

ORLEANS PARISH SCHOOL BOARD

CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION RECOMMENDATION REPORT 2018

National Association of Charter School Authorizers

November 5, 2018

New Charter School Application for

KIPP New Start High School

Submitted by

KIPP New Orleans, Inc.

Evaluation Team

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INTRODUCTION

Across New Orleans, more than 90 percent of public school students currently attend charter schools. These schools have led to a dramatic increase in the number of students meeting academic proficiency standards and the performance gap between students in Orleans Parish and Louisiana as a whole has dramatically decreased over the last 12 years.

Despite these gains, additional progress is needed. Every student deserves high quality schools where their interests will come first, where they and their families will have choice, and where educators will have the tools and support they need to be successful.

The Spring 2018 charter school application process seeks proposals from highly qualified applicants to open new Type 1 charter schools and transform existing district-run schools into Type 3 charter schools.

Focus on Quality

The 2018 Request for Proposals and the resulting evaluation process are rigorous and demanding. The process is meant to ensure that approved charter school operators possess the capacity to implement a school model that is likely to dramatically increase student outcomes. Successful applicants will demonstrate high levels of expertise and capacity in the areas of curriculum and instruction, school finance, educational and operational leadership, and non-profit governance, as well as high expectations for excellence in student achievement and professional standards. An application that merits a recommendation for approval will present a clear, realistic picture of how the school expects to operate; be detailed in how this school will raise student achievement; and inspire confidence in the applicant's capacity to successfully implement the proposed academic and operational plans.

Evaluation Process

For the 2018 RFP cycle, OPSB partnered with the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) to manage the application process and to provide independent, merit-based recommendations regarding whether to approve or deny each proposal. NACSA assembled an independent evaluation team that included both national and local expertise related to charter school start-up and operation. This report from the evaluation team is a culmination of three stages of review:

PROPOSAL EVALUATION

The evaluation team conducted individual and group assessment of the merits of the proposal based on the complete written submission. In the case of experienced school operators, OPSB and NACSA supplemented this written evaluation with due diligence to verify claims made in the proposal related to past performance.

CAPACITY INTERVIEW

After reviewing the application and discussing the findings of their individual reviews, the evaluation team conducted an in-person interview to assess the team's overall capacity to implement the proposal as written in the application.

CONSENSUS JUDGMENT

Following the capacity interview, the evaluation team came to consensus regarding whether to recommend the proposal for approval or denial. The duty of the evaluation team is to recommend approval or denial of each application based on its merits against OPSB-approved evaluation criteria. The authority and responsibility to decide whether to approve or deny each application rests with the members of OPSB.

Report Contents

This evaluation report includes the following:

PROPOSAL OVERVIEW

Basic information about the proposed school as presented in the application.

RECOMMENDATION

An overall judgment regarding whether the proposal meets the criteria for approval.

EVALUATION

Analysis of the proposal based on four primary areas of plan development and the capacity of the applicant team to execute the plan as presented:

School: academic model and schedule, LEA status, special student populations, goals and metrics, enrollment plans, school culture, and family and community engagement.

People: founder's submission, governing board, staff, mission critical partners, and education service providers.

Operations: start-up plan, facility, budget, and financial readiness.

EVALUATION: ADDENDA

For applicants on the existing or experienced operator tracks, applicants that are or will form a corporate partnership, schools whose primary instructional environment is computer-based or virtual, applicants seeking or potentially willing to seek a match to operate an existing Orleans public charter school or school facility, or applicants seeking to start, transform or convert a school serving Grades 9-12, an analysis of:

Experienced Operator Addendum (if applicable): past school performance, growth plan, scale strategy, and risks and associated contingency plans.

Corporate Partnership Addendum (if applicable): corporate partnership formation, corporate partner track record, legal relationships, and organizational structure.

Virtual School Addendum (if applicable): location, educational program, instructional staff, state and federally mandated services, evaluation and assessment, school operations, and parent and community involvement.

Transformation Addendum (if applicable): transformation overview, operator track record, educational program, school operations, metrics and goals, and community engagement.

High School Addendum (if applicable): state and district graduation standards, supporting success for all students – truancy prevention, remediation and intervention, ensuring college and career readiness, and strong start – 9th grade transition plan.

RATINGS CHARACTERISTICS

Evaluation teams assess each application against the published evaluation criteria. In general, the following definitions guide evaluator ratings:

Meets the Standard

The response reflects a thorough understanding of key issues. It addresses the topic with specific and accurate information that shows thorough preparation; presents a clear, realistic picture of how the school expects to operate; and inspires confidence in the applicant's capacity to carry out the plan effectively.

