believe will collectively achieve targets, Collegiate’s hiring processes generally follow the same structure and philosophy. Conversations, tasks, and group interviews gauge candidates’ desire for growth and ability to implement feedback quickly and effectively. The process ensures candidates value deep trust across teammates and demonstrate a willingness to have candid conversations in service of students. Finally, the hiring process tests candidates’ flexibility and excitement about pivoting on a dime in service of shared team-wide goals. Notably, candidates are provided clear and uncomplicated ways to drop out of the interview process if the work environment at Collegiate does not match their educational philosophy or professional needs. The interview process itself serves to build and sustain a vibrant organizational culture by showing clearly what it looks like to be successful at Collegiate.
- **Whole group orientation to deepen practice of Collegiate values:** Once hired, the first expectation of new teammates -- and returning teammates -- is participating fully in a 3-4 week orientation. For new teammates, this is a critical moment to understand the principles and values by which Collegiate operates: they see the commitment to growth in practice; they experience the openness and trust across teammates; and they feel the weight of personal responsibility to bring their best self to the building every single day. For returning teammates, they are expected to reground themselves in these behaviors and demonstrate leadership by bringing new teammates along. The content of the orientation also reinforces these norms and mindsets: we read articles and discuss as a group, we spend considerable time digging into our school’s vision, and we practice scenarios that will test our collective commitment to the norms that we agree will make us successful for kids. At the end of the three weeks, Collegiate teammates are deeply invested in the principles that bind us together as a team and are prepared to put them into practice.
- **Constant attention to sustain strong alignment of values:** School Leaders embrace that a major component of their leadership is sustaining the vibrant mission alignment that they help foster in our schools through hiring decisions and by running an intentional orientation process. With the support of network leadership, School Leaders build their understanding of the “macro” (structures, routines, annual events) and “micro” strategies (interactions, ways to praise, things to notice) that help them to shepherd an excellent team culture. Examples abound of successful leadership moves on both macro and micro levels -- frequent coaching meetings that reinforce both skill development and values alignment, daily “Value Village” morning routines to infuse the day with joy, “Sunshine” emails to spotlight exceptional team performance and student growth, and more. While formal evaluations with 360 degree feedback are a critical structure, the hard work of building and sustaining an organizational culture happens on an ongoing basis. Collegiate School Leaders embrace that work and demonstrate exceptional leadership in their work to create an aligned team that stops at nothing to meet the complex needs of our students in New Orleans.

(2) Our behavior norms and structures are grounded in our network values and restorative practices.

Collegiate Academies leans heavily on our core values, which drive every interaction, every decision, every program component, and every staff hire. These values guide Collegiate in consistently building the best instructional and support staff, the highest quality school leaders, and the most dedicated central network team:

- **Growth:** We grow ourselves constantly.
- **Ownership:** We take responsibility and solve problems for our team as much as our leader does.
- **Joy:** We spread our gratitude and love for the work always.



We instill and maintain these values by displaying them in public and working them into regular daily lessons, as well as through the staff value shout outs, and teacher features described above.

We take a school-wide approach to proactive, responsive, and adaptive intervention policies and practices in order to create a learning environment that is structured and supportive of all students. We implement restorative practices and a behavior intervention continuum to ensure students are receiving the individual supports necessary for success. For OA, our discipline plan is specifically tailored for students with disabilities in accordance with IDEA.

- Tier I: School wide rituals and routines for all learners. These are our school-wide approaches that provide the most elemental structures. They include all of our rituals and routines, expectations, rules, procedures, and classroom structures along with universal screeners and diagnostics for academics and behavior. For OA, positive behavior reinforcement is the primary method of directing behavior for OA students. Each student earns credentials in a public behavior system and is celebrated for his or her achievements.
- Tier II: Specialized interventions for learners whose academic or social progress is at-risk due to academic or behavioral challenges. These are the extra supports, structures and services that we provide to targeted groups and/or those students who have not demonstrated growth within the foundational services alone. They include: mentoring, restorative activities, behavior plans, academic recovery systems, etc.
- Tier III: Individualized interventions for students with intense and/or chronic behavioral needs. These includes the intensive interventions we make on an individual basis to help students be successful and to build a positive school environment. They include: functional behavioral assessments with a student’s IEP team, individualized behavior improvement plans, small group skill building, individual cognitive and behavioral therapy, referral to community support services, and more, as determined by students’ needs.

Discipline Policy & Procedures for OA students.

As all OA students will have mild to significant disabilities, any disciplinary action involving our students will carefully follow Louisiana’s laws and guidance, as outlined below. The following policies and procedures have been adopted from G.W. Carver High School, one of the OA host schools, and is currently shared with parents, families, and students in the annual handbook:

I. Overview of Procedural Safeguards

A. General. Disciplinary actions give students with disabilities extra legal protections when the discipline constitutes a change in placement. If a student violates the student Code of Conduct, before consequences or punishment are imposed, the principal/designee must consider whether the student:

- Has an IDEA or Section 504 disability;
- or Is a student who is “thought to have a disability.”

While all students may be disciplined, the placement of students with disabilities cannot be “changed” when the offense is directly related to his/her disability or when the IEP or Section 504 plan is not implemented, except in the case of emergency circumstances (drugs, weapons, significant bodily injury). See Section II for more information about emergency circumstances.

B. Determining Change in Placement. A change in placement is a legal term that applies to the situations described below. A student’s school suspension that occurred in a LA local education agency (LEA) during the same school year of transfer into another LA LEA “counts” and is added to any additional suspensions in the new school.



1. More than 10 Consecutive Days of Suspension, i.e., Expulsion. Any suspension that is for more than 10 consecutive days is considered to be a change in placement.

2A. More than 10 Total Days of Suspension in One School Year. A series of suspensions with days that total more than 10 total school days in a school year may be a change in placement. The special education chairperson, with assistance and documentation from the Administration/Disciplinarian, monitors the number of days each student has been suspended. Students with disabilities who have not reached this 10-day threshold may be suspended under the procedures that apply to all students.

Factors for Determining Pattern of Suspensions

Substantially Similar Behavior. Is the student's behavior substantially similar to the behavior for which the student has previously been suspended? (Factors may include same type of behavior, same victim, same class, same day of the week or same time of day, etc.) If the answer is yes, continue with the following analysis:

Other Pattern Considerations.

Consider such factors as:

Length of each suspension, e.g., 1 day, 4 days, etc.

Total cumulative days of suspensions, e.g., 11 days, 20 days, etc.

Proximity of (time between) suspensions, e.g., 1 week apart, 2 months apart, etc.

A pattern is more likely to exist when the facts in each factor are more extreme, e.g., longer suspension lengths, more cumulative days of suspension and fewer days between each suspension. Also, consider whether the suspensions are: from the same class on a regular basis; on the same day of the week; at the same time of day; for the same activity; involving same staff or other students. **Consistent Decision-Making.** Determining whether a pattern exists is very subjective. Thus, school staff should consult with a Department of Education Representative (Office of Federal Programs Support) when considering this issue to ensure that factors are considered consistently across schools.

The Determining a Pattern of Suspensions Worksheet, Appendix A [to the school handbook], should be used to document consideration of this issue whenever a student's suspension has surpassed 10 cumulative days for the year.

3. Additional Considerations. The following considerations apply to in-school suspension; a suspension or removal for a portion of the school day; and for suspensions from transportation.

a. **In-school Suspension.** An in-school suspension will not be considered as a suspension for the above purposes as long as a student is given the opportunity to continue to: appropriately participate in the general curriculum; receive IEP specified services; and participate with nondisabled children to the extent (s)he would have in the current placement. Any in-school suspension that does not meet this standard must be considered as a suspension for purposes of these procedures.

b. **Suspension/Removal for Portion of School Day.** students sent home from school in the morning because of misconduct is considered to have a full-day suspension. students sent home in the afternoon is considered to have a half-day suspension. These conditions apply unless the student's BIP specifically calls for the student to receive a shortened school day



when certain behaviors are exhibited.

c. Bus Suspension. The following standards apply based on whether transportation is a related service on the IEP:

1) Bus Transportation Is IEP Service. When transportation is an IEP service, a student's removal from the bus is considered to be a suspension unless transportation is provided in some other way. In this case, transportation has been determined to be necessary for the student to access educational services.

2) Bus Transportation Is Not IEP Service. When transportation is not an IEP service, the student's removal from the bus is NOT considered to be a suspension. In this case the student/parent have the same obligations for the student to get to and from school as any nondisabled peers suspended from the bus. However, school officials should consider whether the bus behavior is similar to classroom behavior that IS addressed in an IEP and whether the bus behavior should be addressed in the IEP or through a BIP. Monitoring Suspensions - Principals must have procedures in place to monitor and cumulatively total all suspensions for students with disabilities.

C. Determining Manifestation Determination & Services.

1. Manifestation Determination. Within 10 days of any decision resulting in a change of placement the LEA representative, parent, and relevant members of the child's IEP Team (as determined by the parent and the LEA representative) must meet and determine whether the student's behavior is a manifestation of his/her disability using the Manifestation Determination form. The procedures below are used to make this determination.

a. Making the Decision

1) Review Relevant Information. The team participants review all relevant information in the student's file, including the IEP. If the IEP was not implemented, the team documents why it was not implemented and whether the failure to implement the IEP impacted the student's behavior.

2) Observe Behavior. The team also reviews documentation of staff observations regarding the student's behavior. This should include an analysis of the student's behavior across settings and times throughout the school day.

3) Information from Parents. The team reviews any relevant information provided by the parents.

4) Ask Two Questions to Determine Manifestation. The team must consider the two questions below to determine if a student's behavior was manifested by his/her disability.

a) Relationship of Behavior to Misconduct. Was the conduct caused by or directly and substantially related to the student's disability? Consider whether the behavior in question has been consistent and/or has an attenuated association with the disability: Consistent Behavior. Behavior that has been consistent across settings and across time may meet this standard. Attenuated Association. Behavior that is not an attenuated association, such as low self-esteem, to the disability would not have a direct and substantial relationship to the student's disability.

b) IEP Implementation. Was the conduct a direct result of the school's failure to follow the student's IEP? If so, the principal must ensure that



immediate steps are taken so that the identified deficiencies are remedied.

b. Behavior Is Manifestation of Disability. If the relevant members of the IEP team answers yes to either question, then the student's behavior is a manifestation of his/her disability. In this case:

1) Return to Placement. Unless the IEP team agrees to a change of placement as part of the modification of the BIP, the school must return the student to the placement from which (s)he was removed. Note: this provision does not apply to students involved with weapons, drugs or serious bodily injury. (See Section II.)

2) FBA & BIP. The IEP team must conduct or review a functional behavioral assessment (FBA) and create a behavior intervention plan (BIP) addressing ways that the school can help the student with the conduct at issue. If the student already has a BIP, it must be reviewed and modified to address how the school can better assist the student with the conduct at issue. Note: If the FBA requires a new assessment of student behavior, parental consent is required.

c. Behavior is NOT Manifestation of Disability

1) Same Consequences. If the IEP team members agree that the student's conduct was not a manifestation of his/her disability, then the student may be subject to the same consequences as all students.

2) Required Services. A student with a disability who is removed from his/her current placement must receive the following services beginning on the 11th day of cumulative suspensions during the school year. The IEP team:

a) Identifies Services. Identifies and documents educational services the students will receive to enable the student to continue to participate in the general education curriculum, although in another setting (e.g., an interim alternative educational setting (IAES), etc.) and to progress toward meeting the goals set out in the student's IEP; and

b) Develops/Reviews FBA/BIP. Provides, as appropriate, an FBA and BIP services and modifications, which are designed to address the behavior violation so that it does not recur.

c) Considers Need for More Restrictive Services. May convene and modify the student's IEP. School personnel may consider any unique circumstances on a case-by-case basis when determining whether a change in placement, consistent with the requirements of this section, is appropriate for a student with a disability who violates a code of student conduct.

II. Weapons, Drugs or Serious Bodily Injury: Emergency Procedures [non-discretionary removal]

In circumstances related to a student's use of weapons, drugs or imposition of serious bodily injury, school officials may remove a student for 45 school days by following the procedures below.

