

GEO North Baton Rouge Elementary (K-5)

Executive Summary

1. *a.* GEO Louisiana proposes to launch GEO North Baton Rouge Elementary (K-5) with the mission of providing all children with a quality education regardless of their race, income, and zip code. To actualize this mission, GEO North Baton Rouge Elementary's vision is to provide a student-centered, content-rich education model utilizing a personalized and competency-based approach to learning to close opportunity gaps beginning in elementary school, and prepare low-income students to begin college coursework on college campuses as early as 9th grade.

b,c. GEO Academies defines success as providing its students an accelerated pathway to college, beginning in 9th grade. While the school will be located in East Baton Rouge Parish, GEO will be open to students from across Louisiana. By providing a high quality and innovative school model to the students of the East Baton Rouge Parish with declining public school performance and a majority of D and F-rated schools, GEO Academies is satisfying the purposes of charter schools as defined by Louisiana Revised Statutes 17:3972 and Bulletin 126, §105: "Purpose of Charter Schools."

2. *a.* GEO Academies proposes to open two new schools in East Baton Rouge Parish (EBR): a K-5 elementary school and a 6-12 upper academy. This model would offer a K-12 continuum for GEO North Baton Rouge students. GEO North Baton Rouge Upper Academy anticipates serving a comparable student population as EBR: 93% ED, 12% SWD, 4% EL, 97% Minority, and 2.5% Homeless.¹ While the school will be open to students across the state, we will focus our attention to East Baton Rouge throughout the application as this will be where our school is physically located

The East Baton Rouge Parish School District currently holds a "C" letter grade for the 2023-2024 school year.² Despite EBR's overall average letter grade, the students who live in North Baton Rouge have no high-performing 6-12 school options: one middle is rated F; and the three high schools are rated a D or F. There remains a critical need for high-quality public school seats in EBR, especially North Baton Rouge where we propose to serve students. In addition, 2023 ACT scores underscore the need for more high-performing high schools. In 2023, only 32% of EBR graduates had an ACT composite score of 21 or greater and only 31% of all Louisiana students had a composite score of 21 or greater. EBR's graduation rate is 75% and the state of Louisiana is 83%. EBR is below the state's average. This graduation rate becomes a barrier for students to pursue their college and career options. See Growth Plan section for K-5 grade level enrollment from Year 1 to Year 5.

b. The main community challenge faced by families in North Baton Rouge is the desperate need for high-performing school options for their children. This is evidenced by GEO Academies' enrollment waitlist numbers across EBR. Waitlist numbers range from 82 to 199 at GEO Academies: Mid-City (K-8) has a waitlist of 82; GEO Prep has a waitlist of 199; and GEO Next Gen High School has a waitlist of 159.

3.*a,b.* GEO Academies Louisiana has intentionally proposed GEO North Baton Rouge Elementary as a K-5 school rather than a full K-12 site allowing leadership to focus on the critical early years when literacy, numeracy, and social-emotional skills have the greatest long-term impact. Concentrating on K-5 leverages instructional expertise, supports teacher development, and establishes a strong academic culture from the start. The education plan includes four major programmatic elements, or "pillars," that together achieve strong academic results for students: (1) blended learning, (2) strategic human capital management, (3) effective instructional practice, and (4) evidence-based curriculum. These pillars are proven to improve students' academic performance during their K-5 experience. Together, these pillars

¹ Using the state average (<http://profiles.nche.seiservices.com/StateProfile.aspx?StateID=22>) as a proxy for homeless students, due to limited data for East Baton Rouge specifically.

² [2023-24 LDOE School System Report Card data](#)

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ensure that students are exposed to the highest quality materials in their classrooms under the care of educators who are confident and ever-improving in their craft.

The charts below display the proposed growth plan over time along with budgeted, minimum, and maximum budget per grade level for the charter term contract.

	26-27	27-28	28-29	29-30	30-31
K	75	75	75	75	75
1	75	75	75	75	75
2	75	75	75	75	75
3	75	75	75	75	75
4	75	75	75	75	75
5	75	75	75	75	75
Total	450	450	450	450	450

	26-27 SY	27-28 SY	28-29 SY	29-30 SY	30-31 SY
	K-5	K-5	K-5	K-5	K-5
Budgeted Enrollment	450	450	450	450	450
Minimum Enrollment	120	180	240	300	360
Maximum Enrollment	540	540	540	540	540

c. GEO Academies two elementary schools outperform EBR on Top Growth and LEAP Mastery during the 2023-24 SY. For Top Growth: GEO MC achieved 59% and GEO Prep achieved 51%, compared to EBR at 43%. For LEAP Mastery: GEO MC and GEO Prep both achieved 29%, compared to EBR at 16%.

d. Not applicable.

4. The GEO Academies model is entirely unique in the context of instruction. Though other schools report using Tier 1 curricula, TAP, or TLAC, the GEO Academies model stands apart from other schools in its innovative implementation of these strategies to lead to successful, immersive college and career programming. Although the application is focused on K-5, students who graduate from GEO Academies emerge well-prepared to fully excel in the college and career-immersion high school model that was pioneered by GEO Next Generation High School in Baton Rouge, and is now expanding in other schools across the state. The new elementary school is satisfying the purposes of charter schools as defined by Louisiana Revised Statutes 17:3972 and Bulletin 126, §105: "Purpose of Charter Schools."

5. *a,b,c.* GEO Academies has previously submitted three type 2 charter applications to BESE, all of which were approved. GEO Prep Academy received approval in 2013 and GEO Next Generation High School received approval in 2018. GEO Academies also submitted a proposal to turn around Baton Rouge

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Charter Academy at Mid City in 2017. Based upon GEO Academies' 2014 charter application, BESE approved that request and, under GEO Academies' management, the school became GEO Prep Mid-City in the fall of 2017. Finally, GEO Academies received approval in 2021 to launch GEO Prep Baker.

Since these submissions, GEO Academies has revised this proposal to reflect the current state of student performance and demographics in EBR parish as well as the performance of all GEO Academies schools. Using the student performance data findings, GEO decided to change its English Language Arts curriculum and will now use Wit and Wisdom to improve student outcomes. Currently, there are no changes in board leadership since GEO's most recent application submissions.

Educational Program and Capacity

6. a. GEO Academies proposes to open a K-5 elementary school in East Baton Rouge. The East Baton Rouge Parish school system serves a diverse student population of over 40,000 students, making it one of the largest districts in Louisiana. The student body reflects a rich mix of ethnic and cultural backgrounds, with approximately 70% African American, 20% White, and a growing percentage of Hispanic and Asian students. Many schools also have a significant number of economically disadvantaged students, with about 80% qualifying for free or reduced lunch. The district offers a range of programs, from magnet and gifted education to special education and career-technical pathways, aiming to meet the diverse needs of its learners.

As discussed, the proposed school presents an opportunity for the students of North Baton Rouge in particular, as they are relegated to either low-performing or failing public school options at present. To succeed in serving this student population, GEO North Baton Rouge Elementary will implement its four-part strategy: (1) blended learning, (2) TAP programming for educator excellence, (3) Teach Like a Champion teacher effectiveness strategies, and (4) Tier 1 curricula that has a track record of significant growth and success among EBR students.

GEO Academies has been building deep roots and investing in the East Baton Rouge community and now specifically in North Baton Rouge since 2015. GEO Academies wants to continue to provide high-performing school options for families in the community. The rationale for continuing to work in EBR is clear by 1) district need for high performing K-12 schools and 2) demonstrated family demand through waitlist data across all GEO Academies' EBR schools. It is imperative for us to continue to expand in EBR.

b. The need for high quality public elementary schools is clear across all indicators. East Baton Rouge's district performance is low and declining (see tables below). EBR has consistently been one of the lowest-performing districts in the state across all performance measures.

Table 1: Need for High-Quality Schools in East Baton Rouge

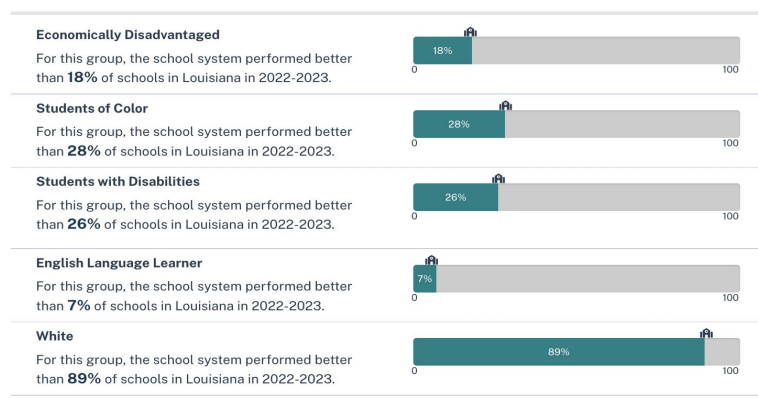
Below is a summary of the public schools north of Florida Blvd. in EBR, including student demographics and student performance ³:

³ LDOE. 2023 School Performance Scores Subgroup. https://louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/data-management/2023-school-performance-scores-subgroup.xlsx?sfvrsn=9ff26118_6

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Schools	Grades Served	Letter Grade SPS	% Minority	% Economically Disadvantaged
Glen Oaks High School	6-12	F 47.9	99%	94%
Istrouma High School	6-12	F 43.8	98%	94.4%
Belaire High School	9-12	D 54.8	98%	91.2%
Park Forest Middle School	6-8	F 46.3	98%	91.7%
Crestworth Elementary	PK-8	D 51.2	99%	96.9%
Merrydale Elementary	PK-5	D 52.5	100%	96.7%
GEO Prep Academy of Greater Baton Rouge	K-8	B 75.4	99.7%	87.3%
GEO Next Generation High School	9-12	B 76.1	100.0%	84%
GEO Prep Mid-City of Greater Baton Rouge	K-8	B 78.3	100.0%	94.4%

According to the LDOE's 2022-2023 Report Card⁴, EBR performs worse than the majority of other public schools in the state in student performance across all demographic subgroups, with the exception of White students:



⁴ LDOE. *East Baton Rouge Parish*. https://louisianaschools.com/schools/017/academic-performance/breakdown_student_groups

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Family Demand for More GEO Schools: GEO Academies EBR enrollment waitlist data illustrates an authentic demand and desire for more GEO Academies elementary schools, as well as a 6-12 educational continuum. The two EBR elementary schools at full capacity have a combined waitlist of roughly 300 students and a high school with a waitlist of 159 students. Given the opportunity to open the proposed elementary school, GEO Academies already has a demand for the future elementary school demonstrating families desire for another high-quality school option reflecting their model.

EBR Family Demand - 2024 GEO Total Enrollment Waitlist Data

	City K-8	Mid-City K-8	Next Gen 9-12	Baker K-3 (K-8)	Total
Enrollment	771	685	478	121	2055
Waitlist	199	82	159	2	442

The school performance of the local K-12 schools in North Baton Rouge is low as displayed in Table 1 above and described in the narrative below. Families do not have enough options to meet their needs. GEO's proposed school will continue to serve a similar population of EBR who are primarily educationally disadvantaged.

Across Baton Rouge, approximately 33% of students attend “F” schools or “D” schools. These schools are in the bottom third of Louisiana in terms of academic growth (as measured by Progress Index and LDOE's “Top Growth” measure). On district-wide measures of academic growth, EBR is lagging behind the state:

- On the LDOE Top Growth measure, only 44% of students demonstrated Top Growth. This is the 27th percentile of districts statewide.
- EBR trails behind other large urban districts in the state in academic growth. For example, Jefferson Parish Public School System is at the 63rd percentile; Caddo Parish Public Schools is at the 75th percentile; and New Orleans Public Schools is at the 89th percentile.

Economically Disadvantaged Students: GEO Academies' current student population is approximately 90% Economically Disadvantaged students; our new schools aim to continue to serve a similar student demographic. Of the 29 EBR district schools serving a student body of 90%+ Economically Disadvantaged students, no schools are rated an “A”, only two schools are rated a “B”, and nineteen schools are rated a “D” or “F”.

In these 29 schools serving a similar demographic to GEO Academies, 43% of the students reached Top Growth (i.e. met their growth-to-mastery target and/or grew in the 60th-99th percentile relative to similar peers statewide). As a comparison, each GEO Academies school in Baton Rouge has higher Top Growth than these schools and as EBR as a district. GEO students also outperformed EBR in attainment of “Mastery” or higher on the state standardized tests.

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	EBR	GEO Mid-City K-8	GEO Prep K-8	GEO Next Gen High School 9-12
Top Growth	43%	59%	55%	46%
LEAP Mastery	16%	29%	29%	19%

The scores demonstrate that while serving the same student population, students who attend a GEO elementary school or high school achieve higher academic growth and mastery than a student who attends an EBR school.

Finally, the four feeder high schools for North Baton Rouge students have lower cohort graduation rates than GEO's Next Gen High School. In 2023, GEO Next Gen High School's graduation rate was 85.1%, which is several points higher than Scotlandville Magnet High School (78.7%), and significantly higher than Glen Oaks (56.3%), Belaire (56.9%), and Istrouma (46.4%). The same student population that would attend a GEO high school would have a higher chance of graduating on time for postsecondary college and career opportunities.

c. GEO Academies is an experienced operator with a track record of success serving students in the East Baton Rouge community. As described at length in the section above, our schools are currently more effective than other public school options in the community serving a similar student body. Our proposed school will leverage lessons learned from operating for years in the community to build additional schools. Specifically, we will employ the following strategies to ensure the effectiveness of our new schools:

(1) **Hiring and Supporting Highly Qualified Educators:** Like urban school districts nationwide, EBR struggles to attract the human capital needed to staff high-quality schools. As of 2023, only 70% of Louisiana teachers are highly-qualified and only 52.4% of EBR teachers are found highly effective according to COMPASS ratings. GEO Academies, on the other hand, has established partnerships with talent pipelines throughout the region⁵ that enable nearly 100% of classes to be led by highly-qualified teachers at the proposed schools.

(2) **Leveraging Community Resources:** Currently, EBR public schools do not take advantage of the significant opportunities and resources that are within its reach. This does a disservice to its students and limits student success, especially for elementary school students. Southern University, Louisiana State University, and Baton Rouge Community College are all institutions that present opportunities for rigorous coursework, exposure to higher education, and a high school pathway that increases students' readiness for and the likelihood of their persistence through college. GEO Academies' existing partnership with Baton Rouge Community College means that the network is already poised to bring these otherwise untapped resources to the students of North Baton Rouge even as early as elementary school.

⁵ See our staffing plan in the Organizational Plan and Capacity portion of the application for a detailed overview of our partnerships and our pipeline for highly qualified educators.

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Our BRCC partnership is designed not only for college credit but also to engage families and students in early college-going mindsets. At the elementary level, BRCC faculty and students will lead Saturday workshops, family literacy nights, and mentoring. This scaffolds toward the dual-credit work that begins in high school.

(3) Geographic proximity to current GEO Academies schools in EBR: GEO Academies currently operates four schools in East Baton Rouge Parish, all of which are within immediate driving distance to each other. This proximity allows the existing central office staff and systems to easily expand their services to new GEO schools located in EBR without significant additional resources.

d. Not applicable

7. a,b,c,d. GEO Academies new school will serve a student population that is similar to the broader East Baton Rouge community and to existing schools in the GEO Academies network:

2024-25 SY						
	Total Enrollment	Minority	LEP	ED	SPED	Homeless
State of Louisiana	673801	59.4%	5.4%	71.7%	14.0%	2.5% ⁶
East Baton Rouge Parish	39711	89%	10.3 %	79.6%	11.4%	2.5% ⁷
GEO Prep Academy of Greater Baton Rouge	771	99.7%	12.5%	87.3%	12.1%	2.73
GEO Next Generation High School	456	99.9%	5.9%	84%	14.7%	4.78
GEO Prep Mid-City of Greater Baton Rouge	676	100.0%	0.0%	94.4%	13.3%	1.89
GEO Prep Baker	122	99.9%	0.0%	87.7%	11.5%	1.65
GEO North Baton Rouge Elementary School (K-5)*	450	100.0%	4.0%	93.0%	12.0%	2.5%
*Target enrollment and demographics at full scale						

8. a,b. We have taken a multifaceted approach to engaging stakeholders to open a proposed K-5 elementary school in North Baton Rouge:

- Parent/Guardian Engagement: Our consideration to continue to expand into EBR and North Baton Rouge came from years of parent and community engagement starting in 2015. GEO Academies has three existing and high-performing, waitlisted schools in EBR: two K-8 schools and one high school, including one K-8 school in the City of Baker.

⁶ According to the [National Center for Center for Homeless Education](#)'s recent data, in 2022-2023 SY there were 2.5% homeless students across Louisiana schools. This is 17,777 students.

⁷ EBR specific data unavailable. This is the Louisiana-wide homeless population.

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- Talent Engagement: Today we employ many EBR residents, 100% of whom reported in surveys that they are in favor of our expansion.
- Evidence of Family Demand: All three of GEO Academies have evidence of widespread support including enrollment waitlists between 82 to 199 at their EBR schools: Mid-City K-8 has a waitlist of 82; GEO Prep has a waitlist of 199; and GEO Next Gen High School has a waitlist of 159. Baker K-2 is not at full capacity yet, and has a waitlist of two. These waitlist numbers ratify that there is a high demand from families for more high-performing GEO Academies schools, especially elementary schools. See Appendix 1 for waitlist number by school.

Each stage of stakeholder engagement has informed the next. GEO Academies would not have continued expansion in North Baton Rouge in the absence of family demand demonstrated by the waitlist data and the need for high-performing schools determined by School Performance Score (SPS) data. In addition, GEO Academies would not have determined that expansion was feasible if talent engagement showed that the schools would not be able to hire sufficient talent. Finally, the desires expressed by parents at the more recent parent meetings will refine our plans to more responsively serve EBR as we approach our school's launch in the 26-27 SY. We have received no opposition to our plans at this time.

See Appendix 1: Evidence of Community Support for more detail.

Academic Plan

9. a,b. The proposed elementary school will operate with eight guiding principles critical to its success and reflecting the school's mission and vision. These principles are: 1) a student-first focus where success is determined entirely by the achievement of students; 2) high performance expectations for both staff and students; 3) data utilization to drive staff and student performance; 4) schools at the center of the network organizational model; 5) bounded autonomy, in which teachers and principals at the school level have decision-making freedom within the implementation of the school model; 6) commitment to service by the "home office" to free schools from operational burdens; 7) a focus on efficiency, particularly with respect to non-school expenses; and 8) a "no excuses" promise when it comes to serving students and families.

GEO Academies' academic model includes four major programmatic elements, or "pillars," that together achieve strong academic results for students: (1) blended learning, (2) strategic human capital management, (3) effective instructional practice, and (4) evidence-based curriculum. These pillars, along with the guiding principles outlined above, make up the core of the model for replication. Individually, these pillars are proven to both improve students' academic performance during their K-5 experience. Together, these pillars ensure that students are exposed to the highest quality materials in their classrooms, are under the care of educators who are confident and ever-improving in their craft, and are learning in environments designed to reflect future college and career opportunities.

Pillar One: Blended Learning - To complement the College Immersion model, GEO Academies uses an evidence-based blended learning model that combines online learning and in-class education. GEO Academies classrooms are divided into three zones: direct, teacher-led instruction; independent learning and practice; and teacher-assisted small group instruction. This blended learning approach honors and facilitates relationships between teachers/students and students/students, while providing space to build independence and self-reliance, which are qualities essential in college and career.

Pillar Two: Strategic Human Capital Management - The second pillar of the GEO Academies model is the emphasis on strategic human capital management, which includes professional development,

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support, and compensation for educators. GEO Academies focuses intensely on professional learning and growth for educators by implementing *TAP: The System for Teacher and Student Advancement*. TAP is an evidence-based program that all GEO Academies schools employ to provide professional advancement opportunities for school staff and reach the maximum possible achievement results for students.

Among other human capital management systems, TAP stands out because of its track record of growth and success in raising student achievement in high-need schools, and improving teacher retention in high-need schools.⁸ The majority of TAP schools that have implemented the system are more than 95% in high-need. These schools are achieving at least one year's academic growth as compared to 77% of comparison schools.⁹

Third Pillar: Effective Instructional Practice - GEO Academies use the Teach Like a Champion⁷ program to support the third pillar, effective instructional practice. Teach Like a Champion provides practical, concrete, and effective teaching methods and actions to enable teachers to be successful in the classroom and put their students on the path to college. GEO teachers receive training in Teach Like a Champion instructional techniques throughout the year through cluster meetings and ongoing professional development, as well as through Teach Like a Champion conference attendance. This training, along with TAP training, is critical to the continuous improvement of staff and increasing their effectiveness. The Teach Like a Champion strategies provide a framework within which teachers can receive regular feedback in addition to student performance on their classroom practices, supporting more nuanced coaching. This added layer of feedback is critical to teachers' continuous improvement and is shown to be effective in accelerating student progress.¹⁰

Fourth Pillar: Evidence-Based Curriculum - For its fourth pillar, GEO Academies incorporates an evidence-based set of curricula into its schools. For Louisiana schools, that means that all GEO Academies schools utilize curricula that are rated Tier 1, indicating the highest quality, by the Louisiana Department of Education.

According to data from the LDOE, schools utilizing Tier 1 curricula have consistently shown higher gains in academic achievement compared to those using lower-tier materials. Specifically, schools serving predominantly low-income students that implemented Tier 1 curricula saw a 15% increase in students scoring proficient on state assessments in ELA and Math over three years.

c. The model remains the same.

10. a,b. All GEO Academies utilize Tier 1 curricula, and corresponding assessments embedded in those curricula across all subjects and grade-levels, to monitor students' growth toward meeting Louisiana State Standards, and will additionally utilize LEAP 360 to the same end. A Tier 1 rating indicates that the materials contain embedded scaffolding and supports, allowing teachers to instruct all students using grade-level materials regardless of their specific differentiation needs. See the table below for the specific curriculum materials that will be used at GEO North Baton Rouge Elementary.

⁸ In a [study](#) of nearly 700 teachers over the course of three school years the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching found that teachers participating in TAP showed steady improvement in observed skills.

⁹ A [study](#) done by the National Institute of Excellence in Teaching demonstrated the impact that TAP had on high need schools. Within the TAP System, improvements to teacher instructional practices translate into gains in student achievement, these improvements increase over time.

¹⁰ VanDerHeyden, A. (2013). Are We Making the Differences That Matter in Education? *Performance Feedback: Using Data to Improve Educator Performance*, 3, 119-138.

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Subject: ELA			
Grades	Curriculum	Tier	SWD & EL Curriculum Use
K-5	Wit & Wisdom	1	A Tier 1 rating on all K-12 ELA curricula indicates that the LDOE found that the materials provide extensive scaffolding, support, and vocabulary acquisition tools, thereby enabling both Students With Disabilities and English Learners to comprehend and use grade-level materials. ¹¹

Subject: Math			
Grades	Curriculum	Tier	SWD & ELL Curriculum Use
K-5	Eureka Math ²	1	A Tier 1 rating on all K-12 Math curricula indicates that the LDOE found that the materials provide extensive scaffolding, support, and vocabulary acquisition tools, thereby enabling both Students With Disabilities and English Learners to comprehend and use grade-level materials. ¹²

Subject: Social Studies			
Grades	Curriculum	Tier	SWD & ELL Curriculum Use
K-5	Bayou Bridges	1 (equivalent to) ¹³ NA - As the LDOE designed these resources, they are not rated. Further, there are no Tier 1 Social Studies curricula.	All teachers receive extensive training (see PD plan) to utilize these materials such that they provide extensive scaffolding, support, and vocabulary acquisition tools, thereby enabling both Students With Disabilities and English Learners to comprehend and use grade-level materials. ¹⁴

Subject: Science			
Grades	Curriculum	Tier	SWD & ELL Curriculum Use
K-5	Amplify Science	1	A Tier 1 rating on all K-12 Science curricula indicates that

¹¹ All LDOE curricular review rubrics are linked [here](#).

¹² All LDOE curricular review rubrics are linked [here](#).

¹³ [Bayou Bridges FAQ](#)

¹⁴ All LDOE curricular review rubrics are linked [here](#).

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			the LDOE found that the materials provide extensive scaffolding, support, and vocabulary acquisition tools, thereby enabling both Students With Disabilities and English Learners to comprehend and use grade-level materials. ¹⁵
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Instructional Strategies, Methods, and Techniques: GEO Academies trains teachers on instructional strategies that are responsive to the needs of the student population. Based upon both formative and summative assessment data, the Chief Academic Officer, heads of schools, and other members of the academic leadership team regularly identify the strategies required to meet the needs of individual students at all grade levels.

GEO Academies uses an evidence-based blended learning model that combines online learning and in-class education for differentiated instruction. GEO Academies classrooms are divided into three zones: direct, teacher-led instruction; independent learning and practice; and teacher-assisted small group instruction. This blended learning approach honors and facilitates relationships between teachers/students and students/students, while providing space to build independence and self-reliance, qualities essential in college and career. Teachers, assistant teachers, and the special education staff collaborate to additionally provide tiered intervention as needed.

- **Utilization of Small Group Instruction:** Teachers are trained to utilize small group instruction in order to provide personalized teaching and reteaching to students. This practice is shown to be particularly effective¹⁶ in elementary grade reading and math instruction, with highest levels of growth resulting among students requiring the most significant remediation and support. Teachers benefit from TAP, a pillar of GEO Academies schools, in their training to maximize this time.
- **Tiered Interventions:** Assistant teachers collaborate with teachers to provide one-on-one interventions as needed, primarily in Tier 3 of RTI. This additional, focused instructional time allows for reteaching, additional practice, and is shown to be effective¹⁷ for students requiring the highest levels of support.
- **Independent Practice:** Consistent with the Teach Like a Champion strategy of “At Bat,” GEO Academies facilitates independent practice in the classroom in order to ensure that students have as many “at bats,” or chances to practice the skill or concept, during class time, as possible. When combined with strong student/teacher relationships, Tier 1 curricular materials, and the additional support of small group instruction and, as needed, tiered interventions, independent practice is a critical instructional strategy in our classrooms. With these additional supports in place, independent practice is proven to be effective across grade-levels and regardless of learning needs.¹⁸
- **Student Ownership:** Central to TAP practices, one of the pillars of GEO Academies’ model, is student ownership. All teachers are reviewed according to the TAP rubric, which states that a proficient teacher prioritizes and enables student-centered learning and student ownership. This

¹⁵ All LDOE curricular review rubrics are linked [here](#).

¹⁶ Jacob, R. & Jacob, B.A. (2018, June 7). *New evidence on the benefits of small group math instruction for young children*. Brookings. <https://www.brookings.edu/research/new-evidence-on-the-benefits-of-small-group-math-instruction-for-young-children/>

¹⁷ Fortenberry, A. (2018). *The Role of Response to Intervention in Michigan High Poverty Elementary Schools That Are Beating The Odds*. [Doctoral Dissertation, Western Michigan University]. <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/dissertations/3372/>

¹⁸ Mayer, B., Haywood, N., Sachdev, D. & Faraday, S. *What is independent learning and what are the benefits for students?* [http://www.curee.co.uk/files/publication/\[site-timestamp\]/Whatisindependentlearningandwhatarethebenefits.pdf](http://www.curee.co.uk/files/publication/[site-timestamp]/Whatisindependentlearningandwhatarethebenefits.pdf)

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means that “students can articulate what they are learning, why they are learning, strategies that support their learning, and how they will use these strategies in the future.”¹⁹

Taken together, these strategies mean that students have varied levels of supported and independent learning throughout their school day, ensuring that they have both the support needed to master concepts and skills, as well as increasing independence over time.

c. Not applicable

11. a. The proposed schools would move to a hybrid or remote learning setting in any instance of a national disaster, pandemic, or other Act of God that prohibits students’ abilities to learn in person.

b. GEO Academies purchases Chromebooks for all students in the Louisiana network. At the beginning of every school year, every school disseminates Chromebooks to every student. All students return their Chromebooks at the end of every school year. The network's IT staff tracks the dissemination and return of all chromebooks and also manages any repairs or replacements needed.

c. Teachers are all trained to use PowerSchool, GEO’s learning management system (LMS) to track attendance which notifies a parent/guardian when a student is marked absent.

d. All classes would take place over Google Meets, as they did, successfully, during the COVID-19 pandemic.

e. All schools offer several parent/guardian workshops on use of the Chromebooks, accessing assignments and resources, and the use of PowerSchool, the learning management system. Students receive training on the use of both Chromebooks and Power School during the first week of school. Students who enroll late in the school receive direct training from the network IT staff as part of their late orientation. Additionally, GEO employs a team of local tech experts available to assist families as need arises.

f. The school will communicate with families through Parent Square, a platform for school/parent communications. The school will also supplement these communications with phone calls, emails, and home visits as needed and as appropriate.

Academic Goals

12. a. The proposed K-5 school will begin by serving grades K-5. See below for GEO Academies anticipated academic goals for the proposed elementary school below. The process by which we created these goals is described in the sections below.

¹⁹ National Institute for Excellence in Teaching. *2021 Learning Acceleration Resources*. <https://www.niet.org/assets/Resources/student-ownership-thinking-problem-solving.pdf>

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K-5 Academic Goals					
LEAP 2025 Proficiency	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Average Proficiency	60%	65%	70%	75%	80%
ELA	60%	65%	70%	75%	80%
Math	60%	65%	70%	75%	80%
Science	60%	65%	70%	75%	80%
Social Studies	60%	65%	70%	75%	80%
Subgroup: Economically Disadvantaged	60%	65%	70%	75%	80%
Subgroup: Students with Disabilities	50%	55%	60%	65%	70%
Subgroup: English Learners	55%	60%	65%	70%	75%
These school goals are projected and are subject to change based on our baseline diagnostic and LEAP 2025 testing. Our goals are set to ensure that we are a C school or better. Strategic interventions and support will be provided to scholars whose baseline data is lower than grade level during the school day with a scheduled intervention time built into daily class instructional schedules and/or the extended day program.					

Establishing & Gathering Diagnostic Data: To establish baseline data to create academic goals aligned to LEAP 2025 in each grade-level content area, GEO North Baton Rouge Elementary will utilize the following assessments. The LDOE creates each of these assessments to align with the relevant Louisiana Student Standards and summative End of Course/LEAP tests. See diagnostic assessment used to create academic goals below.

In addition, teachers will utilize each scholar's most recent LEAP 2025 performance as well as diagnostic data from LEAP 360, a Tier 1 diagnostic assessment, to establish an Independent Growth Plan (IGP) for each scholar. All GEO Academics schools additionally use the NWEA to measure both student performance and progress within the network. Both the NWEA and LEAP 360 are aligned with Louisiana State Standards, and performance goals are based on LEAP performance, which measures mastery of Louisiana State Standards. In K-2, Dibels assessments and curriculum embedded assessments are used to continuously gather data on student performance.

Diagnostic Assessments				
Grade	ELA	Math	SS	Science
3 - 5	LEAP 360 & i-Ready (Reading)		LDOE "Practice	NWEA & LDOE

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		Test”	“Practice Test”
K-2	Dibels, CKLA, i-Ready		

b. The proposed school will monitor progress through administration of LEAP 360 interim tests throughout the year. Following the initial diagnostic exam, teachers administer three progress monitoring exams, quarterly, throughout the school year, ahead of state administered standardized testing. Additionally, teachers create daily exit tickets using resources from LDOE.²⁰ Teachers utilize resources such as the remediation guides, practice tests items, the level descriptors, and the formative assessments embedded in their Tier One curricula to create daily exit tickets that are aligned to state standardized testing.

c. The school will establish performance goals following the activities described in the chart below.

Event	Frequency	Leader	Use of Analysis to Establish Performance Goals
Academic Retreat	Annual	Chief Academic Officer	All academic leadership (including principals and master teachers) come together annually to review all student data at each school and overall trends for GEO Academies in Louisiana. Together, this team jointly determines any necessary changes to curricula, instructional practices, programmatic offerings, and professional development needs. CAO then makes decisions about needed staffing changes based upon this reflection and planning process. The team looks at internal assessment data, LEAP data, and biweekly/weekly assessment data throughout the school year. Teachers can be placed on a PIP and/or released in the middle of the school year based upon this data and classroom observations.
End of SY Planning	Annual	Principals	Principals also use these data (above) to determine which teachers will return, which teachers will be asked to teach summer school, which teachers will get promoted to master teacher and/or be placed on a performance improvement plan (PIP).
TAP Clusters, Job-Embedded PD	Weekly	Master Teacher	With the support of master teachers, teachers unpack student performance data on a weekly basis and utilize that analysis to prepare for the week of teaching ahead. Through this process, teachers will receive ongoing job embedded PD based on need, anchored in the LA State Standards and their curriculum materials in all core courses. Teachers also receive Teach Like a Champion trainings during these sessions.

d. Professional Development and coaching start before the school even opens to students for the school year. Staff is provided with an extensive professional development “boot camp” where, for a minimum of

²⁰ LDOE. *Teacher Resources*. <https://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/library/teacher-support-toolbox-library>

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two weeks, the school introduces and supports topics including GEO Academies model and culture, specific training on curriculum, in-depth training on TAP methodology, classroom management methodology (Teach Like a Champion), and curriculum implementation specific to their academic area. Experienced staff attend refresher courses as well, giving new staff the opportunity to meet colleagues and learn from experienced peers across the network.

As reflected below, all professional development is facilitated by LDOE-approved vendors and/or Master teachers through TAP frameworks, ensuring that all facilitation is provided by content Experts. See the tables below for more details regarding professional development.

Summer Professional Development Table

Summer Professional Development			
PD Focus	Purpose/Description	Targeted Audience	Vendor
Leadership Retreat	Principals and APs will review LEAP, i-Ready, and data to set goals for the coming school year. Principals will receive training in conducting effective leadership and on “Look Fors” for all instructional programs in their schools.	Principals, APs, Master Teachers	NIET
Teacher Leader Training in ELA and Math	Master teachers will participate in Teacher Leader training provided by LDOE. The training will be re-delivered to the instructional staff.	Master Teachers (MT)	LDOE
CKLA (Module unpacking, pacing, and assessments)	Instructional staff will take a deep dive into the foundational skill of the curriculum by unpacking modules. Teachers who work with SWD or EL students will focus on how to target supports needed for their scholars.	Instructional staff (including SPED and EL team)	LDOE
Wit & Wisdom (Module unpacking, pacing, and assessments)	Instructional staff will take a deep dive into Wit & Wisdom learning design; explore components of a module— a unit of study in reading, questioning, writing about and discussing knowledge-building text—and focus on meeting the needs of diverse learners.	Instructional Staff (including SPED and EL)	Great Minds
Wit & Wisdom (Writing)	Instructional staff will have the opportunity to begin planning and creating high-quality material to effectively provide instruction to scholars.	Instructional Staff (including SPED and EL)	
Eureka Math	Educators will explore the curriculum to	Instructional Staff	

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	understand how the learning design and lessons build a comprehensive and coherent understanding of mathematics. Teachers who support SWD or ELs will focus on how to target supports needed for their scholars	(including SPED and EL)	
Amplify	This training will help teachers develop a deeper understanding of the LA science standards.	Instructional Staff (including SPED and EL)	Unit Specific Amplify
Bayou Bridges	Training will focus on how to use the Companion Documents, Scope and Sequences, assessment resources, and LEAP 2025 rubrics to support instruction.	Instructional Staff (including SPED and EL)	School Kit
NIET: Teaching Rubric	Instructional Staff will review the Teacher Evaluation Rubric from an evaluator's perspective and discover how the rubric is interconnected and holistic. This is part of TAP programming and is how teachers are evaluated.	Instructional Staff (including SPED and EL)	NIET
Special Education Training	SPED - Differentiated instruction, Lesson Planning, and Grouping (cont.), Identifying Students, and IEP Writing	Instructional Staff (including SPED and EL)	TBD
Technology Training	Teachers participate in training to learn to create Google Classrooms and use them securely to monitor instruction. Teachers participate in training addressing how to have strong virtual lessons by becoming comfortable with Zoom and Nearpod.	Instructional Staff (including SPED and EL)	Network Training
Technology Training - Parents	Families learn to login to Google Classroom and Zoom. They learn about key features, engagement strategies, and how breakout rooms will be used. This training is available at multiple times and is used asynchronously to ensure all families are able to access the information. Further, translators are available if needed.	All families	Network Training

Ongoing PD Throughout School Year: All Grade Levels			
PD Focus	Purpose/Description	Targeted Audience	Vendor
Wit & Wisdom	Module Unpacking will occur at	Admin, Leadership	Great Minds

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	minimum two weeks before each module will begin.	Team, and Instructional Staff	Core Knowledge
Onsite Walkthroughs and Support	Curriculum vendors will support implementation of ELA and math curriculum by conducting 10 days of support with walkthroughs/coaching sessions in the fall/winter during the school year.	Admin, Leadership Team	Great Minds Core Knowledge
ELA/Math Content Training Redelivery	Content Trainers/Master Teachers will re-deliver training on modules from training at LDOE.	Instructional staff	Master Teachers
TAP Support	NIET staff will provide regular support to strengthen TAP systems and implementation.	Master Teachers, Instructional staff	NIET
TAP Clusters/Job-Embedded PD	Teachers will receive ongoing job-embedded PD based on the need, anchored in the LA State Standards, their curriculum materials in all core courses, and Teach Like a Champion Techniques	Instructional Staff (including SPED and EL)	Master Teachers

Coaching methods will be tailored to the needs of each teacher based on the following factors: TAP evaluations on each teacher, results from weekly walkthroughs, and results from weekly/biweekly student assessments. See below for example of a TAP Support Log.

