Orleans Parish School Board

Spring 2019

Request for Charter School Applications

Transformation Addendum

For schools opening in School Year 2020-2021

John Brown, Sr., District 1
Ethan Ashley, District 2
Sarah Newell Usdin, District 3
Leslie Ellison, District 4
Benjamin Kleban, District 5
Woody Koppel, District 6
Nolan Marshall Jr., District 7
Dr. Henderson Lewis, Jr. Superintendent

Transformation Addendum

Applicants seeking or potentially willing to seek a match to operate an existing Orleans public charter school or school facility, which is subject to nonrenewal, revocation, or voluntary relinquishment by the existing chartering organization should complete the Transformation Addendum. Complete this section only if your application proposes such a school. 20 page limit

Transformation Overview

(1) Please identify the type(s) of transformation (e.g., full takeovers, reconfigurations) that your organization is prepared to undertake.

(2) Will all currently enrolled students be able to re-enroll next year? If your proposal does not provide for all currently-enrolled students to remain at the school, please provide a rationale for this decision, and explain how your organization will work to communicate with families in order to ensure that all impacted students are able to access high-quality schools.

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

Crescent City Schools plans for CCCS4 and CCS5 to be full PreK-8 takeovers and for them to provide for all currently enrolled students to remain at the schools. We believe that to do otherwise is unfair to students and families and places an undue burden on them at time where they are already facing uncertainty. We recognize that applying to run PreK requires a separate application, but we are committed to continuing to offer PreK programming at the transformation school, so we have included it in our projections below. The LDOE has traditionally allowed the transformation operator to continue to operate the PreK program at the transformation site, and because we already successfully operate PreK in our other three schools, we anticipate they will approve our PreK application to operate at the transformation site.

CCS4

Year	PreK	K	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	Total
2020-2021	40	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	580

CCS5

Year	PreK	K	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	Total
2021-2022*	40	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	580

**Crescent City Schools proposes to open CCS5 no earlier than the 2021-2022 school year. However, the timing of the school's opening will be contingent on the need of the city and the timing of the turnaround of the school to which Crescent City Schools would be assigned.*

Evidence of Academic Program Success

(1) Provide a brief narrative describing the organization's history, including its development and growth, opening and operating high-quality schools, and its interest in a transformation.

(2) Provide a summary describing the other transformation school(s) or program(s) operated, managed, or supported by this organization. The summary should describe key design elements of the school(s) or program(s), including mission, curriculum model or whole-school design, grade span, and governance model. The summary should clearly reflect the implemented elements of the school(s) or program(s) that are similar to the proposed charter school as well as any substantive differences.

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

Established in 2010, Crescent City Schools was founded on the belief that all students deserve great schools. Crescent City Schools is a Charter Management Organization (CMO) founded by two veteran educators, Kate Mehok and Julie Lause, in order to address the specific need of transforming failing schools. Crescent City Schools is dedicated to turning failing schools into high-performing college preparatory charter schools that are accessible to all students regardless of their past academic record or special need.

While opening and operating academically excellent schools that start small and expand one grade per year is a worthy endeavor, Crescent City Schools seeks to effect change in education in New Orleans through whole school **turnaround**. We believe that children who attend a failing school currently do not have time to wait and should have the opportunity to obtain an excellent education immediately**.** Whole school turnaround is a challenging mission, but it is vital to the ultimate goal of ensuring that all children in New Orleans attend an academically excellent institution.

Crescent City Schools believes that the key to transforming low-performing schools into academically excellent ones is establishing ambitious academic standards, high student expectations, and a strong school culture of performance and achievement. This often represents a dramatic change in the daily look, feel, and operation of a school. Our students have an extended school day and an extended school year, which gives them hundreds of hours of additional instruction each year compared to students in traditional public schools. Crescent City Schools currently serves more than 2,200 students in three schools across New Orleans: Harriet Tubman Charter School in Algiers, Akili Academy in the Upper Ninth Ward, and Paul Habans Charter School in Algiers.

Harriet Tubman Charter School

Since joining the Crescent City Schools network in 2011, Harriet Tubman Charter School has displayed impressive academic improvement. In the fall of 2010, Crescent City Schools received a Type 5 charter from the state of Louisiana to transform a failing school in New Orleans. Crescent City Schools was assigned to Harriet Tubman in February 2011 and assumed all operations of the school in July 2011. **In October 2013, two years after joining the Crescent City Schools network, Tubman exited failing status and transformed from an F school to a C school. Tubman demonstrated its continued ability to steadily raise student achievement in 2015, when it became the fifth highest-performing school in the Recovery School District.** In 2010, before Crescent City Schools assumed operations of the school, Tubman was a persistently failing school, ranking 45th in the RSD. In 2015, Tubman moved from 27th to 5th in K-8 school rankings for the RSD and raised its SPS score by more than 18 points, from 63 to 81.4. **In 2016, Tubman was rewarded for this academic achievement with a six-year renewal of its charter from the Louisiana Department of Education.** According to New Schools for New Orleans, who collects CREDO data on individual New Orleans schools, for the most recent data available in 2015, Tubman had a positive effect

size of .06 for math which translates into an additional 36 days of learning. For ELA, Tubman had a positive 0.19, which translates to an additional 144 days of learning. This is some of the highest effect sizes in the New Orleans Region.[1] In 2018, Tubman was only two schools in New Orleans to receive both the Equity and Top Gains honor from the Louisiana Department of Education. Tubman is led by Julie Lause, a veteran educator with more than 20 years of experience in education, and currently serves more than 900 students in Pre-K through eighth grade.