A. Criteria for Emergency Removal.

1. Weapons. A student carries a weapon to or possesses a weapon at school, on school premises, or to or at a school function under the school's jurisdiction. A weapon is a device, instrument, material or substance animate or inanimate that is used for or is readily capable of causing death or serious bodily injury (excluding pocket knife with a blade of less than 2 ½ inches in length);



firearms, including a starter gun; the frame or receiver of such a weapon; a muffler or silencer; any destructive device including any explosive incendiary or poison gas bombs, grenades, rockets, missiles and mines; does not include antique firearms.

2. **Drugs.** A student knowingly possesses or uses illegal drugs, or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance, while at school, on school premises, or at a school function under the school's jurisdiction; A controlled substance is a drug or other substance in the Federal Code that does not include a substance legally used and possessed under the supervision of a licensed health-care professional. Possession of alcohol and tobacco does not fall under "controlled substance." Therefore, the principal cannot move a student to an IAES for possession of these items under this section. Instead, the removal is subject to the procedural safeguards applicable to other types of misconduct.

3. **Serious Bodily Injury.** A student inflicted serious bodily injury upon another person while at school, on school premises, or at a school function under the jurisdiction of the State or an LEA. Serious bodily injury involves substantial risk of death; extreme physical pain; protracted and obvious disfigurement; or protracted loss or impairment of the function of a bodily member, organ, or mental faculty.

B. Removal

1. **General.** The school may immediately remove the student for up to 45 school days to an IAES. Because drugs, weapons and serious bodily injury are so dangerous to a safe school climate, a school may remove a student under these circumstances for 45 school days regardless of whether the team believes that the behavior is a manifestation of the student's disability. The 45 school days do not include those days the school is not in session, e.g., Spring Break. The IEP team may specify a removal for fewer days than the maximum 45 days.

C. Action during Removal. During the 45 school day period, the school must convene a meeting to determine whether the student's behavior is a manifestation of his/her disability. (See Section I.C. above for more information about the manifestation determination process.)

1. **Behavior IS Manifestation of Disability**

- a. **FBA/BIP.** As discussed above, the IEP team must conduct or review an FBA and create a BIP addressing ways that the school can help the student with the conduct at issue. If the student already has a BIP, it must be reviewed and modified to address how the school can better assist the student with the conduct at issue. Note: if the FBA requires a new assessment of student behavior, parental consent is required.
- b. **Reevaluation.** The student may be referred for a reevaluation.
- c. **More Intensive Services.** The IEP team may meet to consider more intensive special education services upon the expiration of the 45 day IAES or sooner.

2. **Behavior is NOT Manifestation of Disability**

- a. **Disciplinary Hearing.** If all team members determine that the conduct was not a manifestation of the student's disability, then the 45 school day emergency placement may proceed to a disciplinary proceeding afforded to all students.
- b. **FBA/BIP.** The student must receive, as appropriate, an FBA and BIP services and modifications, which are designed to address the behavior related to the disciplinary violation so that it does not recur.



III. Appeals

A. Reasons for Requesting an Expedited Due process Hearing

1. Parent Disagreement. Parents who disagree with the appropriateness of the alternative placement or remedial disciplinary setting or services may request an expedited due process hearing.
2. School Considers student to be Dangerous. If a school has documented reasons to believe that keeping the student in his/her current school is substantially likely to result in injury to the student or to others, the school should request an emergency hearing for the purpose of transferring the student to an IAES for up to 45 school days. Note: this standard is not as high as serious bodily injury; it does not allow for an immediate 45 school day removal.

B. Authority of Hearing Officer

1. A hearing officer may:
 - a. Return the student to the placement from which the student was removed if the hearing officer determines that the removal did not comply with these procedures or that the student's behavior was a manifestation of the student's disability; or
 - b. Order a change of placement to an IAES for not more than 45 school days if maintaining the current placement of the student is substantially likely to result in injury to the student or to others.
2. The school may repeat its request for an expedited hearing if it believes that returning the student to the original placement is substantially likely to result in injury to the student or to others.

C. Expedited Due Process Hearing Procedures.

1. An expedited hearing must occur within 20 school days of the date the request is filed. The hearing officer must make a determination within 10 school days after the hearing.
2. Unless the parents and school personnel agree in writing to waive the resolution meeting or agree to mediate the dispute:
 - a. A resolution meeting must occur within seven days of receiving notice of the hearing request; and
 - b. The hearing may proceed unless the matter has been resolved to the satisfaction of both parties within 15 days of receipt of the hearing request.
3. Evidence not disclosed to the other party three business days before the hearing is excluded, unless the parties agree otherwise. Expedited due process hearing decisions are appealable to state or federal court.

D. Placement during Appeal of Discipline Decision

1. Weapons, Drugs or Serious Bodily Injury. The student remains in the IAES pending the decision of the hearing officer or until the expiration of the 45-day or code violation time period (if less than 45 school days), whichever occurs first, unless the parent and school personnel agree otherwise.
2. Behavior Not Manifested by the student's Disability. The student remains in the IAES pending the decision of the hearing officer or until the expiration of the 45-day or code violation time period (if less than 45 school days), whichever occurs first, unless the parent and school personnel agree otherwise.



3. Behavior Is Manifested by Student's Disability but Belief Behavior is Substantially Likely to Cause Injury. The student remains in the placement (s)he was in at the time of the behavior in question unless the parent and school personnel agree otherwise.

IV. Students Without IEPs or Section 504 Plans "Deemed to Have a Disability"

In some cases, a student without a disability will be deemed to have a disability. The criteria for making this determination and the applicable procedures relevant to such a finding are discussed below.

A. Knowledge of suspected disability (Thought to be a student with a disability) There are certain circumstances that would indicate a school had knowledge that a student might (or is thought to) have a disability prior to the violation of the disciplinary violation. The following three situations give rise to such legal evidence:

1. Evaluation Requested. The parent requested an evaluation.
2. Written Concern. The parent expressed concern in writing to the student's teacher or school administration about the student's need for special education and related services
3. Specific Concerns by Staff about Pattern of Behavior. The student's teacher or other school staff told school supervisory personnel of specific concerns about the student's pattern of behavior. If any of the three factors above are present, then school officials consider disciplinary action as if the student has a disability.

B. NOT Deemed To Have Knowledge. This provision does not apply if:

1. Parent did not consent to an initial evaluation of the student
2. Parent refused special education and related services for the student or
3. The student was evaluated and was determined not to have disability. If any of these three circumstances exist, the student may be subjected to the same disciplinary measures applied to those without disabilities engaging in similar behaviors. The US Department of Education's comments to IDEA states: a public agency will not be considered to have a basis of knowledge merely because a child receives services under the coordinated, early intervening services of the IDEA law UNLESS a parent or teacher of a child receiving early intervening services expresses a concern, in writing, to appropriate agency personnel that the child may need special education and related services.

C. School Personnel Have No Knowledge and Parent Subsequently Requests an Evaluation

If the parent requests an evaluation for a suspected disability after the student is sent to an IAES, the school must conduct an expedited evaluation at parental request. However, the student remains in placement, including an IAES, during the evaluation. If the student is found to have a disability, an IEP must be developed. The IEP team must then conduct a manifestation determination. If the behavior is manifested by the student's disability, the team reconsiders the student's placement in light of the new information

V. Referral to and Action by Law Enforcement and Judicial Authorities

A. Reporting Crimes. Nothing in this part prohibits school personnel from reporting a crime committed by a student with a disability to appropriate authorities or prevents State law

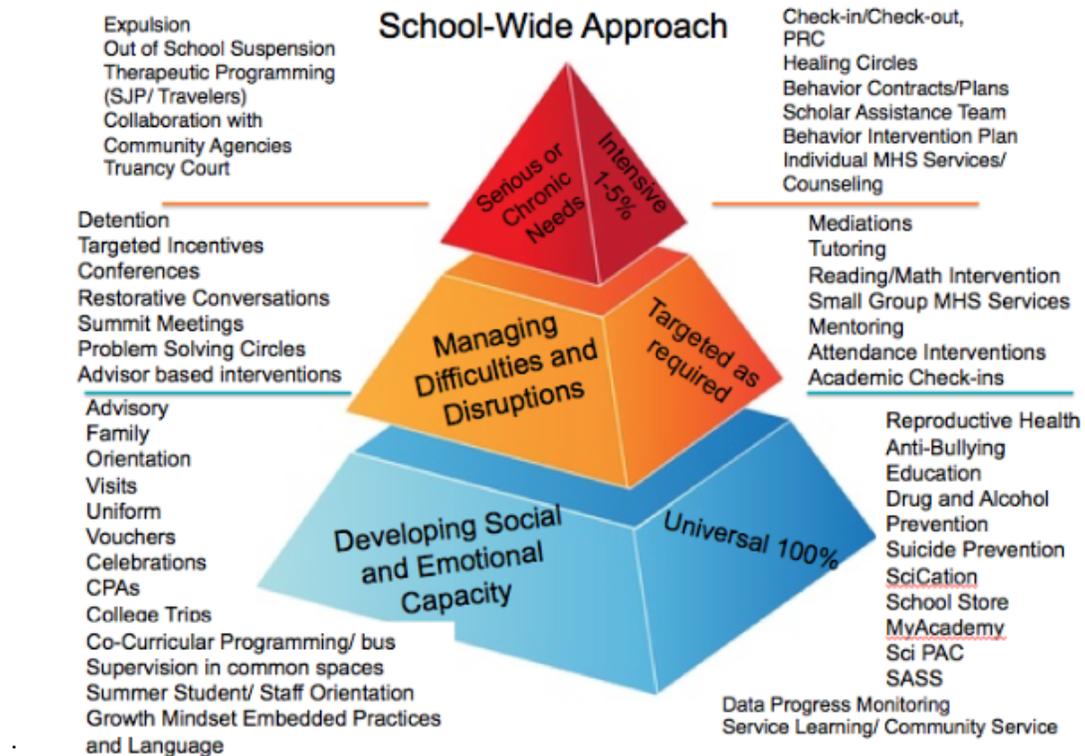


enforcement and judicial authorities from exercising their responsibilities with regard to the application of Federal and State law to crimes committed by a student with a disability.

B. Transmittal of Records. School personnel reporting a crime committed by a student with a disability must ensure that copies of the special education and disciplinary records of the student are transmitted for consideration by the appropriate authorities to whom the agency reports the crime. Records must be transmitted only to the extent that the transmission is permitted by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

VI. Application of Section 504 and ADA Generally, students with disabilities eligible for services only under Section 504/ADA (i.e., need related and supplementary aids and services only) are entitled to the procedural safeguards specified in this section. An exception to this general rule applies to students with behavior that is not a manifestation of his/her disabilities. In this case, these students are entitled to those services normally available to nondisabled students who are suspended or removed pursuant to the school’s Code of Student Conduct.

The following graphic outlines an example of the extensive programming Collegiate implements at its schools, with a strong foundation of social emotional learning. This suite of behavioral programming would be the base for school behavior structures that the OA school would adapt for its student population.



(3) OA student leadership is encouraged by empowering them to define their own path, take charge in experiential learning opportunities, and contribute to OA’s future plans.

- **Self-defined goal setting:** As a college-like program, OA puts the OA student at the forefront of deciding



what they are going to study and accomplish during their time in the program. Each student participates in shaping their own path and defining their personalized goals.

- **Student-led enterprises:** OA students have the opportunity to build and lead one of the student-run businesses that OA operates, such as the coffee shop enterprises, rOAsT. Through this, students get the chance to shape what the business will become and take on a prominent role in the school community.
- **Advisory Council:** Student family members participate on the OA Advisory Council that helps guide long-term planning, advocacy, community engagement, and OA program implementation. This structure helps to create a space where student concerns can be raised directly with the community and have an impact on future OA programming.
- **Raising student voices:** OA empowers students to be OA Ambassadors to represent the program to external audiences in their own words. The OA team will work with current ambassadors to determine whether a student government structure would be appealing for future years. Collegiate also gives OA students the opportunity to bring their voices to the public sphere. For example, a network-level communication staff regularly works with students to help them share their experiences and develop personalized guest columns for publication in local news outlets like *The Times-Picayune's* NOLA.com.

Family & Community Engagement

- (1) Describe any activities you have undertaken to date to assess and build parent and community support for the school. Explain the role to date of any parents and community members in developing this application or the school, as applicable.
- (2) How will you share information with Parents/Guardians and Community Members?
- (3) How will your school create meaningful opportunities for Student, Parent/Guardian, and Community voice in school decision-making?
- (4) Describe your plans for creating a Parent-Teacher Organization.
- (5) What is the process for grievances?