Meets the Standard with Reservations

The response meets the criteria in many respects, but lacks detail and/or requires additional information in one or more areas.

Approaches the Standard

The response meets the criteria in some respects but has substantial gaps in a number of areas

Does Not Meet the Standard

The response is wholly undeveloped or significantly incomplete; demonstrates lack of preparation; or otherwise raises substantial concerns about the viability of the plan or the applicant's ability to carry it out.

PROPOSAL OVERVIEW

Applicant Name:

KIPP New Orleans, Inc.

Proposed School Name:

KIPP New Start High School

Mission:

The mission of the proposed KIPP New Start High School is to empower all students with the knowledge and skills they need to be successful through college and the world beyond.

Proposed Location:

To be determined

Enrollment Projections:

<i>Academic Year</i>	<i>Planned # Students</i>	<i>Maximum # Students</i>	<i>Grades Served</i>
2019-20	175	190	9
2020-21	340	375	9-10
2021-22	500	550	9-11
2022-23	655	720	9-12
2023-24	655	720	9-12
At Capacity	655	720	9-12

SECTION RATINGS

KIPP New Start High School

Recommendation:

Approve

Summary of Section Ratings:

Opening and maintaining a successful, high-performing charter school depends on having a complete, coherent plan and identifying highly capable individuals to execute that plan. It is not an endeavor for which strengths in some areas can compensate for material weaknesses in others. *Therefore, in order to receive a recommendation for approval, the application must Meet the Standard in all areas.*

SCHOOL

Meets the Standard

EXPERIENCED OPERATOR ADDENDUM (IF APPLICABLE)

Meets the Standard

PEOPLE

Meets the Standard

TRANSFORMATION ADDENDUM (IF APPLICABLE)

N/A

OPERATIONS

Meets the Standard

SCHOOL

KIPP New Start High School

RATING:

Meets the Standard

Plan Summary:

The KIPP New Start High School plans to serve students in Grades 9-12 with the long-term vision of college readiness, matriculation, and persistence for all of its 655 students. The school will start with Grade 9 and add one grade level per year until it reaches full capacity. Success is driven by high expectations; strength of character; highly effective teachers and leaders; safe, structured, and nurturing environments; and the KIPP Through College alumni support program. The proposed school schedule runs from 7:30 a.m. - 3:40 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday and from 7:30 a.m. - 2:40 p.m. on Wednesday.

KIPP employs two social workers at each school. The professional development plan focuses on helping teachers create classrooms that provide the academic foundation to prepare students for college and beyond while remaining responsive to students' social and emotional needs.

Analysis:

The School section meets the standard for approval. The proposed school model is comprehensive, research-based, and successful, as evidenced by the percentage of students from across the KIPP New Orleans network who enroll and persist in higher education.

KIPP describes many programmatic elements that support student success. Specific examples include setting a culture of high expectations, a curriculum aligned to state standards, an integrated data management system to monitor student progress, rigorous standards-based instruction, and KIPP network-level support. In the application narrative and capacity interview, the applicant team expressed dissatisfaction with the KIPP network's absolute performance data. However, several individual schools have improved over the past several years. For example, the KIPP New Orleans Leadership Academy improved from a "D" SPS grade in 2015 to a "C" in 2017. Between 2015 and 2017, the KIPP Renaissance High School has consistently scored in the "A" and "B" range. KIPP's college acceptance rate for 2018 was 99 percent and the college persistence rate was 96 percent. The KIPP leadership team identified strategies for improvement, including additional training and development for school leaders. Based on the attention the KIPP leadership team and board have devoted to improving student performance, the evaluation team is confident that KIPP will apply these lessons learned to increase student academic outcomes.

KIPP presents a comprehensive, robust professional development (PD) plan for teachers that includes school-based training and network-level training. The PD format varies and includes three to five weeks of summer training, three shared KIPP New Orleans PD days, Professional Learning Communities, data dives, and individual coaching. These strategies are consistent with best practices designed to raise student achievement and build teacher capacity.

KIPP also describes a comprehensive plan for student retention and academic access, which includes creating a positive school culture that emphasizes the "whatever it takes" philosophy. The school employs classroom, grade-level, and schoolwide norms that include student goal setting, rewards for positive behaviors, and restorative disciplinary practices. The application narrative also describes an inclusive learning environment for special education students and English Language Learners (ELLs) that includes curricular pathways for differentiation and intervention.