Akili Academy

The story of Akili Academy, the second school to join the Crescent City Schools network, is characterized by growth and academic progress. Akili began operations in August 2008 and successfully served kindergarten and first grade students in New Orleans. Founded as a single charter school, the Akili Academy board voted to become a member of the Crescent City Schools network in Spring 2012, as Akili and Crescent City Schools both shared a commitment to open enrollment and high expectations for students. The school has grown each year and is now a Kindergarten through eighth grade school serving 625 students. In the school's first year of operations, only 6% of students were at grade level at the start of the school year. At the end of the first year of instruction, 85% of kindergarteners were at or above grade level, and 77% of first grade students were at or above grade level. By the 2010-2011 school year, Akili Academy had grown to a K-3 school, and its first class of third graders took the State of Louisiana annual iLEAP exam. More than 88% of Akili students performed at or above grade level on the iLEAP, the highest percentage in the entire Recovery School District. Additionally, 45% of students achieved a level of Advanced or Mastery in ELA and Math. In 2014, Akili Academy sixth graders were in the Top 10 in the city for scoring Mastery and Advanced in English Language Arts on the LEAP exam. Akili was the only school in the Recovery School District represented on this list. Akili's students continued to make great academic strides in 2015: Seventh grade students were in the Top 10 in the Recovery School District for scoring Basic and Above in both Math and English and Language Arts on PARCC, the newly developed state assessment. In 2016, 90% of Akili 8th graders who took the high school Algebra I End of Course exam passed, and 80% of Akili third graders scored Basic or above in Math. Akili graduated its first eighth grade class in May 2016 and is led by Principal Allison Lowe.

Paul Habans Charter School

The most recent addition to the Crescent City Schools network, Paul Habans Charter School joined Crescent City Schools in 2013. Located in Algiers, Habans opened its doors for the first day of school in August 2013. By the end of the first year, Habans sixth graders, the oldest students in the school, grew their reading level by 1.37 years. Additionally, while only 40% of Pre-K scholars started the year reading on grade-level, by the end of the year 97% were reading on grade-level. Habans has been embraced wholeheartedly by scholars' parents, as well as the broader community. For much of its history, Habans was a Pre-K through sixth grade school, serving roughly 300 students. Since joining the Crescent City Schools network, Habans has grown to serve more than 700 students in Pre-K through eighth grade. In the last two years, Habans has gone from a "F" to a "C", improved its School Performance Score by 25 points, and received a three-year renewal of its charter in 2017 due to its students' academic progress. Habans is led by Principal Elisabeth LaMotte-Mitchell, who assumed the role in 2016, and under her leadership Habans students have made significant gains: in 2017-2018, Habans ranked first, out of all public K-8 schools in the city, for student growth in ELA, and sixth in student growth in Math.

2017-2018 was a monumental year for all three of the Crescent City Schools network schools. All three of our schools ranked in the top ten K-8 schools in New Orleans for English Language Arts (ELA) growth. Notably, Paul Habans Charter School ranked first of all public K-8 schools in the city for ELA growth with 64% of its students meeting their targets and sixth in math with 58% meeting their targets.

[1]For more information on CREDO: https://credo.stanford.edu/pdfs/CMO%20FINAL.pdf

School Name	ELA		Math	
	Ranking*	% Meeting Growth Target	Ranking*	% Meeting Growth Target
Paul Habans Charter School	1	64%	6	58%
Akili Academy	3	60%	11	55%
Harriet Tubman Charter School	9	56%	27	44%
Louisiana Statewide		48%		43%

*out of all K-8 schools in Orleans Parish

In the last five years, Crescent City Schools has been the only CMO in New Orleans to take two PreK-8th grade schools from F's to C's. CCS has managed to grow the academic performance of its students at a much higher rate than similar operators despite rising standards in New Orleans and changing standardized test scores. We believe we can continue that work at CCS4 and CCS5.

Educational Program

(1) What are the key tenets of your transformation model? Please identify the research base or other rationale supporting each identified tenet.
(2) How will the educational model be responsive to the student needs, while maintaining the fidelity of the organizations educational program?
(3) How will your transformation model support equitable achievement for all students? Please specifically identify how your model will support the learning of students with disabilities, English language learners, and other "at-risk" student populations (as this is defined in state law).
(4) How will your organization ensure a successful transition period and first year of operation? What steps will you take to ensure sufficient enrollment (by retaining existing students and/or recruiting new families), create a positive school climate and culture, and establish high expectations for students, teachers, and staff?

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

Key Tenets of the Transformation Model:
Crescent City Schools believes, in the broadest sense, that the school is the location where the transformation of society takes place. We take this societal role seriously, endeavoring to create life-changing educational experiences for students and, through this work, transform a city. To this end, we believe it is each school's responsibility to provide an outstanding, high-quality education for every child who walks through its door. It is our responsibility to make the difference despite all the challenges that a child presents. Poor preparation, family struggles, societal need, and conditions of poverty are not excuses we use to account for lower performance. Instead, we will build a school around our students, knowing they may come to us with these factors. Our approach is to structure a school that will take all students to the highest academic levels.

This means that teachers will write detailed lesson plans for each objective they teach and then use assessments to help measure whether or not students have mastered the objective. It means that when students require more time to master material, staff will provide them with that time through tutoring and re-teaching. It means that staff will be available to students and parents at night and that the school will welcome parents and other caregivers as active members who enhance the school community. But it also means that teachers will not take

excuses from students and instead work to develop each student's internal drive, so every child knows that he or she can achieve regardless of circumstance.

Crescent City Schools and CCS4 and CCS5 are a part of the movement that believes all students can and will learn, and that it is the responsibility of the adults in the building to meet the needs of each student. The most significant school-based factor that has an impact on student achievement is the quality of the teacher[2], and we believe that transformative schools increase the quality of teaching so that every child has a great teacher and thus can achieve at the highest level.

Crescent City Schools believes that transformation of failing schools is a unique opportunity to quickly turn around the education of many students at once. School transformation is also incredibly challenging, and to that end Crescent City Schools has developed a deliberate set of strategies that we believe contribute to the success of a K-8 transformation project. Based on our own prior experiences in transformation environments as well as research from the transformation movement, we have developed a set of strategies that we believe focus school leadership on the behaviors and activities that will lead to success. Instead of thinking of the project as "school improvement," turning around a school requires bold action and clear strategy. Crescent City Schools' transformation strategies are:

- Set Priorities and Minimize Distractions
- Set the School Culture as a First Priority
- Build Unity through a Team Approach
- Invest in Adults
- Provide a Structured Management System
- Drive Student Achievement Through Personal Leadership

Set Priorities and Minimize Distractions
Successful turnaround leaders first set priorities to ensure that they are focusing their efforts and the efforts of the leadership and school faculty on a common set of goals. The work of school transformation is challenging, and without focusing our attention on our priorities we can get distracted by important, but not crucial, goals. Successful leaders filter out distractions that do not lead to success on clearly set priorities.