TYPE YOUR RESPONSE IN THE BOX BELOW, IT WILL EXPAND AS NEEDED.

(1) Opportunities Academy exists as a program and seeks to become a school because New Orleans parents voiced a need for it.

The original Opportunities Academy program was created in response to multiple years of conversations with parents and community members about the lack of affordable, rigorous post-secondary options for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities in New Orleans. Now, Collegiate Academies seeks to create an OA school out of the program in part because parents have suggested it as a way to simplify the enrollment process and further expand programmatic offerings; parents and community members alike have suggested that a greater number of eligible students would gain access to OA's services if it were an independent entity listed on the OneApp.

In the development of the OA program, OA has established an Advisory Council made up of both parents and community members in order to leverage citywide resources and consistently solicit feedback from both OA families and the community at large.

(2) As a network, Collegiate Academies communicates regularly with families and community members to receive feedback and ensure that stakeholders are aware of all instructional services and school programming.



It is the duty of Collegiate Academies to report to parents/guardians the social and academic progress of their children. We use a variety of methods to make sure that all pertinent information is successfully disseminated:

- Our advisory system creates strong interpersonal bonds between members of our faculty and the families of our students. These bonds serve as a foundation for all other communication.
- Regular phone calls between advisors and parents/guardians are a faculty requirement. Faculty members log all contact in our Schoolrunner data management system and are held accountable to meet their communication expectations on a quarterly basis.
- Parents provide critical input on all areas of the school through the parent organization, My Academy.
- Students receive a daily report on their academic and behavioral performance generated by the Schoolrunner system.

In OA, parents actively participate in IEP meetings to help determine their student's path and set their goals. They also have their own commitments within the OA program to access community resources that they need to provide their students with the services they need long-term.

(3)(4) Opportunities Academy has created an OA Advisory Council to actively engage parents and community members in decision-making.

As a network, Collegiate solicits input from diverse stakeholders and seeks feedback and partnerships from community organizations and the public, including through Board meetings in compliance with state Open Meetings Law. Collegiate employs a team of individuals tasked with communicating all initiatives and interventions to stakeholders, parents, and community members.

For Opportunities Academy, the primary structure for engaging parents and community members in decision-making has been the citywide OA Advisory Council, which started meeting regularly in December 2017 and includes OA parents and staff, along with invested representatives from local high schools, New Schools for New Orleans, Delgado Community College, Metropolitan Human Services District, New Orleans Therapeutic Day Program, Louisiana Rehabilitative Services, Families Helping Families, YouthForce NOLA, and the Cowen Institute of Tulane University.

This Advisory Council actively includes parents and gives them opportunities to engage well beyond the traditional parent-only boards and committees. Specifically, the goals of the OA Advisory Council are:

- Engage institutions of higher education, career readiness providers, local businesses/employers.
- Engage parents, alumni and students as advocates and collaborators in mapping transition strategies and offerings in New Orleans.
- Engage in collaborative Professional Development for OA program staff.
- Increase the number of students with disabilities who:
 - Obtain employment in an integrated setting after completing high school and/or
 - Attend an institute of higher education for concurrent or post-secondary learning experiences.
- Engage stakeholders through the Advisory Council to create a comprehensive strategic plan that addresses each "Area of Consideration" below:

Area of Consideration	Questions for Stakeholder Engagement
Partnerships: Transition Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the full scope of transition service agencies (e.g. Louisiana Rehabilitative Services, Metropolitan Health Services District, etc.) available to work with OA?



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can we replicate programs in institutions of higher education in other parts of Louisiana? • What activities does OA need to carry out in order to develop formal, long-term partnerships with these agencies?
Partnerships: Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What industries are most likely to have employers that would provide OA students with such opportunities? • What are the key levers for success in existing career preparation programs (i.e. Café Reconcile and/or Liberty's Kitchen)? • What activities does OA need to carry out in order to pursue and develop long-term partnerships with industry-based partners?
Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As the programs grow, what is the most efficient approach to overcoming barriers to participation due to transportation issues?
Evaluation and Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What can we learn from nationally-recognized transition programs about how to approach measures of success?
Competitors/ Collaborators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What other public and private programs offer rigorous post-12th grade options to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities? • How are the services offered by these programs different from and similar to those offered by OA? • How can existing programs complement the services offered by OA?
Revenue Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What additional revenue sources, outside of per pupil funding and traditional government funding for students with disabilities, exist for OA to utilize? • Of any additional revenue sources to utilize, which are recurring and which are not recurring? • What activities would OA need to carry out to secure those revenues?

(5) Collegiate Academies addresses all grievances to ensure a high-functioning school community.
 Any student, parent/guardian, employee or employment applicant who feels that he/she has been discriminated against on the basis of race, creed, color, age, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status, or disability may discuss and/or file a grievance with the appropriate part of Collegiate Academies administration. In most cases, this is the School Leader. A final determination will be made in advance of opening and will be published in the Student & Family Handbook. A student or any parent/guardian of a student who has a question or concern may choose to seek the help of the building



administrator or another adult with whom they trust, such as a teacher, counselor, nurse, or psychologist. If satisfaction cannot be achieved through this discussion, the adult sought by the student will assist the student in reporting the incident, in writing, to the appropriate compliance officer.

- Reporting should take place within forty (40) calendar days of the alleged discrimination.
- The compliance officer will commence an effective, thorough, objective, and complete investigation of the complaint within ten (10) working days after receipt of the complaint. The compliance officer will consult with all individuals reasonably believed to have relevant information, including the complainant and the alleged violator, any witnesses to the conduct, and victims of similar conduct that the investigator reasonably believes may exist. The investigation shall be free of stereotypical assumptions about either party. The investigation shall be carried on discreetly, maintaining confidentiality insofar as possible while still conducting an effective and thorough investigation. Throughout the entire investigation process, due process rights will be upheld. No reprisals will be taken or permitted for truthfully asserting a complaint.
- The compliance officer shall make a written report summarizing the results of the investigation and proposed disposition of the matter, and shall provide copies to the complainant, the alleged violator, and, as appropriate, to all others directly concerned within fifteen (15) working days after receiving the complaint.
- If the complainant is not satisfied with the decision of the compliance officer, an appeal in writing may be made to the Collegiate Academies Board of Directors within ten (10) days of receipt of the decision.
- The Collegiate Academies Board of Directors, within thirty (30) working days, will investigate the complaint and may conduct a hearing to gather additional information.

Governing Board

- (1) Describe the roles necessary on the board, the responsibilities that align with each role, and identify who will play that role on the board. Describe how the governing board will interact with the principal/head of school and any advisory bodies. As **Attachment 2**, provide a resume for each of your identified board members. Resumes will not count towards the page limit.
- (2) Describe how the board will monitor the school’s overall performance.
- (3) Describe the steps the board will take to evaluate the school leader and CEO/Organizational Leader. Specifically, describe: the information the board will collect; The systems by which the board will collect information; The standards - including and in addition to student performance goals- the board will use to evaluate information it collects;
- (4) Describe the process by which your board identifies potential conflicts of interest before making decisions.
- (5) Explain the procedure by which board members have been and will be selected. How often will the board meet? Discuss the plans for any committee structure. Describe the board’s processes to remaining compliant with open meeting and public records laws.
- (6) (if applicable) If there’s a sole member structure responsible for the appointment of governing board members, and/or if the local board (maintained in compliance with Policy HA requirements) must report to any other entity (i.e., a statewide or national board) please provide a statement explaining the nature of the relationship, and the terms/conditions under which it could be dissolved (if any).

TYPE YOUR RESPONSE IN THE BOX BELOW, IT WILL EXPAND AS NEEDED.

(1) Roles on the Collegiate Board are designed to provide oversight and help the organization reach its goals.

To ensure efficient and effective execution of Board duties, the following positions will be designated:



- Stephen Rosenthal, Chairperson: Preside at all meetings of the Board. Has general charge and supervision of the administration of the affairs and business of the Collegiate. He or she shall have the power to sign all contracts authorized specifically by the Board, to execute and deliver other documents and instruments, and to sign checks, drafts, notes and orders for the payment of money. The Chair shall also have such other powers and perform such other duties as the Board of Directors may from time to time prescribe.
- Jonathan Wilson, Vice Chair: In the absence or disability of the Chair, perform the duties and exercise the powers of the Chair. The Vice Chair may have such powers and perform such duties as may be delegated by the Chairman or prescribed by the Board.
- Gregory M. St. Etienne, Secretary: Responsible for the maintenance of an accurate record of all the minutes of all meetings of the Board and of any committees; serve or cause to be served all notices of the Corporation; be custodian of the records (other than financial); perform other duties as assigned. In the event of absence or disability of the Secretary, the Board of Directors may appoint an Assistant Secretary to perform the duties of the Secretary during such absence or disability.
- Douglas Finegan, Treasurer: Assist the Board in the oversight of the Collegiate's financial management but shall not participate therein. The Treasurer shall also serve as the Chair of the selection committee for the auditor engaged to conduct the annual audit.
- All other members shall attend all meetings in order to actively and thoughtfully oversee the management of Collegiate.

Board members receive training and information from partners such as LAPCS in order to remain informed about key policy compliance goals and to equip them to ensure that schools are on-track to meet them. In rare instances where the organization learns it is out of compliance, the Board requests regular status updates and clear plans to resolve the situation.

(2) Board responsibilities are structured to effectively monitor progress and help each Collegiate school accomplish its vision.

Collegiate Academies’ Board of Directors is ultimately responsible for ensuring that all schools and the central office meet their academic, fiscal and operational objectives. Collegiate Academies’ Board of Directors responsibilities include:

- Bearing final responsibility for each school’s academic success, organizational viability, and faithfulness to the terms of the charter
- Development and approval of the annual organization-wide budget
- Approval of all organizational policies
- Supporting the organization in fundraising, communications, and advocacy efforts
- Setting goals and reviewing strategy to continually guide the organization towards the fulfillment of its mission
- Hiring, termination, and evaluation of the Chief Executive Officer

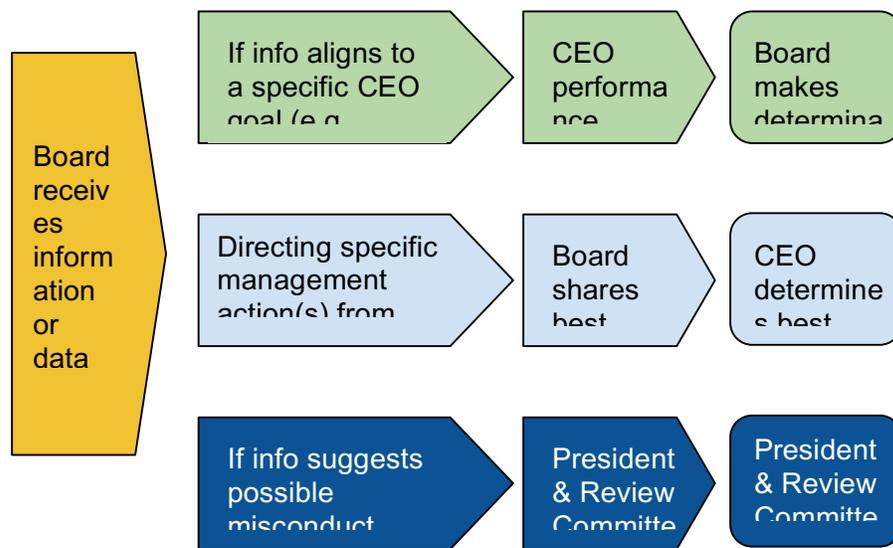
The Board represents the diverse professional experiences and practical expertise necessary to support the startup and long-term viability of a charter network. Such experiences and expertise include education, finance, law, non-profit and community leadership, human resources, and previous governance experience.

