



InspireNOLA Charter Schools Executive Summary

InspireNOLA's Plan

Meeting the Needs of McDonogh #42

Almost 50,000 students currently attend 81 public schools in New Orleans. Of those 81 schools, 77 received School Performance Scores for the 2015-2016 school year. Twenty-nine schools – or 37% – are D or F schools, while only 21 – or 27% – are A or B schools. Though InspireNOLA hopes that lower performing schools achieve results and gains for their students, InspireNOLA wants to ensure that, in the case that charters are not renewed, another operator is prepared to operate the potential turnaround schools. Closure of failing schools can be traumatic and have negative consequences on the students who attend them and the communities that they are in. InspireNOLA hopes to meet the need of the current students, parents, and community of McDonogh #42 Elementary Charter School.

In December 2016, the state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) voted to non-renew the charter contract with the current charter management organization that was operating McDonogh #42 Elementary Charter School due to failing status. Thus, the Recovery School District (RSD) is now seeking a qualified charter school organization to assume operations of the campus beginning the 2017-2018 school year. Given its track record of success as an experienced, local charter operator who has already demonstrated success with transforming an elementary turnaround school, InspireNOLA is seeking to assume operation of and transform McDonogh #42.

Mission and Vision

The mission of InspireNOLA Charter Schools is to transform and inspire an educational movement, and this mission will extend to McDonogh #42. InspireNOLA is committed to ensuring that all of its students are fully prepared for future success in college or career, as it is preparing the future citizens of our state, nation, and world. InspireNOLA holds itself accountable to its students, families, community, board, district, and state, and consistently measures its progress and share its successes and areas for improvement in a spirit of transparency.

The overarching goals of InspireNOLA is that its students will achieve the following outcomes, thus setting them up for long-term success:

- At least 80% of students in third through eighth grades will score “proficient” on state assessments
- At least 75% of students in ninth through twelfth grades will score “good” or “excellent” on End-of-Course assessments
- High school graduation rate will be at least a 95%
- Graduating seniors will achieve a 95% college acceptance rate

The mission and vision of InspireNOLA puts students on a trajectory of lifelong success, as proven by the successes achieved by InspireNOLA's existing schools, proving that students can and will succeed at high levels. InspireNOLA's foundation schools, Alice M. Harte Charter School (prekindergarten through eighth) and Edna Karr High School (ninth through twelfth) both received "A" letter grades in the 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 school years, dramatically outperforming city and state proficiency averages. Edna Karr's 2015 and 2016 senior classes both achieved a graduation rate of 100%, with 95% accepted to college and over \$7 million in scholarships earned in 2015. 100% of Alice Harte eighth graders who were enrolled in Algebra I scored "excellent" on the End-of-Course assessment for the past two years in a row.

In the 2015-16 school year, InspireNOLA took over Andrew H. Wilson Charter School, the second-lowest performing elementary school in New Orleans. Andrew Wilson received "F" letter grades for the previous two years, and less than 40% proficiency in 2014-15. After only one year of operation by InspireNOLA, Andrew Wilson's school performance score grew an incredible 29.2 points, the highest growth of any school in New Orleans. Rising from a 39.7 to a 68.9, Andrew Wilson's letter grade is now the equivalent of a "C" on the state grading scale, due to significant progress and increases in student achievement.

Scale Strategy

The executive and leadership team of InspireNOLA's Network Office will provide support, training, and oversight to the leadership team of McDonogh #42. During the six-month planning and launch period, InspireNOLA network staff and newly hired McDonogh #42 school leaders will focus mainly on identifying and meeting the specific needs of the McDonogh #42 school community and assisting the implementation of InspireNOLA best practices and strategies that are shared across all schools. The InspireNOLA leadership team has extensive knowledge of and expertise in academics, finance, operations, strategy, and human capital, thus providing guidance and development to the new school and leaders as InspireNOLA expands its impact on a greater number of students.

InspireNOLA has already successfully led school turnaround efforts at Andrew H. Wilson Charter School, which has many similarities to the turnaround that will occur at McDonogh #42. InspireNOLA created a turnaround playbook, which describes in copious detail the foundational elements of InspireNOLA schools, including instructional design and strategies, cultural systems and expectations, and parent and community engagement approaches and practices. Because InspireNOLA is currently operating a turnaround school that achieved notable and impressive growth in its first year, new school leaders will observe and replicate the successes of Wilson, and learn from the challenges experienced there as well.

Lessons Learned and Mitigating Risks

InspireNOLA has gained valuable insight and knowledge into expansion practices and effective operation over our past three years of operation.

- Leadership pipeline and development
- Recruiting and developing new teachers and staff
- Separating schools into grade-level academies

- Establishing and maintaining school culture
- Implementing interventions early
- Setting goals and measuring progress toward them
- Developing an effective Network Office
- Ensuring consistent, quality systems and structures

Based on a thorough research and analysis by board members and organization leadership, InspireNOLA has identified the following risks and the plans to mitigate them in order to achieve continued and future success for our students.

1. *Capital and philanthropic funding:* InspireNOLA has received funding from the Charter School Growth Fund for past expansion within New Orleans, and has commitments from them to extend their support to future schools as well. Additionally, InspireNOLA was recently awarded the federal Charter Schools Program Replication and Expansion grant, which provides up to \$800,000 in funds per elementary school that InspireNOLA begins operating as a takeover. InspireNOLA will continue to apply for local, state, and federal grants that will assist with the costs of transforming McDonogh #42.
2. *Human capital and talent:* InspireNOLA utilizes a multifaceted approach to hiring, retaining, and developing staff members, including a leadership development program, ongoing teacher development, partnerships with local universities and teacher preparation programs. InspireNOLA will continue to be a part of the Teachers' Retirement System of Louisiana, enabling it to recruit veteran Louisiana teachers and demonstrate that it values traditional and local educators.
3. *Community engagement and enrollment:* InspireNOLA will continue to invest in the larger community of New Orleans, and will be a partner in the neighborhood and smaller community of McDonogh #42. Through local partnerships, connections with parents and families, and ongoing outreach to parents and community members, InspireNOLA will become a part of the existing McDonogh #42 family.

