



# ORLEANS PARISH SCHOOL BOARD

## Proposal Narrative Template

## Collegiate Academies

### Executive Summary

#### What is your plan?

- (1) Why do you want to start a school? Identify and describe in detail the problem that you are addressing.
- (2) Provide the mission of your school.
- (3) Provide a vision that clearly illustrates how your school will put students on a trajectory for lifelong success.
- (4) Outline the key components of your scale strategy
- (5) Detail your approach to mitigating the threats most likely to hinder your success.

#### **Collegiate Academies is animated by an unshakeable belief in the capacity of all scholars to grow**

Collegiate Academies' staff, scholars, board, and partners are united in an unshakeable belief in the potential of schools to transform a child's life. We focus on serving high school grades because our shared belief is completely unbounded by time: all students, including those in high-poverty environments, can learn and achieve at the highest levels, regardless of their academic success to date.

In New Orleans, more than nine in ten public school students that begin 9th grade will enter a new school community. Our system of family choice means that these scholars will come from across the city and from as many as forty middle schools. While citywide academic achievement has improved notably over the last decade, the average performance remains low. Public schools are still working to determine the best ways to serve students with complex academic, social-emotional, and economic challenges.

Without exceptional high schools for all of these rising leaders, New Orleans families and students will continue to face an uncertain and challenging future with unacceptably low college graduation rates and uneven career outcomes. If New Orleans creates and expands exceptional high schools, there is no limit to what our young people can accomplish.

For the last decade, Collegiate Academies has committed itself to being part of the answer for New Orleans families. We gratefully serve every scholar that enters our schools and have a student population with higher rates of students with disabilities, English Language Learners, and 2+ Years Over Age compared to the city as a whole. Our success in generating transformational growth among traditionally underserved student populations has increased demand from families: compared to EnrollNOLA's Round 1 Demand data from 2016, applications to Collegiate's three schools are up ~95% in 2017 (1,375 applications vs. 700 in prior year). We aspire to open additional schools to meet that demand and continue to improve our network's ability to offer an excellent high school experience to New Orleans families.

#### **Collegiate's expansion plans help to advance our organizational mission**

*The mission of Collegiate Academies is to create and support schools that prepare all scholars for college success.*

Our unwavering belief that all students can reach their highest potential drives leaders to build and support schools and specialized programs that serve the diverse learning needs of our students. As an innovative, reform-minded network of schools, Collegiate has a responsibility to lead the charge in closing the achievement gap for traditionally underserved students (including those with diagnosed disabilities). We recognize that this mission is large and ambitious, and can often seem extremely overwhelming. That said, Collegiate has a proven track record of transforming the opportunities of students regardless of economic or educational background, and we are well prepared to face the challenges ahead as we expand into new communities. Opening two additional schools in New Orleans will allow CA to bring our programming and unrelenting belief to more families of high school students. Responsible, strategic growth is central to our mission and we look forward to the challenge and successes ahead.

After selection as part of CA's School Leader Fellowship, incubating leaders will complete an in-depth process to determine the specific vision for their school. Each vision aligns to CA's overall mission, while taking on the character of the students, staff, leadership, and community served. The strength of the central office as a highly effective support structure is crucial to successfully grow and ensure each of our schools achieve their vision.

### **Collegiate has a proven scale strategy to successfully open new schools in New Orleans**

Postsecondary success for all scholars is our ultimate goal. This north star drives every choice we make, including the decision to expand. To maintain our focus on academic achievement and ensure that each of our new schools are equipped with the fundamental features essential to our model, we have developed a scale strategy that maximizes our odds of success. The key components are detailed in our Experienced Operator Addendum and Attachment 10 (School Start-Up Plan). They include:

- Selecting School Leader(s) and providing exceptional training
- Securing financial support
- Identifying adequate facilities
- Developing community partnerships
- Recruiting families and students
- Developing a thorough budget
- Building an aligned instructional team and support staff
- Providing intensive professional development

Collegiate has three prior experiences with scaling our model: Carver Collegiate Academy (2012), Carver Preparatory Academy (2012), and Livingston Collegiate Academy (2016). In fall 2017, we will open a fourth new site in Baton Rouge, further strengthening our strategies and protocols around scaling our organization.

### **CA has proactively identified internal and external risks and has begun to execute mitigation strategies to ensure new schools will reach targeted outcomes.**

School Leader pipeline: The position of School Leader is rewarding and well-supported by network experts in instruction, curriculum, staff and student culture, and talent recruitment. The role is also extremely demanding: few have the leadership skills and personal resolve to inspire a staff of 60+ professionals and 500+ scholars to pour themselves into a school community. One threat to our success is that identifying and successfully incubating two school leaders for 2018 launches.

