



**LDOE Type 5 Charter Application**

**Engaged Learning Academies of Louisiana**

**December 19, 2025**

# Assurances Form

Please provide your assurances to the following items. Your responses serve as an attestation to fulfilling the following provisions if the application is approved.


If the answer to any item below is “No”, please submit a statement of explanation as an attachment.

ASSURANCES		YES	NO
1	The school and/or charter board is organized as a nonprofit corporation under Chapter 2 of Title 12 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes, Nonprofit Corporation Law.	✓	
2	The school and/or governing organization is currently registered as a nonprofit corporation and is listed as in good standing with the Louisiana Secretary of State.	✓	
3	The school is not affiliated with any religious organization and does not support nor engage in any religious activities.	✓	
4	The school and/or governing organization does not have any liens, litigation history, and/or sanctions from any local, state, and/or federal regulatory agency against the nonprofit corporation.	✓	
5	The school and/or governing organization does not have the same or substantially the same board of directors and/or officers as an existing private school.	✓	
6	The school does not draw a substantial portion of the employees from an existing private school.	✓	
7	The school does not receive a substantial portion of assets or property from an existing private school.	✓	
8	The school is not located at the same site as an existing private school.	✓	
9	The school will not create barriers of access to enrollment in accordance with <i>Brumfield v. Dodd</i> , 405 F. Supp. 528 (E.D. La. 1977).	✓	
10	The school will provide free transportation to students as stipulated in the Charter Operating Agreement.	✓	
11	The school charter includes provisions regarding the safety and security of the school.	✓	
12	The school charter includes provisions regarding the inspection and operation of all fire prevention and safety equipment at the school.	✓	
13	The school charter includes a plan for collecting data in accordance with R.S. 17:3911.	✓	
14	The school charter includes personnel policies and employment practices applicable to the school's officers and employees.	✓	
15	The school charter includes provisions regarding liability issues.	✓	
16	The school charter includes employee grievance processes and policies.	✓	
17	(Beginning August 1, 2024) Each president of a BESE authorized charter board shall participate in at least one hour of board governance, special education, and financial management training within one year of assuming the role.	✓	
18	(Beginning June 1, 2025) Each new member of the board of directors of a BESE authorized	✓	

	charter operator shall participate in at least one hour of board governance, special education, and financial management training within one year of appointment to the board.	✓	
19	The charter school will ensure fiscal responsibilities per R.S. 17:3981.	✓	
20	Charter schools will follow applicable state laws regarding the completion of approved numeracy skills per LAC28:CV.511, R.S. 17:24.13.	✓	
21	Charter schools will follow applicable state laws regarding the display of the national motto per R.S. 17:262.	✓	

## Certification

I certify that I have the authority to submit this application and that all information contained herein is complete and accurate, realizing that any misrepresentation could result in disqualification from the application process or revocations after award.

Name of Board Chair, Charter Governing Board: <b>Conner LeBlanc</b>	
Signature of Board Chair: 	Date: <b>12/9/25</b>

## **Executive Summary**

### **ES.1 Mission and Vision**

Engaged Learning Academies of Louisiana (ELAoL) exists to reconnect students with significant academic gaps to meaningful learning through an accelerated, hands-on model that restores confidence and builds mastery. Although the site location has not yet been assigned by the Recovery School District (RSD), ELAoL anticipates serving up to five (5) communities of K-8 students currently attending a failing or underperforming school identified for turnaround. The school(s) will primarily serve students with significant academic gaps, high percentages of economically disadvantaged families, and a demonstrated need for accelerated learning and strong school culture systems. The school's mission is to re-engage and inspire students who have fallen behind academically or become disengaged from traditional instruction by providing a hands-on, project-based learning experience that accelerates achievement, rebuilds confidence, and creates clear pathways toward lifelong success. ELAoL's vision is for students who once struggled academically to become confident, capable, and future-ready through rigorous, project-based learning that connects knowledge to real-world success. Success for ELAoL students' looks like increased student engagement, improved attendance, students managing their own learning, decreased student discipline referrals, academic growth, and strong social-emotional outcomes that empower students to thrive in and contribute to their communities. Louisiana believes in school choice for families. One of the options of school choice is to provide high-quality seats through charter school options. The mission and vision of ELAoL align with the purposes of Louisiana R.S. 17:3972 by offering an innovative, high-quality public education option that expands opportunity, improves student performance, and fosters the development of responsible, productive citizens.

### **ES.2 Anticipated Student Population and Educational Need**

Engaged Learning Academies of Louisiana seeks to operate up to five (5) Kindergarten-8th grade Type 5 charter schools in communities selected by the Recovery School District (RSD) based on demonstrated need and alignment with state priorities for school improvement. For example, ELAoL could be located in Northern Louisiana, where many schools have received consecutive "D" or "F" ratings and serve high-need student populations. The school anticipates enrolling approximately 85% economically disadvantaged students, 12% students with disabilities, 5% English language learners, 5% homeless, and 95% minority students. In comparable communities, fewer than 30% of middle school students meet grade-level expectations in ELA or math, and chronic absenteeism rates exceed 25%, limiting academic growth and engagement. Turnaround school students typically face challenges related to poverty, language barriers/literacy deficiencies, numeracy deficiencies, and social-emotional stressors such as food insecurity, transportation difficulties, and housing instability. ELAoL's school-within-a-school model addresses these barriers by providing a smaller, focused learning environment that offers individualized instruction, remediation, and mentorship while keeping students connected to their home school. ELAoL will incorporate bilingual support, partnerships to provide meals and wraparound services, and engage family involvement (remotely and in person) to reduce absenteeism and increase access. By embedding trauma-informed, culturally responsive practices and strong family engagement, Engaged Learning Academies of Louisiana will prepare students for long-term academic and personal success.

### **ES.3 Education Plan**

Engaged Learning Academies of Louisiana will replicate the proven Star Academy national model by offering a research-based, project-centered approach that re-engages students who have struggled in traditional settings and accelerates academic growth. ELAoL seeks to serve this population because many elementary and middle school students in Louisiana's underperforming communities have fallen behind academically, become disengaged from learning, and need an alternative pathway that rebuilds confidence and promotes achievement. The school's school-within-a-school framework creates a smaller, focused environment where students receive individualized instruction, targeted remediation, and mentorship. The model combines academic acceleration, experiential learning, and mastery-based progression to help

students close gaps and advance multiple grade levels within a single year. Students will benefit from an interdisciplinary STEM focused and Tier 1 curriculum aligned to the Louisiana Student Standards, emphasizing relevance, collaboration, and real-world application, for example, through thematic units such as Local Problem-Solving and Civic Responsibility, which integrate ELA, Math, Science, and Social Studies into authentic, community-based projects. Unlike traditional schools serving this population, ELAoL will more effectively close academic and engagement gaps for the turnaround student target population by pairing personalized, project-based learning with consistent adult mentorship. Nationally, Star Academy sites report 84% of students advancing two grade levels in one year, 95% retention of previously held-back students, and major reductions in absenteeism and discipline; ELAoL will replicate these outcomes through high-dosage tutoring, small cohorts, engaging thematic project-based learning, and continuous progress monitoring. The program will also embeds bilingual support for English learners, along with trauma-informed practices and wraparound services to meet the diverse needs of economically disadvantaged and at-risk students. Through its personalized approach, evidence-based practices, and robust whole-child supports, ELAoL will provide a level of effectiveness and responsiveness that surpasses the prior traditional district-run model, positioning students for success in high school, college, and future pathways.

Engaged Learning Academies of Louisiana will open with grades K–8 in Year 1 (2026–2027) and maintain those grade levels throughout the five-year charter term, concluding in Year 5 (2030–2031). Although the enrollment numbers are unknown, the school plans to serve an anticipated enrollment of approximately 440 students annually, with a minimum of 360 and a maximum of 500 students during each year of operation. Each grade level will enroll an average of 52 students per grade level across grades K-3, and 50 students per grade level across 4-8 with a minimum of 40 and a maximum of 60 students across all grades. However, ELAoL will work closely with the RSD to ensure that its partnership is able to accommodate all K-8 students in a partnered Type 5 environment.

#### **ES.4 Impact**

Engaged Learning Academies of Louisiana’s program is designed to improve and positively impact student outcomes by combining rigorous, standards-aligned instruction with individualized supports that accelerate learning and rebuild academic confidence. The model’s school-within-a-school design creates a small, focused environment where students receive targeted interventions and project-based instruction that connects learning to real-world contexts, increasing engagement, student management of learning, and relevance. For example, in a Northern Louisiana parish, achievement data such as the 2024–2025 LEAP results are as follows: 14% mastery in ELA, 11% in math, and less than 5% in science and social studies, highlighting the urgent need for an approach that addresses both academic recovery and student motivation. ELAoL will implement mastery-based, hands-on learning experiences that allow students to progress at their own pace while receiving high-dosage tutoring and continuous feedback. By integrating bilingual supports, social-emotional learning, and trauma-informed practices, the school will remove barriers that limit success for economically disadvantaged and at-risk learners. This holistic, research-based model will close learning gaps, promote engagement, and offer families a high-quality, innovative public education option in a region where few currently exist..

#### **ES.5 Prior Charter Application Submissions**

A Type 2 application was submitted in 2024, but was subsequently withdrawn. The combination of challenges in locating an appropriate site and a period of leadership transition resulted in a sense that the circumstances were not conducive to a strong, well-prepared launch. Prior feedback related to budget assumptions have been rectified through a conservative budget approach based on solid historical funding trends utilized in the current application. For example, the budget was made to scale for a typical K-8 turnaround model of approximately 450-500 students.

## Section 1: Educational Program & Capacity

### School Establishment

#### EPC.6 Community Seeking to Serve

Engaged Learning Academies of Louisiana seeks to partner with the Recovery School District to serve K-8th grade students in a community identified as high-need, aligning its school-within-a-school model to the state's strategy for academic turnaround and student re-engagement. The decision to expand to this region is grounded in a demonstrated and urgent need for schools that can re-engage students who have fallen behind academically and provide meaningful pathways toward proficiency and success. For example, families and districts across Louisiana have expressed strong interest in programs that combine academic rigor, individualized support, and career-connected, hands-on learning, core features of the ELAoL and Star Academy model.

##### a. Rationale for Selecting the Community

Engaged Learning Academies of Louisiana will be located in a community selected by the Louisiana Department of Education's Recovery School District, which identifies and assigns schools for takeover based on persistent low performance and demonstrated need for academic intervention. In areas such as Northern Louisiana's rural parishes, students consistently face some of the lowest academic performance rates in the state. For example, in a Northern Louisiana Parish, 2024–2025 LEAP results for 3rd - 8th grade show only 14% mastery in ELA, 11% in math, and less than 5% in both science and social studies, illustrating a persistent need for schools that can accelerate academic growth while increasing student engagement. Many students in the region attend small, under-resourced schools that struggle to provide the differentiated instruction and enrichment necessary for recovery and advancement. ELAoL's school-within-a-school framework is intentionally designed to serve these students by providing a smaller, focused environment that combines mastery-based progression, individualized instruction, and intensive mentoring. The model is particularly effective for students who are over-age, under-credited, or disengaged, offering an opportunity to complete multiple grade levels in one year while developing essential academic and life skills. This approach aligns with Louisiana's commitment to closing opportunity gaps and expanding access to high-quality, innovative school models in underserved regions.

##### b. Performance of Local Schools in the Community

Recent LEAP 2025 data underscore the significant opportunity for improvement in certain areas of Louisiana. For example, in a Northern Louisiana Parish, fewer than one in five students meet grade-level expectations across all core subjects, with mastery rates dramatically below the state average. Schools in nearby parishes reflect similar trends, often ranking among the lowest statewide for academic growth. In contrast, schools implementing the Star Academy model nationally have demonstrated measurable gains: 84% of students advancing two grade levels in one year, 95% retention of previously held-back students, and significant reductions in absenteeism and discipline incidents. These results show that ELAoL's model, anchored in academic acceleration, project-based learning, and strong adult relationships, can drive meaningful improvement in student mastery, attendance, and engagement in communities where traditional approaches have struggled to produce growth.

##### c. How the Proposed School Would Serve the Community More Effectively

Engaged Learning Academies of Louisiana will bring a proven, research-based school-within-a-school model that combines:

- High-quality, standards-aligned instruction delivered through project-based, interdisciplinary learning units;
- Mastery-based progression that allows students to advance at their own pace and recover multiple grade levels within a year;
- High-dosage tutoring and small cohorts to ensure intensive, individualized support;
- Social-emotional and trauma-informed practices that create a safe, supportive environment for students impacted by poverty or instability;
- Bilingual and sheltered instruction to support English learners and improve language acquisition; and
- Career-connected, hands-on learning experiences that increase relevance and engagement.

This comprehensive design provides a structured yet flexible approach that traditional middle schools often cannot sustain, enabling ELAoL to meet the diverse academic and non-academic needs of its target population more effectively than existing options.

#### d. Key Partnerships, Governance, and Operational Support

Engaged Learning Academies of Louisiana will operate under the oversight of the Engaged Learning Academies of Louisiana Board, a nonprofit governing body of professionals with expertise in academics, finance, operations, law, governance, and community engagement. The Board is responsible for ensuring strong academic outcomes, fiscal integrity, and compliance with all state and federal requirements. Members bring experience in K–12 school leadership, higher education, and nonprofit management, and will hold the school’s leadership team accountable for achieving measurable student growth and maintaining fidelity to the Star Academy model.

Operationally, ELAoL will partner with NOLA Education, the national organization behind the Star Academy model, which provides full curriculum materials, technology integration, implementation training, and ongoing professional development. Each site will have a dedicated Education Support Specialist who provides monthly on-site coaching, data analysis, and instructional feedback to ensure continuous improvement. ELAoL will also work collaboratively with the local district to implement the school-within-a-school framework using existing facilities, promoting cost efficiency and community partnership. In addition, ELAoL will collaborate with regional workforce and higher education partners to align learning experiences with Louisiana’s high-demand career sectors.

In addition, Engaged Learning Academies of Louisiana will partner with a national financial services organization that supports more than 100 charter schools across multiple states, including Louisiana. 4th Sector will provide comprehensive financial management services, including budgeting, forecasting, payroll, compliance reporting, grants management, and preparation of monthly financial statements and annual audits. This partnership ensures transparent, accurate, and timely fiscal reporting that aligns with state and federal requirements, while also strengthening the school’s long-term financial sustainability. Through 4th Sector’s expertise in charter school finance, ELAoL’s leadership and governing board will have access to the data and analysis necessary to make informed, strategic decisions that prioritize student success and operational efficiency.

The school will maintain active partnerships with the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) and the Recovery School District (RSD) to ensure full compliance with accountability and reporting

requirements, and with the Louisiana Association of Public Charter Schools (LAPCS) for governance, policy, and compliance support. These partnerships, along with the governing board's deep experience and NOLA Education's proven operational infrastructure, provide ELAoL with the expertise and capacity necessary to launch, sustain, and replicate a high-quality model that delivers strong outcomes for low-performing middle school students.

### **EPC.7 Student Population Seeking to Serve**

Engaged Learning Academies of Louisiana anticipates serving a student population reflective of the demographics found in Louisiana's high-need communities, particularly those identified by the Recovery School District for intervention due to persistent low performance. The school is committed to equity and inclusion, ensuring that all students, regardless of background, learning needs, or socioeconomic status, have access to a rigorous, supportive, and engaging academic environment intentionally designed to close opportunity gaps.

#### **a. Racial and Socioeconomic Demographics**

Based on regional and parish-level data for underperforming schools, ELAoL anticipates serving a population that is approximately 95% minority, including 90% African American/Black and 5% Hispanic or other racial/ethnic groups. The school expects that at least 85% of students will be economically disadvantaged, 5% English Language Learners, 12% Students with Disabilities, and 5% Homeless. The ELAoL model is specifically designed to meet the needs of students from historically underserved backgrounds, with a focus on academic acceleration, social-emotional learning, and individualized support to ensure equitable access and outcomes.

#### **b. Students with Disabilities**

ELAoL anticipates that approximately 12% of enrolled students will be students with disabilities, mirroring state averages for schools serving similar populations. The school's instructional design includes built-in structures for individualized support, including small class sizes, high-dosage tutoring, and co-taught classrooms when appropriate. Teachers will receive specialized training in inclusive practices and differentiated instruction, ensuring that all students with IEPs or 504 plans can fully participate in the project-based and mastery-learning environment.

#### **c. English Learners**

While English Learners represent a smaller percentage of students, ELAoL anticipates that 3%–5% of students will be English Learners. The school will provide bilingual support and sheltered instruction strategies within core content areas to ensure EL students can access grade-level material while developing English proficiency. Staff will receive professional development in EL strategies, and students will be monitored using the English Language Proficiency Screener (ELPS) to guide ongoing instructional adjustments.

#### **d. Students Experiencing Homelessness**

Consistent with regional averages, ELAoL anticipates that 3%–5% of its student population will be students experiencing homelessness or housing instability. The school will fully comply with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, providing transportation, meal access, uniform assistance, and coordination with local social service agencies to ensure students have equitable access to all aspects of the educational program. Through the school's wraparound support model, staff will maintain



consistent communication with families to connect them with available community resources and reduce barriers to attendance and engagement.

### **EPC.8 Engagement of Stakeholders**

Engaged Learning Academies of Louisiana (ELAoL) recognizes that meaningful community engagement is foundational to the success of any turnaround or re-engagement effort. As a Type 5 charter operator, ELAoL understands that the Recovery School District (RSD) will determine the specific school and community to be served based on demonstrated academic need and state priorities. While the exact site has not yet been identified, ELAoL has developed a comprehensive plan for community engagement that will be implemented immediately upon assignment to ensure the school's design, culture, and supports reflect the needs and aspirations of the families it serves.

#### **a. Description of Stakeholders Engaged**

ELAoL anticipates engaging a wide range of stakeholders once the assigned community is identified, including parents and caregivers of students currently enrolled in the selected school, teachers and school staff, district and RSD representatives, and local leaders from faith-based organizations, nonprofits, and businesses. ELAoL will also work closely with community-based organizations that provide youth development, mental health, and social services to ensure students and families have access to a comprehensive network of support. The governing board and school leadership team will hold introductory meetings with the existing school community, including parent-teacher groups and local officials, to listen to their experiences, understand current challenges, and begin establishing trust. This process will ensure that parents and educators are active participants in shaping the transition plan and ongoing program design.

#### **b. Strategies Used to Solicit Community Input**

ELAoL will use a combination of direct outreach, structured listening sessions, and ongoing communication to gather authentic input from families and community stakeholders. Within the first 60 days of site identification, the leadership team will conduct a series of community forums, both in-person and virtual, to share the school model, explain the transition process, and gather feedback on families' priorities for academic support, school culture, and student well-being. Surveys will be distributed to parents, teachers, and students to identify key areas of focus, such as literacy intervention, behavioral supports, enrichment programming, and family engagement preferences.

ELAoL will establish a Community Advisory Group composed of parents, educators, and local partners to provide ongoing feedback throughout the planning and launch phases. The school will also host monthly "Coffee and Conversation" events, family workshops, and open-door sessions with leadership to ensure transparent communication and collaboration. Recognizing that many families in high-need communities face barriers to participation, ELAoL will provide translation, childcare, and transportation support for all engagement events. Additionally, partnerships with local social service agencies and faith-based organizations will be leveraged to reach families who may be disconnected from traditional school networks.

These strategies are designed not only to solicit input but to ensure families and community members are co-creators in shaping the school's vision and systems of support. ELAoL's approach emphasizes consistency, transparency, and accessibility, key components for building trust in communities that have experienced frequent leadership or governance transitions. Once the school is established, family and community engagement will remain ongoing through parent councils, advisory committees, and regular progress updates, ensuring that the school evolves in partnership with those it serves.

## Academic Plan

### EPC.9 School Model

Engaged Learning Academies of Louisiana (ELAoL) will replicate the nationally recognized Star Academy model, a proven, research-based, and mission-aligned framework designed to re-engage students who have struggled in traditional settings and accelerate their academic growth. The program provides a smaller, structured, and project-centered learning environment where students can regain confidence, close learning gaps, and advance multiple grade levels within a single year. ELAoL's mission is to ensure that every student, particularly those who are over-age, under-credited, or disengaged, achieves measurable academic growth, develops strong character, and is prepared for success in high school, college, and career.

#### a. Key Design Elements That Reflect the School's Mission and Vision

The following design elements are essential to achieving ELAoL's mission of providing personalized, accelerated, and supportive educational experiences for students in underperforming schools:

- **School-Within-a-School Framework:** The model functions as a focused learning environment within an existing school identified by the Recovery School District (RSD). This design allows students to receive individualized instruction and targeted support while maintaining a connection to their broader school community. The ELAoL learning space operates as a distinct, immersive environment equipped with dedicated classrooms, hands-on learning stations, and project-based instructional resources, creating a setting that feels both innovative and cohesive with the larger campus. Students benefit from a small, supportive cohort model, consistent facilitator guidance, and a structured, data-driven learning pathway while still accessing school-wide services, extracurricular activities, and transitional supports into upper grades.
- **Mastery-Based and Accelerated Learning:** Students progress through the curriculum upon demonstrating mastery of the Louisiana Student Standards, allowing them to recover unfinished learning and advance up to two grade levels in one academic year.
- **Project-Based, Interdisciplinary Curriculum with a STEM Focus:** Core academic subjects, English Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies, are taught through thematic, hands-on projects that emphasize relevance, collaboration, and real-world problem-solving. For example, a unit titled Local Problem-Solving and Civic Responsibility might have students research community challenges, use math to model data, and design solutions that connect directly to Louisiana contexts.
- **Small Cohorts and High-Dosage Tutoring:** Students learn in small classes, enabling close teacher-student relationships and personalized feedback. High-dosage tutoring and embedded remediation ensure that each learner receives the support necessary to achieve mastery.
- **Data-Driven and Inclusive Supports:** Teachers use formative assessments, data tracking, and progress monitoring to inform instruction and adjust pacing. Built-in RTI/MTSS structures support students with disabilities, English learners, and those experiencing social or emotional challenges.
- **Social-Emotional and Wraparound Supports:** Recognizing the impact of poverty, trauma, and housing instability on learning, ELAoL embeds trauma-informed practices, mentoring, and counseling within the daily schedule. Partnerships with local agencies ensure that students and

families receive wraparound support, including access to meals, mental health services, and family outreach.

- **Career-Connected Learning and 21st-Century Skills:** ELAoL integrates career exploration, technology literacy, and problem-solving into each project-based module, preparing students with the critical thinking and teamwork skills essential for future success.

ELAoL will replicate the proven Star Academy model by embedding its mission-aligned design elements into every aspect of the school day. The comprehensive Star Academy program is a school-within-a-school, that uses a STEM-inspired curriculum, customized to meet the unique needs of every school. Mastery-based instruction will guide students to progress at their own pace, with high-dosage tutoring and small-group remediation built into the schedule to close learning gaps and accelerate achievement. Interdisciplinary, project-based units will connect core subjects through real-world themes such as Local Problem-Solving and Civic Responsibility, helping students apply academic concepts to authentic challenges in their communities. Daily instruction will emphasize active learning, collaboration, and critical thinking through hands-on labs, presentations, and data-driven discussions. Teachers will use continuous progress monitoring to personalize instruction, while the school's RTI/MTSS framework ensures inclusive support for students with disabilities, English learners, and those needing additional intervention. Morning advisories and mentorship meetings will build strong relationships, promote accountability, and integrate trauma-informed and social-emotional learning practices, ensuring that every student feels safe, valued, and capable of success.

For example, A 6th-grade cohort at Engaged Learning Academies of Louisiana may be assigned a unit titled "Local Problem-Solving and Civic Responsibility". Over several weeks, students work in small teams to identify an issue affecting their own Louisiana community, for example, litter along Baton Rouge green spaces, frequent street flooding in New Orleans neighborhoods, erosion along the bayous near Houma, poor internet connectivity in Morehouse Parish, or the lack of safe bike paths connecting schools and parks in Lafayette. Guided by their teachers, they research the problem, gather data, and interview community members to understand multiple perspectives. In English Language Arts, students analyze informational texts and articles, comparing ideas and citing evidence as they craft persuasive proposals for real solutions. In Math, students create budgets, interpret ratios, and develop charts and graphs to illustrate the scale and impact of their chosen issue. Science lessons bring in the engineering design process, as students model potential environmental or structural fixes, test materials, and refine their designs based on feedback. Social Studies ties everything together by helping students examine how local government, civic institutions, and community action can bring about change. The experience transforms abstract standards into authentic learning, showing students that academic knowledge can be a powerful tool for improving the world around them

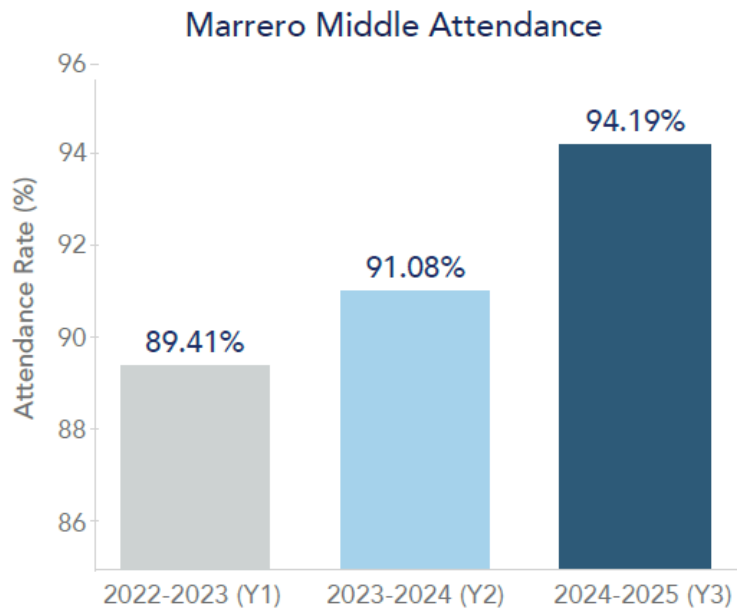
#### b. Rationale and Evidence of Success

The ELAoL model is grounded in the documented success of the Star Academy framework, an evidence-based approach that has demonstrated substantial gains for students in underperforming, high-poverty, and historically marginalized school communities. National evaluations of Star Academy sites show that 84% of participating students advance two grade levels within a single school year, 95% of previously retained students remain successfully on track, and schools experience marked reductions in discipline incidents and chronic absenteeism. Districts such as George County, Mississippi, and Escambia County, Florida, have reported dramatic improvements after adopting the model, including double-digit increases in proficiency and sustained growth in graduation outcomes, with some locations realizing more than 20-point gains in ELA and Math within three years.

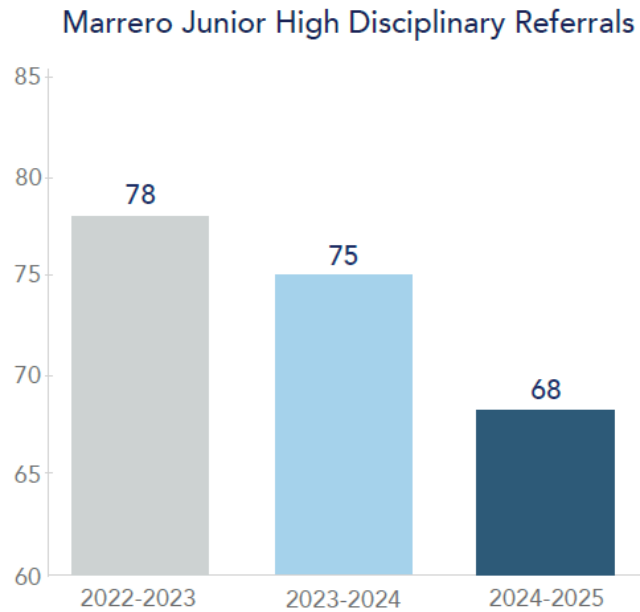
Independent research reinforces the core components embedded within the ELAoL design. Studies from the Learning Policy Institute (2017) and MDRC (2014) consistently find that small learning communities, mastery-based progression, and hands-on, project-based instruction significantly increase student engagement, academic achievement, and long-term graduation rates for at-risk and economically disadvantaged learners. Moreover, the model’s integration of trauma-informed practices and social-emotional learning aligns with research showing that these approaches reduce behavioral referrals, improve attendance, and create the conditions necessary for accelerated academic recovery, key levers for turnaround success in priority schools.

Marrero Middle School in Jefferson Parish serves as one of many clear proof points of the effectiveness of the Star Academy model, demonstrating how targeted acceleration, strong routines, and consistent adult support can rapidly improve outcomes in a school serving high-need learners. Marrero Middle School serves 84.3% Economically Disadvantaged students, 20.4% English Language Learners, 14.7% Special Education students, and 85.4% Minority students. In the sections below, we highlight three key indicators, attendance, discipline, and LEAP performance, that together show meaningful, sustained improvement over a three-year period. These graphs illustrate how a structured, engaging, and student-centered model can transform student engagement, strengthen school culture, and drive academic gains, reinforcing the potential impact Star Academy will bring to ELAoL’s future turnaround site.

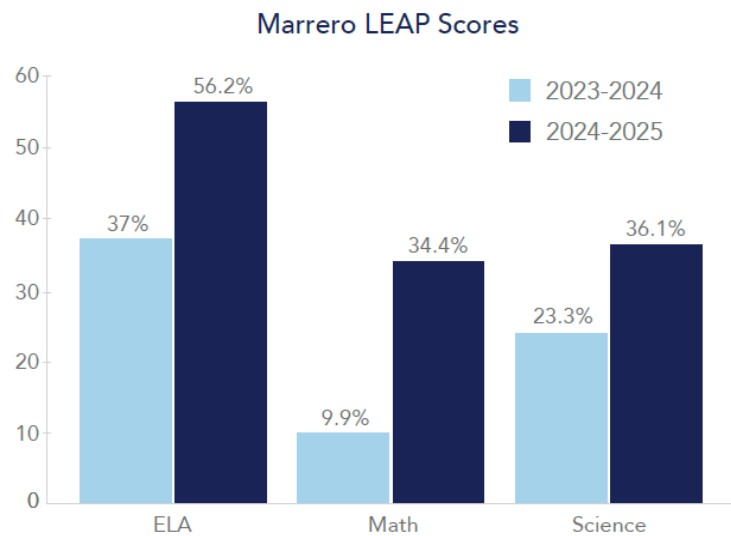
**Data Graph 1 - Attendance (Jefferson Parish School Site):**



The attendance data from Marrero Middle shows strong, consistent growth over three years, reflecting improved student engagement and strengthened school routines. Attendance increased from 89.41% in 2022–2023 to 91.08% in 2023–2024, and then climbed to 94.19% in 2024–2025, an overall gain of nearly five percentage points. This upward trend demonstrates how intentional culture-building, clear expectations, and proactive attendance monitoring can significantly improve student participation, a model ELAoL aims to replicate in its own turnaround setting.

**Data Graph 2 - Discipline (Jefferson Parish School Site):**

The data on disciplinary referrals at Marrero Middle School shows steady improvement in school culture and student behavior over the past three years. Referrals decreased from 78 in 2022–2023 to 75 in 2023–2024, and then dropped more significantly to 68 in 2024–2025. This downward trend reflects stronger routines, clearer expectations, and more effective adult-student relationships, key components of the Star Academy model. These results demonstrate how structured supports and consistent culture systems can reduce behavioral incidents and create a safer, more focused learning environment.

**Data Graph 3 - LEAP 2025 Basic or Above Scores (Jefferson Parish School Site):**

The LEAP results at Marrero Middle School show significant growth in the percentage of students scoring Basic and above across all tested subjects, demonstrating the school's strong academic momentum. ELA proficiency rose sharply from 37% to 56.2%, reflecting substantial improvement in literacy outcomes. Math showed the most dramatic acceleration, climbing from 9.9% to 34.4% Basic and above in just one year, indicating meaningful gains in foundational skills. Science performance also strengthened, increasing from 23.3% to 36.1%. Together, these improvements highlight the effectiveness of the school's targeted supports, structured instructional routines, and consistent implementation of high-quality curriculum, key components of the Star Academy model that contribute to rapid increases in student mastery.