Collegiate Academies’ Board of Directors plays a critical role in monitoring operational and financial goals via meetings, reports, and regular discussion. The Finance Committee receives reports on enrollment and all variances, including those between budgeted staff and actual, progress to fundraising targets, and other key drivers of organizational health. These reports are shared with the board at each board meeting. In the fall and after the first of the year, the Board receives reports by school on daily attendance, suspensions, interim testing and % of students on track to meeting individual academic goals. At year end the Board reviews EOC and ACT data broken



out by school, grade, and subject, along with daily attendance and suspension rates. The executive committee is tasked with the annual CEO evaluation against organizational goals. In addition, the board has requested and received presentations by programmatic leaders across Collegiate Academies schools in the areas of English Language Learner programming, special education, community engagement, facilities, and growth strategy. Typically these sessions begin with a presentation by staff, followed by extending questions by the board. Follow-up research and action steps are assigned to be brought back for future board engagement. When appropriate, a subcommittee is formed to allow for in-depth discussion and problem-solving. The Finance and Audit Committee, for example, meets on a monthly basis to review financial statements, progress to fundraising targets, state enrollment data, and other key drivers of organizational health.

The flowchart below summarizes how the Board responds to the collection of data regarding school performance and degree to which the network is on-track to fulfill the terms of its charter and hit stated academic, financial, and operational goals. In most instances, the Board delegates the development and execution of strategies to respond to data and information to the CEO, who in turn delegates to School Leaders and leadership of the central Create and Support Team (CST).



(3) The board monitors and evaluates the CEO on a regular basis, with structures in place to address performance issues.

At each meeting the Board receives a CEO Report on academic performance and strength of student culture at each school. Specific data points and indicators are presented with comparisons to prior years or peer schools when available. To ensure that Collegiate has the resources needed to execute its vision, monthly financial reports are provided. Discussion and questions about the allocation of resources to the highest priority areas follows.

The board's process is straightforward: metrics are reviewed to ensure they remain applicable for the upcoming year and any adjustments are made by the Governance Committee and Chair. After the year ends, the Governance Committee uses publicly available data (and staff-generated data, when needed) to guide an evaluation discussion,



the conclusions and summarized recommendations of which are brought to the whole Board for approval after additional discussion. Areas of strength and improvement are noted to the CEO, who has the responsibility to build out a set of professional development supports in order to remediate the growth areas. In recent years, the CEO has participated in multiple national fellowships to build skill as the network expands and becomes more complex. These include The Board Academy, Achievement First’s Charter Network Accelerator, and the Transcend + New Schools Venture Fund Collaborative.

In the event of persistent underperformance in a particular area or areas of the CEO evaluation, the degree of board oversight would escalate. Domains evaluated include: Academic Performance, Financial Management, Academic Program Fidelity, Stakeholder Satisfaction, and Fundraising/Community Relations. The additional coaching and oversight would be tailored to the area of underperformance. For example, poor performance on Financial Management might trigger a review of financial operations, policy, and strategy by a third-party with expertise in charter school finance. The Governance Committee of the board would work with the CEO, authorizer, and nonprofits such as New Schools for New Orleans and LAPCS to identify supports that would improve performance of the network and the CEO. These supports may also be recommended if performance is “Below Expectations” or even “Meets Expectations”, depending on the trajectory of the indicators over the years and the strategic importance of the criteria. Collegiate Academies has never faced this scenario due to strong academic, financial, and operational performance since 2008-09.

(4) The Board has strong processes to ensure conflicts of interest are identified and avoided.

Demonstrating ethical behavior at all times is a non-negotiable obligation to serve on the Collegiate Academies Board. Our processes begin with clear definitions and standards in our bylaws. Ethics training and conflict of interests disclosures are tracked. There is a mandate placed on all Board members to disclose so that Board can discuss the possible conflict fully and transparently; if disregarded, Board is empowered to take disciplinary and corrective action. With these processes in place -- and with a strong Board culture around selection and transparency -- Collegiate has successfully avoided all real and perceived conflicts of interests since its inception. We are committed to maintaining that track record indefinitely.

(5) An aligned, thoughtful Board of Directors is critical to Collegiate’s success.

Selection of Collegiate Board members is guided by the goals of adding trustees who are aligned to the mission of Collegiate Academies, who provide needed professional expertise, who help to achieve ethnic and gender diversity on the Board, and who help to represent the communities we serve.

By working diligently to grow the board and replace departing members with strong replacement members, Collegiate’s board has successfully overseen a network of open-enrollment charter schools that has received renewals and extensions at each opportunity, has grown from one school to five, and has received clean financial audits each year.

Sourcing taps both established structures such as LAPCS’ Board Bank and informal networks in the nonprofit, business, religious, and community leadership of Baton Rouge and New Orleans. We have significantly increased the diversity of our board in recent years to better reflect the demographics of the students we serve. Additionally, we have added a parent of current students.

Once a candidate is identified and expresses interest, a selection process launches to ensure candidate expectations are in alignment with the vision for Collegiate Academies’ board. Candidates will tour current CA schools, interview with the Board Chair, Chair of Governance Committee, and CEO. As in Collegiate’s process to hire staff, scenario-based questions are critical during interviews to understand the candidate’s problem-solving



approach, values, and commitments. A prospective new member may be asked how they would respond if they learned the CEO and School Leaders planned to adopt a new Geometry curriculum, or how they might respond if asked to prepare to testify at an OPSB meeting in support of a new policy. These responses are intended to simulate the experience of a board member, particularly clarifying the distinct roles of board and management. We consider this selection process as a critical component of onboarding as well: new board members understand from the outset that the Board’s role is to evaluate the performance of the CEO, approve the budget, and assist the CEO with requests for assistance. This foundational principle--as well as more general information about the functioning of the Board and strategic plan of the network--are reinforced through other onboarding activities such as meetings with fellow board members, meetings with the CEO and network leadership, and observation of board and committee meetings. Board members are provided the bylaws, recent meeting minutes, annual reports produced by staff, and compliance guidance from sources such as LAPCS and LDE to ensure they are fully prepared for the responsibility.

Collegiate Academies will continue to develop an active, strong Board of Directors that is representative of our community and will play a crucial role in supporting our strategic growth. The Board will oversee the management of the business, affairs, and property of Collegiate. Regular meetings will be held at times and places determined by the Board, and notice of meetings will be given in compliance with the Louisiana State Open Meetings law, La. R.S. 42:4.1 et seq. Collegiate will maintain a Board of at least seven (7) individuals and will elect or appoint committees for focused discussion of critical organizational issues. No member of the Board will receive any salary or compensation for their services.

Staff and Organization

- (1) As **Attachment 3**, provide an organizational chart. As **Attachment 4**, include job descriptions that summarize the scope of work for all staff on the school leadership team. If applicable, As **Attachment 5 and 6**, provide redacted and un-redacted resumes for any identified leadership team members.
- (2) Describe your administrator and teacher recruitment strategy, including legally required qualifications (LA R.S. 17:3983), as well as any school design specific qualifications. Include how you will attract a diverse applicant pool that includes candidates who share the same backgrounds with students and are from the Greater New Orleans area.

TYPE YOUR RESPONSE IN THE BOX BELOW, IT WILL EXPAND AS NEEDED.

(1) See Attachments 3, 4, 5 and 6.
(2) Recruiting the right teachers and staff is crucial to Collegiate’s academic success.
 Research indicates that teacher quality is the single strongest determinant of student success. Therefore, we take the recruitment process very seriously. The hiring process is lengthy – from start to finish, we average seven weeks – and requires multiple sample lessons and discussions with staff and students at the school. We believe that this rigorous process has directly contributed to our students’ ever-increasing academic performance. The hiring process that is used for all staff is detailed in the table below:

Hiring Step	Method	Purpose
Initial Screening	Telephone or in-person interview	Candidates must prove undaunted by the challenges of Collegiate’s mission and inspired by the potential fulfillment of Collegiate’s mission



Work Sample	For teaching staff, sample lesson	To provide evidence and data for Coaching (Step 3)
Coaching	In-person or telephone review of sample	Provide feedback on sample work/teaching. Shows how candidate responds to feedback, informs step 4, and provides the candidate with an example of Collegiate's development methods
Second Work Sample	For teaching staff, sample lesson	Second sample shows how/if candidate integrates feedback into work
Team Interview	In person, often in casual setting	Candidate is asked a series of scenario-based questions. Team evaluates candidate's adherence with core values
References	Via phone	To assess the implications of candidate's past performance for future performance

To diversify our talent pool and target locals, our talent team has been actively building relationships with local universities to draw in a pool of teaching staff from the Greater New Orleans area and who are more likely to share the same backgrounds and come from the same communities as the students we serve.

Collegiate has also been working to create a special education teacher pipeline in partnership with the Relay Graduate School of Education in New Orleans. As part of this program, our talent team has been recruiting younger teachers and investing the resources to develop them into more skillful educators with licenses in their field.

The Opportunities Academy program has been leveraging this pipeline to build its initial staff and to empower Collegiate's existing paraprofessionals with the education and experience to become high-quality full-time teachers.

We assess the success of our hiring and staff development methods by analyzing student achievement outcomes. An increase in student achievement, as measured by interim assessment data during the year and state and national assessments at the end of each year, is the ultimate measure of team effectiveness.

Mission Critical Partners

Educational Service Providers are not considered "Mission Critical Partners" for the purposes of this section. Applicant groups which will use an Educational Service provider should complete the Educational Service Provider section of this application.

- (1) Describe the mission-critical partnerships that your school has established and provide, as **Attachment 7**, the terms of these partnerships in form of a written commitment or MOU.
- (2) What is the contingency plan if these partnerships are not maintained?

TYPE YOUR RESPONSE IN THE BOX BELOW, IT WILL EXPAND AS NEEDED.

(1) Collegiate works with a range of service providers and partner organizations to maximize impact with our students and their families. Collegiate will work with the following partners to best serve OA students.



As they are in development, most have not yet been formalized with MOUs.

- Local high schools: The OA team will collaborate with local schools to identify students with intellectual and developmental disabilities for whom OA would be a viable and beneficial option beyond 12th grade. Collegiate’s OA team will work closely with school teams to transition students from high school settings to OA.
- Local Community College: Working with Delgado Community College, the OA team will create a career and technical education learning site.
- Louisiana Rehabilitation Services and Metropolitan Health Services District: The OA team will work with these local agencies to connect students with community services that will support them with independent living and employment into adulthood.
- The Advocacy Center of Louisiana (AC): OA will connect students with AC to empower them with the resources to advocate for their human and legal rights and to avoid abuse, neglect, and exploitation.
- Local Adult Programs: The OA team will work with organizations that serve adults with significant disabilities to ensure graduating OA students are accessing the best available services in their transition to adulthood. Such organizations might include the Magnolia School and The Arc of New Orleans.
- Best-practice sites: the Opportunities Academy team will deepen existing relationships with organizations and providers that are currently serving similar populations with success. These include: REACH Iowa, ThinkCollege!, The Arc of San Francisco, and the Program for Successful Employment in Bossier, Louisiana.
- Specialized Programming: OA will work with the Institute for Women and Ethnic Studies to provide OA students with sex education. **The MOU for this agreement is attached.**

Operational and Financial Readiness

- (1) Provide, as **Attachment 8**, a detailed start-up plan for the school. Specify tasks, and key milestones, timelines for completion, and the individuals or positions responsible for each. Indicate at which point key individuals will become employees of the organization, as well as contingency plans if you are unable to open in your preferred time frame.
- (2) Provide as **Attachment 9**, your school’s start-up and Year 1 operating budget.
- (3) Do you plan to use a financial manager or a back-office service provider? If the entity that will provide your financial services has been chosen, please provide its name and attach the contract as **Attachment 10** and the resume of the person designated as your qualified business manager as **Attachment 11**. If that entity is an individual financial manager, please provide his / her one-page resume as **Attachment 11**.
- (4) To whom will your financial manager or back-office service provider report: the school leader, a network/CMO level staff member, or the board?
- (5) If your school leader or organization are considered an experienced operator include as **Attachment 12** your School/Portfolio Performance workbook.

TYPE YOUR RESPONSE IN THE BOX BELOW, IT WILL EXPAND AS NEEDED.

(3)(4) We do not plan to use a financial manager or back-office provider.