- **Mitigation:** We began preparations in 2014-15 to face this challenge. We formally launched the CA School Leader Fellowship (SLF) to provide a concrete path to identifying and training future school leaders from within. We added network capacity to coach existing school leaders to allow CEO Ben Marcovitz to devote more time to designing and executing SLF, a skill for which he is nationally known among the charter

community. Finally, we began targeted recruiting of potential leaders working in schools across the country. This effort has yielded one hire who will begin with CA in July 2017, further bolstering our internal pipeline.

Facilities: After operating for eight (8) academic years in modular classrooms, all Collegiate Academies schools are now operating in stunning, newly rebuilt facilities. These buildings benefit scholars, families, and staff in innumerable ways. As we look forward to future growth in New Orleans, the School Facilities Master Plan is coming to completion and comparatively few public facilities options remain possible. This presents a risk to our success, as we are unable to continue offering the full array of programming that our scholars deserve while simultaneously paying for a private facility. Adequate public facilities in New Orleans are critical to our success.

- **Mitigation:** Above all, we remain flexible and willing to adapt elements of our program to fit within available facilities where there is community demand for additional quality high school options. We have added network Operations and Facilities staff to ensure a wider range of buildings can be utilized by future Collegiate Academies schools. We have begun deepening community partnerships and support across a wider geographic area of New Orleans than our current New Orleans East / Desire neighborhood base. This work includes specific outreach to school partners on the West Bank, where fewer than half of students attend a public high school with an Assessment Index >50 ("F"). Finally, Collegiate is able to draw on multiple experience of co-location to open a wider range of short- and long-term options.

Enrollment: Our citywide system of school choice empowers families and students to identify the right school community for their needs and aspirations. A major challenge that Collegiate Academies faces is enrolling students for new schools. We have found that a critical mass of approximately 135-150 students per grade is necessary to sustain the full range of academic, social-emotional, and co-curricular programming that helps our students thrive.

- **Mitigation:** Additional network investments in personnel to lead student recruitment and middle school partnership initiatives have resulted in the current 2017-18 enrollment process yielding a 95% increase in applications to Collegiate schools. Strong demand at our existing schools -- and strong relationships across a wide range of middle schools -- help to minimize our risk around student enrollment. With the foundation we have established and the lessons we have learned, Collegiate is confident that families will continue to choose our schools in large numbers.

Teacher recruitment at scale: Teaching in high-needs public schools remains rewarding and incredibly difficult work. It requires extraordinary leadership skills, dedication, and personal investment. As Collegiate opens additional schools, the number of teachers that we will need to recruit and orient to our organizational culture will increase considerably. Without strong, aligned teachers in every classroom, our scholars will lack the instructional and social-emotional support to reach their highest potential -- a critical threat to our success.

- **Mitigation:** Collegiate's school launch model tempers the challenge of teacher recruitment: because we grow schools one grade at a time, we have fewer hiring needs than we otherwise would. We have built a strong central network Talent Team to focus on recruitment. That team has a coherent strategy, which includes paying top of market salaries for teachers, spotlighting the major investment in coaching and professional development Collegiate makes in all of our teachers (cf II. People - Staff), and continuing to drive successful efforts to retain quality teachers to minimize the overall number of new hires. We plan to add additional capacity to this team in 2017 to prepare for the 2018-19 recruitment season.

## How will you measure your plan's success?

Describe the performance goals that you will achieve to put students on the path towards achieving your vision. Provide the baseline data used in establishing all performance goals. Include the goals that you will reach in years one through five, the length of your first charter contract.

### **OPSB Specific Questions**

1. How will you evaluate school performance?
2. What are performance goals for year 1 through 5? How did you get to these goals?
3. What is your capacity to effectively measure success?
4. What will you do to address performance if you fall below these targets?

### Collegiate sets ambitious goals in order to drive performance

Lofty goals motivate our School Leaders, teachers, central network staff, scholars and families. We rally an entire school community around the idea that growth and successful life outcomes are within reach of all scholars, regardless of prior experiences in school.

The table below summarizes our school goals for new openings in New Orleans in fall 2018. These targets were developed in partnership with CA's official third-party evaluator for our recently-awarded federal Charter Schools Program Replication and Expansion grant, Bellwether Education. All rely on data generated and shared by the Louisiana Department of Education. Meeting these targets would put new Collegiate Academies high schools in the top handful of open enrollment high schools statewide that serve a population with >90% low-income students. Based on results to date at existing CA schools, these figures are ambitious yet achievable with the relentless, tightly aligned team that we expect to form at new schools under the leadership of strong School Leaders.

Additional interim goals are detailed in I. School – Academic Model. These include a critical target for growth in Reading skills: All CA Scholars will grow at least 2 years in MAP Reading level each academic year, or be on target to reach 12th grade reading level by graduation. We have extensive experience measure and tracking this objective at existing CA schools and consider it a critical formative measure of a school's likely outcome in the goals below.