Maintaining a clear focus on priorities in the first year also allows for early, visible wins for the organization and allows staff to build on successes.[3] Staff are motivated by meeting goals, and continuing to raise the bar after early successes will ensure that the school is continually moving toward its big goals.
In their respective first years, CCS4 and CCS5 will the following priorities:

[2] Brewer, Dominic, Eric Eide and Dan Goldhaber, "The Teacher Labour Market and Teacher Quality." *Oxford Review of Economic Policy 20* (Summer 2004): 230. Ferguson, Ronald F, "Paying for Public Education: New Evidence on How and Why Money Matters." *Harvard Journal on Legislation 28* (1991): 465-498. Hanushek, Eric A, "The Failure of Input-Based Schooling Policies." *The Economic Journal 113* (February, 2003): F64-F98.

[3] Mullen, C.A., & Patrick, R.L.,The persistent dream: A principal's promising reform of an at-risk elementary urban school. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk, (2000) 5(3),* 229-250. (http:// findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0JSD/ is_6_62/ai_n13810321). In their study on first-year principal Lynne Patrick's turnaround of the lowest performing school in Alabama, Mullen and Patrick noted setting priorities as one of the most significant levers to success in this all-black, K-6 urban elementary school.

- Creating a structured, orderly learning environment
- Dramatically raising reading levels in every grade
- Closing the achievement gap in our first class of kindergarteners, sending them to 1st grade on grade level
- Building significant relationships with families, characterized by frequent contact from school leadership early in the year

Concentrating on key levers to school success and motivating staff around several clear goals will help us use resources and time on strategies that will have the most impact.

Set the School Culture as a First Priority
We believe that creating a structured, orderly learning environment is crucial to transforming a school, and we also believe that this is so important that it should be a first priority. There are those that believe a school will gradually improve, becoming more structured over the course of the first year. We disagree: school culture must be established within the first month of school in order to clearly communicate high expectations for all students and move on to focus on academics. Of course, there will always be students who behave outside the boundaries of what is acceptable, but when the majority of students are engaged with the teacher, the school can make huge academic gains. Without constant attention to setting and keeping the bar high, the proper culture does not get set. In schools where high standards aren't maintained after the first week of school, constant "re-sets" are necessary, teachers are focused for too long on the daily battle of classroom management instead of instruction, and burnout sets in. We want to create an orderly and structured environment as soon as possible so teachers and students can enjoy their time together focused on learning.

Build Unity through a Team Approach
We believe in the power of a team approach to building a strong school. When a team of teachers has the same standards, procedures, and expectations for behavior and culture, students know what to expect in every classroom and experience more success. Establishing a common language, collective vision, and shared direction is the responsibility of the school principal, and this effort drives student achievement.[4] A successful school team will do the same kind of planning to meet the needs of their grade level of students.

Each team at the school will spend significant planning and collaboration time each day handling the day-to-day workings of their team. This could include any of the following:

- Perfecting transitions to class, lunch, recess, and arrival/dismissal
- Discussing difficult students and strategizing together to ensure more success
- Identifying students who need special services or just more attention from staff
- Collaborating on field trip plans and procedures
- Looking at student work together to ensure that each teacher is keeping expectations high for meeting the standard
- Streamlining procedures for report card distribution to ensure more parent time with teachers
- Sharing ideas for making science instruction more interactive
- Discussing difficult students and strategizing together to ensure more success
- Identifying students who need special services or just more attention from staff

Behavior Management Cycle

[4] Goldring, E., Porter, A.C., Murphy, J., Elliot, S.N., & Cravens, X., *Assessing Learning-Centered Leadership: Connections to Research, Professional Standards, and Current Practices*. Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University. (2007) This Wallace-funded project identified key processes each successful turnaround leader should exemplify, including the process of planning and implementing a shared vision for school direction.

Since 2012, Crescent City Schools has partnered with the *Center for Transformative Teaching* (CTT) to implement the *No Nonsense Nurturer (NNN) Behavior Management Cycle (BMC)* in its classrooms. Coaches from CTT have worked with members of all three schools' leadership teams to coach them to implement NNN in their school buildings. Teachers are trained to use the following BMC strategies:

- Set expectations by giving MVP directions to students that explain what type of **m**ovement they want to see, what type of **v**olume they want from students, and what type of **p**articipation they expect. An example of a good MVP direction is, "When I say go, I want you to silently (*volume*) take out your homework from last night (*movement*), and then look up so I know you are ready (*participation*). Go"
- Narrate positively what they are seeing in the classroom. Examples of positive narration include, "I see Jonas taking out his homework," "Marcus is silently following directions" "Elicia has her eyes on me." Positive Narration allows students to hear the expectation again so they know what they should be doing and allow teachers to recognize students for doing the right thing.
- Give a consequence. Teachers at CCS schools and at Tubman2 give consequences when students are not meeting expectations. Teachers give consequences in a neutral tone and restate the expectations. Consequence might include, "John, that is a deduction. We are silent" or "Maria, that is a color change, we are taking out our homework." Consequences are used to reinforce positive behavior and never to humiliate.

Implementation of the NNN model is a hallmark in the CCS transformation model. It allows teachers to establish and maintain a strong classroom culture. Teachers know to set expectations, narrate, and give consequences. Students know expectations will be clear and that there will be consistently delivered consequences if expectations are not met.