PEOPLE

KIPP New Start High School

RATING:

Meets the Standard

Plan Summary:

The KIPP New Start High School will be governed by the Regional KIPP Board. There are currently 12 board members who have diverse professional backgrounds, including legal, financial management, strategic planning, marketing, and public education. The board provides strategic oversight of the school's academic outcomes, operational viability, and financial sustainability through the use of committees. Current committees include academic, development, financial, governance, and strategic planning.

KIPP has created both a teacher and leader pipeline to meet its staffing needs. The applicant group does not identify any mission-critical partnerships but does describe relevant partnerships with universities and neighborhood organizations.

Analysis:

The People section meets the standard for approval. The governance structure and staffing plans demonstrate that KIPP will be able to successfully implement both the academic and human resource components of the proposed school.

The KIPP Regional Board's Governance structure and composition is aligned with best practices for effective charter school oversight. The Strategic Planning Committee works closely with the CEO to create annual goals and priorities, and reviews progress toward each of the goals twice per year. Annually, board members participate in a retreat to increase their governance capacity, develop strategic plans, and conduct a self-assessment. The KIPP Regional Board will continue to build its capacity by cultivating community members with deep relationships across New Orleans to serve on the board. Although only the board chair participated in the capacity interview, his contributions were meaningful and his leadership capabilities were evident. The resumes provided for the board members demonstrate a wide range of professional expertise, including legal, operations, and financial management. The evaluation team is confident that the current governance structure, composition, plans for recruitment, and CEO accountability plan will lead to student success and effective organizational oversight.

The KIPP staff recruitment and retention strategy is thoughtful and well-developed. The KIPP network created the Crescent Teacher Residency to develop a pipeline of diverse teachers new to the profession and has experienced impressive results with an 81 percent average retention rate for participants. Both teacher and staff expectations are communicated clearly and frequently through targeted, whole school, and individual PD. KIPP's retention strategies are well-developed and consist of annual awards, recognitions, and opportunities for advancement within the organization.

Although KIPP has not identified a permanent school leader, the capacity interview revealed an intentional focus on developing a leader from within the network. The current chief strategy officer, who has considerable experience with teacher evaluation and development, strategy execution, and school leadership, will become the interim school leader. The evaluation team is confident that, given the strength of KIPP's talent pipeline, they will identify a school leader within their organization in ample time for the school's opening.

OPERATIONS

KIPP New Start High School

RATING:

Meets the Standard

Plan Summary:

KIPP New Orleans will participate in the OPSB facility siting process but provides a contingency plan in the event an OPSB facility is not available. According to the start-up plan, the siting process will be complete by January 2019. The Year 1 budget allocates \$182,063 for facility-related expenses.

The KIPP New Orleans network finance team, composed of eight members, will monitor the proposed school's financial position and will provide oversight for the budgeting process, accounting, internal controls, monthly financial reporting, school allocations, compliance, and audit preparations. Examples of internal controls include purchasing and disbursements, revenues and receivables, cash management, payroll processing, fixed asset recording, and travel. The majority of expenditures are allocated for salaries, facility operations, meal service, and student transportation. KIPP maintains an annual operating surplus.

Analysis:

The Operations section meets the standard for approval.

The facility plans, budget projections, and start-up plans are detailed and comprehensive, suggesting that the applicant team will successfully execute the operational model. KIPP has not identified a facility but provides a detailed description of the programmatic and operational needs of the school, including the number of classrooms, specific uses for classrooms, and outside space requirements. The facility plan also includes considerations for "high needs" students that include self-contained classrooms and designated spaces for differentiation, interventions, and enrichment, demonstrating a commitment to meeting the individual learning needs of all students. The applicant team will finalize their facility plans at the conclusion of the OPSB siting process. Through the Request for Clarification (RFC), the applicant team outlined reasonable contingency plans if they are not awarded an OPSB facility, including using a temporary district "swing space," temporary co-location with an existing KIPP school, and rental of private school facilities. The KIPP New Orleans network demonstrated significant experience with varied facility options in the region, with a focus on proper building safety and maintenance. Additionally, they have designed a staffing model that should respond to any facility challenges promptly and efficiently. The network employs a well-qualified director of facilities who provides ongoing facility maintenance, facility staff oversight, frequent safety inspections, and compliance with ADA and all other applicable codes.

The start-up plan is detailed and includes the critical actions for a successful school opening, attainable timelines, and persons responsible for each task. The budget projections are conservative with an estimated fund balance of \$688,474 by Year 4, inspiring confidence that the budget is sustainable. The applicant provides clear details about the budgeting process and demonstrates a thorough understanding of sound financial practices. For example, the application narrative describes the collaboration between the network and school leaders in the budget development process, which promotes accuracy and reduces the risk of financial mismanagement.