Goal	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
<u>% Average Daily Attendance</u>	93%	93.5%	94%	94.5%	95%
<u>Student Persistence</u>	80%	81%	82%	83%	85%
<u>% of students passing EOC Exams (Scores of "Excellent" or "Good")</u>	60%	62%	65%	68%	70%
<u>Average ACT score</u>	-	-	-	18.5	19.0
<u>% Four-year High School Grad</u>	-	-	-	81%	83%
<u>% of grads accepted to college</u>	-	-	-	98%	98%
<u>% of grads who matriculate to a college or university</u>	-	-	-	76%	80%

We fully intend to meet these performance goals. If interim indicators suggest that a school is off-track, CA will respond to that data, as we have in previous years when a school temporarily went off-track. This response can take a number of forms. Most commonly, network staff -- including the CEO, CAO, Chief of School Leadership, and Sr Director of Scholar Support -- will support the School Leader in planning a "reset", then will devote additional time and coaching resources to the school. The School Leader owns results at her school. This group helps the school leader to diagnose root causes and set smaller interim goals to rebuild trust and momentum across the school. Weekly, or even daily, check-in meetings ensure that no time is wasted in implementing the planned interventions. School Leaders must be able to reach their school's academic and performance goals. If the School Leader is unable to execute the agreed-upon plan, then additional performance management conversations begin. While CA has never faced this scenario, it is discussed regularly as one component of the autonomy and decision-making

authority granted to School Leaders in order to allow them to shape their school community.

## Why is your school critical for New Orleans?

### OPSB Specific Questions

1. What about your school positions it to uniquely address the needs you have identified?
2. What do you know about the families you will serve? What do you know about other schools you may compete with? How will your school be competitive in New Orleans?
3. Who will your school collaborate with? What community support has the school generated? Who will your school work with to be well positioned within the city and community?
4. What external factors does the school expect to face in opening in Fall 2018 in New Orleans? How does the school expect to address these external factors?

### **To grow our network of strong open-enrollment high schools, CA will build off our decade of experience in New Orleans as well as lessons learned from our past scale efforts**

- As the number of CA School Leaders has increased, we have responded to the need for additional leadership coaching capacity. Initially, CEO Ben Marcovitz led all School Leader coaching, drawing on his success in founding Sci Academy to help our new schools overcome challenges and adapt to new circumstances. This coaching requires significant time to embed in schools to observe and provide feedback. To meet this demand, CA hired an experienced and highly-regarded former KIPP principal to begin coaching. In addition to the extra capacity, this hire brought new perspectives on how to build a network of excellent open enrollment schools. We have begun planning for the total network capacity needed for school leadership when Collegiate reaches scale across New Orleans and Baton Rouge.
- As we analyze student academic growth data from the first semester at Livingston Collegiate Academy (Fall 2016) compared to the first semester for Carver Prep and Carver Collegiate (Fall 2012), it is clear that the strength and alignment of the founding team must be a top organizational priority as we launch new schools. This lesson impacts every functional leader at CA. For example, in 2015-16 our Talent Team prioritized supporting the Livingston founding School Leader in recruiting and hiring top instructional and operational talent. Along with strong coaching and planning for the school's cultural alignment, this support kickstarted the school. It currently has among the highest student growth data among any 9th grade cohort in Collegiate's history. Collaborating with human capital partners and local universities to identify members of the next founding Collegiate team will be vital to the success of future CA schools.
- Partnering with a range of community groups and nonprofits has been critical to the success of Collegiate Academies schools over the last decade. In particular, the recent move into the rebuilt Carver facility, the graduation of the founding cohort of Carver Collegiate and Carver Prep scholars, and the merger of those two schools have helped draw our organization close to the Carver alumni group. Similarly, as Sci Academy moved into the Abramson facility, the school proactively sought to build ties to the alumni community, even changing its name and mascot to honor Abramson's legacy. Cultivating analogous relationships with local neighborhood groups, alumni, religious communities, and nonprofits from the outset will be critical to our new schools' success, particular if we identify facilities outside of Collegiate's traditional geographic footprint in New Orleans East. We have already begun this work and will deepen these relationships over the next 18 months by bringing potential partners into our current schools and by listening to their hopes and aspirations for future New Orleans high schools. Our application includes letters of support from several prospective parents and other community partners, indicating early success in this critical work.

Collegiate Academies' track record, organizational capacity, and strong community support create a unique opportunity to launch additional successful open-enrollment high schools. We consider replicating past success a minimum bar and believe that new school communities can exceed the academic and post-secondary results seen

to date at Abramson Sci Academy, G.W. Carver, and Livingston Collegiate. Our central network team has proven capable of providing a range of supports to new schools: School Leader development, talent recruitment, family outreach, financial and operational planning, and school culture development. With our commitment to serving all scholars, families are beginning to choose Collegiate Academies schools in record numbers. We hope to have the opportunity to meet this strong parent demand in 2018 by opening two transformational high schools in New Orleans.

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