**Data Graph 4- Growth Rates (United States Site Data):**



This national map demonstrates the breadth and effectiveness of Star Academy's acceleration model across more than 150 sites nationwide, showcasing its proven ability to drive transformative outcomes in diverse communities. From dramatic increases in graduation rates in Illinois and Mississippi, to significant improvements in reading fluency in Arkansas, to major gains in math proficiency and attendance across Georgia and West Virginia, the results consistently show students making rapid, measurable progress. Schools in Texas, New Jersey, and Louisiana have also seen students advance multiple grade levels in a single year, evidence that the model is especially effective for learners with significant academic gaps. For ELAoL, these outcomes signal the power of partnering with a nationally tested system capable of accelerating growth, improving culture, and supporting students in turnaround environments. The widespread success reflected on this map reinforces the decision to bring this model to the students and families ELAoL will serve.

The Star Academy model's evidence base, combined with ELAoL's localized implementation under the guidance of the Recovery School District, provides a strong rationale for success. By blending proven national strategies with local community engagement and Louisiana standards alignment, ELAoL will provide an innovative, research-backed solution to re-engage struggling learners and accelerate achievement in schools identified for intervention.

**EPC.10 Instructional Materials**

Engaged Learning Academies of Louisiana (ELAoL) will implement a mixture of Tier I curriculum and the Star Academy curriculum, a comprehensive, research-based instructional program that is fully aligned to the Louisiana Student Standards and designed specifically to accelerate learning for students who are performing below grade level. The Star Academy instructional model integrates core content, English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies, through cohesive, interdisciplinary projects that make learning relevant, hands-on, and engaging.

Specifically:

- English Language Arts (K–5).  
Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA) in grades K–2 and Guidebooks 2.0 in grades 3–5 provide a coherent, knowledge-building literacy pathway grounded in complex texts, systematic vocabulary development, and writing anchored in textual evidence. Both curricula support the mastery of foundational reading skills and higher-level comprehension demanded by Louisiana’s literacy standards and serve as a strong precursor to high school ELA and ACT readiness.
- English Language Arts (6–8).  
In grades 6–8, students transition to the ELAoL project-based curriculum, which aligns to the Louisiana Student Standards and embeds inquiry, cross-curricular writing, and performance-based assessments. The hands-on and collaborative design re-engages adolescent learners and supports significant gains in comprehension, fluency, and writing proficiency.
- Mathematics (K–5).  
Zearn provides a deeply aligned, problem-based math curriculum emphasizing conceptual understanding, procedural fluency, and continuous feedback. The platform’s embedded digital supports and teacher-led instruction help students build strong mathematical foundations aligned with Louisiana’s expectations.
- Mathematics (6–8).  
Middle school mathematics incorporates the ELAoL project-based curriculum, which integrates collaborative modules, mastery-based individualized lessons, and real-world application tasks. These lessons align directly with Louisiana math standards and support measurable growth in mathematical reasoning and problem-solving.
- Science (K–5).  
Amplify Science is fully aligned to the Louisiana Student Standards for Science and supports students in developing scientific literacy through inquiry, hands-on investigation, modeling, and evidence-based reasoning. Students learn to think and act like scientists using grade-level phenomena and engineering challenges.
- Science (6–8).  
In grades 6–8, science instruction is delivered through the ELAoL curriculum, which includes teacher-led blended science lessons, hands-on modules, and performance assessments aligned with Louisiana’s science standards. Students apply the scientific method through interactive, multidisciplinary projects and investigations.
- Social Studies (K–5).  
Gallopade offers a Louisiana-specific social studies program designed to align with the state’s

updated standards. The curriculum emphasizes cultural relevance, civic understanding, geography, and the historical context necessary for developing informed and engaged citizens.

- Social Studies (6–8).

Middle school students engage with the ELAoL social studies model, which uses inquiry-based instruction and project-based learning to promote critical thinking, collaboration, and student-led exploration of historical and contemporary issues. The curriculum aligns to Louisiana’s content standards and incorporates reading, writing, and evidence-based analysis.

a. Evidence that the Selected Curriculum Meets Louisiana Grade Progression and State Standards

All selected Tier 1 core content curricula meet the Louisiana Department of Education’s highest quality expectations, demonstrating strong alignment to the Louisiana Student Standards, rigorous instructional design, and ease of use for teachers and students as they progress from grade to grade. Their selection reflects the state’s comprehensive review process, which evaluates curriculum materials for coherence across grade levels as students progress grades, academic rigor, embedded formative assessment opportunities, and supports that meet the needs of diverse learners.

The Star Academy curriculum provides a rigorous, standards-aligned framework that is STEM focused ensuring students master grade-level content while also addressing unfinished learning from prior years. Each academic module is mapped directly to the Louisiana Student Standards and follows a carefully sequenced progression of skills to ensure students are meeting grade-level benchmarks and making rapid academic gains. Lessons are structured around real-world, project-based units that integrate reading, writing, math, and science, allowing students to see connections across disciplines while reinforcing key concepts multiple times within a unit. Curriculum that meets a Tier I rating has been vetted through a rigor

English Language Arts (K–5).

Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA) in grades K–2 and Guidebooks 2.0 in grades 3–5 provide a coherent, knowledge-building literacy pathway grounded in complex texts, systematic vocabulary development, and writing anchored in textual evidence. Both curricula support the mastery of foundational reading skills and higher-level comprehension demanded by Louisiana’s literacy standards and serve as a strong precursor to high school ELA and ACT readiness.

English Language Arts (6–8).

In grades 6–8, students transition to the ELAoL project-based curriculum, which aligns to the Louisiana Student Standards and embeds inquiry, cross-curricular writing, and performance-based assessments. The hands-on and collaborative design re-engages adolescent learners and supports significant gains in comprehension, fluency, and writing proficiency.

Mathematics (K–5).

Zearn provides a deeply aligned, problem-based math curriculum emphasizing conceptual understanding, procedural fluency, and continuous feedback. The platform’s embedded digital supports and teacher-led instruction help students build strong mathematical foundations aligned with Louisiana’s expectations.

Mathematics (6–8).

Middle school mathematics incorporates the ELAoL project-based curriculum, which integrates collaborative modules, mastery-based individualized lessons, and real-world application tasks. These lessons align directly with Louisiana math standards and support measurable growth in mathematical reasoning and problem-solving.



### Science (K–5).

Amplify Science is fully aligned to the Louisiana Student Standards for Science and supports students in developing scientific literacy through inquiry, hands-on investigation, modeling, and evidence-based reasoning. Students learn to think and act like scientists using grade-level phenomena and engineering challenges.

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Gallopade offers a Louisiana-specific social studies program designed to align with the state’s updated standards. The curriculum emphasizes cultural relevance, civic understanding, geography, and the historical context necessary for developing informed and engaged citizens.

### Social Studies (6–8).

Middle school students engage with the ELAoL social studies model, which uses inquiry-based instruction and project-based learning to promote critical thinking, collaboration, and student-led exploration of historical and contemporary issues. The curriculum aligns to Louisiana’s content standards and incorporates reading, writing, and evidence-based analysis.

The instructional design is intentionally accelerated, enabling students to complete multiple grade levels of coursework within a single school year. Curriculum materials include diagnostic assessments, formative checks, and performance-based tasks that guide teachers in identifying learning gaps and adjusting instruction in real time. This mastery-based approach ensures that students are not promoted until they have demonstrated full competency in each skill area, supporting both immediate academic recovery and long-term success aligned to Louisiana’s grade progression and graduation requirements.

## b. Evidence of Alignment to Quality Indicators on the State Instructional Materials Rubrics

The Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) uses one of the most rigorous curriculum review processes in the country to identify high-quality instructional materials. Tier 1 curricula are those that meet or exceed all state expectations for alignment to the Louisiana Student Standards, coherence across grade levels, intellectual rigor, and usability for teachers and students. To earn a Tier 1 rating, instructional materials undergo a comprehensive, multi-step evaluation conducted by panels of trained educators and content experts. The review process examines the curriculum’s structure, the depth and accuracy of standards alignment, the quality of embedded formative assessments, and the degree to which the materials support diverse learners, including students with disabilities and English learners. Only curricula that demonstrate strong evidence of effectiveness, instructional coherence, and equitable access to grade-level content receive the Tier 1 designation. Schools such as Engaged Learning Academies of Louisiana prioritize adopting Tier 1-aligned materials to ensure that every student receives rigorous, standards-based instruction that prepares them for long-term academic success.

Although the Star Academy curriculum is not currently listed on the Louisiana Department of Education’s Tier 1 instructional materials list, it has been reviewed and observed in action by LDOE top officials, who have commended its design and effectiveness for students with significant achievement gaps. The curriculum meets the spirit and intent of Louisiana’s Tier 1 quality indicators for rigor, alignment, and accessibility, providing students with engaging, standards-based instruction that accelerates learning across multiple grade levels. The program integrates scaffolds for students with disabilities and English

Learners, including explicit vocabulary instruction, visual supports, and hands-on learning activities that promote conceptual understanding. Teachers receive comprehensive training in curriculum implementation, differentiation, and data-driven instruction to ensure lessons remain rigorous and responsive to individual learning needs. The materials demonstrate strong coherence, usability, and equity, offering multiple entry points for students to access grade-level content and achieve mastery aligned with the Louisiana Student Standards.

Within the school-within-a-school model, the curriculum is uniquely effective because it operates in a focused, immersive learning environment that allows for intensive academic acceleration and individualized support. The model's small cohort structure, consistent facilitator guidance, and dedicated classrooms enable the curriculum to be implemented with fidelity, ensuring that students receive targeted, standards-aligned instruction uninterrupted by the broader complexities of a traditional school schedule. This structure enhances the program's capacity to close learning gaps rapidly, provide immediate feedback, and personalize learning pathways, making the curriculum especially powerful for students who require a nontraditional, high-engagement approach to meet Louisiana's academic expectations.

### c. Specialized Curriculum Supporting ELAoL's Academic Focus

The Star Academy curriculum provides a comprehensive and differentiated instructional program that includes two NOLA Education mathematics courses, two science courses, two English/language arts courses, and two social studies courses delivered through a block schedule format. All mathematics and ELA materials are aligned to the Common Core State Standards, science materials are aligned to the Next Generation Science Standards, and social studies instruction is correlated to individual state standards. The curriculum integrates multiple components designed to accelerate learning and deepen understanding. Individualized Prescriptive Lessons offer mastery-based mathematics instruction through relevant, storyline-driven modules that incorporate instructional text, audio, interactive graphics, and embedded assessments, with teachers closely monitoring student progress through an intuitive management system. MATH Connections provide teacher-led, project-based activities that make challenging concepts more accessible and relevant, supported by curriculum guides, equipment, and materials for hands-on exploration. Expeditions further enhance learning through multimodal, problem-based experiences that guide students step-by-step through real-world scenarios, hands-on applications, and cross-curricular tasks aligned to core standards. Complementing these are Modules, which reinforce learning through multimedia content and hands-on workstations designed to build knowledge across math, science, technology, and career pathways. In science, blended instructional materials allow teachers to extend and deepen learning after students complete a sequence of standards-aligned modules, with an emphasis on inquiry skills and scientific investigation. Literacy development is supported through a reading system that integrates vocabulary, comprehension strategies, fluency, literary and expository texts, writing, and online learning tools, often resulting in substantial reading level gains over the course of a year. Social studies materials challenge students to think critically about history and geography while strengthening reading skills through a wide range of multimedia and print resources. To support consistent implementation, the STAR Living Curriculum provides an ongoing, multi-tiered professional development series that reinforces classroom procedures, instructional expectations, and behavior norms. Through this integrated, multi-component model, Star Academy delivers a rigorous and engaging curriculum that accelerates student learning across subject areas.

For example, A 6th-grade cohort at Engaged Learning Academies of Louisiana may be assigned a unit titled "Local Problem-Solving and Civic Responsibility". Over several weeks, students work in small teams to identify an issue affecting their own Louisiana community, for example, litter along Baton Rouge green spaces, frequent street flooding in New Orleans neighborhoods, erosion along the bayous near Houma, or the lack of safe bike paths connecting schools and parks in Lafayette. Guided by their teachers, they research the problem, gather data, and interview community members to understand

multiple perspectives. In English Language Arts, students analyze informational texts and articles, comparing ideas and citing evidence as they craft persuasive proposals for real solutions. In Math, students create budgets, interpret ratios, and develop charts and graphs to illustrate the scale and impact of their chosen issue. Science lessons bring in the engineering design process, as students model potential environmental or structural fixes, test materials, and refine their designs based on feedback. Social Studies ties everything together by helping students examine how local government, civic institutions, and community action can bring about change. By the end of the unit, each team presents a multimedia proposal to classmates, complete with written arguments, data displays, and visual models. The experience transforms abstract standards into authentic learning, showing students that academic knowledge can be a powerful tool for improving the world around them.

Students demonstrate proficiency through a combination of formative and summative assessments embedded within each module, as well as performance-based projects and presentations that require the practical application of academic content. Formative assessments are used daily to guide instructional adjustments, while end-of-unit summative assessments measure mastery of Louisiana standards across all four core subjects. In addition, students present completed projects to their peers and teachers, showcasing interdisciplinary understanding, communication, and critical thinking skills. Students will progress or be retained based on the continuous demonstration of mastery across formative assessments, summative evaluations, and performance tasks that together verify their readiness for the next grade level. These promotion and retention decisions will be fully outlined in ELAoL's Pupil Progression Plan.

### **EPC.11 Hybrid Learning Plan**

Engaged Learning Academies of Louisiana (ELAoL) is committed to maintaining high-quality, uninterrupted instruction for all students, even in circumstances that require a temporary or long-term transition to hybrid or fully virtual learning. The hybrid learning plan ensures that instruction remains rigorous, equitable, and aligned to the Louisiana Student Standards, while preserving the key components of the Star Academy model, project-based learning, individualized pacing, and strong academic and social-emotional supports.

#### **a. Circumstances Under Which This Plan Would Be Implemented**

In the event of a disruption to in-person instruction, ELAoL will activate its hybrid learning plan to maintain instructional continuity and student engagement. Circumstances may include public health emergencies ordered by the Governor or local officials, quarantines directed by health authorities, natural disasters such as hurricanes or floods, facility closures due to environmental hazards, or short-term disruptions caused by weather or maintenance. In limited cases, a hybrid option may also be used for individual students experiencing extended medical absences. The school leader, in consultation with the governing board and the Recovery School District, will determine activation and duration of the plan, ensuring alignment with local and state guidance.

#### **b. Plan to Acquire and Disseminate Technology to Students**

To ensure equitable access during any period of remote learning, ELAoL will maintain a 1:1 technology program. Each student will be assigned a Chromebook that travels between home and school daily, ensuring readiness for both in-person and hybrid instruction. Families lacking reliable internet access will be provided with Wi-Fi hotspots or assistance connecting to low-cost broadband programs. All devices will be equipped with content filters, remote monitoring tools, and pre-loaded access to the school's Learning Management System (LMS) and digital learning platforms. Technology distribution will occur through scheduled pickup events with curbside options and multilingual support for families.

### c. Plan to Track and Monitor Attendance in a Virtual Setting

Attendance will be tracked daily through student log-ins to the LMS, participation in synchronous instruction, and timely completion of assignments. Teachers will take attendance during live sessions and verify asynchronous participation for students working independently. When students miss a day of virtual engagement, staff will follow up within 24 hours by phone, text, or email to identify and remove barriers. Attendance data will be entered into the student information system and reviewed by leadership weekly to identify patterns of disengagement. The school will communicate attendance expectations clearly to families and provide regular updates on student participation.

### d. Identification of the Learning Management System (LMS) to Be Employed

ELAoL will utilize Engaged, a customized system for ELAoL, as its primary Learning Management System, which houses Star Academy Curriculum, project-based learning modules and interactive assessments. Engaged integrates seamlessly with Tier I curriculum and Star created curriculum, allowing teachers to post assignments, track progress, and provide real-time feedback. The LMS supports accessibility features for English Learners and students with disabilities, ensuring that all students can engage meaningfully in virtual instruction.

### e. Plan to Provide Training and Technical Support on the LMS to Staff, Families, and Students

Prior to the start of each school year, teachers will receive professional development and be trained to be facilitators of the virtual instruction, digital classroom management, and progress-monitoring tools. Families and students will participate in orientation sessions, offered both in person and virtually, that include guided tutorials on using Chromebooks, navigating Engaged, and accessing assignments. The school will operate a Technology Help Desk during school hours for password resets, device troubleshooting, and connectivity support. Step-by-step video tutorials and written guides will be available in English and Spanish to ensure families can confidently support learning at home.

### f. Plan to Communicate with Staff, Families, and Students Virtually

ELAoL will maintain strong, multi-channel communication during hybrid or virtual instruction. Families and staff will receive updates through ParentSquare, email, and Engaged announcements, as well as text alerts for urgent notifications. Families receive an overview of the module prior to the beginning of a new rotation. Weekly digital newsletters and virtual town halls will provide updates on schedules, technology use, and student progress. Teachers will hold virtual office hours and small-group check-ins via online video platforms such as Zoom or Teams to ensure ongoing academic and emotional support. All communication will be accessible in families' preferred languages, and staff will receive guidance on maintaining consistent engagement through virtual platforms.

## **EPC.12 Academic Goals**

Engaged Learning Academies of Louisiana (ELAoL) has established clear and measurable academic performance goals aligned to Louisiana's LEAP 2025 assessments and the state's School Performance Score (SPS) framework. These goals are intentionally ambitious yet attainable, designed to accelerate academic growth for students who have previously struggled in traditional settings. The school's targets account for the unique needs of its anticipated student population, predominantly economically disadvantaged, historically underperforming, and at risk of academic disengagement, and are grounded in the proven success of the Star Academy national model. Goals will be reviewed annually and adjusted based on baseline data collected in Year 1, including subgroup trends and growth indicators.

**Yearly LEAP Academic Goals (Years 1–5)**

School Year	LEAP ELA	LEAP Math	Growth Targets Met: All (ELA)	Growth Targets Met: All (Math)	School SPS Score
Year 1 (3-8)	15% at Mastery or above	15% at Mastery or above	60%	60%	D
Year 2 (3-8)	20% at Mastery or above	20% at Mastery or above	65%	65%	D
Year 3 (3-8)	25% at Mastery or above	25% at Mastery or above	70%	70%	C
Year 4 (3-8)	30% at Mastery or above	30% at Mastery or above	75%	75%	C
Year 5 (3-8)	35% at Mastery or above	35% at Mastery or above	80%	80%	C

**Leap 2025 Goals:**

- Goal 1: By the end of Year 1, at least 15% of students in tested grades will perform at Mastery or above on the LEAP 2025 English Language Arts and Math assessments.
- Goal 2: Each subsequent year, the percentage of students achieving Mastery or above in both subjects will increase by 5 percentage points, reaching 35% in ELA and Math by Year 5.
- Goal 3: By the end of Year 1, at least 60% of students will meet Top Growth targets in both ELA and Math, as measured by Louisiana’s student progress index.
- Goal 4: Each subsequent year, the percentage of students meeting Top Growth targets will increase by 5 percentage points, reaching 80% in both subjects by Year 5.

**Subgroup Goals:**

- Goal 5: By the end of Year 1, at least 30% of English Learners (ELs) will demonstrate Top Growth on LEAP 2025 ELA and Math assessments, increasing by 5 percentage points per year to reach 50% by Year 5.
- Goal 6: By the end of Year 1, at least 35% of economically disadvantaged students will demonstrate Top Growth, increasing by 5 percentage points annually to reach 55% by Year 5.
- Goal 7: By the end of Year 1, at least 25% of students with disabilities will demonstrate Top Growth, increasing by 5 percentage points annually to reach 45% by Year 5.

## SPS Goals:

- Goal 8: By the end of Year 5, Engaged Learning Academies of Louisiana will achieve a School Performance Score (SPS) equivalent to a “C” rating or higher, with steady improvement over the charter term. The school will demonstrate consistent gains in student growth and achievement, beginning from an expected baseline equivalent to a “D” rating in Year 1 and improving to a “C” rating by year 5.

**Yearly DIBELS Academic Goals (Years 1–5)**

School Year	DIBELS: All	DIBELS: Bottom 25% Subgroup	Growth Targets: All Students including Subgroups
Year 1 (K-2)	40% at benchmark or above	40% will improve one subgroup score from BOY 1 to EOY 1	40%
Year 2 (K-2)	50% at benchmark or above	55% will improve one subgroup score from EOY 1 to EOY 2	45%
Year 3 (K-2)	55% at benchmark or above	60% will improve one subgroup score from EOY 2 to EOY 3	50%
Year 4 (K-2)	60% at benchmark or above	65% will improve one subgroup score from EOY 3 to EOY 4	55%
Year 5 (K-2)	65% at benchmark or above	70% will improve one subgroup score from EOY 4 to EOY 5	60%

## DIBELS Goals, including subgroup (bottom 25%):

- Goal 1: By the end of Year 1, at least 40% of students in grades K–2 will score at benchmark or above on DIBELS, demonstrating foundational early literacy proficiency.
- Goal 2: Each subsequent year, the percentage of students scoring at benchmark or above will increase steadily, reaching 65% by Year 5.
- Goal 3: By the end of Year 1, at least 40% of students in the bottom 25% will improve by one performance band from BOY to EOY.
- Goal 4: Each subsequent year, the percentage of bottom 25% students improving one performance band will increase by approximately 5 percentage points, reaching 70% by Year 5.

## Subgroup Goals:

- Goal 5: By the end of Year 1, at least 25% of English Language students will meet Louisiana's growth expectations as defined in the state's growth category, increasing by 5 percentage points per year to reach 45% by Year 5.
- Goal 6: By the end of Year 1, at least 35% of economically disadvantaged students will meet Louisiana's growth expectations as defined in the state's growth category, increasing by 5 percentage points annually to reach 55% by Year 5.
- Goal 7: By the end of Year 1, at least 25% of students with disabilities will meet Louisiana's growth expectations as defined in the state's growth category, increasing by 5 percentage points annually to reach 45% by Year 5.

#### a. How the Proposed School Will Establish Baseline Data

Engaged Learning Academies of Louisiana (ELAoL) will establish baseline academic data during its first operational year through a comprehensive system of diagnostic and standards-aligned assessments across all grade levels. For students in grades K–2, the school will administer Louisiana-approved early literacy and numeracy screeners, including DIBELS 8th Edition and the LDOE Numeracy Screener, to measure foundational skills and academic readiness. These assessments will be administered at the beginning, middle, and end of the year to identify gaps in phonemic awareness, decoding, fluency, and number sense. In addition, all newly enrolled students whose Home Language Survey indicates exposure to another language will be assessed using the English Language Proficiency Screener (ELPS) to determine baseline English proficiency levels. Results from the literacy, numeracy, and ELPS screeners will guide targeted small-group instruction, intervention planning, and individualized supports for students requiring accelerated growth.

For students in grades 3–8, baseline proficiency will be established through a combination of interim assessments and benchmark assessments aligned to the Louisiana Student Standards in ELA, Math, Science, and Social Studies. As students transition into grades 6–8, the ELAoL (Star Academy) curriculum will incorporate embedded performance tasks, pre- and post-unit assessments, and module-based demonstrations of mastery that further refine each student's academic profile. In addition, any newly enrolled student in grades 3–8 whose Home Language Survey indicates exposure to another language will be assessed using the English Language Proficiency Screener (ELPS) to determine a baseline English proficiency level and identify necessary supports. Prior-year LEAP and DIBELS results, when available, will be obtained through the statewide student information system and used to inform grouping decisions, academic placement, and targeted intervention supports. Student report card grades and previous schoolwork will also be reviewed to provide additional context regarding historical achievement and classroom performance.

All assessment data will be disaggregated by grade level, subject, and student subgroup, including economically disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, and English learners. This analysis will serve as the foundation for establishing individual, subgroup, and school-wide growth targets. Baseline findings will guide instructional planning, progress monitoring, and the development of data-driven interventions throughout the year, ensuring that ELAoL meets the academic needs of all learners within its school-within-a-school model.

#### b. Plan for Collecting Data in Accordance with R.S. 17:3911

Engaged Learning Academies of Louisiana will collect and report student achievement data in full compliance with R.S. 17:3911 and Louisiana Department of Education accountability requirements. The school will administer all required state assessments, including DIBELS Literacy Screener, LDOE

Numeracy Screener, LEAP 2025, LEAP Connect, and ELPT/ELPT Connect for English Learners. In addition, Star Academy benchmark assessments will be implemented quarterly to monitor student mastery of the Louisiana Student Standards across all content areas. Assessment results will be entered into the school's Student Information System (SIS) and Engaged Platform, where data will be disaggregated by subgroup and reviewed regularly by the leadership team. Data meetings will occur monthly to evaluate schoolwide trends, identify underperforming subgroups, and adjust intervention strategies. Results will be reported to the Louisiana Department of Education as required, shared with the Recovery School District when required, and communicated to families to promote transparency and shared accountability for student learning.

#### c. Plan to Establish Student Performance Goals

Student performance goals at ELAoL will be established using a data-informed, SMART-goal framework aligned to DIBELS proficiency, LDOE Numeracy proficiency, LEAP 2025 proficiency, and LEAP 2025 growth targets. Baseline data from LEAP-aligned benchmark assessments and Star Academy diagnostics will inform individual, grade-level, and schoolwide goals. Teachers and instructional leaders will collaboratively establish measurable goals for each student that focus on both proficiency and academic growth. These goals will be revisited quarterly based on benchmark and formative assessment data embedded within the Star Academy curriculum. Progress-monitoring meetings will be held biweekly to review classroom-level performance, identify students in need of targeted interventions, and adjust pacing or support. Students will also engage in individual goal-setting conferences to promote ownership of learning. Leadership will track cumulative progress through a schoolwide data dashboard to ensure alignment with LEAP performance expectations and subgroup growth targets.

#### d. Core Components of Professional Development and How They Support Effective Implementation

The professional development model at Engaged Learning Academies of Louisiana (ELAoL) is designed to ensure consistent, high-quality implementation of the Star Academy instructional model, which emphasizes academic acceleration, mastery-based progression, interdisciplinary projects, and hands-on, student-centered learning. Professional learning is grounded in ELAoL's vision of delivering rigorous, inclusive, and data-driven instruction that re-engages students who have experienced interrupted learning, academic disengagement, or significant achievement gaps. Because ELAoL operates as a school-within-a-school, its professional development intentionally equips teachers to be facilitators by creating an immersive, highly structured learning environment that supports rapid academic growth and strong student relationships.

All instructional staff will participate in initial and ongoing professional development in collaboration with ESP's national training team. This includes intensive summer onboarding focused on the foundational components of the model, classroom design, facilitation strategies, and implementation of the curriculum. Quarterly follow-up sessions throughout the year will deepen teachers' expertise in curriculum internalization, facilitation of project-based learning, and delivery of interdisciplinary modules that integrate ELA, Math, Science, and Social Studies through real-world applications. Teachers will also be trained to utilize the program's embedded assessments, including pre- and post-tests, performance tasks, and checkpoints within the Engage LMS, to monitor growth and adjust instruction.

Professional learning is embedded throughout the school year through scheduled in-service days, weekly early-release collaboration blocks, and monthly data-driven instruction (DDI) meetings. During these meetings, teachers will analyze benchmark assessments, DIBELS results, and module-based performance data to identify trends, plan small-group interventions, and refine pacing. Star Academy coaches and ELAoL instructional leaders will guide these reviews using structured protocols that support targeted instructional adjustments and ensure alignment with Louisiana Student Standards.



In addition to formal training, ELAoL's professional development model includes continuous coaching cycles. Instructional leaders and ESP support staff (Curriculum Coaches, Program Liaisons, and Support Specialist) will conduct regular classroom observations with individualized feedback sessions focused on lesson delivery, differentiation, collaborative learning routines, and the facilitator role, ensuring teachers are able to guide, prompt, and support students through hands-on tasks rather than relying on traditional lectures. Teachers will be coached on strategies that build student agency, foster productive struggle, and maintain high levels of engagement within an accelerated, mastery-based environment.

Teachers will also receive training in trauma-informed practices, social-emotional learning, and cultural responsiveness to ensure the school-within-a-school environment meets the needs of diverse learners. Dedicated sessions will support teachers in meeting the needs of English Learners through structured academic talk, visual supports, explicit language routines, and vocabulary scaffolds. Additional professional learning will address accommodations, modifications, and instructional planning aligned with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and Section 504 plans, ensuring that all students have equitable access to grade-level content and project-based learning.

## **Assessments**

### **EPC.13: Assessments**

#### **a. Assessment Descriptions**

Engaged Learning Academies of Louisiana (ELAoL) will implement a comprehensive assessment system that includes diagnostic, formative, interim, and summative measures aligned to the Louisiana Student Standards. These tools will guide instructional planning, monitor student growth, and ensure that students receive the targeted support necessary to close learning gaps. Assessments will be used across grade levels to establish baseline data, identify individual learning needs, and measure mastery within ELAoL's accelerated, project-based school-within-a-school model.

#### **DIBELS 8th Edition (Early Literacy Diagnostic)**

- Purpose: To measure foundational reading skills for students in grades K–2, including phonemic awareness, decoding, fluency, and early comprehension, and to identify students in need of early literacy intervention.
- Design: Louisiana-approved diagnostic tool focusing on the critical components of early reading development.
- Format: Short, one-on-one assessments administered individually at the beginning, middle, and end of the year.
- Rationale: DIBELS provides immediate, high-quality data that supports targeted intervention and small-group instruction, helping ensure students reach grade-level literacy benchmarks.

#### **LDOE Numeracy Screener (Foundational Math Diagnostic)**

- Purpose: To determine students' numeracy skills in grades K–2 and identify areas where additional instruction or intervention is needed.
- Design: State-developed assessment that measures core early math competencies such as number recognition, counting, and basic operations.

- Format: Brief, structured tasks administered at the beginning, middle, and end of the year.
- Rationale: The numeracy screener offers clear, actionable information that allows teachers to address foundational gaps early, supporting long-term math success.

#### Interim and Benchmark Assessments (Grades 3–8)

- Purpose: To track student progress in English Language Arts and Mathematics throughout the year and monitor readiness for state assessments.
- Design: Standards-aligned assessments that reflect the structure, rigor, and expectations of Louisiana’s summative assessments.
- Format: Administered three times per year in grades 3–8.
- Rationale: Interim assessments provide reliable progress data that supports pacing adjustments, targeted remediation, and planning for students’ academic growth.

#### Embedded Star Academy Assessments (Grades 6–8)

- Purpose: To assess mastery of interdisciplinary modules within the Star Academy curriculum, including ELA, Math, Science, and Social Studies.
- Design: Performance-based assessments integrated throughout each module, including pre-tests, post-tests, oral assessments, checkpoints, and project rubrics.
- Format: Delivered through the Engage LMS and through hands-on demonstrations of learning tied to project-based tasks.

Rationale: These assessments are tightly aligned to the model’s accelerated, mastery-based approach and allow teachers to monitor students’ conceptual understanding in real time.

#### Formative Classroom Assessments (Daily Measures)

- Purpose: To provide ongoing insight into student learning and identify misconceptions at the lesson level.
- Design: Small, frequent assessments such as exit tickets, fluency checks, graphic organizers, journal responses, and quick quizzes.
- Format: Embedded in daily instruction and reviewed immediately to guide next-day adjustments.
- Rationale: Formative tools enable teachers to respond quickly to student needs, ensuring instruction remains aligned to student performance within the accelerated learning environment.

#### LEAP 2025 Assessments (Summative Testing)

- Purpose: To measure end-of-year proficiency in ELA, Math, Science, and Social Studies for students in grades 3–8.
- Design: State-mandated summative assessment aligned to the Louisiana Student Standards.

- Format: Annual assessment including multiple-choice, short-answer, and constructed-response questions.
- Rationale: LEAP results serve as the official measure of statewide academic performance and contribute directly to the School Performance Score (SPS).

LEAP Connect (Alternate Summative Assessment)

- Purpose: To assess the academic achievement of students with significant cognitive disabilities.
- Design: Alternate assessment aligned with the Louisiana Connectors for students with complex learning needs.
- Format: Delivered through structured, adapted tasks appropriate to individual student abilities.
- Rationale: LEAP Connect ensures equitable access to statewide assessments and appropriate measurement of academic progress.

ELPS (English Language Proficiency Screener)

- Purpose: To identify English learners at enrollment and determine eligibility for language support services.
- Design: Computer-based, adaptive screener assessing listening, speaking, reading, and writing.
- Format: Administered upon enrollment to students whose Home Language Survey indicates exposure to another language.
- Rationale: ELPS establishes baseline English proficiency levels to guide placement and instructional planning for EL students.