TAP Support Log

Master/Mentor _____ Week of: _____

Rubric/Strategy Focus _____

Teacher	Date/Time	Support Provided	Summary	Next Steps	Teacher's Signature
		☐ Planning ☐ Observation/Feedback ☐ Modeling ☐ Team Teaching ☐ Other			
		☐ Planning ☐ Observation/Feedback ☐ Modeling ☐ Team Teaching ☐ Other			
		☐ Planning ☐ Observation/Feedback ☐ Modeling ☐ Team Teaching ☐ Other			

Master Teachers: Based on the results of each evaluation, Master teachers will provide teachers with their own area of reinforcement (strengths to build upon) as well as their area of refinement (an area to

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grow in). This support will be provided during weekly 90-minute cluster meetings facilitated by the principal, followed by classroom support by Master teachers.

Individual Growth Plans: Master teachers will then work with teachers to develop an Individual Growth Plan (IGP). The IGP will target both the area of refinement for the teacher and focus on an identified area of need for the students. For example: After Mrs. Green’s 1st TAP evaluation the refinement area was Presenting Instructional Content, specifically modeling. It was also identified that the students in her class are struggling with writing. The leadership team then collaborated to determine that they will focus on the SEC Strategy for her classroom. As she progresses through her IGP, Master teachers will provide attention and support to strengthen Mrs. Green to model expectations through think-alouds to help her students improve in the area of writing.

Central Data Tracking: The school will track all data used to support teachers in progressing through their Individual Growth Plans. Schools utilize a 9-week period of evaluation, support planning, and progress monitoring for teacher support.

Professional Development on Special Student Populations: All teachers participate in PDs that aid them in effectively implementing Tier 1 materials and meeting academic goals. Additional training is provided to teachers to teach and support SWD, EL scholars, and academically struggling students. The ultimate goal is that teachers will be able to appropriately provide accommodations, modifications, and support that will allow students to access and be successful engaging in and mastering Tier 1 materials and meeting academic goals.

Louisiana Accountability System: Academic Performance

13. a. According to most recent school performance data across the GEO Academies schools in Louisiana, all sites are demonstrating both high absolute growth relative to their peer schools serving similar student populations, as well as high growth ratings, indicating positive trends across all GEO schools.

Today, GEO Prep Academy, GEO Next Gen High School, and GEO Prep Mid-City—all located in East Baton Rouge Parish—are rated a “B.” GEO Prep Academy and GEO Prep Mid-City, both serving K-8 grades, are currently rated an “A” for school performance growth. GEO Next Gen High School, serving grades 9-12, is currently rated a “B” for school performance growth. GEO is a data-driven organization, constantly collecting and analyzing student performance to refine our approach.

While overall student academic achievement at GEO schools is improving, we recognize it is not yet where it ultimately needs to be. At the same time, the evidence clearly demonstrates that GEO students are progressing at a higher rate than both local and state averages. All our Baton Rouge campuses have earned strong Progress Index ratings (A or B), reflecting consistent student growth across the years.

This growth trajectory is important: it shows that while proficiency levels must continue to rise, our students are closing gaps more quickly than peers and are on track to meet achievement goals. For example, K–3 reading results across GEO Baton Rouge schools outpace the state average, and subgroup performance for students with disabilities and English Learners shows stronger growth than district benchmarks.

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At GEO North Baton Rouge Elementary, we will build on this momentum using the same systems already proven in our existing schools: frequent formative assessments, teacher coaching through the TAP model, and data-driven interventions tailored to student needs. By acknowledging areas for improvement while celebrating steady gains, GEO ensures that every campus maintains high expectations, adapts quickly when performance dips, and accelerates student achievement year over year.

b. According to the most recent school performance data (reflected in 2023-24 state report cards²¹), performance of students at GEO Academies schools is at or above state and district performance for most subgroups. Additionally, all GEO schools in EBR have shown significant growth in overall mastery-plus attainment over time with Academy growing from 14% of students scoring mastery or better in 2021 to 29% in 2025 and our Mid-City campus growing from 11% to 27% over the same time frame and our Next Gen campus growing from 7% mastery to 16% Mastery over that time.

GEO Academies students who are minorities, Economically Disadvantaged, or considered to be in a special student population, outperform their peers with the same characteristics across the state of Louisiana and East Baton Rouge Parish. Specifically, GEO Academies students in grades 3-8 score Basic and above on LEAP 2025 exams at higher rates in all subject areas:

Subgroup Performance on Statewide Assessments (All Subjects, Grades 3-8)	
	Black or African American
	% Mastery + Advanced
State of Louisiana	21
East Baton Rouge Parish	23
GEO Prep Academy of Greater Baton Rouge	30 (+10 since 2022)
GEO Prep Mid-City of Greater Baton Rouge	27 (+11 since 2022)

Subgroup Performance on Statewide Assessments (All Subjects, Grades 3-8)	
	English Language Learner
	% Mastery + Advanced
State of Louisiana	6
East Baton Rouge Parish	6
GEO Prep Academy of Greater Baton Rouge	16 (-1 since 2022)
GEO Prep Mid-City of Greater Baton Rouge	N/A

²¹LDOE. 2022-2023 School & District Report Cards. <https://www.louisianabelieves.com/data/reportcards/2023/>

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Subgroup Performance on Statewide Assessments (All Subjects, Grades 3-8)	
	Economically Disadvantaged
	% Mastery + Advanced
State of Louisiana	26
East Baton Rouge Parish	22
GEO Prep Academy of Greater Baton Rouge	26 (+6 since 2022)
GEO Prep Mid-City of Greater Baton Rouge	27 (+11 since 2022)

The summary table below provides a summary of GEO Academies school and the conditions the schools met to green light expansion.

Table 1. GEO Academies Summary

School Name	Authorizer	Opening	Grades	Enrollment	SPS	Progress Index	LA Requirements for Expansion
GEO Prep Academy	BESE	2015	K-8	771	75.4 (B)	A	✓
GEO Mid-City	BESE	2017	K - 8	676	78.3 (B)	A	✓
GEO Prep Baker	BESE	2021	K-3	121	NA	NA	✓
GEO Next Gen. High School	BESE	2019	9-12	456	76.1 (B)	B	✓

Across all measures and all subgroups, GEO Academies outperforms peer schools in serving subgroups such as students who are Economically Disadvantaged, English Learners, Hispanic/Latino students.

Table 2: GEO Academies Subgroup: Economically Disadvantaged Student Performance Summary

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School	Subgroup Name	2024 Subgroup Letter Grade	2024 Subgroup SPS	2024 K8 Assessment Index	2024 K8 Progress Index	2024 Dropout Credit Accumulation Index	2024 K8 Interests & Opportunities Index
GEO Prep Academy of Greater Baton Rouge	Economically Disadvantaged	C	74.1	57.4	96.6	121.1	131
GEO Next Generation High School	Economically Disadvantaged	C	74.2	NA	NA	NA	NA
GEO Prep Mid-City of Greater Baton Rouge	Economically Disadvantaged	B	78.6	58.8	103.7	142.8	>145
East Baton Rouge Parish	Economically Disadvantaged	C	64.8	45.6	81	133.6	135.1

Table 3: GEO Academies Subgroup: English Learners Performance Summary

School	Subgroup Name	2024 Subgroup Letter Grade	2024 Subgroup SPS	2024 K8 Assessment Index	2024 K8 Progress Index	2024 Dropout Credit Accumulation Index	2024 K8 Interests & Opportunities Index
GEO Prep Academy of Greater Baton Rouge	English Learner	C	67.1	54.2	90.5	NA	>145
East Baton Rouge Parish	English Learner	D	53.3	38.3	75.7	119.4	135.1

Table 4: GEO Academies Subgroup: Hispanic/Latino Student Performance Summary

School	Subgroup Name	2024 Subgroup Letter Grade	2024 Subgroup SPS	2024 K8 Assessment Index	2024 K8 Progress Index	2024 Dropout Credit Accumulation Index	2024 K8 Interests & Opportunities Index
GEO Prep Academy of Greater Baton Rouge	Hispanic/Latino	C	68.4	55.4	92.2	NA	131

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East Baton Rouge Parish	Hispanic/Latino	C	61.8	44.8	81.9	128.7	135.1
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Table 5: GEO Academies Subgroup: Black/African American Students Performance Summary Part 1

School	Subgroup Name	2023 Subgroup Letter Grade	2023 Subgroup SPS	2023 K8 Assessment Index	2023 K8 Progress Index	2023 Dropout Credit Accumulation Index	2023 K8 Interests & Opportunities Index
GEO Prep Academy of Greater Baton Rouge	Black or African American	B	75.6	97.5	97.5	121.1	131
GEO Prep Mid-City of Greater Baton Rouge	Black or African American	B	78.3	58.4	103.3	142.5	>145
East Baton Rouge Parish	Black or African American	C	64.8	44.5	80.3	134.1	135.1

Table 6: GEO Academies Subgroup: Black/African American Students Performance Summary Part 2

School	Subgroup Name	2024 Subgroup Letter Grade	2024 High School Assessment Index	2024 High School Progress Index
GEO Next Generation High School	Black or African American	B	49.5	88.2
East Baton Rouge Parish	Black or African American	C	44.5	80.3

Table 7: GEO Academies Subgroup: Students with Disabilities Performance Summary

School	Subgroup Name	2024 Subgroup Letter Grade	2024 Subgroup SPS	2024 K8 Assessment Index (includes ELPT progress points)	2024 K8 Progress Index	2024 Dropout Credit Accumulation Index	2024 K8 Interests & Opportunities Index
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GEO Prep Academy of Greater Baton Rouge	Students with Disabilities	C	61.7	39.5	98	100	131
GEO Prep Mid-City of Greater Baton Rouge	Students with Disabilities	C	60.4	31.6	103.5	132.5	>145
East Baton Rouge Parish	Students with Disabilities	D	53.9	31.6	78.2	120.9	135.1

Table 8: GEO Academies Subgroup: Homeless Students Performance Summary

School	Subgroup Name	2024 Subgroup Letter Grade	2024 Subgroup SPS	2024 K8 Assessment Index (includes ELPT progress points)	2024 K8 Progress Index	2024 Dropout Credit Accumulation Index	2024 K8 Interests & Opportunities Index
GEO Prep Academy of Greater Baton Rouge	Homeless	C	72.8	61.5	92.8	NA	131
East Baton Rouge Parish	Homeless	D	50.7	29.7	74.5	118.7	135.1

Table 9: GEO Academies K3 Literacy rating (total population)

System/Site Name	EOY K3 On/Above Rate
GEO Prep Academy of Greater Baton Rouge	78.30%
GEO Prep Mid-City of Greater Baton Rouge	76.20%
GEO Prep Baker	76%
Louisiana Statewide	64.10%
East Baton Rouge Parish	58.80%
City of Baker School District	54.30%

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System/Site Name	EOY K3 On/Above Rate
GEO Prep Academy of Greater Baton Rouge	78.30%
GEO Prep Mid-City of Greater Baton Rouge	76.20%
GEO Prep Baker	76%
Louisiana Statewide	64.10%
East Baton Rouge Parish	58.80%
City of Baker School District	54.30%

c,d,e. GEO approaches all academic areas with a growth mindset and acknowledges that there is always room for improvement. However, there are no performance deficiencies across GEO Academies East Baton Rouge schools that prohibit our schools from meeting the requirements of Bulletin 126 for expansion/additional schools. This means that GEO Academies strategic focus is on continued implementation of its current model with fidelity and excellence. Further, all GEO Academies sites meet the Louisiana requirements for expansion. Taken together, these performance trends, alongside the clear demand represented by families on waitlists and relegated to low performing/failing schools in the region, present a clear case for the replication of the GEO model in East Baton Rouge. Please see GEO Academies subgroup performance summary Tables 2-8.

All academic leadership (including principals and master teachers) come together annually to review all student data at each school and overall trends for GEO Academies in Louisiana. Together, this team jointly determines any necessary changes to curricula, instructional practices, programmatic offerings, and professional development needs. The CAO then makes decisions about needed staffing changes based upon this reflection and planning process. In addition, the team looks at internal assessment data, LEAP data, and biweekly/weekly assessment data throughout the school year. Teachers can get placed on a PIP and/or released in the middle of the school based upon this and classroom observations. The cumulative findings inform any changes in the school model for future academy replication.

Assessments

14. a,b,c,d,e. Teachers will utilize each scholar's most recent LEAP performance, as well as diagnostic data from LEAP 360, a Tier 1 diagnostic assessment, to establish an Independent Growth Plan (IGP) for each scholar. All GEO Academies schools additionally use the NWEA to measure both student performance and progress within the network. Both the NWEA and LEAP 360 are aligned with Louisiana State Standards, and performance goals are based on LEAP performance, which measures mastery of Louisiana State Standards. Please see core subject assessments for grades 3-5 in the table below.

Grade	ELA	Math	SS	Science
3 - 5	LEAP 360 and i-Ready		LDOE 'Practice Test'	NWEA & LDOE 'Practice Test'

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Formative & Interim Assessments: The proposed school will monitor progress through administration of LEAP 360 interim tests throughout the year. Following the initial diagnostic exam, teachers administer three progress monitoring exams, quarterly, throughout the school year, ahead of state administered standardized testing. Additionally, teachers create daily exit tickets using resources from LDOE.²² Teachers utilize resources such as the remediation guides, practice tests items, the level descriptors and the formative assessments embedded in their Tier One curricula to create daily exit tickets which are aligned to state standardized testing.

Note that Louisiana's Tier 1 assessments are designed to be inclusive and accessible for all students, including those with special needs. Special education assessments are aligned with these standards to ensure that individualized education plans (IEPs) are supported while maintaining consistency with the rigorous academic goals set by the state.

Subject: ELA		
Grades	Formative & Interim Assessments	Tier
K-1	DIBELS, CKLA, i-Ready	1
2	i-Ready, Assessments Embedded in Curricula*	1
3-5	LEAP 360, i-Ready & Assessments Embedded in Curricula*	1

*Note that all curricula are Tier 1, meaning that they are all aligned to Louisiana Student Standards and LEAP 2025.

Subjects: Math, Science, and Social Studies		
Grades	Formative & Interim Assessments	Tier
K-5	LEAP 360, i-Ready & Assessments Embedded in Curricula*	1

*Note that all curricula are Tier 1, meaning that they are all aligned to Louisiana Student Standards and LEAP 2025.

Ongoing Student Performance Data Analysis: GEO Academies utilizes the following data-driven decision-making structure to inform all crucial aspects of its schools' model including instructional and programmatic offerings, curricular choice, and professional development opportunities.

Event	Frequency	Leader	Use of Analysis
Academic Retreat	Annual	Chief Academic Officer	All academic leadership (including principals and master teachers) come together annually to review all student data at each school and overall trends for GEO Academies in Louisiana. Together, this team jointly determines any necessary changes to curricula, instructional practices, programmatic offerings, and professional development

²² LDOE. Teacher Resources. <https://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/library/teacher-support-toolbox-library>

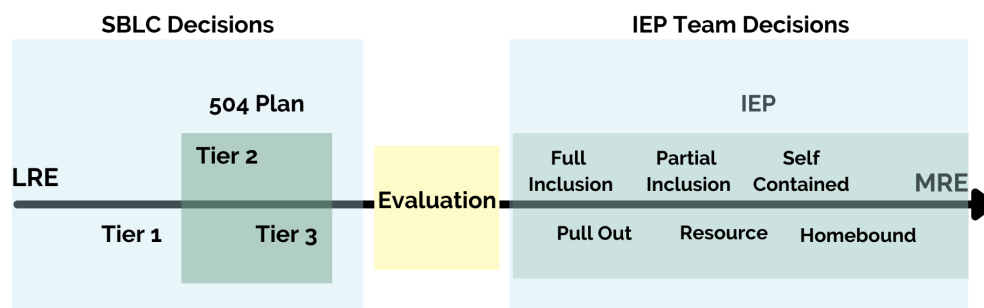
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			needs. The CAO then makes decisions about needed staffing changes based upon this reflection and planning process. The team looks at internal assessment data, LEAP data, and biweekly/weekly assessment data throughout the school year. Teachers can be placed on a PIP and/or released in the middle of the school) based upon this and classroom observations.
End of SY Planning	Annual	Principals	Principals also use these data (above) to determine which teachers will return, which teachers will be asked to teach summer school, which teachers will get promoted to master teacher and/or get placed on a performance improvement plan (PIP).
TAP Clusters, Job-Embedded PD	Weekly	Master Teacher	With the support of master teachers, teachers unpack student performance data on a weekly basis and utilize that analysis to prepare for the week of teaching ahead. Through this process, teachers will receive ongoing job-embedded PD based on need, anchored in the LA State Standard and their curriculum materials in all core courses. Teachers also receive Teach Like a Champion trainings during these sessions.

Communicating to Parents/Families: GEO Academies provides regular updates on student progress and achievement through a combination of methods. Teachers will send home progress reports every quarter, and parent-teacher conferences will be held twice a year to discuss student performance in more detail. Additionally, parents will have access to an online portal where they can track their child's academic progress and communicate with teachers as needed. Additionally, all GEO schools have implemented use of Parent Square to communicate with parents/guardians.

Diverse Learners and Student Supports

15. The proposed school will implement a continuum of support systems for all students that is responsive to individual student needs and past interventions:



Identifying Struggling Students: The proposed elementary school will use GEO Academies' network-wide RTI and School Based Learning Committee (SBLC) processes to identify students who are at risk of academic failure. The school will implement these systems with support from the central office. This process defines students who are struggling as those who need support/intervention beyond Tiers 1 and 2 of RTI (defined below).

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Response to Intervention (RTI): Response to Intervention (RTI) is the process of intervening to meet the needs of all students. The purpose is to increase learning outcomes for each student through a tiered service delivery approach. RTI is a general education initiative that provides support to students in general education settings with the goal of them achieving success in those settings.

The RTI process includes: (1) Universal screenings to identify students who need additional monitoring and/or interventions; (2) Research-based supports provided in general education settings; (3) Multiple tiers of interventions geared to specific student needs; (4) Collaboration among staff in the design, implementation, and monitoring of interventions; (5) Monitoring of interventions to inform future decisions; and (6) Documentation of parental involvement in the process. The network Special Education Director establishes an RTI leadership team to assist in the implementation of interventions and the collection of data to determine effectiveness of interventions. This team includes classroom teachers, members of the academic leadership team, and special education staff.

RTI Intervention Tiers: The school will use a three-tier model of interventions to ensure that all interventions are systematic and targeted. They are as follows:

- **Tier 1:** All students receive Tier 1 interventions. Universal screening is conducted first to determine which students need further tiered interventions; examples include DIBELS and NWEA. Interventions may include the implementation of a school-wide literacy program, inclusion of computer-assisted technology across a grade, the implementation of School Wide Positive Behavior Supports (SWPBS), etc.
- **Tier 2:** Includes the provision of instruction and strategies to a smaller group of students (i.e., those students resistant to interventions utilized at Tier 1 level). Tier 2 interventions may include small group instruction on specific deficit areas, reading tutorials, math/science remedial labs, computer labs, behavior focus groups, reinforcement systems, etc.
- **Tier 3:** Interventions may include very small group instruction/support on specific deficit areas or specially designed behavior intervention systems. Interventions include additional hours of instruction. Review of data will indicate if the interventions are successful or if a student should be referred for an evaluation.

RTI Documentation: Documentation of all RTI activities is required. Individual teachers and support staff collect data on how students respond to interventions and monitor the implementation of interventions; RTI leadership team collects data on the implementation of the RTI process at the school level. Implementation of interventions is required before a student is referred for a special education evaluation unless an evaluation is requested by a parent, the student is suspected of having a low incidence exceptionality, the student is a danger to self or others, and/or there is evidence of a disability.

Evaluating Efficacy of RTI: All GEO Academies schools utilize a series of monitoring systems in order to regularly evaluate the needs of individual students. All schools hold weekly data meetings to review student assessment data. For all students who are in either Tier 1 or Tier 2 of RTI, schools use this time to discuss any interventions or supports needed for have not been successful on assessments in the last week. Schools also use this time to identify trends for individual students who may warrant escalation to Tier 3. Up to this point, GEO Academies schools find that students are in RTI tiers in roughly the following percentages: 1-5% of students are in Tier 3 of the RTI system; 5-15% of students are in Tier 2 of the RTI system; and 80-90% of students are in Tier 1 of the RTI system. When the percentages of students far exceed or are far below these percentages for any one of the tiers, this prompts the academic leadership team to investigate the needs of the individual students in each tier, the cause of any academic challenges and whether they are non-academic, and remediation needed that is not currently in place.

Safeguards Against Disproportionate Identification of Struggling Students: Quarterly, the CAO assembles a team, including the Special Education Director, special education teachers (listed as

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“Resource Teachers” in the staffing plan²³), Principals, and any other relevant staff to review the population of students identified as “struggling.” In the instance that this group finds disproportionate identification of any one subgroup, the group takes two steps: (1) the Special Education Director leads a review to determine whether any one student has been identified as struggling when an exclusionary factor²⁴ is the cause of low academic performance; and (2) the Special Education Director leads professional development on potential non-academic causes of low academic performance, mitigation of those challenges, and the pitfalls that lead educators to conflate academics with social, emotional, or economic needs.

To prevent disproportionality or overidentification of students with disabilities, GEO schools regularly review identification, placement, and service data by subgroup. Referral and evaluation processes are aligned with IDEA and LDOE guidelines, using multiple data sources to ensure accurate identification. Staff receive professional development on culturally responsive practices, implicit bias, and referral procedures. If disproportionality is detected, targeted strategies, responsibilities, and timelines are developed, and progress is monitored through regular data reviews to ensure corrective action is effective.

Identifying and Serving Students with Exceptionalities: An evaluation is a systematic review of RTI data, test results, interviews, observations, and relevant functional and developmental information, including information from the parent. The determination of whether a student is exceptional and the services needed is based on the multidisciplinary evaluation and will vary based on the evaluation findings. A parent or any member of the child’s educational team may request an initial evaluation. All initial evaluations are conducted according to Bulletin 1508 criteria.

Early and Accurate Identification: GEO Academies administers universal screeners (such as DIBELS and NWEA) for cognitive, speech/language, social/emotional, fine/gross motor, and vision/ hearing needs to all students starting in the earliest grades. Following the screeners, GEO Academies convene SBLCs to review data and make recommendations for interventions/supports.

Evaluation Timelines: Evaluations are conducted within 60 school days of parental consent. A re-evaluation occurs at least every three years unless the parent and the school agree that it is unnecessary.

Evaluation Determination of Eligibility: The SBLC evaluates the primary reasons for low-academic performance to avoid misidentification.²⁵ The team utilizes a variety of sources to determine if a student has a disability. These include aptitude and achievement test results, parent input, teacher recommendations, and review of RTI data, as well as information about the student’s physical condition, social or cultural background, and adaptive behavior.

Evaluation Team/Pupil Appraisal Personnel: Evaluations are conducted by LDOE-approved Pupil Appraisal personnel in coordination with the Special Education Director. GEO Academies contracts with Comprehensive Pupil Appraisal Services to provide these services.²⁶ These individuals may include the following: Evaluation Coordinator, Education Diagnostician, Certified School Psychologist, Speech/Language Pathologist, Qualified School Social Worker, Audiologist, Occupational Therapist, Physical Therapist, and/or a School Nurse.

Child Find: GEO Academies ensures that Child Identification activities are conducted in accordance with Bulletin 1706. GEO Academies also ensures that the Special Education Reporting System (SER) is

²³ Resource room is a separate setting, either a classroom or a smaller designated room, where a special education program can be delivered to a student with a disability, individually or in a small group.

²⁴ Noncognitive factors potentially contributing to academic performance.

²⁵ Whittaker, M. & Ortiz, S. *What A Specific Learning Disability Is Not: Examining Exclusionary Factors*. Ncld.Org, 2019, <https://ksdetasn.org/resources/2654>

²⁶ This cost is included in “contracted services” in the budget.

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maintained as the tracking system for all activities pertaining to special education. A copy of the Child Search Report form is submitted to the Division of Special Populations no later than June 30 annually.

Components and Development of an IEP: Bulletin 1706 (Section 320-324) and Bulletin 1530 outline the specific components and areas that must be addressed in the IEP. They include: (1) General Student Information: the student's strengths, the parents' concerns, results of evaluations, academic/developmental/functional needs of the student; (2) Consideration of Special Factors: A brief description of behavior issues and the use of positive behavioral supports; the communication and language needs of the student; the need for assistive technology services/devices; the health needs of the student; (3) Baseline Academic Performance: Present levels of academic achievement; (4) Rigorous, Measurable Goals: Measurable annual goals that are both rigorous according to grade-level standards and reflective of the student's individual needs; method of measurement to be used to evaluate progress toward meeting annual goals; identify personnel responsible for tracking progress toward goals. short term objectives are required for all students with significant cognitive disabilities; (5) Accommodations: Identify participation in LEAP/ILEAP/GEE/EOC or Alternative Assessment, testing accommodations, participation in regular education classes/activities, criteria for Extended School Year (ESY); identify supports needed for school personnel; identify dates for services to begin as well as level, location and frequency of services; (6) Placement/Least Restrictive Environment/Categories: Educational environments for students, ages 6 to 21, provide for a continuum of environments from least to most restrictive (not applicable to students who are hard of hearing or who are gifted/talented); (7) IEP Review/Revision: A student's IEP is reviewed and updated to address current needs/performance at least annually to determine if the student is achieving the annual goals.

IEP Development & Monitoring Team Participants: Members should include all persons necessary to provide appropriate input into a student's education plan, particularly the following, at a minimum: the student's parents, at least one of the student's general education teacher if the student attends general education classes, the Special Education Director, one resource/special education teacher, and an officially designated representative (ODR) of the school.

IEP Monitoring: IEP teams determine objective metrics (performance on formative data, behavior observation checklists) and a method by which they can collect data frequently and systematically (Monday/Wednesday/Friday at 10:00am, for example; once quarterly, on the other hand, would be insufficiently frequent/systematic). Second, the IEP team identifies the party responsible for collecting the data listed in the IEP. This could be the classroom teacher or special education teacher, for example.

Finally, every nine weeks, the Special Education Director writes progress reports on the progress of each student with an IEP towards their goals and objectives. The Special Education Director then gives that information to parents/guardians and uploads the report to the Special Education Reporting System (SER) so that relevant staff at both the central office and on the school level are able to track student data in real time. If the student is not making sufficient progress toward their IEP goals, the Special Education Director will call a meeting of their IEP team. The IEP team (parents, principal, possibly guidance counselor, Special Education Director, special education teacher (called "Resource Teacher" in the staffing plan), related service provider, maybe child) meet to determine if changes to IEP are necessary.

At GEO schools, instructional strategies and environments are adapted using student performance data collected through ongoing assessments. Teachers differentiate assignments at varying levels of complexity, incorporate visual supports and digital resources, and adjust pacing to ensure mastery. Small-group interventions are used to target specific skills, and classrooms are modified as needed to create supportive learning environments. These strategies ensure that every student with a disability has equitable access to rigorous instruction and support.

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Special Education Staff & Vendors: GEO Academies employs a Special Education Director who oversees all special education staff, leads student evaluations, IEP development, and will monitor provisions of ongoing services. Additionally, the proposed school will employ a special education teacher (called “Resource Teacher” in the staffing plan), “Resource Assistant Teachers,” and will have a contracted partnership with Comprehensive Pupil Appraisal Services to conduct evaluations.²⁷

Safeguards Against Disproportionate Identification of Students with Exceptionalities: The proposed elementary school has codified steps in the SBLC process to ensure that no student is misidentified as having exceptionalities when non-academic factors/exclusionary factors are at play. When they form, SBLCs determine whether the individual student data and observations from all committee members with regular interactions with the student support the need for additional academic support. To that end, when an SBLC is formed, the group identifies whether the student has any exclusionary factors that the National Council of Learning Disabilities lists in its definition of specific learning disabilities.²⁸ While at that point it is not yet determined how the school will proceed in better serving the student, identifying any possible exclusionary factors helps the school to determine the source of the student’s challenges.²⁹ This step supports a nuanced, holistic evaluation of the needs of children and helps the school avoid assuming that low academic performance is necessarily a function of academic needs.

Quarterly, the CAO assembles a team representing each school, including the Special Education Director, special education teachers (“Resource Teachers”), and Principals to review the population of students identified as “struggling.” If this group finds disproportionate identification of any subgroup as having exceptionalities, the group takes two subsequent steps: (1) the Special Education Director leads a review of each IEP file to determine whether any one student has been identified as struggling when (an) exclusionary factor(s) are the cause of academic challenges; and (2) the school provides supplemental professional development on potential non-academic causes of low academic performance, mitigation of those challenges, and the pitfalls that lead educators to conflate academic with social, emotional, or economic needs.

Measuring the Efficacy of the Special Education Program: GEO Academies evaluates the efficacy of the special education program by tracking both inputs and outputs. (1) Monthly, the Special Education Director reports results for the special education program at each school to the CAO. In this report, the Director includes all of the students in the program and the dates by which each student needs a new IEP and evaluation. This allows the CAO to ensure that all IEP files are current. (2) On a weekly basis, the network Special Education Director analyzes documentation on each school’s Special Education Teacher(s) including lesson plans, classroom observations, and performance data for each student showing progress towards their IEP. The Director ensures that special education teachers³⁰ are providing in-class support, preteaching, and scaffolding required for students with IEPs to access grade-level materials and make progress towards their IEP goals. (3) On an annual basis, the Special Education Director and CAO review the percentage of students who met their IEP goals over the course of the year. In the instance that fewer than 85% of students met their IEP goals, the Special Education Director will conduct a deeper review of the IEP goals themselves, the implementation of accommodations and supports, and the training needed for classroom teachers to effectively differentiate.

²⁷ Comprehensive Pupil Appraisal Services provides services on the parts of Evaluation Coordinators, Education Diagnosticians, Certified School Psychologists, Speech/Language Pathologists, Qualified School Social Workers, Audiologists, Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists, and/or a School Nurses.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Whittaker, Meghan, and Samuel ORTIZ. "What A Specific Learning Disability Is Not: Examining Exclusionary Factors". *Ncld.Org*, 2019, <https://ksdetasn.org/resources/2654>

³⁰ Referred to as Resource Teachers in the staffing plan.

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Identifying English Learners: Every student completes the state-required Home Language Survey at enrollment, which flags potential English Learners (ELs) for screening with state-approved language proficiency tests within 30 days. Identified ELs receive an Individualized Learning Plan (ILP) that specifies goals, instructional strategies, and accommodations. Certified ESL teachers, in collaboration with classroom teachers, use ILPs to guide instruction and monitor student progress through assessments, classroom data, and observations. ILPs are updated as needed to reflect growth, ensuring EL students receive the supports necessary for success.

GEO Academies utilizes the English Language Proficiency Screener (ELPS) to determine if K-12 students are English Learners (ELs) who require language support services. GEO Academies administers the ELPS to all new students upon enrollment to ensure that students receive language support immediately. The survey is available to all families in multiple languages to ensure that all families are able to take the survey. ELs take the ELPS every year until they meet the criteria to exit the program.

The elementary school will determine the degree of support needed based upon the results of the ELPS. Supports will be codified with the LDOE English Learner Accommodations Checklist³¹— it can vary in degree from in-class vocabulary instruction by the student’s classroom teacher, small-group instruction by an ESL teacher, or additional time on tests. The proposed school will finalize the list of supports that an English Learner receives in a meeting with the student’s parents/guardians and then disseminate that list to all educators engaging with the student.

English Language Instruction: All regular education teachers with ELs in their class will receive support from an ESL teacher who will both push into the regular education classroom, as well as pull out students for small group instruction. The degree of intervention is varied and responsive to each individual student’s language instruction needs.

Accessibility for Non-English-Speaking Families: All GEO Academies enrolling one or more ELs will employ an English as a Second Language teacher.³² This teacher will provide translation services for all written and verbal communications to families. This will ensure that all communications are equitable and accessible regardless of language.

Safeguards Against Misidentification of English Learners as Students with Disabilities: See “Assessing the Efficacy of the English Learner Program” (below) and “Evaluation Determination of Eligibility” (see *Evaluation Determination of Eligibility* above).

If data suggest disproportionality or overidentification of English Learners, GEO schools take corrective action by reviewing enrollment, identification, and placement data, ensuring tools and practices align with LDOE and ESSA guidelines. Identification relies on multiple measures, including proficiency assessments and academic data. Staff are trained on culturally responsive practices and implicit bias, and corrective strategies are documented with responsibilities and timelines. Data are reviewed regularly to measure effectiveness and adjust practices as needed.

Assessing the Efficacy of the English Learner Program: At the conclusion of every school year, the CAO, Heads of School/Principal, and English Learner Instructor(s) assess the efficacy of the English Learner program at each school. The standard for efficacy is that EL students “attain English proficiency and parity of participation in the standard instructional program, comparable to their never-EL peers, within a reasonable period of time.”³³ A “reasonable” timeframe is determined through analysis of

³¹ LDOE. *English Learners (EL) Accommodation Checklist*. https://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/assessment/english-learner-accommodations-checklist.pdf?sfvrsn=c6c5901f_26

³² Note that there are so few EL students, GEO Academies has historically employed an ESL teacher at the network level who then works with multiple schools.

³³ U.S. DOE. *Tools and Resources for Evaluating the Effectiveness of a District’s EL Program*. <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/chap9.pdf>

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baseline proficiency of each child as measured by the ELPS. With all of this in mind, the team evaluating the efficacy of each English Learner program also considers the percentage of students exiting the English Learner program by their target date.³⁴

Identifying and Serving Gifted Students: Gifted children and youth are students who demonstrate abilities that give evidence of high performance in academic and intellectual aptitude.

The gifted and talented program at GEO schools follows LDOE guidelines and uses a pullout/resource model led by certified gifted teachers. Services emphasize critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, and project-based learning beyond grade-level expectations. Instruction is coordinated with general education teachers and is based on data, IEPs, and ongoing performance assessments. Families receive regular updates, and eligibility is reviewed annually to ensure continued alignment with student needs.

In accordance with Bulletin 1508, GEO Academies will work with a school psychologist to determine a student's eligibility for gifted/talented programming. Criteria for eligibility are as follows:

- Kindergarten: The student shall obtain a score at least three standard deviations above the mean on an individually administered test of intellectual abilities appropriately standardized on students of this age and administered by a certified school psychologist or licensed psychologist.
- Grades 1-12: The student shall obtain a score of at least two standard deviations above the mean on an individually or group administered test of intellectual abilities appropriately standardized on students of this age and administered by a certified school psychologist or licensed psychologist.

GEO Academies requires that the evaluation process for determining gifted/talented programming participation shall be "standardized, non-discriminatory, and appropriate for the cultural background of those students." The recommendation of the team either to classify or not classify a student as gifted must be based on a thorough evaluation of the student's abilities."³⁵ That process will include, at a minimum: (1) an assessment of intellectual abilities administered by a licensed psychologist using instruments appropriately standardized for students of their age; (2) an assessment of reading and mathematical skills using a standardized achievement test conducted by an educational diagnostician or other qualified pupil appraisal member; (3) an interview with the parent(s) conducted by a social worker or other qualified examiner; and (4) an interview with the teacher(s) of enrolled students.