Attachments

- (1) Attachment 1: (Optional) Student Recruitment Evidence
- (2) Attachment 2: Governing Board Roster & Resumes
- (3) Attachment 3: Organization Chart & Staffing Plan
- (4) Attachment 4: School leadership team job descriptions
- (5) Attachment 5: Redacted Leadership Team Resumes



- (6) Attachment 6: Un-redacted Leadership Team Resumes
- (7) Attachment 7: (If applicable) Mission Critical Partner MOUs/Contracts
- (8) Attachment 8: Detailed Start-up Plan
- (9) Attachment 9: Start-up and Year 1 Budget
- (10) Attachment 10: (If applicable) Financial Manager Contract
- (11) Attachment 11 Qualified Business Manager/Financial Manager resume
- (12) Attachment 12: (Experienced Operators) School/Portfolio Performance workbook

Common Application (Part 2)

Section I: School

Academic Model & Schedule

- (1) For all core content and mission-related subject areas:
 - a. Identify the program model or curricula that your school will use and your reasons for these choices, you may include as **Attachment 13** data or research supporting your academic model;
 - b. Identify the interim assessments you will use and how these align to the curricula;
 - c. Describe your professional development plans for teachers and how they connect to the curricula and assessments.
- (2) Where has each identified core instructional component, program model or curricula been used before? What have been the results, in particular with your intended student population?
 - a. If your schools is using an existing curricula, provide the curricula’s Louisiana Department of Education Curricular Review Score (<http://www.louisianabelieves.com/academics/ONLINE-INSTRUCTIONAL-MATERIALS-REVIEWS/curricular-resources-annotated-reviews>)
 - b. If the model or curricula has not been scored by LDE, what is the research and evidence base and/or logic model informing your curricular design choices? How will you ensure alignment between the curriculum and state standards, and how will you evaluate the effectiveness of its implementation?
- (3) Describe a day and year in the life of a student at your school. Include, as **Attachment 14**, a weekly student schedule and, as **Attachment 15**, a calendar of special events that will happen throughout the school’s inaugural year.
- (4) Provide as **Attachment 16**, a copy of the school/organization’s [Pupil Progression Plan](#). If your school does not yet have an adopted PPP, please attach a draft version.
- (5) Does the school intend to offer early childhood education, or Pre-Kindergarten classes? Describe the group’s anticipated funding source(s) and model for early childhood education.

TYPE YOUR RESPONSE IN THE BOX BELOW, IT WILL EXPAND AS NEEDED.

(1) OA’s programming was created by Collegiate’s team of Special Education experts to fill the gap in New Orleans transition programming for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Opportunities Academy will provide a one-of-a-kind, rigorous transition program for New Orleans students with intellectual and developmental disabilities that provides the academic and vocational skills students will need to pursue their desired levels of independence and employment.

In its design, OA will strive to feel like a real college campus so that students can have an authentic and individually-driven post-secondary experience. Curricula will aim to bridge the gap between high school and adulthood according to identified student needs. Prior to enrollment, and then on an ongoing basis, students and their families will work with OA staff through a formal IEP process to set individualized goals in the areas of:



- **Independent Living:** Are students prepared to live independent and robust lives with proper levels of support?
- **Family Supports:** Are families able to navigate available public agencies to best meet their child’s needs?
- **Meaningful Career:** Do students leave public education and transition to paid and meaningful employment that aligns with their most rigorous goals?
- **Community Access:** Upon exiting public education, do students know how to effectively and authentically participate in the community?

Lessons will be highly personalized and experiential. The instruction is as practical as it is academic, with communication and problem solving skills being honed alongside job awareness, transportation navigation, nutrition, and math and reading. The extra time and attention that OA provides for these students and their families will equip students to achieve their highest level of independence in pursuit of meaningful and fulfilling personal and professional outcomes.

Prior to placement in the OA program, a student’s IEP team will work with the student and other stakeholders to draft a person-centered plan that focuses on the three critical elements of transition: Independent Living, Career Readiness, and Community Access. This PATH plan identifies individual goals and outcomes the student can achieve. The goals identified in each plan will determine the student’s courses and schedule in OA.

Responsive student programming will offer

- **Work-based learning:** Internships within the school, including at student-led enterprises, and externships with local partners, including The Hyatt and the Grow Dat’s Youth Farm, where students can gain career experience and leadership skills.
- **Independent-living lab:** in an apartment-style classroom, students will develop independent-living skills and, at a local community college, students will practice community access and personal advocacy and engage in academic coursework.
- **College classes:** OA students will access further career readiness training through computer programming courses with a local organization focused on accelerating workforce development by equipping participants with high-demand tech skills.

The OA program has already demonstrated success with its internship program and student-led enterprises. OA’s rOAsT Coffee Shop is a student-operated coffee shop run within OA, where Collegiate teammates, students, and friends frequently visit. The professional and real-world experience students gain through rOAsT is immense, reinforcing employment and independent living skills, while also helping students gain customer service training. Each part of this experience is carefully planned for and taught using task analysis, feedback, and consistent adjustments to meet student’s individual needs and work toward their individual goals. For example, one student’s PATH career goal is to work at a retail location. At rOAsT, this student runs the cash register to gain practice with greeting customers, fielding questions, managing money, making change, and using a credit card machine. These are all skills this student will need to succeed in their future career goals. The strategic operation of rOAsT allows us to provide students with these experiences and increase students’ ability to be successful and independent on a daily basis. An OA school would build on this model to create additional hands on work experiences for students.

Through all of these elements, OA’s school will increase post-secondary program completion, independent living, and job placement for individuals with disabilities, boosting their earning potential and financial security, and connect students and families to a web of continuous services to support their long-term needs.

Assessment of interim student progress within the OA Program.

Student progress will be measured by constant tracking and analysis of individual skill acquisition and progress towards their ultimate independence. The ultimate goal and vision for the students in the program is to maximize independence in career, community, and life and thus achieve greater access to the rigorous outcome of their



choice.

Collegiate Academies utilizes person-centered plans, or PATH (Planning Alternative Tomorrows of Hope) plans, that we use both to obtain a baseline of student transition abilities and to allow us to progress monitor each student's individual growth over their years in Opportunities Academy. Plans and objectives are modified to address skills for all students at all levels and to ensure instruction is appropriate and rigorous for everyone.

The PATH plans serve as the cornerstone of student progress towards goals, with each level of the plan helping students to target and develop a variety of skills grounded in the major domains of transition necessary for an independent adult life. OA supports students in reaching their individualized goals and monitors their progress in the major domains of transition, including employability, daily living, community, personal life, personal interests, and lifelong learning.

We aim to have students achieve one full level of growth on their PATH plans and to reach maximum independence on the goals outlined on their plans. To foster this progress, benchmark goals are tracked on a nine-week cycle and the data is used to plan for maximizing instruction and experiences for the next cycle in order to achieve goal attainment at the end of the year. By April of its pilot year, 80% of students in OA had already met their goals.

To ensure that each student continues to push his/her growth and independence, we will work with families to evolve plans to ensure that students continue to progress toward their life goals.

As students in OA work to successfully transition into adulthood and graduate from the school and program, our team plans to leverage external partnerships and work to ensure that they are:

- linked to an **independent support agency**
- have appropriate **personal care assistants and home living aids**, and
- maximally **integrated in the community**.

PATH plans encompass a range of objectives in the areas of employment, daily living, community, personal life, and lifelong learning. These objectives are measured on a scale of independence with the ultimate goal that students master these skills as independently as possible. Independence may look different for each student, based on their functional and physical needs, but independence is still possible for every student and that is the expectation we are constantly working towards.

Students are assessed weekly on classroom routines using a task analysis and Criteria for Success. Through weekly assessments, the OA team is able to track students' reliance on prompts and adult support over time and determine their level of independence in that specific skill. If students are not progressing and are still relying on the same level of support from week to week, we are able to identify what barriers exist and implement interventions or modifications as needed. Ultimately, some students will continue to rely on some level of support from family or care providers into adulthood given their level of need. However, through Transition, we work with each student on building independence in specific daily living skills, including eating or engaging in a game with a peer, or in communication skills, such as asking for help on their own or utilizing their communication devices authentically.

Experiences are designed to be diverse. For example, when instruction or practice targets money management skills, some students may be working on balancing checkbooks and operating a register. Other students may be working on the essential motor skills needed to count out bills and use their communication device independently to state how much money they have and what they want to purchase. OA students develop career skills, become more independent in daily living skills, such as financial literacy and cooking, and learn how to access their



community and explore opportunities for an active and engaged lifestyle.

OA Aligned Professional Development.

Opportunities Academy plans to incorporate aligned professional development into every day, with 45 minutes at the beginning and end of each day dedicated to staff professional development around OA’s goals.

At a network-level, Collegiate believes in the unique potential of every one of our students and strives to ensure that each student achieves their maximum potential so that they are able to obtain their maximum opportunity.

Collegiate has developed the Intervention Leadership Fellowship (ILF) program as a tool for reaching these goals.

The Intervention Leadership Fellowship is dedicated to enhancing and enriching mindsets and further develop knowledge and skills that ensure every child can achieve his or her most rigorous post-secondary outcome in our existing Collegiate schools.

- The ILF is 4-month program that prepares fellows to lead programs to achieve one shared goal: ensure that every student will achieve his or her most rigorous post-secondary outcome.
- The program is designed to:
 - Increase capacity within and outside of Collegiate schools in intervention leadership
 - Build a pool of potential Directors of Intervention for Collegiate schools as we grow
- Fellows spend their time focused on four main content areas:
 - Mission, values, and background knowledge for Intervention Leadership. Mission and values of intervention team at Collegiate; the history of Special Education in the US; Collegiate mindsets for intervention; the relationship between intervention, special education, and student support; and key policies in Louisiana that govern how we plan, organize and report on the services we provide.
 - The Continuum of Services: from Academic and Behavioral RTI to Evaluation. Professional development (PD) sessions include: how to develop strong RTI processes for students to enter evaluation; how to write high-quality IEP goals and run compliant, exemplary IEP meetings; and how to motivate teachers to be present for evaluation dissemination meetings.
 - Collegiate Outcomes Matrix and progress monitoring towards student outcomes. Professional development sessions include: defining what “most rigorous post-secondary outcome” means in practice; learning the Collegiate Outcomes Matrix; and best practices for how intervention teachers and teams use data to drive their programming and results.
 - Specialized programming and related services. Professional development sessions include: the qualities of effective reading and math intervention; high-quality programming for students with significant disabilities; high-quality programming for students with emotional/behavioral disorders; and how to lead a team to align speech services, OT, and PT, to overall program goals.
- There are three major program components:
 - Full Day PD: We will host two full day PDs, one kick-off, and one follow-up
 - Evening PD: Between full day PDs, there will be evening sessions from November through February on Tuesdays and/or Thursdays from 6 - 8 pm
 - Excellent School Visits (travel required): The fellows will visit exemplar school sites during the Mardi Gras break

In addition to the ILF, all instructional staff participate in bi-monthly Professional Learning Community (PLC) groups. These content based teams work together to improve classroom learning and practice, including working on skills specific to intervention and PATH plans.

Additionally, each CA school employs a Special Education Coordinator to coordinate and drive results for students



needing additional services and supports; this individual typically coaches all teachers with courses focused on meeting the needs of students with disabilities and ELL students. Participants in (and graduates of) the Intervention Leadership Fellowship supplement this leader so that more educators with expertise on each campus can collaborate with teachers. Additionally, for ELL students, the network has a stipended teacher leadership role to lead network-wide PLCs on serving the needs of ELL students and to support the campus Director of Intervention and ELL Chair with the design, execution, and evaluation of this programming. School Leaders regularly devote time in weekly school professional development to topics relevant to improving outcomes for these students alongside professional development on Tier One curriculum and whole school practices. This focus results in an in-depth and wide menu of development via sessions and ongoing coaching to support the needs of students with disabilities within the general education environment. Some of the topics include: Training in baseline mindsets, norms and approaches; Accommodations and Modifications (that target specific disability and or level of language acquisition); How to read a student's plan and turn it into action (504s, IEPs and LAPs); What is your role in an IEP meeting and how do you leverage it if students aren't succeeding in your class?; and Leveraging Read-Aloud software and other assistive technology. Depending on the student body and their needs, other PDs may be offered such as best practices in sheltered immersion for ELLs and best practices in co-teaching. In addition, teachers are observed regularly throughout the year to gather feedback on the fidelity of each student's plan implementation, provision of accommodations and modifications and other best practices.

(3) A Day and Year in the Life of an OA student.

As a highly personalized program, each student's day looks different depending on their needs. Below is an outline of a potential day in the life of a student Opportunities Academy.