ELPT (English Language Proficiency Test)

- Purpose: To measure annual progress in English language proficiency for identified English learners.
- Design: Standards-based assessment aligned to the Louisiana Connectors for English Learners.
- Format: Administered annually in four domains: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.
- Rationale: ELPT data ensures that language development supports are effective and that students progress toward reclassification.

ELPT Connect (Alternate English Proficiency Assessment)

- Purpose: To provide an appropriate measure of language progress for English learners with significant cognitive disabilities.
- Design: Adapted version of the ELPT aligned to alternate connectors.

- Format: Domain-based assessment tailored to students with more complex instructional needs administered annually
- Rationale: ELPT Connect ensures equitable assessment conditions for EL students with significant disabilities.

#### b. Data Collection and Analysis

Engaged Learning Academies of Louisiana (ELAoL) will implement a systematic process for collecting, organizing, and analyzing assessment data to ensure that instruction is responsive and aligned to student needs. All diagnostic, formative, interim, and summative assessment results will be entered into the school's Student Information System (SIS) and Engage Platform, allowing teachers and school leaders to access data dashboards, track individual and subgroup progress, and monitor trends across grade levels. Data from DIBELS, the LDOE Numeracy Screener, interim benchmark assessments, embedded Star Academy assessments, and LEAP results will be compiled after each administration and reviewed in scheduled data meetings.

Teachers will participate in monthly data-driven instruction (DDI) cycles where assessment results are analyzed to identify student strengths and gaps, determine mastery of standards, and plan targeted interventions or enrichment. During these sessions, teams will review classwide patterns, subgroup performance, and individual student growth using structured protocols. Instructional leaders and Star Academy support staff will guide teachers in adjusting pacing, modifying small-group instruction, and determining appropriate re-teach strategies based on assessment evidence.

In addition to state assessments and district-required screeners, ELAoL will also evaluate student learning using standards embedded within the Star Academy curriculum. These standards focus on mastery of interdisciplinary, project-based tasks, hands-on demonstrations of learning, and performance assessments aligned to the Louisiana Student Standards. The school will use these additional curriculum-based expectations to assess conceptual understanding, application of knowledge, collaboration, and real-world problem-solving within the school-within-a-school model. Together, the Louisiana Student Standards and Star Academy's interdisciplinary performance standards provide a comprehensive measure of student knowledge, ensuring that academic progress is evaluated through both traditional measures and authentic, project-based criteria.

#### c. Additional Academic Standards

Engaged Learning Academies of Louisiana (ELAoL) will adopt additional academic standards embedded within the Star Academy curriculum to complement the Louisiana Student Standards. These additional expectations focus on interdisciplinary performance, mastery-based progression, applied problem-solving, and project-centered learning across English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. While all grade-level content remains aligned to Louisiana's required standards, the Star Academy performance standards introduce higher-level competencies that require students to manage and demonstrate understanding through hands-on, real-world tasks rather than traditional knowledge recall alone.

The additional standards were developed by national curriculum designers and content experts who created the Star Academy modules. These standards are organized around key interdisciplinary competencies, including evidence-based writing, technical reading, mathematical modeling, data interpretation, scientific inquiry, collaborative problem-solving, and multi-step project execution. Each module contains clearly defined learning outcomes, performance indicators, and mastery rubrics that describe what students must know and be able to do to demonstrate proficiency.

These standards exceed Louisiana Student Standards by requiring students to integrate learning across content areas, apply knowledge to authentic situations, and demonstrate deeper understanding through projects, presentations, experiments, and written products. Students must complete multi-step tasks, use academic vocabulary in context, apply mathematical and scientific reasoning to real-world problems, and collaborate with peers to develop and communicate solutions. The rigor of these performance-based standards ensures students master not only grade-level content but also advanced academic and technical skills aligned with college- and career-ready expectations.

ELAoL will use these additional standards to evaluate student knowledge through a combination of performance assessments, project rubrics, module checkpoints, pre- and post-assessments, and demonstrations of learning within the Engage LMS. Each standard has associated mastery criteria that allow teachers to evaluate whether students can apply content knowledge, communicate reasoning, and complete interdisciplinary tasks. These evaluation tools provide a deeper measure of student learning than traditional assessments alone and help ensure that students are progressing toward both state-level proficiency and the higher-order competencies embedded in the Star Academy model.

#### d. Exit Standards

Engaged Learning Academies of Louisiana (ELAoL) will use a set of exit standards that combine the Louisiana Student Standards with the additional interdisciplinary performance standards embedded in the Star Academy curriculum. These exit standards define what students must know and be able to do by the end of each grade level and content area and serve as the basis for evaluating mastery in the school's accelerated, project-based model.

Exit standards include the following grade appropriate expectations in order to promote to the next grade level:

#### English Language Arts

- Read and comprehend grade-level complex texts independently, citing evidence to support inferences, explanations, and claims.
- Write clear, coherent multi-paragraph compositions that incorporate text-based evidence, appropriate academic vocabulary, and grade-level conventions.
- Demonstrate proficiency in speaking and listening skills through discussions, presentations, and explanations of project-based work.
- Integrate information from multiple sources to complete research-based tasks within interdisciplinary modules.

#### Mathematics

- Demonstrate mastery of grade-level math standards through accurate application of skills in number sense, algebraic reasoning, geometry, measurement, and data analysis.
- Apply mathematical reasoning to real-world and project-based problems, using models, diagrams, or digital tools to justify solutions.
- Explain mathematical thinking verbally and in writing using precise mathematical language.
- Complete multi-step tasks that require selecting appropriate strategies, tools, and representations.

#### Science

- Demonstrate understanding of grade-level scientific concepts through inquiry-based investigations, data collection, and evidence-based conclusions.

- Apply the scientific method to design and conduct experiments aligned with Star Academy’s blended science modules.
- Interpret graphs, charts, and models to explain scientific phenomena.
- Communicate scientific findings through written explanations, laboratory reports, or project presentations.

### Social Studies

- Demonstrate understanding of key historical, civic, geographic, and economic concepts identified in grade-level Louisiana standards.
- Analyze primary and secondary sources to draw conclusions, support claims, and complete project-based tasks.
- Explain cause-and-effect relationships, compare perspectives, and describe the impact of major events or decisions.
- Communicate knowledge through written products, discussions, and interdisciplinary projects that integrate social studies with other content areas.

### Interdisciplinary Performance Standards (Star Academy)

- Complete at least one major interdisciplinary project demonstrating mastery of learning objectives across ELA, Math, Science, and Social Studies.
- Collaborate effectively with peers to plan, design, and complete hands-on tasks, demonstrating communication, responsibility, and problem-solving.
- Use digital tools and the Engage LMS to access content, submit tasks, monitor progress, and revise work based on feedback.
- Demonstrate applied skills such as data interpretation, technical reading, research, and real-world problem-solving aligned with Star Academy performance expectations.
- Present project outcomes through oral, written, or multimedia formats that demonstrate accuracy, clarity, and depth of understanding.

#### e. Data Collection and Analysis

ELAoL will administer all diagnostic, formative, interim, and summative assessments through secure, state-approved platforms such as the Louisiana LEAP and ELPT portals, DRC Insight, Amplify, KITE, and the school’s internal systems, including the Star Academy Engage LMS. These systems ensure accuracy, confidentiality, and secure handling of all student assessment data. Upon completion of each assessment, data is automatically uploaded to secure dashboards within the Student Information System (SIS), where staff with designated access can review and analyze results.

#### Data Collection:

Assessment data will be collected immediately following each assessment administration through the platforms listed above. This will include individual student performance on formative assessments, interim benchmark tests, and state-mandated summative assessments, along with subgroup-specific data such as English learner status, disability status, and economic disadvantage.

Collected data will include results from LEAP 2025, LEAP Connect, ELPT, ELPT Connect, DIBELS, the LDOE Numeracy Screener, interim ELA and Math benchmarks, and performance data embedded within the Star Academy modules, including pre-tests, post-tests, and project-based assessments.

#### Data Analysis:

**Who:** Assessment data will be analyzed by instructional leaders, classroom teachers, interventionists, and the school's data and curriculum teams. Star Academy instructional support staff will participate in module-based data reviews to ensure fidelity to the accelerated learning model.

**When:**

**Daily Analysis:** Teachers will review daily formative assessments such as exit tickets, fluency checks, and lesson-aligned performance tasks to adjust instruction in real time. This allows teachers to modify grouping, pacing, and scaffolding based on immediate student needs.

**Post-Assessment Review:** After major assessments such as DIBELS, numeracy screeners, interim benchmarks, and module assessments through the Engage LMS, instructional teams will review data during scheduled weekly collaboration blocks or monthly DDI meetings. These reviews will identify instructional gaps, trends in understanding, and students in need of targeted intervention or enrichment.

**Benchmark Reviews:** Three times per year, school leadership will conduct comprehensive benchmark data reviews to monitor progress toward school-wide goals, including DIBELS benchmarks, subgroup outcomes, growth targets, and School Performance Score (SPS) projections.

**Purpose:**

The primary purpose of data analysis at ELAoL is to monitor student learning in relation to grade-level expectations, project-based performance standards, and individual academic goals. Data reviews will guide instructional decisions, determine curricular pacing, and identify necessary supports for students who require remediation or enrichment.

Assessment data will also be used to adjust interventions for students identified as at-risk, including English learners, students with disabilities, and students performing below benchmark expectations. Subgroup analysis will allow the school to ensure that all student groups demonstrate equitable progress and that supports are appropriately tailored to their needs.

**Roles and Responsibilities:**

**Teachers:** Review daily and weekly formative data, track student progress toward learning goals, and adjust instructional plans accordingly. Teachers will be responsible for implementing small-group instruction, targeted reteaches, and personalized learning supports based on assessment trends.

**Instructional Coaches and Data Coordinators:** Facilitate data review meetings, assist teachers in interpreting results, identify patterns across grade levels or content areas, and ensure that instructional adjustments are based on evidence.

**School Leadership:** Lead quarterly benchmark reviews, monitor progress toward SMART goals and SPS benchmarks, and determine professional development priorities based on data trends. Leadership will collaborate with Star Academy coaches to support implementation of data-informed instructional practices.

**Data Teams:** Analyze subgroup data, monitor progress for students requiring interventions, and collaborate with instructional staff to ensure that supports align with DIBELS, benchmark, interim, and state assessment results.

**Purpose of Data Usage:**

**Instructional Adjustment:** Data will be used to refine lesson planning, reorganize small groups, and adjust instructional strategies to meet the evolving needs of students.

**Identifying Gaps:** Regular data reviews allow staff to identify areas of misunderstanding early, ensuring that interventions are implemented before students fall significantly behind.

**Program Evaluation:** Assessment data will inform evaluation of academic programs and curricular tools, including literacy and numeracy interventions, Star Academy modules, and enrichment offerings.

**Family Communication:** Data will be shared with families through progress reports, parent-teacher conferences, and updates in the SIS, ensuring families remain informed and engaged in their child's academic progress.

#### f. Data-Driven Instructional Decisions

Engaged Learning Academies of Louisiana (ELAoL) will use a comprehensive, data-driven decision-making process to inform instructional planning, programmatic structures, curriculum adjustments, and professional development priorities. Because ELAoL operates as a school-within-a-school model using Tier I curriculum and the Star Academy curriculum, assessment data plays a central role in ensuring that students receive the targeted academic supports, project-based learning experiences, and accelerated instruction necessary to close learning gaps and achieve mastery.

Instructional leaders and teachers will analyze data from diagnostic tools, formative checks, benchmark assessments, and embedded Star Academy module assessments to understand each student's progress and determine the level of acceleration or intervention required. In the school-within-a-school environment, smaller cohorts and consistent facilitator-led instruction allow staff to monitor data closely and make immediate adjustments to instruction, grouping, and pacing based on student performance. Daily formative data, such as exit tickets, fluency checks, and responses to project tasks, will be used to reteach concepts, scaffold lessons, or modify groups to ensure mastery within the module.

Weekly collaboration meetings will provide grade-level and content teams with dedicated time to analyze trends in benchmark and formative data, assess progress within ongoing project-based learning units, and plan next steps aligned with the Louisiana Student Standards and the Star Academy performance expectations. Because PBL requires students to apply knowledge across ELA, Math, Science, and Social Studies, teachers will review student work products, project rubrics, and module checkpoints to determine where students may need additional support in research, writing, data analysis, or problem-solving.

After each administration of DIBELS, the LDOE Numeracy Screener, interim benchmarks, and Star Academy pre-/post-tests, instructional teams will participate in structured data-driven instruction (DDI) meetings. During these sessions, instructional leaders and Star Academy support staff will guide teachers in interpreting data to identify priority standards, misunderstandings within modules, and students requiring targeted interventions. Data reviews will also inform pacing adjustments within project-based units, ensuring students have the time and support needed to complete interdisciplinary tasks successfully.

Programmatic decisions within the school-within-a-school model will be grounded in assessment results. Students who demonstrate significant foundational gaps will receive increased intervention time, individualized supports, or modified project roles to ensure equitable participation in PBL activities. Students showing advanced mastery may be assigned extended project tasks, leadership roles within group projects, or opportunities for accelerated module completion. Leaders will also use subgroup data to determine the level of support required for English learners, students with disabilities, and students performing below benchmark expectations.



Curricular decisions will be adjusted based on student performance within modules and project outcomes. When data shows consistent challenges in particular standards or PBL competencies, instructional leaders may refine the implementation of project tasks, incorporate supplemental materials, or modify scaffolds to ensure students meet both state standards and Star Academy’s higher-level performance expectations. Because the Engage LMS provides real-time data on student mastery, teachers can continuously refine instruction within each module.

Professional development will be directly aligned to data findings. When assessment trends indicate challenges in literacy, numeracy, project facilitation, or interdisciplinary performance tasks, school leadership will design PD sessions focused on these identified needs. Coaching cycles will prioritize instructional strategies tied to PBL success, such as guiding inquiry, managing collaborative groups, supporting student discourse, and providing feedback during project development. Star Academy coaches will support teachers through modeling, observation, and targeted feedback tied to assessment evidence.

### **Diverse Learners and Student Supports**

#### **EPC.14: Diverse Learners and Student Supports**

Engaged Learning Academies of Louisiana (ELAoL) is committed to providing an inclusive, equitable school-within-a-school environment that ensures all students—including those with disabilities, English Learners, academically behind students, and academically advanced learners—receive rigorous, individualized support. The school will operate in full compliance with IDEA, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Title III of ESSA, Louisiana Bulletin 1508 (Pupil Appraisal), and Bulletin 1530 (IEP requirements). Because ELAoL’s model is built on small cohorts, interdisciplinary project-based learning, and strong monitoring systems, staff are well-positioned to identify student needs early and respond with appropriate support.

#### **Students with Disabilities (SWDs)**

ELAoL will use a multi-step MTSS process to identify students with disabilities. Teachers, families, or support staff may refer a student for evaluation when academic or behavioral challenges persist despite documented Tier 2 or Tier 3 interventions. All evaluations will follow Bulletin 1508 procedures to ensure equitable, data-driven determinations. For students who qualify, the school will develop IEPs in accordance with Bulletin 1530, aligning goals to Louisiana Student Standards and detailing accommodations, services, and learning supports specific to each student’s needs. Instruction will be delivered through push-in services, small-group supports, scaffolded project-based learning tasks, and pull-out services as necessary. Because the Star Academy model integrates interdisciplinary, hands-on learning, teachers will modify project roles and support students with accessible entry points to ensure full participation. Progress monitoring will occur every 12 weeks using curriculum-based measurements, formative data, and performance trends within the Engage LMS, with quarterly reports shared with families.

To prevent disproportionality or over-identification, the school will review referral, evaluation, discipline, and enrollment data each semester, disaggregated by race, gender, socioeconomic status, and EL status. If patterns suggest inequitable referrals or placements, ELAoL will conduct MTSS fidelity checks, strengthen pre-referral documentation, and engage external appraisal experts to audit processes. Staff will receive annual training on culturally responsive practices, unbiased referral protocols, and equitable MTSS implementation to ensure all evaluations reflect student needs rather than subjective or biased judgments.

#### **English Learners (ELs)**

All families will complete a Home Language Survey upon enrollment. If the survey or family interview indicates exposure to another language, the English Language Proficiency Screener (ELPS) will be administered within 30 days. EL students will receive services through an inclusion-based model with embedded English Language Development (ELD). Teachers will integrate scaffolded supports, visuals, vocabulary previews, sentence starters, guided discussions, and structured writing supports, into the Star Academy project-based curriculum. The school will supplement core instruction with an ELD resource aligned to Louisiana EL Connectors to ensure explicit instruction in speaking, listening, reading, and writing.

Each EL student will receive an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) detailing proficiency levels, language goals, accommodations, and assessment strategies. ILPs will be reviewed annually and monitored throughout the year using DIBELS, classroom assessments, Star Academy module performance, and ELPT results. To guard against misidentification, under-identification, or disproportionate placement, ELAoL will conduct semester audits of ELPS screenings, ILPs, and reclassification decisions. Staff will also receive annual training on linguistic diversity, bias-free screening, and effective scaffolds for ELs within PBL settings.

#### Academically Behind Students

Students performing below grade level will be identified through DIBELS, the LDOE Numeracy Screener, interim benchmarks, Star Academy module pre-tests, and ongoing formative assessments. Instructional teams will create individualized intervention plans outlining targeted supports and progress-monitoring strategies. Students will receive additional instructional time through intervention blocks, skill-based small-group instruction, and scaffolded support within project-based learning tasks. Teachers will use high-quality instructional materials such as CKLA, Guidebooks 2.0, Zearn, Amplify Science, Gallopade Social Studies and Star Academy Curriculum scaffolds, supplemented with explicit skill-building tools when needed.

Progress will be monitored weekly or biweekly, with MTSS teams meeting monthly to assess student response to intervention and determine whether changes in intensity or grouping are necessary. To prevent over-identification or subgroup bias, leadership will review intervention data quarterly by demographic group and evaluate intervention fidelity. If disproportionality appears, staff will receive corrective training on MTSS documentation, pre-referral processes, and culturally responsive instructional strategies.

#### Academically Advanced and Gifted Students

Academically advanced students will be identified through performance on benchmark assessments, Tier I curriculum assessments, Star Academy module performance, classroom work, LDOE standardized test performance, and teacher recommendations. While ELAoL does not operate a formal Gifted/Talented program, students demonstrating advanced capabilities will receive enrichment opportunities such as extended project pathways, accelerated module completion, independent research, and leadership roles within collaborative PBL tasks. If a student appears to meet gifted criteria, ELAoL will follow evaluation procedures established in Bulletin 1508 and develop an IEP in accordance with Bulletin 1530.

Progress for advanced students will be monitored through project rubrics, classroom assessments, and benchmark trends to ensure continued growth and challenge. To ensure fairness and equity in identifying advanced or potentially gifted students, the school will review subgroup participation in enrichment opportunities and monitor referral patterns. Staff will receive training on identifying giftedness in diverse learners, minimizing bias in recommendations, and designing differentiated PBL tasks that extend learning for advanced students.

**EPC.15: Behavior Management**

Engaged Learning Academies of Louisiana (ELAoL) emphasizes a preventive, relationship-based approach to student behavior that supports each learner's social, emotional, and academic growth within the school-within-a-school environment. The school will establish a consistent framework built on clear routines, explicit modeling of expectations, and proactive skill-building. Rather than relying on exclusionary practices, ELAoL will equip teachers with a tiered set of supports including redirection strategies, structured check-ins, restorative conversations, conflict resolution meetings, behavior reflection logs, and goal-setting conferences. Students who require additional support may receive small-group social-emotional instruction, individualized behavior plans, or staff mentoring. The school's counselor or social worker will collaborate with families, mental health agencies, and instructional staff to provide targeted behavioral and emotional support. Removal from class or suspension will only be used when a student engages in behavior that poses a significant safety risk or after progressive interventions have been attempted and documented.

**a. Communication of Policies to Students and Families**

ELAoL will clearly communicate its discipline philosophy and expectations to families and students through the Student and Family Handbook distributed at the start of each year. The approach will be reinforced during summer orientation, open house sessions, advisory lessons, and quarterly expectation reviews. Teachers will explicitly teach, model, and practice behavioral expectations during the opening weeks of school and revisit them regularly. Families will be updated throughout the year through newsletters, conferences, and digital communication to ensure they understand the school's policies and processes. Additionally, the Student and Family Handbook will be accessible on the school's website.

**b. Interventions and Alternatives to Exclusionary Discipline**

The school will prioritize supportive interventions designed to keep students engaged in learning. These include restorative conversations, guided reflection, conflict resolution sessions, check-in/check-out routines, behavior plans, and small-group social-emotional lessons. Students may be assigned supportive roles in project-based learning settings, given structured movement breaks, or offered redirected tasks to de-escalate behavior. Counseling and mental health services will be available as needed. Suspension or expulsion will only occur when behaviors endanger the safety of others or continue after documented interventions have been exhausted.

**c. Protection of Rights for Students with Exceptionalities**

ELAoL will ensure that disciplinary procedures for students with disabilities and those with 504 Plans comply with IDEA, Section 504, and Louisiana Bulletin 1530. Before any disciplinary action that could result in a change of placement, the school will convene a Manifestation Determination Review (MDR) to determine whether the behavior was a manifestation of the student's disability or related to a failure to implement the IEP or 504 Plan. Special education staff will participate in all disciplinary processes to ensure accommodations and support are implemented appropriately. Families will receive formal written notification explaining the incident, proposed action, and procedural safeguards, including participation rights and the option to request an expedited due process hearing. Staff will be trained annually on discipline procedures for exceptional learners, legal timelines, and documentation requirements.

**d. Monitoring of Suspension, Expulsion, and Addressing Disproportionality**

All behavioral incidents, suspensions, and expulsions will be logged in the school's student information system and disaggregated by race, ethnicity, disability status, English learner status, gender, and socioeconomic status. School leaders will conduct monthly reviews to identify trends, inequities, or inconsistencies in discipline practices across classrooms. If disproportionality or over-identification is identified, the school will conduct a root-cause analysis that may include reviewing referral patterns, evaluating teacher use of classroom management strategies, auditing MTSS and PBIS implementation,

and examining staff-student interactions. Corrective actions may involve targeted coaching, additional supervision, professional development on culturally responsive practices and implicit bias, or adjustments to schoolwide systems. Feedback from students, families, and staff will be incorporated to ensure equitable discipline practices.

e. Supervision Plan for Alternate Settings

When a student is assigned to an alternate educational placement due to suspension or expulsion, ELAoL will ensure ongoing academic engagement and behavioral support. Suspended students will maintain access to grade-level assignments through the Engage LMS or structured learning packets, along with scheduled check-ins with teachers. For longer-term removals, the school will collaborate with the local district's designated alternative education program to ensure continuity of instruction aligned to the student's grade level, IEP, or ILP. Upon return, the school will conduct a re-entry meeting with the student, family, and staff to review expectations and develop a reintegration plan that may include counseling support, restorative meetings, or a temporary behavior plan. This process promotes safety, accountability, and successful reintegration into the school community.

### **EPC.16. Parent and Community Engagement**

Engaged Learning Academies of Louisiana (ELAoL) is committed to building meaningful, lasting partnerships with families and community members that reflect the strengths and needs of the students it serves. Because ELAoL operates a school-within-a-school model, strong family relationships and consistent community involvement are essential to supporting student success, academic acceleration, and smooth integration within the host campus. The school will cultivate a welcoming environment where communication is transparent, family voices are valued, and community stakeholders play an active role in shaping school priorities.

a. Building Strong Family–School Partnerships

ELAoL will create a multi-layered family engagement system that provides frequent, flexible, and culturally responsive opportunities for families to connect with the school. Engagement opportunities will vary in time, format, and purpose to ensure access for working caregivers, multilingual families, and those requiring individualized support. The school will offer morning and evening sessions, virtual participation options, and meetings in multiple languages, ensuring that every family can engage despite scheduling or language barriers.

Families will be invited to participate in a variety of events and structures, including project showcases connected to Star Academy modules, family learning workshops, advisory conferences, and celebrations of student achievement. Throughout the year, families and community members are invited to participate in open houses and student-led site tours, allowing them to engage directly with the school environment and its programs. Teachers will host virtual office hours and optional drop-in sessions for families seeking academic updates or additional support. Monthly newsletters and two-way digital messaging, using platforms compatible with translation tools, will ensure families remain informed and have a consistent way to communicate with teachers and leadership. For students needing intensive support, the school's counselor, intervention team, and advisory teachers will offer individualized conferences and home visits to strengthen relationships and coordinate wraparound services.

To deepen long-term engagement, ELAoL will establish a Family Partnership Association in Year 1. This group will collaborate with staff to support school initiatives, coordinate volunteer opportunities, and help shape family-centered programming. The association will be open to all caregivers and will include rotating meeting times to encourage broad participation.

b. Formal Structures for Ongoing Input and Shared Decision-Making

ELAoL will implement several formal mechanisms to ensure families and community members have meaningful opportunities to contribute to decision-making and provide feedback to school leadership and the charter board. A Family Advisory Council (FAC) will meet three times per year to review schoolwide performance data, culture indicators, family engagement metrics, and progress on goals. Council members will represent the diversity of the school population and will collaborate with leadership to identify areas for improvement and recommend action steps.

A Special Education and English Learner Advisory Group will be added to ensure that families of students with exceptional learning needs have structured opportunities to provide input on programming, accessibility, and services. These groups will help identify barriers to engagement, review outcomes for specific subgroups, and propose adjustments to strengthen support.

Families and community partners will also be invited to participate in annual climate surveys and mid-year feedback surveys, available online and in multiple languages, to inform school planning and evaluate communication effectiveness. ELAoL will host biannual community dialogues and town halls, offered in person and virtually, where stakeholders can engage directly with the school leader, ask questions, and contribute ideas for future improvements.

At the governance level, the charter board will maintain open meetings in accordance with Louisiana Open Meetings Law. The board will designate a family liaison to serve as a consistent point of communication between families and board leadership. Recommendations from the Family Advisory Council and the EL/Special Education advisory groups will be presented during board meetings to ensure stakeholder perspectives are incorporated into school policy and strategic planning.

## Section 2: Organizational Plan and Capacity

### **OPC.17. Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **Governing Board Roles**

The governing board of Engaged Learning Academies of Louisiana (ELAoL) provides strategic guidance and fiduciary oversight for the organization. The board approves budgets, monitors financial and academic performance, ensures compliance with state and federal regulations, and evaluates the Education Service Provider (ESP), NOLA Education. Members offer expertise in areas such as education, finance, law, and community engagement. The board meets regularly to review progress toward charter goals, assess organizational performance, and maintain alignment with the school's mission. The ELAoL Governing Board is committed to finalizing its draft bylaws and completing its board roster upon assignment of the school's location by the Louisiana Recovery School District. The board has intentionally deferred final approval until the school site is identified to ensure that locally based board members have the opportunity to review the bylaws, provide input, and formally approve all governing documents with full knowledge of the school's community and context.

#### **Board Director: Chair**

The Board Director: Chair serves as the leader of the governing body and oversees all aspects of board governance. This individual works with the ESP to develop meeting agendas, ensures productive and compliant board meetings, and guides the board in fulfilling its responsibilities related to academic quality, fiscal oversight, and long-term planning. The Chair also ensures that all board actions comply with Louisiana's Open Meetings Law, Public Records statutes, ethics requirements, and all other legal obligations applicable to charter school boards. This role confirms that members complete required governance training, follow conflict-of-interest procedures, and operate in accordance with organizational bylaws. In addition, the Chair oversees the annual performance review of the ESP using clear organizational goals tied to the school's charter commitments bound by the Charter School Performance Compact. The Chair supports the development of board priorities, strengthens governance practices, and ensures that internal oversight systems remain aligned to statutory requirements and the school's long-term academic and operational outcomes.

#### **Board Director: Vice Chair**

The Board Director: Vice Chair assists the Chair in maintaining effective board operations and takes on leadership responsibilities when the Chair is unavailable. This role supports board committees, helps ensure adherence to bylaws, and contributes to strategic discussions and special initiatives.

#### **Board Director: Secretary**

The Board Secretary manages the official records of the board, including meeting agendas, minutes, policies, and governance documents. The Secretary ensures compliance with Louisiana's Open Meetings Law by publishing meeting notices and maintaining transparent access to public records. This role is responsible for accurate documentation of board actions and decisions.

#### **Board Director: Treasurer**

The Board Treasurer oversees financial oversight and works closely with the finance team and back-office provider to ensure accurate financial reporting, responsible budget management, and compliance with financial regulations. The Treasurer reviews monthly financial statements, monitors long-term sustainability, and presents financial updates to the board.

#### **General Board Director**

General board members contribute to governance by attending meetings, serving on committees, and offering professional expertise. Members support oversight of academic programs, operations, finances,

and community engagement efforts. Each member plays a role in upholding the mission and ensuring accountability across the organization.

### **Educational Service Provider (ESP) NOLA Education - Leadership Team**

The ESP's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) provides the overarching leadership that guides Engaged Learning Academies of Louisiana (ELAoL) and ensures that the organization, led by the ESP's leadership team, delivers on its academic mission and operational commitments. The ESP is responsible for the school's overall performance, including instructional quality, financial health, organizational culture, compliance, and long-term sustainability. This role sets the strategic direction for the organization and ensures that all programs operate cohesively and effectively. The ESP maintains a close working relationship with the governing board, offering regular performance updates, presenting data-driven recommendations, and ensuring that board members have the information necessary for strong oversight. The ESP is accountable for meeting all charter requirements and implementing organizational goals tied to academic results, operational efficiency, and student outcomes. This role oversees the senior leadership team, including the Executive Director, Chief Schools Officer, Chief Operating Officer, and Chief Talent Team, to ensure alignment and coordination across instructional, operational, and talent systems. The ESP serves as the primary representative of ELAoL in the community and broader educational landscape. This includes engaging with local and state education officials, cultivating relationships with community partners, supporting development efforts, and advocating for policies that advance the mission of ELAoL. The ESP is also responsible for building a strong organizational culture rooted in transparency, equity, and continuous improvement, and for ensuring that all legal, fiscal, and compliance requirements are met with fidelity. Through strategic planning, leadership development, and organizational stewardship, the ESP ensures that ELAoL remains a high-performing and mission-driven institution.

#### **Executive Director (ED)**

The ESP's Executive Director provides day-to-day executive leadership for ELAoL's campus and ensures that the school operates in alignment with the organization's mission, strategic priorities, and accountability commitments. The ED is responsible for driving academic and operational excellence, monitoring progress toward charter goals, and ensuring that the campus culture reflects the values of engagement, accelerated learning, and student-centered support. This role directly supervises the Principal, supports the integration of the Star Academy accelerated model within the broader campus, and ensures that instructional systems and operational structures work cohesively. The Executive Director collaborates closely with organizational leaders to oversee compliance, manage campus-level planning, and ensure fidelity to state and federal requirements. The ED also serves as the primary local ambassador for ELAoL, cultivating relationships with families, community organizations, higher education partners, and local agencies. Through ongoing engagement and needs assessment, the ED ensures that school programming responds to the strengths and challenges of the assigned community and that families remain active partners in the school's success.

#### **Chief Academic Officer (CAO)**

The ESP's Chief Academic Officer leads the academic vision for ELAoL by overseeing instructional quality, curriculum implementation, and data-driven teaching practices across the organization. The CAO provides direct coaching and support to School Leaders and instructional staff, ensuring that classrooms maintain high expectations, rigorous standards alignment, and effective use of formative and summative data. This role builds and maintains academic systems that promote consistency across grade levels, ensures that the accelerated model is implemented with fidelity, and supports teachers in delivering project-based learning, mastery progression, and interventions aligned to student needs. The CAO works closely with the Chief Talent Team to align professional learning, staffing decisions, and educator

development with instructional priorities. Additionally, the CAO oversees academic performance monitoring and ensures that ELAoL meets state accountability benchmarks, maintains compliance with Louisiana Student Standards, and continually improves instructional outcomes for all learners.

#### Chief Operating Officer (COO)

The ESP's Chief Operating Officer oversees all operational functions of ELAoL and ensures that non-instructional systems enable effective teaching and learning. The COO manages facilities, transportation, nutrition programs, technology systems, school safety, and vendor relationships to ensure that the school remains safe, functional, and fully compliant with local, state, and federal regulations. This role establishes efficient processes for procurement, enrollment operations, emergency procedures, and campus logistics, while maintaining clear communication with the Executive Director, Principal, and operational support teams. The COO leads risk management efforts, monitors operational performance indicators, and develops scalable systems that can support organizational growth. By ensuring that daily operations run smoothly and anticipating long-term infrastructure needs, the COO enables instructional leaders and teachers to focus on delivering high-quality student learning experiences.

