

**Addendum to Quest Academy January 18, 2018
Charter Amendment**

**Submitted to the Nevada State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA)
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Overview

The purpose of this addendum is to answer additional questions that were raised after the Quest Academy Charter Amendment was submitted on January 18.

I. Human Capital

A. Process for SY 17-18 – 18-19 Transition

TenSquare will follow the process below (outlined in the School Improvement Trajectory submitted to SPCSA with the Receiver's Report in December) to build Quest's human capital for the 18-19 School Year.

We will:

- Lay the foundation for building an effective performance management/talent development system within Quest.
- Ensure all staff are evaluated effectively; exit out low performing staff.
- Source all academic leadership, staff and teaching talent.
- Conduct outreach, recruiting, screening, interviewing, and reference checks.
- Provide support for effective onboarding.

B. Timeline and Steps

The process will unfold according to the following timeline and steps over the next few months:

1. Begin to Build an Effective Performance Management System; Evaluate all Current Staff and Make Re-Hire Decisions

- a) Issue intent to return letters (due at the end of January 2018) to all staff.
- b) Explain that as part of Quest's turnaround, that all positions will be advertised—this is common practice when a school is in turnaround.
- c) Post for all positions on a rolling basis (January to September, or as needed).
- d) Implement weekly walk-through cycle for all teachers to inform teacher observations and evaluations.
- e) Evaluate the teacher pay scale for alignment with market competition. Revise, as necessary based on resources available.
- f) Make decisions about retaining and exiting current staff by mid-May.
- g) Communicate with parents and families about the transition process, easing any concerns they may have – through monthly meetings and written communications, when appropriate.
- h) Since TenSquare staff (e.g. Leadership and Instructional Coaches) are already working on the ground, they have already built relationships with teachers and leaders and will use those to ease staff concerns about the transition process.

2. Conduct Advertising, Outreach, and Sourcing to ID Potential New Staff – Underway

- a) Advertise all positions through relevant job websites, publications, and listservs – beginning in January.
- b) Use social media (e.g. LinkedIn, Facebook).
- c) Conduct targeted, personal outreach to TenSquare's cultivated network of charter

schools, nonprofit educational organizations, and experienced professionals; focus on connections the Receiver and TenSquare team have already built in Nevada (e.g. TenSquare attended the Teacher for America Opportunity Fair in December; we will also work with UNLV and UNR, and alternative teacher preparation programs that have been approved by the Nevada Department of Education such as the Nevada New Teacher Project and the other programs listed here -

http://www.doe.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/ndedoenvgov/content/Educator_Effectiveness/Educator_Develop_Support/Educator_Preparation/ARL/ARL_Matrix_rev.pdf).

- d) Identify candidates in TenSquare's candidate database.
- e) Conduct research on charter peers and proactively reach out to potential candidates who may not be involved in a job search.

3. Conduct Screening, Interviewing, Reference Checks; Hire High-Performing Candidates – Beginning in February

- a) Collect and manage all applicant submissions.
- b) Screen resumes based on pre-determined criteria including competency, content knowledge, and mission fit.
- c) Conduct Google background reviews.
- d) Conduct phone interviews with promising candidates.
- e) Present qualified candidates for in-person interviews.
- f) Design and facilitate in-person interviews - all candidates will be interviewed by TenSquare leadership staff, along with applicable Quest Leaders.
- g) Conduct internet searches and employer reference checks; ensure that all required background checks are completed prior to onboarding.
- h) Make offers to best candidates; negotiate contracts.

4. Complete Hiring and Onboarding – Hire as soon as Possible (i.e. hire highly qualified teachers early in the year; complete hiring before August)

- a) Maintain communication with candidates after hire.
- b) Prepare for two-week pre-service in August.
- c) Implement on-boarding plan – enculturation into new Quest Culture of High-Performance; mentoring by leadership; coaching plan in place and ready to go day one.

