Application Cover Sheet

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The Application Cover Sheet provides basic information about the proposed school. Many of these questions were also asked on the Letter of Intent. They are asked again here to make sure that the review committee has the most current information about the proposed school. You are welcome to copy information from your Letter of Intent if the information has not changed.

Applicant Information

Information Requested	Response
Name of Applicant (Organization):	Explore Academy
Name of Lead Applicant (Individual):	Justin Baiardo
Address (Street, City, State, Zip)	2720 Avenida Corazon Rio Rancho, NM 87124
Phone (xxx-xxx-xxxx)	(505) 306-5283
Email	Baiardo@explorelearn.net
Website (if applicable)	www.explorelearn.net

Applicant Type

Information Requested	Response
Experience Level	☐ **New Applicant:** An organization or individual that has not operated at least one charter school for three or more years **X** **Experienced Applicant:** An organization that has operated at least one charter school for three or more years
Experienced Applicant, Number of Schools	*Nevada law allows experienced charter operator applicants to apply to open more than one school by submitting their plans in a single application cycle.* **If you are applying as an experienced operator**, *how many schools are you applying to open?* **X** 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ **Other:** _____
New Applicant, Organizational Structure	☐ **Independent Applicants:** An organization or individual that does not intend to contract with an Educational Services Provider (CMO or EMO) **X** **ESP Applicants:** An organization or individual that intends to contract with an Educational Service Provider (CMO or EMO) *Name of CMO/EMO, if applicable:* <u>Explore Learning Network</u>
School Type	**X** **Fresh Start/Neighborhood Option Applicant:** An organization or individual that is applying to open a new charter school that will provide a quality school option within the neighborhood of a consistently underperforming school, with preferences to serve students currently enrolled in a school(s) eligible for the Nevada Achievement School District. ☐ **Transformation Applicant:** An organization or individual that is applying transform of a consistently underperforming school. Approved transformation applicants will be matched with an underperforming school following a broad community outreach and diligence effort. *Applicants may select both options if they would be open to either a Fresh Start or a Transformation*

Information Requested	Response
Nevada Experience	☐ **In-State Applicant:** An organization or individual that has a track record of working in Nevada **X** **Out-of-State Applicant:** An organization or individual that does not have a track record of working in Nevada
Launch Approach	**X** **Phase-In**: An organization or individual that plans to start with a limited number of grade-levels and add additional grade-levels during the term of the charter contract ☐ **Whole School:** An organization or individual that plans to start at full scale, with all grade levels in the first year of operation *Applicants may select both options if they would be open to either a Phase-In or a Whole School launch.*

School Information

Information Requested	Response
Proposed Opening Year	**X** **2019-20** ☐ **Open to discussion** ☐ **2020-21** ☐ **Other:** *(please indicate)*_____
Proposed Grade Configuration *(full scale)*	6-12
Geographic Preference	**X** **Clark County** ☐ **No Preference** ☐ **Washoe County** ☐ **Other:** *(please indicate)*_____

Board Information

Information Requested	Response
What is the status of your board of directors?	☐ **No members yet** ☐ **6 or More Members** ☐ **1-2 Members** **X** **CMO/EMO Board seeking** local advisory members ☐ **3-5 Members**
At this time, how many of your board members are based in Nevada?	n/a (in progress of finding board members)

Eligibility Information

Information Requested	Response
Has anyone involved with your charter proposal, whether as staff or a board member, ever been convicted of or plead no contest to a felony?	☐ YES **X** NO
Is your organization supported by or affiliated with a religion or religious institution?	☐ YES **X** NO
Is your school a conversion of a private school or home study program?	☐ YES **X** NO

Is the mission of your school or school organization aligned to serving students who are currently served by the lowest performing schools in the State (see [Nevada's 2017 Rising Stars School List](#)) by
   a) opening a new neighborhood option school that prioritizes students served by low-performing schools
        and/or
   b) transforming a low-performing school
	X YES ☐ NO

Explore Academy will provide all students, regardless of background, with a personalized educational experience through the power of student choice, allowing each student to create a personalized and engaging educational pathway in preparation for college. In attempting to establish an Explore Academy campus within the Las Vegas area, the Explore Learning Network team seeks to provide students within the area a form of education, and a personalization in learning, that has not been seen before, one which focuses on each student as an individual learner who has specific needs, interests, and passions related to their education. This individualization and customization of the educational process will provide each student with a unique learning experience that will prepare them academically for post-secondary studies as well as mold them into a lifelong learner who values education.

The choice theory model of education, which underlies the philosophy of the Explore Learning Network (ELN), is focused on putting each student in charge of his or her own education by providing them increased choice in the manner in which they are educated. Through the use of elective-based learning to a level previously unseen in public education, the idea of a differentiated curriculum can provide all students, no matter their background, with a diversity of educational choices from which they can create individualized, custom educational pathways.

At Explore Academy, students are held more accountable to specific requirements which align to state standards. Utilizing shorter periods of study, compounded with increased academic support, students are pushed to elevate their learning in a way previously unseen, creating a truly holistic and comprehensive educational process for all students.

1) SUMMARIZE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STUDENTS YOU HAVE EXPERIENCE SERVING.

The current Explore Academy campus is located in Albuquerque, NM, a city with a diverse mixture of student demographics. From a cultural and ethnic perspective, Explore Academy serves a population that is mixture of primarily Caucasian and Hispanic students (43% / 43%) with smaller subpopulations of other ethnic minorities including Native American (8%), African American (4%), and Asian (2%).

The vast majority of the school's students are first-generation college students, and thus the Explore Academy administrative team has experience in building a college-preparatory program that is successful for all students, regardless of background, through the use of continual support, engaging yet rigorous academic content, college-based school structure, and essential skill-building that together provide a comprehensive college preparation program.

The school averages a 40% population of students whose families are eligible for the National School Lunch Program either through state-assistance programs or through income qualification. As such, the school's leadership has experience in serving students with varying levels of financial support for educational success within the Explore Learning model (ability to afford the Chromebook and/or school uniforms, internet service at home, etc.).

Within the category of special populations, the school averages a 10% enrollment of special education students with an additional 10% subpopulation of gifted students (20% total for total enrollment of special populations).

Explore Academy enrolls students from around the greater Albuquerque area, drawing from many different neighborhoods and sub-communities, providing students the option to attend a higher quality school than would otherwise be offered in their immediate geography.

For the school's high school enrollment, the chart shows the breakdown of the quality of school Explore Academy students would otherwise attend (based on the New Mexico letter grading system):

LETTER GRADE OF NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOL	PERCENT OF STUDENTS ENROLLED AT EA
F	19%
D	20%
C	53%
B	24%
A	3%

For Explore Academy's high school enrollment, the data shows the middle school environments from which Explore Academy students exit prior to enrollment:

LETTER GRADE OF NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOL	PERCENT OF STUDENTS ENROLLED AT EA
F	41%
D	22%
C	35%
B	3%
A	0

As the majority of Explore students come from struggling middle and high schools, it can be surmised that there are, at the very least, some level of academic challenges which Explore Academy inherits from its incoming student populations. Despite the learning gaps and other challenges that our students bring with them to Explore Academy upon enrollment, they make remarkable academic progress which increases with each year they attend the school. Similar to the populations of Rising Star schools in Nevada where middle schools score in the lowest 5% based on their index scores and high schools have a graduation rate lower than 60%, students who attend Explore Academy come from district schools that are also underperforming. Explore Academy provides its students with an option for a customized education that demonstrates proven academic success.

PROPOSED SCHOOL MODEL AND ACADEMIC PLAN

1) DESCRIBE IN DETAIL YOUR APPROACH TO EDUCATING YOUR STUDENTS. PROVIDE AT LEAST TWO EXAMPLES OF THE SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS APPROACH IN YOUR OTHER SCHOOL(S).

The curricular approach and educational philosophy employed at Explore Academy has three areas of focus:

- **Objective 1:** Greater student accountability using a standards-driven system in course design and academic reporting
- **Objective 2**: Selectivity and student choice for all classes to promote both a customized and individualized form of an elective-based education

- **Objective 3:** College preparation through the implementation of a curriculum which increasingly resembles and simulates college academics in structure, rigor, and content.

OBJECTIVE ONE

The primary objective specifically focuses on the academic standards in order to develop all students in *each one* of the core academic areas for which they are responsible as high school graduates, an area of concern across the educational landscape. To combat this concerning trend, and given the recent trends in education which holds schools and teachers more accountable in the proficiency of their students, the curriculum at Explore Academy promotes strong, foundational core knowledge and increased student accountability for every core standard, and thus ensures that every Explore Academy graduate is a well-rounded educated citizen and that the school itself is successful in the current educational climate.

The school's curriculum is divided into smaller increments of instruction, called *seminars,* each of which will span twenty-two (22) days in length for grades 8-12 and forty-four (44) days in length for grades 6-7. These seminars are Explore Academy's courses and are formed around a group of common academic standards. As an example, instead of a student taking a traditional physics course which includes a unit on forces and motion, Explore Academy students take a specific seminar devoted to forces and motion, its own individual course, taught over a 22-day period. Using the Nevada state standards, the entire curriculum for all four core subjects is divided into these smaller, more focused areas of study.

Explore Academy's seminar-based approach focuses instruction on an area which receives little to no focus in a traditional academic setting: specific student academic accountability. In a traditional setting, a student receives a final grade for a semester of work, covering dozens of standards; yet, the final grade the student receives does not accurately reflect nor describe in what standards, within the scope of the class, he or she showed proficiency or lack thereof. A student who passes a class, even with a grade as low as 60%, a level far below what is considered proficient, is deemed by the school and the state to be proficient in *all* the standards contained therein. Schools and their staffs are being measured and evaluated based on student performance, yet those schools, and their staff members, exist within a system which does not specifically hold students accountable for all the information they are required to know. Schools operating under the traditional educational model are thus held accountable for students who are themselves not held accountable for their academic proficiency.

It is the Explore Academy philosophy that grading periods must become more frequent, and thus more specific, to hold students accountable for *each* of the academic standards. This benefits all parties, for with greater specificity comes a more resolute image of student comprehension.

Examinations at the conclusion of each seminar (exit exams) are directly tied to each of the standards within the seminar, with each exam question based directly on one of the academic standards around which the seminar is focused. Thus, at the conclusion of a given seminar, students, parents, teachers, and the State of Nevada, will know, with precision, in which *specific* areas each student has shown proficiency.

OBJECTIVE TWO

The second objective aims to focus on educating the *individual*. In the current traditional educational format, a teacher is forced to employ differentiated instruction in attempt to provide some specific learning methods for each student. Differentiated instruction is defined as the process of ensuring that what a student learns, how he or she learns it, and how the student demonstrates what he or she has learned is a match for that student's readiness level, interests, and preferred mode of learning. Thus, all students within a given class would be provided with forms of instruction and assessments that are specifically tailored to their individual learning needs. This theory of instruction is ideal, yet in practice, with student-teacher ratios at their highest levels, this approach can never be realistically implemented. The focus of Explore Academy is to move away from the unrealistic goals of differentiated instruction and instead change the focus to a systemic form of individualized instruction: a *differentiated curriculum.*

For each middle school seminar, there are multiple options for academic content within the seminar, allowing students to build the capacity to make academic choices that best meet their interests and needs with the guidance of their teacher. For each high school seminar, there are multiple versions from which students can choose, with each version possessing its own emphasis and providing its own forms of instruction. These are called *seminar-versions or "flavors"*, and it is through this differentiation that students develop the freedom for academic choice. Each flavor within a given seminar is taught through a different theme, using different learning styles or modalities, and thus allows students, for the first time, the freedom to choose how they will fulfill the academic standards set forth before them. To clarify, regardless of which version of a given seminar a student chooses, he or she will still be receiving instruction over the same standards as the alternate versions; the difference is *how they will be learning*.

This idea of a differentiated curriculum is at the core of the Explore Academy philosophy: that *all classes can be elective in nature*. Because all flavors of a given seminar share the same fundamental elements on the exit exam, the

evaluation on which the awarding of credit is based, Explore Academy is able to verify that all students who are receiving credit show proficiency in all of the required standards, regardless of the curricular path they chose.

Through the model as described above, students more effectively learn the academic objectives for which they are responsible. More effective learning takes place when students can apply their knowledge or show interest in what they are learning, and by providing them with the options for learning content how they desire, they are more likely to invest themselves in their learning, apply it to their interests, and retain that knowledge over the long term, thus adequately preparing them for summative assessments or college entrance exams such as the ACT, as well as reducing the need to re-learn that information again through developmental/remedial college courses.

OBJECTIVE THREE

The third facet of the Explore Academy's academic philosophy involves preparing graduates for success in college. There are three components to the Explore Academy's college readiness approach. As students fulfill their academic obligation within the core standards, they enroll in seminars across Explore Academy's major programs through which they focus their studies beginning in their sophomore or junior year. Much as a student declares a major at the university level, there are extensive offerings for areas of emphasis for students to explore their interests.

This type of extension provides three main positive functions. First, it allows students to pursue their academic interests, leading to greater student commitment, all the while nurturing their academic motivation. Second, this approach allows the school's upper division seminars to continually re-emphasize and reinforce the core standards, allowing students to go deeper in their understanding within a given area. Third, and most importantly, it serves to develop their college readiness and career selection by not only providing them with a taste of college-level academic rigor, but essential insight into the reality of the careers in they which they potentially see themselves.

Seminars within the various major programs are designed specifically for the purpose of preparing students for an effective transition into college. All the seminars within a given major program transition to simulate college academics in both content and rigor, and thus provide extensive experience without the need for Advanced Placement courses. With the deficiencies present across secondary public schools in providing adequate preparation for college-level rigor, this system not only provides students with a glimpse of the academic expectations from college courses, but a true understanding of the demands within their prospective field of study.

INCREASED STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY

One major component directly linked to success after high school is the development of students as responsible and independent learners; this is a critical focus of Explore Academy. The traditional educational model does little to promote student independence and individual student responsibility; in fact, it could asserted that it does quite the opposite by creating a culture of *dependent* learners who are incapable of thinking and acting for themselves. This form of passive education has created students who have become detached and disengaged, waiting for their education to arrive.

The primary causal factor, employed by this system in creating this culture of complacency, is the denial of student choice in education, which, on average, begins in early and continues through high school. Yet as students enter post-secondary education (college), they find themselves confronted with levels of responsibility which are foreign and for which they are unprepared, and ultimately fail to adapt to the pressures therein.

By allowing students to choose their curricular path, and make choices in their own best interest, Explore Academy develops its students as responsible, active learners who create their own pathways personalized toward their own educational success. Moreover, as students enter their major program(s), increased responsibilities are placed on them to work at level of rigor which parallels that found in college, all with the added support of the Explore Learning model.

LEARNING AS THE FOCUS

The traditional educational system's use of grades has distorted the learning process, shifting the goal of education away from learning toward the collection of points and the achievement of specific letter grades. To combat this trend, and to bring learning back to the forefront, Explore Academy minimizes the use of summative grades to focus more on learning.

Students in our public schools have become conditioned to perform the work required to achieve the grades with which they are comfortable rather than actually focusing on the learning of information. As a system, we use these grades to qualify and quantify the learning that takes place in classrooms across the country, when in reality, the disproportionate scaling of grades, rampant levels of academic dishonesty, superfluous extra credit, submission of late work, etc. have created students who know how to manipulate the system and can perform the work without learning the material. For this reason, all work at Explore Academy, both in and out of the classroom, is done for the purposes of assessing what students know and is thus formative in nature. Feedback on student work is continually provided for the intrinsic benefit of providing students

and parents with a measure of where the student stands in the *learning process,* and is thus not calculated into the student's final grade in the class. As a result, the incentive is shifted away from simply completing the work to actually learning.

At the completion of each seminar (every 22 or 44 days), students take an exit exam which assesses the scope the information (standards) presented within the seminar. The score on this single exam comprises the student's score within the course and is the basis for the awarding of credit. Thus, the focus of daily work and homework is shifted to help the student measure where he or she is in the *process of learning* rather than using such instruments as summative assessments in and of themselves.

Explore Academy's curricular program has been developed from and is supported by a significant body of research and data, and as such, the format of its instructional model is built for immediate success now and in the future educational climate.

INSTRUCTIONAL APPROACH AND THE SEMINAR

In the words of the memory researcher Edward Bolles, "We remember what we understand; we understand only what we pay attention to; we pay attention to what we want." This quote closely reflects the Explore Academy philosophy, providing students a choice in how they receive their education.

The focus of the seminar-style of instruction focuses on a two-way discourse between teachers and students, eliminating the teacher as the sole source of information. The seminar structure requires a 50/50 split in the communicating of information, sharing the role across all participants within the class structure.

Extensive research in this area points to three main factors that promote long-term student comprehension: inherent interest, experience, and application, all of which represent the three main focal areas of the Explore Academy curriculum. Furthermore, when long-term memory is the objective, as in the creation of an educated student, research specifically details implementation of the following six actions:

ACTION ONE: MAKE SKILLS RELEVANT

Students read and understand information faster and more thoroughly when it is relevant to them, or rather, when they are interested in the topic at hand. Explore Academy students select their own educational pathways, working toward the goal of preparing them for college and career. Explore Academy's environment is built around providing students with a college experience prior to stepping on a college campus, and as such, it becomes a much more relevant endeavor. This feature is compounded by the "major" programs the school offers, which provide students with a glimpse into the field(s) of study they wish to pursue. Thus, their enrollment, and the skills they develop, all become relevant to their future.

ACTION TWO: USE LOW-DENSITY TEACHING METHODS

Learning has been proven to be much more effective when the amount of content provided, or rather required of the learner, focuses on fewer objectives. Within this thread, for maximum effectiveness in teaching, only 50% of material should be new, and that the focus of learning should be to connect new material with one's previous knowledge. This principle is further supported in research which illustrates the importance of educational simplicity, with fewer objectives emphasizing depth over breadth, in the quality of learning and the establishment of retention.

Explore Academy seminars are driven by both a specific focus in a given content area and the vertical alignment of a particular skill set. In this sense, each seminar is not a standalone unit but a continuation of a larger process which works to *establish connections* between its own unique material and the material presented within other seminars, thereby creating a more holistic approach in education and thus creating cohesiveness between individual seminars. To this end, Explore Academy seminars constantly review, reiterate, and reinforce material from other seminars to establish a system of comprehensive education that spirals learning targets continually.

The focus on low density instruction operates outside the classroom as well. The Explore Academy schedule is built with the focus that less is more when it comes to student learning, and as such, students will attend fewer classes per day (five) in comparison to the traditional high school student who must budget his or her time and effort across more courses (seven or eight classes enrolled at a given time). This effort leads to a greater focus on depth over breadth.

ACTION THREE: USE SHORT CLASSES AND SHORT LEARNING MODULES

According to research, segments of learning should be as concise and specific as possible. Within this vein of thought, the dissemination of too much information can actually be counterproductive and detrimental in the learning process, causing a state of information overload where previous information, which has not yet had the chance to solidify, is constantly being replaced by new information. The stream of information, to which students are constantly bombarded, does little to establish the long-term retention of information.

Because Explore Academy seminars are shorter in length and more specific in their focus, they can better promote the establishment of long-term knowledge. The focus and specificity additionally serves the school and its teachers by providing a more accurate measurement of each student's proficiency level, allowing better insight as schools and teachers work to meet increased levels of accountability as required by the State.

ACTION FOUR: REPEAT THE MESSAGE OFTEN

Reiteration and reinforcement of information have been shown to be critical factors in the establishment of long-term memory. Further research characterizes repetition as a key driving force in moving information from short-term to long-term memory and countering what is known as the *fading effect,* which describes the natural loss of information over time. Material that is retained over more extensive periods of time, termed *residual memory,* is created directly from repeated exposure and is the basis for long-term retention.

The strategy of information repetition is seen between and within Explore Academy seminars which, based on their flavor, work to continuously incorporate information from other content areas and build on existing content knowledge and skill sets covered in lower-level tiers within the same content area, thus creating greater cohesiveness between individual seminars. This reinforcement of ideas works to tie the individual seminars into one solid framework that addresses learning targets repeatedly through various content areas and seminar flavors.

Connections between seminars, and the concepts therein, creates and develops what is known as neuroplasticity, where the brain physically reorganizes neural pathways as new connections are made between existing areas where information is stored. As one begins to understand a concept from a more global perspective, including its relatedness to other concepts and real-world application, the way that information is stored in brain changes and the longevity of the stored information increases significantly.

By providing a spiraling curriculum between seminars, constantly drawing on information from other disciplines to apply to new information, information is reinforced, and greater levels of long-term memory can be established.

This philosophy operates within the seminar timeframe as well. While each seminar focuses on a few specific academic standards, the way in which these standards are presented to students builds connections within the twenty-two or forty-four day term. By using spiraled instruction, where the teacher circles back on instructional objectives and learning targets in an effort to continuously tie content together, information is repeated often, albeit with new connections, thus strengthening the understanding and interrelatedness of each individual objective.

ACTION FIVE: PROVIDE THE LEARNER WITH MOTIVATION

Learning becomes most effective when the learner has inherent motivation to learn. This intuitive notion is the basis for what is termed *choice theory*, developed by Dr. William Glasser and his culmination of over fifty years of research and practice in the areas of psychology and counseling. The guiding principle in choice theory asserts that behavior is central to our existence and is driven from within, and that we as humans are most successful when we are internally motivated. As it relates to the classroom, Glasser's theory describes a choice-based education as one in which students are (a) provided a warm, supportive classroom environment where they are respected, (b) asked to perform only useful work (no compulsory homework), (c) pushed to do the best they can, and (d) continuously asked to evaluate their own work and improve it (feedback).

In addition, a teacher in a seminar-based environment steps into a mentoring role rather than one that is supervisory in nature, helping to facilitate, support, and drive the learning process rather than simply disseminate information. Such teachers are interested in quality, and must continuously challenge students to nurture that level of quality into existence. Grades thus become less of a focus given that they "tend to turn the process off because the students work for your grade instead of their own judgment of quality." (Glasser, 1998).

The theory asserts that there is not one road to quality, but rather several, and when given a choice, the individual will find more success on the road of his or her choosing. This strategy in providing each student with his or her own customized educational pathway is the foundational principle of Explore Academy.

ACTION SIX: PROVIDE THE LEARNER WITH FEEDBACK

Appropriate feedback within the educational process is a crucial element in the learning process, especially when it possesses the following characteristics: goal-oriented, ongoing, timely, and specific.

Explore Academy focuses on learning as a *process* and not an end in and of itself, and thus feedback and guidance become integral components in this process. With the exception of the single summative assessment at the conclusion of a given seminar (the exit exam), all work is guided toward the goal of attaining proficiency / mastery through guided, experience-based learning.

Assessments provided within the scope of a given seminar, including homework, in-class work, projects, and quizzes, are formative in nature and thus meant to serve as a mechanism to provide feedback to students and parents. Explore Academy utilizes these assessments as measures *within* the learning process and not as measures in the attainment of learning. It thus becomes in the best interest of the student to not only complete the work, but to understand the work as they complete it.

Because Explore Academy is based on active student learning, the teacher takes on a mentoring role where he or she can more effectively assess student learning and attainment of the learning targets for each seminar and provide timely and specific feedback throughout the duration of the learning experience.

SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION

At the initial Explore Academy campus, the above theory has been turned into practice over the four years of the school's existence. Two particular areas (as an example) where the educational theory described above has proven effective are in the areas of student accountability and choice-based success.

EXAMPLE ONE: STUDENT ACCOUNTABILITY

In requiring students to demonstrate proficiency in all standards before advancing to higher level coursework, the Explore Academy model has shown increased success for students who have been held to this higher standard for learning.   Utilizing New Mexico's statewide assessment, PARCC, the following data demonstrate the increase in proficiency rates for students who work through the Explore Academy system and meet the school's expectation of demonstrating proficiency in each standard.

PARCC Scores (Reading)
Based on Students Continually Enrolled

Focusing on three cohorts (labeled based on their graduation year) who have moved through Explore Academy's system, data show an increase in performance on the PARCC each year as students are tested across two levels of math (Math I and Math II) and three levels of English / Language Arts (ELA 9, 10, and 11). Accounting for the baseline PARCC score (650), math scores average a 19% increase from the initial math exam (Math I) to the second math installment (Math II). Accounting for the same baseline in ELA (650), the ELA scores average a 26% increase from each subtest each year (ELA 9 vs. ELA 10 vs. ELA 11).

PARCC Scores (Math)
Based on Students Continually Enrolled

The above increases in performance illustrate an increasing level of proficiency for students who have moved through Explore Academy system with higher and more comprehensive expectations.

EXAMPLE TWO: CHOICE-BASED SUCCESS

As students complete each seminar, they provide feedback on the instruction they received as well as their overall satisfaction with the flavor of the seminar in question (forty surveys are administered to each student per year (five per term across eight terms)). One particular element that is measured within this feedback mechanism is the level of choice they were offered in the flavor they chose (as compared to a class the student was required to take based on scheduling constraints). On the Likert scale provided, with values from 1 (student had no choice in the seminar) to 5 (student chose the flavor of the seminar specifically), student responses average with a value of 3.9, showing that students do, for the most part, chose seminars based on the flavor when building their schedule.

In cross referencing the level of choice in the seminar with the student's performance on the exit exam, results demonstrate that students who actively choose the flavor of the seminar show greater success in the class as a whole. In calculating the relationship between student responses in the choice for the flavor of the seminar in question (independent variable, from 1 to 5) and the resulting exit exam score (dependent variable, from 0% to 100%), the resulting correlation is

0.78, showing a strong relationship between the level of choice and the resulting level of success for students. As Explore Academy continues to grow, allowing for more flavors and flexibility in student scheduling, students will continue to have greater opportunity for choice in the flavors in which they enroll.

2) EXPLAIN YOUR APPROACH TO REPLICATING AND IMPLEMENTING THE SCHOOL MODEL, INCLUDING CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND SCHOOL CULTURE IN THE PROPOSED NEW SCHOOL(S). PLEASE DESCRIBE ANY NON-NEGOTIABLE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOLS YOU OPERATE.

In its efforts to replicate its New Mexico-based model to Nevada, Explore Academy will implement a similar design within its new schools while still allowing for the individual and unique culture of the school to develop organically.

Explore Academy schools in Nevada will utilize an identical academic framework for the building of academic skills within all four core content areas, with adjustments and variations to be made in specific seminars specific to the academic requirements within the state of Nevada. With the exception of these adjustments, the framework for Explore Academy, from grades 6 to 12 will be as similar as possible to its New Mexico counterpart.

Within structure of the model itself, there is considerable flexibility to allow for the creative influences of the Nevada teaching staff. While the seminar requirement will be comparable if not identical in most content areas, the manner in which the content / standards will be presented to students will be unique and customized around the Nevada teaching staff, allowing for a truly unique and Nevada-specific academic culture to grow and evolve. Nevada Explore Academy teachers will have the freedom to, within the guidelines of the academic standards, engage students and build mastery in a manner that they see best. As such, the course catalogs of all schools within the Explore Learning Network will have different flavor offerings within a comparable academic scaffold.

Teachers at Nevada's Explore Academy will be encouraged to bring their own instructional uniqueness into the classroom and showcase it to students in an effort to provide as much instructional diversity, and thus increase the level of choice provided to Explore Academy students. Explore Academy teachers, at any campus, are encouraged to find the most creative and engaging instructional approaches to deliver their content, and in this way teachers have, within the constraints of the academic standards, an exceptional level of creative freedom.

Within this model, however, teachers will be evaluated in a similar manner as the results from the common components of each seminar's exit exam can and will be compared across different flavors of each seminar. This comparison will not only be performed across seminars in Nevada-based Explore Academy sites, but across all Explore Academy sites across different state boundaries.

Further, student feedback surveys will be administered in an identical way, with students providing monthly data for teachers to utilize in improving their practice. While many of the questions will be standard, there will be room for campus-specific questions that the school leader may elect to include for specific feedback. Teachers will be required to reflect, on a monthly basis, to the feedback provided within these surveys to demonstrate their commitment to continual instructional improvement. Additional feedback for students with disabilities will be provided by teachers on a monthly basis as well in order to provide parents a monthly evaluation of the student's progress towards goals.

In addition to the above, all Explore Academy campuses will identify at-risk students on a weekly basis, providing students and parents snapshot reporting each week (in addition to general teacher-parent communication). From the culmination of this feedback semiannually, Explore Academy campuses will identify "cuspy" students, students who are potentially on the cusp of success and need extra support to make progress and move off the bubble, the results of which will inform teachers as they work with these students in their classes across subsequent terms. It is from the above feedback that interventions will be made for students in need of greater academic support, both in class and within their flex periods.

Explore Academy campuses will be consistent in the daily schedule implemented, with students in class for similar spans of time (approximately 60 minutes), with similar class loads (five periods per day), and with the utilization of free periods (flex periods) each day in a manner supporting student academic progress.

In the area of technology, all Explore Academy campus will utilize the G Suite apps for both staff and students with all students required to possess a Chromebook as a condition of enrollment.

All Explore Academy campuses will utilize the same discipline matrix as well. The basic structure involves a 10-point system where, at 10 points, a student is expelled. There are minor infractions that would merit a warning, such as violating the dress code policy or attempting to use a cell phone in class. These offenses, if repeated, will result in a student earning one discipline point. More serious offenses such as drug possession or distribution, fighting, and vandalism would result immediately in more points being assessed. The goal of the discipline at Explore Academy is to teach students to learn from their mistakes in order not to make them again. At the New Mexico campus, most students never earn a point, while others may earn a point or two in the first term and then acclimate to the higher level of accountability and adjust their behavior accordingly.

Outside of the above expectations, it is expected and encouraged that each new Explore Academy site will develop its own personality and school culture, and thus within the above dimensions of the Explore Learning Network framework, there is considerable latitude for a unique community driven by the students, teachers, and parents that form the school's constituency.

3) ARE THERE ANY KEY EDUCATIONAL FEATURES THAT WILL DIFFER IN THE PROPOSED NEW SCHOOL(S) FROM THE OTHER SCHOOLS THAT YOU OPERATE? EXPLAIN THE RATIONALE FOR THE VARIATION IN APPROACH AND ANY NEW RESOURCES THE VARIATION WOULD REQUIRE.

As described above, based on the specific academic standard requirement as designated by the state of Nevada, there will be some level of variation in state-specific seminars offered, although the extent of this variation should be minimal as the two state's standards are closely aligned.

Within the necessary adjustments mentioned above, all Explore Academy campuses will utilize the same credit model, seminar system, and flavor-based approach. Within this requirement, each individual Explore Academy campus, within its inherent teaching staff, will have the creative freedom to develop and implement a unique collection of creative, standard-specific flavor offerings from which students can choose. In this way, each Explore Academy campus will develop its own curricular identity, unique from each sister campus. This promotion of instructional creativity is designed to encourage teacher investment and student engagement, while empowering their unique academic interests and skills to create highly captivating academic learning environments.

As a summative component of each seminar, exit exams will have a component common in each respective seminar across the entire Explore Learning Network. This common component will measure students' basic level of comprehension across all flavors of each particular seminar. Allowing for half of each exit exam to remain specific to the flavor allows for teachers to measure higher-level thinking in a manner specific to the theme they created while also allowing the Network to measure basic understanding across all sections of a given seminar across multiple campuses.

4) HOW IS YOUR CHOSEN APPROACH SUITED TO THE NEEDS OF THE NEVADA STUDENTS WHO WILL ATTEND YOUR SCHOOL?

As discussed above, Explore Academy's approach is suited to meet the needs of Nevada students by individualizing their education through choice-based seminars and in-depth support systems. The entire school model is designed to meet the needs of each student, individually, thus resulting in a learning environment that is tailored specifically to support our Nevada students and bring them unprecedented academic success.

The curriculum, developed within the structure of the Explore Learning mode, will be unique to the culture and flavor of the Nevada students it serves. It is customized through seminar flavors and school activities to truly embody the interests and needs of the students who attend the school. The customization of the curriculum allows the Explore Learning model approach to meet the needs of each individual student on campus, ensuring that they receive the instruction, guidance, and support needed to make academic progress. The on-site tutoring and academic support systems such as at-risk and "cuspy" reporting ensure that no student is lost in the crowd. Instead, all students are monitored and supported as individual learners.

Another component of the approach that meets the needs of all students who attend Explore Academy is the use of placement testing to assign students to the seminars that are appropriate for their skill and performance levels. This allows us to schedule students in a way that places them in seminars that will close their respective learning gaps when they enter Explore Academy. The school pairs this intentional student placement with small class sizes, usually never exceeding twenty (20) students per classroom in order to provide not only an individualized curriculum through choice, but also an individualized classroom experience where each student is able to receive ample attention from their teachers.

The Explore Academy approach will also allow Nevada students to become responsible, independent, and skilled learners. The school incorporates technology training and usage into all seminars, preparing students for college and careers in an ever-immersive technological world. With the rigorous, standards-based curriculum and grading structure, students graduate from Explore Academy prepared for college not only with solid academic knowledge that is free of learning gaps and deficiencies, but also armed with organizational, management, and technical skills that will bring them success in their post-secondary endeavors.

5) WILL YOUR SCHOOL(S) HAVE A SPECIFIC AREA OF FOCUS (E.G., BILINGUAL EDUCATION, MATH AND SCIENCE)?

Explore Academy offers a program designed to provide students tremendous choice in customizing their own educational pathway as they prepare for a college future. The school utilizes an elective-based approach to learning which

allows students to choose the manner in which they complete the credit requirements set forth before them, allowing for greater investment in and ownership over the learning process.

The Explore Academy model incorporates a skill-based, vertically-aligned curriculum designed to develop 21st century skills necessary for success in college. As students move into their 10th grade year, their journeys shift into the Explore Academy majors, which allow them to begin exploration in several areas in which they have interest in pursuing in their post-secondary education. As a college preparatory institution, Explore Academy simulates a college environment and curriculum within a high school framework.

6) WHAT WILL A TYPICAL DAY BE LIKE FOR A STUDENT IN YOUR SCHOOL(S)?

An Explore Academy student day consists of seven periods, five of which are seminars the student attends. Explore Academy utilizes the process of frontloading on a daily basis, requiring students to come to class each day having prepared beforehand by completing a task that ties into the material for that day (an anticipatory set). These may include pre-reading a passage/chapter, taking advanced notes, watching a documentary or clip, reviewing information, etc. This allows the teacher to immediately begin class, utilizing the frontloading material to engage students from the moment they enter the room while also providing students feedback on their learning and progress. Students are active participants in each seminar, engaging in dialogue, inquiry, research, debate, investigation, experiment, projects, etc. In this way, students are an active part of each of their five seminars.

The remaining two class periods, where students are not in class, are called "flex" periods and will be used for multiple purposes. While one flex period will function as lunch, the second flex is student status-dependent. For students in grades 6 and 7, this flex period will remain structured as a series of workshops to help provide supplemental academic and social support within a variety of topics (time management, note-taking, content review, technology use, keyboard, etc.) as well to provide specific academic support in the form of tutoring.

For students in grades 8 through 12 who are in good academic standing, this flex period will remain free for them to study, complete their frontloading, collaborate, seek tutoring, relax, participate in activities (including intramural sports), etc. Flex times will additionally offer workshops for students in a variety of academic subject areas (ACT prep, college application preparation, FAFSA, etc.) as well as non-academic subjects (basic cooking, vehicle maintenance/repair, etc.). For students who are identified as at-risk or otherwise requiring academic intervention, as assessed weekly, they will be assigned to a structured flex to provide more specific academic supports including quiet study time, tutoring, extra practice, etc.

On Fridays, all Explore Academy students have an abbreviated schedule with early-release in mid-afternoon. During the day on Fridays, there is time built-into the schedule where students will attend a club of their choosing. Within this time, each student picks a club for the term that piques their interest, selecting from options provided from teachers who each host a different club offering. Clubs range in content, from board games and sign language to dance and robotics. Providing a time for clubs during the school day allows all students to attend a club without need for after school transportation or added cost.