CCS4 and CCS5 leaders will use professional development time during staff summer orientation PD to introduce the NNN model to teachers and giving them ample opportunity to practice it with their peers before the start of the year. Many teachers pick up the model easily and can implement it, while others struggle with this unfamiliar model for classroom management. For those teachers, CCS4 and CCS5 instructional leaders will use *Real Time Teacher Coaching (RTC)* to provide teachers with "in the moment" feedback during their classroom lessons. Coaches use walkie talkies to communicate with teachers who wear ear buds in their ear, giving them quick directions they can follow that will positively influence the class lesson. At first coaches spend time coaching on management with teachers, giving directions such as, "Reset the class with MVP direction" or "John is not taking notes-go over and tap him on the shoulder." Once teachers are implementing the NNN model for management, coaches move on give real time feedback on instruction. We anticipate we will use RTC for management at CCS4 and CCS5 for much of the first half of each school's first academic year (respectively), but will then coach more on instruction as the building culture becomes strong.

Invest in Adults

Crescent City Schools believes that people make the difference, and great people make an even bigger difference. We aim to include the appropriate staffing structure to meet the needs of our students, and develop those staff members so they are helping our students reach the highest levels of achievement.

We understand and anticipate the variety of challenges our students will bring with them to school. We also believe it is our responsibility to educate and nurture each child, no matter their circumstances. Because of this commitment to each child and each family, we plan to staff our school with the people in place to meet student

needs. To that end, we intend to move away from, as Calkins and Guenther write, "a linear, curriculum-driven 'conveyor belt' that students and schools try (with little success in high-poverty settings) to keep up with."[5] Instead, we will build a team of staff around each student with highly-effective systems for assessing and serving that student's needs.

When taking over an entire school, there is often a lack of teacher capacity to attend to every student or family issue that arises. This is natural in a turnaround environment, but it seriously undermines the school's ability to serve students. Our experience reveals that time and attention to students and parents is a critical factor in building buy-in and meaningful relationships between adults and students.

Successful schools have adequate student support professionals to address the variety of needs that students present. Because we don't know the specific special education needs, emotional needs, or socioeconomic needs of each of our families in the school, we plan to thoughtfully add additional staff in these areas to ensure that students are served well.

More than any other factor, caring, highly-skilled adults make the difference in a child's life. Crescent City Schools intends to allocate our resources to developing the people in the CCS4 and CCS5 buildings so they can best serve the needs of our students. In the first few years of each school, we will hire additional staff to ensure that every teacher has the time to address all student issues, from making a parent call to report a good day, or talking through a conflict with two students. We believe that talented people will make a huge difference in our students' lives, and we want to give them the training and the time to do that well.

Provide a Structured Management System
Crescent City Schools believes that structured management systems will ensure success in a turnaround environment by eliminating any ambiguity with respect to expected outcomes for each employee. A transformation environment can be fast-paced and unstable, especially because each member of the team is in their first year at that particular role. We will create a management hierarchy designed to streamline communication and promote accountability. It will be clear to each employee who their immediate supervisor is, and to reduce redundant work or inaction because of confusion, we will ensure that everyone has one primary supervisor. In addition, having one building principal who is responsible for everything in the building builds a culture of accountability.

Drive Student Achievement Through Strong Principal Leadership
The research on school turnaround as well as our own experiences in transformation environments acknowledges the significant role the school leader plays in the success of the school. In a transformation environment, the school principal's leadership has more of an effect—in essence it's needed more—because staff need direction. The Center on Innovation and Improvement has identified several Leader Actions that contribute to success in a transformation school setting.[6] Key among these is having the principal take personal responsibility for the school, including all aspects of student achievement. In addition, successful school leaders communicate a positive,

[5] Calkins, A., Guenther, W., Belfiore, G., & Lash, D., *The Turnaround Challenge*, (2007). Calkins describes a new model that "evokes instead the sense of a medical team rallying to each student, backed by a whole system of skilled professionals, processes, and technologies organized and ready to analyze, diagnose, and serve the goal of learning."

[6] Brinson, D., Kowal, J., & Hassel, B. of Public Impact., *School Turnarounds: A Review of the Cross Sector Evidence on Dramatic Organizational Improvement.* Lincoln, IL: Center on Innovation and Improvement. (2007)

compelling vision of the school, which motivates and leads the staff to embody the values and mission of the school.[7] Rather than being an office-bound administrator, Crescent City Schools' principal is an engaged, visible, and completely accountable leader within the school community.

Supporting Equitable Achievement for All Students

Julie Lause and Kate Mehok started the Crescent City Organization because they saw a need in New Orleans for operators willing to take on the challenge of transformation work. Since its inception in 2010, Crescent City Schools has always served and advocated for "at risk" populations, as our entire school buildings are composed of those students. As explained fully in Academics section (beginning on page 7 of the Experienced Operator Application), as a transformation organization we assume that almost all our students will be behind academically, so we must build intervention into the regular academic program. As a transformation organization we know that many children with special needs languish in failing schools and it is our job to ensure they get the adequate services to help them achieve their potential. We also know that transformation schools often are full of many students who have high needs but have not yet been identified and given IEPs and the respective corresponding services. We hope that is not true with CCS4 and CCS5 but we are prepared if it is true and know that it is our job to secure services for those students by October 1st of the transformation year. As each CCS school serves as its own LEA in regards to special education, we design our schools to have a full continuum of services in special education, including inclusion, pull-out/resource, and self-contained. For those for whom none of those settings work, we have created Aurora, an alternative program that is more therapeutic in nature (see page X for a description of the Aurora Program). We have counselors and social workers at each of our schools to support students' social and emotional learning, and we employ ELL teachers and interpreters to help families and ELL students feel welcome and successful. We want all our students to thrive and we know it is our responsibility to make that happen.

Crescent City Schools, as part of its mission to provide college preparatory education to all students, will ensure a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) for all students by providing and directing special education and related services that meet all State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (SBESE) standards and OPSB standards at the school's expense.[8] Special education students will receive robust support within the school community in order to excel and meet high academic performance standards. In accordance with all applicable state and federal laws and regulations, including Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1974, Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Bulletin 1706, and other relevant regulations/legislation. CCS4 and CCS5 will offer students with disabilities the least restrictive environment possible within the guidelines of each student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP). CCS4 and CCS5 will not discriminate against students who have or may have disabilities in student recruitment or enrollment practices, as it is our mission to provide a college preparatory education to underserved and at-risk students in New Orleans.

All of our students, including those identified as disabled under Louisiana State Law and Federal IDEA law, will achieve CCS4 and CC5's mission of being prepared to enter into college because we have instituted a thorough support system into our overall school design and model to support the academic needs of all students. In order to serve all students in a setting that best supports their learning, we offer a full range of continuum of services to

[7] Almanzan, H.M., *Schools moving up. Educational Leadership*, *62.* Retrieved January 2008. Interactive principal leadership ensured success in 18 formerly low-performing schools in California and Nevada.

[8] Due to page limitations, pages 10 and 11 of this Transformation Addendum include a truncated description of the Special Education Program employed across the CCS network of schools. A complete description of Special Education at CCS schools can be provided upon request.

meet the needs of our schools. These options include inclusion in the general education classroom, resource rooms, and self-contained classrooms. Overall, the Special Education program at CCS4 and CCS5 will be guided by six main principles:

1) Equal access to college preparatory curriculum
All students at CCS4 and CCS5 will have access to a high-quality, rigorous, college preparatory curriculum regardless of whether the student has an identified disability or not.

2) Integration in student population
To the greatest extent possible, students with disabilities should be integrated in the regular student population and included in every part of the school's culture and expectations.

3) Preparation for independence
The goal of the special education program at CCS4 and CCS5 will be to help special education students excel at the highest levels. We believe that this includes developing lifelong strategies for success and achievement at the highest possible level. We want to equip students with strategies for independence and, to the extent possible, exit students from special education services when they no longer need the designation.

4) Inviting to students of all learning profiles
CCS4 and CCS5 will actively seek students of all learning profiles, including students with disabilities, to be a part of our robust and rigorous academic environment. CCS4 and CCS5's ' staff will treat students' disabilities as a welcome challenge and those students as an integral part of the schools' vision.

5) Strict adherence to procedure
CCS4 and CCS5's special education department will strictly adhere to the special education policies and procedures of the school, as these policies and procedures insure that students and parents are given due process in decisions regarding special education evaluations and services.

6) Stakeholder involvement
Beyond the extent required by law, CCS4 and CCS5's special education staff will include parents, classroom teachers, administrators and others in decisions involving a student's disability and/or accommodations.

English Language Learners
In order to support our English Language Learner (ELL) students, we will equip them with targeted instructional support necessary for their academic success. We will use a structured English immersion methodology to fulfill this goal, as this strategy has been shown to demonstrate the best results with English language learners. In addition, our extended school day and school year will provide needed additional learning time for these students to work toward mastery of the English language. We firmly believe in avoiding the common pitfall of assigning ELL students to special education services simply because of their limited language proficiency. For parents whose English proficiency is also limited, the ELL coordinator will provide translations of all school materials and make regular contact with the parent to ensure that communication is open and frequent. CCS4 and CCS5 will actively recruit staff members that are either native speakers or fluent in the prevalent non- English languages of our student population.

Gifted and Talented Students
Crescent City Schools is committed to providing a free appropriate public education to all its students, including those that are identified as gifted/talented (G/T). The Director of Special Education will be responsible for ensuring

all identification, screening, parental involvement, and procedural safeguard requirements are followed in accordance with the SBESE *Pupil Appraisal Handbook*. For non-identified students suspected of being G/T, either through teacher referral, parent request, or based on a review of universal screening data, the School Building Level Committee (SBLC) will be convened by the Director of Special Education to consider eligibility for G/T designation. Gifted and talented evaluations will be conducted in accordance with the provisions of SBESE Bulletin 1508 – *Pupil Appraisal Handbook.* The final determination of whether or not a student is a gifted student will be based on a comprehensive assessment, integrating information drawn from various sources, including record reviews, teacher interviews, parent interviews, a standardized assessment of academic achievement in reading and math, and a standardized assessment of cognitive abilities.

The Aurora Program

As a network committed to operating open enrollment charter schools, we strongly believe that: 1) schools should serve *all* students, including those with special needs, and 2) schools should offer students with special needs the opportunity to be educated in a variety of settings. In order to serve all students in a setting that best supports their learning, we offer several learning environments at each of our schools. These options include inclusion in the general education classroom, resource rooms, and self-contained classrooms. All of our schools offer these settings, and 99% of our students can be successful in one of these settings. However, for the remaining 1% of students, many of whom are in kindergarten through third grade, school is simply overwhelming and they are not prospering. Crescent City Schools's solution to the challenges faced by its most vulnerable students was to create the Aurora Program in 2016-2017**.** The Aurora Program is a highly individualized program designed to meet the unique needs of children with documented emotional and behavioral concerns that are significantly impacting the child's ability to be successful in his/her regular school setting.

The Aurora school day runs from 9:00 am-3:00 pm and includes ample time for academic work, social and emotional learning, and enrichment classes. Breakfast, lunch and snack provided. The program has a small student to teacher ratio (8:1) as well as full time paraprofessional support in each classroom. We house the Aurora Program off site, in the former Habans building in Algiers. Currently 24 students from all three Crescent CIty Schools attend that program and CCS4 and CCS5 students will have access it to as well.

Transition Period for Families and Students

Crescent City Schools has experienced two different transitions during our turnaround efforts in Algiers. Turnaround efforts were made more difficult at Tubman in 2011 by a hostile operator and a state charter office unprepared for the transition. It was difficult to gain access to the Tubman building, difficult to get rosters to connect with current students and families, and difficult to get an adequate inventory of the building since materials disappeared on a regular basis. And yet, we still managed to increase the number of students attending Tubman by 130%. We still poured $150,000 and thousands of hours of volunteer labor into the Tubman building to transform it for students over the summer. And we still built strong relationships with families such that we got out of failing status in two years and the demand for the Tubman program continues to grown in Algiers in year seven.

At Habans we experienced a very different transition. Both the Recovery School District and the outgoing principal worked collaboratively with Crescent City Schools to ensure that families at Habans were well informed and that the transition was as smooth as possible for all parties. We increased enrollment at Habans by 130%, put $100,000 and hundreds of volunteer hours into the building that we knew would be obsolete in three years, and now have over 700 students in the new Habans building. We also have grown almost 20 SPS points in two years.