Based upon the findings of this team's evaluation, the school will form an IEP team as it would for any other student with exceptionalities (see IEP Team Participants above). The team will write the IEP, with the student's input, to include: (1) the student's baseline performance, outlining their strengths as well as any areas requiring remediation or additional support; (2) annual goals³⁶ building upon the student's strengths that may include, but are not limited to: learning goals that are tied to a higher order of thinking, independent learning, or growth in an area of interest; (3) goals should be tied to a learning expectation, including both qualitative and quantitative indicators of success; (4) instructional strategies that the student's instructional team will employ, including minutes spent in gifted instruction; and (5) the method by which the student's instructional team will assess progress toward or satisfaction of IEP goals.

³⁴ To exit the English Learner program, students must demonstrate full proficiency on the English Language Proficiency Screener, allowing an apples-to-apples comparison of proficiency over time. After demonstrating proficiency, students will move to a "monitoring" phase during which the school will monitor any ongoing language acquisition support needed.

³⁵ See Bulletin 1508.

³⁶ Sample IEP Goal: The student will independently research a subject of interest, such as ocean ecosystems, to learn about and produce a presentation on the subject. At the end of the year, the student will take an assessment on the subject and demonstrate 95% accuracy.

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Evaluating Efficacy of Gifted/Talented Programming: See the “Measuring the Efficacy of the Special Education Program” section (above) for an outline of how GEO Academies schools evaluate the efficacy of their Gifted/Talented Programming.

If disproportionality or overidentification is detected in gifted and talented identification, GEO schools review referral and screening data and revise policies and procedures to align with LDOE guidelines. Universal screening using multiple measures and performance tasks is implemented to ensure equitable access to gifted services. Ongoing monitoring ensures identification practices remain fair and inclusive.

Behavior Management

16. a. Throughout the school year, the new elementary school will disseminate newsletters to all parents outlining methods and frequency by which families will be informed of behavioral learning initiatives, use of trauma-informed practices, administration of mental health screeners, availability of student support services, and the outcomes associated with each aspect of the school’s plan to support the social and emotional health of students. In the case of individual student support, school counselors will communicate directly with parents on at least a weekly basis throughout any period of providing targeted social-emotional support.

b. A variety of interventions, approaches, and programs will be used to prevent exclusionary discipline practice for students. These are listed below.

Trauma Informed Care: First, the proposed elementary school will administer universal screeners (see *Mental Health Screener* below) which will identify any students who should receive a Trauma Screening. With the parents’ permission, the proposed schools would administer either the Young Child Screener or the Child and Adolescent Screener to gather data on the support needed on an individual basis. As part of the LDOE’s Trauma Recovery Demonstration Grant program, eligible students would receive “trauma-specific treatment provided by an enrolled Louisiana licensed mental health professional. Each participating provider has been vetted by the LDOE to ensure he/she/they has: 1. A valid and up to date license and 2. Training in trauma focused mental health services. Parents/guardians are encouraged to select a mental health provider that best fits their needs. If the licensed mental health provider you select is not currently participating in this grant program, he/she/they will be assisted in completing the enrollment process before services begin.” This, along with support provided by each school’s counselor, ensures that all students receive care that is responsive to any trauma they have endured.

Mental Health Screener: The proposed school will utilize a Mental Health Screener approved by the LDOE: Student Risk Screening Scale—Internalizing and Externalizing (SRSS-IE). School counselors at each school will administer these screeners at the beginning of the school year and will analyze the data to both identify any students in need of acute support (e.g. the screener revealed that a student has experienced trauma) as well as establish priorities for the school year. GEO Academies selected this screener because (1) it can be administered by either a teacher or self-administered, making it accessible to all students in grades K-12, regardless of their reading level; and (2) the interventions promoted through the screener correspond with GEO Academies’ culture of positive behavioral interventions and supports. The “Comprehensive, Integrated, Three-Tiered Model of Prevention (Ci3T) is an organization that supports SRSS-IE and assists schools in creating a comprehensive systems-oriented approach to (a) integrate efforts to support the academic, behavioral, and social competencies of all students; (b) promote collaboration and teaming between all school and community stakeholders; and (c) support educators’

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efficacy and well-being through data-informed professional learning, clear expectations for staff and students, and supportive, positive environments.”³⁷

Personnel Providing Social-Emotional Supports: Every proposed school will be staffed with a school counselor who is trained to provide social-emotional support to both whole classes and to individual students. In instances in which a teacher or other staff member observes ongoing interpersonal conflict, traumatic circumstances arising in a child’s life, or behaviors that are symptomatic of social-emotional struggle, they are required to refer that child to the school counselor for support services.

c. The proposed schools will utilize Schoolwide Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (SW-PBIS) and will communicate all expectations through a student handbook prior to the start of the school year. All parents and students will be required to review and sign the handbook on an annual basis in order to demonstrate that they understand all behavior expectations and systems in place at their school. This culture will be reinforced throughout the year through professional development opportunities, school convocations, and through daily communications with families and students.

While each school will work with their school community prior to the beginning of the school year to establish customized school norms, behavior expectations will be consistent with those already in place at other GEO Academies schools in Louisiana. The table below outlines GEO's behavior expectations and possible consequences.

Discipline Matrix ³⁸

Infraction	1st Offense	2nd Offense	3rd Offense	4th Offense
Classroom Behavior	Tier 1 school-wide interventions and supports.	Parent Conference	Detention	In-school suspension (TOR)
Behavior in Hallway	Tier 1 school-wide interventions and supports.	Parent Conference	Detention	In-school suspension (TOR)
Behavior in Restroom	Tier 1 school-wide interventions and supports.	Parent Conference	Detention	In-school suspension (TOR)
Behavior in Lunchroom	Tier 1 school-wide interventions and supports.	Parent Conference	Detention	In-school suspension (TOR)
Behavior in Playground	Tier 1 school-wide interventions and supports.	Parent Conference	Detention	In-school suspension (TOR)

³⁷LDOE. *Implementing Student and Staff Well-Being SAMPLE Interpretation of Screener for Elementary School*. <https://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/strong-start-2020/sample-interpretation-of-screener-for-elementary-school.pdf>

³⁸ [GEO Family Handbook](#)

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Behavior on Bus	Tier 1 school-wide interventions and supports.	Parent Conference	Detention	In-school suspension (TOR)
Behavior During School Supported Activities and Field trips	Tier 1 school-wide interventions and supports.	Tier 2 school-wide interventions and supports.	Tier 3 school-wide interventions and supports	Exclusion from activities or trips
Aggressive Behavior	Parent conference	Tier 2 & 3 Response to Intervention (RTI) supports	Referral to School Building Level Committee (SBLC)	Referral to school counselor
Inappropriate Use of Technology	1st: Confiscate device. Parent conference with administrator. Parent signs an acknowledgment & device is returned to parent.	2nd: Confiscate device, may be taken up to the end of the school year, parent conference with administrator, device is returned to parent.	3rd: Confiscate device, 5 days OSS, parent conference prior to returning to school ,device is returned to parent at end of the school year	NA
Physical Attack/Fighting with Staff or Fellow Students	Parent conference	1st: 5-day suspension & participation in Mandatory Violence Prevention Intervention Program. Areas to address: academics, attendance, restorative interventions, counseling, and review required Transportation Agreement	2nd: 7-day suspension and referral to the Child Welfare & Attendance Student Advocates	3rd: 9-day suspension expulsion recommendation
Threats and/or Verbal Abuse	Parent conference	Up to expulsion recommendation	NA	NA
Inappropriate Language/Gesture	Parent conference	Up to suspension	NA	NA
Insubordination/D	Parent conference	Up to 5 days	NA	NA

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isrespect		suspension		
Teasing Verbal or non-verbal	Parent conference	Tier 2 & 3 Response to Intervention (RTI) supports	Referral to School Building Level Committee (SBLC)	Referral to school counselor
Disrespect of Property or Vandalism	Parent conference	Up to expulsion recommendation - Restitution prior to return to school	NA	NA
False Fire Alarm	Expulsion recommendation and restitution if applicable -Acts of terrorizing may require judicial ordered mental health evaluation and judicial clearance prior to return to school	NA	NA	NA
Weapon	Parent conference	Up to expulsion recommendation	NA	NA
Possession of Communication and Other Electronic Devices	1st: Confiscate device. Parent conference with administrator. Parent signs an acknowledgment & device is returned to parent.	2nd: Confiscate device, may be taken up to the end of the school year, parent conference with administrator, device is returned to parent.	3rd: Confiscate device, 5 days OSS, parent conference prior to returning to school ,device is returned to parent at end of the school year	NA
Bullying	Parent conference	Suspension up to expulsion recommendation	Suspension up to expulsion recommendation	Expulsion

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Due Process: A parent or guardian may request an expedited due process hearing if s/he disagrees with the appropriateness of the alternative placement or remedial disciplinary setting or services. Additionally, the school may request an expedited due process hearing if the school has documented reasons to believe that keeping the student in the school is substantially likely to result in injury to the student or to others.

In either of these cases, an expedited hearing must occur within 20 school days of the date the request is filed. The hearing officer must make a determination within 10 school days after the hearing. Unless the parents and school personnel agree in writing to waive the resolution meeting or to mediate the dispute, a resolution meeting must occur within seven days of receiving notice of the hearing request, and the hearing may proceed unless the matter has been resolved to the satisfaction of both parties within 15 days of receipt of the hearing request. The evidence is not disclosed to the other party three business days before the hearing is conducted unless the parties agree otherwise.

The hearing officer may a) return the student to the placement from which the student was removed if the hearing officer determines that the removal did not comply with these procedures or that the student's behavior was a manifestation of the student's disability; or b) order a change of placement to an Interim Alternative Education Setting (IAES) for not more than 45 school days if maintaining the current placement of the student is substantially likely to result in injury to the student or to others. Expedited due process hearing decisions are appealable to state or federal court.

Appeal Process for Expulsion: In the event of student expulsion, the parent/guardian may request a records review of the Hearing Officer's findings within five days of the initial decision. GEO Academies will follow the Due Process requirements of LAC 28: CXV:1311, and shall have the governing authority (School Board) review the decision of the Hearing Officer. The Board may affirm, modify, or reverse the decision previously taken.

Rights of Students with Disabilities: Students with Exceptionalities shall receive additional protections in disciplinary matters. First, any disciplinary process will take into consideration both the student's disability as well as accommodations required in their IEP. Second, schools cannot change the placement³⁹ of students with disabilities if the infraction is related to the student's disability OR if the student's IEP has not been correctly implemented. The only exception to this is in emergency circumstances (e.g. cases involving drugs, weapons, and/or physical injury).

To conduct a Manifestation of Disabilities Review, the relevant IEP team will review all disciplinary documentation and relevant IEP documentation asking the following: (1) was this conduct a manifestation of the student's disability? and (2) was the conduct due to the school's inadequate implementation of the IEP? If the team answers yes to either, the student will return to his/her original placement and the IEP team will develop a behavior intervention plan. If not, the student can be subject to the same consequences as their peers.

d. On a quarterly basis throughout the school year, the Assistant Principal of each school will gather a team to conduct a review of all schoolwide discipline data by subgroup in order to ensure that no subgroup is subject to disproportionate discipline at any GEO Academies school.

Student suspension and expulsions will be disaggregated by subgroups (gender, race, ethnicity,

³⁹ A change in placement is a legal term that applies when a student receives a suspension for more than 10 days or more than 10 total days of suspension in one school year. Within 10 days of a change of placement the LEA representative, parent and IEP team members will meet to determine whether the student's behavior is a manifestation of his/her disability.

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economically disadvantaged, and IEP/504) to ensure no subgroup is overly represented in disciplinary actions and categories. Subgroup participation rates in tardiness, absenteeism, behavior referrals, suspensions, and assignment of detentions will be collected. When it becomes evident that a subgroup is experiencing difficulty, the type of response varies by the student and the circumstances surrounding the student. When the team determines that there is any disproportionate rates of suspension or expulsion by any subgroup, the team would (1) conduct an analysis of each individual case to determine the causes underlying the disproportionate discipline rates and (2) conduct professional development on positive behavioral intervention strategies, social-emotional learning, and schoolwide discipline plans.

e. The supervision plan for suspended/expelled students in alternative settings will follow §RS17:416. Students will be placed in the Discipline Center in the GEO Academies-EBR School region. Discipline Center staff will supervise the students until the suspension is over. If the student is expelled, school staff will be responsible for supervising the student until the expulsion period expires. During a student's suspension period, the school registrar will contact the supervisor of the Discipline Center to ensure the student is attending the alternative placement daily.

See Appendix 2: Draft School Model Master Plan for more detail.

Parent and Community Engagement

17. a. The administration, faculty, and staff of GEO Academies schools are committed to establishing programs and practices that create a climate of mutual trust and respect that support substantive parent involvement. All GEO Academies schools will establish a Parent-Teacher Association (PTA)/PTO Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) and support the formation of committees and organizations.

GEO Academies also believes that the education of our children is a shared responsibility. Involvement by the school, the family, and the community creates a stronger educational system and improves the quality of life for the students, their families, and the entire GEO Academies community. In order to build an effective, home-school partnership, the proposed school will provide the following:

- a. Communication—Establish various forms of communication (school to home, home to school, central office to home and vice versa) that encourage regular discussion about school programs and children's academic progress and behavioral management.
- b. Parenting—Provide information that supports families as they create home environments that value education and nurture children's curiosity for learning.
- c. Student Learning at Home—Share information with parents about how to provide learning activities at home, help students with homework, and plan for success in school.
- d. Volunteering—Encourage and recruit parents' participation in school activities both in and outside of the classroom, developing program ideas which respect the diverse needs of families.
- e. School Decision Making and Advocacy—Recruit and develop parents as leaders in school-based decision-making and in advocating for the welfare of students.
- f. Collaborating with the Community—Identify, enlist, and welcome community resources, of all types, to strengthen schools, families, and student learning.

Parent Square: The proposed school will utilize Parent Square to facilitate immediate school/parent communications about any announcements, celebrations, and/or concerns from the school. Similarly, parents can elevate any information and/or concerns through the app. Parent Square has intelligent auto-translation capabilities, ensuring that non-English speaking families are able to utilize the app.

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Parent-Teacher Association/Organization: All parents, foster parents, guardians, and teachers are encouraged to take an active part in school activities. Meetings will be scheduled primarily throughout the school year and programs are planned to offer entertainment, enlightenment, fundraising experiences, and a chance for parents to get to know school personnel and other parents and to provide volunteer service to the school. The PTO/PTA acts as both a voice for the school community and assists in many activities throughout the year such as, but not limited to: Family Math and Literacy Night, Family College Night and workshops, Teacher Appreciation Week, etc. GEO Academies is committed to reaching out to all parents including those who may not have had a positive experience in school or for whom English is not their first spoken language. Furthermore, the proposed school will seek, encourage, and develop relationships with community agencies and organizations that provide services to children to encourage them to share in this investment in the lives of children.

Parent-Teacher Conferences: Achieving maximum progress for your child necessitates a close line of communication and understanding between teacher and parent. Parent-teacher conferences are the best means of accomplishing this goal. The teacher or the parent can initiate such a conference by calling for an appointment. Conferences can be held in person or by phone. The dates for regularly scheduled conferences are noted on the school calendar. Parents are required to attend each of the two scheduled parent conferences throughout the year.

Parent Visitation and Participation: The proposed school will maintain an open-door policy for parents who may come into the school at any time, after gaining office clearance, and enter any classroom for observation if there is no disruption. Parents who would like to conference with their child's teacher should make a scheduled appointment at their convenience. Teachers and GEO Academies staff ensure that they accommodate the varied schedules of parents and that work hours, language, and/or transportation do not hinder a parent's ability to engage with their child's teacher(s). Families, community organizations, businesses, and other groups are encouraged to apply to volunteer at the proposed schools. Background checks must be completed for any volunteer to work with students in our school at any time. The Louisiana Code requires that a limited criminal history check be on file in the school office for each volunteer, each year.

Calendar of Events: All parents are invited to participate in schoolwide events that occur at varied times, on varied days (to ensure maximum access for parents given varied work schedules), throughout the school year. ESL teachers (translators) will be present at all events to ensure that non-English-speaking parents are able to enjoy all events.

b. Parents/families are encouraged to provide feedback to the board in one of two ways: (A) parents who are able to attend board meetings may raise issues in real time directly to the board. Parents in attendance who are not English speakers will have translators available to them to ensure that the board is able to take their item into consideration; (B) Parents who are unable to attend board meetings may submit written items to the front desk. Translators will ensure that items written in another language will be translated into English ahead of the board meeting.

Parent Input & Feedback for School Staff: Parents/families are encouraged to provide feedback to teachers, administrators, and school leaders through a variety of systems. First, parents are encouraged to utilize parent/teacher conferences as an opportunity to provide feedback. Second, parents are invited to observe their child's classroom at any time to learn more about what their child is learning, instructional strategies, and to assess ways in which the school can better serve their child. The proposed school will ask that parents share any concerns with the school leader either by emailing them directly, setting up an in-person or virtual meeting with the school leader at their convenience, submitting concerns to their child's teacher who will elevate the concern to the school leader, or by submitting a letter to the front

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office. Regardless of the manner in which parents raise concerns, all proposed schools are committed to responding to parent concerns either in real time or within 24 hours of receiving the concern.

Finally, like all GEO Academies, the proposed school will administer and aggregate data from parent surveys three times throughout the school year to gauge the health of each school's relationship with their students' families. School leaders will utilize the feedback collected through these surveys to adjust family engagement systems throughout the year. These surveys are available in multiple languages and each proposed school will collaborate with ESL teachers/translators in order to ensure that responses provided in all languages are heard and taken into consideration.

See Appendix 3: Draft Grievance Policy for more detail.

Growth Plan

18. a,b,c,d,e. GEO Academies will continue to use all existing policies and practices in place at its East Baton Rouge Campuses. This consistency is a key strategy in successful expansion. There will be no changes to the following policies/practices: a. Promotion and graduation policy b. Instructional leadership roles c) Hiring processes (including qualifications and responsibilities for instructional and administrative staff) d. Food services and e. Transportation.

19. GEO Academies has a long history of success in serving students in the Greater Baton Rouge community in Louisiana. GEO Academies has experience turning an "F" school into a "Top Gains" and "Comeback" school in Baton Rouge. GEO Prep Mid-City was a chronically low-performing school prior to the state of Louisiana asking GEO to take it over in 2017. GEO was able to quickly support it and turn it around due to the strength of the existing GEO Prep Academy, also in Baton Rouge. Once the Mid-City campus began to turn around, the schools were quickly able to begin sharing professional development, resources, and economies of scale in transportation, curriculum and administrative oversight, and data dissemination. Both schools then combined to help support the new GEO Next Generation High School, which, in turn, strengthened the entire region's ability to serve students on a full K-12 continuum.

Adding additional schools through GEO Academies will allow the new school to start with a strong and established foundation for growth, but then will contribute to even better economies of scale in the region that will drive more supports into the classrooms for students and teachers, and expand academic opportunities for other student in other areas of the state.

GEO North Baton Rouge Elementary will open with grades K-5 in order to offer high-quality educational options to all families across the Baton Rouge area.

- ***Human Capital Resources:*** GEO Academies' implementation of the TAP model has created a robust and well-trained academic leadership pipeline. Many of the academic leaders in our current EBR schools began as teachers and advanced thanks to TAP programming. The experienced ranks of the existing GEO Academies schools in Baton Rouge provide a strong leadership pipeline. Further, all GEO Academies teams in the EBR will continue to benefit from the network's many existing Tier I partnerships including, but not limited to, TAP/NIET, Instruction Partners, and Relay GSE.
- ***Operational Capacity:*** GEO Academies has also been preparing to take the next steps toward scaling up by adding resources in both the centrally-located "back office" team and the Greater Baton Rouge Region operational staff. Financial and operational staff have already been added at

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the central office level, and this staffing has contributed to streamlining processes that will support the addition of new sites. One additional accounting team member has been added to support these initiatives, and it is anticipated that one more accounting position—a controller or bookkeeper—situated at the local level to support school staff, will be needed once the schools are open.

- **Financial Sustainability:** While the school projects to be financially self-sustaining on public funds by year three, we will partner with a non-profit education foundation for years 0-2 in order to financially support the educational model with fidelity. These grant funds (see financial template) have already been approved and committed, pending EBR’s authorization of the school. Further, GEO Academies is prepared to support the school as needed with a no-interest operational loan that the school can pay back as it is able—just as GEO Academies did for GEO Prep in 2015. That school has been fully or over-enrolled every year since then, and GEO Foundation is confident that the GEO North Baton Rouge Elementary will quickly achieve the same trajectory.
- **Regional Need:** Across Baton Rouge, approximately 33% of students attend “F” schools or “D” schools. These schools are in the bottom third of Louisiana in terms of academic growth (as measured by Progress Index and LDOE’s “Top Growth” measure). On districtwide measures of academic growth, EBR is lagging the state: On the LDOE Top Growth measure, only 44% of students demonstrated Top Growth. This is the 27th percentile of districts statewide. EBR trails behind other large urban districts in the state in academic growth including Jefferson Parish (63rd percentile); Caddo Parish Public Schools (75th percentile); and New Orleans (89th percentile).
- **GEO Academies Success:** GEO Academies currently operates three schools in East Baton Rouge, all of which are located in the same Greater Baton Rouge region, including the City of Baker. All four schools have attained high academic outcomes (see past school performance) and steadfastly satisfy the operational and financial requirements outlined in the Charter School Performance Compact. This existing capacity stands to benefit students in the larger region who are in dire need of improved options.
- **Demand from Families:** GEO families are demanding expansion. Currently, there are over 400 students on the waitlist for GEO Academies’ existing sites in Baton Rouge. Further, GEO Academies has received extensive requests for expansion from families residing in EBR. This, alongside the districtwide need for higher-performing seats, presents a clear case for GEO Academies to launch an additional site.

The overall growth plan for GEO Academies is to open two new schools, K-5 and 6-12, in North Baton Rouge to offer a K-12 continuum of learning and college and career preparedness starting in kindergarten. See K-12 grade level enrollment from Year 1 to Year 5 below:

	Year 1 26-27 SY	Year 2 27-28 SY	Year 3 28-29 SY	Year 4 29-30 SY	Year 5 30-31 SY
K-5	K-5	K-5	K-5	K-5	K-5
Total	450	450	450	450	450
6-12	6-9	6-10	6-11	6-12	6-12

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6-12 total	325	425	525	625	625
K-12 Total	775	875	975	1,075	1,075

20. a. Neither GEO Academies nor the current Louisiana Board have ever had any litigation issues, charter terminations, or non-openings.

b. Not applicable, as nothing described included arbitration or litigation.

c. Neither GEO Academies Louisiana nor GEO Foundation have ever had a closure, revocation, or a non-opening.

Organizational Plan and Capacity

21. GEO Academies has a history of success operating a network of schools in Louisiana. The following board, network, and school roles and responsibilities have been codified after years of implementation:

Board Responsibilities	Network Leadership	School Leadership
- Oversight & Accountability: Ensures that GEO Academies complies with legal, financial, and educational standards. - Policy Making: Establishes broad policies that guide the network. - Financial Management: Approves and oversees budgets, audits, and financial decisions. - Charter Compliance: Ensures that the schools meet the requirements of their charters. - Strategic Direction: Approves long-term strategies and goals. - Evaluation: Monitors performance of the CEO, the network, and the schools.	- Operational Oversight: Manages the day-to-day operations of the entire network of schools. - Curriculum & Instruction: Develops and oversees the implementation of the educational model across schools. - Human Resources: Leads recruitment, training, and professional development of school leaders and staff. - Financial Oversight: Ensures sound fiscal management across the network. - Strategic Planning: Leads the execution of the network's strategic goals. - Support & Guidance: Provides support to school leaders, helping them meet performance standards.	- School Management: Oversees the daily operations of an individual school. - Instructional Leadership: Ensures the quality of teaching and learning at the school level. - Staff Supervision: Manages hiring, evaluation, and development of teachers and other staff. - Student Achievement: Tracks and improves student performance outcomes. - Community Engagement: Serves as the main point of contact between the school and its local community. - Compliance: Ensures the school adheres to state and federal education regulations.

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22. This structure provides the maximum autonomy to all staff in their respective roles while ensuring that they have the support and accountability of both their school leadership staff and the central office necessary to thrive.

1. Master Teachers, Deans, School Directors, Office Staff and Support Staff Report to Principal and Assistant Principal
2. Assistant Principal reports to Principal
3. Principal reports to Chief Academic Officer and Deputy Academic Officer
4. Deputy Academic Officer reports to Chief Academic Officer
5. All School Operations staff report to the Chief Operating Officer
6. All School Business staff report to the Chief Financial Officer and Chief Human Resources Officer
7. Chief Financial Officer, Chief Human Resources Officer, and Chief Operations Officers reports to President
8. President reports to Superintendent/CEO
9. Chief Academic Officer reports to Superintendent/CEO
10. Superintendent/CEO reports to Board of Directors
11. Contracted employees or partners report to the Chief Human Resources Officer.

23. To ensure that the ratio of students to educators remains low in all classrooms, all GEO Academies classroom teachers are paired with assistant teachers. In addition to assistant teachers, other staff members may be in the classroom at set times working with student(s): counselor, school aides, or the special education team. GEO Academies classrooms are divided into three zones: direct, teacher-led instruction; independent learning and practice; and teacher-assisted small group instruction. The school staff adult to student ratio in the school is 6:1. Classroom student to teacher ratio can vary daily depending on the class. See below for exemplar class ratios.

Per Classroom	Students	Educators	Ratio
K-5	25	2 (teachers & assistant teacher)	12.5:1
K-5	25	4 (Teacher, assistant teacher, classroom aide, special education teacher)	10.5:1

24. A potential employee will be notified by the Principal if their position requires licensing, certification, or testing requirements. Employees are responsible for maintaining their license or certification and providing Human Resources with an updated copy as needed. Revocation or expiration of a license may be grounds for immediate termination of employment. Employment is conditional upon successful completion of the following items: 1) Acceptable criminal background check and sex offender registry check; 2) Completed onboarding documents, including the form I9 and W4; 3) Signed receipt of Employee Handbook; and 4) Employment at Will Statement. If applicable, all required college transcripts, licenses, and certifications must be provided.

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Staff will attend a new Employee Orientation during the first few days of employment. The employee will become familiar with the policies and procedures of the company as well as receive information about the benefits that are offered. The employee will set up your account with Paylocity and become familiar with the self-service portal. The employee will also be oriented to specific job duties and how their job impacts our mission. The employee will reach out to their Resources Team or to their Principal if anything is unclear or they need more information.

Upon being hired, the employee will be orientated to the company benefits, and trained in their specific job responsibilities as written in your job description. The employee will be notified that Louisiana is an At-Will employment state and will read the AT-Will Employer statement below: OUR SCHOOL IS AN AT-WILL EMPLOYER. THIS MEANS THAT REGARDLESS OF ANY PROVISION IN THIS EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK, EITHER YOU OR THE SCHOOL MAY TERMINATE THE EMPLOYMENT RELATIONSHIP AT ANY TIME, FOR ANY REASON, WITH OR WITHOUT CAUSE OR NOTICE. NOTHING IN THIS EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK OR IN ANY DOCUMENT OR STATEMENT, WRITTEN OR ORAL, SHALL LIMIT THE RIGHT TO TERMINATE EMPLOYMENT-AT-WILL. NO OFFICER, EMPLOYEE OR REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SCHOOL IS AUTHORIZED TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT - EXPRESS OR IMPLIED - WITH ANY EMPLOYEE FOR EMPLOYMENT OTHER THAN AT-WILL.

Additionally, all third-party contracted staff will be required to undergo appropriate background checks in accordance with Louisiana law and BESE policy.

Dismissing Personnel: As stated above, during the hiring process all employees are notified of the At-Will employment status and the terms of At-Will employment, which means regardless of any provisions in the Employee Handbook, the employee may be terminated at any time, for any reason with cause or notice.

In addition to the At-Will employee dismissal, each employee has an obligation to observe and follow the school's policies and to maintain proper standards of conduct at all times. If an individual's behavior interferes with the orderly and efficient operation of a department, corrective disciplinary measures will be taken. Disciplinary action may include a verbal warning, written warning, or suspension and/or discharge. The appropriate disciplinary action imposed will be determined by the school. The school does not guarantee that one form of action will necessarily precede another. The school reserves the right to implement the disciplinary action of discharge, even for a first offense, if, in its discretion, the employee's breach of conduct requires discharge. The following may result in disciplinary action, up to and including discharge: violation of the school's policies or safety rules; insubordination; unprofessional conduct; unauthorized or illegal possession, use, or sale or being under the influence of alcohol or controlled substances on work premises during working hours, or while engaged in school activities or in school vehicles; unauthorized possession, use, or sale of weapons, firearms, or explosives on work premises; theft, fraud, or deliberate falsification of records; physical assault of student or fellow employee, or other member of the public; inappropriate conduct with a student; sexual harassment; disrespect toward fellow employees, visitors or other members of the public; performing outside work or use of school property, equipment or facilities in connection with outside work while on school time; poor attendance or poor performance. The school reserves the right to consider any of the above actions gross

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misconduct which could result in immediate termination. These examples are used for illustrative purposes only and are not exhaustive. We emphasize that discharge decisions will be based on an assessment of all relevant factors.

The following activities will be considered gross misconduct and will result in immediate termination of the employee by their supervisor: theft; assault of a student, parent, co-worker or guest in the school; inappropriate behavior with a student.

All new hires will be required to complete a criminal background check prior to the first day of employment.

25. As described in the Staff Retention Practices below, GEO Academies Talent and Development team has a strong teacher and staff pipeline in the East Baton Rouge region. The Talent and Development team has current and active teacher and staff applicants in its system that they regularly contact to monitor if they are still interested in a position at GEO Academies, if a position were to open. In addition, since our schools are centralized in Baton Rouge, teachers may transfer to a new or another GEO Academies school with the permission of their principal and approved by Human Resources. GEO also has a robust network of community members who are registered with the network as substitute teachers (with all appropriate background checks) that are able to serve in long or short term assignments to ensure continuity of instruction in the event of teacher absences.

26. GEO Academies has submitted two applications in this cycle for new charter schools. With an additional two schools, the central office will operate a total of five charters in East Baton Rouge Parish and one charter in nearby Baker. The operation of multiple schools in a single geography allows GEO to centralize back office functions such as staff recruitment, operations, and finance.

The staffing plan for the proposed GEO North Baton Rouge Elementary, including the total number of new hires projected for each year of growth, is detailed below. Please note that staffing is always contingent on the number of scholars that each school enrolls and the specific needs of those scholars for that school year.

	Y1
K-5 Enrollment	450
	Total
Teachers	23
Paraprofessionals	18
SPED Teachers	4
SPED Paraprofessionals	4
School Counselor	3

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Master Teacher	3
Curriculum Director	1
Principal	1
Assistant Principal	2
Receptionist	1
Coordinator of Special Education	1
Director of Special Education	1
Office Manager	1
Facilities Manager	1
Dean	1
Total	65

Since 2015, GEO Academies has continued to build capacity, reflect and refine strong and efficient centralized back office services for its schools in East Baton Rouge and the City of Baker. These key centralized service areas are human resources (HR), instructional training and coaching, school operations and finance. See the Operational Management and Leadership section for leadership team descriptions for HR, instruction, and operational and financial leadership. GEO Academies has the leadership talent and capacity to open two new schools, K-5 and 6-12, in East Baton Rouge.

GEO Academies' teacher retention rates are just under 90%. GEO Academies also has the ability to over hire in year 0 allowing the new school to start with leaders and teachers that are familiar with GEO Academies' culture and practices ensuring continuity across the region.

Further expansion across Greater Baton Rouge will deepen regional scale allowing for the economies that enable school level personnel to focus on academic excellence.

HR Capacity: As previously stated, GEO Academies' staff retention rates are just under 90%. GEO Academies also can overhire in year 0 allowing the new school to start with leaders and teachers that are familiar with GEO Academies' culture and practices ensuring continuity across the region. Previous hiring patterns have been consistent with these high levels of retention. These high retention rates are attributed to GEO Academies' strong hiring practices and use of data to reflect upon practices that resulted in high or low retention rates across the schools or the central office. Once a pattern is identified, the regional team's CAO and school leadership work together to respond to feedback and make changes in the hiring practice and revisit and examine practices at the school level.

Staff Retention Practices: The Talent and Development team works closely with the school leader to ensure all schools are able to retain a diverse staff. All schools place a specific emphasis on feedback and elevating the voices of every educator. Further, the underlying assumptions are that educators who have the support that they need to thrive in their roles, opportunities to advance, and work in a positive environment that is responsive to their needs, will feel more satisfied in their jobs. Below are GEO Academies successful retention practices:

1. Solicit Feedback from Staff: Create an open door policy for staff and conduct quarterly staff surveys to share concerns or suggestions. Acknowledge they were heard and implement those that

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are applicable. Provide a Chat Box for all staff to leave notes on ways the leadership team can better support them and areas of support.

2. Continuously Build Teacher Capacity: All teachers receive consistent support, observations, and immediate feedback from master teachers and other academic leaders. Second, the Executive Director of Talent and Development and Principal conducts a new teacher academy to ensure that all teachers receive the training needed to thrive in their respective positions. Finally, build teacher ownership of student data by reviewing teacher data regularly and ensuring that teachers are aware of school goals and progress toward those goals.
3. Career Progression: Provide opportunities for professional growth and develop a pipeline of teacher leaders by providing ongoing opportunities for promotion and leadership experiences.
4. Staff Appreciation: All schools have a culture of celebrating educators through events such as Monthly Staff Appreciation Day, Weekly Highlights of Teacher Accomplishments, and Educator of the Month.
5. Competitive Salary: Meet or exceed salary schedules of surrounding area, as well as offer annual raises and performance-based bonuses based on TAP structure for student achievement.

In addition to the practices described above, the following has resulted in a strong internal pipeline of highly-qualified teachers: (1) GEO Academies has a two-teacher model of including both an assistant teacher⁴⁰ and a teacher in every classroom, meaning that those who are not yet considered highly-qualified are able to gain experience and provide support prior to becoming lead teachers themselves; (2) GEO Academies has extensive partnerships throughout the Greater Baton Rouge/City of Baker region supporting recruitment of highly-qualified teachers. (3) All proposed schools will participate in the TAP program, meaning that teacher development and growth will be an ongoing and iterative process throughout the careers of all GEO Academies educators.

Staff Recruitment: GEO Academies takes a methodical approach to recruitment in order to hire and retain a diverse and talented staff of educators and administrators. GEO Academies prioritizes engaging with partners—including prominent, local Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)—that provide a pipeline of qualified, diverse educators. Our recruitment plan includes the following core tasks and strategies:

- Create job descriptions of each position vacancy and post to our GEO Academies website in addition to a variety of hiring websites such as Indeed, and Idealist.
- Job Fairs: Host job fairs throughout the community and surrounding districts in the months of February, April, and, if needed, June. To ensure diverse and talented potential candidates attend our fairs, we advertise our job fairs with our current and future partners at Southern University, Louisiana State University, Southeastern Louisiana University, Grambling State University, University of Louisiana Lafayette Colleges of Education, LRCE, iTeach, Chief of Minds, and New Schools of Baton Rouge.
- Further Engagement with Partners: The Executive Director of Talent and Development will visit partners to provide information to prospective candidates about job opportunities.
- The CAO, along with the Principal and Assistant Principal for each school, will review applications for qualifications needed.
- Interviews: Selected interviewees will conduct a variety of performance tasks, including model lessons (for classroom teachers), responses to disciplinary scenarios, sample communications with parents, their first 30-day plan, as well as other interview questions.
- GEO Academies has established a Teaching Fellows Program to proactively address staffing needs and ensure a strong pipeline of mission-aligned educators. Launched in early 2025, the program received over 100 applications for its inaugural cohort in Baton Rouge, selecting 11

⁴⁰ Assistant teachers split time between two classrooms beginning in 6th grade. In grades K-5, there is one assistant teacher dedicated full time to every classroom.