7) HOW WILL YOU MAKE SURE THAT INCOMING STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO TRANSITION TO YOUR WAY OF DOING THINGS (E.G., SCHOOL CULTURE, INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS) FROM THOSE OF THEIR CURRENT SCHOOL?

Explore Academy's innovative academic model is a departure from both the academic and cultural norms of most traditional educational institutions. As such, in transitioning into the Explore Academy environment, there is an extensive system of supportive mechanisms to help acclimate students to a new system of education.

From the outset, the school is clear in its expectations for students in terms of both academic performance and behavioral / social conduct. While the school is public and provides open enrollment for any student or family who is interested, it is necessary for full transparency with families from the very beginning of the enrollment process. The expectations for both academic performance and student behavior / conduct are additionally published in the school's course catalog and student handbook respectively, which are available on the school's website and are used as referenced during discussions with prospective parents and students.

The foundation of support for students as they transition into the Explore Academy environment is a joint effort between the school's mentors and teachers. Prior to the start of school, all new students attend orientation, which provides them short and pointed workshops covering a variety of topics including: seminar-style learning, formative feedback, proficiency / mastery-based learning and grading, exit exams, frontloading and appropriate preparation for class, student conduct / discipline, time management and flex time, use of technology in the classroom, scheduling (for older students), etc. Explore Academy mentors and teachers run this event.

For 6th and 7th grade students, workshops such as these with the addition of academic-support and skill-building workshops (note-taking, organizational skill-building, review of material, etc.) are required for students to attend within their flex periods for the entirety of their 6th and 7th grade years.

For students in grades 8 and above who are new to Explore Academy, there is a required set of workshops students must attend during one of their flex periods for the entirety of the first term in which they are enrolled. All of the above-mentioned workshops are managed and overseen by Explore Academy mentors whose primary function is to provide academic support to students during their flex periods, both in a structured manner such as the workshops described above and the informal tutoring program that takes place throughout the day during student flex periods.

The above-mentioned flex time provides additional support for students in helping with adjustments as they attend Explore Academy. Not only does it provide academic support in the form of tutoring, but mentors provide additional culture-building programs including icebreakers, team-building, flex-based activities, etc., all of which help to bring Explore Academy students together in meaningful and productive ways as the community grows. In addition, flex periods function as times when students can make appointments to visit the school's support service personnel, such as the school's counselor(s) for additional support as needed. The school's activities director will manage all flex-related components, both academic and non-academic in nature.

As described above, teachers form of a part of the two-pronged approach to community building at Explore Academy. Fundamentally, the school's small class sizes and formative nature of instruction provides an ongoing discourse between teacher and student through the seminar-format of instruction in which interaction and discourse within the classroom functions as a two-way discourse. The seminar format provides individual attention to students to both evaluate and address their academic and social-emotional needs.

Furthermore, as students move to new seminars every month (grades 8-12) or two (grades 6-7), there is a constant mixing of students and teachers as classes change, creating more interaction and community-building as students get to know new members of both the student community and teaching staff. By the end of the year, Explore Academy students and teachers have come to know a significant portion of the school's population.

For students who enroll during a school year, their flex periods are used to assist them in acclimating to the school's structure and culture. During these periods, regardless of the grade level of the student, they attend sessions to introduce them to the technology and procedures at Explore Academy so they are able to fully engage in the school model from the first day they are on campus. We encourage new students to begin classes at the start of a term in order to begin each seminar at the same time as the other students. This allows them to feel more comfortable as they are beginning a class just like the other students around them.

This community-building approach continues at the conclusion of each 22-day term (at the midpoint of each 44-day term for grades 6-7) during the two term break days where school is not in session. During the second term break day, Explore Academy will host community events for students to come together for an activity outside of the school (volunteer work, field trips, etc.), furthering the development of the school community as one core unit.

Within the programs described above, an additional role that exists (and will come to exist in the Nevada schools) is the role of peer mentors. For juniors and seniors who apply and are selected, there is an opportunity for peer mentorship of new and younger students entering the Explore Academy system. Through additional workshops and mentoring sessions spread throughout the year during student flex periods, students new to the school can help understand and be acclimated to the culture that exists within Explore Academy.

SPECIAL POPULATIONS AND AT-RISK STUDENTS ⊕

1) DESCRIBE YOUR OVERALL PLAN TO SERVE STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO STUDENTS WITH INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAMS OR SECTION 504 PLANS; ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS; AND STUDENTS AT RISK OF ACADEMIC FAILURE OR DROPPING OUT.

The entire nature of Explore's academic model is based on individualized student educational pathways, thus providing students with special needs, ELLs, and at risk students with in-depth academic support that surpasses what is traditionally seen in public education. For students with documented special needs, such as IEPs, 504 plans, and English Language Learners (ELLs), Explore Academy follows all legal protocols to provide these students with services specific to their special needs to create an environment based around educational equity.

Explore Academy utilizes a full-inclusion structure, with all students sharing the same opportunities for curricular choice. Within this framework, the school provides support staff for special education, ELL students, and students who are at

risk of failure to provide direct and supplemental support both in and out of class. This support is extended by the network of ancillary service providers with which the school contracts in order to provide the necessary support services.

The primary work, however, begins with the classroom teachers. As a model, Explore Academy commits itself to maintaining smaller class sizes so that teachers may work closely with each student in class. The seminar style of instruction ensures that students are doing at least 50% of the communicating in class, so the environment becomes one where discourse is two-way. By knowing their students and their students' specific learning needs, teachers can effectively intervene and provide individualized support in areas specific to address student deficiencies.

Additional support mechanisms operate across a multitude of dimensions, one of which is in scheduling around required supports to keep students in class as much as possible. For students that require services in the areas of social work, speech language pathology, etc., Explore Academy can provide these service hours to students during their free (flex) periods so that they are not missing class for these crucial sessions.

These flex periods provide an additional layer of support as they allow for academic support throughout the day while the student is at school. While traditionally the school allows flex periods to remain open for students to use as needed (unless interventions are necessary), students with IEPs, 504s, and ELLs may be assigned to a "structured" flex period to better meet their academic needs. This allows them time with their special education or English language development case manager to work individually on areas of deficiency, learning gaps, social skills, etc., as well as to be a point of contact between content area teachers and parents in order to maintain open lines of communication This class period, meeting on a daily basis, also allows for dedicated tutoring time, extended test-taking, and technology skill building. As a component built into the day, this time helps ensure that students are able to receive all support services they require as well as receive academic interventions to allow them to be successful in their seminars for the term in question.

As Explore Academy highly integrates technology into its instructional and administrative processes, staff can communicate efficiently regarding student progress and academic needs, both of which specifically benefit the level of support structure of the school's special populations. This workflow can operate across several dimensions, the more prominent ones being:

THE AT-RISK REPORT

At the conclusion of each week, teachers evaluate student progress and generate an at-risk list which identifies students who are struggling along with metrics denoting the potential causal factors. Reports from each teacher are compiled and a comprehensive report is sent to parents each week detailing areas in which the student may be struggling and why teachers perceive these struggles might exist. This report is further modified to provide feedback for the special education and ELL staff members who work closely with their respective subpopulations. Using the metrics from each teacher, these staff can provide more precise support as they work with students and liaise between teachers, students, and parents throughout the term.

PROGRESS TOWARDS GOALS

As a component of each student's IEP, PTG become a specific benchmark on measuring student growth. While the common practice is to measure PTG once per year, Explore Academy teachers review and provide feedback on special education goals each month, thus creating a more precise and workable data set from which the special education teachers can operate in supporting students for the term ahead. These data are compiled and added into an existing report which is continuously shared with parents for review on an ongoing basis.

OPEN COMMUNICATION

With students moving through the classrooms of more teachers within a shorter span of time, Explore Academy creates a system where staff communicate constantly about student progress and academic needs. At the beginning of each new term, modifications and accommodations are shared with all teachers for students with modified curriculum, assessment, educational setting, etc. This open line of communication allows teachers to share best practices and experiences with each other continually, providing open dialogue about what works best for each student. The data collected each term from all seminars also allows administration and special education / ELL case managers to monitor each student and respond quickly to any issues that may arise. Monitoring and intervention help to assign students to some of the many supports mentioned above and below, and also ensures that students have their needs met in all classes consistently, creating a safe and stable educational environment.

In addition to support for students with documented special needs, the Explore Learning model has several mechanisms built-in that provide much more support to students with documented special needs as well as students who are at risk of academic failure or dropping out.

FORMATIVE CURRICULUM

Explore Academy's choice-based curriculum is built on the idea that students must continually work to improve in their learning. As such, the assessment of proficiency in each seminar's standards / skills is formative throughout the term, thus allowing students the ability to demonstrate learning as they make educational gains at their own pace while being provided the freedom to work through their mistakes. A student's final grade is not penalized for a score earned in week one if they are able to demonstrate mastery in that same concept by the end of the term. This allows all students, including those with special needs and ELLs, to learn in a way that is less intimidating and more accepting of each student's individual cognition and learning gaps. With formative assessments continually providing students feedback, students who would normally be lost in a large class are given individualized attention and guidance, providing them with support and confidence to take control of their learning. Students are not asked to merely hand in an assignment and wait two weeks for a grade; rather, they are working through class concepts with their peers and teachers in class, allowing the teacher to facilitate each student's learning in real time with authentic feedback.

CUSPIES

At the halfway point in the year (end of term 4), Explore teachers analyze data on every student they have had. The goal of this analysis is to identify students who are on the cusp of succeeding or failing at Explore Academy, for whatever reason. These students are the "cuspies" who need specific and purposeful intervention to ensure that they have the support and skills they need to move toward success. Once identified, these cuspies are assigned a mentor teacher to monitor them, coach them, make parent and teacher contacts for them, tutor them, etc. This one-on-one attention allows at risk students to be front and center with all teachers, especially with their mentor teacher, providing in-depth support and guidance that will allow them to develop better academic skills and make more learning gains in their seminars. Once identified, data on the progress of cuspies is analyzed on a monthly basis.

STRUCTURED FLEX

As described above, the structured flex period provides support for special needs students, ELLs, and any student who is at risk or struggling.   All students in 6th and 7th grades have a structured flex where they work closely with a mentor teacher. Beginning in 8th grade, when a student fails a seminar or appears consistently on the At-Risk Report, that student is assigned to a structured flex period (as mentioned above) that serves as a study group for the following term. This intervention is put in place to prevent students from failing seminars term after term without receiving the support they need for academic success. The structured flex also provides the students who are at risk of failure or dropping out access to a teacher, one on one, every day of the week. This individual attention means they are not lost in the system or overlooked as an individual. Each student's needs are identified, and they then work toward making progress in their own learning gaps and academic issues during their flex period. This leads to greater success in their current term's seminars and a decrease in the likelihood that they will fail a seminar again.

AT-RISK

As mentioned above, the At-Risk report sent out on a weekly basis allows teachers to identify students who are struggling in their seminars. These students can be assigned tutoring, assigned to attend a class for a second time, or they may be placed in a structured flex where they have added support. The goal of the At-Risk Report is to intervene before a student fails a seminar, allowing students with special needs and students who are at risk of failing or dropping out to get support before they reach a point where they are falling behind or failing a seminar. Because it is done on a weekly basis it can be utilized for continual monitoring and immediate intervention for students who would otherwise fall behind in their seminars.

2) DISCUSS HOW THE COURSE SCOPE AND SEQUENCE, DAILY SCHEDULE, STAFFING PLANS, AND SUPPORT STRATEGIES AND RESOURCES WILL MEET OR BE ADJUSTED FOR THE DIVERSE NEEDS OF STUDENTS.

The entire framework of Explore Academy is built to allow for adjustment as needed to meet the needs of students as they develop and change over the course of the school year. The daily schedule for each student is built to meet the needs of each student; no two students will have the same schedule for the year. There is freedom regarding when students can

take their flex periods as well as when they take certain seminars. This allows students to create the schedule that best meets their academic and personal needs. The school's registrar and counselors help students with the scheduling process as they develop their own self-awareness and academic preferences. Staffing is also adjusted continually to meet student needs. The tutors used during free and structured flex periods are available all day to meet student needs. When more students need academic support, more staff are allocated to provide tutoring and support. The flex periods are adjusted based on student data and need on a weekly basis. Flex periods also provide students the access to staff during the academic day, eliminating the need for students to seek tutoring after school or off campus. Explore Academy schedules a teacher from each content area to be free each period across the scope of the day to ensure that all students, especially students who are at-risk, have access to quality academic support throughout the school year.

The seminars themselves are designed to provide in depth student support. The small class sizes provide individual student attention in all seminars. With students choosing the flavor of each of their seminars, thus choosing the theme and method of instruction, they are more engaged and interested in the course material from the very first day. This means that each student's schedule is built just for them and they are able to adjust it to meet their needs throughout the year. This means that some students may take one less or one more seminar during a certain term. Students are also able to take a flex period early or late in the day to allow for study time when they need it most. Students are also encouraged to take their flex period at the same time as a teacher with whom they require a lot of extra help so they are able to meet with the teacher on a regular basis, all the while never missing class to get academic support.

3) EXPLAIN HOW YOU WILL IDENTIFY AND MEET THE LEARNING NEEDS OF STUDENTS WITH MILD, MODERATE, AND SEVERE DISABILITIES IN THE LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT POSSIBLE. SPECIFY THE PROGRAMS, STRATEGIES, AND SUPPORTS YOU WILL PROVIDE, INCLUDING:
   A) METHODS FOR IDENTIFYING STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS (AND AVOIDING MISIDENTIFICATION);
   B) SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS, PRACTICES, AND STRATEGIES THE SCHOOL WILL EMPLOY TO PROVIDE A CONTINUUM OF SERVICES; ENSURE STUDENTS' ACCESS TO THE GENERAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM; AND ENSURE ACADEMIC SUCCESS FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS;
   C) PLANS FOR MONITORING AND EVALUATING THE PROGRESS AND SUCCESS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS TO ENSURE THE ATTAINMENT OF EACH STUDENT'S GOALS AS SET FORTH IN THE INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP);
   D) PLANS FOR PROMOTING GRADUATION FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS (HIGH SCHOOL ONLY); AND
   E) PLANS TO HAVE QUALIFIED STAFFING, INCLUDING EXTERNAL SERVICE PROVIDERS AS APPLICABLE, ADEQUATE FOR THE ANTICIPATED SPECIAL NEEDS POPULATION.

There are two ways in which students are identified and entered into special education at Explore Academy: students who enroll with current IEPs who are automatically entered into program, and general education students who demonstrate academic struggles in class who are then referred to a student assistance team (SAT) coordinator for evaluation and possible diagnostic testing.

For students who enroll as special needs, the school initially collects IEPs as part of a general records request. Upon receipt of an IEP, the special education case manager creates a calendar with all students, IEP due dates, service hours requirements, necessary testing, etc. This master calendar allows all required testing and services to be mapped out for the whole school year and creates transparency for teachers and administrators. Students are then scheduled for classes with the counselor in collaboration with their special education case manager to receive supports and services within the school day. Upon enrollment, the special education case manager also identifies students who may need altered class schedules, altered curriculum, etc. to make sure these services start immediately to support the students. Students are also encouraged to take placement exams to make sure they are scheduled into seminars that correspond with their grade level knowledge and content skills.

For students who are identified as potentially having a learning disability, the staff initiates a SAT process that begins with tiered interventions and data collection, both in and out of class. If it is determined that general interventions are not enough to provide the student with a fair and equitable learning environment, the team then proceeds to diagnostic testing to determine if the student qualifies for special education services and thus the implementation of an IEP to support their education success.

To accommodate students with disabilities at all levels, there are several ways the curriculum, learning environment, and academic requirements are adjusted to provide each student with their own least restrictive environment. Some of these, also mentioned above, include:
   - Reduction in overall credit requirement: reducing the class load and increasing the number of flex periods per term. This results in a lowering of the total credit requirement (may be overall or specific to a given subject area) while still complying with the state's minimum graduation credit requirement
   - Adjusting the level of mastery required to pass a standard (based on Bloom's Taxonomy)

- Adjusting the overall pass rate (80%) for a standard
- Averaging the percentages for every standard in a seminar (rather than considering each standards independently)
- Creating a Behavior Plan for students whose disability affects their behavior in order to distinguish between manifestations of their disability that necessitate intervention from their case manager and/or service provider(s) vs. infractions that merit assessment of discipline points in line with general education students.

For data collection, see the above descriptions for at-risk reporting, cuspies, and progress towards goal data collection, all of which help inform teachers, parents, and administration of student progress within and across each term.

STAFFING

As mentioned above, the students meet with their case manager / teacher during their structured flex period on a daily basis. This is also the time when they meet with ancillary service providers, ensuring that they miss a minimal amount of content class time to receive services. Explore Academy will contract with an external company for these services. As described above, there will be a schedule set for each student with the appropriate service providers coming to campus to meet with students in meeting their service hour needs.

4) EXPLAIN HOW YOU WILL MEET THE NEEDS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER (ELL) STUDENTS, INCLUDING
   A) METHODS FOR IDENTIFYING ELL STUDENTS (AND AVOIDING MISIDENTIFICATION);
   B) SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS, PRACTICES, AND STRATEGIES THE SCHOOL WILL EMPLOY TO ENSURE ACADEMIC SUCCESS AND EQUITABLE ACCESS TO THE CORE ACADEMIC PROGRAM FOR THESE STUDENTS;
   C) PLANS FOR MONITORING AND EVALUATING THE PROGRESS AND SUCCESS OF ELL STUDENTS, INCLUDING EXITING STUDENTS FROM ELL SERVICES;
   D) PLANS FOR PROVIDING QUALIFIED STAFFING, INCLUDING EXTERNAL SERVICE PROVIDERS AS APPLICABLE, FOR ELL STUDENTS.

ELL STUDENTS - IDENTIFYING

To identify ELL students, Explore Academy uses several methods that, together, promote early identification. First, records are requested from students' previous schools that include not only academic and assessment records, but also program records to include special services such as English language services. When WIDA - ACCESS scores are provided for a student, the school identifies them as an ELL and proceeds with services (see below).

The second method used for identification is contained with the school's registration form that specifically asks about home language and language usage as it relates to the student and their family. When a student's answers reveal a language other than English that is used by the student or their immediate family, the school identifies the student as a potential ELL and proceeds to placement testing and screening for ELL status.

Lastly, in NM, Explore Academy use the state education department's student database to perform queries on any student for whom it cannot acquire previous education records or for whom it is unsure of language usage based on enrollment paperwork. This allows the school to see student's previous program qualification as well as previous test scores, including ACCESS scores, if any.

Once a potential or confirmed ELL is identified, the school has several systems in place to meet their language and academic needs within the curriculum. First, the student is placed in a structured flex with an ESL-qualified teacher who is their case manager, with the focus of the flex period being English language development, academic support, and sheltered content material instruction. The teacher also adapts materials from the student's seminars to ensure they are receiving fair and equal access to content while also improving their academic English language skills. This approach is meant to further both grade-level content knowledge acquisition as well as foster progress in the English proficiency of the student.

Explore Academy also provides classroom and assessment supports for ELLs such as word-to-word dictionary use, extended time for work and testing, adapted reading materials, scribes and text-to-speech services, and sheltered content instruction that includes vocabulary in advance, outlines, printed versions of lectures and notes, and preview of class material to allow time to work through the English used in the materials.

To help students progress exit the ELL program, Explore Academy uses the ACCESS score reports as well as WIDA standards to monitor and support students as they improve their language skills. The goal for all ELL students is to score a level higher than they did the year before until reaching a 5 and qualifying for program exit. Their ELL case manager helps set yearly goals for each ELL and assesses them during their structured flex period to track academic data as it pertains to their progress in both their content classes and their language development. The data is monitored daily as students meet with their ELL case manager during their structured flex, and also collected both weekly from the student's five seminar teachers as well monthly through exit exam scores and teacher feedback.

It is crucial that Explore Academy employs at least one teacher who is highly qualified to work with ELLs (TESL endorsement) and has experience with language acquisition and development in a 6-12 setting in order to provide an environment that is conducive to not only grade-level academic success, but also to improving English language skills until reaching proficiency on par with native English speakers. If the enrollment of the Nevada campus includes a large percentage of ELLs, an ELL director can be added to the staff to serve as the case manager for all ELL students and coordinate services with teachers.

5) EXPLAIN HOW YOU WILL IDENTIFY AND MEET THE LEARNING NEEDS OF STUDENTS WHO ARE PERFORMING BELOW GRADE LEVEL AND MONITOR THEIR PROGRESS. SPECIFY THE PROGRAMS, STRATEGIES, AND SUPPORTS YOU WILL PROVIDE FOR THESE STUDENTS.

The first method used to identify and support students who are performing below grade level in one or more areas is the use of placement tests. Explore Academy has developed tests that allow content teachers to view current student levels so that incoming students are placed in the correct seminars, ensuring that the coursework corresponds to the current content knowledge of the students. It is impossible to have a level playing field when students are coming from a wide variety of educational backgrounds, and thus placement tests allow the school to schedule students into seminars that best match their current levels of performance. With Explore Academy's seminar structure, with smaller modules, there is greater specificity in correct skill placement vs. a traditional semester.

Once placed, students who are performing below grade level work to fill in the learning gaps from previous years. If there is a significant gap between where a student is performing and their current grade level, they are scheduled into supplemental seminars during flex periods that help to support them. For example, if a student enters three years behind in reading, they will be scheduled for grade-level language arts as well as a structured flex that focuses on reading skills. This allows the student to proceed with content instruction in their ELA seminar while also receiving tutoring and support in an area where they are showing significant learning gaps. The same situation often occurs in math, so students are placed in seminars that meet them where they are and allow them to build a solid content foundation before moving on to grade-level seminars for which they are not fully prepared.

As mentioned above, the school also monitor students using the At-Risk Report to identify and intervene early and often when students are not meeting learning goals in their seminars. When a student fails a seminar or is struggling during a term, they are automatically scheduled to structured flex and in-turn receive individual tutoring and instruction, helping to eliminate the learning gaps and bring them closer to grade-level performance levels in areas where they are weak.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT ⊕

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1) WHAT ARE YOUR ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE GOALS FOR ALL STUDENTS IN EACH OF THE FIRST THREE YEARS OF OPERATION? STATE GOALS CLEARLY IN TERMS OF THE MEASURES OR ASSESSMENTS YOU PLAN TO USE. FOR EACH ACADEMIC GOAL, PROVIDE STATE OR NEIGHBORHOOD STUDENT PERFORMANCE DATA THAT SUPPORT THE GOALS YOU HAVE CHOSEN.

GOAL 1: STUDENT SUCCESS

At the end of each academic term, Explore Academy students will take a summative exit exam which will determine their final measure of proficiency (and credit-determining assessment). Students must show proficiency (80-89%) or mastery (90-100%) on *every* standard within a given seminar to earn credit for that seminar. Because exit exams are required to pass seminars, passing the exit exam is synonymous with passing the seminar.

The following metrics illustrate Explore Academy's goals for its first three academic years:

YEAR 1: 80% pass rate across all seminars
YEAR 2: 82% pass rate across all seminars
YEAR 3: 84% pass rate across all seminars

GOAL 2: STUDENT ATTENDANCE

With terms spanning twenty-two (22) days for grades 8-12 and forty-four (44) days for grades 6-7, and with an emphasis on mastery of standards, student attendance becomes crucial in determining academic success. As such, it will Explore Academy's goal that student attendance rates increase over its first three years:

YEAR 1: 80% average attendance rate across all students

YEAR 2: 82% average attendance rate across all students
YEAR 3: 84% average attendance rate across all students

GOAL 3: STUDENT RETENTION

With the uniqueness of Explore Academy's model and its emphasis in building on academic skill and content mastery over time, there is a natural focus on retaining students from year to year. Explore Academy defines student retention as the percentage of students who were present at the conclusion of the previous academic year who choose to return for the following academic year. As such, Explore Academy's goal for retaining students each year is:

YEAR 1: 80% student retention rate
YEAR 2: 85% student retention rate
YEAR 3: 90% student retention rate

GOAL 4: STUDENT SATISFACTION

At the conclusion of each academic term, students reflect on the previous term with a specific focus on the teacher's performance. Survey questions include:

- The flavor (theme) of the seminar was used everyday and throughout the instruction of the seminar.
- The teacher demonstrated creativity in presenting and explaining concepts covered in the class.
- The theme/flavor of the seminar kept me interested and made learning the content more enjoyable.
- I know what I should be working on in class.
- New material is connected to material previously covered
- My teacher checks to see if I understand.
- When I ask for help, my teacher is willing to help me.
- My teacher wants me to explain my answers.
- My teacher helps me to understand the material.
- My teacher wants me to try to correct my mistakes.

- My teacher periodically reviews what we are learning.
- My teacher expects me to do my best.
- My teacher cares about me.
- My teacher encourages students to actively participate in the class.
- My teacher is engaging and keeps students interested in the class.
- My teacher is respectful to students in class.
- My teacher is organized in his or her instruction.
- My teacher uses the entire class period for effective instructional and learning activities.
- The frontloading practices used by the teacher align with the expectations set forth.

Qualitative responses are presented along a Likert Scale and associate with a score range of 1 to 5. From this data, it is one of Explore Academy's goals that the average response to *all* survey questions administered within a full academic year are as follows:

YEAR 1: Average score of 4.0 out of 5.0
YEAR 2: Average score of 4.1 out of 5.0
YEAR 3: Average score of 4.2 out of 5.0

GOAL 5: AT-RISK MOBILITY

One particular area of focus with Explore Academy's model is the work performed to elevate students to higher levels of academic success. As such, on an annual basis, the school's teaching staff will provide a scoring of students based on a series of at-risk criteria. These students, also known as "cuspies" given their fragility in climbing or falling academically, are a focus of teachers and administration under the Explore Learning model. Within the at-risk scoring range, students fall into categories from 1 to 5 based on averages of teacher scoring. Students residing in tiers 1 to 3 are considered "at-risk", with tier 1 representing severely at-risk.

It is the goal that, in identifying and providing intervention efforts with these students, Explore Academy elevates students to higher tiers during the course of their enrollment. Thus, this goal measures upward mobility of at-risk students:

YEAR 1: 25% of students identified in either tiers 2 or 3 show upward mobility
YEAR 2: 30% of students identified in either tiers 2 or 3 show upward mobility
YEAR 3: 35% of students identified in either tiers 2 or 3 show upward mobility

GOAL 6: SBAC PERFORMANCE - ENGLISH

Using data from state standardized tests provides valuable insight into the success of the Explore Learning model and its emphasis on proficiency in all content standards. To measure this in grades 6-8, Explore Academy will use student achievement data on the SBAC English Language Arts test. Based on current trends, Nevada students in grades 6-8 are achieving lower proficiency rates on the SBAC ELA test than other states in the consortium. Additionally, the trend over the

last three years of data show that student proficiency rates remain the same or drop each year between grade 6 and grade 8. Explore Academy has set ELA proficiency goals on the SBAC that are based on student growth on the SBAC as determined by their score increase each year. The achievement levels and score bands can be found here.

    YEAR 1: baseline year, all student scores will be collected
    YEAR 2: 70% of students make one year's growth on the SBAC
    YEAR 3: 75% of students make one year's growth on the SBAC

GOAL 7: SBAC PERFORMANCE - MATH

In addition to ELA performance on SBAC, we will focus efforts on math achievement as well. Nevada student proficiency rates on the math exam drop dramatically between grades 6 and 8. By grade 8, only 18% of students score proficient on the exam. As a school that focuses heavily on feedback, remediation, and proficiency, we hope to have greater academic gains in math on the SBAC. The trend in math scores shows a large drop in proficiency throughout middle school grades, so we are setting our goals based on growth on the SBAC to demonstrate that students are making academic progress and closing learning gaps even if they are not yet scoring at proficient for their grade level in math. The achievement levels and score bands can be found here.

    YEAR 1: baseline year, all student scores will be collected
    YEAR 2: 50% of students make one year's growth on the SBAC
    YEAR 3: 55% of students make one year's growth on the SBAC

2) WHAT FORMATIVE AND OTHER ASSESSMENTS (AND OTHER METHODS, IF ANY) WILL YOU USE TO TRACK STUDENT AND SCHOOL-LEVEL PROGRESS? EXPLAIN HOW THESE ASSESSMENTS ALIGN WITH THE SCHOOL'S CURRICULUM, PERFORMANCE GOALS, AND STATE STANDARDS.

The continual cycle of formative and summative assessment at Explore Academy allows for constant progress monitoring and creates a feedback mechanism to inform instruction, provide specific remediation, and to continuously improve the school's instructional practice. The system of monitoring, data collection, and data analysis consists of several components: formative classroom assessments, exit exams, and state test performance, all of which invite their own in-depth data analysis.

Because Explore Academy is standards-driven, each evaluation of student learning, be it formative or summative, is tethered to a measure of student learning for a specific state standard. As such, the school's academic model focuses on measuring the learning of standards rather the completion of work or tasks specific to standards.

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

Explore Academy's academic model utilizes formative assessment and continuous student feedback as the mechanism through which learning and improved learning practices take place. In each seminar, student progress is monitored constantly to both provide them with feedback for improvement and facilitation of learning. This monitoring also serves to track each student's progress on the required standards for that seminar throughout the academic term so that interventions can be implemented at any point the teacher deems appropriate.

Being that each seminar is assigned specific required state standards to which the teacher and students are bound, the assessment and monitoring that occurs on a daily basis provides the students, parents, and teachers with a continually updated measure of how each student is performing in each standard. This information is used to identify students who are at-risk (Explore Academy "cuspies"), students who are not enrolled in the proper class for their proficiency level, and students who are on track to demonstrate proficiency in the seminar's standards.

The format of formative assessment will vary throughout each seminar and within each flavor of each seminar, but may include general practice, practice assessments, projects, presentations, oral reporting, debate, and written work in a variety of formats to name but a sample. The teacher is left with the discretion to utilize the formats of assessments they feel is most appropriate to the student and the seminar in general, although it is stipulated that the students are provided short formal practice exams on a weekly basis to provide practice and exposure to what the exit exam will require of them at the conclusion of the term.

Within the school's gradebook, which is shared with parents and students through a parent / student portal, the most recent measure of each student's progress on each standard is shown. While daily work and assignment grades are shown within the instructional platform (Google Classroom), the teacher gradebook simply illustrates the most recent, comprehensive measure taken of each standard, thus providing parents and students with the most recent data available on their student's learning progress for each standard within the class.

These standards grades change on a weekly basis so as parents and students review grades as they see fit, they will see new grades for each standard based on the most recent measure taken by the teacher.

AT-RISK

At the conclusion of each week, all students will be evaluated by their teachers, based on the above formative evaluations, to present students and parents with a progress report in determining whether the student is on-pace, based on the data and the teacher's monitoring of student progress, to predictably pass the seminar in the end. From this data, parents receive a weekly report which provides this basic report on student progress and, if the student is failing to progress as the teacher would prefer ("at-risk"), the causal factors leading to that failed progress are identified for parents (attendance, lack of engagement in class, lack of effort in assigned work, poor study habits, etc.).

EXIT EXAMS

Exit exams serve as the summative, credit-determining measure of proficiency for each seminar. Since this occurs every quarter (two months) for grades 6 -7 and every term (one month) for grades 8-12, there are several opportunities for the staff and school leadership to collect progress data and focus efforts on interventions when there is not adequate progress being made.

Exit exams measure proficiency (and mastery) for each academic standard, and thus align specifically with the academic standards required by the state. Students must demonstrate proficiency (80% or above) for each academic standard for the seminar in question in order to earn credit for that seminar. Proficiency on standards is only measured on the exit exams with all other evaluations (see above) functioning as formative for the purposes of feedback. As such, students who graduate from Explore Academy will have been deemed proficient in every academic standard.

Exit exams incorporate questions from Bloom's Taxonomy levels, with lower-level seminars utilizing Bloom's levels 1 to 3 and higher-level seminars incorporating Bloom's levels 4, 5, etc., depending on the seminar level. Every exit will be broken into two sections, with the half assessing the lower-level Bloom's skills common across all flavors of a particular seminar. The other half, assessing higher order Bloom's skills will be specific to the flavor in question.

Exit exam scores will be reviewed each month by teachers. Teachers are required to reflect each month on a variety of metrics, one of which will include pass rates for each different seminar they taught during that time.

3) EXPLAIN HOW YOU WILL COLLECT AND ANALYZE STUDENT ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT DATA, USE THE DATA TO REFINE AND IMPROVE INSTRUCTION, AND REPORT THE DATA TO THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY. IDENTIFY THE PERSON(S), POSITION(S), AND/OR ENTITIES THAT WILL BE RESPONSIBLE AND INVOLVED IN THE COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS OF ASSESSMENT DATA.

As mentioned in the school model section, Explore Academy is based heavily on the collection of, analysis of, and response to student and school data. This data collections happens at several levels: ongoing performance monitoring in classrooms, proficiency data from every term, seminar effectiveness evaluated each term and annually, and annual state assessment data.

Student achievement data is collected throughout each term on a continual basis in each seminar, providing frequent reports to students, parents, and administration on each student's progress in each standard. The generation of this data lies with each teacher as they evaluate their students' learning and report it through the student information system, through Google Classroom, and through the progress monitoring systems including the At-Risk Report. Teachers use this data within their seminars to adjust instruction and materials to meet each student's individual needs along with providing students with feedback and remediation that facilitates their learning. The teachers are also in direct communication with parents, keeping families in the loop regarding student progress or lack thereof.

At the end of each 22-day term in grades 8-12 or the end of each 44-day quarter for grades 6-7, achievement is evaluated through the students' scores on the exit exams. Since exit exams are standards-based and contain common questions across all flavors of any particular seminar, the student performance results allow for data analysis related to specific standards, questions, and flavors. This data is initially collected by teachers as they administer and grade the exit exams. As schoolwide data comes in, ELN staff will evaluate the data and provide reports to the school leader that outline areas of strength and weakness. These reports also contain the list of students who failed a seminar and require a structured flex during the upcoming term, students who failed multiple seminars, overall exit exam data (trends, averages, and success rates,etc.), and progress towards goals reports for students with special needs. At the end of each school year, these reports are viewed by each department, with the help of the ELN staff, in order to review exit exam questions for quality control (too easy or hard, mistakes, confusing, two correct answers, etc.) so that exit exams are improved across the board to better indicate student performance and proficiency on state standards.

In addition to student data that is analyzed to assess student progress, ELN will also provide reports that are focused on curricular and instructional improvement and reflection. This includes the analysis and reporting of student survey data at the end of each term. ELN uses the survey data to create reports for each teacher as well as for the school leader to consider instruction from a global perspective. This includes break down of flavors that showed uncharacteristic success or struggles in relation to other flavors of the same seminar and student feedback on the efficacy and quality of the seminars from that term. These reports allow the school leader to lead the staff in reflective discussion about what is working and what is not in each of their seminars. These surveys are then compiled at the end of each school year so that teachers can make annual adjustments to their curricula based on student data and engagement.

The reports from ELN will allow the school leader to work with staff to intervene with students who are showing a lack of progress, to adjust seminars or exit exams that are ineffective or otherwise not successful, and to collaborate and share best practices that have resulted in student success. The collaboration and content-specific data analysis ensures that the focus of all instruction is student-centered and data-driven across the entire curriculum and teaching staff.

The last area of data analysis that is vital for determining whether there is significant student achievement is student performance on the annual state testing. For grades 6-8, this will be the SBAC exam given each spring. For grades 9-11, Explore Academy plans to use the available SBAC interim assessment, if possible, to give annual scores that align with the middle school grades. The ACT will also be used for juniors. These exams allow ELN and the school to measure student progress from the same point across each year, leading to growth and proficiency analysis. The results of this data analysis, provided by ELN staff within one month of the score release date, will allow the school leader and ELN staff to discuss next steps and interventions that are necessary for better student achievement. The school leader will then convey this data and improvement strategies with the staff and, collectively, the whole school staff will decide on implementation timelines and tasks to ensure that the student achievement gaps or shortcomings will be addressed going into the next academic school year.