Morning:

- Ride to school on free specialized transportation.
- Eat breakfast while:
 - working on personalized social skills goals,
 - getting prepared for what will happen that day, and
 - setting daily goals.
- Participate in movement class (i.e. yoga, dance, or Anat Baniel method neuromovement therapy)
- Content Time
 - Independent living skills in the lab: practice healthy cooking techniques and home care.
 - Attend courses, such as financial literacy or college and career readiness, at Delgado Community College
 - Tutoring, career-aligned skill development or preparation for internships/externships

Lunch: Eat while working on personalized social or mobility goals.

Afternoon:

- Work-based learning aligned to career interests.
 - Externship (e.g., working at an off-site internship for a partner organization)
 - Internship (e.g., working at an on-site student-run enterprise or school department)
- Last half hour: Advising. Teachers and job coaches meet with students to discuss goals and progress.

As mentioned above, there are many deviations from this schedule because of the individualization of each student plan. The Opportunities Academy schedule is intentionally designed to be highly customizable. For example, a student who has a specific interest (e.g., cosmetology) might spend the content portion of their day completing coursework on that subject through one of OA's community partners. OA students who are more independent will have the opportunity to take courses at local schools like Delgado Community College, either traditional Delgado



courses or a course taught by OA staff on Delgado’s campus, depending on student ability.

Another deviation from the schedule above may be for students who receive specialized services. A portion of their day would be dedicated to services such as occupational therapy, speech therapy, counseling, or adaptive PE, as designated in the student’s IEP.

A year in the life of an OA student is also flexible depending on each student’s personal pathway plan. The OA program will operate on a quarter schedule and students will typically cycle through internships or externships quarterly and experience four total in the year. Teachers will conduct quarterly assessments of student data that will be shared with the student and their family, and shared with Collegiate’s network-wide team at quarterly convenings. Students will take field trips approximately once a month through organizations like Louisiana Outdoors Outreach Program (LOOP). Students will also experience several family events to celebrate their achievements and developing skill acquisition, and they will participate in quarterly student recruitment events to share the program with other potential students and interested community members. Throughout the year students will continue to progress through levels of the program as they gain skills. For example, a student may apply to a leadership position in their Grow Dat internship or transition to a more independent Delgado Community College course after demonstrating success in an OA-run course at Delgado.

Special Student Populations

All schools are obligated to provide services to students with identified disabilities and English language learners under Federal law, and state law and BESE policy also provide for (but do not mandate) services to students identified as gifted/talented.

- (1) Provide a detailed special education plan describing how you will ensure that all special education students succeed at your school. Describe plans for identifying, evaluating, and serving special education students. Include your staffing plan for special education.
 - a. Specific instructional programs, practices, and strategies the school will employ to provide a continuum of services; ensure students’ access to the general education curriculum; and ensure academic success for students with exceptionalities,
 - b. Plans for promoting graduation for students with exceptionalities,
 - c. Plan to develop partnerships and connect students with disabilities and their families to outside agencies, and
 - d. Plan to discipline students with disabilities in an equitable and fair manner, in accordance with the IDEA.
- (2) Provide a detailed English Language Learner plan describing how you will ensure that all English Language Learners succeed. Describe plans for identifying, evaluating, and serving English Language Learners. Include your staffing plan for English Language Learners. Include specific instructional programs, practices and strategies the school will employ to ensure success both academically and socially, as well as equitable access to the core academic program for these students.
- (3) Describe plans for identifying, evaluating, and serving gifted and/or talented students. If the school will not provide gifted/talented instructional services as described in BESE Bulletins 126, 1508 and 1566 please indicate. If applicable describe the instructional programs, strategies, and supports that will be provided to ensure the success of intellectually gifted and/or talented students.
- (4) Provide as **Attachment 17** the relevant job description(s) and, if applicable, **Attachment 18**, resumes for individuals responsible for Special Education evaluations and/or service provision.

TYPE YOUR RESPONSE IN THE BOX BELOW, IT WILL EXPAND AS NEEDED.



(1) OA’s primary purpose is to better serve New Orleans’ students with mild to significant disabilities.
 As is elaborated throughout this proposal, OA’s entire program will focus on delivering specialized programming to New Orleans students with intellectual and developmental disabilities that will prepare them for fulfilling adult lives with maximum independence.

(2) Extending OA’s programming to English Language Learners.
 Collegiate Academies is committed to serving English Language Learners at the highest level. Over time, the proportion of Collegiate’s students who are non-native English speakers has increased significantly. Our schools have a great deal of experience in building strong support systems and equitable access to services for students who are English Language Learners. OA will leverage the lessons learned by existing schools to ensure all students are able to experience high quality programming that aligns to their individual needs. Specifically, in order to best meet their needs we have developed the following programs that will be implemented at Opportunities Academy:

- Every new student is given a translated orientation visit where language-minority students can be identified. Instructional leadership is notified when a child is identified as having need of translation and language acquisition services and diagnostics are completed for determining/recommending ELL support.
- All critical documents are translated into student and family home languages and all Collegiate Academies schools maintain contracts with a variety of translation services including document translation (Bilingual Resource Group), phone translation (Language Line), and in person translation (Bilingual Resource Group). Translators are also present at major parent and family events on campus.
- Staffing is tailored to meet the needs of the school’s population. OA will leverage the network resources of ELL experts, certified translators, and ELL teachers while actively recruiting bilingual staff. The number of teachers and translators and their language expertise is dependent on the needs of the students.

(3) OA will not provide gifted/talented instructional programs, strategies, and supports.
 OA’s primary purpose as a school is to provide high-quality experiential programming for students age 18-21 with intellectual and developmental disabilities that is specially focused to prepare them with real-world experiences for the transition into adulthood. To best serve this group of students with disabilities, OA will focus exclusively on meeting their particular needs.

High School Specific Questions

OPSB requires additional information from applicants seeking to start, transform or convert a school serving grades 9-12 in Orleans Parish. Complete this section only if your application proposes such a school.

State and District Graduation Standards

- (1) Provide as **Attachment 19** an example of a daily schedule for a student attending your school as well as your school’s academic calendar.
- (2) Detail each type of diploma your school will offer. Describe how your school will ensure every student is on a pathway to the diploma that best meets the individual student’s interests and post-secondary plans. Describe how your school will implement the state’s required Individual Graduation Plan, as well as the requirements of Act 833 relative to high school completion for students with identified disabilities.
- (3) Explain how the diploma pathways and credentialing offered by the school will ensure student readiness for post-secondary opportunities (college, trade school, military service, or entering the workforce).

Supporting Success for All Students – Truancy Prevention, Remediation and Intervention

- (1) Explain what systems and structures the school will implement for students in danger of dropping out and/or not meeting the proposed graduation requirements. Specifically describe any programs designed to support



students who have fallen behind in credit accumulation or are at-risk of falling behind to encourage on-time graduation.

- (2) Describe any systems and interventions your school will employ to decrease truancy.

Ensuring College and Career Readiness

- (1) What features will your school implement to ensure all students not only graduate from high school, but graduate prepared for success in college and career? Specifically, how will your school ensure students meet the following, or articulate why your school may not offer these opportunities:
- a. achieve a college going ACT score and/or career-ready WorkKeys score,
 - b. have opportunities to earn college credit during high school,
 - c. have opportunities to earn industry-based credentials (please provide information about the specific credentials students enrolled at your school will have the opportunity to earn)
 - d. have opportunities to engage in work-based learning experiences,
 - e. graduate with the knowledge, skills, competencies and experiences required to take ownership over individual post-secondary plans.
 - f. taking alternative assessments, with low incidence disabilities, are prepared to access to a variety of post-secondary options.

Strong Start – 9th Grade Transition Plan

- (1) How will your school ensure a successful transition into your school from 8th grade, and orient new students to your school?
- (2) How will your school use evidence based-strategies and interventions to support transitional 9th grade, and other students, who arrive 2 or more years behind? Please describe their path to graduation.

TYPE YOUR RESPONSE IN THE BOX BELOW, IT WILL EXPAND AS NEEDED.



State and District Graduation Standards

(2) OA Diplomas

OA will serve students with intellectual and developmental disabilities who have either completed or are working to complete a LAA1 diploma. Students who arrive without a diploma will receive functional, experiential instruction to help them complete their academic requirements, while also accessing work-based learning experiences. For example, math credits may be built into a student's internship through practical lessons that leverage experiences like cash-handling and customer service for student-run coffee shops. Once a student has obtained their LAA1 diploma, OA's main focus is providing students with the specific skills required to achieve their highest level of post-secondary success.

(3) As detailed in the Academic Model section above, the OA program is a rigorous transition program designed to provide students with intellectual and developmental disabilities with the support they need to reach their most rigorous post-secondary outcome. Supports are highly individualized and tailored to each student's goals and needs. Each student will work with their IEP team to create a person-centered plan that focuses on the three critical elements of transition: Independent Living, Career Readiness, and Community Access.

Success is measured against the student's PATH plan. This tool helps us ensure that each student's pathway leads them to their ideal and most rigorous post-secondary opportunity. Examples of pathways for different post-secondary opportunities are outlined in more detail below in the *Ensuring College and Career Readiness* section.

Supporting Success for All Students – Truancy Prevention, Remediation, and Intervention

(1) (2) OA has built-in structures that support families and students to prevent truancy and stay on track.

Each student's IEP process is highly collaborative and includes parents, families, students, and teachers. Additionally, close-knit advisory structures result in daily touch points between teachers, students and families; teachers proactively communicate updates with parents and families. Lastly, the highly personalized instructional model prevents any students from slipping through the cracks.

Ensuring College and Career Readiness

(1) OA Students will graduate ready to pursue their most rigorous post-secondary outcome.

Specific transition programming will include:

- **Work-based learning:** Internships within the school, including at student-led enterprises like rOast, and externships with local partners, including The Hyatt and Grow Dat's urban farm, where students can gain career experience and leadership skills.
- **Independent-living lab:** In an apartment-style classroom, students will develop independent-living skills and, at a local community college, students will practice community access and personal advocacy and engage in academic coursework.
- **College classes:** OA students will access further career readiness training through computer programming courses with a local organization focused on accelerating workforce development by equipping participants with high-demand tech skills.

Through all of these elements, the OA school will increase post-secondary program completion, independent living, and job placement for individuals with disabilities, boosting their earning potential and financial security, and connect students and families to a web of continuous services to support their long-term needs.

Strong Start – Plan for Students Transitioning into OA

The OA team will work closely with school teams to transition students from high school settings to OA. Students coming from Collegiate Academies schools will gain exposure to the program as soon as they start the 9th grade. Outside of Collegiate schools, OA's team is working to formalize partnerships with all 24 local high schools to recruit and enroll students to OA. Each partner high school will play an essential role in building awareness around OA for eligible students and families in New Orleans, familiarizing them with the program offerings and introducing them to the program through Open Houses and tours.



Once students are enrolled in the program, they will be carefully walked through the process of creating their own personal pathway by their IEP team and OA teaching staff, in partnership with their families. The personalized attention built into the OA design will help the OA team to address any issues that new students, or their families, face while adjusting to the program.

Attachments

- (1) Attachment 13: (Optional) Provide data or research supporting your academic model
(2) Attachment 14: Weekly Student Schedule
(3) Attachment 15: Calendar of Special Events
(4) Attachment 16: Pupil Progression Plan
(5) Attachment 17: Job Descriptions for staff performing Special Education evaluations and/or services
(6) Attachment 18: (If Applicable) Redacted & Un-Redacted resumes for staff performing Special Education evaluations and/or services
(7) Attachment 19: (High School applicants) Daily Schedule for high school students

Section II: People

Governing Board

- (1) How will the board expand and develop over time? How and on what timeline will new members be recruited and added, and how will vacancies be filled? What are the priorities for recruitment of additional board members? If there will be a network-level board, identify any board development requirements relative to the organization's proposed growth and governance needs.
(2) Describe plans for increasing the capacity of the governing board. What kinds of orientation or training will new board members receive, and what kinds of ongoing development will existing board members receive? The plan for training and development should include a timetable, specific topics to be addressed, and requirements for participation.
(3) Identify the stakeholders whose partnership you have determined is necessary to your school's success. Describe what your board has done already to establish these relationships and explain what your board will do to deepen and sustain these relationships.

TYPE YOUR RESPONSE IN THE BOX BELOW, IT WILL EXPAND AS NEEDED.