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promising candidates for intensive training, mentorship, and classroom-based experience across GEO campuses. Graduates of the program are prepared to step into full-time teaching roles, and future cohorts will serve as a sustainable staffing source for new school launches. We will continue to invest in and expand this program to ensure we are fully staffed at the launch of this proposed campus.

Sample Recruitment Timeline

- February 15, 2026 - First job fair
- February 28, 2026 - Review applicants from first job fair and online
- March 15, 2026 - Qualified and diverse applicants interview and/or model lessons completed
- March 18, 2026 - Narrow down applicants
- March 25, 2026 - Offer letters
- April 15, 2026 - Second job fair
- April 29, 2026 - Review applicants from first job fair and online
- May 16, 2022 - Qualified and diverse applicants interview and/or model lessons completed
- May 20, 2026 - Narrow down applicants
- May 27, 2026 - Offer letters
- June 3, 2026 - Third job fair (if needed)
- June 15, 2026 - 95-100% of staff hired

Ability to Hire Strong School Leadership: Based upon the experiences of GEO Academies across the country, we know that a school leader is a key variable in a new school's academic success. In determining whether to open a new school, therefore, we look first to the pipeline of school leadership. If we are unable to hire a leader who meets our bar within 12 months of a new school's opening, we will defer opening until the subsequent school year. We have used this strategy successfully in the past, as we decided to delay the opening of our GEO Prep Academy school by one year, which resulted in the hiring of leader Sandra Douglas. It was her leadership excellence that not only propelled the success of that first school, but indeed, eventually the academic success of all three GEO Academy schools in East Baton Rouge.

School Leadership Team Capacity

GEO Academies is in the process of forming the elementary school leadership team for GEO North Baton Rouge Elementary. We will utilize the requirements outlined in the provided job description to vet and select a school leader, as we have done in all past EBR launches.

See Appendix 4: Resumes for Proposed School Leadership Team for more detail.

Charter Board Governance

27. Below is a brief description of each member of the GEO Academies Louisiana governing board. See Appendix 5 for rationale for each member's role on the board.

Board Member	Role	Responsibilities Area of Expertise/Profession	Resides in Community
Tony Davis	Board Chair	Board Governance, Education Law/Policy	No

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Erin Piper	Board Member	Accounting, Entrepreneurship, Social Work	Yes
Stephanie Goudeau	Board Member	Education	Yes
Kirk Moore	Board Member	Human Resources	Yes
Johnny Dunnam	Board Member	Law Enforcement	Yes
Jeff Ready	Board Member	Marketing, Technology, Fundraising	No

See Appendix 5: Resumes for Charter Board for more detail.

28. Maintaining public trust in the operations of GEO Academies is critical to our mission. To this end, GEO Academies has developed a comprehensive internal conflict of interest policy. This policy is the basis for identifying and evaluating potential board member conflicts of interest. Together with existing Louisiana law and policy, each board member is held accountable for avoiding potential or real conflicts. Each year, board members complete the “Annual Board Member Conflict of Interest Statement” to certify that they have received, read, understand, and will comply with the GEO Academies conflict of interest policy. This conflict-of-interest policy helps the organization avoid situations where directors’ private interests are benefitted by GEO Academies’ transactions or arrangements. Board members have a duty to disclose any actual or possible conflicts of interest. In addition to the internal conflict of interest policy, board members comply with Louisiana ethics law, including the submission of Tier 3 Personal Financial Disclosures to the Louisiana Secretary of State’s office.

Board members are required to disclose potential conflicts to the board chair. When a potential conflict is disclosed, the board member will recuse themselves from discussion and voting, and the matter will be reviewed by the board and legal counsel if needed. The board may resolve the conflict in multiple ways depending on the circumstances, including:

- Terminating the relationship that causes the conflict (e.g., ending a contract or vendor relationship).
- Reassigning responsibilities so that the board member has no involvement in the conflicted matter.
- Permitting the relationship to continue if the board determines, by vote, that sufficient safeguards are in place to protect the integrity of decision-making and that no violation of the Louisiana Code of Ethics exists.

Failure to disclose a potential conflict may result in corrective action, up to and including removal from the board. These procedures ensure transparency, maintain compliance with Louisiana law, and preserve public trust in the governance of GEO Louisiana schools.

On this board, there are currently no relationships that could pose real or perceived conflicts of interest.

29. In addition to attending annual training on board governance, the Board monitors—rather than manages—school effectiveness by establishing committees with leaders who have expertise in particular areas. The process is outlined in the table below, and further detail is provided in the subsequent sections.

Board Committees:

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Committee Formation	Committee Meetings	Committee Reporting
The Board establishes Academic, Finance, and Governance committees composed of Board members, staff members, and other stakeholders as necessary.	Committees meet on a quarterly basis and thoroughly analyze any relevant issues that pertain to their areas of expertise.	While committees do not take action, they bring any relevant information back to the Board such that the Board can make appropriate decisions or changes.

Committee Formation: The Board begins its decision-making process for responding to information gathered in monitoring school effectiveness with clearly-defined committees. Board members with appropriate levels of expertise make up Academic, Finance, and Governance committees, and Board members are further supported by leadership staff members with expertise in those areas. Staff members offer a more school-specific perspective and bring day-to-day information for their topics. When needed, the Board will invite other stakeholders, such as parents or students to the table, and they may even form ad-hoc committees to delve into a specific topic as needed.

Committee Meetings: At a minimum, the committees meet on a quarterly basis. They utilize their time and individual expertise to take a “deep dive” into issues and topics such that each area is continually monitored. Board members are then able to develop familiarity with school operations and effectiveness. While Board members recognize it is important to observe the difference between management and governance, it is also important to be informed and active in school accountability and understanding, as this allows the Board to properly fulfill its role and execute informed decision making and leadership. The Board will focus on setting strategic goals, ensuring fiscal responsibility, and overseeing school performance, while school leadership will handle the day-to-day operations and implementation of policies. Through regular performance reviews, clear communication, and adherence to established governance structures, the Board will supervise and support school leadership, ensuring alignment with the school’s mission and vision.

Committee Reporting: While the committees do not take action on behalf of the Board, they can and do bring their knowledge and expertise back to the Board as a whole. Committees report on issues so that all Board members are able to participate in decision making in an informed manner. Should any issues arise that require larger input from all Board members, the Board has the ability to meet as a group in public work sessions (or in executive sessions in limited cases) so that the Board as a whole may discuss an issue further.

Committee Purposes: Board on Track provides a framework that GEO Academies has adopted to organize its various committees. Board on Track defines the purpose of each committee as follows:

- “Finance Committee: commissioned by and responsible to the Board of Directors. It has the responsibility for working with the CEO and Chief Financial Officer (CFO) to create the upcoming fiscal year budget; presenting budget recommendations to the Board; monitoring implementation of the approved budget on a regular basis and recommending proposed budget revisions; recommending to the Board appropriate policies for the management of the charter organization's assets. The finance committee shall be assisted by the CEO and CFO.”
- “Governance Committee: commissioned by and responsible to the Board of Trustees to assume the primary responsibility for matters pertaining to Board of Trustees recruitment, nominations, orientation, training, and evaluation in accordance with the bylaws of the organization as well as established policies and practices approved by the Board of Trustees.”
- “Academic Committee: commissioned by and responsible to the Board of Trustees to assume the primary responsibility for working with the CEO to define academic excellence, ensure that all

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board members know the charter promises that were made to the community and the authorizer and to devise clear and consistent measures to monitor these goals.”⁴¹

Explain how the proposed structure will ensure accessibility to staff, community, and families.

Committees & Community Engagement: The Board has three committees: governance, finance and academic. The governance committee reviews by-laws and member terms each year for compliance and updates as well as recommends new board members to serve for approval by the full board. The finance committee reviews budgets and financials as well as proposed annual budgets and expenses for approval by the full board. The academic committee reviews academic progress and goals at each meeting and reports out to the board progress and results. The Board surveys parents for satisfaction and suggestions for improvement twice annually. Surveys are available electronically and on paper, and are made available in all languages needed. We also survey staff twice annually for satisfaction and suggestions for improvement. Our board meetings are open to the public and posted accordingly both on social media and on the doors of our schools.

30. The charter school intends to meet its organizational goals annually starting its first year of operation. This annual standard applies to all GEO Academies. See the table below for the school’s organizational goals.

Indicator	Standard Expectation	New School & GEO Academies' Annual Goals
<i>Enrollment</i>	<i>Schools enroll and serve all students through prioritizing equity in their enrollment and discipline policies and procedures.</i>	
Required Percentages of Economically Disadvantaged Students	Meets required percentage	Matches EBR Percentages
Required Percentages of Students with Disabilities	Meets required percentage	Matches EBR Percentages
Re-Enrollment of Students	More than or equal to 80% of students return.	Re-enrollment rate of 85% or greater
Suspensions	At or below the National Average	Suspension rate of less than 3% for K-5 and 6-12
	School is not on the Urgent Intervention Required (UIR) List for Discipline	School is not labeled UIR-Discipline
Recruitment, Lottery, and Other Enrollment Policy and Procedures	School receives no Notice(s) of Concern nor Notice(s) of Breach relative to Student Enrollment Practices	No Notices of Concern nor Notices of Breach
Student Records and Other State Required Data Reporting (inclusive of PEP and other Student Information Systems Requirements)	School receives no Notice(s) of Concern nor Notice(s) of Breach relative to Student Records and Data Reporting in the District’s Student Information Systems Porta.	No Notices of Concern nor Notices of Breach

⁴¹ Taken from the Board on Track training materials.

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School is nondiscriminatory and compliant with laws and policies related to student admissions, discipline, attendance and truancy	Meets laws, policy, and contract terms relative to admissions, discipline and attendance	Meets laws, policy, and contract terms
	School receives no Notice(s) of Concern nor Notice(s) of Breach relative to these areas	No Notices of Concern nor Notices of Breach
School Admissions Process is nondiscriminatory and compliant with laws and policies related to students with disabilities	Meets laws, policy, and contract terms relative to admissions, discipline and attendance	Meets laws, policy, and contract terms
	School receives no Notice(s) of Concern nor Notice(s) of Breach relative to these areas	No Notices of Concern nor Notices of Breach
<i>Special Populations</i>	<i>All special student populations receive the services and supports they need to ensure academic success in accordance with applicable law and policy.</i>	
Students with Disabilities Evaluations	Less than 5% of evaluations out of compliance	0% of evaluations out of compliance
IEP Timeline Compliance	Less than 5% of evaluations out of compliance	0% of evaluations out of compliance
Least Restrictive Environment	Over 60% of total students with disabilities population meets measure	Over 80% of total students with disabilities population meets measures
Subgroup Performance	School has been identified as “Urgent Intervention Required” in no more than two reported subgroups	School is not identified as UIR in any subgroup.
Economically Disadvantaged & Federal Programs	Favorable monitoring checklist reports from district Title I monitor	Favorable monitoring checklist reports.
	School receives no Notice(s) of Concern nor Notice(s) of Breach relative to Title I and Other Federal Programs implementation	No Notices of Concern nor Notices of Breach.
All student populations receive the services and supports they need to ensure academic success in accordance with applicable law and policy	Meets law and policy requirements regarding special student populations	Meets laws and policy requirements
	School receives no Notice(s) of Concern nor Notice(s) of Breach relative to these areas	No Notices of Concern nor Notices of Breach
<i>Law and Policy</i>	<i>Schools and governing boards responsibly follow all laws, policies and contractual obligations</i>	

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Board adheres to state policies regarding governance and compliance	No evidence of non-compliance with state or federal governance policies including but not limited to the following: open meeting laws, public records act, public bid laws, fire and safety laws, health laws, board structure requirements, etc.	No evidence of non-compliance
	School receives no Notice(s) of Concern nor Notice(s) of Breach relative to these areas	No Notices of Concern nor Notices of Breach
School and board have no evidence of violations of Louisiana Ethics Laws	No evidence of non-compliance with the Louisiana Code of Governmental Ethics	No evidence of non-compliance.
	School receives no Notice(s) of Concern nor Notice(s) of Breach relative to these areas	No Notices of Concern nor Notices of Breach
School and board have no evidence of violations of legal and contractual obligations	No evidence of significant, intentional or repeated non-compliance of legal and contractual obligations	No evidence of non-compliance
	School receives no Notice(s) of Concern nor Notice(s) of Breach relative to these areas	No Notices of Concern nor Notices of Breach
School has no evidence of violations of required test procedures	No evidence of non-compliance with state testing policy and/or local test security policy; district investigation found evidence of cheating by school staff and/or significant or repeated violations of district or state testing policy	No evidence of non-compliance.
	School receives no Notice(s) of Concern nor Notice(s) of Breach relative to these areas	No Notices of Concern nor Notices of Breach
Board adheres to BESE approved state policy Bulletins (such as but not limited to Louisiana handbook for school administrators; promotion and placement; statewide assessment practices; accountability standards, etc.)	No evidence of non-compliance with the Louisiana state law, state policies and/or applicable local policies	No evidence of non-compliance
	School receives no Notice(s) of Concern nor Notice(s) of Breach relative to these areas	No Notices of Concern nor Notices of Breach

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<i>Financial</i>	<i>Schools and governing boards responsibly with finances</i>	
Balanced Budget	Schools submit a board-approved balanced budget and operate within revenues	Balanced budget approved by board and submitted to LDOE annually; year-end audits confirm revenues $\geq$ expenditures
Enrollment-to-Budget Alignment	Schools maintain enrollment consistent with projections	10/1 enrollment within 95% of budgeted projections
Operating Reserves	Schools maintain adequate liquidity and reserves per BESE policy	Establish and maintain appropriate operating reserves
Annual Audit	Schools comply with Louisiana Law requiring independent audits	CFO provides monthly budget to actuals to finance committee and full board

31. On an annual basis, the board utilizes the Annual Review⁴² produced by the LDOE that outlines all academic, organizational, and financial performance measures to establish an oversight plan for the year ahead. The LDOE rates each school as “meets all expectations,” “meets most expectations,” or “does not meet expectations” on each of the sets of academic, organizational, and financial performance expectations. If there are any measures according to which a GEO Academies school has been rated “meets most expectations” or “does not meet expectations,” the board requires the CEO, CFO, and/or CAO to create an improvement plan to immediately address the deficiency. In the instance that a deficiency is either dire or exists unaddressed for a long period of time, the board may move to request a plan from the CEO on how they will make staff changes to address the deficiency.

Further, the relevant committees receive reports at each of their meetings on the school’s current performance on each of the measures included in the LDOE’s Annual Review throughout the school year. This means that, in the instance that the school is underperforming on any performance expectation, the board is immediately aware and the network leadership team is able to quickly address the issue.

Each of the performance expectations listed in the LDOE’s Annual Review is tied directly to the Charter School Performance Compact (CSPC), ensuring that the board is consistently apprised of each school’s satisfaction of CSPC requirements.

Second, the Board has engaged Board on Track, a national organization that assists charter school boards in governance. This organization provides training and governance documents and strategies to evaluate board member performance as well as the performance of the CEO.

⁴² Each of the indicators listed in the Annual Review are linked [here](#).

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Monitoring Progress Toward Accountability and Renewal Standards: The LDOE's Annual Review informs the board of whether or not each school is on track to meet accountability and renewal standards. As the board receives reports from the CEO, CFO, and CAO on current performance data on each of the measures included in the Annual Review at all relevant committee meetings throughout the school year, the board remains apprised throughout the school year of whether each school is meeting accountability standards.

In the instance that the board learns that there is a performance deficiency on any measure, the board requires of the CEO a corrective action plan that targets the deficiency, as well as a reporting plan that outlines both the data and frequency of reporting that the board should expect to receive in order to progress monitor the evolving issue. Strategies in a corrective action plan will be responsive to the particular deficiency but could include steps such as changes in leadership, targeted initiatives led by network leadership to direct resources towards the issue, professional development/training, and/or implementation of new systems.

At each subsequent meeting, the board will then review all new information and data related to the deficient performance area until it is resolved and remains a non-issue for a pre-established period of time thereafter. In the instance that the issue increases in severity or remains unresolved over a sustained period of time, the board may issue a Performance Improvement Plan to the CEO or may move to terminate the CEO.

32. a,b,c. The board sees the evaluation, performance, and accountability of our CEO as its top priority. The board, therefore, follows an annual protocol for monitoring the CEO's performance and taking action when needed to support his performance.

Beginning in December, on an annual basis, the Board conducts an evaluation (see performance indicators in the table below) of the CEO utilizing the same school performance data, organizational performance data, and financial performance data that the LDOE utilizes, according to the CSPC, to make accountability decisions. Additionally, the board collects survey data from staff and families, as well as other key performance indicators such as staff retention rate, job satisfaction rates, and family satisfaction rates, to assess the CEO according to the indicators in table below. In the instance that the Board finds that the CEO is not performing in accordance with these expectations, the Board may institute a performance improvement plan or seek termination of the CEO, depending upon the severity and/or longevity of the CEO's underperformance.

CEO Performance Indicators for Board Evaluation:

<i>CEO Core Competencies:</i> This section is for evaluating the CEO's demonstration of core competencies that have been directed linked to successful charter schools.	
Demonstrates Integrity	Deals with others in a straightforward, honest, and ethical manner; behaves in a way that supports the organization's mission, vision, and values; admits mistakes and takes timely corrective action; and treats others with dignity and respect.
Cultivates a Culture of Excellence	Creates and maintains an organizational culture that promotes student achievement and college preparation for all students; makes the organization a place where staff and students are all committed to excellence and believe that hard work is the key to achieving it; demonstrates commitment to competent communications and conflict resolution; and consistently evaluates and proactively improves people, processes, programs, and services for greater effectiveness, efficiency, and value.

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Drives Academic Excellence and Student Performance	All students demonstrate levels of mastery, which exceed grade-level standards; the organization creates, maintains and regularly revises systems and processes to drive student achievement; the organization has met or exceeded agreed upon goals set for increasing student performance; and the organization is on track to outperform other public schools in our community.
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Role-Specific Competencies: This section is for evaluating the CEO's role-specific competencies, which are based on those related to leading, directing, and managing a charter school or charter school organization.	
Leads the Educational Program	Ensures there is a standards-based curriculum complete with scope and sequences for all subjects taught at every existing and expected grade level that exceeds national academic standards; ensures all teachers regularly use assessment data to plan curriculum, lesson plans, meet individual student needs, and make daily instructional decisions; and the organization's structure and staffing ensures that special student populations are making progress equal to those students in its regular education program.
Develops and Leads Staff	Recruitment: Attracts and selects high performing staff and leadership; Staff culture: Creates a staff culture and work environment in which highly effective staff members are actively engaged and feel connected to the organization and its mission.
Manages Organizational Compliance and Administration	Current with all local, state, and federal laws and mandates; oversees development and proper functioning of an enrollment and admission process; provides for the overall safety and well being of students and staff; ensures organization is administered well with efficient investment of staff time and other resources.
Builds and Maintains Family Satisfaction	Ensures organization has frequent, meaningful, and well-attended ways for families to be involved in their child's learning and the school community; provides indication of a high level of parent satisfaction with the organization as evidenced by quantitative data and low student attrition rates; and listens and responds respectfully to the range of concerns expressed by parents and families.
Manages Financial Performance	Understands and provides leadership in the areas of financial planning, budgeting, accounting, and management of the organization's financial resources; determines the current and future financial resources needed to realize the organization's mission; ensures that clear and accurate accounting, payroll, cash management, and insurance systems are maintained; and oversees the development, maintenance, and regular revision of systems for capturing, managing, and analyzing financial data to improve performance.
Promotes the Organization, Ensures Adequate Resources	Partners with the Board to develop effective public relations, marketing, and fundraising plans; coordinates efforts of the Board and its Development Committee to implement a board-approved fundraising plan; creates partnerships with community organizations and businesses; and pursues/secures philanthropic support that directly supports the mission and vision of the organization.
Partners with	Acts as liaison to ensure an effective flow of critical information between the

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the Board	Board and the organization's senior staff, teachers, and students; helps to facilitate the Board's governance, composition, and committee structure; implements Board policies and recommends policies for Board consideration; and develops and implements strategic and operational plans to achieve the organization's mission and vision, and allocates resources accordingly.
Engages the Community	Serves as chief spokesperson for the organization, in coordination with the Board Chair; listens and responds respectfully to the range of concerns expressed by various constituents; and develops and maintains effective external relationships that support the organization's performance and fundraising success.
Overall Leadership and Academic Performance	Responsible for leading the organization in fulfilling its mission and goals in accordance with the policies established by the Board of Trustees; responsible for the success or failure of the organization; provides vision and leadership by example; develops and implements strategic and operational plans to achieve the organization's mission and vision; and oversees the operation of the organization, develops staff, allocates resources and ensures proper controls.

33. a,b. On an annual basis, the board utilizes the Annual Review⁴³ produced by the LDOE that outlines all academic, organizational, and financial performance measures to establish an oversight plan for the year ahead. The LDOE rates each school as “meets all expectations,” “meets most expectations,” or “does not meet expectations” on each of the sets of academic, organizational, and financial performance expectations. If there are any measures according to which a GEO Academies school has been rated “meets most expectations” or “does not meet expectations,” the board requires of the CEO, CFO, and/or CAO an improvement plan to immediately address the deficiency. In the instance that a deficiency is either dire or exists unaddressed for a long period of time, the board may move to request a plan from the CEO on how they will make staff changes to address the deficiency.

Further, the relevant committees receive reports at each of their meetings on the school’s current performance on each of the measures included in the LDOE’s Annual Review throughout the school year. This means that, in the instance that the school is underperforming on any performance expectation, the board is immediately aware and the network leadership team is able to quickly address the issue.

Each of the performance expectations listed in the LDOE’s Annual Review is tied directly to the CSPC, ensuring that the board is consistently apprised of each school’s satisfaction of CSPC requirements.

Second, the Board has engaged Board on Track, a national organization that assists charter school boards in governance. This organization provides training and governance documents and strategies to evaluate board member performance as well as the performance of its CEO. The board participates in conducting these surveys each year.

Monitoring Progress Toward Accountability and Renewal Standards: The LDOE’s Annual Review informs the board of whether each school is on track to meet accountability/renewal standards. As the board receives reports from the leadership on current performance data on each of the measures included in the Annual Review at all relevant committee meetings throughout the year, the board remains apprised through the school year of whether each school is meeting accountability standards.

⁴³ Each of the indicators listed in the Annual Review are linked [here](#).

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In the instance that the board learns that there is a performance deficiency on any measure, the board requires of the CEO a corrective action plan that targets the deficiency, as well as a reporting plan that outlines both the data and frequency of reporting that the board should expect to receive to progress monitor the evolving issue. Strategies in a corrective action plan will be responsive to the deficiency but could include steps such as changes in leadership, targeted initiatives led by network leadership to direct resources towards the issue, professional development/training, and/or implementation of new systems.

At each subsequent meeting, the board will then review all new information and data related to the deficient performance area until it is resolved and remains a non-issue for a pre-established period of time thereafter. In the instance that the issue increases in severity or remains unresolved over a sustained period of time, the board may issue a Performance Improvement Plan to the CEO or may move to terminate their relationship with GEO Academies altogether.

Financial Planning and Monitoring: Each spring, the CFO/Business Manager will work with school leadership to assess anticipated revenue streams and develop an appropriate financial plan for expenses that supports school need and student academic advancement while meeting all financial goals as listed above. In order to meet state requirements, the first reading of the draft of the budget will be reviewed by the Finance Committee and then the full Board in a public meeting in May, with the final review and approval in June.

During the year, all financial statements will be presented to the Finance Committee and the full Board in a public meeting at least once per quarter. The Board may request additional reviews in the event there is a financial concern or to monitor a particular issue as needed. Final audits will be reviewed with the Board by the audit firm in a public Board meeting.

Accounting: The school will engage with properly certified and locally-experienced accountants to manage all fiscal aspects of the school, including, but not limited to, grant funding, AFR, audit preparation, monthly financial statements, compliance and communication with the LDOE, and all other financial aspects critical to the successful operation of the school. The team will be overseen by the network CFO, who is licensed CPA with significant experience in Louisiana school accounting. As noted above, all financial information will be reviewed by the Board on a quarterly basis at minimum.

Purchasing: Purchasing is monitored through a formal purchase order process, where school office managers submit purchase requests for all non-personnel school needs. If in alignment with the Board-approved budget, the PO is approved by the Business Manager, and incoming invoices and packing slips are matched up with the approval prior to payment. The system has met the requirements for proper internal controls and financial management by the Louisiana school auditor and the Louisiana Legislative Auditor.

Payroll: Each spring, staffing needs are determined by the school leadership, with budget approvals from first the CFO and then the full Board as part of the budget approval process. Once onboarded, including proper background checks, staff “punches” in and out at the school level to ensure attendance and trackability. Each pay period, the school Principal and Office Manager review for accuracy and appropriate recording of PTO time prior to submission of each pay period.

Controls and Long-Term Viability: Each expense—whether it is staff salaries/benefits, operational costs such as lease or utilities, or school-based purchasing—is executed with proper approvals, such as signed contract or approved purchase order that ensure each cost is in alignment with the Board-approved budget. That said, sometimes expenses may unexpectedly exceed budget planning, or revenues may come in less than anticipated. As part of their ongoing monitoring, the CFO and the Board will discuss any

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significant variances and work together to ensure that the school continues to meet the financial goals above to ensure long-term viability.

34. The board participates in several trainings on an annual basis to ensure that all members have a current understanding of their respective and collective roles/responsibilities, as well as a current understanding of the policies and laws that apply to their roles. First, the entire board participates in all trainings provided by Board on Track as well as all board trainings provided by the Louisiana Association of Public Charter Schools. Finally, the governance committee meets annually to determine whether there are any particular weaknesses on the board that require either supplemental membership or training. The committee then makes a recommendation to the entire board regarding the steps needed to address this particular weakness.

New Membership: The Board currently has the expertise needed to effectively oversee our schools' performance. In the instance that the board does require additional members to address lacking expertise, the Board follows a set membership identification protocol. The process includes inviting prospective members to attend meetings prior to joining the board, then Board leadership interviews candidates and discusses responsibilities, offers a tour of the schools, and then puts the issue to a vote by the board. The governance committee provides a comprehensive overview and training of all board bylaws to new members and ensures that they are aware of and have agreed to carry out all board member responsibilities. Finally, all new members attend Board on Track and Louisiana Association of Public Charter Schools' trainings on board member roles, responsibilities, best practices, and current policies/laws.

35. The Board holds 10 meetings per year and complies with state open meetings laws by posting each meeting both on social media and on the front doors of all school buildings. All board meetings are held on school grounds, and translators are made available in the event that non-English speaking families wish to attend meetings. The 2026 meeting calendar is below.

September 15, 2026	Governance, review bylaws, set committee membership
October 20, 2026	Finance/Budget, review state reports
November 17, 2026	Academics, review state reports
December 15, 2026	Strategic Plans/Facilities
January 19, 2027	Governance
February 16, 2027	Academics
March 16, 2027	Finance/Budget
April 20, 2027	Staff/Student/Family Policies
May 18, 2027	Strategic Plans/CEO and Board Evaluations
June 15, 2027	Finance/Budget

See Appendix 6: Charter Board Governing Bylaws for more detail.

Operational Management and Leadership

36. GEO Academics team has strong expertise and capacity in the areas of staffing, financial management, professional development, general operations and facilities management.

Chief Financial Officer/Business Manager: Kathy Pitts

The GEO Academics Financial Management team is led by Chief Financial Officer Kathy Pitts. Kathy was the former Chief Accounting Officer, and has over 15 years of direct school financial management experience. With an MBA from the Kelley School of Business at Indiana University, Kathy serves as the

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schools' Business Manager, and works with the schools' Board of Directors and academic leadership to ensure academic needs are put first while still meeting fiscal responsibility and financial compliance.

Director of Finance and Accounting - Louisiana: Kelly Forbes

The local accounting team is led by Director of Finance and Accounting, Kelly Forbes. Kelly is an accomplished accounting professional with a wide range of financial experience in public, private, and charter schools. In her role, Kelly works closely with the regional academic team and the national team to ensure the school's academic priorities are reflected in the budget.

Chief Academic Officer: Shirlon Clay Norman

Ms. Norman began with GEO Academies when the first Baton Rouge school launched in 2015. During her time with GEO Academies, she has served in various positions including mentor teacher, master teacher, assistant principal, principal, deputy academic officer, and now chief academic officer. Across those roles, Ms. Norman has a depth of experience creating professional development plans for a variety of audiences from individual teachers to the entire organization.

Chief Operations Officer: Jeff Lozer

Jeff Lozer has substantial experience developing organizations and lines of business, and in managing mature, yet evolving organizations with complex sets of stakeholders. He has developed and managed revenue-generating service relationships with over forty schools on behalf of GEO Academies, Marian University, and Goodwill Education Initiatives, Inc. He has also led a large agency law practice, and has subject matter expertise in organizational development, private foundation management and corporate law. He has identified, recruited, hired and led subject matter experts to develop a comprehensive state agency law practice of 130 attorneys throughout 92 counties. He partnered with the DCS Director in the organizational development of a new state agency, traveling the state building new community partnerships and promoting a new agency culture. He led the grant making of a private foundation and has advised numerous nonprofit organizations in private practice. Throughout his career he has been a respected and trusted leader and advisor to governmental agencies, private foundations, public charities, and educational institutions.

Human Resources: Kevin Carpenter

Kevin has over 25 years of professional human resource experience in the areas of recruiting, professional development and performance management, with several large complex companies. His strengths are performance management, recruitment and onboarding. His HR team is made of highly trained and experienced individuals in all HR areas especially recruitment and onboarding.

37. The following table outlines how the school will manage its non-academic services:

Services	Provider	Responsible School Staff
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Transportation	School expects to outsource with a professional transportation company. Contact will have specific provisions for supporting special populations in accordance with student IEPs and applicable laws	Local Operations Manager under the oversight of the network COO, with the support of special populations staff as needed to ensure compliance and student-specific supports
Food Services	School expects to outsource with a professional food service company.	Local Food service manager, under the oversight of the COO
Facilities	School-based staff (custodial, maintenance)	Local Facility Manager under the oversight of the COO
Purchasing Services	School-based Office Managers	Chief Financial Officer/Business Manager
Student Records	School-based Staff	Local Registrars, under the oversight of the CAO
School Safety	School-based Staff in cooperation with local law enforcement	Coordinated between the COO and CAO

Student Enrollment and Recruitment

38. The elementary school will utilize social media (Facebook, Twitter, Google Ads, and more) to share our school's mission and goals, grade levels served, and education philosophy. We will also use billboards, yard signs, and handout fliers in grocery stores, convenience stores, hair salons, Boys and Girls Clubs, and churches to garner interest and support. We will reach out to Pre-K centers to connect with rising kindergarten students. In addition, we will engage our current parents and students attending GEO Prep and GEO Mid-City in EBR to help spread the word about the elementary school opening.

The marketing process has already started with parent and community meetings held this year, but will begin in earnest once (and if) approved in early 2025. The months of January, February and March of 2025 will be used to market and recruit students and to help families complete applications and enrollment forms.

These strategies are designed to address common barriers to enrollment in high-quality schools. By using multiple outreach methods, we reduce barriers related to lack of information and awareness about new school options. By placing materials in grocery stores, salons, churches, and community centers, we reach families where they naturally gather, addressing the barrier of limited access to traditional marketing channels. Social media and digital ads ensure we connect with families who

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may have transportation or scheduling constraints that limit in-person engagement. Direct outreach to Pre-K centers supports families in navigating the transition to kindergarten, addressing the barrier of uncertainty about enrollment processes for young children. Finally, leveraging current GEO families as ambassadors addresses the barrier of trust, ensuring prospective families hear directly from peers about the school's quality and impact.

Applications and Admissions: Families can submit applications either online or in person and can submit all information in whatever language is most accessible to them. A registrar reviews all applications for eligibility, ensuring that they are of the correct age for the grades served by the school, before making (1) a phone call to the family notifying them of their admission and (2) sending a letter and enrollment packet to the family with all information about beginning of school year logistics.

Mitigating Barriers: We will provide both an online enrollment form process, as well as an in-person enrollment form process, for those without computers. We will also have staff available to sit with families needing assistance completing their applications and collecting necessary forms. All forms and meetings related to enrollment will be available in multiple languages, available online, and available in paper copy to ensure maximum accessibility.

Lottery: If the school receives applications from more students than they can enroll, the school will conduct an open, public lottery in accordance with the requirements of Louisiana Revised Statute §17:3991(C) and 20 U.S.C. §7221i(1)(H)(i). Lotteries will be public, randomized, and non-discriminatory.

In accordance with LA.§R.S. 17:3991, GEO Academies will provide lottery preference to the following applicants: (1) Students who are currently enrolled at the school/in the network will receive an automatic seat in their grade for the coming school year; (2) Siblings of current school students; and (3) the children of GEO Academies employees or contracted employees of the school.

A lottery will be held in late March if necessary. The date of the lottery will be determined by the Board. The lottery will be held in public, and student names will be anonymous and have only the student applicant number on the slips of paper in the lottery machine. Numbers will be provided to the parents of the students and the numbers will be called out live, in public, for transparency. After the lottery, it will be a first come, first served enrollment process. If needed, the lottery will be directed by a local accounting firm. The school will use the PowerSchool student management system to manage our enrollment and waitlists. Registrars oversee the lottery, waitlist, and Powerschool Student Information System.

Financial Plan

39. GEO North Baton Rouge Elementary will apply for the Charter School Program grant. Since the grant is not in alignment with conservative budgeting practices, this funding is not included in the budget.

40. Although we unfortunately do have some experience with having to evaluate what is “mission-critical,” we are proud to say we have done so successfully, and never at the expense of student learning. If we are under-enrolled, our first financial priority is clear: the classroom. To remain in good financial standing, GEO Academies will make administrative and operational cuts first to reduce overhead without harming our instructional capacity. If a gap remains, the CMO can make a no-interest loan to the school(s) that the school(s) can pay back over the next few years, as they are able. We would apply the same principles to any budget shortfall in the future: the learning environment is the absolute priority.

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41. GEO Academies has also been preparing to take the next steps towards scaling up by adding additional resources in both the centrally-located “back office” team and the Greater Baton Rouge operational staff. Financial and operational staff has already been added at the central office level, and this new staffing has contributed to streamlining operational and accounting processes that will support the addition of new sites. One additional accounting team member has been added to support these initiatives, and it is anticipated that one more accounting position—a controller or bookkeeper—situated at the local level to support school staff, will be needed once the schools are open.

Chief Financial Officer/Business Manager: The CMO’s Financial Management team is led by CFO Kathy Pitts. Kathy was the former Chief Accounting Officer with GEO and has now assumed the role of CFO. Kathy earned a BS in Accounting from Butler University and holds a CPA license in Indiana.

Director of Finance and Accounting: Kathy’s accounting team is led by Director of Finance and Accounting, Kelly Forbes. Kelly is an accomplished accounting professional with a wide range of financial experience in public, private, and charter schools. In her role, Kelly works closely with the regional academic team and the national team to ensure the school’s academic priorities are reflected in the budget. This experienced team is responsible for all of GEO’s schools—including our flagship Louisiana schools—receiving clean audits and high marks for excellence from the Louisiana Department of Education year after year.

Internal Controls and Procedures: GEO Louisiana maintains robust internal controls consistent with BESE Bulletin 126 and Louisiana charter law. Duties are segregated so that no single individual authorizes, processes, and reconciles transactions. For example, monthly bank reconciliations are prepared by the finance team, reviewed by the CFO, and verified by the board Finance Committee chair. Expenditures above board-set thresholds require dual approval, and all contracts and major purchases receive both administrative and board authorization. These safeguards, together with independent annual audits and clear delineation of responsibilities between the CMO and governing board, ensure fiscal integrity, transparency, and compliance. The Board and the Administrative management team use a combination of internal and external controls to balance and ensure that all dollars are properly accounted for, from planning and budgeting through spending and tracking, purchasing and payroll, all the way through to final audit.

The process begins with planning and design of the budget based on the needs of the school, done in collaboration with the Board finance committee, the school Business Officer, and the academic leadership. The stakeholders design with careful adherence towards the Louisiana law and policies such as 70% of general fund dollars being invested in instructional costs, approval of the budget being done by the Board and submitted to the state prior to July 31, and fund balance and debt-asset ratio requirements under the Charter Performance Compact.