II. Key Instructional Strategies in Math and English Language Arts

A. Overview

Quest will employ a variety of effective, research-based instructional strategies to support student learning and achievement. **The focus of the strategies will be on rapidly increasing student achievement by:**

1. Improving direct instruction through professional development, teacher coaching and observation, and regular bite-sized feedback. This will start with very simple tasks, such as a) is the objective for the day written on the board; b) are students engaged in the learning process; c) how well are checks for understanding built into instruction?
2. Helping teachers to differentiate instruction through modeling, co-teaching, and support from instructional coaches with content expertise in mathematics and English language arts (ELA).
3. Ensuring that assessments are aligned to “taught” as well as “written” curriculum resources and supports. This process will include a) regular reviews of pacing through classroom observations and walkthroughs, and b) reviews of interim assessment questions and testing/question format (e.g. multiple choice vs. open-ended problem solving) to ensure that assessments – both school – and teacher-created, as well as formal interim assessments such as MAP assessments, are testing what teachers are teaching, and in turn, that those assessments are aligned to the SBAC.
4. Ensuring that interim assessment data are used by leaders and teachers (in weekly professional learning communities as well as monthly data days) to group students, provide appropriate intervention supports, and re-teach lessons if appropriate.
5. Continually differentiating instruction, ensuring that those students who need specific interventions and supports, receive them, and that students who are performing above grade level are challenged to continue to grow and excel (through strategies describe in the full Charter Amendment).

B. Specific Best-Practice Instructional Strategies in Math and ELA

In addition to the ELA Instructional Framework included in the January 18 Quest Charter Amendment, TenSquare will also work with Quest to implement the following high-impact instructional strategies in mathematics and ELA. Quest will:

1. Increase instructional time in ELA and math from the state minimum to at least 65 minutes per day in the middle school grades. This strategy is designed to ensure that students (and teachers) have enough time to learn (and teach) the curriculum, that students can explore topics in depth, and that students master key foundational skills before moving on.
2. Implement with fidelity English Language Arts (ELA) and math curricula that are horizontally and vertically aligned, meet requirements of a research-based program from the Department of Education, and are aligned to the Common Core standards. Quest will implement nationally proven anchor curricula in English language arts (ELA) and math. The math curriculum, *Go Math*, is one of the few national math curricula that has been

evaluated by EdReports.org to align with the Common Core in all grade spans K-8, ensuring vertical alignment for students to progress in mathematics. The ELA curriculum, *Core Knowledge Language Arts* (Amplify) is also highly rated for alignment to Common Core standards. As described in the Overview above, to ensure that curriculum resources and supports are implemented effectively, instructional coaches with content expertise and school leaders will conduct regular classroom observations—observing pacing, teaching effectiveness, and overall engagement.

3. Implement a research-based interim assessment system in math and ELA to measure student growth from fall to spring (NWEA MAP—Measures of Academic Progress) in grades K to 8. MAP has been aligned to the SBAC (see - <https://www.nwea.org/content/uploads/2015/12/Linking-the-Smarter-Balanced-Assessments-to-NWEA-MAP-Assessments-DEC15.pdf>), and provides students and teachers with adaptive tests that are designed to measure both student growth and student achievement. TenSquare will work closely with Quest teachers and leaders to help them gain a deep understanding of how to use MAP assessment data to understand and address students' specific learning needs.

MAP assessments are closely aligned to the Common Core and individual state standards, so test results can be used to project proficiency on high-stakes tests. Common Core MAP includes technology-enhanced and multiple-choice item types and features that allow for deep assessment of reading, language usage, and mathematics comprehension and increased cognitive complexity, enabling students to demonstrate evidence of their learning – *Measures of Academic Progress: A Comprehensive Guide to the K-12 Computer Adaptive Interim Assessment*