(1) OA will benefit from the established strength and expertise of the Collegiate Academies network board. As OA and the Collegiate network expands and considers growing to new markets, we will alter our Board composition, structure, and meeting schedule as necessary to comply with all state laws. We will also focus, as we have in the past, on recruiting Board members who understand the community, are free of conflicts of interest (as defined in the Louisiana Code of Ethics), who are deeply engaged, and are relationship-builders. With this combination of characteristics, Collegiate is confident that as OA expands and develops as a school, our Board can successfully support its growth in alignment with the needs of OA students and families.
(2) Dedicated staff capacity ensures that the Board can operate effectively. The Assistant to Collegiate's CEO provides the bulk of staff capacity for Board operations, compliance, and coordination. The CEO and Board President set an appropriate calendar and delegate the administration to staff. This includes securing space; ensuring agendas are set and posted according to Open Meetings laws and



authorizer policy; drafting minutes, finalizing, and posting to network website; coordinating the compliance responsibilities of new and returning Board members, etc. The CEO provides a semi-annual job evaluation based in part on the Assistant's success in accomplishing the above goals in a timely and professional manner.

(3) Collegiate Board members represent the organization and build strong relationships with stakeholders.

Board members regularly engage their networks to identify qualified professionals to fill open roles in the organization. For example, Chairperson Stephen Rosenthal connected OA's Executive Director with resources at YouthForce NOLA to help develop work-based learning opportunities. Additionally, Board members support the CEO and staff in collaborating with partners in New Orleans to identify suitable facilities for the OA school to occupy. Members' technical expertise and deep professional networks help to ensure all Collegiate students are able to learn in safe, modern buildings. Finally, Collegiate Board members help to connect staff with community and religious leaders in neighborhoods outside of our traditional areas served in New Orleans. Building these relationships helps to build understanding around, communication about, and support for our model.

Staff

- (1) If your organization chart or job descriptions have changed since your original submission, please submit an updated school level organizational chart as **Attachment 20**. Include job descriptions that summarize the scope of work for all staff on the school leadership team as **Attachment 21**.
- (2) Describe the expectations for teachers. How you will clearly communicate these expectations and ensure that teachers stay on track towards meeting expectations? What instrument will be used for staff evaluation? Will the school seek a waiver from the state observation rubrics under COMPASS? If other than COMPASS attach any teacher evaluation tools to be used by the school as **Attachment 22**.
- (3) Describe your strategies for retaining high quality teachers, ensuring a stable teaching force, and your pathways to leadership for qualified staff members.
- (4) Outline the proposed school's salary ranges and employment benefits for all employees, as well as any incentives or reward structures that may be part of the compensation system.

TYPE YOUR RESPONSE IN THE BOX BELOW, IT WILL EXPAND AS NEEDED.

(1) N/A Please see attachments 3, 4, 5, and 6.

(2) Just as students need benchmarks to track their progress, so do Collegiate Academies teachers.

Feedback is given on an ongoing basis. We expect feedback to be integrated into future lesson plans, classroom management, and data analysis.

- Teachers are observed and given feedback at least once a week and, in many cases, more than once a week. Feedback is given during coaching sessions that occur weekly. Quick observations are followed up with an email synopsis of feedback so that the teachers can immediately implement changes.
- At least twice a year, teachers are rated using the Collegiate Academies Rubric for Excellent Teaching (CARET). Long-term coaching goals and weekly action steps are aligned to rubric rows on the CARET.
 - The CARET is a rubric used to evaluate instructional staff that has been developed internally and refined over the last four (4) years. All coaches participate in professional development around norming on CARET indicators that involves viewing video clips of teachers and scoring the teacher. CARET norming involves professional development and co-observations. The group shares their rating and talks through responses. There is a master CARET rater who shares the official score and the group can ask question to understand any nuance of the rubric. This is repeated several times. Homework involves viewing a new video and scoring to ensure the ratings are sufficiently



normed. Any rater who is outside of the range will get follow up PD. In addition, the leader of the CARET-norming PD then does co-observations with each coach in person to ensure they can transfer the rating abilities to live teaching.

- Formal evaluations are written twice a year and are grounded in rubric performance and academic performance of students. Additionally, evaluations include qualitative data on how the teacher is doing with the core values of the school and the expectations for staff.
- Empower Talent: Finally, we believe that a critical component of empowered educators is a culture of development and constant support. Our schools are committed to providing every teacher we hire with consistent development and coaching so that they constantly improve and develop the skills and resources to identify holes in our model and suggest improvements.
- Our principals are supported throughout the hiring and development process by our network office, but they are ultimately empowered to make critical hiring/firing decisions that will best support their schools and mission.

Teachers are held to high standards.

Collegiate Academies teachers, like their students, are expected to work hard and continuously improve. OA will track the following areas to monitor progress, provide appropriate coaching where data is reviewed, and institute interventions when necessary:

- End of year PATH plan goals
- Weekly lesson plan submission
- Participation in daily professional development sessions and professional learning communities
- Data analysis that include daily, unit, and interim assessments

All Collegiate schools are held to the same high expectations that are rooted in our core belief in the power of the growth mindset.

Professional development is an integral part of teacher performance growth and improvement.

Every Collegiate Academies teacher participates in over 250 hours of PD each year. The following list identifies the professional development opportunities for teachers and explains how each connects to curricula and assessments.

- Summer PD: 4 weeks of content-based training to improve pedagogy
- Professional Learning Communities: 90 minutes every other Friday where content area and role-specific instructional groups from across the network focus on collaboration and academic growth.
- Network-wide PD: Full staff PD several times per school-year that focuses on content-specific knowledge and pedagogy across all schools.
- Individualized Professional Development Plans: Every teacher is observed at minimum once/week by his/her instructional coach and has a development meeting at least once/week. Those meetings involve creating action steps to help the teacher reach larger PD goals and leveraging current strengths.

Collegiate Academies teachers and staff share similar foundational beliefs and qualifications.

Entering Collegiate teachers have an average of 2 years of teaching experience and have demonstrated their ability to drive measurable gains in student learning. In addition, OA teachers will all have the following qualifications:

- Desire to rebuild urban education in the city of New Orleans
- Desire for continuous personal and professional growth
- Positive, solutions-oriented attitude and strong work ethic
- Deep belief that all students, regardless of their backgrounds and educational experiences, have the potential to live lives of unlimited opportunity, and that it is our responsibility to help students realize that potential
- Strong content knowledge of the field and practice of Special Education



(3) Leadership recruitment has largely focused on recruiting from within the Collegiate community.
 Collegiate Academies schools have achieved remarkable staff retention because of the emphasis on helping people grow, both through professional development and recruiting from within. As is expanded upon throughout this proposal, Collegiate invests considerable resources in developing our staff. Furthermore, to date, our organization has primarily addressed shifts in administrative and instructional leadership roles by promoting from within. Collegiate Academies is dedicated to maintaining a model of continual staff development and frequent evaluation, processes that allow our organization to invest in staff and identify and train potential leaders in-house.

(4) In order for Collegiate to attract the best people, it creates competitive compensation packages.
 Collegiate Academies has three guiding principles that guide compensation decisions:

1. Hiring and keeping the best people: our school model’s success is driven by teacher and staff quality. We aim to ensure our leaders have every tool at their disposal to hire and keep the best people on our team serving students.
2. Staying competitive: we want to pay teachers at the top of the market. Our teacher salary level for someone with 2 years of experience is among the highest, if not the highest, in the city.
3. Valuing experience: we value experience in the classroom, setting the salary for a teacher with 2 years significantly higher than a teacher with 0 or 1 years experience. At year 5 with Collegiate Academies, schools offer a “Master Educator” designation that comes with a ~15% salary increase. This structure is designed to retain quality, experienced teachers to ensure our students benefit from top instructional talent.

We acknowledge that questions around roles/decisions rights around compensation are complex. As a network, Collegiate tries to strike the right balance between network-wide teamwork and school leader autonomy. Our schools can only get (and keep) the best people if we are strategic about when it makes sense to align on a single approach versus knowing when it will be most impactful to let great leaders lead, guided by their deep knowledge of their own schools, students, and teams.

School Leader Capacity

Note that the application should not refer to the experiences of an Educational Service Provider or another company (such as a back-office service provider) that will provide services to the school. Only the school leader OR a member of the school leadership team may respond to the prompts below. In addition to submitting their resume, the school leader must at least respond to prompts 1 & 2 or prompts 3 & 4.

- (1) Describe the school(s) or academic program(s) for which you, the proposed school leader, have been responsible. Describe your leadership role(s) and primary responsibilities at the relevant school(s) or academic program(s). The summary should describe the impact that these responsibilities had on the success of the relevant entity.
- (2) Provide multiple years of student performance data under your leadership. This data must include but is not limited to: proficiency and growth on either state or national standardized tests.
- (3) Describe a leadership position you have held in which you were responsible for the operations and/or finances of a program or organization. Describe your leadership role and primary responsibilities at the relevant program or organization. The summary should describe the impact that these responsibilities had on the success of the relevant entity.
- (4) Provide data or evidence that speaks to the organizational and/or financial viability of the program/organization for which you were responsible as a leader.



TYPE YOUR RESPONSE IN THE BOX BELOW, IT WILL EXPAND AS NEEDED.

(1) I have a Masters degree in Special Education. I have additionally completed the 1-year Relay Graduate School of Education’s National Principals Academy and NSNO’s 1-year Personalized Learning Fellowship as a teacher. I have completed general Collegiate leadership courses and participated in three progressive years of the rigorous Collegiate Academies School Leader Fellowship.

(3) Over the past year, I have been Executive Director for the Opportunities Academy (OA) program at G.W. Carver and Abramson Sci Academy high schools. I drive OA expansion efforts, establish strategic community partnerships, and ensure high-quality program delivery. Due to my efforts, we have nearly doubled enrollment for the 2018-2019 school year. OA is well-positioned to continue expanding because of regular recruitment events that I have created and partnerships that I have cultivated with local schools to send us eligible students to benefit from our programming. I have built out an OA Advisory Council with community stakeholders, which meets regularly to discuss community needs for young adults with disabilities and to identify synergies and opportunities to support OA students and families. Through these partnerships, I have been able to improve program offerings for a growing number of OA students. I have also improved program quality by setting a high bar for OA teacher and staff recruitment.

(4) OA is a much stronger, more financially secure program since I took over its leadership. My partnership efforts have led to new opportunities for our students to gain professional experience through externships. I created the OA Advisory Council, which has led to a responsive, community-centered program design that more holistically supports New Orleans students with disabilities and their families. This Advisory Council has enabled me to increase dual-enrollment courses offered to our students and to secure a free apartment space for our OA students to use as an independent living lab for practicing fundamental home-living skills in a highly realistic environment. By setting a higher bar for staff recruitment, I have increased the number and quality of staff hired. I have hired 11 additional people and ensured that every OA paraprofessional/job coach has a Bachelor’s Degree. I have also created a pathway for job coaches to become lead teachers, providing two first year teaching residents with a foundation to start full-time teaching and increasing the likelihood of retention as OA grows.

Attachments

- (1) Attachment 20 (Optional) Updated Organization chart
- (2) Attachment 21: (Optional) School leadership team job descriptions
- (3) Attachment 22: Teacher Evaluation tool

Section III: Operations

Facility

- (1) What is your plan for securing a facility?
- (2) What facility characteristics are required to serve your academic program?
- (3) How will the organization meet state, local, and OPSB standards¹ for facility safety and maintenance?
- (4) Please address how your school will plan to adhere to occupancy and fire/life safety codes and ADA standards.

TYPE YOUR RESPONSE IN THE BOX BELOW, IT WILL EXPAND AS NEEDED.

¹ OPSB Facilities policies are located in OPSB Policy HD (Charter School Facilities Management)



(1) (2) Adequate facilities are critical to the long-term success of OA’s students.

Collegiate schools have each experienced myriad benefits to our school communities upon moving into a permanent long-term facility. Because the School Facilities Master Plan is coming to completion and comparatively few public facilities options remain available, we are pursuing two different routes for securing a facility for OA:

- We are exploring **existing locations** through OPSB and the city of New Orleans that we could potentially retrofit to meet the needs of OA’s students and programming.
- We are exploring **a partnership with another organization or business that would host OA**, such as a university or business.