#### Chief Talent Team (CTT)

The ESP's Chief Talent Team leads human capital strategy for ELAoL and works with school leadership to ensure that the school recruits, develops, and retains a highly effective and diverse staff. This role oversees hiring processes, onboarding systems, certification and credentialing compliance, evaluation frameworks, and retention initiatives. The CTT ensures that all personnel practices reflect ELAoL's commitment to equity, cultural responsiveness, and student-centered learning. The CTT collaborates closely with instructional leadership to design and implement professional development systems, including coaching cycles, leadership pipelines, and staff growth plans. This role is responsible for cultivating a strong organizational culture, supporting employee well-being, and building talent systems that sustain high-quality instruction and operational excellence. The CTT also plays a key role in succession planning to ensure stability and continuity in leadership roles across the organization.

### School Site Leadership Team

#### Principal

The Principal serves as the academic and cultural leader at the school level, responsible for cultivating a safe, engaging, and high-performing learning environment. This role directs all aspects of instructional programming, ensures that the accelerated and project-based components of the Star Academy model are implemented with fidelity, and guides teachers in maintaining rigorous expectations for all students. The Principal supervises faculty and staff, conducts formal and informal evaluations, and leads School Leadership Teams (SLTs) to ensure that instructional practices, professional expectations, and student outcomes remain aligned with organizational standards. The Principal oversees comprehensive data review cycles, facilitates collaborative planning, and coordinates intervention systems to support students who need additional acceleration or remediation. This role also ensures full compliance with Louisiana education regulations, manages discipline and student support systems, and maintains consistent communication with families. Working closely with the ESP's Executive Director and ESP's Chief Academic Officer, the Principal aligns school-level decision-making with organizational goals and drives continuous academic improvement across grade levels.

#### Assistant Principal

The Assistant Principal plays a critical role in supporting instructional excellence and maintaining coherence across the academic program. This leader ensures that all curricula, including the accelerated Star Academy coursework and the Tier 1 instructional materials used in lower grades, are aligned to Louisiana Student Standards and implemented effectively in classrooms. The Assistant Principal oversees all assessment systems, manages testing logistics for state and internal assessments, and leads teachers in



using data to adjust instruction, monitor progress, and address learning gaps. This role also assists the Principal with teacher evaluations by conducting classroom observations, providing feedback, and supporting the development of staff growth plans. Additionally, the Assistant Principal designs and facilitates professional development, guides lesson internalization processes, supports instructional coaching cycles, and fosters collaboration through professional learning communities. By ensuring consistency in academic expectations and monitoring the quality of instruction, the Assistant Principal contributes directly to strong instructional outcomes for all learners.

#### Student Services Coordinator

The Student Services Coordinator leads the comprehensive support systems that ensure students with disabilities, English learners, and those needing targeted intervention receive appropriate and compliant services. This role manages the development, implementation, and monitoring of IEPs, 504 plans, and Individual Language Plans, ensuring alignment with state and federal regulations, including IDEA, Section 504, and the EL Guidebook. The Coordinator facilitates cross-disciplinary collaboration among general education teachers, special service providers, appraisal personnel, and families to maintain inclusive instructional practices. Additionally, the Coordinator oversees intervention frameworks, tracks student progress toward academic and behavioral goals, and monitors documentation and compliance timelines. Through proactive communication and ongoing data review, the Student Services Coordinator ensures that student support systems are both responsive and aligned to legal and organizational expectations.

#### Director of Operations

The Director of Operations manages all non-instructional systems essential to the smooth functioning of the school, ensuring that the campus remains safe, organized, and fully operational each day. This role oversees facilities, maintenance, transportation coordination, procurement, technology systems, security procedures, and relationships with external vendors. The Director of Operations develops efficient schoolwide processes for arrival, dismissal, scheduling, inventory, and emergency preparedness, ensuring compliance with local, state, and federal regulations. This role also supports staff by ensuring that operational needs are addressed promptly and that systems are designed to maximize instructional time. Through coordinated planning and effective logistical management, the Director of Operations provides a stable foundation that enables high-quality teaching and learning.

#### Back-Office Services Provider

ELAoL will contract with a back-office provider, 4th Sector, to support financial management, compliance reporting, budgeting, payroll, and data systems. The provider operates under the oversight of the governing board and ESP, ensuring strong fiscal practices while allowing school leaders to focus on academic and cultural priorities.

### **OPC.18. Organizational Reporting and Accountability Structure**

Engaged Learning Academies of Louisiana (ELAoL) has designed a clear, efficient organizational structure that establishes strong accountability, ensures alignment to the school's mission, and supports high-quality implementation of the accelerated school-within-a-school model. The ELAoL Governing Board holds ultimate legal, fiduciary, and strategic authority for the organization. The Board supervises the ESP's CEO, who is responsible for executing the organization's strategic priorities and ensuring that academic, operational, and financial systems function at a high level.

The ESP's CEO oversees key members of the executive leadership team, each with specialized roles that provide targeted oversight and support to the future campus:

- The ESP's Executive Director provides direct local leadership and ensures that the campus operates in alignment with ELAoL's mission, community partnerships, student needs, and charter commitments. This role maintains a consistent presence on campus and provides regional supervision and coaching to the Principal.
- The ESP's Chief Academic Officer (CAO) manages instructional quality across the organization, ensuring effective curriculum implementation, data-driven instructional practices, and fidelity to academic expectations. The CAO also provides coaching and support to school leaders, including the Principal and Assistant Principal, with a strong focus on maintaining rigorous academic standards.
- The ESP's Chief Operating Officer (COO) oversees all non-instructional systems, including facilities, transportation, technology, safety, and operational compliance. This role ensures that the school environment supports high-quality instruction and meets all regulatory requirements.
- The ESP's Chief Talent Team (CTT) oversees recruitment, onboarding, credentialing, evaluation systems, and staff development, ensuring that the school attracts and retains high-quality educators who are prepared to support an accelerated, project-based learning environment.

At the school level, the Principal provides campus-specific leadership and reports to the ESP's Executive Director while also collaborating closely with the ESP's CAO. The Principal is responsible for instructional quality, student culture, staff supervision, teacher evaluations, and daily management of academic programming. The leadership team supporting the Principal includes the Assistant Principal for Curriculum and Assessment, instructional coaches, the Student Services Coordinator, and the Director of Operations. Together, this team ensures strong instructional delivery, coherent intervention systems, effective operations, and responsive family engagement.

#### Rationale for Structure:

This organizational model strengthens ELAoL's capacity to deliver a rigorous and responsive school experience by ensuring:

- Distinct academic and operational oversight that allows instructional leaders to remain focused on teaching and learning;
- Regional leadership through the ESP's Executive Director to ensure deep community engagement, responsiveness to local needs, and consistent on-site support;
- Clear reporting lines that facilitate efficient communication, transparency, and accountability at all levels of the organization;
- Specialized roles that relieve school-based leaders of administrative burdens and enable them to prioritize instructional quality and student support;
- Alignment between school-level practices and organizational expectations to promote consistency, equity, and continuous improvement.

This structure supports the unique demands of the ELAoL accelerated model, which requires tight coordination between instructional, operational, and student-support functions.

#### Role of Partner Organizations:

ELAoL will partner with a professional back-office services provider, 4th Sector to support financial management, compliance reporting, grant management, budgeting, payroll, and other operational data systems. The back-office provider will collaborate with the ESP's COO and CEO and will be evaluated annually based on performance metrics, accuracy of reporting, timeliness, and adherence to state and federal requirements. This partnership enables school leaders to focus on instructional excellence and student relationships while ensuring strong internal controls and financial integrity. All service

agreements will include defined scopes of work, performance expectations, and monitoring structures to ensure high-quality service delivery.

### **OPC.19. Teacher-Student Ratio**

Engaged Learning Academies of Louisiana (ELAoL) will maintain instructional group sizes to support individualized attention and the accelerated learning model. Although RSD will inform ELAoL of the location, the maximum student-to-teacher ratio will be approximately 26:2 in grades K-3 and 25:1 in grades 4-8, allowing educators to closely monitor progress and provide targeted support. The adult-to-student ratio at ELAoL is 10:1 to ensure a safe, well-supervised learning environment and to support strong academic accountability. This ratio is intentionally designed to provide consistent adult presence throughout the school day, enable effective monitoring of student safety and behavior, and allow educators to deliver individualized academic support. Maintaining an appropriate adult-to-student ratio also ensures timely feedback, progress monitoring, and instructional adjustments, reinforcing both student engagement and responsibility for learning outcomes. ELAoL will collaborate with the RSD to accommodate all students at the designated turnaround site, ensuring that their academic and developmental needs are fully met.

### **OPC.20. Recruitment and Hiring Procedures**

Engaged Learning Academies of Louisiana (ELAoL) utilizes a structured, equitable, and compliant hiring process designed to recruit highly qualified educators and support staff who meet all Louisiana Department of Education requirements and who are aligned with the school's mission and instructional model. Recruitment begins early in the calendar year to maximize the applicant pool, with outreach conducted through regional and national job boards, teacher preparation programs, alternative certification pathways, community organizations, and professional networks. Given the school's unique school-within-a-school model and emphasis on project-based, accelerated learning, ELAoL gives preference to applicants who have experience with interdisciplinary instruction, personalized learning, innovative scheduling models, or serving students who need academic acceleration and re-engagement. Prospective employees must submit a resume, academic transcripts, certification documentation, and any additional credentials required for their roles. These materials are reviewed to verify compliance with Louisiana licensure requirements and organizational expectations. All open positions at ELAoL include detailed job descriptions outlining required qualifications, essential duties, performance expectations, and alignment to the employee handbook. These job descriptions are shared with candidates during the recruitment process to ensure clarity and transparency regarding role responsibilities and professional standards. Candidates participate in a multi-step screening process that may include an initial interview, a content- or scenario-based performance task, a teaching demonstration for instructional staff, or a school tour to assess fit within the accelerated, hands-on learning environment. References are verified prior to extending an offer. The Human Resources team issues a written offer letter outlining key responsibilities, compensation, evaluation processes, and onboarding steps. Employment decisions follow all federal and state non-discrimination laws, and ELAoL ensures equal employment opportunity regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, religion, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

#### **Criminal Background Checks and Compliance**

All instructional, operational, and administrative personnel must complete fingerprinting and pass a Louisiana State Police–approved background check before beginning work on campus. Staff must also complete all state-mandated pre-employment requirements, including ethics training, mandated reporter certification, and required safety modules. No employee may work with students until all documentation is verified and approved by Human Resources. Third-party vendors, such as food service teams, transportation providers, or contracted instructional support personnel, must also pass background checks before being permitted on campus. Dates of fingerprint execution and passing must be provided by the

third-party vendor to the school. All vendor agreements include explicit language requiring compliance with these security protocols to protect student safety.

#### Employee Discipline and Dismissal

ELAoL maintains clear policies governing employee discipline and dismissal that are aligned with Louisiana labor law and outlined in the employee handbook. Employees whose performance or conduct does not meet organizational expectations may receive coaching, documented feedback, or placement on a formal improvement plan. Detailed documentation of concerns, timelines, and support measures is provided to the employee and maintained by Human Resources. Situations involving serious misconduct, willful neglect of duty, or violations that compromise student safety may result in immediate administrative action. Before any termination decision is finalized, employees are given an opportunity to respond to concerns and are informed of their rights under applicable law. Documentation related to all disciplinary decisions is retained in accordance with state and federal regulations.

### **OPC.21 Teacher Turnover and Coverage Plan**

Engaged Learning Academies of Louisiana (ELAoL) understands that consistent, well-supported teachers are critical to strong student outcomes and to maintaining trust with families and the broader school community. To promote stability and reduce staff turnover, the school will implement intentional hiring, comprehensive onboarding, and ongoing coaching structures, while cultivating a workplace culture that is collaborative, supportive, and rooted in shared accountability. ELAoL engages in early recruitment each year and maintains a continuous hiring pipeline to ensure a pool of qualified candidates is available when staffing needs arise.

Should a teacher leave mid-year, ELAoL will utilize a multi-layered plan to maintain seamless instruction for students. For short-term absences, the ESP will manage and supply a substitute pool that serves as the school's first line of response to daily or short-notice vacancies. Additionally, instructional assistants and cross-trained support staff provided by the ESP may be reassigned temporarily to assist in classrooms when appropriate, ensuring that teacher planning and preparation time is preserved.

When a vacancy extends beyond the short term, the school and ESP will prioritize rapid hiring to secure a permanent replacement. While recruitment for a permanent teacher is underway, a qualified long-term substitute will assume classroom responsibilities to ensure continuity of instruction. Instructional leaders, including coaches and the administrative team, will monitor classroom progress and provide support to ensure lessons remain aligned to pacing guides and curricular expectations; however, they will not be assigned as primary classroom teachers, preserving their leadership roles and responsibilities.

ELAoL ensures all teachers and instructional personnel including ESP support staff are trained in the school's curricular resources, pacing structures, and instructional routines, which allows for flexibility in coverage without compromising instructional quality. When staffing adjustments occur, families will be notified promptly with clear communication about the transition and the plan to maintain academic consistency. This tiered staffing strategy ensures that, even during unexpected personnel changes, students experience a stable, supportive, and high-quality learning environment aligned with the school's mission and academic model.

### **Charter Board Governance**

#### **OPC.22. Board Roster**

<b>Board Member Name</b>	<b>Board Role</b>	<b>Board Responsibilities/ Area of Expertise (Academic, Finance, Operational Management, Legal, and Community Relations)</b>
Conner LeBlanc	<p>Board Director: Chair</p> <p>The Board Director guides the governing body in carrying out its core responsibilities for organizational stewardship, including monitoring academic progress, financial health, and overall operational effectiveness. This individual leads all board meetings, collaborates with the ESP and Vice-Chair to craft agendas, and ensures that deliberations are efficient, transparent, and aligned to legal and policy requirements. The Chair acts as the primary point of contact between the board and school leadership, oversees the annual performance review of the ESP based on established organizational goals, and ensures adherence to governance protocols and statutory obligations. In addition, the Chair coordinates routine board self-assessments, supports long-range planning efforts, and may take on leadership of special projects or committees to strengthen the board's overall effectiveness.</p>	Legal and Community Relations
Dan Cooper	<p>Board Director: Vice Chair</p> <p>The Board Director: Vice Chair assists the Chair in maintaining effective board operations and takes on leadership responsibilities when the Chair is unavailable. This role supports board committees, helps ensure adherence to bylaws, and contributes to strategic discussions and special initiatives.</p>	Community Relations and Operational Management
Keith Gillies	<p>Board Director: Secretary</p> <p>The Board Secretary manages the official records of the board, including meeting agendas, minutes, policies, and governance documents. The Secretary ensures compliance with Louisiana's Open Meetings Law by publishing meeting notices and maintaining transparent access to public records. This role is responsible for accurate documentation of board actions and decisions.</p>	Finance and Community Relations
Todd Villarrubia	<p>Board Director: Treasurer</p> <p>The Board Treasurer oversees financial</p>	Operational Management, Legal, and Finance

	oversight and works closely with the finance team and back-office provider to ensure accurate financial reporting, responsible budget management, and compliance with financial regulations. The Treasurer reviews monthly financial statements, monitors long-term sustainability, and presents financial updates to the board.	
Will be selected once a location is determined	Board Member General Board Members participate consistently in all board meetings and contribute meaningfully to the organization's governance work. Each member serves on at least one standing committee, such as Finance, Governance, Facilities, or Executive, and brings professional expertise in fields like education, law, finance, real estate, or community engagement. These members help safeguard the school's mission and play an important role in maintaining strong academic performance, fiscal responsibility, and operational integrity across the organization.	Academic
Will be selected once a location is determined	Board Member General Board Members participate consistently in all board meetings and contribute meaningfully to the organization's governance work. Each member serves on at least one standing committee, such as Finance, Governance, Facilities, or Executive, and brings professional expertise in fields like education, law, finance, real estate, or community engagement. These members help safeguard the school's mission and play an important role in maintaining strong academic performance, fiscal responsibility, and operational integrity across the organization.	TBD
Will be selected once a location is determined	Board Member General Board Members participate consistently in all board meetings and contribute meaningfully to the organization's governance work. Each member serves on at least one standing committee, such as Finance, Governance, Facilities, or Executive, and brings professional expertise in fields like education, law, finance, real estate, or community engagement. These members help safeguard the school's mission and play an important role in	TBD

	maintaining strong academic performance, fiscal responsibility, and operational integrity across the organization.	
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### **OPC.23. Conflict of Interest**

Engaged Learning Academies of Louisiana (ELAoL) affirms that there are no known actual or perceived conflicts of interest between its governing board members and any organizations connected to the launch or operation of the proposed school. The board operates in full compliance with the Louisiana Code of Governmental Ethics and maintains clear internal policies to prevent any circumstance that could compromise decision-making. Each board member must complete annual ethics training through the Louisiana Board of Ethics and is required to disclose any personal, financial, or professional affiliations that could influence, or appear to influence, their judgment. If a potential conflict is identified, the board member must remove themselves from all related discussions and voting processes, and the recusal is formally documented in the board minutes to ensure transparency.

To proactively safeguard the integrity of governance, ELAoL requires all board members to complete conflict-of-interest disclosure forms every year. These forms are kept on record by the board secretary and reviewed by the governance committee to confirm that no conflicts exist or remain unaddressed. The board will enforce a comprehensive conflict-of-interest policy that prohibits board members from holding financial interests, employment, or leadership roles within the ESP or any associated subcontractors. If concerns arise regarding the independence of board decision-making in relation to an ESP, the governance committee will conduct an impartial review and implement corrective steps to ensure full transparency and continued compliance with state ethics laws.

### **OPC.24. Board Governance Structure and Responsibilities**

The governing board of Engage Learning Academies of Louisiana (ELAoL) operates as an independent nonprofit board with a clear understanding of its fiduciary, academic, and strategic responsibilities. With experience supporting innovative and student-centered schools, the board functions strictly as an oversight body rather than a manager of daily school operations. Its core duties include establishing long-term goals for the organization, adopting policies and budgets, monitoring compliance with state and federal requirements, evaluating the ESP, and safeguarding the mission of providing high-quality, accelerated learning pathways. Operational authority is delegated to the ESP and school leadership team to ensure effective management at the campus level.

The board will employ a comprehensive evaluation system for the ESP that incorporates both quantitative and qualitative indicators aligned to ELAoL's organizational goals. Performance measures will include school performance data, statewide accountability results, growth metrics, financial audits, enrollment and attendance trends, progress toward charter commitments, and overall operational stability. The evaluation process will also incorporate tools such as leadership performance rubrics, stakeholder feedback surveys, and routine progress dashboards reviewed throughout the year. Board committees will monitor metrics during monthly meetings, and a formal evaluation will be conducted annually. If the ESP does not meet established performance expectations, the board will issue a corrective plan with clear benchmarks and timelines. This approach ensures transparent, mission-aligned accountability focused on student achievement and organizational health.

Board members participate in structured onboarding that introduces governance responsibilities, legal requirements, financial oversight, and the distinctions between governance and management. Annual continuing education is provided through statewide charter associations and legal or financial experts to

ensure the board remains knowledgeable and compliant. To prevent board members from becoming involved in operational decisions, no individual member may provide directives to school staff, and all actions must be taken collectively during publicly noticed meetings under Louisiana's Open Meetings Law.

ELAoL's governance structure includes several standing committees to support effective oversight:

**Executive Committee**

Purpose: To guide board leadership and ensure continuity between regular board meetings.

Role: Composed of board officers, this committee prepares meeting agendas, reviews strategic progress with the ESP, and addresses emergent issues requiring timely attention when the full board cannot convene.

Responsibility: Ensures that board actions remain aligned with ELaOL's mission, strategic priorities, and governance obligations.

**Finance Committee**

Purpose: To maintain fiscal integrity and transparency across the organization.

Role: The committee reviews monthly financial reports, audits, budget forecasts, and financial controls to ensure compliance with state and federal regulations.

Responsibility: Recommends financial strategies to the full board and monitors adherence to approved budgets and grant requirements.

**Governance Committee**

Purpose: To ensure the board operates effectively and in compliance with legal and ethical requirements.

Role: Oversees recruitment and vetting of potential board members, coordinates annual board self-assessments, and ensures members complete required ethics and governance training.

Responsibility: Maintains a high-functioning board through structured development, succession planning, and continuous improvement.

**Facilities Committee**

Purpose: To support safe, functional, and sustainable learning environments.

Role: Provides oversight of facility maintenance, safety protocols, capital improvement planning, and long-term facility needs for the school-within-a-school model.

Responsibility: Advises on facility operations and ensures compliance with health, safety, and accessibility standards.

Advisory committees may be established as needed to gather input on specialized topics such as student services, community engagement, or academic innovation. These committees do not hold decision-making authority but provide valuable recommendations that inform board oversight. No formal votes occur within advisory committees, preserving clear governance boundaries.

To maintain transparency, all board meetings are open to the public, and meeting materials are posted in accordance with state requirements. Families, community partners, and staff are invited to participate, and public comment opportunities are integrated into each meeting. Board members also engage with stakeholders through listening sessions, school events, community forums, and annual surveys. This approach ensures the board remains connected to the community while upholding its oversight responsibilities.

**OPC.25. Organizational and Financial Goals (Years 1-5)**

**Year 1:**



Goal 1: Enroll student populations that meet at least 90% of BESE benchmarks for Economically Disadvantaged (ED) and Students with Disabilities (SWD).

Goal 2: Establish a baseline re-enrollment rate and achieve at least 80% re-enrollment of eligible students for Year 2.

Goal 3: Maintain an out-of-school suspension rate at or below national averages for elementary/middle schools (OCR benchmark).

Goal 4: Complete at least 95% of initial special education evaluations within required timelines.

Goal 5: Ensure that at least 95% of all IEPs are current and compliant as verified in SER.

Goal 6: Maintain performance such that no subgroup receives an “Urgent Intervention Required” designation.

Goal 7: Operate with full compliance with ethics laws and state/federal regulations, receiving zero Notices of Concern or Notices of Breach.

Goal 8: Maintain 100% adherence to governance requirements, including Open Meetings Law, Public Records Act, and procurement rules.

Goal 9: Earn a “Low Risk” rating on the LDE Fiscal Risk Assessment.

Goal 10: Complete an external audit with no material findings or repeat issues.

Goal 11: Demonstrate proper stewardship of federal and state funds with zero findings of misuse.

**Year 2:**

Goal 1: Meet 100% of BESE thresholds for ED and SWD enrollment.

Goal 2: Maintain at least an 85% re-enrollment rate.

Goal 3: Keep suspension rates at or below national averages while expanding restorative practices campuswide.

Goal 4: Reduce special education evaluation noncompliance to no more than 3%.

Goal 5: Achieve at least 97% IEP compliance.

Goal 6: Continue to prevent any subgroup from receiving a UIR designation.

Goal 7: Maintain zero findings of concern related to ethics, compliance, or operations.

Goal 8: Uphold complete compliance with governance laws and expectations.

Goal 9: Maintain a “Low Risk” classification on the LDE Fiscal Risk Assessment.

Goal 10: Receive a clean audit with no material or repeated findings.

Goal 11: Demonstrate documented and compliant use of all state and federal funds.

**Year 3:**

Goal 1: Sustain full compliance with Bulletin 126 enrollment thresholds for ED and SWD students.

Goal 2: Achieve at least an 88% re-enrollment rate.

Goal 3: Maintain suspension rates at or below national averages and review disproportionality data quarterly.

Goal 4: Hold special education evaluations and IEP compliance to no more than 3% out-of-compliance.

Goal 5: Prevent any subgroup from being designated UIR and apply early targeted interventions when needed.

Goal 6: Maintain consistent adherence to ethics, legal, and procedural governance standards.

Goal 7: Preserve a “Low Risk” rating on the LDE Fiscal Risk Assessment.

Goal 8: Sustain a clean audit record with no fiscal or internal-control findings.

Goal 9: Successfully meet all internal-control, procurement, and federal-grants monitoring expectations.

**Year 4:**

Goal 1: Continue to meet 100% of ED and SWD enrollment thresholds.

Goal 2: Achieve a re-enrollment rate of at least 90%.

Goal 3: Maintain suspension rates at or below national averages and reduce total suspension days by at least 10% from the baseline year.

Goal 4: Keep special education evaluations and IEPs to no more than 3% noncompliant.

Goal 5: Maintain an inclusive placement rate of 85–90% for students with disabilities.

Goal 6: Ensure no subgroup receives a UIR designation.

Goal 7: Maintain full compliance with ethics, governance, and legal obligations.

Goal 8: Preserve a “Low Risk” fiscal rating, including strong indicators of liquidity and fund balance.

Goal 9: Achieve another clean external audit with strong internal-controls evidence.

Goal 10: Reserve at least 5% of the operating budget for long-term growth and facility planning.

**Year 5:**

Goal 1: Maintain consistent compliance with equitable-enrollment thresholds to earn full points under the Charter School Performance Compact.

Goal 2: Sustain a re-enrollment rate of at least 90% of eligible students.

Goal 3: Keep suspension rates at or below national averages and eliminate any subgroup disproportionality.

Goal 4: Achieve at least 98% compliance for special education evaluations and IEP timelines.

Goal 5: Ensure that at least 90% of students with IEPs are educated in inclusive settings.

Goal 6: Maintain zero UIR subgroup designations and demonstrate narrowing of achievement gaps through improved subgroup growth percentiles.

Goal 7: Continue full compliance with all governance and ethics requirements.

Goal 8: Maintain a “Low Risk” fiscal rating with a minimum of 60 days of cash on hand.

Goal 9: Complete a fifth consecutive clean audit with no material findings.

Goal 10: Grow the operating reserve to at least 8% of the annual budget.

Goal 11: Allocate funds strategically to support staff retention, program advancement, and long-term organizational stability.

#### **OPC.26. Board Monitoring of Academic, Organizational, and Financial Goals**

Engaged Learning Academies of Louisiana (ELAoL) will implement a deliberate and systematic approach to oversight that enables the governing board to closely track the school’s progress toward its academic, financial, and organizational performance targets. The board will receive scheduled reports from the ESP, supported by performance dashboards that highlight critical indicators such as assessment outcomes, subgroup growth patterns, annual re-enrollment rates, compliance metrics for special populations, fiscal health ratings, and audit results.

At every regular board meeting, academic achievement, financial status, and operational compliance will be core agenda items. Twice each year, the board will participate in an in-depth review of academic trends with the ESP’s Chief Academic Officer and school leadership, examining statewide assessment data, benchmark performance, early literacy indicators, and areas where subgroup performance may signal emerging concerns. Financial monitoring will occur through the Finance Committee, which will analyze monthly budget updates, fund balance projections, risk assessments, and any irregularities flagged by the school’s financial services provider. The board will also review findings from the annual external audit and the Louisiana Department of Education’s Fiscal Risk Assessment to confirm that the school remains in good financial standing and adheres to regulatory requirements. Operational indicators, such as enrollment equity, compliance for students with disabilities and English Learners, discipline data, and results from any state or internal audits, will be reviewed by the Governance Committee and brought forward for full board discussion.

If trends indicate that ELAoL is not on pace to meet its academic, organizational, or financial goals, the board will implement a formal response protocol. This process may include calling a special meeting to further investigate the concern, requesting that leadership/ESP submit a corrective action plan with measurable steps and timelines, and increasing the frequency of progress reporting until improvements are verified. Depending on the nature of the challenge, the board may also direct the ESP to reallocate resources, secure external technical assistance, or adjust staffing or programming to ensure the school remains aligned with performance expectations.

### **OPC.27 ESP Evaluation and Oversight Toward Renewal Standards**

Engaged Learning Academies of Louisiana (ELAoL) will conduct an annual evaluation of the ESP using a performance framework aligned to the expectations outlined in the Louisiana Charter School Performance Compact as well as the organization's long-term strategic priorities. The governing board utilizes a comprehensive evaluation tool that defines explicit performance standards across academic outcomes, organizational effectiveness, financial stewardship, and mission alignment. These criteria ensure that the ESP is consistently accountable for advancing student achievement, maintaining operational integrity, safeguarding financial stability, and upholding the values of the organization.

#### **Evaluation Measures and Data Sources**

The board's assessment of the ESP will draw upon a broad set of quantitative and qualitative indicators gathered throughout the year. Core measures include:

Academic impact: student proficiency and growth on state assessments, subgroup performance trends, progress index results, and year-over-year improvements in key instructional benchmarks.

Organizational capacity: family re-enrollment patterns, staff retention, campus culture indicators, and progress toward organizational milestones.

Financial performance: findings from the annual external audit, fiscal risk assessments, compliance records, liquidity and fund balance measures, and adherence to adopted budgets.

Stakeholder insight: feedback gathered from staff climate surveys, family satisfaction measures, and other engagement tools.

These data points are compiled on a quarterly basis and reviewed by the Governance Committee to monitor progress and prepare for the formal evaluation cycle.

#### **Evaluation Cycle and Procedures**

The ESP's summative evaluation will occur annually during the summer. The process includes a report from the ESP, a review of organizational performance data, and a board-led assessment using the adopted rubric. The results will be documented in writing and presented to the full board for discussion and approval. All evaluation documentation will be maintained as part of the board's official records.

#### **Corrective Action and Accountability Steps**

If the ESP does not meet expectations outlined in the evaluation framework or is not making adequate progress toward renewal benchmarks, the board will activate a structured improvement process. This may include the development of a formal performance improvement plan with measurable targets, additional reporting requirements, revised responsibilities, or targeted coaching and support. Should progress remain insufficient after these interventions, the board reserves the right to take further action, including terminational, in accordance with organizational policy and the ESP's contract

For example, if the board determines that ELAoL is not meeting budgetary expectations, such as when mid-year financial statements reveal overspending, inadequate revenue collection, or failure to implement cost-containment measures, the board will follow a structured accountability process. In such a situation, the Finance Committee would first meet with the ESP to review the variance in detail. The committee would request an explanation for the deviation, ensure that all relevant financial documents are examined, and report its findings to the full board. This initial review establishes whether the issue reflects unforeseen external circumstances, gaps in execution, or a breakdown in financial oversight.

Following this review, the board would require the ESP to submit a written corrective action plan within a defined timeframe. This plan would outline the specific steps the ESP will take to bring the budget back into alignment, including revised spending strategies, updated cash-flow projections, and any operational adjustments needed to stabilize finances. The board may also increase supervision during this period by requiring monthly budget updates, additional meetings with the Finance Committee, or more frequent reporting during public board sessions. These measures allow the board to monitor improvements closely while maintaining transparency and public accountability for financial decisions.

If the budgetary concerns point to a need for strengthened financial management skills rather than misconduct, the board may direct the ESP to participate in targeted coaching or to work more closely with the school's back-office provider to improve forecasting, cash-management practices, or adherence to financial protocols. However, if the ESP fails to make adequate progress toward restoring budget alignment, the board will take formal performance action as outlined in the contract including termination of the contract with the ESP. Through this graduated and transparent process, the board ensures that financial accountability is upheld while providing the ESP as outlined in the contract.

### **OPC.28. Financial Planning, Accounting, Purchasing, and Payroll Policies**

Engaged Learning Academies of Louisiana (ELAoL) will operate under a comprehensive set of financial policies developed by its governing board to ensure that all fiscal practices adhere to Louisiana statutes, Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP), federal regulations governing charter schools, and widely accepted nonprofit financial standards. The financial management framework emphasizes accountability, transparency, and long-term sustainability through clearly delineated responsibilities, multiple layers of internal controls, secure financial systems, and continuous oversight from the board.

To support day-to-day fiscal operations, ELAoL will partner with 4th Sector, a nationally recognized financial services firm that specializes in the charter sector and has extensive experience in Louisiana. Working collaboratively with network leaders, 4th Sector will manage budgeting, financial forecasting, payroll processing, accounts payable/receivable, grant reporting, and monthly financial reconciliations. 4th Sector staff maintain credentials in finance, accounting, or related fields, and are trained in nonprofit and charter-specific compliance standards.

#### **Budget Development and Financial Planning**

Each spring, ELAoL leadership and 4th Sector will jointly prepare an annual operating budget informed by projected enrollment, anticipated state and federal revenue, staffing models, facility costs, and strategic priorities. Draft budgets will be reviewed by the ESP and presented to the board's Finance Committee prior to full board approval. Budget-to-actual reports will be updated monthly and reviewed for variances, with adjustments made as necessary. Multi-year financial forecasts will be updated annually to support long-term planning and ensure the school's ongoing financial viability.