Measuring Success

InspireNOLA will measure achievement at McDonogh #42 against a comprehensive set of performance goals, mainly focusing on academic achievement and performance of students but also including culture, discipline, parent satisfaction, operational, and financial components.

InspireNOLA will set annual academic performance goals for state issued letter grades and school performance scores, and the percentage of students scoring "Basic" or above and the percentage scoring "Mastery" or above on state assessments. Projected annual goals are shown in *Figure 1*, though InspireNOLA will have access to updated and more comprehensive data from the current 2016-2017 after its completion as well. The yearly goals for the duration of the initial charter contract are set based on past progress achieved by Alice Harte and Andrew Wilson, elementary schools that InspireNOLA currently operates that both have similar student performance histories to McDonogh #42.

Figure 1: Academic Performance Goals for Years 1 -5

	<i>Baseline</i>	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Letter Grade	<i>F</i>	D	C	C	B	B
SPS	<i>45.8</i>	62.0	72.0	80.0	88.0	95.0
% at Basic or Above	<i>38%</i>	50%	58%	67%	74%	80%
% at Mastery or Above	<i>11%</i>	18%	27%	34%	40%	44%

Additionally, InspireNOLA will achieve the following annual goals at McDonogh #42:

- Suspension rate of 10% or lower
- Expulsion rate of 2% or lower
- Student retention rate of at least 90%
- Staff retention rate of at least 80%

If InspireNOLA currently monitors these performance measures at its existing schools, and will therefore extend this monitoring to McDonogh #42 as well. The InspireNOLA Network Office provides oversight and support with regards to goals monitoring and action planning, with the Chief Executive Officer, Chief Academic Officer, Chief Financial Officer, Executive Director of Strategy, and Network Data Manager all playing specific parts in the monitoring and accountability. InspireNOLA compiles data quarterly into dashboards and organizational report cards, which allow network and school leaders to analyze school performance at multiple levels.

In the event that InspireNOLA falls behind these targets at McDonogh #42, it will analyze the data, identify root causes and issues, create action plans to address the identified issues, implement the action plans, and progress monitor improvements and changes over set periods of time. The Network Office will provide intensive support in all areas as needed, with particular focus on academic programming and interventions and teacher development and support. The InspireNOLA board will also monitor progress toward goals and support the network and schools, as needed.

Critical to New Orleans

Uniquely Positioned

InspireNOLA desires to transform McDonogh #42 Elementary Charter School into a high-performing elementary school that will meet and exceed the needs of its 500 students. The students of McDonogh #42 have not received the quality education that they deserve, and InspireNOLA plans to change this. InspireNOLA already operates high-performing schools in New Orleans, including a turnaround school that experienced the highest growth of any school in the city, increasing its school performance score by 29.2 points in just one year. InspireNOLA is known in the New Orleans community, and is both trusted and sought after by parents who wish to enroll their students. Given its history of performance and achievement across multiple

schools and years, InspireNOLA is uniquely positioned to meet the needs of McDonogh #42 and the students and community it serves.

Serving Students and Families

InspireNOLA currently operates three schools in New Orleans: two foundation schools and one turnaround. It serves a high-needs student population: 98% are minority, 87% are economically disadvantaged, and 14% receive special education services (including gifted and talented). The existing student population at McDonogh #42 is very similar: 98% are economically disadvantaged and 11% receive special education services.

Because InspireNOLA already operates schools in New Orleans, it is known in the community and amongst parents. InspireNOLA's foundation schools have extremely high enrollment demand from parents and students, and the demand for Andrew Wilson is increasing with its academic improvements from the previous year as well. InspireNOLA believes that McDonogh #42 will be competitive in similar ways, as it evolves and transforms into a highly effective school as well.

Collaboration and Support

McDonogh #42 will collaborate with existing InspireNOLA schools, particularly the two elementary schools that InspireNOLA operates: Alice Harte and Andrew Wilson. McDonogh #42 leaders, teachers, and staff will engage in summer and ongoing professional development. The parent organizations from each school will have multiple opportunities to engage with and support one another, thus creating a network-wide parental support group.

InspireNOLA will engage its existing community networks and partnerships to support the transformation at McDonogh #42 as well. New Schools for New Orleans, 100 Black Men, Urban League of New Orleans, Xavier University, and other existing partnerships and community organizations will be integral and collaborative members in the McDonogh #42 turnaround.

External Factors

InspireNOLA anticipates facing similar challenges to those that it faced during the takeover of Andrew Wilson. Foremost, InspireNOLA will only have a six-month planning period before it acquires McDonogh #42, which means that many steps will need to be completed in an abbreviated timeline. InspireNOLA will mitigate this by creating and progress monitoring against a comprehensive start-up plan. Multiple network level leaders at InspireNOLA have already successfully launched a turnaround school in a similar timeline during the takeover of Andrew Wilson, so experienced individuals will be leading and supporting the acquisition.

Additionally, InspireNOLA recognizes that it will encounter existing challenges and aspects that are currently not identified because McDonogh #42 is a takeover, and InspireNOLA has limited knowledge except for high-level and released information. InspireNOLA will plan for these unknowns by anticipating challenges as it best can, and will engage with existing parents and community members as early and often as possible to gain a full understanding of the existing McDonogh #42.