



1. Partner Background

a. Organization name

IDEA Public Schools

b. Summarize your organization's mission and its connection to Louisiana's plan for struggling schools

Working from the belief that having a good-paying job is the best way for children to escape poverty and that the best way to get and keep such a job is to have a college degree, IDEA Public Schools opens and operates high quality, college preparatory charter schools that send all students to and through college. For the past 10 years, in fact, 100% of IDEA high school graduates have been accepted into college or university, and IDEA's college graduation rate is three times the national average for low-income students.

Growing from a single charter school 15 years ago, IDEA currently educates more than 30,000 predominantly low-income students in 51 schools in Texas' Rio Grande Valley, San Antonio, and Austin. IDEA's student population that is majority Hispanic (94.7%) and English-language Learners (34.8%) as well as economically disadvantaged (86.1%). And, while IDEA's work in Texas has been impactful and rewarding, we have recently begun to look outside the borders of Texas where we see a tremendous need for new and better schools.

In May 2016, IDEA was granted approval from the East Baton Rouge Parish School Board to open four K-12 charter schools, beginning with two in 2018. As envisioned, the Baton Rouge schools will be the hub of a network of high-performing charter schools that serve children and families across south Louisiana. Our goal is to eventually become the state's top producer of low-income college graduates.

2. Evidence of Track Record of Student and School Outcomes

a. In any format, please illustrate your organization's track record in dramatically improving schools or systems of schools and/or radically increasing outcomes for targeted subgroups of students.

Below is a summary of our 2014-2015 academic progress across IDEA's Texas schools, as measured by Texas state standardized testing (STARR). Note our sustained success helping low income and minority students achieve well above the state average across every single grade level.

District Name: IDEA PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
 County Name: HIDALGO  
 District Number: 108807

TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY  
**Texas Academic Performance Report**  
 2014-15 District Performance

		State	Region 01	District	African American	Hispanic	White	American Indian	Asian	Pacific Islander	Two or More Races	Special Ed	Econ Disadv	ELL <sup>A</sup>
<b>STAAR Percent at Phase-in Satisfactory Standard or Above</b>														
<b>Grade 3</b>														
Reading	2015	77%	76%	79%	70%	78%	92%	*	100%	-	-	46%	78%	76%
<b>STAAR Percent at Phase-in Satisfactory Standard or Above</b>														
<b>Grade 4</b>														
Reading	2015	74%	71%	79%	71%	79%	93%	*	94%	*	*	40%	79%	75%
Writing	2015	70%	74%	79%	59%	79%	93%	*	100%	*	*	29%	78%	75%
<b>STAAR Percent at Phase-in Satisfactory Standard or Above</b>														
<b>Grade 5 **</b>														
Reading	2015	87%	86%	90%	89%	89%	94%	-	100%	-	-	67%	89%	85%
Science	2015	72%	70%	81%	58%	81%	78%	-	100%	-	-	40%	80%	75%
<b>STAAR Percent at Phase-in Satisfactory Standard or Above</b>														
<b>Grade 6</b>														
Reading	2015	77%	69%	79%	82%	79%	90%	*	100%	*	*	43%	77%	64%
<b>STAAR Percent at Phase-in Satisfactory Standard or Above</b>														
<b>Grade 7</b>														
Reading	2015	76%	68%	77%	79%	76%	83%	*	75%	-	*	29%	76%	59%
Writing	2015	73%	69%	76%	79%	76%	81%	*	88%	-	*	38%	75%	56%
<b>STAAR Percent at Phase-in Satisfactory Standard or Above</b>														
<b>Grade 8 **</b>														
Reading	2015	88%	82%	93%	92%	93%	94%	*	100%	*	*	57%	92%	80%
Science	2015	71%	66%	82%	50%	81%	89%	*	100%	*	*	40%	80%	65%
Social Studies	2015	65%	59%	82%	58%	81%	94%	*	100%	*	*	39%	80%	59%
<b>STAAR Percent at Phase-in Satisfactory Standard or Above</b>														
<b>End of Course</b>														
English I	2015	71%	64%	83%	*	82%	81%	-	100%	-	*	52%	82%	64%
English II	2015	72%	65%	85%	-	85%	90%	-	100%	-	*	56%	85%	65%

3. Your Organization's Model

- a. How will you differentiate your services to meet the unique needs of schools and districts in Louisiana?

To date, IDEA has exclusively focused on opening new-start charter schools, believing that this approach allowed the autonomy around personnel, academic program, policies, resource allocation, etc., that are essential for success, as well as the ability to develop and shape school and organizational culture from a blank slate. We understand that this approach may not be ideal for a number of schools and districts, particularly those in rural areas. Accordingly, we are open to working with district leaders to explore different operating structures that offer similar conditions for success without creating additional burdens for our districts.

- b. What are the attributes of your ideal partner school or district?

In our view, the ideal partner school or district is one that sees value in what we are good at doing and who is willing to work with us collaboratively in support of students.

In addition to our work in urban areas, IDEA has a strong track record of serving students in rural to semi-rural areas of the Rio Grande Valley. We envision partnering in Louisiana with education leaders from rural or semi-rural school districts who have ambitious goals for their students, but who have labored to achieve these goals. Specifically, we seek to partner with them to determine if and how a charter strategy (either within a single district or across multiple districts) might help to improve student outcomes and school performance.

IDEA's semi-rural Alamo Academy, which is 99% Hispanic, 68% ELL, and 96% FRL, achieved attendance of 97.7% and a 70% "meets or exceeds progress" across all subjects tested on the Texas STARR exam. This is a full 8 points higher than the state average. Like many semi-rural schools, IDEA Alamo employs a teaching force that matches the community demographics. IDEA has achieved similar results in other rural and semi-rural schools within the network.

We also would be open to considering a role as a phased-in whole-school turnaround partner: While not a core area of expertise, IDEA does have important and relevant turnaround experience at San Antonio's Carver Academy. Once a struggling independent private school, under IDEA's management, Carver students now significantly outperform students in the surrounding district and surpass state averages in every subject area.

- c. Describe your experience working with other third party providers to support coherent school and district improvement.

IDEA has developed a number of important partnerships with third party partners including the National Math and Science Initiative (NMSI), the National Institute for Direct Instruction, and Communities in Schools, among others. We will discuss the NMSI partnership in this RFI.

NMSI's College Readiness Program is a comprehensive approach that increases teacher effectiveness and student achievement in rigorous math and science courses through training, teacher and student support, vertical teaming, open enrollment, and incentives. NMSI offers a suite of tools that can be used to better prepare teachers and students for the rigors of AP. IDEA prides itself on being one of NMSI's largest and most responsive partners. We create a culture of high expectations and achievement, and encourage our teachers to participate in NMSI programs in order to increase our student success in AP courses. This partnership has allowed IDEA to help a full quarter of our students become AP scholars (this is roughly 8x the national average), and has allowed us to offer at least 11 AP courses to each student.

- d. What support from the state, district or school partners would enhance your success in Louisiana?

IDEA thrives when expectations are high and clear, partnerships have well defined contours, and autonomy is upheld. As such, we'd like to work closely and collegially with our partner(s) to:

- establish a clear set of expectations and desired outcomes from a partnership
- determine individuals who own specific responsibilities and serve as consistent points of contact
- craft a firm timeline for actions, deliverables, and outcomes
- ensure cultures are compatible and work towards continuous the betterment of students