#### **Accounting Systems and Payroll**

4th Sector will utilize a secure, cloud-based accounting system with role-restricted access to safeguard financial information and preserve the integrity of internal controls. This platform will manage the general ledger, accounts payable and receivable, and payroll. Payroll will run biweekly, with approvals required at both the school and network levels before disbursement. Timekeeping will be verified by supervisors, and staff will have the opportunity to review hours prior to payment. Electronic payments will be used to minimize risk and improve efficiency.

#### **Purchasing and Procurement**

All purchasing will follow a structured approval hierarchy based on expenditure thresholds. Requisitions must be approved by school or network leadership before purchases are made. Expenditures above \$5,000

will require competitive quotes, while contracts exceeding \$25,000 will require formal board approval. Any procurement subject to Louisiana Public Bid Law will follow established requirements, including competitive bidding or a request-for-proposals process. Vendor agreements will undergo legal review when warranted and will be securely archived.

#### Internal Controls and Fiscal Oversight

ELAoL will implement a robust internal control framework that includes:

- Segregation of duties between purchasing, approving, and reconciling financial activity
- Role-based access and audit tracking within financial software
- Monthly bank and account reconciliations completed by 4th Sector and reviewed by finance personnel
- Quarterly reviews of financial performance by the board's Finance Committee
- An annual independent audit conducted by a certified public accounting firm
- Annual fiduciary training for all board members
- A detailed financial procedures manual addressing grant management, asset control, travel reimbursements, and cash handling

These systems help protect public funds, reduce the risk of fraud, and ensure accurate reporting.

#### Board Oversight and Accountability

The Finance Committee, composed of board members with relevant financial and nonprofit experience, will review financial statements, revenue projections, cash flow reports, and risk indicators on a monthly basis. The full governing board will receive updates at each board meeting and will examine the annual audit report. Any material variances, compliance issues, or financial risks will trigger immediate follow-up and corrective action planning.

#### Sustainability, Compliance, and Long-Term Stewardship

With strong internal controls, a seasoned third-party financial partner, and vigilant board oversight, Engaged Learning Academies of Louisiana is positioned to maintain sound fiscal health and full compliance with legal and regulatory obligations. Continuous monitoring, independent audits, and multi-year planning efforts will help ensure responsible stewardship of public funds and support ELAoL's ability to grow sustainably while meeting all obligations under the Charter School Performance Compact.

### **OPC.29. Board Training and Development Plan**

#### Continuing Members

Engaged Learning Academies of Louisiana (ELAoL) recognizes that effective governance depends on continual reflection, professional learning, and intentional capacity-building. Each year, the board completes a structured self-assessment to evaluate its performance in key areas such as academic monitoring, financial oversight, compliance with state and federal regulations, and long-term strategic planning. The results of this evaluation guide the board's annual professional development priorities. Board members participate in governance training provided by the Louisiana Association of Public Charter Schools (LAPCS), and additional sessions are offered throughout the year to address identified needs, such as updates to special education requirements, ethics laws, changes to Bulletin 126, BESE policy revisions, and best practices for charter school accountability. Regular briefings ensure members remain informed about evolving legal and regulatory expectations that impact school operations and board decision-making.

#### New Member Recruitment and Onboarding

To maintain a high-functioning and well-rounded governing body, the ELAoL Board uses a deliberate recruitment strategy that seeks individuals with professional experience in areas such as education,

finance, law, real estate, philanthropy, and community engagement. When a vacancy occurs, the Governance Committee reviews the board's existing composition and identifies specific skills, perspectives, or demographic representation needed to strengthen the board's overall effectiveness.

New members participate in a comprehensive onboarding process that introduces them to the school's charter and performance expectations, organizational policies, ethical obligations, and governance protocols. This includes orientation on the Open Meetings Law, public records requirements, conflict-of-interest procedures, and financial oversight responsibilities. Incoming members are matched with an experienced board member and attend early meetings of the Finance and Governance Committees to gain familiarity with critical oversight functions. Within the first two months of service, all new members complete state-required charter governance training to ensure full legal compliance.

### **OPC.30. Board Meeting Frequency and Compliance Procedures**

Under Louisiana's Open Meetings Law and Bulletin 126, charter school governing boards are not required to convene a set number of meetings each year. In alignment with this flexibility, the ELAoL Board does not prescribe a rigid meeting quota within its bylaws. However, to maintain strong oversight of academic, operational, and financial performance, the board intends to meet no fewer than six times annually, approximately every other month, and will schedule additional special meetings whenever circumstances require timely action. An annual meeting calendar will be posted on the school's website and shared with families to ensure full transparency and accessibility.

To uphold all provisions of the Louisiana Open Meetings Law, ELAoL will publicly announce each board meeting at least 24 hours in advance and include a clearly written agenda. Notices will be posted both online and at the school site. Meetings will be open to the public, held in accessible locations, and available for virtual attendance whenever possible. Accurate minutes will be recorded and made available to the public following each meeting as required by law. The board will incorporate a public comment period into every agenda, allowing stakeholders to address the board directly, and will also provide an online option for submitting written comments prior to the meeting. These written submissions will be reviewed by the board chair or designee and added to the public record.

The ELAoL Board will also meet its obligations under the Louisiana Public Records Act by maintaining organized, publicly accessible records, including meeting minutes, board policies, financial documents, and executed contracts. All public records requests will be directed to the board's designated records custodian, who will follow legally compliant procedures for acknowledgment and timely response, including providing written confirmation within three business days.

### Section 3: Financial Plan and Capacity

#### Operational Management and Leadership

##### **31. Applicant Team Qualifications for Operations Plan Implementation**

ELAoL will operate under a clear governance and leadership structure in which the ELAoL Board maintains full legal and operational authority, while NOLA Education, led by CEO John Alvendia and his leadership team (including Virginia, Jay, and other experienced personnel), provides comprehensive educational, staffing, finance, and operational support as the ESP. The school principal will be an employee of ELAoL and will manage day-to-day school operations, instructional execution, and staff supervision. Working closely with ESP's team, the principal will ensure strong implementation fidelity while maintaining direct accountability to the ELAoL Board and ESP's Executive Director.

As part of ESP's support to ELAoL, Chief Executive Officer, **John Alvendia**, will provide overarching strategic and operational guidance to ensure the school launches and operates with the systems, structures, and fidelity expected of the Star Academy model. In his role at Star Academy, Mr. Alvendia will support ELAoL by advising on strategic priorities, overseeing quality assurance across academic and operational domains, and ensuring that all ESP-provided services align with Louisiana requirements and the charter's goals. He will supervise the Star Academy team members assigned to ELAoL and ensure that the school receives high-quality leadership coaching, implementation oversight, and compliance support.

As the ESP's Chief Academic Officer, **Virginia Robinson**, will support ELAoL by guiding the academic design and execution of the accelerated, project-based Star Academy model. Drawing on her experience in curriculum, assessment, and instructional leadership, Ms. Robinson will lead professional development, facilitate data-review cycles, and coach the school's instructional leaders on planning, intervention, and progress monitoring. She will ensure that the Tier I curriculum, acceleration structures, and academic systems are implemented with fidelity and aligned to Louisiana's academic standards.

**Jay Wehrer**, ESP's Chief Operating Officer, will support ELAoL by providing operational guidance essential for a successful school launch and ongoing daily operations. This includes advising on facilities readiness, safety protocols, transportation coordination, food service, technology systems, procurement, and operational compliance. His expertise ensures that non-instructional functions operate efficiently and meet regulatory expectations, contributing to a stable learning environment for students.

**ESP's staff** is composed of approximately 80 experienced educators, instructional leaders, and operational professionals with a demonstrated record of supporting high-quality, student-centered learning environments. Through its work at Star Academy, the team has supported curriculum implementation, instructional coaching, assessment practices, student intervention systems, and day-to-day school operations within a school-within-a-school model. Staff members bring expertise in standards-aligned instruction, data-driven decision-making, and personalized learning approaches, as well as familiarity with Louisiana accountability expectations and school improvement practices. Collectively, the NOLA Education team provides the instructional, operational, and compliance support necessary to effectively support ELAoL upon authorization.

#### Distributed Expertise Across Core Functional Areas

Together, the ESP's executive team brings comprehensive strength across all major operational and academic domains required to run a successful charter school:

##### 1. Staffing & Talent Management

Led by a collective ESP's Chief Talent Team which includes Virginia Robinson, with support and input



from school leadership, the team oversees recruitment pipelines, teacher selection processes aligned to the school-within-a-school and PBL instructional models, and ongoing development structures. Their combined expertise ensures that ELAoL recruits, trains, and retains educators who can thrive in an accelerated, hands-on learning environment.

## 2. Professional Learning & Instructional Development

Virginia Robinson coordinates design and implementation of professional development, including curriculum training, data-driven instruction, and classroom management aligned to the Star Academy model. School leaders and instructional coaches reinforce/deliver this work through coaching cycles, PLCs, and demonstration-based learning.

## 3. Performance Management & Accountability

John Alvendia, Virginia Robinson, and the Principal collaborate to create clear performance expectations for teachers and staff, monitor progress toward charter goals, and ensure alignment with the Louisiana Charter School Performance Compact. Evaluation systems, walkthrough tools, and data dashboards are used to drive continuous improvement.

## 4. Operations Management

Operational systems are designed and overseen by Jay Wehrer in partnership with ELAoL's Director of Operations, ensuring strong financial controls, efficient campus operations, technology and transportation readiness, facility safety, and alignment with state and federal requirements.

## 5. Facilities & Safety Oversight

Jay Wehrer partners with the board and external vendors to ensure the school maintains safe, code-compliant learning spaces and long-term facilities planning.

### **FPC.32. ESP's Management of Non-Academic Services**

Engaged Learning Academies of Louisiana (ELAoL) will use a coordinated operational model to ensure all non-academic services are executed efficiently, safely, and in full compliance with state and federal requirements. Rather than relying on isolated campus systems, the organization will implement a unified structure in which campus-based staff work closely with network-level leaders to maintain consistent quality across all operational domains.

Executive oversight of non-academic functions will rest with the ESP's Chief Operating Officer, Jay Wehrer, who is responsible for establishing systemwide procedures, monitoring vendor performance, ensuring adherence to regulatory standards, and aligning operational practices with organizational goals. His work will be complemented by the school-level Director of Operations, who manages day-to-day logistics on campus and serves as the primary point of contact for transportation providers, facilities partners, food service vendors, and other contracted services.

Jay Wehrer and Director of Operations will collaborate closely with John Alvendia and Virginia Robinson to ensure that operational decisions support instructional priorities and maintain a safe, welcoming environment for students and staff. Together, this structure ensures that Engage's non-academic services remain reliable, transparent, and responsive to the needs of the school community.

#### Non-Academic Services:

##### Transportation Services

Engage Learning Academies of Louisiana will partner with a qualified, state-approved transportation provider to offer safe and dependable bus service for students residing in the assigned residing parish. Bus

routes will be designed to promote equitable access, with particular attention to economically disadvantaged students and those requiring specialized transportation under IDEA or Section 504. Any transportation modifications, including specialized equipment, individualized pick-up or drop-off points, or additional adult support, will be developed collaboratively through each student's IEP or 504 team. Oversight of transportation operations will be led by the ESP's Chief Operating Officer, Jay Wehrer, and the school's Director of Operations, who will coordinate scheduling, compliance monitoring, contractor communication, and annual performance reviews of the transportation vendor.

#### Food and Nutrition Services

ELAoL will participate in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and the School Breakfast Program (SBP), ensuring students have consistent access to nutritious meals that meet USDA guidelines. The school will ensure that all food service personnel, whether employed directly or through contracted vendors, complete mandatory background checks, food safety certification, and required health screenings before working on campus. Jay Wehrer and the Director of Operations will supervise all aspects of food service implementation, including vendor oversight, compliance reporting, meal-count systems, and preparation for annual state reviews.

#### Facilities Management

Facilities operations will be managed through a shared structure between the central office and school-based leadership. The ESP's Chief Operating Officer, Jay Wehrer, will oversee facility acquisition, long-term maintenance planning, safety compliance, and coordination with the Board's Facilities Committee. Daily building operations, including custodial oversight, work order processing, and coordination with facilities vendors, will be handled by the school's Director of Operations. All building systems, such as fire alarms, HVAC, elevators, and safety equipment, will undergo required inspections and annual certifications to maintain compliance with state and local regulations. Preventive maintenance schedules and safety logs will be maintained and reviewed regularly to ensure a safe and functional learning environment.

#### Procurement and Purchasing Procedures

The school will follow ELAoL's network-wide procurement policies, state law, and federal law which are aligned with Louisiana Department of Education expectations and include strong internal controls. These procedures require vendor verification, spending approval thresholds, and competitive quotes or bids when necessary under state law or when using federal funds required by regulation. Contracts and purchases will be reviewed for alignment with the board-approved budget, grant requirements, and fiscal policies. Oversight of procurement will be shared by Jay Wehrer and Virginia Robinson, for instructional purchases, and the Director of Operations, with financial processing supported by the school's back-office provider, 4th Sector.

#### Student Records and Data Management

Student information will be managed through a secure student information system, such as PowerSchool or JCampus, with full adherence to FERPA requirements. The school will ensure accurate maintenance of enrollment data, attendance records, grade reporting, and all state-required submissions. Special populations data, including information for English Learners, students with disabilities, and students identified through literacy and numeracy screeners, will be monitored closely to ensure timely evaluations, delivery of services, and compliance with reporting timelines. The Student Services Coordinator, the ESP's Data Manager, in coordination with Virginia Robinson, will oversee data accuracy and compliance. The Student Services Coordinator, Special Education Teachers, and English Learner Teachers will ensure that specialized student records are maintained appropriately.

#### School Safety and Emergency Preparedness

ELAoL will implement a comprehensive school safety plan that includes emergency procedures, visitor

management protocols, crisis communication systems, and regular safety drills. Annual reviews of safety practices will be completed with input from local emergency responders, transportation partners, and facilities vendors. Teachers and staff will receive yearly training on emergency response procedures, supervision responsibilities, and mandatory reporting requirements. Oversight of schoolwide safety will be shared by the Principal, Jay Wehrer, and the Director of Operations, ensuring that daily practices and long-term safety planning support a secure environment for students, staff, and families.

### Meeting the Needs of Special Populations through Transportation

Engaged Learning Academies of Louisiana (ELAoL) is committed to ensuring that transportation supports full and equitable access for all students, including those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds and students with disabilities. The school will work with its contracted transportation provider to ensure that all required accommodations are available for students whose IEPs or 504 Plans mandate specialized services. These supports may include wheelchair-accessible buses, alternate or individualized pick-up and drop-off locations, specialized seating arrangements, or additional adult supervision as determined by a student's support team.

Transportation planning will be informed by enrollment data, special education documentation, and demographic analyses to ensure that routes are designed in a way that promotes timely, fair, and inclusive access to school for every student. ELAoL will closely monitor route efficiency, consistency, and responsiveness to family needs throughout the school year.

Oversight of transportation services will occur through routine reviews led by Jay Wehrer and the Director of Operations. Findings, updates, and any recommended adjustments will be shared with the Board's Facilities and Finance Committees to ensure ongoing compliance with IDEA and Section 504, adherence to safety expectations, and the delivery of high-quality service to students and families.

## **Student Enrollment and Recruitment**

### **FPC.33. Student Recruitment and Marketing Plan**

#### Student Recruitment and Enrollment Plan

Engaged Learning Academies of Louisiana (ELAoL) will implement an inclusive and transparent recruitment and enrollment process designed to welcome students in grades K–8. The school will operate as an open-admissions, tuition-free public charter school and will follow all requirements outlined in Louisiana R.S. 17:3991(B)(3) and BESE Bulletin 126. Admission will not be based on academic history, behavior records, language background, disability status, or ability to pay.

#### Recruitment and Community Engagement Strategy

ELAoL's recruitment plan is designed to build a strong, diverse K–8 student community by engaging returning families, reaching families across multiple neighborhoods, and forming partnerships with key community organizations. Outreach will be coordinated by the Executive Director and Principal, with support from both central office and school-based leadership teams. Efforts will include digital communication, printed materials, neighborhood-level engagement, and collaboration with local partners.

A major component of the strategy is establishing a clear pipeline from early childhood programs into kindergarten. The school will collaborate with Head Start centers, publicly funded Pre-K programs, private childcare providers, and early intervention services to support smooth transitions for families. These partnerships will also help identify children who may need language services, specialized supports, or early intervention resources before they enter the school.

Because the school is transitioning to an RSD-operated campus, ELAoL will also prioritize reconnecting with families currently enrolled at the site. The goal is to maintain continuity, rebuild trust, and ensure that families understand the school's instructional model and vision. Dedicated information sessions will be held for returning families to explain the enrollment process, highlight upcoming program enhancements, and address questions regarding services, staffing, and student support. Ongoing communication will be maintained through newsletters, social media, and direct outreach via phone and text to support families throughout the transition.

Returning families will also be invited to participate actively in recruitment efforts. Caregivers may serve as ambassadors, share testimonials, join open house events, or assist with welcoming prospective families. This approach values the perspectives of those closest to the school and strengthens community ownership during the transition process.

These efforts will be supported by broader community outreach strategies, including participation in local festivals and youth events, distribution of materials through libraries, clinics, and community centers, and engagement with organizations that support families experiencing homelessness, migrant youth, foster care agencies, and other high-need populations. All essential enrollment documents will be translated into commonly spoken languages to ensure linguistic accessibility. Staff participating in outreach will be trained to support families of English Learners and students with disabilities with accurate information and a welcoming approach.

#### Accessible Enrollment Process

To ensure equitable access, ELAoL will offer multiple avenues for families to apply. While the primary application will be submitted through a centralized enrollment system, paper applications will also be available at the school site and at community outreach events. Staff will provide individualized assistance in person, over the phone, or through virtual appointments to help families complete the process.

Enrollment events will be scheduled during evenings and weekends to accommodate working caregivers. Mobile enrollment stations will be set up in various neighborhoods to further reduce barriers for families who may face transportation or schedule constraints.

Each year, ELAoL will publish an enrollment calendar outlining all application windows, deadlines, and lottery procedures when applicable. This information will be available on the school's website and shared widely through outreach channels.

#### Lottery Process

If the number of applications exceeds available seats in any grade level, ELAoL will conduct a publicly verifiable lottery in accordance with Louisiana R.S. 17:3991(B)(3) and BESE Bulletin 126. Lotteries will be executed through the school's centralized enrollment platform, ensuring a randomized and unbiased selection process. Families will receive advance notice of the lottery date, and results will be communicated directly via email, text, or mailed letter. Students not selected in the initial round will be placed on a waitlist in the order generated by the system. ELAoL will apply allowable enrollment preferences transparently, including priority for siblings of currently enrolled students and children of full-time employees, as permitted by state law. Preferences will not guarantee placement but will adjust a student's position within the lottery. All processes and outcomes will be documented, and the school will maintain detailed records to ensure full transparency and compliance.

#### Commitment to At-Risk and Special Populations

ELAoL's outreach and enrollment messaging will emphasize the school's commitment to serving all students, including those with disabilities, English Learners, and students needing academic or behavioral

support. Enrollment staff will be trained to explain available services, reassure families of the school's legal obligations, and answer questions about IEPs, 504 plans, interventions, and language instruction.

Families will be encouraged to share information regarding a child's learning needs so the school can prepare supports before the school year begins. All outreach materials will clarify that ELAoL is a tuition-free public school with an open admissions policy, serving students in grades K–8 without academic or behavioral screening.

## **Financial Plan**

### **FPC.34. Revenue Sources Outside of State and Federal Funds**

ELAoL anticipates supplemental revenue from a combination of philanthropy and competitive grants. These projections are built using cautious assumptions and are designed to ensure both regulatory compliance and long-term financial stability.

Corporate Partnership and Facilities Funding:

ELAoL will not be provided funds through the Corporate Partnership and Facilities Funding program.

Philanthropy and Grants:

The school will pursue competitive grants through funds such as the Louisiana Charter Schools Program Grant (CSP Grant) and available opportunities through eGMS.

Student Fees:

No student fees will be charged at ELAoL.

Conservative Financial Planning and Liquidity:

ELAoL's financial plan is built so that all core expenses can be supported through confirmed state and federal funding streams. Any additional grants or external contributions will be treated as supplemental and not required for baseline operations. The school's collaboration with its back-office provider ensures reliable budget projections, strong compliance practices, and attentive oversight of cash flow.

ESP Audit:

NOLA Education has not served as an Education Service Provider (ESP). NOLA Education has agreed to serve as the ESP if and when a Type 5 charter school is awarded by the Recovery School District (RSD) to Engage Learning Academies of Louisiana (ELAoL).

### **FPC.35. Financial Contingency Plan**

Engage Learning Academies of Louisiana (ELAoL) has established a comprehensive financial contingency plan designed to maintain stability should enrollment fall below projections or operating costs exceed initial estimates. The plan emphasizes conservative financial management, ongoing monitoring, and rapid, strategic intervention supported by experienced operational and financial partners.

ELAoL will implement a tiered approach to addressing potential revenue shortfalls. In the event that state or federal funding decreases, enrollment fluctuates, or grant revenue does not materialize as expected, the leadership team will immediately limit non-essential spending. Examples include postponing select supply purchases, pausing optional professional development, reducing discretionary contracted services, and temporarily freezing non-critical staffing additions. The organization will also rely on the dedicated contingency reserves intentionally built into the annual budget to help absorb unanticipated financial pressure.

If expenditures rise beyond planned levels, for example, due to increased special education service requirements, unexpected facility needs, or rising vendor costs, the ESP, working with the school's back-office provider 4th Sector, will complete a detailed expenditure review to identify potential reallocations. Adjustments will focus on preserving core academic programming and student support. Any significant revisions to the financial plan will be presented to the Board Finance Committee and the full governing board for approval.

Financial health will be assessed continuously through monthly budget-to-actual reviews conducted by the ESP, and back-office provider 4th Sector, with quarterly reporting to the governing board. ELAoL will maintain a reserve fund consistent with state expectations and aims to increase reserve strength over the first several years of operation to enhance long-term financial resilience.

As part of a broader organizational structure, ELAoL benefits from centralized expertise in finance, compliance, and operations. Should sustained fiscal challenges arise, the leadership team, together with the board, may revise program timelines, adjust staffing models, or pursue supplementary revenue sources to ensure continued viability.

### **FPC.36. Back Office Service Provider: 4th Sector**

Engage Learning Academies of Louisiana (ELAoL) will partner with 4th Sector, a nationally respected financial and operational services firm with a long track record of supporting charter schools. The 4th Sector team includes specialists with advanced skills in nonprofit financial management, individuals licensed in public accountancy, and professionals experienced in interpreting and applying charter-specific fiscal regulations. This depth of expertise ensures that ELAoL's financial systems are managed by personnel capable of meeting the expectations outlined in the Louisiana Charter School Performance Compact. By relying on 4th Sector for these complex responsibilities, ELAoL can maintain strong financial controls and compliance while enabling school and network leaders to remain focused on academic and instructional priorities.

4th Sector will manage a comprehensive portfolio of financial services for ELAoL. Core responsibilities will include monthly financial reporting, cash flow projections, payroll processing, accounts payable administration, and reconciliation of all financial accounts. The team will support the development of the annual operating budget and produce multi-year financial projections aligned with enrollment assumptions and grant revenue expectations. 4th Sector will also prepare all documents required for annual independent audits and will coordinate directly with external auditors to ensure timely and accurate completion.

In addition, 4th Sector will assist the school with state and federal compliance requirements, including quarterly budget submissions, annual financial reporting, and reimbursement requests for federal grants. Their work includes monitoring expenditures for alignment with grant regulations, preparing necessary documentation for LDOE reviews, and supporting the school with financial data submissions to state and federal agencies. All required reporting related to the Louisiana Department of Education, the State Treasurer, and other oversight entities will be completed with accuracy and within the appropriate timelines.

Through this partnership, ELAoL will maintain strong internal controls, including segregation of duties, transparent purchasing procedures, and routine financial monitoring. 4th Sector will provide ongoing variance analysis and alert school leadership to any emerging fiscal risks so that early corrective measures can be implemented. This level of support ensures that the school's financial operations remain stable, compliant, and strategically aligned with long-term sustainability goals.

**FPC.37. Budget Development and Oversight Process**

Engage Learning Academies of Louisiana (ELAoL) will follow a structured, collaborative approach to budget development that ensures financial decisions are aligned with academic priorities and legal requirements. The annual budgeting cycle will be coordinated by the ESP's Chief Executive Officer, Chief Academic Officer, and Chief Operating Officer, with direct input from the Principal and other school-based leaders. 4th Sector, the organization's financial services partner, will support this work by providing revenue forecasts, expenditure modeling, historical financial analysis, and guidance on state and federal compliance requirements.

Each spring, the budgeting team begins by reviewing projected enrollment and calculating anticipated funding streams across state, local, and federal sources. School leadership simultaneously conducts a needs assessment driven by academic performance data, staffing patterns, facility requirements, and student support priorities. Resource allocations are planned to reflect the goals and commitments outlined in the school's Super App, instructional improvement plans, Title IX plan, special education plan, English learner plans, and other board-approved strategies. Throughout this process, the team balances programmatic needs with long-term financial sustainability, ensuring that funds are directed toward initiatives with the greatest impact on student outcomes and equity.

A draft budget is prepared and submitted to the Board Finance Committee for review and discussion. After revisions, the proposed budget is presented to the full governing board for approval at a public meeting prior to the start of the new fiscal year (by June 30th). Financial activity is monitored continuously through monthly financial statements and variance analyses produced by 4th Sector. Leadership and the Board Finance Committee review these reports to identify trends, address variances, and ensure ongoing alignment with organizational priorities. Any necessary adjustments are brought to the board for approval through formal budget amendments, maintaining transparency and strong financial stewardship throughout the year.

**High School Addendum**

ELAoL does not plan to offer a high school program.

**Corporate Partnership Addendum**

ELAoL does not have a contract with a corporate partnership

**Educational Service Provider****ESPA.1 Rationale for Consideration of an Educational Service Provider (ESP)****a. List of Companies/Organizations Considered**

In evaluating potential partners to support ELAoL's academic and operational model, the Board conducted a targeted review of Star Academy. The model's specialized design and its strong alignment with ELAoL's instructional vision made NOLA Education the only provider capable of delivering the level of fidelity, quality, and effectiveness required.

**b. Evaluation of All Companies/Organizations Considered**

ELAoL evaluated NOLA Education according to four criteria: demonstrated academic outcomes, alignment to ELAoL's K–8 model and student needs, cost-effectiveness, and implementation support. Star Academy was evaluated through site visits, data review, interviews with partner schools, and assessment of implementation requirements (Project-based learning, School-Within-A-School Model, Adult Support,

etc...). Star Academy demonstrated the strongest alignment to ELAoL's needs and the greatest record of success with schools serving similar student populations.

#### c. Rationale for Selected Provider

ELAoL selected NOLA Education because it offers a research-based, comprehensive instructional model specifically designed for students performing below grade level who require rapid academic acceleration. Its emphasis on hands-on, project-based learning, small group instruction, and personalized pathways aligns with ELAoL's mission to accelerate learning while strengthening student engagement. The Star Academy program is also well-suited to operate as a school-within-a-school model, providing a structured, nurturing environment that allows targeted student groups to receive intensive support without disrupting the broader K–8 instructional program. In addition, Star Academy provides direct coaching, ongoing professional development, progress-monitoring systems, and implementation support that align with the needs of a school transitioning from an existing campus. Its strong record of success in Louisiana and nationally further supports its selection.

#### d. Evidence of the Provider's Success

Launched in 2004 in partnership with the South Carolina Department of Education, Star Academy has over two decades of demonstrated success in schools serving economically disadvantaged students, English Learners, and students with unfinished learning. Partner schools typically achieve between 1.5 and 2.0 years of academic growth within a single year, with statistically significant gains for students entering the program multiple grade levels behind. Schools consistently report improvements in state assessment performance, attendance, student engagement, and school climate. The program incorporates structured language supports and scaffolded curricula that strengthen outcomes for English Learners. Star Academy maintains a consistent record of fiscal responsibility, transparent financial practices, and contract compliance which is demonstrated and evidenced through the 150+ site locations throughout the United States. Partner districts also report high ongoing renewal rates due to sustained academic and operational improvements.

### **ESPA.2 Decisions and Services Provided**

Star Academy was selected as ELAoL's educational service provider and will be responsible for a defined set of decisions and services that support the school's instructional model and student acceleration strategy. Star Academy will provide a comprehensive, school-within-a-school program that includes curriculum design for the acceleration academy, daily lesson frameworks, project-based learning, high-quality instructional materials, and hands-on learning resources. The provider will deliver ongoing training, coaching, and implementation oversight to ensure fidelity to the model, including professional development, classroom observations, and teacher feedback cycles. Star Academy will also support progress monitoring by supplying assessment tools, analyzing student data, and advising on instructional adjustments based on identified learning gaps.

While all final operational, financial, and academic decisions remain with ELAoL's Board, Star Academy and school leadership are responsible for guiding instructional practices within the acceleration academy, ensuring curriculum alignment, supporting targeted intervention structures, and maintaining a high-quality learning environment for participating students. The provider's services include program setup, teacher onboarding, pacing guidance, and continuous quality checks throughout the school year. Through this partnership, ELAoL gains a structured and well-supported model designed to accelerate learning for students needing intensive academic support.

### **ESPA.3. Oversight of the Educational Service Provider**



The ELAoL charter board will implement a structured oversight plan to ensure Star Academy is held fully accountable to the agreed-upon terms. The board will monitor the ESP through monthly updates from the Executive Director and Chief Academic Officer, quarterly performance presentations by Star Academy, and review of all required documentation, including fidelity of implementation checks, professional development logs, service delivery records, and progress-monitoring data. The board will use clearly defined performance indicators embedded in the contract, such as academic growth benchmarks, timely delivery of required services, adherence to implementation timelines, and compliance with all reporting requirements, to guide ongoing oversight. Board members will also have access to classroom observation summaries, stakeholder feedback, and financial reports to ensure full transparency.

The board will conduct a formal annual evaluation of NOLA Education to determine whether the ESP has met its contractual obligations. This evaluation will include analysis of ESP goals aligned to the charter school compact, DIBELS results, the LDOE Numeracy Screener, interim assessments, LEAP performance trends, attendance and engagement data within the school-within-a-school program, and evidence of progress toward stated academic and operational goals. The annual review will inform decisions regarding contract continuation, corrective actions, or adjustments to implementation expectations.

The contract will outline clear conditions for termination, which include: failure to deliver required services or maintain implementation fidelity; persistent failure to meet academic performance expectations or student growth targets; breach of reporting, financial, or legal obligations; actions compromising student safety or data privacy; or any material violation of contractual terms that jeopardizes the school's ability to meet its mission. The board may terminate the contract at the end of the term or earlier if significant breaches occur, following appropriate notice and opportunity to cure as outlined in the agreement.

This oversight structure ensures that the ELAoL charter board retains full authority over the ESP relationship and that NOLA Education remains accountable for providing high-quality, compliant, and effective services.

#### **ESPA.4. History of Educational Service Provider**

Based on information provided by NOLA Education and available public records, the organization reports no current or past litigation, including arbitration proceedings, involving the organization in connection with its educational programs or school partnerships. As such, there are no associated outcomes, demands, or findings to disclose.

NOLA Education also reports that none of its partner schools have had their contracts terminated, voluntarily closed, or failed to be renewed due to issues related to the ESP's performance or program implementation. In addition, Star Academy has not experienced contract terminations initiated by schools, nor has the organization exited any partnership under adverse conditions. When partnerships have concluded, they have done so at the natural end of the contract period or as part of strategic planning decisions made jointly with school leadership.

The organization further reports no instances in which a school approved to operate with Star Academy failed to open, nor any circumstances in which a planned school-within-a-school program was abandoned or withdrawn due to deficiencies in the ESP's model or services.

NOLA Education affirms that, at the time of submission of this application, all operational, financial, and programmatic obligations across its partnerships are in good standing, and no outstanding issues, deficiencies, or compliance concerns remain unresolved. The organization continues to implement its

program successfully across multiple schools, maintaining positive relationships with partners and demonstrating consistent fidelity to its instructional and operational commitments.

### References

Learning Policy Institute. (2017). *Study on small learning communities and student outcomes*. Learning Policy Institute.

MDRC. (2014). *Evaluation of small learning communities and school improvement initiatives*. MDRC.