Once approved by the Board prior to the start of the school year, the budget is monitored monthly by the Business Officer and is presented to the Board and finance committee for review and approval on a quarterly basis, at a minimum, or more often as needed. The budget is also reviewed and possibly revised in October after “count day,” if needed.

During the year, the Business Officer (who holds an MBA) works with the Chief Accounting Officer (a CPA) to track and report on all expenses. All the internal and external policies and processes have been reviewed and vetted over the last six years by Crowe, Inc., a Louisiana-based audit firm approved by the Board, and have been found by both Crowe and by the LDOE to be “excellent” and “no findings” for each of the applicants Louisiana schools. At this time, each of the applicant’s schools are in strong fiscal health and continue to meet all fiscal requirements under the Louisiana Charter Performance Compact.

GEO North Baton Rouge Elementary (K-5)

Appropriate segregation of financial duties is critical not only to prevent fraud and misuse of funds, but it also preserves appropriate designation of fiscal responsibility as required by law. GEO Academies distributes financial leadership across the CMO and its schools using the roles outlined below:

Financial Leadership Role	
Board of Directors	The Board of Directors retains all authority and responsibility over the budget and the public funds. While the day-to-day management of the funds is delegated to a business manager, that manager is always still subject to Board oversight. Financial statements are presented to the finance committee and/or the Board of Directors on a quarterly basis, at a minimum.
CFO/ Business Manager	The CFO/Business Manager drafts the budget in conjunction with the school leader, so that it meets the academic needs of the school in a fiscally and legislatively appropriate manner. It is presented to the Board finance committee for review, and upon their recommendation, is taken to the Board for final approval. The CFO/Business Manager also reviews and approves all requests for expenditures from the school level, in accordance with properly submitted purchase order requests or vendor contracts. All expenses are reviewed against the Board-approved budget prior to approval.
Office Manager	All expenditures are requested from the school level by the Office Manager through a purchase order system, which is approved by the business manager in accordance with the approved budget. Hiring and payroll expenditures are also done according to the approved budget as well. Once items arrive at the school, they are checked in and validated by the school office manager through three-way match, and submitted to accounts payable for payment.
Chief Accounting Officer	The Chief Accounting Officer supervises the accounting team that maintains the general journal, accounts payable, cash management, bank reconciliations, preparation of all financial statements, as well as audit and tax preparation.
Human Resources Department	Payroll is prepared and verified through the human resources department, and then double checked for accuracy and approved for payment through the accounting team.
Independent Auditing Team	The full accounting, financial process system, and internal controls are reviewed and audited by an independent auditing firm on an annual basis, and have been found to be “Excellent” (No Weaknesses) every year.

The first fiscal duty is held at the Board level. After approval, final payment is then approved by the accounting manager. Bank statements are reviewed and reconciled monthly. No one with access to the general ledger can access bank accounts, and those who can access bank accounts have no access to the general ledger.

The finance team uses budget and finance templates that are formatted to the Louisiana Accounting and Uniform Governmental Handbook and strictly match the Annual Financial Report (AFR) template in regard to Revenue, Object, and Function codes. All expenses must be approved by the Business Manager through the Purchase Order system, in accordance with the Board-approved budget.

GEO North Baton Rouge Elementary (K-5)

See Appendix &: Individual Financial Manager Resume for more detail.

42. Not Applicable as the organization is meeting all financial requirements for expansion.

43. a, b. The process begins with planning and design of the budget based on the needs of the school, done in collaboration with the Board finance committee, the school Business Officer, and the academic leadership. The stakeholders design with careful adherence towards the Louisiana law and policies such as 70% of general fund dollars being invested in instructional costs, approval of the budget being done by the Board and submitted to the state prior to July 31, and fund balance and debt-asset ratio requirements under the Charter Performance Compact.

Once approved by the Board prior to the start of the school year, the budget is monitored on a monthly basis by the Business Manager and is presented to the Board and finance committee for review and approval on a quarterly basis, at a minimum, or more often as needed. The budget is also reviewed and possibly revised in October after “count day,” if needed. See annual budgeting process steps below:

- In spring, the Business Manager (BM) reviews all available funding sources, and meets with school leader to determine needs for the upcoming school year.
- BM drafts a balanced budget in accordance with Louisiana Accounting Uniform Governmental Handbook requirements, focusing on state requirements such as instructional resources (70%), fund balance (6%), and state and federal grant availability and guidelines.
- Draft budget is presented for review to the Board Finance Committee (FC).
- After FC review and approval, the draft budget is presented to the full Board for review and approval, prior to June 30.
- School leader may hire staff with approval from BM in accordance with the established budget.
- School staff (Office Manager) submit requests for purchases through the PO system for approval from BM in accordance with the established budget.
- All expenses are tracked through an audit-approved accounting system.
- Financial statements are presented to the Finance Committee and to the Board on a quarterly basis, at a minimum.
- Variances from the budget are reviewed by the Finance Committee and Board.
- Significant purchases outside of the traditional, annual budgeting process (i.e., building financing) are driven by the Board, with BM manager executing as directed.

See Appendix 8: Insurance Coverage for more detail.

Corporate Partnerships Addendum (If Applicable): Not applicable. GEO North Baton Rouge Upper School does not intend to have a corporate partnership.

Educational Services Provider Addendum (If Applicable): Not applicable.

Virtual Operator Addendum (If Applicable): Not applicable.

Appendix 1: Evidence of Community Support

GEO Schools



To whom it may concern,

New Schools for Baton Rouge writes to express our support for the prospect of the GEO Foundation partnering with local educators and leaders to serve additional students in Baton Rouge. We have closely followed the progress of the current schools operated by GEO and believe that they have the mindsets, systems, and capacity to play a greater role in meeting the educational needs of Baton Rouge families and students.

We are particularly impressed by the academic growth and achievement seen year after year at GEO Prep Academy of Greater Baton Rouge, GEO Prep Mid-City of Greater Baton Rouge, and GEO Next Generation High School. They consistently serve a student population with more than 90% Economically Disadvantaged students, and perform strongly compared to schools with similar populations both within East Baton Rouge Parish and statewide.

We are excited about GEO's potential to continue to enrich our educational landscape and provide students with unparalleled opportunities. The proposed school represents a critical step in providing excellent choices to all Baton Rouge families and fostering a new generation of civic leaders.

We look forward to engaging GEO leadership in our grantmaking process over the course of the fall, and determining the financial resources that we are able to bring to bear on this exciting possibility. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me for additional information or a conversation.

Thank you,

Dr. Noemi Donoso, CEO
New Schools for Baton Rouge

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Noemi Donoso". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.



201 Community College Drive Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70806

October 16, 2024

On behalf of Baton Rouge Community College (BRCC), I am writing to express our enthusiastic support for the charter application submitted by GEO Academies. BRCC is proud to partner with GEO Academies in the Early College program, which provides students with the invaluable opportunity to earn college credits while still in high school. This partnership has proven to be a powerful tool for advancing educational equity and ensuring that more students have access to the opportunities they need to succeed in higher education and beyond.

Through our collaboration, GEO students are able to take college-level courses on BRCC's campus, gaining not only academic credits but also the confidence and experience necessary to transition seamlessly into post-secondary education. This innovative approach to education is already making a significant difference in the lives of students, many of whom are the first in their families to pursue college education. The Early College program equips students with the skills and knowledge they need to excel, while also reducing the financial burden of higher education by allowing them to earn credits at no cost.

We have witnessed the positive impact this program has on students and their families. GEO Academies' dedication to academic rigor, personalized learning, and real-world preparation aligns perfectly with BRCC's mission to provide accessible, high-quality education to the Baton Rouge community. The approval of GEO's charter application would allow even more students to benefit from this unique model, opening doors to higher education and meaningful career pathways for those who might otherwise face significant barriers.

As Baton Rouge continues to grow and evolve, GEO Academies' charter will represent a critical step in addressing the educational needs of our diverse population. We are confident that with increased opportunities for students to participate in programs like Early College, we will see even greater success in preparing our students for the future.

BRCC fully supports GEO Academies' charter application, and we look forward to continuing our partnership to provide transformative educational experiences for the students of Baton Rouge.

Thank you for your consideration and support of this important initiative.

Sincerely,

Willie E. Smith, Sr., Ed.D.
Chancellor

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to express my strong support for GEO Prep Academy and the vital role it plays in our community. As the Chief Deputy for the East Baton Rouge Clerk of Court, I have witnessed firsthand the significant impact that quality education has on the lives of our youth and the broader community. It was our pleasure early on to work with this fine organization in offering our Kids ID Program during some of their events.

GEO Prep Academy has continuously shown that it is dedicated to both character development and academic performance. In addition to preparing children for academic achievement, its cutting-edge approach to education instills vital life skills that will benefit them well into adulthood. Students' personal development and sense of belonging are fostered by the emphasis on a caring and inclusive atmosphere.

Furthermore, it is admirable that the institution is making an effort to involve the community and families. GEO Prep Academy guarantees that kids receive the assistance they require to succeed in and out of the classroom by forming solid alliances with parents and neighborhood organizations.

The ongoing efforts of the GEO Prep team to give our young people high-quality instruction and support are appreciated and I am proud to have witnessed their growth in outreach, impact and vision over the last several years. I firmly believe in GEO Prep Academy and look forward to watch how it continues to influence our community.

Sincerely,

Fred Sliman
Chief Deputy
East Baton Rouge Clerk of Court

October 22, 2024

TO: GEO Prep Academy Support Committee
FROM: Shandon M. S. Archie, Proud Parent
RE: Letter of Support

To Whom It May Concern,

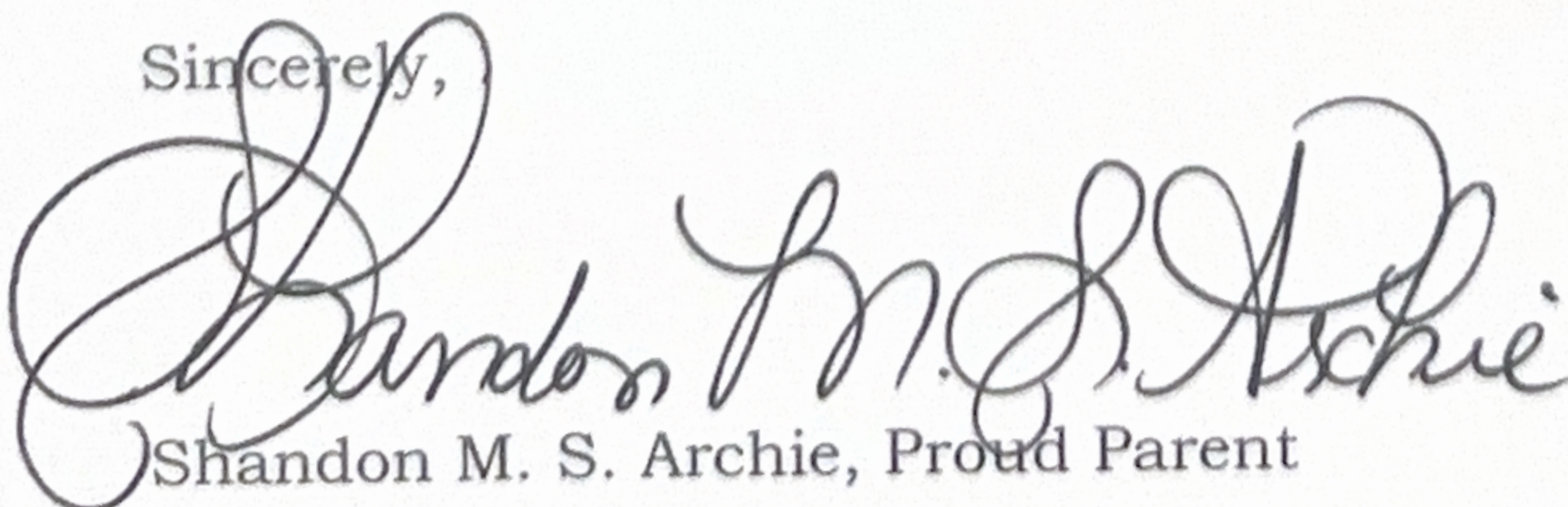
I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for GEO Prep Academy and to share my perspective as a parent, Shandon M. S. Archie, on the incredible impact this institution has had on my child's education.

From the moment I enrolled Huellon, it was clear that GEO Prep Academy prioritizes academic excellence and holistic development. The dedicated educators foster an environment where students are encouraged to think critically, collaborate effectively, and embrace a love for learning. My child has thrived in the supportive setting, gaining confidence and skills that will serve him well in his academic journey.

One of the standout features of GEO Prep is its commitment to inclusivity and community. The school emphasizes not only academic achievement but also social and emotional growth. My child had formed meaningful connections with peers and staff, cultivating friendships that extend beyond the classroom. This sense of belonging has positively influenced their self-esteem and motivation. The rigorous curriculum, combined with a focus on character development, prepares students for future challenges. Huellon has shown remarkable growth in both academic performance and personal responsibility. I truly believe that GEO Prep Academy is shaping them into a well-rounded individual ready to make a positive impact in the world.

In conclusion, I wholeheartedly recommend GEO Prep Academy as a place where students can excel academically while also developing important life skills. I am confident that any child not just my child who joins this community will receive an education that is both enriching and transformative. Thank you for considering my perspective.

Sincerely,



Shandon M. S. Archie, Proud Parent

shandonarchie@yahoo.com (or) (225) 424-3070

Heaven Bound Ministries
Pastor Brian Littles

Date: October 15, 2024

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my strong support for the expansion of GEO Academies in Baton Rouge. As a dedicated advocate for high-quality education and equitable opportunities for all students, I have seen firsthand the significant positive impact that GEO Academies have made in the communities they serve. The innovative approach GEO takes to educating and empowering students aligns closely with the needs and aspirations of families in Baton Rouge.

Baton Rouge is a city rich with potential, yet many students face obstacles that hinder their ability to thrive academically. GEO Academies' proven model of personalized learning, rigorous academic standards, and early college and career pathways provides an invaluable resource for underserved communities. The success of GEO schools in offering college credit to high school students and creating pathways to meaningful careers offers hope to students who may otherwise struggle to find such opportunities.

As Baton Rouge continues to grow, the need for more high-quality educational options becomes ever more critical. GEO's commitment to academic excellence, student-centered learning, and community engagement makes them a valuable partner in addressing this need. The expansion of GEO Academies will not only provide students with greater access to high-caliber education but also foster a culture of achievement that will benefit the entire city.

I have no doubt that an expanded presence of GEO Academies in Baton Rouge would greatly contribute to the academic success of our students and the long-term vitality of our community. Therefore, I strongly urge the approval and support of GEO Academies' expansion in our city.

Thank you for your consideration of this important issue. I look forward to seeing the continued success and growth of GEO Academies in Baton Rouge.

Sincerely,

BK Littles



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

10/22/2024

I am writing on behalf of the YMCA of the Capital Area to express our strong support for GEO Academies' charter application for the establishment of GEO Prep Academy in Baton Rouge. As an organization dedicated to youth development and community strengthening, we recognize the critical need for high-quality public-school options that meet the diverse needs of families.

GEO Prep Academy's mission to provide innovative, college-preparatory education aligns perfectly with our commitment to fostering academic achievement, character development, and lifelong learning opportunities. With over a decade of experience in education and community engagement, I have seen firsthand the transformative impact that dedicated educational models can have, particularly for students from historically underserved communities.

The GEO Academies model employs a student-centered and content-rich approach, focusing on closing achievement gaps from an early age. By providing a personalized and competency-based education, GEO Prep Academy prepares students for high school by the summer before 9th grade, ultimately setting them on a path toward college readiness. This proactive approach is essential for fostering academic success and social mobility.

The families we serve at the YMCA depend on public schools that meet their children's diverse needs and deserve meaningful choices in selecting the best educational paths. GEO Academies has a proven track record of success in creating environments where students are challenged, supported, and prepared for college and future careers. Programming like the Early College initiative empowers students to earn college credits while still in high school, an invaluable opportunity for families seeking a brighter future.

At the YMCA, we believe strong communities are built on the foundation of strong families, starting with access to quality education. GEO Academies' commitment to providing real-world experiences, academic rigor, and career readiness complements our mission of supporting youth development. Together, our organizations share the common goal of helping young people reach their full potential, regardless of their background.

Approving GEO Academies' charter application will provide Baton Rouge families with additional high-quality school options, ensuring equity and access to the education all students deserve. We strongly endorse this application and look forward to the positive impact that GEO Prep Academy will have on our community.

Thank you for considering this vital opportunity for our youth and families.

Sincerely,

Jeremey Miller
Executive Director

YMCA of the Capital Area

8704 Jefferson Hwy., Ste. B., Baton Rouge, LA 70809
P 225 295 6680 W ymcabr.org

Appendix 2: Draft School Model Master Plan

GEO Schools

Appendix 2: Draft School Model Master Plan

Positive Behavior Support

In order to assure classroom management using positive behavioral supports and effective disciplinary tools, GEO will identify data-driven academic, career and technical, discipline/behavioral performance results in the School Improvement Plan (SIP). GEO will establish and use a school-based leadership team to meet on a regularly scheduled basis to review data and guide the positive behavior process. This leadership team shall, to the extent possible, include representatives of the school administration, both regular and special education teachers, parents, guidance counselors, and school bus operators. It may also include other groups, e.g., food services workers.

The leadership team will use a decision-making process utilizing a data-management system that allows graphical representation of discipline issues. Said data system will permit regular and efficient monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of the implementation of a schoolwide system of discipline. School data collection shall include, but not be limited to, average referrals per day per month, referrals by problem behavior, referrals by location, referrals by time, referrals by student, referrals by staff, individual student report by month and by year, and referrals by grade level. Environmental changes may be made as indicated by data. For instance, increased monitoring, schedule changes, or changes in recess structure may help to alleviate congestion or overcrowding at certain times during the day.

The team will uniformly use the two BESE-approved forms, i.e., “School Behavior Report Form” and “School Bus Behavior Report Form,” to report incidents of alleged discipline violations. The referral system will be utilized consistently and appropriately.

The leadership team will review and revise any Zero Tolerance Policy of GEO North Baton Rouge Elementary School to ensure that the policy is in compliance with R. S. 17:416.15; the policy does not violate R. S. 17:416 (H) which prohibits disciplinary action against any pupil reasonably acting in self-defense; and that inappropriate referrals are not made to agencies serving children.

The leadership team will review and revise its policies and procedures for handling suspensions and expulsions at GEO North Baton Rouge Elementary to ensure that suspension/expulsion policies are consistent with R. S. 17:416; suspension/expulsion policies are consistently and fairly executed; and alternative interventions, consistent with best theory and practice, to suspensions/expulsions are used including, but not be limited to, counseling, conflict resolution, social and family responsibility, peer mediation, and stress and/or anger management.

The leadership team will make referrals, as appropriate, to Alternative Education Programs that are designed to offer variations of traditional instructional programs, as well as strategies for the purpose of increasing the likelihood that students who are unmotivated or unsuccessful in traditional programs, or are disruptive in the traditional school environment, remain in and be successful in school.

The leadership team will review the current Code of Student Conduct of GEO North Baton Rouge Elementary to assure that it is in compliance with R.S.17:416.12, R.S. 17:416.13 and Section 4114 of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). They will refine consequences to create a reward/incentives program for positive student and teacher behavior and ensure the delivery of

GEO Schools

consistent reinforcement. The team will define consequences for rule violations that are clear, reasonable, and consistently enforced and which support maximum time in instruction.

The leadership team will monitor, evaluate and modify the school master plan, as needed, throughout the school year.

GEO adopts the following clearly defined behavioral expectations in these five (can be less) basic rules.

1. **Be kind:** Be kind to others and encourage them
2. **Be responsible:** Accept responsibility and work hard
3. **Be respectful:** Respect others, their property, and yourself
4. **Be a scholar:** Ask questions, help other, focus in class, be goal oriented

These rules shall be posted in prominent places around the school site, e.g., hallways, cafeterias, gymnasiums, and classrooms. These rules shall be provided to parents and shall be known by all students and school staff.

Each teacher at GEO shall develop lesson plans and teach expectations across each school setting by providing direct instruction on expected behaviors at the beginning of the school year and reinforced throughout the year for all students.

GEO shall design programs for students with special needs so that the students are challenged and engaged in school curriculum, and are appropriately placed so they remain in school rather than being suspended/expelled or becoming drop-outs.

The principal of GEO shall submit annual reports to the district's Discipline Policy Review Committee.

Safe School Planning

GEO has established and shall maintain grade-appropriate programs of alcohol, drug and substance prevention, education, information and counseling as provided in R.S. 17:404.

GEO has established a plan, in accordance with Sec. 4114, of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, for keeping the school safe and drug-free that includes appropriate and effective school discipline policies that prohibit disorderly conduct, the illegal possession of weapons, and the illegal use, possession, distribution, and sale of tobacco, alcohol, and/or other drugs; has established security procedures at school and while students are on the way to and from school; has established prevention activities that are designed to create and maintain safe, disciplined, and drug-free environments; has established a crisis management plan for responding to violent or traumatic incidents on school grounds; and has established a Code of Student Conduct (and as also required by R.S. 17:416.12 and R.S. 17:416.13) for all students that clearly states the responsibilities of students, teachers, and administrators in maintaining a classroom environment that allows a teacher to communicate effectively with all students in the class; allows all students in the class to learn; allows all students and school employees to be treated respectfully; has consequences that are fair and developmentally appropriate; considers the student and the circumstances of the situation; and, is enforced accordingly.

GEO Schools

Parental and Community Involvement

GEO is committed to parental involvement and family strengthening. As set forth in R. S. 17:406.1, effective approaches to involving families more fully as partners in the process of their children's learning require the participation and coordination of numerous state and local, public and private agencies shall be encouraged. GEO North Baton Rouge Elementary shall seek to make connections through a variety of local and culturally sensitive methods to facilitate parents/family members/access to local/regional family strengthening programs available in the community. (Programs can be specifically identified, as applicable, e.g., Families Helping Families, Regional Family Resource centers, Parent Information Resource Center, Families In Need of Services [FINs] programs and other family strengthening programs exhibiting peer to peer support systems and positive mental health initiatives).

GEO shall seek training to facilitate mutual understanding of research-based practices promoting positive relationships between parents, LEA personnel and community service providers.

GEO shall seek to identify the mental health needs of its students and match those needs with available local resources including public, nonpublic and/or volunteer organizations. Pending inclusion of mental health services in the Medicaid Health Services Program (School-Based), the availability of mental health services will be expanded in GEO North Baton Rouge Elementary.

Inter-Agency Cooperation

GEO shall seek to improve communication, coordination and collaboration between schools and agencies serving children; shall foster cooperation regarding the sharing of data about children, youth and families involved agencies serving children; and shall work in cooperation with other schools/districts/communities/regional planning boards to facilitate the successful re-entry and transition of youth formerly in state custody into their diverse school/community settings in order to encourage the continuation of education and their access to other needed services in order to prevent recidivism.

Student Records

GEO shall provide for the transfer of student education records upon written request of any authorized person on behalf of an education facility operated within any correctional or health facility or, for children in the custody of the state, an education facility operated within any other state approved facility, whether within or outside the state of Louisiana, where such student has become enrolled or is seeking enrollment. The transfer of such records, whether by mail or otherwise, shall occur not later than 10 business days from the date of receipt of the written request. If the student has been expelled, the transferred records shall include the dates of the expulsion and the reason(s) for which the student was expelled.

No education record of any student may be withheld as the result of lack of payment of any fine, debt, or other outstanding obligation.

A student or his or her parent(s) may inspect the education record of that in accordance with the federal Family Education Rights and Privacy Act.

GEO Schools

Any student seeking admission to GEO who has been suspended or expelled from any public or nonpublic school within or outside the state of Louisiana shall provide information on the dates of any suspensions or expulsions and the reason or reasons for which the student was suspended or expelled.

Visiting Teacher/ Child Welfare and Attendance Supervisor/Families in Need of Services (FINS) Officer

It is the duty of all staff at GEO to cooperate fully with the visiting teachers, or supervisors of child welfare and attendance. GEO shall make available to visiting teachers, or supervisors of child welfare and attendance, FINS officers, and Truancy Assessment and Service Centers such information as will assist them in promoting the regular attendance and school adjustment of these children.

Visiting teachers, or supervisors of child welfare and attendance (pursuant to R. S. 17:235), and FINS officers, shall cooperate fully with the state departments of social services, labor, and health and hospitals, and with other state and local agencies, including interchange of confidential and privileged information; cooperate fully with juvenile and family court authorities, training and correctional schools, law enforcement officers; and make such referrals and conduct such investigations as seem necessary for the enforcement of school attendance laws, including interchange of confidential and privileged information.

Statements of compliance

Each homeroom teacher of students in grades 4-12 shall, on the first day of school each school year, provide information to and answer any questions from students relative to the statement of compliance as provided by GEO School Board.

Each parent/guardian of each student in grades 4-12 shall sign a statement of compliance committing to do all of the following: ensure that his child attends school daily, except for school absences; ensure that his child arrives at school on time each day; ensure that his child completes all required homework assignments; and attend all required parent and teacher or parent and principal conferences.

Signatures:

_____ Principal	_____ Leadership Team Member
_____ Leadership Team Member	_____ Leadership Team Member
_____ Leadership Team Member	_____ Leadership Team Member
_____ Leadership Team Member	_____ Leadership Team Member

Appendix 3: Draft Grievance Policy

GEO School

GEO Academies School Grievance Policy

GEO Academies are public charter schools, and as such, supports the voluntary and professional resolution of any conflicts that may arise between students, staff, parents, or other related parties in order to foster a positive and healthy environment for learning for all.

The Board of Directors of the school recognizes that, unfortunately, however, some issues require additional assistance in order to reach a satisfactory resolution for all concerned. Therefore, in order to support all parties involved, the Board hereby establishes the following Conflict Resolution Policies:

1. One-On-One Resolution

Each issue should first be addressed between those directly involved. Should a student, parent, or staff member fail to begin the process at the lowest level, and instead attempt to go directly to the Head of School, to GEO Academies, or to a Board Member, that person at the higher level shall direct the complainant back to the affected person at the appropriate level in the process. Students may ask for the assistance of a teacher in mediating their discussion.

2. Head of School Resolution

If an appropriate resolution is not reached with direct conversation between the conflicted parties, it may be brought to the attention of the Head of School, in writing, for further discussion. The Head of School will bring all affected parties together within 48 hours (when possible), and will facilitate communication and develop a plan for conflict resolution.

Parents and staff members should expect that all legal rules regarding student and employee privacy and safety will be respected and followed, for the protection of their children and others.

Should the issue concern the Head of School, this step may be skipped, and a parent or staff member may directly contact the school superintendent, Kevin Teasley, at GEO Academies, at kteasley@geoacademies.org. At this stage, all concerns regarding the Head of School shall be communicated in writing so the Superintendent may investigate thoroughly.

The written concern should include following information:

1. Describe the incident, decision, or practice that gave rise to the concern;
2. Cite the contract, policy, or procedure that has been violated and/or rationale for concern;
3. Describe what conflict resolution strategies were attempted in prior steps; and
4. Explain what corrective action is being requested

3. Superintendent/Board of Directors

If no resolution is reached at the school level, parties may put their concerns in writing (following the steps outlined above) and contact the School Superintendent, Kevin Teasley at kteasley@geoacademies.org. The Superintendent will investigate the issue with all parties

involved using the information provided, and will facilitate a resolution within 7 days (where possible).

If a resolution is still not reached to all parties' satisfaction, a written complaint may be sent to the Board of Directors at the school's address. The written complaint shall contain the information above, as well as additional information from the resolution session with the School Superintendent.

The Board President, or designee, shall review the grievance, and shall ensure that all steps have been followed before adding the complaint to the Board agenda. While any member of the public is always welcome to speak in an open meeting, no formal complaint shall be addressed by the Board without it first having followed these proper procedures. Issues of employee or student privacy may be addressed in Executive Session, as is legally proper.

The board, in regular or executive session, shall review any conflict(s) brought before it as requested and as permitted by law. The board shall do one or all of the following:

- a. Remand the conflict back to the Head of School or Superintendent, with a directive to find a reasonable and quick resolution.
- b. Remand the conflict back to the two parties, with the Head of School or Superintendent mediating the conflict.
- c. Mediate the conflict and render a decision to resolve the conflict.

All decisions of the Board of Directors shall be final.

4. Exceptions

- a. Criminal situations will be referred to the proper authorities.
- b. Issues of suspension and expulsion will be handled according to School Discipline Policy and relevant state law.

Appendix 4: Resumes for Proposed School Leadership Team

GEO School

ABOUT US

GEO Academies is a free public charter school. We are the top performing charter school in Baton Rouge. Our mission is that All Roads Lead to College. We offer an early college program, which allows our qualifying high school students to take real college courses for real college credit, free of charge to our students and their families. Our curriculum and teaching methods are designed using Core Knowledge, Project Lead the Way beginning in middle school, and a blended learning model in elementary school through high school. We are a TAP school! Apply if you are committed to excellence, mission driven, and ready to take GEO Academies to uncommonly high levels of achievement!

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:

- Education: Master's Degree from an accredited institution.
- Experience: Minimum of five years of successful teaching experience
- 2 years of leadership experience in a low-income, high-needs school
- License: Louisiana certification as an elementary school administrator.

ESSENTIAL POSITION FUNCTIONS:

The following duties are representative of performance expectations:

- Serve as the instructional leader of the building staff and articulate a clear and compelling vision founded in strong and sustainable student achievement outcomes.
- Manage personnel effectively through appropriate delegation, planning and evaluation. Fosters an environment where staff and faculty work cooperatively together and hold each other accountable to reach high levels of student achievement.
- Effectively evaluate teachers' classroom management, instructional practice, professional development pursuits, interpersonal and leadership skills, while identifying high- and low-effectiveness performers, and provide clear and actionable feedback, resources and support.
- Lead the improvement of student achievement by implementing the TAP Model for teacher observation and evaluation with high levels of fidelity.
- Provide ongoing professional development for staff, based on an analysis of feeder school / assigned building data, best practices and instructional research.
- Model and promote the continuous use of data to inform practice and drive decision making and instruction.
- Observe teaching methods and examine learning materials to evaluate and standardize curricula and teaching techniques, and to determine areas where improvement is needed.
- Manage school resources (fiscal, human capital, facilities and equipment, etc.) to support student achievement goals and in compliance with district policies. · Foster a positive school climate by assessing, planning, and communicating with the school community; promoting distributive leadership while demonstrating understanding of and respect and appreciation for cultural diversity.
- Promote a positive tone for collaborative school/community relations by articulating the mission, seeking community support, and fostering rapport with all stakeholders.
- Confer with parents and staff to discuss educational activities, policies, and student behavioral or learning problems.
- Recruit and maintain student population from year to year.
- Perform other administrative duties as assigned by the Associate Superintendent for GEO Academies in Baton Rouge.

Appendix 5: Resumes for Charter Board

GEO School

Erin Piper, LCSW, MPH

Baton Rouge, LA | [phone] | [email] | [LinkedIn]

Professional Summary

Licensed Clinical Social Worker and therapist with diverse professional experience spanning mental health services, education, nonprofit leadership, and corporate auditing. Proven ability to support individuals and families through counseling, crisis intervention, and community-based initiatives. Skilled in organizational leadership, program development, and financial and operational oversight. Dedicated to service, philanthropy, and community impact.

Licensure

Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW), Louisiana

Professional Experience

Owner & Therapist

Piper Psychotherapy Services – Baton Rouge, LA

- Provide individual and family therapy, specializing in evidence-based interventions.
- Manage private practice operations including scheduling, billing, and client services.
- Collaborate with local providers to ensure continuity of care and holistic treatment.

Social Worker

New Orleans Public School System – New Orleans, LA

- Delivered school-based counseling and social work services to students and families.
- Facilitated crisis intervention and developed individualized support plans.
- Partnered with teachers and administrators to integrate social-emotional supports.

Director, Mercy Community Hope Project

Mercy Family Center – New Orleans, LA

- Led community response initiatives following the BP Oil Spill.
- Managed programming, partnerships, and staff to deliver mental health and support services.
- Coordinated with nonprofits and government agencies to maximize impact.

Internal Auditor

PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) – New York, NY

- Conducted financial and operational audits for corporate clients.
- Evaluated internal controls and compliance with regulatory standards.
- Developed recommendations to strengthen financial operations.

Education

Master of Public Health and Master of Social Work – Tulane University, New Orleans, LA

Bachelor of Science in Accounting – Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA

Jeff Ready

Professional Summary

Serial entrepreneur and technology executive with a proven track record of founding, scaling, and leading innovative companies in enterprise technology. Skilled in fundraising, negotiation, marketing, product development, and strategic growth. Over 20 years of leadership experience, raising more than \$150 million in investment capital and driving multiple successful exits.

Professional Experience

Co-Founder & CEO

Scale Computing

- Lead vision, strategy, and growth of Scale Computing, a leader in hyperconverged infrastructure solutions.
- Guide fundraising and investor relations, securing major investment to drive global growth.
- Oversee operations, product innovation, and market expansion.

Vice President of Marketing

Tumbleweed Communications

- Directed marketing efforts following the acquisition of Corvigo.
- Oversaw brand integration, customer acquisition strategies, and corporate communications.

Co-Founder & CEO

Corvigo

- Founded Linux-based anti-spam appliance company.
- Raised investment capital and scaled company through growth to successful acquisition.
- Oversaw product development, operations, and investor engagement.

Co-Founder, COO & VP of Marketing

Radiate

- Co-founded and led operations and marketing strategy.
- Raised venture capital funding and managed partnerships to grow market share.

Education

Bachelor of Science in Computer Science – Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology

Tony Davis

Tony Davis is the National Director, FAME USA, where he has led the expansion that doubled the size of the Federation for Advanced Manufacturing Education to become a powerful network of more than 40 training programs across 16 states supported by more than 425 employers and boasting nearly 2,000 graduates. FAME USA is an initiative of The Manufacturing Institute, the education and workforce development partner of the National Association of Manufacturers (The NAM). Tony leads a team of professionals with an emphasis on continuous improvement, providing support for existing FAME chapters and developing new chapters around the country. Tony regularly speaks on talent attraction, talent development, career pathways, apprenticeship models and general workforce issues.

Before joining The Manufacturing Institute, Tony led a local economic development organization in central Louisiana. In that role, he led various development initiatives with an emphasis on workforce solutions. He was instrumental in starting GeauxFAME, the first independent chapter of FAME USA, and worked closely with K12, community college, and university partners on various projects. Prior to that role, Tony served as President of the local Chamber of Commerce for eight years. During that time, Tony partnered closely with the state chamber and the US Chamber on various initiatives, including piloting early childhood education programs and sharing that experience with communities across the country; additionally, Tony led the development of the first young professionals' group in Natchitoches and the first leadership program for the area.

Tony was elected to two terms on the Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) and served as Vice President of the 11-member board that sets policy for early childhood and K-12 education. He was also Chair of the Administrative and Finance Committee for five years, a member of the Technology Task Force, and a member of the Early Childhood Advisory Task Force. He was a driving force behind the revamp of the JumpStart initiative (dubbed JumpStart 2.0) and a strong and vocal proponent of the importance of early childhood education initiatives and school choice to meet the needs of families across the state.

Tony is a native of Natchitoches, Louisiana, and a graduate of Northwestern State University. He has served on many boards, among them the Louisiana School for Math, Science, and the Arts (LSMSA), the Louisiana Association of Business and Industry (LABI), the Louisiana Industrial Development Executives Association (LIDEA), the Louisiana Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives (LACCE), and D.O.V.E.S. He is a 2013 graduate of Leadership Louisiana as well as a graduate of the US Chamber of Commerce Foundation (USCCF) Business Leads Elite fellowship.

Tony and his wife live in Fishers, Indiana with their son and daughter and golden retriever.

PROFILE

Veteran Professional with over 33 years of Law Enforcement expertise. Purposeful leader with excellent communication and people skills; a strong emphasis in Police Administration, Administrative Investigations, Human Relations, and Procedures Instruction. Proven history of success. Solid ability to assimilate new concepts to meet the demands of dynamic and diverse operational environments.