4. Use data to assess and diagnose student needs, and implement effective, research-based intervention programs (identified in Table 3 of the full Charter Amendment submitted on January 18) for students in math and ELA for Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions. Quest to date has not implemented research-based math or reading intervention programs and a focus on whole group instruction has dominated teaching. While whole group instruction is essential for on-grade level students, we also recognize the need for targeted research-based intervention programs that will help students catch up and make accelerated progress. The intervention programs selected have been identified by the Department of Education, *Doing What Works Clearinghouse*, as proven intervention methods to target ELA and math growth. Programs selected must be research-based and required a human and fiscal investment that Quest is prepared to make to improve student outcomes.
5. Departmentalize ELA and math instruction beginning in 5th grade to recognize the complexities of content. If necessary, we will begin departmentalization even earlier, perhaps as early as grade 3, allowing mathematics and ELA teachers to meet in cross-age teams to ensure that curriculum and instruction are horizontally and vertically aligned, and that teachers have the content (as well as pedagogical) expertise they need to teach effectively.

To ensure that we are meeting the full range of students' needs throughout the year—and rapidly improving student learning and achievement—student progress monitoring will be ongoing. Additionally, we will measure the success of our efforts by monitoring student progress (individually, as well as by class, grade-level, and campus) throughout the year on MAP tests,

and annually on SBAC tests as well. Individual and cohort data will be analyzed to determine the effectiveness of interventions and supports—as well as the curriculum and overall instructional framework—over time and to continue to improve outcomes for students.

III. Goals

The chart below expands on the Goals included in the Amendment submitted on January 18. It represents a suggested avenue to attain a 3-STAR rating for Quest Academy elementary schools over the next three years, and it was developed by TenSquare leaders in collaboration with Quest leadership to define a path forward. (The ultimate goal for Quest is to achieve a 4 or 5 STAR rating, but realistically this will take more than 3 years to achieve. The goals below represent a suggested path that is reasonable and achievable.) Individual goals for each metric will be reset each year based on prior performance and outcomes. Adjustments will also be made to account for changes to the metrics, calculations, or technical components of the assessment and accountability system.

Area	Metric	SY 1718 GOAL	Nevada Report Card (SY1718)	SY18-19 Goal	Nevada Report Card (SY18-19)	SY20-21 Goal	Nevada Report Card (SY19-20)	SY 20-21 Goal	Nevada Report Card (SY20-21)
Academic Achievement	Math CRT	32%	n/a	37%	n/a	42%	n/a	45%	n/a
	ELA CRT	32%	n/a	37%	n/a	42%	n/a	45%	n/a
	Science CRT		n/a		n/a		n/a		n/a
	Pooled Average	33%	4	37%	5	42%	8	45%	9
	Read by Grade 3	30%	2	40%	3	43%	3	65%	5
Student Growth	Math CRT MGP	45%	4	47%	4	47%	4	50%	5
	ELA CRT MGP	32%	1	35%	2	40%	3	45%	4
	Math CRT AGP	31%	3	35%	4	37%	4.5	38%	4.5
	ELA CRT AGP	33%	0.5	38%	1.5	42%	2	35%	1
English Language	ELPA	30%	1	37%	3	37%	3	40%	4
Closing Opportunity Gap	Math CRT	25%	4	30%	6	30%	6	30%	6
	<i>%meeting AGP</i> ELA CRT	25%	1	30%	2	30%	2	35%	4
Student Engagement	Chronic Absenteeism	16%	3	12%	6	10%	7	10%	7
	Climate Survey	≥55	2	≥55	2	≥55	2	≥55	2
STAR Points			26.5		38.5		44.5		51.5
Star Rating			1		2		2		3

Quest can be a model charter school for the SPCSA. Quest Academy educates one of the most diverse student populations amongst Nevada State Public Charter Schools, with a population that is far more racially diverse than the state or the county. In addition, Quest's SpEd population exceeds the SPCSA average and its ELL population is nearly double the SPCSA average.

The SPCSA made the difficult and dramatic step of placing Quest into receivership in light of fiscal mismanagement issues. Having now addressed those issues related to the schools' finances, as well as resolving a plethora of legal challenges and, not insignificantly, moving its flagship campus into a much-improved facility, we hope that the SPCSA finds this plan acceptable for allowing the school to complete its journey to a high performing academic institution.