## **Appendix 1: Community Support and Anticipated Opposition**

## **Appendix 1: Community Support and Anticipated Opposition**

Because the final school site has not yet been designated by the Recovery School District (RSD), ELAoL anticipates that community response will vary depending on the neighborhood, current school performance, and the history of district–community relations. Type 5 turnaround schools often encounter initial opposition from families and staff who are experiencing the loss of a district-run school, uncertainty about new leadership, or concerns regarding changes in culture, staffing, and instructional approach. ELAoL is fully aware of these dynamics and is preparing proactively to engage families with transparency, empathy, and a clear commitment to student success.

At the same time, our past history with families, educators, and community partners across service areas in Louisiana indicates a strong desire for a school model that can rapidly accelerate student learning, provide stability, and offer a safe, supportive environment for children. Stakeholders frequently express openness, or even urgency, for a fresh start when a school has been persistently failing, especially when the new operator demonstrates a clear plan for improvement and a commitment to community partnership. ELAoL’s model, which blends high-quality curriculum, hands-on learning, and targeted acceleration through Star Academy, has been well-received by prospective partners and aligns with the needs typically present in turnaround settings.

To further demonstrate community confidence in the Star Academy model, ELAoL will provide letters of support from current Star Academy students, families, staff, and community members in regions where the program is already operating. These testimonials highlight strong relationships, positive academic and behavioral outcomes, and the meaningful impact the model has had on students and communities. While they are not specific to the yet-to-be-determined Louisiana site, they offer compelling evidence of program effectiveness and broad-based support in comparable settings.

ELAoL will be prepared to navigate both support and opposition by implementing a robust, responsive community engagement strategy once the turnaround site is identified. This includes family listening sessions, transparent communication about program changes, opportunities for parent and staff input, and a strong emphasis on stability, student safety, and improved academic outcomes. Through open dialogue and consistent action, ELAoL aims to build trust with the community and demonstrate that the school exists to serve students more effectively than the prior model. While some opposition is expected in any Type 5 transition, ELAoL is committed to working collaboratively with the RSD and families to ensure that all students feel welcomed, supported, and positioned for success.

## Evidence Of Support

Document	Page	Description
Richard Hartley	69	Former Senior Policy Adviser, Governor John Bel Edwards support for ELAoL school application
Daquanda Broussard	70	Middle School Math Teacher, support for Star Academy's math program
Addison Lee	71	Educator, support for Star Academy program
Kristin Wilson	72	Educator, support for Star Academy program
Virginia Cagle	73	Educator, support for Star Academy program
Alex Kinard	74	Science Educator, support for Star Academy program
Libby McGee	75	Educator, support for Star Academy program
Dylan Harris	76	Educator, support for Star Academy program
Yulanda Lassiter	77	Educator, support for Star Academy program
Erik Frank	78	Community Member, support for Star Academy program
Kyla Aucion	79	School Improvement and Assessment Specialist, support for Star Academy

		program
Steven D. Steele	80	Principal, support for Star Academy program
Denise James	81	Community Member, support for Star Academy program
Yolanda Levier	82	Science Teacher, support for Star Academy program
Shannon Rogers	83	Community Member, support for Star Academy program
LeAndra Evans	84	Community Member, support for Star Academy program
Lathecia Wiley	85	ELA Teacher, support for Star Academy program

To: Louisiana Department of Education  
Re: Engaged Learning Academies of Louisiana's charter school application

To Whom It May Concern:

As the former Senior Policy Advisor to former Governor John Bel Edwards, I am writing to express my strong support for the approval of the Engaged Learning Academies of Louisiana (ELAoL) charter school application. The greater New Orleans area has long grappled with providing effective educational solutions for underserved students who have fallen behind academically, and ELAoL offers an innovative approach to addressing this critical need.

By employing an alternative educational model that utilizes individualized, adaptive, and standards-aligned programming, ELAoL has the potential to re-engage students in their education, enabling them to recover credits and successfully reintegrate into a traditional school setting.

Furthermore, I am particularly impressed with the school's vision to cultivate a nurturing environment that fosters personal growth, academic achievement, and leadership skills. This holistic approach prepares students for future success by equipping them with essential life skills and exposing them to potential career paths.

In my role as a Policy Advisor and my travels across the state, I became keenly aware of the significant impact that a quality education has on the trajectory of a young person's life and, by extension, the well-being of an entire community. ELAoL's mission and vision align with my desire and commitment to strive to provide equitable educational opportunities for all students, regardless of their circumstances.

I firmly believe that the approval of this charter school application will be a valuable investment in the future of the greater New Orleans area. By empowering underserved students to overcome academic challenges and achieve their full potential, ELAoL will contribute to a more educated, skilled, and resilient workforce, ultimately driving economic growth and prosperity for the region.

For these reasons, I wholeheartedly support the Engaged Learning Academies of Louisiana charter school application and urge its approval. This innovative educational option has the potential to transform lives and strengthen the Greater New Orleans Area for generations to come.

Sincerely,



Richard H. Hartley  
Former Senior Policy Advisor  
Former Governor John Bel Edwards



April 15, 2024

RE: Star Academy

To Whom This May Concern:

As a dedicated math teacher, I am writing to express my strong support for the implementation of Star Academy's hands-on learning mathematics curriculum. Incorporating interactive and experiential activities into math education is essential for promoting student engagement, fostering conceptual understanding, and developing essential skills that extend beyond the classroom.

Mathematics, often perceived as an abstract and theoretical subject, can greatly benefit from a hands-on approach. By providing students with opportunities to manipulate physical objects, construct models, and actively engage in problem-solving scenarios, we can bridge the gap between abstract concepts and real-world applications. Hands-on activities allow students to visualize mathematical concepts, making them more tangible and relatable, ultimately enhancing their comprehension and retention.

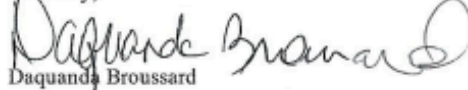
Moreover, hands-on learning in mathematics nurtures critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration skills – competencies that are highly valued in today's rapidly evolving workforce. When students work together on interactive projects, they learn to analyze problems from multiple perspectives, devise creative solutions, and communicate their thought processes effectively. These skills are invaluable for their future academic and professional endeavors, regardless of the field they pursue.

Beyond academic benefits, hands-on learning in mathematics can also foster a sense of joy and curiosity in students. By engaging in hands-on activities, students can experience the excitement of discovery and develop a genuine appreciation for the beauty and practical applications of mathematics. This enthusiasm can inspire them to pursue STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) fields, contributing to the advancement of our society.

As an educator, I have witnessed firsthand the transformative impact of hands-on learning on student motivation and achievement in mathematics. Students who actively participate in interactive activities demonstrate a deeper understanding of mathematical concepts, improved problem-solving abilities, and a more positive attitude towards the subject.

By providing our students with these invaluable learning experiences, we can equip them with the knowledge, skills, and enthusiasm necessary to excel in mathematics and become critical thinkers and problem-solvers in their future endeavors.

Sincerely,



Daquanda Broussard

Opelousas Junior High Mathematics Teacher

April 15, 2024

Addison Lee  
Stuttgart School District



Re: Star Academy

To Whom It May Concern,

I am thoroughly impressed by the forward-thinking approach taken by Star Academy in shaping the educational journey of its students.

What sets Star Academy apart is its commitment to providing students with exposure to a diverse array of career paths, transcending the boundaries of traditional education. Through meticulously crafted modules aligned with both academic standards and practical job skill objectives, students are given the opportunity to explore over 50 different career paths. These hands-on modules serve as invaluable windows into various fields and industries, offering students invaluable insights and igniting their passions.


Moreover, Star Academy's dedication to customizing its curriculum to suit the needs and interests of its students is truly commendable. By actively engaging students with potential career opportunities within their community, the academy is taking proactive steps to prepare them for the demands of the modern workforce. This personalized approach ensures that students not only acquire the necessary knowledge and skills but also develop a clear pathway towards fulfilling and meaningful careers.

In essence, by addressing the holistic needs of each student, Star Academy not only paves the way for academic success but also equips them with the tools and confidence needed to thrive in their future endeavors.

Sincerely,

Addison Lee  
April 16, 2024

Kristin Wilson  
Stuttgart School District



Re: Star Academy

Star Academy epitomizes educational innovation, recognizing that genuine learning transcends mere academic achievements. Through seamless integration of work readiness skills into its curriculum, the program not only imparts knowledge but also equips students with the essential tools to excel as active members of society.

The emphasis on instilling qualities such as responsibility, respect, and collaboration lays a solid foundation for success, extending beyond classroom boundaries to shape future professional endeavors. This holistic approach to student development is not only commendable but also sets an exemplary standard in the field of education.

I wholeheartedly endorse Star Academy's approach, especially for students who may thrive under alternative learning methods. The program's comprehensive nature ensures that every student, irrespective of their unique needs, is allowed to thrive and realize their full potential.

In conclusion, Star Academy's unwavering dedication to holistic student growth is truly inspiring and serves as a beacon of educational excellence. I am confident that within such a nurturing and inclusive learning environment, every student, regardless of background or learning style, will flourish.

Warm regards,

Kristin C. Wilson  
April 16, 2024

Virginia Cagle  
Stuttgart Junior High School

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Re: Star Academy

To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing to express my admiration for the Star Academy program and its innovative approach to education. It is evident that Star Academy recognizes the importance of going beyond traditional academic measures and focusing on the holistic development of students.

One aspect of the program that truly stands out is its integration of work readiness skills into the curriculum. By equipping students with not only knowledge but also essential skills such as responsibility, respect, and collaboration, Star Academy is preparing them to succeed not only academically but also as active and productive members of their community.

I firmly believe that the qualities fostered by Star Academy will serve as a solid foundation for success, both in school and in the future workforce. In today's rapidly changing world, it is essential for educational programs to take such a holistic approach to student development.

Moreover, I highly recommend Star Academy to students who may benefit from an alternative means of study. The well-rounded nature of the program ensures that every student has the opportunity to thrive and reach their full potential.

In conclusion, I commend Star Academy for its dedication to providing a comprehensive and enriching educational experience. I am confident that the program will continue to positively impact the lives of its students and contribute to the betterment of our community.

Sincerely,  
Virginia Cagle

April 16, 2024

Alex Kinard  
Barnwell County School District

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Re: Star Academy

To Whom It May Concern:

Star Academy is a program based on creating an educational program that extends far beyond just academic achievement. By integrating workforce skills into the curriculum, the program ensures that students are not only equipped with knowledge but also with the essential skills needed to thrive as successful citizens of their community. Building qualities like responsibility, respect and collaboration will lay a strong foundation for success not only in school but also in their future workforce. It's wonderful to see an educational program taking such as a hands on and collaborative approach to student growth.

My recommendation is that every student, especially those who are in need of an alternate means of study, will thrive in such a well-rounded program. This program is design to help bring content to live for all students and apply it into read world jobs.

Sincerely,

Alex Kinard

April 15, 2024

Libby McGee  
Focus Academy

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Re: Star Academy

To Whom it May Concern:

Star Academy is a wonderful program. I teach the science portion of the program. This program allows students to learn at their own pace. It focuses on all types of learning that in return allows the students to grasp the material at a faster pace and with better comprehension. The science experiments that come with the program are hands-on and are phenomenal with the students. I recommend this program for anyone especially for an area that just needs an extra tool that promotes learning. Having a curriculum that is hands on such as the Engage program for science has improved our students' test scores. This is the second year that our school has had the opportunity to use Star Academy. The test scores from the start of last year until now have dramatically increased. This is such a creative way of learning.

Sincerely,

Libby McGee

April 16, 2024

Dylan Harris

Explore Academy

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Re: Star Academy

To Whom it May Concern,

Star Academy is a program based on the knowledge that in order to be a well rounded individual in society, students must not only be college focused but career focused as well. By integrating project based instruction into the curriculum, the program ensures that students are not only mastering their state standards at a high level of rigor but also developing essential skills needed to thrive as successful citizens of their community. Students are continuously developing qualities such as responsibility, respect, and collaboration; thus laying a strong foundation for success not only in school but also in their future workforce. It is wonderful to see an educational program that actually takes a holistic approach to student development. My recommendation is that every student will thrive in such a well-rounded program. Please let me know if you have any questions and I will be happy to elaborate further about my tremendous experience since being a part of a Star Academy based program.

Sincerely,

Dylan Harris

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Yulanda Lassiter  
Pine Bluff Junior High Academy  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

April 16, 2024

Re: Star Academy

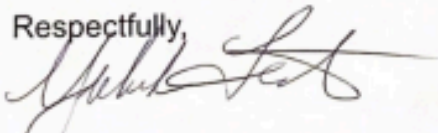
To Whom it may concern:

I am writing this letter in support of additional Star Academy sites being implemented. The clear focus on academic and workforce development has proven to be effective in my experience. Students are engaged in the academic environment and are more aware of the importance of community engagement.

The customized curriculum which allows students to determine possible career paths provides students with the opportunity to experience a variety of possibilities which they may otherwise not experience. The holistic approach ensures that students meet or exceed the traditional standards of teaching and learning. The ultimate goal being providing students with all of the necessary materials to achieve their goals as they matriculate through their academic goals.

I wholeheartedly believe that the Star Academy program is a wise investment in any academic setting and will serve as an asset to any community.

Respectfully,



Yulanda Lassiter





April 12, 2024

Erik Frank

Petra Coach

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Re: Star Academy

To Whom it May Concern:

Star Academy is a comprehensive program that recognizes the importance of education beyond pure academic achievement. A program that preaches progress over perfection. I highly recommend Star Academy for all students, particularly those who require alternative learning methods, as its a well-rounded and inclusive educational experience in which they can thrive. As a parent with a child who learns differently, I can attest to the challenges of the "one size fits all approach" to learning that the traditional school system takes. It wasn't in till we recognized our child's learning styles and preferences that she could succeed.

Star Academy cultivates a true desire to learn in children, and experientially delivers the attributes of responsibility, collaboration and accountability.

I highly recommend Star Academy to any school who wants the best for every student.

Sincerely,

**Erik Frank**

Erik Frank

Petra Coach

4/15/24

To: Louisiana Department of Education

Re: Engaged Learning Academics of Louisiana's Charter School Application

To Whom it May Concern:

As School Improvement Specialist for the Iberia Parish School District, it is imperative that we are consistently providing support, assistance, and leadership to principals, teachers, and students in the areas of instructional strategies. With the implementation of Star Academy, we have continued to identify areas of opportunities, continue research and analysis, and implement those positive changes in one of our UIR (Urgent Intervention Required-Academics) schools. For these reasons, I recommend Star Academy based on my own educational experience. By implementing Star Academy, we are able to provide engaging, hands-on, and project-based learning; thus being extremely pleased with the quality of student learning they provide. Star Academy's holistic approach; focusing on the academic, social, and emotional needs of the students; increased student success; especially in the realm of our multisensory learners. Data taken from our District Benchmark has shown that the number of students placing in the level above Basic has tripled after the implementation of the Star Academy program. This program has led to a decrease in behavior referrals and absenteeism; thus increasing student morale, engagement, confidence, and ownership of their education. I am very pleased to recommend Star Academy to you, and trust that your experience with them will be as positive as ours.

Professionally Yours,

Kyla Aucoin

School Improvement and Assessment Specialist

Iberia Parish School District

April 15, 2024

Steven D. Steele  
Berkeley County School District

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Re: Star Academy

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter serves as a highly favorable endorsement for the Star Academy program. As the principal at Berkeley High School, I had the privilege to facilitate a Star Academy program on our campus for nine years. During the life of this program, we saw the positive academic, social, and behavioral growth for many students who entered the program behind grade level by one or more academic years. By matriculating through the program, our Star Academy students were able to catch back up with their peers and they improved their chances significantly for success in high school and beyond.

Our students found success in Star Academy by navigating a rigorous progression of varied instructional methods, incorporating hands-on learning, real-world learning experiences, individualized instruction, team instruction, and personal development. Additionally, through the academy model, parents, teachers, and students were able to foster a healthy and productive community wherein they strengthened their communication skills and worked together in a safe, engaging, and trusting environment. This community developed in the academy, along with the wraparound services provided at the school level, was an essential component in meeting the needs of the whole student.

Star Academy reignited the passion for learning for many of our students. Our students were able to recapture a sense of purpose, regain their self-esteem, and succeed academically. In addition to the personal growth and achievement experienced by our students individually, we also noticed the impact the Star Academy's success had on our collective success as a school district concerning graduation rates, declining disciplinary infractions, and improved attendance. I endorse without reservation the Star Academy program as a means of supporting the academic, social, and behavioral goals of the students being considered.

Respectfully,

Steven D. Steele

April 16, 2024

Denise W James, Director  
Guinyard-Butler Middle School  
Barnwell School District 45

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Re: Star Academy

To Whom It May Concern:

Star Academy is a program based on the recognition that education extends far beyond just academic achievement. Star Academy integrates rigorous curricula in core subjects like science, math, English language arts, and social studies. In addition, it prioritizes engaging, hands-on learning methods that offer students an opportunity to experience real world situations. Not only does the academy ensure that students meet or exceed state standards, but it offers different learning styles, particularly benefiting those who might be disengaged in traditional classroom settings.

My recommendation is that every student, especially those who are in need of an alternate means of study, will thrive in such a well-rounded program.

Sincerely,

Denise W James

April 15, 2024

RE: Star Academy

To Whom This May Concern:

As a science teacher, I firmly believe in the power of hands-on learning experiences to engage students, foster scientific curiosity, and deepen their understanding of complex concepts. I am writing to express my strong support for Star Academy's hands-on science program in our district.

In the field of science, theoretical knowledge alone is insufficient for students to truly grasp the intricacies of the natural world. Hands-on activities, such as experiments, field trips, and interactive simulations, allow students to actively participate in the scientific process. By physically manipulating materials, observing phenomena, and collecting and analyzing data, students develop critical thinking skills, problem-solving abilities, and a deeper appreciation for the scientific method.

Hands-on learning in science not only reinforces the concepts taught in the classroom but also cultivates essential skills that are invaluable in the 21st century. Students learn to formulate hypotheses, design experiments, interpret results, and communicate their findings effectively. These skills are transferable to various disciplines and professions, preparing our students for future academic and career endeavors.

Moreover, hands-on learning experiences have the potential to spark a lifelong passion for science in our students. When they witness scientific principles in action and experience the excitement of discovery firsthand, they are more likely to develop a genuine interest in pursuing STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) fields. This interest can lead to a more diverse and skilled workforce, driving innovation and advancements in our community and beyond.

As a science educator, I have witnessed firsthand the transformative impact of Star Academy's hands-on learning on student engagement and comprehension. Students who actively participate in experiments and projects demonstrate a deeper understanding of scientific concepts, and their retention of the material is significantly improved compared to traditional lecture-based instruction.

Star Academy has helped my students with invaluable learning experiences, that foster a generation of critical thinkers, problem-solvers, and future scientists who will contribute to the advancement of our society.

Sincerely,



Yolanda Levier

Science Teacher

Opelousas Junior High

Shannon Rogers



Strong Huttig High School

Dear Sir or Madame

**Transformation of Learning at Star Academy**

The impact of Star Academy on traditional education is truly remarkable. This innovative program empowers students to progress at their own pace, facilitating a comprehensive grasp of each lesson. By offering targeted reteaching whenever necessary, students advance steadily, nurturing a deep affection for Star Academy. This transformative approach has revolutionized the learning journey for students, altering the course of their educational trajectory.

At the core of Star Academy's mission is the aspiration to connect students with prospective career pathways within their local community through a tailored curriculum. The initiative allowing students to participate in the established writing team is notably exceptional, fostering a proactive transition into the modern workforce and equipping them with essential competencies for successful career pursuits. Encouraged to take ownership of their learning, students cultivate habits of responsibility, thereby acquiring enduring skills in self-sufficiency. Consequently, challenges become more manageable as Star Academy students develop the resilience to navigate and overcome obstacles effectively.

Sincerely,

Shannon Rogers

April 16, 2024

LeAndra Evans

Strong-Huttig School District

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

RE: Star Academy

To: Whom It May Concern

Star Academy implements a technology-based curriculum aimed at captivating students through hands-on experiments. Each module not only covers essential standards but also fosters connections to real-world scenarios, providing students with valuable insights.

This innovative approach offers a more advanced and engaging learning experience than traditional instruction methods. Through tailored curriculum, Star Academy strives to ensure success for every student. Witnessing the moment when students grasp the concepts and make connections is truly rewarding.

By addressing the holistic needs of students, Star Academy not only supports their academic journey but also prepares them for future success. Emphasizing workplace readiness skills and community involvement enriches the educational experience, empowering students to excel academically, professionally, and as contributing members of society.

Sincerely,

LeAndra Evans

April 15, 2024

RE: Star Academy

To Whom This May Concern:

Star Academy's commitment to holistic education is truly remarkable. Beyond focusing solely on academic and workforce development, the academy fosters a deeper understanding of society and encourages active community engagement among its students.


The implementation of local projects that align with learning objectives and core standards is highly valued by both teachers and educational experts. These projects not only reinforce classroom learning but also provide invaluable opportunities for students to apply their knowledge and skills in real-world situations. Engaging in community projects instills a profound sense of responsibility and pride in our students, helping them develop into well-rounded individuals who are invested in making positive contributions to their communities.

Star Academy's emphasis on social awareness and community involvement enriches the educational experience in profound ways. It equips our students with the tools they need to thrive not only academically and professionally but also as active and conscientious members of society.

Through this holistic approach to education, Star Academy cultivates a generation of students who are not only academically accomplished but also socially conscious, compassionate, and committed to making a positive impact on the world around them.

We are truly fortunate to be part of an educational institution that recognizes the importance of nurturing both the intellectual and the civic development of its students. This comprehensive educational approach will undoubtedly yield countless benefits for our students, our community, and society as a whole.

Sincerely,

  
Lathecia Wiley

ELA Teacher

Star Academy – Franklin Junior High



## **Appendix 2: ELAoL Draft School Model Master Plan**

## **Appendix 2: ELAoL Draft School Model Master Plan**

### **Positive Behavior Support**

In order to assure classroom management using positive behavioral supports and effective disciplinary tools, Engaged Learning Academies of Louisiana (ELAoL) will identify data-driven academic, career and technical, and discipline/behavioral performance results in the School Improvement Plan (SIP). ELAoL 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 school-wide 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 ELAoL to ensure that the policy is in compliance with R.S. 17:416.15; that 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 ELAoL to ensure that suspension and expulsion policies are consistent with R.S. 17:416; that such policies are consistently and fairly executed; and that alternative interventions, consistent with best theory and practice, are used in lieu of suspension or expulsion, including but not 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

intended to increase the likelihood that students who are unmotivated, unsuccessful, or disruptive in traditional programs remain enrolled and successful in school.

The leadership team will review the current Code of Student Conduct of ELAoL 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). The team will refine consequences to create a reward and incentives program for positive student and teacher behavior and ensure the delivery of consistent reinforcement. Consequences for rule violations will be clear, reasonable, consistently enforced, and designed to support maximum instructional time.

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

ELAoL adopts the following clearly defined behavioral expectations:

1. Be Respectful
2. Be Responsible
3. Be Prepared
4. Be Safe
5. Be Engaged

These rules shall be posted in prominent places throughout the school site, including 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 ELAoL 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 reinforcing expectations throughout the year for all students.

ELAoL shall design programs for students with special needs to ensure that students are challenged, engaged in the school curriculum, and appropriately placed so that they remain enrolled rather than being suspended, expelled, or dropping out.

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

### **Safe School Planning**

ELAoL 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.

ELAoL has established a plan, in accordance with Section 4114 of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, for maintaining a safe and drug-free school environment. This plan includes effective discipline policies prohibiting disorderly conduct; illegal possession of weapons; and the illegal use, possession, distribution, or sale of tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs; security procedures during school hours and student travel; prevention activities promoting safe and disciplined environments; a crisis management plan; and a Code of Student Conduct consistent with R.S. 17:416.12 and R.S. 17:416.13.

### **Parental and Community Involvement**

ELAoL is committed to parental involvement and family strengthening. As set forth in R.S. 17:406.1, effective approaches to engaging families as partners in student learning require coordination among state and local public and private agencies. ELAoL shall seek to establish connections through culturally responsive methods to facilitate family access to community-based family strengthening programs, including but not limited to Families Helping Families, Regional Family Resource Centers, Parent Information Resource Centers, and Families in Need of Services (FINS) programs.

ELAoL shall seek training opportunities that promote shared understanding of research-based practices supporting positive relationships among families, school personnel, and community service providers.

ELAoL shall identify student mental health needs and coordinate services with available public, nonpublic, and volunteer organizations. Pending inclusion of mental health services in the Medicaid School-Based Health Services Program, mental health supports will be expanded within ELAoL.

### **Inter-Agency Cooperation**

ELAoL shall seek to improve communication, coordination, and collaboration with agencies serving children and families and will cooperate in data sharing, as permitted by law, to support successful student transitions, reentry, and continued access to educational and community services.

### **Student Records**

ELAoL shall provide for the transfer of student education records within ten (10) business days of receipt of a written request from an authorized entity, in accordance with applicable law. No education record shall be withheld due to unpaid fines or financial obligations.

Parents and eligible students may inspect education records in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Any student seeking admission to ELAoL who has been suspended or expelled from another school shall provide required disciplinary history information.

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

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

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

**Statements of Compliance**

Each homeroom teacher of students in grades 4–12 shall, on the first day of school each year, provide information and respond to questions related to the statement of compliance as provided by the ELAoL Governing Board.

Each parent or guardian of students in grades 4–12 shall sign a statement of compliance committing to ensure daily attendance, punctuality, completion of required homework, and participation in required 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: Grievance Policy**

## **Appendix 3: Draft Grievance Policy**

### **GRIEVANCE POLICY: GUARDIAN CONCERNS/COMPLAINTS PROCESS**

The Engaged Learning Academies of Louisiana (ELAoL) Board of Directors and staff are committed to addressing all concerns and complaints from guardians and community members in a timely, respectful, and transparent manner. While disagreements or misunderstandings may occasionally arise within a school environment, the Board believes that such concerns should be approached with seriousness, professionalism, and a clearly defined process. The following procedure outlines the required steps for resolving concerns and ensuring that all parties are heard and treated fairly:

**1. Teacher-Level Resolution:**

Guardians are encouraged to first address concerns directly with the teacher involved to seek a collaborative and timely resolution. If the guardian does not feel comfortable contacting the teacher, then they may contact the principal directly.

**2. School-Level Intervention:**

If the issue is not resolved at the classroom level, the guardian shall contact the school principal to request a meeting. The principal will contact the guardian within 48 hours and schedule a meeting. The principal will meet with the guardian, and, when appropriate, the teacher and student, to formally investigate the matter, which may include reviewing documentation, speaking with involved parties, and examining relevant school policies. The principal will then provide written correspondence of their findings and outline any steps taken to address the concern allowable under state and federal law.

**3. ESP Executive Director Review:**

If the guardian remains unsatisfied after meeting with the principal, a written appeal may be submitted to the ESP's Executive Director. Within four to five business days, the Executive Director will schedule a meeting with the guardian and any relevant staff members, conduct a comprehensive investigation of the concern, including reviewing school-level findings, assessing compliance with organizational procedures, and gathering additional evidence as needed, and provide a formal written response within five (5) business days outlining conclusions and next steps.

**4. Board-Level Appeal:**

Should the concern remain unresolved, the guardian may submit a written appeal to the ELAoL Board of Directors. The Board Point of Contact will schedule a hearing for the guardian to present their concern before the Board at the next board meeting. The guardian will receive written notice of the hearing date and their right to attend. The

Board may review prior investigative findings, request additional information, or gather testimony to fully understand the issue. Following the hearing, the Board will issue a written decision within five (5) business days to the guardian, principal, and ESP.

#### GRIEVANCE POLICY: SPECIAL POPULATIONS

Grievances related to students with disabilities, English learners, or other protected classes, including those arising under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Title VI, Title IX, and other federal or Louisiana statutes, will be handled in accordance with all required procedural safeguards and due process protections.

For grievances alleging violations of a student with disabilities, ELAoL will comply with all applicable federal and state laws, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and will follow all required procedures and timelines. State complaints will be investigated and resolved within 60 calendar days, unless an extension is permitted by law. If a due process complaint is filed, ELAoL will provide a written response to the complaint within the timeframe required by applicable state and federal law and will convene a resolution meeting within fifteen (15) calendar days of receipt of an due process complaint, unless the parties mutually agree to waive the meeting or pursue mediation. If the matter is not resolved during the resolution period, the due process hearing will proceed in accordance with state and federal timelines, including issuance of a written decision within the legally prescribed timeframe.

ELAoL will ensure that all parties are informed of their procedural rights, provided timely written notice, and afforded opportunities for meaningful participation throughout the grievance process. All grievances will be documented and monitored to ensure compliance with statutory timelines, due process requirements, and accountability standards under Louisiana and federal law.

#### GRIEVANCE POLICY: LITIGATION

In the event that a family initiates legal action against ELAoL, the school will respond in accordance with applicable Louisiana and federal law and established legal procedures. Upon notice of litigation, the matter will be referred to legal counsel, and ELAoL will follow all required protocols related to litigation holds, confidentiality, and preservation of records. While litigation is pending, ELAoL will continue to comply with all applicable student protections, including requirements related to special populations, health and safety, and educational services, unless otherwise directed by a court or agreed upon through legal proceedings.

Nothing in ELAoL's grievance policy limits a family's right to pursue legal remedies. The school will ensure that all procedural safeguards, statutory timelines, and due process requirements are



upheld, and that any related administrative complaints, hearings, or court proceedings are handled in accordance with governing law.

## **Appendix 4: School Leadership Team**

## Appendix 4: School Leadership Team Resumes

ELAoL will finalize the hiring of the Principal, Assistant Principal, Director of Operations, and Student Services Coordinator once the school's site location is determined, ensuring the leadership team reflects the needs of the assigned turnaround community. In alignment with rubric expectations, all job descriptions for these positions will explicitly require prior experience in roles that hold a high level of responsibility and accountability for academic, operational, and financial functions, ensuring that only candidates with demonstrated capacity to lead and improve student outcomes are considered. Any individuals ultimately selected will be expected to bring a proven record of school improvement, organizational management, and effective leadership. This approach ensures that ELAoL maintains a high-quality leadership team capable of driving rapid improvement, sustaining operational excellence, and achieving strong results in a turnaround setting.

