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Executive Summary

Provide a two-page overview of your proposed network, including: (1) The outcomes you will achieve; (2) The key components of your scale strategy; and (3) Your approach to mitigating the threats most likely to hinder your success.

Leaders of ReNEW Accelerated High School (RAHS), ReNEW Schools CMO (ReNEW), and Educators for Quality Alternatives (EQA) seek to transfer RAHS from ReNEW Schools to EQA. Together, leaders believe this transfer will both continue and amplify RAHS's important work with students who have struggled in traditional schools. As the operator of two high quality alternative schools (The NET:Center City and The NET:Gentilly), leaders believe that EQA is the charter management organization best positioned to effectively provide the support and leadership necessary for a transformed New Orleans Alternative High School (NOAH) to thrive.

As an organization, EQA's vision is that: *The City of New Orleans becomes a beacon of high quality education for students who have been expelled, have dropped out, or have struggled in a traditional environment. Through the creation of innovative and effective programs that provide life-changing education and opportunities for our students, EQA will serve as an exemplar for other communities, making better outcomes possible for all young people.*

In service of this vision, EQA's mission is to: *provide struggling high school students with the skills, confidence, and experiences necessary to succeed in the education and career paths of their choice.* This mission will be shared by NOAH upon transformation into EQA's network.

The intended instructional model for NOAH will encompass many of the components already present in the school's current incarnation. These components include: a rigorous and accelerated curriculum model, extended school year, and access to career and technical training. To further improve student achievement at NOAH, EQA plans to expand implementation of restorative practices, project based learning, and a deep focus on individualized, differentiated instruction. In addition, EQA will be able to provide NOAH with mission-aligned leadership coaching and support along with strategic development, operations and financial systems built specifically for alternative schools. NOAH will open as an EQA school in the 2020-2021 school year, serving grades nine through twelve with a starting enrollment of 250 students.

Outcomes

School outcomes sought for NOAH are directly related to students achieving high school diplomas and a solid foundation for post-high school life. As an alternative school, the school's outcomes align with Orleans Parish School Board's Alternative School Framework *(see table 1*).

Table 1

Student Stability Rate	Returning to, attending, and persisting through high school are not a given for the school's target demographic. Supporting students with both academic and non-academic issues such as behavior, mental health, truancy and homelessness is necessary to ensure they are able to be successful in school.
Growth in Literacy & Math Skills	The vast majority of students will enter the school with middle-school level reading and math skills. Thus, it is necessary to provide remediation while engaging students in the high school curriculum.
Credit Accumulation	Most students at NOAH will be over age for their grade. They have been held back in middle school or have lost time in high school. Therefore, the school's year-round, flexible scheduling, credit recovery, and accelerated opportunities are essential for catching students up.
End of Course/ LEAP 2025 Exam Passage	Many students at NOAH will have failed high stakes exams several times. Providing intensive, targeted instruction through regular classrooms and a comprehensive Response to Intervention (RtI) program as well as ensuring students are correctly identified for the appropriate accommodations and supports is vital to ensuring students are successful on their exams.

Graduation Rate	Unlike other alternative schools where students are only expected to attend a short time, students at NOAH will attend until they complete their degree. For some that will be a few months, for others several years. In all cases, the goal for every student is to graduate with a Louisiana High School Diploma.
Career Development Participation & Credentialing rate	NOAH's CTE and internship programs will expose students to post-graduation options, provide them with opportunities to learn and contribute to the "real world" (something teenagers hunger for) and to help them build important soft and hard skills for future careers.[1]

NOAH will use the best of evidence-based, RAHS, and NET-proven strategies to ensure students achieve the outcomes above and graduate with the confidence, experiences, and skills required to be successful in employment and continued education.

Scale Strategy

This transformation is unique in that NOAH will retain the current principal and leaders who have lead RAHS to its recent improvements and who have actively advocated for EQA's intervention. While many transformations are forced when a school and its leaders are failing, these leaders are proactively seeking more targeted, aligned and effective support in order to move the school from fair to great. NOAH and its school leaders will be supported and managed by EQA's Executive Director (ED) who co-founded the organization and served as founding principal at both NET campuses.

EQA has spent nearly ten years developing and improving the model for The NET Charter High School and successfully expanded to a second campus in 2017. This organizational learning, combined with a stable financial outlook and strong human capital, are the basis for scaling. Transforming a school will bring unique challenges and adding NOAH will nearly double the number of students served by EQA. However having learned from scaling from 60 students in a program to 325 students across two school campuses, EQA is confident in its ability to take on this challenge and maintain the organization's history of high quality execution.

Mitigating Threats

The most pressing concern in transforming RAHS to NOAH is effectively sharing The NET's systems and expectations in a manner that is both respectful of the school's unique history and values and insures the necessary changes are made to insure the students and school meets more of their goals.

To mitigate this threat, the ED and NOAH leaders will leverage the trust they have developed over the last year to honestly evaluate strengths, growth areas and strategies. Together leaders will model how to positively manage the excitement and fear that accompanies all changes. EQA's organizational value of transparency and communication structures such as its annual strategic planning cycle and professional growth management systems will be vital in ensuring a productive transformation.

Despite city-wide improvements in graduation rates over the last decade, New Orleans still lags behind the national average with only 61% of students successfully completing the requirements for a diploma[2] This data illuminates the continued need to increase high quality options for struggling students, ensuring they not only graduate, but they also learn the skills, gain the experiences, and develop the confidence to be successful after high school. EQA has a proven track record of providing this demographic with the supports they need to graduate and take the next step. Thus ReNEW and EQA leaders seek to proactively transition the school in order to insure that the most vulnerable students in New Orleans are assured the highest quality supports available.

Past School Performance

In your proposal overview, you provided performance data on the schools your organization currently operates or has previously operated. Please provide a brief accompanying narrative that describes your organization's success educating a similar demographic population to the population you intend to educate in Louisiana. Please note that the charter authorizer(s) to which you applied, or the Department may contact your other authorizers.

Narrative

The New Orleans Alternative High School will continue to serve the students that ReNEW Accelerated High School, The NET:Central City, and The NET:Gentilly have been serving in New Orleans since 2011. Specifically these are students who:

- Have been expelled
- Have dropped out of another school
- Are overage for their grade
- Have been adjudicated
- Have serious truancy issues
- Have significant trauma or live with toxic stress
- Are several years behind academically
- Struggle behaviorally
- Have significant adult responsibilities such as parenting or financially supporting their families

EQA is very familiar with the challenges and needs of these students and has a demonstrated record of results with this population.

Since 2014, The NET Charter High Schools have been rated by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education's (BESE) alternative accountability rubric, and going forward, the schools will be rated by Orleans Parish School Board's (OPSB) alternative accountability rubric. *(See Appendix A1)* These rubrics were developed specifically to address the discrepancies between Louisiana's School Performance Score and the student population, mission, and goals of alternative schools like The NET. This rubric has not yet been widely used, so there is little to no comparative data. However, the benchmarks are rigorous and the scores below demonstrate EQA's school's respectable, and continually improving, scores. *(See Table 2.)*

Table 2

	NET:Central City	**NET:Gentilly**
2014-2015 BESE Rubric **first year of alternative acct. rubric**	EOC Scores 0/20 Credit Accumulation 10/20 Student Stability 0/20 Literacy/Math Growth 20/20 Graduation Rate 20/20 **Total Points = 50 = Charter Extended**	n/a
2015-2016 BESE Rubric	EOC Scores 20/20 Credit Accumulation 10/20 Student Stability 10/20 Literacy/Math Growth 10/20 Graduation Rate 20/20 **Total Points = 70 = Charter Renewed**	n/a
2016-2017	Data not produced by LDOE	n/a
2017-2018 OPSB Rubric **School produced: data not yet verified by OPSB**	EOC Scores 15/25 Credit Accumulation 10/20 Student Stability 7/15 Literacy/Math Growth 20/20 Graduation Rate 20/20 **Total Estimated Points = 72**	EOC Scores 15/25 Credit Accumulation 20/20 Student Stability 8/15 Literacy/Math Growth 20/20 Graduation Rate 20/20 **Total Estimated Points = 83**

For the students EQA serves, reading and math growth, credit accumulation, student stability, internship completion, and Jump Start certifications are all vital indicators of academic growth and success. Along with

attendance, behavioral growth, and post-graduation outcomes, EQA closely analyzes these data to determine school effectiveness and develop plans for continual and targeted improvement.

Outside of the organization, however, it is the Louisiana End of Course (EOC) exams and, more recently, the LEAP2025 exams that are the most widely recognized signs of a school's academic success. All students at The NET schools take the EOC/LEAP2025 exams regardless of their special education status, reading/math levels, or the number of times they have taken and failed the exams previously. In this context the passing rates below show in Figure 1 below demonstrates an admirable and persistent trend of growth and improvement.

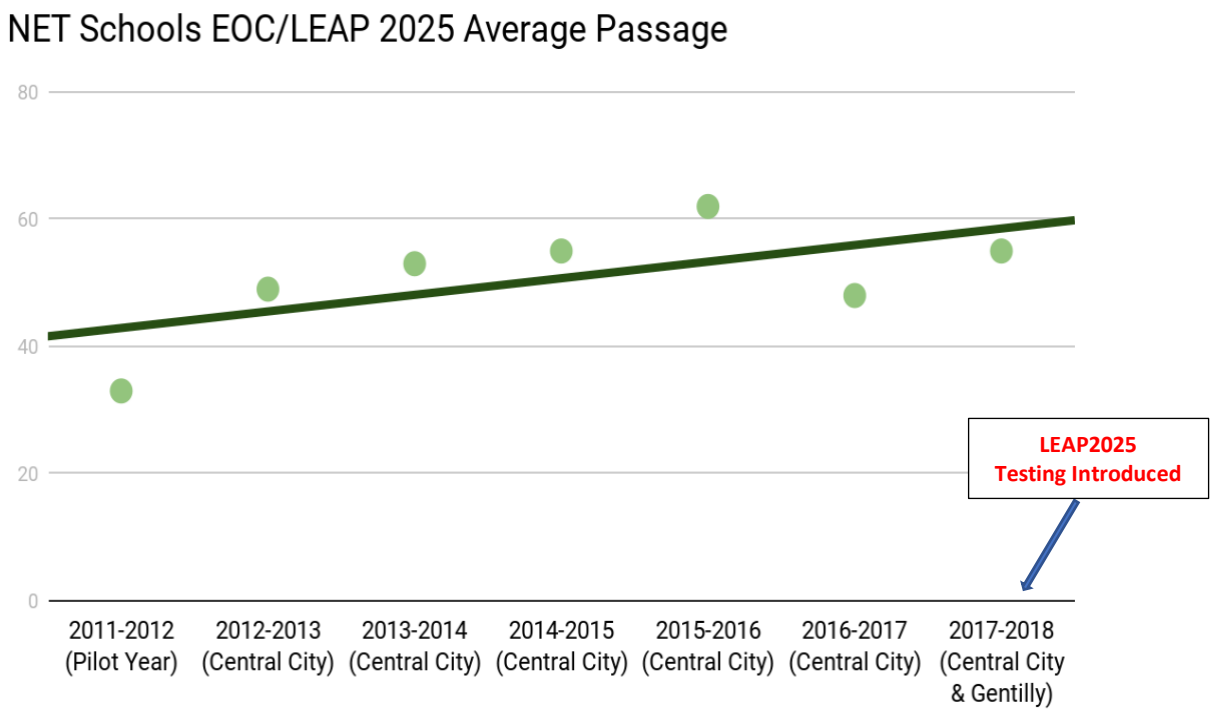

Figure 1

While NET schools have historically had the highest population of special education students and students who struggle with mental health and home issues in the city, it is evident from Figures 2 and 3 below that their students have performed better on EOC/LEAP 2025 tests than those at the other alternative schools in New Orleans.