In order to report school data and progress to the school community, the school will publish a newsletter weekly that outlines school activities, lunch menu, current flavors being taught, achievement data, upcoming test administrations, etc. This newsletter is delivered via email to all members of the Explore Academy distribution list as well as kept in pdf format on the website for download and viewing. The website is also used for posting of special announcements related not only to events and school business, but also to student highlights, academic successes, and achievement data. This can even include links to other entities that praise or recognize the school for its student success, as we have experienced at the New Mexico campus and anticipate achieving in Nevada as well. Social media platforms are also vehicles through which achievement data and school progress is shared with the community.

4) EXPLAIN THE TRAINING AND SUPPORT THAT SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND TEACHERS WILL RECEIVE IN ANALYZING, INTERPRETING, AND USING PERFORMANCE DATA TO IMPROVE STUDENT LEARNING.

ELN provides the school leader and the staff of Explore Academy with a significant collection of data on a monthly basis. In order to make this data the most beneficial and usable, there are several ways ELN will train both the school leader and staff to familiarize them with the types of data they will receive as well as how they can be implemented to drive school operations and instructional improvements.

The school leader, as an ELN employee, will be highly trained in all aspects of the Explore Learning model. The reports that are provided to the school leader monthly will include exit exam data, seminar pass rate, student failure list, student seminar surveys, cuspy progress, special education student progress toward goals, and at-risk student progress reports. The school leader will communicate directly with the ELN staff to full discuss and analyze the data for the month as well as ELN staff's recommendations for how to address the data with the staff.

Teachers will be trained (by ELN staff) on the types of data that will be used, both data that must be collected by them on a regular basis as well as data that will be imparted on them through ELN reports each month and at the end of the year. The teacher training that takes place before the school year begins includes grading policies, seminar standard breakdown, scope and sequence of the content they are teaching from 6-12, exit exam structure and examples, cuspy and at-risk processes and interventions, Google Classroom and student information system tutorials, etc. This allows teachers to have a solid grasp on what will be expected from them throughout the year. This then carries into the school year where every Friday, staff gather for a meeting during which they are given specific professional development to deepen their knowledge of the model, enhance their instructional effectiveness, and increase their comfort level when working in a standards-based and data driven system. These trainings are both digital through presentations and in person by the school leader and ELN staff. At the culmination of each term, staff will have two professional development days (students will be

off) where further discussions, analysis, trainings, and professional development can take place, depending the specific need.

5) DESCRIBE THE CORRECTIVE ACTIONS YOU WILL TAKE IF THE SCHOOL(S) FALLS SHORT OF STUDENT ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT EXPECTATIONS OR GOALS AT THE SCHOOL-WIDE, CLASSROOM, OR INDIVIDUAL STUDENT LEVEL. EXPLAIN WHAT WOULD TRIGGER SUCH CORRECTIVE ACTIONS AND WHO WOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTING THEM.

Corrective action will be data-driven and will be assessed at the conclusion of each academic term (every twenty-two school days). As exit exam scores (and midterm scores for grades 6 and 7) are compiled at the end of each term, ELN, in conjunction with the school leader, will perform data analysis to determine the need for corrective action. There are three components in the Explore Academy corrective action plan: remediation, credit recovery, and seminar evaluation.

REMEDIATION

Explore Academy will promote the notion that learning and comprehension can *always* be improved, and that these elements are *continuous processes* rather than finite objectives. Every student has areas in which he or she is challenged, and thus remediation emerges through a continuous, personal reflection of learning rather than a consequence of failure. This facet is central to the Explore Academy philosophy.

The school's schedule structure as previously described allows for built-in remediation time during the course of every school day within the academic flex periods. This remediation mechanism will be implemented immediately, as it will be part of the school day, so as to allow students to use the time as needed for any academic purpose, including but not limited to tutoring, homework / frontloading, enrichment, study sessions, make-up work, extended teaching time, extended work time (projects, labs), parents-teacher conferences, etc. Remediation will be part of the *daily instructional process.*

Given that the academic flex periods are built into each student's daily schedule (one which will be partially used for lunch), a student could potentially devote one flex period to each class within the scope of a full five-day week. Additionally, this time can help fulfill any additional need or modification for special education or ESL/ELL students, including extra instructional explanation, time in the school's resource room, extra work time, student-teacher review, etc.

Tutoring can be assigned at any point within the scope of an academic term by a student's current teacher as well as through assignment to structured flex periods that serve as study hall periods. Assignments and objectives during these flex periods will be specific, with the teacher and administration utilizing constant communication with the flex tutoring staff to inform all parties as to the precise area(s) in which the student shall receive additional assistance.

Structured flex periods with dedicated tutoring time can be assigned on a monthly basis (based on failing a seminar in the previous term), the At-Risk Report, and students who self-select to attend the tutoring sessions. For those students overseen by a case manager, either those under a 504/IEP or those identified as ESL/ELL, tutoring may be assigned on an individual basis based on the recommendation of the case manager. In the Explore Academy system, one with greater focus on student comprehension, these corrective measures occur in a timely and thus more effective manner.

Such preliminary corrective actions could additionally include testing to determine student learning styles (and thus suitable seminar-versions with a better potential fit), recommendation for alternate seminar-versions using different strategies, lessons on better study habits, etc. With the inclusion of the academic flex period, a specified time for remediation can take place each day, and thus such measures become more proactive than reactive in nature. The specific mechanism of remediation, if required, will be considered on an individual basis for each student and will be implemented at the discretion of the counselors.

CREDIT RECOVERY

Based on the data analysis performed at the conclusion of each academic term, those students who fail a seminar will be identified by ELN in collaboration with the school's counseling staff. Within the first week at the beginning of the new academic term, counselors will meet with each student in his or her academic flex time to reflect on the previous term and determine a plan in rectifying the issue(s) at hand and resolving the issue of lost credit. This process is in addition to assigning the student to a structured flex period to assist them with the next term's coursework.

Explore Academy's schedule provides a convenient path toward credit recovery, having minimal negative impact on the student. The Explore Academy graduation requirements builds in twenty credits which can be used for credit recovery. The proposed graduation requirements mandate 220 total seminar credits out of a possible 240 seminars (seminars taken over 7 years, grades 6-12). This difference of twenty (20) seminars allows students a buffer in which credit recovery can easily occur without alteration of their seven-year academic plan. At the time of meeting with the student, the counselor will

discuss this credit recovery option, examine future seminar offerings that would fulfill the missed credit, and assist in the student in registering for a future version of the seminar in question.

A second option available to students is to register for a sixth seminar in a future academic term, thereby making up for lost credit. This allowance is made possible by the two academic flex periods built into each student's schedule, one of which can be "dropped" and replaced by a seminar within a future academic term. A student in such a scenario would take six (6) seminars within the academic term instead of the standard five. This is the only circumstance in which students will be allowed to take more than five (5) seminars per academic term. Because this option may put undue workload and stress on the student, by both adding an additional class *and* removing academic assistance time from the daily schedule, it will be considered as a second option to the method stated above.

At the conclusion of these meetings, the counselor will provide a brief report certifying that plans for corrective action have been implemented.

SEMINAR EVALUATION

At the conclusion of each term and at the end of each year, each seminar flavor will be analyzed for instructional patterns that raise concern, specifically low exit exam scores within a seminar flavor or across a seminar itself. Such an instance will dictate a required corrective action on the part of ELN and the school leader in partnership with the content lead(s) and department head for the content in question.

Low exit exam scores or high failure rate *within a given seminar flavor* would be indicative of an ineffective flavor, the specific causal factors of which may include its academic approach, instructional theme, or other general academic practices. The ineffectiveness may also have instructor-related causation, relating to the instructor him/herself or a specific component of that instructor's educational approach, be it lecturing, classroom management, etc.

Low scores on exit exams seen across *all flavors* of a given seminar would indicate an issue with the overall instruction of the seminar, perhaps including the exit exam itself as a common component is shared by all flavors of a given seminar. If such patterns come to exist, the school leader and ELN staff will work with the instructors to help identify and evaluate in what area(s) the instructional process has become ineffective. Student evaluation surveys, performed at the conclusion of each seminar, will provide additional insight into this process. If such a problem persists in subsequent academic sessions, administrative corrective action will be taken to change the offerings for the flavors for the seminar(s) in question. This process may include both student and parent participation.

It is expected that some flavors will naturally be more popular and more successful than others, and the continuous evaluation of the flavor offerings will be an ongoing process in the school's evolution and will be a significant component in the work of the school's administrative and instructional staff. This element of the Explore Academy model allows its curriculum to change and remain current within its student population. Through a continuous analysis over which seminars are providing greatest student success, the school can easily adapt to reinvent / replace those seminars which struggle to educate students. This continuous evolution is but one benefit of the Explore Academy philosophy, allowing the curriculum to truly evolve and continually keep up with its changing student population.

PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

Explore Academy's short-course (44-day for grades 6-7, 22-day for grades 8-12) model of instruction has an inherent safeguard against long-term failure. With shorter, more precise measurements inherently built into and at the end of each course, teachers and parents will receive immediate feedback on where students are failing to meet proficiency. This allows for more efficient corrective action against student failure, since the areas of student failure can be more specifically determined and thus more accurately remedied. This, of course, doesn't include the feedback provided on a weekly basis prior to the conclusion of each term.

The ease with which students can repeat failed seminars (instead of failed *semesters*) will aid in allowing students to make up credit, and thus deter the high risk of student drop-out that is associated with failed classes under the semester-based system. The academic flex period additionally aids in the prevention of student failure as it provides a time specifically devoted toward remediation.

EFFECTIVENESS

To monitor the success of the programs described of, the ELN staff and school leader will work closely with the school's counselors to monitor students currently in some phase of remediation. It is one of the goals of Explore Academy to ensure that students who are identified as "cuspies" make positive gains to move off the cuspy list in the next academic year, thus the remediation efforts described above will continuously work toward that end. Such remediation efforts will be considered effective if they meet this goal.

In the area of credit recovery, the mechanisms described above will work to prevent students from falling behind in credits. In this area, the goal is not to specifically deter failure, but deter chronic failure. Using the academic counseling program mentioned above, counselors will work with students to implement a plan after each failed seminar to ensure that the path toward credit recovery will be timely, efficient, and effective. To measure the effectiveness of this goal, student records will be assessed by counselors each year to reanalyze student graduation progress. This annual assessment will assist counselors in considering a secondary level of corrective action, such as the scheduling of six seminars within a given academic term (mentioned above).

The seminar effectiveness component described above represents a critical component in the Explore Academy curriculum for it serves to continuously drive instructional innovation based on student feedback. To this end, the goal of the school (as mentioned above) is to see both an increase in overall student satisfaction and instructional effectiveness with the learning options available each academic year. As corrective measures are employed, as needed for individual seminars, the success of such mechanisms will be based on student satisfaction levels and instructional effectiveness for that seminar in subsequent years.

FURTHER CORRECTIVE ACTION

In the event that Explore Academy requires further corrective action, all matters of instruction are open for reanalysis, including, but not limited to (a) instructional methodologies within *all* of the school's seminars, (b) exit exams and the required skills and content included therein, (c) the daily schedule, including daily and annual instructional hours, (d) flex periods, their utilization, and effectiveness in tutoring and overall remediation and (e) the instructional staff (teachers) including but not limited to teaching assignments, special education and ELL case management, etc.

SCHOOL-WIDE CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

Based on an evaluation of progress toward the school's goals as described above, ELN staff will determine the specific interventions required to adjust the school's operation in order to make adequate progress in the specified focus areas. Be it academic (pass rates, e.g.) or administrative (retention rates, e.g.), ELN staff will determine both the need for and extent of required adjustments. While the goals stated above are annual measures, if the ELN staff perceive a lack of progress toward any of the goals at any throughout the year, intervention may take place.

This investigation will include appropriate parties related to the goal(s) in question, including the school leader, counselors, special education / ELL case managers, and teachers. Working together, ELN and the appropriate staff will pinpoint the perceived causal factors related to the lack of progress and will devise a strategy to rectify the issue, implementing changes as soon as the following term or as late as the following school year. Progress monitoring of the goals in question will take place within a shorter timeframe (as opposed to the annual measure of each goal) so as to measure the level of success of the applied intervention. As deemed necessary, additional adjustments may result depending on the need for further corrective action.

6) DESCRIBE THE NETWORK ORGANIZATION'S (CMO, EMO OR OTHER ENTITY THAT SUPPORTS AND OVERSEES THE SCHOOLS IN THE NETWORK) PLANS TO MONITOR PERFORMANCE OF THE PORTFOLIO AS A WHOLE. WHAT ACTIONS WILL YOU TAKE IF THE NETWORK AS A WHOLE FAILS TO MEET GOALS?

In the same way ELN and site administration monitors the teachers and students for success and progress toward academic goals, ELN will also monitor itself to assess performance in relation to site-specific management of Explore Academy. There are three main areas of feedback and data that allow this to happen: (a) board feedback, (b) school leader feedback, and (c) teacher feedback.

The feedback from the local school board will be gathered from its monthly meetings as well as comprehensive survey data collected on a quarterly basis. This will allow the ELN staff to address issues that are presented by the school board and adjust the management services accordingly when issues arise. If ELN is failing to meet the board's expectations for the management agreement related to services provided, the Director of Operations and the CEO of ELN will meet directly with the board to resolve the issues and put a plan in place that will rectify any lack of progress toward overall school goals.

The school leader, being an ELN staff member, serves as the most important liaison for the school and the ELN staff. The leader will report back to ELN staff about school issues and concerns weekly to ensure that there is open communication and thus conflict resolution and problem solving strategies. This feedback will include PTO meeting minutes, weekly staff meeting minutes, and any curricular or operational issues that presented themselves. If the school leader reports issues that indicate that the school overall is not meeting its goals, or that the ELN team is not managing the site in a way that is leading

to success, the ELN team will meet directly with the school leader and the staff to discuss the issues and implement an improvement plan to put the school back on a path of success.

The teacher feedback at Explore Academy is vital in ELN's maintenance of a quality school culture and academic structure. Each term, teachers provide in depth feedback during term break days that dives deeper into school performance and success as well as staff engagement and morale on the job. The ELN staff will also send an anonymous survey to all staff every month during term break to get an overall feel for the school's climate as well as flush out any discontent or lack of progress that is being noticed by the teachers. This survey will also inquire as to the performance of the school leader (considering they are an ELN employee).

ELN strives for teachers to enjoy their working environments and to feel they are supported, both by ELN staff and by their leader. Collecting monthly data allows ELN to monitor this and to intervene quickly when there are issues presenting themselves, regardless of whether they are curricular-, performance-, or culture-related. As with other monitoring methods, ELN intends to implement improvement plans and increase support if there comes a time when the ELN's performance is not facilitating successful implementation of the school model at Explore Academy or if the school is otherwise not meeting its goals, whether academic or operational.

FOUNDING TEAM, NETWORK ORGANIZATION, SCHOOL GOVERNING BOARD, AND LEGAL STATUS Ⓐ

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1) PROVIDE THE NAME OF EACH MEMBER OF YOUR FOUNDING LEADERSHIP TEAM AND INDICATE WHICH TEAM MEMBERS ARE EMPLOYED BY OR ARE BOARD MEMBERS OF THE NETWORK ORGANIZATION. PROVIDE A SHORT SUMMARY OF EACH FOUNDING TEAM MEMBER'S RELEVANT QUALIFICATIONS FOR LAUNCHING AN ACHIEVEMENT SCHOOL AND A DESCRIPTION OF HIS OR HER POSITION, ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES WITH THE PROPOSED SCHOOL. THIS SHOULD INCLUDE ANY IDENTIFIED GOVERNING BOARD MEMBERS OF THE PROPOSED SCHOOL.

Explore Academy will be founded by the Explore Learning Network, a non-profit corporation. That organization is composed of the following members / employees:

- Justin Baiardo - Board Chair / Executive Director
- Elizabeth Wheelock - Board Member
- Leticia Fraga - Board Member
- Elisha Varela - Director of Operations (employee) / Instructional Lead - English
- Felicia Boatman - Instructional Lead - Math
- Kimberly Dimiceli-Blanton - Head Instructional Lead - Social Studies
- Natalie Ballew - Instructional Lead - Science

Justin Baiardo is the developer of the Explore Academy model and the founder of the inaugural Explore Academy campus in Albuquerque, NM. Mr. Baiardo is an educational administrator as well as a National Board certified educator with over ten years' experience. His qualifications include expertise in the Explore Academy model as well as extensive experience in the launch and operations of an independent, state-authorized charter school. As the Executive Director, Mr. Baiardo will manage the operations of the Explore Learning Network, including the schools which it supports. In this capacity he will function as a superintendent over a collective of Explore Academy campuses.

Elizabeth Wheelock is an English teacher, currently the head of English instruction at Explore Academy's current campus in Albuquerque, NM. Ms. Wheelock has extensive educational experience and will provide valuable academic insight in managing the educational components of all Explore Academy campuses.

Leticia Fraga is a member of the founding team of the inaugural Explore Academy campus in Albuquerque, NM. As a teacher, department head, and educational administrator within the Explore Academy model, she has experience in launching and managing the operations of a startup charter school.

Elisha Varela is a member of the founding team of the inaugural Explore Academy campus in Albuquerque, NM. Working both in the classroom as an English teacher and in various administrative positions, including curriculum and instruction, assessment, data management, and bilingual education, Ms. Varela will directly oversee the operations of all Explore Academy sites as well as the expanding team of the ELN as it seeks to meet the needs of its expanding network. She will work closely with the ELN staff as well as with the school leaders at each Explore Academy site.

Felicia Boatman, Kim Dimiceli-Blanton, and Natalie Ballew are all content-area experts and have extensive experience within the Explore Academy system as both teachers and instructional leaders within their respective content areas. As master teachers and members of the founding team of Explore Academy (NM), they have compiled comprehensive experience in both the instructional methodology and the general administrative operations of the school. They have been

responsible for training highly effective cohorts of new teachers who have add to Explore Academy's staff as the school has grown and will continue to serve as the leader training staff for future Explore Academy teachers.

For the purposes of this application, Ms. Varela and Mr. Baiardo will be identified as the founding team for the ELN.

At the time of this writing, the Explore Learning founding team is still in the process of building a local school board. As the founding team continues to build connections in the community, it will continuously seek board members for the local board, focusing on the following characteristics/experience in board members: legal background, finance background, strong community connections, parents of future Explore students, and former or current educators. Positions on the local school board are open to members from a variety of backgrounds, and it is the intent of the founding team to form a board that is well-rounded in experience, knowledgeable of academic and business operations, and enthusiastic about Explore Academy and its success and community impact.

2) AS ATTACHMENT D, PROVIDE THE RESUME OF EACH MEMBER OF YOUR FOUNDING LEADERSHIP TEAM, INCLUDING ALL IDENTIFIED MEMBERS OF YOUR GOVERNING BOARD. FOR EACH TEAM MEMBER, LIST ANY FOR-PROFIT OR NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS OF WHICH HE OR SHE IS CURRENTLY A PRINCIPAL OR BOARD MEMBER. IF THE TEAM MEMBER IS NOT CURRENTLY THE PRINCIPAL OR BOARD MEMBER OF ANY ORGANIZATION, PLEASE INCLUDE A STATEMENT TO THAT EFFECT.   Attached.

3) EXPLAIN ANY SHARED OR CENTRALIZED SUPPORT SERVICES THE NETWORK ORGANIZATION WILL PROVIDE TO THE SCHOOL(S). DESCRIBE THE STRUCTURE, SPECIFIC SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED, THE COST OF THOSE SERVICES, AND SPECIFIC SERVICE GOALS. HOW WILL THE NETWORK ORGANIZATION MEASURE SUCCESSFUL DELIVERY OF THESE SERVICES?

The Explore Learning Network will provide services to both manage and support school-specific operations at each Explore Academy campus, including:

- **General Compliance Monitoring:** oversight of the school's general operations to ensure that the school(s) are meeting all applicable state and federal laws set forth. ELN will further work closely with both the school leadership (including its local board) and authorizer to ensure that the school and its board are acting in accordance will all policies and statutes while also maintaining the fidelity of the Explore Academy academic model
- **Teacher Development / Training:** teacher training will be provided to ensure teachers are prepared and supported as they enter the Explore Learning model. Training topics include seminar and inquiry-based instruction, teaching for depth of understanding, flavor-based teaching, implementation of technology in teaching, assessment strategies (formative and summative), professional development related to instructional practice, frontloading and flipped classroom instruction, developing quality assessments, standards-based grading, Bloom's Taxonomy
- **Data Management / Analysis**: in-depth data collection and analysis is a vital component of the model, and as such, the ELN will provide data to the school leader, staff, and board to provide feedback in the guidance of school operations. Academic data provided includes flavor effectiveness, delivery of state-based reporting, seminar pass rates and comparisons across flavors of each specific seminar, specific reporting for sub-groups (at-risk, special education, ELL, etc.), student survey data, remediation rates for students identified as at-risk from the previous term, management of student credit/records data (registrar data)
- **Staffing / Staff Support:** selection, contracting, and ongoing monitoring of school leader performance, instructional reflections from teachers based on monthly term summative data (student surveys, exit exam results), data-based instructional adjustments and development of interventions (site-specific / content-specific / teacher-specific) based on term data, teacher-specific support based on academic data and student survey results, identification and implementation of instructional measures based on at-risk students, continued professional development based on data-driven need, review of student credit data and credit standing (in conjunction with school counselor), gradebook setup and troubleshooting, exit exam scoring and standards weighing support
- **Curricular Setup / Management**: teacher flavor development and tiering within the curricular framework, guidance in composing course descriptions, formatting and design of course catalog, structuring of major seminars, managing vertical and horizontal alignment within the curriculum, exit exam creation/guidance/review/approval, credit analysis setup for new students, importing of term schedules (teacher and student), coordination of staffing plan with head administrator
- **Marketing**: parent and stakeholder presentations for student recruitment and community awareness, design of school recruitment material (mailers, flyers, brochures), meetings with stakeholders and community members regarding the school's mission and vision, social media and publication advertising

- **Special Education**: monitoring of school special education program operation and all compliance is vital, so management and oversight includes support for school special education personnel, random auditing of special education documents, monitoring of state and federal law compliance, monitoring of student progress towards goals as well as overall special education student achievement benchmarks
- **Business Operations**: management and oversight of the school's business operations, working in conjunction with the school's contracted licensed business manager to ensure that the school's business operations abide by all state laws and that the school's business prioritizations remain focused on student-centered learning, within the Explore Academy framework, while still maintaining financial solvency in its overall operations
- **Technology Management:** provide support to the local staff information technology official to assist with data management, academic data processing, and all state-reporting requirements.
- **Facilities:** provide assistance and support to the local school leader on matters related to facilities including but not limited to initial acquisition, financing, management, maintenance, etc.
- **Accountability**: providing data on a monthly basis in the areas of academics and finance to the local school leader and local school board to inform decisions regarding the school's operations. As mentioned above, this includes assistance with all state and authorizer-specific reporting requirements

ELN will charge each site a fee based on the level of services to be provided and within a margin that is appropriate to maintain the financial solvency of the school. By utilizing a shared support system, all schools under the ELN will benefit from services that are shared across multiple schools.

For the above services, ELN will charge between 5-15% of the school's annual budget, with the actual annual fee varying within that range depending on the size and needs, such as unexpected low or high enrollment, data-based interventions, etc., of the site in question. This fee will include the cost of the school leader which ELN will employ and assign to the school. For its initial year(s) of existence, the percentage will remain flexible within the above-specified range as the school comes into operation in order to prevent any undue burden on the school's operation in its early stages of operations. The percentage will then be negotiated with the local board once a baseline of services has been established and the school's data is analyzed to indicate more detailed management and oversight needs.

In evaluating its own performance and oversight in conjunction with the local school board, ELN will utilize data in the following areas to measure its overall effectiveness:
- **General fidelity of the academic model:** based on student and teacher feedback on a monthly basis, ELN will review data to ensure that the Explore Academy academic framework is being implemented with fidelity
- **General success of the academic model:** based on formative and summative measures within each academic term (at-risk reporting, exit exams result, student feedback surveys, etc.), ELN will measure the school's general level of academic health and overall academic success by evaluating not only basic student proficiency but the level of student growth exhibited by students across each academic term. Further, it will evaluate the school's progress toward each of its institutional goals
- **Review of the school leader**: on a semi-annual basis, review of teacher-provided data on the school leader's effectiveness in the areas of instructional leadership, communication, operational oversight, and professional development
- **Compliance monitoring:** as a general area of review, ELN will measure its effectiveness in overseeing school operations and compliance based on reports and feedback from the state (and its association subdivisions), the school's authorizer, and local school board
- **Stakeholder feedback**: based on feedback from and ongoing discussions with local stakeholders including the school administrative staff, teachers, students, parents, state / local officials, and other community members, ELN will evaluate its effective management of Explore Academy. ELN will provide external stakeholders (outside of teachers and students) feedback opportunities on a semi-annual basis to allow for the collection, analysis, and reflection of data concerning the school's overall operational health

5) WHAT IS YOUR ORGANIZATION'S GOVERNANCE PHILOSOPHY?

The Explore Learning Network is designed to help implement and support the Explore Learning model of education across multiple Explore Academy campuses. As an organization, its philosophy seeks to maintain a balance between academic and operational fidelity, and the freedom and independence of each standalone academic institution. While it will contract for management and support services for its schools, it will allow the local school board the ability to manage operations and compliance at a local level as well as to manage the effectiveness of ELN's management contract itself.

As a network, ELN operates at a mid-point between strict and loose in its operational structure. In the area of academics, the Network requires strict adherence to the Explore Learning academic framework, however within that framework it encourages the creative development of teacher-driven instruction (its flavors) for each of its seminars. In the area of academic accountability, specific portions of each seminar's exit exam will be common across seminars in the entire network, while a portion of each

exit exam will remain teacher-designed per the creative uniqueness of the seminar's flavor. In this sense, there is a balance between teacher and school autonomy, and the adherence to a core academic foundation.

In the area of operational oversight, the Network promotes the individuality of each of its campuses, allowing each site to develop its own cultural and community-lead personality in a fashion derived organically from its school leader, staff, students, parents, and other community members. While there are fundamental principles that make a school "Explore Academy", the Network recognizes the importance of ownership and investment by each school's local stakeholders as a key to sustained success.

Within both of the above dimensions, the Network's primary objective is to implement and support new schools in their inception and development to build a foundation and support each school toward its goal of long-term success. From this perspective, it values the independence of the school leader and local school board in establishing and maintaining a culture conducive to long-term success. To this end, the Network will provide data on a continuous basis (academic, financial, etc.) to each school's administrator and board to provide him or her the most current and comprehensive data it can so that he or she may make informed decisions as it pertains to the day-to-day operations of the school. The Network will continuously evaluate the results of these decisions in an effort to ensure that the school remains focused on its academic and operational goals. In this sense, the Network will function as a district-level entity which supports all campuses within its network to promote and maintain success.

6) DESCRIBE THE GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE AT BOTH THE NETWORK AND INDIVIDUAL SCHOOL LEVELS AND THE PLAN FOR ENSURING ACTIVE AND EFFECTIVE REPRESENTATION FROM THE LOCAL COMMUNITY. EXPLAIN WHETHER THE SCHOOL(S) WILL HAVE AN INDEPENDENT GOVERNING BOARD, WHETHER THERE WILL BE A SINGLE NETWORK-LEVEL BOARD GOVERNING MULTIPLE SCHOOLS, OR BOTH A NETWORK-LEVEL BOARD AND BOARDS AT INDIVIDUAL SCHOOLS.

While Explore Learning Network will maintain its own board as a nonprofit, Explore Academy will possess its own governing school board, a local non-profit. The local school board will be composed of at least three individuals, two of which will be specific members of the local Las Vegas community. While this body may start with three individuals, it will be encouraged to expand to between five and seven members over time to allow for more diverse and comprehensive representation from local community stakeholders.

At the time of this writing, the founding team plans for ELN to hold the charter for Explore Academy, with the local school board responsible for management and local implementation of the school's model, compliance with local laws and regulations, and evaluation of the effectiveness of ELN's management service.

As the Network values and welcomes parent and greater community involvement, the school board will be active in reaching out to community members to maintain an appropriate connection with the community stakeholders. Furthermore, as described above, the Network will, on a semi-annual basis, solicit feedback from stakeholders within the community in order to better inform its operations and general academic practices as well to provide additional feedback to the local board. Such feedback mechanisms will include both written and electronic feedback as well as a semi-annual community feedback forum to be held as an open session for members of the community to attend. ELN has designed a staff member specific to community outreach (see Attachment L) who will develop and maintain connections with community members.

In addition, Explore Academy will establish a robust parent organization (PTO) to create a leadership arm of the school driven by willing members of the school's parent population. The school's head administrator or activities director will function as a liaison between the PTO and the school's administration. As a component of the school community, the PTO will have an established position of representation, as appropriate, within staff training events, school activities, student-center leadership groups (student council), administrative meetings, and of course school board meetings.

7) HOW YOU WILL ENSURE EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE BOARD(S), THE NETWORK ORGANIZATION AND THE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP?

To help ensure consistent and collaborative communication between all managing entities of Explore Academy, ELN's director of operations will coordinate operations and interaction between ELN, its governing board, and the

school. Ms. Varela will communicate on a weekly basis (at least), and visit on a monthly basis with the school's head administrator as the school plans to launch operations, with that frequency varying by need during the planning year.

As an employee of the Explore Learning Network, Ms. Varela will work closely with the Explore Learning Network executive director, Justin Baiardo, who will further report, on an as-needed basis, to the Network's board of directors.

Both Ms. Varela and the school's head administrator will coordinate their reporting to the local school board on a monthly basis or more frequently as required based on the urgency of the issue at hand. At each monthly board meeting, both Ms. Varela and the school's head administrator will provide reports based on the school's current standing, both in the planning phases and as the school commences operations.

As the planned expansion within the Las Vegas area proceeds, ELN will establish a specific Las Vegas-based operations managers to oversee campuses in the Clark County area, helping to provide a local presence in the area for more practical and efficient management of local sites.

8) HOW WILL DECISION-MAKING AUTHORITY BE DIVIDED AMONG THE BOARD(S), THE NETWORK ORGANIZATION AND THE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP?

As described above, ELN's approach to school management is tailored around a heavy regiment of initial training coupled with extensive support for the school's staff in the implementation of the school's curriculum. This is further coupled to the Network's collection and dissemination of an extensive collection of data to help guide the school leader in his or her instructional and operational leadership.

The school leader will manage day-to-day operations for the school and will have the latitude to act within a broader range to build and maintain a positive school community in all respects. Based on the feedback from data collected on a weekly to monthly basis, the Network will work with school leader to adjust operations as needed.

The Network will employ the school leader and assign him/her to the school site as discussed above, and as such, the school leader functions as an arm of the Network and will thus perform all evaluative functions of the school leader's performance therein.

The primary function of the Explore Academy school board will be to manage the local implementation of the Explore Learning model, and to evaluate the managerial effectiveness of the Network itself. Although ELN will hold the charter, the school board is responsible for the policy decisions of the charter school, and is legally and ethically responsible for the school's academic progress, organizational success, and financial health at the local level.

The school's ongoing management is a collaborative effort between the local board and ELN staff, including the school leader. Together they will oversee the Explore Academy mission, set policy, perform strategic planning, and ensure alignment with the school's mission, vision, and charter. This includes the creation of and updates to policies related to the school's mission and governance, as well as delineating the strategic direction of the school through the review of the school's progress toward goals over time.

9) HOW WILL THE BOARD(S), THE NETWORK ORGANIZATION AND THE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP HOLD EACH OTHER ACCOUNTABLE?

As the management entity for Explore Academy, Explore Learning Network will evaluate both the school leader and local board, as well as its own performance through a self-evaluative process. As an assurance of accountability, the local board will evaluate the managerial services provided by ELN.

Explore Academy's board will provide a comprehensive evaluation on the school leader each year utilizing both the Nevada Educator Performance Framework. The Explore Learning Network will perform a similar evaluation, utilizing a similar metric but will additional utilize its own evaluate toolset (see below). It will present its findings to the school's board prior to its evaluation of the school leader.

The school board will perform an annual self-assessment using the Explore Learning Network's governance monitoring tool, which includes eleven dimensions through which the board can measure its own effectiveness.

Each of the eleven standards will include individual indicators which will guide each board member in ranking the standard in question on a scale of 0 ("Unacceptable") to 4 ("Outstanding"). The eleven standards are: Leadership: Mission, Vision, and Goals; Policy and Governance; Community Relations; Cultural Responsiveness and Educational Equity; Accountability and Performance Monitoring; Board Meetings; Board Member Communications; Board-Staff Relations; Board-School Leader Relations; Values, Ethics, and Responsibility for Self; and Board Systematic Improvement.

The Explore Learning team will provide the monitoring tool for the board to complete, after which it will compile its own report based on the same evaluative measures. It will compile data from both data sets and will create a comprehensive report for the board each year.

In furthering the process of continual feedback, the Explore Learning team will solicit feedback from both the school leader, school staff, and school board regarding its own performance in the services it provides, including the quality and effectiveness of its training and professional development, support for staff, its academic and instructional systems, and overall communication both in regards to the data and information it provides and the general quality of interaction between school staff and ELN staff. In addition to this, the school board will provide ELN with its own independent evaluation of the Network's performance of its annual management contract. It is through this evaluation that the local school board will evaluate the renewal of its annual contract with ELN.

10) PLEASE PROVIDE THE NAME AND BOARD MEMBERS OF ANY ORGANIZATIONS (EX. FOUNDATIONS) THAT ARE FORMALLY AFFILIATED WITH YOUR NETWORK.   N/A

11) FOR EACH EXISTING OR PROPOSED ORGANIZATION RELATED TO THE SCHOOL, INCLUDING THE SCHOOL ITSELF, THE NETWORK ORGANIZATION AND ANY OTHER RELATED ORGANIZATIONS, DESCRIBE IN DETAIL THE CURRENT OR PROPOSED LEGAL STATUS, INCLUDING THE NON-PROFIT STATUS AND FEDERAL TAX-EXEMPT STATUS FOR EACH ORGANIZATION.

The Explore Learning Network is a non-profit corporation within the State of New Mexico. It is currently in the process of applying to the IRS for tax-exempt status under section 501(c)(3). Upon approval of its charter, ELN will file for the creation of a non-profit corporation for Explore Academy, after which it will seek to submit its own tax-exempt filing.

12) HAVE ANY OF YOUR SCHOOLS: A) BEEN SUBJECT TO LITIGATION; B) HAD MATERIAL AUDIT FINDINGS; C) BEEN SUBJECT TO CORRECTIVE ACTION OR CLOSURE BY ITS AUTHORIZER; OR D) SURRENDERED ITS CHARTER? IF SO DETAIL THE CIRCUMSTANCES AND PROVIDE EVIDENCE OF HOW THE PROBLEM WAS RESOLVED.

Explore Academy (NM) has not been subject to litigation, had material audit findings, been subject to corrective action, nor has it had to surrender its charter.

TALENT ⊕

1) WHAT QUALIFICATIONS WILL BE REQUIRED OF THE SCHOOL LEADER(S)? INCLUDE AS ATTACHMENT G JOB DESCRIPTIONS FOR THE SCHOOL LEADER(S) AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE LEADERSHIP TEAM.

The school leader must hold or be eligible to attain an administrator license in the state of Nevada. In addition, qualified school leaders will have teaching experience in grades 6-12 and be able to demonstrate a deep understanding of curriculum design and implementation, classroom management, best practices related to authentic student learning, data-driven education, and staff collaboration. School leaders will be required to run all on-site daily operations such as maintaining a safe school environment, handling student and staff discipline, monitoring and supporting staff, communicating with all stakeholders (students, staff, parents, community members, board members, ELN staff, vendors, and contractors) to ensure smooth school operation.