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

Police Department Administration		Supervising Internal Investigations		Policy Development
Knowledge of Law Enforcement		Budgets	Reporting	Finance
Interdepartmental Coordination		Community Planning		Communication
Conducting Background Checks		Analytics, Reporting & Forecasting		Patrol/Crime Prevention
Cultivating Business Relationships		Logistics Leadership		Public Speaking
Labor Relations	Media Relations	Search/Arrest Warrants		Interrogation
State & Federal Laws		Leadership		Random Alcohol Testing Certification
Staffing Development & Performance				PR/Presentations

PROFESSIONAL ATTRIBUTES

- Thorough working knowledge of Police Departments' organizational procedures, policies, functions, and operations of law enforcement
- Comprehensive experience reviewing investigate complaints of misconduct by police officers
- Extensive training in quickly making educated, safe decisions in dangerous environments
- Establishing budgets, procedures, and aggressive attainable goals for an organization
- Exhibits the highest degree of integrity, supported by a proven record of dedication

EXPERIENCE

June 2020 – Present, Executive Director for Capital Region Crime Stoppers

Provide day to day operations of the non-profit crime stoppers organization

June 2020 Retired from the Baton Rouge Police Department

January 2018 – June 2020, Deputy Chief of Police and Chief of Staff

Provide supervisory responsibility for the Administrative Staff of the Baton Rouge Police Department and all 698 sworn police officers and 97 civilian employees

- Supervised 698 sworn police officers and 97 civilian employees
- Developed and implemented policies and procedures, directed resources, handled budget, did media interviews, performed public relations at community events, instituted disciplinary actions. Etc.
- ❖ Assisted new Chief Murphy Paul in reaching his goals to reorganize and reform the Police Department
- ❖ Saw a 20% reduction in homicides and violent crime in 2018 and 2019 during my role.

July 2017 – January 2018 Interim Chief of Police (Appointed by Mayor Broome)

Provide overall supervisory responsibility for the Baton Rouge Police Department and all 698 sworn police officers and 97 civilian employees

- Supervised 698 sworn police officers and 97 civilian employees
- Developed and implemented policies and procedures, directed resources, handled budget, did media interviews, performed public relations at community events, instituted disciplinary actions. Etc..
- ❖ Guided the department through the transition of leadership.
- ❖ Saw a 10% reduction of homicides and violent crime during my interim role as chief.

EXPERIENCE (cont'd)

October 2014 – July 2017 Lieutenant/ Commander, Public Information Office

Provide overall supervisory responsibility for media releases and public information requests as well as doing media interviews and public relations work for the Baton Rouge Police Department.

- Supervise 2 Public Information Officers
- Develop and implement policies and procedures
- Perform security for the Baton Rouge Planning Commission and the City Council during meetings

Accomplishments

- ❖ Started the Police Departments Social Media Accounts which grew to over 80 thousand followers
- ❖ Established transparency and public trust through the 2016 protests after the Alton Sterling shooting and Natural Disaster (Flood of 2016)

Mar 2000 – Oct 2014 Lieutenant/ Commander, Internal Affairs Division

Provide overall supervisory responsibility for review and investigation of complaints of misconduct against all 789 sworn police personnel and 97 civilian personnel working for the Baton Rouge Police Department.

- Supervise 5 Internal Affairs Investigators and 1 civilian Secretary
- Develop and implement policies and procedures
- Perform security for the Baton Rouge Planning Commission and the City Council during meetings

Accomplishments

- ❖ Lead investigator on numerous high profile internal affairs investigations resulting in the termination of corrupt police officers
- ❖ Selected to attend FBI National Academy

1995 - 2020 Instructor, Baton Rouge Police Academy

Educate trainees on multiple subjects including burglary investigations, Internal Affairs, and Policy and Procedures.

Apr 1993 - Mar 2000 Burglary Detective

Coordinate follow up investigations of burglaries.

- Recover stolen property
- Performed special narcotics area patrols assisting with search warrants and other narcotics activities
- Submitted written reports containing charges, available facts, and evidence to authorize search warrant or wire tap

Accomplishments

- ❖ Lead detective on the apprehension of a prolific burglary ring responsible for targeting elderly citizens, stealing jewelry and silverware
- ❖ Effected thousands of felony arrests and recovered thousands of dollars in stolen property
- ❖ Recipient of numerous letters of commendation

Aug 1990 - Apr 1993 Uniform Patrol Officer

Performed a full range of police duties necessary to enforce local, state, and federal law.

Feb 1989 - Aug 1990 Police Cadet

Worked in the Crime Stoppers Division of the Police Department.

- Worked Tip-Line; obtained crime tips from concerned citizens, forwarded to appropriate division

EDUCATION

University of Virginia School of Continuing and Professional Studies, Quantico, VA 2014

Graduate Certificate in Criminal Justice

FBI National Academy Graduate, Quantico, Virginia 2015

University of Phoenix (Baton Rouge Campus), Baton Rouge, LA, 2002-2005

Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice Administration

References Available Upon Request

Kirk Moore Jr

4847 E Dacha Ln, Baton Rouge Louisiana, 70817|3046576580 | Kirk.Moore1@pepsico.com

Education

West Virginia University

Master of Science in Human Resources Management

Bachelor of Science in Sport and Exercise Psychology

Professional Experience

PEPSICO

Human Resources Manager

Mar 2024- present

- Provides full-cycle HRBP support across the Louisiana Market inclusive of all field functions; Delivery, Fleet, PES, Sales, Transport, Warehouse, etc. from Director level to Frontline associates consisting of 700 associates.
- Ensures strict adherence to all PepsiCo policies, as well as state and federal employment laws and regulations including FMLA, ADA, EEO and FLSA.
- Responsible for all AOP cost planning inclusive of labor, headcount, etc.
- Responsible for all campus recruiting and university relations.
- Mentors current HR Representatives and Interns.
- Presents all HR topics on weekly leadership call inclusive of staffing, recruiting, talent development, capability building, etc.
- Leads all change projects within the market inclusive of Kronos Workforce Management, location Geo-Launch, PGT (PepsiCo Global Template), etc.

PEPSICO

Human Resources Sr Representative

Jan 2023- Feb 2024

- Provided full-cycle HRBP support across the entire spectrum of the South Division Commercial functions inclusive of Commercial Strategy, Foodservice, Franchise, Retail, & Revenue Growth Management from the VP level to entry level consisting of over 450 associates.
- Ensured strict adherence to all PepsiCo policies, as well as state and federal employment laws and regulations including FMLA, ADA, EEO and FLSA.
- Designed and implemented effective staffing strategies including campus recruiting, MBA designate program, Returnship program, and Florida Direct Hire strategy.
- Demonstrated keen focus on execution by creating the plan to add headcount to specific locations to grow restaurant share. Recently given 1.5MM to add headcount and created a new role to drive net new restaurant business.
- Presented all HR topics on period townhalls staffing, recruiting, talent development, capability building, etc.
- Lead OHS Action Committee for Commercial SVP.
- Lead EAW activities for the division.

PEPSICO*Human Resources Representative*

Jan 2022- Dec 2022

- Provided full-cycle HRBP support to the Orlando Warehouse team consisting of over 300 associates.
- Supported PBNA SD GTM team from a division standpoint.
- Guided Supply Chain (SC) Operation leaders and employees regarding Company policies, values, HR programs (benefits, pay, and salary) administration. Ensured policies and procedures are handled consistently and in a timely manner.
- Played a key role with the leadership team with performance management efforts. Ensuring meticulous documentation for coaching, Disciplinary Action Reports (DARS), and other steps of progressive discipline as needed.
- Developed effective pipeline and succession plans by participating in People Planning at the local and division level.
- Designed and executed staffing strategies for exempt/non-exempt hiring needs including campus recruiting, facilitating hiring events, interviewing internal/external candidates, working with local recruiters (RVR Consulting Team) and partnering with Valencia College.
- Developed and execute site/division-level strategies to improve Organizational Health and culture.
- Successfully managed multiple projects with overlapping task, demonstrating the ability to work independently with minimal supervisions. Notable projects include, AMP'D, ALDP, and a CIA Migration.
- Pioneered frontline supervisor training, "Soda Shop Talks."

PEPSICO*Human Resources Intern*

May 2021 to Aug 2021

- Provided valuable guidance to PepsiCo Unit Leaders and Commercial Team Leaders regarding Change Management and Organizational Effectiveness.
- Managed multiple projects inclusive of The PepsiCo Way Action team, Alternative Work Schedules Action team, Simplifying the Agenda Governance Committee, Holistic VP Onboarding support of New Leader Integrations.
- Accurately diagnosed organization issues, developed solutions, and implemented action plans.
- Led execution of division wide surveys to gather and analyze data from multiple functions including: EHS, Finance, HR, Sales, and Foodservice.

STEPHANIE M. GOUDEAU

4311 DeLee Lane, Ethel, LA 70730 | (225) 719-0838 | smgoudeau@gmail.com

EDUCATION

Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA

Ph.D. in Kinesiology

2015

Concentration: Pedagogy and Psychological Science

Dissertation: Principal Motives of Positive Youth-Adult Relationships: A Model for Identifying the Motives of Adult Volunteers and Youth-Adult Relationships in Physical Activity-Based Youth Development Programs

Emporia State University, Emporia, KS

M.S. in Health, Physical Education, and Recreation

2010

Thesis: The Impact of Physical Activity on Cognitive Functioning

Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA

B.S. in Kinesiology

2007

Concentration: K-12 Health and Physical Education

Honors Thesis: The Relationship Between Waist Size and Cholesterol

PROFESSIONAL TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Slaughter Community Charter School

Director

February 2021-Present

Manage daily school operations, budget, and assume lead role in curriculum and oversight of all teachers and staff on campus. Current school enrollment of 365 students in grades seven through twelve and 40 faculty/staff members.

Slaughter Community Charter School

ESS Coordinator/7th Grade Math/Health/Physical Education Teacher

2014-2021

Developed lessons plans and course curriculum for a high school health course and physical education for grades seven through eleven. Beginning August 2015, began teaching and implementing course curriculum for seventh grade math. Effective August 2016 served as the 504 Chairperson and IEP Teacher of Record; conducted meetings, completed paperwork, and serviced students with small group accommodations and in-class support for over 70 students throughout the school year.

Louisiana State University

Graduate Assistant at LSU

2011-2014

Developed syllabus and overall course structure, and administered all grades in KIN 1801 (Movement Fundamentals in Physical Activity), KIN 2577 (Elementary Physical Education), KIN 4511 (Techniques and Methods of Teaching Physical Education), KIN 4516 (Curriculum and Instruction in Physical Education). Assisted in teaching, grading, and mentoring students in KIN 2501 (Philosophy of Kinesiology) and KIN 3609 (Health Methods).

Louisiana State University

Recovery School District, Greensburg, LA

Health/Physical Education Teacher

2010-2011

Heath and physical education curriculum development and lesson planning with PowerPoint presentations and literacy guided notes for grades five through eight.

Appomattox County Public Schools, Appomattox, VA

Health/Physical Education Teacher

2007-2009

Heath and physical education curriculum development and lesson planning with PowerPoint presentations and literacy guided notes for grades six through eight. Introduced new curriculum for bike safety, dance, and gymnastics units.

RELATED EXPERIENCE

East Feliciana Parish Schools, Clinton, LA

Safe and Drug Free Schools Coordinator

2009 – 2010

Coordinated and promoted drug-free activities for seven schools in district and counseled students with behavior and substance abuse infractions. Implemented bully awareness for schools and community, hosted bully and media safety education for parents.

21st Century Community Learning Center, Slaughter, LA

Monday/After School Teacher

2009 – 2010

Tutor, reading coach, lesson reinforcement, and standardized text practice for kindergarten and fourth grade students.

Appendix 6: Charter Board Governing Bylaws

GEO School

BYLAWS

OF

GEO ACADEMIES LOUISIANA A Domestic Nonprofit Corporation

1. PRINCIPAL AND REGISTERED OFFICES

1.1 Principal Office. The principal office of GEO Academies Louisiana (hereinafter referred to as the "Corporation"), shall be located at _____ or at such place in the State of Louisiana as the Board of Directors shall from time to time designate.

1.2 Registered Office. The registered office of the Corporation shall be located at _____, or at such other place in Louisiana, as the Board of Directors may from time to time designate. The Corporation shall have and shall continuously maintain in Louisiana, a registered office at such place as may be designated by the Board of Directors.

2. BOARD OF DIRECTORS

2.1 Powers of Board. The affairs of the Corporation shall be managed by the Board of Directors.

2.2 Number of Directors. The number of directors of the Corporation shall be a minimum of three (3) and a maximum of fifteen (15). The number of directors shall be the number elected from time to time by the Members; provided, however, such number shall never be less than three (3). No decrease in the number of directors shall have the effect of shortening the term of any incumbent director. Notwithstanding the preceding sentence, at anytime the Corporation has been authorized to operate a charter school, the minimum number of directors shall never be less than seven (7).

2.3 Election and Term of Directors. The first Board of Directors of the Corporation shall consist of those three (3) persons named as initial directors in the Articles of Incorporation. Such persons shall hold office until the expiration of their respective terms provided in the Articles of Incorporation, or until their successors are elected and have qualified. Thereafter, at the initial annual meeting of the Members of the Corporation, the Members shall elect successor directors, such that there are equal numbers of directors elected to serve a term of three (3) years, two (2) years and one (1) year, beginning at the adjournment of that annual meeting and continuing through the expiration of their respective terms, or until their successors have been elected and qualified. At each subsequent annual meeting of the Members, the Members shall elect directors to serve a term of three (3) years beginning at the adjournment of that annual meeting and continuing through the expiration of their respective terms or until their successions have been elected and qualified.

2.4 Reserved.

2.5 Board Vacancies. Any and all vacancies occurring on the Board of Directors (including any vacancy resulting from an increase in the authorized number of directors or from the failure to elect the full number of authorized directors) shall be filled by the affirmative vote of a majority of the Members. A director elected to fill a vacancy shall be elected for the unexpired term of his predecessor in office, or until his successor is elected and qualified.

2.6 Resignation or Removal of Directors. Except as otherwise required by law, any director of the Corporation may resign at any time by giving written notice to the Board or to the President or to the Secretary of the Corporation. Such resignation shall take effect at the time not more than thirty (30) days after such receipt as specified in such notice, or on receipt of the notice if no time is specified. Unless otherwise specified in the notice of resignation, no acceptance of such resignation shall be necessary to make it effective. The Members may remove any director from office at any time, either with or without cause.

2.7 Quorum of Directors and Manner of Acting. Unless a greater proportion is required by law or these Bylaws, a majority of the Board of Directors shall be necessary to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business, and the acts of a majority of the directors present at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the acts of the Board of Directors. If a quorum is present when a meeting of the Board of Directors is convened, the directors present may continue to do business, taking action by a vote of a majority of a quorum as fixed above, until adjournment, notwithstanding the withdrawal of enough directors who leave less than a quorum as fixed above, or the refusal of any director present to vote. Except as otherwise provided by law or by the Articles of Incorporation or these Bylaws, the acts of a majority of the directors present at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the acts of the Board.

2.8 Annual and Monthly Meetings of Directors. The annual meeting of the Board of Directors shall be held, in each year immediately after and at the same place as the annual meeting of Members. Such annual meeting may be held on another date or at another place, pursuant to a resolution of the Board, provided that, at least five (5) days notice of the new date or place for the annual meeting is given to each director.

Notwithstanding the preceding paragraph, unless and until a charter has been approved, the Board of Directors shall meet no less than 10 times per year.

Once a charter has been authorized by the chartering authority, monthly meetings of the Board of Directors shall be scheduled at the annual meeting of the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors shall hold no less than ten monthly meetings during a calendar year.

Once a charter has been authorized by the chartering authority, in accordance with Louisiana Constitution and Open Meetings Law, R.S. 42:4.1 *et seq.*, notice of any meeting shall be posted in the central office of the managed school or schools at least one day prior to the meeting. All such notices shall include an agenda and an explanation of the public comment process and will be announced prior to the start of each meeting.

Written public notice of the regular monthly meetings of the Board of Directors shall be given at the beginning of each calendar year. Such notice shall include the dates, times and places of such meetings.

2.9 Special Meetings of Directors. Special meetings of the directors may be called at any time by the President, the Board of Directors or the Executive Committee, if one be constituted, by written notice signed by the President or by a majority of the directors or of the members of the Executive Committee. Special meetings may be held at such place or places within or outside the State of Louisiana as may be designated by the Board of Directors. In the absence of such designation, any such meeting shall be held at such place as may be designated in the notice thereof.

2.10 Notice of Directors' Meetings. Whenever notice is required to be given under any provision of these Bylaws, it shall be in writing and it may be delivered personally or sent by U.S. mail, electronic mail, by telegram, by express delivery service or by electronic facsimile transmission to each director at his address as shown by the records of the Corporation. If notice is given by U.S. mail, such notice shall be deemed to be delivered three (3) days after being deposited in the United States Mail in a sealed envelope so addressed, with postage thereon prepaid. If notice is given by telegram or other commercial message delivery service, such notice shall be deemed to be given on the date delivered. If notice is given electronically, such notice shall be deemed delivered when transmitted by electronic mail or facsimile equipment to the intended recipient's electronic mail address or electronic facsimile number as shown in the records of the Corporation.

2.11 Directors' Waiver of Notice. Any director may waive notice of any meeting in writing at any time, either before or after the time notice would have been required and the waiver need not specify the purpose of the business to be transacted at the meeting. Directors present at a meeting shall be deemed to have received due, or to have waived, notice thereof, except where a director participates in the meeting for the express purpose of objecting to the transaction of any business at the meeting on the ground that the meeting is not lawfully called or convened. Except as specifically required by the Articles of Incorporation or these Bylaws, neither the business to be transacted at, nor the purpose of, any regular or special meeting of the Board of Directors need be specified in the notice, or waiver of notice, of such meeting.

2.12 Compensation and Expenses of Directors. The Corporation shall not pay any compensation to directors for their services rendered to the Corporation. The Corporation may reimburse directors for reasonable expenses actually incurred in the performance of their duties to the Corporation.

2.13 Honorary Boards and Advisory Committees. The Board may elect or appoint any person to act in an advisory capacity to the Corporation or in an honorary capacity with respect to the Corporation, and may create such honorary Boards or advisory committees and appoint to them such persons as the Board deems appropriate in its sole discretion. Persons serving in such advisory and honorary capacities shall not exercise any of the powers granted to the Board of Directors by law or in these Bylaws or in the Articles of Incorporation of the Corporation.

2.14 Fiduciary Relationship of Directors. Directors and officers of the Corporation shall be deemed to stand in a fiduciary relationship to the Corporation and its Members, and shall discharge the duties of their respective positions in good faith, and with that diligence, care, judgment and skill which ordinarily prudent men would exercise under similar circumstances in like positions.

2.15 General Requirements and Prohibitions. Once a charter agreement has been approved by the Louisiana Department of Education, the Board of Directors shall comply with all laws applicable to public bodies including, but not limited to, the Louisiana Open Meetings Law, the Louisiana Public Records Law, and the Code of Governmental Ethics.

3. COMPOSITION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

3.1 Skills and Experience. The Board of directors should consist of individuals with a diverse set of professional skills and practical work experience in the area of education public/nonprofit and/or for profit administration or operations, community development, finance, and law.

3.2 Representation. The Board of directors should be representative of the community(ies) in which the charter school(s) is located and no fewer than sixty percent (60%) of its members shall reside in the community in which the charter school is located. Community, for purposes of this paragraph, shall consist of the parish in which the school is located and immediate neighboring parishes and, for Type 2 charter schools, any parish that is included in the charter school's attendance zone.

3.3 Family Members. The Board of directors shall consist of no more than one person from the same immediate family, as defined by the Louisiana Code of Governmental Ethics.

3.4 School Board. No member of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education is eligible to be a member of the Board of Directors.

3.5 Elected Officials. No elected official, as defined by the Louisiana Code of Governmental Ethics, is eligible to serve as a member of the Board of Directors as long as the Corporation operates any Type 5 charter school under the Louisiana Charter School Demonstration Programs Law. No individual formerly classified as an elected official is eligible to serve as a member of the Board of Directors for a period of one year following his or her termination from elected services, provided that the Corporation operates any Type 5 charter school under the Louisiana Charter Schools Demonstration Programs Law.

3.6 Employees. An employee of the corporation is not eligible to serve as a director.

4. COMMITTEES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

4.1 Executive Committee. The Board of Directors may, by resolution adopted by a majority of the directors in office, designate and appoint an Executive Committee to consist of not less than two (2) directors. The Executive Committee shall, to the extent provided in the Board

resolution, have and may exercise all of the powers of the Board of Directors in the management of the business and affairs of the Corporation during the intervals between the meetings of the Board, and shall fix its own rules of procedure. Such Executive Committee shall keep a record of its proceedings, which shall from time to time be reported to the full Board of Directors. The designation and appointment of any such Executive Committee and the delegation of authority to the Committee shall not relieve the Board of Directors, or any individual Member of the Board of Directors, of any responsibility imposed upon it or him by law. Any vacancy occurring on the Executive Committee shall be filled by the Board of Directors, but the President of the Corporation may designate another director to serve on the Executive Committee pending action by the Board of Directors. The Executive Committee shall hold office during the term of the Board of Directors constituting it, unless otherwise ordered by the Board of Directors.

4.2 Committees Other Than Executive Committee. The Board of Directors may, by resolution adopted by a majority of the directors in office, designate and appoint one or more committees, in addition to the Executive Committee, each of which shall include at least two (2) directors. Such committees shall have the duties assigned to them by the Board of Directors in a resolution. Such committee or committees shall have such name or names as may be set in the Articles of Incorporation or these Bylaws, or as may be determined, from time to time, by the Board of Directors. The designation and appointment of any such committee and the delegation of authority to the committees shall not relieve the Board of Directors, or any individual Member of the Board of Directors, of any responsibility imposed upon it or him by law. Any vacancy occurring in any such committee shall be filled by the Board of Directors, but the President of the Corporation may designate another director to serve on the committee pending action by the Board.

In the event the Board of Directors undertakes the management of one or more charter schools, the committees to be created are as follows:

- Finance – reviews finance reports for accuracy and consistency, and manages the audit process;
- Compensation – establishes base compensations levels for the school(s') staff and aligns expense with budget availability;
- Personnel – ensures personnel policies are in compliance with the various federal and state personnel requirements, and arbitrates any personnel situation that can not be resolved between the teacher and the principal/parent/co-worker; and
- Board Training – establishes annual training programs and training schedules for members of the Board of Directors to attain knowledge with respect to the operation of a nonprofit organization and the management of a charter school in compliance with the requirements set forth by the Department of Education Charter School Office.

4.3 Minutes of Meetings of Committees. Any committee designated by the Board of Directors shall keep regular minutes of their proceedings, and shall report the same to the Board

of Directors, when required; but no approval by the Board, of any action properly taken by a committee shall be required.

4.4 Procedure. If the Board of Directors fails to designate the chairman of a committee, the President, if a member of such committee, shall be the chairman. Each committee shall meet at such times as it shall determine and at any time on call of the chairman. A majority of a committee shall constitute a quorum, and the committee may take action either by vote of a majority of the committee members present at any meeting at which there is a quorum or by written concurrence of a majority of the committee members. In case of absence or disqualification of a member of a committee at any meeting thereof, the qualified committee members present, whether or not they constitute a quorum, may unanimously appoint a director to act in place of the absent or disqualified committee member. The Board of Directors shall have the power to change the members of any committee at any time, to fill vacancies, and to discharge any committees at any time.

5. OFFICERS, AGENTS AND EMPLOYEES

5.1 Officers. The Board of Directors shall elect a President, a Secretary and a Treasurer, and may elect one or more Vice Presidents and such other officers and agents as may be necessary for the business of the Corporation. Any two of these offices may be combined in one person; provided that no person holding more than one office may sign, in more than one capacity, any certificate or other instrument required by law to be signed by two (2) officers. Unless otherwise provided in the Articles of Incorporation, none of the officers of the Corporation need be directors.

5.2 Election and Term of Office. The first officers of the Corporation shall consist of those persons named as initial officers, and such persons shall hold office until the first annual election of officers. Thereafter, a nominating committee which may be comprised of directors and non-directors shall present a slate of officers for Board approval. The Board shall elect officers at each annual meeting of the Board. If the election of officers shall not be held at such meeting, such election shall be held as soon thereafter as conveniently may be held. Each person so elected shall hold office for the term for which he is elected, not to exceed two (2) years.

5.3 Resignation of Officers. Any officer or agent may resign at any time by giving written notice to the Board of Directors or to the President or to the Secretary of the Corporation. Any such resignation shall take effect at the time of receipt or at such later time as therein specified, not to exceed thirty (30) days. Unless otherwise specified in the notice of resignation, no acceptance of such resignation shall be necessary to make it effective.

5.4 Removal of Officers. Any officer or agent may be removed by the Board of Directors with or without cause at any time, without prejudice, however, to the contract rights, if any, of the person so removed. Election or appointment of an officer or agent shall not of itself create any contract rights.

5.5 Vacancies in Offices. A vacancy in any office may be filled for the unexpired portion of the term by the Board of Directors at any meeting of the Board.

5.6 Powers and Duties of Officers. Subject to the authority and control of the Board of Directors, all officers as between themselves and the Corporation shall have such authority and shall perform such duties in the management of the property and affairs of the Corporation as may be provided in these Bylaws or by resolution of the Board of Directors, not inconsistent with these Bylaws, and, to the extent not so provided, as generally pertain to their respective offices.

a. President. The President shall, when present, preside at all meetings of the Board of Directors and the Members. The President shall be the chief executive officer of the Corporation with general management of the Corporation's business and power to make contracts in the ordinary course of business; shall see that all orders and resolutions of the Board of Directors are carried into effect and direct the other officers in the performance of their duties; shall have the power to execute all authorized instruments; and shall generally perform all acts incident to the office of the President or which are incumbent upon the President under the provisions of the Articles of Incorporation and these Bylaws. The President may delegate authority and responsibility, but such delegation of authority shall not relieve the President of any responsibility imposed upon the President by law, the Articles of Incorporation or these Bylaws and the President shall remain fully accountable to the Board of Directors.

b. Secretary. The Secretary, when such is required, shall give, or cause to be given, notice of all meetings of Members, directors, and committees, and all other notices required by law or by these Bylaws, and in case of the Secretary's absence or refusal or neglect so to do, any such notice may be given by the Members or directors upon whose request the meeting is called as provided in these Bylaws. The Secretary shall record all the proceedings of the meetings of the Members, of the directors, and of committees in a book to be kept for that purpose. Except as otherwise determined by the directors, the Secretary shall have charge of the original accounts, Members, certificate books and transfer books. If a corporate seal is adopted, the Secretary shall have custody of the seal of the Corporation, and shall affix it to all instruments requiring it. The Secretary shall perform such other duties as may be assigned to him by the Board of Directors or by the President.

c. Treasurer. The Treasurer shall supervise and oversee all funds, securities, evidences of indebtedness, and other valuable documents of the Corporation. The Treasurer shall receive and give, or cause to be given, receipts and quittances for monies paid in on account of the Corporation and shall payout of the funds on hand all just debts of the Corporation of whatever nature when due. The Treasurer shall enter, or cause to be entered, in books of the Corporation to be kept for that purpose, full and accurate accounts of all monies received and paid out on account of the Corporation, and whenever required by the President or the Board of Directors, the Treasurer shall render a statement of accounts. The Treasurer shall keep or cause to be kept such books as will show a true record of the expenses, gains, losses, assets, and liabilities of the Corporation," and shall perform all the other duties incident to the office of Treasurer. If required by the Board of Directors, the Treasurer shall give the Corporation a bond for the faithful discharge of his duties and for restoration to the Corporation, upon termination of his tenure, of all property of the Corporation under the Treasurer's control.

d. Vice President. The Board of Directors may select and appoint one or more Vice Presidents. If the Board of Directors appoints more than one Vice President, each Vice President shall have such powers and shall perform such duties, as shall be assigned to him by the Board of Directors or by the President (subject to the powers and supervision of the Board), and in the order determined by the Board, shall in the absence, inability or refusal to act by the President, perform the President's duties and exercise the President's powers, and when so acting shall have all of the powers of and be subject to all of the restrictions upon the President.

e. Executive Director. The Board of Directors may select and appoint an Executive Director. The Executive Director shall perform such duties as are provided by these Bylaws and as are delegated to the Executive Director by the President, the Board of Directors or the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors. Without prejudice to the complete authority of the Board of Directors to manage the affairs and properties of the Corporation, the Executive Director shall hire, direct, and discharge all agents and employees and fix their salaries subject to the budget authorized by the Board of Directors. The Executive Director may, under the direction of the President or other officer of the Corporation, act for them as they deem appropriate and shall perform such other duties as shall be required by the Board of Directors. In the event the office of Executive Director is not filled, the President shall perform the duties outlined above.

5.7 Agents and Employees. The Board of Directors may from time to time, in its sole discretion, appoint agents and employees who shall have such authority and shall perform such duties as may be prescribed by the Board. The Board may remove any agent or employee at any time with or without cause. Removal shall be without prejudice to such person's contract rights, if any. The appointment of a person as an agent or employee shall not itself create contract rights.

5.8 Compensation of Agents and Employees. The Corporation may pay reasonable compensation to its agents and employees for services rendered and as authorized and fixed by the Board of Directors, or if the Board delegates such power, then as authorized and fixed by the Board's delegate. The Corporation may reimburse all officers, agents and employees for their reasonable expenses actually incurred. The Board may require officers, agents and employees to give security for the faithful performance of their duties, for which they shall be reimbursed.

5.9 Fiduciary Relationship of Officers. Officers of the Corporation shall be deemed to stand in a fiduciary relationship to the Corporation and its Members, and shall discharge the duties of their respective positions in good faith, and with that diligence, care, judgment and skill which ordinarily prudent men would exercise under similar circumstances in like positions.

6. MEMBERS

6.1 Designation of Members. The initial Member of the Corporation is GEO Foundation, an Indiana nonprofit corporation. The Board of Directors of GEO Foundation may, by written notice given to the Secretary or any Director of the Corporation, designate a single successor Member who shall succeed it as the sole Member of the Corporation. Such successor Member may also designate a single successor Member to succeed such successor Member as the sole

Member of the Corporation, and so forth. GEO Foundation and any of its successors shall hereinafter be referred to as the "Member." No right, title or interest in any property or earnings of the Corporation shall inure to any Member during the existence of the Corporation or upon its dissolution.

6.2 Regular Meetings. The purpose of the annual meeting of Members is to elect directors and to transact such other matters as may properly come before the Members. The annual meeting of the Members of the Corporation shall be held at the times and places designated by the Board of Directors or the President of the Corporation. The annual meeting of Members for any year shall be held no later than thirteen (13) months after the last annual meeting of Members. However, failure to hold an annual meeting timely shall in no way affect the terms of officers or directors of the Corporation or the validity of actions of the Corporation.

6.3 Special Meetings. Special meetings of Members may be called by the President or by a majority of the Board of Directors then in office or by any Member. The purpose of each special meeting shall be stated in the notice and may only include purposes which are lawful and proper for Members to consider.

6.4 Place of Meetings. The Board of Directors may designate any place within the State of Louisiana as the place of meeting or any meeting of Members.

6.5 Notice. Written or printed notice stating the place, day and hour of the meeting and, in the case of a special meeting the purpose or purposes for which the meeting is called, shall be delivered personally or by mail not less than ten (10) days nor more than sixty (60) days before the meeting. Notice shall be given by or at the direction of the President or the Secretary or the person calling the meeting to each Member of record entitled to vote at the meeting. If mailed, such notice shall be deemed to have been delivered when deposited in the United States Mail addressed to the Member at his address as it appears on the records of the Corporation with postage thereon prepaid.

6.6 Waiver. A written waiver of notice signed by a Member, whether before or after a meeting, shall be equivalent to the giving of such notice. Attendance of a Member at a meeting shall constitute a waiver of notice of such meeting, except when the Member attends for the express purpose of objecting, at the beginning of the meeting, to the transaction of any business because the meeting is not lawfully called or convened.

6.7 Action by Members Without a Meeting. Any action of the Members may be taken without a meeting, without prior notice and without a vote, if a consent in writing setting forth the action so taken is signed by all of the Members of the Corporation.

6.8 Quorum of Directors and Manner of Acting. Unless a greater proportion is required by law or these Bylaws, a majority of the Members shall be necessary to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business, and the acts of a majority of the Members present at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the acts of the Members. If a quorum is present when a meeting of the Members is convened, the Members present may continue to do business, taking action by a vote of a majority of a quorum as fixed above, until adjournment, notwithstanding the withdrawal of enough Members who leave less than a quorum as fixed above, or the refusal of any Member

present to vote. Except as otherwise provided by law or by the Articles of Incorporation or these Bylaws, the acts of a majority of the Members present at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the acts of the Members.

7. ADMINISTRATIVE

7.1 Fiscal Year. The fiscal year of the Corporation shall be from July 1 to June 30 of the following year, unless otherwise determined by the Board of Directors.

7.2 Corporate Seal. The corporate seal, if any, shall be in such form as may be approved from time to time by the Board of Directors.

7.3 Contracts and Other Documents. The Board may, except as otherwise required by law, the Articles of Incorporation or these Bylaws, authorize the President of the Corporation to enter into any contract or to execute and deliver any instrument or document on behalf of the Corporation. Such authority may be general or may be confined to specific instances.

7.4 Checks, Drafts, Loans, etc. All checks, drafts, loans or other orders for the payment of money, notes or other evidence of indebtedness issued in the name of the Corporation shall be signed by such officer or agent of the Corporation and in such manner as shall be from time to time determined by the Board of Directors. The Board may delegate its power under this Section 6.4 only to the President and only on such terms as the Board shall prescribe by resolution.

7.5 Books and Records. The Corporation shall keep at its registered office in the City of _____: (1) correct and complete books and records of account; and (2) minutes of the proceedings of the Board of Directors and any committee having any of the authority of the Board.

7.6 Loans to Directors, Officers, Employees and Agents. No loans shall be made by the Corporation to any of its directors, officers, employees or agents.

7.7 Regulations. These Bylaws shall operate merely as regulations among the directors, officers and Members of the Corporation, and shall not affect contracts or other dealings with other persons, unless such persons have actual knowledge of these Bylaws.

8. INDEMNIFICATION AND INSURANCE

8.1 The Corporation may, to the extent permitted by law, indemnify any person who was or is a party or is threatened to be made a party to any action, suit or proceeding, whether civil, criminal, administrative or investigative (including any action by or in the right of the Corporation) by reason of the fact that he is or was a director, officer, employee or agent of the Corporation, or is or was serving at the request of the Corporation as a director, officer, employee or agent of another nonprofit, business or foreign corporation, partnership, joint venture or other enterprise, against expenses (including attorneys' fees), judgments, fines and amounts paid in settlement actually and reasonably incurred by him in connection with such

action, suit or proceeding if he acted in good faith and in a manner he reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the best interests of the Corporation, and, with respect to any criminal action or proceeding, had no reasonable cause to believe his conduct was unlawful; provided that in case of actions by or in right of the Corporation, the indemnity shall be limited to expenses (including attorneys' fees and amounts paid in settlement not exceeding, in the judgment of the Board of Directors, the estimated expense of litigating the action to conclusion) actually and reasonably incurred in connection with the defense or settlement of such action and no indemnification shall be made in respect to any claim, issue or matter as to which such person shall have been adjudged to be liable for negligence or misconduct in the performance of his duty to the Corporation unless and only to the extent that the court shall determine upon application that, despite the adjudication of liability but in the view of all the circumstances of the case, he is fairly and reasonably entitled to indemnity for such expenses which the court shall deem proper. The termination of any action, suit or proceeding by judgment, order, settlement, conviction, or upon a plea of nolo contendere or its equivalent, shall not, of itself, create a presumption that the person did not act in good faith and in a manner which he reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the best interests of the Corporation, and, with respect to any criminal action or proceeding, that the person had reasonable cause to believe that his conduct was unlawful.

8.2 To the extent that a director, officer, employee or agent of the Corporation has been successful on the merits or otherwise in defense of any such action, suit or proceeding, or in defense of any claim, issue or matter therein, he shall be indemnified against expenses (including attorneys' fees) actually and reasonably incurred by him in connection therewith.