EXPERIENCED OPERATOR ADDENDUM (IF APPLICABLE)

RATING:

KIPP New Start High School

Meets the Standard

Plan Summary:

KIPP New Orleans expects that the student population at the proposed school will mirror the current student population of other KIPP schools in the region. Of the 5,000 pre-K-12 students who attend KIPP in the current school year, approximately 94 percent are African American with 100 percent eligible for free or reduced lunch and 13 percent receiving special education services.

All major organizational initiatives, including scaling and growth, are supported by members of the Regional School Support Center. During this application cycle, KIPP is applying for a pre-K-8 transformation school, a high school transformation, and the New Start High School. KIPP has one school already approved by OPSB, scheduled to open in 2019.

Analysis:

The Experienced Operator Addendum meets the standard for approval. The applicant team demonstrates the capacity to effectively open and manage additional schools within the KIPP Regional network and maintain high levels of student performance.

The KIPP New Orleans network growth has been dramatic with network schools currently serving 5,000 students across eleven (11) campuses. During the interview, the applicant team clarified their growth strategy and advised that growth will occur through new schools and transformations; will be strategic, informed by community need with input from stakeholders; and will not outpace their teacher/leadership pipelines. The demand for a new high school was supported by the comprehensive application data provided during the RFC process for the existing KIPP Renaissance High School. In the spring of 2018, 960 students applied for 175 open Grade 9 seats with 168 of these students ranking the school as their first choice. School-level growth is supported by the regional team, which allows for consistency in model implementation. The regional team has relevant professional experience in academics, strategy, finance/operations, talent recruitment, data management, and external affairs, increasing the likelihood of start-up success. The network's scaling strategy is comprehensive and demonstrates that the applicant group can effectively manage additional schools.

KIPP has identified three possible threats to successful expansion: lack of high-quality teachers, unexpected shifts in funding, and effectively managing the start-up. They provided mitigation strategies for each potential threat, including expanding their teacher pipeline, maintaining a fund balance that allows for sustainability in the event of a funding crisis, and leveraging communication strategies from existing high schools to market the new school.

The applicant described robust plans for emergency and long-term succession, created by the CEO and approved by the board annually, ensuring school and model sustainability over time.

EVALUATOR BIOGRAPHIES

Evaluator's Name

Waynica Staples

Waynica is a passionate reformer with nearly 20 years of educational experience and believes that all students can achieve at high levels if given the right tools and opportunities. Waynica is the founder and CEO of Inspire Success, LLC, a consulting firm that provides direct support to charter school leaders and boards by helping them navigate the school development or charter renewal process. Specific services include petition writing and/or review, project management, governance training, and strategy development. Prior to launching her consulting firm, Waynica worked for the Georgia Charter Schools Association (GCSA). Waynica's role at the association was to provide training and technical support to governing boards and school-level leadership related to academic success, operational compliance, and financial viability. During her tenure at GCSA, Waynica trained more than 20 governing boards. Waynica also held roles as a charter school developer, admissions and financial aid advisor, and college access coordinator.

Evaluator's Name

Dr. Lisa Green-Derry

Dr. Lisa Green-Derry is an education strategist who knows that all children have assets and believes that expanding the definition of assets can influence ways in which professionals interact with children and ultimately produce positive outcomes. For more than 20 years, Dr. Green-Derry's expertise in student-centered instruction and assessment; implementation and evaluation of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) curricula; and designing and facilitating culturally responsive modules for pre-service teachers and educators in K-12 systems, and graduate students, as well as faculty of social work programs has influenced educational outcomes for students in urban and rural educational settings. Dr. Green-Derry's integrative approach to education connects assets of families and children to various systems in ways that provide opportunities that support equitable education for all children.

Evaluator's Name

Carol Swann

Currently CEO and president of Swann Educational Solutions, Carol Swann has more than 30 years in education with extensive experience working with districts and states regarding the charter school authorization process, strategic planning, training, monitoring and oversight, and policy development for charter schools. Carol has been responsible for charter policy and procedures, writing and updating the charter application and scoring rubric in conjunction with state laws, and working with external partners such as the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) to ensure a quality authorizing process utilizing best practices from across the country. As a direct result of this work, Carol has developed training modules to assist authorizers, providing training for review teams, school boards, university charter offices, and state charter offices. Carol also organized the Tennessee Association of Charter School Authorizers (TACSA) and wrote the TACSA Principles and Standards and by-laws. She served as president for 2017-18. This organization is developing model authorizing policies and practices for authorizers in Tennessee as well as looking at model charter laws around the nation in order to inform and educate legislative work.