Our team is weighing the benefits and drawbacks of both options and will make a decision based on what best maximizes our resources to deliver the best programming. An independent building may be more customizable for OA’s programming, while a strategic partnership could allow our students easier access to work-based learning or dual-enrollment opportunities.

Collegiate will dedicate time and organizational capacity to identifying leading voices in a range of New Orleans communities dedicated to serving students with disabilities, learn about their aspirations for a rigorous post-secondary option like OA, build wider understanding of the philosophy and programming found in Opportunities Academy and in Collegiate Academies schools, and create partnerships to collectively reach goals for young people with disabilities in New Orleans. Alongside this work, Collegiate will build our knowledge of possible facility options by meeting on a regular basis with OPSB staff, working with the Collegiate Board, and collaborating with the OA Advisory Council to identify possible partner facilities.

The Director of Facilities on our central network team will maintain a carefully-considered list of facility characteristics that would allow for OA to offer its specialized programming to future OA students. These include a set number of classrooms, administrative offices, and specialized spaces. Prospective facilities need to be fully ADA compliant and have easily modifiable rooms and spaces to accommodate a range of services depending on individual student need. The ideal facility will be centrally located with access to RTA stops and have the capacity to support an enterprise with a commercial kitchen.

Collegiate has demonstrated significant flexibility in temporary arrangements to “incubate” a school before it reaches its full enrollment. We remain open to these arrangements, as they expand the universe of possible options in the short- and medium-term. Our successful co-location with Foundation Preparatory Academy in Livingston Collegiate Academy’s building demonstrates our organization’s desire to partner with other nonprofit organizations to find creative solutions to vexing facilities questions.

Should appropriate public facilities not be available, Collegiate is committed to demonstrating similar creativity and partnership with OPSB to determine the best path forward to enable more New Orleans families to access rigorous post-secondary programming for students 18-21 with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

(3) (4) Collegiate’s Network Operations team supports schools to meet all safety/maintenance requirements.

Keeping all members of the Collegiate Academies community safe is a foundational commitment of the organization. While this commitment impacts policy and practice in a range of functional areas -- including Human Resources, Shared Services, and Risk Management -- it influences our Facilities work in notable ways. We have created a regular, structured cadence of facilities inspections that bring peer Directors of Finance & Operations and outside experts into each Collegiate school twice per semester to evaluate the condition of each facility, give



positive feedback on strong maintenance and safety practices, and spotlight areas that need improvement. We evaluate school facilities and maintenance against rigorous standards drawn from national best practices, our own experience, and administrative and policy guidance from the Recovery School District.

Our network Operations lead is fully engaged in citywide conversations on how to continue to improve the expectations for safe and productive school facilities. As an experienced Director of Finance and Operations, he is also well-positioned to understand and apply all occupancy and fire/life safety codes. In rare examples where a Collegiate school is not fully in compliance, the issue is spotted during regular facility reviews, brought to the attention of school leadership, and put on a corrective action plan. Progress is monitored over the following weeks to ensure all action items are completed and that the facility is brought back to full compliance as soon as possible. As Collegiate moves into additional school facilities in Orleans Parish, we will continue to utilize these effective structures while remaining open to piloting new procedures as needed to ensure the network is upholding and safeguarding the safety of all students, staff, and visitors.

Financial Readiness

- (1) Include, as **Attachment 23**, your Financial Plan and Budget.
- (2) Include, as **Attachment 24**, your school’s budget narrative. The narrative should not exceed 3 pages (and should not include the network-level budget if applicable as this is covered in the Experienced Operator section), and should specifically address the degree to which the school budget will rely on variable income (e.g., grants, donations, fundraising). Include:
 - a. Per Pupil Revenue. Use the figures in the Budget Template in developing your budget assumptions.
 - b. Anticipated Funding Sources. Indicate the amount and sources of funds, property or other resources expected to be available through banks, lending institutions, corporations, foundations, grants, etc. Note which are secured and which are anticipated, and include evidence of commitment for any funds on which the school’s core operation depends.
 - c. Describe the resources required to support they key elements of your program. What are the expected costs of key program elements (including staffing model)?
 - d. How will you finance these costs to keep the school sustainable?
 - e. Describe the resources required to support they key elements of your program. What are the expected costs of key program elements (including staffing model)?
 - f. How will you finance these costs to keep the school sustainable?
- (3) Describe your approach to budgeting, including an explanation of your approach to cutting costs if faced (as schools so often are) with a budget shortfall. Specifically describe the roles of the governing board, CMO/organizational leadership (if applicable), and the school site leadership in the budgeting process.
- (4) Describe the accounting and control systems you will install, including essential checks, balances, and segregation of duties. Please indicate how a culture of proper financial controls and reporting will become an essential component of your organizational culture.
- (5) Describe the school’s plans and procedures for conducting an annual audit of the financial and administrative operations of the school. Who will select the audit firm, and to whom will they report?
- (6) Describe how the school will ensure financial transparency to the authorizer and the public, including its plans for public adoption of its budget and public dissemination of its annual audit and an annual financial report.
- (7) Describe your organization’s process for awarding contracts including any processes to increase utilization of disadvantaged business enterprises.



TYPE YOUR RESPONSE IN THE BOX BELOW, IT WILL EXPAND AS NEEDED.

(3) Collegiate schools build and manage their budgets with a mindset of maximization.

As with any financially healthy organization, Collegiate Academies approaches budgeting with a mindset of maximization. Every cent is carefully allocated, with the large majority of dollars spent at the school level on our students and our teachers. We believe in paying our teachers a salary commensurate to their professional status, and we invest in their growth and professional development. Likewise, we invest significantly in student programming, especially those programs that support the students with the highest needs. When incoming revenues are not sufficient to fund our full program plan, we conduct detailed analyses to determine the most appropriate areas for cutting costs. When possible, we focus on making cuts at the central office level rather than at our schools so that our students are not directly impacted. This aligns with our overall financial philosophy: to always focus on and invest in what is best for the students at Collegiate Academies schools.

The annual budget process runs from December to April and involves key stakeholders at each stage. The Board looks to national and sector-wide benchmarks of financial health in order to set goals for the upcoming years, particularly around fund balance. CMO leadership designs and executes a budget process, including setting a target for non-recurring revenue (fundraising) to assume in the budget. School Leaders play a significant role: approximately 70% of total school spending is largely at their discretion. School Leaders propose a staffing map and spending on a range of items, including materials, professional development, and travel. CMO leadership provides coaching and guidance to schools to ensure that essential areas are allocated sufficient resources. After multiple iterations, the budget is “closed” and CMO leadership engages with the Board regarding the overall state of the budget for the organization, including costs for the central office. The Board reviews the upcoming budget at multiple public meetings before voting to approve the numbers.

At that point, a robust set of budget management supports begins so that schools are in the best possible position to hit their financial targets while maximizing the benefit of public resources for student learning. The network's COO leads monthly budget meetings with the School Leader and DFO. In these meetings Year-to-Date spending is compared to the latest budget and anticipated revenues/enrollment are checked against actual student figures. We run a formal reforecasting process twice annually (post 10/1 and 2/1 counts) to ensure each school is on track to meet financial measures set by our Board and authorizer. The COO leads monthly Board reporting to identify any challenge areas and address them. The annual “scorecard” for each School Leader contains data on their success in meeting agreed-upon financial goals: elevating these objectives ensures that the School Leader is identifying skilled teammates to lead this functional area and is engaging the support of network experts to resolve challenges.

Collegiate schools receive ongoing central network support to ensure they are maximizing resources available to students and educators, while maintaining focus on the long-term metrics that are critical to demonstrating a commitment to financial stewardship. This support begins in budgeting, when clear targets and guidelines are set so that School Leaders innovate within the bounds of financial responsibility. As hiring and spending begin, SL and DFOs meet weekly (at minimum) to ensure programmatic decisions align to the annual and long-term financial plan of the school. The network COO leads monthly budget meetings and biannual reforecasting to structure the analysis and decision-making around the use of financial resources. At all times, the expectations around transparency and proper application of Collegiate's Financial Policies and Procedures are maintained. Each year, School Leaders reflect on the overall direction of their school and revisit their programmatic elements to ensure they are providing top-quality services to students and are meeting key financial indicators.

(4) Collegiate will continue to operate with strong financial controls and a commitment to transparency.

Collegiate Academies is committed to developing and maintaining financial policies and procedures that ensure sound internal controls, fiscal responsibility, and accounting in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) rules and regulations. Strong financial policies and procedures enable us to meet our financial needs and obligations, ensure long-term financial stability and viability, and protect our tangible assets. As such, we implement the following financial systems and controls to ensure there are essential checks and balances to safeguard Collegiate's finances:

- Appropriate accounting software with ability to grant differentiated permissions based on role (Blackbaud



Financial Edge)

- Strong accounts payable system that ensures proper documentation of expenses and thorough approval routing across all appropriate levels of school and network management (Concur - SAP)
- Rigorous segregation of duties best practices (e.g., check signers cannot write checks; bank reconciliation not completed by check signer, multiple signatures for expenses >\$5,000)
- Payroll controls to ensure accurate and timely payment of employees (e.g., approvals of payroll preview with match to actual payment; multiple approvals to change employee pay; personnel files maintained)
- Disbursement policies to ensure controls are maintained at all times (e.g., no checks made to 'Cash'; blank checks not signed in advance; blank checks are locked).

Collegiate Academies does not tolerate any financial mismanagement, misappropriation, or fraud. We have built a strong culture of financial compliance that we will continue to advance with these new schools.

(5) Embodying financial stewardship and meeting critical financial measures.

We define 'financial stewardship' as competent, disciplined, and student-centered use of financial resources to improve the academic and life outcomes for our students. From budgeting to controls to long-term planning, each financial decision must be evaluated in light of its capacity to advance our mission and allow Collegiate to better serve our students. For this reason, we integrate our Finance function into the leadership team of every school and in the network office. We discuss key financial metrics and strategies collectively as a leadership team to ensure the full range of academic, social, and operational impacts are considered in decision-making. We collectively create an ambitious plan for long-term financial sustainability and check-in on it often to ensure we are on the path to continuing to provide excellent high school options for generations to come.

- OA's financial operations will be audited as a component of Collegiate Academies' annual financial audit. Collegiate has consistently received clean financial audits since its founding. The policies and procedures under which OA would operate are the same as all other Collegiate schools.
- The Board Finance Committee, led by the Treasurer, select the audit firm. They are in regular communication with staff and Board leadership throughout their testing and analysis.
- The audit firm selected will file their annual report by no later than December 15th each year.

(6) Collegiate Academies is committed to financial transparency.

Collegiate Academies has a strong track record of financial transparency that will extend to all elements of Opportunities Academy.

- Annual budgets are discussed in at least one open meeting prior to the meeting in which the budget is formally adopted.
- Each Board meeting is preceded by an open Finance Committee meeting that allows for in-depth review of Budget-to-Actuals, Enrollment, Non-Recurring Revenue / Fundraising, and other indicators or financial health and stewardship.
- Collegiate Academies shares an annual report with key financial data and benchmarks. The annual audit is available via the Legislative Auditor's website, alongside that of all other public charter schools and LEAs.
- The reports indicated above are all available by request from any member of the school or wider community.

(7) Collegiate Academies follows a clear process for awarding contracts.

Collegiate Academies strives to receive maximum value from all contracted goods and services in order to honor the public trust placed in our nonprofit organization to operate public schools and steward public resources. The organization's Financial Policies & Procedures look to local, state, and federal policy to ensure our process is sound. At different costs thresholds, our process requires varying levels of documentation, quote comparison, and competitive bids. For example, for purchases between \$5,000 and \$15,000, at least three responsive quotes are required. In the case of the erection, construction, alteration, improvement, or repair of a public facility with a project cost exceeding \$152,550, Collegiate Academies follows Louisiana Public Bid Law. Our process seeks to increase the utilization of disadvantaged business enterprises (DBE), including via its inclusion in rubrics evaluating



competing proposals for goods and services such as custodial, transportation, and care and upkeep of grounds.

Educational Service Providers

Not Applicable

Attachments

- (1) Attachment 23: Financial Plan and Budget
- (2) Attachment 24: Budget Narrative
- (3) Attachment 25: (If applicable) ESP Contract **(NOT APPLICABLE)**
- (4) Attachment 26: (If applicable) ESP Audit **(NOT APPLICABLE)**