### Team Member Descriptions

Name, Proposed Role	Rationale
TBD based on site location, Principal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Provides the essential instructional and operational leadership needed to implement ELAoL's academic model with fidelity, including Tier I curriculum, project-based learning, and the Star Academy acceleration program.</li><li>● Ensures strong school culture, daily management, staff supervision, staff evaluations, and data-driven decision-making critical to turnaround success.</li><li>● Serves as the primary liaison between ELAoL, the ESP, families, and the RSD, ensuring consistent communication and alignment of expectations.</li><li>● Drives continuous improvement through teacher coaching, performance management, and implementation of assessment and intervention systems.</li></ul>

<p>TBD based on site location, Assistant Principal</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Expands leadership capacity to support high-quality instruction, effective classroom management, and consistent schoolwide culture systems.</li> <li>● Oversees specific academic or behavioral initiatives, allowing the principal to focus strategically on overall school performance.</li> <li>● Provides daily coaching, support, and feedback to teachers, strengthening instructional practices and student outcomes.</li> <li>● Ensures continuity of leadership and operational oversight when the principal is engaged in external responsibilities.</li> </ul>
<p>TBD based on site location, Director of Operations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Along with the ESP, they work to manage the non-instructional functions of the school, facilities, transportation, safety, food service, technology, compliance, and procurement, ensuring smooth daily operations.</li> <li>● Allows instructional leaders to focus on teaching and learning while operational systems run efficiently and meet all regulatory requirements.</li> <li>● Ensures the school is prepared for opening and ongoing readiness, an especially critical need in turnaround settings.</li> <li>● Maintains accurate reporting, logistics coordination, and operational problem-solving that support a safe, orderly learning environment.</li> </ul>
<p>TBD based on site location, Student Services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provides coordination of student</li> </ul>

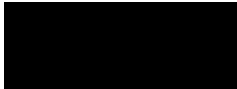
Coordinator	<p>support services, including attendance monitoring, MTSS interventions, special populations communication, and family engagement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensures students with academic, behavioral, or social-emotional needs receive timely, coordinated support aligned with school and state expectations.</li> <li>• Strengthens systems for chronic absenteeism prevention, behavioral interventions, and wraparound services essential for a turnaround school population.</li> <li>• Serves as a bridge between students, families, teachers, and leadership to promote a positive, inclusive, and well-supported learning experience.</li> </ul>
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## **Appendix 5: Charter Board Member Resumes**

## Appendix 5: Charter Board Member Resumes

Board Member	Role	Area Of Expertise	Resides In Louisiana
Conner LeBlanc	Board Director, Char	Legal and Community Relations	Yes
Dan Cooper	Board Director, Vice Chair	Community Relations and Operational Management	No
Keith Gillies	Board Director, Secretary	Finance and Community Relations	Yes
Todd Villarrubia	Board Director, Treasurer	Operational Management, Legal and Finance	Yes

## Contact



# Conner J. LeBlanc, JD/MBA

## Educational Experience

### **Louisiana State University Paul M. Hebert Law School**

- Juris Doctorate/Comparative Law (2016–2020)
- Louisiana State University Flores MBA Program**
- Specialization: Tech-based Entrepreneurship (2019–2020)

### **Louisiana State University Bachelor of Arts**

- Major: Philosophy (2012–2015)
- Minor: History (2012–2015)

## Professional Experience

### **Licensed Attorney in the State of Louisiana**

- Bar Roll Number: 39251
- Admitted: September 4, 2020
- LSBA Accredited CLE Professionalism/Ethics Presenter

### **Certifications**

- Licensed Notary (East Baton Rouge Parish)
- FAA Part 107 Certified Drone Operator

### **Co-Founder/CEO of Project Zenith, LLC (2019-Present)**

- Zenith is an immersive content production company that specializes in the development of terrestrial/aerial interactive virtual tours for business across South Louisiana.
- Zenith was founded just months before the Covid-19 lockdowns swept world. In response to businesses no longer able to welcome patrons into their physical locations, virtual tours became an excellent way for businesses to drive revenue remotely.
- While it is our belief that immersive content (like virtual tours) will change the way we all engage with content and each other in the years to come... that said, the technology is still very early on the adoption curve. Although Zenith has become a side project for the time being, once AR/VR/MR technology begins to experience true adoption at scale, Zenith will be well positioned to help businesses capitalize on this disruptive technology.

### **Professional Acknowledgements**

- **General Informatics BDM of the Year (2023, 2024 & 2025)**
- **Baton Rouge Business Report – 40 Under 40 Nominee (2025)**

## Athletic Experience

### **LSU Fighting Tigers Football Team (2013-2016)**

- Walk-On Long Snapper/Tight End
- 2014 Outback Bowl Championship Team
- 2014 All-SEC Academic Honor Roll

## Social/Charity Involvement

- **Mystic Krewe of Louisianians - Member (2020-Present)**
- **LSU Delta Chi Fraternity - Recruitment Chair/ (Chapter Financial Advisor) (2014-2016)/(2023-Present)**
- **Capital City's Finest - Nominee (2022)**
- **American Heart Association – Leaders of Impact (2024)**
- **Prix D'Elegance Men of Fashion – Nominee (2025)**
- **American Cancer Society – Fork Cancer Tastemaker (2026)**

## Employment Experience

### **General Informatics | Senior Business Development & Compliance Manager**

#### **Baton Rouge, LA | January 2024 – Present**

- In addition to all business development responsibilities, primarily focused on highly regulated industries (banking, healthcare, maritime, etc.), responsibilities also include identifying regulatory/compliance requirements impacting clients and working with GI's cybersecurity experts to ensure recommended solutions comply with regulatory requirements.

### **General Informatics | Business Development Manager**

#### **Baton Rouge, LA | July 2021 – December 2023**

- Responsible for both identifying new sales opportunities and cultivating strategic partnerships in furtherance of growing General Informatics' managed IT/cybersecurity services footprint across New Orleans, Baton Rouge, and the Bayou Region.

## Professional Association Involvement

### **American Bar Association (ABA) | United States**

- AI Task Force Committee Member (2023-2024)

### **Louisiana State Bar Association (LSBA) | Louisiana**

- Member (2020-Present)
- Young Lawyer Division Committee Member (2021-Present)

### **Baton Rouge Bar Association (BRBA) | Baton Rouge, LA**

- Young Lawyer & In-House Council Sections (2022-Present)
- Publications Committee & AI Seminar Committee (2023-Present)
- CLE By the Hour Presenter on AI & Cybersecurity (2022-Present)

### **New Orleans Bar Association (NOBA) | New Orleans, LA**

- Young Lawyers Section Member (2023-Present)

### **Louisiana Bankers Associations (LBA) | Louisiana**

- Associate Member (2021-Present)

### **Port Association of Louisiana (PAL) | Louisiana**

- Associate Member (2023-Present)

## Civic Leadership Involvement

- **CABL/C100 Leadership Louisiana** - Class of 2025
- **Jefferson Chamber Leadership Jefferson** - Class of 2024
- **New Orleans Regional Leadership Institute (NORLI)** - Class of 2023
- **BRAC Leadership Baton Rouge** - Class of 2022

## Civic Organization Involvement

### **Louisiana Institute of Business and Industry (LABI) | Louisiana**

- Member (2023-Present)

### **Greater New Orleans Organization (GNO, Inc.) | New Orleans, LA**

- NextGen Council Member (2024 – Present)

### **New Orleans Chamber of Commerce | New Orleans, LA**

- Board of Directors & Chairman's Council Member (2021-Present)
- Junior Achievement League of Greater New Orleans | New Orleans, LA**
- Young Professionals Board Member (2022-Present)
- Trust Your Crazy Ideas Mentor (2022-Present)

### **Jefferson Chamber of Commerce | Metairie, LA**

- Governmental & Young Professional Committee Member (2022-Present)

### **Jefferson Economic Development Commission (JEDCO) | Metairie, LA**

- Member (2023-Present)
- Prosper Jefferson Series Speaker on AI & Cybersecurity (2024)

### **Elmwood Business Association | Elmwood, LA**

- Member (2023-Present)

### **Baton Rouge Chamber of Commerce (BRAC) | Baton Rouge, LA**

- Member (2021-Present)

### **Baton Rouge Area Foundation (BRAFA) Member | Baton Rouge, LA**

- Member (2022-Present)

### **Forum 225 | Baton Rouge, LA**

- Member (2022-Present)

### **Atchafalaya Intercoastal Coalition (AIC) | Morgan City, LA**

- Member (2022-Present)

### **St. Mary Parish Chamber of Commerce | Morgan City, LA**

- Member (2022-Present)





# TODD VILLARRUBIA

J.D., LL.M., AEP  
D. AEP

## SUMMARY

Highly accomplished, experienced, board-certified expert in estate planning & administration, as certified by the Louisiana Board of Legal Specialization, with a long track record of success in a vast array of disciplines within the tax law industry that includes high net-worth estate planning, corporate business & tax compliance, wills & trusts, tax planning, business tax advisory services, & client relationship management with a strong work ethic and the passion and drive necessary to achieve optimum success at a superior level.

## WORK EXPERIENCE

### CO-FOUNDER, CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER (COO)

Fountainhead Development Partners, LLC | 2021-Present

- Successfully perform & execute all COO responsibilities of the firm including all corporate & small business incorporations, small business 8A, EDWOSB & B-Lab certifications.
- Help to ensure that all back-office needs are properly administered & that all financial & investment decisions are prudent & beneficially aligned to the company's strategic goals & objectives.
- Translate strategy into actionable goals for performance & growth, adhere to all company, federal, state, & local business regulations, design & implement policies to properly promote company culture, & vision, & oversee all business operations necessary to keep the business on track & sustainable.

### FOUNDER & CEO

Todd M. Villarrubia, APLC d/b/a Wealth Planning Law Group / 1995-Present

- Implemented written based systems for every aspect of the business, used tactics & skills learned from Verne Harnish on how to scale the company's operations, & served as the Lead Attorney & Owner for a firm whose mission statement was as follows: "We protect highly successful business owners from the government, taxes, and creditors."
- Carefully drafted wills and trusts, successions, family limited partnerships, private foundations, LLCs, GRATs, dynastic trusts, domestic asset protection trusts, SCINs, & multi-generational wealth planning.
- Directly responsible for all major sales to both prospective new High Net Worth clients & supervised & oversaw the work of a staff of up to 10 employees that included other board-certified estate planning, Tax & MBA attorneys, paralegals & support staff to ensure the highest levels of industry compliance & quality standards were properly executed.

### ENTER YOUR JOB TITLE HERE

Company Name / 2015-2016

Make sure to save this resume as a PDF! Some companies would specifically ask for word documents only then save it as such otherwise always save as a borderless PDF file. It is as easy as that.

- Word files often have compatibility issues. So it is best to use pdf's



## TODD VILLARRUBIA

J.D., LL.M., AEP

## SKILLS

High Net-Worth Multi-Generational Estate Planning | Complex Estate Tax Reduction Strategies | Business Tax Advising | Income & Estate Taxes | Asset Protection | Captive Insurance Companies | Corporate & Tax Compliance | Irrevocable Life Insurance Trusts | Intentionally Defective Grantor Trusts | Wills & Trusts | Private Foundations | Grantor Retained Annuity Trusts | Dynastic Trusts | Special Needs Planning | Limited Partnerships & LLC's | Family Buy/Sell Agreements | Business Acquisitions & Sales | Business Incorporation | Client Relationships Management | Team Leadership & Management | Business Continuity | Effective Communication Process Improvement | Strategic Planning

## AWARDS &amp; RECOGNITIONS

- Admitted to Practice Before the United States Tax Court.
- Worth Magazine – Top 100 Estate Planning Attorneys in America.
- Law Firm 500, Top 200 Fastest Growing Law Firms in the Country for 2 consecutive years.
- Named in Louisiana Super Lawyers.
- Martindale-Hubbell, Recognized by peers with an A / V Preeminent rating - the highest possible rating for legal professionalism and ethics.
- Received the Edgar E. Burkes Award for Most Outstanding Student Leader at UNO.

## WORK EXPERIENCE CONTINUED

## ESTATE &amp; BUSINESS PLANNING ASSOCIATE

Steeg & O'Connor Real Estate Law Firm / 1993-1994

- Served as an Associate Attorney that was directly responsible for drafting wills & trusts, succession pleadings, generating loan documents, creating LLC operating agreements, & other such incorporation documents & real estate-related matters.
- Met with clients to determine their needs & wishes, which led to drafting appropriate documents to best meet those needs & wishes such as wills, trusts, powers of attorney, health care directives, providing advice on estate, gift, GST, & income tax matters & explain CDP's approach to engagements & fees.

## PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

## MEMBER

NAIFA, Atticus, Advisors Forum & The New Orleans Estate Planning Council

## MEMBER/BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Entrepreneurs Organization

## Advisory Board Member

ResearchWild, LLC

## MEMBER

The New Orleans & Jefferson Bar Association

## BOARD MEMBER

The Board for the Celerity Charter School System

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Young Leadership Council

## STUDENT MEMBER

LSU Board of Supervisors

## PRESIDENT

Student Government Association

## PRESIDENT

Tau Kappa Epsilon Fraternity

## PRESIDENT

Panhellenic Council

## CERTIFICATIONS

## BOARD-CERTIFIED EXPERT IN ESTATE PLANNING &amp; ADMINISTRATION

Louisiana Board of Legal Specialization

## ACCREDITED ESTATE PLANNER

The National Association of Estate Planning Councils

**EDUCATION**

**LL.M. in TAXATION**  
Emory University | 1993

**JURIS DOCTORATE**  
Louisiana State | 1992

**BACHELOR OF ARTS DEGREE**  
University of New Orleans | 1998

**LINKEDIN**

[Redacted]

**CONTACT**

[Redacted]

Tel.  
Email.

[Redacted]

United States

## BIOGRAPHY

### Keith M. Gillies

Keith M Gillies, CFP, MBA, is the Managing Principal of Wealth Solutions, LLC and The Pension Center, LLC, and co-founder of United Wealth Advisors Group, LLC, where he serves as Chief Executive Officer. He began his career as a financial advisor in 1981 with a commitment to providing advice and strategies to individuals, professionals, and business owners to help them achieve their personal, business and charitable goals.

Keith is an honor graduate of Tulane University's A. B. Freeman School of Business with a M.B.A. and of the University of New Orleans with a B.A. in Political Science. He is a Certified Financial Planner, Chartered Life Underwriter, and Chartered Financial Consultant.

Keith is a Registered Representative and Investment Advisor Representative with Ameritas Investment Corp., a member of FINRA/SIPC. He is a leading representative of the Ameritas group of companies. Keith served many years in field leadership including chairing the Broker-Dealer Task Force and as Chair of the prestigious Ameritas Field Advisory Cabinet, an elected team of advisors who work directly with the Ameritas senior leadership to shape strategies and product development. In 2013, Keith was named the Lester A. Rosen Humanitarian Award recipient for his service to his community, profession, and to the greater Ameritas family. In 2016, Keith was inducted into the Ameritas Hall of Fame. He is currently honored as one of Louisiana's top financial advisors by Forbes Magazine. He was recognized by the University of New Orleans as one of the most impactful business led by a UNO graduate.

Keith is very active in his community, church, and the financial services profession. For over twenty years, Keith chaired the St. John the Baptist Parish (County) Planning and Zoning Commission. He also chaired the St. John the Baptist Parish Select Presidential Advisory Committee for Finance. Keith served the St. Joan of Arc Catholic Community by chairing the Pastoral Finance Committee for seven years and he served as the basketball program coordinator and coach for sixteen years. In 2013, Keith was awarded the Distinguished Service Award by St. Joan of Arc, the highest of all lay honors.

Professionally, Keith served as President of the National Association of Insurance and Financial Advisors, NAIFA. Prior to joining the NAIFA National Executive Committee, Keith was elected to two consecutive two-year terms to the National Board of Trustees. He is past-president of both greater NAIFA-Greater New Orleans and NAIFA-Louisiana. His honors include NAIFA-Greater New Orleans Member of the Year in 1997; NAIFA-Louisiana's President's Award in 2004; and NAIFA-Louisiana's Arthur Abramson Member of the Year Award in 2007. He is also a life and qualifying member of the most prestigious financial services organization in the world, the Million Dollar Round Table with status as a Top of the Table member.

A lifelong resident of the greater New Orleans area, Keith currently resides in New Orleans, Louisiana with his wife, [REDACTED]. They have five children. He enjoys reading, golf, cycling, traveling with his friends and family.

# DAN R. COOPER

## EXPERIENCE

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1994 to Present, **The Capitol Group of Companies.** Jackson, Mississippi

*Chairman and Chief Executive Officer*

Multistate Public Affairs and Government Marketing Firm whose mission has been to represent clients at every level of government and jurisdiction. The firm has a wide and deep skill set emphasizing traditional legislative lobbying, as well as, the complex world of public sector marketing. The firm has successfully represented many of the Fortune 50 companies who have an eye towards providing government services to States and the Federal Government.

1991 to 1994, **Hon. Kirk Fordice, Governor** of the State of Mississippi

*Assistant to the Governor, Legislative Liaison*

- Responsible for all matters relating to the Office of the Governor and all of its attendant agencies as it related to the Mississippi Legislature, the 82 county governments, all municipalities and all special purpose political subdivisions in the State of Mississippi which involved policy and legislation.
- Responsible for intergovernmental affairs as it related to the Federal Government to include the Executive Branch its Agencies and the Congress of the United States.
- Governors Liaison to the Republican Governors Association, the Southern Governors Association and the National Governors Association

1988–1991 **Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation** Jackson, Mississippi

*Director of Public Affairs*

- Managed the day-to-day operations and staff of the public affairs department of a 250,000-member farm service organization with three domestic insurance operations, a twelve state life insurance company and a six state property and casualty company providing insurance products in those states.

1987-1988 **Hon. Ray Mabus, Governor of the State of Mississippi**

*Office of the Governor, Congressional Liaison – Disability Examiner IV*

*(Social Security Administration / Vocational Rehabilitation Issues)*

1984 to 1987 **Conagra, Incorporated**

Omaha, Nebraska

*Corporate Management Trainee / Legal Services*

## EDUCATION

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1977 - 1980 **University of Mississippi** Oxford, Mississippi  
*B.A., English and Political Science.*

- Graduated with 193 hours of classroom credit

1975 -1977 **Millsaps College**  
Music Major – Voice Performance  
Pre-Medicine Track

Graduate Studies

1981 - 1984 **Mississippi College School of Law**  
*Doctor of Jurisprudence Degree* 102 hours Classroom Credit

## INTERESTS

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Part Time Member of Advance teams for two United States Presidents.

Staff and/or Executive Finance Committee member for 5 gubernatorial campaigns in last 25 years. Also active involvement with 5 US Senatorial campaign and a number of House and Senate races on State and Federal levels.

Active member of the National Finance Committee for the Republican Governor's Association (RGA), Washington DC for 14 years.

Active in the Ole Miss Alumni Association, the University of Mississippi Athletic Association and the Sooner Club of Mississippi (thru spouse). Member of Kappa Alpha Order. Member of First Baptist Church, Sanctuary Choir, Men's Quartet of Jackson, Mississippi.

Enjoys hunting, firearms & sports.

## FAMILY

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Married to [REDACTED] with three children. [REDACTED]  
currently attending Ole Miss.



## KINGSGUARD

### Background Screening Report

VICTIG Screening Solutions  
14587 S 790 W Suite A  
Bluffdale, Utah 84065  
Phone: 866-886-5644

FILE NUMBER	571864	REPORT DATE	03-04-2024
REPORT TO	KINGSGUARD Inc. (KGD_101) 4440 Chastant Street Suite G Metairie, LA 70006 Phone: 5042641984 Fax: (504) 539-3788	ORDER DATE	03-04-2024 Randall Neider
		TYPE	KingsGuard- A La Carte Menu

#### Application Information

APPLICANT	COOPER, DANNY RAY	SSN	[REDACTED]	DOB	[REDACTED]
DRIVERS LICENSE	[REDACTED]	PHONE NUMBER	[REDACTED]		
E-MAIL	[REDACTED]				
ADDRESS(ES)	[REDACTED]	CITY / STATE / ZIP	[REDACTED]		

#### Investigative

Nationwide NetPlus (National Criminal, SSN Trace, Sex Offender Registry, Alias)

RESULTS **No Reportable Records Found**  
NAME SEARCHED COOPER, DANNY RAY

DOB SEARCHED [REDACTED] SEARCH DATE 03-04-2024 1412 MDT

JURISDICTION NATIONWIDE

NAME VARIATION(S) SEARCHED

DANNY R COOPER; DANIEL RAY COOPER; DAN RAY COOPER

JURISDICTION(S) SEARCHED

The search you have selected is a search of our criminal database(s) and may not represent 100% coverage of all criminal records in all jurisdictions and/or sources. Coverage details available upon request.

#### SSN VALIDATION INFORMATION

Valid:	True
Deceased:	False
Message:	This is a Valid Social Security Number.
Issued Location:	Mississippi
Issued Date Range:	1968 and 1971

#### ADDRESS/IDENTITY HISTORY INFORMATION

FULL NAME / SSN	DOB	ADDRESS	PHONE/NAME/COMPANY	REPORTED DATE(S)
DANNY RAY COOPER	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]		First: 2018-04 Last: 2024-03

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Disclaimer

Your organization must utilize this information provided to you in accordance with all applicable federal and state laws. Make sure your decisions are not discriminatory and that they follow the guidelines outline by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Contact us with any questions.

This report is furnished to you pursuant to the Agreement for Service between the parties and in compliance with the Fair Credit Reporting Act. This report is furnished based upon your certification that you have a permissible purpose to obtain the report. The information contained herein was obtained in good faith from sources deemed reliable, but the completeness or accuracy is not guaranteed.

\*\*\* End Of Report \*\*\*

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## KINGSGUARD

### Background Screening Report

VICTIG Screening Solutions  
14587 S 790 W Suite A  
Bluffdale, Utah 84065  
Phone: 866-886-5644

FILE NUMBER	571861	REPORT DATE	03-04-2024
REPORT TO	KINGSGUARD Inc. (KGD_101) 4440 Chastant Street Suite G Metairie, LA 70006 Phone: 5042641984 Fax: (504) 539-3788	ORDER DATE	03-04-2024 Randall Neider
		TYPE	KingsGuard- A La Carte Menu

#### Application Information

APPLICANT	GILLIES, KEITH MICHAEL III	SSN	[REDACTED]	DOB	[REDACTED]
DRIVERS LICENSE	-	PHONE NUMBER	[REDACTED]		
E-MAIL	[REDACTED]				
ADDRESS(ES)	[REDACTED]	CITY / STATE / ZIP	[REDACTED]		

#### Investigative

Nationwide NetPlus (National Criminal, SSN Trace, Sex Offender Registry, Alias)

RESULTS	<b>No Reportable Records Found</b>		
NAME SEARCHED	GILLIES, KEITH MICHAEL III	SEARCH DATE	03-04-2024 1405 MDT
DOB SEARCHED	[REDACTED]		
JURISDICTION	NATIONWIDE		
NAME VARIATION(S) SEARCHED	KEITH MICHAEL GILLIES, KEITH N GILLIES III; KEITH CINDY GILLIES		
JURISDICTION(S) SEARCHED			

The search you have selected is a search of our criminal database(s) and may not represent 100% coverage of all criminal records in all jurisdictions and/or sources. Coverage details available upon request.

#### SSN VALIDATION INFORMATION

Valid:	True
Deceased:	False
Message:	This is a Valid Social Security Number.
Issued Location:	Louisiana
Issued Date Range:	1955 and 1973

#### ADDRESS/IDENTITY HISTORY INFORMATION

FULL NAME / SSN	DOB	ADDRESS	PHONE/NAME/COMPANY	REPORTED DATE(S)
KEITH MICHAEL GILLIES III	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]		First: 2015-05 Last: 2024-03

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Disclaimer

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\*\*\* End Of Report \*\*\*

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## KINGSGUARD

### Background Screening Report

VICTIG Screening Solutions  
14587 S 790 W Suite A  
Bluffdale, Utah 84065  
Phone: 866-886-5644

FILE NUMBER	571856	REPORT DATE	03-04-2024
REPORT TO	KINGSGUARD Inc. (KGD_101) 4440 Chastant Street Suite G Metairie, LA 70006 Phone: 5042641984 Fax: (504) 539-3788	ORDER DATE	03-04-2024 Randall Neider
		TYPE	KingsGuard- A La Carte Menu

#### Application Information

APPLICANT	VILLARRUBIA, TODD MICHAEL	SSN	[REDACTED]	DOB	[REDACTED]
DRIVERS LICENSE	-	PHONE NUMBER	[REDACTED]		
E-MAIL	[REDACTED]				
ADDRESS(ES)	[REDACTED]	CITY / STATE / ZIP	[REDACTED]		

#### Investigative

Nationwide NetPlus (National Criminal, SSN Trace, Sex Offender Registry, Alias)

#### RESULTS **No Reportable Records Found**

NAME SEARCHED	VILLARRUBIA, TODD MICHAEL	SEARCH DATE	03-04-2024 1336 MDT
DOB SEARCHED	[REDACTED]		

JURISDICTION NATIONWIDE

NAME VARIATION(S) SEARCHED

TODD MICHAEL VILLARRUBIA; TODD M VILLARUBIA; T VILLARRUBIA; TO VILLARRUBIA

JURISDICTION(S) SEARCHED

The search you have selected is a search of our criminal database(s) and may not represent 100% coverage of all criminal records in all jurisdictions and/or sources. Coverage details available upon request.

#### SSN VALIDATION INFORMATION

Valid:	True
Deceased:	False
Message:	This is a Valid Social Security Number.
Issued Location:	Louisiana
Issued Date Range:	1980 and 1981

#### ADDRESS/IDENTITY HISTORY INFORMATION

FULL NAME / SSN	DOB	ADDRESS	PHONE/NAME/COMPANY	REPORTED DATE(S)
TODD MICHAEL VILLARRUBIA	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]		First: 2014-07 Last: 2018-10

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Disclaimer

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Your organization must utilize this information provided to you in accordance with all applicable federal and state laws. Make sure your decisions are not discriminatory and that they follow the guidelines outline by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Contact us with any questions.

This report is furnished to you pursuant to the Agreement for Service between the parties and in compliance with the Fair Credit Reporting Act. This report is furnished based upon your certification that you have a permissible purpose to obtain the report. The information contained herein was obtained in good faith from sources deemed reliable, but the completeness or accuracy is not guaranteed.

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\*\*\* End Of Report \*\*\*

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IdentoGO Center (2800006)  
6555 Siegen Ln  
Ste 13  
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70809-4315

# IdentoGO

Date 12/15/2025@02:09 PM  
Customer: CONNER J LEBLANC  
UE ID: UZ7S6H2X3V

## Services

LA - Louisiana State Police	\$42.50
Right to Review - Printed Copy	

SubTotal	\$42.50
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$42.50</b>

## Payment

Credit Card ending in (6576)	\$42.50
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<b>Amount Paid:</b>	<b>\$42.50</b>
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## Credit Card Authorization

By signing, I authorize IDEMIA and/or their agents to charge my credit card for service (s) performed and/or products purchased. I agree that I will pay for this purchase in accordance with the issuing bank.

## **Appendix 6: Bylaws**

## **Appendix 6: Draft Charter Board Governing Bylaws**

\*\*\* The ELAoL Governing Board is committed to finalizing its draft bylaws and completing its board roster upon assignment of the school's location by the Louisiana Recovery School District. The board has intentionally deferred final approval until the school site is identified to ensure that locally based board members have the opportunity to review the bylaws, provide input, and formally approve all governing documents with full knowledge of the school's community and context.\*\*\*

### **ENGAGED LEARNING ACADEMIES OF LOUISIANA (ELAoL)**

#### **DRAFT BYLAWS**

##### **ARTICLE I NAME & PURPOSE**

**1.1 Name.** The name of the corporation is Engaged Learning Academies of Louisiana and is sometimes referred to hereinafter as the "Corporation." The principal office of the Corporation shall be located at 610 Belle Terre Boulevard, LaPlace, LA 70068 or such place as the Board of Directors shall designate. The Corporation may also maintain additional offices at such other places as the Board of Directors may from time to time designate.

**1.2 Purpose.** Engaged Learning Academies of Louisiana was created for the purpose of opening and operating a public charter school in the State of Louisiana.

##### **ARTICLE II MEMBERS**

There shall be no members. All rights, powers, duties and obligations usually vested in the members of a nonprofit shall be vested in the directors in accordance with these bylaws.

##### **ARTICLE III BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**3.1 General Powers.** The business and affairs of the Corporation shall be managed by the Board of Directors and it shall exercise all powers not otherwise delegated by law, the Articles of Incorporation or the Bylaws. The Board of Directors will monitor the day to day operations of Engaged Learning Academies of Louisiana.

**3.2 Number of Qualifications.** The number of directors of the Corporation at incorporation shall be seven (7) . The directors constituting the initial Board of Directors shall be as specified in the Articles of Incorporation and shall serve as directors until the first regular meeting of the Board of Directors, at which time their successors shall be appointed and qualified in accordance with the provisions of 3.3 below. The number of directors shall be established from time to time by a majority vote of those present at any regular meeting of the Board of Directors.

**3.3 Appointment and Term of Office.** At the first regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the Corporation, directors shall be appointed to succeed the initial directors named in the Articles of Incorporation of the Corporation as is provided in this 3.3.

The Directors appointed at the first regular meeting of the Board of Directors shall serve staggered terms as provided hereinafter. Two directors elected shall serve for a period of two (2) years or until their successors shall be appointed and qualified. Three Directors shall be elected for a period of three (3) years or until their successors shall be appointed and qualified. Thereafter, as vacancies occur by reason of expiration of terms, each director shall serve for a period of three (3) years or until his successor shall be appointed and qualified. Directors can serve two full consecutive three (3) year terms. The Directors will be representative of the fields of interest of Engaged Learning Academies of Louisiana.

**3.4 Vacancies.** Any vacancy in the authorized number of directors whether occurring by reason of expiration of term, resignation, death, or increase in the authorized number, shall be filled as provided in this 3.4. A vacancy created by a vacating director shall be filled by the majority vote of the remaining members of the Board of Directors. An individual appointed to fill such a vacancy shall serve for the remaining term of the director who created the vacancy.

**3.5 Resignation and Removal.** Any director of the Corporation may resign by giving written notice to the Board of Directors. Any director of the Corporation may be removed from the Board of Directors with or without cause by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Board of Directors.

**3.6 Regular Meetings of the Board of Directors.** Regular meetings of the Board of Directors shall be held at such time and place as may be fixed by the resolution of the Board. Regular meetings of the Board of Directors shall be conducted at a physical location that is open and accessible to the public and situated within the Board's geographic jurisdiction. Meeting agendas will be posted at least twenty-four (24) hours in advance on the school's website and in a conspicuous location on the exterior of the school facility accessible to the public in compliance with Open Meetings Laws. A calendar of meeting dates will be available on the school's website. Additionally, all meeting agendas, documents, and minutes will be accessible on the school's website.



**3.7 Special Meetings of the Board of Directors.** Special meetings of the Board of Directors may be called at any time by the Chair or by any two (2) members of the Board. Special meetings of the Board of Directors shall be fixed by the resolution of the Board and in compliance with Louisiana law. Notice of any special meeting of the Board of Directors shall be given to each director not less than seven (7) days before such meeting and shall state the place, day, hour, and the purpose or the purposes for which the meeting is called. Notice may be given either by personal contact, mail, or email. Special meetings of the Board of Directors shall be conducted at a physical location that is open and accessible to the public and situated within the Board's geographic jurisdiction. All meeting agendas, documents, and minutes will be accessible on the school's website.

**3.8 Notice of Special Meetings.** Notice of any special meeting of the Board of Directors shall be provided in full compliance with the timelines and requirements of the Louisiana Open Meetings Law. Meeting agendas will be posted at least twenty-four (24) hours in advance on the school's website and in a conspicuous location on the exterior of the school facility accessible to the public.

**3.9 Virtual or Phone Participation.** Members of the Board of Directors may participate in any meeting of such Board by conference telephone or digital platform or similar communications equipment by which all individuals participating in the meeting can hear and/or see each other at the same time; participating in such manner shall constitute presence in person at a meeting, but will not count towards quorum. Any virtual or telephonic meeting of the Board shall be conducted in accordance with all applicable requirements of Louisiana law, including the Louisiana Open Meetings Law.

**3.10 Quorum and Manner of Acting.** A majority of the Board of Directors shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any regular or special meeting of the Board of Directors. If a quorum is present at the meeting, the act of a majority of the directors present at the meeting shall constitute the act of the Board, except in cases where the vote of a great number is required by law, the Articles of Incorporation or by these Bylaws. All actions taken by the Board of Directors or any committee thereof on behalf of the Corporation shall be conducted in an open and transparent manner in accordance with Louisiana's Open Meetings Law, La. R.S. 42:11 et seq

**3.11 Voting.** Each Board Member present within a quorum shall, at every meeting, be entitled to vote.

**3.12 Non-Compensation to Directors.** No compensation or payment shall be paid or made to any officer, director, creator, or organizer of this Corporation or substantial contributor to it

unless approved by the Board of Directors. Allowable exceptions will include reimbursement for reasonable expenses incurred in their performance of their responsibilities as a Director or Chief Executive Officer, actual expenditures or services rendered to or for this Corporation. Neither the whole nor any portion of the assets or net earnings current or accumulated of this Corporation shall ever be distributed to or divided among any such persons, and neither the whole nor any part or portion of such assets or net earnings shall ever be used for, accrued to, or inure to the benefit of any member or private individual within the meaning of Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and its Regulations as they now exist or as they may hereafter be amended.

**3.13 ACT 393. Virtual Meeting.** In accordance with Act 393 of the 2023 Regular Legislative Session, the Board of Directors of the charter school may conduct one-third ( $\frac{1}{3}$ ) meetings per calendar year by electronic means, without a physical quorum present, as permitted under Louisiana's Open Meetings Law. Any such virtual meeting will be conducted in full compliance with all statutory requirements, including advance public notice, agenda posting, and provisions that allow for public observation and participation as required by law.

**3.14. Committees.** The Board of Directors may establish standing or special committees by resolution to assist in carrying out the duties and responsibilities of the Board. The structure, purpose, and scope of each committee shall be clearly defined by the Board at the time of its creation. Unless expressly authorized by resolution of the Board, all committees shall serve in an advisory capacity only and shall not exercise the authority of the Board. The Board retains full responsibility and accountability for all decisions, actions, and oversight of the Corporation, regardless of any committee recommendations. Any committee granted decision-making authority, or composed of a quorum of the Board, shall conduct its meetings in compliance with the Louisiana Open Meetings Law, La. R.S. 42:11 et seq., including applicable notice, agenda, and public access requirements. The Board may modify, limit, or dissolve any committee at any time by majority vote.