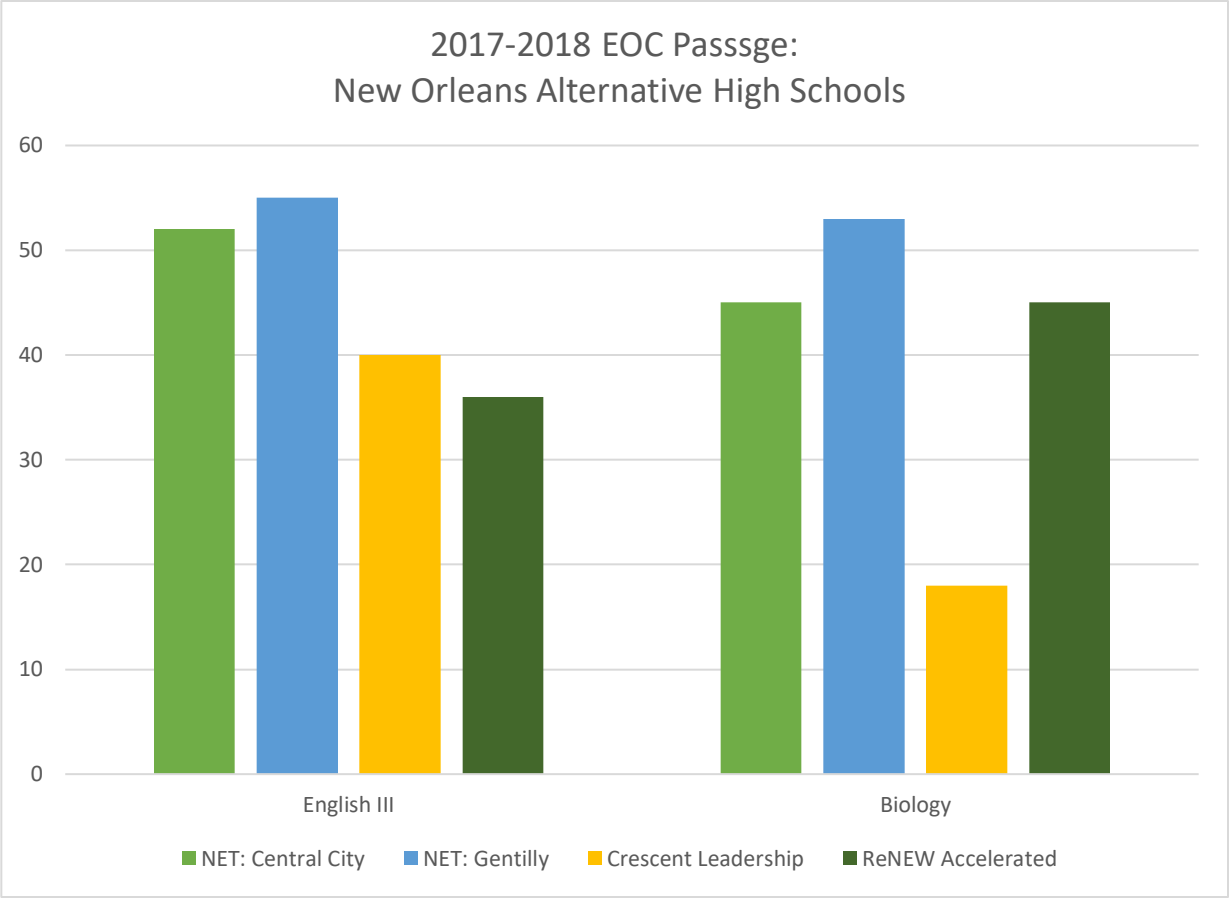

Figure 2

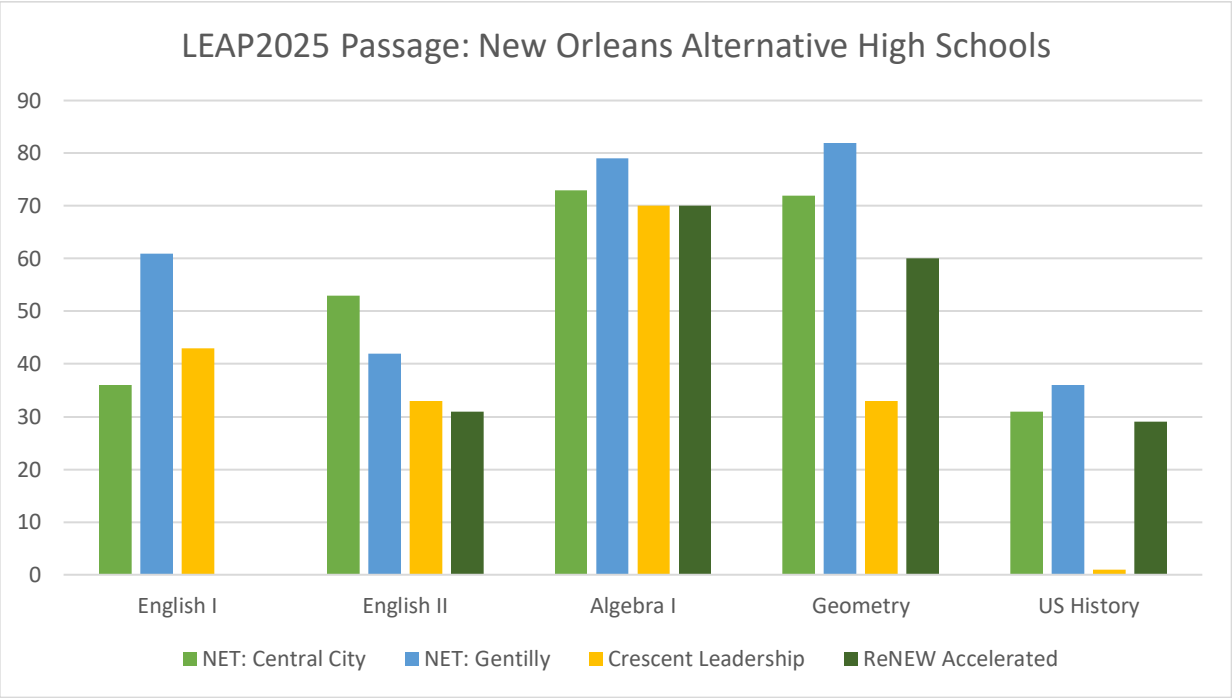

Figure 3

For students and families the most important indicator of the NET's success is their ability to graduate and receive a diploma. Each year the school has been in operation, it has seen growth in the number of graduates. This is particularly important because most students who graduate from the NET were previously considered drop-outs. Only after attending The NET were they able to earn their diplomas. *(See fig. 4)*

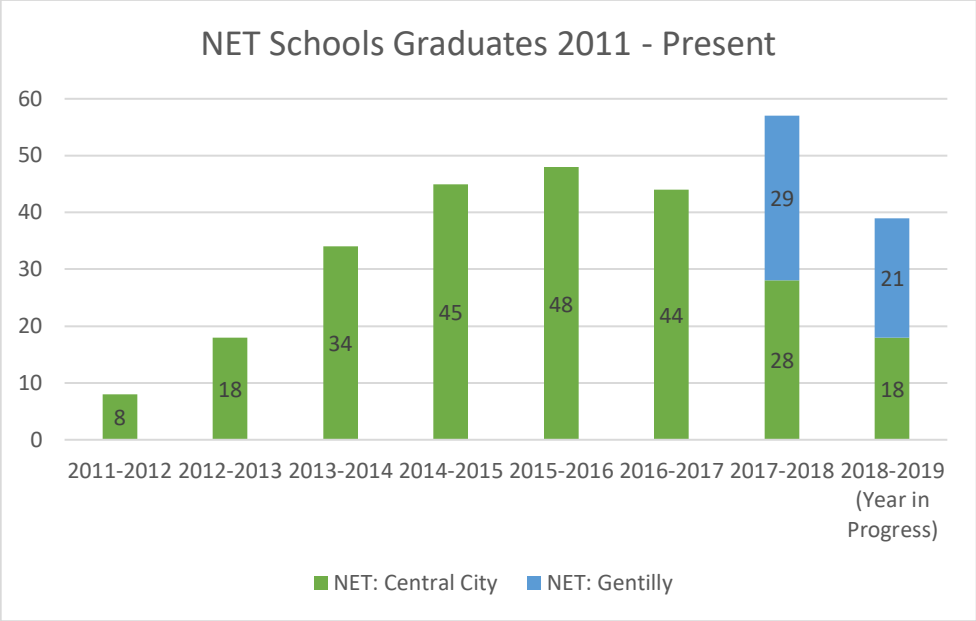

Figure 4

For school staff, it is alumni outcomes that they most often look to for indication of the success of the education and programming provided at The NET. The organization's ultimate success is predicated not simply on students growing while attending school, but instead on their outcomes after graduation. The NET's most recent comprehensive review of alumni outcomes occurred in 2016. At that time, more than 50% of alumni responded to requests for updates. Their responses are captured in Figure 5 below.

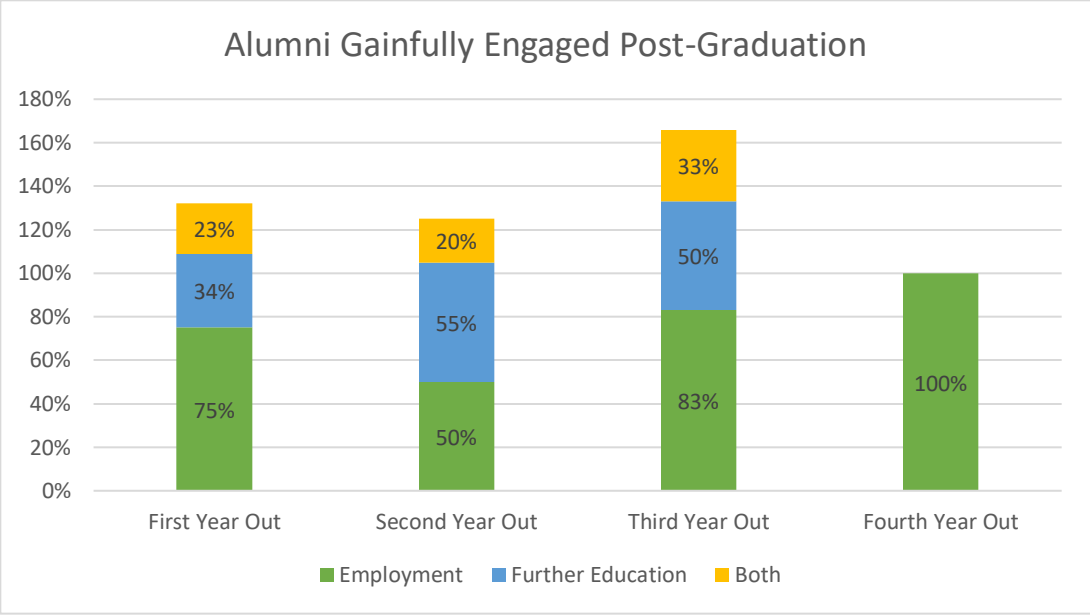

Figure 5

The NET schools have been recognized both locally and nationally as exemplar programs for students who have struggled in other settings. Due to this, EQA's Executive Director Elizabeth Ostberg was named an appointee to the LDOE's Alternative Education Study Group in the Spring of 2017. This group was tasked with "provid(ing) guidance for improving alternative education services and practices statewide for students who are most at-risk for not completing their education."[3] Numerous LDOE and OPSB leaders along with community and advocacy organizations such as Louisiana Center for Children's Rights, the Southern Poverty Law Center, the Youth Empowerment Project, and NOLA for Life, have visited and promoted The NET's work in New Orleans. Additionally, numerous articles outline how EQA schools have worked to provide safe, nurturing spaces where all students are able to focus on academic achievement and preparedness for the steps they will take upon graduation.[4]

Performance Deficiencies/Compliance Violations

(1) Any performance deficiencies or compliance violations that have led to authorizer intervention;
The NET has maintained an excellent track record in both financial and organizational performance. Neither EQA nor The NET:Central City nor The NET:Gentilly have ever received any allegations of violations. NOAH will maintain similar meticulous attention to all areas of compliance.

Litigation Involvement

(2) Any litigation involving your organization or a school that you operate; and,
Neither Educators for Quality Alternatives nor any of it schools have been involved in any litigation. EQA is not aware of any litigation involving RAHS which would burden the transition to NOAH.

Material Audit Findings

(3) Any material audit findings for your organization or a school that you operate.
All financial audits of Educators for Quality Alternatives and its schools have been unqualified. EQA and its back office provider, 4th Sector Solutions, are aware of the adjustments needed to expand to a third school and are prepared to do so in a way that continues its meticulous attention to financial management and responsibility.

Academics

(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.

Student Population Needs

EQA intends to serve all the current students at RAHS and to continue recruiting students for NOAH that mirror the demographics of the current school. Thus a clear picture of the actual student needs can be attained through examining RAHS's most recent baseline screening data.

In the 2018-2019 school year, the average student attending ReNEW Accelerated High School began the fall semester both reading and doing math at approximately a 5th grade level equivalent (GLE), according to the school's MAP Growth baseline screener. Of the 209 students included in the reading average, 30% scored at or below a third grade level. The same percentage scored at or below a third grade level in math with 212 students tested. (See figs. 6 & 7)

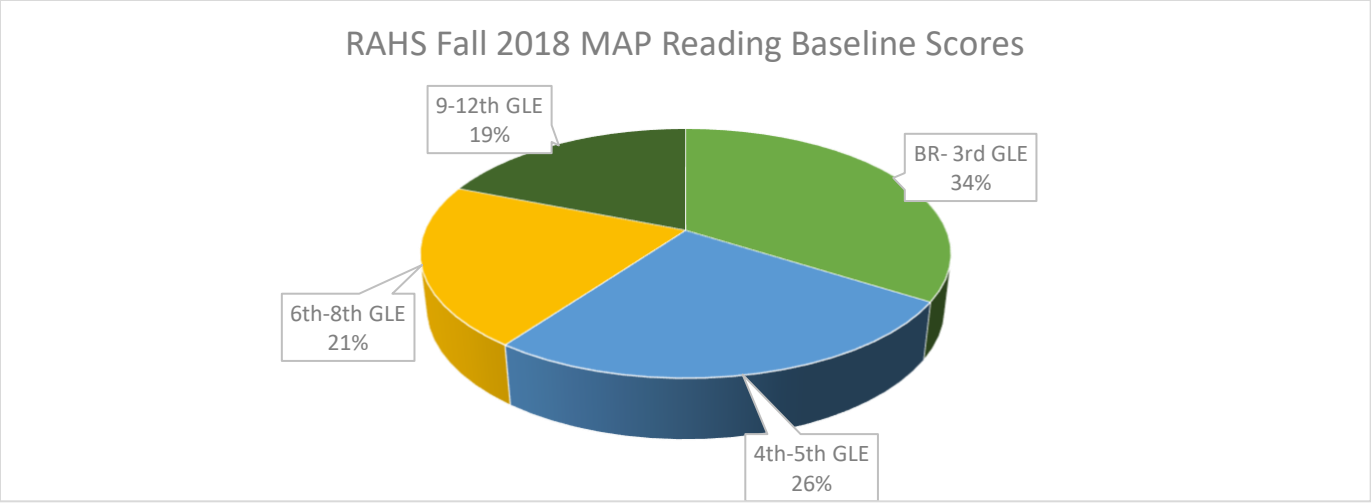

Figure 6

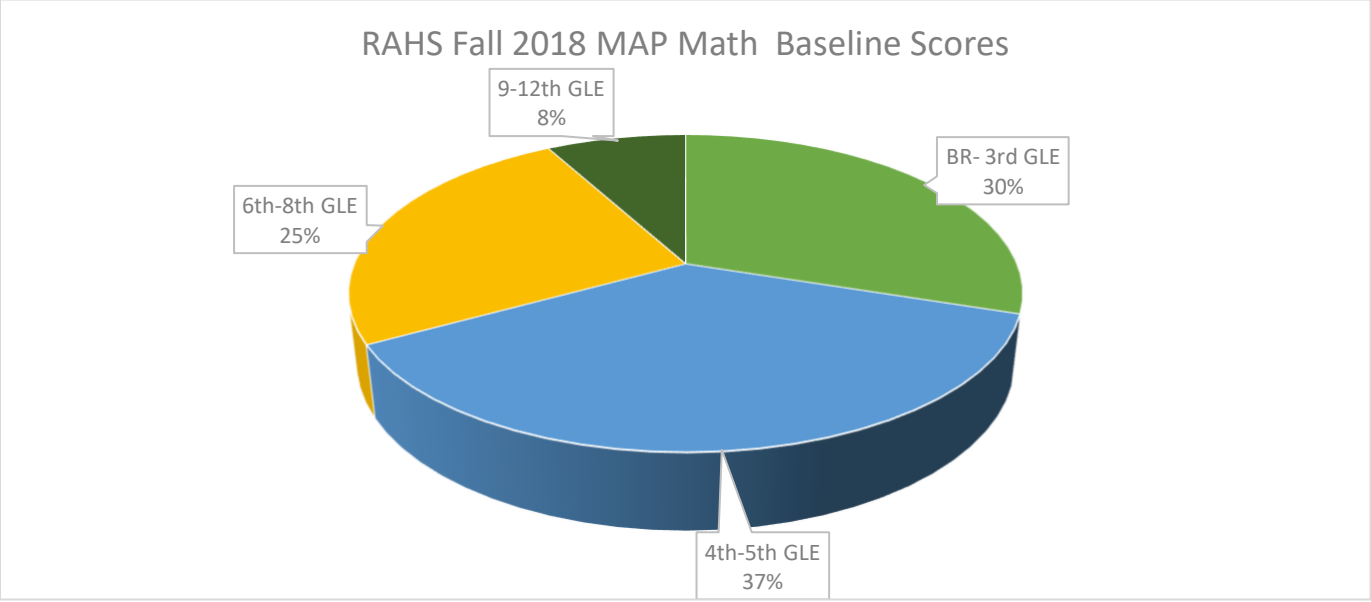

Figure 7

As evidenced by this data, the academic needs of this population are significant. In order to address the gaps between where students are when they enroll and where they need to be upon conferral of a diploma, the performance goals EQA sets forth must be rigorous and must include clear plans of support for students and staff. EQA plans to continue utilizing the MAP assessment as a screener to gather baseline and progress monitoring data, while working with NOAH school leaders to improve the school's use of this data to inform student scheduling, academic intervention design, classroom instruction, and professional development.