The school leader's role will center around the daily operation of the school in cooperation with the ELN team members, who will assist in the management and operational oversight of the school as a whole. The specific roles for the school leader include:
- **Staff management:** the school leader will manage the entire school's on-site staff. This duty starts with building the instructional team of teachers and support staff. After the school's opening, she will monitor, guide, and evaluate the teachers as they develop and implement their individual seminar content and assess students with the ELN's standards-based exit exams. This evaluation will continue throughout the year as the school leader evaluates teachers for instructional effectiveness, adherence to the ELN instructional model and school policies, and participation in collaboration at the department and school level. The ELN team will provide the school leader with weekly and monthly data to inform her management of the instructional practices within the school.
- **Student management:** The school leader will manage student discipline, including the clear communication of the discipline policy and the community expectations that are to be followed and embraced by students. This will include responding to disciplinary referrals and following the school policies, communicating with parents and students when there are behaviors that violate the Explore Academy rules, and communicating with staff to keep open lines of communication regarding safety and community.

- **Professional development:** The school leader will be in charge of professional development for the staff such as required health and safety training, pedagogical improvement, best practices, student intervention, etc. Many of the curricular/pedagogical professional development topics will be presented in cooperation with members of the ELN education team
- **Facility management and compliance:** The school leader will comply with all state and federal regulations concerning school management such as inspections, procedures, safety, security, and maintenance of the school building and grounds. She will ensure that the site is a safe place for learning and is maintained in a way that is both clean and operational. This will include adhering to all required building codes and adequacy standards, including but not limited to providing restrooms and water fountain fixtures, operational classroom doors and furniture, sanitary cafeteria supplies and seating, efficient and consistent janitorial services, etc.
- **Safety and security**: The school leader will manage the site and its security including alarms and locks, gates and controlled points of access, window, and any systems that require monitoring such as security cameras. In a broader sense, the school leader will ensure that Explore Academy's campus is maintained as a secure community where students feel both welcome and safe each day.
- **Food service**: The site leader will manage the partnership with the food service provider and maintain communication for lunch counts, free and reduced programs, scheduling of services, menus, student orders, etc. She will also ensure that the cafeteria facilities are prepared for food service daily.
- **Transportation**: The school leader will make all necessary arrangements for transportation services that are necessary and/or available for the students attending the school as well as monitor the drop off and pick up areas while students are present to ensure the safety and security of all who utilize the school's transportation services.
- **School financial management:** The school leader will work closely with the ELN and the school's business manager to conduct necessary school business operations in accordance with state law and appropriate purchasing, internal controls, and financial reporting procedures.
- **Legal compliance:** The school leader will ensure that the actions taken by the school in all areas of operation, are done within the confines of what is required by law. This includes the implementation and enforcement of all state and local policies of the State of Nevada, the school's authorizer, and the school's governing board.

2) AGAINST WHAT GOALS WILL THE BOARD MEASURE THE SCHOOL LEADER'S SUCCESS AND WHAT WILL THE BOARD DO IF THE SCHOOL LEADER FAILS TO ACHIEVE THOSE GOALS?

In addition to the Nevada Educator Performance Framework, which the school board will use to evaluate the school leader, Explore Learning Network has adopted an evaluation framework that allows the school staff to provide evaluative feedback to measure the school leader's success. Included as Attachment O.3, the School Leader Evaluation Framework outlines domains by which the school leader is evaluated: Instructional Leadership, Communication, Professional Development, Operations Management, and Scope of Responsibility in Secondary Schools. Each of these domains contains various indicators, and each indicator is scored on a 1-4 scale: 4 - Highly Effective, 3 - Effective, 2 - Minimally Effective, and 1 - Ineffective.

ELN staff collect feedback from the school staff in response to these domains and their respective indicators. They will then evaluate the school leader on the rubric, addressing each indicator individually and arriving at a total score for each domain. Staff members will comment on domains as needed, particularly when a score of 1 or 2 is given. This evaluation, completed on an annual basis, will be compiled by the ELN director of operations and reported to both ELN's executive director and the local school board. The reporting process will detail the evaluation and provide feedback and recommendations in relation to the school leader.

If the school leader fails to achieve the goals set forth in the job description and/or outlined in the performance framework, the board will discuss the areas of concern with ELN staff in order to recommend next steps and corrective action. ELN will then address the concerns with the school leader. The resulting action could result in a stated inability of the school leader to perform his or her function, which could lead to termination or probation in combination with a performance improvement plan. This plan and the school leader's overall progress will then be monitored by ELN director of operations who will discuss the school leader's performance as necessary.

3) IF YOU HAVE NOT IDENTIFIED A SCHOOL LEADER(S), WHAT IS YOUR STRATEGY FOR RECRUITMENT? WHAT SYSTEMS WILL YOU PUT IN PLACE TO ENSURE THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SCHOOL LEADERSHIP PIPELINE THAT WILL ENABLE YOU TO FIND A SUCCESSOR FOR YOUR FOUNDING SCHOOL LEADER(S)?

Gretchen Larsen is a Ryan Fellow who showed an immediate interest in the Explore Academy model, mission, and vision. After interviewing several candidates and vetting each for compatibility, experience, and initiative, Mrs. Larsen was chosen for not only her background experience in 6-12 classroom instruction, but also her experience with student and staff management. In addition, the founding team feels her participation in the Ryan Fellowship will provide valuable support and guidance as she embarks on the journey to plan and open Explore Academy. Mrs. Larsen has embraced the school's core philosophy and has spent recent months learning about the school, speaking with ELN staff about school systems and procedures, and planning ways to fully integrate herself in the planning year of the school.

Mrs. Larsen has the educational background that makes her a solid founding school leader for Explore Academy. Ms. Larsen has nine years of experience teaching middle and high school English in an urban setting in Phoenix, where her students regularly outperformed their peers on assessments. Ms. Larsen also brings three years of leadership experience, having served as Dean of Students, where she reduced suspensions and restraint holds on students using PBIS and social-emotional learning curriculum. Ms. Larsen has completed The Ryan Fellowship through Accelerate Institute in Las Vegas, receiving a recommendation for principal. Through her action research as part of her fellowship year, Ms. Larsen coached teachers and increased student achievement in 5th grade math as much as 1500%. The Ryan Fellowship will continue to provide support to Ms. Larsen for the school's first two years of operation at no charge. With this experience behind her, paired with her drive and enthusiasm as she immerses herself in the Explore mission and vision, she is a quality choice for school leader.

In order to enable ELN to find quality successors when team members either move to other positions within the Network or move on to other employment opportunities, ELN has prioritized cross-training between positions so that team members, both ELN and site-level, are trained in and familiar with other job roles within the organization. This allows not only for more collaboration and support, but also allows the team to pick up the slack when there is a vacant position and spend the necessary time to fill the position with a qualified candidate. Growing talent from within the Explore team is a great way to preserve the integrity of the school's philosophy while also fostering the professional growth of Explore Academy employees, thus teachers and others staff members are encouraged to further their education and experience in order to move into site and network administrative roles for which they are well-suited. This process allows us to have a sustainable stream of leaders. The cross-position training paired with fostering of staff development and promotion provide a solid foundation for our succession plan within ELN and Explore Academy campuses.

4) WHAT ARE YOUR EXPECTATIONS FOR TEACHERS AND WHAT QUALIFICATIONS WILL BE REQUIRED OF YOUR TEACHERS?

Teachers at Explore Academy are expected to meet all state licensure requirements including teaching license (exam, coursework, student teaching, background check, etc.). For certain roles, specific areas of licensure will be required. Teachers working directly with ELLs to provide language support must have the TESL endorsement, while special education teachers will need to be properly endorsed. Explore Academy teachers come from various points in educational careers; teachers who are just out of school or just completing an alternate route to licensure as well as veteran teachers with decades of experience all have success in the Explore Academy model. Teacher characteristics are less dependent on a specific level of experience and more related to passion for teaching and facilitation of student learning, content knowledge and creativity in content delivery, and academic transparency and accountability.

The teaching experience at Explore Academy is very creative and rewarding, but also requires a significant amount of preparation before the start of both the school year and each term within the school year. Teachers are required to develop the flavors of their seminars for the entire year, a process that requires solid content knowledge as well as creativity and innovative thinking. They will be guided and supported through the process by both the ELN staff as well as on site administration, but the power of the curriculum lies in the unique flavors that are provided by each teacher through their personal and professional experience and knowledge. For an example of seminar flavors created by Explore Academy teachers, see Attachment O.5 - Course Catalog (SY18-19).

It will be expected that teachers either know or are willing to learn to integrate the use of technology, particularly Google Apps and Chromebooks, into their daily instruction with the help of constant training and support. They will need to adhere to Explore Academy instructional practices that include the use of a seminar approach to content delivery, thematic lessons that driven by student engagement and formative assessment, and high levels of accountability through data-driven student and staff monitoring on a continual basis. Although the teaching requirements can seem extensive, they also provide professional autonomy and pedagogical freedom that allows teachers to teach and assess learning in the most transparent and authentic way possible while using material that is engaging and relevant.

Outside the classroom, teaching duties include attending weekly staff meetings, completing reports such as the At-Risk and cuspie lists, updating grades for the standards in each of their seminars throughout the week, communicating with parents regularly, providing students with formative feedback in a timely matter, and collaborating on a regular basis with

both their department and the staff as a whole regarding school matters. Teachers at Explore Academy are fully engaged in the school model in the same way the students are, thus academic data and subsequent interventions and adjustments are part of both the teaching and learning experience.

5) WHAT IS YOUR STRATEGY FOR RECRUITING HIGH-QUALITY TEACHERS? FOR OUT-OF-STATE APPLICANTS, HOW WILL YOU ADAPT YOUR EXISTING RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION STRATEGIES TO THE NEVADA CONTEXT?

One of the most powerful recruitment methods for our New Mexico campus has been word of mouth recommendations from educators, administrators, parents, and community leaders. By speaking about the school and its mission, the initial Explore Academy founding team was able to develop relationships with a variety of educators and individuals who are passionate about education. This led the group to recruit of the most talented teachers from across the city. The founding team members were all teachers, therefore had connections with other teachers from their various school sites. In order to adapt this strategy for Nevada, the founding team intends to foster relationships with local teacher organizations, teacher preparation programs, and community organizations in order to establish introductions to educators across Clark County. Once the foundation of student, parent, and teacher support is generated, general word of mouth will assist in continuing to draw in future staff members interested in joining the Explore Academy team.

As an establishment effort, the above approach may not be effective at first. As such, the founding team has several other recruitment methods. In making connections with the community, establishing a working relationship with colleges and universities, specifically with their teacher preparation programs and leaders, the founding team will recruit new teachers and provide them with focused training and mentorship as they embark on their teaching careers. Although many schools seek to hire veteran, experienced teachers as they replicate, Explore Academy has had immense success with both new and experienced educators and as such is open to recruiting from teacher preparations programs as well as programs such as TFA. The content knowledge and creativity that teachers bring with them is the key to their success at Explore Academy, so all levels of teaching experience have the potential for recruitment.

Additionally, the founding team plans to attend professional conferences as well as continuing to introduce its presence into the area, allowing the Explore Academy message to spread as a new school to the area but as an additional arm for the recruitment of educators and administrative staff members who are members of local and national organizations. Local career and job fairs will also provide an avenue where the founding team will be able to connect with the community and advertise the school's open positions. The school leader and staff who are recruited early in the planning year will be present at these local events and conferences to inform educators and industry leaders alike about the opening of Explore Academy and the employment opportunities that will be available.

To further the marketing of employment opportunities and open positions, the founding team will also partner with city and county organizations to recruit teachers. It plans to meet with city officials in North Las Vegas, with elected officials from across Clark County, the Urban Chamber of Commerce, and possibly educator organizations such as the Nevada State Education Association and the Clark County Education Association. It is the goal to foster relationships with leaders and members of these and other organizations to help Explore Academy become known and increase awareness of job openings and teaching position vacancies.

In addition to the above mechanisms, the founding team has had with internet advertisements to post open positions. These include job search websites but also through social media platforms and the school's website. The goal is to make Explore Academy and its mission known widely throughout the area, thus increasing its reach in attracting potential teachers to apply for a position.

6) N/A - NOT A TRANSFORMATION SITE

7) HOW WILL YOU SUCCESSFULLY COMMUNICATE THE EXPECTATIONS TO TEACHERS AND ENSURE THAT THEY STAY ON TRACK TO MEET THEM?

Aside from the teaching duties outlined in an Explore Academy teaching contract (included as Attachment O.2), one of the most powerful teacher tools is the staff handbook. Functioning as more than a manual for policies and procedures, it outlines important aspects of the instructional model and serves as a guide for teachers to orient themselves to the school and its processes and procedures. The handbook includes sections about course numbering, frontloading, flavoring of the seminars, assessment (including sections on Bloom's Taxonomy and formative vs. summative assessment), exit exams, course catalog and writing course descriptions, and seminar-style learning. This handbook is paired with staff orientation before the start of school, which allows departments to align their schedules and seminars, allows teachers to ask questions and request

materials, and allows for specific training in areas such as gradebook requirements, student data collection, Google, etc., There is an excerpt of the staff handbook included as Attachment O.1.

Orientation topics will be a fixed agenda item for weekly staff meetings attended by all staff. These meetings allow staff to discuss pedagogy and best practices, staff requirements, student data and issues, etc. These meetings also serve as a platform for administration to relay information, reinforce requirements and requests, and deliver messages from administration or the Explore Learning Network. All policies and procedures are outlined from day one, so staff are aware of their responsibilities and requirements related to training, teaching, grading, data reporting, communication, preparation and planning, and collaboration.

Staff complete a yearly professional development plan (PDP) that outlines their goals for the year and provides a space to reflect on their progress toward these goals at the end of each term. This process allows the teacher to outline goals that align with the school requirements while also challenging the teacher as a reflective, continually-improving educator. The reflective component promotes continual growth and requires educators to make adjustments in their practice on a monthly basis rather than waiting until May to look back at the school year's results. At these monthly junctions, goals can be refreshed and adjusted based on experience in order to realign themselves to the school's mission and vision when necessary. This process will be adapted to align with Nevada teacher evaluation protocols so that it can be implemented monthly to provide professional feedback and accountability for Explore Academy teachers at the North Las Vegas campus.

8) DESCRIBE IN DETAIL YOUR PROGRAM FOR COACHING AND OTHERWISE DEVELOPING STAFF.

Staff development is a vital part of Explore Academy due in large part to the innovative and unique educational model employed by the school. Explore Learning Network (ELN) staff will partner with site leadership to ensure that staff are trained and supported starting before the beginning of the school year and throughout the year.

Staff development involves coaching in areas such as instructional model, curriculum development, pedagogical coaching, technology integration, student-driven instruction, and data-driven reflection. In order to teach successfully at Explore Academy, teachers must first be taught the instructional model in order to grasp the choice-based learning on which it is based. Teachers are instructed in how to build their curriculum for each seminar using themes, or flavors (as explained in the school model section), as well as how to gather materials for the flavors they create. There are templates and examples that are provided by ELN content experts that can help guide new teachers until they are able to create curriculum on their own. ELN staff and site leaders also instruct staff in methods of instruction that correspond with the learning model, such as socratic lessons, seminar-style teaching, problem-based learning, and student-lead lessons. This method of facilitating student investigation and learning rather than lecturing and assigning work can take adjustment time, so content experts and instructional video examples are available to help teachers learn the model and the methods it uses.

In addition to classroom-related training, teachers are also taught the scope and sequence of seminars from grade 6-12 so they understand the way students progress through the curriculum. This includes training in the daily schedule and flex period usage (such as tutoring, mentoring, collaboration, planning time, etc.). This training also includes the breakdown of graduation requirements, the breakdown of standards assigned to each seminar in the teacher's content area, the common exit exams that will be administered for the seminars the teacher is teaching, and the grading system for formative and summative grading processes and reporting.

Teacher training sessions occur throughout the school year: during sessions throughout the summer before each school year, during on-site orientation days before the start of school, during allotted times on term break days, and during weekly staff meetings. The term break days and weekly staff meetings allow site administration and ELN staff to hold full-staff training as well as breakout sessions to address teacher needs throughout the year. This built-in staff time also allows for immediate response to staff needs as they arise.

To support teachers throughout the year, there are several methods of data collections and teacher effectiveness monitoring. Site leadership will conduct both frequent walkthroughs as well as formal observations to evaluate teacher effectiveness and provide support for teachers when they are struggling with any aspect of the position. These are meant to be both formative and summative in nature, allowing for reflection and improvement but also holding teachers accountable for their performance and for student progress. Along those lines, students are surveyed at the end of each term (see School Model section for more information) about the seminar and the teacher for that term. These surveys provide valuable insight into the efficacy of the teacher, the flavor, and the instruction for the term. This data is compiled and given to teachers in order to promote reflective practices that lead to improved instruction and therefore improved student achievement.

In addition to the school-wide support and development for teachers, there are also two types of teacher mentorship that also provide coaching and support for staff at Explore Academy. For first year teachers who are entering the teaching profession for the first time, whether from a student teaching and a teacher-training program, or from an alternate licensure program or fellowship, mentor teachers are assigned to provide support and guidance through their entire first year

teaching. This partnership is meant to provide the teacher a point of contact who can lend their support above and beyond what is provided by site leadership and ELN team members. Starting in year two of operation, there will also be mentors assigned to teachers who are new to Explore Academy, even if they are experienced educators from other school systems. This school-specific mentoring relationship will provide support as the teacher adjusts to the unique model and instructional practices that are required to teach at Explore.

9) HOW WILL YOU SEEK TO RETAIN YOUR HIGH-PERFORMING TEACHERS?

The Explore Academy model allows teachers to do something that is often overlooked and hard to accomplish in traditional schools; it allows them to teach, and to do so authentically and creatively. This may sound like an exaggeration, but in many schools across the country, curriculum is uniformly aligned horizontally and vertically within a subject area with assigned texts and teaching schedules that keep all teachers, and in turn their students, on an identical path that does not allow for variation or improvisation. The mandated adherence to a strict scope and sequence paired with the averaging of grades, often inflated with curving practices and extra credit, results in a system where teachers are not using their pedagogical skills to teach, and students are not actually responsible to learn all the required material to earn course credit.

Explore Academy retains teachers because it completely changes this paradigm; it teachers truly teach. Each teacher creates their seminars based on their own experiences, personal and academic interests, and understanding of their students and community. This allows the teachers the ability to have autonomy and creative license to design and create their own curriculum. It is understood that high-performing teachers truly take pride in their craft and work continually to improve and adapt their lessons to meet the needs of their students. At Explore Academy, the small class sizes paired with the engaging seminar curriculum allows teachers to facilitate student learning daily with frequent opportunities for feedback, adjustment, individualization, and intervention. Teachers know where each student is in their path to proficiency for every standard within the focused, 22- or 44-day seminars that focus on a few standards/skills at a time. When quality teachers are given the ability to design their own pathways in order to reach common goals, the results are astonishing. Teachers who excel in the craft of teaching remain at Explore Academy because the model provides satisfaction and fulfillment every term.

Another crucial practice that helps Explore Academy retain high quality teachers is the continual support of the administration and network staff. Teachers who are highly successful in the classroom bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to their instruction. The founding team of Explore Learning Network are both teachers with over two decades of teaching experience. That combined with the dozens of teachers who work and operate the NM campus has created a school that was, in reality, created and opened by a group of teachers. Where some charters are founded by businesses or parents, was founded by teachers who share a similar drive in finding the freedom to teach a creative, choice-based curriculum and to do it effectively. This has allowed ELN staff to develop comprehensive support systems for teachers, including collaborative weekly staff meetings, ongoing data-driven professional development, detailed staff training materials related to all aspects of the school (such as educational model, technology integration, instructional and grading practices, etc.), and built in collaboration time at regular intervals to promote sharing of best practices and strategies as well as materials and ideas.

There are other aspects of a school that promote retention such as competitive teacher pay, flexibility related to teacher's personal needs such as appointments and emergencies, quality and availability of classroom supplies and teaching materials, and community building and appreciation initiatives built into the school culture. These are focus areas as well, thus providing the best possible teaching experience for Explore Academy teachers. The current rate of staff retention at the New Mexico campus is over 95%, showing that the model is truly appreciated and embraced by the teachers. Of the teachers from 2017-2018, all scored Highly Effective or Exemplary, the two highest score levels possible in the NM teacher evaluation system, demonstrating that the school has the right systems in place to retain high-performing teachers and to allow them to make astonishing academic progress with Explore Academy students.

10) AS ATTACHMENT H, PROVIDE A STAFFING CHART FOR THE SCHOOL(S), INCLUDING SCHOOL LEADERSHIP, INSTRUCTIONAL AND NON-INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF. Included

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PARENT AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT Ⓐ

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1) HOW HAVE PARENTS OF POTENTIAL STUDENTS BEEN INVOLVED IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROPOSED SCHOOL PROGRAM?

Although the instructional model was initially created by Mr. Baiardo, and further developed with the help of the founding team of the Albuquerque campus, there has been ongoing adjustment based on parent feedback of the students

who attend the school. In writing the charter, Mr. Baiardo collected data from parent meetings, surveys, and focus groups that helped inform the process as he developed the school model. Many of the school's educators are also parents themselves, so speaking to other educators and inquiring their opinions about education as it pertains to their own children also helped to guide the model's creation. This feedback helped form the foundation of the model in conjunction with research regarding choice theory and educational engagement and accountability.

The process did not stop there, however. Starting in the planning year, Explore Academy prioritized the creation and maintenance of a strong Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). The first PTO consisted of the school's inaugural student population, a population who collaborated closely with teachers and administration to help inform school processes such as dress code options, flavors, scheduling, grading, communication methods, school calendar, etc. It is vital to any school community to include parents from the very beginning in order to better serve the students who were going to attend the school. These collaborative discussions led to improvement of the class registration processes, adjustment of the grading scales and exit exam procedures, expansion of the dress code options, and improved transportation routes and policies.

While much of the framework already exists, parents within the Las Vegas area will have similar influence as the school plans its operations. The founding team has already begun soliciting feedback through local community members and parent groups to help determine what local parents want for their educational options, including facility location, college-focus, conduct expectations and community components, etc.

2) WITH WHICH KEY COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND LOCAL AND NATIONAL SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS HAVE YOU DEVELOPED PARTNERSHIPS? HOW HAVE THESE COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS HELPED YOU DEVELOP YOUR SCHOOL PROGRAM? HOW WILL THEY HELP YOU ONCE YOUR SCHOOL(S) OPENS?

Working with our authorizer in New Mexico, the founding team has experience with the monitoring process as well as school site visits and data analysis. This has become an avenue of support, driving our site management processes and systems. Over the last five years, from planning year through year four of operation, the process of operating a school has taught the team valuable lessons that it uses to further improve the model and the school's operational capacity.

In relation to building capacity, ELN has partnered with Excellent Schools New Mexico, an organization whose mission drives the development of quality school options in New Mexico. This partnership connected the team with Bellwether Education Partners, a national nonprofit focused on dramatically changing education and life outcomes for underserved children. With the guidance of the Bellwether consultants, the team completed an in-depth analysis of Explore Academy's educational model, current performance, and capacity to expand. This strategic forecasting allowed the team to analyze Explore Academy's route to expansion and replication that preserves the "secret sauce" that makes the first campus so successful while also allowing for modification and adjustment to best design and plan subsequent campuses that use the same model while still developing their own unique culture. The forecasting process also guided the team in mapping out the Explore Learning Network formation and structure in order to provide the most comprehensive and effective network-level support to every Explore Academy campus in operation.

In Las Vegas, the team has partnered with Opportunity 180 to guide its potential expansion into Nevada. ELN was awarded a planning grant to provide support through the charter application and startup processes. This partnership with Opportunity 180 allowed the team to visit Las Vegas on several occasions, including a visit in March for a summit hosted by Opportunity 180. At the summit, the team became immersed in the charter school landscape of the area, meeting school leaders, authorizers, vendors, Ryan Fellows, city officials, and community members, and as a result gained valuable insight into the Las Vegas culture, academic needs, and school options, allowing for the beginning of adjustments that will work to meet the needs of the unique North Las Vegas population.

The team will continue to use the planning grant as its host family information nights and focus groups this fall. These events allow the founders to meet potential students and parents in a more intimate setting to gain insight into the preferences of the local community while also introducing the community to the Explore Academy model and mission. These focus groups with parents, students, and other stakeholders are vital in truly establishing a founding connection to the community the school ultimately intends to serve. The partnership with Opportunity 180 has allowed the start of this process, and with continued support, further grant funds will continue to build a solid foundation for Explore Academy's potential campus.

The founding team has made connections directly with city officials in North Las Vegas to open a dialogue between the city and Explore Learning Network. This partnership allows the team to better meet the needs of the community by involving the city of North Las Vegas in the planning and opening of Explore Academy. One such meeting involved connecting with William Legere, the Economic and Business Development Specialist for the city of North Las Vegas, who leads school development in the city. During these discussions, Mr. Legere expressed strong interest in not only assisting with the facility search and acquisition for the school site, but also with the planning process for the school itself. He was very impressed with

the school model and its innovative design, feeling its focus is important for the families of his community As a parent and community member who places high value on education, Mr. Legere expressed his desire to assist us as we form the school as well as his willingness to help us make valuable connections in the community.

During one visit with Mr. Legere, the team was able to connect with Mayor Lee to discuss its plans for Explore Academy's North Las Vegas campus. He was immediately excited about the school's ability to offer a quality option for students in his city and has provided the support of the Mayor's office through our efforts to establish a campus in his community. The team intends to meet with both officials on each visit to forward the process of serving the students in North Las Vegas and improve educational outcomes for the community. This partnership with City Hall will allow for open communication with city officials during operation, increasing the ability for Explore Academy to meet the needs of the community.

With our chosen school leader Gretchen Larsen, the team was able to partner with the Ryan Fellowship program and Mrs. Larsen's mentor from the program, Erin Brooks. The support and guidance of the Ryan Fellowship will allow our school leader to better serve the school community on a daily basis as she communicates with parents and students about all school business such as academics, discipline, activities, etc. This will also allow the Explore Learning Network staff to work with Mrs. Larsen to collect feedback and input from stakeholders at Explore Academy as well as general feedback from the Las Vegas area as a whole through the Ryan Fellow network. Having access to a network of other leaders and educators provides valuable insight into the issues, concerns, and preferences of the school community.

When working in Las Vegas, we made a deep connection with an active community member, Tameka Henry. Mrs. Henry has a daughter who is very excited to attend Explore Academy, entering as a 7th grade student in August 2019, the proposed start of the first operational year. When meeting with Mrs. Henry, the team was able to gain insight into the needs and worries of the parents of the students who are in the some of the potential areas for school sites. She also expressed interest in assisting with the entire school planning process as well as being an active parent advocate for the school and as such, the teams plans to meet with several parent groups to which she belongs as well as to include her in the planning and hosting of family nights and focus groups. Her involvement with the community includes connections with industry leaders and community partners, both of which will help further enrich Explore Academy connections within the city. One of her passions is education and she is an important partner for the ELN founding team as it moves into the planning year; there is no substitute for authentic, open communication from a parent who wants to see Explore Academy succeed in her community. As we move into operational years, parent partners such as Mrs. Henry will form the foundation of the PTO and the school board, allowing for continual feedback and improvement of the site as well as support from parents.

Another connection Explore Learning Network has fostered is with local school leaders. When planning a school, the team has learned that advice and information from those who came before provides experience and insight that cannot be measured. The team has met with the leaders of Democracy Prep, Nevada Rise, and Futuro Academy in order to learn about their planning years, authorizing experience, facility search, school logistics, advertising, marketing, and budgeting based on Nevada funding and operation costs in their respective sites. Communicating with school leaders such as Mr. Prado, Mr. Brecht, and Mr. Johnson will allow us to better navigate school operation struggles as well as reflect on best practices and procedures for the Las Vegas community. These site leaders expressed willingness to remain in communication as the founding of an additional school will continue to create a supportive network of charter operators who are trying to bring quality education options to students across the city.

3) WHAT SPECIFIC STRATEGIES HAVE YOU EMPLOYED AT OTHER SCHOOLS TO ENSURE PARENTS ARE PARTNERS IN THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY?

Since the initial year, the PTO has remained a vital part of the school's operation. The parents involved in the organization meet monthly to discuss school issues, events, fundraising, community involvement, etc. This continued collaboration helps the staff stay connected to the parents, leading to continually improved flavor development for seminars, open lines of communication between the school staff and parents, quality guest speakers, suggestions for seminar materials, community and industry connections for "majors" seminars, and parental suggestions for improved school performance.

In addition to the PTO, Explore maintains an open door policy, both in person and through electronic communication. The school leader welcomes parent communication in all forms, a practice that will be prioritized in all Explore Academy campuses. As with academics and performance data, the focus is that transparency is a crucial element in the operation of a school site, thus the team welcomes parent phone calls, emails, and school visits. The purpose of these visits is sometimes as simple as a question about a task that was assigned by a teacher that day, while at other times, parents come with major concerns related to discipline, food service feedback, technology issues, or grading. While not all instances of parent communication can be immediately addressed, the school prioritizes responses to parents as quick as possible to allow the school leader and school staff to better address parent feedback and take necessary action. This process has helped

maintain parent engagement as they feel they have a voice and their opinions are valued. When paired with frequent school communication (email newsletters, continually updated grades, constant teacher contacts, etc.), parental involvement has truly helped Explore Academy develop into the successful school model that proudly serves its community.

4) HOW WILL THESE AND OTHER STRATEGIES BE IMPLEMENTED TO CREATE AND STRENGTHEN PARENT ENGAGEMENT IN THE SUCCESS OF THEIR CHILDREN AND IN THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY? HOW WILL YOU MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR PARENTS TO EXPRESS THEIR PRIORITIES AND CONCERNS BOTH PRE- AND POST-OPENING?

For the pre- and post-opening of Explore Academy, the team will use the strategies that have been refined from its experiences in New Mexico as a foundation for Nevada campuses. To start this process, in the pre-opening stage, it will use community feedback in order to tailor the academic model and school operation plan to fit the community and the students it will serve. This will be done by gather data from surveys, parent nights, focus groups, meetings with stakeholders (parents, elected officials, community organizations, students, and educators), and correspondence via our social media platforms and interest forms. This will allow the team to deepen its preliminary understanding of the student and community needs of North Las Vegas and in turn make adjustments in the planning process. The pre-opening stage provides time for development of a strong founding PTO, local board, and community partnership network, further promoting open lines of communication between prospective families and both ELN and school staff, thus fostering collaborative interactions early in the process.

Once the school opens in August of 2019, the PTO will serve as an extension of the school. There will be announcements for PTO members as well as official meetings that can be attended by anyone interested in participating. Minutes from these meetings will be shared with administration and ELN staff in order to ensure that all concerns, suggestions, and input is heard and addressed in a timely manner. The PTO will also work closely with the school's activities director so that parents have their input considered for school events, programs, and initiatives.

Between ELN and site administration, the governing board, and the PTO, team will have solicit engagement from various stakeholders on a regular basis. This will be enhanced by the open door policy held by the site leader, keeping dialogue going with parents and community members about the school, its progress, and its community impact. ELN has developed parent and student surveys to assist with data collection about specific school business, and will also maintain social media platforms as well as the school's website so that parents have a place where they can access information related to the school, communicate with school staff, and express interest in enrollment and school initiatives. In conjunction with the website, the school staff will keep Google Classroom pages up to date along with grades in the student information system. Theses platforms sync with email to provide instant feedback and communication opportunities. Teachers are also encouraged to call home or invite parents in if internet communication is a prohibitive factor for any family. This multi-faceted approach ensures that all parent voices are heard, no matter how large or small communication.

5) HOW WILL YOUR SCHOOL LEADER(S) AND BOARD MEMBERS ENGAGE WITH THE NEIGHBORHOOD AND THE BROADER COMMUNITY ON AN ONGOING BASIS? HOW WILL YOU RESOLVE ANY DISPUTES THAT MAY ARISE? PLEASE INCLUDE A DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED GRIEVANCE PROCESS AND THE ROLE OF THE GOVERNING BOARD IN THIS PROCESS.

In regard to the school leader and the role they play within the neighborhood and broader community, the founding team intends to use a blend of similar strategies utilized in the past in combination with new initiatives that are unique to the Las Vegas community. The school leader role involves an open door policy for parents and community members who want to reach out about Explore Academy and its impact, an openness which is fostered through up to date information on social media and the school website, email newsletters regularly released to community and families, and a welcoming entrance and meeting area for school visitors.

In addition to the communication and information methods used, the team will implement coffee hours with the principal to arrange for specific time periods where the school leader is available to meet with anyone who wants to reach out. These meetings can be in person or through email or phone calls. This practice has allowed parents and community members to remain involved by emphasizing that Explore Academy welcomes their input and provides them with a voice when it comes to the education of the children in their community.

It is assumed that not all stakeholders have the drive or confidence to reach out to the school on their own, so the team will also make efforts to reach out into the community through local groups and organizations, feeder schools, and community events. Making itself present in the community and establishing the school as a solid community partner helps to reach the neighborhood and broader area. By reaching out through events, conferences, information nights, etc., the team is able to bring our staff and administration out into the community, allowing for connections with stakeholders who may otherwise not become involved with the school. These efforts have included local marathons and walks, fundraising events, volunteer work through local organizations, partnering with local employers and their employees, and field trips to bring our students into the community and what it has to offer.

The school's board will have a strong community engagement and involvement as well. Board meetings are announced and advertised monthly with ample time for stakeholders to plan to attend. An information gathering area of the website allows ELN and school administration to collect questions and input from community members, including parents and students, which in turn can be used for board agenda items that need to be addressed. A strong and diverse school board, which is the focus of its composition, will allow for more connections across many areas of the community.

As with any school, there are bound to be disputes and disagreements between various parties (community members, parents, teachers, administrators, students, board members, etc.). In order to make sure there is fairness and understanding with all people involved, the team has established policies and procedures that assist with conflict and dispute resolution, be in in relations to academics, operations, or school activities. The grievance policy is attached as Attachment O.6.

6) INCLUDE AS ATTACHMENT I LETTERS OF SUPPORT AND OTHER DEMONSTRATED COMMUNITY INVESTMENT FROM KEY CONSTITUENTS, PARTNERS, PARENTS, AND SUPPORTERS. Included

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FINANCIAL READINESS ⊕

1) WHAT ARE THE PROCESSES AND SYSTEMS THAT YOU WILL USE TO MANAGE THE CRITICAL FINANCIAL FUNCTIONS OF YOUR SCHOOL(S)? IF YOU WILL CONTRACT OUT FOR ANY FINANCIAL SERVICES, IDENTIFY WITH WHOM YOU WILL CONTRACT AND EXPLAIN THEIR RELEVANT BACKGROUND AND THE SPECIFICS OF YOUR CONTRACTUAL RELATIONSHIP.

Explore Academy will contract with a proven, comprehensive business management service provider with experienced in serving charter schools in the state of Nevada to support the critical financial functions of the school, including:
- Budgeting: assistance in the development of annual budgets with cash flows, timely revisions and updated monthly forecasts
- Financial Statements and Reporting: monthly year-to-date financial statements, cash flow projections, statement analysis and support in resolving any financial issues, while supporting government financial reporting for budgets, interim reports and audited reports
- Accounting: journal entries and transaction recording, fund accounting, bank reconciliation and compliance with GAAP, GASB, SACS, and Nevada regulations
- Accounts Payable and Receivable: revenue verification and collection
- Purchasing: assistance in procedures for vendor selection and major purchases
- Payroll Management: services including agency reporting, tax reporting and deposits, and PERS

In addition, the school will contract with an accounting firm to perform an annual audit of the school's financial operations. Both of the above-mentioned service providers will be selected through a competitive bid process (RFP) and will be selected based on their documented certification, level of expertise and experience including work specifically in the state of Nevada, positive referrals from current charter school clients, extent of business service offerings, commitment to strong internal controls, and personalized commitment to Explore Academy's mission, vision, and overall success.

Explore Academy's school board will review the chosen service provider each year and consider the overall effectiveness of the provider's services prior to renewing its contract.

At the time of this writing, ELN's founding team has not yet identified with which specific service provider(s) it will contract. Within the scope of the preparation of this application, the ELN founding time has utilized consultation from EdTec for guidance in developing the school budget in accordance with regulations specific to the state of Nevada.

2) HOW WILL YOUR STAFF, BOARD AND NETWORK ORGANIZATION SHARE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF FINANCIAL OVERSIGHT FOR YOUR SCHOOL(S)? WHAT SYSTEMS, ROUTINES, AND PROCESSES WILL PROTECT AGAINST FRAUD OR THEFT?

Explore Academy will incorporate a highly redundant approach to financial oversight in order to ensure the school maintains responsible financial operations throughout the term of its charter. The multiple layers of oversight provided by the school leader, ELN director of operations and executive director, business manager, and school board members help prevent against fraud or theft.

Prior to the school commencing operations, the school board will formally adopt fiscal policies outlining roles, responsibilities, and processes concerning financial oversight including banking and cash management, procurement,

expenses and accounts payable, payroll and liabilities, assets, grants and donations, debt, and security. These policies will be developed by the school leader in conjunction with the school's business manager.

As the school commences operations, it will contract with its own licensed business manager. This individual will work closely with the school's head administrator and ELN director of operations in maintaining the school's successful financial operations. While the school board will be charged with financial oversight of the school, the school leader will be the primary point-person in overseeing the school's day-to-day operations, including accounts payable / receivable, payroll, cash flow, etc.

The business manager will be responsible for providing payroll services, reviewed and approved by the school leader, as well as training, as needed, for both the school leader and school board members in the areas of best practices, basic accounting principles and controls, reading of balance sheets and dashboards, and financial statements.

The school leader will be the purchasing agent for all school purchases and his or her signature will appear on all purchase orders and checks generated by the school. As a backup, the school board president will have signing approval on all checks. Purchases under $20,000 can be approved by the school leader. Purchases (and contracts) of $20,000 or more must be approved by ELN before it is put to the school board for a required approval vote. Payments over $10,000 require approvals from both the school leader and school board president. In addition, payments made to the school principal require school board approval and the appropriate signature from the board president.

As the school commences operations, ELN will work closely with the school leader in overseeing the school's budgetary operations. Each year, both ELN's executive director and the school board will be required to approve the school's annual budget, developed in cooperation by the school leader, school's business manager, and ELN director of operations.

All purchase orders submitted and approved by the school leader will be automatically copied to the ELN director of operations. ELN reserves the right to postpone purchase order approval if it feels further justification is required or, given the nature of the purchase, board approval should be required. As part of the standing weekly conference call between ELN and the school leader, the school's budget (among other items) will be discussed.

In addition, ELN will hold bi-weekly phone calls with the school's business manager for general updates on the school's business operations. As time goes on, and the financial operations of the school stabilizes, these calls will become monthly unless specific circumstances require more periodic communication.

As a measure of oversight, both the local board and ELN (executive director and director of operations) will monitor the school's financial health on a monthly basis through reports (revenues and expenditures, bills and disbursements, bank reconciliation, outstanding checks, cash analysis, etc.) provided by the school's business manager. At this time, ELN will submit to the board any additional information it feels is pressing based on its own analysis. The business manager will attend all board meetings to describe these reports and answer any specific questions from ELN or the board.

If the school board size exceeds five members, a separate finance committee will be created to specifically analyze the school's financial reports prior to consideration by the entire board.

As projected in the ELN budget, the Network anticipates hiring a business manager if / when additional campuses come to exist, thereby saving costs business service costs for each campus.

On an annual basis, the school board will contract with an independent auditor to review the school's annual financial operations. The school board and business manager will ensure that the resulting auditor report(s) be distributed to the necessary state and local entities.

3) AS ATTACHMENT J, INCLUDE A FIVE-YEAR BUDGET MODEL FOR THE SCHOOL(S). PLEASE PROVIDE EXPLANATORY NOTES AND ASSUMPTIONS, INCLUDING EXPECTED STUDENT ENROLLMENT AND ANTICIPATED NUMBERS OF STUDENTS IN THE FOLLOWING THREE SUBGROUPS: STUDENTS WITH IEPS, STUDENTS QUALIFYING FOR FREE OR REDUCED LUNCH, ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS.

The five-year budget is provided as Attachment J. The founding team utilized business management consultation services (EdTec) for the estimates below in order to utilize comparable values within the Las Vegas area. Within the budget, the following assumptions are made:

REVENUES

The budget is calculated with the assumption of revenues from DSA and Outside Revenue sources. It further includes state and federal funding sources through IDEA and Title programs, both of which are calculated in the Financial Plan Workbook provided. This workbook was used for the purposes of establishing baseline funding with the inclusion of the above-mentioned revenue sources. While it is anticipated that the school will utilize the National School Lunch Program, it was not included in this analysis as any revenue included would be offset by the price of lunches paid to the school's food service provider.

ENROLLMENT

Within the "Enrollment" tab, the phase-in plan for both middle and high school grades is shown. Explore Academy will commence operations with the offering of grades 6, 7, and 9, with subsequent grades phased-in each year thereafter until the school reaches full capacity at its fourth year of operation.

The school anticipates some level of attrition each year, at which time its (presumed) waiting list to backfill younger grades to ensure that these enrollment projections are met. Given that 9th grade is a secondary entry point for many students, the school is open to backfilling at the 9th grade level to maintain the 100-student population threshold. From that point forward the school's budget anticipates a slight drop in students from grades 9 to 12 due to attrition.

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Based on the demographic data from the middle and high school's in the North Las Vegas area, the following demographics were compiled: 80% FRL, 18% ELL, and 12% special education. As a conservative estimate, the budget reduced the above percentages by 10%, resulting in the following subgroup percentages: 72% FRL, 16% ELL, and 10% special education.

STAFFING

The school's budget shows the need to start with four (4) teachers per core content area (five for math), with this number increasing by one teacher per core content area per year. The "Staff" tab shows this increase over the first five years. For academic support staff, specifically tutors, who work closely with students during their flex periods (time out of class), the school's budget anticipates four tutors staffed initially with an additional tutor hired each year across the school's first five years.

In the area of special education, the school will start with one special education teacher / director, with staffing increasing to two FTE beginning in year 3. A similar trend is predicted for the counseling staff. Also at this time, it is predicted that the school will bring on a nurse or health assistant.

SUPPLIES

As Explore Academy is integrated heavily with technology, the bulk of traditional costs in supplies is minimized. That being said, the school does incorporate considerable hands-on learning options for its flavors as well as a plentiful selection of lab supplies for its science labs and arts programs, both of which will require spending on school supplies. The school will phase-in its ordering of student supplies over its initial years of operations but will purchase the bulk of its foundational supplies with start-up capital through CSP Start-up funds.

Within the administrative supplies, there is an initial increase in spending in the first years of operations considering the need for basic supplies (dry erase boards, markers, etc.), furniture (teacher, student, and common-area furnishings) and technology (projectors, laptops, etc.). While some of this cost will be covered with start-up funds prior to opening, it is assumed that the school will require additional budgeting for the above categories in its initial years of operation.

ADMINISTRATION

As the Explore Learning Network will employ the school's principal, the line item for head administrator shows no expense value. In this area the school's management fee is indicated, beginning at 9% of total school revenues (see "CMO" tab), which includes the employment of the school leader.

The school anticipates an audit each year beginning in the school's second year of operation.

In the area of advertising, it is assumed that the school will rely more heavily on advertising in its initial years of operation, with the budgetary commitment to advertising lessening slightly thereafter.

A similar trend is anticipated with legal expenses as it is assumed that the school will rely more heavily on its legal counsel in its initial years of operation.

At the beginning of the school's second year of operation, it will hire an assistant administrator.

SERVICES

The school will contract for business management services during its initial years of operations. The school has estimates that these services will not exceed $70,000. In the fourth year of operation, ELN plans to utilize a Network-based business manager, thus reducing the costs from that point forward.

RENT / LEASE

The rental rate is projected utilizing pricing estimates from EPR Properties for the construction of a new facility (see below). EPR would plan to phase-in costs over the first three years as the school's enrollment grows, with the facility itself undergoing two phases of construction to accommodate the need for expansion due to student growth. These costs are

assumed to be higher than the renovation of an existing facility. Both options will be considered as the school finalized its facility options.

UTILITIES

The school's budget predicts an increase in utility rates each year, with a 5% increase for electricity and a 3% increase for gas, water, and communications (internet / phone).

INSURANCE

$100 per student was used in the calculation for general property and liability insurance. This rate was derived from comparable values utilizing consultation from a business management entity (EdTec) with experience in the state of NV.

BENEFITS

Benefits are currently calculated at 38% of total salary within each category. This calculation was derived from utilizing comparable values applied to teacher salaries with the consultation of a business management entity (EdTec) with experience in the state of Nevada. Within the "Staff" tab, the spreadsheet incorporates the number of teaching FTEs with the assumption that 70% of teachers will apply for medical benefits. Of those that elect to take benefits, it is further assumed that 50% will opt for single coverage with the remaining 50% opting for family coverage.

For all employees, the spreadsheet utilizes estimated percentages for FICA, state retirement, unemployment insurance, and workers' comp, all of which are based on percentages of total salary. Payroll services is charged at a rate of $28 per FTE per month ($336 per year). When considering the calculation for state retirement (PERS), given the option for employees to pay 14.5% or 28% with a 14% reduction in salary, the model assumes all staff go with the 14.5% contribution (leaving the school with the same percentage). The resulting 38% was applied to all staff positions as a general average from which to estimate total benefits within each subcategory.

CASHFLOW

The "Cashflow" tab shows a general estimate of cashflow through the year, utilizing the following assumptions:
- State revenue will start in July for the first operational year
- Revenue will be transmitted to the school on a monthly basis as the school's quarterly revenue would be above the $500,000
- Non DSA-revenue streams are predicted to be received on a quarterly basis
- No CSP monies are entered into the cashflow analysis
- Revenue for the first year will start in July (assuming request approval)
- Salaries and benefits for instructional and support staff will begin in August (half payment) with full payments beginning in Sept. Administrative assistant salary and benefits begin in full in August
- Payment for rent includes two months of deferred rent, so total rent payment is divided across remaining 10 months

4) AS ATTACHMENT K, INCLUDE A BUDGET FOR THE PRE-OPENING YEAR(S) OF THE SCHOOL(S). PLEASE PROVIDE EXPLANATORY NOTES AND ASSUMPTIONS.

Within the start-up budget, it is presumed that the state will receive start-up capital from two sources: Opportunity 180's start-up grant (estimated at $100,000 based on previous award amounts) and the Federal CSP grant (estimated at $850,000 across the first three years of operations with $640,000 eligible in the months leading up to the opening of the school). The Explore Learning Network has already received a planning grant from Opportunity 180, some of which will be utilized for start-up funding.

The attached budget shows an overall budget for the startup year, with the assumption that the above two revenue sources will be in place. For the salary of the head administrator, it is assumed that the school's principal will be paid $5,000 per month for the three months (April, May, and June) leading up to the start of the school's funding stream (July).

As the school leader begins work to commence operations, he or she will receive a stipend of $5,000 per month for the three months leading to the start of his or her contract.

The school will spend $10,000 on marketing for the hiring of staff, including the use of local media for job postings, social media, postings within teacher licensure programs, and both state and national job boards. The additional $5,000 included will be paid to interview committee members for travel and time in interviewing for each position.

Student recruitment spending will be multi-faceted and will include the use of social media to connect with families and community entities, direct mailers dispersed around the North Las Vegas area, hourly wages for neighborhood canvassing, and advertising with local media (newspaper, radio, etc.). This line item will further include the renting of facilities to host monthly information nights to which the above directed advertising will be connected.

As an innovative model which requires support for new teachers, ELN will provide considerable training for new teachers, both in designing courses and curriculum for flavored-based seminars, but also in the general operations of the Explore Academy model.

It is assumed that school will require significant start-up expenditures for student and staff furniture, as well as furniture for student and visitor common areas. In addition, it is assumed that there will be startup expenses for technology (staff computers, projectors, printers, document cameras, class calculators, etc.) as well instructional supplies, specifically for art and science programs. An additional line item is included for administrative supplies for administrative staff.

Legal services are assumed to be needed as the school sets in place its policies and procedures, school board bylaws, and contracts. In addition, it is assumed that some business management services will be required prior to the school commencing operation.

For a temporary space where parents can visit and school representatives can meet with families and members of the community, rent and utilities for a temporary facility is included.

5) AS ATTACHMENT L INCLUDE A FIVE-YEAR BUDGET MODEL FOR THE NETWORK ORGANIZATION. PLEASE PROVIDE EXPLANATORY NOTES AND ASSUMPTIONS.

The budget for the Explore Learning Network is shown in Attachment L. As a preface to this narrative, positions included in the budget are those whose services directly impact the operations of Explore Academy campuses in Las Vegas. As such, ELN employees who work specifically for campuses outside of Nevada (e.g. the principal of an Albuquerque-based campus) are not included in the budget. While the school contributes to the Network's budget, it does not cover the entirety of the Network's total costs as those costs are shared by all schools within the Network. As schools open and reach full capacity, it is appropriate to assume that the Network fee percentage contributed by all campuses will be equal and that all schools will benefit equally from services provided.

The budget shows a phasing approach to increasing the capacity of the Explore Learning Network over the first five years of Explore Academy's operation. The Network initially begins with its executive director and director of operations, along with staff members who oversee:
- Technology: internet connectivity, computers and other technological hardware, network-wide student information system support, state and federal reporting requirements
- Growth: student recruitment, community relations, marketing
- Curriculum and instruction (Head Instructional Lead): pedagogy, academics, instruction, prof. development, training)
- Human capital: overseeing personnel services (HR) for ELN staff
- Instruction in core content areas (Instructional Lead): contracted positions for support in science, English, math, soc. st.

The budget also includes the employment of the school's head administrator.

This staffing structure remains intact for the first two years. In the third year, as the Network prepares for the launch of a second and third school in Las Vegas, it expands its capacity to include an administrative assistant, part-time positions for both new principals, and positions specific to:
- Academics: academic data management, development of all network academic resources
- Special education: overseeing instruction for special education students, student IEPs, student progress towards goals, and compliance with state and federal laws
- Operations in Nevada: an ELN staff located in Las Vegas to oversee the operations of all Las Vegas campuses

This expansion continues once the second and third campuses open, with full salaries for both new school administrators as well as the addition of staff specific to:
- Business management: overseeing the business operations of all campuses
- Scheduling and student data management

For each staff member, an increase in salary is assumed at 1.5% per year across the five-year plan. Benefits are assumed to be 35% of total salary which is specific to the benefits structure for small business employees in the state of New Mexico, where ELN is centrally located. Overhead costs ("Network Support") for the Network are included as well, increasing at 2% per year. The renting of facilities for the Network offices are included with increases in rent associated with the increase in Network staffing over the five-year projection.

6) HOW WILL YOU ADJUST YOUR BUDGET IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO ATTRACT THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS REFLECTED IN YOUR SUBMITTED BUDGET MODEL OR FUNDING IS OTHERWISE REDUCED?

If student enrollment fails to meet projections, or is otherwise impacted by budgetary cuts, the school has developed specific responses to address budgetary shortfalls. The following are the steps the school will take in the event that the budget requires adjustment due to budgetary shortfalls, the total of which could reduce the school's overall budget by over $500,000 with minimal impact on its academic operations:

- Teaching staff reduction: as teaching staff encompasses a significant percentage of the school's budget, and in the event that student enrollment numbers are down, it is appropriate to look to a reduction in hiring teaching staff in proportion to the degree to which student enrollment is below projected numbers. Reduction in teaching staff will take place in social studies and science initially, with English and mathematics seeing a reduction if further reductions are needed. In addition, a decrease in overall staff
- Elective teaching staff: It is further conceivable that reducing the number of elective teachers is an option, with the school simply offering fewer non-core classes to its students until such time that the budget allows for foreign language, fine arts, and physical education to be offered to all of its students
- Activities: as an area where administrative staff, including the principal, counselor, and tutors, can come together to manage, the activities director position may be absorbed in the event that additional cuts are needed
- Information technology: as the Network provides technology support to each of its school's, an on-site IT staff members, while ideal, could be substituted for contract IT services in the event that staffing needs adjustment. The Network IT staff member would shift to work more closely with the head administrator and contracted IT entity to ensure that technology support is adequately provided in the absence of a full-time, on-site IT staff member
- Network management fee: as a school managed by the Explore Learning Network, it is a priority that the school maintains financial solvency at all times, and as such, the Network is open to re-evaluating its fee during periods of financial stress due to lower enrollment metrics

The following are additional steps that could be taken to further adjust for budgetary shortfalls:
- Facility payment renegotiation: as an additional step, the school will seek to renegotiate its facility lease terms to reduce or defer rental payments until such time that the school can meet its full lease obligations
- Absorbing business management services: while Explore Academy will contract for its own business management services, if needed, the Network may adopt a ELN-specific business management staff member prior to its planned rollout (2022). This would help save costs to the school itself while putting an increased (but acceptable) burden on the Network to manage the school's business operations

7) AS ATTACHMENT M, INCLUDE COPIES OF YOUR LAST THREE NETWORK ORGANIZATION FINANCIAL AUDITS AND A COPY OF THE MOST RECENT AUDIT FOR EACH SCHOOL.   Included.

8) AS ATTACHMENT N, IF YOUR PROPOSAL INVOLVES A FOR-PROFIT EDUCATION MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION (EMO), PLEASE PROVIDE THEIR MOST RECENT AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FROM THE CORPORATE LEVEL.   N/A

SCHOOL SUSTAINABILITY ⊕

1) WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE GREATEST RISKS TO THE SUCCESSFUL OPERATION OF YOUR SCHOOL(S) IN ITS FIRST YEAR? WHAT CRITICAL STEPS CAN YOU TAKE NOW TO MITIGATE THESE RISKS?

One risk in the operation of the first year lies in the fact that ELN is managing the school from out of state. In order to mitigate this risk, the director of operations, Ms. Varela, will work closely with the school leader, both virtually at least once a week and no less than once per month on site at the school campus. This collaborative relationship between ELN and the school site will help address school needs as they arise. As a management organization, it is important that ELN not only holds the school accountable for its implementation of the model and its school operation, but also that it holds itself accountable for providing comprehensive support for the school staff to ensure the success of Explore Academy.

Another risk that is anticipated is the implementation of the school model with a brand new staff and school leader. In order to mitigate this risk, the training that will be implemented both for the school leader as well as the staff will be comprehensive and begin in the planning year. As teachers are hired starting in the spring of 2019, the instructional leads for each content area, in conjunction with the ELN director of operations, will train and guide teachers as they learn the model and begin to form their flavors and course descriptions. ELN will also guide the master scheduling process and provide teachers with support as they plan their year's instruction. A more detailed description of how we will prepare and support

the teachers is outlined in the talent section of this application, and those systems are the foundation of how ELN support a brand new staff as they acclimate to the Explore Learning model.

2) WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE GREATEST RISKS TO THE SUCCESSFUL OPERATION OF YOUR SCHOOL(S) FIVE YEARS FROM NOW? WHAT ARE THE CRITICAL STEPS YOU CAN TAKE IN YOUR FIRST FIVE YEARS OF OPERATION TO MITIGATE THESE RISKS?

Looking toward Explore Academy operation in five years, the greatest anticipated risk relates to the expansion of the school network. Currently, the expansion plan outlines three schools operating in Nevada in five years, so in order to facilitate the success of all three ELN network schools in Nevada, the Network has formed expansion timelines in order to develop the Network's capacity to manage a growing network. Positions will be added to ELN to support the three campuses including special education and compliance, technology, instructional leads, directors of operations for each site, business management, etc. Building this capacity at the network level and strengthening the network support systems each year leading to year five will help each Explore Academy campus as it functions both independently as a successful school, collaboratively as a network of Explore schools, and cooperatively with ELN and its governing board for support and compliance.

Another risk at year five that may be anticipated is the staffing needs of the school as it develops and grows. As described in the talent section of this app as well, there are several systems in place to not only recruit quality teachers, but also to support and develop the staff to help retain quality teachers year after year, however continuing to attract effective talent is always a perceived risk as more talent is needed.

FRESH START CHARTER SCHOOL PROGRAM ◈

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1) HOW WILL YOUR SCHOOL(S) DIRECTLY ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS WHO ARE CURRENTLY ZONED TO A SCHOOL ON THE STATE'S LIST OF RISING STARS SCHOOLS? HOW WILL YOU PARTNER WITH OTHER SCHOOLS IN THE SAME ZONE TO ENSURE THAT ALL STUDENTS IN THAT ZONE ARE BEING WELL SERVED?

Explore Academy will seek to serve students (and their families) who are searching for a more individualized education and high quality options outside the education they are receiving at their local neighborhood district high school. With the implementation of the Explore Learning model, a school brought to the area will provide students with tremendous opportunity in developing a customized, choice-based curriculum, leading to improved educational outcomes.

One of the main services that an incoming charter school can provide is, simply, an alternative. Within the North Las Vegas area, there is a sparse collection of charters available to parents in general, and, of those that are available, there are no charters offering a program providing a comprehensive middle-high school program (grades 6-12).

Furthermore, of those charter schools that do exist, there is little evidence that population of North Las Vegas is truly being served based on the demographic data of the charter schools themselves. In comparison to the surrounding middle and high school programs, free-and-reduced lunch rate on average is 84% and 79% for middle school and high school respectively. When comparing to the North Las Vegas charter middle and high schools, the average FRL rate is 5% and 10% for middle school and high school, respectively, marking a clear lack of representation of the students in North Las Vegas.

This chasm is further exemplified when considering special educational populations and English Language Learners, both of whom are significantly underrepresented in the area's charters when compared to the demographics of the students in the area, specifically when focusing on the middle school programs with which Explore Academy would likely be paired.

Within those potential paired middle schools, it is clear that there is a need for an educational alternative as the existing schools are not providing successful outcomes to the students of North Las Vegas. Within the Nevada School Performance Framework, five of the seven existing middle schools possess a rating of two stars or below.

As a school built around academic choice, Explore Academy provides a model that is innovative and provides something never-before-seen in the area it intends to locate. Not only does the school itself embody choice within a greater (but sparse) charter landscape, but the ideals on which the school itself will be founded are based on choice for students themselves, a notion completely unrepresented in schools within the area as a whole.

Those middle schools and high schools within the area are traditional in their approach, relying on a standard one-size-fits-all format for its educational model. In contrast to this, Explore Academy can provide students with an experience that begins to build their responsibility and independence in making choices that lead to successful outcomes in their lives.

As a rigorous, college preparatory model, Explore Academy will further offer a program that focuses on student success in post-secondary educational endeavors. Of the high schools in the area, while geared towards providing comprehensive education to their students, not one specific focuses on preparing students for success in

college. Furthermore, based on the average ACT scores for the four local district high schools, only 5% of graduating seniors are considered college-ready based on ACT scores, suggesting a strong need for an alternative approach in preparing students for college.

Just providing an alternative, however, is insufficient. Explore Academy will offer a proven focus on college preparation that will allow those students (and their families) who seek a college-preparatory program to benefit from a rigorous curriculum which not only challenges students with higher expectations required for success in college, but supports them as they build their capacity to function at a college level. In this respect, from sixth grade until graduation, Explore Academy will offer students that preparatory focus from an earlier age and continuing through graduation, a program the likes of which are unavailable to the families in North Las Vegas.

As a member of the North Las Vegas educational community, Explore Academy will seek to partner with local charter and district elementary schools whenever possible in order to establish connections with those entities in order to offer its academic program as an innovative alternative as those students continue into middle school. To the extent possible with both middle and high schools in the area, the founding team will seek to form relationships with leaders at several schools so that a potential consortium can be formed where charter schools may appear as a viable alternative to the local neighborhood district middle and high schools. As the charter school movement is focused on providing student choice, an effective partnership with other schools will seek to foster that sense of choice in families so that they may come to see Explore Academy as an alternative if its style and manner of education aligns with their vision of education. The extent to which this will be possible is currently unknown.

To whatever extent possible, based on the receptivity of the local area partner schools, Explore Academy would like to utilize shared services or facilities so that all students may come to benefit from the partnership at hand.

2) INDICATION OF PREFERENCE

a. **IF YOU HAVE A PREFERRED ZONE OR LOCATION, IDENTIFY THE LOCATION (BE AS SPECIFIC AS POSSIBLE) AND DISCUSS HOW YOUR EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY AND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM ALIGN WITH THE NEEDS OF THAT COMMUNITY. OR**

b. **IF YOU HAVE NO PREFERENCE, PROVIDE A DETAILED EXPLANATION OF HOW YOU WILL DETERMINE WHICH ZONE TO SERVE AND HOW YOU WILL CONFIRM THAT YOUR ACADEMIC PHILOSOPHY AND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM ALIGN WITH COMMUNITY NEEDS. NOTE: APPLICANTS EXPRESSING A PREFERENCE ARE NOT GUARANTEED THE PREFERRED ZONE OR LOCATION.**

Explore Academy will pursue a location in the North Las Vegas area within close proximity to an identified partner school. As the partner school identification has yet to take place, the specific radius for a potential location cannot yet be determined.

As the school begins to draw initial data for its enrolled students, and as the Rising Stars data is released and potential partnership schools begin to materialize, the founding team will analyze appropriate facility locations in coordination with available spaces around the North Las Vegas area that the team has previously identified.

As described above, the North Las Vegas area has yet to provide a school which enrolls a representative population of North Las Vegas students with an innovative college preparatory education. With the establishment of Explore Academy in the area, the families of North Las Vegas will be provided with an innovative alternative to the struggling academic programs it currently offers.

3) DESCRIBE YOUR LOTTERY AND REGISTRATION PROCESSES.

As a public charter school with open enrollment, Explore Academy will serve all students and families without bias. The school will, however, target advertising and enrollment efforts in the Neighborhood Option zones where it will potentially locate to provide students and families with an increased opportunity for access to school choice. This will include canvasing, direct mailers, family parent nights, social media blasts, advertisements in local publications, website outreach, and presence at local community events. ELN will build relationships with the community in order to attract a student body that reflects the demographic and educational profile of the district schools in the area. ELN and Explore Academy will follow all laws, statutes, and rules to which they are bound by Nevada law, Achievement School District, and any grant programs (if funded by grant monies).

The enrollment and lottery process outlined here is based on the New Mexico campus and will be adjusted to comply as needed with all ASD and Nevada rules and regulations as they pertain to lottery processes and charter school enrollment such as weighted enrollment, school boundary preferences, etc. pursuant to NRS 388A.456 - *Priority enrollment for certain children; timeline for lottery; school districts required to create, maintain and post list regarding enrollment.*

From the moment advertising commences, the school will begin drawing a student enrollment queue from which it will select students starting in October of the year prior to the school's opening. This selection will be done on a monthly basis until such time when the enrollment cap is reached for a specific grade level. Student enrollment submissions will be taken online (through the school's website), over the phone, and at each of the community information nights to allow all families the means to submit an interest form for a position in the enrollment queue.

Students will be selected based on their order within the enrollment queue at the end of each month until such time that the school's initial enrollment level for each grade is satisfied. At the end each month, if the cap for a specific grade level has not been met, then all students who submitted interest forms in that month will be admitted. If the enrollment cap is reached for a specific grade level at the end of the month, the students on the enrollment queue from that month will then undergo a lottery process and in turn be assigned a numerical position. From the randomly sorted list, students will be accepted starting with position 1 until the cap is reach. Siblings of accepted and current students as well as children of employees are exempt from the lottery process and are admitted from the enrollment queue directly as space allows. All lottery procedures will be open to the public and all procedures will be explained in detail on the school website or provided upon request.

Students who are not accepted due to the enrollment cap being reached for their grade level, having been assigned their random wait list number in the monthly lottery, will be transferred to the wait list from which students will be pulled as spaces becoming available. As students either fail to commit to their enrollment or withdraw from the enrollment process, the enrollment queue will proceed down the length of the wait list until such time that the enrollment level is satisfied. The enrollment queue and subsequent wait list for each grade level will not consider gender, race, ethnicity, disability, academic standing, or any other metric when considering student enrollment within the enrollment cue.

Once a student has been accepted to Explore Academy, the registration process begins, starting with an enrollment form that is completed by each family either online or in person at the school site. ELN intends to remove barriers such as lack of technology access or lack of experience with school registration procedures by hosting registration events at the school, making the enrollment process available on the website in a format that is accessible via cell phone browsers (Google Form), and by inviting parents to the school to have someone assist them one on one with the process. ELN will also provide personal assistance, via email, phone, and in-person during enrollment event, to families who require any specific assistance. This allows for both in-depth and brief questions to be posed and answered at any time of day, any day of the week. The Network are dedicated to responding in a timely manner, and it realizes that many of our families will have schedules that are quite different from a normal school day. The social media platforms, website, and email processes that ELN continues to establish will help to remove communication barriers and achieve a smooth, comfortable enrollment process for families entering the Explore community.

FRESH START CHARTER SCHOOL FACILITY Ⓐ

1) IF YOU ALREADY HAVE IDENTIFIED A SUITABLE FACILITY, DISCUSS YOUR PLAN AND TIMELINE FOR ACQUIRING AND RENOVATING IT.   Explore Academy's founding team has not yet identified a facility.

2) IF YOU HAVE NOT YET IDENTIFIED A SUITABLE FACILITY, DESCRIBE YOUR TIMELINE AND APPROACH TO FINDING ONE.

After approval of its charter application, Explore Academy will follow the process of becoming a Neighborhood Option by pairing with a school from or around the North Las Vegas area. During this process, the founding team will work with real estate entities, facility investors, developers, and city officials to explore options for its location, using a predicted set of potential locations based on prior year data for Rising Star schools. From this work the founding team will generate a series of potential facility options, both new construction and existing facility renovation, around the area in which the predicted partner schools will come to exist.

In parallel to this work will be the process of student recruitment and community outreach as the founding team continues to reach out to families within the community in an effort to jumpstart its enrollment process. From this work a general projection of student enrollment geography will be created based on from where the school's potential students will be coming.

As the final partnering school options are solidified, the founding team will begin to narrow its focus in on its final location by analyzing the above geographic data, partnering school options (and appropriate allowable distance), available facility locations, and geographic data for incoming students to narrow its focus and finalize the school's location.

Within the facility selection criteria, the consideration for financing the development of the existing facility (or land) into the future Explore Academy will be heavily evaluated, weighing in both timeline and overall cost based on the school's short and long-term budgets. In the event that the founding team can approve an investor to renovate an existing facility or provide new construction as an option at a rate that is financially responsible for the school's budget in the long-term, the founding team will seek to pursue that as its first option if a payment structure can be established to remain flexible within the school's budget for the initial years of its operations. At present, the founding team has worked closely in exploring an agreement with EPR Properties for financing its facility acquisition and construction costs and High Mark for its facility development. The founding team has experience in working with both parties in the past.

In the event that the above scenario does not provide results that are satisfactory for the school's short or long-term facility solution, the founding team will work directly with potential property owners to secure a facility with owner-financing via a real estate contract or with a lease arrangement with tenant improvement costs paid by the owner and amortized over the life of the lease.

Depending on the options which manifest from the above scenarios, coupled with the pairing of Explore Academy to its partner school, the timeline for acquiring and beginning renovations will vary. In the event that the charter application is approved the potential timeline for facility acquisition estimates a closing date of December 1st to January 1st. In the scenario for new construction, Explore Academy will need to finalize arrangements prior to December 1st. For facility renovations, it is conceivable that, depending on the extent of the renovations, arrangements would need to be finalized by March 1st to have the facility ready for the start of school in August.

3) WHETHER OR NOT YOU HAVE IDENTIFIED A SUITABLE FACILITY, WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS FOR FINANCING ITS ACQUISITION AND RENOVATION, INCLUDING:

The process described above provides a general plan in the acquisition of a facility. As stated above, the founding team has started preliminary planning to utilize EPR Properties and High Mark for its facility financing and development. In the area of facility financing, the founding team anticipates the need for a final facility approximately 45,000-50,000 square feet in size at full enrollment (seven hundred students). When considering a two-phase approach, EPR currently estimates the following project costs, totaling $10,050,000:

YEAR	STUDENTS	TOTAL SQ FT NEEDED	EPR COST ESTIM. PROJ COSTS
1 (2019)	330 (Gr 6-7, 9)	20,000	$4,915,000
2 (2020)	525 (Gr 6-10)	50,000	$5,250,000

Based on the programmatic offerings of potential investors, including EPR, there are potential scenarios in which the school would take on a lighter debt service in its initial years to afford the burden of new construction as it phases in its enrollment. In its current projections with EPR, the following debt structure is predicted across the first five years (see right):

YEAR	IMPLIED CAP	RENT
1 (2019)	6.87%	$337,906
2 (2020)	7.84%	$787,946
3 (2021)	8.77%	$881,067
4 (2022)	8.99%	$903,094
5 (2023)	9.21%	$925,671

Under the scenario in which the school leases a building, the following costs can be derived with the assumption of $40/sq ft in reconditioning a building with open-office architecture. Under that scenario, it is assumed that the base rent for a facility is $12/sq ft NNN with an additional $4/sq ft across the life of a ten-year lease ($16/sq ft total). With those assumptions in place, the following costs can be derived using a three-step phase-in approach:

YEAR	STUDENTS	SQ FT NEEDED	ANNUAL RENT (@$16/sq ft)	COST PER PUPIL
1	330 (Gr 6-7, 9)	20,000	$320,000	$969

| 2 | 525 (Gr 6-10) | 40,000 | $640,000 | $1,219 |
| 4 | 700 (Gr 6-12) | 50,000 | $800,000 | $1,142 |

From the scenarios above, it is the first (financing) scenario which is outlined in the school's projected budget. Within this model, the above-described debt service does fit responsibly within the school's five-year budget.

4) DESCRIBE YOUR CAPACITY AND EXPERIENCE IN FACILITIES ACQUISITION AND MANAGEMENT, INCLUDING MANAGING BUILD-OUT AND/OR RENOVATIONS, AS APPLICABLE.

The ELN founding team has had extensive experience in facility financing including work with real estate developers, educational facility planning, and facility financing through public and private investors. It has worked through three separate renovation projects within its facilities experience over the life of Explore Academy's (NM) operation. The team has worked closely with general contractors, architects, investors, and developers to successfully work through each of these projects to achieve successful outcomes for its school facility.

Within the last year, the Explore Learning team successfully finalized a public bond financing transaction over $10,000,000 to purchase its existing campus, incorporating a $2,000,000 construction project to add capacity to the existing facility. As a school with three academic years completed at the time of transaction initiation, the approval of Explore Academy for this level of transaction is a testament to its academic success, school model, and school leadership team.

Moving forward, the Explore Learning Network will contribute this experience and the experience of its third-party associates to provide the same level of attentive oversight to its projects within the North Las Vegas community to provide students with a facility conducive to the academic and cultural environment it plans to build for its students.

LAUNCH PLAN ⊕

1) WHAT CRITERIA DID YOU USE TO ASSESS YOUR READINESS TO EXPAND? UNDER WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES WILL THE ORGANIZATION DELAY OR MODIFY ITS GROWTH PLAN.

As a founding team, members of the administrative and instructional staff have worked together for five years to develop and operate the original Explore Academy in Albuquerque, NM. As the school has grown and continues to show success utilizing an innovative and truly original model, the discussions of replication, and new communities which the school could benefit, came to the forefront. This process of collaboration, brainstorming, and research culminated in the formation of the Explore Learning Network, a nonprofit organization that seeks to replicate, manage, and support new school sites that utilize the Explore Academy / Explore Learning model.

The group analyzed student achievement data, state test scores, student survey data, parent satisfaction data, enrollment and retention data, and student academic progress to measure whether the school and its model was able to replicate similar success across new school sites. After earning "A" letter grades from the New Mexico Public Education Department for the last three years and demonstrating student growth in math and English that surpasses all high schools, both charter and traditional, in the state of New Mexico, it became clear that the model was one that could potentially benefit other communities outside the Albuquerque area.

This group formed a steering committee who partnered with Bellwether Education Partners to participate in a strategic forecasting analysis for what was to become the Explore Learning Network. This process provided insight into the model's capacity for growth and expansion, the logistics of forming and operating a management organization, and the potential tracks for replication of Explore Academy sites. In the end, the process equipped the founding team of this charter application with a replication plan that is thorough and comprehensive in its approach.

Modification to the growth plan will be dictated by the acceptance of the Explore Learning model in areas outside of NM, both by local and state authorizers and by the community members it intends to serve through its expansion. As delays exist in charter approvals or start-up capital for the establishment of new schools in high-needs areas, the growth plan will be adjusted to accommodate. Further, as student enrollment dictates the rate at which Explore Academy campuses will ultimately grow, the growth plan will further accommodate student and parent interest in the model, to which ELN will adjust its growth planning appropriately.

2) WHY DO YOU WANT TO OPERATE A SCHOOL(S) IN NEVADA?

As the New Mexico campus of Explore Academy continues to grow and show unprecedented success, both in the areas of academic proficiency as well as academic growth, the initiative that led to formation of the Explore Learning Network was focused on expanding the model's potential to bring the same quality education to students outside NM.

North Las Vegas is home to families similar in many ways to those of Albuquerque: students from first-generation residents as well as first-generation college-bound students, students of several ethnicities and English language learners, students from low income households, students with disabilities, and students who have few quality options for innovative education in their local neighborhoods. The Explore Learning model has the potential to bring these students the opportunity to truly engage in their education and feel welcome in a school community that is structured around not only the development of their capacity to take responsibility for their own learning, but also focused around their personal and academic interests, allowing for a curriculum that is both unique to their school site as well as highly engaging and customizable. As the founding team has engaged with parents and community members in Las Vegas, it became clear that the area has the potential for a successful implementation of the Explore Learning model.

The students in the ASD Rising Star schools, specifically those within the area of North Las Vegas, are not provided with many educational choices. There are few quality options for them in their neighborhoods, and many of the schools show enrollment that exceeds the number of students that the school was designed to accommodate. As a school, Explore Academy's mission is to bring choice to students, a theme that exists on multiple levels. Not only is the school in itself an option for students and families, but the curriculum provides choice at every turn and for every student, one that seeks to provide a tested model for students that will prepare them for college by closing learning gaps and developing individualized learning pathways for each student who attends.

The Explore Learning founding team seeks to establish schools in Nevada because its goal is to provide Nevada students the options and educational choices they deserve through an approach to learning not found anywhere else.

3) NEVADA'S ASD LAW ALLOWS YOU TO APPLY ONCE TO OPERATE MULTIPLE SCHOOLS IN THE FUTURE. IF YOU ARE APPLYING TO OPERATE MULTIPLE SCHOOLS, HOW MANY SCHOOLS DO YOU PROPOSE TO OPERATE IN NEVADA? FOR WHICH GRADE LEVELS, IN WHICH AREAS OF THE STATE, AND IN WHICH YEARS? IF YOU HAVE NOT YET DECIDED, PLEASE EXPLAIN YOUR PROCESS AND TIMELINE FOR DECIDING.

The founding team seeks to start with the establishment of a single campus in North Las Vegas beginning in the fall of 2019. In 2021, the founding team plans to apply for two additional campuses within the same general area as the capacity for additional sites allows. Using the 2021-22 school year as a planning year, the two prospective campuses would open in the fall of 2022. All campuses will serve grades 6-12, each with a population of seven hundred (700) students at full enrollment. Explore Academy's first campus will open with grades 6, 7, and 9 in the fall of 2019, thereby phasing in subsequent grades each year until the school reaches full enrollment for grades 6-12 in the fall of 2022. For the two additional campuses, the Explore Learning Network plans to follow a similar approach.

As the school commences operations with its first campus, it will measure the model's early effectiveness according to its array of metrics, including the institutional goals described above. From these measures, if the school is making progress towards the goals it has set, and enrollment at the school provides financial stability, ELN will perform an evaluation for greenlighting the above-mentioned expansion campuses.

4) DISCUSS THE RESULTS OF YOUR PAST REPLICATION EFFORTS AND LESSONS LEARNED – INCLUDING PARTICULAR CHALLENGES OR TROUBLES ENCOUNTERED; HOW YOU HAVE ADDRESSED THEM; AND HOW YOU WILL AVOID OR MINIMIZE SUCH CHALLENGES FOR THE PROPOSED SCHOOL.

This will be the first replication attempt for Explore Academy and the Explore Learning Network. That being said, the founding team has performed considerable research in engaging with school leaders and network staff who have replicated successful models across the country, seeking to analyze areas of struggles and lessons learned. As an example, during the Bellwether process, members of the steering committee were connected with a school leader from Pave Schools, a fledgling network which expanded from New York to North Carolina. Through these discussion, critical pitfalls were identified in their expansion process, including the choosing of the right school leader, differences in laws between the two states in which the schools operate, funding differences and their impact on the school model and design, and adherence to the school model in the absence of the initial founding team and staff from the first site.

The founding team additionally collaborated with schools in New Mexico who have attempted replication and experienced challenges in the process. From their experience, it became clear that working closely with the authorizer and

remaining in open communication at all times is extremely important for successful replication. It is clear that when additional campuses have tried to push through without feedback, guidance, monitoring, and support, they have watched their efforts struggle continuously at several stages due to lack of compliance, legal issues, and financial shortfalls.

In addition, it was clear from these discussions that failure to establish roots in the community you intend to serve will undermine any effort to establish a success neighborhood alternative. These effects cannot be underestimated as, without proper establishment, schools will face challenges of under-enrollment, little to no community support, and failed marketing attempts with potential families. These insights have helped the founding team to plan for community involvement and establishing connections with the Las Vegas families and community members in order to establish a deep connection to the community and use that connection to solidify the foundation of the Explore Academy campuses that will develop and grow in Nevada.

It was through discussions such as these that the ELN founding team has prepared for expanding its own fledgling network not only to a second site, but one across state lines. This process, both in projecting the expansion of our model, but predicting the areas in which challenges will manifest, has helped the founding team in planning the adjustment of the Explore Learning model based on Nevada laws and funding, to address plans for school staff training and support to increase success of a Nevada-based staff, and to anticipate procedural and logistical changes to the Explore model to better serve the communities of Las Vegas.

5) LIST ANY SCHOOLS THAT WERE PREVIOUSLY APPROVED BY ANOTHER AUTHORIZER BUT WHICH FAILED TO OPEN OR DID NOT OPEN ON TIME, AND EXPLAIN THE REASONS FOR THE FAILURE OR DELAY.   N/A

6) HOW WILL YOUR NETWORK ORGANIZATION TEAM EXPAND OR OTHERWISE CHANGE IN ORDER TO SUPPORT SCHOOLS IN THE NEVADA ASD? OUTLINE SPECIFIC TIMELINES FOR BUILDING OR DEPLOYING ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY TO SUPPORT THE PROPOSED SCHOOL(S).FOR OUT-OF-STATE APPLICANTS, WILL YOU BUILD A REGIONAL OFFICE IN NEVADA?

The Explore Learning Network (ELN) is currently building capacity to manage multiple school sites. At present, it is scheduled to manage the current Explore Academy campus in NM beginning in July of 2019, when the school's new charter contract takes effect. It is also at that time that the Network will begin management over Explore Academy, Las Vegas.

The ELN's founding team currently serve as administrative and instructional staff members for Explore Academy, New Mexico, and have developed comprehensive experience over the past five years in planning, implementing, and operating a newly-designed independent charter school.

Over the past year, this team has worked to develop the infrastructure for the ELN, working with educational non-profits in both Nevada (Opportunity 180) and New Mexico (Excellent Schools New Mexico), Bellwether Education Partners, as well as with Explore Academy's existing Albuquerque-based school board to design the network structure, growth plan, and capacity building efforts.

This work has led to extensive planning as the team shifts from a single site administration to a network team that then supports the multiple schools' academic implementation, operation, data, and other required school tasks. The ELN's development plan allows the network to grow to include both the Executive Director, Mr. Baiardo, the Director of Operations, Ms. Varela, and other team members who will join the team as new campuses are added and the need for network-level support increases. These roles, as shown in the various stages of network organization structure seen in Attachment E, describe the network's growth including team members devoted to business management, marketing, special education, technology, and human resources.

As the ELN team expands, so will the network's capacity to support the ASD-chartered campuses. This will allow ELN to support the campuses in the same way the current team supports the single site it manages. The founding team is confident that its work to anticipate growth at specific school sites as well as the establishment of new campuses will allow the ELN to maintain comprehensive oversight for this growth. The strategic forecasting efforts of the past year have allowed the ELN team to learn from other networks, both successful and struggling, as well as to make connections to groups and organizations that can assist its growth and replication efforts. To this end, the ELN team also plans to apply for various grants to support its growth and planning as it focuses on expanding its operation across multiple school sites.

Within its design scope of the Las Vegas area, the ELN intends to open a single campus in the fall of 2019, with the intention of opening two additional campuses four years later, in the fall of 2022. In the planning year for the second and third campuses (fall of 2021), the ELN plans to create a local, Las Vegas-based network office as the need for greater capacity and support increases at the local level.

During the initial operational years of Explore Academy in North Las Vegas, the ELN team, in conjunction with the school leader, will recruit and train a Nevada-based operations manager to work closely with the Nevada-based network of schools. In addition to this individual, ELN will have content leads who are assigned to each campus. The operations

manager and the content leads will work as liaisons between ELN staff, particularly the Operations and Academic Directors, and the Nevada campuses. ELN will ensure that there are highly trained and supportive ELN staff located in Clark County to provide local support and training for all campuses. These positions, collectively, will function as the regional office.

In making these plans for staffing, the ELN team is cognizant of the way that schools develop and necessitate adjustment and alterations to meet the needs of the students and community. Therefore, it remains flexible in adjusting, as needed, its network, regional, and local staffing structures that may better function to support the successful operations for all Nevada-based campuses. To this end, on an annual basis, the ELN will assess the staffing efficacy and needs throughout both planning, startup, and operational phases to analyze what positions at the local and network level may be required moving forward. It is the goal of the ELN team to continually evaluate and adjust its network, regional, and local staffing plans to be supportive, cost-efficient, and effective to ensure the success of all Explore Academy campuses in Nevada.

7) FOR OUT-OF-STATE APPLICANTS, HOW IS THE NEVADA FUNDING FORMULA SIMILAR OR DIFFERENT FROM OTHER MARKETS WHERE YOU OPERATE SCHOOLS? TO THE DEGREE IT IS DIFFERENT HOW WILL YOU ENSURE THAT THEY KEY ELEMENTS OF YOUR ACADEMIC PLAN ARE IMPLEMENTED? WHAT IF ANY ADJUSTMENTS MIGHT YOU NEED TO MAKE AND HOW WILL YOU MAKE THEM?

In comparison to the New Mexico, where Explore Academy currently operates a school, the funding formula for the state of Nevada is both clear and straightforward. New Mexico's funding formula is nuanced with coefficients and multipliers that change the school's overall unit value based on a variety of conditions including: rural location, growth from the previous year, small school size (under 400 students), time and experience of the school's teaching staff members, specific levels of special education students, etc. With these numerous adjusting parameters, it is difficult to project with significant accuracy a school's operational budget as it enters each school year, specifically because many of these factors are adjusted for the school throughout the year in question. Because of these mid-year fluctuations, Explore Academy (NM) has had to operate on a conservative budget throughout its existence, a philosophy its founding team will continue utilize in the operations of its Las Vegas partner.

Nevada's funding formula provides increased simplicity, as well as a higher base unit value per student ($5,781 compared to New Mexico's $4,159). Specific adjustments to this unit value are predictable in Nevada with the Outside Revenue supplement, where, as described above, adjustments to budgets in New Mexico can fluctuate within the scope of a given year based on many parameters.

In terms of funding for special populations, both states utilize federal funding through IDEA-B and Title programs. While Nevada supplies additional state special education funding, New Mexico's funding structure incorporates special education calculations as yet another coefficient on the school's overall unit value.

The way funding is disseminated varies between the two states. While still providing state-funding on a monthly basis, New Mexico utilizes prior-year funding, where the school's operational budget for a given year is calculated based on its student count from the previous year. Because of this, especially during periods of growth where enrollment is increasing, there are significant challenges in staffing and facility costs, neither of which will exist based on the funding structure in Nevada.

New Mexico currently provides schools with capital outlay monies which may be spent toward the lease of its facility ("lease assistance funding"), to which Las Vegas has no comparable funding stream. While this supplement is not significant, it does provide extra revenue that a Nevada-based Explore Academy will have to operate without; however, it is predicted that this decrease is more than offset by the increases described further above.

One larger difference in the two states exists in the salary schedule for teachers. In comparing Clark County School District's salary schedule to the three-tiered salary schedule for the state of New Mexico, the initial difference is the starting salary point for new teachers ($36,000 for NM, $40,000 for CCSD). After the initial three-years, salaries do become comparable as New Mexico teachers advance to a Level II status ($44,000) while CCSD teachers would advance but at a lower rate ($43,000). At that point, CCSD teachers continue to advance while New Mexico teachers lag to a considerable extent. In comparing a teacher with eight-years experience with a bachelor's degree, Clark County School District pays $50,355 while a New Mexico teacher of similar experience and education would be paid $45,646 on average.

Based on the above salary difference, if teacher salaries require, it is the intention of the founding team to adjust class sizes proportionally to offset differences in salary for teachers if the need arises. While Explore Academy (NM) operates with classes capped at 16, it is the intention of the founding team to increase the class size cap for Explore Academy (NV) to 19 students if teacher salary becomes a constraint around which the school's budget cannot remain flexible. This increase does not negatively impact the school's model to any extent.

In whole, as projected in the school's budget, there are no noticeable adjustments, based on state funding, that require Explore Academy to change or alter the implementation of its academic model with its full fidelity.

SUPPLMENTAL INFORMATION REQUEST – RESPONSES

EXPLORE ACADEMY

STUDENTS SERVED AND PAST PERFORMANCE

QUESTION:

WHAT PERCENT OF STUDENTS ARE ENGLISH LEARNERS?

For school year 2017-2018, 12% of the student population of Explore was classified as EL.

QUESTIONS:

1.   PROVIDE ADDITIONAL PERFORMANCE DATA TO DEMONSTRATE THAT STUDENTS FROM DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS ARE HAVING SUBSTANTIAL SUCCESS.

A.   PLEASE PROVIDE DATA BY SUBGROUP, INCLUDING ELL.

Data for ELL students is depicted below. The data incorporated in the graphic below shows the increased academic achievement of students, based on PARCC scores for the respective subject exam, who have been enrolled at Explore Academy for three consecutive years. Over the past three years, students identified as ELL have, on average, shown increasing proficiency year after year.

The second graph (below) further illustrates the disparity between state PARCC proficiency rates for ELL students vs. proficiency rates for ELL students enrolled at Explore Academy for each of the most recent three academic years.
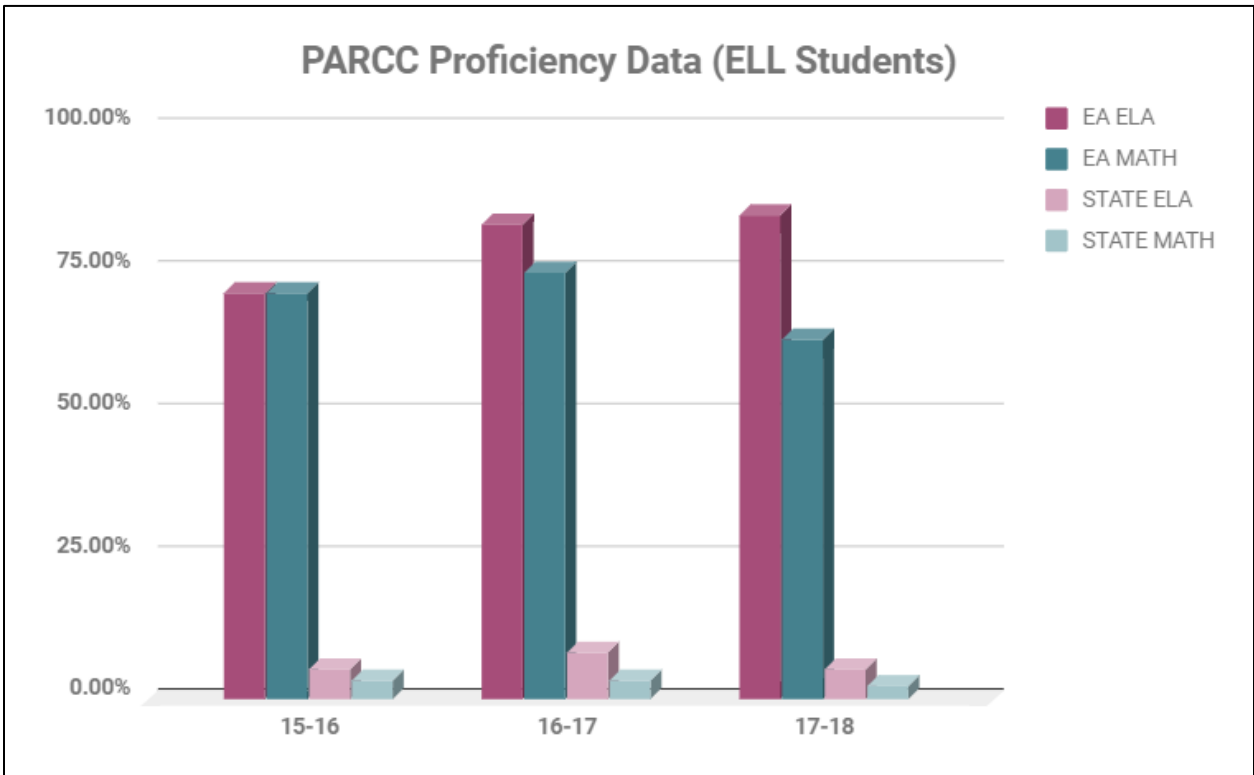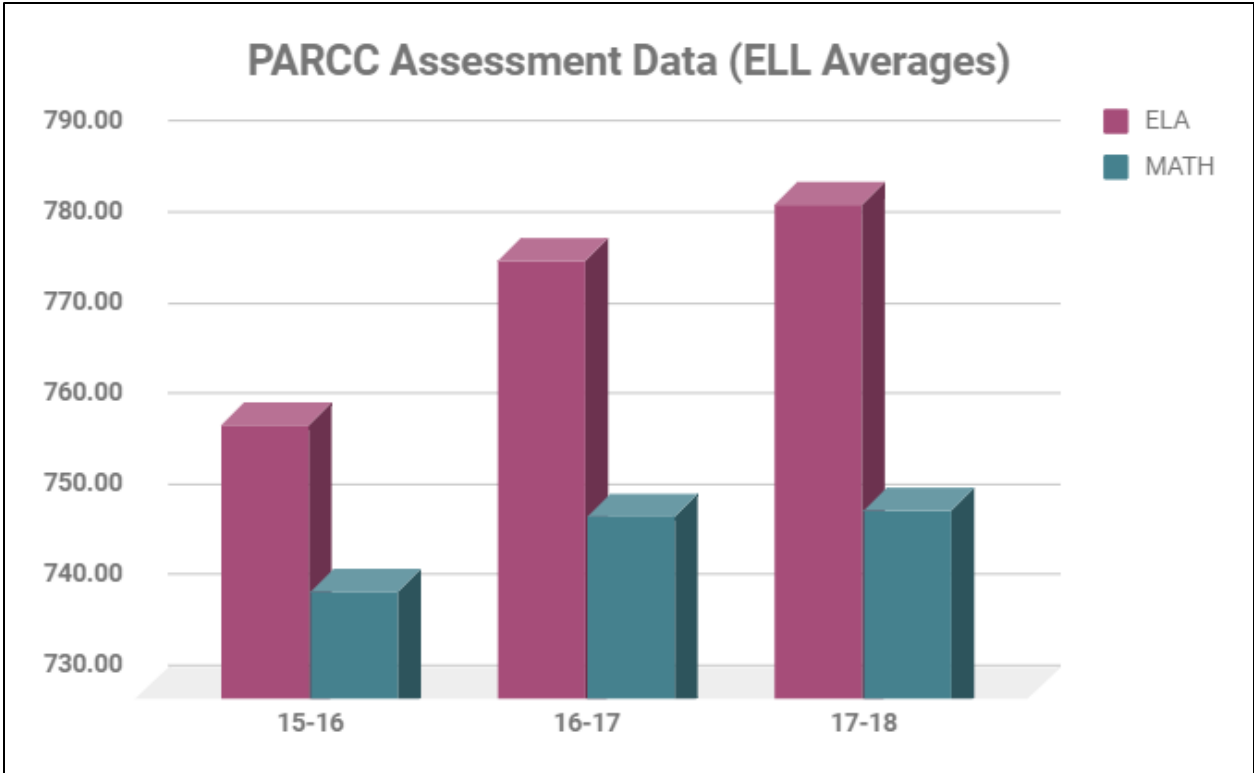
PARCC Assessment Data (ELL Averages)

PARCC Proficiency Data (ELL Students)

Student graduation rates are based on the number of entering seniors that graduate at the end of their 12th-grade year. Utilizing this data, Explore Academy has graduated 100% of its entering seniors for each of its last two (only two) graduating classes. Based on the degree to which the administrative staff receives reports from the school's college graduates, all graduates are attending a post-secondary institution.

In regards to college readiness, because all students are required to complete a dual-enrollment course, Explore Academy utilizes the Accuplacer as the basis for determining the level at which students will enter college-level coursework. Based on the previous two years data (two graduating classes), Explore Academy showed an increase in college readiness rates based on both the Accuplacer and ACT composite averages. Both averages exceed the threshold deemed appropriate for college readiness (ACT composite: 21, Accuplacer: 80).

Accuplacer Average
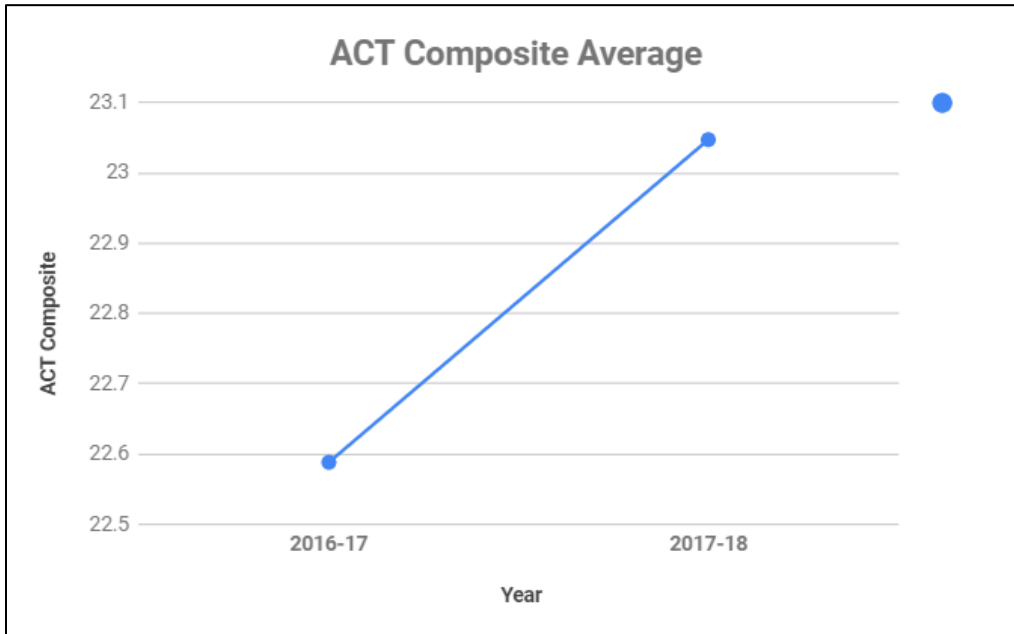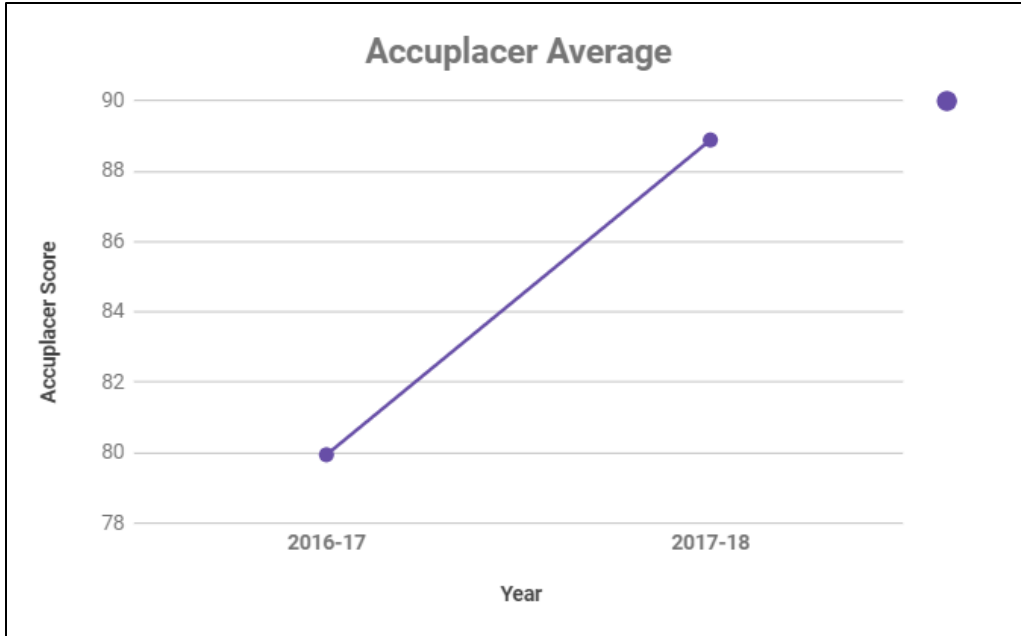
C.   PLEASE PROVIDE THREE YEARS OF DATA WHERE AVAILABLE.

Data supplied in above sections.

PROPOSED SCHOOL MODEL

QUESTIONS:

1.   IS THE CURRICULUM DEVELOPED INTERNALLY? WILL THE NEVADA SCHOOL DRAW FROM CURRICULUM DEVELOPED IN THE NEW MEXICO SCHOOL OR DEVELOP THEIR OWN? IF NEVADA TEACHERS ARE EXPECTED TO DEVELOP THEIR OWN CURRICULUM, HOW WILL YOU ENSURE THAT TEACHERS HAVE THE TIME AND EXPERTISE TO CREATE HIGH-QUALITY CURRICULUM?

The curriculum is developed internally through a framework provided by ELN and input from the individual teachers. The Nevada school will utilize the same framework as the New Mexico campus, but the Nevada staff will develop their own curriculum. The framework provided by ELN will include detailed alignment documents that delineate how seminars are structured and grouped, which seminars align to which NV standards, exit exams and example test questions for each content, and the scope and sequence of the seminars in each content area. The framework will also provide templates for course descriptions, seminar content planning, lesson plans, etc. The network will compile and organize teacher schedules into a master schedule each year, accounting for number and type of seminars required, flex period balancing, teacher prep period balancing, lunch period balancing, and equal distribution of content area and seminar level offerings throughout the year.

For teachers in Nevada who will develop the site-specific seminar flavors, this process starts with brainstorming their personal and academic likes and interests, the cultural and social interests of the students in the community, and their academic content knowledge. The next step in the process is to develop themes, or "flavors", for each of their seminars. ELN will provide example flavors, examples of "flavored" materials, example seminar outlines, etc. These materials are intended to model the curriculum creation process as the teachers begin to develop their own personal curriculum. Content leads from the network will also provide content-specific guidance and coaching that is focused specifically to assist and train the Nevada teachers in each content area. There will also be opportunities for the founding staff of the Nevada campus to participate in New Mexico seminars via internet video conferencing, to watch videos of actual Explore teacher lessons from New Mexico seminars in their content area, and to make professional connections with teachers in New Mexico to form a teacher network of support and idea-sharing.

Extensive training will be provided by the instructional leads and ELN team during the planning year, summer prior to school opening, and throughout the first school year. Teachers possess the ability to create and teach their curriculum with the right support and freedom; the training will include modules on Google Apps, technology-based learning, seminar-style teaching, flavor development and evaluation, administration of exit exams, summative and formative assessment techniques, Bloom's taxonomy, frontloading (the instructional method used universally at Explore to teach students to come to each class prepared through a semi-flipped classroom approach), and data-driven school procedures.

2.   WILL ANY NON-TEACHER-DEVELOPED ASSESSMENTS BE USED TO TRACK STUDENT PROGRESS? PLEASE DESCRIBE.

At the middle school level, all students will take the SBAC in ELA and math annually. This data, similar to PARCC data in New Mexico, will be used to measure student progress by tracking student scores from year to year, measuring the growth of each student along with their proficiency level in each test content area. Additionally, since the SBAC interim assessment is free to any Nevada school, students in grades 9-11 can take this exam in the spring during the SBAC test window in order to

continue the annual standardized measure of proficiency and growth. Students in required grade levels 5, 8 and 10 will also participate in standardized testing in science. If there are interim exams available for science, that measure would ideally be performed for the non-state tested grade levels annually as well to provide the same longitudinal test data for science that will be gathered for language arts and math.

Explore students will also participate in the ACT in grade 11 (and ideally before grade 11 as well) each year to meet the Nevada testing requirement. This assessment also provides valuable college and career readiness information for each junior as they prepare to transition from secondary to postsecondary endeavors.

In addition, teachers will be evaluated in part based on student performance on exit exams, seminar pass rates, and student feedback surveys each term. The data from exit exams, EoCs (if given), and standardized tests will be used to inform instruction across all content areas. However, exit exams are so much more precise in their ability to pinpoint areas of student proficiency, progress, growth, and learning gaps that they have proven to be a much more valuable tool in informing instruction, monitoring student progress, and developing specific interventions on the student, department, or campus-level.

3.   PLEASE PROVIDE DETAILS ON THE APPROACH TO SCHOOL DISCIPLINE.

Explore Academy prioritizes safety and positive school culture, so the discipline approach that is implemented is intended to ensure that each student feels safe, respected, and welcome at school every day. Understanding that students are learning and developing constantly throughout their k-12 experience, it is important to maintain an approach to discipline that is not only consistent, but also fair and empathetic. Thus, the Explore discipline matrix is designed using four infraction levels that categorize negative student behavior and allow for multiple opportunities for intervention from administration and counseling to foster positive school behavior on campus. With consistent implementation and adult intervention for students when they break a school rule, the approach has been very successful in guiding students to be responsible for and cognizant of their own actions and choices, a goal that mirrors the educational model's goal of teaching students to be responsible for and cognizant of their own learning and academic progress.

The school's discipline matrix, with the levels of disciplinary offense is shown below:

LEVEL I

- Profanity (purposeful, hurtful, sexist, derogatory, disrespectful)
- Dress code • Electronic device (phone, IPod, Kindle, games, or similar during class)
- Misuse of technology (not using for intended or directed purpose)
- Tardy (repetitive, habitual)
- Poor classroom/academic conduct (sleeping in class, etc.)
- Parking violation (non-reckless, criminal, or with intent)
- Horseplay
- Ditching/Unexcused absence
- Fight – self-defense (could have walked away but refused)
- Disrespect, insubordination, defiance of authority
- Disruptive behavior in class or on school transportation
- Refusal to work during class or study hall
- Lack of preparation for class (not bringing technology, device not charged)

• Instigation of trouble/arguments, inciting of rumors, spreading of misinformation, etc.
• Failure to report information which undermines the safety and security of the school

LEVEL II

• Fight – Mutual assault (both participants willingly engaged)
• Horseplay with serious injury
• Inappropriate material/contraband (paraphernalia, pornography, anti-government, racist, sexist, etc.)
• Possession of cigarettes, smoking on campus
• PDA – public display of affection (excessive kissing, hugging, touching, perceived/reported offensive by staff, students, or visitors)
• Ditching/Un-excused absence (off-campus, repetitive, more severe)
• Harassment (teasing, bugging, constantly bothering in a childish or immature manner)
• Improper use of technology (hacking, pornography, racist, games, etc.)
• Improper use of motor vehicle (not injurious, criminal, reckless, negligent, no negative intent)
• Disrespect, insubordination, defiance of authority (severe, recurring, habitual)
• Disruptive behavior in class or on school transportation (more severe, recurring, habitual)
• Vandalism (easily removed by student, pen or pencil on desk etc.)
• Possession of weapon – No intent (left airsoft gun or box cutter in vehicle, self-confessed possession, etc.)

LEVEL III

• Bullying (any kind, any time, no prior offense required)
• Improper use of motor vehicle (injurious, criminal, negligent, intent)
• Gang Activity (dress, recruiting, imitating) • Possession of criminal material
• Drugs and alcohol (possession, under the influence, authentic or look alike)
• Disrespect, insubordination, defiance of authority (severe, recurring, habitual)
• Cheating/plagiarism
• Failure to comply with discipline consequences
• Theft (physical or digital)
• Misuse/falsifying official documentation
• Sexual Misconduct (sex, touching private areas, solicitation)
• Vandalism (not easily removed by student, extra chemical or manpower needed, replacement required)
• Disruptive behavior in class or on school transportation (very severe, recurring, habitual)
• Fighting (starting, instigating, encouraging, participation, inciting, fan club mentality, verbally or electronically)
• Threats

LEVEL IV ~ ZERO TOLERANCE***

• Arson
• Physical/Sexual Assault
• Bomb Threat
• Possession of weapon with intent (verbal or assumed)

DISCIPLINE MATRIX POINT SYSTEM

Level I Offenses = 1 Point*
Level II Offenses = 2 points*
Level III Offenses = 3 Points
Level IV Offenses = Expulsion from Explore Academy
Recurring Offenses = At the discretion of administration, student may receive additional points for recurring offenses, or for offenses deemed more severe than the level in which they are classified

CONSEQUENCE MATRIX
~ 1-2 points: student receives warning
~ 3-9 points: student is suspended out of school with the number of days based on the offense (Level I offense = one day suspension, Level II offense = two days, etc.)
~ 10 points: student is expelled from Explore Academy**

**Prior to expulsion, the student or parent has the right to an expulsion hearing to be heard before the school's head administrator

4. PLEASE VERIFY THAT THE SCHOOL'S UNIQUE MODEL WILL COMPLY WITH THE RECENTLY ADOPTED NEVADA GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS.

The chart below specifies a cross-reference to demonstrate which Explore Academy seminars will be utilized to fulfill Nevada's state graduation requirement. It describes in which areas students will have to fulfill two seminar requirements within a given category (ENG 410, for example). It should be noted that Explore Academy's graduation requirements will exceed the minimum requirement set forth below.

CREDIT AREA	NV GRAD REQ'T	EA SEMINARS
ENGLISH	4	ENG 300, 310, 320, 330, 400 (x2) **(ENGLISH 9)** ENG 410 (x2), 420 (x2), 430 (x2) **(ENGLISH 10)** ENG 500 (x2), 510 (x2), 520 (x2) **(ENGLISH 11)** ENG 530 (x2), ENG 600-LEVEL SEMINARS (x4) **(ENGLISH 12)**
MATH	3	MTH 300, 310, 400, 410, 500, 510 **(ALGEBRA I)** MTH 320, 420, 520, 620, 720, 800, 820 **(GEOMETRY)** MTH 330, 430, 530, 630, 730, 830 **(STATISTICS)**
SCIENCE	2	SCI 300, 310, 320, 330, 400, 410 **(SCIENCE I)** SCI 420, 430, 500, 530, 600, 610 **(SCIENCE II)**
US HISTORY	1	SOC 300, 400, 430 (x2), 530 (x2)
US GOV	1	SOC 600 (x2), SOC 610 (x2)
PE	2	SEMINARS WILL VARY BASED ON STUDENT CHOICE BUT OPTIONS WILL INCLUDE: PE 300-690 WITH TWELVE (12) TOTAL SEMINARS REQUIRED
HEALTH	0.5	HLT 300, 310
COMPUTERS	0.5	WILL BE INCLUDED IN MATH CURRICULUM AND CAN BE DRAWN FROM ROBOTICS OR COMPUTER SCIENCE SEMINARS (3 SEMINARS REQUIRED)
ELECTIVES	6	WILL VARY BASED ON STUDENT CHOICE.
ART/HUMAN	1	WILL BE DRAWN FROM ART, MUSIC, OR DRAMA SEMINARS. RANGE WILL INCLUDE ART 200 - ART 500, MUS 200 - MUS 500, DRA 200 - DRA 500 WITH SIX (6) CREDITS REQUIRED
COLLEGE / CAREER "FLEX" CREDITS	2	COURSES (12) WITHIN EXPLORE ACADEMY'S MAJORS WILL FULFILL THIS REQUIREMENT. THESE WILL INCLUDE SCI 600-LEVEL, ENG 600-LEVEL, SOC 700-LEVEL, MTH 900-LEVEL. STUDENTS MAY USE THE ADDITIONAL SCIENCE, SOCIAL STUDIES, AND MATH COURSES THAT WILL BE REQUIRED BASED ON EXPLORE ACADEMY'S GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

In addition, students will be required to pass End of Course Assessments required by Nevada state law (two math (Math I, Math II), two English (English I, English II)) and the ACT for students in 11th grade.

5.	Given that the new Nevada School Performance Framework for high schools (p. 34-39 and Appendix G) includes 20 points based on student participation and success in post-secondary

PREPARATION PROGRAMS (AP COURSES, DUAL ENROLLMENT, IB COURSES AND CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION), HOW COULD THE SCHOOL'S MODEL BE ADAPTED TO ENABLE STUDENTS TO ACCESS THESE TYPES OF PROGRAMS AND ULTIMATELY ENABLE THE SCHOOL TO BE SUCCESSFUL ON THIS EVALUATION FRAMEWORK?

All Explore Academy students are required to complete at least one dual enrollment course (fulfilling the official state requirement). Additionally, students are encouraged to take more college courses while still enrolled at Explore Academy during their junior and senior years, allowing them to enter college after graduation with many of their first-year college requirements completed during high school. The seven period academic day helps students with this process since they can schedule their flex (free) periods during timeframes that allow them to be off campus to attend their college courses. This flexibility allows them to enroll in courses offered at local colleges at any time during their school week. Since Explore also provides students with wifi and study areas to be used during their flex periods (study rooms, commons, flex room), students are also able to participate in correspondence or online courses offered by colleges and universities while using the Explore Academy resources to assist them with their college courses. This includes assistance with copies, scanning, and online storage space, access to audio/visual equipment, academic tutoring, and help with college scheduling and registration.

6. GIVEN THE NON-TRADITIONAL SCHEDULE, HOW WOULD YOU ANTICIPATE STUDENTS PARTICIPATING IN THE STATEWIDE END OF COURSE ASSESSMENTS REQUIRED FOR CERTAIN HIGH SCHOOL COURSES? ALSO SEE 2017-18 GUIDANCE MEMO

Students at Explore complete the required courses for graduation, but do so in a way that result in each student creating their own unique timeline for course completion. Each core content is broken into four skill areas (columns). Each area then progresses through tiers as the standards become more advanced (rows). While one student may complete a required course, English 11 for example, in less than one academic year by taking all seminars that correspond to English 11 across the four skills and up one tier, another student may complete all levels of the skill "Argument" and a few courses in the skill "Language" or "Literature" without, collectively, completing the seminars that contain the entirety of English 11. This is the case in all core content areas since students proceed both across columns into new skills areas as well as up rows into more advanced tiers.

Currently, there are several options being considered to allow students to complete the EoC requirement for Nevada:

Option One - Explore Academy is in the process of drafting a waiver request to be submitted to the Nevada Department of Education to allow the charter's exit exams to take the place of EoCs for students graduating from the school. This will allow the students to complete their coursework based on the Explore Learning model framework in which courses are not necessarily linear or sequential in the traditional sense. Exit exam scores from the Explore Academy seminars that correspond to each of the EoC courses will be compiled and averaged to provide an overall score in place of the EoC for that traditional course equivalent. This system of exit exam data compilation can be used in science, math, and English language arts to represent an overall performance level on every standard covered in an EoC course.

Option Two - Based on Assembly Bill 110 from 2017, Explore Academy's second option to meet EoC Assessment requirements will be to apply to participate in the competency-based education pilot through the Competency-Based Education (CBE) Network of the Nevada Department of Education. ELN

has reached out to the Department of Education and it was confirmed that applications will still be considered. The program is designed to promote skill- and standard-based grading as well as proficiency/competency-based progression from one class to another. This fits the Explore Learning model perfectly since credit is awarded for a seminar only when a student demonstrates proficiency at 80% or greater in all standards and skills for that seminar.

Option Three - if we are unable to obtain a waiver to use exit exams in lieu of EoC Assessment and are not accepted into the CBE pilot program, the third option to meet all EoC requirements will be to use the EoC Assessments for the required courses by administering them to students at the end of the last seminar in a sequence. For example, when a student completes the last seminar that corresponds to Integrated Math I, and in turn has also successfully completed the other seminars that correspond to that course, the student will then take the EoC Assessment for Integrated Math I. The score for this EoC will count for the required percentage of the exit exam score for that student for that term. This system of administering EoCs based on each student's completion of each required course will mean that every term there could potentially be students who will be required to take an exit exam in addition to an EoC Assessment, while others in those same seminars will only have the exit exam to complete. This discrepancy between students and their final exam requirements will be inevitable since few (if any) students will complete a sequence of seminars at the same time, and no specific seminar is the end point for all students in a particular sequence. For these reasons, this is the last option in the planning for EoC requirement compliance. The first two options lend themselves much more to the educational model, to the logistics of student schedules, and to the administration of standards-based exams across many classes each term.

7. THE APPLICATION REFERENCES A REQUIREMENT FOR ALL STUDENTS TO HAVE A CHROMEBOOK. WHO PROVIDES THE CHROMEBOOK? HOW DO YOU ENSURE THAT ALL STUDENTS CAN PARTICIPATE REGARDLESS OF ECONOMIC MEANS? HOW DO YOU ENSURE THAT STUDENTS CAN PARTICIPATE IN HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS IF THEY DO NOT HAVE ACCESS TO THE INTERNET AT HOME?

In order to make access to Explore Academy equitable for all students, regardless of their economic status, the school will provide loaner Chromebooks while students work to purchase their own. For most families, this allows them time to save and purchase a device of their choosing when they are able. The Network also has loaner systems available. These systems can be allocated to students through a loaner program as mentioned above or through a rent-to-own program where families can make small payments or fundraise to cover the cost of the device over time. This allows all students to have a quality device assigned to them so that they may fully participate in all Explore seminars, activities, and communications.

In order to mitigate the issues related to other technology access, such as internet access, Explore provides students two free (flex) periods daily that allow them to use all campus resources to complete assignments, study, access school media and literature, and access their Google Classroom and student information system accounts. Most of the work that is assigned to students can be done at school, so the resources that are available for all students on campus provide an equitable learning environment regardless of their economic background. Explore Academy can also provide students with mobile hotspots if such a need arises for students needing increased access to internet even while off campus. Explore administration also compiles and distributes a list of local libraries, community centers, and other neighborhood venues that offer free wifi, areas allocated for studying, etc.

See Question 2c under School Sustainability for FRL data that shows there is a decreasing gap in proficiency rates between all students enrolled and the FRL subgroup, with FRL students actually surpassing school average proficiency rate in math in 2018.
See Question 1a in Students Served and Past Performance for ELL data that shows that English learners not only demonstrate academic growth as they achieve higher scores each year enrolled at Explore Academy, but the ELLs enrolled also achieved scores that are significantly higher than the average score for ELLs across the state of NM.

QUESTIONS:

1.   PROVIDE JUSTIFICATION FOR STARTING WITH 6TH AND 7TH GRADE GIVEN THAT THE EXPLORE ACADEMY MODEL IS YET TO BE PROVEN FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL.

Explore Academy's model has demonstrated proven success in elevating student achievement for high school students, but that success has largely involved a reverse engineering effort in rebuilding students and their respective academic skills from years in educational systems where there was minimal skill development.
As stated in the original application, Explore Academy enrolls a significant portion of its 9th graders who come from struggling schools. Specifically, 63% of its students (on average) enter Explore Academy after having attended a middle school which earned a D or F letter grade within the state's letter grade system. When considering schools with a C rating, over 95% of Explore Academy's enrollment is drawn from middle schools with a letter grade of C or lower.
Because of this, Explore Academy has modified its instruction to provide extensive focus on rehabilitating students to grow into self-motivated learners within a higher accountability environment. Because the formative years within middle school can be truly destructive to a child's educational development, the Explore Academy founding team expanded its focused grade range in an attempt to engage students earlier in an educational system with strong engagement, higher accountability, and extensive support in order to build and cultivate learners from an earlier age. It is this same rationale that drives the founding team in its attempt to establish Explore Academy (NV) by focusing on building a stronger foundation in students from an earlier age.
The younger the age where students can be engaged in learning, the stronger the foundation for long-term academic success. Because of the curricular similarities between middle and high school, the leap to middle school, from a curricular standpoint, is a logical step-down in developing the same skill sets, but at a more fundamental level and from a earlier age.

2.   IF APPROVED TO OPERATE A MIDDLE SCHOOL, HOW WOULD THE APPROACH TO EXPANSION BE DIFFERENT FOR THE MIDDLE VERSUS HIGH SCHOOL GIVEN THE LACK OF A PROVEN MIDDLE SCHOOL MODEL?

The proposed approach begins with both middle and high schools phasing in parallel. While the unproven approach at the middle school is certainly a fact, Explore Academy (NM) is phasing in its middle school program this year, so there will be some level of experience in the adjustments required prior to the phasing in of the initial Nevada campus. That being said, Explore Academy's proposed

middle school model is based on highly engaging instruction, student choice, smaller class sizes, and an extensive instructional support system, all of which are sound educational approaches that will lead to successful outcomes with middle or high school students.

That being said, the founding team acknowledges that even a proven model established in one state does guarantee success when established at an alternate location. This reality remains true for the establishment of middle and high school grades, however, the above also remains true in that sound instructional principles at the core of one's establishment effort will create the foundation upon which specific adjustments can be made both in adapting to the community which the school plans to serve as well as in modifying the general operations of the school as new strategies and approaches are discovered throughout the course of the first year. One inherent benefit of Explore Academy's model is its allowance for efficient adaptation as the need for adjustment arises. Given that new terms start and stop each month, there is are frequent opportunities where adjustments can be made to improve the overall operations of the school, instructional and otherwise.

3.   HOW WILL THE SCHOOL BALANCE THE IDEA OF ALLOWING TEACHERS AUTONOMY TO BUILD UNIQUE COURSES WITH GETTING THE SCHOOL OFF THE GROUND IN THE FIRST YEAR?

Explore Academy's operational implementation will remain separate from its instructional implementation. The founding team has two divisions, each of which is designed to address these two areas of implementation. Having had experience in the launch of a new school, members of both divisions will provide invaluable experience in both startup operations and startup instruction.

In an operational sense, the operational members of the founding team will work closely in cooperation with the executive director in working through its planning year startup checklist to ensure that the school will be ready for launch in August. These areas include student recruitment, development of the school facility, food service, student apparel, purchasing of supplies and equipment, establishment of policies and procedures, contracting third-party service providers, etc.

In an instructional sense, ELN has a separate instructional team designed to work with the initial teaching staff as they start developing their curriculum within the Explore Academy framework. Trainings will be conducted locally on a monthly basis to cover the seminar-based style of teaching, flavor development, questioning and Bloom's Taxonomy, assessment, technology, etc. Supplemental support will always be available remotely; however, members of the instructional team will visit continually over the summer to meet with teachers to provide additional support as they work to develop their seminar offerings. In this way, teachers will have little to worry about in the operational side of the launch plan, and can thus focus their efforts entirely on the development of their curriculum.

4.   PLEASE SPECIFY THE COMPONENTS OF THE "IDENTICAL ACADEMIC FRAMEWORK" REFERENCED IN QUESTION 2 IN THIS SECTION.

While many aspects of the academic framework will allow for customization at any new Explore Academy campus, the framework itself will remain consistent from campus to campus. The specific components that will remain consistent include:
- **The Seminar:** the central component of the framework is the seminar, which utilizes a student-driven approach to learning. This is central to Explore Academy's academic model
- **The Flavor:** Tied into the seminar is the theme in which the seminar is presented. The "flavored" approach to teaching, allowing teachers to theme out their seminars in a way to engage students, will remain a central component to all Explore Academy sites

- **Student Choice:** further tied into the flavor is the element of student choice, allowing students to select the flavor in which they're most interested while pursuing mastery of the standards. This level of selection will continue through Explore Academy's majors, which further allow for choice in exploring areas of study within various career pathways
- **Vertical Alignment of Skill Standards:** all Explore Academy sites will utilize Common Core in math and English, therefore the alignment of the skills in those areas will be consistent by default. In regards to science and social studies, all Explore Academy campus will integrate the same vertical skill alignment into the curriculum, overlaying it with the content standards (which may vary from state to state)
- **Exit Exam Components:** the exit exam itself will remain a consistent component across all campuses, including the specific ways in which students are assessed. Explore Academy utilizes Bloom's Taxonomy as a guide to tiering higher order questioning that will increase through Explore Academy's tiers. The specific requirements at each tier, based on Bloom's levels, will be consistent from campus to campus
- **Frontloading:** the usage of frontloading will remain consistent from campus to campus, allowing for teachers to build from background information that students were exposed to prior to entering the class session in question
- **Flex Time:** the development of time management skills for students, in preparation for college, will remain a component of all Explore Academy campuses. Flex time will be structured for students that need additional academic support, and thus this level of support outside of class will be remain a central component within the framework

SPECIAL POPULATIONS AND AT-RISK STUDENTS

QUESTIONS:

1.	WHAT WILL BE THE RATIO OF ELL CASE MANAGERS TO ELL STUDENTS?

	The caseload for each of the ELL case managers will depend on the student ELL level and WIDA tiering. When considering WIDA tiers, each student will be assigned a point value depending on his or her level based on the chart below:

LEVEL	SCORE
1	4.5
2	4
3	3
4	2
5	1

	Based on this calculation, case managers will ideally manage a mixed group of students whose collective score equals 30.

2.	DESCRIBE ANY PUSH IN SUPPORTS OR STRATEGIES THAT WILL BE USED TO SUPPORT ELL STUDENTS WITH ACADEMIC LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT.

	In addition to managing their caseload in the ELL flex period, the case managers/ELD teachers also go into seminars with students when the push in support is beneficial or necessary to provide equitable access to content instruction. This can include assisting the student in completing a lab, teaching alongside the general education teacher to provide ELL specific accommodations in real time, or working in small groups with several ELs in the seminar as they complete their assignment for the day. The push in services also include assistance with adaptation and translation of materials, assistance with technology used for language support such as dictionaries, translation software, text to speech, etc., outlines and/or copies of class notes to allow student to follow along and ask the ELL push in teacher questions, etc. The ELL case manager for each ELL flex will have periods throughout the day where they are free for push in services, testing assistance, etc. This means that all ELL flex teachers are able to work with any EL while they are in class if there are required or recommended push in services.
	It is important to mention, however, that we have found that pull-out services in the ELL flex period used in conjunction with sheltered methods for instruction in each classroom prove to be much more successful for our students than push in services are, so the in-class push ins are used when they are deemed necessary by the case manager, teachers, administration, and student data, but are not the first method that is utilized in most cases.

3.	REPEATED QUESTION: AS ADDRESSED IN THE "STUDENTS SERVED AND PAST PERFORMANCE" SECTION, PROVIDE ACADEMIC OUTCOMES DATA FOR THE ELL AND SPECIAL EDUCATION SUBPOPULATIONS. (NOT NECESSARY TO PROVIDE THIS INFORMATION TWICE, BUT DATA WILL BE REFERENCED HERE AS WELL)

See above for academic data from ELLs

THE APPLICATION SPECIFICALLY MENTIONS STUDENTS WITH "LEARNING DISABILITIES" WHEN DESCRIBING
IDENTIFICATION AND SERVICES. HOWEVER, THERE ARE A RANGE OF DISABILITIES THAT STUDENTS MAY HAVE SUCH AS
AUTISM AND OTHER HEALTH IMPAIRMENTS.

As a correction, the application intended to include language encompassing all students with
disabilities.

QUESTION:

DESCRIBE HOW THE SCHOOL WILL ENSURE THAT STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS CAN PARTICIPATE IN STANDARDIZED
TESTING.

Explore Academy will provide all prescribed accommodations for students with special needs
based on the guidance of the student's IEP, 504, or ELL documentation. These may include, but are not
limited to, assistive technology (magnification, text to speech, color overlays, enlarged print, calculator,
captioning, word-to-word dictionary, headphones), testing environment accommodations (small
group, one-on-one, read aloud to self, time of day), dictation (scribing, human read aloud), extended
time (including more frequent breaks), adapted test materials (guides, outlines, scratch paper), etc.
Furthermore, the school's staff will work in cooperation with ELN staff to ensure that
accommodation requests for ACT and College Board are submitted within an appropriate time
frame. Further assistance will be provided to aid students with the registration for said assessments, as
well as to assist in providing fee waivers for students/families that qualify.

COMMENT:

THIS SECTION NEEDS ADDITIONAL DETAIL, PARTICULARLY THE SECTION ON SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS,
PRACTICES AND STRATEGIES THAT WILL BE USED TO ENSURE ACADEMIC SUCCESS AND EQUITABLE ACCESS TO THE
GENERAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM AND CORE ACADEMIC PROGRAM

More detail about how students with special needs and English language learners will have
academic success **and** equitable access to the general education curriculum can be found in the
answers to the questions in this section including ELL services, special education testing,
accommodations, push in and pull out ELL services, case management, etc.

QUESTION:

PROVIDE A DETAILED SUMMARY OF THE PROGRAM AND SERVICES FOR ELL STUDENTS IN THE NEW MEXICO SCHOOL.
IF THE ELL POPULATION IS LARGER IN THE LAS VEGAS SCHOOL THAN THE NEW MEXICO SCHOOL, HOW WOULD THIS
PROGRAM BE ADAPTED TO SERVE MORE ELL STUDENTS?

The English Language Learner program at Explore Academy is designed to provide students
who are learning English not only with English language support, but also with support related to

grade-level content acquisition, support as they learn self-advocacy methods, and support with effectively using resources that are available. The program is designed to scale to match student enrollment need, so with an increase in ELL population, the program and all related services will be adjusted to fully support the enrolled student body.

The first step in the program is the identification of English language learners. This is crucial and must be done in the first few weeks of a school year in order to initiate program supports as soon as possible for eligible students. The Home Language Surveys (or Language Usage Surveys as they are called in New Mexico) is the most accurate way to gather information about a student's home language and language exposure/usafe. It is ideal to obtain the first Home Language Survey that was completed by each student in the first public school they attended, but even with diligent records requests, that is not always possible. Explore Academy can distribute a new Home Language Survey to all students when no previous version can be located. We also request all test records from students and from previous schools, which would include ACCESS test scores for all ELs. This also allows us to identify students who are not English proficient. If a student indicates a language other than English on their Home Language Survey or enters Explore as a known EL with ACCESS scores or a WIDA Screener score that indicates eligibility, they will be placed in program and assigned to an ELL case manager, an ELL flex, and the ACCESS testing roster for the second semester of the school year.

The services provided for ELs at Explore falls under sheltered content instruction, content ESL, and English Language Development Pull-out. With the anticipated North Las Vegas ELL population much higher than the New Mexico campus, many if not all teachers will ideally be endorsed in TESL or be willing to obtain the endorsement within a year of their hire date. This will allow the students to receive instruction from teachers who are educated and trained to make progress with academic language acquisition while teaching in their content area, be that English, math, science, art, etc. The classroom instruction for ELs will be sheltered in nature, providing language support and low student to teacher ratios in order to give more attention to each student and their unique learning needs. The ESL and sheltered instruction utilized in content area instruction allows ELs to progress both in academic language acquisition as well as grade-level content acquisition. This forward motion in both areas is crucial to maintaining student engagement, English acquisition, preparing for college and career, and mastering standards and skills in each seminar.

ELs will also be scheduled into a specific free (flex) period where they will attend a structured version of flex with their EL case manager, a trained ESL/ELD teacher. The staffing for ELD teachers will depend on student enrollment, so the specific class assignments and FTE will be more defined as student enrollment becomes more concrete. The ELD/ESL teacher will provide intensive ELD instruction for students who have ACCESS scores under 2.5 (daily instruction in flex), moderate ELD instruction to students with ACCESS scores between 2.5 and 3.5 (3-4 days a week instruction in flex), and minimal/maintenance ELD instruction for students with ACCESS scores between 3.5 and 4.5 (1-2 days a week instruction in flex). The flex period teacher, who is both instructor and case manager for the ELs in their caseload, also support students by checking grades, adapting materials, providing language support and guidance, assisting with student/teacher communication, and providing resources such as dictionaries, notes, outlines, etc. The purpose of this ELL Flex period is to truly provide ELs with support and language education without sacrificing their content instruction or ability to engage fully with all other students and teachers at Explore Academy.

Once a student scores a 4.5 on the ACCESS, as quoted in Nevada DOE Memo on November 7, 2017, they are exited from the ESL program and placed on a monitoring support list. Students can be reclassified as an EL if they demonstrate a lack of progress or academic language regression in a future year based on test scores and academic performance, so all ELs at Explore who have exited the program at any time in their school career are monitored to ensure they are successful, even if they exited the ESL program before entering school at Explore.

In addition to the ESL-specific staff members on site who support ELs, all staff at Explore Academy are trained to teach and support students who are learning English in all seminars. This includes providing all staff with the detailed list of ELL accommodations for ELs each year including classroom accommodations, testing accommodations, and special supports on a student by student basis. Similar to an IEP, ELs are monitored and case managers communicate with the student, parents, and teachers to promote dialogue about and analysis of the student's academic and language data.

Teachers are also trained, as mentioned above, to use sheltered instruction teaching methods in their content seminars to provide the most equitable learning environment for students whose academic language usage does not yet match their content knowledge or grade level. The most common form of training that has shown results in NM has been SIOP-based instructional strategies. This has included training on explicit vocabulary instruction, outlines and notes of assignments, visual/auditory/oral versions of instructions and assignments to provide repetition and language exposure, etc. These methods are used in content seminars across all departments while more focused English language development instruction is implemented in the ELL flex. Thus, teachers and ELL case managers support each other and the ELs at Explore Academy to acquire academic English while also making content area academic gains.

QUESTION:
PLEASE RE-ADDRESS THIS STANDARD FOR THE ELL POPULATION SPECIFICALLY. (ANSWER MAY OVERLAP WITH OTHER RESPONSES IN THIS SECTION)

See answer to question above

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

COMMENTS:

THE GOALS DO NOT SEEM AMBITIOUS:
1.   THE STUDENT ATTENDANCE TARGETS ARE FAR BELOW THE NEVADA STATE AVERAGE.
2.   IF ONLY 50% OF STUDENTS IN 6-8 MAKE ONE YEAR'S GROWTH ON THE SBAC, THEN HALF OF STUDENTS ARE FALLING FURTHER BEHIND. IN ADDITION, THE "ONE YEAR'S GROWTH" MEASURE IS NOT COMPARABLE TO OTHER SCHOOLS IN NEVADA. YOU MAY CONSIDER GOALS THAT WOULD BE COMPARABLE TO OTHER NEVADA SCHOOLS USING DATA ON THE NEVADA REPORT CARD
3.   NO GOALS ARE SET FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS ON STANDARDIZED ASSESSMENTS.

After discussions with more school leaders and Nevada education leaders, the founding team has revamped some goals to better fit the student population.

ATTENDANCE:

For attendance goals, we hope to see students attending Explore Academy at or above the CCSD average of 95% daily attendance.

PROFICIENCY AND GROWTH:

For growth on SBAC, the data drawn from the Nevada Department of Education (see end of this section for data sources) shows that students, particularly in grades 6-8, have little to no growth from year to year. In some grade levels, the percent of students who are proficient in math or ELA drops in each subsequent grade level. Understanding that there are significant gaps in learning and skills within the middle school population statewide, our goals are meant to reflect a realistic and sustainable trajectory where students are making progress annually. In New Mexico, Explore Academy is the highest scoring high school, traditional or charter, in the area of student growth in both math and ELA. The Explore Learning model is focused on student academic progress and closing learning gaps through transparent, data-driven instruction and assessment.

After reviewing the goals related to student growth annually, the goal of 50% of students making at least one year's growth may seem low, but it was formulated on the larger goal that the Nevada campus annual growth continues to progress annually with higher and higher percentages of students achieving more than one year of academic growth annually. That being said, we have adjusted our goals for student proficiency and growth to the following:

MIDDLE SCHOOL:

For middle school students, the goal for the SBAC is to have 55% of students score proficient in ELA and 40% of students score proficient in math in year one (about 10% higher than the CCSD average for middle school students, and significantly higher than average proficiency in most Achievement School District Neighborhood Option schools where % proficient is sometimes as low as 10%). This goal will increase 5% annually, increasing the overall percentage of students who are proficient in both core areas each year that they attend Explore Academy.

In addition, the goal for Explore students' Adequate Growth Percentile (AGP) is to make at least 10% more progress in both ELA and math than the state average each year (since growth is measured

taking all students into account with a total N then comparing students across sites, subgroups, and other demographic indicators).

HIGH SCHOOL:
For high school, the goal is for students in grade 11 is to earn at least a 21 composite score (which is the composite of subscores in the four areas that indicate no remedial classes in college will be required in Nevada). We also seek to have 100% of students not only take the ACT and earn at or above this goal composite score, but also to enter into college with no remedial courses.

The data for Nevada SBAC results was obtained from Department of Education Nevada Report Card. The goals and metrics for Explore Academy were derived from this information, both from 2016 and 2017 measurements. Some data was also obtained from the DOE memo announcing ASD Neighborhood option schools in 2017. Other data was obtained from the Nevada Accountability Portal where many search options and information filters can help to gather data from very broad or very specific sets of students and/or skills.

TALENT

QUESTION:

HOW WILL SCHOOL PERFORMANCE (EX. ACADEMIC, FINANCIAL ETC.) FACTOR INTO THE SCHOOL LEADER EVALUATION? PLEASE PROVIDE SPECIFIC, MEASURABLE AND REALISTIC GOALS FOR STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND SCHOOL SUSTAINABILITY.

As described in Attachment O.3, Explore Academy will utilize a specific school leader evaluation framework when evaluating its executive director on an annual basis. Within this framework, financial responsibility is evaluated within the Operations Management domain.

Additionally, academic evaluation is contained within the Scope of Responsibility in Secondary Schools and Instructional Leadership domains. Within this area, more specific goals can be established such as:

- **Attendance rate:** at or above 95% (as described in the performance management goals)
- **Student surveys:** 10% improvement in lowest category each term per teacher
- **Exit exam pass rates**: at or above 80% (as described in the performance management goals)
- **ACT:** average composite score of 21 or higher (as described in the performance management goals)
- **SBAC:** meeting SBAC annual goals
- **Student retention**: retention rate is at or above 85% each year
- **Nevada School Performance Framework Index Score:** index score each year will place the school in at least the 75% percentile (earning the school at least 4 stars)

QUESTION:

HOW WOULD THE SCHOOL MITIGATE FOR POTENTIAL TEACHER "BURN-OUT" PARTICULARLY IN AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE TEACHERS HAVE MANY RESPONSIBILITIES?

While the creative energy (at least initially) for an Explore Academy teacher can be challenging, the school provides its teachers with accommodations that help to offset some of the preparatory burden. In contrast to founding team, the members of which are required to perform a range of duties that extend beyond the classroom, Explore Academy teachers are expected to, at the very least, focus themselves on exceptional instruction within the classroom. This is made possible by the support from ELN and the utilities that have been developed to provide teachers with all of the necessary tools to engage their students in effective instruction. This, in itself, should relieve a significant portion of any startup burnout.

Explore Academy is committed to keeping class sizes as small as can exist within the constraints of the school's budget. It is projected that teachers would not have teaching loads larger than 100 students (20 students per class) per term, thus providing more ample time to provide students with quality feedback. Compared to an average of 32 students across 6 class periods (192), Explore Academy teachers should have loads almost half the traditional size.

One factor in lowering teaching loads is the number of periods teachers teach. Explore Academy will only teach five periods per day, thus allowing them two prep periods and over two hours of planning and preparation time. Because of the creative instructional responsibilities and the

accountability in ensuring that students are achieving levels of mastery on each academic standard, the two preps is appropriate to allow teachers the time to meet the school's expectations.

In addition, by allowing teachers the freedom to develop their own thematic curriculum, teachers will be happier and more satisfied in *what* they are teaching. This element of choice theory, which extends to the teachers as well as the students, provides all parties, particularly teachers, the inherent motivation to excel in their work.

In addition to the above, Explore Academy builds in planning time in the days (term breaks) between each of the monthly academic terms. These days allow teachers the time to collaborate, grade, troubleshoot, receive training, seek out help, and plan for the upcoming term. In addition, these days allow for professional development and coaching as well as culture building for the staff. This integration of time dedicated solely to teacher needs helps support the teaching staff and build a culture of respect, community, and professional accountability.

QUESTION:

1.   WHAT CHALLENGE DO YOU ANTICIPATE IN RECRUITING TEACHERS, PARTICULARLY IN THE FIRST THREE YEARS? WHAT ACTIONS WILL YOU TAKE TO MITIGATE THESE RISKS?

The most unique challenge we face for teacher recruitment is the ELN home office being located in New Mexico. Throughout this process, one of the most vital areas of focus for ELN has been the planning and preparation for CMO support in Nevada that is structured to provide not only the contracted management services, but also consistent support during each step of the planning, implementation, and operation phases of Explore Academy in Las Vegas.

That being said, recruiting teachers in the first three years is a process that will require a multifaceted approach that reaches into talent pools in a variety of ways. First, as mentioned in the application, the Explore Learning model works best when teachers are recommended by those who see their potential, talent, and passion for education. When the steering committee is formed (the initial group of people who will help form the local school board as well as function as the first group of Nevada Explore Academy representatives), they will be connected with the school's executive director (referred to in the application as the school leader who is employed by ELN and appointed to the Nevada campus). This will create a team of individuals who can work together to reach into the education community and receive recommendations for potential teachers. This process has already begun; Gretchen Larsen has begun the process by compiling resumes of interested teachers as well as board members, sharing these contacts with ELN staff as we move through the application and authorization process. This on-the-ground effort will increase in the coming months, allowing for more connections and recommendations to be made.

Another arguably more serious challenge is the teacher shortage in Clark County and Nevada in general. In the past few academic years, it has been published widely that there are not enough teachers to fill the open positions in Nevada schools. Education week reports that in 2016, there were over 700 vacancies after the start of the school year, forcing unlicensed substitutes to fill teacher positions that were left without a highly qualified applicant. This is a challenge that we hope we can overcome through our unique model that provides autonomy and small class sizes afforded to teachers, but we are aware that these benefits may not be well known or sufficient to mitigate the overall teacher shortage in Nevada the way we have done in New Mexico (a state experiencing similar numbers in relation to teacher shortages).

Returning to the multifaceted approach, another aspect of the recruitment process to find talent and hire quality teachers for Explore Academy will be the social media, internet, and publication

presence of the school in Nevada as well as nationally. There are talented teachers everywhere, and broadcasting the opportunity to join the team through many platforms will not only increase public knowledge of the school and its launch, but also reach more potential teachers and staff members throughout Las Vegas, Nevada, and the nation. This includes press releases, social media posts and active interactions online, the school website, job recruitment websites and publications, conferences and job fairs, etc. These efforts may mean working with teachers from many states to build the inaugural staff.

Additionally, as mentioned in our application, there are many organizations and programs that may prove to be valuable partners in teacher recruitment, so it is vital that ELN and the local steering committee reach into many circles to promote and educate about Explore Academy and its available positions.

2. ~~Repeat Question: How will the school mitigate from potential teacher "burn-out" particularly in an environment where teachers have many responsibilities? (not necessary to provide this information twice, but data will be referenced here as well)~~

Question:

Describe the roles of the network-level employees in working with the proposed school in Las Vegas.

ELN plans to provide a range of services that include roles both remotely and in-person. Many of these roles can be seen in School Sustainability Question 1 of this supplemental request. This section specifies the mentoring and coaching performed by ELN staff with local Explore Academy teachers. ELN staff will attend monthly term breaks, bringing the instructional lead and content leads on site to support the Nevada staff. This support is also available at all times through virtual platforms and scheduled on site visits as necessary. This also includes the data-driven coaching and mentoring that is provided by the ELN team. In this role, the team provides meaningful data weekly, monthly, and annually to drive instruction.

Also mentioned in section 7 of the Founding Team section of the application, the role of the Director of Operations is discussed, outlining weekly meetings, monthly on site visits, and constant interaction with the school's executive director. In prompt 2 of Financial Readiness of the application, it also states that there are biweekly phone calls with the business manager and executive director. It is also referenced that ELN will submit financial, academic, and operational reports to the local board. All of these roles are in addition to the professional development, ELN materials, training, and technology support that is also provided to the school site.

FOUNDING TEAM

COMMENT:
NRS 388B.230 PREVENTS THE GOVERNING BODY OF AN ACHIEVEMENT CHARTER SCHOOL FROM AUTHORIZING PAYMENTS TO A CMO WHICH ARE "GREATER THAN 15 PERCENT OF THE TOTAL EXPECTED FUNDING TO BE RECEIVED BY THE ACHIEVEMENT CHARTER SCHOOL FROM THE STATE DISTRIBUTIVE SCHOOL ACCOUNT." THE CMO FEES EXCEED THIS CAP DURING YEARS 4 AND 5 OF THE 5-YEAR BUDGET.

QUESTION:

1.   PROVIDE ADDITIONAL DETAIL ON HOW THE CMO FEE WILL BE NEGOTIATED WITHIN THE 5-15% RANGE.

        Explore Learning Network will set up a per pupil student formula when calculating its management fee proposal, the total percentage of which will increase proportionally as enrollment increases over time. The formula will be set not to exceed 15% of the school's total expected funding so as to comply with the above-cited statute.
        In order to better support the school, both parties may elect to re-negotiate the contract on an annual basis as necessary.
        Any members of the ELN board that serve as a minority membership of the local board will recuse themselves during the negotiation process, including the resulting local board vote on the contract itself.

COMMENTS:

1.   UNDER NRS 388B.230, THE GOVERNING BODY OF AN ACHIEVEMENT CHARTER SCHOOL MUST ULTIMATELY SELECT THE PRINCIPAL. UNDER THE CURRENT PLAN, THE CMO SELECTS AND EMPLOYS THE PRINCIPAL.

        As the founding team has investigated this process, it has adjusted its proposed plan to abide by the above requirement. As a result, the CMO (ELN) will employ a local executive director at the school site to oversee school operations. The ELN founding team will undergo the recruitment process for identifying highly qualified candidates for the role of the site-level administrator, the results of which will be proposed to the local board for consideration and approval (through a vote of the local board).
        The proposed five-year budget did not include an assistant administrator in its first year, so an adjustment will be made in shifting the activities director position to that of an assistant administrator. The flex coordinator position will be brought in starting in year 2 (the year in which the first assistant administrator was to be hired).

2.   TO APPLY FOR THE CSP GRANT, AN APPLICANT MUST MEET CERTAIN ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS, INCLUDING MAINTAINING AN ARMS LENGTH AGREEMENT WITH ANY CMO OR EMO. THERE ARE CONCERNS THAT ELN'S ROLE IN APPOINTING THE BOARD OF THE ACHIEVEMENT CHARTER SCHOOL AND EMPLOYING THE PRINCIPAL WOULD CAUSE THE SCHOOL TO NOT BE ELIGIBLE FOR THE CSP GRANT. (SEE GRANT GUIDANCE, EDUCATION SERVICE PROVIDERS AND ASD APPLICANTS SECTIONS FOR DETAILS)

QUESTIONS:

1.   EXPLAIN HOW THE REQUIREMENTS OUTLINED IN THE COMMENTS ABOVE ARE ACHIEVED UNDER THE PROPOSED STRUCTURE, OR SUGGEST AN ALTERNATIVE STRUCTURE THAT WOULD COMPLY. THIS MAY INCLUDE IDENTIFYING A DIFFERENT REVENUE SOURCE FOR START-UP FUNDING.

As an alternate structure, the CMO (ELN) will formulate a local steering committee (separate from ELN's application/school founding team) to recruit and set up the school's local board. By providing this intermediate entity, the establishment of the school's board will remain separate from the operations of the CMO. Although the CMO will ultimately commission the local steering committee, it will have no involvement with the actual selection of the local board members.

As it relates to the head administrator, as described above, ELN will establish an executive director to manage the school site, the performance of which will be evaluated by ELN. The school administrator(s), although working at the direction of the executive director, will be hired by and evaluated by the local board. This separation will provide the arms length relationship between the CMO (ELN) and the school and local board to comply with the eligibility requirements for the CSP grant.

2.   WHAT ARE THE PLANS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPING THE BOARD OF THE CMO, INCLUDING ADDING MORE BOARD MEMBERS? WHAT OVERSIGHT WILL THE BOARD OF ELN PROVIDE TO THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR?

As the ELN expands its scope of management over multiple campuses, it is the expectation that ELN's board will grow accordingly. It is projected that ELN's board will expand to five (5) members within the next two years as the non-profit's work with its network schools expands.

Each year, ELN's board will evaluate the executive director based on multiple factors, including: a) the individual performance of each Explore Academy site based on each school's site-specific goals, b) individual performance of each Explore Academy site based on state school evaluation criteria, c) each school's annual evaluation of the support received from the Network, and d) an analysis of annual feedback surveys provided by ELN staff.

QUESTION:

PROVIDE ADDITIONAL DETAIL ON HOW THE SCHOOL WILL EVALUATE THE ELN SUPPORTS AND SERVICES AND HOW THE EVALUATION WILL BE USED.

As stated in the initial application, ELN will solicit feedback from the school and school board in relation to its own performance in the services it provides to ensure quality and effectiveness of its training and PD, staff support, academic and instructional systems, and communication about data and other school business.

The Explore Learning team will be evaluated by the local school board and school using a system similar to the school leader and executive director evaluation tools. In order to gather feedback to address concerns and improve the working relationship between ELN and the school board and school, the monitoring tool will include a variety of areas on which ELN can be evaluated by the local board with input from the school leaders.

There are eight standards in the survey, each addressing a different area of the services, support, and management provided by Explore Learning Network. Each of the eight standards will include individual indicators that will guide the board and school site in ranking the standard in questions. The eight standards are scored on a scale of 0 ("Unacceptable") to 4 ("Outstanding"). The

standards are: Accessibility of Support, Quality of Support, Curricular Guidance, Level of Interaction, Quality of Training, Timeliness of Reporting, Completeness of Reports, and Communication.

QUESTION:

WHAT IS THE TIMELINE FOR CREATING THE LOCAL SCHOOL BOARD, IF APPROVED?

Following the approval of the charter application, the application ELN founding team will commission the local steering committee to begin the search for local board members. The establishment of the local steering committee will take place within two months of charter approval.

Over the following six (6) months, the local steering committee will be responsible for the selection of the initial members of Explore Academy's local board.

PARENT AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

QUESTION:

1.   HOW DOES THE SCHOOL EXPECT TO CONTINUE TO WORK WITH PARENTS AND FAMILIES TO REFINE THE
MODEL FOR LAS VEGAS IF APPROVED? WHAT TYPES OF INPUT WOULD YOU SEEK OUT? HOW WOULD YOU EXPECT
THAT INPUT TO INFLUENCE THE SCHOOL MODEL?

       While the framework for the school's curriculum will remain largely fixed, there are
significant components of the school's operations that will be driven by the larger school community,
including its parent community.
       Input from and, ideally, involvement of the parents and families of the students attending
Explore Academy is an important part of forming a school culture, community, and curriculum that
truly embodies its stakeholders. Parent and family input is not only welcome, but will be sought out
regarding community issues, extracurricular activity requests/preferences, seminar flavors, school
culture priorities, supplemental activities and services, school calendar, start and stop times, and
community experts/guest speakers. In order to use this input to shape the school model and operation,
parent suggestions and feedback will be categorized and analyzed for trends, common requests,
community concerns, etc. In this way, ELN will be able to adjust club offerings, school logistics such as
start and stop times, parent conference times/days, school calendar/breaks, flavor offerings, flex study
group lesson topics, and other school characteristics to best meet the needs and interests expressed by
the community, parents, and families.
       In order to gather this input, there will be parent forums monthly, sometimes in conjunction
with the family information nights, where families will be able to leave input in written form or
verbally through discussions with ELN and local school staff. There will also be a section dedicated to
feedback on the website where parents and families can submit a Google Form response anytime from a
computer or phone. The responses from both of these measures will allow ELN and local school staff to
gather data related to the topics above as well as other topics that have not been predicted and then
incorporate change into the model to adapt to the the community the school is serving.

QUESTIONS:

1.   HOW WILL THE INITIAL PARTNERSHIPS THAT HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THE SCHOOL?

       The city of North Las Vegas and its city hall officials have already committed to assisting
Explore in finding facilities, building community partnerships, and hosting events to promote the
school and establish community support for the new, high quality education option. The Mayor and his
office have expressed interest in participating in community events hosted by Explore Academy and
ELN.
       Parents who have shown interest and been on board with ELN since the process began wish to
help create and establish the initial PTO as well as help prepare the school for opening with events,
meet and greets, fundraisers, community nights, and networking with parent groups and organizations
across Clark County. This parent support will help support the school not only through increased
enrollment, but also through advertising as more families begin to discuss the school and its opening in
their neighborhood.
       Opportunity 180 has been a valuable partner through the research and application process.
ELN intends to apply to their other available grants in order to assist with Explore Academy start up

funding as well as to grow the partnership with the organization to make the transition from planning to operation as smooth and effective as possible.

In order to ensure the school's operations and management are as efficient and relevant as possible, partnerships with other school leaders in Las Vegas and North Las Vegas will continue to help ELN and the school staff with best practices, quality vendors, common missteps, and effective school policies that have proven successful in the communities close to the community that Explore Academy will serve.

2.   WHAT ADDITIONAL PARTNERSHIPS WILL YOU NEED TO ESTABLISH IN ORDER FOR THE SCHOOL TO BE SUCCESSFUL? WHAT IS THE PLAN FOR BEGINNING TO BUILD THOSE PARTNERSHIPS?

The first step to help this process will be the formation of the local steering committee that will be dedicated to establishing the local school board for the school. This committee, which ELN has already started reaching out to community members to form, will help to ensure that the school board members come from a variety of backgrounds with a wide range of expertise to best guide, lead, and monitor the school and its progress in relation to student success and school mission and vision. The partnership between ELN and the local steering committee and eventually school board will be a foundational partnership that cannot be underestimated. As mentioned previously, we plan to have the committee in place within two months of charter approval with an official board in place within six months of approval.

With a large part of the school's mission being dedicated to rigor and preparing students for their post-secondary studies, building partnerships with local college campuses is another priority. This will allow for smooth dual enrollment processes, shared resources for students (such as use of library, internet and computers on both campuses, tutoring opportunities, etc.) in addition to access to college courses for credit. These partnerships can also lead to increased staffing resources through teacher education and licensing programs and other degree programs that lead to careers in education such as counseling, social work, human resources, etc. In the spring after approval, ELN will reach out to local campuses to being forming partnerships with the post-secondary institutions in the area.

It will also be important to establish partnerships with vendors and other companies/individuals who may provide services to Explore Academy such as food service companies, apparel vendors, photographers, print shops, and other service providers. Building relationships with the local businesses with which the school will potentially do business will not only allow for the best vendor selection for the school, but also allow Explore to give back to the community by supporting local business for goods and services that the school must utilize. The plan for this is to reach out to community businesses within two months of approval and work through the spring of 2019 to first establish communication with local businesses then work to identify businesses that are a good fit for partnering with the school and ELN.

FINANCIAL READINESS

QUESTION:

1.   DESCRIBE THE SYSTEMS, ROUTINES AND PROCESS FOR BACK-OFFICE OPERATIONS THAT ARE USED IN THE EXISTING SCHOOL.

Explore Academy (NM) utilizes a contracted business manager for its back-office operations, similar to the expectation for contracted financial services at Explore Academy - Nevada. The scope of the business managers responsibilities includes budgeting, state reporting, review and presentation of the school's financial statements, ongoing financial analysis, general accounting, accounts payable and receivable, payroll, and work with the state auditors on an annual basis.

Financial processes at the school site run through the head principal. This individual submits a draft of the annual budget based on staffing and operational needs, submits requisitions for purchase orders, generates and executes all staff contracts, signs contracts with service providers (unless board approval is required), approves invoices for goods/services received, approves budget adjustment requests (BARs), approves payroll, oversees employee files, submits expenditure approvals/contracts to the school's governance council (board) as needed, monitors the school's financial health on a weekly basis in collaboration with the school's business manager, submits leave for staff, signs all checks, and reports to the board in collaboration with the business manager on any additional financial matters related to the school's daily operation.

Money that is deposited electronically is wired (by the head administrator) to the bank with backup provided to the school's business manager. Money that is deposited at the school in person is deposited into the school's bank account within 24 hours. The school's office executive (receptionist) manages receipts, cash/check deposits, and the receiving of invoices for approval from the head administrator.

Purchases are subject to approval by the head administrator. Approval leads to the submission of a purchase requisition for the encumbrance of school funds. Purchase orders are then provided to the requesting staff member(s) for finalization of the purchase or are submitted directly to the entity providing the goods or services.

2.   HOW WILL THE SCHOOL SELECT A PROVIDER FOR BACK OFFICE SERVICES?

ELN's founding team has yet to select a provider for business management/back-office services to propose to the local board for contracting with Explore Academy. After charter application approval, the team will begin a competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) process through which it will select the financial service provider it will propose to the local board. The team will seek the following qualifications for the financial services provider:
        • General alignment and commitment to working with charter schools serving at-risk students
        • Required certifications reflecting necessary expertise
        • Extensive experience providing back-office support to first year charter schools
        • Strong oversight in establishment and management of internal controls
        • Capacity to provide personalized and exceptional service (low client-to-staff ratio)
        • Effective coverage of all areas of school management
        • Demonstrated experience in preparing annual financial reports in accordance with Nevada guidelines and communicating with all relevant local, state and federal entities

• At least three positive referrals from other charter schools with clean financial audits
• Affordability for resource-constrained charter schools - provide competitive pricing plan

COMMENT:

GIVEN THAT ELN IS A SEPARATE ENTITY FROM THE LOCAL SCHOOL BOARD IT IS NOT CLEAR WHY ELN RETAINS FULL REVIEW OF ALL PURCHASES OF THE SCHOOL.

This level of review provides another layer of oversight of the financial operations of the school.

QUESTION:

IN THE EVENT THAT THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE SCHOOL MOVES TO AUTHORIZE A CONTRACT OR PAYMENT OVER $20K BUT THE CMO DOES NOT APPROVE THE EXPENDITURE, WHAT RECOURSE DOES THE GOVERNING BOARD HAVE IF THEY BELIEVE THAT THE EXPENDITURE IS IMPORTANT TO THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL?

In the event that the school's governing body has approved a measure that ELN has questioned, ELN will provide, in writing, the rationale for the concern. In the end, ELN defers purchasing authority to the school's governing body.

QUESTIONS:

1.   HOW WILL THE CMO PROVIDE SERVICES DURING THE PRE-OPENING PHASE? PROVIDE A PRE-OPENING BUDGET FOR THE NETWORK ORGANIZATION.

As described in the start-up budget (Attachment K), some of the specific services listed will be performed by the ELN. Specifically, lines 14-17 in Attachment K will represent the scope of ELN's official services within the startup year:

MARKETING - TEACHER RECR $ (15,000.00)

MARKETING - STUDENT RECR $ (40,000.00)

TEACHER / STAFF TRAINING $ (30,000.00)

CURRICULAR DEVELOPMENT $ (20,000.00)

To this, the founding team would like to add an additional line item to include establishment efforts within the North Las Vegas community. These efforts include but may not be limited to: community outreach, facility planning/monitoring, school development progress monitoring, continuous relationship building with local community leaders/school community leaders, etc. It is anticipated that ELN will travel to Las Vegas at least twice per month during the months in the planning year leading up to the start of school. The budget line item is shown below:

ESTABLISHMENT/PROGRESS MONITOR. $ (20,000.00)

2.   PROVIDE DETAILS ON THE REVENUE SOURCES IN 5-YEAR NETWORK BUDGET.

ELN's five-year budget accounts for funding from the two (presumptive) Explore Academy locations, both of which are paid through their individual management service agreements. As it more established, Explore Academy (NM) will be paying the majority of ELN's network budget for 2019-20.

QUESTIONS:

1.   BASED ON PAGE 10 OF THE AUDIT THE NEW MEXICO SCHOOL OVERSPENT ON GOVERNMENTAL FUNDS BY $236K IN FY17. PROVIDE AN EXPLANATION FOR THE NEGATIVE FUND BALANCE REPORTED IN THE FY17 BUDGET.

The audited financial statements include accruals of accounts payable, payroll and related payroll liabilities. What the financials show is that for the year ended June 30, 2017, the school did expend in excess of revenues received for that year. However, the school had carried over fund balances which almost met the excess expenditure on an accrual basis. The State of New Mexico also implemented a mid-year reduction in funding for all public schools throughout the state. Explore Academy experienced a reduction in state funding of approximately $46,000. If these are looked at Page 10 of the financials would show the following:

Fund Balances – Beginning	$196,024
Excess of Revenues over Expenditures	263,679
Fund Balances – Ending	(67,655)
State of NM cuts/clawbacks	46,000

In addition, the New Mexico funding formula is based largely on prior year counts of students. Because of this and the fact that the school's enrollment was growing, the funding will "catch up" with the school when all grade levels are fully implemented.

Lastly, it should be noted that the school's cash balances as of June 30, 2017 were $175,109. No finding was given by the auditors as the school endured a very lean year with state cuts experienced twice and only an immaterial amount of modified accrual basis financial statement deficit incurred (approximately 1% of total revenues). The school has demonstrated its ability to address adverse actions by the state and maintain its financial stability.

2.   THE AUDIT APPEARS TO BE MISSING A FINDINGS PAGE OR A STATEMENT INDICATING THAT THERE WERE NO AUDIT FINDINGS. PLEASE PROVIDE.

Uploaded as a separate file.

3.   PLEASE PROVIDE FY16 AND FY15 FINANCIAL AUDITS FOR THE NEW MEXICO CAMPUS, GIVEN THAT THE NETWORK ORGANIZATION HAS NOT BEEN ESTABLISHED AND THEREFORE IS UNABLE TO PROVIDE THE REQUESTED THREE YEARS OF FINANCIAL AUDITS.

Audits for FY15 and FY16 provided.

SCHOOL SUSTAINABILITY

QUESTIONS:

1.	FOR EACH OF THE RISKS ALREADY IDENTIFIED, PROVIDE ADDITIONAL DETAILS ON HOW THE IDENTIFIED MITIGATION STRATEGIES AND OTHERS WILL REDUCE RISK. WILL OTHER EMPLOYEES OF THE CMO VISIT AND SUPPORT THE LAS VEGAS SITE? BEYOND EXPANDING THE CMO STAFF, WHAT ACTIONS WILL BE TAKEN TO ENSURE THAT QUALITY IS NOT SACRIFICED DURING THE PROPOSED RAPID EXPANSION?

The close relationship with the school's executive director (labeled as the "school leader" in the application) remains paramount in determining the foundational success of Explore Academy as it establishes itself in the Las Vegas area. To this end, ELN is prepared to send members of its team to Las Vegas are often as is needed as the school commences operation. As previously stated, ELN will be managing professional development and training for staff during term break days (days between each of the academic terms), which occur monthly. In this respect, ELN staff will be visiting on a monthly basis, at the very least, as the school launches operations.

As the school's operations continue, the continual communication outside of the administration become essential for ensuring the establishment of a quality instructional model. ELN's budget specifies an instructional lead as well as additional, content-specific leaders, all of whom will maintain constant communication with content area teachers as they hone their instructional practices. This will be supplemented by the above-mentioned visits during term breaks throughout the year.

While it is the expectation that these visits will involve a general mentoring of teachers as they develop their instructional practice, as the year progresses, the significant amount of data collected within the Explore Academy model will further drive these training, coaching, and mentoring initiatives.

As the need arises, visits to the Las Vegas site may become more frequent or more focused on specific areas identified as the school year progresses.

2.	THE REVIEW COMMITTEE IDENTIFIED ADDITIONAL HIGH-POTENTIAL RISKS. PLEASE DESCRIBE HOW YOU WILL MITIGATE FOR THE FOLLOWING:

A.	FINDING ADEQUATE FACILITIES

The founding team has already begun exploratory work on identifying potential facilities within the North Las Vegas area. The North Las Vegas area holds an extensive range of properties and open land to serve as potential facility solutions. The school has received commitments from city officials in North Las Vegas, financial commitments from EPR, and development commitments from Highmark to the extent that the founding team evaluates the potential risks in this area, for identifying a permanent facility (or a temporary facility in the short-term), as average in risk.

B.	ADAPTING TO A NEW REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT

Understanding the range of laws and regulatory mechanisms will definitely a challenge as the founding team works to further understanding the landscape of education in the state of Nevada. As the school ultimately selects many of its service providers, including the areas of finance/back-office, food service, special education, technology/data reporting, and general legal counsel, it will become acclimated to the local regulatory environment quickly over the course of the planning year.

While there will be certain nuances that are different between the two states and their regulatory systems, the founding team is confident that it is composed of individuals with the experience to adapt quickly to the demands of the local environment. In addition, the founding team feels that it possesses a local support system, both through its prospective authorizer and through support organizations such as Opportunity 180, that will be provided with an exceptional level of support, as needed, as it navigates its way through unknown regulatory challenges. The founding team evaluates this area as lower risk.

C.   SERVING HIGHER NUMBERS OF FRL (AND PERHAPS ELL) STUDENTS THAN IN THE EXISTING SCHOOL

Over the last several years, Explore Academy (NM) has shown significant progress in increasing student achievement rates with those students classified as economically disadvantaged. Including the data from 2018, the results of which were not available at the time of submission of the original application submission, Explore Academy has shown a decreasing gap between total student proficiency and proficiency rates of students classified as economically disadvantaged. The data below was pulled from NM State Letter Grade reports over the last three academic years, including data from the spring of 2018 which was released in August.

While the founding team acknowledges the predicted difference between percentages of these two subgroups in its Nevada campus compared to what it currently serves in at its New Mexico, the work performed with these subgroups and the success shown provides encouraging trends that the team hopes to replicate in the Nevada area.
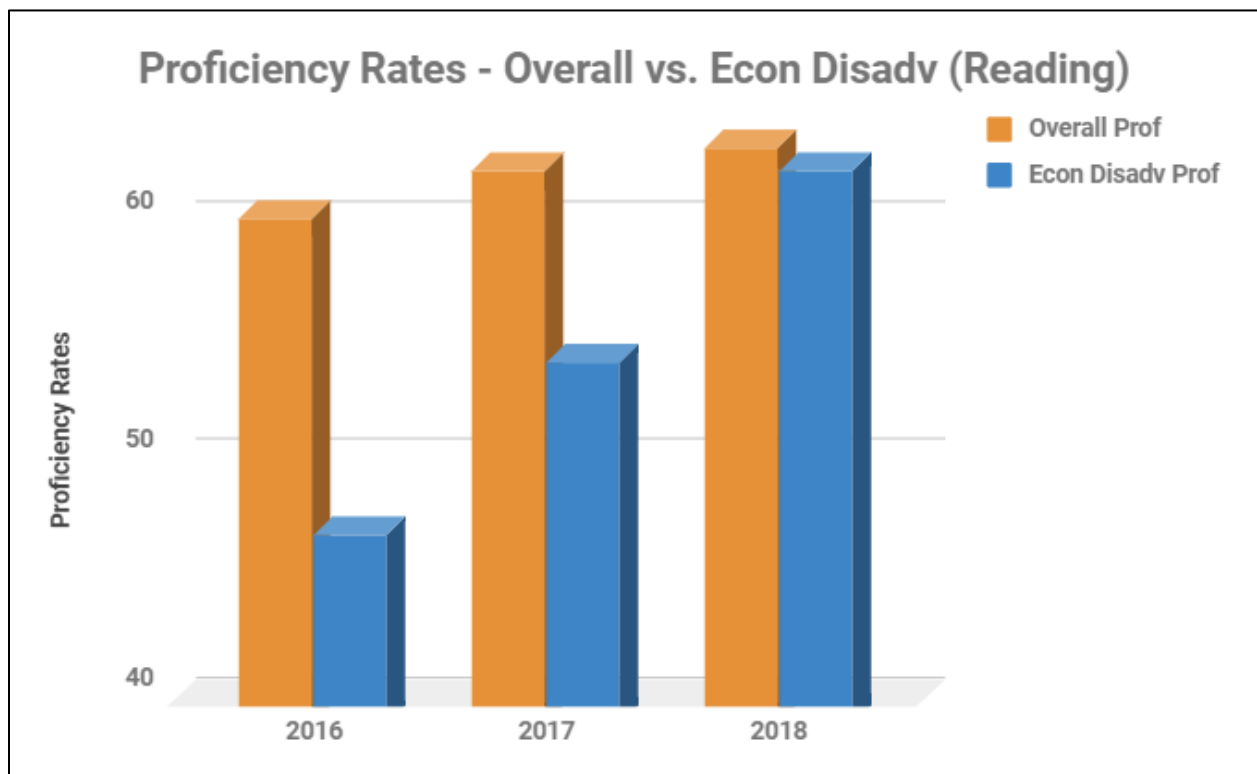
Proficiency Rates - Overall vs. Econ Disadv (Math)
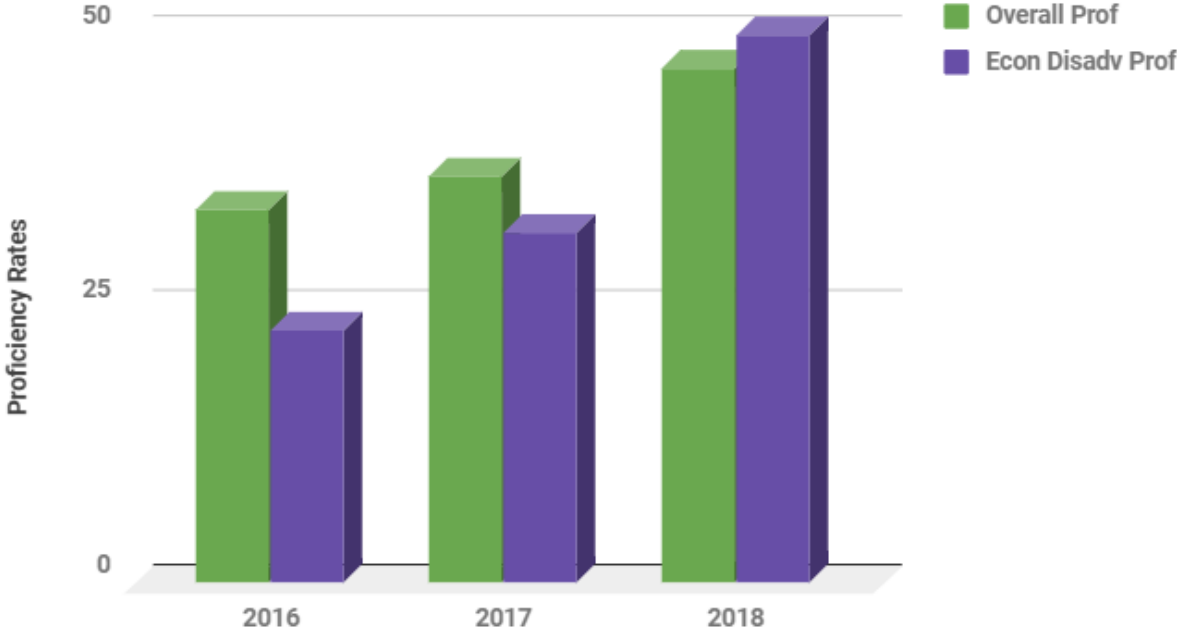
FRESH START CHARTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

QUESTION:

UNDER NRS 388B, ASD SCHOOLS ARE REQUIRED TO PRIORITIZE ENROLLMENT FOR STUDENTS ZONED TO THE PAIRED LOW-PERFORMING SCHOOL. IN THE FIRST YEAR, THIS MUST TAKE THE FORM OF A LOTTERY EXEMPTION FOR ALL STUDENTS ZONED TO THAT PAIRED SCHOOL. IF SPACE EXISTS AFTER THE ZONED STUDENTS ARE ENROLLED, THE SCHOOL MAY ENROLL STUDENTS IN THE ORDER PRESCRIBED IN NRS 388A.453 AND NRS 388A.456. DESCRIBE HOW YOU WOULD ENSURE STUDENTS ZONED TO THE PAIRED SCHOOL WOULD RECEIVE PRIORITY ENROLLMENT IN THE FIRST YEAR OF OPERATIONS.

As stated in our application, the enrollment and lottery process will be adjusted to comply as needed with all ASD and Nevada rules and regulations as they pertain to lottery processes and charter school enrollment such as weighted enrollment, school boundary preferences, etc. pursuant to NRS 388A.456 - Priority enrollment for certain children; timeline for lottery; school districts required to create, maintain and post list regarding enrollment.

More specifically, students who are zoned to the paired school will have priority enrollment and will not be entered into a lottery unless there are more zoned children applying for entry than there are spots available at Explore Academy, at which point ELN and the local school board and school leaders will evaluate enrollment and capacity to determine if there is a way to increase the capacity for the grade level with more paired applicants than there are spaces in the school. This preference will be upheld through the entire school year and the students who are zoned to the paired school will be guaranteed enrollment at any time. All other students will participate in the open enrollment and lottery periods.

NEVADA LAUNCH PLAN

QUESTION:

WHAT ACADEMIC AND FINANCIAL CRITERIA WILL BE CONSIDERED WHEN "GREENLIGHTING" THE PROPOSED EXPANSIONS IN 2020 AND BEYOND?

The academic criteria that will be considered when greenlighting the expansion schools will include:
- **Enrollment at site 1** - stability year to year, growth over time, success of phase in grades, retention rates
- **Demand** - wait lists for site 1, interest forms gathered from target areas for expansion sites, parent night feedback from events in target areas
- **Facilities** - availability of suitable facilities in target areas where there are Neighborhood Option potential schools for pairing

The financial criteria that will be considered when greenlighting the expansion schools will include:
- **Start-up funding sources** - Opp 180, CSP, other grants
- **Budget of site 1** - favorable annual financials that demonstrate solvency
- **Enrollment** - sufficient funding would still be generated from students at site 1 in addition to expansion sites

QUESTION:

PROVIDE ADDITIONAL DETAILS ON HOW THE CMO TEAM WILL SUPPORT THE SCHOOL IN THE PRE-OPENING YEAR AND YEAR 1 TO ENSURE A SMOOTH LAUNCH.

Refer to question about ELN roles in the Talent section of this supplemental request for ELN roles to support the school site.

Refer to question 1 in School Sustainability section of this supplemental request for ongoing support, coaching, and training that is provided to ensure the preparation and readiness of the school.

Refer to question 1 in Proposed School Model section of this supplemental request for information on how ELN will support the local school site in developing the Nevada specific curriculum and preparing for instructional launch with the opening of the school. Question 3 of this section also discusses local monthly training for initial teaching staff in a wide variety of areas that directly support opening of the school. We also discuss other site visits that are geared specifically to prepare for launch and successful initial operation of the school.

QUESTION:

REPEATED QUESTION: PROVIDE ADDITIONAL DETAILS ON HOW THE CMO TEAM WILL SUPPORT THE SCHOOL IN THE PRE-OPENING YEAR AND YEAR 1 TO ENSURE A SMOOTH LAUNCH. (NOT NECESSARY TO PROVIDE THIS INFORMATION TWICE, BUT DATA WILL BE REFERENCED HERE AS WELL)

See above

Application Narrative

1. Describe how you have further developed partnerships with community organizations since authorization. In addition to any other information, please make sure to address the following:

    a. Please describe your current partnership with Opportunity 180.

Opportunity 180 has awarded Explore Academy two grants thus far, one for the planning year and one for year zero. The year zero grant was put on hold when the opening of the school was delayed, so Opportunity 180 generously awarded additional monies to cover the school leadership and advertising that had already taken place and was in motion for the spring and summer of 2019, allowing the school to restart the grant plan in the spring of 2020 (one year delayed). This will also allow the school to realign its efforts and spending plans in regard to the CSP grant as well.

    b. Is Explore Academy still working with the Ryan Fellowship? How has this organization supported development of the identified school leader?

Gretchen Larsen, the school's Executive Director, has done extensive work as a Ryan Fellow, including leadership training, staff initiatives, and codification of school policies and procedures. Ms. Larsen has also been able to leverage her Ryan Fellowship contacts to seek advice and guidance from other Fellows as she prepares to reengage with school launch activities in the fall of 2019. She is also using the network to vet candidates for school leadership positions as well as other staffing opportunities.

2. Since authorization, has Explore Academy identified any service providers and/or entered into contracts with any service providers?

With the unexpected delay of the school's opening and resulting immediate change of launch plans, the founding team revised the timelines for service providers and other contracted services. However, with the finalization of the charter contract, our team intends to return to the original plan which includes analyzing provider services and price structures and presenting viable options to the school administration and the school board. This includes business management, food service, ancillary services, etc.

3. Please describe how the school's board has engage with community members.

The board has been very active, attending networking events through Opportunity 180, the Nevada School Choice Coalition, and Explore Academy parent information nights and events. The board has also met with Teach for America staff and members as well as parents of future Explore Academy students. Moving into the fall, the board has expressed interest in block parties, a ribbon cutting ceremony for the school's campus, and meeting with the city of North Las Vegas and the team working hard to help the school launch and operate successfully.

4. What is status of relationships with identified families such as Tameka Henry, who anticipated a Fall 2019 opening?

Many families have expressed continued interest. The delays related to the contract and subsequent facility issues have caused some families to become frustrated, but in many discussions with parents and even teachers, interested families are excited for a final location as well as an official intent to open with a signed contract. We are confident that once everything is official and our team and recommence community engagement and year zero activities, we will strengthen family engagement and involvement very quickly. Additionally, we have maintained contact with many of the original families because their input is vital to the school's success.

5. Please describe progress on identifying a facility. Please provide information about potential locations and any communication with officials from the City of North Las Vegas regarding the development of the facility.

Currently, the delay in the charter's contract has been crippling to the facility progress. Our investor was unable to acquire the original plots of land due to the delays. The developer, HighMark, is working closely with North Las Vegas and the Mayor's office in order to prepare the taskforce to begin the purchase and construction as soon as the school is chartered officially. They have met with several sellers to ensure that a site is in place and has a feasible timeline leading into July 2020. This includes planning for or completion of entitlements, traffic and impact studies, zoning, etc.

6. Given this is the first replication attempt, and it has been delayed. Does the network still plan to replicate within two years of opening in Las Vegas, per the application? (Launch Plan, 3)

The replication process will depend on the year zero and year one outcomes. We feel it is best to evaluate the school's successes as well as struggles in the first year, as well as enrollment numbers and community need, in order to make the most effective and responsible timeline for replication. Ultimately, we just want to bring choice to families and serve students and the community.

Community Engagement Plan

7. During the ASD matching process, the school identified potential district schools for partnership. Does Explore still intend to serve students in the originally identified school communities? If so, how will the school work to serve those families?

Yes, the school will still located in the same general area of North Las Vegas as originally planned. The same families we have been engaging, as well as more of the North Las Vegas community, remains the target population for Explore Academy. The impact studies, data analysis, and community events our team has done will serve as a foundation on which we will build our relationship with the community. This community engagement will also allow us to gather community stakeholder input to shape the campus to best serve its students and families.

8. To what extent has student recruitment happened? How many intent to enroll/interest forms have been collected to date, and are they still applicable with a delayed opening? (i.e., grade level aligned)

Enrollment efforts were paused when the delay happened. This was a hard choice, but we felt it was the fairest decision for families. It was very difficult to explain to families that they could rely on us with confidence and that they could support a new school that, without a contract in place, and without an address, would *probably* open in 18 months. We worked very diligently on the school launch and developing deep community connections, and the delay caused much of that momentum to disappear. The majority of families who have excitedly submitted interest forms say they would prefer an official address before committing.

The other families who were supportive, which was about 10 families for every 1 family that submitted an interest form, said they would not feel comfortable signing up for Explore Academy until we have both a contract and an official location. Many interest forms were for 7th or 8th grade, so it is possible that we will not be able to serve those students if we open with grades 6 and 7 only in 2020. That said, we are confident that when we reengage the community engagement and recruitment plan with an official contract and location, we will have even more momentum than before. We will create a timeline with recruitment goals to track the school's progress and enrollment projections throughout the 19-20 school year.

9. How many info sessions have taken place? When? Where? What was attendance?

There were three family information nights with a total attendance of about 40 families across December, January, and March. We were forced to cancel a large event in February due to contract delays (the event had 60 rsvps on social media alone). In March, we had to make the tough decision to stop the information nights due to a lack of funds and the one year delay for opening. The information nights will recommence in October 2019 and will be held once monthly throughout the winter and spring. There will also be larger events in the spring when the weather allows for outdoor venues.

Financial Policies and Procedures

10. How has pre-opening budget been adjusted to reflect delayed opening?

Given that the school choose to delay its opening early on, the school did not spend any CSP money, and as such, no budgetary adjustments are necessary except the modifications explained above in regards to the Opportunity 180 grant monies.

11. In December of 2017, new regulations were approved for charter schools. Among other things, these regulations state that charter schools *shall not:*

- "Design, use or intend to use requirements for enrollment in the charter school, including, without limitation, the payment of fees, expectations for the performance of volunteer work or attendance at informational meetings and interviews, for the purpose of discrimination;

- Require the payment of a fee as a condition of applying for, enrolling in or attending the charter school;

- Adopt a fee policy unless the policy is approved by the sponsor of the charter school and contains a provision for the waiver of all fees for any pupil who qualifies to participate in a program for free or reduced-price meals, regardless of whether the charter school participates in the program for free or reduced-price meals under the National School Lunch Act or School Breakfast Program, as defined in NRS 387.0693 and 387.073, respectively."

Please confirm that Explore Academy's model will comply with the items outlined above. In addition, if the school intends to adopt a fee policy, please describe that policy.

Our model complies with all the above-listed regulations. We require a chromebook as the only school supply, but we have programs to provide devices to students who cannot provide their own. This is also the case for the required uniform. So, there are no fee policies for the model and no student or family will be discriminated against on the basis of economic status, participation in school events, etc.

Board Recruitment

12. What is status of board and board recruitment since the 12.14.18 update? Please describe when the board will fully meet the requirements of NRS 388A.320:
https://www.leg.state.nv.us/NRS/NRS-388A.html#NRS388ASec320

The Explore Academy school board currently has a former teacher with a background in education policy, a daycare coordinator with deep roots in the community and school policy, and a procurement specialist with financial and contract expertise. The board will recruit a parent when there are students enrolled as well as another member with expertise in finance, law, and/or accounting. The board will also focus on the recruitment of a member who is a current NV teacher.

Our team has reviewed the revised language in the NRS. The current board will be informed of and each member will supply the written affidavit certifying that he/she has not been convicted of a felony related to serving on a school board, has received training and is familiar with his/her roles and responsibilities as a charter school board member, and will submit fingerprints and grant permission to the sponsor for a background check in both the NV and the FBA databases.