## **ARTICLE IV OFFICERS**

**4.1 Number.** The officers of the Corporation shall be a Chair, a Vice Chair, a Secretary and a Treasurer. In addition, there may be such other officers as may be designated from time to time, by the Board of Directors, in accordance with these Bylaws.

**4.2 Election and Term of Office.** The officers of the Corporation shall be elected by a majority vote of the Board of Directors at any regular or special meeting of the Board of Directors. Each such elected officer shall hold office for a period of one (1) year or until his or her successor

shall be duly elected and qualified. Election or appointment of an officer, employee or agent of the Corporation shall not of itself create contract rights between any appointee and the Corporation. Nothing in these Bylaws may be construed to create any contract rights, written or implied, including, but not limited to, the term of office, compensation or benefits for any officer, employee or agent.

**4.3 Resignation.** Any officer may resign at any time by giving written notice of such resignation to the Board of Directors. Such resignation shall take effect at the time specified therein, or if no time is specified upon its receipt. Unless otherwise specified therein, the acceptance of such resignation shall not be necessary to make it effective.

**4.4 Removal.** The Board of Directors, may, by majority vote, remove any officer from office, with or without cause.

**4.5 Vacancies.** A vacancy in any office shall be filled by a majority vote of the Board of Directors at any regular or special meeting.

**4.6 The Chair.** The Chair shall oversee and conduct the Corporation's business and affairs. Said person is empowered to appoint committees as herein provided and shall, ex officio, be a member of all such committees. The Chair may sign, execute and deliver in the name of the Corporation all deeds, mortgages, bonds, contracts and other instruments, except in cases where such signing, execution or delivery thereof shall be expressly otherwise delegated by the Board of Directors, by these Bylaws or by law, and, in general, shall perform all duties incident to the office of Chief Executive Officer and such other duties which may from time to time be assigned to him by these Bylaws or by the Board of Directors.

**4.7 The Secretary.** The Secretary shall keep an accurate record of all minutes of meetings of the Board. The Secretary shall be custodian of the seal of the Corporation and shall affix the seal to all such documents as may be required. He/she has the authority to give notice of all meetings of the directors in accordance with the provisions of these Bylaws, and shall keep copies of these Bylaws available for inspection by the Board. In general, he/she shall perform all duties incident to the office of Secretary and such other duties as may from time to time be assigned to him/her by these Bylaws, the Board of Directors or the Chief Executive Officer.

**4.8 The Treasurer.** The Treasurer shall oversee the collection of all monies payable to the Corporation and the disbursement of all funds. The accounts of the Corporation shall be open at all times to the inspection of any member of the Board of Directors. In general, the Treasurer shall perform all the duties incident to the office of Treasurer and such other duties as may from time to time be assigned to him by these Bylaws, the Board of Directors or the Chief Executive Officer.

**ARTICLE V**  
**FUNDS, CHECKS & DEPOSITS**

**5.1 Depositing of Funds.** All funds of the Corporation shall be deposited in such depository or depositories as may be designated by the Board of Directors. Such deposits shall be made in the name of the Corporation.

**5.2 Signing of Checks, Drafts, or for Payment.** All checks, drafts, or other orders for the payment of money shall be signed by such officer or officers, agent or agents of the Corporation and in such manner as shall from time to time be determined by resolution of the Board of Directors.

**5.3 Surplus Funds or Assets upon Dissolution.** The Corporation shall not operate for profit. In the event of the dissolution of the Corporation all assets on hand shall be distributed in accordance with the terms of the Articles of Incorporation.

**5.4 Distributions by the Corporation.** All distribution of the Corporation shall be approved by a majority of the Board of Directors, either at a regular or special meeting or in writing.

**ARTICLE VI**  
**SEAL**

The seal of the Corporation shall be circular in form, shall bear its name in the margin thereof, and shall indicate the date of incorporation and the state of incorporation.

**ARTICLE VII**  
**PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES**

No part of the earnings of the Corporation shall benefit, or be distributable to its directors, officers or other private persons, except that the Corporation shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distribution in furtherance of the purposes set forth in the Articles of Incorporation of the Corporation. No substantial part of the activities of the Corporation shall be the carrying on of propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and the Corporation shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office.

Notwithstanding any other provision of these articles, the Corporation shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on by an organization exempt from federal income tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Code, or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code, or by an organization contributions to which are deductible for federal income tax purposes under section 170 of the Code, or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code.

## **ARTICLE VIII MISCELLANEOUS**

**8.1 Fiscal Year.** The fiscal year shall end on December 31.

**8.2 Books and Records.** The Corporation shall keep correct and complete books and records of the account and shall keep minutes of the proceedings of the Board of Directors and any committees having any of the authority of the Board of Directors. The Corporation shall keep at its registered office or principal office a record of the names and addresses of its directors and officers.

All books and records of the Corporation may be inspected by any director or officers, or his agent or attorney, for any proper purpose at any reasonable time.

**8.3 Review.** To the extent that resources are available, the books and records of the Corporation shall be reviewed or audited once annually by an independent accountant appointed by the Board of Directors if requested by any member of the Board of Directors.

**8.4 Financial Statements.** The Corporation shall issue an annual statement of its finances as of the close of the fiscal year to each member of the Board of Directors, each officer and the members.

**8.5 Designated Gifts and Contributions.** The officers, directors, employees or any other person authorized by the Corporation may accept on its behalf any contribution, gift, bequest, or devise of money or property for its general purposes set forth in the Articles of Incorporation within the purposes described in section 501(c)(3) of the Code, or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code; provided, however, designations for contributions will only be accepted at the discretion of the Board of Directors and only if the designated purpose, project or activity set out by the donor is in furtherance of the Corporation's tax exempt purposes. Any designation of any contribution shall not be deemed to be legally binding upon the Corporation unless the designation made by the donor is deemed to be a lawfully enforceable condition subsequently impressed upon the gift. If, upon the advice of counsel, it is determined that one or more contributions made to the Corporation are subject to any enforceable condition subsequent,

requiring its use in the manner specified by the condition, and is not deemed to be a precatory or discretionary designation by such donor, the condition subsequent will be deemed to obligate the Corporation and will be honored only if the condition imposed by the donor is consistent with the purposes stated in the Article of Incorporation. If not, such contribution shall be returned to the donor or otherwise disposed of in compliance with the condition subsequent.

**8.6 Insurance.** The Foundation may purchase and maintain insurance on behalf of any Director, officer, employee or agent of the Foundation against any liability asserted against such person and incurred in such capacity whether or not the Foundation would have power to indemnify such person against such liability under the provisions of the above section.

**8.7 Amendments.** These Bylaws may be amended by two thirds (2/3) vote of those present at any regular meeting of the Board of Directors. Subject to the power of the members to amend, alter or repeal by the Bylaws; provided, however, that notice of any such action by the Board of Directors shall be given to each Director.

I, Conner LeBlanc, do hereby certify that I am the Board Director: Chair of Engaged Learning Academies of Louisiana, and that the foregoing Bylaws were duly presented to and considered by the Board of Directors of the Corporation and adopted as and for the Bylaws of such Corporation.

In WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2025.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Conner LeBlanc, Board Director: Chair

## **Appendix 7: Back Office/Financial Manager**

## **Appendix 7: Back Office/Financial Manager**

ELAoL plans to contract with 4th Sector Solutions to provide comprehensive financial management services that ensure strong fiscal stewardship and full compliance with Louisiana's reporting requirements.

### **Budgeting & Forecasting:**

In collaboration with the ESP's leadership team and the Board's Finance Committee, 4th Sector Solutions will develop an annual budget aligned to the school's strategic priorities and academic goals. The budgeting process will rely on conservative revenue projections, historical expenditure trends, and documented programmatic needs. The proposed budget will be reviewed by the Finance Committee and submitted to the full Board for approval.

### **Accounting:**

The provider will prepare monthly financial statements that compare actual revenues and expenditures to the board-approved budget. These reports will be reviewed by the ESP leadership team and the Finance Committee to ensure ongoing fiscal health, identify variances, and maintain transparent financial oversight.

### **Purchasing:**

4th Sector Solutions will assist ELAoL in establishing and implementing clear purchasing policies governing approval processes, vendor selection, and invoice management. All large purchases will follow competitive bidding procedures, and the accounting system will maintain strong audit trails and segregation of duties. Multiple levels of review and approval will be required for all transactions to ensure internal controls are consistently upheld.

### **Payroll:**

The provider will manage payroll operations, including timely processing and full compliance with all tax withholding and reporting requirements. The Board will conduct regular internal audits to identify and correct any discrepancies, supplementing the annual external audit conducted by an independent accounting firm selected by the Board.

Additional financial or operational support may be provided by 4th Sector Solutions based on ELAoL's evolving needs and the provider's areas of expertise.

4th Sector Solutions employs multiple credentialed professionals in its Baton Rouge and New Orleans offices who hold the Louisiana Certified School Business Administrator (CLSBA) credential. Because ELAoL will contract with the organization rather than a single financial manager, no individual résumé is enclosed.



## **4th Sector Solutions Team Experience and Credentials/Resumes:**

### **Joe Keeney**

4th Sector Founder and Chairman

## **Professional Experience**

### **Founder and Chairman**

4th Sector Solutions; School Food Solutions L3C; 4th Sector Transportation LLC

- Founder and board chair of multiple mission-driven organizations providing operational, facilities, food service, and transportation solutions to charter schools nationwide
- More than 20 years of experience serving the national charter school community

### **President, Edison Charter Schools**

Edison Learning (1997–2005)

- Led the development and operation of the nation's largest and highest-achieving charter school network at the time, serving approximately 30,000 students across 14 states and the District of Columbia
- Oversaw client and new school development, school finance and operations, and real estate design and construction

### **Divisional President and Chief Operating Officer**

Fortune 1000 Global Manufacturing Company

- Led international operations, including five years based in Hong Kong

### **Corporate Strategy Consultant**

LEK Consulting Inc., London and Boston

- Advised corporate clients on strategy, operations, and growth initiatives

## **Education and Credentials**

- B.A. in Economics, Columbia College
- M.B.A. with High Distinction, Harvard Business School
  - Baker Scholar (top 5% of class)
  - Recipient of the Macy Scholarship and the Uhlmann Award
- Ed.M. in Education Leadership, Teachers College, Columbia University

## **Leadership, Publications, and Service**

- Mentor, Leadership for Educational Entrepreneurship Program, Arizona State University
- Author of articles and book chapters for American Enterprise Institute publications, including works on facilities financing and high-performing school back-office systems
- Selected by the U.S. Department of Education (2010) to serve as a peer reviewer for the \$4.35 billion Race to the Top grant competition

- Board Member, Charter Schools Development Corporation (Community Development Financial Institution)

### **Melissa Fox, Chief Financial Officer**

Melissa leads 4th Sector's finance practice. She joined 4th Sector in 2008 with over 15 years of accounting experience, split between the non-profit and for-profit sectors. Melissa's range of activities includes finance and accounting, reporting systems and procedures, and facilities financing for independent charter school management organizations. She works closely with school and CMO leadership, as well as site-based operations managers, to ensure the financial health, control, and stability of the charter schools and other non-profit programs supported by 4th Sector. Melissa was previously a senior accountant for a rapidly growing restaurant chain that expanded from 14 to over 50 stores during her tenure. Her duties called for a wide range of financial reporting and accounting functions. Melissa holds a BS in Accounting from Southeastern Louisiana University.

### **Joe Neary, Chief Operating Officer**

Joe has over 15 years of educational management experience in New York and New Orleans. Most recently, he was Chief Operating Officer of FirstLine Schools, which operates five charter schools in New Orleans. Joe has extensive charter school financial and operating expertise and organized the Charter School CFO Roundtable in New Orleans. He leads or supports 4th Sector's operations, human resources, finance, and business development activities.

### **Kevin Cox, Head of Finance Team**

Kevin leads 4th Sector's New Orleans finance practice. He graduated from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette in 1996 with a Bachelor of Science majoring in economics. Kevin later completed his studies in accounting at the University of New Orleans to become licensed as a Certified Public Accountant. He is a member of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, Society of Louisiana Certified Public Accountants as well as a certified QuickBooks ProAdvisor. He brings over eight years of public accounting experience to 4th Sector with a background in financial accounting, tax accounting and payroll services.

## **Appendix 8: Insurance Plan**

## **Appendix 8: Insurance Plan**

ELAoL will secure all insurance coverage required by the Louisiana Department of Education Charter School Insurance Requirements. The following list outlines each type of insurance, a brief description, and the anticipated level of coverage.

### **Worker's Compensation Insurance:**

- Description: Provides coverage for medical expenses and lost wages for employees injured on the job, along with employer liability protection as required by federal and state law.
- Coverage Level: Minimum of \$100,000.

### **Comprehensive General Liability Insurance:**

- Description: Provides protection against claims for bodily injury, personal injury, and property damage. This includes umbrella coverage, directors and officers liability, crime packages, and general liability.
- Coverage Level: Minimum combined single limit of \$1,000,000 per occurrence.

### **Directors and Officers (D&O) Liability Insurance:**

- Description: Protects board members and school leadership against claims arising from governance decisions, fiduciary responsibilities, or alleged mismanagement.
- Coverage Level: Included within the general liability package at a minimum of \$1,000,000.

### **Comprehensive Automobile Liability Insurance:**

- Description: Covers hired and non-owned automobiles used for school business, protecting against bodily injury and property damage.
- Coverage Level: Minimum combined single limit of \$1,000,000 per occurrence.

### **Property Insurance:**

- Description: Covers loss or damage to school-owned contents, furniture, materials, and technology; the facility will be leased rather than owned.
- Coverage Level: To be determined based on final inventory valuation.

### **Errors and Omissions (Professional Liability) Insurance:**

- Description: Provides coverage for liability resulting from professional services, including financial management, compliance, and indemnification obligations.
- Coverage Level: Maximum deductible of \$25,000 and minimum limit of \$1,000,000 per claim and annual aggregate.

**Employee Dishonesty Insurance:**

- Description: Protects the school against financial or physical loss resulting from fraudulent acts committed by employees.
- Coverage Level: Minimum limit of \$250,000 per claim and annual aggregate.

**Employment Practices Liability Insurance:**

- Description: Covers claims alleging wrongful employment practices such as discrimination, harassment, or wrongful termination.
- Coverage Level: Minimum limit of \$500,000 per claim and annual aggregate.

**Fire Prevention and Safety Equipment Compliance:**

ELAoL will comply with all state and local fire safety regulations and will ensure that all fire prevention and safety equipment, including alarms, extinguishers, sprinkler systems, and emergency exits, is inspected, maintained, and operated in accordance with the requirements set by the Louisiana Office of State Fire Marshal. Regular inspections will be documented, any deficiencies corrected promptly, and staff will receive annual training on emergency procedures and operation of safety equipment. Regular emergency drills will be conducted and recorded at the school site.

## **Appendix 9: Does not apply**

## **Appendix 10: Does not apply**

## **Appendix 11: Does not apply**



## **Appendix 12: Educational Services Provider Audit**

## **Appendix 12: Educational Services Provider Audit**

NOLA Education has not served as an Education Service Provider (ESP). NOLA Education has agreed to serve as the ESP if and when a Type 5 charter school is awarded by the Recovery School District (RSD) to Engage Learning Academies of Louisiana (ELAoL).

## **APPENDIX 13: ESP**

## **APPENDIX 13**

### **DRAFT Education Service Provider Memorandum of Understanding**

This Education Service Provider Memorandum of Understanding (“MOU”) is entered into as of [Effective Date] by and between Nola Education, with a principal address at [address] (“Nola Education”), and Engaged Learning Academies of Louisiana, with a principal address at 610 Belle Terre Boulevard, LaPlace, LA 70068 (“ELAoL”).

This MOU is intended to satisfy expectations applicable to Louisiana Type 5 public charter schools and shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with BESE policies, Bulletins, and authorizer requirements.

#### **1. Purpose and Scope**

The purpose of this MOU is to memorialize the Parties’ mutual understanding regarding the provision of educational, instructional, operational, and programmatic support services provided by Nola Education to ELAoL’s public charter school mission. Nothing herein shall be construed to delegate governing authority, fiduciary responsibility, or statutory accountability from ELAoL’s Board of Directors.

#### **2. Term and Renewal**

**Initial Term.** This MOU will commence on the Effective Date and continue through [date/milestone], unless earlier terminated as provided herein.

**Renewal.** The Parties may renew or extend this MOU by mutual written agreement.

#### **3. Roles and Responsibilities**

The Governing Board of Engaged Learning Academies of Louisiana (“School”) retains full legal authority and fiduciary responsibility for the School and does not delegate its core statutory duties. The Governing Board is responsible for maintaining compliance with the School Performance Contract (SPC), Louisiana charter school law, BESE policy, and all applicable federal, state, and local laws. The Board adopts and enforces bylaws, policies, and procedures; provides oversight of the Education Service Provider (ESP); and evaluates ESP performance in alignment with the SPC. The Governing Board approves the annual budget, monitors financial performance, ensures proper internal controls, and maintains fiscal solvency. The Board retains authority over personnel decisions unless otherwise delegated through formal board action, and retains final decision-making authority over academic programming, school operations, material contracts, and strategic direction.

NOLA Education (“ESP”) provides services in support of the School’s mission and obligations under the SPC, subject to Governing Board oversight. The ESP supports the design, implementation, and continuous improvement of the academic program, including curriculum alignment, instructional frameworks, assessment systems, and data-driven interventions consistent with Louisiana academic standards and charter commitments. The ESP supports instructional leadership, teacher coaching, and professional development aligned to academic goals and accountability expectations.

The ESP assists with the development and implementation of school operations and systems, including enrollment, attendance, discipline, student records, scheduling, and school safety procedures. The ESP supports compliance and service delivery for students with disabilities, English learners, and other protected classes in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Title VI, Title IX, and applicable Louisiana law. The ESP assists the School with compliance monitoring, data reporting, audits, authorizer reviews, and corrective action planning required under the SPC and applicable regulations.

The ESP provides support for staffing and human capital functions, including recruitment, onboarding, training, and performance management of instructional and school-based staff, consistent with board-approved staffing plans. The ESP assists with budget development, financial forecasting, and monitoring aligned to enrollment projections, funding formulas, and academic priorities, while acknowledging that all fiscal authority and responsibility remain with the Governing Board. The ESP provides governance support through the preparation of reports, data analysis, and technical assistance to support informed Board decision-making and does not exercise control or authority over the Governing Board.

The School and the ESP collaborate on the development, implementation, and monitoring of the School Improvement Plan and any authorizer-required corrective action plans. The School and ESP jointly review academic, operational, and financial performance data to assess progress toward SPC goals and prepare for authorizer meetings, site visits, and compliance reviews.

Nothing in this Agreement shall be construed to grant the ESP authority to govern the School, employ/terminate Governing Board members, or assume fiduciary responsibility. All final authority remains solely with the Governing Board.

#### **4. Scope of Services**

Services shall be limited to those authorized by this MOU and any Board-approved addendum.

NOLA Education (“ESP”) shall provide comprehensive educational, operational, and administrative support services to Engaged Learning Academies of Louisiana (“School”) in

accordance with this Agreement, applicable Louisiana law, federal law, and all requirements of the School's charter contract.

The Education Service Provider ("ESP") shall support the design, implementation, and continuous improvement of the School's academic program. This includes curriculum development, alignment, and implementation consistent with Louisiana academic standards and the School's charter commitments; the development and use of instructional frameworks, pacing guides, assessment systems, and academic interventions; and the analysis and reporting of student performance data to inform instructional decision-making and School Improvement Planning. The ESP shall also support literacy, numeracy, special populations, and accountability measures as required by the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE).

The ESP shall support school leadership and staffing by providing guidance and assistance with the recruitment, selection, onboarding, and professional development of school leadership and instructional staff. The ESP shall support performance management systems, instructional coaching, and leadership development and ensure that staffing models align with academic, operational, and budgetary requirements. The ESP shall also maintain human resources records necessary to ensure compliance with applicable Louisiana and federal laws and audit requirements.

The ESP shall ensure that the School meets all obligations related to special populations. This includes supporting compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Title VI, Title IX, and all applicable state laws. The ESP shall support special education programming, related services, English learner services, and required accommodations, and shall provide oversight of due process procedures, timelines, and documentation in coordination with the School.

The ESP shall provide operational, compliance, and risk management support to the School. This includes guidance related to compliance with Louisiana charter law, BESE policy, LDOE regulations, applicable federal regulations, and reporting requirements. The ESP shall support student discipline systems, attendance, enrollment, and records management, and shall assist with school safety planning, crisis management, and risk mitigation in accordance with state and federal requirements.

The ESP shall assist the School with financial and budgetary support functions, including the development of budgets aligned to enrollment projections, academic priorities, and applicable funding formulas. The ESP shall support financial monitoring and internal controls designed to promote fiscal responsibility and shall coordinate, as needed, with third-party vendors or service providers, including payroll and related services.

The ESP shall provide governance support in a non-controlling capacity. This includes providing data, reports, and recommendations to support informed decision-making by the School's

Governing Board and supporting board training related to academic performance, compliance, and fiduciary oversight. The ESP acknowledges that all final decision-making authority remains solely with the School's Governing Board.

The ESP shall provide required written and electronic reports to the School and, as applicable, to the LDOE, the Recovery School District, and federal entities regarding academic performance, operational compliance, and progress toward charter goals. The ESP shall cooperate fully with audits, monitoring, evaluations, and site visits conducted by the authorizer or regulatory agencies and shall maintain and submit records sufficient to demonstrate compliance with this Agreement, applicable law, LDOE submission deadlines, and federal deadlines.

The ESP shall perform all services in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations; the School's charter agreement, bylaws, and board-adopted policies; and all ethical standards and conflict-of-interest requirements applicable to public charter schools in Louisiana.

## **5. Performance Standards and Accountability**

The performance of NOLA Education as Education Service Provider ("ESP") shall be reviewed annually by the School's Governing Board and shall be directly aligned to the School's performance under its School Performance Contract ("SPC") with the authorizer. The review shall evaluate the extent to which the services provided by the ESP support the School's achievement of academic, operational, and organizational performance standards set forth in the SPC.

The annual review shall include, but not be limited to, analysis of the School's academic outcomes, progress toward accountability targets, compliance with applicable federal and state requirements, financial and operational performance, and fulfillment of any corrective actions or conditions imposed by the authorizer. Performance metrics may include student achievement and growth indicators, special population outcomes, compliance findings, audit results, and authorizer evaluations.

The Governing Board shall provide the ESP with written feedback following each annual review, including identification of strengths, areas for improvement, and any required corrective actions. If the School fails to meet performance expectations under the SPC, or if the ESP materially fails to perform its obligations under this Agreement, the Governing Board may require the ESP to submit a corrective action plan with defined benchmarks and timelines aligned to the SPC.

Continued failure by the ESP to support the School's compliance with or performance under the SPC may constitute grounds for modification, non-renewal, or termination of this Agreement, subject to the notice and cure provisions herein. Nothing in this section shall be construed to limit the Governing Board's authority or responsibility under the SPC or applicable law.

## **6. Governance and Decision-Making**

The Board of Directors of ELAoL shall retain full, independent, and non-delegable authority over the governance and oversight of the school, consistent with all applicable federal and state laws, BESE policies, and LDOE requirements. This authority includes, but is not limited to, establishing and safeguarding the school's mission and strategic direction; adopting and enforcing policies; approving and overseeing the annual budget and financial plan; selecting, contracting with, monitoring, and evaluating any education service provider (ESP). The Board shall exercise active, informed oversight and shall not cede final decision-making authority to any management entity or third party.

## **7. Financial Arrangements**

NOLA Education shall maintain fiscal policies and practices that comply with all applicable BESE fiscal accountability standards, Louisiana law, RSD, and Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) requirements. The School will work with a Louisiana-based, high-quality financial management provider to support sound financial operations, internal controls, accurate reporting, and compliance. All compensation and financial terms shall be governed by a separate Board-approved agreement. No public funds shall be expended without prior Board approval, proper documentation, and adherence to applicable procurement, budgeting, accounting, and audit requirements. The Board shall retain ultimate fiscal oversight and responsibility, including review of financial reports, audits, and corrective actions, as required by BESE and LDOE.

## **8. Data, Privacy, Confidentiality, and Ownership**

The ESP shall ensure that all collection, access, use, storage, transmission, and disclosure of student, staff, and school data are conducted in strict compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), all applicable Louisiana law, BESE Bulletins, RSD Bulletins, and any authorizer-imposed data-sharing, privacy, and confidentiality requirements. All data created, received, or maintained by the ESP in connection with this MOU shall remain the sole property of the Charter School and/or its authorizer, as applicable, and no ownership rights are transferred to the ESP. The ESP shall use such data solely for purposes expressly authorized under this MOU and shall implement appropriate administrative, technical, and physical safeguards to protect the confidentiality and security of the data. Upon expiration or termination of this MOU, or upon written request of the Charter School or authorizer, the ESP shall promptly return all school data in a mutually agreed-upon format and shall securely destroy any remaining copies, including backups, in accordance with applicable law, unless retention is otherwise required by law. The ESP shall certify in writing its compliance with the return and destruction requirements of this section.

## **9. Staff and Personnel**



All personnel provided by NOLA Education shall remain employees of NOLA Education and shall not be considered employees of the Charter School or BESE. All such personnel shall meet and maintain all qualification, certification, licensure, suitability, and criminal background check requirements applicable to Type 5 charter schools under Louisiana law, BESE policy, RSD policy, and Louisiana Department of Education regulations. NOLA Education shall be responsible for ensuring ongoing compliance with all applicable personnel requirements and shall promptly remove or replace any personnel who fail to meet such requirements or whose continued assignment is inconsistent with the Charter School's obligations under its charter contract.

## **10. Compliance**

The Parties shall, at all times, comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, statutes, rules, and regulations, including but not limited to all policies, directives, and guidance issued by the Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE), the Recovery School District (RSD), Federal Government, and the Louisiana Department of Education. Such compliance shall include adherence to all applicable Department Bulletins (including, but not limited to, Bulletin 126), authorizer requirements, School Performance Contract obligations, reporting deadlines, audit requirements, and any subsequent amendments or successor provisions thereto. The Parties further agree to cooperate fully with all monitoring, reviews, audits, investigations, and corrective actions required by the authorizer or any governmental or regulatory authority having jurisdiction.

## **11. Insurance and Indemnification**

Each Party shall maintain, at its own expense, as required by applicable law, BESE policy, RSD policy, or the charter contract. To the extent permitted by Louisiana law, each Party shall indemnify, defend, and hold harmless the other Party, its board of directors, officers, employees, and agents from and against any claims, damages, losses, liabilities, costs, or expenses arising out of the indemnifying Party's acts or omissions in the performance of this Agreement. Nothing in this section shall be construed to require indemnification beyond that permitted under Louisiana law or to waive any statutory limitations, immunities, or defenses available to either Party.

## **12. Reporting and Audit**

The ESP shall maintain complete, accurate, and auditable records related to the services provided under the terms of this Agreement in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles, applicable federal and state laws, and authorizer requirements. The ESP shall provide all reports, data submissions, and documentation required by the School, the Louisiana Department of Education, the Recovery School District, BESE, and any other authorized governmental or regulatory entity, in the format and within the timelines prescribed.

The ESP shall cooperate fully with all audits, monitoring activities, reviews, evaluations, and site visits conducted by the School, the authorizer, the Louisiana Legislative Auditor, or any federal or state oversight agency. Such cooperation shall include timely access to records, personnel, systems, and supporting documentation necessary to verify compliance with this Agreement, the School Performance Contract, and applicable law.

The ESP shall promptly notify the School of any audit findings, material weaknesses, compliance concerns, or corrective actions identified by any oversight entity and shall assist in the development and implementation of corrective action plans as required. Records shall be retained for the period required by applicable law and authorizer policy, including any extended retention periods associated with audits, litigation, or investigations.

### **13. Dispute Resolution**

In the event of any dispute, claim, or controversy arising out of or relating to this Memorandum of Understanding (“Dispute”), the Parties shall first attempt to resolve the Dispute through good-faith discussions between authorized representatives of the Parties. If the Dispute is not resolved through informal discussions, the Parties may, by mutual agreement, submit the Dispute to nonbinding mediation prior to instituting litigation. Mediation shall be conducted in the State of Louisiana by a mediator mutually selected by the Parties. Participation in mediation shall not delay or interfere with the Charter School’s obligations under its charter contract, applicable law, or any directive of the authorizer, BESE, or the Louisiana Department of Education. By mutual written agreement, the Parties may elect to submit the Dispute to binding arbitration conducted in accordance with applicable Louisiana and federal arbitration law. Arbitration, if elected, shall be conducted in the State of Louisiana before a single arbitrator mutually agreed upon by the Parties, and judgment on the arbitration award may be entered in any court of competent jurisdiction.

Nothing in this section shall be construed to waive, limit, or impair the authority of the Board of Directors, the authorizer, BESE, RSD or the Louisiana Department of Education to exercise oversight, enforcement, intervention, or corrective action as required by law or the charter contract, nor shall it restrict any rights or remedies that may not be waived under applicable law.

### **14. Termination.**

(a) Termination for Cause. Either Party may terminate this Agreement for a material breach by the other Party that is not cured within thirty (30) calendar days after written notice specifying the nature of the breach and the actions required to cure; provided, however, that if the breach is not reasonably capable of cure within thirty (30) days, the breaching Party shall be permitted a reasonable additional period to cure so long as it is diligently pursuing cure. Immediate termination may occur for violations of applicable law, loss of required licensure or

authorization, material noncompliance with BESE, RSD, or Louisiana Department of Education requirements, or conduct that materially jeopardizes student safety or the charter school's legal or regulatory standing.

(b) Termination for Convenience. Either Party may terminate this Agreement without cause upon sixty (60) days' prior written notice, subject to the Parties' obligation to cooperate to ensure continuity of services and compliance with applicable charter, BESE, RSD, and LDOE requirements.

(c) Effect of Termination. Upon termination for any reason, the Parties shall cooperate in good faith to effect an orderly transition designed to minimize disruption to students, staff, and operations and to ensure continued compliance with applicable law and charter obligations. Any undisputed amounts owed for services properly rendered through the effective date of termination shall remain due and payable. Provisions relating to confidentiality, data privacy, records retention, and compliance with applicable law shall survive termination to the extent required.

## **15. Notices**

Any notice, demand, request, or other communication required or permitted to be given under this Agreement ("Notice") shall be in writing and shall be deemed properly given when delivered personally; sent by a nationally recognized overnight courier; transmitted by electronic mail with confirmation of receipt; or mailed by certified or registered mail, return receipt requested, postage prepaid. Notices shall be addressed to the Parties at the addresses designated in this Agreement or to such other address as a Party may designate by written notice in accordance with this provision. Notice shall be deemed effective upon receipt if delivered personally or by electronic mail; on the next business day if sent by overnight courier; or three (3) business days after deposit in the United States mail if sent by certified or registered mail.

## **16. Governing Law**

This MOU shall be governed by, construed, and enforced in accordance with the laws of the State of Louisiana. Nothing herein shall be construed to limit or impair the authority of BESE, RSD, the Louisiana Department of Education, to exercise oversight, enforcement, intervention, or corrective action as required by applicable law or the charter contract.

## **17. Miscellaneous**

No Assignment. Neither Party may assign or transfer this MOU, in whole or in part, without the prior written consent of the other Party, except to an affiliate or a permitted successor by operation of law.

Entire Agreement; Amendments. This MOU, together with any exhibits or attachments incorporated by reference, constitutes the entire agreement between the Parties with respect to the subject matter hereof and supersedes all prior or contemporaneous understandings. This MOU may be amended only by a written instrument executed by both Parties.

Severability; Waiver. If any provision of this MOU is held to be invalid or unenforceable, the remaining provisions shall remain in full force and effect. No waiver of any provision shall be effective unless set forth in a written instrument signed by the Party against whom the waiver is asserted.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Parties have executed this MOU as of the Effective Date.

ENGAGED LEARNING ACADEMIES OF LOUISIANA

By: \_\_\_\_\_

Name:

Title:

Date:

NOLA EDUCATION

By: \_\_\_\_\_

Name:

Title:

Date: