



November 7, 2016

To: Hunter Brown
From: Kevin Teasley
Re: School Redesign RFI

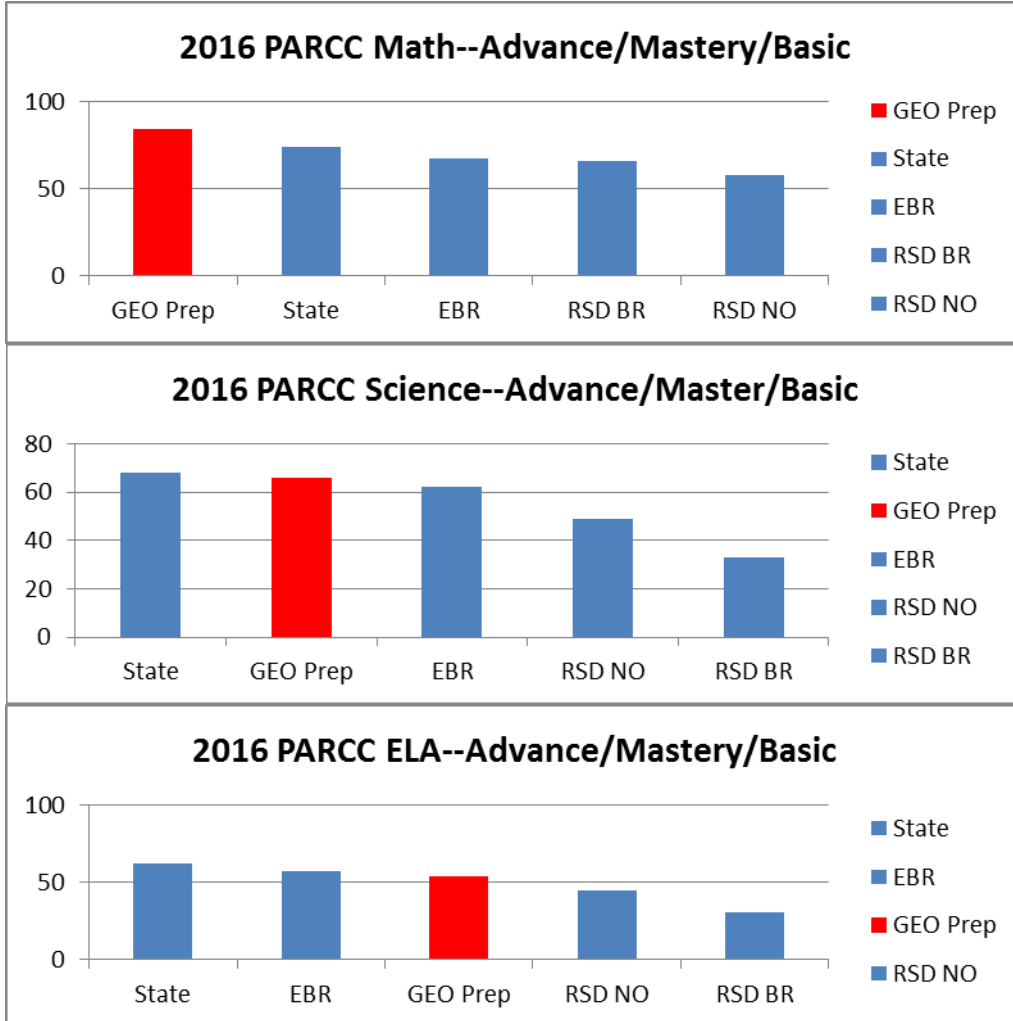
Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your request for information regarding the state's school redesign program. Below are our answers to your questions.

1. Partner Background:

- a. Greater Educational Opportunities Foundation
- b. GEO Foundation is a non-profit charter management organization with the mission of breaking the cycle of poverty by providing students and families with access to quality educational options in impoverished neighborhoods. GEO Foundation partners with local community leaders to start, support, and manage high-quality charter schools in different areas of the country. In 2014, GEO was approved by the Louisiana State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to start three charter schools in Baton Rouge.

2. Evidence of Track Record of Student and School Outcomes:

GEO's first charter in Baton Rouge opened in 2015 and is located at 4006 Platt Dr. in NE Baton Rouge. Our first year PARCC results are listed below:



Stanford University’s CREDO report shows GEO Academies performing in the top 25% of the country in terms of academic growth in math and language arts. Indeed, GEO Academies received several accolades in Indiana and Colorado for being among the top academic growth schools in these states. Our Colorado Springs charter school was rated a “performance” school in 2016 and our Gary charter school regularly outperforms the state and local school district in graduation rate and college and career readiness. Our Gary school is also the only school in NW Indiana to regularly graduate high school students who earn their two-year college Associate Degree while attending our high school.

GEO Academies:

- 21st Century Charter School at Gary (K-12): Authorized by Ball State University (started in 2005)
- Gary Middle College (9-12): Authorized by Ball State University (started in 2012)
- Pikes Peak Prep (K-12): Authorized by the Colorado Charter School Institute (started in 2005)
- GEO Prep Academy of Greater Baton Rouge (K-4): Authorized by the Louisiana State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (started in 2015)

3. Your Organization’s Model:

GEO Foundation currently manages four charter schools in three states and we support both a K-12 “early college” model and a high school dropout recovery model. Our K-12 academies center on providing a classical education provided through Core Knowledge in K-8 and an early college program in grades 9-12 with a goal for our freshmen to start taking college courses and graduate from high school within four years with a two-year college Associate Degree. Our teachers use the highly effective National Institute for Excellence in Teaching program known as TAP (System for Teacher and Student Advancement). And our schools use technology to provide a blended learning experience. Our dropout recovery academy focuses on helping students earn their high school diploma AND prepare for a successful career or to enter college. Each GEO Academy’s goal is to give every student, regardless of race and socioeconomic background, a fair opportunity to pursue higher education and improve their life circumstances.

- a. GEO Foundation’s model is built around differentiated instruction for each student. At our core are four elements of success—TAP, Core Knowledge, Teach Like a Champion strategies and early college in high school. Each of these elements provide structure but also allow for differentiation. We seek to hire and support TAP qualified, Core Knowledge-trained, and Teach Like a Champion-trained staff. Louisiana is a TAP-rich state with hundreds of highly qualified TAP teachers and administrators. We will hire from this pool of leaders. Louisiana also supports Core Knowledge and Eureka Math as Tier One curricula. We will train and support staff in these two key areas. We will train our staff in Teach Like a Champion strategies. Lastly, when students reach high school, our staff will support and encourage students to start taking college level classes.
- b. We seek to partner with schools or districts willing to support structured change that includes higher rigor, expecting more from students, and supporting staff and students more. We also seek schools and districts willing to focus services to what’s best for students. We believe a student-centered budget will provide more options to students and help them achieve more in their K12 experience.
- c. We have worked with the Indiana Department of Education and the Colorado Department of Education to implement school improvement grants in Gary and Colorado Springs. We have worked with the Center for Excellence in Leadership and Learning at the University of Indianapolis, the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching, the Uncommon Schools Teach Like a Champion leadership team, and the Core Knowledge Foundation leadership to structure supports for our schools.
- d. We are excited to work with the state of Louisiana and your Department of Education to implement these reforms in schools and districts as needed. We believe the Department of Education provides many terrific supports already including TAP, Core Knowledge and Eureka Math training that we will take advantage of to support improvements at the partner schools and districts.