While we anticipate that the transition to operating CCS4 and CCS5 will resemble the Habans transition more than the Tubman transition, we at Crescent City Schools are prepared for anything, and know we can adjust our plans if

necessary. We will be successful if we remember that our most important customers are our families and our students. They deserve accurate timely information during the transition time. They deserve a CCS4 and CCS5 staff who are friendly and knowledgeable, and can build relationships with families quickly so they can grow to trust a new operator. We need to host as many community meetings and parent nights as we can so that families can get to know our staff the CCS4/CCS5 way. We need to make sure our policies and our handbook and our written materials home to families are clear and concise and relay important information both in English and Spanish (and other languages as needed). We need to have an office manager who answers the phone and welcomes families to the school. We need to do what we say we are going to do so that we can earn the trust of our families.

Establishing High Expectations
Prior to the start of school, staff will engage in a 3-week professional development session. As explained more in the staff section of the charter, the first week of PD with staff is all about mission and values and expectations for staff. This week is where the principal and his/her team set the tone for what is expected of CCS4 and CCS5 staff. Week two of professional development focuses on curriculum, and third week focuses on perfecting routines and procedures for staff prior to the start of school. While that third week is important every school year, is especially important during transformation. It is through practice together as a staff with whole school dismissal, lunch transition, and bathroom breaks, that the reality of transformation becomes evident for staff.

So when students start the year on August 15, 2020, staff will have already been working together for almost a month and will be a united group. It is so much easier to run and execute an orientation week for students that helps students to understand and demonstrate the high expectations when the staff are all speaking with one voice.

School Operations

(1) Provide a brief addition to your staffing plan, explaining what additional steps you will take to recruit and retain highly-effective teachers and non-classroom staff.
(2) Provide a brief addition to your budget and budget narrative, explaining any additional financial resources you have received or anticipate receiving to support transformation efforts. Has your school applied for LDE School Redesign Funding, or does your organization intend to apply?

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

Crescent City Schools is committed to attracting and retaining a diverse and talented staff. All prospective faculty will go through a rigorous hiring process to ensure that Crescent City Schools is selecting the very best staff for our students. Qualities to look for in potential candidates for CCS4 and CCS5 include experience with dramatically raising student achievement levels in urban classrooms, academic achievement in their own school background and willingness to devote extra time and energy to creating a school from the ground up. In addition, we seek faculty that embody our values and demonstrate a love of teaching, learning and the ability to transform the lives of children. While teachers at charter schools are not required by law to be certified (except PreK) and no longer are required to be classified as “highly qualified”, we continue to seek certified teachers as we think certification demonstrates a level of commitment to the profession.
Recruitment: Recruitment for faculty begins by tapping into the networks of existing gap-closing teachers. Our best hires come from recommendations from our current staff. Over the last two years we have made 39 hires that were a direct result of a referral from a current staff. Of course, referrals are not enough, so we have employees at the CMO central office team who conduct all recruiting and screening of candidates before passing qualified candidates on to the schools. That work is led by the Director of Human Capital and is supported by the Manager of Human Capital. Recruiting activities include attending local and national hiring fairs, advertising on

social media, and posting job positions on local and national job boards. Over the last years the number of applicants to CCS have increased, with over 4000 applicants over the last two years. In a time of teacher shortages, we also increased our teacher applications by almost 150, going from 801 for the 2016-2017 school year to 948 for the 2017-2018 school year.

Retention: Crescent City Schools seeks to attract and retain a diverse set of staff dedicated to the mission of preparing all students for college. While Crescent City Schools does not offer the top salaries in the market, we do aim to offer the best benefits package in the city. Our philosophy is that we want our employees to take care of themselves, take care of their families, and craft sustainable careers. Our 2018-2019 benefits to all Crescent City Schools include the following:

Benefit	Annual Value	Details
Insurance	At least $2,878 Up to $7,678	• Health insurance: **100% of your premium paid by CCS** • Dental insurance: **100% of your premium paid by CCS** • Vision insurance: **100% of your premium paid by CCS** • Add your spouse, partner, and/or children to any of the above insurance plans: **25% of family member premium paid by CCS**
Retirement	Up to 4% of your salary immediately	• 401k plan with **matching contributions up to 4% of your compensation**; immediate vesting (no waiting period) • Tiered matching structure: **5%** match in 5th - 9th year with CCS; **6%** match in 10th - 14th year; **7%** match in 15th year and beyond
Life & Disability Insurance	At least $200	• $25,000 life insurance policy, **100% of your premium paid by CCS**, and access to affordable additional life insurance for yourself, your spouse or partner, and your children • Short-term disability insurance, **100% of employee premium paid by CCS** • Access to affordable long term disability insurance
Additional Health Benefits	Up to $2,250	• Flexible spending accounts for medical and dependent care expenses • Free, unlimited telemedicine consultations for employees & dependents
Total Value of Benefits		**$3,078 - $10,128 + 4% of Your Salary**

Crescent City Schools also prides itself on providing the best benefits package possible, and that goes beyond the traditional benefits like insurance and retirement accounts. To enable our employees to "craft sustainable careers" as our benefits philosophy states, we provide the following to our staff: Free, 24/7 telemedicine consultations for all staff and their dependents; Monthly on-site carwashes; On-site tax preparation; Free, on-site financial management classes; Free, on site biometric screenings; Free, on site flu shots; Extensive local and national discounts (including cell carriers, dry cleaning, gyms, housekeeping, retailers, and more); Discounted, high quality childcare; Free, on-site notary services. We also believe that creating a robust, rewarding professional development program is another key feature in retaining high-quality staff. Not only does ongoing, professional development We feel that developing leaders within the organization and providing opportunities for growth will lead to higher staff retention. One of the goals of the professional development program at each of our schools is to provide career options within the organization for staff members, so that most vacancies can be filled from within the organization. For example, an assistant teacher will be receiving support and feedback all year that will

hopefully prepare him or her to take on the role of classroom teacher the following year or sooner if necessary. Office managers will be receiving feedback and training to possibly take on positions managing operations and finance of the school.

Additional Financial Resources
Crescent City Schools prides itself on operating both its schools and its central office solely off of regularly-recurring government revenue. We do not have a multi-million dollar fund balance that we can selectively dip in to, as some large traditional school districts do, so we always create budgets that can best serve our students without relying on significant unsecured financial resources.

That said, we do fundraise for our schools and have a very successful track record of raising funds to support extracurricular programming and experiences, technology purchases, and new program start-up activities. Fundraising makes up approximately 1-2% of our revenue each year and, while we expect this to continue, we do not include it in our budgets to ensure we can always operate within our means.

Each of the schools we currently operate received a start-up grant from the Walton Family Foundation. Additionally, Harriet Tubman Charter School received a second grant from the Walton Family Foundation to support its expansion. We anticipate applying for a start-up grant from the Walton Family Foundation for both CCS4 and CCS5, but we have not included those unsecured funds in our budgets.

Paul Habans Charter School applied for and was awarded both School Redesign Planning and School Redesign grants. We have no intentions, at this time, of applying for additional School Redesign grants. However, if CCS4 and/or CCS5 are eligible for School Redesign grant funds, we will likely apply.

Metrics and Goals

(1) How will your organization use data to set goals, and inform decision-making? How will you measure progress in your transformation efforts, and what steps have you taken to mitigate risks? What will you do if your transformation effort is off-track? Discuss this from both the organization perspective and the charter board perspective.
(2) How has your organization operated a transformation school previously? If applicable, what lessons have you learned, and how have they informed changes in your practice and in this proposal. Additionally, provide specific measures of success of previous transformations that your organization has operated.

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

As experienced transformation operators in New Orleans, we know many of the challenges we will face. We understand that we must quickly assess our students at the beginning of the year to ensure we are adjusting our program to fit their needs. We assess each child's reading level using the STEP (K-3) and Fountas & Pinnell (4-8) reading assessments. We assess all 3rd-8th grade students in math through the iReady program and all K-2 students through MAP. We use all that data to inform our regular Tier 1 program as well our intervention groups. We host day long professional development "data days" where we analyze interim and reading data, and work to make adjustments in our teaching to ensure students reach mastery of state standards. We also use that time to analyze non-academic data, such as attendance and suspensions, to ensure we are on track to meet our goals with students.

We believe that the driving force of any school transformation is school culture. We know that school culture must be strong from the start so school leaders use rubrics to assess student culture in our classrooms from the beginning of the year. Leaders track small behavior goals such as "number of students with name tags on" or "number of students with shirts tucked in" in each classroom, but leaders also use rubrics to determine if teachers are following the behavior management system. We track if teachers are "giving clear directions" and then if they are "narrating positive behaviors." In the first few weeks of schools teachers receive emails with their rubric scores immediately following observations and then have weekly follow-up meetings with their coach. After the first few weeks of schools, each teacher sits with her supervisor and the School Leader and develops a Professional Development Plan (PDP) based on the observation results. Some teachers will nail classroom management immediately and them move on to working more deeply around instructional delivery, while others will need more intensive coaching and real time feedback from their coach.

The CEO meets weekly with each School Leader in the network and those meetings involve classroom walkthroughs, analysis of weekly and quarterly data, and coaching on staff management. If the transformation is off track early, it will be manifest itself in a lack of strong culture in the classrooms. If staff are not speaking with one voice and being consistent with praise and consequences, then students will be confused about the expectations for them. If there are small changes needed, then the School Leader will work with staff during Wednesday professional development sessions to tighten procedures and review expectations. If there is a larger problem, the School Leader can plan a culture reset after a break, whether it is Thanksgiving or the December Holidays, where students participate in another orientation to reset the expectations for behavior and academics. We have run those successfully before, and often the reset is not needed for the entire school, but for a few grades within the school.

As mentioned previously, weekly data meetings and interim assessments inform the decisions we make about teaching. If those data points are demonstrating we are off track on our transformation, then we will adjust our program, using our data day professional development and/or our weekly Wednesday professional development time to train staff. If only a few teachers are off track we will tailor coaching and feedback to the needs of those specific teacher. Coaches can model lessons, team teach, or give "in the moment" feedback to teachers so they can make instant adjustments. If a teacher is not responding to coaching, and is not showing improvement despite all the interventions, then we may reassign the teacher, or if necessary relieve the teacher of his duties.

So much of the success of the school is based on the strength of the School Leader. Our strongest schools are runs led by visionary principals who have the autonomy to make school-level decisions quickly. It is the job of the CMO central office team to support principals to lead, not to dictate what principals do all day long. That autonomy allows the school leader and her leadership team to be responsive to the needs of students and families and the school community. As we make preparations to transform two additional schools in New Orleans, we will first look to promote folks from within our organizations to lead them, as they have proven they can deliver on the promises made to families.

We know that each transformation is both similar and very different from other transformations. CCS has already successfully transformed two schools (described on pages 3-5) and will use the lessons learned from the turnaround leaders in its network. The experience of CCS's two co-founders, Julie Lause and Kate Mehok, will be particularly relevant here. Lause and Mehok have worked closely together for eight years at CCS and have developed a strong working relationship. Together, there is little that can happen in a transformation that they have not experienced before, and they will both use their experience to guide the next phase of the work at Crescent City Schools.

Finally, Crescent City Schools had developed strong relationships with other CMOs in New Orleans and will use

those relationships to support the transformation of CCS4 and CC5. Kate Mehok is the President of the School Leader Forum, a collection of all charters leaders in New Orleans who work to increase student achievement across the city. If there is a problem at CCS4 or CCS5, Kate can pick up the phone or email and call any charter leader in the city to ask for help. Julie has twenty years of experience in education and has strong relationships with many of the leaders in the city-there will be so much support available to the teams at CCS4 and CCS5 that we are comfortable we have the resources need to address any unforeseen problem.