Goal Setting & Progress Monitoring

Upon transformation in to the EQA network, the New Orleans Alternative High School will share in the strategic planning and goal-setting process that currently acts as a north star for monitoring progress at the NET Schools. Table 3 below outlines long-term goals for The NET: Central City, The NET: Gentilly, and the proposed New Orleans Alternative High School. These goals are aligned to the Orleans Parish School Board Alternative Accountability Framework.

Table 3

The NET: Central City The NET: Gentilly New Orleans Alternative High School			
	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Student Enrollment	150 175 250	150 175 250	150 175 275
Average Daily Attendance	75% 75% 65%	75% 75% 70%	75% 75% 75%
Stability Rate	75% 75% 65%	75% 75% 70%	75% 75% 75%
Credit Accumulation	75% 75% 65%	75% 75% 70%	75% 75% 75%
EOC Average: % of students passing each test	75% 75% 65%	75% 75% 70%	75% 75% 75%
Literacy Improvement	2 GLs 2 GLs 2GLs	2 GLs 2 GLs 2GLs	2 GLs 2 GLs 2GLs
Math Improvement	2 GLs 2 GLs 2GLs	2 GLs 2 GLs 2GLs	2 GLs 2 GLs 2GLs
Graduation Rate	80% 80% 70%	80% 80% 75%	80% 80% 80%

* GLs - Grade Levels

In addition to these goals, each EQA school sets goals and measures progress on a variety of indicators of student success both in the short term-- while in school-- and in the long term-- in life after graduation. These include, but are not limited to:

- ACT participation and scores
- Internship participation and successful completion
- CTE course participation and IBCs earned
- Progress on behavior intervention plans
- Progress on counseling goals
- Suspension and expulsion rates
- Restorative intervention rates and success of mediation agreements
- Graduates entering higher education and the workforce

In addition, EQA schools set goals and measure progress on a variety of programmatic quality indicators including, but not limited to:

- Experience, diversity and effectiveness of staff
- Staff retention and promotion
- Parent and student satisfaction
- Community engagement
- Effectiveness of data collection and analysis
- Operational responsiveness
- Financial stability

The Executive Director works with each EQA school leader to develop an annual strategic plan which identifies goals for each area of school programming and aligned initiatives for improvement. School leaders share this annual strategic plan and progress towards its goals with the full staff at the beginning of each semester inviting every adult in the building to be involved in, and responsible for, individual student and collective school achievement.

Curriculum

Introduction

Historically, many alternative schools have approached curriculum in one of two ways: Either they have adopted the “regular school” curricula without providing the supports below-grade level students need to access it or they have adopted a sub-standard curriculum which meets students at their skill level but does not challenge them to reach grade level. In both cases, students fall far short of their potential. In contrast, EQA schools’ curriculum and instruction are selected and designed to provide both high levels of support and

high levels of challenge. This is done through pairing curriculum designated by the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) as "Tier 1"-- on grade level, rigorous, and state-exam aligned curriculum-- with small classes, data driven instructional planning, differentiated instruction, intensive remediation, and highly engaging "real world" project based learning.

The curricula and instructional methods utilized at EQA schools reflect an understanding that learning and learners are complex and demand a multi-faceted approach that is rigorous, flexible and responsive. The Tier 1 curriculum is combined with the two research-based methodologies of Differentiated Instruction and Project-Based Learning. Implemented together, these strategies address the individuality of each learner and yield achievement among even the most struggling students. This section will focus on the curriculum itself, while our answer to Question 4 will describe in detail the unique methods and structures the school will use to ensure all students are able to achieve mastery.

Core Content & Mission-Related Curriculum

Table 4 below outlines the intended curricula to be used at the New Orleans Alternative High School.

Table 4

Core Content Curricula		
Subject Area	**Tier I Curricula**	**Reasoning**
English	Louisiana Guidebooks 2.0: English I, II, III, and IV	All of these curricula were chosen because they have been identified as meeting the criteria necessary to be designated at the Tier 1 level of rigor and alignment by the LDOE. We recognize that the rigor of these curricula is high and that differentiation and scaffolding will be necessary for most students attending NOAH to successfully access the content. These interventions and supports are outlined below in our answer to Question Three.
Math	Agile Mind: Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II	
Social Studies	Document Based Question (DBQs): American History , Civics, World Geography, World History **Teacher Created Curricula Aligned to LDOE Social Studies Standards/Scope & Sequence**	
Science	**Teacher Created Curricula Aligned to LDOE Science Standards/Scope & Sequence:** Physical Science, Environmental Science, Biology, Chemistry (note: there are currently no Tier 1 curriculum options identified by LDOE for high school courses)	
Mission-Related Curricula		
Subject Area	**Curricula**	**Reasoning**
Career & Technical Education*	Students who attend NOAH will have access to a variety of courses that will allow them to earn Industry Based Credentials and experience that will prepare them for transition into life after high school graduation. These include courses in: - Electrical and carpentry - Health sciences - Digital Media Each program and partner uses curriculum developed by and for industry standards. For example, NOTEP uses the National Center for Construction Education and Research curriculum which is the same curriculum used throughout higher education and industry training programs.	The National Center for Dropout Prevention identifies engagement with career and technical training opportunities as a key lever for engaging students who are at risk of dropping out.[5] To ensure high quality and industry aligned programming, NOAH will work with organizations such as NOTEP and NOVAC which are industry based training partners. NOAH will continue a strong partnership with YouthForce NOLA which has been supporting both RAHS and EQA to fund and develop high quality career programming over the last three years.

Career-Based Internships*	The NET schools run an innovative Internship Program which enables high school aged students to gain important professional experience while interning in businesses and organizations throughout the greater New Orleans area. NOAH will expand and build upon the internships already offered through RAHS upon transformation into the EQA network. Students are given the opportunity to apply their skills and assets while providing meaningful support to their internship placement. These formative experiences challenge students to reflect on post-secondary opportunities and identify pathways to achieve their professional and civic goals. .	In addition to the benefits of practical career experience and cultivation of professional work habits, strong relationships with caring adults are a key factor that can contribute to students' persistence in high school completion.[6] Providing a meaningful connection with a mentor at their internship site allows for an additional adult relationship that extends the network of support for students who participate.

**In depth discussion of these program are provided later in the application. Click HERE to jump to that section.*

Interim Assessments

EQA administers traditional assessments aligned to the curriculum which are crucial for both providing data to teachers and students that aligns with graduation exams. NOAH's traditional interim assessment plan is detailed below. In addition, those assessments are augmented with additional opportunities for students to demonstrate mastery using nontraditional methods as well. These assessment approaches are evidence based practices[7] crucial for learning and are explained in detail later in our application. (Click HERE)

The New Orleans Alternative High School will administer two interim assessments in core academic classes during each semester. These assessments are called "Challenge Tests." The structure of these exams and how they align to curricula detailed above is shown in Table 5.

Table 5

Course	Challenge 1	Challenge 2	Alignment
English: • I, II, III	Exam created by academic leaders* using items pulled from Guidebook Assessment Tools (Cold Read Tasks)	LEAP-360 Exam	These assessments are directly aligned to the Tier 1 content taught, which are aligned with the LEAP2025.
English: • IV	Exam created by academic leaders* using items pulled from Guidebook Assessment Tools (Cold Read Tasks	Exam created by academic leaders* using items pulled from Guidebook Assessment Tools (Cold Read Tasks	This course does not culminate in a state exam, so both interims are aligned to the Tier 1 content taught.
Math: • Algebra I • Geometry	Assessment created using Agile Mind assessment tool.	LEAP-360 practice Exam	These assessments are directly aligned to the Tier 1 content taught, which are aligned with the LEAP2025.
Math: • Algebra II	Assessment created using Agile Mind assessment tool.	Assessment created using Agile Mind assessment tool.	This course does not culminate in a state exam, so both interims are aligned to the Tier 1 content taught.
Social Studies: • American History	Assessment created using released test items and DBQ tasks.	Assessment created using released test items and DBQ tasks.	These assessments are directly aligned to the Tier 1 content taught, which are aligned with the LEAP2025.
Social Studies: • Civics	Teacher-Created Assessments based on LDOE Scope & Sequence and DBQ tasks.	Teacher-Created Assessments based on LDOE Scope & Sequence and DBQ tasks.	These courses do not culminate in a state exam, so both interims are aligned to the

• World History • World Geography			Tier 1 DBQ content taught as well as the scope and sequence laid out by LDOE.
Science: • Biology	Teacher-created assessment based on LDOE Scope & Sequence as well as released items for the LEAP 2025.	Biology Practice Test released by LDOE.	These assessments are aligned to the scope and sequence laid out by LDOE.
Science: • Phys. Science • Env. Science • Chemistry	Teacher-Created Assessments based on LDOE Scope & Sequence.	Teacher-Created Assessments based on LDOE Scope & Sequence.	These courses do not culminate in a state exam so both interims are aligned to the content outlined in the LDOE Scope & Sequence documents.

Professional Development

c. Describe your professional development plans for teachers and how they connect to the curricula and assessments.

Overview of School Wide Development

EQA believes it is crucial to continually develop the skills necessary for teachers to deliver rigorous content in an engaging manner. Because of our students' skills and backgrounds, it is of equal importance to ensure that every person in the school building is also well-trained in restorative practices, project based learning, and differentiated instruction. Therefore, all staff at EQA schools have on-going professional development that aligns both to the curricula and assessments outlined above as well as to the specialized structures, policies and practices explained in the sections that follow. A professional development calendar is developed annually and includes:

Pre-Semester Intensive

Each semester at NOAH will begin with 3-5 days of staff time. In addition to the presentation of and reflection on strategic planning and goals, all employees will engage in team building exercises, position-based responsibilities feedback sessions, and classroom set-up as well as team and individual meetings.

Semester Data Days & Reflection

After administration of each Challenge Test, instructional staff will examine student performance data. All building staff will engage in reflection on other data relevant to their position. This will allow time to discuss successes and growth areas, and craft plans to address the latter.

Monday Collaborative Time

The unique design of the NOAH schedule will allow for two hours of dedicated whole-school professional development time each week. This time will be planned in advance by school leaders in response to needs identified at the onset of each semester and will also be responsive to needs that may arise over the course of the year. These meetings will address various groups of staff and faculty, sometimes calling for whole-group sessions, and other times asking specific teams or committees to gather. For example, this time might be utilized to bring in external providers to deliver development to content area staff around implementation of the school's Teir 1 curriculum. Concurrently, school culture staff might meet to deepen their knowledge and application of Restorative Practices.

In addition to these group based sessions, much of the professional development at NOAH occurs through one-on-one coaching in weekly meetings between each staff member and their supervisor as well as observation and feedback sessions. Co-teaching, peer observations, school visits, critical friends groups, book studies, leadership development workshops, and research and pilot committees, are all additional professional development structures offered at EQA schools.

Given the complexity of each staff person's work at NOAH, these many forms of professional development will be crucial in ensuring that staff are given ample time and proper support to make appropriate progress towards both whole school and position based goals.

Core Content Professional Development

In order to ensure that content area instructional staff are well positioned to teach rigorous lessons aligned to graduation requirements, EQA plans to partner with a variety of LDOE approved providers in order to deliver high quality support to teachers. Table 6 outlines these offerings.

Table 6

Core Instruction Related Professional Development			
Type of PD	**Audience**	**Provider(s)***	**Description/Rationale***
English Content Support	English Instructors, Special Educators & Interventionists, School Based Leadership	***American Reading Company*** *School Based Leadership*	Each of the opportunities outlined here are directly aligned to the Tier 1 curricula identified by the LDOE. Ensuring that teachers have a deep understanding of the curriculum and assessments they are responsible for delivering to students is key in to achieving rigorous outcomes. As described above, all schools inside of the EQA network have professional development both prior to starting each semester and consistently throughout the semester. Thus instructional staff will have time to engage deeply with their curriculum and learn directly from these providers and each other. In order to maintain fidelity of implementation and quality of instruction throughout the year, multiple approaches will be taken: - Managers will include one-on-one feedback aligned to teacher implementation of curriculum and student progress in their weekly meetings - Content teams will engage in further learning together during sessions of weekly professional development time - Providers will engage in "train the trainer" sessions across the school year in order to further support instructional excellence.
		Teaching Lab *School Based Leadership*	
Math Content Support	Math Instructors, Special Educators & Interventionists, School Based Leadership	***Agile Mind Educational Holdings*** *School Based Leadership*	
Social Studies Content Support	Social Studies Instructors, Special Educators & Interventionists, School Based Leadership	***The DBQ Project*** *School Based Leadership*	
Science Content Support	Science Instructors, Special Educators & Interventionists, School Based Leadership	***The STEM Library Learning Lab*** *School Based Leadership*	

Mission Related Professional Development

This table outlines the ways in which EQA will work with NOAH staff to develop the knowledge, skills, and mindsets aligned with the network's proven mission-aligned strategies. During the 2018-19 RAHS and EQA leaders piloted some joint professional development opportunities and plan to continue this collaboration in 2019-20 to prepare for the transformation.

Mission Related Professional Development* ***In depth discussion and research base for the strategies mentioned below is available HERE.***			
Type of PD	**Audience**	**Provider(s)**	**Description**
Project Based Learning (PBL) Support	All Instructional Staff	*Big Picture Learning* *School & Network Based Leadership*	Students at NOAH are expected to create Capstone Projects in various courses each semester. These projects provide students with an opportunity to demonstrate deep knowledge and mastery of coursework in a rigorous and differentiated manner. The NET schools complete similar projects called exhibitions. EQA has long modeled these after similar projects developed by Big Picture Learning, and in recent years The NET schools have officially partnered with Big Picture to build their expertise in this area. Both representatives from Big Picture and NET staff who are well-versed in PBL will provide NOAH staff with support and coaching to increase the quality of their Capstone Projects.
Restorative Practices Support	All Staff	*Center For Restorative Approaches* *School & Network Based Leadership*	At RAHS, staff have begun to adopt tenets of Restorative Approaches, making this a key area where EQA will deepen and improve school staff knowledge and implementation of the strategies that have been successful at both NET schools. NOAH staff will engage in intensive training around restorative practices before the launch of the 2020-2021 school year, and will continue to receive coaching and development throughout subsequent years.
Differentiated Instruction Support	All Instructional Staff	*School & Network Based Leadership*	Because the entire design of the school is one that is created to provide all students with Individualized Learning Plans, (ILPs), it is crucial that staff have a strong grasp on research-based strategies that are proven to improve outcomes for at-risk students. Integration of and on-going development in Differentiated Instruction from NET leadership will be crucial in ensuring all students are receiving instruction that allows them both to be challenged and supported appropriately.

Overview of Individual Development & Accountability

Staff performance management at NOAH will center around the Professional Map cycle. Maps will be used to evaluate individual performance, and to plan professional growth each year. The map is divided into four sections: goals, position-based performance, professional operating values, and growth plan. Staff will receive a numeric rating, ranging from 1 to 4, weighted in accordance with Louisiana Act 54.[8]

These maps will help to contextualize individual goals and challenges in the larger picture of school progress. Position-based goals and Student Learning Targets will be set by school leadership in the service of accomplishing school-wide goals. Each individual at NOAH will have a direct manager meet with them regularly to provide feedback and support towards achieving his or her targets and goals. During these meetings, the manager will share notes from weekly observations, review plans and student work, analyze student data, and discuss additional matters as necessary. These meetings will serve as touchpoints, consistently re-focusing each staff member's work on the overarching goals for the school, as well as addressing areas for growth. This will allow for course correction throughout the semester.

Once per semester, each staff member will have a formal meeting with their manager and the principal to review progress on the Professional Map. All staff will have "Strength(s)" and "Growth Area(s)" formally identified, and he or she will discuss a plan with their manager to build on the former and to address the latter. If a staff member is identified as having an "Area of Concern" on their map, an improvement plan will be implemented in order to support him or her in their professional growth. Areas of Concern must be addressed and improved upon for a staff member to continue in his or her position.

Interventions

Introduction

In most high schools, Response to Intervention (RtI) processes and structures exist mainly to serve a small subset of the student population in need of additional support. The population that will be served by NOAH, as detailed in the section on Student Population Needs, is made up primarily of students who have struggled in previous school environments. Because of this, while instructional staff will be responsible for designing and implementing interventions, it is crucial to understand how the school is itself intentionally designed to provide intervention and support to every student who attends. This innovative school design is already in place at both NET schools and has led to consistent results for its students. RAHS has built structures for supporting students in their current incarnation and are well positioned to grow in this is an area with EQA's support. Joining the EQA network is crucial for ensuring the students who attend NOAH receive the best possible interventions and supports.

Response to Intervention Overview

Best practice in RtI dictates the division of students into three tiers:

- Tier 1 (additional intervention not necessary)
- Tier 2 (targeted small-group and/or in-class support needed)
- Tier 3 (intensive small group, in class, and/or individualized support needed)[9]

Additionally, a strong RtI program is characterized by the following:

- Systemized collection & analysis of student data
- Clear protocols for identifying students in need of intervention
- Selection, implementation, and tracking of research-based interventions
- Responsive, organized reflection on student progress [10]

Just as in traditional schools, NOAH will follow a detailed process of data collection, analysis, and adjustment in order to identify struggling students and to meet their needs. *(See Table 7)*

Table 7

NOAH RtI Process
1. All students will be benchmarked using NWEA's MAP test.
2. MAP results, as well as other pertinent student data will be analyzed by the School Building Level Committee (SBLC). This committee includes the school principal and meets twice weekly in order to ensure all students are identified and provided with appropriate intervention in a timely manner. Data reviewed might include: Testing History, previous school grades, 504s, IEPs, etc.
3. Based on results, students will be designated in reading, math, behavior, and attendance as Tier 1, Tier 2, or Tier 3
4. The SBLC will analyze data in order to make decisions about what kinds of research-based intervention to offer in response to student need. Interventions are diverse as is appropriate for an individualized approach with students with complex needs.
5. Instructors will be responsible for implementing interventions, tracking student progress, and using assessment or anecdotal data for six week cycles.
6. SBLC will analyze the effectiveness of the interventions, and make adjustments as needed.
7. Students who fail to make progress will be assigned to a more intensive intervention, and the data collection process will begin again.

8.	SBLC will refer students for 504 evaluations as necessary.
9.	SBLC will refer students to Pupil Appraisal Team for special education evaluation as necessary.

As written, this process can appear linear and rote in nature. However, it is important to note that because of the many challenges facing students who will attend NOAH, implementation often requires multiple and varied attempts in order to see progress. This process requires vigilance, adaptability, and creativity on the part of all staff as often a particular intervention might first seem successful with a student, only to stall over time. Cohesive team work and involvement of student voice in the design, implementation, and adjustment of interventions is an area that both NET schools execute at a high level. In joining EQA's network, NOAH will have access to the network's learning and expertise to increase the efficacy of their current RtI programming.

School as Tier 2 Intervention

This attention to individual student needs is made possible through a unique program design. EQA schools themselves are structured as Tier 2 environments, providing a baseline of intervention to every student with additional layers of support available for those who demonstrate additional need.

A whole-school Tier 2 environment is accomplished in a variety of ways. One is through small teacher to student ratios in all classes (approximately 15:1), allowing for more individualized attention from instructors. In addition to these small class sizes, NOAH instructional staff will:

- Have access to comprehensive and regularly updated data for each student taught
- Be expected and trained to implement Differentiated Instruction (DI) in all classes taught
- Develop and maintain Individual Learning Plans for each student
- Have access to research-based online intervention and blended learning programs both in their classrooms and as stand-alone courses for students who are struggling
- Consistently utilize Restorative Approaches and student problem-solving techniques to address behavioral challenges

Not only are the practices outlined above designed to ensure that students receive appropriate interventions, they are also aligned to core attributes of trauma sensitive schools. Because of the extremely high levels of trauma and chronic stress in young people in New Orleans[11] it is vital that NOAH's community is trauma-informed on all levels. The NET schools have distinguished themselves by training and supporting staff to see their role as reaching far beyond just imparting academic content to students. Supporting staff at NOAH to take on a similar mindset will be an integral part of EQA's transformation plan.[12]

Comprehensive Student Data

As previously discussed, all students entering NOAH will take MAP assessments to obtain baseline math and literacy levels. These tests are administered multiple times over the course of the year in order to measure student growth. While these data are crucial to understanding the needs of learners, they are not sufficient for creating meaningful and effective interventions. This is why at all EQA schools, much time is spent gathering and reflecting on a broader spectrum of data for each pupil. This data includes, but is not limited to:

- State testing history
- Behavior history (both prior to attendance at an EQA school and during their tenure at NOAH)
- Health and mental health history
- Historical grades
- Pertinent personal information, where appropriate (i.e a student lacks stable housing, student is parenting, student holds a job outside school, etc.)
- Family and other support systems
- Student personal, educational, and career goals

Instructional staff are expected to be well-versed in the full picture of the students in their classrooms. This is made possible through:

- Protecting time during staff professional development to digest information and ask questions about their students
- Touchpoints with managers during weekly meetings
- Easy access to data at any time

Holding this amount of knowledge about their students makes it easier to create interventions that work. For example, it might be easy to assume that a student testing at a 10th grade level in literacy would not be in need of additional support in an English course. However, if an instructor is also aware that this particular student has failed both the English II course and EOC multiple times, they might change their approach, meeting with a student early in the semester and asking questions to uncover possible barriers. This conversation, along with the other data available can assist the instructor in designing a successful intervention.

Differentiated Instruction

The interventions that teachers at NOAH design will be aligned to evidenced based practices in Differentiated Instruction (DI). NOAH instructional staff will use the data outlined above to meet each student at his or her current level and provide what is needed to help him/her develop as a learner, employee, and productive member of society. DI considers the individual's readiness for learning content and tasks without lowering expectations or limiting the student's participation in any aspect of the program. DI takes into account interest, learning styles, and the student's affect in developing an individual plan to maximize each student's potential, and the principles of DI are rooted in decades of educational theory and research showing that reaching each student at his/her individual level leads to higher levels of achievement.[13] [14]Some very basic examples of DI strategies culled from a collection provided by Vanderbilt University's Peabody school include:

- Using graphic organizers and other visual supports
- Planning center and station based work
- Allowing students to demonstrate mastery in a variety of ways
- Using tenets of culturally relevant pedagogy to increase engagement[15]

Online Intervention & Blended Learning

In addition to utilizing Differentiated Instruction to ensure mastery of curriculum by all learners, instructional staff will also make strategic use of research-based online intervention programs and blended learning opportunities. Programs used to provide these include: Edgenuity/Compass Learning, Aleks, Achieve3000, and Common Lit. Teachers may deploy online programs as another Differentiated Instruction strategy.[16] One possibility is to use data to identify a sub-group of students who need significant remediation in order to access curriculum at their grade level. This small group might spend a portion of their class working to master remedial skills related to course content. Alternatively, the whole class might utilize an online program, with content adjusted to each individual's instructional level. The implementation of these interventions happens in two primary settings: embedded in core classes or as a stand-alone course in the learning lab.
The personalized learning lab at NOAH will serve multiple purposes, allowing students the opportunity for self-directed credit recovery as well as blended learning interventions. Credit recovery is an important part of any high school wishing to provide the opportunity for accelerated graduation. Having the ability to obtain credits at an accelerated rate can act as an intervention in its own right as research shows that the ability to expedite graduation works as a deterrent to dropping out.[17]

In addition to providing credit recovery, the lab is a crucial place for targeted interventions that can assist struggling students in strengthening their skills. The lab will be staffed by a full-time NOAH teacher, who will be responsible for developing supplemental curriculum to aid in student understanding of online courses, working one-on-one and with small groups of students to support their mastery, and implementing a personalized goal and tracking system previously developed at the original NET school in Central City. This system will help students stay on task and maintain productivity while in the lab, as well as encourage students to complete courses quickly and earn multiple credits in one semester.

Student Behavior and Culture Interventions

While identifying and addressing students' academic challenges is crucial, it is particularly important given the population served that all instructional staff at NOAH are also trained and equipped to help create behavioral interventions and student plans that align with the restorative environment that is a trademark of EQA's schools. Most importantly, staff are trained to develop transformational relationships with their students as a strategic intervention.[18]

The small school size and small student to teacher ratio that allows for staff capacity to create academic interventions and to create and implement behavior supports. Any student attending NOAH is eligible to receive an individualized behavior plan, regardless of 504 or IEP status. Staff are trained in behavior development theory and practices that a positive, therapeutic, and student-empowering.

Beyond Tier 2

All students who attend EQA schools receive a baseline of intervention through the interventions described above. For many students, these supports are sufficient to close academic gaps and/or address challenging behaviors. However, for others, more intensive support is needed. In these instances, students will be assigned to a Tier 3 intervention.

Tier 3 Interventions

Tier 3 interventions are more intensive than Tier 2, often offering the same level of support that students with 504 plans and IEPs receive. These interventions include, but are not limited to:

- Small group phonics and fluency instruction
- Small group remedial numeracy instruction
- Individual or group counselling
- Daily therapeutic interventions
- Push-in/pull-out support
- Specialized schedules or classroom settings
- Homebound or virtual instruction

Many students who attend NOAH will lag significantly behind their peers both academically and behaviorally. Often, this gap can be addressed through the intervention structures described above. If, however, after numerous supports have been implemented, a student still fails to make progress, he or she will be referred to the Pupil Appraisal Team to be evaluated for Special Education Services. (Please see the Transformation Addendum for a full discussion of Special Education at NOAH.)

Specialized School Structures, Policies and Practices

Introduction

Any school designated as "alternative" naturally functions as a specialized program. Therefore, NOAH will join The NET:Central CIty and The NET:Gentilly in serving students who have struggled in traditional settings through the execution of a specialized program. In its current incarnation, ReNEW Accelerated High School is already designated as an alternative program. It has established many unique practices to meet the needs of its students; as NOAH, these will be integrated with aspects of the shared structures, policies and practices upon which both NET schools are built. While many of these are already detailed in various parts of this application, the following captures how this integration will set NOAH apart as a unique offering in the city of New Orleans.

Theory of Change

EQA's theory of change is perhaps best encapsulated by the acronym that names both of its schools: to meet students' *Needs*, to leverage the power of high *Expectations*, and to *Train* students for life. *(See Table 8)*

Table 8

Meeting Needs	EQA schools offer a markedly different learning experience for students who have struggled in traditional schools. Because students fail for various reasons, the approach is diverse and tailored to the needs of each student. Successful programs across the nation have proven that if their needs are appropriately met, even the most struggling students can succeed.
Raising Expectations	High expectations for all students at all times fuel EQA's instructional programs. Heightening students' aspirations and expanding their access to academic, social, and career opportunities is paramount to fulfilling the school's mission. The program is structured deliberately to inspire students to aim high and to strive for excellence in all their endeavors.
Training for Life	Students who drop out of school often report feeling school is not connected to or adding value to their "real-world" futures. To combat this notion, EQA schools engage students actively in authentic, project based learning in and out of the classroom. The schools facilitate meaningful learning by challenging students to grapple with and master complex concepts and apply them to real-world situations. Engagement in deliberate, varied experiences such as the Internship Program and CTE classes, help students develop as learners which has a lasting impact on their futures.

Since 2011, RAHS has sought to affect change with the same population, and their current model has many bright spots and unique offerings that set it apart from both NET schools. However, EQA's schools have achieved higher overall levels of student achievement, more responsive and comprehensive intervention and Special Education programs, and a fully integrated restorative, trauma-informed culture. Upon transformation into EQA's network, NOAH will adopt EQA's theory of change, and many of its structures, policies, and procedures while maintaining various aspects that have proven successful for RAHS.

Values as a Guide

In order to achieve EQA's theory of change, both NET schools have adopted a set of operating values:

- **Belonging:** *All students thrive in a community where adults they respect love, support, and challenge them*
- **Mastery:** *All students achieve when adults have high expectations for themselves and their students.*
- **Independence:** *All students succeed when instruction is tailored to suit their individual learning styles.*
- **Generosity:** *All students benefit from the deliberate cultivation of a spirit of generosity, empathy, and commitment to the community.*

RAHS's current values invoke similar sentiments:

- **Professionalism** - *We model integrity and accountability when doing so is most difficult.*
- **Empowerment** - *We define our own success, and turn obstacles into opportunities.*
- **Resilience** - *We succeed because we grew from our greatest challenges, not in spite of them.*
- **Fellowship** - *We sustain mutual growth and development, while showing kindness and love.*
- **Accomplishment** - *We redefine what is possible by consistently exceeding goals and expectations.*

NOAH will continue to operate with these values as part of EQA, but will have the opportunity to improve upon their current model through support, feedback, and professional development from EQA. Both organizations are confident that this will lead to improved outcomes for the school and its students.

Concrete Policies, Practices & Procedures

The instructional & culture-building approaches at EQA schools reflect an understanding that learning and learners are complex and demand a multi-faceted approach that is flexible and responsive. As such, all students at NOAH will engage with the rigorous Tier 1 curriculum and mission-aligned offerings. NOAH

students will daily grapple with highly engaging and meaningful texts, questions, and projects. However, the curriculum alone will not move students academically. The key methodologies that EQA schools rely upon to achieve results are:

- Individualized Learning Plans
- Differentiated Instruction
- Project Based Learning
- Restorative Approaches
- Intentional Community Building

Implemented together, these strategies address the individuality of each learner and yield achievement among even the most struggling students. The sections that follow will provide detailed descriptions of these practices as well as how they will be deployed in various learning environments at NOAH.

Individualized Learning Plans

In addition to their schedule, students will have an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) outlining exactly what they must accomplish in order to earn a diploma *(See Appendix A2)* This includes documentation of Carnegie Units the student has earned, those he or she has left to earn, a record of outcomes on state exams, and a projected graduation date based on the sum of that information. Staff members will meet with students one-on-one in order to clearly communicate these requirements, and to help them set personal goals. The ILP will function as a foundational document, guiding decisions about scheduling, interventions and internship placement throughout the duration of a student's tenure at NOAH. Students meet with staff at least once per semester, and often much more frequently, to review their ILP and make any appropriate adjustments to goals, supports, or timeline.

Differentiated Instruction

Differentiated Instruction has been discussed at length HERE.

Project Based Learning

Project-Based Learning (PBL) is a methodology that facilitates multidisciplinary learning, illuminates the relevance of course content, heightens students' sense of ownership of their learning, and develops their problem-solving and communication skills. The Buck Institute for Education, a nonprofit dedicated both to supporting PBL in schools and to providing independent scholarly research supporting the effectiveness of PBL, defines it as "a teaching method in which students gain knowledge and skills by working for an extended period of time to investigate and respond to an engaging and complex question, problem or challenge."[19] Research has shown PBL to be an effective teaching style for improving critical thinking and knowledge retention in students who struggle academically. [20]

Students at NOAH participate in multiple guided experiences, aiding them in solving complex, open-ended, authentic problems in various academic settings, ranging from on-campus courses to off-campus internships. In their courses and internships, students will develop multidisciplinary, standards-based projects that address authentic interests and questions. Learning to develop, research, complete, present, and defend such projects will be central to the NOAH experience. Students will be able to apply the skills of teamwork, organization, communication, developed through PBL in any post-graduate education or employment setting.

See Appendix A3 for The NET Schools Project Based Learning Continuum.

Restorative Approaches

Many students attending NOAH will have already experienced harsh consequences in their lives such as expulsion or jail. Others will be facing difficult challenges like single parenthood, homelessness, or addiction. These factors can render traditional behavioral consequence systems ineffective or inappropriate.[21] Instead, to build students' skillfulness and when someone has been harmed or has caused harm, NOAH will rely on

the use of restorative approaches. The use of restorative approaches is increasing across the country as a response to overly harsh zero tolerance policies and rising suspension and expulsion rates.[22] In study after study, schools implementing a restorative program report significant decreases in not only disciplinary actions, but also in the re-occurrence of violent behavior and other serious incidents.[23][24]

Both NET schools have worked extensively with the Center for Restorative Approaches in New Orleans; they describe the restorative process as: "methods that help people to cooperate, to take personal responsibility for their actions, and to resolve conflict."[25] These practices are based on the concept of Restorative Justice, adapted and refined for use in schools. The foundation of this practice centers on the use of these restorative questions:

- What happened?
- What were you thinking about at the time?
- What have you thought about since the incident?
- Who do you think has been affected by your actions?
- How have they been affected?
- What do you need to do to make things right?

When a student is struggling in class, or when a conflict has arisen, these questions will guide NOAH staff response. All staff members will be expected to operate from a restorative perspective, and all students will be taught how the process works. Whether an issue can be resolved in class, or must be addressed in another space with a Dean, the end goals of the process are always to increase student accountability, mend rifts in relationships, build empathy and skillfulness, and to return students to their learning environment as quickly as appropriate. This is accomplished through restorative conversations, student plans and mediations that include all parties.

The NET's restorative behavior system has not only helped to maintain low suspension & expulsion rates, it has also improved both staff and students' ability to resolve conflict and to communicate effectively. These results mirror the success seen in schools from Oakland[26] to Chicago[27] to Philadelphia[28]. Students' increased ability to solve problems productively is borne out by The NET's data. During the 2017-2018 school year, 90% of disciplinary issues were handled using restorative approaches at both The NET:Central City and The NET:Gentilly, and 85% of mediation agreements remain intact. This means more students staying in class, staying in school and moving on to graduation. Simultaneously it means that students—many of whom have severe behavioral challenges—are growing their skillfulness and better able to handle themselves in multiple settings. Because lagging behavioral, conflict-resolution, and communication skillfulness has been a primary impediment to many NOAH students' previous success in school the implementation of restorative practices is vital and evidence based.

Successful implementation of NOAH's restorative approach to discipline will rely upon systems and procedures that are already in place at both NET schools. As such, all staff will take part in intensive training provided by EQA school leaders who have trained extensively (Elizabeth Ostberg, Neil Poynter, and Justin Ross-Hillard), in collaboration with The Center for Restorative Approaches. This will ensure a shared vision for a restorative school culture. As part of this training, staff will learn to lead restorative conversation and mediations and practice drafting, implementing, and tracking student plans to address individual's specific challenges and needs.

See Appendix A4 for The NET School's Student Handbook. A similar one will be drafted for NOAH.

Intentional Community Building

When students feel they belong to a community at their school, they are less likely to drop out.[29] Researcher and scholar, Thomas Sergiovanni describes Community as a "...tie that binds students and teachers together in special ways, to something more significant than themselves: shared values and ideals." He goes on to

describe the necessity of individual schools being able to generate their own models, grounded in best practices and tailored to their specific needs and students.[30]

The model for Community Building at NOAH will be grounded in building close relationships and participating in the shared experiences outlined in Table 9.

Table 9

Experience Overview
● **New Student Orientation** In order to quickly acculturate new students, each semester will begin with a systematic orientation spanning multiple days. During this time, enrollees will engage in community-building exercises, academic benchmark testing, and personal reflection. They will be introduced to NOAH values, restorative practices, and school expectations; they will also have the opportunity to interact with staff and to explore the building. Orientation will culminate with a formal induction ceremony, attended by all staff and many returning students, officially welcoming each individual to the NOAH community and providing them with their schedule
● **Mid-Semester Enrollment Orientation** All students enrolled after the first four weeks of school will be enrolled in an elective-credit Orientation class. In this class, students will learn about the school culture, systems & procedures and begin to make up work they have missed from the beginning of the semester. The grade in this class will be based on using time effectively to make up work for core content classes.
● **Same Beat** Morning meetings, called "Same Beat," occur daily before classes begin for all students. The purpose of Same Beat is to create a sense of unity and fellowship to start off the day on all the same beat before class begins. Same Beat provides an opportunity to share school announcements and how students have illustrated NOAH school values through shout outs.
● **Advisory** All students are assigned to an advisor & attend advisory class each day. A student's advisor is the first point of contact for students/families with questions about schedule, credits, graduation, etc. During advisory time, students participate in Community Building Circles and other activities designed to build trust and camaraderie.
● **Town Hall** Approximately every four to six weeks, the entire staff and student body will participate in a Town Hall meeting. These meetings will be carefully planned to foster healthy and respectful dialogue about issues that concern the school community, to develop student leadership and promote student voice, and to build community through shared experiences.
● **School Wide Celebrations** In its current incarnation, RAHS has established a variety of traditions and celebrations unique to the culture of their school. These include student talent shows, holiday celebrations, and other student and staff -led initiatives. It is EQA's goal to both support NOAH in the continuation of these traditions as well as supporting them in implementing other traditions that align with the NET schools.
● **Excursions** Students at NOAH will participate in a variety of experiences and excursions designed to build their skills, self-confidence, and trust in both themselves and the school. These happen quite frequently particularly in Career Based and Technical Education courses. Specifically, NOAH experiences and excursions will be planned to provide opportunities for: • Increasing students' exposure to and comfort in a variety of environments • Heightening students' involvement in and commitment to the wider community • Encouraging students to take positive risks

Learning Environments

In order to ensure the effective delivery of the strategies described above, there will be six primary learning environments at NOAH:

- Seminar Classes
- Core Classes

- Personalized Learning Lab
- Intervention Courses
- Internship Experience, and Career and Technical Education

Most students will participate in a variety of these settings daily during each semester. Each will incorporate Tier 1 curricula with aspects of Differentiated Instruction and Project Based Learning into the course-planning and assessment. These diverse environments will give students the opportunity to engage in a variety of learning experiences throughout the school day.

Seminar Classes

Seminar will be one of the most unique learning environment at NOAH, integrating all instructional methods detailed above. Structured as interdisciplinary seminars, they will be inquiry-based courses with an average 10:1 student to teacher ratio. Students will earn two Carnegie Units as they engage in project-based, hands-on learning. Seminar will feature small class size, hands-on, immersive instruction, and individualized attention from a caring adult, all proven factors of success in alternative education.[31]

Seminar Course Planning

Seminar teachers will build their curriculum using the Understanding by Design[32] framework. In doing so, each Cycle they will:

- Write Learning Targets (LTs) aligned to Louisiana Academic Standards describing what students should know, understand, and be able to do at the conclusion of the Cycle
- Draft Essential Questions (EQs) to drive student inquiry
- Select an Anchor Text to begin student exploration of the EQ
- Design learning experiences that will lead to mastery of LTs and successful completion of Capstones
- Determine what it will look like for students to demonstrate mastery of the LTs
- Craft formative and summative assessments that will demonstrate student progress towards mastery of the LTs
- Partner with students to plan Project-Based performance tasks that students will present during their Capstones (see below for details)

Capstones

In keeping with the tenets of Project Based Learning, each semester will require students to immerse themselves in a project that will serve as the culmination of their exploration of the Essential Question. At NOAH, these projects will be referred to as Capstones. These will be a school-wide event, with staff, students and families encouraged to attend the presentations. Capstones will consist of three major components: a product, a presentation, and a reflection. *(See Figure 8)*

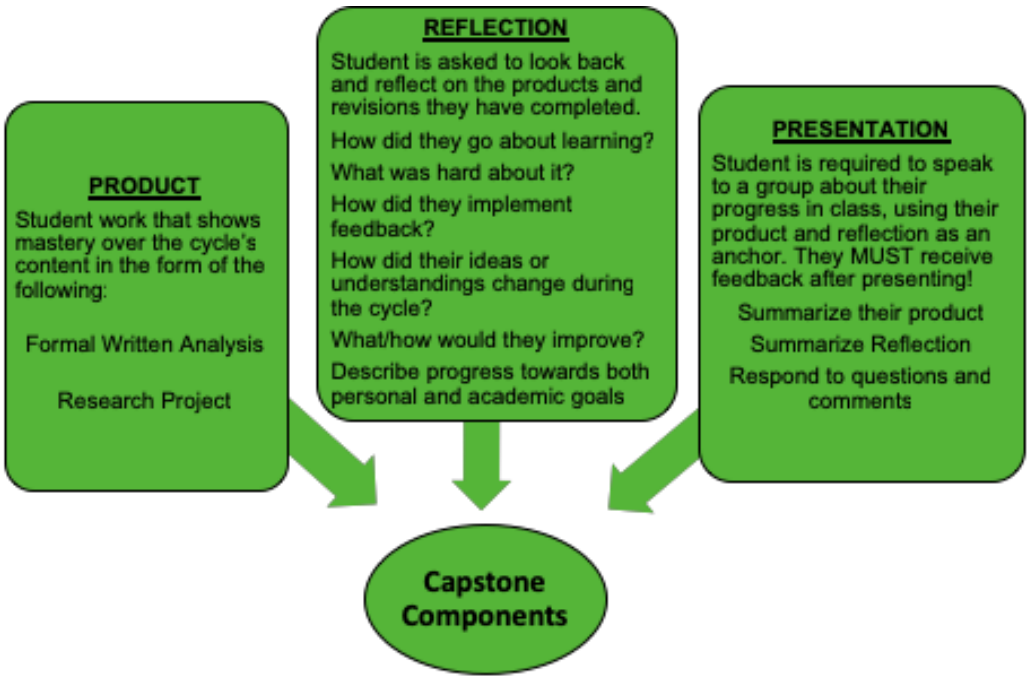

Figure 8

Seminar teachers will scaffold the knowledge, skills and resources that students will need to develop the required products for their Capstones, allowing for multiple demonstrations of mastery. Seminar teachers will schedule time with individual students throughout the Semester to help them select and plan their project, create a timeline with deadlines, provide feedback and guidance in revision, and connect them with the resources they need to be successful. Although all students in a Seminar will be studying the same Essential Question, and all Capstones must demonstrate mastery, Capstones will look different for different students, based on academic needs as well as personal interests and goals.

Core Classes

Core Classes at NOAH will typically focus on content-based courses which culminate in a high stakes test, particularly STEM classes. They will be taught by instructors in a more traditional fashion than Seminar, focusing instruction on one discipline, using a Tier 1 curriculum identified by the LDOE and specifically aligning a scope and sequence to ensure students cover all material necessary to be successful on the State of Louisiana End of Course exams. Core Classes will maintain a low student to teacher ratio, with a cap of 20 students to be enrolled in each session. When deemed appropriate, Core Classes will be co-taught with a Special Education teacher in order to provide additional support.

Core Classes will follow a typical five-part lesson structure: Do Now, Introduction to New Material, Guided Practice, Independent Practice, Closing/Exit Ticket. Teachers will be expected to track student mastery with data collected from exit tickets and formative assessments. This data will drive instructional choices and illuminate the need for interventions. The lesson cycle, coupled with a gradual release of responsibility, supported by targeted data-based differentiation, will provide the support necessary for students to achieve mastery of the extensive breadth of content assessed by the LEAP2025.

Personalized Learning Lab

When RAHS first opened in 2011, their curriculum was entirely online. Because of poor student progress, the current school leadership team wisely moved away from this model. With the support of NET and EQA leaders, NOAH will re-introduce the use of some online learning through its Personalized Learning Lab. EQA's Personalized Learning Lab has been a highly effective setting at The NET schools for allowing students the opportunity for self-directed credit recovery as well as for providing blended learning interventions. Credit recovery is an important part of any high school wishing to provide the opportunity for accelerated graduation, while interventions are crucial for assisting struggling students in strengthening their skills. Students will be strategically assigned lab classes, using data from both their IGP and their academic benchmark testing.

** For further explanation of the lab, click HERE.*

Internships & Career and Technical Education

Internships

NOAH will run an innovative Internship Program which will enable students to gain important professional experience while interning in businesses and organizations throughout the greater New Orleans area. Student experiences will be modeled after Big Picture Schools' Learning in the Real World (LTI) program[33][i]. This program posits that internship experiences are most powerful when: Students complete hands-on work, relevant to their community and related to his or her passion, and students develop caring relationships with professional adults whom they can trust.

Research shows that such opportunities for students can be key levers for success after high school. For example, a 2006 study examining high school seniors involvement in an internship program demonstrated that a successful experience with an adult mentor in a workplace setting contributed to more positive attitudes and outcomes in careers and education post-graduation.[34]

At NOAH there will be various pathways for students to participate in the Internship Program. The CTE and Internship Coordinator will work one-on-one with student to identify their interests, skills, and goals and to match them with professional mentors. For some students, this could be a group placement with peers at a partner organization such as The GrowDat Youth Farm, or the Trafigura Work and Learn Center. For others, it might be an individual placement at an office, store, or alongside an artist. Students will typically work at their internship site twice a week for 2-5 hours per time and internships will typically span one academic semester. However, a multitude of internship lengths and configurations will be possible, dependent on student and/or internship site needs.

Success in an internship will be defined based on the type of placement. Students in more intense placements will be part of an Internship Advisory, where the curriculum will center on teaching general professional skills, addressing concerns and questions particular to students' individual placements, and personalized development of projects that will both demonstrate student mastery of the Learning Targets, and benefit the internship site in some way. Completion will be based on internship attendance, feedback from mentor(s), and presentation of their final projects. Students who participate in internships, but are not members of the Internship Advisory will have similar metrics for completion, but the project component may vary.

Any student at NOAH may participate in an internship, regardless of academic ability or behavioral struggles. These opportunities will be differentiated to meet the needs and highlight the talents of all students.

Career & Technical Education

In addition to internships, NOAH will also feature a variety of opportunities for students to earn credits in courses that will prepare them for potential career paths post-graduation. As summarized in a 2007 report

for the Association for Career and Technical Education, having access to CTE courses was identified by The National Dropout Prevention Center as "one of 15 strategies that has a positive impact on the dropout rate." Numerous surveys of high school aged students[35] identify lack of engagement as a reason for leaving school. CTE courses can act as a remedy, allowing students to engage in real-world experiences aligned to their interests.

The NET schools as well as RAHS currently partner with the award-winning[36] non-profit NOTEP to provide high quality instruction in construction and electrical skills. NOTEP was incubated as a pilot program inside The NET:Central City, and has since ventured out to form partnerships with multiple sites across the city. Aligned to Louisiana's Jump Start Career and Technical Training innovations, these courses will be taught by a licensed construction professional. Students who enroll in these courses will engage in daily hands-on learning, beginning with basics like safety, job site skills, and measurement, and then they will progress to taking on more intense projects such as school site improvements or Habitat for Humanity builds. Students earn certifications from The National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) and learn marketable skills that will prepare them for further study or entry into the workforce upon graduation.

In addition to construction options, NOAH will continue offering the Health Sciences courses that are currently available at RAHS. These course paths included: Certified Nursing Assistant, Emergency Medical Responder, Phlebotomy, and EKG Technician. EQA's partnership with the New Orleans Career Center will strengthen the former course offerings and also expand options for NOAH students in Engineering and Manufacturing. Finally, EQA will extend its partnership with NOVAC to provide digital media courses and IBC options for NOAH students.

See Appendix A-5 for an in-depth look at NOTEP's Curriculum

Student and School Calendars

See Required Attachment Section.

Growth Plan

(1) Describe the demographics of the student population that your proposed school(s) will serve. Identify the needs of your intended student population

The New Orleans Alternative High School will continue to serve the students who currently attend ReNEW Accelerated High School. These students mirror the population that is served by both NET schools. Figure 9 below captures the profile of a typical NET class.

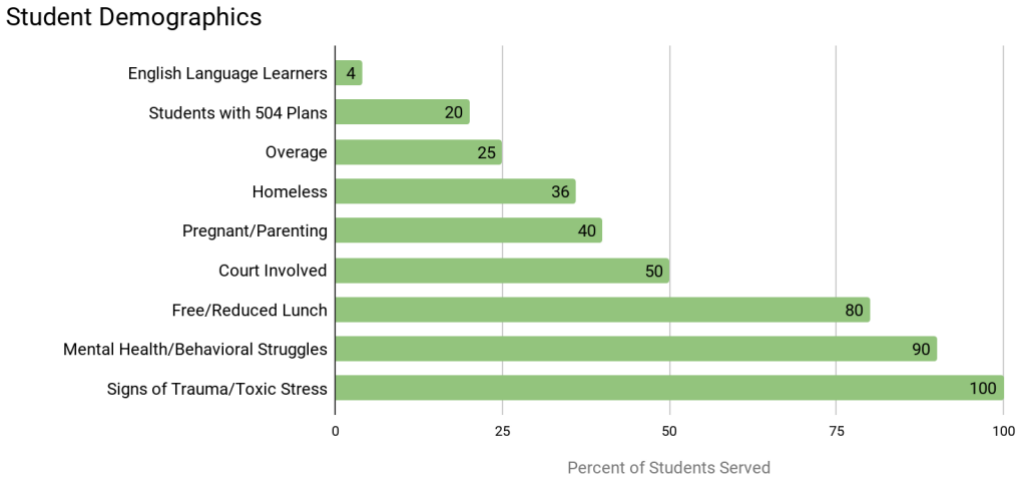

Figure 9

The NETs serve among the highest Special Education populations in the city, with between 20%-28% of students identified as needing an Individualized Education Plan each semester. Figure 10 demonstrates that the majority of IEPs are for Specific Learning Disabilities, Emotional Disturbance, or Other Health Impairments the majority of which manifest in behavioral challenges including, but not limited to ADHD and PTSD.

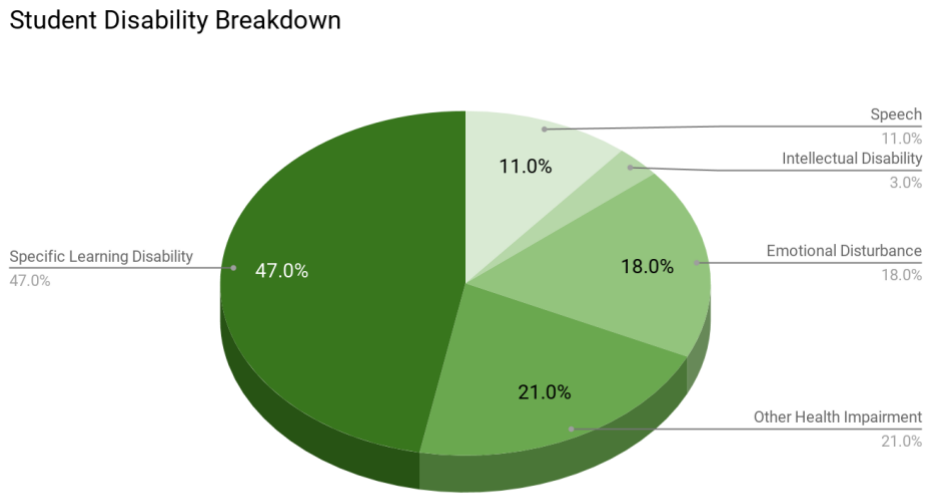

Figure 10

While RAHS's special education population is not currently as high, EQA's experience with such a wide range of student abilities and disabilities will be helpful in providing support for RAHS' high needs classroom, their current special education students, and in improving their Response to Intervention and Pupil Appraisal systems.

The academic needs of this population are well-summarized by 2006 reports by both The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation[37] and The Urban Institute[38] that illuminate the dropout crisis and offer effective antidotes. These reports summarize what theoretical research and school data across the nation have long indicated: students who struggle significantly in traditional school settings succeed academically when the following programmatic components are in place:

- Small schools with small class sizes
- Strong relationships with caring adults
- Individual Learning Plans
- High expectations for academic, behavior, and future success
- Authentically engaging, hands-on curricula
- Multiple layers of social-emotional, behavioral, and academic support
- Direct connection to students' "real-world" futures

A key to The NET success with these students is its individualized design-- as part of EQA, each student at NOAH will have his or her own individualized plan which will consider their unique academic, behavioral, out-of-school, and post-graduation goals and challenges. This plan will address everything from the hours a student attends school to the supports he or she gets in the classroom. Each student will be involved in making their plan, which is continually reviewed and adjusted as needed.

(2) ***[Applicable to groups applying for multiple sites].*** **Describe the number of schools that you plan to open in Louisiana every year for at least the next five years, the year in which each school will open, and how the organization will adapt to meet changing community needs. If your network operates multiple models, identify the model that you will open in each location.**

Not applicable.

Scale Strategy & Risk Mitigation

[This section does not apply to Louisiana-based operators that run multiple schools and are only applying to operate one or two additional new schools]

(1)Describe the steps that you will take to scale your model to new sites, including the people involved and the resources contributed both by the parent organization and the new school(s)
Not applicable.

(2) *[Applicable to groups that operate schools in other states]* Compare your efforts to scale operations to Louisiana to past scale efforts in other states.
Not applicable.

(3) Identify the greatest new threats to your success and the steps you will take to minimize the possibility that the threats you identified will prevent you from achieving your targeted outcomes.
Not applicable.

Board Readiness

(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.

Board Roles

Educators for Quality Alternatives has a well-established board which has been in place since 2009 and has overseen the launch of both The NET:Central City and The NET:Gentilly. The Board composition follows OPSB policy and includes at least 7 members, over 60% of which are residents of Orleans Parish, a parent of a NET alumni, and is a demographically and professional diverse group of individuals committed to EQA's mission and vision. *(See Table 10)*

All board members are responsible for ensuring that the academic program of each EQA school is successful and that the schools' programs and operations are faithful to the terms of their charters. Board members are also responsible for leading EQA's strategic growth plan.

See Appendix A-6 for a copy of the EQA Board Member Job Description.

Table 10

Name	Role	Responsibilities[39]
Wayne Westerfield	President	The duty of the president is to coordinate the full board's activities so the board achieves its goals and operates in accordance with its bylaws. In order to achieve this the president will: • Ensure the board membership is in compliance with applicable state and local policies • Facilitate board meetings and insure they are compliant with LA Open Meetings laws • Oversee the work of committees • Cultivate a constructive, candid relationship with the Executive Director
Darcy McKinnon	Vice President	The role of the vice president is to work closely with and support the president in their leadership of the full board. In the president's absence, the vice president will act in their place. Additionally the vice president will: • Recruit new board members • Advocate for the organization and its students locally and nationally • Oversee the Executive Director evaluation or appoint a qualified board member to do so • Execute specific projects at the request of the president
Tim Gray	Secretary	The secretary holds responsibility for board communication and record-keeping. The secretary will: • Keep accurate minutes for each board meeting

		• Share minutes with the board in a timely fashion • Ensure agendas, minutes, and other documents are publicly accessible as required by law • Assume responsibilities of the president in case of absence of the president and vice president
Tray Ragan	Treasurer	The treasurer is responsible for financial matters related to EQA's schools. The individual should knowledgeable about standard financial and accounting practices. Their responsibilities also include: • Head the Finance Committee • Review financial reports on a monthly basis • Review bank statements and other financial documents monthly • Liaison with Finance Director and auditor • Advise on financial policies and procedures

Board Monitoring of School Performance

(2) Describe how the board will monitor the school's overall performance.

The EQA Board is a governing board which means it focuses on oversight rather than direct management. The Board is responsible for monitoring the academic performance and the organizational and financial health of all EQA schools. Upon transformation into the EQA network, NOAH would be monitored using the same structures and policies that are currently applied to the NET schools.
EQA has worked alongside their board to develop a long-term strategic plan for the organization and each school. This plan guides the board in their work to ensure the schools and the Executive Director stay on track to meet their goals while maintaining alignment to the mission and vision.

The board hires and evaluates the Executive Director who is responsible for managing the EQA organization and each of its schools. To collect information on the Executive Director's effectiveness and each school's performance, the board uses the following structures:

- Weekly updates from the Executive Director
- Monthly board meetings with a Director's Report including a dashboard tracking progress toward goals
- Monthly meetings of the Finance Committee
- Quarterly meetings of the Governance Committee
- Three annual State of the Organization presentations
- An annual Board Retreat
- An Annual Report

Board members are also encouraged to visit the schools annually and to hear from students, parents and staff at different events. Further details of the board's evaluation system are described in the question below.

School Leader Evaluation by the Board

(3) Describe the steps the board will take to evaluate the school 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; and, The process by which the board will evaluate information and make decisions.

The board of Educators for Quality Alternatives does not directly evaluate the leaders of each EQA school, rather they are responsible for evaluating the Executive Director who is in turn responsible for evaluating the school leaders. The processes for both evaluations are outlined below. EQA's success has been driven in large part by the effectiveness and commitment of its leaders and staff. EQA's strategic performance management system in which every individual has a Professional Map which is reviewed at least three times a year is critical developing and maintaining such a staff. The process outlined below focuses on leaders and is an exemplar of the process that every single staff member engages in annually.

Executive Director Evaluation

The Board of Directors forms an Evaluation Working Group annually to evaluate the Executive Director. This working group includes approximately 3 board members and reports to the board in full. For the last few years it has been headed by Michelle Brown, a board member who has a PhD in education and significant experience in instructional and charter school leadership. This expertise is particularly helpful to insure the evaluation process is rigorous and insightful.

The working group members are tasked with gathering and analyzing the evidence used to determine the Executive Director's effectiveness and for preparing an annual report to the board. As appropriate this information is also shared with the LDOE through the Compass portal.

The Executive Director evaluations includes an assessment of relevant school and organizational outcomes as well as an assessment of day-to-day leadership practices. Evidence includes, but is not limited to, the academic progress of students, graduation rates, attendance, and staff retention. Practices considered include the establishment and maintenance of systems, the maintenance of relationships with stakeholders, and an engagement with an ongoing cycle of data analysis and response.

The Executive Director's key areas of responsibility include:

- Providing inspiring and effective leadership for the school leaders, operations team, staff, students & wider community
- Ensuring high standards of achievement for each and every student, school, and program
- Developing an organizational and school culture that is supportive, orderly, responsive and transformational
- Managing staff and systems to provide exceptional support for students, families, teachers and staff
- Leading continual cycles of organizational and school improvement and growth
- Overseeing the financial and operational stability of the organization and each school

The standards for each areas are laid out annually in the organization's strategic plan. As EQA's primary purpose is the schools, the majority of the standards the Executive Director is held are the same as those of the school leaders. These are outlined in the school leader evaluation section below. In addition, the Executive Director is responsible for meeting standards in the areas outlined in Table 11.

Table 11

Finance	**Advocacy & Community**	**Talent development**	**Strategic development**	**Compliance**
Audit results OPSB & LDOE reports Monthly finance reports Meeting financial goals	Public response to organization Public reputation Media representation Parent surveys	Leader & staff interviews Leader & staff retention rates Meeting diversity & experience goals Staff promotion rates Staff surveys: 2x year 360 leadership review: 1x year	Progress toward goals Meeting fundraising goals	Results of LDOE, OPSB and other audits of areas including, but not limited to: Enrollment Special Education Human Resources Finance Health & Safety

The working group is responsible for collecting and reviewing a blend or formal observations, interviews, surveys, and document reviews. Including, but not limited to:

- Monthly financial reports *(See Appendix A7)*
- Monthly Executive Director reports to the Board
- Staff, parent, and student surveys
- Compliance reports from LDOE and OPSB
- Review of organizational policy and procedures, manuals etc.
- Formal and informal interviews with staff and other stakeholders
- Charter School Accountability Framework results

The working group collects data throughout the year. The timeline below is flexible as changes in state data releases etc. can lead to shifts:

- October: SPS and growth scores released
- November: October 1st counts released
- December: Accountability framework results released
- January: review semester data, survey results, and State of The NET presentations
- March: February 1st counts released
- June: review semester data, survey results, and State of The NET presentations
- June-July: analyze data
- August: meet with Executive Director and draft evaluation
- September: present to board

Principal Evaluations

Each year the Board, the Executive Director, and school leaders set the school goals for student and school achievement and growth. Using these goals, Student Learning Targets/Goals are set for each position at the school. These Student Learning Targets and goals are aligned both to OPBS's Alternative Accountability Rubric and to mission-aligned outcomes. Along with a discussion of goals during weekly meetings, The Executive Director meets with each principal three times a year to complete a thorough evaluation of progress toward goal, strengths, and growth areas.

Information Collected

In addition to the indicators outlined in Table 12, site or year specific information is gathered as appropriate.

Table 12

Category	Indicators & Where to Access Data
Instructional Quality	- Credit accumulation: PowerSchool - % of students passing each EOC/LEAP2025 test: LDOE Reporting - % Percentage of students participating in the ACT & Avg. ACT Score: ACT Data Portal - Student average growth in literacy & math: MAP Data Portal - Graduation Rate: PowerSchool
Post graduation Success	- % of graduates who have a job or are in training/school within two months of graduation: Next Steps Internal Alumni Tracking System
CTE and Internship Success	- % of students participating in internship programs: Internal Tracking System - % of students successfully completing their internships: Internal Tracking System -Number of students earning IBC: Internal Tracking System/PowerSchool
Behavior/Culture Quality	- Number of fights on campus: Schoolrunner/Internal Tracker - Number of suspensions: Schoolrunner/Internal Tracker - % of behavioral issues managed through non-disciplinary means: Schoolrunner/Internal Tracker - % of mediations plans held: Schoolrunner/Internal Tracker -% of students making growth on behavioral plans: Schoolrunner/Internal Tracker
Staff Quality	- % of staff receiving a 3.0 score or higher on their evaluation: Staff Professional Maps - % of staff invited to return, electing to return -Number of staff promoted - Staff survey results: Staff Survey
School Stability	- Student enrollment: PowerSchool - Avg. daily attendance: PowerSchool - Stability rate: PowerSchool - OPSB Alternative Accountability Achievement: Various - Student Surveys - Parent Surveys

Standards for Evaluation

In accordance with Louisiana Act 54, each staff member at EQA schools is evaluated based on the formula In figure 11.

Figure 11

For all teachers, principals and counselors, progress on both components is entered into the state Compass evaluation program as required by law. Each principal will be assigned a numerical performance indicator ranging from 1 (ineffective) to 4 (Highly Effective.) As with all EQA staff, the principal evaluation process is focused on identifying strengths, growth areas, and response to feedback. The Executive Director does not expect perfect scores in each category but instead looks for high levels of achievement, compliance, and growth toward goals, along with proactive and strategic responses to areas where goals have not yet been met.

Conflict of Interest Identification

All EQA board members and staff complete annual Louisiana Code of Governmental Ethics annually. In addition board members annually review the organization's Conflict of Interest Policy which is listed in Appendix A8. This continual training insures that board members and leaders are aware of and alert to any possible conflicts of interest and know the appropriate steps to take.

Board Development & Training

To ensure alignment with OPSB policies, and to facilitate the growth and skill development of EQA's board, all board members are expected to:

- Complete at minimum one (1) hour of education and training on the Louisiana Code of Governmental Ethics annually
- Attend two external professional development sessions/trainings/events per school year
- Participate in professional development sessions during board meetings
- Participate in annual board retreats
- New board members and newly elected board chairs attend an OPSB governance training session and meet with the OPSB Superintendent or designee[40]

Professional development provided during retreats and board meetings cover a range of topics, targeted to the growth areas of the members, and aligned to EQA's goals. These sessions are often facilitated either by an outside expert or by EQA's Executive Director. Often the latter sessions are planned using the resources available from the Louisiana Association of Public Charter Schools.[41]

(6) ***[Applicable to groups applying to open a school in a region they do not currently operate in]*** **Describe your plan for obtaining regional board representation for your proposed school(s).**

Not applicable.

Financial Readiness

Financial Manager/Back-Office Service Provider

(1) 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.

EQA contracts with 4th Sector Solutions to provide back-office support. 4th Sector is aware of EQA's growth plans, is supporting in this charter application, and will continue to work with EQA as it grows. In the two years of close cooperation between EQA and 4th Sector Solutions, services provided have been high quality and timely. EQA has had unqualified audits each year, all reports have been submitted in a timely manner and there have never been any compliance findings.

(2) To whom will your financial manager or back-office service provider report: the school leader or the board?

The contract for financial services is between 4th Sector Solutions and the board of EQA. The Finance Manager, Nikki Brock, the Controller, Megan Rhodes, and the Director of Finance, Kevin Cox, report to the Executive Director who reports to the Board. The board finance committee meets monthly with 4th Sector staff to review the financials and prepare reports for the full board.

Budgeting Approach

(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.

EQA has operated schools since 2011 and during this time it has produced clean audits each year of operation and maintained excellent financial reports from the LDOE and OPSB. With annual revenues of around 2 million, the organization built a reserve large enough to launch a second school in 2017 and still maintain a healthy fund balance. These accomplishments are the result of a disciplined approach to budgeting that has focused on conservative revenue estimates, contingency planning for expenses and a strategic approach to limiting expenses from the fund balance to an absolute minimum.
When grants are received to increase programming, the school has worked to build a financial model that whenever possible allows the improvements or increases to continue after the grant funding ceases. This farsightedness has been critical to building financial stability.
In the event of a budget shortfall at NOAH, EQA will utilize this same disciplined approach to make the cuts necessary to ensure financial viability without compromising the mission of the school. A decision making matrix based on the following questions will be used to insure students are supported at the highest levels possible:

- Which programs are most mission critical? (example: instruction would be prioritized over alumni support)
- Which positions are necessary to maintain these programs at quality?
- What adjustments to facilities and operations can be made without compromising safety and compliance?
- What adjustments to future position and salary projections must be made to maintain financial stability?
- Simultaneously, the school would investigate additional funding streams and new and expanded partnerships to improve revenues.

Accounting & Control Systems

(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

Educators for Quality Alternatives (EQA) is committed to responsible financial management. The entire organization including the board of directors, administrators, and staff work together to make certain that all financial matters of the organization are addressed with care, integrity, and in the best interest of EQA.

Educators for Quality Alternatives maintains a Finance & Accounting Policy & Procedures manual *(See Appendix A9)* which is reviewed periodically and is formally agreed upon by EQA staff, 4th Sector Solutions, its accounting back office, and the EQA board.

A major factor in the decision to contract with an experienced organization for back office support was to ensure multiple checks and balances. These can be difficult to accomplish in a small organization such as EQA; including 4th Sector ensures additional layers of accountability. EQA's financial policy and procedural guidelines are designed to:

1. Protect the assets of EQA;
2. Ensure the maintenance of accurate records of EQA's financial activities;
3. Provide a framework of operating standards and behavioral expectations;
4. Ensure compliance with federal, state, and local legal and reporting requirements.

The Executive Director has the responsibility for administering these policies and ensuring compliance with procedures that have been approved by the Board of Directors. Exceptions to written policies may only be made with the prior approval of the Finance Committee. Changes or amendments to these policies may be approved by the Board of Directors at any time. All positions with financial related responsibility are expected to be familiar with and operate within the parameters of these policies and guidelines.
Fiscal responsibilities for the organization are divided by position. The Board of Directors has the authority to execute any policies it deems to be in the best interest of the organization within the parameters of the organization's articles of incorporation, bylaws, and federal, state, and local law and policy. The Treasurer and The Finance Committee have the authority and responsibility to:

- Choose the auditor
- Perform regular, in-depth reviews of the organization's financial activity
- Oversee the development of the annual budget
- Determine the allocation of investment deposits

The Executive Director has the authority to:

- Make spending decisions within the parameters of the approved budget
- Sign checks
- Employ and terminate personnel
- Determine salary levels
- Oversee the budget process for board approval
- Create and amend operating procedures and controls
- Make decisions regarding the duties and accountabilities of personnel and the delegation of decision-making authority
- Enter into contractual agreements – must obtain board approval to enter into new contractual agreements with a total value greater than $10,000.

Principals will have authorities designated by the Executive Director, including the authority to make spending decisions within the parameters of the approved budgets.

The Finance Director and Finance Team of 4th Sectors will function as Accountant with primary responsibility for maintaining the accounting system. Monthly reports are made to the Executive Director and Finance Committee of the Board covering, at a minimum, receipts, disbursements, receivables, and payables. The ED and Finance Director meet weekly to review revenue and expense reports, discuss projections and ensure decisions are being made and processes are functioning effectively and in the best interest of the school. Standard journal entries are entered by the Bookkeeper via the Quickbooks accounting software. Journal entries are reviewed and approved by the Finance Director on a daily basis via the posting journal report from Quickbooks. Non-standard journal entries are reviewed by Finance Director before posting.
Financial statements are reported according to Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) for Not-for-Profits.
Annual budgets are prepared by the Executive Director and Finance Director and approved by the EQA Board. The Finance Director is required to include budget-to-actual comparisons in monthly financial reports to the

Treasurer and the Board. The Finance Committee is required to provide semi-annual budget reviews and annual reviews of the adequacy of insurance coverage. To ensure complete accuracy in all transactions, the following best practices are maintained:

- The check signer(s) must not be the person who writes checks or who does the bookkeeping:
  - The ED & Board President sign checks, the bookkeeper holds the checkbook and writes the checks
- Bank statements are reconciled by someone other than the check signer:
  - The bank statements are independently reviewed by the EQA Treasurer, ED, Board President, and are reconciled by the Director of Finance.
- Deposit documentation and reconciliations are prepared by a person other than the one recording the receipts.
  - Deposit documentation and reconciliations are prepared by the ED and Director of Finance. The receipts are recorded by the Bookkeeper.

To safeguard assets, the following best practices are maintained:

- The Executive Director have primary responsibility for ensuring that proper Financial Management procedures are maintained and that the policies of the Board are carried out.
- The Finance Committee provides fiscal oversight in the safeguarding of the Assets of the Organization and has primary responsibilities for ensuring that all internal and external financial reports fairly present its financial condition.
- A proper filing system is maintained for all financial records. Electronic records are maintained at EQA and 4th Sector Solutions. Paper records are maintained at 4th Sector Solutions.
- Actual income and expenditures are compared to the budget on a monthly basis.
- All excess cash is kept in an interest bearing account.
- Bank statements are promptly reconciled on a monthly basis.
- Inventory records contain description, serial numbers, date of purchase or receipt, valuation, and date of valuation.
- Appropriate insurance for all assets is maintained.

To ensure accuracy and security of payroll records, the following best practices are maintained:

- Personnel files are maintained at 4th Sector Solutions for all employees. Changes in payroll data (i.e., pay changes) are approved by the Executive Director before files are updated.
- An outside payroll processing firm, Paychex, is used to process the payroll.
- The Bookkeeper notifies the payroll service of any changes to the payroll master file, with the prior approval of the Executive Director.
- The payroll service generates the payroll and tax deposit checks via direct deposit, and sends the payroll register to the organization. The Finance Director reviews and approves the payroll register for proper processing of amounts.

To ensure accuracy and security of accounting records, the following best practices are maintained:

- Quickbooks is the organization's accounting software.
- The Bookkeeper and Finance Director are responsible for inputting the financial data into the computer for generating financial reports.
- Neither the ED nor any members of the EQA Board have access to make changes to the school's Quickbooks accounts.

Educational Service Provider

(1) If your non-profit plans to use an Educational Service Provider (ESP), please provide as an additional appendix a copy of the ESP contract that your non-profit board will sign with the ESP that you have selected. Additionally, please provide an independent audit of the ESP as part of that additional appendix.

Not applicable.

School Leadership Team Capacity

Leadership Team Resumes

(1) Provide (as part of Attachment 23) the resume for every member of the school leadership team. These should only be the senior most individuals responsible for the academic, organizational, and financial operations of the school who report either directly to the board or the school leader.

Please find these resumes in Attachment 23.

School Leadership Academic Program Responsibilities

(2) Describe the school(s) and/or academic program(s) for which the school leadership team has been responsible. Describe their leadership role(s) and primary responsibilities at the relevant school(s) and/or academic program(s). The response should describe, using data where possible, the impact that these individuals had on their school(s) and/or academic program(s).

Emily Perhamus and Heather Emmert are ReNEW Accelerated High School's current School Director and Director of Academics, respectively. EQA plans to retain their leadership as part of the transformation model for NOAH.

Ms. Perhamus was a founding special education teacher at ReNEW Accelerated High School's Westbank Campus in 2011. In both that school year and the next, she was named "Special Education Teacher of the Year" at RAHS. In 2013, she was promoted to the school's leadership team as the Intervention Services Coordinator. In this role, she was responsible for coaching and developing a team of five Special Educators, leading professional development around issues of Special Education for all staff, creating and implementing systems to improve services and ensuring compliance for 80 students across three sites. In 2015, she was promoted to the position of Assistant Principal. She spent a year in this role, working to design and implement shifts in school-wide culture systems and implementation of restorative practices. She also grew her management skills, taking on observation/feedback and coaching for all teachers. In April of 2016, Ms. Perhamus took over as School Director at RAHS. She continues to hold that position, in which she is responsible for the development of the leadership team, setting and ensuring progress towards the school's strategic plan, and acting as the external liaison for the school.

Ms. Emmert is also a long-time employee of ReNEW Accelerated High School. She began her tenure at the school as an English teacher in the 2013-2014 school year. In 2014, she was promoted to the position of Instructional Coach, refining her skills in teacher development. In this role, she coached all instructional staff in small-group instruction, led coaching team meetings, and managed six AmeriCorps tutors. Her strong performance in the role led to her promotion to Director of Academics in 2016. This is the role she continues to hold at RAHS. This places her at the helm of setting instructional vision and curriculum, as well as leading

in the design of TIer 2 and 3 interventions. She also continues to coach and develop teachers in service of her vision for student learning.

Together Ms. Perhamus and Ms. Emmert have improved conditions and outcomes at RAHS and have advocated with EQA and ReNEW for the school's transfer. Their demonstrated leadership and their commitment to the school's ongoing development will be vital assets in the transformation. Because both Ms. Perhamus and Ms. Emmert have spent the majority of their careers in education working at ReNEW Accelerated High School, we will use question four to provide data associated with their time in leadership.

School Leadership Financial & Operations Responsibility

(3) Describe relevant leadership positions that the proposed school leadership team has held in which they were responsible for the operations and/or finances of program(s) and/or organization(s). Describe the leadership roles that were held and primary responsibilities for the relevant program(s) and/or organization(s). The summary should describe the impact that these responsibilities had on the success of the relevant entities.

Elizabeth Ostberg is EQA's Executive Director and is responsible for the strategic, operational, and financial health of the organization. She holds a BA from Bryn Mawr College and a Masters in Education from the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Ms. Ostberg held numerous leadership roles before taking on her current role as Executive Director of Educators for Quality Alternatives. In 2005, she worked as the Interim Assistant Director of Andinet International School in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Here she was responsible for the creation and implementation of student, staff and family policies, procedures, and manuals, leading to increased streamlining of daily school operations. She also grew her skills in human resources, as she assisted with evaluations and hiring, ensuring quality in school staff. As Director of Student Services at the New Orleans Charter Science & Mathematics High School from 2006 to 2008, she began to hone management skills through her leadership of a team of five. She also built skill in data analytics as she built a program to promote positive school culture and was responsible for tracking and reporting results.

In 2008, Ms. Ostberg accepted a position with FirstLine Schools as their Director of Talent Management and Human Resources. Here, she built further expertise in staffing, as she was responsible for the organization's job design, recruitment and hiring. She improved, streamlined, and, where necessary, designed FirstLine's systems and procedures to ensure high quality implementation of performance management, staff recognition, compensation structures, and professional development as the organization grew from one small school to a CMO and five schools.

While working at Firstline, Ms. Ostberg co-founded Educators for Quality Alternatives, the entity which would ultimately develop both NET schools. Ms. Ostberg recruited an inaugural board for EQA and launched research into possibly remedies for the extremely high dropout rate New Orleans. Through this, the idea for The NET was born. In 2011, Ms. Ostberg left FirstLine in order to open the first school. As School Leader, she oversaw all aspects of academics, operations, compliance and management. She has successfully overseen the growth of The NET:Central City from its pilot year enrollment of 60 to its current enrollment of 150, and in 2017 launched The NET:Gentilly, transitioning to Principal and Executive Director of the EQA network for the school's first year.

Shane Colman, EQA's Director of Operations will be taking the lead on operations for NOAH. Mr. Colman holds a BA from Northeastern University and Masters in Education Technology from Boise State University. Mr. Colman served first as the Learning Lab Coordinator and then as the School Operations Coordinator at The NET:Central City from July 2012- 2016. In the former role, Mr. Colman was integral to the design and implementation of the NET's unique online learning environment. During his four year tenure in the role, students earned more than 500 Carnegie units, helping accelerate their graduation trajectories. He also oversaw online math and literacy interventions, taking responsibility for data analysis and creation of student

plans to ensure maximum growth. Mr. Colman began to cultivate his leadership skills as he managed other lab teachers and the teachers responsible for homebound instruction. In his role as School Operations Coordinator, he designed and launched recruitment efforts that resulted in exceeding the school's goals for enrollment each semester and substantially improved data management and analysis at the school.

In 2016, Mr. Colman briefly left EQA to work as the Personalized Learning Coordinator for FirstLine Schools. In this role, he was able to take expertise he honed at The NET to help launch a personalized learning program in grade 5-8 across content areas in FirstLine's network of schools. He gained additional management experience through supporting six teachers as coach. He also held responsibility for tracking the efficacy of his program design, and presenting that data to network and school-level leadership. After a year in this role, Mr. Colman returned to EQA as Operations Director.

In this role, Mr. Colman currently leads both NET schools in their enrollment and recruitment efforts; maintaining, analyzing, and reporting on all student data; and managing operations including IT, facilities, food service, transportation and security. In addition, Mr. Colman managed the start up of The NET:Gentilly including a complex renovation project which he kept on track and on budget.

Taking the lead on financials will be EQA's Partner, 4th Sector Solutions. Please see *Appendix A10* for details on their track record and leadership.

As it is vital that students and teachers have what they need to be successful, steady finances, strong operations, and seamless supports for staff and students are a hallmark of the EQA organization.

School Leadership Historical Academic Performance

(4) Provide multiple years of student academic performance data under the proposed school's leadership team. This data must include, but is not limited to, proficiency and growth on state and national standardized tests (where available), and data on graduation rates and growth for applicants proposing to serve high schools.

Since moving in to their current leadership roles in the 2016-2017 school year, Ms. Perhamus and Ms. Emmert have maintained relatively steady rates of student achievement on standardized tests at ReNEW Accelerated High School, with EOC passage staying relatively consistent across years. Recent performance on the LEAP2025 in the spring of 2018 provides noticeable bright spots in student performance on the Algebra I and Geometry exams. Additionally, under their leadership, the graduation rate has increased by over 1.5 percentage points. *(See Figs. 12-14)*

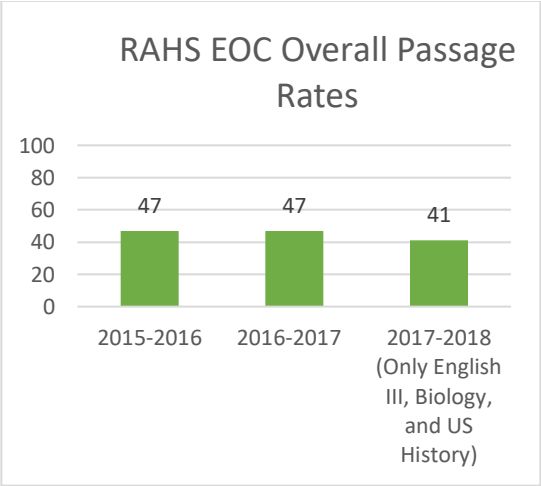

Figure 12

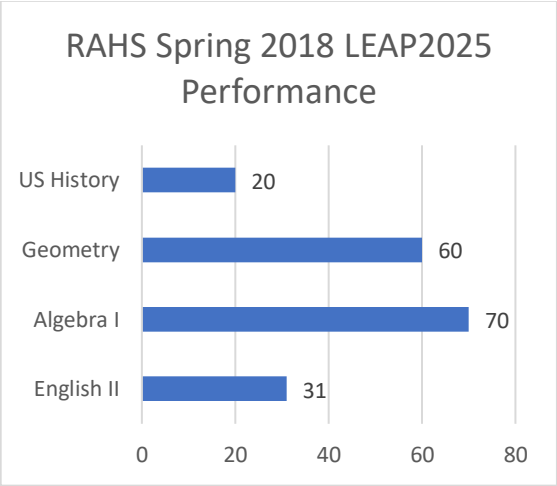

Figure 13

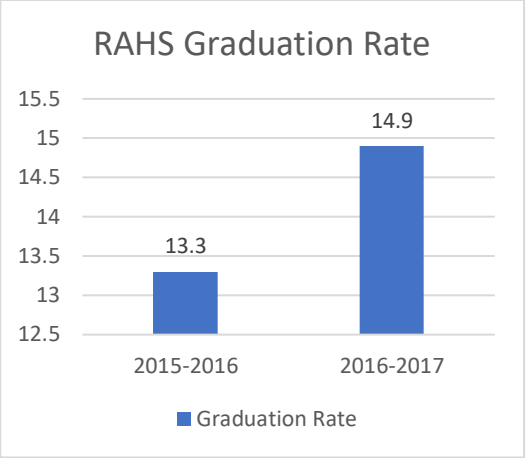

Figure 14

School Leadership Historical Financial & Operations Performance

(5) Provide data or evidence that speaks to the organizational and/or financial viability of the program(s) and/or organization(s) for which members of the school leadership team were responsible as a leader

As referenced throughout this application, Ms. Ostberg has an exemplary history of managing the operations and finances of EQA and both NET schools. This is clearly evidenced by the excellent track record demonstrated in EQA's financial audits, its financial and operational reviews by the LDOE and the lack allegations, litigation, or LDOE/RSD/OPSB warnings or notices of concern against either NET school. Maintaining these results with the expansion to a second LEA while simultaneously changing back office providers also speaks to the strength of the Executive Director and the Director of Operations' management and to the EQA board's oversight.

Expansion to the NET: Gentilly required network level service coordination that were previously centralized in one building. With adding only one additional position, that of Director of Operations, EQA has successfully managed the expansion of food, custodial, technology, and transportation services for both schools while staying on budget.

Building a small school for high needs students is a financial and organizational challenge which most leaders and organizations advise against. Thus from the start the Executive Director had to be strategic and creative in designing The NETs. For example, the staggered start and end times for students are a clear example of creative thinking that serves to both provide students with much needed flexibility and allows for more students to be served in a smaller space at a lower cost. This kind of adaptive leadership is crucial for ensuring that EQA schools continually improve quality programing while maintaining solid financial and operational foundations. NOAH's larger facility and struggling enrollment will bring unique financial and operational challenges. However, EQA's track record predict its ability to stabilize NOAH's financial and operational health while improving its students' outcomes.

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