8.3 Any indemnification under Section 8.1 (unless ordered by the court) shall be made by the Corporation only as authorized in a specific case upon a determination that the applicable standard of conduct has been met. Such determination shall be made: (i) by the Board of Directors by a majority vote of a quorum consisting of directors who were not parties to such action, suit or proceeding, or (ii) if such quorum is not obtainable or a quorum of disinterested directors so directors, by an independent legal counsel, or (iii) by the Members.

8.4 Expenses incurred in defending such an action, suit or proceeding may be paid by the Corporation in advance of the final disposition thereof if authorized by the Board of Directors in the manner provided in Section 8.3 above, upon receipt of an undertaking by or on behalf of the director, officer, employee or agent to repay such amount unless it shall ultimately be determined that he is entitled to be indemnified by the Corporation as authorized in this Article 8.

8.5 The indemnification provided by this Article 8 shall not be deemed exclusive of any other rights to which the person indemnified may be entitled under any bylaw, agreement, authorization of Members or disinterested directors or otherwise, both as to action in his official capacity and as to action in another capacity while holding such office, and shall continue as to a person who has ceased to be a director, officer, employee or agent and shall inure to the benefit of his heirs and legal representative.

8.6 The Corporation may procure insurance on behalf of any person who is or was a director, officer, employee or agent of the Corporation, or is or was serving at the request of the

Corporation as a director, officer, employee or agent of another nonprofit, business or foreign corporation, partnership, joint venture or other enterprise against any liability asserted against or incurred by him in any such capacity, or arising out of his status as such, whether or not the Corporation would have the power to indemnify him against such liability under the law.

8.7 The Corporation shall not, under any circumstances, indemnify any employee, officer, director or any other person for any expenses, including attorney's fees, incurred in connection with any suit or proceeding brought against the Corporation by such persons.

8.8 No director or officer of the Corporation shall be personally liable either to the Corporation or its Members, if any, for monetary damages for breach of fiduciary duty as a director or officer, provided that such breach does not consist of any of the following:

- (a) breach of the director's or officer's duty of loyalty to the corporation or its Members;
- (b) acts or omissions not in good faith or which involve intentional misconduct or a knowing violation of law; or
- (c) any transaction from which the director or officer derived an improper personal benefit.

This provision shall be effective to eliminate the personal liability of a director or officer for any act or omission occurring prior to the effective date of this provision.

8.9 If any part of this Article VII shall be found in any action, suit, or proceeding to be invalid or ineffective, the validity and the effectiveness of the remaining parts shall not be affected.

9. AMENDMENT OF BYLAWS

The Bylaws of the Corporation may be adopted, amended or repealed by a majority vote of the Members, present or represented at any regular or special meeting, or in accordance with Section 6.7.

Appendix 7: Individual Financial Manager Resume GEO School

Kelly Forbes

8739 Florida Boulevard, Denham Springs, LA 70726
Cell (225) 454-0954 | kellyforbes01@gmail.com

PROFILE

Accomplished Senior Accountant and Professional, innovative and talented, with over 15 years of strong Analytics, Financial Reporting, Forecasting, Auditing, Business Operations and Human Resource expertise. Results-driven leader and visionary with excellent business acumen, communication and interpersonal skills. Broad experience dealing with all levels of organizational management; a strong emphasis in process improvement.

KEY MANAGEMENT AREAS

Financial Management, Credit, Cash Flow & Cost Containment
Payroll/AR/AP, Invoicing, Purchasing, & Estimating
Benefits and Insurance
Collecting & Analyzing Accounting/Market Data
Process Improvement/Processes & Controls
Policies & Procedures, Compliance

Human Resource Mgmt and Compliance
Managing Multiple Projects
Time & Task Mgmt
P&L & Budget
Forecasting
Grant Mgmt

PROFESSIONAL ATTRIBUTES

- Proven top performer, with a reputation for strong financial management qualified by mature, prudent business skills and sound judgment.
- Demonstrates professional reliability, highly self-motivated with the ability to assume increased levels of responsibility, anticipates and meets needs to achieve outstanding results.
- Highly organized, with the ability to multi-task in a fast-paced environment, responds quickly and effectively to problems.
- Multi-faceted professional, providing management experience with the ability to effectively communicate across all organizational levels.
- Articulate, diplomatic, persuasive; easily establishes rapport and credibility with people at all levels, works well with people from a variety of backgrounds and cultures.
- Ability to work independently and take initiative in a team in order to meet larger team goals.
- Excellent proficiency in MS Office products (advanced Excel/Word), and numerous software applications.

LICENSES/CERTIFICATIONS

CPA eligible

EXPERIENCE

Oct 23– Present Director of Finance and Accounting, GEO Academies, Baton Rouge, LA

Prepares financial reports to track organizations assets, liabilities, profit and loss, federal and state grant management, and other related financial activities for multiple entities while managing the scheduling, assignments, and daily workflow of assigned staff accountants and other personnel. In addition, meeting with clients and board members to complete budgets, audits and state reporting.

July 22 – Oct 23 Senior Staff Accountant/Finance Mgr, 4th Sector Solutions, Baton Rouge, LA

July 19 – July 22 Business Manager, St. Thomas More School, Baton Rouge, LA

Dec 17 – July 19 Business Manager, Louisiana Key Academy, Baton Rouge, LA

Nov 16 – Dec 17 Manager of Bursar Operations, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA

Mar 07 – Nov 16 Business Manager, Our Lady of Mercy School, Baton Rouge, LA

EDUCATION

College of Charleston, Charleston, SC

Bachelor of Science degree in Accounting

Appendix 8: Insurance Coverage

GEO School

Appendix 8: Insurance Coverage

1. Worker's Compensation Insurance:

Covers obligations imposed by federal and state statutes having jurisdiction over the Charter Operator's employees, and employers' liability insurance with a minimum limit of \$100,000.

2. Comprehensive General Liability Insurance:

Minimum combined single limit of \$1,000,000 each occurrence.

3. Comprehensive Automobile Liability Insurance:

Combined single limit for bodily injury and property damage or not less than \$1,000,000 each occurrence with respect to the school's owned, hired or non-owned vehicles, assigned to or used in performance of the services offered by the school.

4. Property Insurance:

The property insurance obtained by GEO Academies will provide BESE or the State of Louisiana with the ability to file a claim for any loss of property purchased with state or federal funds.

5. Errors and Omissions Liability Insurance:

This insurance shall cover GEO Academies for those sources of liability arising out of the rendering or failure to render professional services in the performance of this agreement, including all provisions regarding financial management and indemnification.

The insurance shall be subject to a maximum deductible not to exceed \$25,000 per claim.

The minimum limits to be maintained by the Charter Operator shall be no less than \$1,000,000 per claim/annual aggregate.

6. Employee Dishonesty Insurance:

Minimum limit of \$250,000 per claim/annual aggregate.

7. Employment Practices Liability Insurance:

Minimum limit of \$500,000 per claim/annual aggregate.

8. Indemnity Insurance:

Minimum limit of \$500,000 per claim/annual aggregate

9. Directors and Officers Insurance:

Minimum limit of \$500,000 per claim/annual aggregate

GEO School

GEO Academies will provide provisions regarding the inspection and operation of all fire prevention and safety equipment of the school. This will be coordinated at the school level by the schools' Facilities Manager and with the GEO Academies Operations team.

GEO Academies is committed to procuring any additional insurance required in the pre-opening process prior to the beginning of the school year, if approved.



TCK Education Consultants

Charter School Evaluation Report

Final Recommendation			
Non-Profit Information			
Non-Profit:	GEO Louisiana	Education Service Provider (ESP)	GEO Foundation
		Operator Track:	Experienced
School Information			
Proposed School Name	GEO North Baton Rouge Upper Academy	Type:	2
Proposed School Location	North Baton Rouge Specific Location Unknown	Model:	Student-Centered, Competency-Based Education Model
Proposed Grade Configuration Year 1	K-5	Proposed Grade Configuration Year 5	K-5
Enrollment Year 1	450	Enrollment Year 5	450
High School Addendum:	NA	Corporate Partner	No

Purpose of the Third-Party Evaluation

In accordance with Louisiana Bulletin 126, Chapter 3, this evaluation was conducted by TCK Education Consultants as an independent, third-party review commissioned by the authorizer to ensure a transparent, objective, and standards-based assessment of the charter proposal.

The purpose of this evaluation is to determine whether the applicant demonstrates the capacity and readiness to successfully open and operate a high-quality public charter school consistent with Louisiana law, BESE policy, and the authorizer's framework. Specifically, TCK's review examines the extent to which the proposal:

1. Meets the **academic, organizational, and financial** criteria established in Bulletin 126 and the local authorizer's evaluation rubric;
2. Demonstrates alignment between **mission, design, and community need**, ensuring that proposed goals and outcomes are attainable and evidence-based; and
3. Reflects a **sustainable governance and management structure** capable of maintaining compliance, financial stewardship, and continuous improvement.



Through this process, TCK Education Consultants provides the authorizer with an independent, evidence-informed recommendation that supports high-quality decision-making and strengthens the overall integrity of Louisiana’s charter authorization process.

Program Overview

GEO Academies Louisiana submitted an application to open GEO North Baton Rouge Lower Academy, a proposed K–5 public charter school in North Baton Rouge. The school is designed to serve students in East Baton Rouge Parish and surrounding communities and would operate under the GEO Louisiana Board of Directors. The proposed school would become part of the existing GEO Louisiana network, which currently includes GEO Prep Academy, GEO Prep Mid-City, GEO Prep Baker, and GEO Next Generation High School. Together with the proposed Upper Academy, the new school would complete GEO’s K–12 continuum in Baton Rouge.

The proposed academic model mirrors GEO’s current Baton Rouge elementary schools and emphasizes blended learning, TAP teacher development, Teach Like a Champion practices, and the use of Tier 1 curricula including Wit & Wisdom, Eureka Math 2.0, Amplify Science, and CKLA Foundations. Instructional design focuses on small-group learning, data-informed instruction, and early intervention in literacy and math to close foundational gaps.

The projected enrollment is 450 students in Year 1, serving grades K–5. The applicant anticipates a student population comparable to East Baton Rouge Parish demographics—approximately 90 percent economically disadvantaged students, 15 percent students with disabilities, and up to 5 percent English learners. The staffing plan includes a principal, four assistant principals, and instructional support staff, with centralized oversight from GEO’s leadership team, including the CEO, Chief Academic Officer, and Chief Financial Officer.

Operationally, the school will share key support services—finance, human resources, and compliance—with other GEO Louisiana campuses through the network’s centralized management systems. The application references GEO Foundation, a national nonprofit organization, as the Educational Service Provider (ESP) supporting GEO Louisiana schools. However, the ESP Addendum was not completed, and the application does not include documentation describing the management relationship, scope of services, or financial terms. While the ESP is mentioned in related submissions, there is no confirmation within this application that a formal ESP agreement will be in place for GEO North Baton Rouge Lower Academy.

Evaluation Summary

Education Program and Capacity: *Summary of: school establishment; academic plan; and culture, social emotional learning, and behavior management, growth plan.*

GEO Academies proposes to replicate its existing Baton Rouge elementary model for GEO North Baton Rouge Lower Academy, emphasizing Tier 1 curricula, blended learning, and TAP-based professional development. The design reflects a coherent instructional framework supported by data-driven teaching practices and network-wide professional learning systems.



Evaluation Summary

While the academic model demonstrates internal consistency, it does not provide evidence that replication will lead to improved outcomes beyond GEO's current performance levels. Existing campuses show student growth in progress indices but remain below state proficiency averages, and the proposal does not present data-based projections or innovations likely to accelerate achievement.

The Year 1 enrollment target of 450 students appears optimistic given the saturated K–8 charter landscape in North Baton Rouge. GEO already operates four schools in the same market, and approval of both current proposals would expand the network to six campuses, raising concerns about enrollment competition, resource strain, and capacity to sustain quality during expansion.

Organizational Plan and Capacity: *Summary of the school leadership team capacity; professional development; charter board governance; corporate partnerships (if applicable); educational services provider (if applicable); organizational goals; and staffing.*

GEO Louisiana operates as an experienced charter network with multiple approved Type 2 and Type 5 schools and demonstrates established systems for governance, staffing, and compliance oversight. The organizational plan outlines clear roles between the governing board, network leadership, and school administration, supported by a centralized operations model for finance, human resources, and compliance.

While the structure reflects organizational stability, the plan provides limited evidence of how GEO evaluates school leaders, monitors progress toward goals, or uses performance data to drive accountability. The proposal also does not fully address how anticipated enrollment challenges across the Baton Rouge portfolio could affect fiscal sustainability and staffing capacity. Reliance on shared network resources without contingency plans raises concerns about scalability and operational resilience as the organization expands within a single market.

Overall, GEO Louisiana exhibits organizational maturity and compliance readiness but will need to strengthen local accountability and capacity to manage growth effectively. Although the application references GEO Foundation as the Educational Service Provider, the ESP Addendum was not completed, and there is no documentation confirming that a formal management agreement exists.

Financial Plan and Capacity: *Summary of financial readiness.*

GEO Academies presents a well-developed financial management structure supported by strong internal controls, an experienced leadership team, and a consistent record of clean audits—elements that collectively meet the rubric expectation for sound fiscal oversight and operational compliance. The organization demonstrates maturity in financial governance, conservative budgeting practices, and a clear prioritization of classroom instruction in its contingency planning.

Despite these strengths, the financial plan reflects overly ambitious assumptions about enrollment growth and network expansion. The proposed Year 1 enrollment target of 450 students and the simultaneous launch of additional schools in East Baton Rouge are not sufficiently supported by market data or evidence of new demand. Parishwide K–8 enrollment has remained flat, and the charter sector is increasingly saturated, raising concerns about recruitment feasibility and potential cannibalization among GEO's existing campuses.



Evaluation Summary

GEO currently operates four schools in the Baton Rouge area, all opened between 2013 and 2025. If both new proposals are approved, the network will expand to six total schools in the same regional market—a pace of growth that heightens the importance of realistic enrollment forecasting and prudent resource allocation. While budget assumptions are clearly presented and technically compliant, they depend heavily on achieving full enrollment and maintaining optimistic cost projections. The plan lacks sensitivity analyses, detailed expense justifications, or demonstrated contingency reserves sufficient to offset potential shortfalls. Similarly, startup and external funding narratives do not clarify key financial assumptions or allocation of shared-service costs across the GEO network.

Overall, GEO meets expectations for fiscal management capacity and compliance but presents moderate to high feasibility risk due to the scale and pace of proposed expansion in a constrained market. Without more conservative enrollment projections or explicit mitigation strategies, the financial model may overstate sustainability and expose the network to operational strain if per-pupil revenues fail to materialize as planned.



Section	Evaluation Findings
Executive Summary	Meets Standard
	ES.1- Mission and Vision • The applicant articulates a mission to provide all children, regardless of race, income, or zip code, with a quality education that prepares them for early college coursework and long-term academic success. The vision emphasizes a student-centered, competency-based learning model designed to close opportunity gaps beginning in elementary school and culminating in early college readiness through a 6-12 program. The proposed school is framed as part of a two-school continuum, with the lower K-5 campus providing foundational preparation for the upper academy. • The mission and vision align with the purposes of charter schools outlined in Louisiana Revised Statutes 17:3972 and Bulletin 126 §105 by addressing equitable access and college-readiness for historically underserved populations. While the mission statement is consistent with GEO’s existing network focus, the narrative could more clearly articulate how this specific campus will differentiate itself within a saturated North Baton Rouge market already served by GEO schools. Even so, the statement meets rubric expectations by providing a coherent and legally compliant mission and vision that are reasonably aligned to the proposed student population and program design.
	ES.2 - Anticipated Student Population • GEO Lower identifies North Baton Rouge as the intended location and describes the anticipated student population in alignment with district demographics—approximately 93 percent economically disadvantaged, 12 percent students with disabilities, 4 percent English learners, 97 percent minority, and 2.5 percent homeless. The narrative references community educational needs, citing limited high-performing middle and high school options, a district graduation rate of 75 percent, and only 32 percent of graduates earning an ACT composite of 21 or above. Waitlist data from existing GEO Academies schools are presented as evidence of family demand for additional secondary options.



Section	Evaluation Findings
	While the description addresses location, demographics, and educational need, the applicant does not discuss current or projected enrollment trends showing that the school-age population in East Baton Rouge Parish is stable or declining, nor the potential for market overlap with GEO's existing K–8 schools that already serve this catchment. The omission raises concern about whether GEO has adequately assessed community demand for another school versus the likelihood that enrollment would result from shifting students among its existing campuses. Even so, the application demonstrates an overall understanding of the population to be served and proposes to address identified academic challenges through its established instructional model, satisfying rubric expectations for describing the targeted population and its educational needs.
	ES.3 - Education Plan - GEO Lower provides a concise overview of the proposed educational program and identifies the grade levels to be served (K–5) for the full term of the charter contract. The plan also includes minimum, maximum, and budgeted enrollment projections per grade level per year, satisfying the descriptive requirements of the rubric. The proposed model is structured around four instructional pillars—blended learning, strategic human capital management, effective instructional practice, and evidence-based curriculum—and incorporates Tier 1 instructional materials including Wit & Wisdom, Eureka Math 2.0, Amplify Science, and CKLA Foundations. - However, the response does not adequately summarize what the proposed school would do more effectively than the schools currently serving the targeted population, as required by the rubric. The plan repeats GEO's existing network strategies without presenting a clear rationale or evidence showing that these approaches will produce stronger outcomes than current GEO or East Baton Rouge elementary schools. While the applicant references strong growth at existing campuses, proficiency rates remain below state averages, and no explanation or performance projections are provided to demonstrate how replication will accelerate mastery or close achievement gaps.



Section	Evaluation Findings
	Because the narrative describes structure but not comparative effectiveness, the proposed educational plan does not meet ES.3 rubric expectations for demonstrating how the school's model will more effectively meet the needs of the identified student population.
	ES.4 - Impact GEO Academies asserts that the GEO Lower will positively impact student outcomes through Tier 1 curricula, TAP systems, and Teach Like a Champion strategies intended to prepare students for college and career success. However, the narrative does not include measurable evidence or data to demonstrate the effectiveness of these components in producing improved outcomes beyond general alignment to Louisiana standards. The application does not address how the proposed school will differentiate its impact within an already saturated North Baton Rouge charter landscape or respond to performance data indicating that GEO's existing high schools graduates have not yet achieved strong indicators of college readiness. Without a clear explanation of anticipated impact of GEO Lower strategies to improve postsecondary outcomes, the response does not meet rubric expectations
	ES.5 - Previous Charter Applications GEO Louisiana has previously submitted four Type 2 charter applications to BESE, all of which were approved, including GEO Prep Academy (2013), GEO Next Generation High School (2018), GEO Prep Mid-City (2017), and GEO Prep Baker (2021). The applicant also received approval in the 2025 RSD Type 5 charter process. The narrative notes that subsequent to earlier approvals, GEO revised its instructional approach in response to student performance trends, including adopting Wit & Wisdom as its English Language Arts curriculum. The board composition remains unchanged since prior approvals. These factors demonstrate an established record of successful charter authorization and responsiveness to implementation data, meeting rubric expectations for this criterion.



Section	Evaluation Findings
Educational Plan & Capacity	Add Section Rating Here
School Establishment	EPC.6 - Overview of Community Demographics • The applicant provides district-level demographic and performance data for East Baton Rouge Parish and general descriptions of area schools but does not present a focused narrative analysis of the specific community to be served. While the submission references a need for additional high-quality schools and includes comparisons of GEO’s existing school performance to district averages, it does not offer clear evidence showing how the proposed school would serve the identified population more effectively than current school options. • Although the applicant asserts that demand supports expansion, available data indicate that the North Baton Rouge area already has multiple charter schools operated by GEO and other networks, suggesting a level of market saturation. • The narrative also references potential higher-education partnerships but does not explain how these partnerships will directly support or sustain the proposed school’s operations or mission. As a result, the response does not meet rubric expectations for a rationale grounded in community demographics, local school performance, and partnership alignment.
	EPC.7 - Overview of the Student Population • The applicant projects enrollment consistent with the demographics of East Baton Rouge Parish and GEO’s existing Baton Rouge schools—100percent minority, 93percent economically disadvantaged, 12percent students with disabilities, 4percent English Learners, and 2.5percent homeless students. While these projections align with GEO’s current campuses, the narrative identifies the student body only as “100percent minority” and does not provide a disaggregated racial breakdown as required under EPC 7. As a result, the response does not meet expectations, lacking the detailed racial and socioeconomic data needed to demonstrate alignment with the proposed community.



Section	Evaluation Findings
	EPC.8 - Stakeholder Engagement • The applicant identifies parents, prospective staff, and board members as stakeholders and references survey data and letters of support to demonstrate interest in a new GEO 6–12 school. However, the response provides minimal detail regarding the <i>strategies</i> used to solicit community input about educational and programmatic needs. The application does not describe specific outreach activities—such as meetings, focus groups, or collaborations with local organizations—or provide evidence that parent or community feedback influenced the school’s design. Because the engagement process relies primarily on internal surveys and previously collected letters, it does not satisfy EPC.8 requirements for clearly documented, two-way stakeholder engagement.
	Appendix 1: Evidence of Community Support • GEO Lower provides documentation of community support, including waitlist data from existing GEO schools and five letters of support from community organizations—New Schools for Baton Rouge, the East Baton Rouge Clerk of Court, Baton Rouge Community College, the YMCA of the Capital Area, and one additional partner. However, four of the five letters are dated October 2024 and are the same letters submitted for the GEO North Baton Rouge Upper application. This indicates that the materials were likely prepared for GEO’s prior 2024–2025 Type 5 submission cycle rather than developed specifically for the current Type 2 proposal. As a result, the evidence does not reflect current or school-specific stakeholder engagement for the new elementary school. • The documentation also lacks evidence of parent or caregiver support, sign-in sheets, survey results, and the required cover sheet with analysis of the depth of support or opposition, as specified in the rubric. The letters provided demonstrate institutional goodwill but not verifiable, contemporaneous family or community input regarding this specific proposal. • Because the submission relies on reused and outdated letters and does not include the full range of current, parent-inclusive evidence required, the response does not meet Appendix 1 rubric expectations for demonstrating authentic and up-to-date community support for the proposed GEO



Section	Evaluation Findings
	North Baton Rouge Lower Academy.
Academic Plan	EPC.9 - Key Design Elements • The applicant identifies eight guiding principles and four programmatic pillars—blended learning, strategic human capital management, effective instructional practice, and evidence-based curriculum—as the foundation of the proposed school model. These components are described as central to achieving strong academic outcomes across the GEO network. • However, the application does not provide sufficient evidence demonstrating how these design elements have contributed to improved outcomes for students in existing schools or how they will address the needs of the proposed student population. The narrative emphasizes organizational philosophy rather than offering data or examples linking the implementation of these strategies to measurable academic gains. In addition, the applicant does not include performance data from GEO-operated schools outside Louisiana that could have strengthened the rationale for the model's effectiveness across varied contexts. • As a result, while the proposed model and its key design elements are clearly articulated, the response does not meet the EPC.9 standard because the rationale and evidence of effectiveness are not fully substantiated, and the connection between the model, mission, and anticipated student outcomes is insufficiently demonstrated.
	EPC.10 - Curriculum • The applicant identifies a complete set of Tier 1 core curricula—Wit & Wisdom (ELA), Eureka Math 2.0 (Mathematics), Amplify Science (Science), and Bayou Bridges (Social Studies)—and provides evidence that these materials align to Louisiana grade-level standards and meet state quality indicators on the LDOE instructional materials review rubrics. The plan includes a clear explanation of how the selected curricula provide scaffolding and supports enabling all students, including Students with Disabilities and English Learners, to access grade-level content. • The accompanying instructional strategies—blended learning, small-group instruction, and tiered interventions—illustrate how teachers will implement the curriculum to support student mastery. While the



Section	Evaluation Findings
	narrative references graduation requirements that are not applicable to a K-5 program, it otherwise demonstrates a strong understanding of standards alignment and curricular coherence. Accordingly, the applicant group meets EPC.10 rubric expectations by providing clear identification of Tier 1 curricula, evidence of quality alignment to Louisiana State Standards, and a comprehensive plan for classroom implementation.
	EPC.11 - Hybrid Plan - GEO Lower outlines a contingency plan for transitioning to hybrid or remote learning in the event of a natural disaster or other emergency. The narrative states that all students will receive Chromebooks, that teachers are trained to use PowerSchool as the Learning Management System (LMS), and that classes will occur via Google Meets, as they did during the COVID-19 pandemic. The applicant also references annual parent and student technology workshops and the use of ParentSquare for school–family communication. - While the plan includes logistical elements, it does not provide sufficient detail to demonstrate readiness to implement or manage a hybrid learning environment. Specifically, the application indicates that teachers are trained to use PowerSchool but does not describe how attendance or student engagement will be tracked or monitored; fails to specify how instructional quality, grading, and pacing will be maintained during hybrid or remote learning; does not define staff roles or responsibilities during implementation; and lacks a clear plan for ongoing technical support, data management, and equitable access. - Because the submission omits these essential operational details—including how attendance will be verified in a remote setting—the response does not meet EPC.11 rubric expectations, which require a logical, feasible, and comprehensive plan outlining how the LMS and hybrid model will be implemented, monitored, and supported to ensure continuity of instruction and accountability for student learning.
Academic Goals	EPC.12 - Academic Goals



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	• GEO Lower presents measurable academic goals aligned to the Charter School Performance Compact and LEAP 2025 expectations, including proficiency targets of 70percent in English Language Arts and mathematics by year one, with annual increases of 5percent for all students and 55percent for students with disabilities and English learners. • However, the application does not provide sufficient explanation or evidence that these targets are realistic or attainable based on the operator’s historical performance data or the anticipated student population. The plan does not include growth metrics, baseline data, or interim benchmarks to monitor progress toward the stated outcomes. • As a result, the proposed goals do not demonstrate a clear, data-based rationale or a comprehensive system for measuring and adjusting academic performance over time and therefore do not meet EPC 12 rubric expectations.
Louisiana Accountability System - Academic Performance	EPC.13 Louisiana Accountability System - Academic Performance • The applicant provides an overview of Louisiana school performance, noting that GEO Prep Academy, GEO Prep Mid-City, and GEO Next Generation High each hold a “B” School Performance Score and meet Bulletin 126 §306 expansion criteria (no school rated below a “C”). Subgroup data and multi-year growth trends show improvement in Mastery+ rates and progress indices above state and district averages, and the applicant describes annual data-review practices used to inform instruction. • However, the GEO Lower narrative does not address persistent achievement gaps in overall proficiency or explain how lessons from existing elementary performance will inform instructional design and intervention strategies for the proposed Lower Academy. The response also omits performance data from GEO’s out-of-state schools and lacks a portfolio-level analysis of trends across grade bands. As a result, the submission provides strong Louisiana growth data but does not fully meet EPC 13 rubric expectations, offering limited evidence of sustained proficiency gains or network-wide performance analysis required under Bulletin 126.



Section	Evaluation Findings
Assessments	EPC.14 - Assessments • GEO Lower describes an assessment framework aligned to Louisiana State Standards that includes LEAP 360 diagnostics, NWEA MAP growth assessments, and curriculum-embedded Tier 1 measures for grades K–5. The plan identifies formative, interim, and summative assessment cycles and outlines a structure for reviewing data through weekly TAP cluster meetings, end-of-unit reviews, and annual academic retreats. These elements demonstrate that GEO has an established process for monitoring student progress and using assessment information to guide instructional planning, satisfying EPC 14 rubric requirements. • The plan would be strengthened by clearer examples of how assessment outcomes lead to specific instructional adjustments and by an explanation of how students and families engage with progress data to support early academic intervention and continuous improvement.
Diverse Learners and Student Supports	EPC.15 - Diverse Learner and Student Supports • The applicant outlines identification and service procedures for Students with Disabilities, English Learners, students who are academically behind, and students who are academically advanced. The narrative references RTI/SBLC processes, Child Find, IDEA timelines, IEP and ILP development, and gifted identification in alignment with Louisiana Bulletins 1508 and 1530. • However, the plan contains material gaps. It misstates English Learner assessment procedures by identifying the ELPS as an annual assessment rather than the ELPT; omits Section 504 identification and service procedures; and provides insufficient explanation of how IEPs and ILPs will guide differentiated instruction and ongoing progress monitoring. Additionally, while the plan cites several appropriate elementary screening tools (such as DIBELS), it does not clarify how data from these assessments will be systematically used to drive intervention and enrichment decisions. • As submitted, the plan provides procedural descriptions but lacks the clarity, and instructional integration required to ensure compliance and high-quality service delivery for diverse learners. Accordingly, the response does not meet EPC 15 rubric expectations.



Section	Evaluation Findings
Behavior Management	EPC.16 - Behavior Management • GEO Academies provides a comprehensive procedural framework for behavioral management that aligns with Louisiana law and BESE policy. The submission includes clear communication methods for families, detailed due-process protocols, a discipline matrix outlining tiered interventions, and explicit safeguards for students with disabilities. The plan also incorporates universal mental-health screeners, trauma-informed supports, and quarterly data reviews disaggregated by subgroups—demonstrating capacity to monitor fairness and compliance across student populations. • While the plan meets EPC 16 technical expectations for structure, compliance, and oversight, it lacks a developmentally responsive approach appropriate for elementary-age learners. The tone is largely procedural, emphasizing infractions, suspension processes, and documentation rather than proactive instruction in social skills, self-regulation, and conflict resolution. There is limited evidence of positive-behavior teaching, classroom-level reinforcement systems, or family-school collaboration to support early behavior development. • For an experienced operator, a stronger alignment between behavior management, social-emotional learning, and family engagement would demonstrate greater maturity of practice and fuller adherence to the intent of EPC 16.
	Appendix 2: School Model Master Plan • GEO Lower's response provides a structured and legally compliant discipline framework grounded in Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). The plan is embedded within the School Improvement Plan and includes a leadership team responsible for reviewing behavioral data, monitoring trends, and ensuring consistent use of BESE-approved forms in accordance with R.S. 17:416. The framework also identifies alternative education options and describes reward and incentive systems to encourage positive behavior, demonstrating awareness of procedural compliance expectations. • However, the plan does not explain how behavioral expectations will be explicitly taught, modeled, or reinforced for younger students. It details data collection and policy review processes but omits the instructional, cultural, and collaborative components essential to authentic PBIS implementation and



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	required under R.S. 17:252—including clear strategies for positive-behavior instruction, teacher and paraprofessional training, family engagement, and inter-agency coordination. As a result, the submission emphasizes documentation and compliance rather than prevention, restoration, and shared culture-building, and therefore does not meet Appendix 2 rubric expectations for a comprehensive and fully implemented School Model Master Plan.
Parent and Community Engagement	EPC.17 - Parent and Community Engagement • The applicant outlines standard parent-engagement activities—such as College Nights, PTA meetings, and feedback opportunities through conferences and grievance channels—that demonstrate a baseline commitment to family communication. However, the plan remains largely event-driven and transactional, offering no formalized mechanisms to ensure parents or community members have a sustained role in school decision-making or consistent opportunities to provide regular feedback to the school leader or charter board. • As an experienced operator managing multiple schools in the same community, GEO Academies does not articulate how stakeholder input will be systematically gathered, analyzed, or used to guide improvement efforts across its campuses. The proposal also omits structures—such as parent advisory councils, board-level engagement protocols, or recurring satisfaction measures—that would institutionalize two-way communication and accountability. • Without a clear strategy for authentic, ongoing stakeholder engagement, the approach reflects minimal compliance rather than proactive partnership. As a result, GEO Lower’s response falls short of EPC 17 expectations for systems that engage families and community members in shared decision-making, performance monitoring, and collaboration.
	Appendix 3:Grievance Policy • The applicant’s response provides a multi-tiered grievance policy that outlines specific channels for families, students, and community stakeholders to raise and resolve concerns. The policy details how complaints are filed, investigated, and appealed; defines written-submission requirements and response



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	timelines; and establishes a transparent escalation process—from the classroom level to the Head of School, Superintendent, and ultimately the Board of Directors. • This framework demonstrates procedural fairness and organizational maturity. It balances accessibility and accountability by encouraging resolution at the lowest level while ensuring final oversight by the governing board. The inclusion of defined responsibilities, due-process protections, and formal board review aligns directly with Appendix 3 rubric expectations and reflects strong governance capacity.
Growth Plan	GP.18 - Growth Plan • GEO Lower’s growth plan relies on maintaining the same operational and instructional systems currently in use across its existing East Baton Rouge campuses. This continuity reflects organizational stability and procedural readiness, indicating that GEO Academies has the foundational infrastructure to support an additional school without major disruption. • While this approach satisfies the rubric’s minimum expectation for experienced operators to demonstrate an established foundation, the plan stops short of presenting a fully strategic scaling framework. It does not explain how GEO Lower will adapt its existing systems to address declining elementary enrollment trends, local competition among network campuses, or the recruitment and retention demands associated with launching a new K–5 school. • The response meets expectations for operational preparedness but lacks the strategic differentiation and market analysis that would demonstrate forward-looking growth management in a crowded and enrollment-challenged environment.
	GP.19 - Impact on Louisiana • The applicant explains that the proposed GEO North Baton Rouge Lower Academy will expand the organization’s Louisiana footprint and help establish a full K–12 continuum within the Baton Rouge market. The plan positions the new school as an opportunity to strengthen GEO’s overall service to students by leveraging the network’s existing infrastructure, shared leadership, and professional development systems. The applicant notes that centralized operations—such as data management,



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	curriculum support, and compliance oversight—will allow the organization to scale efficiently while maintaining instructional consistency across campuses. • These elements demonstrate a rationale for how expansion could enhance GEO’s collective capacity to serve Louisiana students through continuity of academic pathways and the efficient use of existing resources. • However, the response lacks evidence-based justification demonstrating that the addition of a new elementary campus will measurably improve GEO’s overall student outcomes, operational efficiency, or systemwide performance. The narrative does not connect past performance data or lessons learned from existing schools to the anticipated benefits of replication. • Overall, the proposal provides a reasonable theory of organizational improvement through continuity and economies of scale, and it meets GP.19 rubric expectations; however, the rationale would have been stronger had the applicant provided accompanying evidence or performance data to substantiate the anticipated network-wide benefits.
	GP.20 - Non-Profit History • The applicant reports no history of litigation, arbitration, charter revocation, school closure, or failure to open for GEO Academies, GEO Foundation, or the current Louisiana board. This clean record demonstrates organizational stability, compliance, and low authorizer risk, supporting confidence in the operator’s capacity to open and sustain the proposed school. The applicant meets expectations for GP 20.
Organizational Plan and Capacity	Add Section Rating Here
Staffing	OPC.21 - Roles and Responsibilities • The applicant clearly defines the respective responsibilities of Board Leadership, Network Leadership, and School Leadership, demonstrating a coherent governance and management framework. The Board is tasked with setting strategic goals, ensuring financial and academic accountability, and monitoring performance; the Network Leadership oversees system-wide operations and provides daily support to



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	school leaders; and the School Leadership manages instructional outcomes, school culture, and community engagement. • This delineation reflects appropriate checks and balances and a well-structured distribution of authority, ensuring both accountability and operational efficiency. The clarity of these roles supports effective oversight and alignment with the school's mission, meeting expectations for this criterion.
	OPC.22 - Reporting and Accountability • The applicant provides a staffing structure that delineates leadership, instructional, and support roles aligned to the school's academic and operational model. The proposed structure reflects a balanced distribution of responsibilities across administrative, instructional, and student support functions, ensuring coverage of core compliance and instructional areas. Position descriptions and reporting relationships demonstrate organizational coherence and readiness, illustrating how school-level staff will collaborate with the GEO network for finance, operations, and talent management. The clarity and alignment of the staffing plan demonstrate capacity to execute the proposed model and meet rubric expectations.
	OPC.23 - Teacher Student Ratio • The applicant lists ratios of 12.5:1, 10.5:1, and an overall 6:1 adult-to-student ratio, but does not clarify which figures represent certified teacher-to-student ratios versus total classroom staff. Louisiana law (R.S. 17:7(2)(a)) requires ratios of 20:1 in grades K–3 and 25:1 in grades 4–6, yet the response combines teachers, assistants, and support staff without distinction. Because the narrative does not clearly identify the number of certified teachers assigned per classroom or verify compliance with state standards, the response does not meet OPC.23 rubric expectations.
	OPC.24 - Staff Hiring and Dismissing



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	• The applicant presents detailed procedures for hiring, discipline, and dismissal that demonstrate compliance with employment law and BESE policy. Background checks, onboarding steps, and non-discrimination provisions are clearly articulated and reflect operational soundness. • However, the plan emphasizes process over strategy. It does not describe how recruitment efforts will attract high-quality, certified elementary teachers or how selection criteria align with the school's instructional model. There is no evidence of historical hiring data or localized recruitment outcomes, even though GEO already operates multiple campuses in Baton Rouge and should be able to reference proven methods or results. • A more mature hiring plan would link these procedures to measurable quality controls—such as candidate yield, performance benchmarks, and retention outcomes—to show that the system not only meets compliance but drives instructional excellence. As submitted, the plan demonstrates HR compliance but not staffing effectiveness and therefore does not meet rubric expectations for OPC 24.
	OPC.25 -Teacher Turnover • GEO Lower describes a centralized Talent and Development Team and a network-based hiring pipeline that draws from community members and registered substitute teachers in the East Baton Rouge region. This framework demonstrates an understanding of how to leverage network resources to maintain staffing consistency. • However, the plan provides no evidence of how this pipeline has performed in practice—such as historical fill rates, teacher conversion data, or time-to-hire metrics from GEO's existing Baton Rouge schools. The description of structures without accompanying results suggests capacity but not demonstrated effectiveness. • Given that GEO already operates several schools in the same region, a more data-informed approach would be expected at this stage, showing how prior hiring efforts have met targets, mitigated shortages, and informed improvements for the new campus. While the plan reflects readiness and intent, the lack of



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	accompanying analysis limits evidence of full implementation or continuous improvement; therefore, the response does not meet rubric expectations.
	OPC.26 - Recruitment Plan and Timeline for Hiring • The applicant outlines a framework for staffing and retention, citing GEO's Talent and Development Team, centralized recruitment process, and several teacher appreciation and incentive initiatives intended to strengthen culture and reduce turnover. These structures demonstrate operational capacity and network-level experience managing talent pipelines across existing GEO campuses. • However, the plan is largely descriptive rather than evidence-based. It offers little data demonstrating the effectiveness or adaptability of these strategies within Louisiana's elementary educator workforce, and omits historical information on hiring timeliness, vacancy rates, or retention outcomes. This gap is notable given GEO's established Baton Rouge presence, where greater specificity and demonstrated success should be evident. • A more robust staffing plan would include defined recruitment and retention metrics—integrating teacher performance data, targeted professional development, and differentiated supports tied to measurable outcomes. Its absence signals readiness but not preparedness, and therefore does not meet rubric expectations for demonstrating a sustainable and data-driven human-capital strategy.
School Leadership Team Capacity	Appendix 4: Leadership Team Resumes • The applicant provides résumés for the proposed leadership team that outline prior roles in education and school management. While these documents reflect experience across instructional and operational domains, they offer limited evidence of demonstrated impact. The materials describe responsibilities but seldom reference tangible outcomes—such as student achievement gains, school performance improvements, or operational efficiencies realized under their leadership. • This absence of results-based evidence makes it difficult to discern whether the proposed team has a track record of driving measurable improvement or sustaining performance at scale. In an experienced-operator model, credibility rests not only on familiarity with school systems but on proven



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	capacity to translate experience into results. Without clear performance evidence, the leadership team's readiness to replicate success in the proposed school remains uncertain; therefore, the submission does not meet Appendix 4 rubric expectations.
Charter Board Governance	OPC.27 - Charter Board Governance • The applicant identifies six proposed board members with backgrounds in education policy, finance, social work, marketing, technology, and fundraising, offering broad professional diversity. The roster includes at least one member with academic expertise and others with operational and financial experience, satisfying the composition and coverage requirements outlined in the rubric. • While the board member descriptions are primarily biographical rather than results-based, they sufficiently demonstrate that the group collectively possesses the range of knowledge and functional expertise necessary to oversee school management and ensure sound governance. The board's size, diversity, and defined expertise areas meet OPC.27 rubric expectations.
	Appendix 5: Board member Resumes • The GEO Lower submission includes résumés for all six proposed board members, meeting the completeness requirement. The board composition satisfies the Type 2 expectation that at least 60 percent of members reside in the community served by the school, demonstrating local representation. While some résumés vary in depth and detail, all required materials were submitted, and the information provided satisfies the Appendix 5 criteria for completeness and community alignment.
	OPC.28 - Conflicts of Interest • The applicant provides a comprehensive conflict-of-interest policy consistent with Louisiana Board of Ethics standards, supported by annual certification and recusal procedures. The process is clear, proactive, and compliant. The response meets expectations for OPC 28.