Over the last eight years, Crescent City Schools has participated in the transformation of two schools, Harriet Tubman and Paul Habans. When we took over operations of Harriet Tubman in 2011, there were eight Recovery District schools on the Westbank and Tubman was ranked last in academic achievement. By 2016, Tubman had increased its academic achievement such that it was the highest performing RSD school on the Westbank. After year one of operations at Habans in 2014, we were one of the four lowest performing school in New Orleans. Yet we kept working with our students and families and four years later we have gone from F to C, made 25 SPS points of growth, and ranked number 1 in New Orleans (out of all K-8 schools) in ELA Mastery achievement (Spring 2018 LEAP scores).

We have demonstrated that we can raise student achievement in the building, moving our UNSAT and Approaching Basic kids towards Basic, but we still do not have all our students performing at Mastery. Like many open enrollment charters in New Orleans, we have not yet be able to have consistent achievement in every grade band in every classroom in all three of our schools. Each year we have teachers who get 80% of their students to Basic and 40% to mastery but we do not yet have that happening in every room every year. That challenge is one we face and that every open enrollment school in New Orleans is currently facing.

But we know that the key to continuous improvement is to maintain a strong culture of excellence in our building. Through our transformation efforts, we have learned that developing and maintaining a strong achievement driven student culture trumps every other intervention strategy-a belief supported by the work of *Relay Education and UnCommon Schools.* Having a strong culture allows principals to continuously raise the bar for excellence, both for students and for the adults in the building. It is what has allowed us to go from F schools to C schools, it is what will make the CCS4 and CCS5 transformations successful and it is what will get our C schools to A schools.

Community Engagement

(1) In what ways will you include community voice in the planning for the transformation? Describe in detail how you will be responsive to the community needs, include any meetings you plan to facilitate along with the content to be discussed.

(2) Describe the specific strategies you will use for engaging the following stakeholders in the transformation effort: a) parents/guardians/families, b) residents of the community surrounding the school. What is the role of parents in your schools' decision-making processes, and what venues will be established to articulate and elevate parent and community voice?

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

Crescent City Schools has experience in conducting turnaround work, both as an unknown operator trying to get to know families and the surrounding community with Tubman, and then as an experienced operator looking to expand within the community with Habans. We understand the importance of engaging families during this time of transition, as family partnership is the key to our success in our efforts.

When the Recovery School District assigned us to Harriet Tubman in 2011, we were unfamiliar with the Westbank

in New Orleans as neither Julie Lause or Kate Mehok had led or worked in schools in Algiers. We were also facing a hostile operator who had previously held a monopoly over schools on the Westbank and who was determined to make the transition difficult for us. So we took a series of steps to embed ourselves in Algiers and worked tirelessly to embed ourselves and get to know our community. Activities included:

- Renting space in the Craige Cultural Center, ½ mile down the street from Tubman, for four months prior to our being allowed into the Tubman building so we could have a home base in Algiers before we could get into the Tubman building
- Walking the streets of Algiers on numerous Saturday mornings with our staff, knocking on doors and introducing ourselves and our model.
- Hosting numerous parent information sessions both at Craige and at Tubman so parents of current Tubman students and other Algiers parents could come and get to know the team at Tubman.
- Meeting with over fifteen different Algiers community groups to introduce the CCS team and talk about the vision for the reimagined Tubman. Kate Mehok met with and spoke with leaders from groups as varied as the Algiers President's Council, the Kiwanis Club of Algiers, and the LASPCA.
- Recruiting 1,000 volunteers and spending over $150,000 of our own money to renovate the run-down Tubman building so that when students entered the building in August 2011, they would return to a beautiful building signifying a fresh start.
- Adding the vice-president of the McClendonville/Tunisburg Neighborhood Association to the board of CCS, so we'd have neighborhood representation.

Efforts to engage families were successful, as we grew Tubman enrollment from 300 in Spring 2011 to 540 in August 2011, despite never actually receiving any accurate records of enrollment from the previous operator and despite messages from the former operator that the Tubman school was closing. When we opened in August 2011, we also held a series of "Back to School Night" for families so they could see the building and get to know staff. In October 2011, we hosted a "Tubman Community Breakfast" and invited all the folks in Algiers who had supported us throughout the turnaround. We had over 30 community leaders at that breakfast who were thrilled to see the turnaround that had already taken place. We continue to host yearly Community Breakfasts at Tubman each year.

In 2013, when the Recovery School District assigned Crescent City to the Paul Habans building, we were a bit more known in Algiers, having successfully operated in Tubman for two years. Yet Habans was in a different neighborhood in Algiers so we knew it was important that that community and families got know us well. In addition, the current school leader at Habans was well liked by families and had made some academic improvements in the school, so we knew there were going to be families that were wary and not in favor of change. So we set out to get to know those families, and we sent Litouri Smith, the founding principal at Habans and an Algiers resident, to speak to a lot of the same groups that Kate Mehok had spoken to two years prior. We also hosted several family meetings at Habans where we invited the current Habans school leader so families could experience both groups working together. We hosted a meeting at Murray Henderson, since those families were losing their school as well, and we invited those families to join us at Habans the following year. We increased enrollment at Habans as well, going from about 250 students in Spring 2013 to 440 in August 2013. We also held a series of back to school nights for families and a Habans Community Breakfast in Fall 2013. Fast forward five years and Paul Habans Charter School is full in every grade and currently serves 700+ students.

When we are granted a charter for CCS4 and CCS5, we imagine we'll use some of the same strategies we used at Tubman and Habans and then adapt others to fit the needs of the communities in which those schools are located. We recognize that each school community is unique and so we must be prepared to create a myriad of opportunities for families to get to know us. We anticipate holding several family nights prior to the start of

school, we plan to canvas the neighborhoods surrounding the schools, and we plan to invite families to our other three schools to learn more about Crescent City Schools.

During the first school year and beyond, we'll engage families several ways 1) ensure that all families attend an orientation, 2) ensure that every family attends the fall back to school night, 3)ensure that every family attends the trimester report card conferences and 4)ensuring that families attend at least one other school-wide event. We think if families can commit those four things to engage with the school during the year, then we will see positive results with student achievement.