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	OPC.29 - Board Purpose, Structure, and Role • GEO North Baton Rouge Lower provides a legally compliant description of the governing board’s purpose, structure, and role. The narrative outlines how the board will advance the school’s mission while maintaining oversight of academic, financial, and operational performance in accordance with BESE and Louisiana charter law. The plan defines board composition, officer roles, and committee functions, demonstrating an understanding of the distinction between governance and management. Collectively, these elements establish a sound governance foundation that supports accountability, transparency, and alignment with the school’s mission, meeting the rubric standard.
	OPC.30 - Measurable Organizational and Financial Goals • The applicant identifies a comprehensive and clearly structured set of organizational and financial goals aligned with the Charter School Performance Compact. These goals address key areas of school performance, including enrollment equity, student discipline, special populations, compliance, and fiscal health. Each goal includes measurable indicators—such as maintaining an 85percent re-enrollment rate, keeping suspension rates below 3percent, ensuring 0percent of evaluations out of compliance for students with disabilities, and maintaining a balanced budget with appropriate reserves. • The framework demonstrates strong attention to legal compliance, operational accountability, and fiscal responsibility, reflecting the organization’s capacity to manage multiple schools effectively. By aligning targets to BESE and LDOE standards and embedding oversight through the network’s governance and financial systems, GEO presents a clear process for monitoring performance and maintaining high organizational standards. • While primarily compliance-focused, the goals collectively establish a coherent structure for tracking progress, promoting transparency, and ensuring organizational stability. Taken together, these elements satisfy OPC.30 rubric expectations and demonstrate the applicant’s readiness to monitor and sustain performance across its Louisiana network.
	OPC.31- Monitoring Progress Towards Goals



Section	Evaluation Findings
	• GEO North Baton Rouge Lower references the board’s responsibility for academic oversight but does not provide a structured or measurable process for monitoring school performance. The plan lacks evidence of a defined data review schedule, identified metrics, or corrective action procedures to guide board decision-making. Without a consistent and transparent system for tracking progress toward academic goals, the board’s ability to ensure accountability and respond to underperformance remains unclear. As a result, the response does not meet the rubric standard, which requires a defined process, clear metrics, and regular data review to ensure effective academic oversight.
	OPC.32 - Evaluation of Leadership and Progress Monitoring for Charter Renewal • GEO Lower discusses the importance of evaluating the school leader but does not present a structured or measurable evaluation process. The narrative lacks evidence of a formal performance evaluation tool, defined metrics, or a timeline for assessing the leader’s effectiveness. Without clear processes for data review, performance accountability, or documented feedback, the plan does not demonstrate how the governing board will monitor or ensure leader effectiveness. As submitted, the response does not meet the rubric standard, which requires a defined, measurable, and board-led evaluation system to ensure accountability and continuous improvement.
	OPC. 33 - Management and Accounting Practices • The applicant delineates clear roles and responsibilities between the governing board and GEO Academies management, establishing systems for financial oversight consistent with BESE and Louisiana statutory requirements. The plan outlines checks and balances between the board and management organization, supported by defined procedures for reporting, budget review, and decision-making authority. References to conflict-of-interest policies, Open Meetings compliance, and audit practices further demonstrate transparency and accountability. Collectively, these policies and internal controls are likely to sustain the school’s financial health and ensure compliance with public funding requirements. The response meets expectations for OPC 33.



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	OPC.34 - Board On-Boarding and Training GEO Lower presents a qualified and well-rounded governing board whose collective expertise spans education, finance, law, nonprofit management, and community leadership, ensuring the capacity to provide strong oversight and strategic guidance. The board’s composition aligns with Louisiana charter governance requirements and reflects a deliberate effort to balance local representation with operational experience from the GEO network. Members with backgrounds in school leadership and fiscal management strengthen the board’s ability to monitor performance and ensure compliance. Board members participate in onboarding and ongoing training relevant to charter governance, supported by a logical training schedule with clearly defined topics and an embedded culture of continuous development. Overall, the governing board demonstrates the structure, expertise, and ongoing capacity necessary for effective governance, meeting the rubric standard. The response meets expectations for OPC 34.
	OPC.35 - Meeting Schedule GEO North Baton Rouge Lower provides a clear and compliant board meeting schedule that meets BESE expectations for frequency, transparency, and public access. The schedule reflects a consistent cadence of meetings throughout the year, allowing for timely oversight of academic, financial, and operational performance. The plan also affirms adherence to Louisiana Open Meetings Law, ensuring that meetings are publicly noticed and accessible. Overall, the submission demonstrates a governance structure that supports accountability and effective organizational oversight. The response meets expectations for OPC 35.
	Appendix 6: Bylaws GEO North Baton Rouge Upper submitted comprehensive and compliant governing board bylaws that clearly outline board composition, officer roles, election and removal procedures, quorum requirements, and conflict-of-interest provisions aligned with Louisiana charter law and BESE policy. The bylaws also address Open Meetings and Public Records compliance, ensuring transparency and accountability in governance. Collectively, these elements provide a clear and operational framework



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	that supports effective oversight and demonstrates the governing board's readiness to fulfill its statutory responsibilities, thereby meeting criteria expectations .
Financial Plan and Capacity	Add Section Rating Here
Operational Management and Leadership	FPC.36 - Operational Management and Leadership Geo Academies present a leadership team with clearly defined roles and professional backgrounds aligned to their areas of responsibility. The team collectively demonstrates expertise across staffing, professional development, performance management, general operations, and facilities management. The qualifications of key leaders—including the CFO, Director of Finance, Chief Academic Officer, Chief Operations Officer, and HR Director—reflect substantial experience in school finance, instructional leadership, organizational management, and human resources. The applicants' response meets expectations for FPC 36.
	FPC.37 - Non-Academic Services - GEO Academies presents a clear and feasible plan for managing non-academic services, assigning specific oversight roles for transportation, food service, facilities, purchasing, student records, and safety that align with its existing network structure, meeting rubric expectations for defined responsibilities and operational readiness. - However, the transportation narrative lacks sufficient detail on how routes, vendor expectations, and accommodations will ensure equitable access and compliance for students with disabilities and economically disadvantaged students, creating a risk of noncompliance with IDEA and state requirements and potentially undermining family confidence and enrollment among students requiring specialized or subsidized transportation support; therefore it fails to meet rubric expectations.
Student Enrollment and Recruitment	FPC.38 - Student Enrollment and Recruitment The applicant's response meets the rubric expectation by providing a compliant and inclusive



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	enrollment plan aligned with its mission and target population. GEO outlines outreach strategies, family engagement, and waitlist data from existing Baton Rouge schools, demonstrating understanding of equitable access and nondiscriminatory recruitment practices. • While the plan reflects attention to access and inclusion, it does not fully demonstrate that projected enrollment is feasible or sustainable for a new K-5 campus in the current Baton Rouge market. The proposal assumes full enrollment in Year 1 without substantiating demand through demographic or trend analysis. Given that GEO already operates multiple schools in the same area serving similar students, the absence of clear differentiation or evidence of new community demand suggests the proposed school may shift, rather than increase, total enrollment.
Financial Plan	FPC.39 - Financial Plan • GEO presents a complete and technically compliant financial plan supported by established accounting systems, conservative budgeting practices, and a history of clean audits. The applicant appropriately excludes speculative revenues, such as the Charter School Program (CSP) grant, reflecting fiscal prudence and alignment with standard accounting practices. • However, the plan does not meet rubric expectations for financial feasibility and long-term sustainability. Several material weaknesses undermine confidence in the school's financial stability, including thin ending fund balances, omission of line-of-credit repayment and interest costs, and inconsistent or unexplained expense categories such as "Other," administrative fees, insurance, and repairs. Audit costs appear only in Year 1, indicating incomplete planning for recurring obligations. • More critically, the model's viability depends on achieving full enrollment across multiple GEO campuses operating within the same Baton Rouge market. GEO Prep, GEO Mid-City, and GEO Baker already recruit for similar grade levels, creating direct overlap with the proposed GEO Upper Academy. Without evidence of differentiated programming, feeder pathways, or market growth, enrollment assumptions appear overly optimistic. This dependence on shared enrollment across an expanding network exposes the budget to significant revenue shortfalls and limits the school's capacity to sustain operations under realistic conditions. As a result, the financial plan does not meet the rubric standard for



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	demonstrating a complete, feasible, and sustainable model.
	FPC.40 - Contingency Plan • GEO identifies a general approach to protecting classroom instruction during potential budget shortfalls, emphasizing that administrative and operational reductions would precede instructional cuts and that the CMO may extend no-interest loans to stabilize cash flow. This demonstrates awareness of fiscal responsibility and a stated intent to prioritize learning continuity. • However, the plan lacks the specificity and structure required to ensure operational readiness in the event of reduced revenues or increased costs. The response does not include a defined set of financial triggers, a tiered reduction plan, or a clear decision-making framework to guide timely and coordinated action. Reliance on internal CMO loans introduces additional risk given GEO's ongoing expansion and overlapping student recruitment across Baton Rouge campuses; simultaneous shortfalls could quickly strain shared resources. Moreover, the narrative offers no evidence of scenario planning, reserve targets, or documented procedures to monitor and respond to cash flow challenges. • Without a demonstrably feasible and data-driven contingency framework, the plan does not provide sufficient assurance that the school could sustain operations or instructional quality during financial stress. As a result, the response does not meet the rubric standard for FPC 40.
	FPC.41 - Financial Manager • GEO's response meets the rubric expectation by identifying a qualified financial management team, including a CPA-credentialed Chief Financial Officer and a Director of Finance and Accounting responsible for compliance, reporting, and fiscal oversight. The applicant demonstrates maturity in financial governance through established systems with clear segregation of duties, internal controls, and a consistent record of clean audits across existing campuses. • However, the plan does not fully address how financial management capacity will scale with the proposed network expansion. GEO currently operates four Baton Rouge schools and seeks to open two more, yet the narrative does not indicate whether additional finance staff or localized support will be added to



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	maintain oversight and timely reporting. The network's financial interdependence and reliance on per-pupil revenue heighten the risk of overextension without expanded staffing or regionalized controls. Overall, GEO's financial systems and leadership experience meet expectations for oversight and operational readiness, though the pace of expansion presents moderate risk if capacity is not increased accordingly.
	Appendix 7: Financial Manager or Back Office Service Provider Resume The applicant provides a qualified financial professional with extensive school-based and charter-relevant experience, supported by a clearly defined role within the organization. The résumé and scope of responsibilities align with the rubric's requirements for financial oversight capacity.
	FPC.42 - Financial Requirements/Expectations GEO demonstrates a consistent record of financial compliance across its portfolio, meeting rubric expectations for authorizer and regulatory accountability. The applicant affirms that all GEO schools are in good standing with local and state authorizers and have completed clean audits and federal grant monitoring, including Title I and CSP compliance reviews. No schools are identified as failing to meet financial requirements or expectations under Louisiana Department of Education oversight. Oversight by a licensed CPA, strong internal controls, and layered board review further support fiscal stability and accountability. The network's unbroken record of compliance across multiple campuses indicates institutional maturity and the capacity to manage public funds responsibly. The applicant response meets expectations for FPC 42.
	FPC.43 - Annual Budgeting Process GEO's response meets the rubric expectation by outlining a structured, compliant budgeting process aligned with Louisiana charter finance requirements. The plan involves collaboration among the CFO, Business Manager, Board Finance Committee, and school leaders, with clear adherence to state policies



Section	Evaluation Findings
	such as maintaining 70percent instructional spending, required fund balances, and timely state submission. The described timeline—from spring planning through board approval and quarterly reviews—demonstrates a mature governance process. • However, the response focuses on procedure rather than adaptability. GEO currently operates four Baton Rouge schools and seeks approval for two more, yet the process does not address how budgets will be coordinated across campuses or how shared-service costs and administrative fees will be allocated. The plan also assumes full enrollment and stable revenue without defining triggers or timelines for midyear adjustments. • Overall, the budgeting process is sound and compliant but limited in depth. While it meets rubric expectations for structure and oversight, it does not fully demonstrate readiness to manage fiscal complexity or enrollment variance in a rapidly expanding network.
	Appendix 8: Insurance Coverage • GEO’s response meets and slightly exceeds the rubric expectation by providing comprehensive insurance certificates covering general liability, property, workers’ compensation, and board liability. Coverage levels appear adequate and aligned with Louisiana charter requirements. Minor follow-up is needed to confirm current effective dates and deductible details, but overall, GEO Lower’s submission demonstrates compliance and readiness for operation.
High School Addendum (If Applicable)	
High School Addendum	HSA.1 - Non-Essential Courses
	HSA.2 - Diploma Pathways
	Appendix 9 - Course Offerings- completion of chosen Pathway
	Appendix 10 - Advanced Placement Course Offerings, Dual Enrollment, ACT preparation, and Career



Section	Evaluation Findings
	and Technical Education Courses by Grade Level
	HSA.3 - Advanced Placement Course Offerings, Dual Enrollment, ACT preparation, and Career and Technical Education Courses Rationale
	HSA.4 - Industry-Based Certification Offered
	HSA.5 - Access to Internships
	HSA.6 - Systems and Structures for At-Risk Students
Corporate Partnership Addendum (if applicable)	N/A
Corporate Partnerships Addendum	CPA. 1 - Description of Corporate Partnership and MOU/Contract
	Appendix 11: Letter of Intent of the intended partner
Educational Services Provider Addendum (if applicable)	<i>The applicant indicated in the Eligibility Determination Document and School Management Form that GEO Academies Louisiana will partner with GEO Foundation, a non-profit entity, for school management. However, GEO did not complete the ESP Tab in the overview document, which informs the budget, and the operating and start-up statements do not reflect any management fees. The ESP Addendum was also not completed, and Appendices 12 and 13 were not provided. As a result, the application lacks the required information describing the scope of services, financial terms, governance roles, and performance oversight related to the proposed management partnership. Without these materials, reviewers cannot confirm or evaluate whether an ESP</i>



Section	Evaluation Findings
	<i>relationship exists for GEO Academies.</i>
	ESPA.1 - Rationale for considering an ESP not already partnered with the non-profit Does not meet the standard
	ESPA.2 - Responsibilities of the ESP (Decisions and Services) Does not meet the standard
	ESPA.3 - ESP Accountability Does not meet the standard
	ESPA.4 - ESP History including Litigation Does not meet the standard
	Appendix 12: Does not meet the standard
	Appendix 13: Does not meet the standard
Virtual Operator Addendum (if applicable)	N/A



Section	Evaluation Findings
	VOA. 1- VOA.10
Capacity Interview Standards	Add Section Rating Here
	FTC. 1 - Board Capacity to Govern
	FTC. 2 - School Leader Capacity to Found and Lead



SECTION I – EDUCATIONAL PLAN & CAPACITY

ES.3 – Educational Model

GEO Lower Elementary builds on the proven GEO Academies model that combines rigorous Tier 1 curricula with individualized student supports and early exposure to college pathways. Across GEO Prep Mid City, GEO Prep Sherwood, and GEO Prep Baker, this model has yielded consistent SPS and K-2 reading growth since launch with each GEO site growing 20+ points in SPS since COVID. Additionally, all GEO schools serving this grade band have been recognized as “Top Gains” schools by the LDOE recognizing our success at closing the achievement gap. Central to the GEO model is the NIET TAP System for Teacher and Student Advancement, which structures professional learning and accountability around four components: career pathways, instructional rubrics, ongoing applied professional growth, and performance-based compensation (*NIET.org*). Through TAP, each campus embeds a Master Teacher and Mentor Teacher team who lead weekly cluster meetings where staff analyze student data, review student work, and plan reteaching cycles. This system ensures that instruction is both standards-based and responsive to individual needs. The implementation of this program ensures high-quality instruction in every classroom and develops teachers at a better rate than traditional development plans. The GEO model’s difference lies in its combination of data-driven instruction, frequent feedback, and college-going culture beginning in the elementary grades. Every student receives differentiated intervention blocks and enrichment aligned to benchmark data. This integrated approach has resulted in proficiency gains at GEO schools.

ES.4

While the Baton Rouge region has multiple elementary options, few provide the comprehensive instructional and leadership model that GEO offers. Existing GEO schools demonstrate a pattern of strong academic recovery and growth in neighborhoods with historically low proficiency rates. For example, each of our current schools has grown over 20 points in SPS since COVID and all are currently “B”-rated schools. Specifically, our Mid City campus was a failing school and in turnaround status when GEO began operation. Since, the school has shown significant growth from an F to a B designation. GEO Lower will extend this impact by serving an additional 600 students in grades K–5, targeting attendance zones where fewer than 25 % of students meet state proficiency expectations. Through the NIET TAP framework, teachers receive weekly feedback on indicators directly correlated with student growth—specifically, the “Designing and Planning Instruction” and “Presenting Instruction” domains of the NIET Rubric. Quarterly TAP Leadership Team meetings analyze trend data from these evaluations alongside LEAP 360 benchmarks to identify priorities for reteaching and professional development. This rigorous cycle of feedback and accountability ensures every teacher’s improvement is directly tied to student outcomes. The GEO model’s documented success across Baton Rouge campuses demonstrates that replication at GEO Lower will yield measurable community impact rather than market duplication.

EPC.6

GEO is currently in the process of reviewing potential facility locations for the proposed elementary school, which makes providing finalized, site-specific demographic projections premature. However, based on our extensive presence in East Baton Rouge Parish, we anticipate that the student population will closely mirror that of our existing GEO schools; 95% African American and the remaining Hispanic, with more than 90% of students qualifying as

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economically disadvantaged. These demographics are consistent across our network and reflect the communities we have successfully served for over a decade. While we recognize the reviewer's concern regarding the use of parish-level data, our enrollment history and community engagement clearly demonstrate that the demand for high-quality schools in North Baton Rouge remains significant. According to LDOE data, over 10,000 students in East Baton Rouge Parish are currently enrolled in D- or F-rated schools, representing families who continue to lack access to high-quality public education options. GEO's continued expansion responds directly to this unmet need, not market saturation. GEO's existing campuses, Mid City, Sherwood, Baker, and Next Generation High—collectively maintain waitlists each year despite increased capacity, indicating both community trust and sustained demand. The proposed GEO North Baton Rouge Elementary will expand access for these families. Community listening sessions with parents from Baker and Baton Rouge highlighted shared priorities: smaller class sizes, lower teacher turnover, and more enrichment opportunities. GEO's TAP/NIET system directly addresses each of these concerns by providing structured professional development, embedded coaching, and teacher leadership pathways that promote retention and instructional consistency. Together, these factors demonstrate that GEO Lower is not duplicating services within a saturated market, but rather expanding access to quality seats for students and families who currently lack them. Our partnerships model to our underserved community what is possible and provide access to these options at an early age. In addition, GEO's strategic partnerships with organizations such as the YMCA of the Capital Area, Baton Rouge Community College, and local faith-based and nonprofit partners extend the school's impact beyond the classroom. These collaborations provide students and families with access to afterschool enrichment, summer learning, mentorship, and wraparound supports that strengthen both academic outcomes and community vitality. Our partnerships model for the community what is possible when schools, families, and local organizations work together—broadening access to opportunity and reinforcing the vision of a high-quality public education for every child in North Baton Rouge.

EPC.7

The projected population is 95% African American, 5 % Hispanic with 14 % students with disabilities and 9 % English learners. Which is comparable to our current schools and the demographics of the region. GEO Lower intentionally mirrors neighborhood demographics, ensuring equitable access through transportation routes and targeted family outreach in Spanish and English. TAP cluster teams receive quarterly training on culturally responsive pedagogy using NIET's resources.

EPC.8

Since the initial submission, GEO has expanded its stakeholder outreach to include parent forums, faith-based coalitions, and local business roundtables *and community liasons*. More than 100 families attended community listening sessions in spring/summer 2025, providing feedback on transportation routes, uniform policies, and after-school offerings. Additionally, GEO's enrollment has grown by ~20% since last year indicated a strong demand for the GEO model.

EPC.9

Each design element of GEO Lower is anchored in data and replicates practices proven successful at other GEO Louisiana schools: 1. Data-Driven Instruction: Teachers analyze benchmark and formative data weekly in TAP cluster meetings to adjust instructional strategies

GEO Lower

and groupings. 2. Individualized Learning Time: Every student receives a 30-minute daily intervention block for reteaching or enrichment based on data, 3. College and Career Exposure: Even at the elementary level, students take virtual field trips to partner colleges and learn about career pathways, 4. Family Engagement: Quarterly data nights mirror the TAP model's feedback structure—families review student progress and set goals. These design elements are supported by evidence from GEO Prep Mid City and GEO Prep Academy, which showed double-digit growth on state assessments after TAP implementation. Additionally, GEO's network shows significant achievement in K-2 reading as reported by the state. With West Feliciana Parish (#1 ranked district in the state) the only district that surpassed the GEO schools (by 1%) in the region with GEO schools averaging 77% of K-2 students reading on or above grade level based on the EOY dibels assessment.

EPC.11

While GEO Lower will operate primarily as a traditional in-person school, its instructional model includes digital components that extend learning beyond the classroom. All students are issued Chromebooks and have access to Google Classroom and Zearn Math for formative tasks. Teachers track participation and progress through the SIS, which syncs with PowerSchool for attendance and grading. Through the NIET TAP System, Master and Mentor Teachers model the integration of technology-enhanced lessons during cluster meetings, demonstrating how to align online formative assessments with Tier 1 standards. The GEO data team supports teachers in using these digital tools to provide immediate feedback and intervention. These practices have already produced measurable gains in blended environments at GEO Prep Sherwood, where online fluency practice raised math proficiency significantly between 2022 and 2024.

EPC.12

GEO is a data-focused organization that regularly collects student academic data and derives goals using that information. We recognize that, without current enrollment or academic information, developing accurate targets are difficult. However, GEO has a long track record of student achievement across all LA schools indicated the use of data to drive instruction effectively. We do this by beginning with the collection of baseline data (LEAP, Dibels, curriculum-based assessments, etc.) and formulated growth metrics that represented rigorous, yet attainable, goals for all students (e.g. increase the percentage of students scoring proficient by 10%). Each TAP Leadership Team meeting analyzes performance against these targets. The "Value-Added Growth" component of the NIET system provides an additional measure of teacher effectiveness linked to student outcomes. Quarterly dashboards present this data in the same format used by other GEO Louisiana schools to ensure transparency and comparability.

EPC.13

GEO Academies is building a unified performance framework that consolidates data from all Louisiana campuses. This includes LEAP performance, attendance, discipline, and teacher retention metrics. The Regional team reviews this data regularly with school leaders to identify trends and share best practices. The accountability framework directly aligns to LDOE's current SPS components (Achievement, Progress, and Interests & Opportunities). NIET's Leadership Rubric domains—Instructional Leadership, Teacher Effectiveness, and Culture—map to these same components, creating a consistent lens for evaluation. GEO also stands ready to adjust instruction as needed to account for the State's changing accountability. Our strong track record

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of student growth supports our model's alignment to the accountability system. Regarding achievement gaps, GEO intentionally locates within underserved communities where these gaps are the widest. Our schools have shown consistently high progress ratings indicated our chosen instructional practices consistently close those gaps with each of our K-8 schools being recognized as Top Gains schools by the LDOE.

EPC.15 – Diverse Learners & Supports

GEO Lower is committed to meeting the needs of all learners, including students with disabilities, English Learners (ELs), and those served under Section 504. The school follows all federal and state requirements under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and Louisiana's English Learner policies, ensuring that services are compliant, equitable, and instructional in nature.

Special Education (IEPs): All students identified with disabilities will receive services as outlined in their Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), developed collaboratively by the IEP team—including parents, teachers, and specialists. IEPs directly inform lesson planning and classroom instruction. Teachers review goals and accommodations quarterly during TAP cluster meetings, where data from classroom assessments and progress-monitoring tools are analyzed to adjust supports, reteach strategies, and intervention schedules.

Section 504 Plans: The school-based ESS coordinator ensures that eligible students receive appropriate accommodations. Plans are reviewed annually or as needed, with all accommodations documented in PowerSchool and communicated to teachers during beginning-of-year and midyear professional learning sessions.

English Learners (ELs): GEO uses the English Language Proficiency Screener (ELPS) for initial identification and the English Language Proficiency Test (ELPT) for annual growth measurement, in accordance with LDOE guidelines. Students receive tiered language instruction aligned to WIDA proficiency levels. EL plans are integrated into the TAP instructional framework so that classroom teachers and interventionists collaboratively plan vocabulary development, sheltered instruction, and linguistic scaffolding.

Data-Driven Instruction: Teachers systematically analyze multiple measures, DIBELS, LEAP 360, formative classroom assessments, and curriculum-embedded checkpoints, to identify students needing intervention or enrichment. These data are tracked in the school's RTI (Response to Intervention) system, which triggers targeted supports such as small-group instruction, phonics intervention, or extension tasks. The TAP Master Teacher leads these reviews weekly, ensuring data-based decisions translate into differentiated classroom practice.

Progress Monitoring: Intervention effectiveness is reviewed every 4–6 weeks. Students not making adequate progress are referred to the Student Assistance Team (SAT) for further evaluation or modification of supports. All adjustments are documented and communicated to families to ensure transparency and shared accountability.

Through these integrated systems: accurate procedural compliance, consistent data review, and embedded teacher collaboration, GEO Lower ensures that all students, regardless of background or ability, receive the instruction, support, and challenge necessary to achieve at high levels.

TAP coaching sessions emphasize differentiation using NIET Rubric indicators for “Expectations,” “Lesson Structure,” and “Student Work.” Master Teachers model strategies such

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as language scaffolds and universal design principles to ensure access for all students. Progress is tracked through data folders and reported to families each quarter.

EPC.17 Parent engagement at GEO Lower is embedded in the school's governance and continuous-improvement systems. Surveys and feedback forms are administered twice per year, with results reported to the board and used to shape policy decisions such as transportation routes and school calendar adjustments. The TAP system's emphasis on feedback loops extends to families as well: teachers share lesson objectives and student growth data with parents weekly through digital portals and conferences. Community partnerships with the YMCA and local church coalitions expand family support services, demonstrating GEO's commitment to authentic, ongoing engagement.

OPC. 23 GEO maintains student to teacher ratios of 20:1 or less in all K-2 grades and 24:1 or less in all 3-5 grades in accordance to state law and best practice.

OPC.31

Each GEO Louisiana school operates under a uniform Performance Dashboard reviewed quarterly by both campus and regional teams. The dashboard aggregates SPS indicators, interim assessment data, attendance, and discipline trends. School leaders present the results during GEO's Regional Data Reviews, a process modeled on TAP's leadership meetings where principals analyze teacher- and student-growth data to determine next-step coaching priorities. The Regional team provides feedback and documents next actions in a shared tracker monitored by the board's Academic Committee. This transparent cycle ensures that goal-setting, monitoring, and intervention occur in real time.

OPC.32 The principal evaluation process mirrors the NIET Principal Standards Rubric, assessing Instructional Leadership, Talent Development, Culture, and Operations. The Regional leadership conducts mid-year and annual reviews using evidence from classroom walkthroughs, TAP Leadership Team minutes, and teacher-value-added data. Findings feed into each leader's Individual Growth Plan, which is revisited quarterly. This evaluation approach—already implemented at GEO Prep Mid City and GEO Prep Sherwood—links leader accountability directly to measurable student outcomes and faculty development and involves GEO's board in the process

OPC.24–26 GEO Louisiana maintains a teacher pipeline partnership with local universities and Teach 225. Every teacher enters a structured career pathway within the TAP system—Career, Mentor, or Master Teacher—providing clear growth opportunities and performance-based incentives. Mentor Teachers conduct weekly observations and feedback cycles, resulting in turnover rates below 15 % network-wide. Recruitment efforts focus on candidates with strong instructional data histories and alignment to GEO's mission. Retention is supported through leadership coaching and stipended roles for teacher-leaders. Additionally, GEO has developed a Teaching Fellows Program that creates a path for those interested in teaching to gain valuable skills that enable them to have impactful careers within GEO schools. GEO also conducts regular surveys within our network to gain insight into teacher development needs and job satisfaction to maximize retention within the network.

Appendix 4: The team identified within the application was misidentified as the “proposed team.” The regional leadership team exists currently and has a long track record of student achievement within the network identified in several sections above. The current size of our

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network also provides a strong bench of knowledgeable and experienced GEO employees able to support any local expansion.

Governance & Capacity Overview

The GEO Louisiana Board is composed of leaders with finance, education, and community-development backgrounds. All members complete annual training through LAPCS and receive regular (every board meeting) finance and academic updates.

SECTION III – FINANCIAL PLAN & CAPACITY

FPC.37 GEO Lower will contract with vetted transportation providers meeting LDOE and insurance requirements. Routes are planned in partnership between GEO and the transportation vendor to keep ride times minimal and include ADA-compliant buses. Family surveys inform stop locations each semester. Given our current presence (4 schools and nearly 2400 students), we have extensive experience working with transportation providers to ensure access to GEO's network of schools.

FPC.39 While we recognize that these projections are ambitious, they are supported by consistent demand for GEO schools in East Baton Rouge. The network has grown by nearly 20% over the past year and continues to maintain waitlists across multiple campuses. These trends demonstrate sustained family trust in the GEO model and provide a strong foundation for achieving projected enrollment.

GEO's financial team has extensive experience operating schools at scale and managing budgets across varying enrollment levels. Should actual enrollment differ slightly from projections, the network's existing fiscal oversight, shared-services efficiencies, and strong reserve position ensure that instructional quality and staffing stability remain protected. GEO's record of balanced budgets and clean audits at all Louisiana campuses provides evidence of our capacity to responsibly manage financial operations as the network expands.

FPC.40 – Contingency Plan

GEO Academies maintains a strong record of fiscal responsibility across all Louisiana campuses, with annual audits free of findings and consistent compliance with LDOE financial performance standards. Beyond established internal controls, GEO has developed a formalized contingency framework to ensure continued operational stability in the event of revenue shortfalls or cost increases.

Each school's financial dashboard, reviewed regularly by the Regional Finance Team and CFO, includes three key financial triggers:

1. Enrollment variance exceeding 5% of budgeted projections,
2. Cash reserves dropping below 45 days of operating expenses, or
3. Expense growth exceeding 3% over projected levels.

If any trigger is met, the Director of Finance and Accounting convenes a Financial Response Team (Principal, CFO, and Board Treasurer) within ten days to initiate the Tiered Financial Adjustment Plan:

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- Tier 1: Implement immediate cost controls—freeze non-essential travel, defer discretionary purchases, and review vendor contracts.
- Tier 2: Consolidate shared services or reallocate regional supports to reduce overhead without impacting instruction.
- Tier 3: Modify staffing and program budgets only after thorough analysis and board approval, ensuring that classroom instruction and student supports remain the final areas impacted.

Scenario planning is conducted annually during budget development, modeling three fiscal environments: baseline, 5% revenue decline, and 10% adverse case. These models inform staffing ratios, purchasing schedules, and reserve allocations. The Board reviews results and authorizes any necessary budget amendments.

This proactive and data-driven structure ensures GEO Upper can respond swiftly and responsibly to fiscal pressures while safeguarding instructional quality and staff stability—meeting and exceeding the rubric’s expectations for transparent, sustainable financial management.

ESP Clarification

GEO LA does not contract with an Education Service Provider (ESP) for school management. Each GEO Louisiana school is governed by its own nonprofit charter board, which maintains full autonomy and accountability for all academic, financial, and operational decisions.

The GEO Foundation provides limited shared-service support—including financial oversight, compliance assistance, and professional development. School leadership are employees of the local school.

The original application response reflected the question’s broad wording (“contract or partner with an ESP or other organization”) and was intended to acknowledge collaborative partnerships rather than management outsourcing.